

North West Bicester Eco Development Action Learning Seminar (part 1 & 2) Summary February – March, 2012

Social Life (a new venture of the Young Foundation), in partnership with A2 Dominion, held two Action Learning Seminars with residents and stakeholders from Bicester and the NW Bicester Eco development. Participants came from the voluntary and community, public, and private sectors. The seminars took place on the 2nd February 2012 and 22nd of March 2012, at John Paul II Centre in Bicester and included presentations from Social Life (the Young Foundation), ATLAS (Homes and Communities Agency), A2 Dominion, and the Cherwell District Council as well as roundtable discussions.

The aim of the seminars was to focus on achieving the key priorities outlined in ***One Shared Vision*** - a document formally endorsed by all three local authorities that looks at the town and prioritises "encouraging *people to have a real say in the future of their town*" and "*making opportunities for local communities to own and govern local community assets*".

5 April 2012



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Action Learning Seminar 1

Seminar content

Presentations

- Social life of new communities - *Social Life*
- What is the role of a proxy community? - *Atlas (HCA)*

Questions for discussion

- What can we learn from the experience of pioneer residents elsewhere?
- What is the scope to think differently about how Bicester evolves as the town grows?
- What does this mean for new and existing Bicester residents?
- Is a proxy community appropriate for NW Bicester?
- What are the practical opportunities that development plans for Bicester present?

Main findings emerged from discussions

- There needs to be a balance of support between the new development and Bicester, recognising the impact it will have on existing services and utilising existing local resources.
- There should be better coordination, good communication and feedback using creative ways of engagement and participation.
- The identity of NW Bicester should be integrated with Bicester as a whole, building a cohesive identity of old and new.
- Participants were in favour of utilising a proxy community methodology as it could be a 'very useful' tool for determining the needs of future residents.
- New community facilities and services should be flexible so that they can adapt over time to the changing needs of the population and avoid over duplication of existing services.
- The new development should learn from early Bicester pioneer residents.
- It needs a strong local leadership.



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Action Learning Seminar 2

Seminar content

Presentations

- Overview of the role of A2 Dominion in NW Bicester and virtual tour of the exemplar community - *A2 Dominion*
- What can Local Management Organisations (LMO) do? – *Social Life at the Young Foundation*
- What a Local Management Organisations can offer NW Bicester - *A2 Dominion and Cherwell District Council*

Questions for discussion

- What can an LMO offer to NW Bicester and Bicester as a whole?
- Who should and could be involved in shaping what the LMO looks like?
- How would you like to be involved?
- What issues or obstacles to involvement currently exist?

Main findings emerged from discussions

- The whole of Bicester should benefit as the LMO would help to integrate the new development and the existing community.
- A LMO could potentially deliver neighbourhood activities, create jobs, manage community facilities and open space, income generation and promote the principles of low-carbon living.
- Stakeholders including residents, voluntary and community sector, local politicians, and local business leaders should be involved in the early stages of the LMO steering group.
- LMO board should start with a small core of people and that A2 Dominion has a key role in creating a framework that allows the LMO growth to be self-sufficient and eventually managed by residents.
- Several participants expressed interest in being involved in the LMO.
- The main obstacle for most people participating in the LMO is insufficient time, particularly for local volunteers
- It needs to be made clear that a LMO would offer a mix of activities and value-added services that complement the existing services delivered by the local authority. There is apprehension regarding the potential for the duplication and competition for service provision.



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