

# eco-towns: living a greener future

## Summary of consultation responses





# **eco-towns: living a greener future**

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## Foreword

Government welcomes the huge amount of public interest and input to this stage of the eco-towns consultation. We have thought carefully about what people have told us in developing the draft Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS), published today.

Indeed, a great deal has happened since the launch of the eco-towns consultation in April. We have undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging eco-town standards and locations, which will also be published today.

Government wants eco-towns to be a model for future development. They have the potential to be a real step forward in how we tackle climate change, helping on the journey to zero carbon homes by 2016, whilst providing the housing which families and communities need. The draft PPS sets out what we think should be the minimum standards which an eco-town proposal must reach, and the mechanism by which the local planning system can make this judgement.

The majority of housing growth has always been in our towns and cities, and this will continue. But we see many strong benefits from having free-standing eco-towns: they will relieve pressure for development in crowded urban areas, and provide green and pleasant places in which families can grow and communities flourish. By building settlements 'from scratch', eco-towns will be able to plan and deliver the right mix of housing to meet people's needs, with infrastructure and services planned around them, while making best use of the latest technology to mitigate their impact on the environment.

Some of our work has already brought about change; a few locations have been dropped, or bids recast in the light of local discussions. We cannot avoid the fact that there are people opposed to the proposals in their area, regardless of any benefits being put forward. It is our hope that people will take time to consider the evidence of the Sustainability Appraisal and the messages of the draft Planning Policy Statement, in demonstrating our commitment to getting the best proposals for you, the people who will live in and local to eco-towns.

The process does not end here; there is still work to be done, and your input will be sought. We want to know what people think about our draft eco-towns Planning Policy Statement. Local consultation events will continue, as will assessment work with local groups. Whether or not you have been a part of the consultation so far, we encourage you to have your say on the future of eco-towns.

**Department for Communities and Local Government**



# Section 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Eco-towns: Living a greener future: Executive Summary

We published *Eco-towns: Living a greener future* for consultation in April 2008, outlining the concept of eco-towns and 15 locations short listed for further assessment.

Eco-towns are intended to be a combined response to three challenges:

- climate change
- the need for more sustainable living
- the need to increase housing supply.

They offer an opportunity to design a whole town to achieve zero carbon development, and to use this experience to help guide other developments across the country.

We also took the opportunity to set out the planning process for eco-towns, indicated how the eco-town proposals from bidders would need to be further refined and developed, and the specific challenges to be addressed in each location.

We received 57 bids following the launch of the Eco-towns Prospectus alongside the Housing Green Paper in July 2007; and *Eco-towns: Living a greener future* document summarised the 15 going forward for further assessment.

Consultation on *Eco-towns: Living a greener future* ended on 30 June 2008. We asked for views on the following aspects of the programme:

- the way in which the eco-towns concept is being developed and the different potential benefits that an eco-town could offer
- how particular features such as green space or innovative approaches to housing can best be developed in an eco-town
- preliminary views on the 15 locations going forward for further assessment.

## 1.2 Scope of report

This report summarises the views received by 30 June 2008 on the document *Eco-towns: Living a greener future*. It covers the responses to the questions we asked, and also the significant comments made more widely on eco-towns. It also summarises the key issues raised in each of the potential short listed locations.

For ease of reference, responses to the Eco-towns concept have been grouped around the section heading from *eco-towns: Living a greener future*, whilst wider comments have been added where new themes have emerged which were not consultation questions – such as the planning process, and sustainability appraisal.

We have set out in Section 2 of this report the Government's response to the points that have been raised, and how we propose to take them forward into the next stage of the process, for the national policy and in the case of the locations. In the Conclusion we have explained further how these consultation responses are informing the next phase of consultation starting 4 November 2008, and the local assessments, and other work that has been taking place in the meantime.

Responses that were received after 30 June will be taken forward and considered in the next phase of consultation, starting 4 November 2008. This report includes a short summary of views received before consultation began on *Eco-towns: Living a greener future*; and a list of respondents.

## 1.3 Overview of responses

We received over 12,000 direct responses to the consultation document, of which almost 4,000 were postcards from campaigners against the Weston Otmoor proposal.

Respondent types comprised local government, including parish councils, local authorities, and county councils in areas with a shortlisted location, and some in other locations; non-departmental bodies, regional assemblies and regional development agencies, national organisations representing the environment, local government, housing and community matters, house-builders, and transport groups. There were also planning consultants, business organisations, and utilities companies. We received responses from MPs, national and local campaigning organisations, and protest groups set up in shortlisted locations, as well as from members of the public (the majority of respondents).

In addition to these formal responses, people took the opportunity to make their views heard in local consultation events in the short listed areas, and a number of organisations, including local authorities, parish councils, local groups and national organisations, as well as MPs, shared with us representations about eco-towns from their members and constituents. We received petitions direct from protest groups and also via the No 10 website.

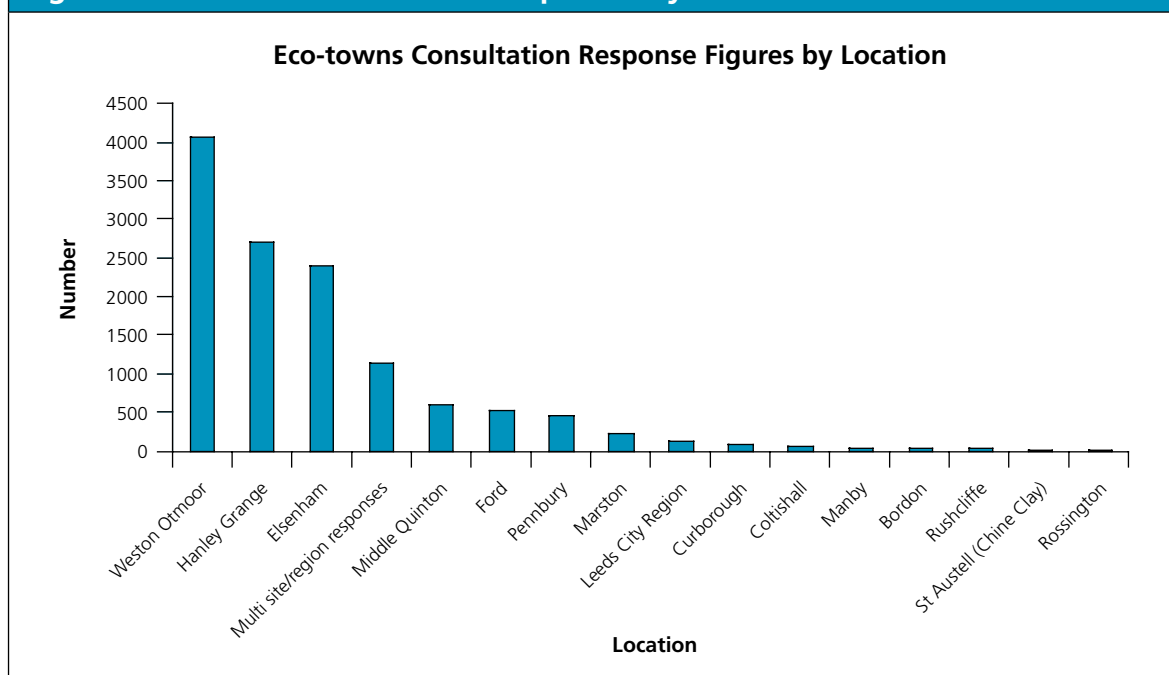
The majority of responses – about 8,000 excluding campaigns – were in general terms, in relation to the 15 short listed potential eco-town locations. These came largely from members of the public, parish councils, local and county authorities and protest groups.

Stakeholders responded across the full range of consultation questions or responded thematically to the eco-towns idea. There was a good level of support amongst stakeholders for the eco-towns concept – nearly two thirds were in favour of the idea. Some of these stakeholders also set out their views on the potential short listed locations. Around two thirds did not support one or more eco-town locations.

We set out a breakdown of the detailed responses to the wider eco-towns concept and benefits in the section ‘Breakdown of Responses’ below. We also give a summary of the main points expressed about each of the potential short listed locations.

Our response to these comments is also set out in the following Sections: 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4.

**Figure 1: Eco-towns consultation responses by location**



# Section 2

## Breakdown of responses

### 2.1 Views on eco-town concepts

Detailed responses on aspects of the eco-towns concept were received mainly from local government; government departments and agencies; regional assemblies and regional development agencies; national organisations representing the environment local government, housing and community matters; national campaigning organisations; house-builders, and transport groups.

Respondents highlighted the following common general observations concerning eco-towns:

- A 'zero carbon' approach should apply to the settlement as a whole, and cover transport as well as buildings. Any measure of zero carbon should apply to the settlement as a whole and take a lifecycle/whole life approach
- There should be a target for each individual eco town home, across all tenures, to meet code level 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes on carbon emissions with immediate effect
- Zero carbon standards should be properly monitored and enforced
- To be sustainable, eco-towns should become more than dormitory towns, outside existing travel to work areas, with poor public transport connections
- Existing housing stock, which contributes 27 per cent of the UK's total carbon emissions, has the potential to help achieve the Government's overall target to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050. The Government needs to maintain an appropriate balance between new build and regeneration.

### A) Zero Carbon

#### 1) General views on zero carbon

- Respondents wanted to see more evidence in order to be convinced that the proposed sites will be zero carbon
- Respondents had difficulty in believing the stated zero carbon credentials, including the car **modal shift** figures of 25-30 per cent

- There was a common view that, even with a **sustainable transport** package in place, eco-towns may still generate large scale long distance car commuting if the employment and infrastructure offers are insufficient, and that this would be counter productive to the Government's zero carbon aspirations
- Improving the quality and performance of **existing housing stock** was viewed as more significant than focusing solely on the environmental performance of new homes
- Respondents recognised that, by the time the eco-town programme has come to fruition, all new developments will need to be fully carbon neutral according to the Government's '**Code for Sustainable Homes**'.

## 2) Areas of further potential on zero carbon

Respondents said that consideration should be given to **piloting 'carbon quotas'** in eco-towns. They also thought that the use of specific energy sources should seek to support the implementation of the **Regional Energy Infrastructure Strategy**. It was viewed as essential to encourage developers to minimise the carbon embodied in building the proposed sites through use of **local and recycled materials**, and planning policies contained in **local development frameworks** should be key in promoting early consideration of this issue.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on zero carbon

The following specific technologies/approaches relating to carbon neutrality were highlighted by respondents:

- solar photovoltaics
- advanced gasification
- anaerobic digestion
- biomass systems
- combined heat and power plants
- ground source heat pumps
- onshore wind farms
- solar hot water
- smart metering
- horizontal ground loops using passive solar energy.

The following points were put forward in greater detail:

- Planting and harvesting woodland in and around the eco-town could provide **biomass fuelled energy**.

- Community heating and energy projects run from **biodigesters** or **biomass burners** capable of using **green waste** would benefit from using mowings produced from eco-town grasslands. Mowers and other power tools should be converted to **zero carbon fuels**
- Eco-towns offer the potential to create a global centre of expertise to develop **zero carbon solutions** for **personal** and **commercial transport** working with Millbrook, Cranfield and other world class universities in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc
- The location of the development's energy supply should be decided locally, and should favour **onsite supply**. Where offsite solutions are implemented, they should **avoid nationally driven, formulaic approaches** in identifying the most appropriate way forward. The demands that these innovations place on local labour and capital supply need to be considered and assessed in the context of local and regional **economic planning**
- Measures such as the **workplace parking levy**, and **differential parking charges** related to **vehicle emissions** should be implemented
- Respondents suggested that the following **carbon emission reduction/energy initiatives** should inform the eco-towns programme:
  - West Midlands Sustainable Planning Checklist ([www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk](http://www.checklistwestmidlands.co.uk))
  - West Midlands Low Carbon Housing Market Framework ([www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/library/west-midlands-sustainable-housing](http://www.forumforthefuture.org.uk/library/west-midlands-sustainable-housing))
  - Green Building Council – 'Definition Of Zero Carbon Report' ([www.ukgbc.org](http://www.ukgbc.org))
  - The 'Warm Front Initiative' – (*in terms of expanding the scheme*) ([www.warmfront.co.uk](http://www.warmfront.co.uk)).

### Government's response on zero carbon

There has been considerable interest in the **zero carbon** status of eco-towns. We think that eco-towns should be **zero carbon** developments. The definition of **zero carbon** we think we should use for eco-towns is that over a year the net carbon dioxide emissions from all energy use within the buildings on the development are zero or below. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this, and we want to hear everyone's opinions in the next stage of consultation on whether we have got this right.

## B) Future Climate Change

### 1) General views on future climate change

- There was a view that all settlements, including eco-towns must adapt to climate change by construction to the highest ecological standards

- Respondents thought that eco-towns must address the ecological impact of new housing alongside its carbon footprint.

## 2) Areas of further potential on future climate change

- Many respondents felt there was a key need to **enable behavioural change** of eco-town residents (such as **recycling**). A robust method of monitoring and evaluating these changes would need to be established
- The design and implementation of eco-towns should incorporate future **climate change predictions**; in the design of buildings, and when considering current and future **water availability**.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on future climate change

- Communities and Local Government was asked to take note of the following Climate Change initiatives:
  - Three Regions Climate Change Partnership – ‘Guidance on adapting to climate change’
  - Three Regions Climate Change Partnership – ‘Guidance for the *Espace* project’.

### Government’s response on future climate change

We think that eco-towns should be sustainable communities that are suitable for the climate change now accepted as inevitable. They should be planned to minimise their future vulnerability in a changing climate, both in terms of mitigating, and adapting to, climate change. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this, and lays out standards on water, flooding, green infrastructure and biodiversity to which we think eco-towns should be built.

## C) Managing Water

### 1) General views on managing water

- A number of respondents were concerned that some of the proposed sites are located in, or adjacent to, **flood risk zones**, and stressed water areas
- It was felt that water should be a compulsory area of sustainability for eco-towns to address. Respondents said that some of the bids have failed to demonstrate that they are able to meet the **minimum requirements** in terms of **water use**
- The Code for Sustainable Homes standards on **water neutrality** specified in the TCPA worksheet should be interpreted as an absolute minimum for eco-towns

- The standard set for **water efficiency** (Level 3 of the ‘Code for Sustainable Homes’) is a minimum standard that is already achievable with a range of fittings and fixtures at a minimal cost
- Most eco-towns should be aiming for Code (*for Sustainable Homes*) Level 5/6
- The aim of **water neutrality** gives sufficient flexibility to developers to seek what they believe the most cost-effective option on water demand management

## 2) Areas of further potential on managing water

- Respondents said there is a need for more explicit reference regarding early engagement with **water companies**, to plan for the required level of **water infrastructure** in conjunction with housing development
- Regarding the wider problem of creating settlements that are **flood resilient**, respondents said that the consultation paper has not considered how **adaptation measures** should influence the design of new development
- Eco-towns should aspire to an overall **reduction of water use** compared to the previous land-use
- Eco-towns should not produce a greater volume of **downstream surface water** than the previous land-use
- Eco-towns should increase the locality’s downstream **water quality**
- Eco-towns should contribute to a **re-charge** of the **underlying aquifers**, where this is possible
- There is a need for a specific eco-town standard relating to the objectives of the ‘**Water Framework Directive**’
- Full ‘**Strategic Flood Risk Assessments**’ should be undertaken for each site
- ‘**Water Cycle Studies**’ should be undertaken for each site.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on managing water

- The following specific technologies/approaches relating to water management were highlighted by respondents:
  - low volume baths
  - water efficient showers
  - spray/aerated taps
  - flow regulators
  - low volume dual-flush toilets
  - water butts
  - rainwater harvesting
  - greywater re-use

- sustainable drainage systems
- permeable pavements
- permeable driveways.
- Water management initiatives highlighted in responses which Communities and Local Government were asked to take note of were:
  - The Environment Agency’s guidance on water neutrality
  - The Environment Agency’s updated guidance on Water Cycle studies
  - The objectives of the Environment Agency’s ‘Water Framework Directive’
  - Environment Agency (2007), ‘Water way guide to bank protection, erosion assessment and management’
  - Defra’s ‘Integrated Urban Drainage Pilots’ (final report published in June 2008)
  - WRc (2006), ‘Sewers for Adoption: Sixth Edition’
  - CIRIA (2007), ‘The SUDS manual (C697)’
  - CIRIA (2006) ‘Designing for exceedance in urban drainage – good practice (C635)’
  - Forestry Commission work on water management across the Yorkshire and Humberside Region.

### Government’s response on managing water

We agree with the many respondents who told us that eco-towns should be **sustainable communities** that can cope with **climate change** and can **manage water** effectively. In part, we think this means that eco-towns should set ambitious standards for how they use and **manage water**, particularly in areas of serious water stress. We think eco-towns should contribute, where existing water quality leaves scope for further improvement, towards improving water quality in their localities. We also think that planning applications for eco-towns should be accompanied by a water cycle strategy that provides a plan for the necessary water services infrastructure improvements. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

We also agree with people’s concerns over the need to **reduce flooding risk**, and we think the location, layout and construction of eco-towns should reduce and **avoid flood risk** wherever practicable. We think eco-towns should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and should use opportunities to address and reduce existing flooding problems. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## D) Air Quality

### 1) General views on air quality

There was support for the aspiration that eco-towns should meet **EU ambient air quality standards** as a minimum.

### 2) Areas of further potential on air quality

Respondents said that eco-towns should aim to achieve the highest possible standards as a demonstration of good practice. Specifically, they should set **air quality objectives** which are more stringent than those detailed in Defra's '**2007 Air Quality Strategy**'.

### 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on air quality

Communities and Local Government was asked to note the example set by Beacon authorities mentioned in Defra's '**2007 Air Quality Strategy**'.

#### Government's response on air quality

Eco-towns will need to adhere to European legislation governing air quality. Where relevant, proposals will also need to demonstrate that they would not have a significant adverse effect on habitats and species of international importance, through their impact on air quality. The draft PPS introduces ambitious standards to help people to use their car less, to reduce to zero or less the net carbon emissions from buildings across the development and to ensure eco-towns have significant areas of green space.

## E) Managing Waste

### 1) General views on managing waste

- Respondents said that **combined heat and power technology** should be mandatory in all eco-towns, and should not be an optional extra
- There was concern that the waste-to-energy proposals have the potential to subvert **local waste strategies**
- The net benefits of waste-to-energy schemes should not be restricted to an eco-town, but should be available to the community as a whole
- Respondents agreed that eco-towns should have state of the art **on-site provision** for storage, collection, sorting and **recycling of waste** from homes and businesses
- Eco-towns at the lower end of the size range may be too small to support economically **viable energy** from a **waste plant**.

### 2) Areas of further potential on managing waste

- Respondents identified the need for the provision of home and/or **community composting facilities**

- The principal focus for each eco-town should be on securing a significant reduction in waste that is produced, and each proposal should specify how it will **reduce/minimise waste**. This should incorporate consideration of how this would stimulate any necessary **behavioural change** among residents
- Respondents insisted that consultation on generating **energy from waste** should be undertaken at an early stage with **neighbouring local authorities, local delivery vehicles** and existing local communities
- It was thought necessary for individual schemes, including the provision of **waste collection** and **recycling facilities**, to link to existing **local authority waste strategies**
- Eco-towns should embrace the principle of **recycling** at all levels.

### 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on managing waste

- Respondents suggested that **sewage treatment** and **waste management** could be linked in an **energy recovery scheme**, to provide neighbourhood heating through **combined heat & power plants**
- Respondents urged Communities and Local Government to consider basing their **waste management standards** on those of the draft TCPA worksheet on waste and resources
- There should be **separate food waste collections**, which could then be fed into **anaerobic digestion plants** to provide heat and electricity.

#### Government's response on managing waste

We believe that all eco-town planning applications should include a sustainable waste and resources plan covering both domestic and non-domestic waste. We think this plan should:

- set ambitious targets for residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion, and show how these will be achieved, monitored and maintained
- should establish how all development will be designed to enable these targets to be achieved; show that consideration has been given to the use of locally generated waste as a fuel source for combined heat and power(CHP) generation for the eco-towns; and
- set out how developers will ensure that no construction, demolition and excavation waste is sent to landfill, except for those types of waste where landfill is the least environmentally damaging option.

The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## F) Greenspace and Biodiversity

### 1) General views on greenspace and biodiversity

- Respondents were concerned that the eco-town's **habitat creation proposals** may not be appropriate to the relevant local area, and that there may be conflict between leisure, **water-recycling** and habitat creation users
- There was concern that **local landscapes** could be adversely affected by eco-towns
- It was thought essential that eco-towns contribute to the delivery of '**Biodiversity Action Plans**'
- The move to set a standard for **green space provision** was welcomed, but respondents urged doubling of this provision as a minimum
- There was encouragement for enhancement of **green infrastructure** within and outside the boundaries of the eco-towns
- Respondents were concerned about the amount of development that would take place on the **Green Belt** and **greenfield land**
- It was highlighted that, while **wetland areas** can form an important green space, it is unclear how wetland creation will be sustainably achieved in areas that are at **low risk of flooding**. It was thought important to recognise that wetlands do not provide significant areas of **green space** for amenity use
- Respondents felt that there is a lack of attention to the promotion and **protection of biodiversity** in the current eco-town concept. There needs to be a much higher recognition of the importance of biodiversity to the concept of '**eco-living**'
- Special attention should be given to **grasslands** during the **environmental impact assessments** necessary for each eco-town, both in terms of their **existing wildlife** interest, and their importance in local and regional contexts, and the extent to which they make a contribution to local and national '**Biodiversity Action Plan**' targets
- Respondents said that **green infrastructure networks** must ensure that development both protects existing habitats and creates new opportunities for wildlife to flourish
- Eco-town developers must be made aware that **biodiversity issues** require **expert advice** and attention, including detailed assessments and guidance from specialists familiar with the **local ecology**, individual habitats and populations of **key species**.

## 2) Areas of further potential on greenspace and biodiversity

- The potential for **community forests** and other **woodlands** to be managed for **woodfuel** was highlighted by respondents. Emphasis of the links between this element of **green infrastructure** provision and the **energy strategy** for individual eco-town proposals was viewed as important
- The need for the provision of **urban trees** was identified, as they can have positive impact on **micro-climates**
- The potential to link green infrastructure provision to the eco-town's public transport, including walking and cycling routes was highlighted
- Eco-towns should not be built if they would cause damage to wildlife sites, including nationally designated **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)** and non-statutorily designated **Local Wildlife Sites**
- The **ecological footprint** of eco-town development should be considered alongside its **carbon footprint**
- Respondents thought it important that proposals:
  - respect and seek to enhance the quality and character of an eco-town's wider landscape setting; and
  - forge positive functional and **recreational links** with the surrounding **countryside**
- Eco-towns should be designed to sit comfortably, both aesthetically and functionally, within their **wider landscape setting**
- For wildlife to cope with the increasing pressures of **climate change**, respondents thought it essential to both **maintain existing habitats**, and restore and **re-create lost habitats** on a landscape-scale
- It was considered vital that eco-towns are developed in a way that takes into account the **wider development 'shadow'**
- Where **open space** and informal **recreational areas** are used for informal recreational purposes, respondents said that this should take place only in 'Flood Zone 2', to allow **maximum community use** throughout the year
- It should be ensured that **green space** which is made available is suitable for **sport use**, and not small unusable strips of land.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on greenspace and biodiversity

- Respondents said that the '**UK Woodland Access Standards**' and '**Accessible Natural Green Space Standard**' provide a good place to start in terms of access
- Respondents suggested that Communities and Local Government work with the following **key partners** in developing the **Eco-towns quality standards** for **greenspace and biodiversity**:

- Natural England
- The Forestry Commission
- The Environment Agency
- CABE
- Space
- Woodland and trees in and around eco-towns, as part of a **green infrastructure network**, can provide a **sustainable source** of **woodfuel** to contribute to the provision of heating and **renewable energy**
- A number of respondents strongly advocated that the **green infrastructure worksheet**, being prepared by **TCPA** and **Natural England**, should be adopted as the **definitive guidance** on this issue
- In designing green infrastructure, synergies should be sought and exploited with other environmental systems. For example, **sustainable urban drainage systems** should be linked to the **green infrastructure strategy** and take a ‘whole-town’ approach. Water features such as ponds and lakes should be designed in accordance with current **best practice guidance** such as that produced by **Ponds Conservation**
- The commitment to enhancing biodiversity should make reference to contributing to local and regional **Biodiversity Action Plan** targets, expanding on the themes set out in **Planning Policy Statement 9**
- Respondents said that **transport should contribute to other aims**, for example, green infrastructure, sustainable drainage, air quality, recreation and education. It must be **planned for strategically** to ensure such opportunities and constraints are identified and progressed
- Eco-towns should have **green infrastructure strategies** that are compatible with local authority green infrastructure strategies and local authority **landscape character assessment** studies
- Respondents recognised that **greenfield development** is not inherently undesirable in itself. They thought it key to ensure new development **enhances the environment**, and that it is planned sensitively to meet sustainability standards
- The prioritisation of previously developed land for eco-town development must not overlook the **biodiversity value** of many **brownfield sites**, which, if developed inappropriately, could lead to a loss of UK Biodiversity Action Plan **priority species and habitats**
- Eco-towns must take full account of the **legislative framework** established to **protect important sites**, habitats and species populations. As a minimum an eco-town should:

- Fully protect internationally and nationally important sites (eg Natura 2000, RAMSAR, SSSIs)
- Ensure no net loss of UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species.

### **Government's response on greenspace and biodiversity**

As these will be major new building programmes, there was understandable concern in the consultation that eco-towns should contain **green space** and preserve **biological diversity**. We agree with this: we think that **green space** is crucial to making eco-towns successful places. Forty per cent of the eco-town's total area should be **green space**, of which at least half should be public: well managed, **high quality green/open spaces** which are linked to the wider countryside.

We believe eco-towns should **protect and support biodiversity**. Planning permission may not be granted for eco-town proposals which are likely to:

- have a significant adverse effect on internationally designated nature conservation sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, or
- result in a net loss of biodiversity from the local area.

We also think that eco-town planning applications should include a **strategy for conserving and enhancing local biodiversity**. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## G) Sustainable transport

### 1) General views

- Effective public **transport links** to and from the eco-town need to be in place at the start of its occupation
- Further scrutiny of the relationship between the proposed settlements and regional and national **rail infrastructure** is required, as a number of the proposed sites either have seemingly limited access to main rail networks, or are located on branch-line networks with a low transport frequency
- Each eco-town should have a **car-free centre**, in addition to **car free residential areas**. But older aged people and disabled people may have **difficulties in access** in areas that have 'no car zones'
- Respondents sought clarity on the thinking behind the achievability of locating **facilities within '10 minutes' walking distance**. Higher order services, such as **secondary schools** or **hospitals** will be difficult, if not impossible to locate within the target walking distance. Therefore, **larger neighbouring centres** are likely to provide **key services** for a number of eco-towns, and it will be essential that the **Planning Policy Statement**, and **sustainability appraisals** recognise these limitations

- Respondents said that a **transport assessment** would be required to inform the second stage of the evaluation of the bids
- There was concern that the size of the proposed eco-towns are too small to support regular **bus services**
- Respondents thought that **few residents will choose to live without a car** if the only available mode of transport is by bus. They therefore said it would be essential that eco-towns are centrally linked to **rail networks**
- Respondents said that clarity should be sought from the scheme developers on:
  - The expected modal share of all transport modes
  - The relationship between the convenience of journeys within the town by sustainable modes and those by car
  - The number of external destinations served by direct Public Transport connections
  - The proportion of the eco-town covered by a 'car-free' designation
  - The percentage of homes with space and IT facilities for working at home
  - The level of provision for cycle routes and cycle parking facilities.

## 2) Areas of further potential

- Many respondents highlighted the need for a credible strategy as to how **funding for sustainable transport** would continue following the cessation of Section 106 contributions from developers
- There should be a clear demonstration of how the design and use of the proposed eco-town would **prevent adding to car commuting**
- Eco-towns should aim to have similar levels of **walking and cycling** to Amsterdam and Copenhagen
- There should be a requirement for a **back up strategy** to explain what would happen if targets for **low modal shares** relating to **car use** were not achieved eg **financial penalties** for the developers which would subsequently **fund improvements** to public transport.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches

The following specific technologies/approaches relating to sustainable transport were highlighted by respondents:

- Free initial membership of a **car club** and a facilitated car share/lift share scheme. **Vouchers** towards a free cycle along with incentives such as **free cycle training** and servicing for up to two years
- Light rail or tram transport solutions

- Use of **smartcard**/joint ticketing for public transport
- **Rapid bus links** to facilitate connections to surrounding, larger conurbations
- The establishment of **dedicated pre-ticketed/season ticketed coach services** for the most common journeys taken to and from the locality
- Provision for “**sholleys**” for older people (a sholley is a shopping trolley)
- **Secure parking for cycles**, public showers and secure luggage storage
- Eco-towns should be developed with small amount of parking provision at the outset, and contain entirely **car-free areas**
- Large scale reallocation of highway space to **bus and cycle lanes**
- Linkage with rural regional Integrated Transport Authorities (as an alternative to the city-region model)
- GPS to allow **real-time travel information** regarding public transport at stops and interchanges
- ‘**Rights of Way Implementation Plans**’ should be updated
- Use of the ‘**Quiet Lanes**’ designation
- Reduced speed limits as part of a **Rural Road Hierarchy** including 40mph as default where a separate path for those walking and cycling cannot be provided
- Some motor vehicle access **restrictions during peak hours** – although it was accepted that this could lead to ‘rat-running’ through small villages
- Establishing a ‘Sustainable Transport Demonstration District’ (STDD) with a 10 mile radius around each eco-town to aid the **integration of transport**.

Respondents suggested that Community Transport Trusts (CTTs) could assume responsibility for establishing STDDs. This might involve:

- Operating a Demand Responsive Transport Service (**taxibus**)
- Operating **car clubs**
- Hiring out **bicycles** and **trailers**
- Offer a **freight**/delivery version of a **taxibus**
- Operating a Demand Responsive Freight Transport Service, to assist **car-free households** with larger deliveries.

Respondents said that a robust and thorough **transport assessment** would be essential to the successful planning of eco-towns. Issues viewed as central to this work were:

- A feasibility study of both passenger and freight **rail services**

- A feasibility study of **bus services**
- Exploration of opportunities to enhance existing **railway stations** and services
- A thorough impact assessment of eco-towns on the **local highway network**.

Respondents thought the best chance of **maximising local travel patterns** would be where an eco-town is situated in close proximity to both a larger conurbation with **access to higher order services**, and pre-existing **sources of employment** in the immediate area. They also asked Communities and Local Government to note the following documents/examples on transport issues:

- Association of Directors of Public Health’s publication: *Take Action on Active Travel*
- The Transport Worksheet produced by the TCPA
- English Partnerships guidance – *Car Parking: What Works*
- The modal shift achieved in Basel (Switzerland) where 17 per cent trips are made by car and 21 per cent by bicycle
- The modal shift achieved in Vauban (Germany)
- The German Eco-card Scheme (“Umweltkarten”).

### **Government’s response on sustainable transport**

We agree with the many respondents who highlighted the need for **transport** to be at the heart of effective eco-town design. We think that travel in eco-towns should support people’s desire for mobility whilst achieving the goal of low carbon living. We think eco-towns should be designed so that access to and through them gives priority to options such as walking, cycling and public transport, thereby reducing residents’ reliance on private cars. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## H) Homes and Housing

### 1) General views

Respondents expressed the following views in relation to housing:

- There was a common view that the eco-towns programme allows a **disproportionate focus** on a small number of houses, as at 120,000, they represent **0.4 per cent of the total UK housing stock**
- There was concern that the **eco-towns delivery model** would divert resources away from genuinely increasing the rate of housing supply

- Respondents felt that the focus of this part of the consultation document was almost exclusively on the issue of housing, rather than **free standing sustainable communities**
- It was considered vital that there is no compromise in the **quality of construction**, simply to maximize housing numbers
- **Eco-friendly construction** should be the **standard approach** for all new development, but the greatest environmental gains can be made by **retrofitting** existing housing stock
- It was felt that some of the sites are too small to be **genuinely sustainable**
- Some respondents held the view that Communities and Local Government had 'caved in' to pressure from house builders by dropping the **requirement for homes** in eco-towns to meet '**Sustainable Homes Code**' Level 6
- An **inclusive range of housing needs** should be catered for to ensure mixed and balanced communities, namely:
  - Extra care housing
  - Nursing homes
  - Specialised and adapted housing for those with physical and/or learning disabilities.

Respondents recommended that Developers, Registered Social Landlords and Third Sector Organisations commit to **joined-up working** with local authorities, to ensure that advice, **support and services** are available to **vulnerable residents**.

**Housing additionality** was a key concern for the majority of Local Authority respondents. In their view, little or no evidence had been submitted to Communities and Local Government which reinforced the bidders' assertion that local housing markets were strong enough to deliver the level of additional housing being advocated. They were also uniform in their view that **eco-town housing figures should count towards those currently agreed** in local and regional plans.

## 2) Affordable housing

The additional affordable housing which eco-towns could potentially deliver was broadly welcomed by respondents. The following issues were identified:

- **Affordable housing** needs to be dispersed across the whole of a district to reflect family and job ties rather than concentrated in new settlements
- Respondents said they were unclear as to where the required **affordable housing supply** would be diverted from, given that the Government has stated that eco-towns will count towards **future housing targets**

- Respondents said that the **affordable housing offer** had been unclear in some promoters' submissions
- Rent and mortgage costs are not the only **barriers to accessing** affordable housing; travel, food and fuel costs will also have an impact on residents lives
- The Government's target for up to **50 per cent affordable homes** in eco-towns may not be achievable due to the recent changes in the housing market
- However, there was a divergence of views on this point – other respondents felt there was a strong case for **raising the proportion of affordable housing** delivered, where proposals involved the development of **surplus public sector land**. There is potential for many of the eco-towns to be considerably more ambitious in terms of the **levels of affordable housing** they are offering
- Respondents said that more than half of all **new affordable homes** are delivered through **section 106 agreements** with private developers contributing to the cost of their provision. Again, due to **market conditions**, this may become less likely
- The **higher environmental specifications** of eco-towns make them more expensive to build, and the increased costs might be passed on to the consumer
- '**Absolute affordability**' due to differences in market property value across regional submarkets needs to be taken into account.

### 3) Areas of further potential

- Respondents commented that there had been no details provided on other aspects of site housing provision, such as **wheelchair and mobility housing**
- At present, there is no requirement or reference to **sustainable methods of construction**, which is a part of the building process that would benefit from being piloted in an eco-town location. The only reference to sustainable construction is a mention of achieving **zero construction waste to landfill**
- Respondents highlighted the importance of good quality, **architectural design**, which needs to be built into the initial stages of the eco-towns, to ensure that they can achieve the **aims of the concept**
- Eco-towns should apply both the '**lifetime homes standards**', and the principles of '**lifetime neighbourhoods**', as a minimum requirement.

### 4) Suggested additional technologies/approaches

- In addition to high environmental standards, respondents said that eco-town homes should offer:
  - Decent (Parker Morris) space standards
  - Flexible design to allow rooms to be used for differing family priorities
  - Private outdoor spaces (private gardens or large terraces)

- Minimised shared entrances to flats to improve safety and foster community spirit
- Ground floor storage.

The following specific technologies/approaches were highlighted by respondents:

- It should be ensured that **older people have access** to a downstairs shower unit to make washing easier – especially for people with mobility problems
- The points made in the Callcutt Review concerning the potential for local authorities to work with eco-town developers to address the **long-term management** of housing across tenures, and stewardship of the public realm
- There may be scope to reduce the impact of travel, food and fuel costs on those seeking affordable housing through the provision of “**dedicated**” **community housing**
- The **eco-borough/eco-quarter** approach as put forward by a number of local authorities. Respondents recommended that Government give serious consideration to these when considering **alternatives** as part of the **Sustainability Appraisal** process
- The **skills base** required to make a long-term change to the construction industry could be linked to **eco-town delivery**, providing significant long-term **training and development** opportunities
- The **Local Housing Company** model has potential to become an **exemplar** means through which local authorities, private developers and housing associations work together to deliver **new affordable homes**
- Respondents highlighted the potential to further develop the ‘**Extra Care**’ **housing model** within eco-towns. Extra care housing could be more fully integrated into the **local communities**, offering a range of **services for older people**.

### Government’s response on homes and housing

We believe that eco-towns should have housing that is high-quality and affordable. We expect eco-town homes to achieve Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and Building for Life Silver Standard at a minimum; and to meet lifetime homes standards and English Partnerships space standards. Eco-towns should also provide for at least 30 per cent affordable housing. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## I) Community building and empowerment

### 1) General views on community building and empowerment

- Respondents felt that the overall approach to 'creating a community' lacked clarity
- Focussed and meaningful **engagement with local communities** is essential, as is a strong commitment to long-term involvement in '**ownership**' of the eco-town
- The proposals on jobs for **promoting lifelong learning**, arising from local environmental technologies, were welcomed. It was thought that such initiatives should be central to 'community building and empowerment' to raise eco-town resident's awareness of **green issues**
- It was thought essential to know how the eco-town 'management bodies' will sit within, or alongside, **existing local government structures**.

### 2) Areas of further potential on community building & empowerment

Active involvement of residents through means such as '**Enquiry by Design**' and '**Planning for Real**' were welcomed. Respondents noted that these initiatives are in line with efforts to promote **devolution** and **localism**, designing **public spaces** to high standards, and **minimising crime** and fear of crime.

Respondents said that the recommendations highlighted in the '**The Quirk Review**' (published by Communities Local Government) should be referenced as they highlight the benefits, and the risks, of public asset transfer and asset management by communities. These recommendations are designed to **encourage community management** and ownership of assets, while being realistic about the appetite and willingness of residents and community organisations to take on what can prove complex, technical, and very time consuming responsibilities.

### 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on community building and empowerment

- Eco-towns should include **learning and skills centres** to provide practical lessons from large-scale use of sustainable construction and renewable/low carbon energy technology
- Eco-towns should include **monitoring and evaluation** of the various **piloting of approaches** and technologies that will exist within the eco-town
- The appetite and capacity for **community ownership** and management of assets needs to be tested in each eco-town area as plans develop. The same applies to suggestions that eco-town residents should take a key role in determining how services are run
- **Older people** should have an active role in the development and planning of eco towns

- The public should come together to **commission** the community buildings that will most suit their needs, informed by advice from appropriate professionals
- There should be further exploration of community ESCOs/MUSCOs as a potential approach
- The creation of a **sense of community** through **public art** and other **cultural activities** and long-term community based management structures that provide local ownership and control of income producing assets. 'Section 106' mechanisms should be fully utilised to secure these arrangements.

### Government's response on community building and empowerment

People have told us that eco-towns must be far more than houses, and we agree. We know that, to be successful, eco-towns will need to be thriving, cohesive communities where residents want to live, work and raise their families from the outset. We expect that eco-town **planning applications should demonstrate** a high level of **engagement** and **consultation** with prospective neighbouring communities, and those who are expected to live in the eco-town. We think there should be both physical and social structures in place to allow new residents to mix and work together.

A long term approach is necessary to ensure a new town retains its integrity as an eco-town, and is able to manage change in a planned way. We want Eco-towns to be developed with long term **governance structures** so that the town continues to live up to its high **standards**; that there is continued community involvement and engagement; and that community assets are maintained. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking more fully on this.

## J) Employment

### 1) General views on employment

- Eco-towns represent a significant opportunity for the private sector and therefore **job creation**
- A number of respondents had a general lack of confidence in the job creation potential of some sites. In some cases they felt that the strength of the **employment offer** had been overstated in the proposal, and that Eco-towns will be housing-led developments with employment as a secondary issue, leading to eco-towns becoming 'dormitory settlements'. Their main related concern was that this would encourage commuting by car, affecting the eco-town **zero carbon targets**
- There was concern that employment opportunities would be in direct competition with local and regional **regeneration programmes**, and would be likely to divert employment opportunities, including construction skills, away from **existing growth locations**.

## 2) Areas of further potential on employment

- Respondents said that greater consideration should be given to how eco-towns will foresee market demand, and subsequently contain employment generating opportunities to achieve balanced communities.

## 3) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on employment

- Prospective employers should target their recruitment marketing at local residents
- **Training opportunities** should be provided by employers for residents to help them develop the skills to benefit from new **employment provision**
- The eco-town needs to **focus on linkages**, particularly to employment
- Linkages should be forged between the eco-town scheme and the local **higher education** facilities, to encourage and develop skills such as **green construction**
- Respondents said that the development of **social enterprise schemes** to provide **local employment** and **local services** will be key to the success of eco-towns, and this element should be worked up and included in any successful proposal
- Eco-towns should tie into each Local Authority's '**Skills and Lifelong Learning**' priorities, and the standards set for educational attainment in **Local Area Agreement's** to prepare and enable young people and the unemployed to take advantage of the **employment offer**
- Respondents recommended taking into account the contribution that the **sport sector** can make to the **employment potential** for local areas. Sport contributes significantly to the local economy and many **Learning and Skills Councils** are using sport as a way of attracting people back into the intermediate labour market.

### Government's response on employment

We know that it is important to ensure that eco-towns are genuine mixed-use communities and that unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum. We want eco-town planning applications to be accompanied by an **economic strategy** that demonstrates how access to work will be achieved. There should be facilities to support **job creation** in the town and as a minimum, we think there should be access to one **employment opportunity** for each new home, that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport. The draft **Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement** lays out our thinking on this.

## K) Delivery Mechanisms and Funding

### 1) General views on delivery mechanisms

- It was felt that there needs to be a clear commitment from the Government that the necessary additional **level of public and private funding** will be made available to ensure that the new settlements are viable. This should be additional to any current funding
- There are concerns about the **delivery of the eco-town concept**, particularly in the context of the current economic climate and the well publicised problems for the housing market and the construction industry
- '**Phasing**' was seen as a critical factor to ensure that the transport and community **infrastructure** are in place at the beginning of development
- Respondents said that effective **engagement with local authorities** is essential such that their positive involvement is achieved and their respective roles clear. Eco-towns are coming forward at a time when **local authorities** are going through **significant transition** and this is likely to impact on their ability to deal with the eco-town initiative
- Any **new delivery vehicles** should be suited to their specific delivery goals; one size does not fit all. **Development Corporations** in particular are not an appropriate mechanism for many of the eco-towns.

### 2) Suggested additional technologies/approaches on delivery mechanisms

- Local informal **partnerships** which are already in place could be developed to help take delivery forward
- The housing market current and economic cycle should be seen as both a **risk and an opportunity**. Development frameworks should consider the impact of future housing and **economic cycles**. New Towns were built over several cycles and some coped better than others, depending on the **mode of delivery** of land and investment
- **Cross boundary working** between local authorities and other agencies can provide a flagship for new models of **public service delivery**, particularly in relation to health and education
- Detailed **master planning** approaches involving strict use of allocations, phasing, and housing tenure specifications, are less able to deal with market cycles
- Eco-towns will need **risk-assessed**, financially profiled, development approaches, combined with **robust business plans** linked to economic strategies
- Relevant lessons are available from the early stages of Barking Riverside project and other large scale mixed-use developments.

### 3) General views on funding

- Respondents said that government should provide **full costings** on eco-towns
- There was a view that the successful delivery of eco-towns will require **additional government funding**
- The '**Section 106**' process may not be sufficient to deliver all of the eco-towns **infrastructure requirements**
- The level of funding available in the '**Community Infrastructure Fund**' alone would be insufficient to establish major strategic sustainable transport access improvements
- It is thought unlikely that land value uplift alone will be enough to fund the infrastructure required to build the developments, especially in the current climate, and this **potential funding shortfall** must be underwritten by the Government
- The **higher cost attached** to building a **new development** rather than expanding an existing one will inevitably raise the average cost of a house in the proposed location.

### 4) Areas of further potential on funding

- Funding to deliver eco-towns should either be **secured from the developer** or, where this is not possible, funded from **additional national resources**
- **Infrastructure investment contracts** should be entered into by government and bidders, and should not be conditional on the scale of house completions
- The potential role of the **Community Infrastructure Levy** should be considered in the context of infrastructure provision for eco-towns
- Long term funding arrangements are essential; it would be sensible for **funding to subsidise public transport** for eco-town residents after the initial period, rather than to try to extend free transport
- It is unclear as to whether the overall **cost of sustainable living** is affordable, and possible that new sustainable living designs and **infrastructure** could be unaffordable in the context of the current housing market climate
- Eco-towns should be required to set up a formal **management body** (such as a trust), which can take on certain responsibilities for ongoing renewal and management
- Developers should be required to pay a **mandatory levy** to fund high-quality green infrastructure provision in all eco-towns.

### **Government's response on delivery and funding for eco-towns**

As with the new towns there is scope for land values to contribute more to the cost of infrastructure than on a similar size urban site because, in general, existing land values are low and scheme bidders have acknowledged this. However, we recognise that higher sustainability standards imply higher costs than may normally be expected and there is likely to be some variation in the scope for these costs to be paid for out of land values. An Impact Assessment will examine the costs and benefits associated with the proposed standards for eco-towns. We will also seek further views on the standards and the potential implications for scheme viability through further consultation.

At the same time, we will assess the potential for short-listed schemes to pay for and deliver infrastructure and high standards of development out of land value. The majority of bidders have prepared infrastructure and cost assessments, based on their experience of items that need to be funded from s106. This information will be thoroughly tested by independent consultants as part of a financial viability study, with input from major infrastructure providers and local authorities. This assessment will inform final decisions on the locations and schemes to become eco-towns.

Government will provide additional delivery capacity and support to local authorities to help in the assessment of schemes and an important aim of the financial viability study will be to provide local planning authorities with a strong starting point for s106 negotiations in the event of a planning application. Government will also consider the potential of the Community Infrastructure Levy, subject to legislation, and other funding sources to support delivery, including the Growth Areas Fund (GAF) and Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF).

We will work with ATLAS (Advisory Team for Large Applications) to assess the challenges to delivery in every location, including capacity issues for local authorities. We will also consider the need for special local delivery mechanisms. The need for and choice of delivery mechanism for each scheme will be informed by an assessment of schemes and locations. Government will also want to consult local authorities on the best approach to delivery with the aim of reaching a partnership agreement on the best way forward. This approach recognises that one size does not fit all. Finally, the potential role of the Homes and Communities Agency will be considered.

## L) Planning System/Process

### 1) General views on planning system/process

- Many councils objected in principle to the overall eco-town initiative, which they viewed as undemocratic and outside of the formal development **planning process**
- The large majority of respondents said the most appropriate route to bring forward any eco-town should be through the **Development Plan** process
- Respondents commented that development on such a scale should not be considered without a proper assessment of the needs of an area. They further thought that **local authorities** need to be involved in this process from the earliest stages, and this must include an analysis of alternative approaches to accommodating development
- The draft **Planning Policy Statement** to be published by Communities and Local Government should demonstrate in practical terms, how local planning authorities will be able to inform debate on the potential size and nature of an eco-town through review of **Regional Spatial Strategies** (RSS) and its own **Local Development Framework** (LDF)
- In the light of the recent PPS1 supplement, all new development of substance should meet the same criteria and aim to meet the good practice described if the challenges of climate change are to be met
- The potential to integrate '**eco-town**' **concepts** into existing regeneration and development initiatives (eg the LDF and SRF) should be considered
- Once finalised, the Planning Policy Statement will become a powerful material consideration in **development control** terms, and it would be difficult to resist a proposal at local level
- Respondents commented that the lack of a **development plan context** for eco-towns, means that the merits of a new settlement have not been evaluated against other options, such as further urban extensions, or development within existing settlements
- Some respondents stated there is a need for clarity on whether eco-towns will count towards revised targets for **additional housing** flowing from the RSS partial reviews
- Land quality and the issue of **contaminated land** are not mentioned in the consultation document. In locations where eco-towns are proposed on previously developed land, PPS23 should be applied as a minimum standard
- Applications for eco-towns should be received and determined by local planning authorities. The unelected **Infrastructure Planning Commission**, and the **Homes and Communities Agency** should not be given a role in their delivery

- No decisions should be made on eco-town applications by local authorities until the publication of the Government's final **Planning Policy Statement**
- The principles underpinning the eco-town consultation are equally applicable to **alternative regional locations**, including urban extensions and/or large scale urban brownfield sites, which could also showcase and deliver against the eco-town criteria
- The **infrastructure** and **cost assessments** which inform the selection of eco-towns will require further testing through the planning process so that detailed scheme proposals can be progressed through each stage of planning based on robust evidence.

## M) Sustainability Appraisal

- A number of proposals for new development were put forward in response to the **eco-towns consultation**, and also some proposals which were not short-listed were re-submitted. These proposals should be considered more fully in the Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Respondents thought that the SA would be a 'high level' assessment; a light touch assessment on any of the **individual locations**
- Respondents found it difficult to see how meaningful the SA will be in satisfying **community concerns** about the potential impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation measures required
- It was thought important that the SA process should assess eco-towns to identify whether they would support the aims and objectives of **Regional Economic Strategies**
- The timetable for developing the draft PPS on eco-towns should be extended to enable reasoned judgements based on independent and rigorous SAs and other **technical assessments**
- The SA should consider all alternative options for **accommodating housing** (not just alternative eco-town locations)
- The '**Lifetime Homes Standards**' and '**Lifetime Neighbourhood Principles**' should be incorporated in the draft 'Planning Policy Statement on Eco Towns' and should also form part of the SA
- There was concern that the baseline information within the **Scoping Report** is drawn too narrowly, and fails to take full account of **local historic environments**.

### Government's response on planning system/process, and sustainability appraisal

People have told us they are concerned that eco-towns will bypass the **planning system**, or that people will not be able to have their say on individual **eco-town proposals**. The Government's view is that eco-towns should be considered in the same way as any other major development proposal. Government remains committed to the **plan-led system**, and the preference is that the broad options for how best to meet housing need are explored at both the **regional and local level**. Where eco-town proposals come through regional and/or local plans, this will allow local residents and local councils to have their say, and to ensure that proposals are right for their area. Even in cases where an eco-town proposal comes forward as a **planning application**, these are subject to statutory requirements in terms of consultation. Local authorities will then determine the planning application, in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The draft **Planning Policy Statement** sets out how eco-towns should be delivered through the planning system. A Sustainability Appraisal Report will be published alongside the draft PPS for consultation, and addresses the range of issues raised in consultation responses.

## 2.2 Views on locations

The majority of responses on individual locations were received from individuals in the affected locations and from local government, including parish councils, local authorities, and county councils in areas with a short-listed location.

## 2.3 Key issues raised by local authorities

### Planning

The majority of councils (over two-thirds) said that eco-towns should only be taken forward via LDF and RSS processes. There was also concern that eco-towns would conflict with existing local and regional priorities (eg urban renaissance strategies). However, there was some recognition that it is not possible for the current planning system, by its complex nature, to respond quickly to the national housing supply problem, and that eco-towns are a possible solution to this.

### Transport

Of those who commented, over a third said that eco-towns would not lead to an increase in car use. Fewer than one in ten stated that eco-town design would lead to an increase.

Half of councils said that their current local road infrastructure would not support the increased traffic levels generated by the eco-town(s) in their area, without further investment, and a small number said that traffic levels would be unsustainable, irrespective of any sustainable transport proposals.

## **Housing**

Half of councils did not comment on the issue of additional housing numbers. Some noted concern and sought assurance from government that eco-town housing numbers would count towards those detailed in existing local and regional plans.

## **Funding**

Funding was a major issue for the large majority of councils. The costs attached to building the required amount of infrastructure was a particular concern. Government has been asked to provide full costings for eco-towns, and to provide additional funding for any shortfall. There was a common view that eco-towns would divert funding (and focus) away from existing local housing growth initiatives.

## **Employment**

The majority of councils commented on the employment creation possibilities of eco-towns, of which:

- Nearly half broadly agreed that eco-towns had the potential to offer employment opportunities; and
- A third said that the approach to generating employment needed further work.

## **Comments on 'eco' credentials**

The eco 'aspirations' of the policy were broadly welcomed. Councils have recognised that eco-towns are a potential solution to the challenges of climate change, housing supply and sustainable living. Government has been asked to note the following concerns:

- Councils will not be in a position to support proposals if they fall short of the standards expected of the eco-town initiative and the challenges identified by the challenge panel. Eco-towns will only be successful if they are in genuinely sustainable locations, delivering real benefits to local communities
- The negative environmental impacts which eco-towns could have on the rivers and waterways in their locality
- There was concern that energy supply and waste management proposals were not robust enough
- A number of proposed locations could have a major impact on both greenfield land and the Green Belt
- From an environmental/climate change perspective, there is little in the eco-towns policy concept that would deliver 'a greener future', as compared with delivering housing detailed in existing local and regional plans, in a sustainable way

- Affordability and carbon neutrality are concepts which cannot be easily achieved in combination – there is usually a lengthy delay between installation and benefits via reduced energy bills when using technologies such as solar panels and increased insulation. There is therefore a risk that this will deter households from use.

## 2.4 Specific issues raised on locations

### ***Pennbury (Stoughton)***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- There was insufficient information provided by the site developer during the consultation period, and several key elements have been changed, (eg, transport proposals). The site is likely to increase traffic on the B6047, especially heavy goods during construction, and may also impact on quieter roads
- Current settlements in development may lose out on funding opportunities if resources are diverted to the eco-town
- Views that the proposed development's size and proximity to Leicester makes this an unsustainable location overall. The area also has poor existing infrastructure
- There are concerns over the phasing of the development; what would come first – schools, medical facilities, or houses? It is feared that pressure on existing schools will increase
- The site will be built on quality agricultural land that should be preserved for food production
- It was felt that there are other brownfield sites in the area which would be more suitable for development
- Pennbury is in an area of low employment; there may well be a shortage of jobs, especially for young people, unless sufficient extra jobs are created
- The transport proposals for the bid are unclear. Pennbury has previously been ruled out for development because of issues concerning the road network
- Government funds planned for eco-towns would be better directed towards increased funding for affordable homes, as current funding levels for the East Midlands will only deliver one third of the social rented units required to meet their target number
- The site may impact on development and regeneration within Leicester; building rates in the area are already slowing.

### ***Manby***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The eco-town proposal was outside of East Lindsey District Council's (ELDC) planning remit (without consulting parish councillors or the local community)

- Full implementation of ELDC's empty property strategy could provide almost all of the homes in the Manby proposal (over 4,000)
- The Strubby area of the Manby bid is not regarded as brownfield. Government were asked to note that the previously existing airstrips at Strubby have been broken up and the land is currently being farmed
- There are implications of developing this land regarding flooding – the site is below sea level and there have been recent flooding incidents
- The 'genuine affordability' of the affordable housing offer has been challenged
- Due to location, there are few employment opportunities in Manby, which may lead to increased travel and a larger carbon footprint
- The local crime rate is currently low, but is only achieved because of the existing good will of the community. Current police resources are insufficient, and creates the question of how a larger population will be adequately catered for
- The development is unlikely to attract many of the current affluent and retired demographic
- Views that costs incurred by ELDC in taking the development forward will force a Council Tax increase

### **Curborough**

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- Significant amounts of development have already taken place at Fradley, and have created an impact on the village and surrounding areas
- There are considerable traffic problems around the A38 junction at Hilliards Cross and HGVs at Fradley Park, and the eco-town would be likely to increase this. There is concern that the suggestion in the proposal of routing traffic through farmland will impact on Streethay
- There was recognition that the site could contribute to large scale plans and targets for biodiversity across the wider district and region, such as the Cannock Chase –Sutton Park Biodiversity Enhancement Area, and local BAPs
- A feeling that the eco-town will alter the face of the area from a group of rural villages to increasing urbanisation. There was concern that Streethay is already becoming subsumed into Lichfield
- The development is out of conformity with existing policies, especially the local plan and A38 corridor policy. The area is not currently allocated for a new settlement, and previous planning policies were not saved
- The proposers have previously submitted an application for the site, leading to the eco-town credentials being viewed as an add-on.

### **Middle Quinton**

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The eco-towns process is considered flawed as Middle Quinton is outside of the normal planning system and is contrary to the current spatial plan
- Eco-towns housing numbers should count towards current local and regional targets, and not exceed them
- The level of affordable housing exceeds local need and could therefore create unbalanced communities. The local housing register figures have been questioned – only 214 families need immediate help. It was thought that those with housing need will not want to relocate away from facilities
- Transport, education, drainage should all be in place before building begins. The eco-town will put pressure on the local transport network, especially the A46. Other, minor roads will be further congested and increased traffic will cause damage
- The rail link is freight only and there are no plans to reopen it for commuter use. It currently functions in two ways; part of it is disused and has been converted to a local greenway, and part is in use as a road
- Education is a major issue, as the location crosses three counties with different systems
- The site will be in an area of low unemployment, so employment needs will only be generated by residents. This is likely to result in out-commuting and add to road problems. There was an objection to the employment that would be lost due to the building of the development (500 jobs at Long Marston)
- Funding by government should be additional to current housing expenditure, and should not have to be met through increased Council Tax
- A sustainability appraisal and habitats assessment is needed. Parts of the site are shown at risk of flooding (low water table) and there is significant land contamination which should be assessed. Long Marston has flooded recently, and the continued risk of flooding may outweigh any 'eco' benefits
- There is a risk of damage to scenic areas and the loss of agricultural land
- The size of the development (two thirds the size of Stratford) is disproportionate to need in the area and pattern of other (rural) development. There was concern about urbanisation and threat to the status of Stratford as an international destination. A much smaller urban development could use the brownfield land effectively while leaving greenfield land unaffected
- It was thought that the site is too small for the proposed housing and infrastructure plans
- The eco-town will impact on the local landscape, being adjacent to the northern end of the Cotswold AONB, overlooked by Meon Hill and visible from the high Ilmington Hill

- There are no apparent means of enforcement of the eco-status of the development, or means of objection if conditions are breached.

### ***Bordon (Whitehill)***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The location does not appear to fit the criteria for eco-towns, as it is a doubling of the existing urban area. However, the eco-town could provide facilities lacking in the existing settlement, and provide a model of sustainability to be followed by the existing community
- The local water supply is of poor quality and limited supply – a viable solution to this issue is needed. It is difficult to see how water neutrality could be achieved. There is potential for contamination of the SPA/SSSIs and the local water supply from any new power use
- If the amount of new development that can be accommodated given these constraints is insufficient to allow the expected benefits of an eco-town, it should not go ahead, as the adverse environmental impacts will outweigh any gains
- The existing gas main would be insufficient to meet any new demand
- Congestion on A325 at peak times may be exacerbated by the proposed bus route (Liphook, Alton, Farnham)
- Consideration should be given to the reopening of the Bordon to Bentley rail link to reduce congestion and ease the additional Blackwater Valley/London commuting pressures
- A step change is required in the availability of public transport designed to reduce car use. Innovative technology should be set up in Bordon-Whitehill eco-town to allow the matching of supply and demand for needed journeys out of town
- Mitigation must be provided for development near the SPA site, especially if on-site power is developed
- The initial analysis fails to identify three other Natura 2000 sites – the Woolmer Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Shortheath Common SAC, and East Hampshire Hangers SAC
- A robust employment strategy must be put in place for the departure of the MoD, to reduce potential out-commuting to London and Blackwater Valley. This needs to include other uses for the area as well as the current light industrial use
- Potential for use of onsite materials (sand) for development
- The eco-town offers the opportunity of creating a well-designed town centre which would benefit the whole community.

### **Weston Otmoor**

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- It was thought that the size of the development will destroy the rural character of the area and that the eco-town approach was a 'gloss' to allow for a large non-eco development to take place. The development will result in a series of conurbations along A34
- Weston Otmoor will have a serious impact on Bicester, which is already suffering from out of town development. Furthermore, it would undermine the plans for, and economies of, Bicester and Kidlington (eg, Multiplex at Bicester, upgraded health centre in Kidlington). The proposed development is a less sustainable location than Kidlington, Bicester and South Grenoble Road
- There are concerns that undue emphasis is being placed by the promoters on linking the delivery of East West Rail to eco-town proposals. The costs of such a link have been considerably underestimated by developers
- Belief that a significant amount of the development will take place in the Green Belt, damaging footpaths and bridleways. There will also be loss of valuable agricultural land
- A view that development at Weston Otmoor is contrary to planning rules and the LDF
- Respondents thought that SSSIs and valuable green spaces (Wendlebury Meads and Mansmoor Grassland) will be damaged, and no mitigation proposals will solve this
- The drop zone remains of value to the MoD
- There are few employment opportunities, and it is feared that this will lead to increased traffic and congestion levels due to commuting to Oxford and London. There are already long tailbacks on the M40 and A34. Heavy reliance on cars in the absence of public transport will negate 'eco' credentials and will increase 'rat running' through nearby villages. There was scepticism regarding the Park and Ride proposal in the bid
- There are concerns over air quality and noise pollution
- There are existing flooding problems owing to the expansion of Bicester and the construction of the M40 Motorway leading to increased run off. This will worsen with further development
- There is no guarantee that the developer can provide the necessary infrastructure. Many essential services in the area are already at breaking point.

### **Ford**

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- Road links in the area are poor. The A27 single road and bypass plans are in doubt, as are improvements to the A259, although these appear to be integral to the development. Parkway station would increase commuting by car. The constraints of a

two-line railway with many level crossings would be unable to deal with the projected increased capacity

- The absence of immediate proposals for schools will increase pressure on existing local provision
- Previous planning applications to build developments in this location have been considered and rejected a number of times. Housing provision is needed in other locations such as Littlehampton and Bognor
- There has been a lack of public consultation and proper scrutiny of proposals. The eco-town will have an effect on the character of the small communities of Yapton, Ford and Clymping, and will lead to a loss of strategic gaps between villages
- The site has flooding issues
- The local water authority has concerns over the capacity needed to pump water to residences in the eco-town
- Most of the proposed Ford site is high grade agricultural land necessary for local food production. There is also a high level of greenfield land
- The power station proposals in the bid will have potentially negative impacts on the environment. Additionally, the zero carbon potential of the site would be compromised by the waste to energy proposals
- The eco-town will have an economic impact on Littlehampton, which is currently trying to regenerate its commercial base
- It would be preferable to see small scale affordable housing built in existing villages for local young people.

### ***St. Austell (China Clay Community)***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The proposed eco-town would add a significant addition to the housing stock in St Austell, and would therefore add considerable pressure to existing infrastructure
- Any eco-town proposal should be brought forward through the normal process of developing the Local Development Framework with its Action Plan for the area, and therefore, using established planning practice to inform how Restormel, St Austell/St Blazey and the China Clay Area are developed into the future
- A series of developments spread over six sites was not considered to be a single 'eco-town'. There is a perception that they will function as un-connected house-building proposals. The dispersal of the development over six satellite sites, combined with their general rural location, will create particular challenges. It will prove difficult to reduce car use, and make the possibility of a coherent transport system unlikely
- The impact of eco-town proposals on existing communities have not been properly considered

- It is important that china clay reserves are safeguarded for the future
- The Government should focus on innovative ways of delivering affordable housing which will meet the genuine needs of the area, as evidenced by the West Cornwall Housing Market Assessment, rather than creating high levels of open-market housing – a minimum 50 per cent is the target in existing Supplementary Planning Documents
- If Drinnick is to develop as a major employment centre, its relationship to the strategic road network would need a major re-assessment. Plans to upgrade the A391 were recently withdrawn
- There is concern about the impact of long-term changes in sea level at Par docks, which could lead to potential flooding problems
- There are safety issues around Baal pit
- The proposal to develop redundant land for recreation is welcomed, but must be integrated with other developments
- It is doubted that this area is capable of establishing sustainable communities.

### ***Rossington***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- A view that the Rossington proposal should be tested against Local Authority corporate priorities – ie sustainable community strategies, local area agreements and housing priorities, economic and transport strategies and plans
- There are concerns that a 15,000 house development in this location is likely to have an adverse impact on the rest of the Borough's housing market, and local economies in the North of Doncaster
- The funding identified for infrastructure is perceived as inadequate
- The local authority's preferred approach is for an 'Eco Borough', of which Rossington Eco-town would be a sub element. – Including:
  - a commitment to establishing mixed income, mixed tenure communities
  - higher density settlements of limited size surrounded by green areas but linked in groups of up to 5,000 homes to form a larger city of around 300 – 400,000 people
  - a fundamental investment in, and the creation of, the very best public transport infrastructure
  - support from government in creating a "framework agreement"
  - far greater detail on the specific renewable energy systems used as part of the development.
- There needs to be a firm commitment from Government that that the existing residents of Rossington will be actively engaged and involved in the eco-towns process.

### ***Hanley Grange***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The Hanley Grange development will be built over prime grade II agricultural land, which has the potential to produce 500 tonnes of wheat per annum
- The site is in a 'Ground Water Protection Zone', and will restrict water and spring flows to nearby SSSIs (Sawston Hall, Fowlmere). There is potential for surface water run-off into Cambridge
- Transport infrastructure in South Cambridgeshire is very stretched and cannot at present support a new town. The M11 is already congested during rush hour, and increased car use from the residents of a new settlement has the potential to create 'rat-runs'
- The train service from Whittlesford to Liverpool Street is already near capacity. The line does not serve the location's biotechnology cluster. The 'Guided Bus' proposals appear impractical. No details of land purchase are available
- There cannot be a competitive retail offer if Tesco are a financial backer
- There has been a lack of consultation and a feeling that the planning system would be bypassed. It would be preferable to focus on existing growth plans and phasing. Northstowe is the preferred location, and should be given eco-town status
- A view that Hanley Grange will have a negative impact on the Duxford Airfield site (Imperial War Museum) regarding flight paths and air shows
- Perception that the development will impact on the character and biodiversity of the area. Infrastructure improvements that may be required as a result of the development could have negative impacts on local wildlife sites
- The development must include significant areas of natural greenspace for recreation needs and should not promote access to the nearby River Cam.

### ***Coltishall***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- There has been inadequate time for consultation, and a lack of information and transparency around the details and process. There has also been a lack of community involvement despite the size of development
- View that the site is not in line with the LDF, and local consultation processes have not been followed
- Links to the North and South via road are seen as inadequate. Both funding and support are needed for the Northern Norwich Distributor Road. Without this link, the site's eco-credentials would be severely compromised

- There is no transport impact analysis available, including the impact of additional traffic on B roads, and no viable rail alternative exists. A need for further investigation of this point
- Detailed water and waste impact studies are needed
- More information is needed on how the proposed 3,000 jobs will be generated, and also on the range of the employment offer
- A view that there are not enough facilities, and no plans are cited to relieve current pressure on schools, GP surgeries, and retail
- The eco-towns principle is welcomed, but this is not seen as a suitable location
- The number of homes has increased from the original bid (5,000), to between 8,000 -10,000 homes, and was announced late in the process. The sustainability impacts of such a large development in this location must be fully considered
- It is believed that the site will have a negative impact on other areas. Specifically, the size and urban feel of a 10,000 home development would be at odds with the rural character of the area
- There will need to be management of visitors in order to protect Barton Broad and other sites on the Broads from increased recreational use.

### **Marston**

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- It was stated that Marston is a greenfield site and that Government should pursue brownfield locations. There are areas of the site which are contaminated and cannot be reclaimed for some time. Other areas are reclaimed land that has been changed to recreational uses
- The ensuing loss of productive arable land/building in the Forest of Marston Vale would be contrary to local policies
- A view that the proposed site has inadequate transport. It is unrealistic to rely on the East – West rail link between Bedford and Bletchley. Car use is likely to increase, especially with traffic to Wixams, Nirah project and Center Parcs. There is already heavy congestion on the A421, and to date, no decision has been made on the dualling of this road
- The proposed site is seen as having an inadequate water supply
- There is a potential risk of the loss of community character and green spaces. Particular concerns relate to the scale and density of development around Brogborough Lake. Stretched linear development would destroy significant tracts of farmland and lead to the loss of landscape. The redundant brick pits in the Marston Vale have developed substantial biodiversity interest resulting in many being designated as County Wildlife Sites

- Perception that neither of the involved developers has consulted properly with the public
- There are no proposals to attract employers to the town. The current employment capacity of the area would not meet the demand of the eco-town residents
- Perception that concentrating affordable housing away from town centres does not meet the needs of those on waiting lists
- Local key infrastructure and services are already stretched, and the proposals do not seem to offer an adequate solution to this problem
- The impact of this development, if taken forward along with development of Milton Keynes, could cause villages to lose their identity and promote increased urban sprawl
- It was also of concern to respondents that this separate settlement would have to compete with Milton Keynes for jobs and homes.

### ***NE Elsenham***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- The LDF approach favours development being distributed through the area
- Respondents queried the need for affordable housing in this location
- The proposed site is largely greenfield. Government should pursue brownfield sites. It was questioned as to how the proposal will not only mitigate but enhance biodiversity in the area
- Concern that the development will lead to the loss of agricultural land for food
- There is a risk that the site will become a dormitory town serving London/Cambridge
- There is a risk of groundwater contamination in the area. The water supply cannot cope with additional extraction. Local drainage systems may not be able to cope with the increased capacity needed for a new development
- There will be an increased demand on secondary schools in the area. There is insufficient infrastructure and services, to cope with the increase in population. Delivery of infrastructure and key services should be in parallel with housing, not following it
- The employment park is currently underused, and it is likely that residents would out-commute to other areas. The employment strategy requires further thought and development
- There is inadequate transport infrastructure to cope with demand. The M11 traffic flow diverts via the B1383 at peak times. This will be made worse by increased traffic including HGVs travelling through 'the Cross' in Elsenham during construction. The current rail capacity cannot cope with demand, therefore increased commuting into Elsenham to use station would be unsustainable. Substantial investment would be

needed to overcome these infrastructure problems

- The developers' proposals seem unrealistic and there has been insufficient consultation with local communities. More information is required on how the final decision on the eco-town will be made
- A perception that the development will essentially alter the rural character of the area. Existing villages which are already under threat from the Stansted expansion will face further changes to village character. The development would entail the coalescence of Elsenham and Henham
- The possibility of achieving carbon savings in a rural location with few transport options was doubted
- A strong view that building of both Elsenham and Hanley Grange would create severe burdens on existing infrastructure.

### ***Rushcliffe***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- Other proposals are believed to rank higher in terms of sustainability and housing need than Rushcliffe. Similarly, the site does not score as highly as other areas with potential for regeneration such as Hucknall, Broxtowe, Erewash and Gedling. These locations should be considered first
- The need for further new development in the region was questioned, as many new homes in Nottingham do not sell, and there are a number of empty homes
- There is no evidence as to how the development will meet the eco-towns criteria, or which services or facilities should be provided
- There are concerns as to whether the scheme would be large enough to be truly self sustaining
- Rushcliffe does not fit with the existing planned growth in the region as there is no robust evidence that freestanding new settlements are needed in the RSS. Housing growth solutions should not be imposed nationally
- There is concern that the development will impact on the provision of existing local growth points
- The RAF Newton proposal emerged during consultation. There is a need to see the proposals in order to respond properly, as the site will have a significant impact on Bingham and will need a thorough assessment before proceeding
- The RAF Newton site is not large enough to accommodate 6,000 new homes and the necessary infrastructure. The Green Belt will need to be developed in order to sustain homes, and other environmental impacts will occur: urban sprawl, encroachment on countryside, overwhelming or merging with Bingham
- Infrastructure needs to be in place before houses are built

- The land could be better used for food provision
- The area has significant road infrastructure problems and needs a full assessment of the viability of forms of transport to identify plans for avoidance of pressures on both the A46 and A52
- Dualling of the A46 and A52 road must precede any development. The Eco-town is likely to generate significant additional traffic through Radcliffe
- There is potential to encourage a modal shift through Park and Ride facilities linked to trams/rail into Nottingham. Respondents found it difficult to see how a new settlement could be built without major road building and a subsequent increase in the use of cars for commuting to Leicester and Nottingham.

### ***Leeds City Region***

Specific concerns raised in the range of responses for this location included:

- There was concern regarding the lack of information available at the start of the consultation process. The eco-towns appraisal work by Leeds City Region was published during the consultation period, leaving limited scope for comment
- New settlements of the scale envisaged will require a significant level of investment in infrastructure in the Leeds City Region, and there is little explanation of how this is to be funded
- Eco-town proposals should be tested alongside other options for growth in the Region as part of an overall spatial strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber
- The spatial study approach for a potential eco-town in the region, taken by the Leeds City Region Board, was welcomed by respondents. However it was noted that the study's criteria did not extend to a sufficiently wide range of environmental impacts
- The Willow Green site was perceived to:
  - Have limited public transport access
  - Potentially exacerbate flood risk in the area
  - Lead to increased usage of the M62 motorway network.
- The Gascoigne Wood site was perceived to:
  - Have a low amount of brownfield land
  - Have limited public transport access
  - Not support the travel to work patterns of residents (most of whom will work in Leeds or York)
  - Have very high infrastructure costs.

## Section 3

### Government's Response on Locations

We are extremely grateful for the time and effort of individuals and groups in giving their views on the 15 shortlisted locations. These responses have provided us with a great deal of important evidence and information about the issues in the individual locations, and the concerns of people locally about their local environment and existing community. We are using this information in two specific ways.

First, we are feeding it into the **range of assessments** that we are carrying out as part of the process to arrive at the decisions on the locations with the potential to become the eco-towns of the future. We have provided it to the consultants undertaking the **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** of the eco-towns policy and shortlisted locations. They in turn have used it to augment and inform their findings as they test the impacts of development on the locations. You can see these findings in the SA report published along with the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS). These documents are also open for consultation.

We are also ensuring that the responses feed into the **Transport Assessments** that are being carried out by developers in conjunction with the Highways Agency, and the other work underway with the technical working groups of developers and local authorities in each location, which are looking at the range of issues affecting each location – from financial viability and deliverability to infrastructure, capacity, and local planning.

Secondly, we are taking the outputs of this exercise to develop and improve the ongoing rounds of **national and local consultation and information sharing**. We received representations about the lack of information locally, and in some cases the weakness of consultation by proponents, and we have taken early action on this, making sure that scheme proponents do more to publicise their bids, and put local events at the heart of their consultation. We now have a much stronger basis of local information and assessment material as we go into the second round of consultation, and we will be making it easier for you to comment, with an online portal, and more opportunities for local input at roadshow events.

Many of you expressed concern about the impact of new development on your localities, citing the strain on existing services, some already stretched to breaking point. As we spell out in the draft PPS, any successful eco-town must provide a full range of services from the start, and all potential locations are being rigorously tested for their impacts on the existing travel and environmental infrastructure. We remain

committed to the principle that the eco-town will bring benefits to the existing community, not take resources from it.

We hope that the draft PPS and the SA Report deal with many of your concerns about local democracy and about the impacts on the area of these locations. The draft PPS makes clear that **local planning** is at the heart of the process, and we are working with councils to consider the best way forward in their locations. In some areas, such as Rushcliffe and Norwich, this has led to a new proposal coming forward which has been considered in the SA assessment of alternatives. In others, such as Hanley Grange, consideration of the location will be taken forward through a more comprehensive assessment of options in the review of the East of England Plan. The SA Report takes an uncompromising view of both the negative and positive impacts of the locations and the potential developments, and bands the locations according to a range of sustainability indicators. This approach is the first step in a range of assessments that will be applied to the locations to ensure that only the most feasible sites become eco-towns.

# Section 4

## Conclusion and Next Steps

The consultation process we launched with *Eco-towns: Living a greener future* is only the first stage of a detailed programme of work. On 24 July we published *Eco-towns: living a greener future – Progress Report*, which outlined the work going forward, including updates on the locations, the assessments of finance and deliverability, work with local authorities, and transport assessments.

We are now commencing the second stage of consultation, please visit our website at: [www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/ecotowns](http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingsupply/ecotowns) We have published a Sustainability Appraisal Report and draft Planning Policy Statement, which sets out more details about the potential locations, and the standards that eco-towns will have to meet.

There will also be a range of exhibitions and consultation events close to the venues of the potential eco-towns. These will provide the opportunity for local communities to express their views and help shape the eco-towns concept, and to find out more about the eco-town proposal in their area.

We will be taking account of the feedback from all these consultations and assessments before decisions are taken, early in 2009, on those locations with the potential to be eco-towns.

Finally, any locations identified as having the potential to become eco-towns will need to go forward for further testing and consultation through the planning system.

# ANNEX 1

## List of Respondents

1. Aby and Greenfield Parish Council
2. Advantage West Midlands
3. Alrewas & Fradley with Streethay Parish Council
4. Ampthill Town Council
5. Andrew Martin Associates
6. Anglian Water
7. Aragon Land and Planning UK Ltd
8. Arkesden Parish Council
9. Arun District Council
10. Arundel Town Council
11. Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
12. BAA Stansted
13. Barbraham Parish Council
14. Barnham Parish Council
15. Bat Conservation Trust
16. Bedford & Milton Keynes Waterway Trust
17. Bedford Borough Council
18. Bedford Borough Liberal Democrat Group
19. Bedfordshire and Luton Economic Development Partnership
20. Bedfordshire County Council
21. Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association
22. Belaugh Parish Meeting
23. Bidwells
24. Bingham Town Council
25. Birchanger Parish Council
26. Birmingham City Council
27. Blaby District Council
28. Blue Sky Planning
29. Borough of Oadby & Wigston
30. Bracknell Forest Borough Council
31. Broadland District Council

32. Brogborough Parish Council
33. Buckinghamshire County Council
34. Butterfly Conservation
35. Cambridge City Council
36. Cambridge Delivery Partnership
37. Cambridge Healthcare & Biotech
38. Cambridge Horizons & Cambridge Local Authorities
39. Cambridge Preservation Society
40. Cambridgeshire County Council
41. Campaign Against The Stoughton Co-op Eco Town (CASCET)
42. Campaign for National Parks
43. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
44. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Bedfordshire Branch
45. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Cornwall Branch
46. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), East Midlands Regional Group
47. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Hampshire Branch
48. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Leicestershire Branch
49. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Nottinghamshire Branch
50. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Oxfordshire
51. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Peak District & South Yorkshire Branch
52. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Warwickshire Branch
53. Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Yorkshire and Humber Regional Group
54. Cannock Chase Council
55. CE May & Sons
56. Central Council of Physical Recreation
57. Charlton-on-Otmoor Parish Council
58. Cherwell District Council
59. Chrishall Parish Council
60. Clymping Parish Council
61. Coltishall Eco Town Action Group
62. Coltishall Parish Council
63. Communities Against Ford Eco-town (CAFÉ)
64. Community Matters
65. Confederation of Co-operative Housing
66. Cornwall County Council
67. Cotswold District Council

68. Cotswolds Conservation Board
69. Countryside Alliance
70. Coventry City Council
71. Cranfield Parish Council
72. Croydon Parish Council
73. CTC-The National Cyclists Organisation
74. Cunnane Town Planning
75. David Lock Associates
76. Development Planning Partnership LLP
77. Devon County Council
78. DLP Planning Ltd
79. Dockenfield Parish Council
80. Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
81. Dorsington Parish Council
82. Drivers Jonas
83. Durham County Council
84. East Hampshire District Council
85. East Herts Council
86. East of England Development Agency
87. East of England Regional Assembly
88. East West Rail Consortium
89. Eastcotts Parish Council
90. Eco-towns Delivery Consortium
91. Elmdon & Wenden Parish Council
92. Elsenham Parish Council
93. English Heritage
94. English Partnerships
95. English Regions Network
96. Environment Agency
97. E-on UK
98. Essex County Council
99. Evesham Town Council
100. Farnham Parish Council
101. Federation of City Farms & Community Gardens
102. Federation of Master Builders (FMB)
103. Felsted Parish Council

104. Ford Parish Council
105. Forestry Commission England
106. Fradley Against Curborough Town (FACT)
107. Fulbourn Parish Council
108. Galliard Homes
109. General Aviation Awareness Council (GAAC)
110. General Motors UK Limited
111. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown F.R.I.C.S., M.P.
112. Glastonbury Constabulary
113. Gloucestershire County Council
114. Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council
115. Granby cum Sutton Parish Council
116. Great Chesterfield Parish Council
117. Great Easton and Tilty Parish Council
118. Great Glen Parish Council
119. Great Hallingbury Parish Council
120. Greater Norwich Development Partnership
121. Hainford Parish Council
122. Halcrow Yolles
123. Hampshire County Council
124. Harborough District Council
125. Harlington Parish Council
126. Harlow Renaissance
127. Harlton Parish Council
128. Harston Parish Council
129. Harvington Parish Council
130. Help the Aged
131. Henham Parish Council
132. Heydon Parish Council
133. High Roding Parish Council
134. Honeybourne Parish Council
135. Horticultural Trades Association
136. Hull City Council
137. Huntingdonshire District Council
138. Ickleton Parish Council
139. Illston on the Hill Parish Council

140. Imerys
141. Imperial War Museum, Duxford
142. Institute of Civil Engineers
143. Jarrow Investments Ltd
144. Kent County Council
145. Kidlington Parish Council
146. Kinoulton Parish Council
147. Landscape Institute
148. Laughton Planning Subcommittee
149. Lawrence Graham LLP
150. Legal and General
151. Leicester City Council
152. Leicestershire County Council
153. Leicestershire County Council Liberal Democrat Group
154. Leicestershire Local Access Forum
155. Lichfield Civic Society
156. Lichfield District Council
157. Lidlington Action Group
158. Lidlington Parish Council
159. Light Aircraft Association
160. Lincolnshire County Council
161. Lincolnshire Marsh Protection Group
162. Linton Parish Council
163. Little Abington Parish Council
164. Little Hallingbury Parish Council
165. Little Shelford Parish Council
166. Littlehampton Town Council
167. Local Government Association
168. Lodders Solicitors
169. Lutterworth Town Council
170. Marston Moreteyne Eco-town Action Group
171. Marston Moreteyne Parish Council
172. Marston Sicca Parish Council
173. Marston Vale Community Rail Partnership
174. Mebyon Kernow-the Party for Cornwall
175. Members Association of Brogborough Boardsailing Club

176. Michael Fabricant MP
177. Mid Bedfordshire District Council
178. Middleton Stoney Parish Council
179. Middleton-on-Sea Parish Council
180. Miller Homes
181. Milton Keynes Council
182. Milton Keynes Partnership
183. National Farmers' Union
184. National Grid
185. National Housing Federation
186. National Trust
187. Natural England
188. Network Rail
189. Newport Parish Council
190. Norfolk County Council
191. Norman Lamb MP
192. North East of England Regional Architectural Liaison Officer Group
193. North Norfolk District Council
194. North Walsham Town Council
195. North Yorkshire County Council
196. Northern Housing Consortium
197. Nottingham City Council
198. Nottingham Core Housing Market Area Housing and Planning Officers Group
199. Nottinghamshire County Council
200. Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
201. Oadby Civic Society
202. Optimum Population Trust
203. Oxford Brookes University
204. Oxford City Council
205. Oxford Green Belt Network
206. Oxford Preservation Trust
207. Oxfordshire County Council
208. Pampisford Parish Council
209. Parish of Hampton Gay and Hampton Poyle
210. Parkridge Holdings Ltd
211. Pebworth Parish Council

212. Pegasus Planning Group
213. Pershore Town Council
214. Persimmon
215. Plantlife International
216. Portsmouth Water
217. Preston on Stour Parish Council
218. PRP Architects, URBED and Design for Homes
219. Public Health, East of England
220. Quendon & Rickling Parish Council
221. Quinton Parish Council
222. Radcliffe-on-Trent Parish Council
223. Renaissance Bedford
224. Restormel Borough Council
225. Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)
226. Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
227. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
228. RPS Planning
229. RTPI (Royal Town and Planning Institute?)
230. Rushcliffe Borough Council
231. Rutland County Council
232. Saffron Walden District Friends of the Earth Group
233. Saffron Walden Town Council
234. Savills
235. Sawston Parish Council
236. SCOPE
237. Sheffield City Council
238. Shelford and Newton Parish Council
239. Shelter
240. Shudy Camps Parish Council
241. Silk Planning
242. Social Enterprise Coalition
243. South Cambridgeshire District Council
244. South East County Leaders
245. South East England Biodiversity Forum
246. South East England Development Agency
247. South East England Regional Assembly

248. South West Regional Assembly
249. Southern Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
250. Spawforths
251. Sport England
252. Sport England West Midlands
253. Staffordshire County Council
254. Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council
255. Stebbing Parish Council
256. Steppingley Parish Council
257. Straford-on-Avon District Council
258. Stratford-on-Avon Friends of the Earth Group
259. Sunningwell Parish Council
260. SUSTAIN – The Alliance for Better Food and Farming
261. Sustrans, Campaign for Better Transport, Carfree UK, Friends of the Earth Joint Response
262. Takeley Parish Council
263. Tangent Properties
264. Thames Valley Police
265. The Co-operative
266. The General Aviation Awareness Council
267. The Grasslands Trust
268. The Landscape Partnership
269. The National Trust
270. The Otmoor Group
271. The Parish of Elpham
272. The Planning Inspectorate
273. The Ramblers' Association
274. The Royal Academy of Engineering
275. The UK Cohousing Network
276. The Vale of White Horse District Council
277. The Wildlife Trsuts, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire Branch
278. The Wildlife Trusts
279. The Wildlife Trusts, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch
280. The Wildlife Trusts, Staffordshire Branch
281. The Wildlife Trusts, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough Branch
282. Thriplow Parish Council

283. Thurnby and Bushby Parish Council
  284. Tilton on the Hill Parish Council
  285. Tugby & Keythorpe Parish Council
  286. Ugley Parish Council
  287. UK Environmental Law Association
  288. Uttlesford District Council
  289. Vintage Aircraft Club
  290. Walberton Parish Council
  291. Warwickshire County Council
  292. Water UK
  293. Welford-on-Avon Parish Council
  294. Wendlebury Parish Council
  295. West Colville Parish Council
  296. West Midlands Business Council
  297. West Midlands Regional Assembly
  298. West Oxfordshire District Council
  299. West Sussex County Council
  300. Weston Front
  301. Weston on the Green Parish Council
  302. Whitchurch Parish Meeting
  303. White Young Green Planning
  304. Whittlesford Parish Council
  305. Wildlife and Countryside Link
  306. Woburn Sands District Society
  307. Woburn Sands Town Council
  308. Woodland Trust
  309. Worcestershire County Council
  310. Worstead Parish Council
  311. WWF
  312. Wychavon District Council
  313. Yapton Parish Council
  314. Yorkshire & Humberside Friends of the Earth Group
  315. Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly
  316. Yorkshire Forward-Regional Development Agency
  317. Yorkshire Water
- And over 10,000 private individuals

## Annex 2

### Responses Prior to Publication of the Consultation Document

Between the deadline for submission of Expressions of Interest and the publication of the consultation document *Eco-towns: living a greener future* Communities and Local Government received large numbers of letters from public bodies and interested individuals.

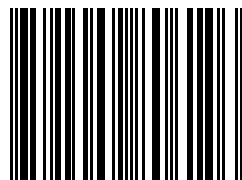
The Department was, at that stage, taking forward eco-towns proposals in a strategic review across Government and its agencies. While this Review was underway we were unable to disclose the names of schemes or to comment on individual proposals. This would have had the potential to be detrimental to the Department's interests in the award of funding and obtaining best value, as well as to the commercial interests of those applicants not selected.

However, some submitted proposals were actively promoted or publicised in their locality, which led to feedback letters being received prior to the start of formal consultation. There were six locations for which the Department received the majority of representations; Kingston (c. 1,100), Pennbury (over 100), Throckmorton (over 50), Middle Quinton (over 900), Wardle (over 500), and Willow Green (c.50). The vast majority of these reflected concerns about potential for individual locations to be selected as eco-towns. We also received a small number of comments on a further 14 locations.

The majority of representations were negative towards prospective individual locations, however, the principle of eco-towns was lauded in many responses. Given that the Department was unable to confirm or deny that an eco-town had been submitted for these locations it was not able to highlight the potential of these locations or to counter some of the incorrect assumptions which many wrote in expressing, including a lack of intention to consult or a bid to bypass the planning system. Since publication of the consultation document *eco-towns: living a greener future*, the Department has been able to actively challenge misconceptions around eco-towns and provide more information on the eco-town proposals submitted for each location shortlisted, which is reflected in the consultation responses received.

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