

## Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

<b>Date of meeting: 26 March 2015</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:  8</b>
<b>Report title: Garden Town Funding Update</b>	
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### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on central government funding available for delivering the Bicester Garden Town concept.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 In December 2014 the Government announced that Bicester had been awarded Garden Town status and as such could bid for funds to expedite the delivery of key infrastructure required for its planned growth. DCLG advised that resource funding, in the form of a capacity grant, could also be made available to help ensure that planning and feasibility work can be conducted as quickly as possible.
- 2.2 We have been in discussions with DCLG over the detail and profile of the bids and submissions were finalised in mid-February.

### 3. Key Elements of the Funding Submissions

- 3.1 Two bids were submitted to DCLG, namely:
- Capacity bid for approximately £1.7m available over this and the next calendar year
  - Capital bid for approximately £130m to be available over the next 10 years to deliver key infrastructure that helps accelerate the delivery of housing and employment proposals.
- 3.2 The Capacity bid seeks funding for additional studies and assessments that would assist in:
- establishing the garden town concept and resourcing the coordination of activities;
  - identifying required strategies and approaches, for example to engage with and encourage community participation, to successfully deliver the garden town concept
  - identifying and mitigating the impact of planned developments
  - understanding the additional infrastructure opportunities and requirements of the Garden Town and
  - marketing self-build opportunities at Graven Hill
- 3.3 The Capital funding submission was compiled and evidenced in collaboration with partners and identifies infrastructure needs across two delivery phases.

The first phase to 2020/21, evidenced with indicative costs, is split as follows:

- Sustainable transport infrastructure £ 3.6m
- Utilities (including broadband and electricity) £ 22m
- Community infrastructure £ 1.5m
- Off-site housing (advanced manufacturing) £ 3.5m

The second delivery phase from 2021 to 2025 includes high-level estimated costs of £100m, which will be better informed by the completion of the capacity-funded studies.

#### **4. Latest Progress**

- 4.1 The outcome of the both the capacity and capital funding submissions was announced as part of the Budget Statement on 18 March.
- 4.2 The Government supports Bicester's ambitions to become a garden town, and confirmed that the total requested capacity funding was being made available. DCLG and Treasury have internal processes that will need to be completed but the first tranche of funding should be received in April. A second tranche will be released in July, subject to agreed milestones being achieved.
- 4.3 The request for capital funding was on balance considered premature in view of the need for further work on partnership and delivery arrangements. However Government confirmed it will work with Cherwell District Council on helping to meet Bicester's infrastructure needs, including through the potential for recoverable government investment, subject to the submission of business cases.

#### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 The successful capacity funding bid provides sufficient resources to move forward dialogue around the vision for Bicester Garden Town and commission key studies that will guide delivery of the concept in a holistic and sustainable manner and across the whole town.
- 5.2 Work on securing capital funding to meet the Garden Town's infrastructure needs will continue with a particular focus on bringing private sector delivery partners on board. In addition opportunities to secure further funding will be explored alongside continuing dialogue with DCLG.
- 5.3 Further funding updates will be provided along with progress reports on the capacity funded studies.

#### **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 The Board is asked to note the progress on garden town funding from Government and to receive further regular updates.