

Views sought on three new schools for Didcot

The public's views are being sought to help mould how three new schools in Didcot will operate.

Estimates reveal that by 2016 there could be 400-500 more primary aged children and 300 more secondary aged children in the town as a result of the 3,300-home Great Western Park scheme, meaning that two new primary schools and one new secondary school are required to accommodate them.

Central government has decided that all new schools must be academies, not run by local authorities but by independent trusts.

A county council-run consultation from 28 January to 31 March will seek views from interested parties about what sort of trusts people would like to see operating the three new schools.

Ideas to be passed on to bidders

Opinions and thoughts gathered from the consultation process will be fed into a specification-writing process, a final version of which would be presented to those interested in submitting bids to run the schools. The consultation results will also shape how a decision is reached by the county council and the Department for Education about who will operate the schools.

Funding for the construction of the new schools has been secured from the GWP developers and sites for the schools have been agreed.

Part of the GWP development has already been completed, however the expansion of Stephen Freeman Primary School has catered for the primary school-age children who have already moved to the development.

Drop-in sessions where further information will be available about the consultation will run at The Vibe Hub, Park Road, Didcot on Thursday February 21 from 2pm to 4pm and on Friday February 22 from 6pm to 8pm.

Get involved

Councillor Melinda Tilley, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "The population of Didcot will grow significantly over the next few years because of housing developments and therefore new schools are required.

"This consultation is an opportunity for people to have their say about who they want to run the academies and I would encourage members of the public to get involved and submit their views.

"We and the Department for Education are keen to gather as many views possible so we are able to present an as detailed as possible guide to potential academy sponsors about what the local community wants from these new schools."

People can submit their views from 28 January at <https://myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk/consult.ti/GWP2013/consultationHome> or by email to GWP2013-manager@myconsultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Alternatively opinions can be lodged by post to:

Diane Cameron
School Organisation and Planning
County Hall
FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL