

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: NW Bicester Steering Group Report	
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1. Purpose of Report

This report is to set out progress on the development at NW Bicester. The report covers progress on the exemplar development which is now underway, the master planning for the remainder of the NW Bicester site and progress towards further planning applications.

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 for development in the emerging Local Plan and Bicester Masterplan.
- 2.2 Since the identification of the site at NW Bicester for an eco development, the Eco Bicester project team has been working with potential developers to deliver an exemplary sustainable development that will function as part of the growing Bicester town.

3. Exemplar Development

- 3.1 In July 2012 planning permission was granted for an exemplar development of 393 dwellings, local centre, eco business centre and primary school (Application reference 10/01780/HYBRID). The proposed development is believed to be the largest Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 scheme and domestic PV array in the country. The proposal also includes rainwater harvesting and reduced water use, car club and sustainable travel incentives, high speed broadband, provision for electric vehicles, allotments, real time transport and community information to each home, net biodiversity gain, provision for a local management organisation and 30% affordable housing. The application therefore does achieve an exemplary sustainable development which is attracting considerable attention both nationally and internationally.
- 3.2 Work on the development commenced in May 2014 with construction starting on highway access work. These works are programmed for 25 weeks although extended working is currently taking place to speed up the construction in the highway to enable traffic controls to be removed. Once the accesses to the site are formed work will move on site with infrastructure provision being carried out and the first residential properties programmed for 2015.
- 3.3 In addition to residential development the planning permission also includes a local centre, eco business centre, primary school and open space. The first elements of the local centre, the convenience store and community hall, are required prior to the completion of 250 dwellings and a planning application needs to be submitted 12 months prior to the start of on site works

or the occupation of 100 dwellings, whichever is the sooner. Marketing of the retail store is also required to commence to the same time line. These triggers have not yet been met so there has been no requirement to submit details yet.

- 3.4 The land for the Eco Business Centre is required to be transferred to the District Council prior to the occupation of 100 dwellings. Basepoint have carried out an issues and options appraisal for the delivery of the centre which has been reported to the Strategic Delivery Board. A meeting was held on 9th July 2014 to consider the options / funding opportunities available to deliver this centre. A further meeting will be held in August and a report will be prepared and considered in October by the NW Bicester Steering Group and the District Council's Executive in October 2014.
- 3.5 The design for the primary school is progressing having reached the stage where pre application advice has been sought on the design prior to a planning application being made. Also importantly a brief has been prepared and interviews held with potential school operators with a view to being able to open to pupils in 2015 on another school site and on the NW site in 2016.

4. Master Plan for NW Bicester

- 4.1 A2Dominion have been leading on masterplanning for the whole of the NW Bicester site. The Masterplan and supporting documents were submitted to Cherwell District Council in May 2014 with updated transport strategy on 24 June 2014. This masterplan has been worked up in collaboration with the Council and key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The District Council is now producing a supplementary planning document (SPD) to guide development proposals for the site. This will build on much of the information in the masterplan documents to provide a framework for the development. The first stage of preparation of the masterplan has been to consult on issues and options to inform the preparation of the draft SPD. Consultation has taken place with a wide range of consultees and public web based consultation and drop in session having been held. The consultation ends on the 24th July. The programme is to produce a draft SPD which will be reported to the October Meeting of the Board. There will be further consultation on the draft SPD with a view to being able to report it to the District Council's Executive for approval before the end of the year. Formal adoption will need to follow the adoption of the local plan.

5. Outline Planning Applications

- 5.1 Following the completion of the masterplan, A2Dominion's consultant team are working on the preparation of two outline planning applications for land North of the rail line and part of the land to the South of the rail line and a detailed application for the Howes Lane realignment and sub station. See attached plan. Pre application public consultation was carried out 20th and 21st June in Crown Walk and applications for scoping opinions for environmental assessment have been submitted and determined. A2Dominion advise that the plan is for the applications to be submitted at the end of July.
- 5.2 Pre application engagement has also take place with Albion Land with regard to land they control in the South East corner of the site (see attached plan). The masterplan identifies this part of the site for employment and residential uses and a proposal to meet the requirements of the masterplan are being developed. It is indicated that an application will be made on this part of the site in similar timescales to the above.

- 5.3 P3Eco Bicester Ltd has also been in contact with the District Council and have a team of consultants working to develop detailed proposals for land they control south of the railway line. No details have been submitted to date and it is anticipated that an outline application for this area will be submitted later in 2014.
- 5.4 There remain land parcels that will be outside the current applications and it is anticipated that these will come forward at a future date.
- 5.5 Once applications have been submitted they will be processed by the District Council in the normal way. The applications will be for large scale development on a complex site so it is anticipated that they will be reported to committee towards the end of 2014. Progress will be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

6. Summary

- 6.1 There continues to be good progress towards the development of NW Bicester. Start on site on the exemplar is a visible sign of the progress being made and will see much work coming to fruition. The scheme will be a national exemplar, exceeding the build standards of any other large scale development in the UK, and will provide a first opportunity for people to be able to see the built scheme that has been planned over the last five years.
- 6.2 Work on the planning for the remainder of the site has progressed with a land use plan now developed and work on details moving forward. There remains further work to be done on details of the proposals and delivery and, inevitably, not all parts of the site or areas of work are moving forward at the same pace. Important areas such as discussions with Network Rail and Highways Agency will be carefully monitored and progress reported at future Board meetings.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 The Board are asked to note the contents of the report.