

## **Eco-towns Select Committee Summary Statement – Wednesday 4th June 2008**

### **Existing Land Uses**

In the first session this morning on existing land uses, we heard about the range of uses in the area at present, and some outline of the proposed uses in the Eco Town. The vision group stated that they have general support of Ford Prison and SW water, partly on the basis of the energy/waste proposals, but also because of employment/training linkages.

With regard to the impact on the existing communities, the promoters argue that the scheme is at an early stage, and is only dealing with broad principles at this stage. If the scheme is supported to later stages they would want to engage with local communities to work with them on these issues.

With regard to the Brownfield/Greenfield debate, there is no disagreement that a large part of the site is good agricultural land, but the government's definitions of PDL now allows curtilage land to be brought within the definition. This results in a range of figures, from the small amount of land actually under concrete, to the larger area including curtilage land now under agriculture, and there is clearly a local perception that the area is largely green.

### **Deliverability**

The discussion opened with a presentation by the promoters of their overall deliverability strategy. This included an explanation of the flexible terms being discussed with landowners, which would leave a residual land value, rather than being bound to a fixed land value from the outset. They also advised that they were confident that this would generate a capital sum of the order of £200m to contribute to the scheme. They also outlined how their involvement in other similar developments gave them confidence that this would be sufficient to deliver the scheme broadly as outlined, and gave some examples of the sort of costs they were assuming, such as for the schools and the railway station.

They went on to explain how their proposals for generating energy from waste would factor into the scheme, not only by delivering increased revenue (through agreement with the energy providers), but also by the interest energy providers would have in investing in the scheme. Examples were given of the basic energy infrastructure envisaged, and its life expectancy.

Many questions then arose about the background to this energy provision, referring back to the discussion on energy and waste, when the Select Committee expressed its concern at the prospect of an Eco town based on imported waste, and the number of lorry movements necessary to service the energy generation. The promoters have agreed to discuss these matters with the County Waste officers in an attempt to provide agreed figures to enable the County Waste officers to advise the Select Committee for its final report.

When questioned about whether the Eco Town was a platform for a waste facility or vice versa, the promoters argued that the two elements are symbiotic, and work very efficiently together.

With regard to depending for deliverability on the A27 bypass as a pre-requisite, the promoters confirmed their initial position, which is that some development could commence ahead of a by-pass, which would not be available before 2018, and also that CLG are encouraging schemes to be independent of road improvements. They accept that the Eco Town would generate external traffic movements, but argue that these would be significantly less than from conventional developments, because of the design and investment in alternative transport.