

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 21 July 2011	AGENDA ITEM NO: 6
Report title: Utilities Audit	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present the report setting out the audit of utilities in Bicester.

2. Background

- 2.1 **The Employment Group** meeting in October 2010 requested that an audit of existing utilities in Bicester was carried out led by the Eco Bicester Project Team.
- 2.2 As part of the audit, utility companies responsible for providing services to Bicester and the surrounding area were contacted. Comments submitted but utility companies were also reviewed where available and meetings with relevant contacts arranged. The main focus for concern among the business community was the unreliability of the existing power network providing electricity to the main employment areas in the town.
- 2.3 The attached report sets out the findings of the report and this will continue to be monitored and progressed as part of the infrastructure plan to support the preparation of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.
- 2.4 Following the employment group meeting in October 2010 it was agreed that the Project Team would coordinate a **utilities and infrastructure audit** for Bicester to understand the issues relating to power supply and energy infrastructure. At the same time it was agreed that an audit of existing services and utilities was required. As a result, local businesses were contacted by Bicester Vision and comments feedback to the Project Team. For example, a major reason for Wirth Research Ltd leaving Bicester was power issues. In addition the Project Team has contacted the National Grid and distribution network operators (Scottish and Southern Electric). From these discussions there remains a contradiction between what the suppliers and users are saying with the utility company stating there is sufficient network capacity to serve the existing town and local businesses citing power issues as a reason for relocating. The Project Team is continuing to investigate as part of the preparation of the infrastructure plan to support the **Cherwell Core Strategy**.
- 2.5 The utilities audit together with the economic strategy forms an important part of the work of the employment group.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that Members agree the contents of this report and note to findings in the attached report.