

Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 27 July 2017	AGENDA ITEM NO: 7
Report title: Garden Town Update	
Author: Maria Curran, Garden Town Delivery Manager	
Tel: 01295 221638 Email: maria.curran@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides a progress update on the Garden Town programme of studies and activities funded from Government capacity grant.

2. Garden Town Capacity-funded Studies

2.1 Bicester Masterplan

The public consultation on the draft Bicester Masterplan has had to be delayed as negotiations to secure a suitably prominent venue were unsuccessful. The event is being planned to take place in September and an all-Member briefing will be arranged as part of the consultation. The masterplan and feedback from the public consultation event will then come back to this Board for approval.

The intention remains for elements of the masterplan to be considered for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Local Plan Part 1. That statutory process remains on course for completion this financial year.

2.2 M40 Junction Feasibility Study

Further survey work at Junction 9 has been completed and the results are now with the consultants. This means that the second stage of the study (options appraisal) can now commence. The study is expected to be completed in the autumn and the findings will be presented to this Board.

2.3 Refreshed Vision

As part of the work to refresh the vision for Bicester, the resident-focussed, evocative tone of the first draft, derived from extensive Member, stakeholder and public consultation in 2016, has been turned into a simple statement of the future character of Bicester. This has produced versions of varying length, attached at Appendix A. The next step is to survey all Bicester councillors on their preferences for a marketing strap line.

2.4 Investment & Marketing Prospectus

The Prospectus is intended to promote the opportunities for investing in, relocating to and growing a diverse employment base in Bicester. It is intended to form part of the marketing collateral at Bicester's stand at MIPIM UK, which will take place on 18 & 19 October in Olympia, London. CDC is funding the Bicester stand and Bicester Vision has commissioned a complementary short film to illustrate the scale of growth and opportunities in and around Bicester.

The tender period to procure an experienced marketing consultant has just closed but disappointingly no submissions were received. The invited suppliers advised that although

immensely interested in the commission, they felt they would struggle to resource the contract. Further dialogue is planned to work through the consultants' concerns and refine the brief; an appointment remains feasible.

3. Funding

3.1 Capacity Funding

£2.5m of capacity funding has been allocated to the garden towns programme for use in 2017/18. A competitive bidding process for the nine garden towns closed on 26 May. The Bicester garden town bid sought £600k towards strategic infrastructure, accelerating the delivery of the garden town and projects that responded to residents' priorities. A decision is expected in August and Board members will be notified of the outcome.

3.2 Capital Funding

The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), first announced in the Autumn Spending Review 2016 was launched on 4 July. It provides £2.3 billion capital grant funding, allocated local authorities on a competitive basis, for physical infrastructure projects that accelerate the delivery of 100,000 new homes in England. The funding will be available from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

There are two strands to HIF:

- i) marginal viability funding, which is open to single and lower tier councils - bids up to £10m
- ii) forward funding, open to single and upper tier councils – bids up to £250m

The closing date for bids is 28 September with a decision on marginal viability funding expected later this year or early 2018; and a decision on forward funding expected in summer 2018.

Working together across the tiers of local government and in conjunction with the LEPs is actively encouraged and discussions to develop strong bids are beginning.

4. Activities

4.1 The third round of the SPARK grant scheme, financed by both garden town and healthy new town funds, closed on 6 June 2017. Five applications were received but only one bid was considered acceptable. This takes the total amount of grant awarded over three phases to almost £10,000.

The deadline for the next wave of funding is 6 September 2017.

4.2 Since the last Board meeting, CDC has hosted visits to Bicester from the University of Waterloo, Canada; south-west councils; and East Hants District Council. Graven Hill and self-build continues to generate considerable interest as well as the delivery of North West Bicester.

5. Recommendation

5.1 The Board is asked to approve the refreshed vision for Bicester and going forward its use in place of the 'One Shared Vision' (December 2010). Board is also asked to note the progress with the capacity funded studies, funding opportunities and the promotion of Bicester garden town.

Further updates will be presented to future meetings.