

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 10 April 2014	AGENDA ITEM NO: 10
Report title: Bicester Development Update	
Author: Andrew Bowe Tel: 01295 221842 Email: andrew.bowe@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update for Board Members on current proposals in the town, including the development activity in the town particularly and provides an update on the local planning policy position.

2. Background

- 2.1 Similar reports have been presented to the Board previously, most recently at the last meeting in January 2014. The importance of monitoring the development proposals and planning policy progress in the town has been recognised by the Board from an early stage.

3. Policy Development

Cherwell Local Plan and Bicester Masterplan

- 3.1. The Cherwell Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary for State in January 2014. A pre-Hearing meeting took place with the Inspector on 25th March 2014 and the Examination is expected to take place in June 2014. Once adopted the Local Plan will provide the policy framework for planning decisions. Supplementary Planning Documents including the Bicester Masterplan and North West Bicester masterplan will be prepared to align with the timeframe for adoption of the Local Plan. The County wide Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was published in March 2014 and is being considered by Oxfordshire local authorities. Further consultation on the Bicester Masterplan will take place in 2014 following submission of the Local Plan.

4. Current Development Proposals

- 4.1 This section of the report provides the Board with an overview the current position on the most significant development proposals affecting the town. The attached appendix to the report identifies the major schemes that have planning permission, those where a planning application has been submitted and finally those where there has been public consultation or screening or scoping for environmental impact assessment.

Graven Hill

- 4.2 Approval has been granted by Cherwell District Council's executive to proceed with the multi-million pound purchase of Bicester's Graven Hill site which is the first stage in enabling the delivery of the UK's first self-build community of up to 1,900 homes, one million square metres of commercial space and the creation of up 2,000 jobs and apprenticeships.

- 4.3 Contracts were exchanged with the Ministry of Defence on March 14th 2014 with a date set of June 30th 2014 to complete on the transaction.
- 4.4 There is a resolution to grant planning permission for the development of the Graven Hill site and for a building of C Site at Arncott (see attached schedule). The S106 and S278 agreement is currently being negotiated with DIO and OCC.
- 4.5 Cherwell District Council is currently reviewing the options to deliver the Graven Hill vision in order to ensure the most appropriate governance model is in place at the time of the completion of the land acquisition. The process is going well and reports are due to be taken to the Graven Hill Project Board in April and May 2014. The Executive will consider the proposals at the June 2014 meeting.
- 4.6 Now that contracts have been exchanged and media/promotion restrictions have been lifted the Council will be launching its promotion activity for the site in the forthcoming months. This will include a dedicated website, sales and marketing office and proposed information date on the self build options.
- 4.7 It is proposed that the Board receives a presentation on the vision for Graven Hill in July or October 2014.

RAF Bicester

- 4.8 Proposals for RAF Bicester are being developed through the preparation of a masterplan and Heritage Partnership Agreement (HPA). The Director (Bicester) has visited the site and can report that Bicester Heritage have made good progress in preliminary works and encouraging businesses onto the site. It is proposed that the Board received a presentation on the site in Summer 2014.

Town Centre Redevelopment: Phase 2 Community Building

- 4.9 Proposals for the redevelopment of Franklins Yard car park have been submitted (application reference 14/00403/F) including a £6.6 million community building as part of the final phase of the town centre regeneration project. Cherwell District Council has submitted plans for the erection of a five storey building comprising community and town centre uses together with servicing and alterations to the vehicle access. The building is proposed to house a new library, hotel and retail space and will incorporate energy saving measures in keeping with the Bicester One Shared Vision initiative.
- 4.10 The five-storey building will front on to Bure Place and Wesley Square. The total 4,643 sq. metre scheme comprises a hotel, offices and retail uses. On the ground floor, space has been allocated for a Cherwell District Council Link Point, restaurant and/or retail space. On the first floor, Oxfordshire County Council will house its new library and incorporate the Bicester Local History Society, with the remaining space being set aside for office use. There will be further office space on the second floor while the third and fourth floors will be occupied by a 53-bed Travelodge hotel.
- 4.11 The building will showcase environmentally sustainable technologies including photovoltaic panels, use of combined heat and power and cycle parking. The building is working towards a BREEAM environmental assessment rating of very good and will be an important development as part of the Eco Bicester programme, meeting the need for high quality cultural facilities in the town centre to serve existing residents and expected increased population. The application

is due to be discussed by councillors in May. If approved, work is due to commence in July and be completed by summer 2015. For more information visit www.cherwell.gov.uk and search for application number 14/00403/F.

Land at South Lodge, Fringford Road, Caversfield

- 4.12 An appeal has been submitted following the refusal of an outline planning application for up to 200 houses on edge of Bicester at Caversfield. An inquiry will take place in April 2014.

Eco Business Centre

- 4.13 Work has commenced on taking forward proposals for the Eco Business Centre and an options appraisal is being undertaken to establish the preferred approach to delivery of the project and funding. A report is due to be considered at CDC's Executive to establish a capital project to progress the delivery of the centre in July 2014. Further progress reports will be reported to the Board at future meetings.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Board is recommended to note the report.