

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: NW Bicester –Update	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates the Strategic Delivery Board on progress with North West Bicester. This report covers progress on the exemplar application (10/01780/HYBRID) and an update on the masterplan for the whole site.

2. Background

- 2.1 The development of an eco town at NW Bicester was identified in the eco town supplement to PPS1 in 2009. P3 Eco (Bicester) Ltd has come forward to assemble land to deliver the development at NW Bicester. P3Eco working with A2Dominion submitted a planning application for an exemplar development at NW Bicester in December 2010. This was accompanied by the emerging masterplan which provides a framework for how NW Bicester could be developed.

3 Exemplar Application

- 3.1 The application submitted comprised of 393 dwellings (of which 30% are to be affordable) and a local centre comprising retail units, eco business centre, offices, children's nursery, community hall and public house. The scheme also includes public open space and allotments. The site for a primary school is also identified.
- 3.2 On 11 August 2011 the Cherwell District Council Planning Committee resolved to approve the application subject to completion of viability and the completion of a legal agreement. The Heads of Terms of the legal agreement were attached to the committee report and can be viewed at <http://cdcmogov:9070/mqConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=1687&T=1>
- 3.3 Following the resolution to grant planning permission work has been underway on the detailed drafting of the legal agreement. This inevitable takes some time as it covers a wide range of matters some of which are similar to other development such as the delivery of the affordable housing and highway requirements, whilst other areas have not been covered in previous agreements in the District or County. These include the measures to facilitate the setting up of a local management organisation, the provision of apprenticeships and measures to support local employment and requirements relating to electric vehicles and car club. The target to complete the agreement is the end of the year.
- 3.4 If the agreement is completed and permission issued A2Dominion advise that they are anticipating a start on site in early 2012 and the first houses being complete in late 2012.

4 Masterplan

- 4.1 Considerable work on baseline surveys and site constraints was undertaken prior to the submission of the exemplar application. This work informed the emerging masterplan that sought to show how the NW Bicester site could be developed and demonstrated how the exemplar application could fit with future development.
- 4.2 Following the resolution to grant planning permission on the exemplar application focus has now moved back to the masterplan and the work necessary to produce an agreed masterplan to accompany an outline planning application.
- 4.3 To move the masterplan forward there is a need for further baseline work. This includes; survey work of the site itself such as undertaking archaeological investigation and completing ecological survey work to identify constraints and opportunities within the area identified for NW Bicester. Strategies such as for employment provision to inform the amount and nature of employment land to be provided on site and energy which are necessary to identify the land requirements within the masterplan also need to be undertaken. Further work such as transport assessment and traffic modelling to inform the decisions about access to the site and off site measures necessary are also required.
- 4.4 Some work has already commenced on the development of energy and water strategies for the site. These are already highlighting some of the opportunities that the site presents in terms of using waste heat from Ardley and on site energy generation as well as opportunities arising from using surface water and dealing with sewerage on site. The potential to move from the standard approach of off site connection to utilities to dealing with energy and water on site to achieve zero carbon and water neutrality is an exciting innovation.
- 4.5 Further work is also underway by the Local Authorities to identify the community infrastructure that is likely to be necessary to serve the large scale development that is proposed. Work has been carried out to model the potential population that would arise from the development and hence the infrastructure required. This work is yet to be concluded and will need to be refined as the masterplan progresses to ensure an optimum solution is achieved including taking advantages of opportunities that might arise from co location and multi use facilities as well as ensuring the sustainability objectives for the site are achieved.
- 4.6 The baseline work, strategies and infrastructure requirements are needed to inform revisions to the masterplan which will be informed by it. The masterplan will also need to address issues around the need to create a high quality place and may have to balance competing requirements. There is a significant amount of work involved in creating a high quality, robust masterplan and putting together the information necessary to support an outline planning permission.
- 4.7 There is also a need for community engagement to inform the revision of the masterplan and ensure emerging plans meet the aspirations of community for the development of the town. It is essential that time is allowed for this to take place.
- 4.8 The development of a detailed programme to deliver the masterplan and outline application is currently under discussion. Given the level of work to be undertaken the masterplan and outline planning application the programme will show that these will not be ready for submission until 2012. Once a programme has been finalised it will be shared with the Board.

5. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- 5.1 Note progress on the planning for NW Bicester.