

Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board

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Report title: Funding and Investment attracted to Bicester	
Author: Jenny Barker	
Tel: 01295 221828	
Email: jenny.barker@cherwell-dc.gov.uk	

1. Purpose of Report

This report is to provide an update for the Board on funding and investment that has been attracted to Bicester since the establishment of the Board in 2010. It updates previous reports that have provided the information on this basis previously, the last time being reported in January 2017.

2. Background

One measure of success of the work in Bicester is the extent that Bicester has been able to attract funding and investment. This funding and investment is delivering planned growth and a wide range of projects and activity in Bicester for the benefit of the town. Funding and investment has been in a variety of forms, Bicester has attracted grant and project funding, public sector investment as well as investment by the private sector. This report seeks to update the Board following previous reports and highlight some of the key areas where funding or investment that has been achieved in the period 2015 to 2017, as well as update on the overall totals.

The information in this report comes from a variety of sources. The information on the value of private sector investment is based on advice provided by Montague Evans in the attached report. Appendix A sets out the assumptions that have informed the desk top study. This therefore provides an estimation of the value of the investment that has been made rather than a precise figure.

3. Funding and Investment attracted to Bicester

Government Funding and Investment

The government has provided significant funding to support the work in Bicester. This was originally provided on the identification of Bicester as an Eco Town and subsequently has been through Capacity funding for the Garden Town and latterly for the Healthy New Town. In the period 2015-2017 funding has been to support the Garden Town and deliver the Healthy New Town work, which has resulted in £1,677,000 of grant funding bringing the overall total from 2010 to approximately £15,447,687.00. This funding has supported the establishment and maintenance of a project team and delivery of a variety of projects within the town such as the successful insulation and boiler schemes and also the forward funding of the primary school at NW Bicester, the Eco Business Centre that is under construction, Garden Town work and the healthy new town project activity. The funding has also supported the commissioning of work such as the Investment Prospectus for the town.

In addition to the figure identified above, further funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (£6.7m) has also been allocated to Bicester and work is on- going to secure these funds.

Affordable Housing Investment

Since 2007 there has been investment by the Homes and Community Agency in a number of sites in Bicester. This includes investment in new build housing, such as in affordable housing at NW Bicester, mortgage rescue schemes and open market home buy. In total 247 homes had been supported by £8.32m of funding up to 2016. In addition 102 units had been supported with recoverable investment of £3.4m. This has amounted to £11.72m of investment in homes. Up dated figures for 2017 will be available 2Q 2018.

Grant for projects

Since the establishment of the Board the project team and other organisations have sought funding opportunities to deliver projects for the benefit of the town. These projects have covered a range of activities and been funded by a range of organisations. The Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) has funded projects related to energy (includes Green Deal Pilot); the Heat Network Unit has funded feasibility on the use of waste heat from Ardley, Innovate UK has funded studies on improving the build process, local energy mapping, climate change adaptation and the innovative retrofit at the Garth. Other grants have also been attracted from other funders such as WREN, TOE 2, and NERC for environmental projects such as bridge repair at Bure Park, wildflower planting and green infrastructure. Other projects include innovative feasibility on fuel cells, the Bicester Moves waste reduction funding and Lottery Celebrate for the launch of the Healthy New Town. Funding through the Healthy New Town pilot has supported projects such as the provision of the health routes, work with schools and businesses, new models of care, air quality modelling and work with the voluntary sector.

EU funding has also been secured as part of OxFutures low carbon project which is supporting SMEs with energy audits for businesses and the establishment of Oxfordshire Greentech.

We have recorded over £2,309,496 grant funding awarded for projects in Bicester. This is likely to be an under estimate as other grant funding will have been attracted by other organisations which the Council does not have a record of.

Local Authority Direct Investment

Since 2010 investment has been made by the local authorities in the town. This has included the Pioneer Square development and Franklins House with new library and offices. The Town Council has invested in the café in Garth Park and other smaller investment has been made such as in the provision of recycling sites in the town. The Cooper school has expanded with the provision of the sixth form centre, St Egburghs school has relocated and expanded and investment has been made at Kingsmere in the delivery of the Whitlands Sports Village pitches and pavilion.

Since the previous report investment has been made in in Perch co-working space at Franklins House. Specialist housing has been provided at Old Place Yard through the Build! team. Again not all costs are known, but £27,168,232 of investment was previously identified and the above projects alone add £4,700,000.

Investment in Infrastructure

Investment in infrastructure has included the provision of road investment such as the Junction 9 pinch point improvements, the building of Vendee Drive, junction improvements on the A41, Park and Ride site provision, rail improvements to Oxford including the re provision of Bicester Village Station. The Studio School has been funded by the Department of Education and the Community Hospital has been built. £302,020,000m of investment was previously identified.

The attached report also identifies that there is a further investment in infrastructure identified in the infrastructure delivery plan. This includes the completion of the Park and Ride and various highway schemes.

Private sector investment

The majority of development taking place in Bicester is being done by private investors such as house builders and developers but also other businesses. The attached report seeks to quantify the financial value of this investment. This includes the investment that has taken place in retail (including the expansion of Bicester Village), new commercial premises and new housing.

The latest figures available were for 2015/17 and included the value of housing and commercial premises completed. This report estimates £282m of investment in 2015/17 (£228m in residential development and £54m in commercial development). This compares to £36.6m per annum for the period 2009 – 2013, and £75m for 2014- 2015. This continuing and accelerating growth story underlines the strength of Bicester as a very attractive location for developers and investors.

It is estimated that the delivery of the whole of the planned housing growth in the Cherwell Local Plan would result in some £2.3 billion of investment.

4. Conclusion

The level of funding and investment is just one measure of the changes that are taking place in the town. Investment taking place is being undertaken by a wide a range of organisations, businesses and individuals and detailed figures are not necessarily available. This report is therefore based on the best information available and estimates based on market research as set out in the attached report. Never the less the above figures highlight how successful the town has been, and continues to be, in attracting funding and investment for a wide range of purposes.

5. Recommendations

The Board are recommended to note the report.

Appendix

Investment Report by Montague Evans