

Exemplar Statement of Community Involvement

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Executive Summary

The approach to community involvement in the evolution of plans for NW Bicester is genuine, thorough and considered.

P3Eco (Bicester) Ltd's role as facilitator for the development is different from that of a traditional developer. The proposal for an eco development at NW Bicester pre-dated their involvement. P3Eco is responding to Cherwell District Council's ambition to make the eco development the very best it can be.

From the outset, P3Eco has had an open approach to information about the development and has made a substantial number of public and private presentations and ensured information is made available via www.nwbicester.co.uk. The Chair of the P3Eco, Ian Inshaw, is himself a member of many local groups and networks. A2Dominion Group, the RSL and housing development partner for the Exemplar, has a long established expertise in engagement and community development. The whole ethic of the approach designed by consultation consultants PMC and adopted by P3Eco and A2Dominion Group has been one of openness and commitment to be aware of and responsive to local needs and local views.

As well as through numerous ad hoc meetings and conversations, there has been structured contact through both the project workstream structure and formal periods of consultation.

The detailed work to produce the wider Masterplan (ongoing) and specific proposals for the Exemplar scheme began with an Open Planning Week which established local ambitions, context and concerns. Subsequently, there have been two further periods of consultation which have provided opportunities to scrutinise both outline and detailed plans for the Exemplar scheme prior to submission.

There is a significant level of active support for the proposed Exemplar from key groups, including elected representatives on Town, District and County councils and in consultation responses from the local parish – Caversfield. There has also been consistent support from Bicester Vision (the public-private partnership) and the Bicester Chamber of Commerce. Various other groups, including the Bicester Local History Society, the residents' associations and individual business and community associations have shown consistent interest.

A good level of awareness of the proposals for NW Bicester has been established and a significant amount of interest shown in information presented publicly. Primary concerns have centred on whether the development will reach the high expectations of sustainability and the impact of the additional population on traffic and other infrastructure.

Introduction

1. P3Eco (Bicester) Ltd was formed to respond to Cherwell District Council's (CDC) ambition for an eco development at NW Bicester. P3Eco is an eco development facilitation company rather than a traditional developer. In this facilitation role, P3Eco has assembled a professional team to produce a Masterplan for the NW Bicester Eco Development and forms partnerships with developers and others where and as needed to deliver the opportunities and ambitions of the eco development.
2. This facilitation role starts by defining the ambitions and content of the Masterplan for NW Bicester. To respond to this, P3Eco has established a 'Masterplanning in Partnership' approach with communications consultants PMC and the professional team. Masterplanning in Partnership creates working processes and a structure for inclusion of all stakeholders – statutory and public – to engage with the creation of the framework for future development within NW Bicester.
3. 'Masterplanning in Partnership' was launched in June 2010 with an Open Planning Week, and has continued through the summer and autumn 2010 with workshops connected to project workstreams (e.g. Transport and Green Infrastructure) and the publication of a paper entitled *NW Bicester: Testing Masterplanning Ideas* in September 2010. It will continue during 2011 until submission of the Masterplan to Cherwell District Council (CDC), the planning authority.
4. The Exemplar has been brought forward ahead of the Masterplan in partnership with housing provider and developer the A2Dominion Group as a stand alone development. The Exemplar has been informed by the ongoing consultation on the Masterplan for the wider development. However, alongside this there have also been two dedicated periods of public consultation focusing on the Exemplar – *Testing Ideas* in September 2010 at which an outline was presented and the more detailed *Pre-Application Consultation* in October 2010.
5. Since July 2009, information on the proposed approach to NW Bicester has been available on the P3Eco website www.p3eco.com. All information has been provided on the project website www.nwbicester.co.uk since its launch in September 2010 and consultations have been well publicised in the local media, through local networks and by wide distribution of posters and flyers. Regular updates and offers of meetings with P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group and the professional team have been provided to stakeholders and self-selected 'Friends of NW Bicester' (membership of which has been actively promoted).

Local and national context

6. NW Bicester was designated alongside three other locations for eco development under the Government's Eco Town Policy Planning Statement, a supplement to PPS1 ('Eco Town

PPS'). The Eco Town supplement is intended to promote and improve the UK's ability to build new housing to the highest levels of sustainability, to catch up with other countries' more advanced eco building scenes.

7. The shortlisting of NW Bicester was announced in March 2009. The proposition was led by CDC and supported by Bicester Town Council (BTC), Oxfordshire County Council, Tony Baldry MP (Bicester and Banbury) and key community groups as a preferred option to the previously proposed Weston-on-Otmoor scheme to the west of the town.
8. Prior to the shortlisting, there was not significant public engagement regarding an eco development on the site to the north-west of Bicester, which left residual concern about the level of community involvement. Subsequently, however, CDC has led events to inform and include residents and promote the eco development as a key driver for economic regeneration and to provide a focus for improvements to the town's infrastructure and standing.
9. P3Eco and masterplanning partners Farrells supported the application for final designation which happened in July 2009 and have subsequently formed the core of the NW Bicester project team. Public engagement began on designation in July 2009.
10. The change in Government has not affected the support for NW Bicester from the local authorities (Bicester Town, Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County Councils) or from the local MP or the community groups who have been consistently supportive.
11. The Government has indicated that it is supportive of eco developments under the Eco Town supplement if they are supported locally, in line with their 'localism' agenda for development. Practical support has been ongoing post-election and further funding has been made available through the Eco Town allocation.
12. Localism is high on the Coalition Government's agenda and the Localism Bill will be introduced to Parliament shortly. The Bill plans to devolve greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and give local communities control over housing and planning decisions. Consultation on the Exemplar is in keeping with this move to more local involvement in the creation of development proposals.
13. The Exemplar is a stand alone development, but within the context of an intended Masterplan for the full development. The Exemplar application demonstrates the viability, potential and benefit of eco development and how it can respond to local need.

Scope of consultation

14. NW Bicester was designated for eco development in the context of a 'whole of Bicester approach'. This approach has been developed further by CDC and P3Eco plays an active role in supporting the existing town's evolving eco identity.
15. CDC has led on public engagement around 'Eco Bicester' and has produced a document for consultation entitled '*One Shared Vision for Bicester*'. In addition, CDC has consulted on the Eco Town designation and identification of the NW Bicester site for eco development under its Local Development Framework Draft Core Strategy. Whilst the Draft Core Strategy was delayed due to the change in Government, officers and lead councillors remain fully and publicly supportive of the eco town principle.
16. Within this context, consultation activities undertaken by P3Eco and the A2Dominion Group have focused on how to make the NW Bicester Eco Development the best that it can be and have tested proposals to deliver the project.
17. As referenced above and outlined below, a 'Masterplanning in Partnership' approach has been taken to consultation on the full NW Bicester proposal and this is ongoing. This Statement of Community Involvement is to support the submission of an application for the Exemplar development within the context of the Masterplanning exercise.

The Masterplanning in Partnership approach

18. PMC and P3Eco devised a 'Masterplanning in Partnership' approach to consultation activity in order to support the creation of a long term framework for the development of NW Bicester. Key to this approach is an ethos set by P3Eco that the development should be responsive and informed by Bicester - an attitude which is different from that of many developers. P3Eco's role as 'facilitator' is fundamental to this.
19. The expectation in the Masterplanning in Partnership approach is that P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group and the professional team will work closely with public sector bodies and local groups and the local community to develop the principles which inform their approach to the site.
20. The Masterplanning in Partnership process allows community representatives and members of the public access to information at key stages of the development of the project, and access and input to the professional team and decision makers directly and via other means. This is to create an ongoing two-way interaction.
21. At each stage of consultation there is available on-line (and in hard copy if requested) a recap of information provided so far and an explanation of how plans have progressed as

well as an opportunity to provide both feedback and new feed-in. There are key points of public consultation along the way, but it is a continuously responsive process.

22. The 'Masterplanning in Partnership' approach has contributed to the development of proposals for the Exemplar through the initial launch 'Open Planning Week' which set out the combined aspirations of local representatives and members of the public and tested the initial principles that P3Eco and Farrells had brought forward. This was largely constructive and positive.
23. Those who disagreed with the proposed eco development were actively encouraged to be part of the Masterplanning in Partnership process, and have turned out to be some of the most constructive partners in this process.
24. There have been a series of workshops involving key stakeholders with expertise in the project workstream areas, for instance in green infrastructure or transport. These have been essential to the Masterplanning in Partnership process, ensuring a sound structure and local knowledge within the project. These are covered across the application.



25. In developing the Masterplan, P3Eco produced a paper entitled *NW Bicester: Testing Masterplanning Ideas* in Sept 2010. The aim was to produce some tentative ideas to generate feed-in and comments, mirroring the system of Government 'green' and 'white' papers. As the Masterplan develops, P3Eco aims to produce a "white paper" as the next stage in the process with more concrete proposals for consultation based on the comments received from stakeholders so far.
26. The Masterplanning in Partnership process is ongoing, and will continue through the full evolution of the Masterplan – during 2011. This Statement of Community Involvement focuses on the activities so far and how they have contributed to the design and decision-making process for the Exemplar.

Ongoing consultation and communication

27. During 2009 and 2010, P3Eco supported a wide range of activities to promote and explain the proposals for an eco development at NW Bicester, led by the District and Town Councils. This helped raise awareness of the scheme and meant that there was an expectation of significant engagement around the proposals from the outset.
28. Presentations given by P3Eco have included:
- Public briefing for designation of NW Bicester, July 2009
 - Briefing for Parish Council Members, August 2009
 - Bure Park Residents' Association, September 2009
 - Meeting for all landowners, October 2009
 - Southwold Residents' Association, November 2009
 - Bicester Summit, December 2009
 - CABE, January 2010
 - CDC Local Development Framework consultation in Bicester, March 2010
29. In addition, P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group and members of the project team have had numerous meetings with a wide range of stakeholders and community representatives. These have taken the form of, although not exclusively:
- Regular project meetings with the Eco Bicester team from Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council officers;
 - Reports to the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board which includes elected representatives from the County, District and Town Councils as well as officers from other statutory bodies (PCT, Environment Agency, CLG, HCA etc) and Bicester Vision ;
 - Reports to the Bicester Vision Partnership Board, of which P3Eco and the A2Dominion Group are members;
 - Attendance at Bicester Chamber of Commerce events;
 - Individual meetings with a wide range of local businesses and interest groups.

Stakeholders

30. From the very earliest stages of the project communication, engagement and consultation with stakeholders was given the highest priority in formulating how the project would develop. The history of proposals for an eco development in the Bicester area and the previous substantial objections to the aborted Weston-on-Otmoor location meant that there was already a considerable amount of information in the community about the possibilities of an eco development. With that knowledge came a range of views, from excitement to

scepticism, and concerns about what an eco development would actually mean for Bicester, was it an appropriate location and how 'eco' it could be.

31. The project has sought to address all of these points through the various stages of consultation in leading the masterplanning process and facilitating the development following the designation.
32. At the beginning of the project extensive work was undertaken to identify the full range of stakeholders, including people and organisations from in and around the Bicester community, and relevant national and regional agencies and organisations. There are a number of statutory consultees but in addition to these the project has sought to engage as wide a group of interested parties as possible.
33. Out of this relationship-building there are some very interesting elements in the process of being added to the overall site development. For example, partnership work with Oxford Brookes University and Oxford Innovation (which operates the Bicester Innovation Centre) has led to the establishment of the Eco Bicester Research and Innovation Centre (EBRIC). EBRIC forms a significant contribution to the nascent eco economy for Bicester and creates institutionalised links between its partners, extended to local authorities and other education establishments.
34. Stakeholders can contact an identified consultation organiser at any time, and contact details are available publicly. The Directors of P3Eco (in particular the Chair, Ian Inshaw and Tim Fenn, leading in particular on sustainability and skills) and the project team from the A2Dominion Group make themselves available whenever requested and have actively sought contact and meetings with as many people as possible in the town and related to the project.
35. NW Bicester stakeholders include:
 - Landowners
 - Local and national politicians
 - Community organisations and voluntary sector
 - Faith groups
 - Young people's organisations
 - Public services, including transport, police, health, utilities
 - Environmental organisations
 - Businesses and business networks
 - Education establishments
 - Civic and historical organisations
 - Media

36. By keeping a record of contact with these various groups the project has remained well aware of the level of engagement with any particular category of stakeholder and has been able to monitor their general and individual responses to the proposals as they have developed. With some stakeholders there is extensive contact for very specific reasons, such as land acquisition. At the other end of the scale, other stakeholders only wish to be kept up-to-date. As the project has moved on, more individuals and organisations have been added to the list as they have become more informed and involved. There has been ongoing contact with stakeholders at all stages of consultation as well as individual correspondence, telephone and face-to-face contact.
37. Many stakeholders have also been brought into the workstream process through workshops; contact with lead consultants and regular contact for those who have shown most active interest.

Landowners

38. As a result of the way in which the NW Bicester site was identified without prior consultation with landowners, there was an understandable degree of concern and apprehension amongst those affected. P3Eco saw the landowners as a key stakeholder group and a number of presentations were made to them individually and collectively about the approach to the site and to ensure they were briefed about the Farrell concept for the development. P3Eco has been able to maintain and develop its relationship with the landowners and a substantial amount of the entire NW Bicester site is now under option or at an advanced stage of negotiation. This includes land owned by individuals who had initially been vocal in their opposition.

Local and national politicians

39. There has been regular and formal communication between P3Eco/the A2Dominion Group and elected representatives at all layers of local and national politics. This has been through a variety of forums – formally in reports to the Eco Bicester Strategic Delivery Board, through the workstream process, through the dedicated periods of consultation (outlined below) and through regular contact, including large and small meetings. The consultation strategy was submitted to the Strategic Delivery Board in April 2010. It is available in appendix 1. Some details, for instance timescales, are out of date, but the core strategy has been delivered.

Parish Councils

40. The Parish Councils for the parishes closest to the NW Bicester development, and Caversfield Parish in particular for the Exemplar, have been key stakeholders. A dedicated presentation to representatives of the Parish Councils was given in August 2009 shortly

after the designation of NW Bicester. At each stage of the consultation, the Parish Councils have been invited to take part, and there is a standing offer of meetings and presentations if desired. Representatives of the Parish Councils attended the Community Masterplanning Workshop in June 2010 and were constructive contributors.

41. The Exemplar falls within Caversfield Parish. The Parish Council submitted a questionnaire to the September consultation (received early November), which was largely supportive of the plans, but raised the following issues:
- Infrastructure provision
 - Viability and sustainability of the Exemplar as an 'eco' development
 - Transport – car parking, public transport provision, realism of charging electric cars away from home
 - Employment
 - Educational and community facilities
 - Access for Caversfield residents to allotments
 - Connection with Caversfield, e.g. spiritual provision
42. Because of the proximity of the Exemplar to the village, all Caversfield residents received flyers for the pre-application consultation in October.

Bicester Vision

43. Bicester Vision is important as the local public-private partnership that brings together local authorities and large private employers and organisations in the town. P3Eco and the A2Dominion Group are both members of Bicester Vision. Through similar mechanisms to those used with local politicians, Bicester Vision has informed the development of the project. There have also been regular presentations to the main Partnership Board meetings.

Voluntary sector, community, faith and residents' groups

44. P3Eco has an established stakeholder database of as many community and residents' groups and local representatives as possible, identified through desk research, local knowledge and contacts. They were invited into the Community Masterplanning Workshop in the Open Planning Week to help establish community needs and 'wants' and to engage with these groups individually. They have been notified of further consultation. There is always a standing offer of meetings or presentations.

Business community

45. The Bicester Chamber of Commerce has been an important local network through the consultation process. There have also been a significant number of presentations by

P3Eco Directors to the business community and various business groups, and they have had many follow-up meetings and contact with local businesses; as well as through the public consultation events.

Statutory organisations

46. Statutory organisations have been involved in the Exemplar proposals through the Strategic Delivery Board; the workstream process; and through notification of public consultations. These are dealt with throughout the application documentation relating to the specific areas of work.

Residents

47. The structure of public consultation and Masterplanning in Partnership has been designed to allow residents of Bicester and the local area to have access to information about the proposal and contact with P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group and the project team so that there can be direct channels of communication. All consultation events have had a heavy presence from the professional team to ensure that there are opportunities for residents to have personal contact with, influence and feed-in to the core project, as well as formal channels via feedback mechanisms such as questionnaires.

Friends of NW Bicester

48. From the outset, encouraging engagement of individuals in and around Bicester was deemed very important. P3Eco wanted to allow people to remain in contact with news about the development so that they could follow what was going on, receive advance information on forthcoming consultations and offer their opinions about how the project was developing either through formal requests or not.
49. Under the Masterplanning in Partnership approach, the Friends of NW Bicester contact list was established and launched as part of the Open Planning Week events.
50. A simple form was devised which allowed people to opt into a mailing list if they so wished. Contact details were requested with the aim that most correspondence would be via email, although it was made clear that information could be sent in the post if required. In June during the Open Planning Week, 'Become a Friend of NW Bicester' forms were available at all the public drop-in events and visitors were encouraged to complete the form if they were interested in staying in touch with the project, regardless of their views. By the end of the Open Planning Week close to 50 people had signed up to be a 'Friend'.
51. At the beginning of September the project website www.nwbicester.co.uk was launched in time for the second stage of consultation. It then became possible to register for the

contact list via an online form. This online format was promoted during the September consultation period and paper forms were also available at the public drop-in events. 15 additional people registered during this time. Stakeholders were not automatically added, and contact with those already identified has been maintained alongside the mailing list.

52. Again while the October consultation period was underway, there were further additions to the Friends of NW Bicester mailing list and 23 names were added via the project website. A smaller number joined by filling in forms at consultation events. There are now 90 names on the 'Friends' list.
53. Since the creation of the mailing list, those listed have received a number of communications, including:
 - A summary of the Open Planning Week feedback
 - Copies of press releases issued to the local media
 - PDFs of a flyer and a leaflet promoting forthcoming consultation events
 - A reminder to submit comments
54. All requests via email to join the group received an acknowledgement and individual enquiries are responded to promptly by a named member of the team.
55. It is the intention to increase contact with those on the mailing list during the continuing consultation on the Masterplan for NW Bicester. The individuals on the list have an active interest in the project for a variety of reasons and they could play an important part of any focus group work on the project.

Local media

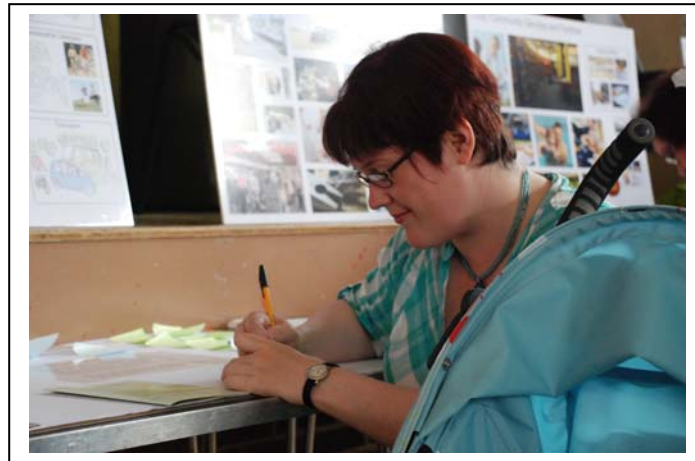
56. The concept of an eco development in the area existed before the arrival of P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group and their team. There was a lot of coverage about the proposed Weston-on-Otmoor site and this focus shifted to NW Bicester. It remains a regular news topic in the area.
57. Coverage by all news outlets on the NW Bicester consultation process itself has been neutral to positive and is referred to later in this document. Good relations have been maintained with the media by prompt responses to enquiries via email and telephone, and a number of releases have been issued about the consultation, which have led to print and broadcast interviews with key members of the team. This has provided an opportunity to explain the aims of the project.
58. There have been some negative comments reported during 2009 and, less frequently, during 2010. There are a couple of vocal opponents who have been quoted in local

newspapers as being against development at NW Bicester. In 2009 there was also anti-development campaigning in the media led by a local resident although this has not had significant traction.

59. Editorially the local media does not appear to have taken sides and information distributed by the project team has led them to ask questions for interest and clarification rather than to trap or berate. As with all stakeholders, the project aims for the media to be fully informed.

Open Planning Week – June 2010

60. The Masterplanning in Partnership approach was launched with an Open Planning Week (OPW). This introduced the wider community to the proposed NW Bicester eco development and Exemplar concept and was intended to provide a firm basis for the team to gather feed-in about what NW Bicester should provide for the town and establish ambitions for the scheme. The Open Planning Week was a participative process drawing on 'Planning for Real' and 'Enquiry by Design' products but applied to a green field site.



61. The OPW marked the beginning of the professional team's baseline work for the full development and detailed work for the Exemplar phase. From the outset, the team's brief was to be responsive and open to the local community and the OPW provided a solid base for this.
62. The OPW took place on 5th-12th June 2010 and was followed by a Community Feedback session on 16th June and subsequent circulation of the summary of the feedback received during the week – now available and flagged on the project website and made available at all consultation sessions. This ensures that there is a public check on the assumptions made over the project and establishes the principle of a completed feedback loop.
63. The OPW consisted of three public drop-in days in the town centre and a two-day 'Community Masterplanning Workshop'. Both were structured around the main project workstreams identified by the professional team so that they related directly to the core project.

64. Over the course of the OPW, over 350 members of the local community were engaged in face-to-face conversation. In addition, the wide promotion through local media, flyers, posters and community networks ensured a good level of local knowledge about the events. A significant number of email exchanges and telephone conversations also happened during this time.

Public drop-in sessions

65. The public drop-in sessions took place in town centre venues on Saturday 5th June (Methodist Church Hall), Friday 11th June (Courtyard Youth Arts Centre) and Saturday 12th June (Bicester Resource Centre). This gave the public two weekend opportunities and one weekday opportunity on Bicester's market day to feed into the beginning of the Masterplanning process.



66. The room in each location was arranged in a series of table-top stations so that members of the public could leave their thoughts and suggestions to be taken up by the professional team involved in developing the proposals. These included:
- Welcome table with instructions and greeting from member of project team
 - 'Friends of NW Bicester' sign-up
 - Map for visitors to mark where they live and work (stickers)
 - Map to make suggestions for new facilities (flags)
 - Series of themed display boards linked to the project workstreams with post-it stickers so that people could leave their remarks about the themes in relation to Bicester – not led by limited questions
 - Comment book for any other points
 - Drawing table for children who were rewarded with a 'sustainable' prize
 - Tea and coffee

67. Representatives from P3Eco, the A2Dominion Group, PMC and the project team attended each event and spent a great deal of time in conversation with visitors about various aspects of the proposals and the eco-town concept in general.
68. Over 210 members of the public attended the drop-in sessions. Members of the team also engaged in outreach by speaking to people in Sheep Street during their shopping trips. Around 50 people were spoken to in this way, some led to lengthy conversations about the issues and a number then came to the drop-in venue.

Community Masterplanning Workshop

69. The Community Planning Workshop was held on 9th and 10th June at the Courtyard Youth Arts Centre. This process involved representatives from the consortium partners, local authorities, Government agencies and business and community organisations who worked in groups to discuss the project in detail. Seventy people, not including the consortium partners, attended one or both days. The invitation letter and list of attendees are included in appendices 2 and 3 respectively.
70. This event was very constructive as it allowed for a range of viewpoints to be aired and useful suggestions, requests and remarks to be put forward.



Community Feedback Session

71. The Community Feedback Session was held at The Garth on the evening of 16th June. It was attended by over 20 people, some of whom had been at a drop-in session or had been part of the Community Planning Workshop. Ian Inshaw, Chair of P3Eco, gave a presentation which brought together a comprehensive summary of all the points that had been raised at the activities during the Open Planning Week. This was a constructive meeting where people had the chance of direct engagement with those leading the project and were given open and honest responses.

72. The PowerPoint presentation was circulated to all who attended the Community Planning Workshop, Friends of NW Bicester, as well as other interested parties. The presentation is available on the NW Bicester project website and accompanies this report in appendix 4.

Promoting the Open Planning Week

Direct mail to stakeholders

73. Details about the Open Planning Week were sent by email to all District, County and Town Councillors, to post-holders of community organisations on our databases of stakeholders and members of relevant statutory bodies.
74. The invitation list for the Community Masterplanning Workshop was drawn from the stakeholder database and also through consultation with, among others, CDC, BTC and Bicester Vision

Leaflets and posters

75. Leaflets were left in public places such as The Garth reception, the library, the Health Centre, Bicester Leisure Centre and also given out to community groups such as Parent and Toddler groups and the Salvation Army Community Café. A PDF of the leaflet was also emailed to community organisations on our stakeholder database for onward circulation. The information was hosted on a wide range of websites, including those of the District Council and residents' associations. Posters were also displayed at key points around the town, e.g. Garth Park.

Town Crier and street promotion

76. A town crier was engaged on 5th June to help launch the Open Planning Week and attract shoppers in Sheep Street to the drop-in session at the Methodist Church Hall. This was very effective. This was followed by street promotion by the team on the second Saturday (12th June), where members of the project team spoke to members of the public to ask them to attend the drop-in session, provide information and respond to questions on the spot. This outreach helped raise the visibility of the scheme. The leaflet and poster are provided in appendices 5 and 6 respectively.

Advertising

77. Advertisements promoting the Public Drop-in Days and the Community Feedback Session were placed in the Bicester Advertiser, Oxford Mail and Oxford Journal over a period of three weeks.

Editorial coverage

78. News releases were issued before, during and after the Open Planning Week to raise and maintain interest in the week's objectives and outcomes. See appendices 7, 8 and 9.
79. Coverage was achieved in local Bicester and Oxford newspapers, BBC Oxford radio, Heart FM and Mix 96. BBC South TV News sent a reporter to cover the drop-in on 5th June and a piece was broadcast on the following evening, including an interview with Gerry Walker of the A2Dominion Group and comments from visitors to the drop-in session.
80. The tone of the articles and broadcast pieces were neutral to positive. The large article featured in the Bicester advertiser on 3 June to promote the whole week included a third party endorsement of the consultation process from the chairman of Bicester Chamber of Commerce.

Feedback from Open Planning Week

81. The Public Drop-in sessions and the Community Masterplanning Workshop held during the Open Planning Week involved very different stakeholders. The aim throughout however was to seek feed-in to six topics corresponding to the development's workstreams, based on the Eco Town supplement and crucial to the whole NW Bicester project. These workstreams are:
 - Masterplanning, Design and Sustainable Construction
 - Waste, Energy and Water
 - Open Spaces and the Environment
 - Transport
 - Training, Business and Jobs
 - Social & Community Facilities
82. In addition, P3Eco wanted to hear stakeholders' ideas about what services and facilities would complement Bicester's existing provision and any other general comments pertaining to the development.
83. Verbatim comments for each topic from the Community Masterplanning Workshop and public drop-in sessions are contained within appendix 10. They are summarised below, and have formed a core element of the professional team's brief. There is a table of the facilities and services that were requested – a list of 'wants' provided in appendix 11 with the status in the Exemplar application explained.

Masterplanning, Design and Sustainable Construction

84. Stakeholders wanted a development that was innovative, different and demonstrated high standards of sustainability. A holistic approach to Bicester was encouraged with transport deemed fundamental and a need for local education regarding eco lifestyles and the development itself. The Farrell 'village' approach was welcomed as was the retention of natural features where possible and the intention to use local people, materials and businesses for construction as far as possible.

Water, Energy and Waste

85. Stakeholders generally expressed a need to reduce demand for water, energy and waste. Standards should be high and the development should keep up with fast moving technology. Both individual and communal waste solutions needed to be considered along with energy-to-waste schemes and the production/recycling of new products from waste. It was felt that energy and waste issues at NW Bicester should not impact on the existing infrastructure. Water provision needed to be carefully managed.

Open Spaces and the Environment

86. It was felt that the NW Bicester eco development would provide a good opportunity to educate and encourage local residents to enjoy nature and wildlife and provide opportunities for access to allotments and farmers' markets. Sport and recreation was considered important. It should be safe, complementary and accessible to the existing town as well as new residents. There was support for protecting existing biodiversity and a desire to ensure quality landscaping. There was concern over issues such as the use of green fields and the impact of light pollution. It was felt a cemetery/woodland burial space should be included.

Transport and Access

87. Stakeholders felt that good local employment opportunities and communications structures were vital to reduce commuting in the area. Public transport, walking and cycle ways needed to be secure, well-managed, reliable, affordable, convenient, varied and accessible to everyone. Non-car travel needed to be actively promoted and investment made to ensure good transport patterns. Establishing NW Bicester's relationship with the existing town was deemed important as were other local developments. There was concern about the impact of the development on traffic in Bicester.

Training, Business and Jobs

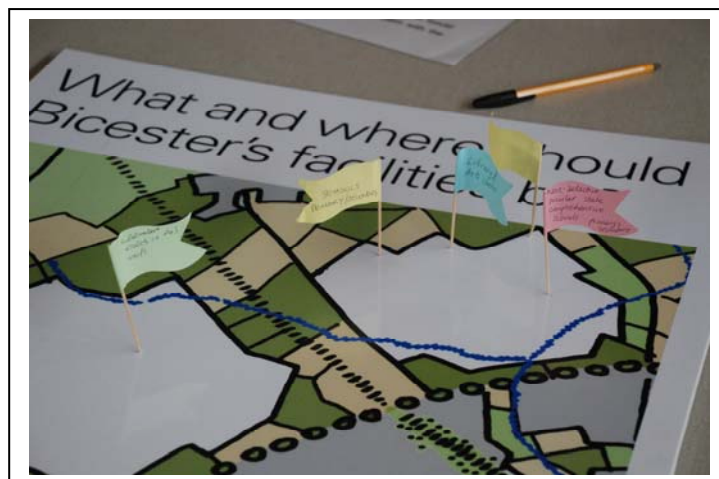
88. Bicester needed to market itself as “Eco Bicester”, thereby encouraging inward investment and a focus on eco innovation. Stakeholders wanted to see NW Bicester support home working, flexible working patterns and ensure that there was training and skills to support new jobs. It was important to use the businesses and networks already in Bicester and use its regional position in terms of transport links and university presence. There needed to be a shared commitment amongst local authorities, organisations and businesses. Jobs needed to be wide-ranging and keep pace with the development.

Local and Community Facilities and Services

89. New community facilities need to complement the existing town and match the development at every stage. Facilities should be affordable and linked to transport networks. To get the most out of the development, it was felt that community buildings needed to be multi-use and safe. The community needed to be actively involved in community governance and the provision of services, helping to ensure a range of activities and services for all. A focus should be made on activities minimising the need to travel.

List of ‘wants’

90. At both the Community Masterplanning Workshop and public open days, information was gathered on what should be included within NW Bicester. This list of ‘wants’ is provided in appendix 11 in tabular form with a response for the Exemplar phase of the development. The majority of these are being delivered in the Exemplar.



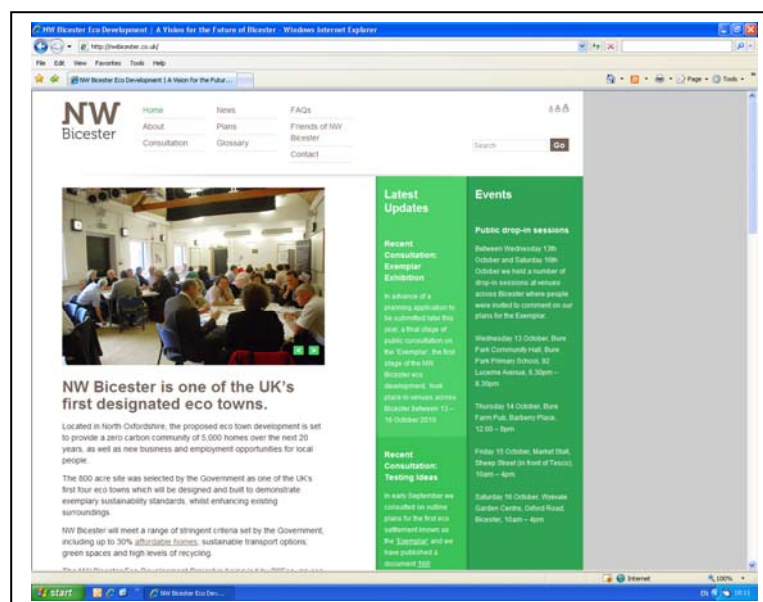
Overall

91. Overall, stakeholders want NW Bicester to be truly pioneering, setting a benchmark for eco towns and using the latest green technologies. This project needs to be part of Bicester rather than a bolt-on and it needs to be sustainable for the future. Infrastructure needs to

start early and keep pace with the development. Transport and employment are particularly significant to stakeholders and will need to develop hand-in-hand.

Testing Ideas – September 2010

92. A second period of consultation took place from 2nd – 17th September. This was entitled *Testing Ideas*. This consultation was primarily online and coincided with the launch of the project website www.nwbicester.co.uk.
93. This period of consultation was intended to provide an update on progress since the Open Planning Week in June, and make sure that members of the public were able to access information about the project. It was intended to introduce more explicitly the concept of the early onsite 'Exemplar'. There were two elements to *Testing Ideas*:
- Setting out of the initial written response to both the Government PPS and the comments received during the Open Planning Week – in the document *NW Bicester: Testing Masterplan Ideas*.
 - Outline plans for the Exemplar to show how the scheme responds to the PPS and attempts to work with the natural landscape; and show progress in taking on board the comments made during the consultation so far.
94. Feedback was sought on the Masterplan document at the same time as the Exemplar as it would indicate how the fuller scheme is developing and provide a chance for consultation and engagement on the overall strategy. *NW Bicester: Testing Masterplan Ideas* is provided in Appendix 12. The full exhibition materials are provided in appendices 13 (Exemplar) and 14 (Masterplan context).
95. The consultation was primarily promoted as an online consultation. During the consultation period, the NW Bicester website received over 300 visits. The traffic was primarily from direct access to the site (70%), with some via search engines or through references.



96. As well as being available online, there were opportunities to see the plans and information on display and to meet the teams at drop-in sessions over a week-long period in town centre venues.

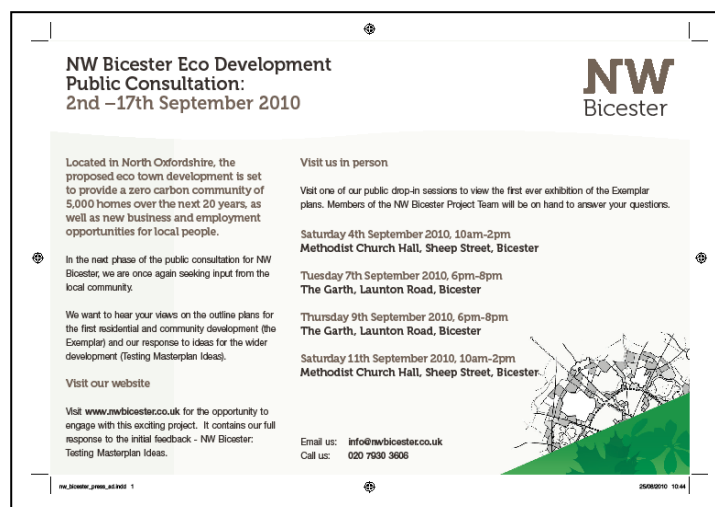
- Saturday 4th September, 10am-2pm, Methodist Church Hall, Sheep Street
- Tuesday 7th September, 6-8pm, The Garth, Launton Road
- Thursday 9th September, 6-8pm, The Garth, Launton Road
- Saturday 11th September, 10am-2pm, Methodist Church Hall, Sheep Street

97. At the exhibition venues hard copies of the Masterplan document and comment forms were available, although people were encouraged to respond online where possible.

98. In addition, the period of consultation was launched with a reception for County, District, Town and Parish Councillors on Wednesday 1st September at The Garth to enable elected representatives to see the exhibition and speak in detail with the professional team.

Promotion and media

99. The promotional methods outlined earlier for the Open Planning Week were repeated for the *Testing Ideas* consultation. Copies of the letter to stakeholders and promotional flyer are provided in appendices 15 and 16 respectively. There was a particular focus on web promotion and promotion of the website through non-web means. In addition, various partners provided links to the NW Bicester website, such as CDC, Bicester Town Council and sustainable.gov.uk.



Editorial coverage

100. As with the Open Planning Week in June, press releases were issued to help promote the consultation (provided in appendices 17 and 18), and in this case to announce the launch of the website and the online consultation facility.
101. There was good coverage in the Bicester Advertiser, which ran two articles and also in Oxford newspapers, including their online versions. There was radio coverage on Heart FM and the consultation features on the BBC Oxford website.
102. Media outlets sought to provide useful information about how to get involved in the consultation and did not produce copy concerning opinions about the project.

Feedback from Testing Ideas

103. There were over 120 attendees at the events displaying the exhibition materials. Alongside the 300 visits to the project website during the consultation (although there may have been some overlap), this suggests that there was a significant level of interest in viewing the plans for the development.
104. However, there was a low response rate to the consultation questionnaires – with only 16 partially completed forms submitted at the events or online.
105. This, along with anecdotal evidence from the professional team, suggests that while there was a high level of interest in the development, attendees were seeking information rather than an opportunity to feed-in or respond in detail to proposals at this stage. This may have been due to the level of detail presented in the document *NW Bicester: Testing Masterplan Ideas*, which was intended as a watchdog on the process so far.
106. The *Testing Ideas* consultation coincided with a period of consultation led by the District Council on *Eco Bicester: One Shared Vision*, which is intended to look at the wider implications for Bicester of the Eco Town status. The methods used for consultation overlapped, which also may have contributed to a relatively low level of formal feedback to the consultation questionnaire.
107. Full details are provided in Appendix 19. However, in summary, the main responses were:
 - i. Neither strongly in favour nor against the approach to the layout of the Exemplar;
 - ii. Strongly in favour of the approach to the 'community heart';
 - iii. Prioritising 'transport', 'infrastructure' and 'roads' most frequently, with environment/open spaces, employment, sustainability, housing and integration with the existing town also named.

Exemplar Pre-Application Consultation (October 2010)

108. A third round of consultation on the Exemplar application took place in October 2010 to inform the final stages of the project team's work on this initial development. This was a more formal pre-application consultation. The exhibition boards are available in appendix 20.
109. A mobile exhibition took place between Wednesday 13th and Saturday 16th October. Over 500 people viewed the exhibition in person. The venues are listed below.
- Cooper School (Wednesday day time – students only)
 - Bure Park Community Centre / Primary School (Wednesday evening)
 - Bure Farm Pub (Thursday day and evening)
 - Sheep Street (Friday Market Day)
 - Wyevale Garden Centre (Saturday day time)
 - Bicester Youth Council Eco Bicester Consultation Evening (following Tuesday evening, young people only)
110. The full exhibition was also available on the NW Bicester website. During the consultation period there were over 120 visits to the website.



Promotion and media

111. Similar promotional activities to earlier consultation stages were again applied to the Pre-Application Consultation in October. These were supplemented by a leaflet delivery to all houses in Bure Park, the northern and western portions of Southwold, the whole villages of Caversfield and Bucknell. It is understood that the delivery to some Bucknell homes was not completed by the outsourced delivery company. The leaflet and poster are provided in appendices 21 and 22.

Editorial coverage

112. In October the consultation process continued to receive wide coverage in the local media. Two releases were issued (see appendices 23 and 24) – one in advance of the consultation start date and the other half-way through to remind people to visit one of the drop-in sessions and to log their comments via the NW Bicester website. As well as news featuring in Bicester and Oxford newspapers and radio, details about the consultation were also posted online with BBC Oxford, Bucknell Matters village website and the Bicester Vision website.

113. The dates of the consultation were well promoted by the local and regional media and the tone of the articles remain neutral to positive.

Feedback from the Pre-Application Consultation

114. Feedback forms were available throughout the exhibition and available online. The project team approached everyone who attended, and attendees were encouraged to leave their comments formally on the feedback forms. The form is provided in appendix 25.

115. Full comments and the way they are reflected in the Exemplar application are included in appendix 26. The table below provides a tally of responses to the questions on the feedback form. Highlighted in bold are the percentages which correspond to support for that aspect.

Question	Yes	No	Don't know / blank	Yes %	No %
1a Do you think the plans provide a good mix of homes, community spaces and employment?	26	9	4	67%	23
1b Do you like the idea of the Village Square / Village Green?	37	1	1	95%	3%
1c Do you like the way we have designed the other open spaces?	28	3	7	74%	8%
1d Do you think that the Exemplar could help to create jobs and generate business in the Bicester area?	22	8	7	59%	22
2a To show that eco houses don't have to be 'different' we are proposing houses that look very similar to what is already around in the local area. Do you agree with this approach?	29	6	2	78%	16
2b Do you like the proposed designs for the eco houses?	26	7	4	70%	19

3a Do you approve of the Government and P3Eco's aim to encourage less car use in and around the Exemplar?	27	7	3	73%	19
3b Do you feel any transport issues have been overlooked?	25	9	4	66%	24
4 We are proposing to generate combined heat and power onsite from renewable energy (probably biomass) through a district heating system and produce clean electricity from photovoltaic panels on roofs. Do you think this is the right approach?	26	0	12	68%	0%
5 Have we got the right approach to supporting the community?	21	6	8	60%	17

116. The only area that received a majority of negative responses was transport, which has been the most consistent concern about the impact of the NW Bicester Eco Development. Respondents had the opportunity to say what issues they felt had been overlooked. They tended towards cynicism about the potential of modal shift to non-car journeys and expected a worsening of existing transport problems. Below is a sample of the comments made by those who felt that transport issues have been overlooked:

- "Costs. [The] further out of town people are the more expensive travel becomes."
- "Not sure infrastructure will cope with increased users, people will need/use cars despite eco principles"
- "Not sure how enforceable personal travel plan will be!!"
- "Buses. Car share links to trains"
- "Persuading people not to use their cars is not realistic"

117. The shift away from car use is a significant part of the project's rationale and credibility as an eco development and is covered in detail in the Transport Strategy accompanying the Exemplar application. It has been the most frequently raised issue at all consultations.

118. The village square / village green concept was very popular, receiving the highest approval (95%). Comments made focused on the ability of public open spaces to support community uses but some concern was raised over maintenance, as shown from the following:

- "Like the idea of individual community feel within a large estate plan"
- "Focal open area"
- "Dislike anti-social behaviour. Like community events."
- "Community spirit"
- "Open spaces and local centre"

119. The central community uses have been retained in the final submission of the layout, as set out in the Design and Access Statement. The 'village square' has evolved into a village 'centre' through the creation of an elongated high street frontage with wide pavements and covered open-sided arcade. The high street is almost 20m across and does not allow for parked cars on the frontages. This is to maintain and enhance the concept of a central meeting place.

Young people in Bicester

120. There were two dedicated opportunities for young people to learn about the proposals for the Exemplar and make comments to the professional team. These were at the Cooper School on Wednesday 13th October during the morning and lunch breaks (and one science class) and the Bicester Youth Council Eco Bicester Consultation Evening on Wednesday 20th October.

121. Representatives of the professional team attended these events and provided reports, which are provided in appendix 27.



122. The young people's areas of interest were primarily:
- Supporting community and more neighbourliness
 - Provision of facilities, in particular facilities targeted for young people on their own terms
 - Good use of open spaces, particularly for sports and interest in allotments
 - Jobs and skills

Other supporting activities

123. In addition to the core consultation activities, P3Eco is contributing to the wider Eco Town project: Eco Bicester. As well as being active partners in a wide range of projects to support CDC, there are two core projects underway:

- i. P3Eco is also constructing a community centre at cost for the Church of the Immaculate Conception which will be a sustainable building to provide a much needed community facility as part of Eco Bicester.



- ii. P3Eco is constructing of a 'Demonstration House' in the town centre in Garth Park to provide a focus for the projects and to showcase eco technologies. It will also be an education and community resource.