

**EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL ASSEMBLY  
REGIONAL HOUSING, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT JOINT BOARD  
5 JUNE 2008**

**ECO-TOWNS CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

**Synopsis**

**This report describes the content of the Government's current "*Eco-towns: Living a greener future*" consultation paper and suggests an East Midlands Regional Assembly response.**

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Housing Green Paper (July 2007) included an "*Eco-towns prospectus*" that invited proposals for the creation of up to 10 new freestanding eco-towns. These would contain between 5,000 and 20,000 new homes that could contribute to the Government's aspiration to enable 3 million new homes to be built across England by 2020.
- 1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) received 57 eco-town proposals. These were subject to a cross-departmental Government appraisal that has selected a shortlist of 15 locations for more detailed assessment. The final list of 10 approved eco-town locations will be announced by Government in January / February 2009.
- 1.3 The shortlisted locations and further information on the next stages of the eco-towns process were announced in a DCLG consultation paper "*Eco-towns: Living a greener future*" published on 3 April 2008 (see [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsgreenerfuture](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsgreenerfuture))
- 1.4 Three of the shortlisted locations are in the East Midlands, namely:
- **Pennbury (Stoughton):** Led by the Co-operative Group and English Partnerships and focused on land to the south-east of Leicester (Harborough and Oadby & Wigston) with a target of 12,000 to 15,000 new homes.
  - **Manby:** Led by East Lindsey District Council and focused on the former Ministry of Defence airfield adjoining Manby and Grimoldby villages, east of Louth, with a target of 5,000 new homes. An earlier alternative location at nearby Strubby is not now being pursued.
  - **Rushcliffe (Nottinghamshire):** The original proposed eco-town site in Rushcliffe was at Kingston-on-Soar but this is not being pursued. Instead, options for alternative sites within Rushcliffe are being

investigated, with RAF Newton near Bingham a potential candidate for around 6,000 homes. Discussions between Rushcliffe Borough Council and the Government to identify an alternative site are taking place.

- 1.5 The DCLG has requested formal responses to the consultation paper by 30 June 2008. A suggested draft East Midlands Regional Assembly response is attached at Appendix 1. This will be sent to DCLG following further refinement and consequent endorsement by the Joint Board. Appendix 2 contains, for information, the DCLG's summaries of East Midlands Eco-towns proposals extracted from the consultation paper.

## **2. CONSULTATION PAPER CONTENT**

- 2.1 The consultation paper seeks views on:

- the way in which the eco-towns concept is being developed;
- the different potential benefits that an eco-town could offer;
- how eco-towns can act as a test-bed for implementing whole-town scale sustainable design features;
- the fifteen shortlisted eco-town locations that will be subject to detailed assessment.

- 2.2 The consultation paper contains:

- summaries of the 15 shortlisted eco-town locations, including specific issues for each proposal that need further consideration;
- a definition of eco-towns as freestanding new settlements linked to other towns and cities, acting as demonstrator projects piloting zero carbon and more sustainable approaches to living with high proportions of affordable housing, along with key criteria for their development;
- confirmation that a draft national Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement will be published for consultation in July / August 2008 and that when the final version is approved in January / February 2009 it will contain the final list of 10 eco-town locations and will be a material consideration for local planning authorities when dealing with eco-town planning applications;
- confirmation that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the proposed eco-towns locations will be published for consultation along with the draft PPS in July / August 2008;
- clarification that housing provision within eco-towns will need to be additional to existing plans, but may help to meet future revised targets within host local authority areas;
- a range of examples and ideas of the components of sustainable master-planning and building design that eco-towns are expected to include;

- brief advice on the role of an Eco-towns Challenge Panel who will input into the design of the selected locations, and the possibility of holding an international design ideas competition to develop further sustainable design innovations.
- 2.3 The Government has a sense of urgency with regard to delivery, expecting the first eco-towns to be underway by 2010. The Government's preference is to work in partnership with local authorities in delivering eco-towns, and funding for research and capacity building is to be made available to local authorities through partnership agreements. It is expected that the emerging Homes and Communities Agency will have a major delivery role, working with local authorities and eco-town promoters. Planning powers under the New Towns Act remain in reserve.
- 2.4 The Government expects the relevant local planning authorities to consider planning applications for the final 10 selected eco-towns. This consideration will need to be made with reference to the Development Plan, incorporating the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks, and the final Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement.

### 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The positive message in the consultation paper is that the Government continues to restate its commitment to encouraging sustainable construction techniques that will help to address climate change. This conforms to policies in the draft RSS. However, the Government's eco-town programme raises three key issues for the Assembly:
- the **principle** and **process** for establishing free-standing new settlements in the context of the draft RSS policy of urban concentration;
  - the implications of the three proposed eco-town **locations** in the East Midlands, and the two proposed locations that lie close to the regional boundary;
  - design and delivery **issues** that impact on RSS policy.
- 3.2 The following summaries of each issue form the basis of the suggested Assembly response in the draft letter attached at Appendix 1.

#### **Principle and process for establishing eco-towns**

- 3.3 The draft RSS does not specifically rule out the provision of free-standing new settlements, but they are not part of the current and emerging spatial strategies for the East Midlands, which promote planned growth concentrated within existing urban areas as the most sustainable option.

- 3.4 The draft RSS is evidence-based, taking account of and planning for regional population, household and migration trends. It supports the regeneration of existing urban areas, including the re-use of brownfield and previously developed land, and facilitates a more co-ordinated approach to providing the appropriate physical and community infrastructure that is required to make growth viable. The strategy was prepared in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and was endorsed by the independent Panel that examined the draft RSS in Summer 2007.
- 3.5 The East Midlands has signed up to a strategy of accommodating significant growth across the region. However, there is currently no robust evidence that eco-towns are required to meet regional growth targets as the required growth can be accommodated within the strategy of urban concentration. Whilst a different approach may be justified in other regions, a national “one size fits all approach” that imposes eco-towns on areas where the evidence does not support their need is an inappropriate way to plan and one that could undermine basic principles of the draft RSS.
- 3.6 In announcing higher national targets for housing provision, the Housing Green Paper confirmed that “mini” reviews of existing and emerging RSSs would need to consider eco-towns as a component in meeting specific housing provision and distribution targets. Advice is awaited from the National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit (NHPAU) on the emerging target ranges for additional growth in the East Midlands. These ranges will be tested in the Partial Review of the RSS, which is currently planned to commence shortly after the expected approval of the current draft RSS in Autumn 2008.
- 3.7 The Partial Review will examine, through sound planning processes based on evidence and stakeholder participation, where and how the additional growth should be targeted around the region. If the Government confirms one or more eco-town locations in the East Midlands during the Partial Review period the planning and regeneration strategies and infrastructure investment plans in the sub-regions and Housing Market Areas will need to be tailored accordingly.
- 3.8 In this circumstance, the Partial Review will only be able to consider any approved eco-town locations in the region as a “given” and will need to plan to ensure that policy is in place to help them to succeed and grow to acceptable limits.
- 3.9 In the Government’s eagerness to promote the benefits of eco-towns as contributors to accommodating additional growth, its process for establishing eco-town locations has avoided the regional and local dimensions of spatial planning strategy and policy development.
- 3.10 In effect the Government is issuing a national plan for eco-towns, which potentially imposes nationally decided, large scale new development

on regions and localities with little regard to evidence, need, existing policy, and the concerns of stakeholders and communities. In this regard the eco-towns process is contrary to sound, established, inclusive and effective statutory planning processes.

3.11 In summary, the key issues of principle and process in establishing eco-towns are:

- Well designed eco-friendly housebuilding and related development is to be welcomed, but if it is built in unsuitable locations and without evidence of need, it will ultimately be unsustainable.
- The review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is the right place for determining the need for and location of freestanding new settlements in the East Midlands, using sound planning processes including stakeholder involvement and debate around a robust evidence base and a series of spatial development options.
- It is not appropriate for eco-town locations to be imposed nationally and for their impacts to be planned for later at the regional and local levels. The Government's process for establishing eco-towns avoids the regional and local dimensions of spatial planning strategy and policy development. It potentially imposes nationally decided, large scale new development on regions and localities with little regard to evidence, need, existing policy, and the concerns of stakeholders and communities. In this regard the eco-towns process is contrary to sound, established, inclusive and effective statutory planning processes.

#### **Short-listed eco-town locations**

3.12 Each of the local authorities affected by or involved with an eco-town proposal is undertaking research into the potential impacts of their respective proposed eco-towns locations, often at considerable cost. The proposed locations all present a series of challenges.

- **Pennbury (Stoughton):** It is understood that Leicestershire County Council is working closely with Harborough District Council, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, Leicester City Council, the Government Office, DCLG and the Co-operative Group to co-ordinate a consultation process that ensures that everyone can comment on the Pennbury proposal by mid June, to enable a formal response to be submitted to the Government. The key challenges to resolve will be around the approach to transportation infrastructure and linkages to Leicester, and the proposal's impact on the regeneration of the existing Leicester urban area.
- **Manby:** East Lindsey District Council is developing its detailed proposal for an eco-town at Manby which is designed to

anticipate the potential impacts of coastal flooding caused by climate change. The detailed proposal will consider the interaction of social, environmental and economic infrastructure and potential phasing options for development. It will also contain a development funding appraisal that will assess the viability of the proposal. However, there will be a need to ensure that East Lindsey's approach complements the outcome of the current study into the implications of potential rising sea levels on the Lincolnshire coast, which will not be completed until 2010.

- **Rushcliffe:** A recent special Full Council meeting debated the council's approach to the Government's shortlisting of Rushcliffe as a potential eco-town location. The outcome was that if a location is eventually promoted by landowners and developers, the council will consider it on its merits. If the RAF Newton location is brought forward there will be major challenges with regard to green belt and transportation. The Government's choice of Rushcliffe for an eco-town location appears to be arbitrary and it is not clear why no consideration has been given to appraising the wider Nottingham Core HMA and related areas to the north to establish whether there is another suitable location.

3.13 None of the East Midlands eco-town proposals are located within the "Leicester / Burton Corridor" that the RSS EiP Panel suggested could be the focus for additional sustainable growth deriving from the Housing Green Paper targets. Whilst this was simply an idea floated by the Panel, and one that was not debated in any detail at the EiP, it is possible that this corridor may feature as a potential additional growth location when the Government publishes its Proposed Changes to the RSS (due in Summer 2008), or it may be an option for consideration within the next RSS Partial Review (from Autumn 2008).

3.14 There are 2 shortlisted proposed eco-town locations that lie outside but close to the regional boundary, namely:

- **Curborough (West Midlands):** This proposal is for a 5,000 home eco-town on a former airfield 15 kilometres west of Burton on Trent. The issue that the Assembly will need to resolve is the impact of growth in this location on the Burton Growth Point, and consequent cross-boundary impacts in the area around Swadlincote, in the East Midlands (where the unsuccessful Grovewood eco-town proposal was located).
- **Rossington (Yorkshire and Humber):** This proposal is for a 15,000 home eco-town south of Doncaster. The issue that the Assembly will need to resolve is the cross-boundary impacts of growth on areas to the south, particularly on Bassetlaw District in the East Midlands.

3.15 In summary, the key eco-town locational issues are:

- **Pennbury (Stoughton):** There is currently no sound planning case for developing the Pennbury (Stoughton) eco-town location. This is contrary to the draft RSS policy of urban concentration and the strategy of the 6 Cities and Counties sub-regional partnership that seeks to regenerate and concentrate sustainable development within the Principal Urban Areas of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. The simple combination of the availability of land and willing private sector and national Government agency development partners are not in themselves satisfactory reasons for pursuing significant development in this location.
- **Manby:** The main challenges with the Manby proposal are its relatively remote location, social, environmental, transport and economic infrastructure issues, and the current lack of detailed evidence about the implications of potential sea level rise are key issues to overcome.
- **Rushcliffe:** There is currently no sound planning case for focusing a search for an eco-town location solely on Rushcliffe Borough, much of which is currently within the Nottingham and Derby Green Belt. Whilst there is a need to address the provision and distribution of new housing within the Nottingham Core HMA the location of growth, which may include a freestanding new settlement as an option, should be considered on a broader basis informed by robust evidence.
- **Leicester / Burton Corridor:** The draft RSS EiP Panel suggested that the Leicester / Burton Corridor should be considered as a location for additional growth as this could assist the regeneration of existing towns and contribute to the critical mass of the 6 Cities sub-regional partnership development plans. It is unclear as to why mainly developer led proposals for eco-towns should take precedence over such potential areas of search for increased growth.
- **Locations outside the East Midlands:** The proposed eco-town locations at Curborough (West Midlands) and Rossington (Yorkshire and Humber) are likely to cause cross-boundary impacts on areas within the East Midlands and mechanisms for dealing with these will need to be satisfactorily resolved.

### **Design and delivery issues**

3.16 The consultation paper sets out a wide range of development criteria, sustainable design principles, innovative technologies, and best practice examples (all of which are within existing urban areas) that eco-towns should incorporate. These include:

- zero carbon development across the town as a whole;
- provision of mixed use community facilities for education, shopping, business and leisure;
- between 30% and 50 % affordable housing, focusing on family homes;
- establishing a management body to co-ordinate town and community development;
- construction to meet the Code for Sustainable Homes standards;
- master-planning and high design standards;
- reducing the need to travel by car and implementing travel plans;
- community empowerment through participation and asset ownership;
- development of an economic strategy for the town;
- promoting healthier lifestyles through “Active Design” principles;
- creating additional green infrastructure;
- making good use of brownfield and surplus public sector land;
- locating low and zero carbon energy sources within or close to the eco-town development area;
- effectively addressing flood risks, air quality, water efficiency, and waste issues.

3.17 The Town and Country Planning Association has published a series of work sheets on dealing practically with transport, community, and water cycle management issues when planning eco-towns. Further guidance will be published in due course (see <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/news.asp>).

3.18 In themselves, these sustainable design and delivery principles are not contentious. They are already supported by draft RSS policies and should be incorporated into all new development in the region.

3.19 It should not be necessary, in the East Midlands, to create one or more new freestanding eco-towns to demonstrate how these principles can be brought into the mainstream. For this region it would be more sustainable to demonstrate how the principles can be piloted and delivered in urban development, sustainable urban extensions and smaller existing settlements.

3.20 Additional housing provision in eco-towns should be matched by additional resources for delivering essential infrastructure, including roads, public transport, energy, water and sewage facilities. These resources should be over and above existing commitments for planned projects and resources should not be diverted from these projects to pump-prime eco-towns.

3.21 In summary, the key design and delivery issues are:

- All of the sustainable master-planning and building design principles promoted in the eco-towns consultation paper can and should be

incorporated into new development in the region and existing draft RSS policy supports this. It is not necessary, and possibly counter-productive, to use eco-towns as a test bed for implementing these principles.

- Eco-towns are likely to require significant resources to pump-prime the infrastructure required to deliver significant numbers of new homes. If these resources are not fully covered by increases in development value they will need to be made available from public funds. It should be a basic principle that if eco-towns are additional to existing planned levels of growth the resources required to deliver required development infrastructure should also be additional. It will not be appropriate for existing funds for existing planned growth related infrastructure to be diverted to eco-towns.

#### 4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 The consultation paper sets out a timetable for the next steps in the Government's process for confirming which of the eco-towns proposals will proceed and how they will be considered through the planning system. The Government's current timetable is:

- **July / August 2008:** Publication of a draft Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement and Sustainability Appraisal on the 15 short-listed eco-town locations. This is likely to be subject to a 12 week consultation and a further report on issues arising and a suggested draft response will be brought to the Joint Board meeting on 19 September 2008.
- **January / February 2009:** Publication of a final Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement containing the refined list of 10 successful eco-town locations. At this stage the Planning Policy Statement will become national planning policy, providing the main policy instrument that local planning authorities will need to use in determining planning applications for eco-towns in their areas.

4.2 The timetable diagram in the consultation paper (page 7) also suggests that eco-town planning applications could be submitted and considered in the period up to January / February 2009. However, this would seem unlikely as the final 10 locations will only be confirmed in the final Planning Policy Statement.

4.3 The eco-towns assessment and selection process runs alongside ongoing work within the Assembly on the current draft Regional Spatial Strategy and its early partial review. This work will need to take eco-towns issues into account and will continue to the following timetable:

- **Summer 2008:** The Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the draft Regional Spatial Strategy are expected around June 2008. These may broadly refer to the potential for identifying eco-town

locations as a component in meeting the region's future housing provisions, setting a context for considering eco-towns in the Partial Review.

- **Autumn 2008:** The Secretary of State's approval of the new Regional Spatial Strategy is expected in October 2008 and this will trigger the launch of its Partial Review through to 2011. The Partial Review will need to assess the role of eco-towns as a potential sustainable growth option and will also need to identify the extent of growth for any confirmed eco-towns in the region.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Members note this report and refine and endorse the suggested draft response at Appendix 1.

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 Draft EMRA response to the Government's "Eco-towns: Living a greener future" consultation paper

Appendix 2 Summaries of East Midlands Eco-towns proposals extracted from the "Eco-towns: Living a greener future" consultation paper

### **Key Contact:**

Paul Bland  
Tel: 01664 502583  
Email: paul.bland@emra.gov.uk

## APPENDIX 1

### Draft EMRA response to the Government's "Eco-towns: Living a greener future" consultation paper

---

Julie Bishop  
Eco-towns Team  
Housing and Growth Programmes  
Department for Communities and Local Government  
Planning Economic & Social Policy Division  
2/H9 Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London  
SW1E 5DU

**Deadline 30 June 2008**

Dear Julie

#### **DRAFT EMRA RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S "ECO-TOWNS: LIVING A GREENER FUTURE" CONSULTATION PAPER**

#### **Background and Summary of Response**

The East Midlands Regional Assembly is the designated Regional Planning Body (RPB) for the East Midlands, and is responsible for preparing the draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and implementing it once adopted.

The Assembly's Housing, Planning and Transport Joint Board agreed this response at its meeting on 5 June 2008. The response focuses on:

- the **principle** and **process** for establishing free-standing new settlements in the context of the draft RSS policy of urban concentration;
- initial strategic comments on the three proposed eco-town **locations** in the East Midlands, and the two proposed locations that lie close to the regional boundary;
- design and delivery **issues** that impact on RSS policy.

It is noted that during Summer 2008 the Government intends to undertake a further stage of consultation on a draft national Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement (PPS) and a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the proposed Eco-town locations. The Assembly will submit a further response following its consideration of these documents.

## Principle and process for establishing eco-towns

- Well designed eco-friendly housebuilding and related development is to be welcomed, but if it is built in unsuitable locations and without evidence of need, it will ultimately be unsustainable.
- The review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is the right place for determining the need for and location of freestanding new settlements in the East Midlands, using sound planning processes including stakeholder involvement and debate around a robust evidence base and a series of spatial development options.
- It is not appropriate for eco-town locations to be imposed nationally and for their impacts to be planned for later at the regional and local levels. The Government's process for establishing eco-towns avoids the regional and local dimensions of spatial planning strategy and policy development. It potentially imposes nationally decided, large scale new development on regions and localities with little regard to evidence, need, existing policy, and the concerns of stakeholders and communities. In this regard the eco-towns process is contrary to sound, established, inclusive and effective statutory planning processes.

## Short-listed eco-town locations

- **Pennbury (Stoughton):** There is currently no sound planning case for developing the Pennbury (Stoughton) eco-town location. This is contrary to the draft RSS policy of urban concentration and the strategy of the 6 Cities and Counties sub-regional partnership that seeks to regenerate and concentrate sustainable development within the Principal Urban Areas of Leicester, Derby and Nottingham. The simple combination of the availability of land and willing private sector and national Government agency development partners are not in themselves satisfactory reasons for pursuing significant development in this location.
- **Manby:** The main challenges with the Manby proposal are its relatively remote location, social, environmental, transport and economic infrastructure issues, and the current lack of detailed evidence about the implications of potential sea level rise are key issues to overcome.
- **Rushcliffe:** There is currently no sound planning case for focusing a search for an eco-town location solely on Rushcliffe Borough, much of which is currently within the Nottingham and Derby Green Belt. Whilst there is a need to address the provision and distribution of new housing within the Nottingham Core HMA the location of growth, which may include a freestanding new settlement as an option, should be considered on a broader basis informed by robust evidence.
- **Leicester / Burton Corridor:** The draft RSS EiP Panel suggested that the Leicester / Burton Corridor should be considered as a location for additional growth as this could assist the regeneration of existing towns

and contribute to the critical mass of the 6 Cities sub-regional partnership development plans. It is unclear as to why mainly developer led proposals for eco-towns should take precedence over such potential areas of search for increased growth.

- **Locations outside the East Midlands:** The proposed eco-town locations at Curborough (West Midlands) and Rossington (Yorkshire and Humber) are likely to cause cross-boundary impacts on areas within the East Midlands and mechanisms for dealing with these will need to be satisfactorily resolved.

### **Design and delivery issues**

- All of the sustainable master-planning and building design principles promoted in the eco-towns consultation paper can and should be incorporated into new development in the region and existing draft RSS policy supports this. It is not necessary, and possibly counter-productive, to use eco-towns as a test bed for implementing these principles.
- Eco-towns are likely to require significant resources to pump-prime the infrastructure required to deliver significant numbers of new homes. If these resources are not fully covered by increases in development value they will need to be made available from public funds. It should be a basic principle that if eco-towns are additional to existing planned levels of growth the resources required to deliver required development infrastructure should also be additional. It will not be appropriate for existing funds for existing planned growth related infrastructure to be diverted to eco-towns.

Yours sincerely

**Paul Bland**  
Head of Planning Policy

## APPENDIX 2

### Summaries of East Midlands Eco-towns proposals extracted from the “Eco-towns: Living a greener future” consultation paper

---

#### PENNBURY (STOUGHTON)

Harborough and Oadby & Wigston Borough Councils, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council.



#### Description

The site would accommodate 12-15,000 homes based on a development of 750 ha within a 1,720ha of greenfield / brownfield / part surplus public sector land site on the outskirts of Leicester (4 miles south east from the centre), surrounded by farmland.

#### Proposed benefits

The eco-town proposal would create a largely freestanding community, but linked to Leicester, on the basis of very ambitious environmental and sustainability standards and environmental innovation. Built on 40% of the available land, 15,000 homes with jobs, schools and healthcare would be designed to complement the surrounding settlements. The scheme pioneers innovative transport and energy solutions and new methods of community participation.

#### Housing Affordability Pressure – High

The scheme would deliver 4,000 affordable housing units in comparison with current delivery of 210 annually in relevant LA areas. Current households on waiting list – 3,000 in Harborough, Oakham and Wigston and 1,045 in Leicester

## **Initial summary of challenges and constraints**

### **Environment**

The scheme will need to address the impact on water issues in urban Leicester and since water resources in the area are in deficit, a sustainable approach to meeting demand would need to be identified. Adequate capacity of sewage treatment works in the area will have to be demonstrated. Surface water runoff must be carefully controlled. Land contamination from previous uses such as airfield and fuel depots must be remedied sustainably. Impacts on the local landscape and biodiversity especially fish populations would need to be considered.

### **Transport**

The scheme will need to accommodate the development with an enhanced local public transport infrastructure, within constraints of existing housing and street layout on edge of urban area and severe road congestion into this part of Leicester along the A6. Rail services are distant from the site.

### **Employment**

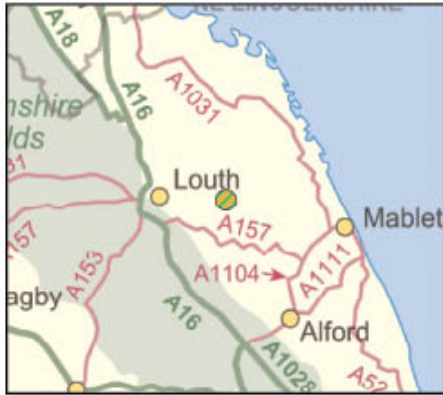
Further work will be needed on the economic and retail hierarchy aspects of a scheme in this location. It would need to complement work to regenerate Leicester, including initiatives on training and linking adult education to employment.

### **Conservation and historic constraints**

Small parts of the site have green wedge status and eastern part of site attractive countryside. One scheduled ancient monument, and some other monuments of significant archaeological importance. Some of the surrounding villages are designated conservation areas.

## MANBY

East Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council.



### Description

Between the towns of Mablethorpe and Louth on the site of a disused airfield. A proposal for 5,000 homes as a strategic long term plan to deal with the phased re-location of communities on Lincolnshire coast due to flood risk. Development is proposed mainly at Manby (and some at Strubby) – both have large elements of brownfield land. Manby is a village of 733 people, and merges with the village of Grimoldby (population 951). Part of site includes former RAF base. ELDC is shortly to publish its Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper and includes an option for a new settlement.

### Proposed benefits

Predicted sea level rise could have a significant impact on East Lindsey's coastal communities. The 5,000 home eco-town would form part of a sustainable strategy to tackle the impacts of climate change by enabling long-term population relocation from the areas at greatest risk. It would also include new employment opportunities, community facilities and public transport links.

### Housing Affordability Pressure – Very High

The eco-town would provide approx 1,500 affordable homes over 10 years compared with current annual supply of 120 in the district. Current households on waiting list – 5,300.

### Initial summary of challenges and constraints

#### Environment

Both sites lie outside flood zones, but surface water drainage would need to be carefully managed. Aquifer resources in the area are fully committed so an alternative water supply will have to be guaranteed, and a new sewage treatment works will need to be provided.

## **Transport**

The new settlement would be distant from both trunk road network and 15 miles from a rail station. There is a need for bus links to be developed to provide significantly enhanced public transport. This may require complementary improvements at larger nearby settlements.

## **Employment**

An eco-town scheme would create a new focus for inward investment, raising the profile of the area and attract much needed skills and a wider range of professional services and boost tourism. The public sector is supporting further employment growth at Manby through re-location.

## **Conservation and historic constraints**

This area contains the Lincolnshire Grazing Marshes, and eco-town development will need to seek to maintain this habitat (identified as a priority under biodiversity Action Plan). The RAF site also has a number of listed buildings.

## RUSHCLIFFE



### Description

An eco-town proposal was submitted for Kingston-on-Soar, to the south of Nottingham. In response to representations from Rushcliffe Borough Council, this site is not to be pursued. However, the Government is proposing to carry out a further review in partnership with RBC to consider whether there is a suitable alternative location with the potential to be viable within the Rushcliffe local authority area.

### Summary of issues

An eco-town scheme in the Rushcliffe area could have a number of potential benefits.

- In an area of high housing pressure it would significantly improve total supply and affordable housing (Rushcliffe has very high housing affordability pressures and recent affordable housing supply is around 60 annually with 1,535 households on the waiting list).
- If adopted an eco-town scheme could provide a substantial boost to supply and concentrate the extra development needed rather than spreading additional pressures across a lot of smaller settlements.
- If on a brownfield location it could have significant regeneration and land restoration benefits and it would be big enough to attract investment in jobs, services and better community facilities. Environmental technologies would be a lead feature of the economic investment potential.

However a scheme would need to pass a number of viability tests in terms of securing the necessary infrastructure on road and rail upgrades, taking account of pressures on trunk routes in and around Nottingham, and the scheme would need to provide developer contributions to these and it would need to meet the demanding eco-towns criteria on sustainability and safeguard and increase environment assets. Subject to a formal dialogue with Rushcliffe Borough Council a further announcement will be made in due course. If a suitable site can be identified it will be included in the draft Sustainability Appraisal for consultation.