

## **The Easter Bush Development Board**

### **Report by Ian Johnson, Head of Communities and Economy**

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update in respect of the ongoing operation of the Easter Bush Development Board (EBDB).

#### **2 Background**

**2.1** On 26 February 2013, Cabinet considered and approved the content of a report entitled 'The Bush Framework Masterplan' and noted that the continuing development of the Bush is central to supporting the Programme Areas highlighted in "Ambitious Midlothian : Economic Recovery Plan" and key economic sectors such as Life Sciences and Animal Biosciences. This fits closely with the priorities highlighted in the Scottish Government Economic Strategy and the aims/objectives of Scottish Enterprise/ the University of Edinburgh – both key partners and members of the Easter Bush Development Board. Published in early 2013, the Masterplan was commissioned by the Council, Scottish Enterprise and the University of Edinburgh. The Masterplan presented an opportunity to consider the coordinated further development of the Bush area against the challenges of the economic climate prevailing at that time in combination with a strategic review of planned developments. Key elements of the Action Plan contained in the Masterplan included :

- Liaison between key stakeholders to establish a Bush governance structure ( this gave the impetus for the establishment of the Easter Bush Development Board );
- Utilisation of the masterplan as a basis for further consultation with key stakeholders such as Transport Scotland and utility service providers; and
- Development of strategies for environmental improvements, road and junction design, branding, signage and a path network.

**2.2** On 15 March 2013, officers attended an Easter Bush Campus Partnership meeting at the Royal Dick Vet School, Easter Bush. This meeting, which was chaired by a senior member of staff from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council , involved representatives from a range of key partner organisations including the University of Edinburgh, the Roslin Institute and the Moredun Foundation. At the meeting, the Council was requested to provide project governance support for the establishment of the Easter Bush Development Board – a strategic partnership for the future development of Easter Bush.

On 13 August 2013, Midlothian Council agreed that Councillor J Bryant and the Head of Communities and Economy be appointed to represent the Council on the Easter Bush Development Board. The Economic Development Manager provides project governance to the Board which is chaired by Dr John Brown, Co-Chair of the Scottish Life Sciences Advisory Board.

The first Board meeting took place on 28 August 2013 and a copy of the minutes of the meeting, which were formally approved at the Board meeting on 18 March 2014, are attached as an appendix. The next Board meeting will take place on 22 August 2014 at Bush House, Bush Estate. It is anticipated that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 will be formally approved at this meeting.

### **3 Report Implications**

#### **3.1 Resource**

There are no financial resource implications for the Council arising directly from this report. All other costs associated with the project governance of the Easter Bush Development Board are related to staffing support which will be provided by the Economic Development Manager on an ongoing basis.

#### **3.2 Risk**

Failure to participate in the Easter Bush Development Board would potentially put the Council out of step in terms of positively influencing the shape of future development activity in the Easter Bush area. In addition, failure to provide project governance related support for the Easter Bush Development Board could stall the process of driving forward development activity at Easter Bush and place an additional administrative related burden on organisations such as the Roslin Institute.

#### **3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

- ☐ Community safety
- ☐ Adult health, care and housing
- ☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- ☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
- ☒ Sustainable growth
- ☐ Business transformation and Best Value
- ☐ None of the above

#### **3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes**

Participation in the Easter Bush Development Board will positively impact on a wide range of economic development related outcomes. This includes a job creation in Midlothian, support for key economic sectors such as life sciences/animal biosciences and the leverage of external funding into Midlothian.

#### **3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach**

At the beginning of 2012, Midlothian Council initiated a project to consider how it should reshape its values and its operating systems. This project, on the “Future Models of Service Delivery” was the subject of public engagement, seeking views on Community Planning Partnership priorities for 2013/2014.

Economic recovery and growth together with promoting increased employment are two of the six national priorities where there is an expectation that each Community Planning Partnership will show how it is giving priority to demonstrating improvement in these particular areas. The other four priorities relate to:

- Early years;
- Safer and stronger communities and reducing offending;
- Health inequalities and physical activity; and
- Outcomes for older people.

Accordingly, from a preventative approach, having a vibrant and successful local economy will positively impact on most, if not all, of the national priorities.

### **3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders**

Key stakeholders such as the Roslin Institute, Scottish Enterprise, the University of Edinburgh and the Moredun Foundation have been fully consulted and involved in the development and establishment of the Easter Bush Development Board. A number of key stakeholders, including the Council, also attended an Easter Bush Campus Partnership meeting on 15 March 2013 at the Royal Dick Vet School, at which the proposal to set up an Easter Bush Development Board was tabled.

### **3.7 Ensuring Equalities**

There are no equalities issues arising directly from this report. However, as the work of the Board develops this matter will be monitored. If any Equalities issues arise during development and implementation of the proposed Easter Bush Development Board workstreams, they will be fully addressed by Easter Bush Development Board members.

### **3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development**

There are no sustainability issues at this stage. The Easter Bush Development Board will take full account of any sustainability issues in relation to planned and proposed development activity at Easter Bush.

### **3.9 IT Issues**

There are no IT issues arising from this report.

## **4 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) notes the content of this report;
- ii) agrees that the Council continues to provide ongoing project governance support to the Easter Bush Development Board; and
- iii) requires regular progress reports on the operation of the Easter Bush Development Board are prepared.

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**Background Papers: Easter Bush Development Board**