

## Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Date of meeting: Thursday 27 October 2011</b>  | <b>AGENDA ITEM<br/>NO:<br/><br/>4</b> |
| <b>Report title: Affordable Homes in Eco Bicester</b>   |                                       |
| <b>Author: Martyn Swann, Strategic Housing Manager (Eco Bicester Project Team)</b><br><b>Tel: (01295) 221743</b><br><b>Email: martyn.swann@cherwell-dc.gov.uk</b> |                                       |

### 1. Purpose of Report

- To update the Board on the progress of affordable housing initiatives within Eco Bicester

### 2. Background

- The provision of affordable housing is an important element of the approach to Eco Bicester. The Board was updated on progress of the provision of affordable housing in March 2011. This report updates the Board on both the provision of affordable homes and other housing initiatives.

#### **Affordable Homes Delivery 2011-12**

- South West Bicester Phase A – the first four units of shared ownership will be available before Christmas 2011.
- London Road Extra Care 20 units – the first Extra Care units in Bicester will be complete by March 2012

#### **Affordable Homes Delivery 2012-13**

- Bryan House Eco Demonstration project 23 units – these units will be ready by April/May 2012.

*The first two units will be complete early however (around November 2011). Plans are currently being devised for the first two units which achieve Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. It is intended the ground floor unit will be available as a show house, whilst the first floor flat will be allocated through a selective letting so the benefits of eco friendly housing can be monitored.*

- George Street Garage Site – this site could be developed into four affordable homes by autumn 2012.
- South West Bicester – a further six shared ownership units by December 2012, and CDC working with Registered Provider partners to secure delivery of 20 social rent units by March 2013 if possible.

#### **Affordable Homes – 2011-15 and moving forward**

- The last report to the Board advised of the National Affordable Homes Programme (NAHP) 2011-15 of the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

- The outcomes of the individual Registered Provider (RP) packages have now been made available. Each RP is expected to deliver a programme utilising the new affordable rent product with affordable housing on Section 106 sites normally expected to come forward without the need for grant subsidy. Cherwell District Council is working with RP partners to enable new schemes to come forward in the District.
- As well as the RP packages, the HCA announced funding to support the First Buy initiative – a scheme which allows access to low cost home ownership on new housing products. Funding has been allocated to three private developers, all of which could help access to affordable homes in SW Bicester.
- Cherwell District Council has secured the status of Investment Partner with the HCA. This status comes with a financial allocation of £1.25 million, which has been granted to take forward community-led and self build housing in the District. Two events were held over the summer – one of which was in Bicester – to explain more about self build, community-led housing and community land trusts. Over 200 people attended the events, showing significant interest in the opportunity. Sites are currently at investigative stage.

### **Retrofitting**

- Cherwell District Council officers are currently arranging an event that could take place in mid-November to act as a forum for Registered Providers (also known as housing associations) to look at eco friendly measures within both the structure of their properties and within the behaviour and lifestyles of their tenants. It is envisaged any reinvestment programmes should have a positive impact towards the objectives of Eco Bicester.

### **North West Bicester**

- Officers are currently working with A2 Dominion on an Area Lettings Plan for the Exemplar application affordable homes
- NAHP grant for the Exemplar application was secured under the 2008-11 programme.
- Officers are currently contributing to the master planning process on affordable housing requirements.

### **3. Recommendations**

- To note progress on Eco Bicester on affordable homes issues.