

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Full Council**

**22 February 2016**

<p><b>North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b></p>
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### **Report of Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To seek formal adoption of the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To resolve that Cherwell District Council as local planning authority adopt the North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as SPD and a Local Development Document in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 1.2 To authorise the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy, prior to the publication of the Supplementary Planning Document, the correction of any minor typographical, spelling or grammatical errors, and the undertaking of any minor presentational improvements, if required prior to the SPD being published by the Council.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

- 2.1 The North West Bicester strategic development site is allocated for development by Policy Bicester 1 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) for a zero carbon mixed use development including 6,000 homes. The site area is approximately 390 hectares (965 acres).
- 2.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 provide the legislative framework for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents setting out the form and content of such documents. Further guidance is set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 153. National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) states that SPDs should only be prepared where necessary and in line with paragraph 153 of the National Planning Policy

Framework (NPPF). It goes on to state that they should build upon policies in the adopted Local Plan.

- 2.3 The proposed development at North West Bicester is recognised locally and nationally as an important project in delivering large scale development to high environmental standards following its identification in 2009 in the Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS). In March 2015, the Eco-towns PPS was cancelled by the Government for all areas excluding North West Bicester, for which its policies remain at the present time.
- 2.4 The adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (Part 1) forms part of the Development Plan for the area and the SPD must not conflict with it. Policy Bicester 1 of the adopted Local Plan sets out planning requirements, key site specific design and place shaping principles for the proposed development. The policy refers to the approval of a comprehensive masterplan for the site as part of the North West Bicester SPD.
- 2.5 Work began on the SPD in 2014 following the submission of a masterplan and supporting information, prepared by the private sector developers, in March and May 2014. This was used as the basis of a consultation on the issues and options in July 2014 which was reported to the Council's Executive in November 2014. In June 2015 the Draft SPD was approved by the Executive to be used on an interim basis for development control purposes pending the receipt of the Local Plan Inspector's report and cancellation of the Eco-towns PPS. Following minor revisions, the Draft SPD and associated documents were published for consultation in November 2015. At its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016, the Council's Executive considered representations received to the consultation, agreed final changes to the SPD and accompanying Statement of Consultation and agreed to recommend to Full Council that it resolved to adopt the final SPD.
- 2.6 Although the planning applications submitted to date cover a significant part of the North West Bicester strategic allocation site, the SPD will assist in the determination of those applications yet to be considered by the Planning Committee and guide future applications for the remaining parts of the site including Reserved Matters applications.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 In order to assist in delivery of successful schemes through the planning process, a Supplementary Planning Document has been prepared for North West Bicester, providing guidance for applicants, developers and landowners preparing proposals and planning applications. It sets out a planning framework to develop proposals from the masterplanning stage to submission of detailed planning applications and implementation. Once adopted, it will be used for development management purposes in the determination of planning applications.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 1 February 2016, the Executive resolved that:
  1. That the progress in preparing the North West Bicester SPD since the update report to the Executive on 1 June 2015 be noted.

2. That the response to the representations received and resulting changes made to the SPD and Statement of Consultation be agreed.
  3. That, subject to the removal of all reference to Local Management Organisations, Full Council be recommended to resolve to adopt as a Supplementary Planning Document the North West Bicester SPD in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
  4. That authority be delegated to the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy prior to the publication of the Supplementary Planning Document, to compile the final document subject to the removal of all reference to Local Management Organisations, incorporate the updated text and illustrations, and correct any minor spelling or grammatical errors.
- 3.3 The SPD expands upon Policy Bicester 1 of the adopted Local Plan which allocates land at the North West Bicester eco-town site for a strategic development comprising a new zero carbon mixed used development including 6,000 new homes. Policy Bicester 1 states that planning permission will only be granted for development at North West Bicester in accordance with a comprehensive masterplan for the whole area to be approved by the Council as part of a North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document.
- 3.4 The Local Plan policy goes on to set out the requirements that the masterplan and planning applications will be required to meet. The SPD incorporates the Local Plan requirements, together with the Eco-towns standards set out in the PPS, interpreting them into more detailed site specific development principles and requirements.
- 3.5 The North West Bicester SPD sets out the context, vision and objectives for the eco-town site. It was reviewed in the light of the adoption of the Local Plan prior to further consultation being undertaken. A further review of the SPD took place in the light of the Government's previously stated intention of cancelling the Eco-towns PPS for North West Bicester once the Local Plan was adopted.
- 3.6 The Final SPD includes updated references to the Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS). To ensure consistency with the adopted Local Plan the Final SPD has been reviewed and updated. The Eco-towns standards in the PPS have been incorporated into the Final SPD.
- 3.7 Work on the SPD has progressed to the point that it can be recommended for adoption in accordance with the timescale set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme and planning programme for North West Bicester. Once adopted by the Council, the North West Bicester SPD and adoption statement will be made available in accordance with Regulation 35, and copies of the adoption statement sent to those who have asked to be notified of its adoption, in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plans) (England) Regulations 2012. The Final SPD for adoption is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. This incorporates the changes made by the Executive at its meeting on 1st February 2015.

- 3.8 The preparation of the SPD included extensive consultation resulting in the incorporation of the masterplan submitted by the private sector as the approved masterplan to guide the comprehensive development of the site.
- 3.9 A large area of the site is currently the subject of planning applications based on the masterplan. The SPD will provide the development framework for current and future planning applications as detailed proposals come forward. Similarly, the development principles and requirements, together with reference to design and character areas and the delivery of the SPD, will ensure the masterplan is refined through the preparation of planning applications.

### **Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 3.10 A screening statement to determine the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) concluded that the SPD would not have any significant environmental impact that had not been considered as part of the Local Plan sustainability appraisal process. A copy of the Screening Statement is contained in Appendix 2.
- 3.11 The North West Bicester SPD has been produced to be in general conformity with the Local Plan and benefits from the Plan's SA/SEA process. The screening process followed in preparing the SPD concluded that an SEA was not required for the SPD, as it is unlikely to result in any significant effects that have not been assessed by the Local Plan SA/SEA.
- 3.12 In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, formal consultation with consultation bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) on the SEA screening statement has taken place. None of the consultation bodies raised any concerns or objection to the screening statement.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 This report sets out the work to progress the SPD to adoption. Following further consultation on the North West Bicester SPD at the end of 2015 the final version of the North West Bicester SPD has been approved by the Executive and is presented to the Full Council for adoption. Throughout its preparation, the SPD has used the masterplan and supporting information prepared by the private sector, to inform the development principles and requirements.
- 4.2 The most recent consultation did not identify any new issues that were not already considered in the production of the draft SPD.
- 4.3 The following tasks were completed to allow the adoption of the SPD:
1. Formal consultation/ publicity on the Screening Statement setting out the Council's determination that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required;
  2. Further review of the SPD and consultation following the adoption of the Cherwell Local Plan and cancellation of the Eco-towns PPS;

3. An update and further consultation on the Statement of Consultation; and Finalising the SPD text and Statement of Consultation following the consultation.

4.4 It is recommended that the Council formally adopts the SPD as contained in Appendix 1 for development management purposes. This report also seeks authorisation for the Head of Strategic Planning and the Economy to present the final SPD for publication, correcting any minor spelling or grammatical errors.

## **5.0 Consultation**

5.1 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the requirements of a local planning authority before it adopts a supplementary planning document. In accordance with the Regulations (Regulation 12), the Council has prepared a Statement of Consultation setting out:

1. The persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the SPD;
2. A summary of the main issues raised by those persons; and
3. How those issues have been addressed in the SPD.

5.2 Consultation on the Final Draft SPD, SEA screening and Statement of Consultation, was undertaken from 20 November to 18 December 2015. The consultation was publicised widely on the Council's website and in the local press. Those people on the Local Plan database were notified direct.

5.3 The consultation responses did not raise any significant issues and resulted in only minor amendments to the final document as agreed by the Council's Executive on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016. In addition to the responses received during the consultation, the Environment Agency submitted minor comments relating to flood risk management and the importance of providing Flood Risk Assessments as supporting information to planning applications. This representation was reported to Members of the Executive on 1 February 2016.

5.4 The Final SPD incorporates comments from previous consultations as set out in the Statement of Consultation (November 2015). In summary, the main issues raised through the various consultations were:

1. General support for the SPD;
2. Detailed comments on specific development principles and requirements, particularly transport and employment related issues relating to the proposed business park and realignment of Howes Lane;
3. The importance of the biodiversity, landscape and heritage assets; and
4. The mechanism for infrastructure provision and delivery.

5.5 A statement of consultation has been prepared and updated to reflect the latest consultations and the comments received. A copy of the Statement of Consultation is contained in Appendix 3.

5.6 Internal consultation has been carried out throughout the preparation of the SPD.

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To not progress the preparation of the North West Bicester SPD and rely only on the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy Bicester 1. This option is rejected given the general support for the content of the SPD, and its role in guiding the preparation of planning applications and as detailed guidance in determining planning applications.

## **7.0 Implications**

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial and resource implications arising directly from this report. The cost of producing the SPD is met from existing resources.

Comments checked by:

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### **Legal Implications**

- 7.2 Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions and will guide applicants in making relevant planning applications for development at North West Bicester. The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 provide the legislative framework for the preparation of supplementary planning documents setting out the form and content of such documents.

Comments checked by:

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## **8.0 Decision Information**

### **Wards Affected**

All Bicester Wards  
Caversfield  
Chesterton and Ambrosden  
Launton  
Bucknell  
Middleton Stoney

### **Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework**

This report directly links to all four of the corporate priorities and objectives set out in the Cherwell District Council Business Plan 2014-15 as follows:

Cherwell - A District of Opportunity  
Cherwell – Safe, Clean and Green  
Cherwell – Thriving Communities  
Cherwell – Customer focussed Council

It links to the strategic priorities for the Bicester projects.

### **Lead Councillor**

Councillor Gibbard, Lead Member for Planning

### **Document Information**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document
2	Screening Statement
3	Statement of Consultation
<b>Background Papers</b>	
None	
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