

**NORTH WEST BICESTER  
EXEMPLAR LOCAL CENTRE:  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This updated Economic Development Statement is provided to accompany a revised planning application for submission to Cherwell District Council for the Local Centre at Elmsbrook, NW Bicester.

The original scheme was consented on the 10th July 2012 as part of the hybrid planning application submitted in 2010 under reference, 10/01780/HYBRID, which carried the description of;

*'Development of Exemplar phase of NW Bicester Eco Town to secure full planning permission for 393 residential units and an energy centre (up to 400 square metres), means of access, car parking, landscape, amenity space and service infrastructure and outline permission for a nursery of up to 350 square metres (use class D2), a community centre of up to 350 square metres (sui generis), 3 retail units of up to 770 square metres (including but not exclusively a convenience store, a post office and a pharmacy (use class A1)), an Eco-Business Centre of up to 1,800 square metres (use class B1), office accommodation of up to 1,100 square metres (use class B1), an Eco-Pub of up to 190 square metres (use class A4), and a primary school site measuring up to 1.34 hectares with access and layout to be determined'.*

An updated economic development statement was prepared by SQW in April 2015 for A2Dominion Developments Limited. This was subsequently used to support a revision of the original employment proposals under planning application reference, 15/00760/F. The application was approved on the 28th July 2016 and carried the description of;

*'Development of a new Local Centre comprising a Convenience Store (use class A1), Retail Units (flexible use class A1/A3/A5), Pub (use class A4), Community Hall (use class D1), Nursery (use class D1), Commercial Units (flexible use class A2/B1/D1) with associated Access, Servicing, Landscaping and Parking with a total GEA of 3,617 sqm'.*

This economic development statement provides a summary of the latest changes to the provision of jobs proposed within the Exemplar Local Centre planning application. The revisions to the Local Centre are required to provide local services and facilities to serve the Exemplar community in advance of further services and facilities being provided in the wider master plan area. The description of proposed development is, "Development of a new Local Centre comprising Retail, Commercial and Community floorspace (flexible Use Class A1/A2/A3/B1/D1), with a total GEA of 1,476 sqm, and 38 residential units (use class C3) with associated access, servicing, landscaping and parking'.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The economic strategy for the Exemplar Local Centre (and for the full NW Bicester Development) responds to and supports the Eco Towns philosophy which strives to achieve "as a minimum that there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport" (Planning Policy Statement: Eco-Towns – para ET10, CLG, 2009).

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The application identified above in 2015 sought to provide the following number of jobs within the Exemplar Local Centre;

USE	GEA	GIA	NIA	JOB DENSITY	JOBS
Other office provision	614	465	442	12	37
Retail	947	787	748	18	42
Eco-pub & restaurant	664	543	516	18	29
Nursery	869	611	n/a	24	25
Multi-faith / community centre	523	367	n/a	122	3
Eco-business centre					116
Primary School					10
Energy Centre Building					5
Green Caretaker					1
Landscaping and on-site servicing					5
Homeworking					50
<b>Total on site-Jobs</b>					<b>323</b>
Construction jobs					50
Off-Site Jobs					60
<b>Total for Elmsbrook</b>					<b>433</b>

Table 1.0 – Number of jobs approved under application 15/00760/F

The timing of the currently approved scheme (15/00760/F) is dictated by Schedule 8 of the Section 106 agreement namely:

- To service and substantially complete the convenience store prior to the occupation of the 250th dwelling.
- To service and substantially complete the community centre prior to the occupation of 250th dwelling.
- To substantially complete the offices, nursery and ancillary retail stores prior to the occupation of the 350th dwelling.
- To ensure the site for the Public House is available for use as a Public House and market the site for use as a Public House in accordance with an approved strategy until the Public House is developed or for no less than five year following completion of the Development (whichever is sooner).

To date, A2D have completed 171 homes with a further 222 under construction. Given that Applications 1 and 2 (LPA refs 14/01384/OUT and 14/01641/OUT) and the Exemplar phase as a stand-alone scheme<sup>5</sup> are not viable (as demonstrated by A2D and their advisers Turner Morum's Viability Report), A2D has two options:

- Halt development now and in advance of the 250th occupation;
- Accept the scheme continues to be unviable and explore whether the revised local centre 'offer' can be delivered that meets the aims of the policy.

Notwithstanding the viability deficit, A2D's preference would be to secure permission for a revised scheme and to secure the occupation thereof now, so that the needs of residents can be met and the Exemplar phase can be completed.

It is proposed to provide a flexible number of uses as shown in the ADP drawing titled, 'Proposed GA – Ground Floor Plan (dwg no. ADP-00-GF-DR-A-1010 Rev 1).

1. Unit 1: 552 sqm (GIA) (flexible use classes D1 and/or A3);
2. Unit 2: 487 sqm (GIA) (flexible use classes A1, A2, B1 and/or D1);
3. Unit 3: 268 sqm (GIA) (flexible use classes A1, B1 and/ or D1).

This Economic Strategy is based on a reference scheme (as set out in the schedule below) which could come forward within the flexible land uses set out above.

USE	GEA	GIA	NIA	JOB DENSITY	NO. OF JOBS
Office	82	71	64	11	6
Retail	210	170	170	15	11
A3 use	141	125	125	15	8
Nursery	528	490	452	24	19
Community Centre	483	447	362	122	3
Energy Centre					5
Green Caretaker					1
Landscaping					5
Homeworking					54
<b>Total On Site Jobs</b>					<b>112</b>
Construction					50
Eco Business Centre					125
Primary School					14
Off-Site Jobs					60
<b>Total Off-Site Jobs</b>					<b>249</b>
<b>Total</b>					<b>361</b>
Required					431
Shortfall					70
% of Policy Requirement					84%

Table 2.0 – Proposed mix and number of uses at Exemplar Local Centre

Notes on sources of jobs numbers and employment densities:

i) Job estimates for office provision and retail are based on the latest national job density guidelines (per sqm NIA) contained in Homes & Communities Agency, Employment Densities Guide (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) 2015.

ii) Nursery job estimates are based on government guidelines for the number of children per sqm and staff to child ratios. Staff to child ratios vary according to the age mix of children, but a sample of staff and children numbers from [daynurseries.co.uk](http://daynurseries.co.uk) give a figure of 1 staff per 3.6 staff members. We have therefore used the same ratio to calculate likely job numbers for the Exemplar nursery, which we are advised will accommodate 90 children. This leads to a job density of 24sqm NIA.

iii) Job estimates for the community centre are based on knowledge of similar uses elsewhere.

iv) Jobs created by uses not included in the revised planning application are assumed to remain the same.

## 3.0 Reasons for the change in jobs generated

The flexible design of the revised Local Centre scheme will secure the land uses required by policy in a format that offers the optimum potential for a beneficial letting. This potential will be enhanced by the marketing strategy to be adopted by A2D and the terms of the letting. A2D wishes to secure a long-term tenant(s) for the commercial/retail units that will provide services to meet the needs of residents. The objective of A2D is to secure the right mix of occupiers on pre-lease agreements to fulfil the day-to-day needs at the Exemplar. The terms of letting will be tailored to meet the needs of local independents as well as national multiples, by reflecting the population numbers and resulting catchment audience, and reduced rent to allow for trading up periods, and at the same time, contributing to the community.

Consequently, the number of jobs provided by these retained uses has altered to those shown in table 2.0 above.

## 4.0 Conclusion

This re-designed local centre is considered appropriate to serve the Elmsbrook community and reflecting that A2Dominion are not in a position to give certainty on the content and programme for the next phases of development beyond the 393 houses in Elmsbrook.

The proposed mix and number of uses outlined above is considered appropriate and economically viable for the Exemplar Local Centre which for the most part, will be frequented by local residents residing within Elmsbrook.

There will be greater opportunities to increase employment numbers as part of the wider scheme when it is delivered. Allowing the 6,000 home NW Bicester scheme to achieve its target of one job per home prior to completion of the development.

## ABOUT BIDWELLS

Bidwells is a multi-disciplinary Chartered Surveying and Chartered Planning Property Consultancy, operating across Commercial, Rural and Residential markets. Bidwells are heavily involved in the 'Golden Triangle' of Oxford, Cambridge and London, working on major science and technology campuses, residential and mixed-use development projects. The team at Bidwells have extensive experience in the local centre market, locally having been involved with Great Western Park (Didcot), North East Carterton and part of Buckingham Park (Aylesbury).



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