

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: Review of the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board's activities for 2011 / 2012	
Author: Caroline Clapson (Eco Bicester Project Team) Tel: 01295 221514 Email: caroline.clapson@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to look back at the achievements of the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board (EBSDB) over the past year and to provide Members of the Board with a broad outline of potential future activities and work over the coming year.

2. Background

- 2.1 The EBSDB was established in March 2010 and is a key element of the governance arrangements for the Eco Bicester project.
- 2.2 Following the identification of NW Bicester as a site for an eco town, a liaison group had been established to steer work on bringing the proposal to fruition. With the successful bid for DCLG funding in 2009 it was recognised that more formal arrangements were required to steer work on the project. The Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board was formed bringing together the key organisations and government agencies which collectively have the powers and authority to deliver the NW Bicester development. One of the early decisions taken by the Board was that they did not wish to solely deal with development at NW Bicester but that they would seek to take a holistic view of the opportunities for the town as a whole.
- 2.3 The EBSDB established its working arrangements and terms of reference when it met in April 2010. The Board was established as an informal partnership with no decision powers or budget of its own. It operates on the basis of consensus and influence. The EBSDB has now been operating for 24 months and meets quarterly.
- 2.4 Current membership of the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board comprises of Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Bicester Town Council, Bicester Vision, Bicester Chamber of Commerce, the Homes and Communities Agency, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire PCT. Other partners are asked to attend as required, including the North West site's promoters, A2 Dominion Ltd and P3 Eco Ltd.

3. Work of the Strategic Delivery Board 2011/2012

- 3.1 The EBSDB has met 4 times over the past year and has considered reports on a range of subjects including: options for the use of Eco Town funding, the Bicester insulation scheme,

renewable energy use from Ardley incinerator, Energy Club and mass solar PV, utilities infrastructure in Bicester, implementation of economic strategies in Bicester, Enterprise Zone for Bicester, the emerging Bicester masterplan, risk register, application progress and demonstration project progress.

3.2 Key outputs of the SDB this past year have been:

- Strategic leadership and influence in promoting the Eco Bicester initiative
- Overseeing the progression of the Phase 1 planning application towards a positive determination
- Overseeing the progression and completion of key demonstration projects in the town including the John Paul II Centre (largest known non-residential building built to passiv haus standards in Europe), the sixth form eco-extension to Cooper School, and the provision of affordable housing to Code for Sustainable Homes levels 4 and 5 through development at the former Bryan House site.
- Overseeing the successful take-up by Bicester residents of the subsidised insulation scheme (approx 1200 completed installations)
- Initiating and supporting the examination of innovative approaches which complement the Eco Town development, such as the setting up of a Local Management Organisation for NW Bicester (and potentially wider Bicester) and the feasibility of a local community bulk purchasing energy and a solar photovoltaic scheme for Eco Bicester.
- Initiating and supporting a masterplan for Bicester to ensure a clear and coordinated approach to growth in the town over the next 20 years.
- Directing the allocation and safeguarding of DCLG funding where it can make the most impact in the delivery of NW Bicester which has included:
 - Identification of funding to gap fund the primary school on the exemplar application – the funding can be recouped from later phases of development that will be able to take advantage of the existing school provision;
 - Identification of funding for the provision of the eco business centre on the exemplar – the funding can be recouped either through the sale of the capital asset in the future or revenue from the lease of the asset; and
 - Investment in a site wide energy company (ESCO) Energy Service Company or (MUSCO) Multi Utilities Company – Investment in an ESCO/MUSCO would ensure low cost energy to the development and provide a return on investment.
 - Seed funding for the Bicester Reuse and Sustainable Living Centre.

3.3 During the past year there have been some changes in membership of the Board, largely as a consequence of the dissolution of former regional development agencies and regional government offices. Specifically, the Board no longer has representatives from SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) or GOSE (Government Office for the South East). In addition it was decided to increase the representation on the Board from the private sector - accordingly the Chairman of the Bicester Chamber of Commerce was nominated.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Over the past year, the EBSDB has dealt with a range of significant issues for Bicester and provided an effective forum, for the public and private sectors, to align resources to achieve and promote a different approach to Bicester. When the governance arrangements were set up for the Board, it was agreed that a yearly review of its activities, remit and membership would

be appropriate. At the previous review held in May 2011, it was agreed that another review should take place in May 2012. This paper contains a partial review of the EBSDB, in that it has set out what the Board has achieved over the past year, but has stopped short on making any recommendations relating to remit and membership.

- 4.2 This is because the Eco Bicester project and governance structures have been the subject of a recent internal audit at CDC, the outcomes of which are expected over the next month. As this exercise may produce some relevant recommendations for the review of the SDB, it is considered it would be better to revisit this subject in a report to the July meeting, when the audit outcomes will be known - these will be reported to the Board and can inform the discussion on any changes as necessary.
- 4.3 In addition, the project is about to reach a significant milestone with the anticipated completion of the Phase 1 S106 agreement in Spring. This will presage a new and probably more intense phase of the project with the development of the masterplan for the whole 5000 dwelling site and outline planning application. Discussion of the future remit of the Board and its membership would be timely in July, in readiness for this new phase of activity on the project.

5. Forward Plan

- 5.1 The Forward Plan for the year is contained at Appendix A of this report. It contains details of anticipated reports and the meetings to which they will be presented. No doubt as the year progresses this will be amended and augmented but it has been drawn up as shown based on how we think the project will develop.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 SDB Members are requested to:

- (i) Note the contents of this report
- (ii) Endorse the suggestion of a further report relating to a review of the remit and membership of the Board at the July meeting in the light of the CDC internal audit
- (iii) Approve the Forward Plan as set out in Appendix A.