

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: Update on the Travel Project	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the Board on the progress of the various transport related the projects and initiatives. It follows a similar report in April 2012 and outlines the travel programme going forward in 2014/2015. The following projects are included:
- The travel behaviour project
 - Proposals for a continuation of the cycle loan scheme
 - Update on cycling and walking infrastructure projects and
 - Preparation of a sustainable transport strategy

2. Background

- 2.1 Various travel projects have been running since 2010. They have been integral to delivering the transport elements of the One Shared Vision for the town and have been reported regularly to the Board. After almost four years, progress has been made but there is still a lot to do. The success and impact of the various initiatives in promoting more sustainable modes of transport in the town has been recognised in previous reports.
- 2.2 Since the previous report in April 2012, the Bicester Transport Policy position has progressed. This includes Policy SLE4 of the Submission Cherwell Local Plan (January 2014) and Bicester Movement Strategy (2013).
- 2.3 As well as improving the network of walking and cycling routes, the project has promoted travel choice and alternatives to short local trips by private motor car. It has looked at the barriers to cycling. Since the start of the project, cycling has risen up the political agenda following announcements by the Prime Minister and others. The ambition remains for Bicester to be recognised as a cycling town.
- 2.4 A summary of the household travel survey results was brought to the Board in October 2011, together with a programme of work and proposals to implement some key projects. It focussed on walking and cycling infrastructure and promotion. The shared walking and cycling link installed on Banbury Road immediately north of Bure Park local centre is an example of an enhanced foot and cycle link constructed as a result of the project. It was identified as a need by local people that took part in Cycling Audits in 2010. The local school and Residents Association have welcomed the improvement.
- 2.5 A cycle scheme, "Cycle for Bicester", managed by Oxfordshire County Council's Travel Choices team with support from the Eco Bicester Community Liaison Officer, encouraged residents to replace one or more of their local short car journeys with a similar journey by foot or bicycle. It included a competitive element and sought to engage residents keen to take up a new "challenge". By signing up to the challenge participants were given access to the following:

- a four week bike loan
- free minor bike repairs and adjustments
- adult cycle training, and/or guided walks and cycle rides.

- 2.6 The Cycle for Bicester challenge was launched at Eco Bicester Day. The Bronze, Silver and Gold cycle routes prepared in summer 2013 have been well received.
- 2.7 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. 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. There have been some minor improvements in Southwold. The need for further cycle parking in the town has been raised by local residents. Work has been undertaken on identifying key locations for additional provision and these are all on highway land and work on installation is progressing. There is also a desire to proceed with public transport and car share improvements and promotional activities. 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.

3. Eco Bicester Travel Demonstration Project Update

- 3.1 The project is coming to the end of its demonstration phase and moving into its next phase as a long term behaviour change and infrastructure delivery project. It will be informed by a sustainable transport strategy with proposals for implementing new infrastructure for sustainable transport.

Monitoring

- 3.2 A baseline report was produced in December 2011 and was expected to be repeated annually. The travel project has enabled the installation of cycle counters in the town and these are maintained on an annual basis. Monitoring of changes to the number of trips made by car however is difficult.

Walking and Cycling Audits

- 3.3 The previous report proposed further walking and cycling audits with residents in the Highfield and Langford Village areas of the town. An audit in Highfield ties in with work on access from the North West Bicester development. 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 and Bicester Masterplan.
- 3.4 The audits undertaken so far have been very effective in engaging with local people on the project. Officers have involved local community representatives and volunteers in the design of schemes and have sought their input.

Bicester Bike Scheme

- 3.5 At the start of the travel behaviour demonstration project, the intention was for wide local community involvement to eventually lead to a culture change and change of perception towards walking and cycling in the town. The "Cycle for Bicester" scheme's objective was to encourage cycling in the town and seek to overcome the perceived barriers to cycling. The scheme comprising of cycle loans, bike fixes and targeted those living, working and/or travelling in Bicester, particularly those considering taking up cycling as an alternative to car trips. The feedback has been positive, with good awareness of the Scheme and its aims. It forms the basis for a similar project to be continued in the future. A2 Dominion have over the last two years organised a Bicester Bike Day event to promote cycling in the town. This

event has been well attended and supports the work to raise awareness and encourage the take up of cycling.

- 3.6 Following discussions between officers and Bicester Green, it has been agreed that 10 bicycles (eight hybrid and two folding) will be available for hire from the facility in Station Approach, Bicester together with two child seats, a child trailer and a Tag-along to encourage young families to take up cycling. All the bicycles and associated equipment is provided with security locks and safety equipment.
- 3.7 Bicester Green will manage the loaning and hiring of bikes and equipment as part of the new loan scheme proposals. Under the new arrangement, bikes will be available for hire at any time during the usual Bicester Green opening hours.
- 3.8 The long term aim remains 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.

Capital Programme update

- 3.9 Route improvements and upgrades are being progressed to enhance existing facilities. Previous work focussed on Churchill Road 'shared space' concept in the vicinity of Cooper School and desktop feasibility associated with on and off carriageway cycle facilities on Buckingham, Banbury and Churchill roads, completing missing cycle links to the town centre. Due to limited funds available the project was amended with the 'shared space' concept replaced by cycle route strategy (corridor approach) on the targeted routes along Banbury, Buckingham and Churchill Roads to link with the Bicester Town Centre Access Improvements. This will include additional cycle parking at locations around the town centre. Further work is now required to take the scheme to detailed design. This includes various option testing and costings so that officers can decide which options will provide the most benefits for the funding available (approximately £300k). OCC has commissioned further feasibility using its own funds.

Forward programme

- 3.10 An indicative programme is below:

No	Milestone	Start Date	Finish Date	Milestone/decision point
1	Feasibility design and costings	April 2014	May 2014	Options to take to detailed design
2	Set-up CDC/OCC Project Team	April 2014	April 2014	
3	Business Case approved	June 2014	July 2014	BC sign-off (OCC)
4	Informal consultation	Sept 2014	October 2014	Consultation results and changes to scheme
5	Formal consultation	Nov 2014	Dec 2014	Consultation results
6	Report writing	Jan 2015	Feb 2015	Recommendations
3	Cabinet	Mar	Mar	CM approval

No	Milestone	Start Date	Finish Date	Milestone/decision point
	Member Decisions (if required)	2015	2015	
4	Commence detailed design	Mar 2015	May 2015	
5	Mobilise	May 2015	June 2015	
6	Construction	June 2015	Sept 2015	

Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy

- 3.11 A Sustainable Transport Strategy has been commissioned to support the preparation of the Bicester Masterplan including the sustainable transport links to the proposed growth at North West Bicester and Graven Hill. It will also inform decisions on the provision of transport infrastructure following engagement with local key stakeholders. Baseline information will be reviewed including the aspiration of the One Shared Vision transport section and relevant best practice for Bicester. A report is expected by the end of July 2014.

Other Initiatives

- 3.12 Opportunities continue to be sought to support sustainable travel initiatives. This includes looking at the potential for a car club in the town and opportunities around electric vehicles.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Travel and movement in the town is an important issue and work on the Local Plan, Bicester Masterplan and Local Transport Plan Area Strategy all provide the context for work on travel behaviour. With the level of growth proposed in the town the issue of travel is critical to ensuring a prosperous and successful place. There will need to make increased provision for vehicles but sustainable travel has an important role to play in the town by reducing the impact of vehicles and air pollution and in terms of walking and cycling providing a healthy and free alternative to car travel.
- 4.2 Although the travel behaviour work has been successful in the areas it has been possible to pursue, there has been a difficulty in resourcing work and this has resulted in slower delivery of projects than would otherwise have been the case. The development of a sustainable travel strategy will provide a review of the issues around sustainable travel and identify opportunities going forward. This will provide a firm basis to enable consideration of priorities going forward and resources required to deliver them.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are asked to;
- (1) note the report and the positive work that has been undertaken to date to support sustainable travel in the town;
 - (2) support the review of work on sustainable travel following the receipt of the Sustainable Travel Strategy in July – Reporting to October Board meeting to be targeted.