

**Delegated Decision by Cabinet Member for Finance
14 February 2025**

**Wood Green School, Witney
Funding Agreement with Acer Trust**

Report by: Executive Director of Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

Approve the completion of the Funding Agreement with Acer Trust which will release funding greater than £1m to Acer Trust to enable the construction of a new teaching block at Wood Green Secondary School in Witney.

Executive Summary

2. Wood Green School is an academy managed by Acer Trust.
3. Due to local housing growth and rising primary school numbers, there is a pupil-place pressure for secondary places in Witney. The council agreed with Acer Trust that they would expand the admission number at Wood Green School by 150 places, from 7 forms of entry to 8 forms of entry, using funding provided by the council.
4. The expansion will be achieved by constructing a new teaching block which has planning approval from WODC. Acer Trust have tendered the project and the tender sum for construction forms part of the project budget.
5. The budget for this project is £4.239m, approved in the Outline Business Case in May 2024. The Full Business Case will be submitted for approval In February 2025, and once that has been approved, it will enable Acer Trust to commence construction.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

6. This proposed course of action supports the council's statutory duty to provide pupil places.

Financial Implications

7. This expansion project has obtained Capital Governance approval as below:
 - Initial Business Case, approved June 2023 with a £3.3m budget

- Outline Business Case, approved May 2024 with a £4.239m budget
 - Full Business Case to be submitted for approval at Property Capital Board on 19 February 2025.
8. The project is fully funded from S106 contributions received by the council.
 9. There are no revenue implications for the council as Wood Green School is an academy, under the management of Acer Trust.

Comments checked by:

Drew Hodgson,
Strategic Finance Business Partner
Email: drew.hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

10. The council has a statutory duty including under section 14(1) of the Education Act 1996 and all other relevant Acts of Parliament, regulations to secure additional school places for children within the County. This funding arrangement to Acer Trust will enable the council to fulfil its statutory function.
11. As the funding under the Funding Agreement will be passed directly to works contractors to cover the building and other professional costs, there is no benefit to Acer Trust, this being a mere pass-through arrangement. Therefore, there are no Subsidy law implications of transferring this funding to Acer Trust.
12. Under the terms of the funding agreement, in selecting contractors and consultants for the building works, Acer Trust is required to go through a procurement process which would be compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015"). This ensures that the works contracts represent value and comply with the council's obligations under PCR 2015, under the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and under the council's Contract Procedure Rules. Acer Trust will also be required to comply with all applicable legislation in carrying out the building project.

Comments checked by:

Busola Akande
Solicitor
Email: Busola.akande@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

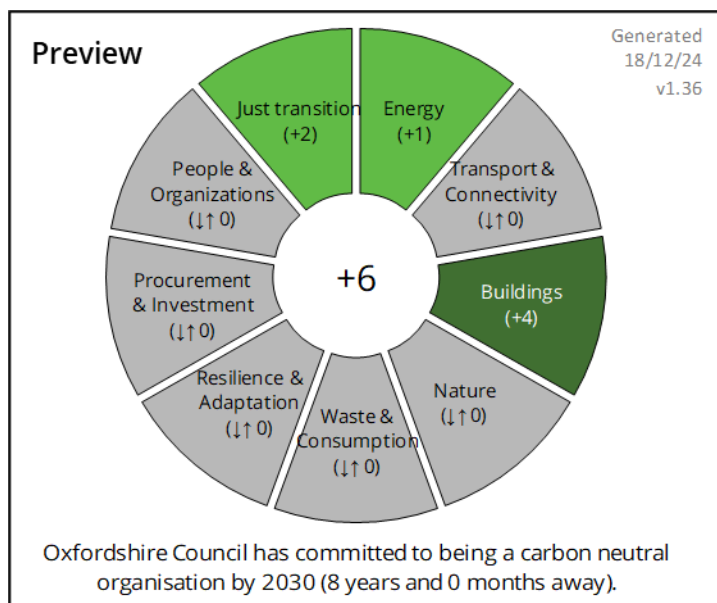
13. The course of action will result in further staff costs for OCC Property, Legal and Highways, which will be recharged against the project budget, as previous staff costs have been.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. The project does not have any equality and inclusion implications with no change to current operations.

Sustainability Implications

15. The scheme has been designed to meet very high standards of sustainable design. Working with the DfE Output Specification as a starting point, this sets a target of Net Zero Carbon in Operation. The scheme has been future proofed to be able to achieve this.
16. The scheme has been designed with an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), in tandem with a new ASHP for the existing block, that the new extension will connect to. Using ASHPs means that the scheme can be heated purely by electricity, removing the reliance on gas.
17. The ASHP will create maximum efficiency and lead to a significant overall improvement in the school's energy performance.
18. A Climate Impact Assessment has been carried out, with the results below:



Consultations

19. This expansion project went through the planning approval process with WODC which included a full consultation period.
20. The increase of Wood Green School's Published Admission Number (PAN) was approved by the Regional Schools Director (RSD) after consultation.

Lorna Baxter,
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex 1 Approved Outline Business Case

Contact Officer: Nick Tomkins, Strategic Liaison Manager
nick.tomkins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

29 January 2025