

CABINET – 21 DECEMBER 2010

Eco-Bicester One Shared Vision

Report by Deputy Director for Growth & Infrastructure

Introduction

1. Work on Eco-Bicester is overseen by a Strategic Delivery Board, consisting of representatives of all three tiers of local government, together with other public and private sector interests.
2. One of the aims of the Strategic Delivery Board has been to develop a vision for Bicester for the next 30 years. A draft vision was prepared earlier this year and consultation on it took place between August and October. The purpose of the vision is :
 - a. To provide a shared vision for the whole of Bicester supported by partners
 - b. To guide the local delivery of the eco-town of national, if not international, significance with the private sector
 - c. To articulate key infrastructure needs to support the eco town
 - d. To inform engagement between the local authority partners, Government departments and agencies on where they can help deliver the project
3. The draft vision has been approved by both Cherwell District Council and Bicester Town Council. This report recommends that the County Council should also approve the vision for its own purposes. A copy of the vision is attached as annex 1.

Consultation

4. Consultation on the draft vision took place between 23rd August and 1st October 2010. A summary of the consultation strategy is set out in Annex 2.
5. In total 55 responses were received from individuals, agents, local groups and businesses. The comments are summarised in Annex 3.
6. A separate table containing other comments not specifically relating to the contents of the draft vision is included in Annex 4.
7. The vision document has been amended in the light of the consultation responses, and it is this amended version which is considered in this report.

Revised Eco Bicester One Shared Vision and Planning Policy

8. The final revised version of the shared vision follows a similar format to the draft version. The shared vision is not a formal development plan document. However, Cherwell has approved it as a statement of informal policy and as such it will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for major development proposals in Bicester, including any planning application at North West Bicester. It will also inform the emerging policies of the development plan as the preparation of Cherwell's Local Development Framework progresses. It will form the basis of local standards for eco development in Bicester at this stage.

Proposals

9. The revised shared vision sets out the aims, aspirations and ambitions for the town in six sections. The vision statement is contained in section one and is followed by sections setting out more detail on community, economy, transport and environmental sustainability. The final section provides eco development standards for the town as a whole and is informed by the eco town standards set out in the supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1: Eco towns.
10. The vision statement seeks to create a vibrant Bicester where people choose to live work and spend their leisure time in sustainable ways. The proposed eco development at North West Bicester will act as the catalyst for the wider regeneration of the town, attracting inward investment and economic development. The theme of integration of the NW Bicester eco development with the existing town is fundamental to the shared vision.
11. Sustainable development (social, economic and environmental) is a fundamental principle of the shared vision. The document emphasises zero carbon and energy efficiency as key objectives.
12. The vision focuses on the aspirations for new development in creating new communities through new housing, community support and improvement to existing facilities.
13. Retrofitting will be an important part in the new Eco Bicester with the aim of improving energy efficiency of existing buildings. The availability and provision of high speed broadband and digital infrastructure has been included as a priority for retrofitting. The vision also sets out high standards of sustainable design and construction for eco development.

Financial Implications

14. Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from the report the development of Bicester will have financial implications in the future.

Conclusion

15. The draft vision commands widespread support, and is consistent with other county council policy, including the key objectives in the Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership.

RECOMMENDATION

16. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to** approve the vision document contained in Annex 1 as informal county council policy, noting that the district council has also approved it as informal planning guidance for development control purposes.

Martin Tugwell, Deputy Director of Environment & Economy (Growth & Infrastructure)

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Daniel Round (01865 815623) & Chris Cousins (01865 815459)

December 2010