

Annual Report
2014



BICESTER, THE PLACE TO DO BUSINESS



Chairman's Report

The progress I highlighted last year continues and gathers pace. Work is in progress to improve Junction 9 on the M40, with J10 not far behind.

The new Railway line to Oxford is materializing before our very eyes and will be open to Oxford Parkway in less than a year, with Oxford Station being reached a few months later.

Both LEP's have launched Business Support Portals which lead logically through to targeted help for small businesses.

The Local Development Plan, after a false start, is now proceeding through its enquiry which will, hopefully, set the framework for further land for jobs and houses.

The re-developed Town Centre has attracted more visitors helped, no doubt, by free car parking and the new Sainsburys.

Next year we have Phase 2 of the Town Centre development to look forward to as well as construction of the first houses in the Eco-Town.

“The Local Development Plan, after a false start, is now proceeding through its enquiry which will, hopefully, set the framework for further land for jobs and houses.”

Adrian Shooter, Chairman, Bicester Vision
(pictured above)



Bicester Vision's Priorities for 2015-16

Work with Government by:

- Bringing the collective views of local businesses to the attention of policy makers.
- Identifying critical key barriers to growth for local companies via surveys and offering solutions to the problems in conjunction with Local Government.
- Supporting the new Local Development Plan which will unlock new Employment Land and provide opportunities for high-end jobs in the area.
- Working closely with the Oxfordshire Skills Board, Local Government and schools to find ways to inspire and motivate the new generation of an innovative and technology savvy workforce.
- Assisting the local Job Club with the promotion of job vacancies in Bicester and the wider Bicester area.

Promote Bicester as the place to do business by:

- Updating Bicester's sales pitch to promote Bicester with new visuals.
- Presenting and distributing new Brochure for "Bicester, the place to do Business"
- Producing 3 case studies of local companies that can be used to showcase an entrepreneurial Bicester.

- Composing a new E-Newsletter for Bicester Vision.
- Implementing Bicester Vision Communications Plan online and off line.
- Working closely with Bicester's new developers to create a positive vision for the future of Bicester and exchange assets that can be used for promotional purposes.
- Creating a new online presence for "Destination Bicester" -either separately from, or as part of, Bicester Vision's website.
- Working with the LEPs, UKTI, BIS etc to ensure they have up-to-date information to be able to promote Bicester; specifically all organisations that focus on inward investment.
- Continuing to showcase the potential of the area for new spin offs from the Universities and Research Facilities to consider locating in the area.

Assist Business by:

- Being an essential port of call for information and connections in the area.
- Working closely with both LEPs (OxLEP & SEMLEP) so that local companies can access their support in an easy manner.

- Supporting existing companies to grow and build on connections by hosting events that will be beneficial to them; host another two Business Clinics, an event on growing your business, a business support information event and a continuation of the Future of Bicester event.
- Collaborating with Oxfordshire Apprenticeships to publicise apprenticeships' benefits and opportunities.
- Working with partners (LEPs, universities, research centres, incubation centres, MOD etc) to research with businesses their growth plans and tailor an offer of the premises' needs.
- Helping businesses understand where and how they can get involved with the new Studio School.
- Assisting the Oxfordshire Skills Board with recruitment of enterprise advocates that would like to support their new initiatives.
- Facilitating networking and encouraging links among local businesses and partners as well as promoting new and existing networking groups.



A Growing Place

Bicester's economic development is at the forefront of environmental efficiency and sustainability with improved road links and extensive walking and cycling routes throughout the town

There has been significant expansion in the leisure and retail facilities on offer in recent years, and the world renowned luxury discount shopping outlet, Bicester Village, attracts more than 6 million visitors a year to the area.

The recently opened 'Pioneer Square' in the heart of Bicester includes a wide range of well-known retailers, restaurants, cafes, cinema and free car parking. This investment of over £70 Million has triggered the development and building of more community facilities in the town centre; a new community building, new library, more commercial premises and a new hotel are to be built in the 2015/2016 right in the town centre.

Over £30m worth of grant funding has been attracted to Bicester, including the DCLG eco town funding. This has been instrumental in the range of projects that it has been possible to deliver in the town. Grant funding is a small proportion of the overall investment that has taken place in the town. A study by Montague Evans estimated that over £184m of private sector funding has been invested in the town since

2009 in the construction of housing and commercial premises. Furthermore the report concluded in terms of future development as part of the growth of Bicester, the estimated value of the housing sites identified in Bicester is £950 million which is expected to be supported by approximately £700 million of infrastructure investment.

“Companies in the area already benefit from successful connections with several world-renowned universities”

Available Employment land

With a population forecast to grow by approximately 1,000 people a year over the next two decades through the creation of over 20,000 new jobs and 10,000 new houses by 2040 Bicester will become an important economic centre in its own.

We are looking forward to welcoming new businesses who possess the desire to be part of the growing development phenomenon that Bicester is experiencing.

Companies in the area already benefit from successful connections with several world-renowned universities, including Oxford, Milton Keynes, and Birmingham, as well as links in to clusters of specific sector-based expertise such as the Harwell Science & Innovation Campus.

Future Developments

A major release of employment land is planned to compliment the housing growth targeting new investment in knowledge based industries, performance engineering and logistics.

New planned business parks, science and technology parks, logistics and distribution centres, a variety of smaller sites adjacent to the town centre for easy access from public transport

Dedicated Business Quarters for new Green and Eco businesses championing sustainability and environmental technologies at the first Eco-Town in the UK, this is the most pioneering housing development in the UK and first true zero-carbon community.



Bicester Vision

Transport and Roads Update

Bicester is a focus for significant economic growth and infrastructure investment that also includes Oxford and Science Vale in Oxfordshire. With all the growth there needs to be careful planning of the 'step change' that needs to happen across the town, both in terms of infrastructure provision and the encouragement of sustainable modes of transport.

Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council are therefore also working together on the emerging masterplan for Bicester and the area transport strategy which will form part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

Public consultation on the area transport strategy will take place early in the New Year and consultation on the masterplan will be undertaken in the Spring of 2015.

The core principles of the transport strategy remain as before – concentrating on enabling efficiently functioning strategic peripheral corridors and an emphasis on sustainable modes of transport within the town itself, whilst still enabling vehicular access to the town centre. However, the increased growth proposals within the Local Plan period (up to 2031) means that new infrastructure will be required. The Bicester Transport Area Strategy within Oxfordshire County Council's emerging Local Transport Plan 4 will focus on:

- Improving access and connections between key employment and residential sites and the strategic transport system
- Reducing the proportion of journeys made by private car by developing the town's walking, cycling and bus networks between key development sites and the town centre and railway stations
- Increasing people's awareness of the travel choices available in Bicester, which should improve public health and wellbeing

In terms of public transport, construction of a Park and Ride facility adjacent to the A41 and close to the Vendee Drive junction is expected to be started and completed in 2015. In addition, construction is underway at Bicester Town Railway Station in order to make way for an amazing new East West rail service, which will see frequent trains to Oxford and London, as well as an eventual service east to Milton Keynes and Bletchley. These two new facilities provide the ideal opportunity to promote Bicester as a location for new businesses and to promote sustainable modes of travel to residents making longer distance journeys.

However, the rail upgrading presents challenges too. More rail traffic means that there is more disruption to the road network

where the two cross. A new rail bridge at Charbridge Lane is already being planned, but there are other challenges such as the rail crossing at London Road.

Now that Pioneer Square phase 1 and other access improvements have been delivered, the potential for cycle schemes on Banbury Road, Buckingham Road and Churchill Road, as well as cycle parking in the town centre, is being revisited as part of the Bicester Travel Behaviour project. Once phase 2 of Pioneer Square is complete and key town centre decisions have been made, such as how to manage London Road level crossing with an increased rail frequency, the county council intends to revisit the proposals to improve the Market Square to ensure the vitality of the entire town centre.

Construction is underway to improve Junction 9 of the M40 and is expected to be completed in December 2014. This project is a result of successful bidding to the government's pinch point fund that was jointly put forward by Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council. It should see significant capacity improvements at the junction.

Bicester Vision Partnership

CREATING A BETTER BICESTER THROUGH THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Bicester Vision Executive Board

	Bicester and District Chamber of Commerce	Represented by Ben Jackson and Peter Cox		London & Metropolitan	Represented by Chris Harris
	Bicester Town Council	Represented by Councillor Richard Mould and Sue Mackrell		MoD HQ Bicester Garrison	Represented by Lt Col David Mason
	Bicester Village	Represented by Miranda Markham		Active Learning Group Banbury and Bicester College	Represented by Rose Turner
	Cherwell District Council	Represented by Councillor Norman Bolster and Karen Curtin		P3ECO	Represented by Ian Inshaw
	Chiltern Railways	Represented by Stephen Barker		Tesco	Represented by James Harrison
	Oxfordshire County Council	Represented by Councillor Lawrie Stratford and Lisa Michelson		A2 Dominion	Represented by Steve Hornblow and Louise Caves
	Zeta Specialist Lighting Ltd	Represented by Phil Shadbolt		The Cooper School	Represented by Ben Baxter
	Ziranland	Represented by John Liggins		Heyford Park	Represented by Paul Silver

Bicester Vision Partnership

	Bicester Hotel, Golf and Spa	Represented by Carol Barford and Ian Pollock		Meeson Williams Phillips	Represented by David Williams and Mark Meeson
	Clark Howes Group	Represented by Tony Sarin		Hill Street Holdings	Represented by Angus Bates
	EP Barrus	Represented by Robert Muir		Brethertons Neasham Lloyd	Represented by Shaun Jardine
	Bicester Innovation Centre	Represented by Tom Hanney		Clearview Traffic Group Ltd	Represented by Nick Lanigan and Shona Wooding
	Brita Manufacturing UK	Represented by Steven Thornton	<div data-bbox="981 1742 1324 1780" data-label="Section-Header"> <h3>New Partners for 2014</h3> </div>		
	Countryside Properties	Represented by Steve Price			
	Es-Tech Network Solutions Ltd	Represented by Stephen Martindale		Pioneer Square	Represented by Neil Wild and Marcus Mears
				Bicester Heritage	Represented by Daniel Geoghegan



Bicester Vision - Accounts 2013 - 2014

INCOME	
Partner Contributions	
Local Government Contributions	£35,500
Bicester and District Chamber Of Commerce	
Bicester Town Council	
Cherwell DC	
Oxfordshire CC	
Private Sector Contributions	£38,000
A2 Dominion Group	
Bicester and Cherwell Innovation Centres	
Brethertons	
BRITA Manufacturing (UK) Limited	
British Bakels	
Chiltern Railways	
Clark Howes Group Limited	
Clear View Traffic	
Countryside Properties	
Dorchester Group	
E P Barrus	
Es Tech	
Hill St Holdings	
Integration Technology Europe - BVISION	
London & Metropolitan	
Meeson Williams	
P3ECO	
Stockdale Land	
Tesco	
Value Management	
Wyevale Garden Centre	
Zeta Group	
Public Sector (not Local Government)	£5,150
Cooper School	
MOD Bicester Garrison	
Oxford and Cherwell College	
Total from Partner Contributions	£78,650
Brought Forward	
Underspend from Previous Years	£77,928
TOTAL INCOME	£156,578

EXPENDITURE	
Employee Related Costs	
Salary and On Costs (Project Manager)	£48,215
Employee Life Insurance	£196
Expenses Manager (inc mileage, Phone and Broadband)	£4,045
	£52,456
Training, Meetings, Conference and Subscriptions	
Meeting Costs	£2,489
	£2,489
Office and Stationery	
Printing Postage and Photocopying	£332
	£332
Events and Marketing	
Marketing and Promotion	£9,663
	£9,663
Website Design	
Ongoing Maintenance and Hosting	£1,490
	£1,490
AGM 2012 Costs	
Design and Print of AGM Document	£3,108
Public Notice Bicester Advertiser	£50
	£3,158
Professional Fees	
Admin and Secretarial	£2,723
Accountancy	£4,440
	£7,163
Sponsorship	
Young Enterprise	£500
Grass Roots	£100
Bicester Town Council	£40
NED SNOGARD Trophie	£30
	£670
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£77,421
SURPLUS	£79,157



“My work with Oxford Entrepreneurs and the Said Business School is a constant reminder to local Universities and research facilities spinning new technologies, to take Bicester into consideration as a location”

Placi O'Neil-Espejo, Partnership Manager, Bicester Vision
(pictured left)

Managers's Report 2013 - 2014

Bicester and its wider area's reputation as one of the fastest growing towns in the country continues to gain momentum. This year we have seen residents taking full advantage of the new Pioneer Square facilities and there has been an even greater number of enquiries received from businesses interested in relocating in the town and its surroundings, making the most of the enormous potential that Bicester has to offer.

Throughout the last year we continued to work towards the delivery of the three priorities set by the partnership in 2012; these being:

- *To work with the Government*
- *To market Bicester as the place to do business*
- *To assist businesses*

My main focus has been to work towards delivering a number of goals that were set in order to achieve these objectives. A brief summary of these activities demonstrating some of the work undertaken over the past year is as follows.

We finished 2013 with the launch of "Bicester, the place to do business" animation film, (<http://youtu.be/-eoRBCpITyU>), which received incredible positive feedback, among some of it was:

- *"It's a great video- you should be proud"*
- *"Well Done" very to the point"*
- *"Great presentation on Bicester!"*

- *"Really clear and to the point showing Bicester's strengths for businesses"*

And my favourite of all:

- *"Putting Bicester in the map"*

We then started developing an effective, concise and eye catching brochure to add to our marketing tool box promoting Bicester as the place to do business. The brochure gives a first taste for what the area has to offer and can be given away at meetings and conferences, or mailed out/distributed to visitors to the area and residents of Bicester. We experienced a number of delays along the way but, thanks to a number of partners stepping in to help, I am sure you will agree with me the final version was worth the wait. One thing to remember is that this is a working document that will need updating regularly with new information as the area expands and progresses.

2013-2014 saw me getting more involved in the skills agenda; assisting the Oxfordshire Skills Board with data gathering and promotion of events, and by recruiting businesses to go into schools to take part in business competitions or give careers talks. We celebrated winning the bid to build and open a new Bicester Studio School in the town, managed by Activate Learning. Studio Schools pioneer a bold new approach to learning which includes teaching through enterprise projects and real work, helping students develop those skills they need to flourish in life. The Bicester Studio School will see a maximum of 300 pupils (at full capacity) having the opportunity to go to a school that will feel more like a workplace.

At the beginning of 2014 I joined the Project Delivery Group for the Studio School with a number of other local stakeholders and soon realised that the timelines were exceptionally tight. We put a case to the Department of Education to defer the opening to 2016 which was approved this summer and I am delighted to

say that we are now on track with the curriculum design, branding concept design and final key employers' engagement.

Following with the educational theme I am honoured to be part of the Advisory Board for the Banbury and Bicester College and loved being part of the pilot project to host the Disruptive Innovation Festival local competition with Banbury & Bicester College, BCC and Cooper School. The 3 teams of students from each school were tasked with designing a tool from raw materials and then presenting a plan on how the item could be redesigned into a child's toy. Banbury and Bicester College beat off entries from Cooper School and Bicester Community College to be named the winner of the Circular Product Competition which was held as part of the international Disruptive Innovation Festival highlighting the changing economy. This was one of many projects held in collaboration with the Eco Bicester, Bicester Green, the Schools, A2Dominion and the Bicester to Oxford Collaboration. Seeing how the students brainstormed and manufactured their products was priceless but then there was the difficult matter of choosing a winner. We have already got interest from a county wide organisation who might be interested in running a similar competition with schools across the county as it is has been so successful as a pilot in Bicester.

As in previous years, I have been acting as a mentor to the local Young Enterprise team at Cooper School and every year I see how the teams improve in terms of working together, coming up with a new product, and taking on the challenge of presenting at the area finals. It is very rewarding to see how the teams gain key business skills that they can then use in the workplace.

My work with Oxford Entrepreneurs and the Said Business School is a constant reminder to local Universities and research facilities spinning new technologies, to take Bicester into consideration as a location. At this year's TATA IDEA IDOL Bicester Vision was credited as a sponsor in return for my volunteering to help the society, which is the largest entrepreneurial student society in Europe with a global reputation. I see this as a great, costless way of getting great advertising and a way of establishing Bicester Vision as a partnership where networking and connections are made.

Partnership really is the key element of Bicester Vision, so I initiated an exchange





of practices with similar partnerships in the county which has proven to be particularly useful when it comes to finding valuable contacts, networking opportunities or simply sharing positive local stories.

Bicester Vision and the Bicester Chamber have also strengthened their collaboration by jointly hosting two major events in the town. At the beginning of the year the Chief Executives of the two Local Enterprise Partnerships took part in an information and discussion breakfast meeting in Bicester with over 70 attendees. As a reminder, we are part of two Local Enterprise Partnership areas - Oxfordshire and South East Midlands.

A Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a partnership between the local authorities and the corporate world formed to help with a number of local economic priorities with the common purpose of economic growth and job creation. There are 39 LEPs in operation in England.

Both LEPS have also been working hard to provide business support to local businesses. The South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership has now got an active team of business advisors that use the Velocity Hub to assist enterprises, and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership has now launched their new online business support platform. I spent some time with a working group looking at the scope and branding of the latter and was exceedingly pleased with the final product.

After the summer we also hosted the Future of Bicester event which we hope will be the first of many such events, where local residents and businesses will receive updates on all the major developments in and around the town.

In terms of events, my focus at the beginning of the year and in the summer was on the new business clinics we run with Clark Howes. The summer event saw over 60 attendees in total engaging with a number of business advisors. I also supported Cherwell District Council with their summer Job Fair, which at the time had record numbers of exhibitors. As in previous years, I have been asked to do presentations about Bicester Vision and Bicester's growth; I enjoy these immensely. Opportunities have come through being Co-Deputy Chair of Oxfordshire Business First, being on the steering group of the International Business Club, and being part of the Cherwell Business Awards organising committee.

One of our main pieces of work was to help Cherwell District Council with the Bicester Masterplan, the Bicester Chapter of the new Local Development Plan. This took some time in the way of reading, analysing data and writing a supportive and forward thinking response for the Local Development Plan on behalf of the Bicester Vision Partnership. The response had to be written twice as the Local Development Plan was amended and resubmitted, as was our response. We are now looking forward to working with the Local Authorities in order to drive

forward the implementation of the Plan, which will mean employment land will start being unlocked for development and high end jobs will start being created.

This year saw the continuation of redundancies of military personnel from the 23rd Pioneer Regiment Programme. We have been assisting the Regiment and local Government with promoting the skills military personnel have to offer to businesses via events or mail outs, while at the same time helping with the planning of their transition plans into civic life and we look forward to working together when new military personnel come to the area in years to come.

Executive Board and Partnership Meeting Dates - 2015

All meetings to run 12-2pm

15 January 2015	Executive Board
3 February 2015	Executive Board
3 March 2015	Full Partnership
14 April 2015	Executive Board
5 May 2015	Executive Board
2 June 2015	Full Partnership
7 July 2015	Executive Board
4 August 2015	Executive Board
8 September 2015	Full Partnership
6 October 2015	Executive Board
3 November 2015	Executive Board
1 December 2015	Full Partnership & AGM



Cherwell Business Awards

The Cherwell Business Awards 2014 Gala Dinner was held in an impressive marquee set in the stunning grounds of Dovecote Barn, Adderbury. We had nearly 100 more guests this year than last with just under 250 people joining in to celebrate the ingenuity, tenacity and entrepreneurship in the local business community. As in previous years, winners were presented with stylish engraved trophies and certificates, and were granted automatic progression into the prestigious Oxfordshire Business Awards.

This year we also had a record 30% more applications than the year before which made the judges' job difficult when it came to choosing the winners. This year's winners were:

New Business – sponsored by Bloxham Mill Business Centre
iphone-experts

Charity & Community – sponsored by Cherwell District Council
ACE Training & Consultancy Ltd

Small Business – sponsored by NatWest
Oxford Fine Dining

Customer Care Award – sponsored by Bicester Village
Castle Vehicle Leasing Ltd

Established Business – sponsored by Spratt Endicott
Nicholsons

Staff Training & Development Award – sponsored by Activate Learning
Banbury & Bicester College
Hawkins Group of Companies

Export – sponsored by Integration Technology
Zeta Specialist Lighting Ltd

Innovation & Creativity – sponsored by Begbroke Science Park
Oxford Photovoltaics Ltd

Business Person of the Year – sponsored by Ellacotts LLP
Mike Hawkins

The overall Cherwell Business of the Year Award, sponsored by Norbar Torque Tools and selected from amongst the finalists, went to ACE Training & Consultancy Ltd.

The awards team is now receiving applications and nominations for 2015 with a new Apprenticeship category being launched and new sponsors announced this year.

As last year, I have been very keen to continue assisting as a mentor and sounding board for the Youth Council and OYAP, both of them terrific organisations motivating and transforming the lives of youngsters in Bicester. OYAP has now celebrated its first anniversary in the Studio in Bicester town centre and will be welcoming all partners at one of our partnership meetings in 2015.

As is tradition, I would love to encourage everyone to send us any positive stories they might have that can be used to promote Bicester; we will make sure they feature on our website, social media channels and in our presentations. We will be making the most of our website in 2015 with new sections added and more case studies compiled.

And finally I would like to say "Thank You" to Adrian Shooter for his supportive chairmanship, to the Bicester Vision Board for its guidance, and the rest of the partners for their invaluable support and contribution to the delivery of our activities, and for continuing to really spread the word that Bicester is, indeed, the place to do Business!

BICESTER VISION

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To find out more about our partners please see inside