

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 22 January 2015	AGENDA ITEM NO: 7
Report title: Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy update	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Board on the preparation of the Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy including the next steps towards completion.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Eco Bicester One Shared Vision sets out to promote walking and cycling in the town and encourage sustainable travel choices. One of the priority areas for the Strategic Delivery Board was the improvement of mode share for walking and cycling through a travel behaviour project.
- 2.2 The travel behaviour project started in 2010 with survey work and based on the outcomes has sought to focus primarily on support for cycling in the town. Capital improvements have been made by providing an additional cycle path link adjacent to Bure Park and measures connected with Banbury/Buckingham Road and North Street improvements. The provision of locations for increased cycle stands have been identified as well as the need for improvements to connect cycle routes at the town centre end of Banbury and Buckingham Roads. However to date it has not been possible to secure the implementation of these later schemes although work continues to support their delivery.
- 2.3 Revenue funding was used to support cycle loans, training and bike fixes which provide popular. There is no further revenue funding in the budget. The bike loan project has continued by Bicester Green, promoting a bike fix service and cycle loans. and these have been well received.
- 2.4 Although some progress has been made, with the level of growth proposed in the town sustainable travel will have an important role to play going forward in supporting travel within the town, environmental improvements and healthy lifestyles. The strategy will have a role focusing work to deliver the travel behaviour project and increased use of sustainable modes.

Bicester Sustainable Transport Strategy (STS) was reported to the meeting of the Board in April 2014.

The previous report stated: *"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."*

- 2.5 In July 2014 a members' workshop was held to discuss transport issues in Bicester including the proposed realignment of Howes Lane, proposals for the town centre and the Bicester STS. The views of members have been considered in the preparation of the final version of the STS and officers continue to work with the transport consultants on the delivery plan for the strategy.
- 2.6 Transport issues in Bicester were also discussed in some detail at the Cherwell Local Plan Examination in December 2014. The intention remains to use the STS to deliver the transport objectives of the Local Plan and inform the emerging Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) currently being prepared by the County Council and expected to be consulted upon from January to March 2015.
- 2.7 At the same time, Cherwell District Council has submitted a registration of interest to the Office of Low Carbon Vehicles' £35 million Ultra Low City Scheme with an announcement on shortlisted bids in mid March 2015. The City Scheme will be run in partnership with Go Ultra Low (GUL) – with winning bids designated GUL Cities. Go Ultra Low is a jointly funded partnership between Government and several major car manufacturers to explain the benefits of ultra low emission vehicles to drivers and fleets. The campaign website, www.goultralow.com is a one stop hub for everything drivers need to know about ultra low emission vehicles.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 The STS will provide an important tool in guiding the transport infrastructure and travel behaviour change in Bicester. It complements and expands on the policies of the Cherwell Local Plan and masterplanning work that has been undertaken. Furthermore it will be used to inform the emerging LTP4 and minimise the impact of congestion in the town. Once the Local Plan is adopted, the Bicester Masterplan will provide further detail on the Council's proposals for sustainable transport.
- 3.2 Officers will continue to focus on an action plan to identify schemes and projects that can be delivered in the next three years (short term) and once the final delivery plan is completed it will be presented to the Board for approval.
- 3.3 On this basis, the Board should note the progress and timescales for the preparation of the document and support its principles.