

Eco Bicester – One Shared Vision – Consultation Summary

Consultation - 23rd August 2010 – 1st October 2010 (6 weeks)

Invitations to comment on the vision were sent to:

Bicester Town Council
Ambrosden Parish Council
Bucknell Parish Council
Caversfield Parish Council
Chesterton Parish Council
Launton Parish Council
Bicester Vision
Bicester & District Chamber of Commerce
Bure Park Residents Association
Southwold Community Association
Bicester Parklandview Residents Association
Langford Village Community Association
Bicester Green Gym
The Courtyard Youth Centre
Bicester & Kidlington Ramblers group
Windrushers Gliding Club
Bicester WI
Local History Society
Bicester Community College
The Cooper School
Bicester Resource Centre
Bicester U3A

Publicity included

- An article in the local newspaper & newspaper website.
- Press release on Council's website
- posters were put up in Bicester Town centre, Bicester Town Council and Bicester LinkPoint along with notice boards around the town.
- Weekly tweeting to encourage people to comment online or at their local offices. These tweets were republished by Chamber of Commerce and Bicester Vision.

Consultation Events

23rd August – 1st October – Online consultation portal was open for people to comment on the draft document

2nd September – Presentation and Q & A session at Launton PC meeting

3rd & 9th September – Public Exhibition in Bicester Town Centre during weekly & Farmer's market, which included handing out of vision document, engaging with the local resident and businesses and had displayed several plans of Bicester with present and proposed development.

15th September – OCC, CDC, and BTC Members' workshop

Presentation/Workshop at Bicester Community College – Date TBC

20th October – Attendance at Bicester Youth Council

Respondents: 35 respondents, 32 through online consultation portal and postal responses (see below).
3 lengthier responses from: Ben Jackson, Green Coconut & John Liggins.
Workshop summary responses were also received through Member Workshop and Bicester Vision Meeting

On Line & Postal Responses

How many agreed or disagreed?

Agree: 16
Disagree: 13
Neither agree nor disagree: 2
Didn't know if they agreed or disagreed: 1

Issues

From the 35 respondents, 88 broad issues have been identified.

The main issues are:

The inadequate existing infrastructure currently in and around Bicester, respondents want to see infrastructure improvement for motorists, but also for pedestrians and cyclists.

The variety and lack of existing facilities within the town, people want to see a wider range of facilities for all ages to stop people leaving Bicester in the evenings and weekends to surrounding towns which have the supply of facilities.

Where are the jobs going to be created to supply the growth of Bicester? And are they going to be for local people?

What vision objective do people find most important?

Community First and Transport and Movement were chosen equally as the most important with 11 respondents each.

Economy and Environment sustainability both with had 5 respondents choose them each.

How many people thought it was about NW Bicester and not about Eco Bicester?

10 out of 32 respondents based their comments mainly or purely on the NW Bicester site issues.

Summary of Ben Jackson's Comments

How will we know when we are a Low Carbon Economy?

Vision needs to include: Retention of existing jobs; improved education to remove need for parents to send to BGN/Marlborough; more high end housing to help lift aspirations and provide accommodation for middle and upper management and high speed broad band to whole town.

Need “good quality” education.

Consider use of Archimedes screws in existing water courses – See Kirtlington Mill Hydro Project.

Exacting eco standards - Highest design standards are well above SHC 4 or 5 – need to clarify intent.

Encourage retrofit of rainwater harvesting as well, especially Local Authority to set example.

Highlight issue of material miles

Include better use of land parallel to railways beside town walks
Wildlife/sitting areas/art/Green Gym/etc

Is the Garth the best choice for a theatre auditorium with formal dining area?
Better to support and grow existing facilities and clubs than provide new sports stadium.

Proper partnership with existing and new secondary schools for community use of facilities would be a more efficient use of funding.

Suggest Bicester at heart of a Diamond that includes Birmingham and position Bicester as the central meeting place – a conference hub that reduces travel distances. In addition have state of the art video conferencing facilities to allow wider conferences to take place. Utilise Evergreen 3 and Oxford Airport to promote Bicester as a location for business.

Term sub region would appear to hark back to RDA should be updated.
Bicester to be given a clear priority over Kidlington and Banbury by CDC
Need dedicated officer time in terms of economic development.

Need secure cycle storage, signposting with approx times, guides for rides and walking. Promote the many Oxford based clubs that could support Bicester.

Target local larger businesses that have car borne workers and encourage/support them in creating car sharing schemes.

The recent Graven Hill Debate does create an opportunity to create a community built around an existing Rail system which could be used as a Tram/transit system. This has to be worthy of consideration and would ease any land acquisition issues and spread the eco message around the town.

To support other points in the document car parking should be minimised and secure bike storage and integrated bus service given significant priority.

Rat running, outward from Bicester, through Wendelbury will not be stopped by SW perimeter road.

Highways - M40 J9 impact of phases 1 and 2 improvements
Value/importance of aerodrome as a green space with community access.
Bees – must encourage Bees.
Commercial and residential waste collection point in town would increase recycling and also reduce road traffic to Ardley.
Heavy on the what, but nothing on the how, timescales or on benchmarking for progress. To hit a target you first have to set one! The appendix refers constantly to NW Bicester, if we are being aspirational should it not be whole of Bicester? Personal view is that it is not grand enough in its ambitions, not time specific and lacks real aspiration. It did not and does not inspire me. We need to set aside the restrictions and negativity of the past and be really ambitious, but set this against a longer time scale. Say 50 years, with built in flexibility to reflect changing need along the way. Good first draft, but a long way from a finished article.

Summary of Comments from Stockdale Land Limited

Final Draft to be circulated before issuing final version
Document needs redrafting
Possibility of higher costs of relocating in Bicester?
Encourage existing business to stay and grow
Road infrastructure to be provided before additional growth
Utility provision for existing business to avoid losing them e.g. Werth
Exemplar needs to be “state of the art”
Some development should be on previously developed land at MOD Bicester south of the town
Local materials should be used
Factory for construction materials to be located in town
Jobs – skill based jobs

Comments from Green Coconut

3 main areas of concern:

1. Availability of jobs
2. Protecting the interests of the existing townspeople and integrating new sectors with the existing town
3. Infrastructure upgrades

Reduce transport miles
Manufacturing of “green” construction materials locally.
Theatre auditorium and formal dining must be large enough
Need to clarify vision in terms of NW Bicester
Need to clearly explain the benefits are across the town and not just for the NW Bicester.
Jobs – need to address the existing unemployed.
The document needs a timeline with milestones to review and confirm/refine next steps
Aim high - talk about good quality education!