



Planning shapes the places where people live and work and the country we live in. It plays a key role in supporting the Government's wider social, environmental and economic objectives and for sustainable communities.

**Draft Planning Policy Statement:**

Eco-towns – Consultation



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Eco-towns – Consultation

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# Part 1: Introduction

## BACKGROUND

1. Communities across the country are facing critical challenges, including the provision of affordable housing and the ability to respond to the serious threat from climate change. Alongside this is the challenge to create cohesive communities where people want to live and work.
2. The Government has developed a series of measures to address these challenges, for example we are investing in developing low carbon technologies and the current Climate Change Bill will set legally binding national targets for the reduction in carbon emissions. Last year's Housing green paper<sup>1</sup> set out the range of measures in place to increase the supply of new and affordable housing in the medium to long-term including through the Growth Areas and Growth Points programme and a major new investment in affordable housing.
3. The Government is committed to building cohesive, empowered and active communities and has also recently published an Empowerment white paper<sup>2</sup>, underlining its commitment to the importance of community engagement and empowerment. The planning process supports the delivery of our social, environmental and economic objectives and this is reflected in the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* (PPS3) which sets out how the planning system should meet the growing need and demand for housing; and the Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change which sets out how the planning system can support the achievement of the shift towards low-carbon energy, and our ambitions on zero carbon development and how it can shape places resilient to the impact of climate change.

## HOW DO ECO-TOWNS FIT INTO OUR WIDER STRATEGY?

4. The Housing green paper also announced and consulted on our proposal to take forward a programme on eco-towns. These are new settlements that will have sustainability standards significantly above equivalent levels of development in existing towns and cities and which are separate and distinct, but well linked to higher order centres and have sufficient critical mass to achieve the eco-town objectives. New settlements are not a new idea, nor is the idea of zero carbon or environmentally sensitive developments. However bringing these two concepts together offers the potential to help meet the challenge of climate change and housing growth. The programme is designed to support a limited number of exemplar schemes to demonstrate how we can live in a low carbon future.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/publications/housing/qualitychoice2>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

5. We recognise that eco-towns are not the only answer to these challenges, but eco-towns, as well as being exemplars, can make an important contribution to the overall package of measures. Alongside eco-towns we want to see development in towns, cities, suburbs and urban extensions built to the very highest environmental standards. We believe that eco-towns are a good model for future development, and that many of the principles and stretching criteria in this PPS could be adopted by other developers as a way of meeting the wider objectives of the Climate Change PPS and other planning policy on environmental protection.
6. The Climate Change Bill sets out the Government's long term targets for climate change. The Government has accepted the advice of the Climate Change Committee that the targets should be framed in terms of greenhouse gas emissions, and that the 2050 target should be an 80 per cent reduction in those emissions from a 1990 baseline. The Bill also requires carbon budgets to be established which will set a limit on emissions. The budgets should ensure a reduction of at least 26 per cent by 2020. The Climate Change Committee will be advising the Government in December 2008 on the first three carbon budgets (for the period 2008-2022). The Government will respond to that advice next year, taking account also of any agreement in the European Union on EU targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

## WHY NEW SETTLEMENTS?

7. The majority of housing growth has always been in our towns and cities and this will continue, with a focus on brownfield land, as set out in PPS3. However, where the need and demand for housing is high, PPS3 advises that it is necessary to identify and explore a range of options for distributing housing, including new settlements. New settlements are not a new idea; the new towns and garden cities were a successful response to the housing crisis in the post war years.
8. A key characteristic of an eco-town is that it must be a new settlement, separate and distinct, but well linked to higher order centres. Eco-towns should be of sufficient size and have the necessary services to establish their own character and identity and so have the critical mass necessary to deliver much higher standards of sustainability. Eco-towns should make provision for a minimum of 5,000 homes. Planning on this scale allows the development to exploit a number of opportunities and benefits. Eco-towns can:
  - (a) relieve pressure for development in urban areas and particularly in relation to their green spaces and public services
  - (b) provide a good quantity of green space of the highest quality through their proximity to the natural environment

- (c) offer opportunities for space within and around the dwellings (particularly important for families with children)
- (d) promote healthy and sustainable environments through 'Active Design' principles and healthy living choices
- (e) offer opportunities for infrastructure that make best use of technologies in energy generation and conservation in ways that are not always practical or economic in other developments
- (f) use the opportunity to plan and deliver a locally appropriate mix of housing type and tenure to meet the needs of all income groups and household size, and
- (g) take advantage of significant economies of scale and increases in land value to deliver new technology and infrastructure such as for transport, energy and community facilities.

## WHY DO WE WANT A PPS?

9. Creating a new settlement has always been challenging, we need to redefine and re-establish the concept in the 21st century and set out how such developments can contribute to meeting the need for housing, enhancing the environment where possible and meeting the challenges of climate change. This PPS sets out what constitutes an eco-town, planning principles, standards and what is necessary for eco-towns to be delivered.
10. We want eco-towns to be exemplar projects that encourage and enable residents to live within environmental limits and in communities that are resilient to climate change. The design of the eco-town should take full account of its impact on local eco-systems, mitigating negative impacts as far as possible and maximising opportunities to enhance their local environments.
11. The Government already requires the planning of development to meet high environmental standards which are set out in the national PPS/G series. Conservation, pollution control, waste management and reduction and other environmental protection concerns are also supported through a comprehensive framework of European and national legislation.
12. This PPS sets out a range of minimum standards, which will be used to define an eco-town. These do not repeat existing planning policy, or national and international legislation which all apply in the usual way. Eco-towns provide opportunities to plan and deliver our existing high standards holistically across a development. But we want to go further, so we are setting more challenging and stretching standards than would normally be required for a new development. This is to ensure that eco-towns

act as exemplars of good practice and provide a showcase for sustainable living and allow Government, business and communities to work together to develop greener, low carbon living.

13. This PPS on eco-towns supplements PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development. It does not seek to assemble all planning policy relevant or applicable to designing new settlements and should be read alongside the national PPS/G series, in particular, Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing and those covering planning and environmental issues including Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change*.
14. We are also proposing to make a consequential change to Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing to add eco-towns to the list of options regions and local planning authorities should consider when planning the distribution of needed housing. PPS3 (paragraph 37, 1st sub-bullet of the 4th bullet) requires the consideration of new settlements as part of this process, so the change would be to add “(including eco-towns)” as an example of a type of new settlement.
15. All eco-towns must comply with national planning policies, except where we have set a standard which is either more specific, or is more stretching, than that set out in wider national planning policy. These include:
  - the delivery overall, of sustainable development (PPS1)
  - requirements to build developments which help secure reductions in carbon emissions and are resilient to a changing climate, for instance to take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing, avoidance of solar gain in the summer (PPS1 supplement on climate change) – and to take account of the risk of flooding (PPS25)
  - requirements on local renewable and low carbon energy generation (PPS1 supplement on climate change)
  - the provision of sustainable waste management (PPS10)
  - the provision of open space, sport and recreation (set out in PPG17) – which includes green space, space for allotments, children’s play areas etc.
  - the protection, conservation and enhancement of our biodiversity and geological conservation (PPS9)
  - the role of planning in controlling pollution (including air and water quality and land affected by contamination)(PPS23)
  - requirements relevant to coastal planning (PPG20), and
  - planning for sustainable development in rural areas (PPS7).
16. There are separate regulatory building standards which require high levels of energy performance for all new buildings (Part L of the Building Regulations). The Government has announced its intention that all new homes will be zero carbon

from 2016 and its ambition that all new non-domestic buildings will be zero carbon from 2018. Government will shortly be consulting on the definition of zero carbon for the separate purposes of building regulations. The definition set out in this PPS reflects the specific potential offered by eco-towns to reduce carbon emissions, and is not intended to anticipate definitions of zero carbon used in any other context. The Government will also shortly be introducing new regulatory standards for water efficiency in new homes (Part G of the Building Regulations).

17. There is also comprehensive national and European legislation, for instance on air quality, water quality, waste management and the conservation of species and habitats, which must be complied with in the usual way.
18. This summary is not comprehensive, but indicates the high baseline from which we are starting.

## **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND HABITATS REGULATION ASSESSMENT**

19. The eco-towns initiative has been developed with the aim of getting exemplar projects off the ground and to bring forward up to 10 schemes with development underway by 2016. Government short listed 15 locations from 57 eco-towns bids, in response to the eco-towns prospectus published in July 2007. The SA/HRA of the Eco-towns Programme has evaluated the short listed eco-town locations and reasonable alternatives to those locations as appropriate. The locations are identified in Annex A of this PPS.
20. This draft Eco-towns Planning Policy Statement has also been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) which focuses on the eco-towns concept and the principles and standards governing their delivery.
21. The development of this PPS has been informed by the SA and in particular the recommendations set out in section 3.9 of the SA and those contained within the associated HRA. The Department's response to those recommendations is set out below.

### **Locational criteria**

22. Overall the recommendation on locational standards has been accepted and the draft PPS has been amended. Not all of the locational criteria recommended have been accepted, in particular those relating to high housing and affordable housing demand, and potential for renewable energy. There are many factors that will be taken into account in identifying suitable locations for eco-towns and high housing and affordable housing demand, although important, may conflict with other

locational criteria such as proximity of employment opportunities and the needs for development and regeneration activities. All eco-town proposals must show that over a year they will achieve zero or below net carbon emissions. It is for the scheme to ensure how this happens and therefore it is not necessary to restrict the locations of eco-towns to those areas with potential for renewable energy generation as this is a requirement of all eco-towns.

### **Benefits for existing communities**

23. We see the key characteristics of an eco-town being that it must be a new settlement, separate and distinct, but well linked to higher order centres, particularly where there is clear capacity for public transport links to that centre. This draft PPS sets out that for eco-towns to be successful they will need to be thriving and cohesive communities where residents want to live, work and raise their families from the outset.
24. It will be essential for developers preparing planning applications to demonstrate a high level of engagement and consultation with prospective and neighbouring communities.

### **Strengthen the affordable housing criterion**

25. This draft PPS sets out that planning applications must provide for at least 30 per cent affordable housing (which includes social-rented and intermediate housing). Where local planning authorities, have up-to-date “development plan” policies on the provision of affordable housing these may be applied to an application for eco-towns where the local need is higher than the minimum 30 per cent. Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* sets out clear advice on how affordable housing targets should be set and applied at the local level.

### **Landscape and the historic environment**

26. The SA suggests a separate section in the Eco-towns PPS on landscape and the historic environment. Existing planning policy such as PPG15 Planning the Historic Environment sets out national policy on this, delivered at the regional and local level through RSS and LDFs. These are considered to be matters of regional and local significance, which will be handled at the appropriate level of plan-making, and will be taken into consideration in the decision making process.

### **Develop eco-standards for other forms of development**

27. We recognise that we have set sustainability standards for eco-towns that are significantly above equivalent levels of development in existing towns. New settlements are not a new idea, nor the idea of zero carbon or environmentally sensitive developments. However bringing these two concepts together offers the potential to help meet the challenge of climate change and housing growth. The Eco-

towns Programme is designed to support a limited number of exemplar schemes to demonstrate how we can live in a low carbon future.

28. We have set out in the draft PPS that eco-towns are not the only answer to these challenges, but paragraph 4 of this document sets out how they fit into the wider strategy.

### **Habitats Regulation Assessment**

29. We note the recommendations made in the Habitats Regulations Assessment in relation to:
- recreational pressure (and the proposed adoption of Natural England Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt), ensuring capacity of existing greenspace to absorb new populations, provision of greenspace in advance of occupation, and development of an appropriate Site Management Plan for European sites.)
  - air quality (homes well linked to core services and transport networks monitoring of air quality in European sites), and
  - water resources and water quality (provision of new water supply and waste water infrastructure while avoiding adverse effects on European sites, in advance of eco-town development, through a Water Cycle Strategy).
30. Adherence to national and European legislation in these areas, and the standards set out in the PPS are considered appropriate for all potential eco-towns, and may in themselves mitigate any significant adverse effects on European sites. The HRA recommendations may be suitable mitigation measures for some proposed Eco-towns developments, and will be considered in more detail through the consultation phase on the draft Eco-towns PPS and SA/HRA, in light of consultation responses on these recommendations and through further discussions with relevant agencies including Natural England.
31. It is also noted that the SA and HRA have been undertaken at a strategic level and are therefore necessarily broad in assessment, conclusions and recommendations. These assessments constitute the first of a series of successive assessments that will be undertaken for each potential eco-town. As each tier of the planning system is negotiated and the eco-town proposals are further developed, a new and more detailed assessment will be required. For example, where the eco-town is included in a LDF, the proposal will be subject to SA and reappraised in the light of more detailed information that may be available and further mitigation measures may also be suggested. Planning applications for eco-towns will also need to include a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and possibly Habitats Regulations Assessments, which may, in turn, also identify mitigation measures.

32. As well as looking at potential locations the Government will decide in a parallel exercise which of the schemes related to these locations will get backing or financial support from Government through funding of associated infrastructure or partner public bodies. Support for a scheme is not a factor in making a planning decision.
33. The Town and Country Planning Association has worked closely with stakeholders to produce worksheets which set out principles, information and flexible models for best practice on a range of themes relevant to eco-towns. This series is being made available as a resource for planning and designing eco-towns.

## THE INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

34. The initial Impact Assessment (IA) accompanying this consultation document makes a provisional assessment of the impact of the policy in terms of the costs, benefits and risks of the new policy statement. Your views are welcomed on any aspect of this and in particular the costs and benefits of the proposed policies.

## CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

35. We look forward to receiving comments and views on the draft planning policy statement, and the accompanying IA and Sustainability Appraisal. Responses are invited by 19 February 2009. Part 3 sets out the questions on which we would like your views.

Responses and any questions about the consultation should be directed to:

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36. It would be helpful if responses from representative groups could give a summary of the people and organisations they represent.
37. A summary of responses to this consultation will be published in early 2009 on the Communities and Local Government website. Paper copies of the summary will be available on request.
38. All responses will be made public unless confidentiality is specifically asked for. However, correspondents should be aware that confidentiality cannot always be guaranteed, for example where a response includes evidence of a serious crime. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your organisation's IT system will not be respected unless you specifically include a request to the contrary in the main text of your response.
39. This consultation is being conducted in accordance with the Government's Code of Practice on Written Consultation. The criteria are reproduced in Part 4. Any procedural observations or complaints about the consultation exercise should be sent to:

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# Part 2: proposed planning policy statement: eco-towns

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning Policy Statements (PPS) set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of spatial planning in England. PPS1 sets out the overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. This PPS on eco-towns, when finalised, will supplement PPS1. It does not seek to assemble all national planning policy relevant or applicable to designing new settlements and should be read alongside the national PPS/G series, in particular, Planning Policy Statement 3: *Housing* and those covering planning and environmental issues including Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change*.
- 1.2 The ambition and policies in this PPS should be fully reflected by regional planning bodies in the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and by planning authorities in the preparation of Local Development Documents. Similarly, applicants for planning permission on eco-towns should consider how well their proposals for development contribute to the Government's ambition of meeting the need for housing and to achieve a low-carbon economy, and how well adapted they are for the expected effects of climate change. Applicants and planning authorities should bear in mind that the policies in this PPS are capable of being material to decisions on planning applications.
- 1.3 This policy statement is related to eco-towns and while Government believes that eco-towns are a good model for the future it is important that lessons are learnt from their development. Many of the principles and stretching standards required by this PPS could potentially be adopted by other developers as a way of meeting the wider objectives of the Climate Change PPS planning policy. However, it is important that the wider application of these standards, including their impact and viability in this specific context, is thoroughly understood before they are applied more widely.

## 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

### National planning policies

- 2.1 Eco-towns are a specialised type of new settlement which are separate and distinct, but well linked to higher order centres. They must achieve sustainability standards significantly above equivalent levels of development in existing towns and cities. At this scale they are not expected to be entirely self-sufficient, particularly in terms of employment, however, they are expected to provide social infrastructure, such as schools, shops and have good transport links to existing higher order centres. They should demonstrate best practice in terms of sustainable development.

### **Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)**

- 2.2 Eco-towns are one of a range of options regions should consider when determining the overall level and distribution of housing in future RSS reviews (see paragraph 37, PPS3). They will be particularly useful in areas experiencing high levels of need and demand for housing. Regions should consider how eco-towns can help deliver housing within the region and in particular housing market areas. Where an eco-town has already been identified in the Eco-Towns Programme or in a development plan document or where a planning application for an eco-town has been approved, Regions should consider the location or the longer-term growth options for the eco-town.

### **Local Development Frameworks (LDF)**

- 2.3 Eco-towns are one of a range of options local planning authorities should consider when determining how to meet their current or emerging housing requirements set out in the RSS. Eco-towns can be allocated as a strategic development option within the Core Strategy.
- 2.4 Where the Core Strategy is in preparation, local planning authorities will specifically address the distribution of housing and where an eco-town location is set out in the Eco-town Programme, they should include it as an option for consideration. However, there is no requirement to allocate an eco-town if a better way of meeting future needs exists. The Adopted Plan should set out the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives.

### **Handling applications for eco-towns before locations are in plans**

- 2.5 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 in regional and local plans. In particular Local Development Frameworks are responsible for identifying exact locations, and planning for the necessary infrastructure to make them work.
- 2.6 Should an application for an eco-town come forward on a site not currently allocated in the development plan, then it should be considered in the usual way by the local planning authority. This means that the development plan remains the starting point for the determination of these planning applications - unless material considerations determine otherwise. Planning policy statements, such as this one, are material to decisions on planning applications and should be considered (alongside other factors) by decision makers. The eco-town standards set out in this PPS, and the work done on assessing a number of locations in the Eco-towns Programme, are designed to guide decision makers in the absence of up-to-date local policies.

## Determining planning applications

- 2.7 The statutory development plan<sup>3</sup> is the starting point for the determination of any eco-town planning application. This means that a decision has to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This PPS and the list of locations emerging from the Eco-towns Programme will be a material consideration, but will need to be considered alongside all other national policies. The determination and handling of planning applications for eco-towns will depend on the local circumstances.
- 2.8 Where the development plan is up-to-date<sup>4</sup> (but has not allocated an eco-town) decisions on applications should normally accord with the plan and the local planning authority may refuse the application on the grounds that it had already provided for all the housing that is needed and that the plan was found ‘sound’ by an Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. However, there are circumstances where local planning authorities can justify going against the plan, for example, where an emerging RSS indicates that the local planning authority would need to deliver higher levels of growth. Where this is the case, or where the plan is out of date<sup>5</sup>, an application for an eco-town should be considered on its merits, taking into account material considerations.
- 2.9 Local planning authorities are not required to approve an eco-town planning application simply because it has been identified as a suitable location, but the fact that it has been identified should be given material weight.

## 3. LOCATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Eco-towns should develop unique characteristics by responding to the opportunities and challenges of their location and community aspirations. Eco-towns proposals should meet the standards as set out in this PPS but developers and local planning authorities will need to consider how they should be applied in practice, recognising the unique nature of each site, which may require appropriate, limited flexibility to reflect specific local opportunities and interests, while maintaining minimum standards across the development.

<sup>3</sup> The development plan includes the Regional Spatial Strategy and Adopted Development Plan Documents (or any saved policies pursuant to section 38 and schedule 8 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004). Where there is a conflict between these documents, the most recent document takes precedence.

<sup>4</sup> An up to date plan is one that complies with PPS3 and the relevant RSS. For example, this means that 5 years of deliverable land has been allocated and a further 10 years of broad locations has been identified.

<sup>5</sup> An out of date plan is one that does not comply with PPS3 and the relevant RSS. For example it does not allocate enough land to meet RSS housing numbers.

- 3.2 All eco-towns should comply with planning policy statements including those relating to sustainable development such as: climate change adaptation, pollution control, open space, biodiversity, transport, flooding, housing and economic development. In addition, eco-towns will be expected to meet the principles in this section and the further stretching standards set out in section 3. In identifying suitable locations for eco-towns, consideration should be given to:
- (a) the proximity of the proposed eco-town to a higher order centre(s) where there is clear capacity for public transport links to that centre
  - (b) the proximity of the eco-town to existing and planned employment opportunities
  - (c) where the eco-town can play an important role in delivering other planning, development and regeneration objectives, and
  - (d) the Eco-towns Programme.

## **4. ECO-TOWN STANDARDS**

- 4.1 An eco-town is a new settlement of between 5,000 and 20,000 homes which demonstrates the highest levels of sustainable development and should act as an exemplar for future developments. Eco-towns are most appropriate when they are near to and well-connected to existing settlements, particularly major centres of employment, retail and leisure. However there are other circumstances where a small new settlement in more remote locations may be suitable. The objective is to have settlements that enable households and individuals to reduce their carbon footprint to a low level (See Figure 1: Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions approach below). Eco-town proposals will need to demonstrate how the development will make it easy for residents to adopt a more sustainable way of living.

**Figure 1: Reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions approach**

Eco-towns should offer sustainable infrastructure and choices that allow residents to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The REAP data below suggests that the emissions resulting from personal lifestyle (the top five items in the table below) are around 9 tonnes per person per year.

**Average CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of a UK resident, 2001**

|                  | Carbon dioxide emissions |             |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|
|                  | Tonnes/capita            | Percent     |
| Housing          | 0.97                     | 8%          |
| Home Energy      | 2.78                     | 23%         |
| Transport        | 2.73                     | 23%         |
| Food             | 0.99                     | 8%          |
| Consumer Goods   | 1.78                     | 13%         |
| Private Services | 1.18                     | 10%         |
| Government       | 0.98                     | 8%          |
| Capital assets   | 0.80                     | 7%          |
| <b>Total</b>     | <b>11.87</b>             | <b>100%</b> |

Source: Resource and Energy Analysis Programme (REAP) modelled using ONS Prodcom data

An 80 per cent reduction to the lifestyle elements implies a decrease to below two tonnes per year. Members of the eco-towns Challenge Panel have recommended that developers may wish to work through a systematic model for reducing the carbon emissions across each of the major lifestyle areas.

- 4.2 The built and natural environments are an important component in improving the health and well-being of people. Well designed development and good urban planning can also contribute to promoting and supporting healthier and more active living and reduce health inequalities. Eco-towns should be designed and planned to support healthy and sustainable environments and enable residents to make healthy choices easily.

### Zero carbon in eco-towns

- 4.3 The definition of zero carbon in 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<sup>6</sup>. Planning applications should demonstrate how this will be achieved.
- 4.4 The health and social care needs of residents, and the resulting energy demand, should be taken into account when demonstrating how this standard will be met.
- 4.5 This standard will take effect in accordance with a phased programme to be submitted with the planning application. It excludes embodied carbon<sup>7</sup> and emissions from transport but includes all buildings – not just houses but also commercial and public sector buildings which are built as part of the eco-town development. The calculation of net emissions will take account of:
- (a) emissions associated with the use of locally produced energy
  - (b) emissions associated with production of energy imported from centralised energy networks, taking account of the carbon intensity of those imports as set out in the Government's Standard Assessment Procedure, and
  - (c) emissions displaced by exports of locally produced energy to centralised energy networks where that energy is produced from a plant (1) whose primary purpose is to support the needs of the eco town and (2) has a production capacity reasonably related to the overall energy requirement of the eco town.
- 4.6 This standard attempts to ensure that energy emissions related to the built environment in eco-towns are zero or below. Standards applicable to individual homes are set out in paragraph 4.9.

### Climate change adaptation

- 4.7 Eco-towns should be sustainable communities that are resilient to and appropriate for the climate change now accepted as inevitable. They should be planned to minimise future vulnerability in a changing climate, and with both mitigation and adaptation in mind.<sup>8</sup>
- 4.8 Developments should be designed to take account of the climate they are likely to experience, using, for example, the most recent climate change scenarios available from the UK Climate Change Impacts Programme. Eco-towns should deliver a high quality local environment and meet the standards on water, flooding, green infrastructure and biodiversity set out in this PPS, taking into account a changing

<sup>6</sup> This definition of zero carbon applies solely in the context of eco-towns, and applies to the whole development rather than to individual buildings.

<sup>7</sup> i.e. carbon emissions resulting from the construction process – but see paragraph 4.29.

<sup>8</sup> In line with Planning Policy Statement: *Planning and Climate Change* (supplement to PPS 1) and supporting practice guidance.

climate for these, as well incorporating wider best practice on tackling overheating and impacts of a changing climate for the natural and built environment.

## Homes

- 4.9 As well as being zero carbon as part of the whole built environment, homes in eco-towns should:
- (a) achieve Building for Life Silver Standard and Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes<sup>9</sup> at a minimum (unless higher standards are set elsewhere in this Planning Policy Statement)
  - (b) meet lifetime homes standards and English Partnerships space standards
  - (c) have real time energy monitoring systems; real time public transport information and high speed broadband access
  - (d) provide for at least 30 per cent affordable housing (which includes social-rented and intermediate housing)<sup>10</sup>
  - (e) demonstrate high levels of energy efficiency in the fabric of the building, having regard to proposals for standards to be incorporated into changes to the Building Regulations between now and 2016 (consultation on planned changes for 2010 forthcoming in early 2009), and
  - (f) achieve, through a combination of energy efficiency, on-site low and zero carbon energy generation and any heat supplied from low and zero carbon heat systems directly connected to the development, carbon reductions (from space heating, hot water and fixed lighting) of at least 70 per cent relative to current Building Regulations (Part L 2006).
- 4.10 The intent of the energy efficiency and on-site carbon reduction standards is to ensure that, without being too prescriptive as to the means employed to achieve the overall zero carbon standard, reasonable opportunities for energy efficiency and on-site carbon mitigation (including directly connected heat systems) are utilised.

## Employment

- 4.11 It is important to ensure that eco-towns are genuine mixed-use communities and that unsustainable commuter trips are kept to a minimum. An economic strategy should be produced to accompany planning applications for eco-towns that demonstrate how access to work will be achieved. The strategy should also set out facilities to support job creation in the town and as a minimum there should be access to one employment opportunity per new dwelling that is easily reached by walking, cycling and/or public transport.

<sup>9</sup> Code Level 4 contains within it standards to be achieved for: household waste recycling, construction waste, composting facilities, water efficiency measures, surface water management, use of materials, energy and CO<sub>2</sub>, pollution, health and well-being, ecology and ongoing management of the development.

<sup>10</sup> See PPS 3 for definition and policy approach.

## Transport

- 4.12 Travel in eco-towns should support people's desire for mobility whilst achieving the goal of low carbon living. The town should be designed so that access to it and through it gives priority to options such as walking, cycling and public transport, thereby reducing residents' reliance on private cars. To achieve this, homes should be within ten minutes' walk of (a) frequent public transport and (b) neighbourhood services<sup>11</sup>. The provision of services within the eco-town may be co-located to reduce the need for individuals to travel by private car.
- 4.13 Planning applications should include travel plans which demonstrate:
- (a) how the town's design will enable at least 50 per cent of trips originating in eco-towns to be made by non-car means
  - (b) good design principles, drawing from Manual for Streets, CABI's Building for Life Code, and community travel planning principles
  - (c) how transport choice messages and infrastructure will be provided from 'day one' of residential occupation, and
  - (d) how the carbon impact of transport in the eco-town will be monitored, as part of embedding a long term low-carbon approach to travel within plans for community governance.
- 4.14 Where an eco-town is close to an existing settlement, planning applications should also demonstrate:
- (a) options for ensuring that key connections around the eco-town do not become congested as a result of the development, for example by extending some aspects of the travel plan beyond the immediate boundaries of the town, and
  - (b) significantly more ambitious targets for modal share than the 50 per cent mentioned above.
- 4.15 Where eco-town plans intend to incorporate electric car schemes to help achieve a sustainable transport system, planning applications should demonstrate that:
- (a) there will be sufficient energy headroom to meet the higher demand for electricity, and
  - (b) the scheme will not add so many additional private vehicles to the local road network that these will cause congestion.

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<sup>11</sup> Specific proposals for the location of health and social care services should reflect the particular local circumstances and be made following discussions with the Primary Care Trust.

- 4.16 Eco-towns should be designed in a way that supports children walking or cycling to school safely and easily. There should be a maximum walking distance of 800m<sup>12</sup> from homes to the nearest school for children aged under 11<sup>13</sup>, except where this is not a viable option due to natural water features or other physical landscape restrictions.

### **Local services**

- 4.17 Building sustainable communities is about providing facilities which contribute to the well-being, enjoyment and health of people. Planning applications should include a good level of provision of services within the eco-town that is proportionate to the size of the development. This should include leisure, health and social care, education, retail, arts and culture, library services, sport and play facilities and community and voluntary sector facilities.

### **Green infrastructure**

- 4.18 Forty per cent of the eco-town's total area should be allocated to green space, of which at least half should be public and consist of a network of well managed, high quality green/open spaces which are linked to the wider countryside. Planning applications should demonstrate a range of types of green space, for example community forests, wetland areas and town squares. The space should be multifunctional, e.g. accessible for play and recreation, walking or cycling safely, and support wildlife, urban cooling and flood management.
- 4.19 Particular attention should be given to land to allow the local production of food from community, allotment and/or commercial gardens.

### **Biodiversity**

- 4.20 Planning permission may not be granted for eco town proposals which are likely to:
- (a) have a significant adverse effect on internationally designated nature conservation sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or
  - (b) result in a net loss of biodiversity from the local area.
- 4.21 A strategy for conserving and enhancing local biodiversity should be produced to accompany planning applications for eco-towns. This should include proposals for the management of local ecosystems, including, where appropriate, the restoration of degraded habitats or the creation of replacement habitats. It should set out the actions including appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures, required to minimise adverse effects on individual species and habitats of principal importance

<sup>12</sup> The distance should be measured by the shortest route along which a child may walk in reasonable safety.

<sup>13</sup> This is a planning standard for eco-towns. It does not override existing legislation and guidance on either school admissions, school organisation or home to school travel and transport.

and to enhance local biodiversity overall. Developers should seek the advice of Natural England and other relevant statutory advisers when developing their strategies and decision making authorities should also consult those bodies as to the adequacy of such strategies.

## Water

- 4.22 Eco-towns should be ambitious in terms of water efficiency across the whole development, particularly in areas of serious water stress<sup>14</sup>, and should contribute, where existing water quality leaves scope for further improvement, towards improving water quality in their localities.
- 4.23 Planning applications for all eco-towns should be accompanied by a water cycle strategy that provides a plan for the necessary water services infrastructure improvements. The water cycle strategy should have been developed in partnership with interested parties, including the local planning authority, the Environment Agency, and the relevant water and sewerage companies through a water cycle study. The strategy should:
- (a) assess the impact that the proposed development will have on water demand within the framework of the water companies' water resource management plans and set out the proposed measures which will limit additional water demand from both new housing and new non-domestic buildings
  - (b) demonstrate that the development will not result in a deterioration in the status<sup>15</sup> of any surface waters or ground-waters affected by the eco-town; and
  - (c) set out proposed measures for improving water quality and avoiding surface water flooding.
- 4.24 Eco-towns should:
- (a) incorporate the measures in the water cycle strategy for improving water quality and managing surface water to prevent surface water flooding; and
  - (b) incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) and, except where this is not feasible, as identified within a relevant Surface Water Management Plan<sup>16</sup>, avoid connection of surface water run-off into sewers.
- 4.25 Planning applications for all eco-towns should include a strategy for the long term maintenance, management and adoption of the SUDS.

<sup>14</sup> As designated by the Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Amendment Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/2457) – map to illustrate extent of water stress can be obtained from the Environment Agency.

<sup>15</sup> Information on status can be obtained from the Environment Agency – in the case of water bodies, this information will be reported in the River Basin Management Plan.

<sup>16</sup> All eco-towns must be covered by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), as defined in PPS25, *Development and Flood Risk*, and the PPS25 Practice Guide. A Surface Water Management Plan for the eco-town should form part of the SFRA.

- 4.26 Eco-towns in areas of serious water stress should aspire to water neutrality, ie achieving development without increasing overall water use across a wider area<sup>17</sup>. In particular, the water cycle strategy should set out how:
- (a) the development would be designed and delivered to limit the impact of the new development on water use, and any plans for additional measures, eg within the existing building stock of the wider designated area, that would contribute towards water neutrality
  - (b) new homes will be equipped to meet the water consumption requirement of Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes; and
  - (c) new non-domestic buildings will be equipped to meet similar high standards of water efficiency with respect to their domestic water use.

Water neutrality is the concept where the total water used after a new development is no more than the total water used before the development. This requires meeting the new demand through improving the efficiency of use of the existing water resources. Water neutrality needs to be assessed within a defined area, normally the water company's water resource zone.

Water neutrality is a demanding level of ambition which is only likely to be achieved through a combination of measures. A key component is to make the new development water efficient, through utilising the most water efficient products and where appropriate looking at water reuse options. Other measures involve the existing building stock and would need to be explored in partnership with the water companies. These may include extending the extent of metering, introducing variable tariffs to encourage water efficiency, retrofitting existing buildings with water efficient products and reducing demand from non-households.

## Flood risk management

- 4.27 The location, layout and construction of eco-towns should reduce and avoid flood risk wherever practicable. Eco-towns should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and should use opportunities to address and reduce existing flooding problems.
- 4.28 There is a strong expectation that all of the built-up areas of an eco-town (including housing, other public buildings and infrastructure) will be fully within Flood Zone 1 - the lowest risk<sup>18</sup>. Flood Zone 2 (medium risk) should, as far as possible, be used for open spaces and informal recreational areas that can serve as multi-functional spaces,

<sup>17</sup> Wider area to be determined by water cycle study normally by reference to the water company water resource zone in which the development is to be located

<sup>18</sup> Flood Zones as described in PPS25, *Development and Flood Risk*

for example, those used for flood storage. There should be no built-up development in Flood Zone 3, with the exception of water-compatible development and, where absolutely necessary, essential infrastructure as defined in Table D.2 of PPS25: Development and Flood Risk.

## Waste

- 4.29 Eco-town planning applications should include a sustainable waste and resources plan, covering both domestic and non-domestic waste<sup>19</sup>, which:
- sets targets for residual waste levels, recycling levels and landfill diversion, all of which should be substantially more ambitious than the 2007 national Waste Strategy targets for 2020<sup>20</sup>; the plan should demonstrate how these targets will be achieved, monitored and maintained
  - establishes how all development will be designed so as to facilitate the achievement of these targets, including the provision of waste storage arrangements which allow for the separate collection of each of the seven priority waste materials as identified in the Waste Strategy for England 2007
  - provides evidence 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-town, and
  - sets 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.

## DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

- 4.30 To be successful, eco-towns will need to be thriving and cohesive communities where residents want to live, work and raise their families from the outset. Planning applications should demonstrate a high level of engagement and consultation with prospective and neighbouring communities. There should also be both physical and social structures in place to allow new residents to mix and work together.

<sup>19</sup> This standard does not apply to health and social care services' medium and high risk waste, such as clinical and hazardous waste; these are covered by national regulations.

<sup>20</sup> The Waste strategy 2007 proposes national targets for waste for 2020 as follows:

- Residual waste reduction per person (amount left after reuse, recycling and composting)– from 370 kg in 2005 to 225 kg in 2020;
- Household re-use, recycling and composting – from 27% in 2005 to 50% in 2020
- Residual waste recovery (recycling, composting and energy recovery) from 38% in 2005 to 75% in 2020.

### **Master planning**

- 4.31 All eco-town planning applications should include an overall master-plan and supporting documentation to demonstrate how the eco-town standards set out above will be achieved and sustained. There should be a presumption in favour of the original, that is the first permitted master-plan, particularly where any subsequent planning applications would materially alter or negatively impact on the integrity of the original master-plan.

### **Transition**

- 4.32 To support the transition process, planning applications should set out:
- (a) the detailed timetable of delivery of neighbourhoods, employment and community facilities and services – such as public transport, schools, health and social care services, community centres, public spaces, parks etc
  - (b) plans for operational delivery of priority core services to underpin the low level of carbon emissions, such as public transport infrastructure and services, for when the first residents move in
  - (c) progress in and plans for working with Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities to address the provision of health and social care
  - (d) how developers will support the initial formation and growth of communities, through investment in community development and third-sector support, which enhance well-being and provide social structures through which issues can be addressed
  - (e) how developers will provide information and resources to encourage environmentally responsible behaviour, especially as new residents move in
  - (f) the specific metrics which will be collected and summarised annually to monitor, support and evaluate progress in low carbon living, including those on zero carbon, transport and waste
  - (g) a governance transition plan from developer to community, and
  - (h) how carbon emissions resulting from the construction of the development will be limited, managed and monitored.

### **Community and governance**

- 4.33 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. Planning applications should be accompanied by long term governance structures for the development to ensure that:
- (a) appropriate governance structures are in place to ensure that standards are met and maintained

- (b) there is continued community involvement and engagement, to develop social capital
  - (c) sustainability metrics, including those on zero carbon, transport, water and waste are agreed and monitored
  - (d) future development continues to meet the eco-town standards, and
  - (e) community assets are maintained.
- 4.34 The governance proposals should be appropriate to the scale and complexity of the development, and should complement existing democratic arrangements for parish and local governance. They should set out the proposed financial, management and legal structures (including arrangements for the transfer of land, buildings or endowment funds to resident-led community organisations for community use and development, including cultural, worship and income-generating purposes). Where appropriate, proposals for establishing new parish arrangements should be considered as part of the longer term governance arrangements for the eco-town. Governance structures will need to be designed so that they can reflect the composition and unique needs of the local community, so that they have potential to bring different groups together to resolve any differences and avoid tensions, and to create a sense of belonging for residents.

### **Monitoring**

- 4.35 Eco-towns will need to be monitored through regional and local monitoring frameworks. Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities will be required to monitor the implementation of their spatial policies as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy and in development plan documents at the local level. Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities should set out in their Annual Monitoring Reports indicators for monitoring the sustainability of eco-towns in their region/district.

## Part 3. Consultation questions

- Q1. Does the draft Planning Policy Statement provide sufficient guidance on the consideration of eco-towns through the plan making process?
- Q2. Are the locational principles for eco-towns sufficiently clear and workable?
- Q3. Taking overall the standards set out in the draft PPS do you think that they achieve a viable eco-towns concept?

### **ECO-TOWN STANDARDS**

- Q4. We would like your views on the Government's proposed standards for eco-towns, in particular:
  - Q4.1 Do you consider that the standards provide a clear basis on which to make decisions on planning applications for eco-towns?
  - Q4.2 Do you consider that the cost of implementing the standards will undermine the viability of eco-towns?
  - Q4.3 Are there any standards that you feel are missing? (That are not covered in other Government policy or guidance.)
  - Q4.4 Are any of the standards not essential?

#### **Zero carbon (paragraphs 4.3 to 4.6)**

- Q4.5 The zero carbon standard attempts to ensure that carbon emissions related to the built environment in eco-towns are zero or below. Have we specified the calculation of net emissions clearly in a way that avoids perverse incentives and loopholes? Is this standard the most cost effective way to do this?

#### **Climate change adaptation (paragraphs 4.7 to 4.8)**

- Q4.6 The climate change adaptation standard, alongside existing planning guidance, aims to ensure that eco-towns will be more future-proof. Is it sufficiently clear and workable?

#### **Homes (paragraphs 4.9 to 4.10)**

- Q4.7 Should the PPS be more prescriptive than set out in paragraph 4.9 (e) in relation to energy efficiency? Do you agree that 70 per cent is an appropriate level of carbon mitigation through on-site means?

**Employment (paragraph 4.11)**

Q4.8 Is this employment standard sufficiently clear and workable?

**Transport (paragraphs 4.12 to 4.16)**

Q4.9 The transport standard attempts to support people's desire for mobility whilst enabling low carbon living. Is it sufficiently clear and workable?

**Local services (paragraph 4.17)**

Q4.10 The local services standard allows flexibility to reflect existing local provision and the size of the development. Does it cover the essential services which will be needed in eco-towns?

**Green infrastructure and biodiversity (paragraphs 4.18 to 4.21)**

Q4.11 The standards proposed on green infrastructure and biodiversity aim to ensure that development is undertaken in such a way that it protects and enhances the best features of local landscapes for the benefit of both people and wildlife. Are these standards reasonable and deliverable?

**Water and flood risk management (paragraphs 4.22 to 4.28)**

Q4.12 The water and flood risk standards aim to ensure that eco-town developments are planned so that they will minimise water use and flood risk, and raise quality. Are the standards proposed clear and deliverable?

**Waste (paragraph 4.29)**

Q4.13 The waste standard aims to ensure that eco-towns manage their waste effectively, from their construction onwards. Is the proposed waste standard a clear and workable way of doing this?

**Transition and development (paragraphs 4.32)**

Q4.14 The transition and development standard should ensure that initial residents will not live in un-serviced and isolating building sites. Does it get the balance right between supporting initial residents and enabling developers the flexibility they need to build and grow the town?

**Community and governance (paragraphs 4.33 to 4.34)**

Q4.15 The community and governance standard attempts to ensure that eco-towns will be successful communities, that residents will have a say in how their town is run, and that standards are maintained. Is this standard clear and workable?

### **Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment and Impact Assessment**

- Q5. Do you have any comments on the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulations Assessment or the Impact Assessment?
- Q6. Do you have any comments on the issues identified in the Sustainability Appraisal/Habitats Regulations Assessment of the locations for eco-towns?
- Q6.1 Pennbury (Stoughton)
  - Q6.2 Middle Quinton
  - Q6.3 Whitehill-Bordon
  - Q6.4 Weston Otmoor and Cherwell
  - Q6.5 Ford
  - Q6.6 St Austell (China Clay Community)
  - Q6.7 Rossington
  - Q6.8 Marston Vale
  - Q6.9 North East Elsenham
  - Q6.10 Rushcliffe (Nottinghamshire)
  - Q6.11 Greater Norwich
  - Q6.12 Leeds City Region

Although SA of the locations for Manby, Curborough and Hanley Grange have been undertaken, these locations are not being taken forward as a result of promoters withdrawing schemes from the programme.

- Q6.13 Curborough
- Q6.14 Manby
- Q6.15 Hanley Grange and Cambridgeshire

## Part 4. Statement of consultation

The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations on the basis of a document in electronic or printed form. They will often be relevant to other sorts of consultation.

Though they have no legal force, and cannot prevail over statutory or other mandatory external requirements (eg under European Community Law), they should otherwise generally be regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies, unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure.

- Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
- Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
- Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
- Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
- Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
- Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out a Regulatory Impact Assessment if appropriate.

The full consultation code may be viewed at:

[www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm](http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Introduction.htm)

Are you satisfied that this consultation has followed these criteria? If not, or you have any other observations about ways of improving the consultation process please contact:

Albert Joyce  
Communities and Local Government Consultation Co-ordinator  
Zone 6/H10  
Eland House  
London SW1E 5DU  
or by e-mail to [albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:albert.joyce@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

## Annex A – Locations that are being considered for inclusion in the Eco-towns Programme

### LOCATIONS

- Pennbury (Stoughton)
- Middle Quinton
- Whitehill-Bordon
- Weston Otmoor and Cherwell
- Ford
- St Austell (China Clay Community)
- Rossington
- Marston Vale
- North East Elsenham
- Rushcliffe (Nottinghamshire)
- Rackheath (Greater Norwich)

Although SA of the locations for Manby, Curborough and Hanley Grange has been undertaken, these locations are not being taken forward as a result of promoters withdrawing schemes from the programme:

- Curborough
- Manby
- Hanley Grange and Cambridgeshire
- Leeds City Region – an eco-town bid is not being taken forward but a proposal for one or more urban eco-communities is being considered separately.
- Coltishall (Greater Norwich)

