

30 November 2011

MEDIA RELEASE

Bicester reaches for the stars with Apollo programme

Apollo cinemas are set to come to Bicester as part of the multi-million pound transformation of the town centre.

The new Apollo will have seven digital screens, featuring the very latest visual and audio technology to immerse you in all the latest blockbuster films.

Rob Arthur, managing director of Apollo said:

“Opening a brand new cinema in Bicester is an exciting development for Apollo and we look forward tremendously to bringing the best quality cinema experience to local residents.

“It is our hope that the cinema, upon completion, will become an entertainment hub for the local community. Our guests will be able to see all the latest blockbuster films and also experience great events, for example amazing live opera, sports and ballet – some of which will be really brought to life through 3D”.

The new cinema is expected to open in summer 2013 and forms part of the Bicester town centre redevelopment.

January 2012 start for Bicester town centre transformation

Construction of the multi-million pound investment in the future of Bicester town centre will start in the New Year. The project will see the construction of a new leisure and retail destination in the heart of Bicester town centre, creating approximately 600 jobs.

The redevelopment is an exciting joint venture between Cherwell District Council, Sainsbury's and Stockdale Land and will transform Bicester by creating a range of new visitor attractions in the town centre.

The project involves the building of a new seven screen digital Apollo cinema, a new Sainsbury's supermarket, a range of other new retail and restaurant units, new town centre car park and the creation of a bus interchange on Manorsfield Road.

Construction will start in January 2012 and is expected to be completed by summer 2013.

The construction will be undertaken by Bowmer and Kirkland, who have significant experience in developing similar town centre projects. The construction work will employ between 150 to 200 people.

Bowmer and Kirkland will set up their construction compound from 9 January with demolition and ground works to prepare building foundations starting on 30 January. Construction of the new Sainsbury's and Apollo cinema is due to be completed by summer 2013.

The new Sainsbury's store will create up to 300 new jobs in the local community with one of the UK's leading employers supported by a range of training initiatives. Sainsbury's 'You Can' programme seeks to widen access to employment for people entering or returning to work or facing barriers to finding work.

The programme offers colleagues a range of new skills and personal development opportunities, including apprenticeships, job related qualifications and the opportunity to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Recruitment for the new Sainsbury's is expected to start in 2013.

Paul Tyler, Sainsbury's project manager said:

"The town centre redevelopment is an exciting project for Sainsbury's and we are really looking forward to becoming an active member of the Bicester community for many years to come.

"Since becoming actively involved with Stockdale Land to deliver the town centre redevelopment, we have made rapid progress in turning the vision into a reality notwithstanding the challenging economic climate. This includes gaining planning permission for revised plans, completing the vital enabling works to move the town brook and acquiring all the necessary land and legal rights to allow the redevelopment to proceed.

"It is great to now finally be at a stage where we can commence the main building phase of the project which will breathe new life into Bicester town centre for residents and traders alike whilst creating hundreds of new jobs".

Councillor Norman Bolster, Cherwell's lead member for estates and economic development said:

"I'm sure everyone in the Bicester area is excited about the prospect of a new cinema opening in the near future. It will mean residents will not have to travel elsewhere to see the newest films and will be a big draw for visitors, which I am sure will delight the town's traders.

"And with recruitment for 300 jobs set to start against a national backdrop of increasing unemployment, this development is fantastic news for Bicester".

Ben Jackson, Chairman of the Bicester Chamber of Commerce said:

"The cinema, once completed, will add a missing piece to the leisure puzzle in Bicester. It will help hold people in the town, which can only be good for the local businesses as well as the residents".

Further Information:

Paul Vicary or William Wood

01296 678 300

w.wood@gka.co.uk

Notes to editors

In 2010, Sainsbury's was awarded Community Retailer of the Year at the Retail Industry Awards, for their commitment to making a difference to local communities.

To allow construction of the redevelopment to take place, it will be necessary to close the Crown Walk and Crown car parks off Manorsfield Road and the existing bus station on Bure Place in January whilst replacement facilities are built.

All existing bus services will continue to serve Bicester town centre, with temporary bus stops to be provided in Market Square and North Street during construction of the new bus interchange on Manorsfield Road. To provide temporary replacement long stay parking for the town centre, an additional 154 spaces have been created at the Cattle Market, a short walk from Sheep Street.

ENDS