



## Planning • Historic Buildings • Archaeology

Specialist & Independent Advisors to the Property Industry

### Eco Towns Update

The second stage of the widely hailed Ecotowns Initiative was launched on the 4th November 2008 and consists of:

- A Draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS)
- A Detailed Sustainability Appraisal of the Ecotowns Shortlist
- An Impact Assessment of the PPS
- A Summary of Consultation Responses (from the first stage)

As a reminder, Ecotowns were originally launched by the Government in July 2007. The Government aims for them to be new settlements of between 5,000 and 15,000 built to meet high sustainability standards which include:

- Zero Carbon
- 40% Green Space
- 30% Affordable Housing

There is now a shortlist of 12 Ecotowns, comprising: Pennbury, Leicestershire; Manby and Strubby, Lincolnshire; Curborough, Staffordshire; Middle Quinton, Warwickshire; Bordon-Whitehill, Hampshire; Weston Otmoor, Oxfordshire; Ford, West Sussex; Imerys China Clay Community, Cornwall; Rossington, South Yorkshire; Greater Norwich; Hanley Grange, Cambridgeshire; Marston Vale and New Marston, Bedfordshire; Elsenham, Essex; Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire, and Leeds city region, Yorkshire. Each of these has now been rated within the Sustainability Appraisal as A - C (A being suitable and C being unsuitable).

Rackheath in Norfolk (Greater Norwich) has so far been the only proposed Ecotown to be given an A rating, with Western Otmoor in Oxfordshire given a C rating (and is unlikely to go ahead).

The remaining ten proposed Ecotowns are classified as 'B', in that 'they might be a suitable location subject to meeting specific planning and design objectives'.

A final shortlist is expected from Government in New Year with the public consultation on this second stage ending on 19th February 2009.

It is expected that soon after that the first wave of planning applications will be submitted.

### Wider Implications

Aside from the obvious issues (if you are directly involved in the promotion of an Ecotown), there are potential implications resulting from this initiative for new residential developments already being taken forward through the usual LDF processes across the country.

The Environment Audit Committee on the 3rd November 2008 recommended that all major housing developments from 2016 should have to meet the same environmental standards as those required for Ecotowns.

There is also an expectation within the Draft PPS (in the introduction) that the same principles can be adopted for other developments. This could be the shape of things to come!

Apart from the obvious costs to development that these proposals might have, there may be a requirement to engage multi-disciplinary teams at the earliest possible opportunity. However, such an approach can seek to identify where financial savings and design improvements can be made before scheme proposals become too advanced.

CgMs are well placed to assist you if you have concerns over the implications of these proposed Ecotowns. Indeed, we can make representations on your behalf to the consultation that is currently open on the Second Stage of the process. Or more broadly, we can provide market-leading advice on the future implications of Ecotowns and the precedents they may set.

For more information about eco towns please contact:

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