

## Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

<b>Date of meeting: 8 November 2010</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:  3</b>
<b>Report title: Eco Bicester One Shared Vision - Review of Consultation Responses and Proposed Changes</b>	
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### 1. Purpose of Report

This report sets out a summary of the consultation on the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision and the main issues arising from the consultation. The purpose of the report is to review the preparation of the Eco Bicester One Shared Vision document, the consultation responses and proposed changes and seek the Board's approval to publish a revised document to be presented to meetings of Cherwell District Council's Executive and Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet in December 2010.

### 2. Background

It was agreed at the facilitation workshop on 31 March 2010 that one of the aims of the SDB was to develop a clear vision for Bicester for the next 30 years. The preparation of a shared vision was agreed by the Strategic Delivery Board ("the Board") at its first meeting in April 2010. The Shared Vision is the result of a need to clearly define the aims and objectives of the Strategic Delivery Board in delivering the eco development at NW Bicester and integrating it with the long term aspirations for the existing town of Bicester. The purpose of the Vision, as set out in a project briefing note dated 26 April 2010, is summarised as follows:

- To provide a shared vision for the whole of Bicester supported by partners
- To guide the local delivery of the eco-town of national, if not international, significance with the private sector;
- To articulate key infrastructure needs to support the eco town;
- To inform engagement between the LA /partner, CLG and HCA on where they can help deliver the project

A paper with the draft shared vision was presented to the Board and agreed for consultation at its meeting in July 2010. Following some minor amendments and desk top publishing, a draft vision document was prepared for consultation in summer 2010. The final version of the document will follow a similar format to the Draft version and will be published in advance of determining any planning application submission for NW Bicester. The document has been prepared to be as clear and concise as possible to summarise the key issues.

### 3. Consultation results

A six week period of public consultation was organised between 23 August 2010 and 1 October 2010. This was publicised in the local press and on the Cherwell District Council website Eco towns page with a link to the online consultation portal. Local stakeholders were contacted including parish councils, residents associations, local partners and schools. Presentations were given to Launton Parish Council and Bicester Vision Partnership Board. In addition, a public engagement exercise was held in Bicester Town Centre (Sheep Street) at the Farmers Market and Market on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> September 2010. Over the 2 days approximately 500 copies of the Vision document were distributed and officers provided information to over 100 people. Exhibitions at Bicester Community College and Cooper School took place on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 respectively and comments have been collated as part of the further work in revising the document. As part of the engagement with partners a local members group met on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2010. A summary of the consultation is set out below:

23<sup>rd</sup> August – 1<sup>st</sup> October – Online consultation portal open for people to comment on the draft  
2<sup>nd</sup> September – Presentation, Questions & Answers session at Launton Parish Council meeting  
3<sup>rd</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> September – Public Exhibition in Bicester Town Centre during weekly & Farmer's market, which included handing out of vision document, engaging with the local resident and businesses and had displayed several plans of Bicester with present and proposed development.  
15<sup>th</sup> September – Members' workshop at the Littlebury Hotel, Bicester  
21<sup>st</sup> September – Presentation and discussion at Bicester Vision Partnership Board meeting  
12<sup>th</sup> October - Exhibition at Bicester Community College 13<sup>th</sup> October – Exhibition at Cooper School  
20<sup>th</sup> October – Attendance at Bicester Youth Council

In summary, 55 responses were received from the general public, partners, agents and businesses. The majority of responses related to the draft vision but also issues affecting Bicester generally. Some responses, however, referred to detailed comments on specific issues and are more appropriate to other Council policies and strategies such as the emerging Local Development Plan (LDF). Each response has been reviewed and analysed and revisions made to the document where appropriate. These are highlighted as track changes in the attached document.

This report is supported by appendices summarising the consultation responses and comments. The consultation received a good response and some comments raised relate to other Council strategies and policies. These comments are included in a separate Appendix. The comments submitted online and using the response forms have been collated and reviewed by officers and form the basis of the revised document.

A summary of the responses and consultation process including those groups and organisations individually contacted is contained in the attached table (**Appendix A**). Comments were received from over 30 individuals on a range of topics but generally relating to growth of the town, lack of services and facilities and infrastructure. There was general support for the vision but many of the comments focussed on existing issues rather than the local term vision set out in the document.

There was some uncertainty and scepticism about the proposals for future development with many respondents focussing on the proposals for eco development at NW Bicester. As a result, it is proposed to clarify the vision by defining the scope of the document in terms of the whole town integrating the proposed development with the existing town. The references to integration and a holistic approach have been made more explicit to avoid any doubt and confusion about the whole

town approach to Eco Bicester. Transport was a major concern for many respondents with comments referring to existing travel patterns and infrastructure requirements to accommodate further growth.

The meeting of the Bicester Vision Partnership Board on 21<sup>st</sup> September was attended by representatives of over 20 local businesses. Again the focus was on integration, a holistic approach to eco development and employment opportunities and support for local businesses.

In addition, representations were made on behalf of local landowners and businesses relating to specific sites and proposals. Many of these comments are more appropriately dealt with through the development plan process.

#### **4. Main issues**

The main issues are set out in the attached table summarising the comments for each section of the draft vision. In summary, the consultation responses focus on

- Integrating the eco development with the existing town
- Existing facilities and infrastructure serving the town
- The need for more housing
- Employment opportunities and job creation
- Existing transport issues
- The proposed eco development at NW Bicester and
- Eco standards for new development.

Other issues included climate change, timescales for the vision, viability of eco development, alternative sites for eco development (including MOD Bicester), community engagement and deprivation. Some of these issues will be addressed in other strategies and policies.

#### **5. Revisions and Proposed Changes**

As a result of the consultation, revisions have been made to the document to reflect the comments and suggestions raised by consultees. In summary these include:

- The insertion of an introductory section setting out the purpose and objectives,
- Referring to other strategies and policies including the Government's transition to a low carbon economy,
- Clearly stating the whole town approach and clarifying the relationship with NW Bicester
- The integration of the appendix into the main body of the text
- A timeline setting out the key milestones in delivering Eco Bicester.

A copy of the revised document with amendments is contained in the appendices.

#### **4. Recommendations**

The Board is recommended to consider the report and attachments with a view to agreeing the revisions and making any further amendments to the One Shared Vision. Once agreed, the document is to be published as the Final version prior to being adopted by CDC, OCC and Bicester Town Council.