

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: Tuesday 19 June 2012
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA

Membership

Councillor Ann Bonner (Chairman)	Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Colin Clarke	Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath	Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Kieron Mallon	Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill	Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Leslie F Sibley	Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitutes

Councillor Andrew Beere	Councillor Patrick Cartledge
Councillor Timothy Hallchurch MBE	Councillor Lynn Pratt
Councillor Alaric Rose	Councillor Rose Stratford
Councillor Douglas Williamson	Councillor Sean Woodcock

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip. Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

- 1. Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**

Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. **Urgent Business**

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 6)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 13 March 2012 and 16 May 2012.

5. **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012/13** (Pages 7 - 26)

Report of Head of Law and Governance

Summary

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme 2012/13.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the work programme.

Councillors are requested to collect any post from their pigeon hole in the Members Room at the end of the meeting.

Information about this Meeting

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk or 01327 322365 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

Personal Interest: Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

Prejudicial Interest: Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Evacuation Procedure

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the car park as directed by Democratic Services staff and await further instructions.

Access to Meetings

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

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that any device is switched to silent operation or switched off.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections dave.parry@cherwell-dc.gov.uk, 01327 322365

Sue Smith
Chief Executive

Published on Monday 11 June 2012

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Agenda Item 4

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 13 March 2012 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Lynn Pratt (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair)

Councillor Ann Bonner
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Daniel Sames
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Rose Stratford

Officers: Catherine Phythian, Team Leader, Democratic and Elections

46 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

47 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

48 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49 **Core Strategy (Local Development Framework)**

The Committee noted that the Core Strategy would be considered at the Executive in May 2012 and would then be subject to a period of public consultation. They agreed to request a briefing note from the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy detailing the current status of the Core Strategy and confirming the timescale and procedures for the public consultation. They asked that the Executive report be made available to all members of the Council.

Resolved

- (1) That the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy be requested to prepare a briefing detailing the current status of the Core Strategy and confirming the timescale and procedures for the public consultation.
- (2) That officers be requested to make the Executive report on the Core Strategy available to all members of the Council.

50

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011- 2012

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Law & Governance which updated Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2011/12. The Committee asked the Democratic and Elections Team to consider options to reformat the work programme report so that it showed all of the scheduled meetings for the year.

Forward Plan

The Committee agreed that there were no items on the Forward Plan for March - June 2012 that they wished to include on their work programme in 2011/12.

Potential Work Programme Items 2012/13

The Committee identified the following as potential topics for scrutiny in 2012/13 and asked that officers present briefing reports on the current status of the issues at the meeting in June 2012:

- ♦ National Benefit changes – implications for residents and for Cherwell District Council services.
- ♦ Concessionary Fares – a review of the first year of operation by the County Council
- ♦ Empty Homes Policy – to be retained as a monitoring item.
- ♦ Core Strategy – to be retained as a monitoring item and be brought to the Committee on the conclusion of the public consultation.

Agenda for 19 June 2012

The Committee confirmed that the meeting in June 2012 should consider potential topics for scrutiny by the Committee during 2012/13.

Resolved

- (1) That there were no items in the current version of the Forward Plan (March - June 2012) to be included on the work programme for 2011/12.
- (2) That the current Overview and Scrutiny element of the work programme for 2011/12 be noted and that national benefit changes, concessionary fares, empty homes and core strategy be considered as potential scrutiny topics in 2012/12.

- (3) That it be noted that the 19 June 2012 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should include an agenda item to consider potential scrutiny topics for 2012/13.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 16 May 2012 at 7.40 pm

Present: Councillor Daniel Sames (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Colin Clarke
Councillor Tim Emptage
Councillor Chris Heath
Councillor Melanie Magee
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Jon O'Neill
Councillor Nigel Randall
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Apologies for absence: Councillor Ann Bonner

1 Appointment of Chairman

Resolved

That Councillor Ann Bonner be appointed Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

2 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Resolved

That Councillor Dan Sames be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13

19 June 2012

Report of Head of Law and Governance

PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report presents the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 for consideration.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended:

- (1) To consider the Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 of the attached report.
- (2) To note any items of interest in the Executive Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme 2012/13.
- (3) To consider if there are any other items Members would like to include on the work programme.

Details

- 1 Draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13**
 - 1.1 The draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13 is attached at appendix 1.
 - 1.2 At the request of Overview and Scrutiny Committee members and members of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, the work programmes of the two scrutiny committees have been separated. Members are invited to make any suggestions to improve the

appearance of the work programme.

- 1.3 Each future agenda item includes an overview of the item and reason for consideration by the Board.
- 1.4 In determining the work programme for 2012/13, the Committee will wish to take into account the terms of reference as laid out in the Constitution (Appendix 2).

2 Executive Forward Plan

- 2.1 As part of the monthly work programme report, the Committee reviews the Forward Plan to consider whether there are any issues which they would wish to look at in more detail in advance of the Executive discussion and decision. To facilitate a thorough consideration of the topic the Committee will need to identify the Forward Plan items at an early stage of the decision making process.
- 2.2 The Forward Plan is updated and published monthly; an electronic copy is available on the council's website and all councillors are sent a prompt containing the website link. Members of the Committee are encouraged to review the Forward Plan outside the committee meetings and to contact the Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Democratic Services Officer if there is a topic that they wish to review
- 2.3 The Committee will wish to note any items of interest in the current version of the Forward Plan and consider whether to include them on the work programme for 2012/13.
- 2.4 At the time of writing this report, the current version of the Forward Plan is June – September 2012 and can be found at:
- 2.5 The July – October 2012 Forward Plan will be published on 15 July 2012. All Members receive email notification upon publication.

3 Potential Work Programme Items

- 3.1 The Chairman has suggested the following items as potential work programme items for 2012/13.

- Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future

This was considered and endorsed by Executive at their meeting of 28 May 2012 (report attached as appendix 3).

The Chairman has suggested that the Committee could play a role in exploring the potential of garden city designation for Bicester.

- Community Safety Issues

To review how community safety issues are considered within planning applications and change of use e.g. parking.

- Banbury Brighter Futures

The Committee received a briefing of the Banbury Brighter Futures project in January 2011. The project remains a key project for the Council.

A report providing an update on Banbury Brighter Futures will be submitted to Executive in July 2012. The report will be circulated to Members as soon as it is available.

The Lead Member for Banbury Brighter Futures and the Director of Community and Environment have indicated that they will be able to attend the Committee's September meeting to brief Members on the project.

- 3.2 Committee Members may wish to suggest other items for inclusion on the work programme 2012/13. Members are reminded that in considering the suggestions for the work programme and prioritising topics, it is important to consider the resources available to support the work and the timescales. The Committee should also reflect on the demands that scrutiny reviews place on the resources in the individual service areas.

- 3.3 The Committee will also wish to consider the priority checklist. The current, informal criteria applied to all suggestions for a scrutiny review are that it must:

- be of concern to a group of people living within the Cherwell District;
- relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake or over which the Council has an influence;
- not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months;
- not relate to an individual service complaint;
- not relate to an individual planning or licensing application.

4 Future Meetings Schedule

- 4.1 The future meeting dates for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board are listed below.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee	19 June 2012, 6.30pm
	24 July 2012, 6.30pm
	11 September 2012, 6.30pm

	16 October 2012, 6.30pm 27 November 2012, 6.30pm 22 January 2013, 6.30pm 12 March 2013, 6.30pm 23 April 2013, 6.30pm
Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board	12 June 2012, 6.30pm 17 July 2012, 6.30pm 4 September 2012, 6.30pm 9 October 2012, 6.30pm 20 November 2012, 6.30pm 15 January 2013, 6.30pm 5 March 2013, 6.30pm 16 April 2013, 6.30pm

Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Sarah Best, Service Accountant, 01295 221982

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor Advocate 01295 221691

Risk Management: If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are over-stretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.

Comments checked by James Doble, Democratic and Elections Manager, 01295 221587

Wards Affected

Each scrutiny review will identify the wards affected

Corporate Plan Themes

Each scrutiny review will identify the relevant corporate plan themes

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/13
Appendix 2	Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference
Appendix 3	Report to Executive (28 May 2012): "Eco Bicester: A Garden City of the Future?"
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Natasha Clark, Team Leader, Democratic & Elections
Contact Information	01295 221589 natasha.clark@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2012/2013

(Updated: 11 June 2012)

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 19 June 2012				
Banbury Brighter Futures	To receive a briefing of the Banbury Brighter Futures Project	Scrutiny review – request of Chairman to receive a briefing to determine if the Committee can contribute to the project	Ian Davies – Director of Community and Environment	
Draft OSC work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 11 July 2012				
National Benefit Change	To receive a briefing on benefit changes and what it will mean for CDC service delivery and what impact it will have upon CDC residents	Scrutiny review	Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement; Belinda Green, Benefits Manager	

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy; Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report	Information/Standing Item – constitutional requirement for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to produce an Annual Report, this is an opportunity for the R&PSB to comment on the draft report	Natasha Clark, Team Leader – Democratic & Elections	
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 11 September 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 16 October 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 27 November 2012				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy; Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Date of Meeting: 22 January 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 12 March 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	
Date of Meeting: 23 April 2013				
Draft OSC Work Programme 2012/13	To consider the draft Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme	Standing item – to review the work programme	Dave Parry, Democratic and Elections Officer	

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
Items to be allocated				
Local Plan 2012	To receive an update following the public consultation	Policy development	Adrian Colwell, Head of Strategic	

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy;
 Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Item	Description	Reason for Consideration	Contact Officer	Further Action / Note
			Planning and the Economy	
Youth Services	To monitor developments in Oxfordshire County Council and CDC Youth Services	Monitoring		
Empty Homes Policy	The monitor the implementation of the Empty Homes Policy	Monitoring – the OSC have received briefings on the work to date and determined to retain it on the work programme to receive regular review during the year	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Tim Mills, Private Sector Housing Manager; Helen Town, Strategic Housing Officer	
Concessionary Fares	To review effectiveness of the first year of management by Oxfordshire County Council	Monitoring	Chris Stratford, Head of Regeneration & Housing; Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager	

Key to Reason for Consideration:

Scrutiny review – agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings; Policy development – to support the development of Council Policy;
 Monitoring – to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations; Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny; Information/Standing Item – to update/advise members on issues related to overview and scrutiny or regular committee item

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has overall responsibility for the performance of all overview and scrutiny functions (under Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007) on behalf of the Council and ensuring its effectiveness.

- To consider and call in decisions relating to the discharge of Executive functions before those are put into effect. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee can ask the Executive to reconsider any such decision (or, exceptionally, refer it to Council).
- To consider decisions relating to the discharge of the Executive functions after they are put into effect.
- To consider the Forward Plan and comment as appropriate to the decision maker on key decisions (before they are taken by the Executive).
- To conduct reviews of policy, services and aspects of services where there is an identifiable need, by itself or through setting up a Task and Finish Group.
- To make suggestions on the development of policies and suggest new policies where appropriate.
- To work with or appoint representatives to work with other local authorities and organisations to carry out joint scrutiny.
- To assist the Executive in the development of the Budget and Policy Framework.
- To receive and consider recommendations on issues requiring scrutiny in terms of wellbeing powers of Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and, where appropriate, establishing Task and Finish Groups, or referring to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board, topics for scrutiny.
- To exercise the power assigned to a crime and disorder scrutiny committee (under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007 and Police and Justice Act, 2006).
- To create Task and Finish Groups and set their terms of reference, in order to fulfill the overview and scrutiny requirements of the authority and the annual overview and scrutiny work programme.
- To receive reports, presentations and updates in order to scrutinise the Executive's priorities for and its performance in the year.
- To review and scrutinise the performance of the Executive, Executive Portfolio Holders, and appropriate officers both in relation to individual decisions and over time.
- To approve an annual overview and scrutiny work programme, including the power to request and receive the work programme of the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board and Task and Finish Groups it appoints so as to ensure that their time is effectively and efficiently utilised and that the potential for duplication of effort is minimised.

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2012-13

- To produce a unified annual report for the whole scrutiny process, with sections provided by the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board and each of the Task and Finish Groups.
- To allocate money from approved overview and scrutiny budgets for its own use, and upon request to the Resources and Performance Scrutiny Board and Task and Finish Groups to support them in meeting their objectives and further the overview and scrutiny work programme and development.
- The overview and scrutiny work programme will not include the following “excluded matters”:
 - a) Any matter relating to a decision on a specific planning application
 - b) Any matter relating to a decision on a specific licensing application
 - c) Any matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment; including but not limited to:
 - Standards decisions and items which may be brought for decision;
 - Appeals decisions and items which may be brought for decision;
 - Breaches of the Constitution and its protocols e.g. Code of Conduct;
 - Matters relating to the terms and conditions of employment or conduct of individual or groups of staff or Members.
 - d) Any matter which is vexatious, discriminatory or not reasonable to be included in the agenda for, or to be discussed at, a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee or at a meeting of a sub-committee of that committee.
 - e) Audit process and items which are likely to be considered by the Audit process.
 - f) Matters within the proper remit of the Section 151 and Monitoring Officers.
 - g) Matters relating to a particular identifiable service recipient or potential service recipient.
 - h) Complaints or matters before the courts or local government Ombudsman.
 - i) Contractual matters, other than performance monitoring and review, except with the agreement of the Executive.

Executive

Eco Bicester a Garden City of the Future?

28 May 2012

Report of Head of Public Protection and Development Management

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider the potential to explore garden city designation for Bicester.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To agree that DCLG are contacted to explore the identification of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city.

Executive Summary

Eco Bicester stemmed from the identification of NW Bicester as a location for sustainable development in accordance with the Eco Town PPS standards. Eco Bicester has been used as a banner covering the diverse range of projects taking place within the existing town and as part of the expansion of the town. However the latest government guidance on planning (the National Planning Policy Framework) no longer refers explicitly to Eco Towns (although the Eco Towns supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1 is still in existence) but does encourage development that meets garden city principles.

This report considers the implications of this change in the governments approach in relation to Eco Bicester

Introduction

- 1.1 The government, particularly through speeches and publications by the Prime Minister and the Minister of State for Housing, have supported new development to garden city principles. Garden Cities were planned new settlements that sought to 'provide a balance between town and country'. Recently the Town & Country Planning Association has published 're-imagining Garden Cities for the 21st Century' which identifies benefits and

lessons in bringing forward comprehensively planned communities.

- 1.2 Eco Towns were similarly envisaged as planned and sustainable settlements, raising standards and being exemplars. The Eco Towns guidance in the supplement to PPS1 also sets clear standards for such places, above those generally achieved in new developments. There are many synergies between the proposals for new settlements envisaged through the garden city movement and the more recent aspirations for eco towns.

Proposals

- 1.3 The government has indicated that there will be consultation later this year about how to apply garden city principles to new developments. The proposal is therefore that the opportunity to identify Eco Bicester with garden cities is explored with government now.

Conclusion

- 1.4 Whilst Eco Bicester is now recognised widely but there may be opportunities arising from also recognising the garden city principles that do not conflict with the ambitions for the town.

Background Information

Government Position on Growth

- 2.1 In a speech on 19 March 2012, the Prime Minister David Cameron announced;

So, yes, we need more housing, but sprawling over the countryside isn't the answer. We must absolutely protect our green belts and national parks, but we also urgently need to find places where we're prepared to allow significant new growth to happen. That is why we'll begin consultation later this year on how to apply the principles of garden cities to areas with high potential growth in places people want to live. And we must get our planning system fit for purpose; it needs to be quick, it needs to be easier to use and it needs to better support growth, jobs and homes.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 The NPPF published in March 2012 sets out the Government's planning policy and replaces the majority of previous planning guidance, although the supplement to PPS1 on Eco Towns remains in place at the present time. The NPPF promotes sustainable development identifying three dimensions; an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. The NPPF advises these should not be sought in isolation and that they are mutually dependent.
- 2.3 With regard to delivering large scale housing development the NPPF advises at para 52 that;

The supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning

for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, Local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such development.

- 2.4 Much new development is planned to be accommodated in Cherwell by the way of large scale extensions to the existing towns of Banbury and Bicester.

Garden Cities

- 2.5 Garden Cities were a concept developed by Ebenezer Howard through his publication *To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898.
- 2.6 The Garden City vision was developed by Ebenezer Howard to combine the very best of town and country living to create healthy homes for working people in vibrant communities. The heart of the garden city ideals are holistically planned new settlements which enhance the natural environment, provide high quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs.
- 2.7 The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) grew from the work of Ebenezer Howard and the garden cities movement and continues to promote the principles of sustainable new development.
- 2.8 The TCPA define the garden city principles as
- *Community ownership of land and long term stewardship of assets*
 - *High quality imaginative design including homes with gardens*
 - *Mixed tenure homes which are affordable for ordinary people*
 - *A strong local jobs offer with a variety of employment opportunities within the garden city and easy commuting distance of homes*
 - *Generous green space linked to the wider countryside. Over 60% of Hampstead Garden Suburb is green space, including a mix of public and private networks of well managed, high quality gardens and open spaces.*
 - *Access to strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities*
 - *Integrated and accessible transport systems*
 - *Local food sourcing, including allotments.*
- 2.9 Two garden cities were originally developed, Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City, which remain successful places today. The garden cities also inspired other new settlements in the UK and abroad including the post war New Towns developed in the UK.

Eco Towns

- 3.1 The Eco Towns programme launched in 2007 sought to address many of the same issues as the garden cities and new towns. Eco towns are to be exemplar developments *'that encourage and enable residents to live within managed environmental limits and in communities that are resilient to climate change'* (Eco Towns Supplement to PPS1 para 5).
- 3.2 The Eco Towns PPS sets minimum standards for eco towns, these are;
- Zero carbon development
 - Climate change adaptation
 - At least 30% affordable housing, building for life silver, lifetime homes, minimum of code 4 and 5 for water, real time energy monitoring, energy efficiency and carbon reductions
 - At least 1 job per dwelling
 - Priority for walking, cycling and use of public transport to achieve at least 50% of trips originating in an eco town by non car means
 - Promotion of healthy lifestyles through the design of the place
 - Local services
 - 40% green space
 - Protection of the historic environment
 - Biodiversity net gain
 - Reduced water use and water quality
 - Flood risk management
 - Reduction in waste
 - Master plan
 - Detailed delivery and monitoring
 - Community governance
- 3.3 The vision for eco towns was therefore that they would be highly sustainable, planned developments delivering both jobs and housing, sustainable long term governance and community facilities, significant green space and ambitious targets for modal shift, as well as the economies of scale that can come from large scale new development. In addition the Eco Towns are to provide demonstrators of best practice, achieving standards beyond those provided through other developments.
- 3.4 The Town & Country Planning Association also has supported the development of eco towns providing detailed worksheets on delivering the standards. Eco Towns could in many ways be seen as the 21 century interpretation of new settlements, much in the way garden cities informed earlier thinking on sustainable developments.

Bicester

- 3.5 NW Bicester was identified as an Eco Town location with the publication of the Eco Town supplement to PPS 1 in 2009. In addition to seeking higher standards for new development at NW Bicester the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board identified a need to ensure the existing town was not left behind and to use the new development as a catalyst to bring about change in the existing town. To that end a vision setting out the ambitions for the town was produced and adopted. The vision is entitled 'Eco Bicester One Shared Vision'.

- 3.6 The Eco Towns PPS aims were used to inform the One Shared Vision for Bicester which is based around three themes of Community First, Employment, Transport and Environmental Sustainability and sets out the long term aims for the town as a whole, including existing and proposed development. The Shared Vision has been adopted by Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Bicester Town Council, Homes and Communities Agency, Environment Agency and Bicester Vision. Eco Bicester has been used as the banner under which a diverse range of projects promoting sustainable low carbon living in the town have taken place.
- 3.7 Since 2009 work has been underway to deliver highly sustainable new development at NW Bicester and improvements within the town such as energy efficiency schemes, work on travel behaviour and exemplar buildings. Some of the work has been funded through Eco Town grant received from the Dept. of Communities and Local Government. However, it is evident that the government is no longer directly promoting 'eco towns' and hence the reference in the NPPF to garden cities.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

1. Through the Bicester Master Plan and Local Plan, Bicester will be identified to grow, accommodate new homes as well as substantial land for employment by 2031. With the very significant levels of growth proposed at Bicester it is important to think not just in terms of new buildings but how the town and its existing population can grow in a holistic way to accommodate the change, retaining the strengths of the existing town and addressing its current weaknesses. The Shared Vision has sought to provide this over arching vision for the town.
2. The Eco Town standards are helpful in identifying clear requirements for delivering sustainable new developments. However the Eco Town PPS supplement is clear that it also relied on advice that at the time of publication was provided in other planning policy statements which have now been replaced by the NPPF. In seeking opportunities for further funding for the growing town it is helpful to ensure that the local approach is consistent with government's current thinking on new development. This supports consideration of a garden cities approach in which sustainability is central, as remains the case with the NPPF.
3. In many ways Bicester meets many of the garden city aims. As a market town it has housing, employment and local facilities. Much development of the town has taken place in the second half of the 20th century at relatively low densities with individual gardens and significant areas of open space. Proposals to expand the town similarly seek a sustainable balance between employment, housing and open space. The NPPF provides the opportunity to consider green belts to provide long term limits for growth in connection with large scale development designed to garden city principles.
4. Given the governments approach to promoting garden cities and the clear synergies with the Eco Bicester approach, that seeks to transform the town into a sustainable community of the future, it is recommended that additional branding of Eco Bicester as a next generation garden city is explored with DCLG.

5. The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

Option One Explore the requirements for garden cities and explore the opportunities of identifying Eco Bicester as a next generation Garden City

Option Two Do not explore Garden City identification

Consultations

None, but extensive engagement with stakeholders will be required if future designation is to be pursued.

Implications

Financial: None arising directly from the report. If there were to be a significant re branding then costs would be incurred and funding for this would need to be further considered.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement Telephone 0300 0030106

Legal: None arising directly from the report

Comments checked by Kevin Lane, Head of Law and Governance 0300 003 0107

Risk Management: Eco Bicester is recognised as the umbrella under which projects in Bicester, contributing to making the town a more sustainable place, are being carried out. There is a risk that a change to the name would confuse the identity.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Corporate Performance Manager 01295 221563

Wards Affected

Bicester Town, East, South, West & North Wards

Corporate Plan Themes

District of Opportunity

Lead Member

**Councillor Barry Wood
Leader of the Council**

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
Eco Bicester One Shared Vision	
Eco Town Supplement to PPS 1	
National Planning Policy Framework	
Re-imagining Garden Cities for the 21 st Century – TCPA	
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