

## Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

<b>Date of meeting: 12 April 2012</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM NO:  6</b>
<b>Report title: Update on the Eco Bicester Travel Project</b>	
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### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Board about progress with the project and the programme of work for 2012/13.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Travel Project is one of the Eco Bicester Demonstration Projects and is integral to delivering the transport elements of the Shared Vision for the town.
- 2.2 A summary of the household survey results was brought to the Delivery Board in October last year, as well as a programme of work that proposed to implement some key walking and cycling infrastructure and follow this up with a promotional push for these modes of transport. A lot of progress has been made since last autumn, but there is still a lot to put into action during 2012/13.

### 3. Eco Bicester Travel Demonstration Project Update

- 3.1 Good progress is being made with implementing new sustainable transport routes, with a shared walking and cycling path being installed on Banbury Road immediately north of Bure Park. This was identified as a need by local people that took part in the cycling audits back in 2010 and the local school and residents association have reported to us that it has been a welcomed improvement. The focus has now moved to looking at how to provide on-road and off-road cycle facilities at the southern end of Banbury Road and Buckingham Road at the town centre approach, and also around Cooper School in the Churchill Road vicinity.
- 3.2 As well as improving the network of walking and cycling routes, the project aims to promote these forms of travel and in particular look at how to overcome some of the issues that put people off cycling. People have been invited to take up the challenge of replacing one or more of their local short journeys that they usually undertake by car with either walking or cycling. If they sign up to the challenge they have access to a four week bike loan, free minor fixes and adjustments to their own bike, adult cycle training, and/or guided walks and cycle rides. People are asked to report back on their success or otherwise with their challenge, inform us of any problems they encounter and comment on whether they will continue to walk or cycle for this journey in future.
- 3.3 Officers have been working with local community groups, Grassroots Bicester, Bicester Green Gym and Go-Active, to co-ordinate activities and offer continuous promotional activities during the spring and summer. The Cycle for Bicester challenge was launched at Eco Bicester Day on 31<sup>st</sup> March. There was a lot of interest from local people, particularly

in the cycle loan and adult cycle training offer. One lady picked up her loan bike from the Demonstration House on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

- 3.4 A good quality map of walking and cycling routes in the town has also been produced and many people at Eco Bicester Day asked for a copy. The map is available on the County Council's web site and on the Eco Bicester web site and will be posted to all residents in the town. A copy of the map can be viewed at <http://www.ecobicester.org.uk/cms/node/15>.
- 3.5 The walk and cycle challenge and its package of incentives will be promoted throughout the spring and summer, with events taking place at the Demonstration Building and other locations within the town. There is an exhibition demonstrating the different elements of the Travel Project at the Demonstration Building during April and May. The next step is to offer the package to businesses and to specific community groups such as playgroups, youth associations and schools.
- 3.6 As far as public transport is concerned, new bus stops have been installed on Boston Road, Middleton Stoney Road and Shakespeare Drive to serve the newly enhanced S5 service. Improvements to existing stops in the town are planned, including the use of real time information at key stops. Officers will also be discussing with operators and local people what will be most effective in persuading people to use the bus for some journeys, prior to a promotional push in the autumn.

#### **4. Forward programme**

- 4.1 The October 2011 report to the Board presented £350,000 worth of schemes and promotional activities to be progressed. The funding was not tied to financial years. Some of the capital funding from this has been spent on the shared path on Banbury Road by Bure Park and on minor cycling improvements, such as dropped kerbs and removal of guardrail. The new bus stops and bus stop improvements are being funded by Oxfordshire County Council. The revenue element of the schemes put forward in October will be spent over the spring and summer on the cycle loan scheme, adult cycle training, bike fix events (although use of Grassroots Bicester's bike fix people will be utilised where possible), production of the map and promotional activities.
- 4.2 The remainder of the £350,000 will be used for capital projects, in particular cycling improvements on Banbury Road, Buckingham Road and in the Churchill Road area. Some minor improvements are also planned on Southwold. The next phase of the project will be to look at walking and cycling needs in the Highfield area and from Langford village to the town centre. The need for cycle parking was brought up by several people at Eco Bicester Day and in email correspondence that officers have received. Work has begun on identifying key locations and needs to be firmed up. There is also a need to proceed with public transport and car share improvements and promotional activities in the autumn and winter. To achieve all the works and activities desired would require more funding than what remains of the £900,000 identified budget for the travel behaviour project. A report will be brought to a future meeting of the Board identifying the potential future programme of work and funding opportunities to continue the project.

#### **5. Recommendations**

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the report.

## **Eco Bicester Travel Demonstration Project – 2012/13 Programme**

### Information Gathering

#### **Monitoring Report**

A baseline report was produced in December 2011 and will be repeated at the end of this year. The travel project enabled the installation of cycle counters in the town and these are maintained on an annual basis.

### Target setting

The baseline mode share ratio is 31:69 (non-car to car) and the short term aim is to achieve a 40:60 ratio, in line with the increases seen in the Sustainable Transport Demonstration Towns. The longer term aim in the Shared Vision is for a 50:50 ratio.

The total number of trips made per day by Bicester residents is 83,720, of which 57,767 are made by car. In order to achieve a 40:60 split the project would need to change 7,534 car trips to sustainable modes per day. This could be achieved with a 2.25% change each year, over four years this will see a 9% modal shift to sustainable modes.

Monitoring to see if these changes have been achieved will be difficult. Analysing results with particular groups will be easier and the cycle challenge web-based product should help to register individual take up.

### Walking & Cycling

#### **User Audits**

Further walking and cycling audits should be undertaken with residents in the Highfield and Langford Village areas of the town. The audits undertaken so far have been very effective in engaging with local people on the project and officers have involved them in the design of schemes going in on the ground and have sought their review of what has been provided.

#### **Infrastructure Improvements**

##### *Quick wins*

Local people have been responding to articles on the project in the Cherwell Link and as word gets around that action is taking place. Some minor improvements can be made quickly and at minimal cost.

##### *Primary Routes*

Five primary walking and cycling routes were originally identified at an early stage in the project. Provision of facilities on the southern ends of Banbury and Buckingham Roads and on Churchill Road would complete these routes. This work will also link in with a review of cycle parking and walking and cycling access to Bicester North Station that officers are undertaking with Chiltern Railways.

##### *Secondary Routes*

Once the primary routes have been completed the aim is for the project to look at walking and cycling provisions in the Highfield area and between Langford Village and the town centre. A look in the Highfield area will need to tie in with work on access from the North West Bicester

development and work on links from Langford Village may form part of a general look at walking and cycling routes across the southern area of the town as part of the Movement Strategy.

#### *Cycle Parking*

A number of local residents are flagging this up as an issue throughout the town. The long term aim is to have some form of cycle hub in the town centre, but in the short term the project needs to install secure cycle parking at key destinations throughout the town.

#### *Maintenance*

Improvements to routes to bring them up to required standards needs to be undertaken by either Oxfordshire County Council or Bicester Town Council, but general maintenance outside of what is usually undertaken by the Town Council could be carried out by local community groups. There is also an offer for Springfield Open Prison to undertake some of this work, which is being pursued at the moment.

### **Promotional Push**

#### *Walking and Cycling Map*

The map has now been produced and is available on line. Many people that visited the display at Eco Bicester Day wanted a copy of the map. The back of the map is currently being drawn up and designed. Once this has been completed the map will be printed and distributed to every household in Bicester.

#### *Cycle Loan Scheme*

People that sign up for the cycle challenge can take advantage of the cycle loan scheme (they have to be over the age of 18 and a Bicester resident). They can borrow a Raleigh hybrid bike or Brompton Folding Bike plus other equipment over a four week period (various forms of child seat, lights, locks, wet weather gear and helmet). Oxford Bike Company has supplied the bicycles and will also maintain them and store them when they are not in use. The current funding commitment enables the scheme to run for six months over the spring and summer. For the travel project to really achieve a change to people's travel habits it needs longevity. The project should be looking to carry out a similar promotional event next year if funding can be made available and looking at ways to keep aspects such as the adult cycle training and bike fix events going longer term.

#### *Adult Cycle Training*

Haddenham Cycle Training has been appointed to carry out this part of the scheme. In signing up for the cycle challenge people have access to training sessions – group training requires about six participants. A couple of fixed dates in May will be on offer, one in Southwold and one off the Launton Road which will be aimed at people working in the area so will be a late afternoon session. The training company will also look to train up local Bicester people to become part of their company so that longer term sessions can be organised by local people.

#### *Bike Fix Sessions*

Minor repair work and bike adjustments will be offered to participants in the cycle challenge who have their own bike or take out a loan bike. Oxford Bike Company will also be supplying this part of the package and will be present at the Demonstration Building on the bike loan days and at other locations in the town on other days. Grassroots Bicester do have mechanics that will carry out such repairs and they will be used at certain events, which will cut down on the cost to the project. However, the loan bikes will need to be maintained by Oxford Bike Company for insurance purposes.

#### *Escorted Walks & Rides*

At the moment the escorted rides will be arranged through the cycle training sessions and these sessions will also recommend that participants take part in the Go-Active cycle rides that

are put on by Cherwell District Council. If there proves to be more interest in other walks and rides then sessions can be arranged.

#### *Cycle for Bicester Challenge System*

People that sign up for the challenge need to record the journeys that they undertake by bicycle; report back on any problems with the route and comment at the end of the four week period as to whether they will continue with cycling for this trip. They will be asked if they would be prepared to respond to a follow up in 6 months time so we can better judge the long term impact of the scheme. A web site based system is being developed, but in the meantime people have access to a spreadsheet to fill in.

#### Public Transport

##### **Infrastructure Improvements and Real Time Information**

New bus stops have been provided in Boston Road, Shakespeare Drive and Middleton Stoney Road. Improvements to existing stops are also happening at a number of locations. These works are funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

The number of stops requiring real time information will be reviewed when officers look at the overall public transport package.

##### **Promotional Push**

The aim is to hold this over Autumn/Winter 2012.