



To: All Members of the Council

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 21 May 2013 at 2.00 pm

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Joanna Simons

Joanna Simons
Chief Executive

May 2013

Contact Officer: **Sue Whitehead**
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Membership

Cabinet Membership and responsibilities to be announced following election of the leader of the Council at the County Council meeting on 14 May 2013

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on Wednesday, 29 May 2013 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 18 June 2013

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, or

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Rachel Dunn on (01865) 815279 or rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note opposite

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2013 (**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

5. Petitions and Public Address

EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the Annex to Item 9, the Cabinet will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the annex by passing a resolution in relation to that item in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the Annex to the report since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda since it is

considered that, in all the circumstances of each case, the public interest in exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. ”.

NOTE: The report does not contain exempt information and is available to the public. The exempt information is contained in the confidential annex.

THE ANNEX HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS ‘CONFIDENTIAL’ BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

THIS IS FOR REASONS OF COMMERCIAL SENSITIVITY AND THE FINANCIAL RISK TO THE COUNCIL IF THE CONTENTS ARE DISCLOSED.

THIS ALSO MEANS THAT THE CONTENTS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS AND NO COPIES SHOULD BE MADE.

6. Procurement of Better Broadband for Oxfordshire (Pages 9 - 26)

Cabinet Member: Business & Communications

Forward Plan Ref: 2012/195

*Contact: Graham Shaw, Deputy Director for Environment & Economy – Oxfordshire
Customer Services Tel: (01865) 816593*

Report by Director for Environment & Economy (**CA6**).

The information contained in the annex is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed category:

3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

It is considered that in this case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that such disclosure would distort the proper competitive dialogue process between the authority with another party for the purposes described and would prejudice the position of the authority in those negotiations and other negotiations of a similar nature in future.

This report sets out an update of the Better Broadband Programme currently in closed contract negotiations as part of a competitive dialogue process.

Discussions on the programme and progress were recently reported at both the Growth and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee ([http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Published/C00000136/M00003301/AI00008696/\\$Broadbandupdatepaperv2.docx.pdf](http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Published/C00000136/M00003301/AI00008696/$Broadbandupdatepaperv2.docx.pdf)) as well as the Strategy and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee ([http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Published/C00000136/M00003301/AI00008696/\\$Broadbandupdatepaperv2.docx.pdf](http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Published/C00000136/M00003301/AI00008696/$Broadbandupdatepaperv2.docx.pdf)) in November.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

(a) endorse the progress to date and the Stage 2 Business Case; and

- (b) ***delegate to the Chief Finance Officer and Director for Environment & Economy in consultation with the Leader the authority to approve the detailed project appraisal.***

7. Results of New Schools for Didcot Public Consultation, and Subsequent Academy Specification (Pages 27 - 46)

Cabinet Member: Education

Forward Plan Ref: 2013/034

Contact: Diane Cameron, School Organisation Officer Tel: (01865) 816445

Report by Director for Children's Services (**CA7**).

This report details the background to, process of and outcomes of a public consultation on new schools required for Great Western Park in Didcot/Harwell.

Didcot is planned to grow by 9,000 homes over the next 20 to 25 years. In the first instance, school models and providers need to be identified to meet the needs of the Great Western Park development of around 3300 homes. However, planning for these, in particular for secondary education, needs to take place within the longer term, broader context of development in Didcot.

A public consultation was carried out to hear the views of the local community and other interested parties on what type of new schools they would like to see being built. The findings from this consultation are set out in the report.

The consultation responses fed in to the writing of a specification for the new schools needed, and this draft specification is appended as Annex 1.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the outcomes of the consultation into new schools for Didcot and RECOMMENDED to approve the specification as the basis for seeking academy providers for the Great Western Park schools.

8. Edward Feild Nursery School - Proposal to Close and Provide Alternative Early Years Provision (Pages 47 - 60)

Cabinet Member: Education

Forward Plan Ref: 2013/045

Contact: Debra Rouget, Sufficiency & Access Manager, Early Years & Childcare Tel: (01865) 810617

Report by Director for Children's Services (**CA8**).

In April 2011 changes by the DfE to the method of funding of Early Years places required the implementation of an Early Years Single Funding Formula. As a result, for attached nursery schools, there is now no financial advantage to running two establishments in parallel and the duplication of work and time is an unnecessary drain on resources.

School Organisation and Planning officers met with Headteachers of attached nursery schools in 2012 to outline the option of merging with their federated primary school. Edward Feild Nursery School proposed instead the closure of the Nursery School and expansion of the successful on-site voluntary Playgroup. Officers have supported the School in evaluating the financial, quality and accommodation aspects of this proposal and published an informal consultation on 17 March 2013. The period in which representations could be made by interested parties closed on the April and these are summarised in the report. Two objections were received. A formal decision is required by Cabinet on whether to publish a Statutory Notice to close Edward Feild Nursery School at the end of the Autumn term 2013.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve publication of a Statutory Notice for the Closure of Edward Feild Nursery School

9. Staffing Report - Quarter 4 (Pages 61 - 64)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2012/169

Contact: Sue Corrigan, Strategic HR Manager Tel: (01865) 810280

Report by Head of Human Resources (**CA9**).

This report gives an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013. It gives details of the agreed staffing numbers and establishment at 31 March 2013 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. These are also shown by directorate in Appendix 1. In addition, the report provides information on vacancies and the cost of posts being covered by agency staff.

The report also tracks progress on staffing numbers since 1 April 2010 as we implement our Business Strategy.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) note the report;

(b) confirm that the Staffing Report meets the Cabinet's requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.

10. Forward Plan and Future Business

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead, Committee Services Manager (01865 810262)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include "updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting". Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified

for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

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Agenda Item 3

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 16 April 2013 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.45 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair
Councillor Rodney Rose
Councillor Nick Carter
Councillor Melinda Tilley
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat
Councillor Kieron Mallon

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Roz Smith, (Agenda Item 6)
Councillor Jean Fooks, (Agenda Items 7 & 9)

Officers:

Whole of meeting Joanna Simons (Chief Executive); Sue Whitehead (Chief Executive's Office)

Part of meeting

| Item | Name |
|------|---|
| 6 | Kathy Wilcox (Corporate Finance) |
| 7 | Roy Leach, School Organisation & Planning Manager |
| 8 | Kevin Griffin (School Organisation & Planning) |
| 9 | Kevin Griffin (School Organisation & Planning) |

The Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

41/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Louise Chapman.

42/13 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2013 were approved and signed.

Cabinet noted the following erratum to the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013:

Item 19/13

Final paragraph on page 3, where it states CRMP was formerly known as the Integrated **Task** management Plan should read '**Risk**' as opposed to 'Task'

Final sentence of the first paragraph on page 4– reference to South **Oxfordshire** – should read 'South **Central Ambulance Service**'

43/13 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed:

Item 6 – Councillor Roz Smith, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 7 – Councillor Jean Fooks, local Councillor

Mr Jon Gray, Head Teacher, Cutteslowe Primary School

Item 9 - Councillor Jean Fooks, local Councillor

44/13 2012/13 FINANCIAL MONITORING & BUSINESS STRATEGY DELIVERY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2013

(Agenda Item. 6)

Councillor Hudspeth gave notice of his intention to move the following amendment to recommendation (f):

- (f) to approve the use of the additional capital funding as set out in paragraphs **49 and 50 and approve the use of the additional highways capital funding in 2013/14 (referred to in paragraph 48)**

Councillor Smith referred to the small underspend in the last financial monitoring report of the 12/13 year which was worrying. She highlighted that

of greater concern was the increase in the reserves to £115m with further reserves to be agreed today. She expected to hear that the reserves were there for a reason but year on year they had increased. She hoped that following the election cabinet members would query why the money was not being spent on services.

Responding to a question from Councillor Hudspeth about what changes Councillor Smith would make she replied that each area would be reviewed.

The Leader in moving the recommendations as amended in the addenda and as set out above explained that the money referred to in paragraph 49 had come in and was going to adult services. At the budget County Council meeting they had looked at everything in detail. The reserves were looked at but they were there for a reason. They were not general reserves where the complaint might then have some validity. The Leader thanked Kathy Wilcox and the Finance Team for all the work they did and felt that 0.7% underspend was a good achievement. However the underspend was not treated lightly and specific underspends were closely monitored to see that they did not reoccur each year.

Councillor Rose, Deputy Leader with responsibility for transport welcomed the amendment proposed by Councillor Hudspeth. Although Oxfordshire roads were not as bad as in many areas the weather conditions had caused some problems and the funding was welcome.

Lorna Baxter responded to questions from Councillor Melinda Tilley about the Basic Needs Budget for Schools and provision for disadvantaged two year olds.

During further discussion cabinet members supported the amendment and the use of earmarked reserves

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the report;
- (b) approve virements for financial year 2013/14 included in Annex 9;
- (c) agree the creation of a new reserve for the renewal of Print Machinery as set out in paragraph 37;
- (d) note the Treasury Management lending list at Annex 7;
- (e) approve changes to the programme in Annex 8c;
- (f) approve the use of the additional capital funding as set out in paragraphs 49 and 50 and approve the use of the additional highways capital funding in 2013/14 (referred to in paragraph 48);
- (g) approve the charges for Environment & Economy as set out in paragraph 51 and Annex 10.

45/13 OPTION APPRAISAL CONCLUSIONS ON CUTTESLOWE PRIMARY SCHOOL FOUNDATION STAGE UNIT (FSU)

(Agenda Item. 7)

In the light of a wish by the Head Teacher and The Cherwell School Academy Trust to continue to provide 39 full time equivalent (fte) F2 nursery places an option appraisal was commissioned by Children Education & Families to investigate the Foundation Stage Unit area and to present options on what work might be carried out, and its cost. Cabinet considered a report on the options appraisal that sought their decision on whether to allocate funds, and if so, how much.

Jon Gray, Head Teacher Cutteslowe Primary School, spoke in support of the extension of the FSU to be able to continue to provide 39fte nursery places. He highlighted that the school had been in special measures for a number of years and that he had taken over late in 2011. In their most recent OFSTED they had been found to making good progress. He explained the background to the recent move under The Cherwell School Academy Trust and highlighted that 40% of pupils were on free school meals and 50% did not have English as a first language. These challenges shaped the curriculum on offer. In referring to the report he stated that the concerns about the size of the nursery unit had been voiced by the school before he had started. The feasibility, procurement and design had all happened at once and he felt that because of that these concerns had been missed. He was aware of only one school of 60 F1 pupils that had only 26 F2 places. The rest were similar to Cutteslowe Primary School and he noted that they already had 39 children in the morning session. The additional provision would allow the school to take children earlier and this would assist in their achievement. With an extended classroom they could take some two year olds in line with the policy around provision for disadvantaged two year olds.

Responding to a question on numbers from Councillor Heathcoat, Mr Gray indicated that they already had 39 children in the morning session and would want 39 in the afternoon session.

Councillor Jean Fooks, speaking as a local councillor expressed surprise that the report referred to over provision in Summertown and Wolvercote and stated that she did not think this was the case. Of the nursery provision taken into account most were private and very few are within one mile of school. Parents would not travel 3 miles with a young child. Cutteslowe Primary School nursery provision was full and there was a waiting list. The school served a deprived area. The extension of the main school to two form was good and The Cherwell School was delighted at the joint Trust status. She felt that it was important that the County Council did what it could and she very much hoped that some support could be found. She referred to the map tabled by Mr Gray and explained where the extended classroom could go. She referred to the additional housing in Wolvercote and that much of this would be social housing.

In response to a question from Councillor Hibbert-Biles about the waiting list, Mr Gray returned to the table. He replied that there were 28 in September but would be 39 in January. He added that he had had to turn children away.

Councillor Tilley, Cabinet Member for Education in introducing the contents of the report paid tribute to Jon Gray. She highlighted that the County Council was spending £2m for the school to become 2-form entry. There was no funding available from the County Council to pay for additional nursery provision as it could not be considered under the Basic Needs budget. As an Academy there were other funding streams available to the school. She proposed that no financial support be provided to make provision for 78 (39 fte) F2 places.

Roy Leach, confirmed the officer view that there was not a basic need for additional places. It was expected that all other provision be considered and there were sufficient places in the recognised planning area. The School has sufficient space for 60 F1 pupils. Responding to a question from the Leader he confirmed that if Cabinet agreed the proposal then there would be additional over provision.

During discussion the following points were made:

(1) This was money that the Council had not got and there were many areas where Cabinet Members could identify additional spend within their own areas that could not take place because funding was not available.

(2) There was over capacity so funding could not be provided through the Basic Needs budget. There was no objective need for 39 places morning and afternoon. However the school could access alternative funding on suitability and condition as well as capacity. The Leader added that he was sure that officers would be happy to assist in applying for these other funding streams.

(3) As an Academy the School had more autonomy and as there was a sufficiency of places then the County Council was not responsible for this additional provision.

RESOLVED: Not to financially support The Cherwell School Academy Trust's aspiration to make provision for 78 (39 full time equivalent (fte)) rather than 52 (26 fte) F2 (nursery pupils).

46/13 STAGE ONE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED EXPANSION OF ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL, OXFORD

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet considered a report detailing a proposal to permanently increase the school admission number at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School from 45 to 60 on a permanent basis from September 2014.

Cabinet noted that the proposals were part of the strategic basic need provision in Oxford.

RESOLVED: to support the Governing Body in its wish to publish a statutory notice for the expansion of St Joseph's Catholic (VA) Primary School, Oxford.

47/13 STAGE ONE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED EXPANSION OF WOLVERCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL, OXFORD

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet considered a report that proposed the permanent increase of the school admission number at Wolvercote Primary School to 45 from 30.

Councillor Jean Fooks, as a local Councillor spoke in support of the proposal but raised concerns over traffic problems. A new travel plan may well be needed and she supported the consultation.

RESOLVED: to approve the publication of a statutory notice for the expansion of Wolvercote Primary School, Oxford

48/13 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 10)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED: to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

49/13 DELEGATED POWERS OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - APRIL 2013

(Agenda Item. 11)

RESOLVED: to note the following executive decisions taken by the Chief Executive under the specific powers and functions delegated to her under the terms of Part 7.4 of the Council's Constitution -Paragraph 1(A)(c)(i).

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Subject</i> | <i>Decision</i> | <i>Reasons for Urgency</i> |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| 14 March 2013 | Request for exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of an extension of the LINK contract for one year from 1 April 2013. | Approved an exemption from the full tendering requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules | Following a procurement exercise that failed to secure a provider to run Healthwatch in Oxfordshire the contract extension is needed so that the County Council can meet its statutory |

| | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|
| | | | functions in relation to providing a local Healthwatch. |
| 25 March 2013 | Request for exemption from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules for the novation of the existing Carer's Voice Contract to Action for Carers (Oxfordshire) Ltd and an extension on the current contract terms for a period of two years . | Approved an exemption from the full tendering requirements of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules | The novation and extension of the contract from 1 April 2013 maintains continuity of service. |
| 26 March 2013 | Scale of Election Fees and Charges 2013 | Agreed the scale of election fees and charges for running the County Council Elections. | The scale needed to be in place so that District Councils who are running the elections on behalf of the County can apply this scale in their preparations |

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Division(s): All

CABINET – 21 MAY 2013

PROCUREMENT OF BETTER BROADBAND FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Report by Director for Environment and Economy

Introduction

1. In conjunction with the national programme Broadband Delivery UK, Oxfordshire County Council has been pursuing an investment in the digital infrastructure across the county.
2. Faster broadband is vital to Oxfordshire's economy and will transform the life, work and play of all businesses and residents. It will boost business efficiency, streamline access to the council's numerous customer services and enrich leisure and social time. Almost everybody will benefit from this major investment.
3. There are a number of strategic benefits this programme hopes to achieve such as:
 - Unlocking Oxfordshire's high-tech, high-value economy
 - Opening up the world to Oxfordshire's Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) community
 - Enabling our communities and transforming the opportunities of our young people
 - Opening up our public services for our citizens
4. The County Council's role in this programme is to provide a mechanism for investment in improving the infrastructure. This will be accomplished through coordinating national, local authority and community investment, leading on the procurement, as well as leading on partnership and engagement with communities and partners. The 'investment' will be with a private sector partner on an outcome basis (improved digital infrastructure for a number of premises). At the end of the process, the Council will not accrue an asset.

Exempt Information

5. This report contains information in the Annex that relates to a competitive procurement process and is commercially sensitive. The public should therefore be excluded during consideration of the Annex because their discussion in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in the following categories prescribed by Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended): paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). Since it is considered that, in all circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that

disclosure would distort the proper competitive dialogue process of the transaction and the Council's standing generally in relation to such transactions in future, to the detriment of the Council's ability properly to discharge its fiduciary and other duties as a public authority.

Commissioning and procurement

6. In order to secure a contract with a telecommunications company for the investment, the council has undertaken a competitive dialogue process. Launched October of 2012, negotiations have progressed to an advanced stage and the council is currently awaiting the detail of a proposed solution.

Timeline for Procurement

7. Dates for procurement milestones:
 - a. Pre-Qualification Questionnaire 2nd August 2012
 - b. Dialogue duration 12 November 2012 – ongoing
 - c. Invitation to Submit Final Tender May 2013
 - d. Contract award (expected) Summer 2013

Funding allocation

8. The total for the contract in public funding is £13.86m of which £9.8m comes from OCC and £4.06m contributed by the national programme. A further £0.2m of OCC capital funds are to be set aside as a contingency.

Timeframe for Delivery

9. The issue of broadband connectivity is a growing and urgent concern for those suffering from poor broadband speeds or coverage (estimated to be approximately 30% of premises across Oxfordshire). The business case for stage two capital approval is developed and unlikely to change in a substantial way. The ability to award the contract as soon as it is available enables the timely implementation of the infrastructure improvements.
10. In addition, there are deadlines associated with the grant funding which must be spent no later than December 2015. The proposed delivery schedule and financial payment structure necessitates that the contract and grant reimbursement begin as quickly as possible so as not to jeopardise full grant utilisation.

RECOMMENDATION

11. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) endorse the progress to date and the Stage 2 Business Case; and
 - (b) delegate to the Chief Finance Officer and Director for Environment & Economy in consultation with the Leader the authority to approve the detailed project appraisal.

HUW JONES

Director of Environment and Economy

Contact Officer: Lisa Michelson, Programme Engagement Lead

May 2013

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Division(s): Didcot West; Didcot East & Hagbourne; Didcot Ladygrove; Hendreds & Harwell; Sutton Courtenay & Marcham; Wallingford

CABINET – 21 MAY 2013 NEW SCHOOLS FOR DIDCOT: REPORT ON CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL FOR SPECIFICATION

Report by Director for Children's Services

Introduction

1. Didcot is planned to grow by 9,000 homes over the next 20 to 25 years. The largest housing developments planned or being constructed are:
 - Great Western Park (GWP) – 3,300 homes being built.
 - Valley Park (west of GWP) – 2,300 homes proposed by Vale of White Horse.
 - North East Didcot – 2,030 homes in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan.
 - There are also smaller developments proposed for Ladygrove East, Orchard Centre and Vauxhall Barracks.
2. The number of extra children needing school places will depend on the size, type and timing of the houses, but we estimate that by 2016 there could be 500-600 more primary aged children and 300 more secondary aged children in the town. Once all of the housing is complete, this is expected to rise to around 2000 extra primary-aged children and a similar number of secondary aged children. This growing population will need new schools: each of the major developments is expected to provide two new primary schools, and there is also a new school proposed as part of the Ladygrove East development. There will also be at least one new secondary school.
3. In the first instance, school models and providers need to be identified to meet the needs of the Great Western Park development. However, planning for these, in particular for secondary education, needs to take place within the longer term, broader context of development in Didcot.
4. The Cabinet meeting of 4 September 2012 approved a new process for the identification of sponsors for new academies to meet the needs of population growth such as this:
 - i. Undertake a public consultation to identify the academy model to be implemented.
 - ii. Invite initial expressions of interest in running the school through DfE website set up for this purpose.
 - iii. Assess expressions of interest and then invite detailed bids from three or fewer providers to show clear plans of how they will contribute to the raising of education standards, add diversity of choice and which best fits the local requirements and meets the needs of those within groups offered specific protection under s149 Equality Act 2010.
 - iv. Assess bids against criteria and rank in order of preference. Agree a preferred option to be approved by Lead Member for Education or Cabinet as appropriate.

- v. Submit report to Secretary of State for decision.
 - vi. Proposal developed with provider approved by Secretary of State through sharing vision of community, county and sponsor.
5. The public consultation to inform the development of specifications for the new schools on Great Western Park, Didcot, has now taken place. On the basis of this a draft specification for new schools on Great Western Park has been developed. The purpose of this Report is to provide information on the outcomes of the consultation, and seek Cabinet approval to move onto the next stage of the academy process, inviting interested parties to submit outline expressions of interest to run one or more of the new schools, based on the proposed specification at Annex 1.

Background

6. The expected pupil generation of new housing development in Didcot has been modeled using the council's PopCal tool, based on current knowledge about the timing of house building and the types and sizes of housing. The timing of houses on Great Western Park could vary depending on housing market conditions. The NE Didcot development has not yet secured planning permission, but is assumed for these purposes to start generating pupils in 2014/15. The Valley Park development lies within the VOWH district, and its timing will be dependent on the progress of the VOWH Local Plan: it is assumed to start generating pupils in 2018/19. The smaller developments at Ladygrove East and the Orchard Centre are assumed to start generating pupils from 2015/16 and that at Vauxhall Barracks in 2018/19. There is also expected to be housing development outside Didcot which will affect the number of secondary pupils, for example at the Harwell Science & Innovation Campus. The housing mixes assumed for the purposes of pupil estimations are assumed to be compliant with the relevant district council policies, except where site-specific information is available.
7. The calculation of need for new schools is made in the context of the potential of existing schools to accommodate more children. In particular Stephen Freeman Primary School was specifically expanded ahead of the housing development to ensure sufficient primary school places for the early generation of pupils. Willowcroft Primary School is also now increasing its intake by bringing into classroom use accommodation which was not previously needed. The two existing secondary schools currently have some spare places as the secondary pupil population as a whole has in recent years experienced a demographic dip.
8. At the same time as Oxfordshire County Council has been planning for new schools at Great Western Park, a proposal has been submitted to the DfE to create a University Technical College (UTC) in Didcot, with a planned opening date of 2015. This would provide 600 places for 14-19 year olds, and cover a 15 mile radius. It expects to draw approximately 50% of its intake from within 5 miles of Didcot, and therefore potentially offers approximately 300 additional places for the 14-19 age group to Didcot.
9. The UTC has received initial approval by the DfE, subject to a satisfactory funding agreement. There is still a possibility that the UTC will not proceed to opening, and planning to meet Didcot's needs must be flexible enough to

respond to this, as well as potentially other changes of circumstances over the long time span affecting the establishment of a new secondary school.

10. The proposed specification is based on the assumption that the UTC does open. This has delayed the need for a new secondary school, and removed the need for additional post-16 provision.

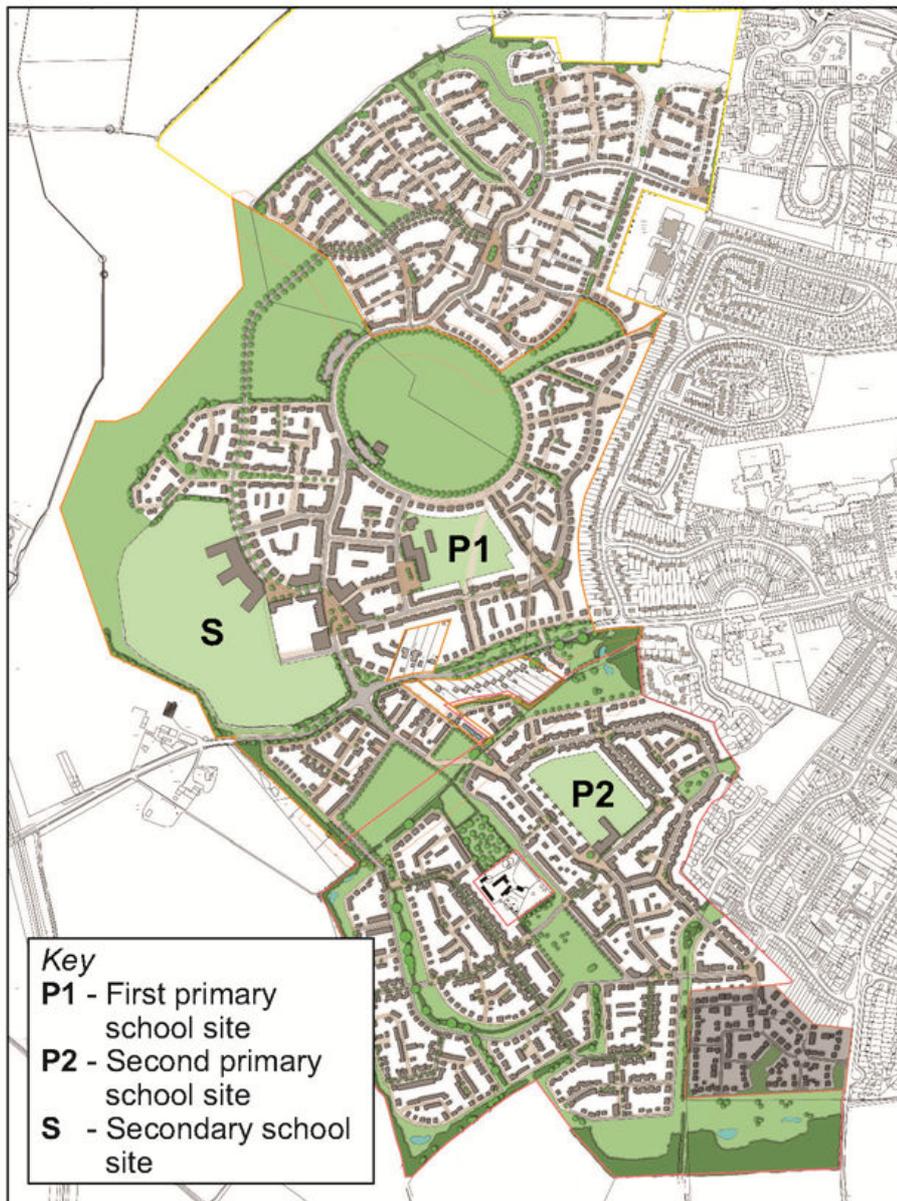
Consultation

11. The public consultation to inform the development of specifications for the new schools on Great Western Park, Didcot, was conducted by the School Organisation & Planning team 28 January – 31 March 2013:
 - To gather local community views to help shape the specification of schools and choice of sponsor.
 - To invite organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge to provide evidence on local need.
 - To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding rounds.
12. The consultation was publicised through the county council and district council websites and local media as well as through posters and leaflets distributed by schools, local employers, the developers of Great Western Park and local networks such as the residents' association. Two "drop-in" sessions were held in Didcot to allow interested parties to talk to officers about the proposals. Briefing sessions were held for local members and schools, and education provision was discussed by Science Vale UK steering groups.
13. We received 133 written responses to the consultation. 30% of these were from parents of children currently at primary school; 16% from parents of children currently at secondary school; 15% from parents of children not yet at school. 22% were from staff/governors at primary schools and 8% from staff/governors at secondary schools. (NB some respondents counted in more than one of these categories.) 18% were from people with no current direct interest in schools as staff/governors or parents – these included potential academy providers and local councillors.
14. While there was a diversity of views submitted, there was broad consensus on the need for :
 - Co-educational secondary education.
 - Greater choice and diversity.
 - Greater provision of vocational courses and maths/science/technical courses.
 - Integrated provision for pupil with special educational needs.
15. Areas of less consensus included:
 - There is some demand for Catholic education, but also concern that a Catholic secondary school would not provide as much additional choice for the town, given the single-sex nature of existing provision.
 - There were mixed views about whether more than one school should be provided by the same provider, and whether the existing secondary schools should provide one or more of the new schools.

Proposed specification for new schools at Great Western Park

CA7

16. On the basis of the data available and the consultation responses, and assuming the opening of the UTC in September 2015, the draft specification seeks providers for the following schools:
 - Primary School 1, to open September 2015, growing to 2 forms of entry.
 - Primary School 2, to open September 2017 subject to the progress of the housing development and population growth, growing to 2 forms of entry.
 - A co-educational 11-16 secondary school, to open September 2017 subject to the progress of the housing development and population growth, growing to approximately 1200 places, with 7 forms of entry in Key Stage 3 and a probable 6 forms of entry in Key Stage 4 (reflecting the expected movement of some Key Stage 4 students to the UTC).
17. It is not proposed that the specification imposes restrictions on the nature of provider – e.g. faith organisations, or existing providers – given that the local consultation was inconclusive on these issues.
18. The specification invites interest from providers able and willing to work with the county council in enhancing SEN provision through integrated or co-located facilities, but does not specify these in detail. Discussions will be held with potential providers with a view to identifying where SEN provision could be included, given the site and financial constraints of the new schools.
19. These schools will be located on the sites previously identified within the Great Western Park master plan. Further discussion will be held with the UTC promoters and the DfE regarding the potential for the UTC and the secondary school to be co-located, sharing some facilities.



Other options considered

20. At this stage it was decided not to be more specific about the nature of the new schools, in order to attract as wide a selection of potential high quality sponsors as possible.
21. At an earlier stage of the process it was considered whether the existing secondary schools could be expanded instead of building a new school. The total scale of growth of Didcot's school population however would exceed the site capacities of the existing schools. Moreover, the consultation responses show a clear desire for more diversity in school provision in the town, and in particular for a choice of co-educational secondary provision. For these reasons it is considered that a new school will be required.
22. It was initially expected that the secondary school would need to open in 2016. However, the additional capacity provided by the UTC is calculated to delay the need for a new secondary school to 2017. If the UTC and the secondary school are to share facilities, any such facilities at the secondary school (for example sports provision) may need to be constructed ahead of schedule for the benefit of the UTC.

23. Early expectations were that the secondary school should include sixth form provision. However, given that the two existing secondary schools jointly operate co-educational sixth form provision, and as the UTC will create additional capacity for the post-16 age group, additional sixth form capacity is not currently justified by expected population growth. There is a risk that the absence of a sixth form may reduce the attractiveness of the school to potential sponsors. However, any eventual sponsor would have the scope to reconsider whether sixth form provision is viable in future years, based on actual pupil numbers.
24. Consideration was given to whether the secondary school should instead be located on the NE Didcot development. This would provide the added advantage of distributing school provision more equally across the town, potentially reducing travel to school distances, and was requested by some respondents to the consultation. However, there is less certainty about the timescale of the NE Didcot development, and keeping the school at Great Western Park provides opportunities for shared use of facilities with the UTC. For these reasons, it is considered that the new school should be located at Great Western Park.
25. The possibility of two new secondary schools for Didcot being required in the longer term – one at Great Western Park and one at NE Didcot – has been considered. However, based on current proposals for housing development, and in the context of the UTC providing some additional capacity, this does not currently appear justified or financially viable. A site for secondary school provision has been included in the draft master plan for NE Didcot, and open discussions have been held with the promoters of this site about the potential education requirements. It is proposed that the county council continues to maintain a requirement for this site to be protected until the VOWH Local Plan is adopted, at which time the situation will be reviewed in the light of the latest information about population and housing plans.

Next steps

26. Cabinet is requested to approve the draft specification attached as Annex 1 as the basis for stage (ii) of the academy provider process outlined in paragraph 4 above, the invitation of expressions of interest from potential providers. Such expressions of interest would be sought during June, and short-listed by officers over the summer, with short-listed applicants invited to submit a detailed proposal by October.
27. A further report would be submitted to Cabinet in December to seek a decision on which provider(s) the county council wishes to recommend to the DfE for approval.
28. Although we have not yet sought expressions of interest from potential academy providers, a number of organisations have already expressed clear intent to submit applications, and we are confident that these will result in a competitive selection process.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

29. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 imposes a duty on the Council to give due regard to three needs in exercising its functions:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.
30. The draft specification, as proposed, seeks to ensure increase equality of education provision by sex in that it proposes a co-educational secondary school in Didcot to supplement the existing single-sex education available. It seeks to increase equality of access to education for children with disabilities by specifically inviting proposals from sponsors able to provide additional SEN provision integrated or co-located with the new schools. It provides opportunities to increase equality of access to faith education, but potential faith providers will be assessed on the same criteria as non-faith providers.

Risks and mitigation

31. There is considerable uncertainty about the precise timing of need for new schools, as it will be influenced by factors outside the county council's control, including district council planning decisions and the housing market. To mitigate against this risk, providers will be sought who are able to be flexible in how quickly the new schools will grow. Providers will be specifically asked in the application process how they will manage these uncertainties. Until a funding agreement is signed with each provider, the county council will be able to renegotiate details of timing should conditions change.
32. If the specification proves unattractive to potential sponsors, we may not be able to identify sufficient providers. This risk is considered low, as there has already been interest expressed from a number of providers. Further mitigation against this risk is that we are seeking providers for Primary School 2 and the secondary school well in advance of need, to provide time for further investigation of the options. In cases where an academy provider cannot be identified, the DfE expects to be able to assist.

Financial and Staff Implications

33. The direct financial implication of this report is the cost of the process of seeking expressions of interest, which is planned for and met within the normal CE&F budget provision. There are no significant financial implications or risks at this stage.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the outcomes of the consultation into new schools for Didcot and **RECOMMENDED** to approve the specification as the basis for seeking academy providers for the Great Western Park schools.

CA7

Jim Leivers
Director for Children's Services

Contact Officer: Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Planning Manager
01865 816459

1 May 2013

Annex 1 Draft specification for new schools for Great Western Park, Didcot

Draft specification

Oxfordshire County Council

New schools for Great Western Park, Didcot

School specification document for potential sponsors

1. Background

- Why the new schools are needed
- Existing educational provision in this area
- Consultation

2. Details of the new schools

- Types of school
- Location
- Timescale
- Size and growth of schools
- Design of school and capital funding

3. Service requirements

- Delivering excellence in education
- Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs
- Working in partnership
- Building stronger communities

4. How to apply

1. Background

Why the new schools are needed

Didcot is planned to grow by 9,000 homes over the next 20 to 25 years. As a result, Didcot's population is forecast to increase from 15,000 in 1981 to over 30,000 residents by 2016, with continued growth in the longer term

The largest housing developments planned or being constructed are:

- Great Western Park in west Didcot (GWP) – 3,300 homes being built
- Valley Park (west of GWP) – 2,300 homes proposed by Vale of White Horse
- North East Didcot – 2,030 homes in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan

There are also smaller developments proposed for Ladygrove East, Orchard Centre and Vauxhall Barracks.

The number of extra children needing school places will depend on the size, type and timing of the houses, but we estimate that by 2016 there could be 500-600 more primary aged children and 300 more secondary aged children in the town. Once all of the housing is complete, this is expected to rise to approximately 2000 extra primary-aged children and a similar amount of secondary aged children.

This growing population will need new schools: each of the major developments is expected to provide two new primary schools, and there is also a new school proposed as part of the Ladygrove East development. There will also be at least one new secondary school.

This specification covers the two primary schools and the secondary school required for the Great Western Park development. Proposals are invited for one of, or a combination of, these schools.

Existing educational provision in this area

The Didcot partnership currently includes 12 primary schools (6 within the town and 6 in surrounding villages), a boys' secondary school and a girls' secondary school. There is also a community nursery school.

There are no FE colleges in the town, although Abingdon and Witney College delivers some courses to meet employer training needs from a facility at Milton Park. There are no special schools in the partnership.

| School | Type (May 2013) | Admission number (2013) |
|---|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Lydalls Nursery School | Community nursery | 30 fte places |
| All Saints CE (VA) Primary School, Didcot | VA Church of England primary | 60 |
| Blewbury Endowed CE Primary School | VC Church of England primary | 25 |

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------|
| Chilton Primary School | Community primary | 30 |
| Hagbourne CE Primary School | VC Church of England primary | 30 |
| Harwell Community Primary School | Community primary | 30 |
| Ladygrove Park Primary School, Didcot | Primary applying for academy status June 2013 | 60 |
| Long Wittenham CE Primary School | VC Church of England primary | 15 |
| Manor School, Didcot | Primary applying for academy status June 2013 | 75 |
| Northbourne CE (VA) Primary School | VA Church of England primary | 45 |
| South Moreton School | Community primary | 25 |
| Stephen Freeman Community School, Didcot | Community primary | 45 (to rise to 60) |
| Willowcroft Community School, Didcot | Primary applying for academy status June 2013 | 60 |
| Didcot Girls School | Girls' secondary academy | 240 |
| St Birinus School | Boys' secondary academy | 240 |

Further detail on the town's schools is available in the Oxfordshire Pupil Place Plan, available from the OCC website.

Proposed University Technical College

At the same time as Oxfordshire County Council has been planning for new schools at Great Western Park, a proposal has been submitted to the DfE to create a University Technical College (UTC) in Didcot, intended to open in 2015 (subject to Funding Agreement approval). This would provide 600 places for 14-19 year olds, and cover a 15 mile radius. It expects to draw approximately 50% of its intake from within 5 miles of Didcot, and therefore potentially offers approximately 300 additional places for the 14-19 age group to Didcot.

The UTC has received initial approval by the DfE, subject to a satisfactory funding agreement. There is still a possibility that the UTC will not proceed to opening, and planning to meet Didcot's needs must be flexible enough to respond to this, as well as potentially other changes of circumstances over the long time span affecting the establishment of a new secondary school.

This current specification is based on the assumption that the UTC does open. This has delayed the need for a new secondary school, and removed the need for additional post-16 provision. Subject to agreement for the UTC to be located on the GWP site, it is expected that the new secondary school and the UTC will share some facilities.

Consultation

Local consultation was undertaken by the county council from 28 January to 31 March 2013:

- To gather local community views to help shape the specification of schools and choice of sponsor.
- To invite organisations and individuals with specialist knowledge to provide evidence on local need.
- To act as pre-notification to potential sponsors of the future bidding rounds.

The consultation resulted in 133 responses.

On the basis of this consultation, the following are features which would be sought for the new schools:

- Co-educational secondary education.
- Greater choice and diversity, for example through the new schools being run by different providers.
- There is some demand for Catholic education, but also concern that a Catholic secondary school would not provide as much additional choice for the town, given the single-sex nature of existing provision.
- Greater provision of vocational courses and maths/science/technical courses.
- Integrated provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Full details of the consultation can be found online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/didcotschools

The consultation results have informed this specification, which was approved by the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet on 21 May 2013.

2. Details of the new schools

Types of school

This specification is for three schools, to be offered by providers separately or in combination:

Primary School 1

- A 2 form entry school.
- Age range: 3-11.
- Admission number: 60.
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 26fte.
- Other details: facilities to allow the provision of Children's Centre services are included in the building design.

Primary School 2

- A 2 form entry school.

- Age range: 3-11.
- Admission number: 60.
- Total places provided for Reception to Year 6: 420 places.
- Nursery places provided: 26fte.

Secondary School

Based on projected pupil numbers and the planned opening of the University Technical College in 2015, it is expected that an additional secondary school will be required to provide:

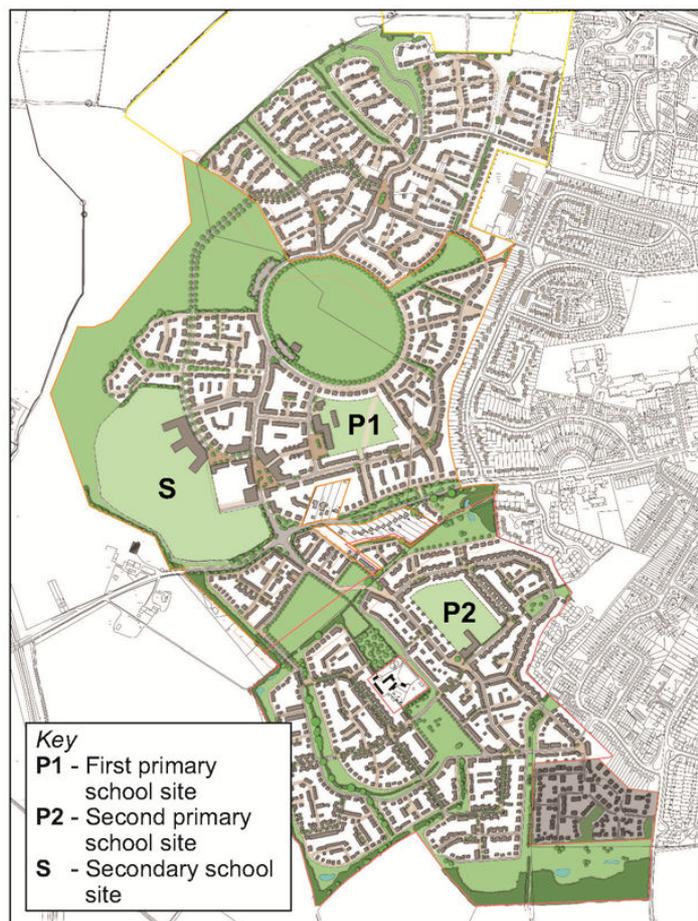
- Up to 8 forms of entry in Key Stage 3 (admission number 240).
- Up to 7 forms of entry in Key Stage 4 (with some pupils choosing to transfer to the UTC).
- Age range: 11-16 (with sixth form provision delivered across the existing two schools and the UTC). There may be potential for sixth form provision in the longer term, depending on local population growth.
- Total places provided for Year 7 to Year 11: up to approximately 1200 places.
- Other details: co-educational.

Location

The new schools will serve the Great Western Park development to the west of Didcot, lying partly in South Oxfordshire District Council, and partly within the Vale of White Horse District Council.

The first phase of primary provision for this development has been provided through extension of Stephen Freeman School, on the north east edge of the development; secondary provision has so far been through existing schools.

No specific transport arrangements for the primary schools are deemed necessary given the close proximity to children's homes. The county council will support the new schools in encouraging safe travel to school, including walking and cycling.



The secondary school will serve a wider area. As the existing secondary schools are single-sex, it is expected that these and the new school will serve the whole of the

partnership area, providing a choice between single sex and coeducational provision.

Timescale

- Primary School 1 is due to open September 2015.
- Primary School 2 is expected to open September 2017, but this date is subject to the rate of completions, and thus population growth, in the Great Western Park development.
- The Secondary School is expected to open September 2017.

Size and growth of schools

The schools will be expected to be flexible in how they organise classes to respond to the growth in local school-age population, including children who move to the development after the normal age of starting school.

Proposers will be expected to demonstrate how they will ensure the needs of new residents of Great Western Park are met without promoting or encouraging a large scale relocation of existing pupils from other schools.

Any proposals which seek to attract pupils from beyond Didcot would need to clearly demonstrate how they would ensure that the identified needs of Didcot would be met.

Primary schools: initial capacity has been provided at Stephen Freeman Primary School. In order to allow all children living in Great Western Park to attend this or one of the new primary schools, the county council seeks to commission the following additional Reception – Year 6 places:

| | Additional primary school places required (approx.) | Primary school 1 | Primary school 2 |
|----------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2015/16 | 210 | Opens | ✘ |
| 2016/17 | 320 | ✓ | ✘ |
| 2017/18 | 420 | ✓ | Opens? |
| 2018/19 | 460 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2019/20 | 500 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2020/21 | 510 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2021/22 | 570 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2022/23 | 600 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2023/24 | 640 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2024/25 | 670 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2025/26 | 700 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2026/27 | 730 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2027/28 | 750 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2026/27 | 770 | ✓ | ✓ |
| 2027/28 | 790 | ✓ | ✓ |

The exact distribution of pupils across the two schools will be determined by the phasing of different areas of housing development and parental preference.

Secondary school: initial capacity is available at the existing secondary schools. From 2015 additional capacity for 14-19 year olds is expected through a new University Technical College. In order to allow all children living in Great Western Park to attend a secondary school within Didcot, the county council seeks to commission the following additional places:

| | Key stage 3 | Key stage 4 | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------|
| 2017/18 | 60 | 0 | 60 |
| 2018/19 | 210 | 0 | 210 |
| 2019/20 | 330 | 30 | 360 |
| 2020/21 | 450 | 90 | 540 |
| 2021/22 | 450 | 150 | 600 |
| 2022/23 | 510 | 210 | 720 |
| 2023/24 | 630 | 240 | 870 |
| 2024/25 | 720 | 300 | 1020 |
| 2025/26 | 720 | 420 | 1140 |

Design of school and capital funding

Under Section 106 of the Town and County Planning Act, 1990, the county council has negotiated sites and capital funding for the three schools. The cost of building the primary schools will be met by the Great Western Park housing developers. The cost of building the first phase of the secondary school will be met by the Great Western Park developers; subsequent housing developments are expected to provide funding for future phases of the secondary school.

Each primary school site is 2.2ha. The secondary school site is 10.1ha; it is expected that this will be shared with the University Technical College, with some shared use of facilities.

The sites are expected to be made available to academies on a 125 year lease, with the usual terms pursuant to the 2010 Academies Act.

In order to meet the opening dates the design and build process for Primary School 1 is already underway. Sponsors will not, therefore, have the opportunity for any involvement in the design of the school building. The new buildings will meet all current guidelines. There may be opportunities for sponsors of Primary School 2 and the secondary school to be involved in the design of the building due to their later planned opening date.

3. Service requirements

Our vision is for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.

We seek sponsors for new schools who will help us to achieve this vision.

Delivering excellence in education

Every child and young person in Oxfordshire should be able to attend a good or outstanding school or setting, access the best teaching, achieve well and as they become an adult, have opportunities for an independent economic and social life. Through providing the best start in life, whatever their background, children should be able to thrive at school. Education and skills provision also needs to be shaped around the needs of the Oxfordshire economy, alongside ensuring that good quality services are available for the vulnerable.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Provide a sustainably good or outstanding school with an exciting and inspiring broad and balanced curriculum.
- Rigorously focus on educational standards to ensure that every child and young person achieves their potential and goals and National expectations are met or exceeded.
- Ensure an inclusive learning environment in which all pupils, including those with special or additional educational needs and those with disabilities, are supported and enabled to make appropriate progress.
- Seek out and share best practice within and beyond the school, promoting innovation and creativity in learning and teaching.
- Implement rigorous processes of self-evaluation and continual improvement, including recognising the importance of Pupil Voice in these processes.
- Secure outstanding and dynamic leadership, management and governance.
- Attract, retain and develop the highest quality teachers and support staff to ensure good or better teaching and learning, and effective and motivated workforces.
- Provide evidence of robust and effective financial management

Supporting vulnerable learners and those with special educational needs

The needs of vulnerable children and young people should be met locally wherever possible. The new schools should promote inclusive opportunities for the most vulnerable children and have a strong focus on equalities, early intervention, and supporting the needs of the local community.

Proposals are particularly welcome from sponsors who can offer one or more of the following, co-located/integrated within the mainstream provision:

- Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties primary provision – short-term and/or part-time as well as long-term and/or full-time.

- Provision for vulnerable Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, including those with Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties, who require and individualised/small group approach or alternative provision.
- Provision for primary and secondary pupils on the Autistic Spectrum Continuum, or with complex/severe Speech, Language and Communication Needs, Physical Difficulties, Hearing Impairment and Visual Impairment.
- High quality provision for vulnerable 2 year olds.

Working in partnership

The schools will be part of the Didcot partnership of schools. A key component of selection will be the proposers' willingness to work in collaboration with other providers and local partners to develop services which meet the needs of local children, young people and families in a coordinated way.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Ensure the school plays a key role within its immediate community and the wider local economy.
- Engage parents/carers in supporting and encouraging their children's learning.
- Work in partnership with the county council and other educational providers to contribute towards meeting a collective responsibility to secure the best for all Oxfordshire's learners, including participating in school-to-school support, and cooperating with Fair Access protocols.
- Develop strategic alliances, partnerships and networks to better meet the needs of young people and families in Didcot.
- Support the strategic responsibilities of the county council to ensure sufficiency of high quality school places and improved educational outcomes through agreed sharing of data and information.

Building stronger communities

Under Section 6 of the Childcare Act 2006, the county council has a duty to secure sufficient childcare for working parents; the involvement of the schools in meeting the childcare needs of the Great Western Park community would be welcomed.

The county council would also welcome the involvement of the schools in providing community access to appropriate facilities, which may include sports and arts facilities, adult learning and ICT provision.

Sponsors will be expected to:

- Support the county council in delivering effective early intervention services, ensuring school readiness and supporting our most vulnerable learners and families.
- Work in partnership with wider services such as social care services, health and police to keep children safe, support families and build stronger communities.
- Provide children and young people with the skills they will need to play an active part in their local community and economy.

4. How to apply

The county council must receive outline Expressions of Interest by 3 July 2013 and requires one hard copy and one electronic copy of all documentation.

In the first instance, Expressions of Interest should be submitted using the Oxfordshire County Council New School Expressions of Interest Form. The Application Form and this Specification Document are available to download from www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newschoolproposals

Further information is available from, and Expressions of Interest should be sent to:
Barbara Chillman
Service Manager – Pupil Place Planning
Children, Education & Families
Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 01865 816459
Fax: 01865 783185
barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Expressions of Interest will be assessed against their ability to meet the following broad criteria:

- the quality of the places being added into the system, based on the proposer's vision and educational plan;
- the capability and capacity of the proposer to deliver their proposal to time and on budget, based on their expertise and experience.

The county council will short-list proposers on the basis of the Expressions of Interest received, and by 13 September 2013 will invite the short-listed proposers to submit a more detailed application by 25 October 2013.

The short-listed proposers will also be invited to deliver a presentation of their proposals during the first two weeks of November.

The county council Cabinet will be asked to identify the preferred proposers at their December meeting, so that recommendations can be submitted to the DfE for final approval. It is hoped the decision would be available from the DfE by March 2014.

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Division(s):

CABINET – 21 MAY 2013

EDWARD FEILD NURSERY SCHOOL - PROPOSAL TO CLOSE AND PROVIDE ALTERNATIVE EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Report by Jim Leivers
Director for Children, Education and Families

Introduction

1. Edward Feild Primary and Edward Feild Nursery Schools in Kidlington share a site and buildings. They also share a Headteacher and Governing Body. However for the purposes of financial accounting and Ofsted Inspection they are separate. Additional early years provision on site includes Robin Playgroup, operating within the school buildings under a hire agreement, and Magpies out of school club.
2. The Headteacher and Governing Body of Edward Feild Nursery and Primary Schools now wish to review and streamline the early years provision on site. The intention is to maintain the same level of high quality early years places and to improve financial viability and long term future of this provision.

Exempt Information

3. None

Background

4. In April 2011, the DfE required that Local Authorities should change the method of funding early years provision to a simplified and more transparent system. As a result, attached nursery schools, including Edward Feild Nursery, no longer have any financial advantage in operating separately from their federated primary school. In addition, funding is now based on actual attendance and there is no longer 'place-led' funding to cover empty places.
5. The duplication of work in having separate accounting, Ofsted inspection and management reporting systems is cumbersome and wasteful of resources. In summer 2012, the Pupil Place Planning Service Manager invited representatives from the attached nursery schools to a meeting to discuss the possibility and implications of their merging with their partner primary school. Two of these schools are currently undertaking this process and have published statutory notices.
6. Edward Feild Nursery School has decided that merger with their federated Primary School is not the best option for them and would not offer sufficient financial savings to guarantee the continued viability of a school nursery class. In March 2013 the Headteacher and Governing Body submitted a proposal for closure of the Nursery School and replacement of those early years places by expansion of the on site Robin Playgroup. A first informal stage of consultation was run on the Oxfordshire County Council website from 11 March 13,. In total 6 representations were received, including 2 objections. Copies of these and the Officer/School response is at Annex 1. The next stage is to decide whether to proceed with a Statutory Notice for the closure of Edward Feild Nursery School.
7. The decision-making power in terms of determining the notice lies with the Cabinet or can be delegated to the Cabinet Member Education (if there have been no objections). In meeting as

'decision-maker' the Cabinet or Cabinet Member must have regard to government guidance and statutory timescales otherwise a decision can be referred to the independent Schools' Adjudicator for reconsideration.

Legal Background

8. School expansions and closures are subject to statutory procedures, as established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended). Local authorities also have a duty to have regard to statutory guidance, in this particular case "Closing a Maintained Mainstream School" ("the Guidance"). When reaching a decision, the Cabinet must have regard to The Guidance. The Cabinet is referred in particular to pages 19 to 40 of The Guidance.
9. The Guidance on considering proposals for school closures sets out a list of factors to be considered by decision makers, which should not be taken to be exhaustive. A summary of the factors is:
 - a. **The effect on standards, school improvement and diversity.** The government's stated aim is to create a dynamic system shaped by parents that delivers excellence and equality, closing weak schools and encouraging new providers and popular schools to expand. The Cabinet should be satisfied that the proposal will contribute to raising local standards of provision and attainment and consider the impact on choice and diversity. It should pay particular attention to the effect on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic minorities, children from deprived background and children in care. The Cabinet should also consider how the proposal will help deliver the 'Every Child Matters' principles. In this instance, early years provision will continue to be provided through the Robin Playgroup, and the School and pre-school propose that staff work as one team across the whole age range, providing the best care and education for children.
 - b. **The need for places.** The Cabinet should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area. As in this proposal early years provision will continue on the same site at the Robin Playgroup, pupils will not be displaced.
 - c. **Impact on the community and travel.** In considering proposal for the closure of schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. Community cohesion, race equality, accessibility and equal opportunities issues should be considered. As in this proposal early years provision will continue on the same site, there will be no negative effects on the local community.
 - d. **Special Educational Needs provision.** The proposals do not change provision for special educational needs.
 - e. **Specific age provision.** There should be a presumption against the closure of a nursery school unless the case for closure can demonstrate:
 - i. *the LA is consistently funding numbers of empty places;*
 - ii. *full consideration has been given to developing the school into a Sure Start Children's Centre, and there are clear, justifiable grounds for not doing so, for example: unsuitable accommodation, poor quality provision and low demand for places;*
 - iii. *plans to develop alternative provision clearly demonstrate that it will be at least as equal in terms of the quantity and quality of early*

years provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; and that

iv. replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents.”

The Proposal

10. The full proposal submitted by the schools is appended at Annex 2. In summary, this is for closure of Edward Feild Nursery School with effect from the end of December 2013. A lease would be granted to the Robin Playgroup to further formalise their use and occupation of school premises and they will expand their provision to offer addition funded early education places for 2,3 and 4 year old children.
11. Officers in School Organisation and Planning, Customer Services (Finance) and Early Years have supported the School throughout the planning process in exploring and evaluating their options. Regular advice and guidance has been offered and also clearly stated requirements that would need to be put in place from both a statutory and Local Authority perspective. In addition, a Local Authority Childcare Business Development Officer (CBDO) has supported Robin Playgroup in their business planning for any proposed changes. Robin Playgroup are in full support of the School proposal.

Consultation and Representations

12. An initial consultation was posted on the Oxfordshire County council consultations portal between 11 March 2013 and 17 April 2013. Notifications of this consultation were sent to all statutory consultees. Edward Feild Nursery School and Robin Playgroup also publicised the consultation by letter to parents, and by posters within the school.
13. 6 representations were received, 2 as objections and 4 in support of the proposal. The two objections were on the basis that maintained nursery schools were felt to have been the beacon of good practice in the local area and this provision should continue. The response on this is that the existing provision is not financially viable, and measures are being put in place to ensure that the alternative early years provision continues at a similarly high standard. Please see Annex 1 for full detail.

Financial and Staff Implications

14. Finance - The business manager at Edward Feild Primary School has worked with the Financial Accountant in Customer services to project the Nursery budget for the next two years if the closure does not take place. This predicts a deficit of between £12,000 and £40,000 per annum, dependent on numbers of children accessing a place. The CBDO has worked with Robin Playgroup to develop their business plans and has reported on the financial viability of the provision and their management and the strength of their administrative structure. See Annex 3 for the full report. The School will be developing a lease agreement for Robin's use of the school premises which will need to be agreed by the Local Authority to ensure that rents and charges for utilities costs are fair and sustainable.
15. Staff – The Headteacher and business manager have consulted a Human Resources officer in Customer Services. The Edward Feild Primary School Nursery teacher would be employed in the primary school, with the position made available through non-renewal of a temporary contract. The Headteacher would be 100% employed by the primary school. The School are intending to keep the Nursery Nurse working with the nursery children for the remainder of the academic year as a transitional arrangement, both for continuity for the children and to assist

with potential training for any new staff in the Playgroup. The Playgroup would buy in her services from the school for this period and governors are willing for the school to contribute something to costs for that period. The postholder is aware of this short term proposal, and also that there is no long term post in the primary school for a nursery nurse. Redundancy may have to be considered (in the short or long term). Administrative hours and roles will be reviewed jointly to include any services within the Playgroup's lease agreement eg reception duties. No redundancy is envisaged. No TUPE process (in either direction) will be needed for any posts.

Case for consultation on Closure

16. The presumption against closure of nursery schools is only a recommendation and not a requirement in legislation.

With respect to 8e(i) above, the number of empty places funded at Edward Feild Nursery School over the last three years has naturally fluctuated during the course of each year as shown below, with an average of 34% surplus in the autumn term, 19% surplus in the spring term and 19% surplus in the summer term. Since the introduction of the Early Years Single Funding Formula these surplus places are no longer funded. This has created budgetary shortfall.

With respect to 8e(ii), the Kidlington area is already served by Kaleidoscope Childrens Centre and there is no demand for additional provision.

With respect to 8e(iii), there will be no loss in the overall number of early years places. Robin Playgroup will expand into the accommodation currently used by the Nursery School and will offer at least the same number of places. They also have good capacity to expand if demand rises. In terms of quality, the report on the proposal from the Early Years Advisory teacher is at Annex 4. Edward Feild Primary School will continue to employ an Early years specialist teacher and Robin Playgroup will buy in her time to assist with continued quality improvement. This involvement of a Qualified Teacher is above the usual requirements for a voluntary provider under the Early Years Statutory framework. As a further measure to ensure continuity of provision across the site, Robin Playgroup are to become incorporated and will include 2 members of the Edward Feild School governing body on their management committee.

As the expanded Robin Playgroup provision will be within the same premises as the current Edward Feild Nursery, these places are no less accessible or convenient for parents (ref 8e(iv)).

RECOMMENDATION

17. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve publication of a Statutory Notice for the Closure of Edward Feild Nursery School**

JIM LEIVERS

Director for Children, Education and Families

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Janine Foulkes-Williams, Senior Officer Early Years Organisation

janine.foulkes-williams@oxfordshire.gov.uk 01865 815181

May 2013

Annex 1: Responses to stage 1 consultation on proposal to Close Edward Feild Nursery School and Provide Alternative Early Years Provision

Summary:

6 responses - 2 against and 4 in support.

Respondent 1: Parent of child at Robin Playgroup and child at Edward Feild Primary, Local Resident

Responded in Support of Proposal

Additional Comments:

I have said yes but am not totally sure as I do not know what the impact will be on my child who will be affected by the changes. If it is simply a financial decision then yes as the school needs to be able to operate in a cost effective manner to ensure it maintains the high quality of education it currently provides. My main concern is to do with how the EYFS curriculum will be managed by the Robin Pre-School and I would like further information on how that will be run. I would want to ensure that there is a seamless transition from Robin Pre-School into Reception in terms of learning goals and outcomes. I have a child who will be directly affected (in Robin playgroup and due to join Nursery in Sept 13) and hope that the parents of those children who will be affected will be given some more detailed information in due course.

Reply From Edward Feild Nursery School Business Manager:

Your concerns are quite understandable, and match our own. We are still working out the details of staffing when the change happens, so unfortunately I can't give you definite answers, but it has already been agreed that the curriculum across Robin and Reception would be led by the school's foundation stage co-ordinator who would have dedicated time every week to work in the pre-school, both with the children and modelling good practice to other staff. This, we believe, will ensure a high quality of curriculum is maintained and developed. It would also ensure that transitions between rooms (Robin to Reception) are as seamless as possible. Transition from Robin to Nursery is very successful at the moment, even without the this proposed formal link, so we would expect this to be even better in future.

We are concerned to provide as much continuity as possible for children who are in the nursery in December and are actively exploring ways of ensuring this. Mrs Wilkes also talked to you about the 1:8 child:adult ratio, higher than in nursery, which applies in pre-schools..

More information will be made available to parents as soon as possible, but you will understand that we need to work our way carefully this process to make sure we get it right.

Respondent 2: Parent of Child at Edward Feild Nursery Schoollorna J

Objected to Proposal

Further Comments:

Since attending the Nursery (my child) has thrived under the care of the teaching staff. The care they have for the children is obvious not only in how the children behave but also the excitement shown by most of the children in attending the Nursery. I am concerned that the level of teaching (both in academic work and social skills) will be restricted. I myself have been a nursery nurse in the past and I know I would be unable to provide the level of teaching shown by the Nursery teachers at present. I feel that nursery schools provide an important introduction to a child's schooling and am sad that my 2nd (child) will not be able to have the same experience as my older (child) has. I am guessing that (*3 members of staff named*), will no longer be employed at the Nursery and hope you realise what amazing teachers you are missing out on. I understand how difficult the decision is and maybe the only solution is for more money to be allocated for early years education so that the school does not have to fund the nursery.

Reply to Respondent 2 From Edward Feild Nursery School Business Manager:

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our consultation on the closure of the nursery school and expansion of Robin Playgroup. Oxfordshire County Council have asked us to respond to your comments. We are equally concerned to ensure that a high quality of pre-school education continues on site and hence have specifically included dedicated time for the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator in the proposal. This will obviously not fully replace the contribution of a full-time teacher, but we believe it provides the best value we can get from the funding available to the children at Edward Feild from age 2 to 11. As you say, the only way round this would be for more money to be allocated to Early Years Education centrally.

We are examining all the options for keeping the nursery staff at Edward Feild for as long as possible and yes, we do know how amazing they are! The governors and playgroup are currently making plans for next year and more information about staffing will be available later this term. However I can say that there will be significant school contribution (in addition to the long term co-ordinator time above) during the first year to assist Robin Pre-school during their expansion to maintain the high quality of their provision, in particular in the 3-4 year old curriculum.

Respondent 3: Local day Nursery Owner
Objected to Proposal

Further Comments:

The maintained nursery schools in Kidlington have previously set the benchmark for quality educational provision for 4 year-olds

Comment From Edward Feild Nursery School Business Manager:

This is nice to hear, but we don't really understand the point of this objection. It seems (the respondent) agrees with us that the previous educational standards have been high, however the reality of our current situation is that the resources are no longer available to sustain that quality of provision in the format of a nursery school. Therefore we are proposing to do the next best thing and provide substantial school

support to a financially sustainable setting, with the aim of still setting the benchmark for quality early years education within Kidlington.

Respondent 4

Local resident and childminder
Responded in support of proposal

Respondent 5

Parent of child at Edward Feild Primary and Robin Playgroup, Staff or Governor of School, Local resident
Responded in support of proposal

Respondent 6

Parent of child at Edward Feild Primary and Edward Feild Nursery Schools
Responded in support of proposal

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Proposal from Edward Feild Nursery School to close on 31st December 2013 and transfer services and pupils to Robin Pre-school.

What is the proposal?

The Governing Body and Headteacher are proposing that Edward Feild Nursery School in Kidlington will close.

After the closure it is proposed that the school's on-site partner Robin Playgroup (to be known as Robin Pre-school) would expand to accommodate the nursery-aged children. The number of funded and wraparound childcare places available for two and three year olds based at Edward Feild Primary School would remain the same.

If the proposal goes ahead there would be no effect on admissions to primary school; children would still need to apply for a place in the the primary school's Reception (F1) year as they do now.

Why is this being proposed?

The change in national funding for early education means that the nursery school is no longer viable as a separate school, and the primary school (with which it shares a governing body and headteacher) is not in a position to subsidise the provision for nursery-aged children. Robin Playgroup has worked in successful partnership with the school since 2004 and provides a high quality of education and childcare on the school site. The curriculum for all two to five year olds at Edward Feild would be led by a teacher, the Foundation Stage Co-ordinator.

For these reasons, following discussion with the county council, the governing body including the headteacher has voted in favour of the proposal.

What happens if the proposal doesn't go ahead?

The nursery school would incur a significant annual debt which would have to be absorbed by the primary school. This would seriously jeopardise both schools' ability to continue to provide a good to outstanding education for children at Edward Feild.

Signed: 
T Ibbotson
Chair of Governors
Edward Feild Primary & Nursery Schools


C Wilkes
Headteacher
Edward Feild Primary & Nursery Schools

I confirm that Robin Playgroup supports the above proposal

Signed 
Clare Cooper
Chair
Robin Playgroup

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Summary of Robin Playgroup's Business Plan for the Transfer of services from Edward Field Nursery

Background

The playgroup has worked closely with the school since 2006. They have offered wrap-around care for children attending the nursery since 2007. Robin Playgroup has a good reputation amongst parents in Kidlington. They received a Good judgement from Ofsted in December 2008. Approximately 90% of children that attend Robin Playgroup go into Edward Field School.

Management

Robin Playgroup is currently going through the incorporation process. Once the transfer takes place two governors will be co-opted onto the Board of Directors. It has been agreed that the Board will be made up of 2 non-governor representatives from Robin and 2 Governors. As the chair has the casting vote in any tied ballot it is recommended that the Chair is chosen from the representatives from Robin. There may be the potential for future conflicts of interest when voting on Lease/Rent agreements proposed by the board of governors. In order to comply with the proposed Articles of Association the governor representatives will need to abstain during any vote on proposals from the governing body of Edward Field School. When this situation arises the meeting will not be quorate. It is therefore recommended that the board is made up of 3 Robin representatives and 2 Governor representatives.

The current Committee Officers and Administrator are extremely competent and have rigorous financial controls in place. The current Committee Officers will make up the Board of Directors once Incorporation has taken place. I am confident that the Committee, along with the Administrator, have the necessary skills to carry this project forward.

Lease

Robin Playgroup currently has no lease. This must be in place when the transfer takes place. Edward Field Governors need to continue to charge a reasonable amount of rent in order for the provision to remain sustainable in the future.

The Playgroup is planning to apply for grant funding to extend the current toiled facilities in order to comply with the Revised EYFS (2012). Should they be successful a claw back clause needs to be included in the lease to reflect the investment in school premises of Charitable funds.

Services from Jan 2014

The Playgroup will continue to mirror the school opening times of 09.00 to 15.15. Robin Playgroup will operate from two rooms. Room 1 will be dedicated to 2 year olds and offer the equivalent of 40x15 hour funded places. Room 2 will be for 3 year olds in receipt of NEF and will have the equivalent of 64 funded places. There will

also be some flexibility with staff hours to take account of fluctuating numbers across the year.

Parents will be able to access the provision in a completely flexible way. They will not be restricted to am only or pm only sessions and will be able to access full days should they wish to. There will also be an option to purchase additional childcare over and above the 15 hours NEF/2 year old funding.

Staff

Robin Playgroup will buy in the services of an Early Years Teacher from Edward Field School for one day per week. They will also need to recruit additional staff for January 2014. The steps and a timeline for recruitment are clearly outlined in the Action Plan attached to the Business Plan.

Finance

The financial forecast aired on the side of caution as exact numbers of NEF and 2 year old places are difficult to predict. The forecast shows that the Playgroup will make a small surplus in the year to December 2014. Robin Playgroup will need to maintain a healthy level of reserves. This should include 3 months running costs and a redundancy payment fund. The redundancy fund will, of course, need to be increased to reflect the increased staffing level.

The Playgroup currently has healthy reserves and there may be scope for further investment; particularly in the outside area. Again any investment will need to be reflected in a claw back clause in the lease.

Proposal to close Edward Field Nursery School and for Robin Playgroup to provide Early Years Education

Capacity of Robin playgroup to cope with Merger

- Robin pre-school is a good pre-school which offers an inviting and stimulating learning environment inside and outside. Planning is clear and there is a strong emphasis on individual children.
- Leadership and management are strong and OFSTED judged the setting to have a good capacity to improve.

Evidence:

Visit in May 2013 by Vanessa Sibley (A – QIPS):

“This is a friendly and busy pre-school environment with a good range of activities available for the children both inside and outside. The weekly planning with clear targets for the children alongside the daily activity plans are a positive feature, as are the prompts around the room to encourage staff to make observational notes.”

Last OFSTED of Robin Playgroup on 1st December 2008:

“The overall effectiveness of Robin Playgroup is good. All children are warmly welcomed and equally valued. There is a clear recognition of the uniqueness of each child and strong commitment to ensuring that all needs are met. Good levels of supervision ensure that children have equal access to the learning provided for them. Leaders provide clear direction and are good at evaluating what needs to be improved. Consequently, there is a good capacity for continuous improvement.”

“The playgroup runs smoothly because there are good procedures for its day-to-day management....Staff regularly attend training....Self-evaluation is of good quality”.

EYAT evaluation of proposed new arrangement

- Robin Playgroup will work closely with the Early Years Foundation Stage Coordinator. They will buy in leadership services and professional support on a regular basis to support their practice.
- There is a strong early years’ ethos between the current school and playgroup teams. Cross team meetings are developing this and pave the way for a shared ethos between settings in the future.
- The statutory EYFS is shared document for both settings: development matters will support children’s development throughout both settings. Good practice within welfare requirements, planning for the environment, interactions and planning for individuals can be seamless across the two settings.

Evidence:**Visit in January 2013 by Sue Brown**

“Playgroup will not be required to transfer either the existing teacher or existing nursery assistant. Robin Playgroup will however be able to buy in the services of both these members of staff. Teacher input for one day per week was discussed but this will be subject to Robin Playgroup’s budget considerations.”

Visit in February 2013 by Jennie Perry

- “Proposed closure of the Nursery School - We discussed the proposal for the closure of nursery school and opening of new provision with Robin playgroup and the implications this would have on each provision on the school grounds, in terms of staffing, resourcing and learning environment, including outdoor provision.
- Shared ethos and practice – Conversations between the settings have already taken place and practitioners have a shared ethos and systems for OAP. Tammy discussed her ethos for the setting and we discussed benefits for children around transition and increased environment to explore both inside and outside for F2 and 3 children.
- Quality of learning environment – New EYAT was given brief tour of all three settings. The outdoor area remains a development point. We discussed how ECERS would help to develop zoning within rooms.”

In summary, the Early Years Advisory Team has no concerns regarding the forthcoming changes proposed. The existing strong links with the school, particularly the Early Years Foundation Stage Co-ordinator, will enable the good practice already established within both the nursery school and Robin playgroup to continue within the new provision.

By Jennie Perry
18 April 2013

Division(s):

CABINET – 21 MAY 2013

STAFFING REPORT – QUARTER 4

Report by Head of HR

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 January 2013 to 31 March 2013. It also tracks progress on staffing numbers since 1 April 2010 as we implement our Business Strategy. It is proposed that for future reports we track progress from 1 April 2013 staffing numbers.

Current numbers

2. The establishment and staffing numbers (FTE) as at 31 March 2013 are 4277.0 Establishment; 4042.76 employed in post. These figures exclude the school bloc.
3. We continue to monitor the balance between full time and part time workers to ensure that the best interests of the Council and the taxpayer are served. For information, the numbers as at 31 March 2013 were as follows - Full time 2913 and Part time 2275. This equates to the total of 4042.76 FTE employed in post.
4. The changes in both establishment and staffing numbers since 31 March 2012 are shown in the table below. A breakdown of movements by directorate for this financial year is provided at Appendix 1.

| | FTE Employed | Establishment FTE |
|---|--------------|-------------------|
| Reported Figures at 31 March 2012 – Non-Schools | 4372.47 | 4634.75 |
| Changes | -329.71 | -357.75 |
| Reported Figures at 31 March 2013 – Non-Schools | 4042.76 | 4277.00 |

Quarter 4 Changes

5. The overall staffing numbers this quarter are relatively stable, with a slight increase of 10 FTE in post since 31 December 2012, whilst Establishment FTE has reduced by 109 posts over the same period
6. We remain committed to redeploying displaced staff wherever possible via our Career Transitions Service but this is getting more difficult as staffing numbers reduce across the Council. There was 1 successful redeployment this quarter bringing the total to 18 this financial year.
7. We also recognise that operational services are critical and cannot be left without any cover. Prudent use of agency staff is therefore deployed to ensure continuity of service – the cost of agency staff this quarter is £1,364,738. We are not simply replacing directly employed staff with agency workers however and this activity is closely monitored with appropriate controls in place within directorates.

Progress since 1 April 2010

8. Staffing numbers have reduced in all key areas since 1 April 2010 as we continue to implement measures contained in our Business Strategy across the Council:-
 - **Establishment FTE** down from 5836 to 4277 – a 27% reduction.
 - **Staff employed FTE** down from 5283 to 4043 – a 23% reduction
 - **Vacancies FTE** down from 474 to 175 – a 63% reduction

Accountability

9. Staffing numbers continue to be monitored rigorously. All new posts are reviewed by the Head of HR on a weekly basis and Deputy Directors are required to check and confirm staffing data for their services on a quarterly basis with appropriate challenge provided by the relevant HR Business Partner

Recommendation

10. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) note the report
 - (b) confirm that the Staffing Report meets the requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.

Steve Munn
Head of HR

30 April 2013

Contact Officer: Sue James, Strategic HR Officer, 01865 815465.

STAFFING REPORT 31 MARCH 2013

| DIRECTORATE | Total Established Posts at 31 March 2013 | Changes to Establishment since 31 March 2012 | FTE Employed at 31 March 2013 | Changes in FTE Employed since 31 March 2012 | Vacancies at 31 March 2013 | Cost of Agency Staff * £ |
|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| CHILDREN, EDUCATION & FAMILIES | 1423.84 | 69.72 | 1344.67 | 81.18 | 51.55 | 249,494 |
| SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES | 764.91 | -166.00 | 721.97 | -150.09 | 31.57 | 364,541 |
| COMMUNITY SAFETY | 397.95 | -9.25 | 392.47 | -9.72 | 4.81 | 46,524 |
| ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY | 527.55 | -269.76 | 498.75 | -275.43 | 26.56 | 443,257 |
| OXFORDSHIRE CUSTOMER SERVICES | 710.71 | 32.97 | 662.69 | 43.60 | 37.72 | 109,943 |
| CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE | 212.63 | 4.31 | 193.44 | -4.64 | 16.32 | 149,821 |
| CULTURAL SERVICES | 239.41 | -19.74 | 228.77 | -14.61 | 6.08 | 1158 |
| TOTAL | 4277.00 | -357.75 | 4042.76 | -329.71 | 174.61 | 1,364,738 |

Please note: The vacancies plus the FTE employed will not always be equivalent to the Establishment. Where employees are absent eg on maternity leave or long term sick and have been temporarily replaced, both the absent employee and the temporary employee will have been counted.

* This figure does not necessarily bear a direct relationship with vacant posts.

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