

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

Date of meeting: 8 October 2015	AGENDA ITEM NO: 5
Report title: NW Bicester Steering Group Report	
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to set out progress on the development at NW Bicester. The report covers progress on the exemplar development which is now underway, the production of Supplementary Planning Document and planning applications relating to the site.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Eco Towns PPS identified NW Bicester as 1 of 4 eco towns to be developed nationally in 2009. The PPS has now been withdrawn although it was retained for Bicester until the Local Plan was adopted. The land at NW Bicester is identified as a strategic allocation for development in the adopted Local Plan.
- 2.2 Since the identification of the site at NW Bicester for an eco development, the Eco Bicester project team has been working with developers to deliver an exemplary sustainable development that will function as part of the growing Bicester Town.

3. Exemplar Development

- 3.1 In July 2012 planning permission was granted for an exemplar development of 393 dwellings, local centre, eco business centre and primary school (Application reference 10/01780/HYBRID). The proposed development is believed to be the largest Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 scheme and domestic PV array in the country. The proposal also includes rainwater harvesting and reduced water use, car club and sustainable travel incentives, high speed broadband, provision for electric vehicles, allotments, real time transport and community information to each home, net biodiversity gain, provision for a local management organisation and 30% affordable housing. The application therefore does achieve an exemplary sustainable development which is attracting considerable attention both nationally and internationally.
- 3.2 Work on the development commenced in May 2014 with construction starting on highway access work. Work on site on the construction of dwellings has followed. The show homes and sales centre opened on the 6th June 2015 and the properties on phase 1 (97 dwellings) are due to be occupied winter 2015 through to spring 2016. Feedback has indicated that sales are above industry averages and are going well. Development will progress on to the second phase immediately on completion of the first phase.

- 3.3 The construction process is being monitored through an innovate UK project (BEPIT) which is seeking to help improve the construction for homes that are of higher sustainability standards. The learning that comes through this project will be used to improve construction on the later phases and will be shared through the Eco Bicester Living Lab, <http://bicesterlivinglab.org/>.
- 3.4 In addition to residential development the planning permission for the exemplar also includes a local centre, eco business centre, primary school and open space. The first elements of the local centre, the convenience store and community hall, are required prior to the completion of 250 dwellings and a planning application needed to be submitted 12 months prior to the start of on site works or the occupation of 100 dwellings, whichever is the sooner. Marketing of the retail store is also required to commence to the same time line.
- 3.5 An application has also been submitted for the local centre, application ref 15/00760/F. The application is for;

Development of a new Local Centre comprising a Convenience Store (use class A1), Retail Units (flexible use class A1/A3/A5), Pub (use class A4), Community Hall (use class D1), Nursery (use class D1), Commercial Units (flexible use class A2/B1/D1) with associated Access, Servicing, Landscaping and Parking with a total GEA of 3,617 sqm and at the time of writing this report is yet to be determined.
- 3.6 An application has been submitted to Oxfordshire County Council for the primary school and planning permission has now been issued. The White Horse Federation have been selected as the academy provider for the school and work on construction is due to commence shortly with opening in September 2016.
- 3.7 The local centre will also include the Eco Business Centre and a report on the proposed business centre was considered by Cherwell District Council's Executive in July 2015. The Executive provided authority to proceed to procure the building and work is underway to this effect.

4. **Master Plan for NW Bicester**

- 4.1 A2Dominion have led on master planning for the whole of the NW Bicester site. The Masterplan and supporting documents were submitted to Cherwell District Council in May 2014 with updated transport strategy on 24 June 2014. This masterplan has been worked up in collaboration with the Council and key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The District Council has now produced a draft supplementary planning document (SPD) to guide development proposals for the site. The document was approved for Development Management purposes by Cherwell's Executive on the 1st June 2015. The document is being reviewed in the light of the Local Plan Inspector's report and will proceed to formal adoption now the Local Plan has been adopted. The SPD has built on much of the information in the masterplan documents to provide a framework for the development.

5. **Outline Planning Applications**

- 5.1 A2Dominion have submitted 2 outline applications to Cherwell District Council for determination. The applications are for;

14/01384/OUT

Development comprising redevelopment to provide up to 2600 residential dwellings (Class C3), commercial floorspace (Class A1 - A5, B1 and B2), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre, land to accommodate one new primary school (Up to 2FE) (Class D1) and land to accommodate the extension of the primary school permitted pursuant to application (reference 10/01780/HYBRID). Such development to include provision of strategic landscape, provision of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access routes, infrastructure, ancillary engineering and other operations

Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site, Banbury Road B4100, Caversfield

This application is subject to a resolution taken on the 19th March 2015 to grant planning permission subject to the completion of legal agreements. Work is progressing on the detailed drafting of legal agreements with a target for completion in 2015.

14/01641/OUT

Outline Application - To provide up to 900 residential dwellings (Class C3), commercial floor space (Class A1-A5, B1 and B2), leisure facilities (Class D2), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre and land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2 FE) (Class D1), secondary school up to 8 FE (Class D1). Such development to include provision of strategic landscape, provision of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access routes, infrastructure, ancillary engineering and other operations

Land Adj To Bicester Road And South West Of Avonbury Business Park, Howes Lane, Bicester

This application is to be subject to amendments which have been advertised prior to determination of the application.

5.2 Albion Land has submitted an application for;

14/01675/OUT

OUTLINE - Erection of up to 53,000 sqm of floor space to be for B8 and B2 with ancillary B1 (use classes) employment provision within two employment zones covering an area of 9.45ha; parking and service areas to serve the employment zones; a new access off the Middleton Stoney Road (B4030); temporary access of Howes Lane pending the delivery of the realigned Howes Lane; 4.5ha of residential land; internal roads, paths and cycleways; landscaping including strategic green infrastructure (G1); provision of sustainable urban systems (suds) incorporating landscaped areas with balancing ponds and swales. Associated utilities and infrastructure.

OS Parcel 4200 Adjoining And North East Of A4095 And Adjoining And South West Of Howes Lane, Bicester

This application was received 7 October 2014 and is also the subject of amendments that have been re advertised prior to the application being determined.

5.3 A2Dominion have submitted a detailed application for the realignment of Howes Lane.

14/01968/F

Construction of new road from Middleton Stoney Road roundabout to join Lord's Lane, east of Purslane Drive, to include the construction of a new crossing under the existing railway line north of the existing Avonbury Business Park, a bus only link east of the railway line, a new

road around Hawkwell Farm to join Bucknell Road, retention of part of Old Howes Lane and Lord's Lane to provide access to and from existing residential areas and Bucknell Road to the south and a one way route northbound from Shakespeare Drive where it joins with the existing Howes Lane with priority junction and associated infrastructure.

Twenty Ha Of Land Proposal Of New Highway Aligned With Howes Lane Bicester

This application has been validated (26 November 14) and been the subject of consultation. This application is for full planning permission and again amendments to the application are awaited that will require re advertising.

- 5.4 P3Eco have submitted an application for;

14/02121/OUT

OUTLINE - Development to provide up to 1,700 residential dwellings (Class C3), a retirement village (Class C2), flexible commercial floorspace (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, B1 and C1), social and community facilities (Class D1), land to accommodate one energy centre and land to accommodate one new primary school (up to 2FE) (Class D1). Such development to include provision of strategic landscape, provision of new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access routes, infrastructure and other operations (including demolition of farm buildings on Middleton Stoney Road)

Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester Middleton Stoney Road Bicester Oxfordshire

This application was validated 31 December 2014 and amendments have been received which are being re advertised.

- 5.5 The above proposals cover much, but not all, of the NW Bicester site. The way the site is coming forward as a series of individual large applications adds to the complexity of dealing with the proposals as it is necessary to ensure that they cumulatively deliver the masterplan proposals for the site and the delivery of infrastructure is co ordinated between proposals. Legal advice has been taken to support the drafting of agreements to ensure the high standards of development sought are delivered as well as the necessary delivery of infrastructure.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Good progress is being made with the delivery of the exemplar development on site. It is particularly encouraging that sales have demonstrated the appetite of house buyers for development to higher standards. Progress is also being made with regard to applications for the wider master plan site. The development taking place is a national exemplar and sets new standards for sustainable development.
- 6.2 The support of the Local Plan Inspector for the Policy Bicester 1 will enable the SPD to progress to adoption and facilitate the determination of future applications and support the requirement to meet Eco Town standards.
- 6.3 Never the less there remain challenges in ensuring such a large and complex project comes forward in a timely manner and there remains work to be done around processing of planning applications and securing legal agreements to ensure comprehensive exemplar sustainable development. This together with ensuring key infrastructure is available within the town to

support its growth including a new tunnel under the railway will be the focus of work over the next quarter.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 The Board are asked to note the progress on the delivery of development at NW Bicester.