



NW Bicester Masterplan Welcome

Following last December's well attended public exhibition in Pioneer Square and extensive wider on-going engagement by A2Dominion, all feedback in relation to the NW Bicester Masterplan proposals has been received and considered by A2Dominion's project team. Details of the consultation feedback and key responses can be found within this newsletter, with further information available on our NW Bicester website: www.nwbicester.co.uk

A2Dominion has also made a further step forward in the progress of its overarching Masterplan to guide the future development of NW Bicester. Whilst further supporting technical work is ongoing, A2Dominion has now submitted a number of documents and strategies, including the 'Masterplan Vision' to Cherwell District Council (CDC) for future consideration. Once this process is completed, there will be opportunities to comment on the Masterplan when CDC go out to public consultation, which A2Dominion understands is likely to be in late May.

It is intended that the Masterplan will guide the future development of NW Bicester over the next 25-35 years. A2Dominion will progress and consult on more detailed proposals prior to submitting outline planning applications for sections of land within the Masterplan.

We wanted to take this opportunity to update you regarding our on-going work to progress the Masterplan. If you have any further questions or queries once you have reviewed this newsletter, please contact the team via any of the options below.

Email: info@nwbicester.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 298 7040

Website: www.nwbicester.co.uk

The Masterplan

The Masterplan will guide the future development of NW Bicester and be a resource for all parties involved in its wider development to make use of. It will:

- Set out the vision and key principles of development
- Set out the distribution of land uses, open space and strategic accesses to serve both the NW Bicester site and surrounding areas
- Provide a framework for all future planning applications

Within the 'Masterplan Vision', there are a number of core elements that form the basis of the NW Bicester development, including:

- Up to 6,000 highly energy efficient new homes across the site, providing for every generation
- 40 per cent green space incorporating a nature reserve and country park, to enhance existing landscapes and encourage outdoor lifestyles
- Supporting facilities, including two local centres comprising retail, leisure, nurseries and community halls as well as a health centre
- Three primary schools (in addition to the primary school already included within the Exemplar phase) and a secondary school
- Space for businesses and opportunities for a mix of jobs
- Strong local links through footpaths, cycleways and public transport connections

Much of the feedback received on the core elements of the Masterplan, as outlined above, has supported or acknowledged the approach adopted by A2Dominion. In certain areas, such as the use of open space, community feedback has helped to inform and refine the proposals. In respect of comments and concerns on aspects of the Masterplan, A2Dominion duly noted these and, where possible, has looked to address them. On the inside pages of this newsletter, we detail the feedback as well as A2Dominion's response; all of which we hope you will find helpful.

Zero carbon new homes

- **Energy efficient homes** – With regard to the creation of true zero carbon, highly energy efficient homes, A2Dominion noted the positive response received. This response supports A2Dominion’s research that the public is becoming more sustainability conscious and increasingly aware of energy costs, both of which will attract people to NW Bicester as somewhere to live and work.
- **Housing densities** – The approach to the type of homes planned together with their broad positioning across the scheme was positively received by the community. Whilst plans to see lower housing density on the edges of the development with higher density homes closer to the centre were well received, A2Dominion recognises that a small proportion of respondents raised concerns. In response to this, A2Dominion considers that given the site’s location and context, it is appropriate to see lower density homes in the outer areas closer to the countryside.

Green spaces and landscaping

Green spaces and landscaping forms a key part of the NW Bicester project and has been an important focus of discussion.

A2Dominion’s proposal to include a nature reserve as part of the development’s 40 per cent green space was particularly well received with 88 per cent of respondents supporting the introduction of this amenity, whilst specific comments were raised about the inclusion of lakes and woodlands. In response to this, A2Dominion considers the proposed nature reserve has the potential to include a mix of habitats, including both wet areas and woodland. Exact details of the specific habitats will be determined by A2Dominion as part of its ongoing work.

A range of other uses were also highlighted by A2Dominion and following its request to see these ranked by the community in terms of preference, the Masterplan proposals now include:

- Community allotments
- Play areas across the housing areas
- Space for a community farm in a central location

Community facilities

- **Schools location** – With A2Dominion keen to ensure that the scheme’s community facilities benefit both residents of NW Bicester and the wider town, this particular aspect of the Masterplan has been given much consideration. As such, A2Dominion was pleased that over a third of respondents considered the proposed primary schools to be in the correct locations. Noting that over 50 per cent held reservations citing a lack of clarity over the exact location as well as concerns over traffic impact, A2Dominion wishes to provide further clarification on the basis for its approach.

The specific location of the three primary schools will be confirmed as A2Dominion moves further forward with design and layout work on future outline planning applications. In response to concerns over the potential for areas of the development to suffer from school related traffic, A2Dominion has positioned schools within 800 metres from all homes with a view to encouraging parents to use non-car methods of transport.

With regards to concerns expressed that the secondary school should be located in Kingsmere, A2Dominion understands the proposed secondary school for Kingsmere is still going ahead, but the overall schools strategy for Bicester is currently being finalised by Oxfordshire County Council.

- **Local centres** – In respect of the supporting local centres, A2Dominion sought feedback on the preferred uses to see included with healthcare, shops and a restaurant/pub returned as the leading choices. It should be recognised that healthcare provision has been addressed as part of the southern community local centre.

Whilst A2Dominion notes reservations over the location of this particular centre, it should be recognised that both local centres have been positioned in a location which is in reasonable distance of all homes and existing communities. Both shops and a restaurant or pub will feature amongst a number of uses that will form the planned local centres.

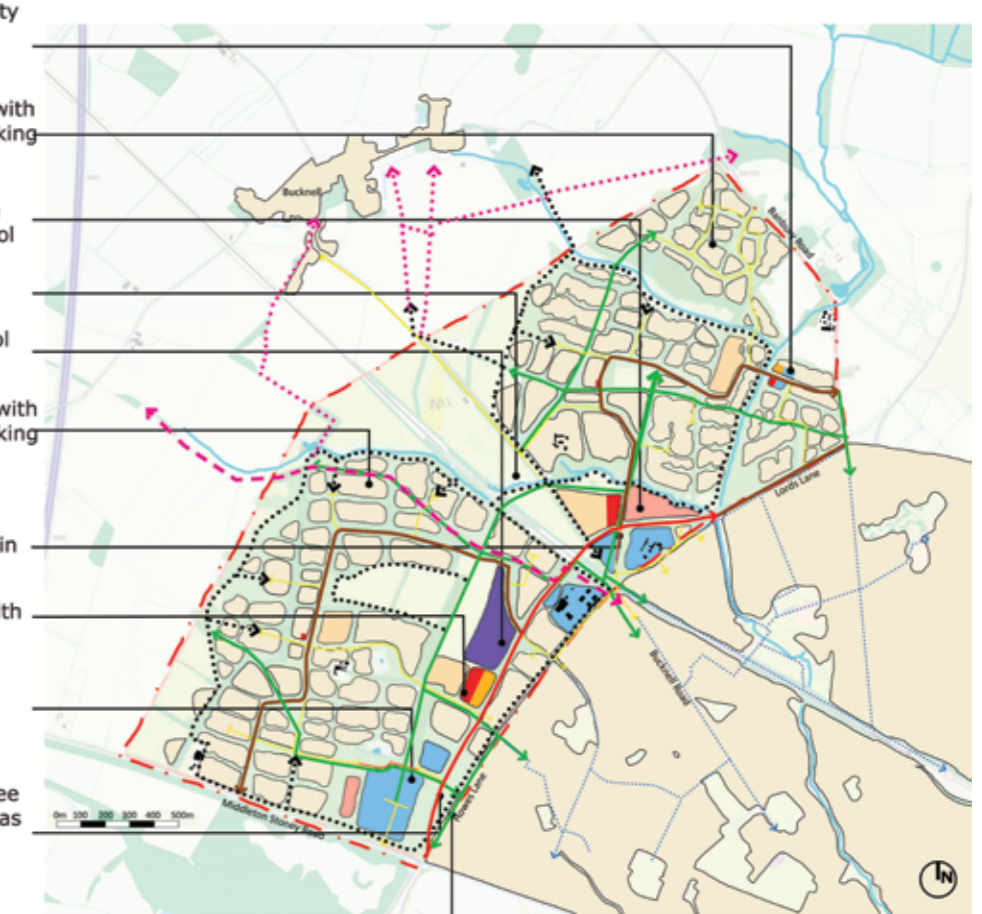
Masterplan – Green spaces

- Proposed central green with play and amenities.
- A network of local play areas with an emphasis on natural play.
- The Green Loop ‘adventure’ walking and leisure routes.
- Proposed Country Park
- Bure River corridor: existing hedgerows and woodlands enhanced.
- Nature Reserve protecting and enhancing the rural habitat.
- A woodland cemetery.
- The Central Green Gateway between the ‘Boulevard’ to the west and Lords Lane to the East.
- Public sports pitches with community centre and changing facilities.
- ‘Everyday’ cycling routes between schools, local centres and hubs.
- Existing foot and cycling routes to Town
- Allotments and orchards accessible to everyone, creating a green buffer to riverside housing



Masterplan – Land uses

- Exemplar: 393 homes, local community centre, primary school, convenience stores and eco business centre.
- Approx 3000 homes north of railway with extensive green spaces and close walking distance to local centre.
- Community and Business centre, care housing, local store and primary school
- Water treatment and energy centre
- Secondary and through primary school and school playing fields.
- Approx 3000 homes south of railway with extensive green spaces and close walking distance to local centre and primary school
- ‘Bus only links to reduce bus journey times to Bicester Town Centre and train stations
- A local community centre and GP health centre
- Business Centre providing up to 2000 jobs.
- The proposed strategic road will be tree lined with pedestrian and cycle paths as well as a through route for cars
- The existing Howes Lane is realigned, with prioritised access and green space.



Highways and access arrangements

Highways and access arrangements are a crucial part of all development proposals and hence have received much attention from A2Dominion's professional team.

- **Realignment of Howes Lane** – A key element of the proposals associated with local highways is the proposal to realign Howes Lane, and as part of A2Dominion's work, a separate event was held for local residents. It was encouraging to see that nearly half of respondents following the public exhibition as well as a significant proportion of comments received following the specific Howes Lane event acknowledged the proposal to see this road realigned in addition to recognising the overall proposals to integrate NW Bicester with the existing town.
- **Bus service** – A2Dominion sought feedback from the local community in respect of public transport and how often they use it at present. Whilst many residents cited they use their cars to travel, many stated that they would consider using an improved bus service. The Masterplan proposes routes for bus services and the accompanying strategy promotes frequent services to key destinations with a view to encouraging sustainable methods of travel.
- **Cycle and pedestrian routes** – The proposed cycle and pedestrian links were received well by nearly 40 per cent of respondents, although a further 41 per cent held reservations and a further 10 per cent were in objection. With local connections and links being an important aspect of the Masterplan, A2Dominion is keen to address concerns around this topic. Having spent much time in developing the Masterplan and, in particular, on ensuring it is easily and well connected to the existing local communities, A2Dominion considers that the access proposals as presented offer the best and most direct connections to key local destinations.

What's next?

A2Dominion envisages the following next steps with possible timings indicated:

March – May 2014

- Completion of further technical work ahead of full submission of associated reports to CDC

May – June 2014

- Consultation on the overall Masterplan by CDC

July 2014 onwards

- Masterplan to be used by CDC to assess future outline planning applications
- Further work by A2Dominion on the next stage to progress and consult on outline planning applications for land that falls within the Masterplan

Employment provision

With a commitment to creating a mixed-use scheme supported by the creation of one job per home, matters relating to employment provision have also featured heavily in the team's work to date.

With regards to business facilities in particular, respondents to the consultation commented on the need to see opportunities provided for small businesses as well as requests for meeting rooms to be available and free superfast broadband. In response to these comments, A2Dominion's Masterplan includes dedicated space for small businesses within the community local centres whilst flexible accommodation for firms will be included within the eco-business centre. As for broadband, all homes will benefit from fibre optic superfast broadband, and businesses will be in a position to take advantage of this as well.

More information

Further information about the feedback received together with full details of the responses to the public consultation, can be found in the Statement of Community Involvement, which will shortly be available to view on the project's website and will also be able to be viewed on the Eco Bicester website in due course. A copy of this report will also be submitted alongside the leading 'Masterplan Vision'.

Should you have any questions or require further information, you can contact a member of the team using the details below.

Email: info@nwbicester.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 298 7040

Website: www.nwbicester.co.uk