

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 26th March 2015	AGENDA ITEM NO: 9
Report title: Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy – Delivery of Walking and Cycling Improvements	
Author: Andrew Bowe, Implementation Officer	
Tel: 01295 221842 Email: andrew.bowe@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Board of the work to complete Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (BSTS) and to present the emerging delivery plan and identify opportunities for delivery.

2. Background

- 2.1 The background to this report is set out in the update to the previous Board meeting in January 2015. From the last report to the Board Members will be aware of the progress and timescales for completing the BSTS to allow it to feed into the consultation on “*Connecting Oxfordshire*” the new Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). A report on LTP4 is contained in agenda item 8. Members were also recommended to support the principles of the sustainable transport strategy and provide further comments to officers by 15th February 2015. No further comments were received following the Board meeting of 26th January 2015.
- 2.2 The BSTS Action Plan prioritises walking and cycling as the first choice for travel thereby continuing the transport and movement vision in the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision. The vision is to create a transport infrastructure network and transport services that encourage walking and cycling as the first mode to become an exemplar of sustainable travel in the UK. There is a major opportunity in Bicester for journeys to shift from car to cycling and walking. The compact nature of the town and the relatively flat topography mean cycling is viable for the vast majority of journeys within the town. For example, all the existing housing is within a 10 minute cycle of the town centre. The areas of housing growth will be within a 15 minute cycle of the town centre.
- 2.3 The Draft Delivery Plan breaks down the different elements of the strategy into priorities with broad timescales and indicative capital costings. In terms of cycling the approach is for segregation on the distributor routes within the town. Buckingham Road, Launton Road and the “Central Corridor” all accommodate flows in between 10,000 and 15,000 vehicles a day. Whilst measures to constrain traffic movement should result in a decrease in flows initially this will to a certain extent be offset by the increased population which will result in additional movement overall. These will continue to be busy trafficked streets with vehicle speeds between 25mph and 35 mph and segregation is fully justified.
- 2.4 In delivering the strategy it is proposed to focus on the improvements to radial routes, some of which could be delivered through development, funding from the Local Enterprise Partnerships and remaining eco-town funds. It is proposed to focus on delivering a key link in network to progress delivery of strategy. The options are set out below.

- 1 – Middleton Stoney – various improvements including creating a shared path along Middleton Stoney Road and a Toucan crossing as set out in the Draft Strategy. This scheme will link new areas of housing to the town centre and a safer route building upon what has previously approved as part SW Bicester phase 1.
- 2 – Launton Road – widening the existing shared path, cycling priority crossings at side roads – provides links to the employment areas to and from the town centre and Garth Park
- 3 – Central corridor improvements to link between Roman Way and Station Approach – likely to deliver the greatest impact and step change towards sustainable transport linking the town centre to the railway station and an important element of the “central corridor”.

2.5 Option 3 is the preferred option as it delivers short term cycle infrastructure improvements and aligns with the overall approach of the STS in terms of managing traffic in the town. The preferred option will have the most significant impact on capacity.

2.6 The Strategy identifies a total cost of £7.5 million for improvement to the primary walking and cycling network. A Bicester Sustainable Transport project expression has been submitted for Local Growth Fund support through the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. A decision is expected to be made by 20th March 2015. Some Eco-town funding remains for travel behaviour projects and this now needs to be prioritised and allocated to specific projects and schemes as a first step to delivering the strategy.

2.7 The BSTS sets out the Future Movement Network including short term cycle infrastructure improvements along a route identified as the “central corridor” from the Oxford Road in the south of the town to the Buckingham Road in the north. These improvements articulate the overall approach of the Strategy and the principles that underlay the encouragement of walking and cycling. The outline designs build upon improvements implemented by OCC on Field Street/Buckingham Road.

2.8 The strategy focusses on improving cycling infrastructure along the radial routes from the town centre. It also groups the improvements into short, medium and long term priorities. Improvements to the Banbury Road and Middleton Stoney Road for walking and cycling are being progressed as part of the proposals for the eco-town.

2.9 In order to progress the strategy, the Bicester Delivery Team will need to work together with officers of Oxfordshire County Council and it is proposed that the improvements identified in the STS between the Buckingham Road railway bridge and Roman Way are prioritised.

3. Recommendations

3.1 The Board is recommended to:

Consider the options and identify the preferred option for the delivery of short term cycling and walking infrastructure improvements as part of its support for the delivery of the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy