

Masterplan Workshop

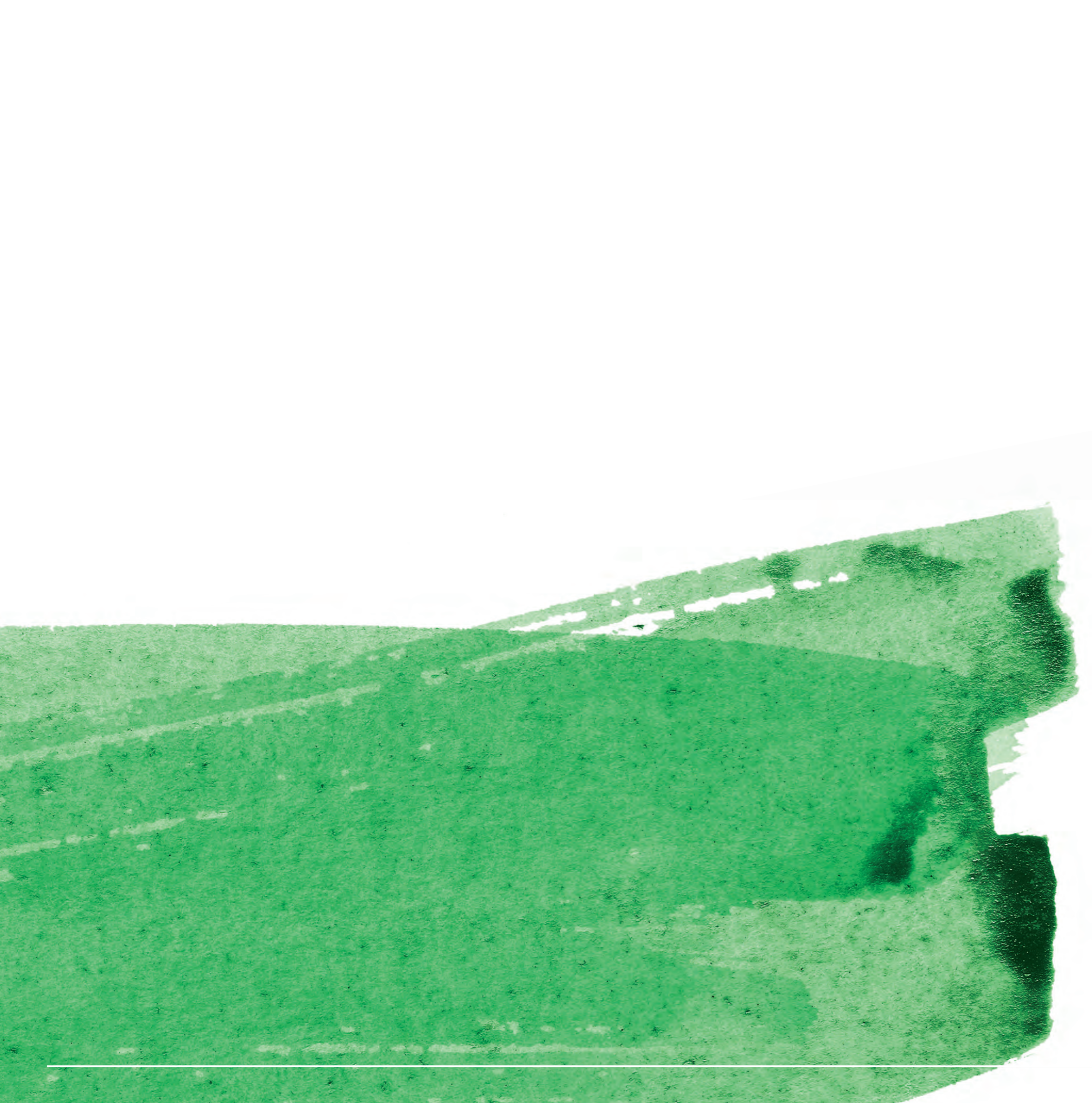
Monday 22 July 2013, 9am – 1pm

The Littlebury Hotel, Bicester

north
west
bicester

azdominion 

THINKING ABOUT TOMORROW



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1. Introduction

This report summarises the workshop that was held on Monday 22 July 2013 at the Littlebury Hotel in Bicester. The workshop was organised by A2Dominion in partnership with Cherwell District Council in order to continue the initial stakeholder engagement related to North West Bicester (NW Bicester), to aid and inform preparation of the comprehensive masterplan being developed for the site.

The focus of the event, which followed a previous workshop held on Wednesday 10 April 2013, was to encourage discussion and invite feedback from stakeholders regarding key topics relating to the emerging masterplan process and workstreams.

The comments and outcomes from the workshop will enable A2Dominion, the Council and consultant team to further shape the proposals for NW Bicester and consider further opportunities to hold further events prior to progressing plans for wider public consultation later this year.

2. Workshop Format

The overall facilitator of the event was Henry Cleary, OBE, previously Deputy Director of Housing and Growth at the Department for Communities and Local Government and who has a good knowledge of the project from this previous role. The event was attended by 36 representatives including consultant team members and comprised invited stakeholders, drawn from political, community, business and voluntary organisations in and around Bicester. Participants were welcomed and provided with initial introductions from Gerry Walker of A2Dominion and independent facilitator, Henry Cleary. This was followed by 2 sessions relating to 5 key topic areas as detailed below, with 3 topics discussed in session 1 and the remaining 2 topics in session 2. Participants were seated at 3 tables with a 10 minute presentation given on each topic by A2Dominion's consultant team followed by 20 minute round table discussions and a 5 minute feedback session so that three main outcomes from each table could be captured, relayed to all participants and recorded on a flipchart. This format enabled each of the 5 topics to be discussed in

turn with facilitators on each table reporting back during the 5 minute feedback session. Each table had three facilitators including an A2Dominion and CDC representative. Appendix A in this report contains the workshop agenda and Appendix B the attendee list.

The event was concluded by Henry Cleary thanking people for their time and input. A summary of table discussions as recorded on the flipcharts (by topic/table) is contained within Appendix C of this report.

3. Feedback

This section highlights the key points raised by participants at each table as recorded on flipcharts and relayed by each table facilitator. Appendix C at the end of this report contains the feedback notes on the flipcharts taken at each table and so provides a breakdown of the overall discussions. To view the consultants' responses please see page 15.

Topic 1 - Housing Numbers

1. **Should we limit the potential of the NW Bicester site to 5000 homes or test the maximum homes the site could allow through the Masterplanning process, potentially up to 6000?**

Key outcomes following discussion around this question are detailed below.

- Planning for an extra 1000 homes safeguards density principles within the local plan/core strategy and prevents speculative developers coming along at a later date and not building to the same eco-standards. This was viewed as a potential benefit of going for a higher number
- The need for soft landscape edges to protect countryside
- Ensuring that the principles of quality, design, green space/open space are adhered to

- A larger number of homes could deliver better services and amenities for the development as a whole. The benefits and impacts of both options should be tested and clearly set out in communicating the change to others
- Ensure that the standards and requirements of the eco town are met if density is increased
- Consider the potential impact on personal amenity space relating to new homes if density is increased
- Clearly defining and planning for a proposed density that will form the masterplan brief and application (to avoid retrospective planning)
- Any increase in dwelling numbers needs to be matched by a commensurate increase in play space, social and community facilities

Topic 2 - Green Infrastructure (GI)

1. **Should open space be dispersed or focused?**

2. **We've identified the following requirements for GI at NW Bicester, including: sports pitches, amenity and recreation, nature park and education, play areas, suds creating damp marshy habitats, community farm, allotments and a burial ground; where should we locate them?**

3. **What are your thoughts on proposed GI uses, as identified in the Masterplan Brief, and their location within the Masterplan?**

Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed below.

- Support for the idea of structured and focused open space
- The importance/need to ensure the hierarchy of open space is correct
- Ensure habitats are protected when considering GI
- Sports provision is welcomed, however not limited to just football
- Preference for active green space towards the centre of the site, with least active on the outskirts

- The importance of school links and sports in concentrated areas
- The railway line could disrupt the effectiveness of GI if it was in a central location. Equally green space either side of the railway could buffer noise impact on houses
- Strong linkages - cyclepaths and footways - need to be provided to green infrastructure and to the town centre. There shouldn't be a green buffer between NW Bicester and the Town
- Green linkages between and into the existing town, the new development and the countryside were seen as very important
- Preference for public uses such as allotments, burial ground, sports/play facilities
- We should think 'big' and be ambitious
- Maximise the amount of GI that is publicly accessible
- Play spaces should be larger and accessible to all

Topic 3 - Schools and Community Hubs

1. **We've identified services / facilities for the community hubs, is there anything else that requires considering? What are your views on these?**

2. **What are your thoughts on proposed hub locations?**

3. **Should we plan for hubs with different characters and facilities i.e. a green hub and young person's hub? What do you think of these ideas?**

4. **What issues determine the location of a secondary school?**

5. **What are your views on planning for 2 larger primary schools (as opposed to 4 smaller schools) in accessible locations, creating busier places and using less land?**

Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed on the next page.

Community Hubs

- Primary Schools and retail hubs should coexist, good for parking, multi-functionality and viability
- Preference towards two vibrant mixed use community hubs located near to the existing and proposed new community to increase viability
- Consider the need for a health related hub
- Design hubs to avoid antisocial behaviour
- Need to agree/specify the type of hubs and consider the needs of the entire population – something that can be used by the whole of Bicester
- Consider GP provision or access North and South of the railway line
- Support suggestion for green hub/ educational facility/nature reserve
- Ensure that there is provision for the elderly/vulnerable/disabled within the community hubs
- Further clarity needed on themed hubs and how they relate to one another, e.g. employment hubs accessing shops to purchase lunch etc.
- Need to ensure that the hubs would work. i.e. Be viable

Schools

- Need for detailed strategy outlining secondary school proposals - further clarity on access required with suggested location (close to railways)
- Acknowledgement that secondary schools can breathe life into the centre and location in relation to the GI is important to consider
- Investigate potential for multiple use of school facilities by community
- Schools to be provided in phases reflecting progress of the development and total number of homes to be built. Preference for 3 primary schools with more homes, with the potential to co-locate with the secondary school
- Need for a clearer understanding and assessment of advantages and disadvantages of two form vs. three form primary schools

Topic 4 - Access and Transport

1. **What are your views on proposed locations for linking the masterplan site to the wider area?**
2. **Are there other locations we should consider?**
3. **What are your views on crossing the railway and practical issues associated with this?**

Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed below.

- Need for options to be tested further with greater understanding of the impacts of each
- Important that links to the wider area are fully considered - Plans showing links with existing routes needs to be clearer
- Additional access points required in light of increased traffic
- Enhance existing cycling and pedestrian routes, particularly to the town centre, and ensure these are aligned
- Consider orbital roads. Buses should use Howes Lane as Howes Lane has to be pedestrian and cycle friendly
- Management of Howes Lane is a key consideration, with a greater understanding of its impacts on the surrounding area. Consider realigning Howes Lane so that houses front onto it rather than back onto it
- Potential value in a strategic perimeter road (potentially to the south of the development) although wider access issues regarding the perimeter road as well as the risk of creating an un-wanted 'hard-edge' to the development
- Railway crossing needs further consideration, concerns over creating an 'hour-glass effect' of traffic building up into a pinch point.
- Wish to see lower traffic speed and promotion of sustainable alternatives such as cycle ways and footpaths
- Any railway underpass would need to be well lit and as short as possible
- Crossing the railway would need to be a destination rather than a route

- Bridge crossing the railway would be too expensive
- Locating green space by the railway line could create more of a divide
- Need for a hierarchy of routes
- Traffic shouldn't be segregated through an underpass, safety in visibility is key
- More consideration on how junction 10 will be accessed
- Provide a lower speed environment for residential areas

Topic 5 - Employment

1. **There are a number of sites identified for employment uses in the emerging local plan. Do you think that the scale and mix of employment proposed at NW Bicester is appropriate in the context of other proposals for the town?**
2. **It is proposed to target various types of employment for NW Bicester, including environmental goods and services, sustainable construction, high performance engineering, other knowledge intensive, business financial and professional services. Are there other key areas of employment that should be explored?**
3. **What are your views on the proposed location of employment within the masterplan?**



Key outcomes following discussion around these questions are detailed below.

- Can unpaid/voluntary positions be included in the overall number of jobs?
- What links could be made to City Deal, countryside and beyond?
- Concerned about the focus of employment in the SW of the site in design terms
- Graven and Heyford considered better suited sites for large format B8
- Desire to provide high skill jobs rather than industrial uses
- General contentment with proposed list of employment uses (however don't rule out other types of industry)
- The need to attract businesses that buy into the eco town philosophy
- Strong view against warehouses
- Promote true home working throughout the development
- Upskilling – attract wider funding so that NW Bicester becomes a knowledge based spine
- Need to consider appropriate uses for each location
- Ensure that connections and access are considered to all employment spaces
- There is a need for a Bicester wide strategy for employment creation
- Likely that 20% of residents will be working from home – need properties that are suitable
- Schools and colleges need to facilitate employment creation through apprenticeships/vocational courses etc.
- Clear definition of what off-site jobs will be created
- Desire to see food production and sale; artisans, crafts industries and studio space
- Is 4-5000 jobs enough for the size of the site?

4. Overall Conclusions

Topic 1 Overview

Test and plan for the optimum number of homes the site could allow through the planning process, and this can exceed 5000.

The density, design and eco principles of the development must be safeguarded through the Masterplan process and not compromised to accommodate an increased number of homes.

Topic 2 Overview

Design and plan for structured and focussed areas of open space with protected habitats. Ensure a clear hierarchy of open space throughout the development. Maximise public access to open space, but avoid locating green space as a buffer between NW Bicester and existing communities. Create strong links with existing green corridors and surrounding countryside.

Be ambitious with sports provision and move away from the provision of small 'postage stamp' play areas.

Topic 3 Overview

Plan for 2 vibrant commercial hubs that contain a range of facilities and co-exist with primary schools to increase viability and parking provision. Enable and encourage use of centres by new and existing communities. Consider the creation of a smaller third centre around a potential health hub. More detail is required about how themed hubs could work.

Potentially allow for two primary schools if the total number of homes built is close to 5000, but plan for three if the number of homes is significantly more than 5000, with the potential for one to co-locate with the secondary school; more information to be considered to inform this decision. Access and strong connections to green infrastructure are key factors when locating the secondary school. Multi-use facilities within the secondary school to be provided.



Topic 4 Overview

Further consideration of access and transport options is required to test the impacts of each.

Topic 5 Overview

Agreement that jobs generated from the NW Bicester development can be created both on-site and in wider areas. In considering jobs on site, wider consideration has to be given to the town wide position on B8 type uses and locations. NW Bicester should consider alternative types and locations for employment space to achieve the target number of jobs on site. Consider flexible business space that can evolve with the development. Be ambitious with employment proposals and attract knowledge based industries that buy-in to the NW Bicester philosophy.

5. Appendices

Appendix A - Workshop agenda

Appendix B - Attendee list

Appendix C - Summary of table discussions

Appendix D - Consultants' Responses to July workshop

Appendix A - North West Bicester Masterplan Workshop - Agenda

9.00 - Arrival (teas and coffees)

9.15 - Welcome/Introduction - Henry Cleary and Gerry Walker
With Jenny Barker (Cherwell District Council) presenting a brief introduction before each topic.

Session 1

9.30 - Topic 1: Housing Numbers - Iain Painting

- Should we limit the potential of the NW Bicester site to 5000 homes or test the maximum homes the site could allow through the Masterplanning process?

10.05 - Topic 2: Green Infrastructure - Gary Young

- Should open space be dispersed or focused?
- We've identified the following requirements for GI at NW Bicester, where should we locate them?
- What are your thoughts on proposed GI uses, as identified in the Masterplan Brief, and their location within the Masterplan?

10.40 - Topic 3: Schools & Community Hubs - Gary Young

- We've identified services / facilities for the community hubs, is there anything else that requires considering? What are your views on these?
- What are your thoughts on proposed hub locations?
- Should we plan for hubs with different characters and facilities i.e. a green hub and young person's hub? What do you think of these ideas?
- What issues determine the location of a secondary school?
- What are your views on planning for 2 larger primary schools (as opposed to 4 smaller schools) in accessible locations, creating busier places and using less land?

11.15 - Break

Session 2

11.35 - Topic 4: Access & Transport - Philip Harker / Janice Hughes

- What are your views on proposed locations for linking the masterplan site to the wider area?
- Are there other locations we should consider?
- What are your views on crossing the railway and practical issues associated with this?

12.10 - Topic 5: Employment - Rachel Redman / Richard Hindle / Iain Painting

- There are a number of sites identified for employment uses in the emerging local plan. Do you think that the scale and mix of employment proposed at NW Bicester is appropriate in the context of other proposals for the town?
- It is proposed to target various types of employment for NW Bicester, including environmental goods and services, sustainable construction, high performance engineering, other knowledge intensive, light manufacturing, and business financial and professional services. Are there other key areas of employment that should be explored?
- What are your views on the proposed location of employment within the masterplan?

12.45 - Conclusion and closing statement - Henry Cleary

1.00 - Close

Appendix B - Masterplan workshop, 22 July 2013 - Attendees

Ben Jackson	Bicester Chamber of Commerce - SDB
Placi O'Neill-Espejo	Bicester Vision
Jason Slaymaker	Bicester Youth Council
Sue Mackrell	Bicester Town Council
Cllr James Porter	Bicester Town Council
Cllr Richard Mould	Bicester Town Council
Cllr Jolanta Lis	Bicester Town Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell DC
Cllr Michael Gibbard	Cherwell DC
Cllr Les Sibley	Cherwell DC
Calvin Bell	Cherwell DC
Claire Mitchell	Cherwell DC
Cllr Lynn Pratt	Cherwell DC
Jenny Barker	Cherwell DC
Azul Strong	Cherwell DC
Cllr Derek Hedges	Bucknell PC
Bruce Tremayne	CPRE
John Broad	CPRE
Cllr Ian Hudspeth	Oxfordshire County Council
Ian Carmichael	Thames Valley Police
Denise Somerton	Bicester Community College
Henry Cleary	Facilitator
Lewis Knight	Bioregional
Gerry Walker	A2 Dominion
Louise Caves	A2 Dominion
Steve Hornblow	A2 Dominion
Heather David	A2 Dominion
Alex Wilson	Barton Willmore
Iain Painting	Barton Willmore
Philip Harker	Hyder
Rachel Redman	SQW
Andy Edwards	Bioregional
Richard Hindle	SQW
Gary Young	Farrells
Caroline Ford	Cherwell District Council
Steve Houkes	Remarkable Group

Appendix C - 22 July Masterplan Workshop - Flipchart Notes

Topic 1 - Housing Numbers

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Extra 1000 safeguards density principles with local plan/core strategy. Prevents speculative developer coming along at a later date and not building to same eco-standards.	Consider the impact of increasing density in relation to gardens/personal open space if overall site density is increased	Need to be clear on no compromise for meeting requirements of eco town
Needs soft landscape edges to protect countryside	Uphold principles of quality, design, green space/open space	Test and present both scenarios (5,000 v 6,000, pros and cons)
Using whole area avoids criticism of reducing the area as historically shown	Consider perceptions in terms of any proposed density increase and how acceptable or not this may be	Clear and concise about why numbers have changed - how informed

Topic 2 - Green Infrastructure

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Focused, but protect habitats, ambitious for sport, not just football, strong walking and cycling linkage	Get the hierarchy of spaces right	Support idea of structured protected open space provision - focused
School links, sports in/ concentrated area but need links - otherwise railway line could disrupt effectiveness - More active green space towards centre, least active on outskirts e.g. burial ground.	Either/or need to achieve a good balance, best places located next to streams	Do not want a green buffer between Bicester and NW Bicester - strong linkages should be provided (cycle paths/footpaths - existing and new in and out of town)
Uses - push boundaries, cycling, multi-focused, must link to countryside, more active elements nearer town	Possibly adjacent to railway line - less noise impact on houses	Maximise public accessible GI space. Preferred uses - allotments, burial ground, sports/play facilities (no postage stamp)

Topic 3 - Schools and Community Hubs

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Primary Schools and retail hubs should coexist, good for parking and multi-functionality, viability	Agree on 2 vibrant centres	x 2 commercial hubs - to be located in location where existing and proposed communities can utilise, must be viable/vibrant, sufficient foot fall key
Design crucial to avoid ASB and make viable	Would group activities around the centres rather than themed centres (dependent on what the themes are actually doing)	Type of hubs - need to consider entire population demands, young v older, services/facilities in existing Bicester must be considered, GP provision key, 2 GPs north and south
Health hub needs to link to community facilities and infrastructure, extra care (elderly)	Use by Bicester as a whole	Primary schools - pros and cons for 2FE v 3FE, ensure future demands are met, through school (3 rd with secondary)
Green hub - education, nature reserve	Secondary centres	Secondary school - central location near GV railway
Secondary - need to discuss access later	Other provision for elderly/ vulnerable, disabled	
Some retail in business hub? Or easy linkage to retail	Acknowledge that secondary schools can breathe life into the centre but recognise that its location is important/green infrastructure	
Need a better understanding of the detail / character and what's included in themed hubs?	Secondary school strategy required, investigate multiple use of secondary school	
Prefer option for three primary schools, but one could potentially be co-located with the secondary school.	Phasing important in relation to development and numbers/population	

Topic 4 - Access and Transport

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Linkage to wider area	Increased traffic will require additional access points	Need to consider further options, options to be tested further, outer ring road would eliminate traffic, HGV concern regarding re routing of Howes Lane
Enhance existing and ensure aligned cycling and pedestrian	Consider orbital roads. Buses should use Howes Lane as Howes Lane has to be pedestrian and cycle friendly.	Railway crossing - concerned over 'hourglass' effect, design and detail critical in terms of underpass (secure design), must be considered further
New road going to underpass gives opportunity to links across existing road which would become very much secondary (Howes Lane)	In favour of strategic perimeter road	Lower speed aspiration - peace and quiet where people want to live, more cycle ways and footpaths into and out of Bicester/ NW, promote sustainable forms of transport
OCC strategic - needs consideration but is it the best use of scarce funds? Does not work with current masterplan, hard edge issue	Creating a bypass creates a route	
Underpass - needs to be wide, lit, all encompassing, design crucial, short as possible	Put the strategic road to the south of the development	
Links along railway line into existing	Encased perimeter road causes problems for access	
1 and 2 favoured provision for long term sustainable travel (charging)	Realign Howes Lane so that houses fronted onto it rather than backed onto it - considered a better solution	
No segregation of traffic especially through an underpass.	Crossing the railway being a destination rather than a route	
A bridge is too expensive, occupies too much land and OCC can't afford it.	Railway line - will locating the green space here create more of a divide?	

Maps and plans to show links with existing routes need to be clearer.	Creating visual links with the green space. Open spaces should be well maintained and lit.	
	More thought on how junction 10 will be accessed	

Topic 5 - Employment

Table 1	Table 2	Table 3
Link to city deal, countrywide and beyond	Job/work exchange	Location - not happy with focus of employment in SW of site
Upskilling, attracts wider funding. NW Bicester to become a knowledge based spine.	Could we include the non paid opportunities as part of overall numbers?	Key considerations – accessibility, relationship between existing uses – sensitivities (residential), other uses - high skilled jobs, not appropriate location for industrial uses
B8 – Graven and Heyford better suited?	Location – connections, landmarking, access	Need to consider appropriate uses for this location and where within site (consider wider Bicester)
Bold ambitious	No warehouses (strong view)	Happy with proposal list of employment uses
Develop products for the houses, role of the business portal expands local business, apprenticeships, local labour	Mix of jobs okay but don't rule out other industries	Eco town want to attract businesses that buy into philosophy
True homeworking	All need to be complimentary and for the good of Bicester	
Retain businesses that occupy incubator units on site by enabling them to grow.	Is 4-5,000 jobs enough for the size of the site?	
Artisans – cottage, craft industries and studio space	Need a Bicester wide strategy for employment creation	

Short lease start up?	20% working from home – need properties that are suitable	
Food production and sale.	Schools and colleges need to facilitate employment creation with more vocational courses	
Location sensible, not large sheds, flexible change of use		
Clearer definition of off-site jobs being created.		

Appendix D - Consultants' Responses to July workshop

Consultants Responses

Following the NW Bicester Key Stakeholders Workshop on 22 July, the lead consultants for each of the key topics have reviewed in detail the points raised and taken the findings back to their relative workstreams for wider discussion. The written statements below set out considered responses to the points raised, providing clarity and explanation as to why and how these matters are being progressed as part of the masterplan process, and start to identify the agreed principles and preferred options to take to wider consultation in October.

Topic 1 – Housing Numbers

The workshop agreed that the master planning process should not be constrained by an artificial ceiling on dwelling yield. Instead, the dwelling yield should arise from the robust assessment and formulation of the master plan, generally within the area identified in the emerging Local Plan i.e. circa 400 ha). However, the workshop was concerned to ensure that any increase above the 5000 new homes currently identified in the emerging Local Plan should be accompanied and supported by the appropriate increase in services and facilities and that the objectives and eco-credentials of the development are attained.

Consultants response – Iain Painting, Barton Willmore

The master plan process comprises a series of 'workstreams'; which include a group tasked with identifying community infrastructure: i.e. the level and form of facilities required to support the new community and how to ensure that the community is integrated with the existing town.

The total number of new homes provided within the scheme reflects the amount of land identified for development, but also the assumptions as the density and type of new homes that are proposed. These issues will be tested through the master plan process together with the distribution of uses, the location and form of social and community uses. A2Dominion has also commissioned modelling of the population growth arising over the life span of the development phase, so that we can better understand how the community will grow and develop.

The master planning process will not be constrained by an artificial limit on the number of new homes. Instead, the amount of developable land, the type and form of new homes and the relationship to the need for facilities and services will be tested to arrive at the optimum form of development, that best meets the aims and objectives of the master plan brief and Eco Towns initiative.

Topic 2 - Green infrastructure (GI)

It was made clear that the preferred option in regards to green infrastructure was for it to be focused in one area as opposed to spreading too thin, providing there are good connections between existing and proposed housing and active GI areas. Some natural protected areas should be provided taking advantage of the railway barrier. Play areas should be grouped in larger areas rather than isolated small areas. It was made clear that there are three community priorities: Sports pitch facilities accessible for all community use, allotments and a burial ground.

Consultants response – Gary Young, Farrells Architects

Study is on-going to investigate the distribution and mix of multiple GI assets and the hierarchy in which these assets fall. The purpose of GI across the site is richly embedded with the NW Bicester aspirations and the aspirations of Bicester as a town and as a result a lot of attention and focus has been made into incorporating dual functions. This runs alongside captivating and memorialising the history of the site through its rich landscape character. The GI strategy establishes the land constraints as dedicated elements to preserve and protect through the incorporation of natural habitats and ecological buffer zones. By working closely with biodiversity interest groups the enhancement and protection level that is required can be achieved.

The idea is to cluster activity towards the centre of the site. By concentrating the GI around the railway line (an asset to the heritage of the site), makes best use of the context, providing high value amenity space which contains a diversity of plant species and incorporates a tapestry of wildlife; that also acts as a noise buffer to close-by residential areas. It is recognised that GI routes into Bicester need to be emphasised more strongly developing key graded pedestrian routes (i.e. leisurely routes, A to B routes, routes to school etc.) and these are issues being addressed through the GI workstreams. Alongside these issues are the elements of play being addressed, formally and informally, at various scales (i.e. formal sports provision, play areas, creative streets etc.)

Topic 3 – Community Hubs and Schools

The workshop suggested two local centres were preferred, rather than several hubs, so that the centres created catchment for footfall and viability. It was also identified that local centres should be located close to existing and proposed connections and housing. The preference was to provide facilities concentrated in fewer places to encourage shared use of facilities and footfall, e.g. school close to retail and health. It was also identified that the provision of schools, school size and location were not clearly evident in how they provided educational needs for the population and met local authority policies.

Consultants response – Gary Young, Farrells Architects

The role of the hubs is recognised as for the benefit of both the NW Bicester population and the existing population of the town. With this in mind more detailed work is being carried out on creating vibrant mixed use community hubs which complement the existing retail and services offered in Bicester. The option of a complimentary variety of hubs alongside two main local retail centres steers towards providing this mix. Locations are still yet to be decided but are closely linked with the housing, community and

green infrastructure proposals. Through themed hubs such as: Green; Community care; Education and Business; mixed uses could be catered for. The design process of the hubs recognises the importance of multi-functionality and services co existing i.e. schools, retail and health facilities in close proximity to each other to provide parking advantages for added user benefits.

The proposed school provision of three primary schools and one secondary reflects the growing population of Bicester and therefore is provided in phases running alongside the build rate of NW Bicester. It has been identified that there exists potential to co-locate one of the primary schools adjacent to the secondary. The function of the schools in the masterplan not only perform an educational contribution but additionally breathe life into the proposal through their relation to play, sport, amenity and multi-use facilities accessible to the whole community providing Bicester with increased healthy living opportunities.

Topic 4 – Access and Transport

To be revisited in a separate dedicated workshop with key Bicester Stakeholders on 25 September 2013.

Topic 5 – Employment

Consultants response – Chris Green, SQW.

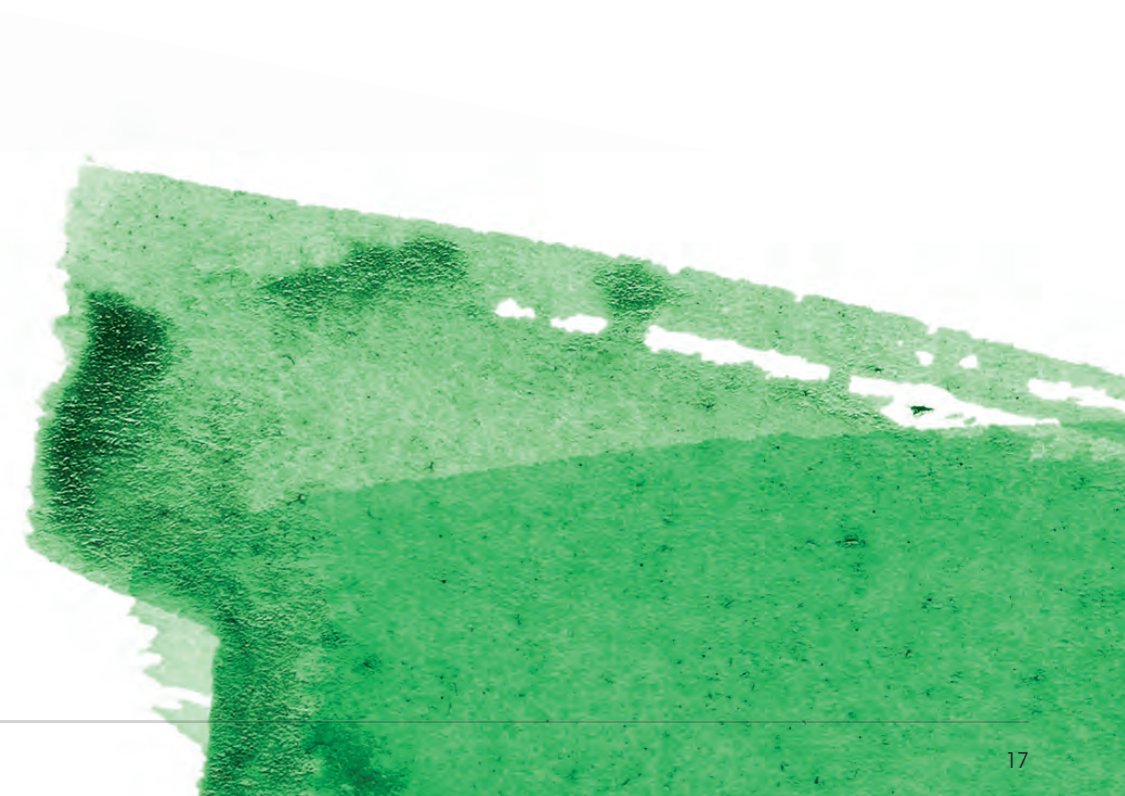
The employment proposals for NW Bicester have been developed within the context of the future economic role of the town as a whole and the potential to generate new jobs across all sectors, whether or not those jobs are directly related to the eco development, and wherever they are located within the town. Other plans and proposals have been taken into account, including the draft Cherwell Local Plan and the draft City Deal submission for Oxfordshire (which identifies Bicester as the northern part of Oxfordshire's Knowledge Economy Spine). However, in keeping with the eco towns guidance and the District Council's requirements, the economic strategy is for the eco development, not for Bicester as a whole.

The eco development will be a mixed use scheme, supporting the creation of as many jobs as homes (note this relates to paid employment; voluntary and unpaid jobs would be additional). Most of these jobs will be located on the NW Bicester site. Marketing of business space will focus particularly on firms in sustainable construction and environmental goods and services, and there will be active promotion of eco principles and sustainable business practices among all firms locating on the NW Bicester site. Other activities which Bicester should attract and which would be suitable to accommodate on the eco development include professional and personal services, craft activities, advanced manufacturing and other high tech activities. Large scale warehousing will not be encouraged on the NW Bicester site: it is better

located at Graven Hill. The demands of people who move to the eco development will also stimulate the creation of more retail, leisure and service jobs elsewhere in Bicester, particularly the town centre.

A mix of offices and flexible business space (suitable for a mix of office, studio/workshop and small scale storage uses) will be provided on the site, both in the various community and business hubs across the site and within a separate business area in the SW corner of the site, designed to be in-keeping with the wider eco-development and to take into consideration its location to nearby residential properties. The SW corner has been chosen as the most accessible location for businesses access to and from the M40. Employment space will be accessible by public transport, on foot or by cycle or car. Homes will be designed to enable homeworking, and the eco business centre will provide facilities for home workers such as meeting rooms, hot desks and reception services.

The action plan which forms part of the economic strategy will identify measures to help attract suitable jobs to the eco development and more generally to Bicester, including apprenticeships and vocational courses.



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