

Land at North West Bicester

Cherwell District Council

Planning Statement

Prepared on behalf of P3Eco (Bicester) Ltd and A2Dominion Group

November 2010

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Ref: 18325/A5/IP/AC

Date: 26 November 2010

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of P3Eco (Bicester) Limited and A2Dominion Group ('the applicants') in support of a planning application for the development of 394 residential units, an energy centre a nursery, a community centre, retail units, an Eco-Business Centre, office accommodation, an Eco-Pub and land for a primary school for which outline consent is sought. The development is an exemplar phase of the NW Bicester Eco-town at North West Bicester, within the administrative area of Cherwell District Council (CDC).
- 1.2 The Supplement to PPS1 entitled 'eco-towns' issued in July 2009 identified four potential locations for an eco-town, including land at NW Bicester. CDC originally promoted the site and is supportive of the principle of bringing forward an Eco Town at this location. The principle of releasing the land for development was identified in the draft Core Strategy (February 2010). The PPS1 Supplement sets out a number of criteria to which the eco development should respond.
- 1.3 The draft Core Strategy identifies some 416 hectares to the north west of the town as being the search area for an eco-development. A masterplan is being prepared which will set out the principles of development for the wider site. The exemplar site which is located to the north-west to of this area equates to 21.1 hectares (the Site).
- 1.4 The site forms part of a swathe of undulating agricultural land that wraps around the north western boundary of Bicester. The eastern boundary of the site is currently denoted by the towns ring road (A4095) which provides indirect road access to the centre of Bicester. The north the site is bounded by the B4100 which links Bicester with junction 10 of the M40 and the villages in between such as Caversfield and Bainton. To the south are further fields that form part of the wider masterplan area and the B4030 which links the site with Middleton Stoney, and the western boundary is denoted by fields serving the adjoining farms. A rail-line bisects the masterplan site on an east – west axis.
- 1.5 The plan enclosed at Appendix 1 identifies the application site in the wider surrounds with Appendix 2 showing the application site in relation to the wider masterplan area. The submitted application is a hybrid submission, with outline permission sought with all matters reserved except for access and layout for all of

the non residential uses (except the energy centre) and full permission is sought in respect of the detailed design of the residential elements and the energy centre.

- 1.6 The documents submitted as part of the application, and their status be they submitted for approval or in support, are identified within the Scope of Application ('the Application Index') (Document 01). The supporting documents include a detailed Design and Access Statement (Document 24), which sets out the rationale and urban design principles that informed the preparation of the proposed site layout. Accordingly, this statement does not consider the design merits of the proposals.
- 1.7 Section 38 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('PCPA 2004') requires applications to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The relevant development plan document in this instance is the adopted Cherwell Local Plan (1996) and the South East Plan (2009).
- 1.8 There are however two other relevant documents that whilst not forming part of the development plan are material considerations namely the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011 (December 2004) and the draft Core Strategy (February 2010). The draft Core Strategy has been the subject of public consultation and is being reviewed in light of the coalition government's current stance in relation to Regional Spatial Strategies and the evidence basis attached to them.
- 1.9 The purpose of this statement is to assess the planning merits of the application: to explain the form and content of the application; assess the proposals against adopted and emerging planning policy, guidance and best practice; and to assess the proposals in light of any other material considerations.
- 1.10 Section 38(5) of the PCPA requires that where conflict exists in the policy provisions between the various documents that constitute the development plan, priority should be given to the document which has been published or adopted most recently. The adopted Local Plan (1996) is some 14 years old and was prepared in accordance with the then Oxfordshire Structure Plan (date) and has been superseded by more recent government policy and best practice. As such, where appropriate, consideration must be given to these more recent documents.

- 1.11 Following detailed discussions with the Local Planning Authority (CDC), a Scope of Application was submitted to them in May 2010. That document set out the proposed form and content of the application and at various meetings discussions have been held to review which matters will be submitted in detail and which would be submitted in outline. The overall approach as set out in that document and as discussed in meetings has been adhered to.
- 1.12 An Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken and accordingly, the scheme is deemed to constitute EIA development by virtue of Schedule 2 (which requires a formal EIA due to its scale and proximity to sensitive areas) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 as amended.
- 1.13 The application proposals are the result of extensive consultation and negotiation. The current plan prepared on behalf of the applicants by Farrells is the latest iteration of the site layout plan that has been informed by the evolving masterplan and technical assessments. Several parties including CDC, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Environment Agency (EA), the Highways Agency (HA) and other stakeholders have commented on the proposals thereby informing the masterplan. Extensive public consultation has taken place over a significant period of time and details of the consultation undertaken, views expressed and responses received are set out in a separate 'Statement of Community Involvement' (Document 05).
- 1.14 A series of workstreams were established as a means of focussing and channelling debate. These served to test key elements of the scheme and the application of policy and best practice. The results of these workstreams, which formed an integral part of the consultation exercise, have served to inform the formulation of the proposals. A document setting out the scope of the workstreams is attached at Appendix 3.
- 1.15 The six workstreams are:
- Water, Energy and Waste;
  - Design and Sustainable Construction;
  - Transport and Access;

- Commercial and Employment;
- Social and Community (including Governance);
- Green Infrastructure;

1.16 Accordingly, this statement is set out on the following basis:

- The Application and Proposals: Form and content of the application;
- The Application Site; Key elements, site-specific factors to be addressed and designations;
- Core Planning History;
- Core Planning Policy and Procedural Context: the development plan and other material policy considerations, guidance and best practice;
- The Case for Development: The Principle of the Eco Town and Need for Additional Development;
- The Case for Development: Water, Energy and Waste;
- The Case for Development: Design and Sustainable Construction;
- The Case for Development: Transport and Access;
- The Case for Development: Commercial and Employment;
- The Case for Development: Social and Community (including Governance);
- The Case for Development: Green Infrastructure; and
- Summary and Conclusions: Delivering Sustainable Development and Strategic Compatibility.



- 1.17 We have sought to identify the key planning issues as set out above. Under each issue, we have summarised the key aims and objectives of the applicant as reflected in the application proposals, summarised the response and proposals and assessed them against policy.
- 1.18 Finally it is important to note that the exemplar phase has been designed into the wider masterplan the eco development will develop and evolve over time. Accordingly, the exemplar phase reflects the first phase of this evolution and therefore whilst not all aspirations will be achieved in this phase the complete schedule of requirements will be provided for within the wider masterplan area.

## **2.0 THE APPLICATION AND PROPOSALS: FORM AND CONTENT OF THE APPLICATION**

- 2.1 As stated above, the application is a hybrid submission. Permission is sought for 394 residential units and an energy centre for which detailed consent is sought and a nursery, a community centre, 3 retail units, an Eco-Business Centre, office accommodation, an Eco-Pub and land for a primary school. The application is submitted in outline with full permission sought for the residential element and energy centre.
- 2.2 A separate 'Application Index' has been produced as a guide through the various application documents identifying those for determination or in support of the application. A number of elements are to be fixed at this stage, such as access, siting, detailed design of the residential units and the various elements of mitigation that are identified through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as set out in the Environmental Statement (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26), and are defined in Parameters. These 'parameters' are set out in the 'Description of Development Parameters' Document (Document 2) ('the Parameters Document').
- 2.3 Likewise, a full description of the proposed development is set out in the Parameters Document (Document 2) and the Environmental Statement (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26).
- 2.4 The development in land use terms is summarised in schedule 1 attached to the application forms and enclosed within the Parameters Document (a further copy is attached at Appendix 4).

### **The Application Site Boundary**

- 2.5 The total site area (i.e. that land within the red line application boundary as shown on drawing: 7165-UA001881-01) comprises 21.1 hectares. The application site falls within the control of the applicants. In addition, the application site also includes parts of Banbury Road which is identified as highway land. A schedule of Third Party owners including the address at which notice has been served is contained within Certificate B of the application form.
- 2.6 The application boundary excludes the wider extent of Banbury Road. Any local off-site highway or public-realm improvements, either to be promoted by the Local

Highway Authority or the applicant by way of an agreement under section 278 of the Highways Act can be accommodated within the public highway.

### **Remediation and Finished Ground Levels**

- 2.7 A detailed analysis of the site contamination has been undertaken. Any contamination is limited to localised concentrations or 'hot spots'. Details pertaining to the contamination and the proposed remediation strategies are contained within the Environmental Statement 'Contamination and Ground Conditions Statement' appendix. The proposed remediation strategy for the limited number of 'hot spots' is submitted in detail for approval at this stage.

### **Strategic Landscape**

- 2.8 The Landscape Assessment (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26) and the Biodiversity Assessment (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26) is likewise submitted for approval at this stage. The strategic landscape scheme will define the structure of the space, and the sub-division of the application site, is therefore an intrinsic element in defining the urban form of the resultant scheme.
- 2.9 Through the Landscape and Biodiversity Framework, issues such as the need to protect flora and fauna and the need to accommodate existing on-site infrastructure can be defined. The Framework aids the demonstration of the merit of the proposed finished ground levels. As a result, by fixing the strategic landscape scheme, the net development area is also fixed. The Landscape Assessment (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26) and the Biodiversity Assessment (Documents 23, 24, 25 and 26) defines:
- The extent and structure of the landscape scheme;
  - The core principles to be adopted in terms of planting and use;
  - The relationship of the strategic landscape to the strategy to be adopted in providing the detailed elements of localised play areas and detailed landscape scheme to be approved as details pursuant;

- Core principles to be adopted in addressing any likely impact arising from the scheme in respect of the extensive mud flats; and
- Core principles to be adopted in protecting watercourses.

### **Documents and Drawings for Approval or as Supporting/ Illustrative Material**

- 2.10 The Parameters Documents (Document 02) and the Application Index (Document 01) confirm those drawings and documents which are submitted for approval. These also define the scheme for the purposes of testing through the EIA procedure. Likewise, in order to define the scheme so that an assessment of the likely significant effects can be provided with or without mitigation, we also propose a number of parameters and we invite conditions to be attached to any permission granted to ensure compliance and adherence to them.

### **Consultation**

- 2.11 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004) requires CDC to publish a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was adopted in July 2006. That document sets out how community involvement should be undertaken to meet the relevant requirements set out in Government guidance on public consultation. Furthermore, the PPS1 Supplement requires that consultations be undertaken with third parties and key stakeholders during the design process to promote the aspirations and benefits of an eco-town development.
- 2.12 The applicants have embraced the aims and objectives of ensuring effective public participation and the proposals have been the subject of an extensive and ongoing consultation process.
- 2.13 The results of the consultation exercise, which included face-to-face meetings, exhibitions, and workshops are set out in the 'Statement of Community Involvement' (Document 05) which accompanies the application.

## **Departure and Notification**

- 2.14 Whilst the site is identified within a supplement to PPS1 entitled 'Eco-towns' and in the draft Core Strategy the site is not allocated within the development plan for any form of development.
- 2.15 Accordingly, in so far as the scheme is considered by the local planning authority (LPA), to constitute a departure as defined by the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) (Departures) Direction 1999, we would invite CDC to undertake the necessary notification and consultation.

### **3.0 THE APPLICATION SITE**

- 3.1 A full description of the application site is set out in the Design and Access Statement (Document 24). That document provides a full description of the site, its characteristics, constraints and opportunities and includes a photographic assessment.
- 3.2 The application site comprises some 21.1 hectares to the north of the overall eco-development masterplan search area which equates to 416 hectares in total. The site forms part of a swathe of undulating agricultural land that wraps around the north western boundary of Bicester. The eastern boundary of the site is currently denoted by the towns ring road (A4095) which provides road access to the centre of Bicester.
- 3.3 To the north the site is bounded by the B4100 which links Bicester with junction 10 of the M40 and the villages in between such as Caversfield and Bainton. To the south of the site are further fields that form part of the wider masterplan area and the B4030 which links the site with Middleton Stoney, and the western boundary is denoted by fields serving the adjoining farms. It is of note that a rail-line bisects the masterplan site on an east – west axis.
- 3.4 In terms of the nature of the application site it is an undulating site with drops in levels adjacent to the small watercourses / drainage ditches. These courses are generally located adjacent to existing hedgerows and currently have a limited amount of water flowing through the site.

#### **Designations**

- 3.5 The site and surrounding areas are not subject to any site specific designations.

#### **Nature Conservation Designations**

- 3.6 There are no Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) designated either on or adjacent to the site. Likewise, no part of the site is identified as either a Special Policy Area (SPA) nor as a Ramsar site. English Nature have confirmed that there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) nor international sites either within the application site. No part of the site nor any site within 2km of the site is subject to any national or international habitat designations.

### **Local Plan Designations**

- 3.7 The site is not subject to any site specific designations as set out within the adopted local plan (1996).

## **4.0 CORE PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 There is no relevant planning history pertaining to the site. The overall masterplan site has been promoted by CDC, OCC and P3Eco over a period of time as an eco-town which resulted in the inclusion of the site within Appendix 1 of the PPS1 supplement relating to eco-towns.



## **5.0 CORE PLANNING POLICY AND PROCEDURAL CONTEXT: THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER MATERIAL POLICY CONSIDERATIONS, GUIDANCE AND BEST PRACTICE**

- 5.1 In accordance with Part 3, Section 38(6) of the PCPA 2004 planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the development plan comprises the Cherwell District Local Plan ('local plan') 1996 and the South East Plan ('RSS') 2009.
- 5.2 A detailed review of the applicable policies is contained within document 04 entitled 'Planning Policy Review' however an overview is provided here for completeness.
- 5.3 PPS1 ('Creating Sustainable Communities' (2005)) reiterates that planning can facilitate and promote sustainable patterns of urban and rural development (para 5). Further, it indicates that sustainable development is needed to achieve social cohesion and inclusion which assists in developing strong, vibrant and sustainable communities where the diverse needs of people are met (paras 14-16). In reflecting these objectives, paragraph 26 advises that LPAs should recognise the needs and broader interests of the community to secure a better quality of life for the community as a whole and should not be unnecessarily constraining.
- 5.4 Regard must also be had to the PPS1 Supplement entitled 'Eco Towns' (July 2009) which 'sets out a range of minimum standards which are more challenging and stretching than would normally be required for new development' (para 3). Further it states that 'the standards act to ensure that eco-towns are exemplars of good practice and provide a showcase for sustainable living and allow Government, business and communities to work together to develop greener, low carbon living'.
- 5.5 The document covers a range of topics that will need to be considered in any proposals for an eco-development including: zero carbon; climate change adaptation; homes; employment; transport; healthy lifestyles; local services; green infrastructure; landscape and historic environment; biodiversity; water; flood risk management; waste; master planning; transition; and community and governance. A document setting out a summary of how we are meeting the criteria is attached at Appendix 5.

- 5.6 PPS3 ('Housing' 2010)) assists in promoting how the government's housing objectives can be delivered in the most sustainable way with consideration to design, access, relationship to facilities, climate change and respecting the character of the surrounding area. Furthermore, paragraph 69 indicates that LPAs should have regard to achieving a high standard of design, a good mix of housing, the site is suitable for housing and the land is used efficiently and effectively.
- 5.7 PPS4 ('Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth' (2009)) sets out policies for economic development. The document seeks to ensure that clear economic strategies exist that encourage sustainable economic growth by supporting existing business sectors; planning for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge whilst making efficient use of land. These aspirations however should link in with providing sustainable transport infrastructure and safe guarding the land from alternative uses at a later date.
- 5.8 PPS9 ('Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' (2005)) sets its objectives as protecting biodiversity and geological conservation matters through the planning system. It reports that 'development proposals provide many opportunities for building-in beneficial biodiversity or geological features as part of good design'.
- 5.9 PPG13 ('Transport' (2001)) seeks to shape the pattern of development and influence the location, scale, density, design and mix of land uses, and to help to reduce the need to travel and reduce the length of car journeys. It also seeks to make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities, and services by public transport, walking and cycling (para 3).
- 5.10 PPG17 ('Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)) emphasises that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life and that associated planning policies are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives. This can be achieved through social inclusion and community cohesion by providing opportunities for social interaction through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
- 5.11 PPS25 entitled "Development and Flood Risk" (2006) aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk. It states that a Flood Risk Assessment should be carried out to the appropriate degree to assess the risks of all forms of flooding to and from

development taking climate change into account and to inform the application of the sequential approach.

### **The South East Plan (RSS)**

- 5.12 At a regional level the applicable policies are contained within the adopted Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England (May 2009) (RSS). The current government sought to abolish RSSs and in fact did so. However a recent High Court decision resolved that the government had acted beyond their powers in revoking the documents thereby reinstating them for formal procedures to be followed should they wish to abolish RSSs. Therefore the South East Plan is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 5.13 Notwithstanding policies relating to housing development, the plan is underpinned by striving to achieve sustainable development. The applicable policies place a clear duty on all public bodies to contribute to the goal of more sustainable development. For clarity, Sustainable Development is defined as "Development which meets the social and economic needs of today in a manner which respects the environmental and resource needs of future generations".
- 5.14 The SEP sets out the housing requirements that the Council must meet. The development of the eco town will make a valuable contribution to meeting the strategic housing requirements of the Council. Paragraph 71 of PPS3 requires that where Council's are unable to demonstrate 5 years supply of available housing land, they should consider applications for residential development favourably and having regard, inter alia, to the criteria at paragraph 69.

### **Adopted Cherwell Local Plan (1996)**

- 5.15 The application site is not identified in the Plan for development and details of the applicable saved local plan policies are set out below.
- 5.16 The key applicable saved policies of the adopted Local Plan include:

H1 - Allocation of Sites for Housing

H5 - Affordable Housing

H18 - New Dwellings in the Countryside

EMP1 - Allocation of sites for employment generating development

S28 - Local Shops  
TR1 - Transportation Funding  
R12 - General Recreation Policies  
C4 - Creation of new habitats  
C7 - Landscape Conservation  
C9 - Scale of Development Compatible with a Rural Location  
C16 - The Urban Fringe

### **Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011**

- 5.17 On 13 December 2004 the Council resolved to discontinue work on the draft Cherwell Local Plan 2011 and withdraw it from the statutory Local Plan process as there was no realistic prospect of it being adopted prior to the Government changes to the plan led system. Consequently, the Council resolved to approve the draft Local Plan 2011 (the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011) as interim planning policy for development control purposes. Changes were made to the draft version to reflect the Pre-inquiry changes made to the Revised Deposit draft plan.
- 5.18 Putting aside the weight to be attached to the document, the key policies are set out in detail within the Planning Policy Review document but cover topics including: housing; local shops; transport and development; cycling and walking; home zones; informal and formal recreation space; community facilities; allotments; pollution control; noise; water resources and quality; flood defence; contamination; renewable energy; biodiversity; landscape character (including trees, hedges and landscaping); archaeology; urban design; quality architecture; mixed uses; and energy efficient design.

### **Draft Core Strategy 2010**

- 5.19 The draft Core Strategy (dCS) issued in February 2010 sets out broadly how the district will grow and change in the period to 2026 and the long term spatial vision for Cherwell District and contains policies to help deliver that vision. Policy NWB1 is a strategic allocation policy entitled 'North West Bicester Eco-Development'.
- 5.20 The policy indicates that the development will be designed as an 'exemplar sustainable community in terms of places of employment, schools, travel planning, promoting and supporting healthier lifestyles, provision of local services and sustainable use of resources'. It sets out that to support the exemplar application

the scheme must be integrated with and complement the proposed masterplan for the overall development proposals.

- 5.21 Finally, the policy sets out that the eco-development must integrate with and complement the function and urban form of Bicester and not undermine Bicester town centre's role as the primary retail and service centre.
- 5.22 In addition to this on 1 November the Councils Executive committee approved the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2010 for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, which presents the district's current housing land supply provision.
- 5.23 The report to committee at paragraph 1.8 states:

***"It should be noted that the district's housing land supply calculations are based on a working figure of 13,400 (2006-2026), the former requirements of the now revoked South East Plan. This figure will be reviewed as preparation of the LDF's Core Strategy continues, having regard to the Council's resolution of 19 July 2010, '*...to progress on the basis of meeting the locally proposed housing target originally endorsed by Councillors and included in the submission of the draft plan to the Government (11,800 to 2026)...*', but also to the Secretary of State's advice (6 July 2010) that '*...Local Authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process...*'".***

- 5.24 Given that this statement was in the report that was approved by members of the Executive Committee it appears reasonable to accept that the Councils current policy position includes as an evidence base the approved AMR. That document at paragraphs 5.60 and 5.62 identifies the north-west Bicester exemplar site as being a deliverable site for which the proposed housing numbers (circa 400 units) has been included within the supply of deliverable sites for the period 2010 to 2015.

## Summary

- 5.25 The policy justification for the development of land at NW Bicester is set out in the PPS1 supplement and reflected and supported in the draft Core Strategy. The supplement provides for the submission of a planning application where the Core Strategy has not been advanced.
- 5.26 In addition, PPS3 provides for the promotion of departure applications where Councils are unable to demonstrate 5 years' supply of housing land. The saved policies of the local plan pre-date the PPS1 supplement but do provide policy guidance in terms of development control.
- 5.27 Notwithstanding the above it is clear that the local plan is out of date and as such the eco development is not catered for within it. In this instance regard must be had to section ET 5.2 of the supplement which states:

**"There are circumstances where local planning authorities can justify going against the plan, for example, where an emerging RSS indicates that the local planning authority would need to deliver higher levels of growth. Where this is the case, or where the plan is out of date [an out of date plan is one which does not comply with PPS3 and the relevant RSS], an application for an eco-town should be considered on its merits, taking into account material considerations."**

## **6.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE PRINCIPLE OF THE ECO TOWN AND NEED FOR ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 6.1 The site represents the largest single opportunity within Cherwell District and more specifically Bicester to provide for much needed new housing, to help meet both the needs of the residents of Bicester and Cherwell as a whole. Further it presents an opportunity to establish a new, mixed use sustainable community. The merit of the proposals are not simply one of numeric capacity but also the development proposals provide for a range and mix of housing and other land uses in a form that will contribute to meeting the full range of housing needs, demands and aspirations and ensure the delivery of a sustainable community.
- 6.2 The objective is not therefore just to provide new housing. A sustainable community requires the provision of other uses, which are complementary and mutually supporting. There is a need to provide employment opportunities, to make provision for education and other social and community uses, and to meet the retail and leisure needs of the community. The objectives of the applicants are for the site to not only be compatible with these broader aspirations and objectives, but to act as a sustainable catalyst for the successful regeneration of the wider area. The development which is the subject of the application will achieve these objectives. The intention is not to bring forward a free-standing community that operates in isolation from the existing town but one that integrates with the existing community.
- 6.3 The Land Use Schedule enclosed at Appendix 4 summarises the provision of residential and other uses. The site layout plan as supported by the Design and Access Statement (Document 24) sets out the distribution of uses, their relationship, in scale, form and location to the principles that underpin the proposals.

### **Key Aims and Objectives**

- 6.4 The key aims and objectives in terms of land use for the wider masterplan area as informed by policy and best practice, can be summarised as:
- An eco-development of 5,000 homes and jobs;
  - A net zero-carbon development;

- A high quality local environment taking into account climate change adaption;
- Achieving code 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes as a minimum;
- Access to one employment opportunity for each new dwelling within easy reach by walking, cycling and / or public transport;
- At least 50% of trips originating from the development being made by means other than the car, with potential to rise to 60%; and
- 40% of the total gross site area to be provided as green space of which half will be public open space.

### **The Proposals**

6.5 Appendix 4 contains the full schedule of proposed land uses as set out in the Development Parameters (Document 02). These have been the subject of extensive discussion and technical assessment and the scheme has been assessed as a whole, as 'ad-hoc' changes to individual elements could well serve to undermine the delivery of other elements.

6.6 The merit of the proposals in land use terms can be assessed on a variety of levels. We set out below the rationale and merit of the scheme in terms of the core land use elements: housing, commercial, retail and leisure, education, social and community, and open space and amenity requirements. Hunt Dobson Stringer have carried out a baseline assessment ('Social Infrastructure Provision' document 12) of the socio-economic characteristics of the 'area', which forms part of the ES. The results of the assessment provides a useful basis for considering the merit of the scheme in land use terms.

### **Housing**

6.7 In discussion, officers of CDC have requested that an affordable housing statement (document 06) accompanies the planning application. In assessing the merit of the scheme and its ability, in residential terms, to build a new sustainable and vibrant community that will help meet the housing needs and demands of the existing and



future population of Cherwell it is useful to consider the proposals in terms of density and mix, phasing, accessibility, tenure and affordability and delivery.

### **Housing–Density and Mix**

- 6.8 In seeking to maximise dwelling capacity, regard has been to ensuring that a full range of accommodation types are provided for which makes an important contribution to maximising dwelling capacity. The attainment of a sustainable community at NW Bicester will require the delivery of the full range of accommodation types: dwellings to meet the needs of single persons and first time buyers, family accommodation and those seeking to 'trade-down'. Accordingly, the scheme has sought to provide for a wide range of dwelling types and the proposed density pattern as set out on the site layout plan.
- 6.9 The proposed density equates to circa 18.7 dwellings per hectare (dph) across the whole application site. Within this average range, densities above and below this level will be achieved due to the location of the non residential uses and open space provision. The distribution of densities will be a reflection of a range of issues, including the final detailed design approach, location and form of non-residential land uses and public transport accessibility.
- 6.10 Achieving an appropriate density of development for the site and its surroundings has assisted in driving the mix of the accommodation provided. The rationale for the density and scale of development proposed is contained within the Design and Access Statement (Document 24).

### **Housing – Phasing**

- 6.11 The rate of dwelling completions reflect the practicalities of ensuring the delivery of appropriate completion rates whilst having regard to the specific nature of the site. The suggested completion rate of 50 dwellings in the first year and 100 dwellings per year thereafter has had regard to the opportunity of maximising the range of accommodation that can be brought forward, the involvement of a range of developers (i.e. residential and non residential builders), and the practicalities of delivery.

## **Housing – Accessibility**

- 6.12 The needs of the community in terms of the design and accessibility of housing varies. The developer has designed the units to provide a range of units including lifetime homes, and the ability for adaption at a later date (for those units that are not built to lifetime standards at the outset). Whilst not all housing needs to be built to full wheelchair standards, changes to Part M of the Building Regulations have introduced further requirements in terms of accessibility.

## **Housing – Tenure and Affordability**

- 6.13 Policy H5 of the local plan sets out a requirement for at least 30% of schemes for new dwellings provided during the plan period to be affordable. The provision of at least 30% of the units as affordable units is replicated within the supplement to PPS1 entitled 'eco-towns'. Furthermore, this exemplar scheme of 394 units will provide for 120 affordable units split across a mix of unit sizes and available as either affordable rent or shared ownership.
- 6.14 The applicant has sought to optimise not only the total dwelling yield, but also the level of affordable housing in a form and manner that will ensure the delivery of a mixed and balanced community. Given the levels of tenure mix existing within the town, the core aim is to introduce variety into the housing market as well as contributing to meeting some of the affordable housing needs.
- 6.15 Throughout the development of the application proposals discussions have taken place with the Council and the HCA to review the level and type of affordable housing to be provided. The applicant proposes that the appropriate level, both in terms of quantum, tenure and mix as submitted reflects that which has been discussed with key stakeholders. In addition to issues of quantum, tenure and mix, consideration will also need to be given to the phasing of delivery over the development period.

## **Housing – Delivery**

- 6.16 A2Dominion Group will be bringing forward all of the residential development to be built out within the exemplar phase i.e. that which is the subject of this application. As such they will remediate the site and implement and construct strategic infrastructure with a view to providing development platforms for development.

## **Employment**

- 6.17 The supplement to PPS1 sets out a requirement for the eco development to provide access to 1 job per dwelling within a walk, cycle or public transport journey of the application site. The application proposals seek consent for a range of non residential uses to complement the dwellings which include: a nursery, a community centre, retail units, an Eco Business Centre, office accommodation, an eco-pub and land for a primary school.
- 6.18 The Employment Strategy (document 11) sets out in detail how the employment uses will be created, but the document identifies that 465 full time employment opportunities will be supported by the NW Bicester exemplar development. These jobs will be provided through construction jobs, on-site jobs, population-derived jobs and home working.
- 6.19 As such it is considered that the development will provide jobs for the future residents of the development in a manner that will also contribute to the wider economic context of Bicester. Further, the job creation is both sustainable and also responds to the aspirations to provide a sustainable and comprehensive development for the benefit of all.

## **Retail**

- 6.20 The application proposals seek to secure outline approval for 770 square metres of retail units. It is anticipated that this area will be split between three retail units although the greater portion (550 square metres) will form 1 independent store and 2 further stores of 110 square metres each.
- 6.21 P3Eco have entered into an agreement with the Midshires Co-Operative Group on the site of the Exemplar development to provide a food retail convenience store of 550 square metres which includes a post office and a pharmacy (subject to the appropriate licences being obtained). The Midshires Co-Operative Group is committed to the principles of the eco town and development and is seeking to explore innovative ways to develop its important position as a keystone business at the heart of the development.
- 6.22 A key example of this is that the Co-Operative are seeking to identify the potential to link the store with local food supply sources. Furthermore, it is seeking to

increase its presence on site by exploring the ability to provide eco-mortgages (through Britannia), the formation of a farmers' co-operative and later on within the masterplan scheme the provision of an eco-cemetery.

- 6.23 In addition to the above elements that relate more specifically to the Co-Operative the development is also providing for two further retail units comprising of a maximum 220 square metres. The end user of these units is to be resolved but example occupiers include hairdressers, a cycle store or any other such retail units that would complement the development and not detract from the town centre.

### **Leisure**

- 6.24 Throughout the exemplar development the proposals have sought to ensure that a structured and robust green infrastructure provision is made to complement the development. The details of the types of provision that are being made are set out in detail on the proposed site layout plan, within the Design and Access Statement and also within the Landscape Assessment all of which accompany this submission.

- 6.25 Essentially, the documents identify that amenity space is being provided that will include the following types:

- Allotments;
- Green Space;
- LEAPs;
- Hedgerow Corridors;
- SUDs Features;
- Home Zones; and
- Play Space at the school site.

- 6.26 The above leisure facilities have been designed to provide an attractive and useable space and environment for future residents to recreate whilst also providing a structure that has been designed to link into the wider masterplan proposals.

### **Education**

- 6.27 The proposed site layout has been designed to provide 1.34 hectares of land that can contribute to a 2 form entry primary school. This meets the needs of the exemplar phase and would provide for a school that can operate in accordance with

the County's standards. Expansion to a full 2 form entry school site as per the County's standards can be achieved through expansion into other adjoining land at such time that a larger site is required as part of subsequent phases. This is identified in the masterplan as submitted at document 25.

- 6.28 In terms of nursery provision the development has been designed to incorporate a nursery to serve up to 40 children within the high street. The nursery will be built by the end user at an appropriate time within the development but to respond to the on site demand for a nursery.

### **Health**

- 6.29 Through the negotiations that have been undertaken with the Local Planning Authority and the County Council along with having reviewed document 12 entitled 'Social Infrastructure Provision' it is clear that there is not a requirement for a doctors surgery or a dental practice to be provided through the development. This is on the basis that there is capacity within existing surgeries thereby negating the need for on site provision.

### **Community Facilities**

- 6.30 It is proposed that the scheme will provide for a community centre of up to 350 sqm in the village centre. It is anticipated that this facility will be available to all and as such will be used for a variety of purposes e.g. youth clubs, places of worship etc. It is therefore envisaged that this will become the focus of community involvement and interaction.

### **Deliverability**

- 6.31 The above mix of land uses have been the subject of not only testing through the EIA process but also a development appraisal. As a total package, the scheme is capable, on current assumptions, of practical delivery.

### **Summary**

- 6.32 The scheme will provide for a full range of land uses, complementary to each other and has been designed to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. It is

our view that the scheme, in land use terms, will deliver a prosperous community, with a range of dwellings that are affordable and that meet the needs of all.

## **7.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: WATER, ENERGY AND WASTE**

7.1 Energy, Waste and Water are identified within the supplement to PPS1 sections ET 7 (Zero Carbon in Eco Towns), ET 8 (Climate Change Adaptation), ET 9 (Homes), ET 14 (Green Infrastructure), ET 17 (Water), ET 18 (Flood Risk Management) and ET 19 (Waste) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- To ensure that the proposals reduce energy consumption overall and utilise low and zero carbon solutions whilst also achieving zero-carbon energy use across the development;
- To establish an affordable and sustainable energy solution(s) for the site;
- To ensure the proposals set residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion targets whilst achieving zero construction waste to landfill;
- To indicate how waste storage will be provided on site;
- To demonstrate that consideration has been given to using local waste as a fuel source;
- To establish a strategy to meet water neutrality by considering the total resource zone and focusing on water efficiencies and re-use. To achieve at least Code for Sustainable Homes level 5 for water;
- To maintain and promote improvements to water quality. To ensure no deterioration in water quality status as defined by the Water Framework Directive and that the biodiversity of the catchment is protected;
- To reduce flood risk and identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures including an exemplary sustainable drainage scheme and no surface water runoff to sewers;
- To ensure the proposals for sewage treatment protect and improve where possible the environment; and

- To consider all appropriate environmental permitting requirements.

7.2 In order to consider the planning merits of the scheme there is a need to consider the three elements separately and how they have sought to achieve the aims and objectives set out above.

### **Energy**

7.3 The energy centre and energy strategy have been designed to adopt a combination of energy sources that will provide the operators and end users with flexibility whilst achieve a sustainable provision that will achieve carbon emission reduction targets.

7.4 Various options have been considered for energy provision including the adoption of a gas fired CHP in combination with biomass heating has the potential for near zero carbon emissions from independent energy centres. When these measures are combined with renewable energy systems such as photo voltaics and ground source heat pumps this enables further reduction in carbon emissions thereby assisting in quantifying the statement that the development will achieve a zero carbon development.

7.5 The exemplar site contains an energy centre that will include a primary electricity sub-station, distribution sub-stations together with booster pumping stations and metering on the heating network. However these facilities and provisions will link into the overall energy strategy that will reduce the overall energy consumption and utilises zero carbon solutions.

### **Waste**

7.6 The development will create two types of waste, namely: construction waste (anticipated to be hard and inert materials, soils and stones, plastics, packaging, insulation material, miscellaneous metals, canteen and office waste) and operational waste (household waste in addition to small quantities of waste from the commercial and public facilities).

7.7 With regard to construction waste the quantum of waste is to be resolved as currently the detailed design drawings including levels and relationships between the development haven't been finalised and as such it has not been possible to



calculate the anticipated waste. However, the developer in conjunction with their construction partner is working under the premise of seeking to achieve zero construction waste to landfill. As such this will require soil and stone to be used on the site where levels need altering and those making deliveries will be asked to use minimal packaging and to take any packaging that they do use away with them so that it can be reused or it will be recycled. This is a significant commitment but through the appropriate agreement of a Site Waste Management Plan in due course appropriate strategies can be put in place to ensure that this requirement is adhered to.

- 7.8 With regards to operational waste, each dwelling and non residential unit will be provided with a series of bins to make it easy and convenient for them to separate their waste for recycling through kerbside collections. The provision of storage for these bins has been designed into the scheme and it is hoped that the levels of recycling will be reinforced through an appropriate community governance structure. In addition to kerbside collections recycling facilities will be provided in the high street area for people to use. These measures will promote the ease at which future residents can recycle their waste both easily and expeditiously.

## **Water**

- 7.9 Achieving the requirements of the supplement to PPS1 for water falls into two categories. The first part relates to flood risk and mitigation measures that may be required and the second part relates to the water cycle strategy.

### *Flood Risk Matters*

- 7.10 The proposed development has been considered against both the provisions of the supplement to PPS1 but also in relation to the criteria set out within PPS25: 'Development and Flood Risk'. In this regard modelling has been taken of the site (given its change from agricultural farm land to a developed site) and to ensure that the development will not give rise to an increase in the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 7.11 The Flood Risk Assessment (Document 15) submitted with the application identifies that the modelling has shown the development area to be in a location at low risk of fluvial, tidal, ground and surface water flooding. Furthermore, the document sets out that the risk from artificial sources is considered to be low as there are no sources within or upstream of the site.

- 7.12 Furthermore, the proposed surface water drainage strategy has demonstrated that an appropriate drainage strategy can be undertaken in a sustainable manner without increasing the flood risk either at the site or to any other sites. As such, subject to the scheme complying with the surface water drainage strategy proposals the development of this green field location will not increase the risk of flooding.

#### *Water Cycle Matters*

- 7.13 To comply with the PPS1 supplement there has been a need for a strategic and sustainable approach to be taken to the management and use of water by all stakeholders throughout the Bicester Eco development. The water infrastructure (supply, wastewater collection and wastewater treatment) required to support the housing and employment growth planned for the Eco development and surrounding area has been identified, along with any constraints that may prevent this.
- 7.14 The potable water supply infrastructure is under considerable strain as the area is considered to be water-stressed and the foul water infrastructure is also potentially under capacity and may require improvement. However, the minimised water demand proposed for the Eco development through extensive water recycling and the efficiency of the properties, together with off-site improvements to the wider catchment in the form of installation of water efficient devices, offers the opportunity to achieve water neutrality, equalising both demand for potable water within the Water Resource Zone and demand of capacity for foul water treatment within the catchment of Bicester Treatment Works.
- 7.15 The widespread use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) and water harvesting will provide sustainable storm water management and create a sustainable resource from rainfall, whilst ensuring that flood risk is reduced for areas downstream and benefiting the local area. Furthermore, the use of SUDS will allow for the creation of new wildlife spaces incorporating wetlands, ponds and a variety of vegetation, creating valuable open amenity areas whilst enhancing the local water environment.
- 7.16 The Eco-town would promote good water quality standards, enhancing the local environmental water quality where possible. SUDS would be used to remove any polluted runoff from diffuse sources proving at source treatment prior to discharge into watercourses.

- 7.17 On the basis of the above measures it is concluded that the scheme meets the guidance set out within the supplement to PPS1 in all respects for Energy, Waste and Water.

## **8.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: DESIGN AND SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION**

8.1 Design and Sustainable Construction are identified within the supplement to PPS1 (sections ET8 (Water), ET 9 (Homes), ET 11 (Transport), ET 12 (Healthy Lifestyles), ET 17 (Water), ET 19 (Waste) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- Create a vision for the eco town and sustainability objectives;
- Follow urban design best practice to promote healthier lifestyles;
- Meet lifetime home standards and building for life at least silver standard;
- Provide for community and employment buildings and infrastructure that is within walking distance of homes;
- Achieve Code 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes unless standards increase in policy and BREEAM excellent for all non residential buildings;
- Achieve high quality design reflecting the location on the edge of Bicester and the adjoining countryside;
- To ensure individual buildings include measures necessary to deliver water neutrality;
- To ensure buildings are equipped with smart metering and RTI; and
- Identification of opportunities for habitat creation in the design of buildings.

8.2 In introducing the supplement to PPS1 the Government has reiterated the desire to ensure that new developments are provided for through the use of sustainable and design construction.

8.3 All of the homes to be constructed in the first phase will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level Five and be Zero Carbon. This goes beyond the Level Four

requirements set out in PPS1 and illustrates the Client bodies' commitment to the development. The homes will also achieve Building for life Silver Standard and have been planned to meet Lifetime Homes standards and are therefore designed for accessibility and adaptability. Both aspirations help to create a diverse and hopefully long lasting community.

- 8.4 Good practice suggests that energy use should be minimised first before energy production is considered. Therefore, the buildings will be designed to be highly insulated, to achieve air tightness with internal heat recovery systems for re-circulation of warm air and be fitted with low energy equipment throughout therefore minimising the energy needed.
- 8.5 To generate energy there will be an on-site energy system which combines the use of photovoltaic (PV) roof tiles for all homes, with a gas combined heat and power plant, supported by a Biomass district heating system. Subject to the efficiency of the photovoltaics excess electricity can be sold back to the grid.

## **9.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: TRANSPORT AND ACCESS**

9.1 Transport and Access are identified within the supplement to PPS1 (sections ET 11 (Transport)) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- To assist the preparation of a transport assessment for the exemplar and transport strategy to support the masterplan process;
- Provide for at least 50% of travel movements from eco-town by non car means;
- Provision of transport choice messages, infrastructure and services;
- Ensure key connections don't become unduly congested;
- Promote walking and cycling for all;
- Provide for efficient and effective public transport;
- Provide sufficient energy headroom to meet electricity demand for charging electric cars;
- Integrate the development with the existing town; and
- Identify parking standards.

9.2 The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (Document 16) which has been prepared to support the application for the exemplar phase of the eco development. That document demonstrates that in accordance with the objectives set out above that the proposals will comply with the national guidance set out in PPG13 'Transport' and the policies in the PPS1 supplement along with the transport elements of other current and relevant national and local policies and guidance.

9.3 Of key importance is that the exemplar development will be accessible by various modes of travel and a full range of facilities accessible within Bicester. The level of accessibility will improve as the development proposals are delivered at the

Exemplar Site and as the package of proposed external highway and sustainable infrastructure improvements are delivered, which is something that will go some way to addressing the concerns raised during the consultation events by local residents.

- 9.4 Not only are we seeking to provide various modes of travel and facilities accessible within Bicester but a range of measures are being put forward within the draft Travel Plan to promote sustainable travel and also monitor travel movements and modes so as to ensure that the requirements of the supplement are adhered to in perpetuity. This will assist in demonstrating that a target modal share for the eco development of 50:50 from vehicle to non vehicle by 2026.
- 9.5 To be clear however the development proposal includes not only residential land uses but also non residential land uses which will mean that a proportion of trips will be contained within the site. This on site provision assists in ensuring that the traffic impact from the development will assist in achieving the target modal share.
- 9.6 Finally, the development allows for improvements to existing junctions within close proximity to the application site. Not only will these works assist in mitigating the impacts of the exemplar development but they will also improve the current highway situation on both the existing and forecast situation. As such it is clear that the development complies with the appropriate policies whilst also improving the highway situation in Bicester.

## **10.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT**

10.1 Commercial and Employment are identified within the supplement to PPS1 (sections ET 10 (Employment)) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- To assist in the preparation of the economic strategy and inform the masterplanning in terms of commercial and employment uses;
- To meet the PPS standard of 1 job per dwelling provided;
- To demonstrate how the development helps create a centre for green jobs in Bicester;
- To ensure that the proposals provide access to jobs and employment;
- To assess and test the viability and deliverability of the employment and commercial strategy;
- To ensure that the proposals integrate with Bicester;
- To ensure that the employment strategy is consistent and complementary with the wider proposals, including transport; and
- To consider the local workforce's ability to take advantage of employment opportunities arising from the scheme and support for local skills development.

10.2 The Economic Strategy (Document 11) identifies that 460 new jobs will be created over a period of four to five years i.e. 66 more jobs than required to support the exemplar phase of development, with the potential for an additional 140 jobs. Further, the proposal will assist in achieving a transformation to the economy. The aspiration of the applicants is to position Bicester as a hub for eco activity, leading to the development over time of a cluster of sustainable construction and other eco-businesses, and related training provision.



- 10.3 Furthermore, the Exemplar will put in place some of the key building blocks in this process, including; an innovative partnership with the Midshires Co-operative; a partnership between P3Eco and Oxford and Cherwell Valley College (OCVC) to develop courses for the eco-economy; and an Eco-Bicester Research and Innovation Centre (EBRIC), a partnership between P3Eco, Oxford Brooks University and Oxford Innovation.
- 10.4 The construction of the Exemplar itself will provide a significant number of construction jobs specialising in niche eco building skills. Working on a basis of 0.7 person years per dwelling this equate to 70 FTE jobs at an indicative rate of 100 dwellings a year (at 150 jobs at the peak of construction activity). On site facilities are expected to provide approximately 250 additional jobs. These will be located in the eco-business centre and other office provision, retail units, a primary school, nursery and community facilities. Indirect job creation will result from spend by the Exemplar's residents, mainly in service jobs. These are expected to equate to 40 FTE jobs based on a standard multiplier applied to the average number of dwellings built per year.
- 10.5 The homes have been designed to include flexible space to encourage home working, alongside next generation broadband and social spaces within the development. This will be marketed actively to encourage home-working amongst residents. Given this, and national trends for increased home working, an assumption of one FTE home worker for every three dwellings is reasonable. Allowing for those delivering services locally (and therefore already counted), this equates to 105 FTE jobs on site once full occupancy is reached.
- 10.6 As the home of one of the first large-scale eco developments in the UK, Eco Bicester constitutes an attractive location for inward investment, particularly in high-tech manufacturing, engineering and environmental industries. It is too early to quantify these jobs, but given the appeal of Bicester's offer and the mechanisms already under discussion to attract firms into the area, they could significantly boost local employment opportunities.
- 10.7 The Exemplar will also contribute to the wider economic context in three ways. First, it will provide an attractive and supportive environment for people to live and work locally, benefitting from Bicester's excellent connectivity and the strong economic opportunities in the wider Oxfordshire area. Second, the Exemplar will kick start the development of a new eco economy in the town, capable of serving a

wider area. Third, the Exemplar will begin a transformation of the image of Bicester, which in turn will change the town's economic relationship with the wider area. The Exemplar provides the opportunity to support the strong and distinctive growth of 'high tech Oxfordshire', northwards from Oxford, rebalancing the bias influenced by the location of research institutes to the south of the county and major business and science parks.

- 10.8 In light of the above and the details contained within the Economic Strategy it is clear that a proposal has been put forward that demonstrates that circa 460 jobs will be created from the exemplar development i.e. in excess of the provisions of the supplement to PPS1. In light of this it is clear that the development will provide for jobs to complement the other uses on site for the benefit of all and for the benefit of the wider eco development aspirations.

## **11.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY**

11.1 Social and Community are identified within the supplement to PPS1 (sections ET 13 (Local Services), ET 21 (Transition) and ET22 (Community and Governance)) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- To identify and prepare the strategy to provide for a mixed and balanced community;
- To understand the population profile;
- To identify the needs of the community and the level of facilities that are required;
- To understand the range & scale of demand for services, the timing of required provision & mechanisms for their delivery;
- To act as the vehicle for testing the deliverability of services and facilities, funding and organisational requirements;
- To demonstrate a long term consultation plan to ensure the social capital is maintained;
- To formulate proposals for the governance of the Eco Town and identify the necessary legal and organisational requirements;
- To set out criteria to highlight how any future development will meet the Eco town requirements;
- To demonstrate how priority core services will underpin low level carbon emissions; and
- To deliver 30% affordable housing to meet local needs.

- 11.2 To create a successful eco development there is a need to provide both the physical infrastructure and development on site but also an appropriate governance structure to support the development and its longevity. The Community Governance Strategy (Document 07) has explained how a governance structure for the exemplar phase will evolve and link into future phases of the development.
- 11.3 Assuming a management structure is created it is anticipated that some of the community assets will be passed over to enable the governance structure to manage and own some of the facilities. For example it could be that the structure maintains and operates the community centre to ensure that the facility is used for the community good and also generates an income from it.
- 11.4 The governance body will be responsible for monitoring performance against the eco development targets and if the targets are not met they will be responsible for responding to the shortfall and introducing new measures to enable them to meet the criteria. The body will report their findings in such a way as to educate and disseminate to industry, government and wider stakeholders. It is considered that if targets are not met, despite everyone's best efforts, the process of documenting and telling the story of how a certain environmental measure was tried wins respect and is of great value to the wider scheme.
- 11.5 The exemplar governance body will develop a Sustainability Charter outlining how the eco town agenda will be delivered through each of its functions. It is however crucial to allow for the strategy to allow for flexibility to allow the scheme to grow to accommodate the growing number of phases of NW Bicester whilst sitting within a town-wide governance structure, whilst allowing for the bottom-up evolution of the governance organisation.
- 11.6 In addition to the requirements to provide a governance structure the development does provide for 30% of the residential units to be provided as affordable units, the provision of community facilities and infrastructure on site and the development as proposed has been designed to respond to the forecast population growth created from the development.
- 11.7 This provision is in compliance with best practice and also the requirements of the PPS1 supplement. It is accepted that further consideration needs to be given to the type of organisation that will be created, its assets (if any) and how the organisation will be funded. However these resolutions need a further consideration

of the development proposals and how the applicant will seek to manage the structures created.

## **12.0 THE CASE FOR DEVELOPMENT: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

12.1 Green Infrastructure is identified within the supplement to PPS1 (sections ET 14 (Green Infrastructure), ET15 (Historic Environment), ET 16 (Biodiversity), ET 17 (Water) and ET 18 (Flood Risk Management) as areas for which various standards and criteria must be met to demonstrate that the delivery of an eco development. In summary the aims and objectives set out within the above policy areas of the supplement are:

- To prepare the green space strategy for the development in its entirety;
- To demonstrate the different types of green space to be provided and their context including; Community forests; Wetland areas; Public parks; Play areas; and Community allotments;
- To identify long term strategies for provision and maintenance;
- To provide 40% of the Eco towns overall area as green space;
- To assist net water neutrality and quality enhancement;
- To protect existing natural assets;
- To provide cycleways and footpaths;
- To incorporate effective SUDS that enhance the environment;
- To provide biodiversity gains; and
- To support facilities for the encouragement of healthy life styles.

12.2 The landscape strategy set out for the NW Bicester eco development Exemplar site is sensitive to the local landscape character, responsive to the existing green infrastructure (GI) and the limited valuable habitats present. PPS1 sets out the core guidance and guidance for Eco-Towns, including requirements for green infrastructure.

- 12.3 Biodiversity has been a key consideration in the design of the green infrastructure from the outset, rooted in the retention of existing hedgerows, even those not identified as species rich, and the river corridor environs. The phase 1 habitat surveys provided valuable early warning of potentially species and habitats and have been used to inform the design layout and landscape strategy. Although the extended phase 1 habitat survey data has only recently been received (November 2010) it has not identified any additional significant species or habitats beyond that already identified much earlier in the design process. In addition the Biodiversity Workstream has been invaluable in contributing to the emerging Biodiversity Strategy and Green infrastructure proposals.
- 12.4 Green Infrastructure is a strategically planned and delivered network of quality green spaces and environmental features. It threads through and surrounding the built environment, respecting and enhancing the distinctiveness and character of habitats and landscape types while supporting and sustaining natural and ecological processes and the quality of life and health of the community, including play provision. The guidance indicates that 40% of the area of an Eco-Town should be green infrastructure, 20% of which should be publicly accessible. Guidance also advocates that GI should, as far as possible, be multi-functional, a principle which has also been applied to the design of the Exemplar site.
- 12.5 The creation of well connected, good quality open spaces and public amenity space including recreation is a key ingredient to the success of the exemplar layout. It is an integral part of the green infrastructure. The Exemplar Site includes the provision of attractive and safe walking and cycling routes which will help reduce the need to travel by vehicle and support the pursuit of healthy lifestyles. Access to open space and play areas is also achieved through the green infrastructure strategy for the site.

**APPENDIX 1**  
**SITE LOCATION PLAN**



## **APPENDIX 2**

### **MASTERPLAN LAYOUT**

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **WORKSTREAMS SCOPE**

**APPENDIX 4**  
**LAND USE SCHEDULE**

**APPENDIX 5**  
**PPS1 COMPLIANCE SUMMARY DOCUMENT**