

## Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

<b>Date of meeting: 31 October 13</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:  5</b>
<b>Report title: NW Bicester Update</b>	
<b>Author: Jenny Barker (Eco Bicester Project Team)</b>	
<b>Tel: 01295 812337</b> <b>Email: <a href="mailto:jenny.barker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk">jenny.barker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</a></b>	

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The update the Board on the progress towards the delivery of the Exemplar planning permission and master planning for the NW Bicester site.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Eco Towns PPS identified NW Bicester as 1 of 4 eco towns to be developed nationally in 2009. The land at NW Bicester is identified as a strategic allocation in the emerging Local Plan and Bicester Masterplan.
- 2.2 In July 2012 planning permission was granted for an exemplar development of 393 dwellings, local centre and primary school. The proposed development is believed to be the largest Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 scheme and largest domestic PV array in the country. The proposal also includes rainwater harvesting, car club, high speed broad band, provision for electric vehicles, allotments, real time transport information to each home and 30% affordable housing.

### 3. Progress to Date - Exemplar

- 3.1 Work is being undertaken to clear planning permission conditions and requirements of the planning obligation for the exemplar development. Information has currently been submitted with regard to all the pre commencement conditions including; phasing, embodied carbon, tree protection, supervision of arboriculture works, ecological construction method statement, construction environment management plan, levels, drainage, flood risk, construction travel plan, site waste management plan, bike and bin stores, boundary details, parking, revised plot details and energy plan. Details of the proposed temporary community meeting facility, school site details and training and employment plan have been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the S106 agreement. Discussions are on going with regard to the pre commencement and first phase conditions and obligations to ensure they do not delay a start on site.
- 3.2 A mini competition has now also been held to select the designer for the proposed primary school on the site. The school will be delivered by OCC. P3 Eco advise with regard to the local centre that this is their responsibility and that that they '*are now actively reviewing the plans for it and vetting appropriate partners to deliver it in the required timeframe with the best outcome*'.

3.3 A2Dominon are currently in the process of completing the purchase of the site through the exercise of the option. Once the ownership transfers S278 and S38 agreements in relation to highway works will be signed and contractors appointed to commence development. The first works will be to construct the entrance road into the site from the Banbury Road (B4100) and then ground works to create the levels required to construct the spine road, including the bridge, as far as the school site.

#### **4. Progress to Date - Masterplan**

4.1 A framework masterplan was developed to accompany the exemplar application but it was acknowledged that further work was required on the masterplan. A programme has now been provided to complete masterplan work, to develop a masterplan to accompany an outline planning application for the site. The programme sets out a 12 month process to get to a completed masterplan, working collaboratively with stakeholders including the local authorities. The aim is to complete the masterplan for Spring 2014.

4.2 Much base line work for the masterplan has been carried out including ecological assessments of the site. Further work is now being undertaken through a series of work streams covering masterplan design, community infrastructure, transport, economy and employment, open space and bio diversity, water, energy and waste. Workstreams to progress the masterplan for NW Bicester commenced in May 2013.

4.3 The first phase of work has been to complete base line work and develop options for the masterplan. This work has been supported by three stakeholder workshops inputting into the brief for the masterplan, considering options arising from the early work undertaken and focusing on travel and movement options for the site. These workshops have helped to inform the emerging masterplan.

4.4 The work to date has resulted in some significant progress. This has included;

- It has been agreed that it is sensible to plan on the basis of the capacity of the site rather than a fixed number of homes. This has meant that it is possible the site could accommodate up to 6000 homes (as opposed to the 5000 originally targeted) without compromising on the quality of the environment or sustainability standards.
- Population modelling has been undertaken on behalf of A2D and by OCC and whilst sensitivity testing of the outputs is still to take place this is starting to provide a basis for planning for community infrastructure such as education, community halls, health, sport, and leisure provision.
- The work has also led to an approach that looks to realign the existing Howes Lane into the proposed development site to enable the creation of a better relationship between the site and the existing built edge of the town. Work on walking and cycling and public transport are also progressing.
- Economic strategy work has identified the level of employment that might realistically be achieved on site in the context of Bicester and both the existing employment provision and the proposals elsewhere in the town. The strategy is identifying 4600 jobs on site of which the significant areas of provision are approximately 1100 through home working, 1100 in local centre hubs and 2000 in a business park. There is ongoing work on the nature of local centre hubs.
- The masterplan is looking to provide 40% green space and net biodiversity gain. There is a desire for significant areas of space to be provided in one location rather than for this to be dispersed through the site. The emerging masterplan is looking to address

this but there is further work required to reach a satisfactory distribution of green space to serve all the sport, recreational, movement and biodiversity requirements.

- There has been good progress on developing the Local Management Organisation and a series of workshops have been held with the local stakeholders. As the masterplan progresses it will also be possible to progress the detail of the long term management arrangements.

4.5 Inevitably not all of the workstreams are progressing at the same rate and there remain areas where more information is required to feed into the emerging masterplan. This includes options for the energy strategy and options for the water strategy for the site. Work has been undertaken with regard to the viability of a connection to Ardley for the use of waste heat and it is anticipated that the outcomes from this will be included in the full options appraisal for energy provision for the site. The approach to assessing viability has been agreed but until the masterplan progresses further the development of the viability appraisal will be an iterative process. Never the less the masterplan has progressed sufficiently for consultation to take place on the emerging proposals in November and early December when the public will have the opportunity to engage in the masterplanning process and help shape the new development.

4.6 To achieve the masterplan timescales for completion it is important to keep under review the progress being made. Before the end of the year there is the need to engage with Network Rail and the Highways Agency over the emerging proposals to enable any issues to be dealt with and avoid delays. However considerable progress has been made on the emerging masterplan and it is anticipated that this will evolve rapidly over the coming months as further information and the input from engagement is taken into account.

## **5. Recommendations**

5.1 The Board is asked to note the progress on NW Bicester.