

**CABINET - 10 FEBRUARY 2009**

**THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECO-TOWN FOR  
LEICESTERSHIRE - FINAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the Proposed Development of an Eco-Town for Leicestershire and to inform the Cabinet of the Scrutiny Commission's comments thereon. A copy of the Panel's report and appendices is attached to this report for members of the Cabinet.

**Recommendation**

2. The Cabinet is asked to consider the findings of the Panel in association with the comments of the Scrutiny Commission on the Panel's report and the separate report which appears elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting.

**Reasons for Recommendation**

3. The separate report makes a series of recommendations to the Cabinet in response to the eco-town proposals.

**Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)**

4. The Government has invited responses to its eco-town proposals by 6 March 2009.
5. The Review Panel has now concluded its work and its report was considered by the Scrutiny Commission on 28 January, 2009. The comments of the Scrutiny Commission are attached as an appendix to this report.
6. The Cabinet's response on eco-towns – which is the subject of a separate report on the agenda for this meeting - will be forwarded to the Government to meet the 6 March deadline. However, this response will then be discussed at a public meeting on 2 March and any feedback will be reported to Cabinet on 10 March and then passed on to the Government.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

7. In July 2007 the Government invited local authorities and landowners or developers to put forward bids for possible eco-towns. 57 bids were received and on 3 April 2008 the Government published a list of 15 locations that had been short listed as possible sites for eco-towns. One of these locations, proposed by the Co-operative Group and English

Partnerships (now part of the Homes & Communities Agency) (HCA), lies to the south east of Leicester in an area around Stoughton village.

8. The Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 18 June 2008 agreed to establish a Scrutiny Review Panel to consider in detail the proposals being put forward by the Co-op/HCA.
9. Based on an examination of the Co-operative Group/HCA proposals and feedback from an initial consultation, the Cabinet on 20 June 2008 approved a number of comments which represented the Council's preliminary views on eco-towns and Pennbury in particular.

### **Resource Implications**

10. There are no direct resource implications arising from the findings of the Panel. However, should the Co-op/HCA proposals receive approval by the Government, there would be resource implications in relation to the statutory, and other, provisions that the County Council would need to provide for the area.

### **Equal Opportunities Implications**

11. These will be assessed through an Equalities Impact Assessment.

### **Environmental Implications**

12. The concept for the Eco-town for Leicestershire provides for a high degree of self containment with a minimum demand on external resources. It offers a commendable approach to sustainability and high environmental standards in areas such as energy and water, environmentally friendly technologies and construction methods. The success of this concept, though, is subject in large part to the deliverability of an ambitious transport strategy, which includes a way of living not previously tested and the attraction of significant levels of employment.

### **Background Papers**

'Eco-towns – County Council response to Pennbury' - report to the Scrutiny Commission on 18 June 2008

'Eco-towns – County Council response to Pennbury (Stoughton)' - report to the Cabinet on 20 June 2008

'An Eco-town for Leicestershire' - Masterplan Vision Document by the Co-operative Group

'Pennbury Strategic Assessment Summary Report' by Halcrow – 11 December 2008.

'Pennbury Strategic Assessment Sustainability Appraisal Review' by Halcrow – 17 December 2008.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

A copy of the Panel's report has been circulated to all Members via the Members' Information Service.

**Officer to Contact:**

Sam Weston                      Telephone: 0116 305 6226  
Committee Officer              Email: [sweston@leics.gov.uk](mailto:sweston@leics.gov.uk)

**Appendix**

Comments of the Scrutiny Commission made at its meeting on 28 January 2009.