

# eco-towns

## Location decision statement







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July 2009

Communities and Local Government

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# Contents

<b>User guide</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Location decision statement</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Pennbury</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Middle Quinton</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Whitehill-Bordon</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Weston Otmoor and Cherwell</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Shipton</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>North West Bicester</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Ford</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>St Austell (China Clay)</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Rossington</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>North East Elsenham</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Rushcliffe</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Kingston</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Cotgrave Place</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Rackheath</b>	<b>37</b>

## User guide to documents published 16 July 2009

Name of document	Purpose
<b>Planning policy documents</b>	
<b>Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns<sup>1</sup></b>	<p><b>Planning Policy Statements (PPSs)</b> set out the Government's national policies on different aspects of spatial planning in England.</p> <p><b>Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns</b> sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the planning process eco-town developers will need to follow</li> <li>• the eco-town standards – the standards any eco-town proposal will have to meet, such as providing a minimum amount of 40 per cent green space and 30 per cent of housing being affordable</li> <li>• the list of locations currently assessed as having the potential to have an eco-town</li> <li>• arrangements for monitoring implementation of the standards, as eco-town schemes are brought forward</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment documents</b>	
<p><b>eco-towns: Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (SA/HRA) of the draft Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns Addendum</b></p>	<p>A <b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b> is a high level appraisal of the environmental, social and economic effects and sustainability of a plan or programme. The initial eco-towns SA incorporated the requirements of the European Union (EU) Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment<sup>2</sup>.</p> <p>A <b>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</b> tests the impacts of a proposal on nature conservation sites of European importance, and is a requirement under EU legislation for land use plans and projects<sup>3</sup>.</p> <p>For the eco-towns programme, the <b>Sustainability Appraisal</b> and <b>Habitats Regulations Assessment</b> were carried out alongside each other, and the <b>eco-towns SA/HRA Addendum</b> includes an update to both the <b>eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal</b> and <b>Habitats Regulation Assessment</b> (these were published on 4 November 2008).</p> <p>The <b>eco-towns SA/HRA Addendum</b> sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an assessment of the key sustainability issues (including environmental, social and economic issues) in relation to the changes made to the standards in the Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns, following the consultation on the draft PPS: eco-towns<sup>4</sup></li> <li>• any changes required to the initial SA and HRA<sup>5</sup> of locations, including their sustainability gradings, as a result of new evidence emerging from responses to the consultation on the initial SA/ HRA, or from new research studies</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Full title: Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns, supplement to PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Developments

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2001/42/EC on assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment

<sup>3</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the 'Habitats Directive') implemented through The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Draft eco-towns PPS was published for consultation on 4 November 2008.

<sup>5</sup> The eco-towns SA/HRA documents were published for consultation on 4 November 2008.

Name of document	Purpose
<b>eco-towns: Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (SA/HRA) of the draft Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns Statement</b>	<p>A <b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Statement</b> is produced when a plan or programme is adopted, to show how the findings of the SA and responses to consultation have been taken into account in finalising a plan or programme (in this case the Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns), and how the effects will be monitored. It meets the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive requirement for information at this stage.</p> <p>It is good practice for the <b>SA Statement</b> to explain how the findings of the <b>Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)</b> were taken into account in finalising the plan or programme (in this case the Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns) to ensure that it provides an appropriate framework for avoiding adverse effects on European sites.</p> <p>The <b>eco-towns Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment (SA/HRA) Statement</b> sets out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how the recommendations made in the initial SA/HRA, and the subsequent SA/HRA Addendum, were taken into account in finalising the planning guidance, the eco-town standards, and locations with the potential to have an eco-town in the final Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns</li> <li>• the arrangements for monitoring implementation of the final standards in the Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns</li> </ul>
<b>eco-towns impact assessment (IA)</b>	<p>This document sets out the aims of the eco-towns policy, and assesses likely impact in terms of the costs and benefits of taking the policy forward.</p>
<b>Other documents contributing to the decision-making process</b>	
<b>eco-towns draft Planning Policy Statement: summary of consultation responses</b>	<p>This summarises the responses received on the series of documents published as part of the consultation on the draft PPS: eco-towns<sup>6</sup>. It also includes the Government's response on issues raised as part of the consultation.</p>
<b>eco-towns: Location decision statement</b>	<p>This sets out the evidence, and the reasons for listing the locations in the Planning Policy Statement: eco-towns, as those with the potential to have an eco-town.</p>

<sup>6</sup> Draft PPS: eco-towns, SA/HRA documents, draft Impact Assessment, Financial Viability Study

## Location decision statement

**This note sets out the background and a summary of the assessment made of locations put forward at this stage of the eco-towns programme, on the evidence currently available, including the Sustainability Appraisal and its update and in the light of the consultation responses.**

**The eco-towns programme has been developed with the aim of getting exemplar eco-towns off the ground, with development well underway by 2016. In July 2007, alongside the Housing Green Paper, Communities and Local Government (CLG) published the *Eco-towns Prospectus* which set out the vision and outline criteria for eco-towns<sup>7</sup>. The launch of the prospectus was accompanied by an invitation for local authorities, developers and other stakeholders to respond with their views on potential sites. The consultation yielded 57 proposals and CLG carried out an initial scrutiny of these and shortlisted the 15 locations which had performed most strongly. These were included in the *Eco-towns – living a greener future* consultation paper published in April 2008. Following the withdrawal of several schemes from the programme, and inclusion of proposals for alternative schemes put forward by local authorities, the draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) listed 11 locations that were being considered for inclusion in the eco-towns programme<sup>8</sup>.**

**The draft PPS, including the list of locations being considered for inclusion in the eco-towns programme, was subject to consultation between 4 November 2008 and 30 April 2009, together with the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment for these locations. Following the consultation, CLG is today publishing the final version of the PPS and this includes a current list of locations with potential to be an eco-town<sup>9</sup>.**

**Locations where the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town has been demonstrated and are included in the PPS**

- Whitehill-Bordon
- Rackheath (Norwich)

<sup>7</sup> Communities and Local Government (2007). *Eco-towns Prospectus* [online] available at: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsprospectus](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/ecotownsprospectus) (accessed 18 May 2009).

<sup>8</sup> Pennbury (Stoughton); Middle Quinton; Whitehill-Bordon; Weston Otmoor and Cherwell; Ford; St Austell (China Clay Community); Rossington; Marston Vale; North East Elsenham; Rushcliffe (Nottinghamshire); and Rackheath (Greater Norwich).

<sup>9</sup> In relation to Middle Quinton, a decision will not be made until Communities and Local Government has received the report of the Panel on the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

- North West Bicester
- St Austell

**None of the other locations listed in either the original short list or the draft PPS will be included in the PPS. However as the Planning Policy Statement makes clear eco-towns are one of a range of options which regions and local planning authorities should consider when determining how to meet housing requirements and there is scope for further eco-town proposals to be brought forward through the planning process, in addition to those identified in the PPS.**

Locations not included in the PPS but where an offer will be made to local authorities to support further work to resolve outstanding deliverability issues. If resolved these could have the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town

- Rossington
- North East Elsenham

Locations which have not demonstrated at this time the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town

- Weston Otmoor
- Pennbury
- Ford

Location where no decision is being taken on the eco-town scheme at this time but which will be considered further after publication of the report of the Examination Panel for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) process

- Middle Quinton

In addition a number of regional bodies will be reviewing potential eco-town options, alongside other development options, as part of their preparation of proposals for new regional plans on which work is now underway in six of the regions.

### Locations and possible alternatives withdrawn by promoter from this process

These locations were included in the Sustainability Appraisal and consultation but the promoter's withdrawal from this process means that insufficient information was available at this time to enable them to be assessed on deliverability.

Manby

Curborough

New Marston and Marston Vale

Hanley Grange

Leeds City Region (subsequent alternative scheme for urban eco-communities)

Coltishall, Norfolk

# Pennbury

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- Proximity to existing settlement at Leicester and Oadby provides strong opportunities to share and improve existing infrastructure, with potential sustainability benefits for existing and future populations. At the same time land ownership of the green wedge between Pennbury and Oadby will help to restrict growth and infill.
- High potential for benefits through land and water quality improvements.
- Leicester is an identified Growth Point, and a lack of affordable housing is a significant issue particularly in Harborough. It is difficult to say at this stage whether or not the proposal will provide truly affordable housing that is accessible to those who need it – i.e. residents of Oadby and Wigston and of Leicester City, but the eco-town could make a significant contribution to affordable housing, especially through the application of recently developed EP intermediate housing models.
- The location has been identified as an area of solar and wind energy potential, and the close proximity to Leicester means that there is potential to connect to a district heating system in Leicester maximising efficiency and minimising waste energy.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- The two main roads going into Leicester which run alongside and through the proposed location are generally acknowledged to be at capacity during peak flows, and car use in the existing area is notably high. Therefore, the public transport solution is the key element of the scheme in terms of the need for excellent access to the city centre, rail transport, and improved services for satellite rural settlements. The planning of a tram or rapid bus route to the edge of Leicester is relatively easy, but the second part of the route into central Leicester is a more difficult. This is essential in ensuring a low carbon development.
- There is a major resource issue with regard to impacts on existing waste and water infrastructure, which are already at capacity. This can be overcome to a certain extent through measures incorporated into the design, but a full solution will potentially require improvements to infrastructure in the region.
- Potential flooding downstream at Great Glen as a result of surface water run off is certainly an issue but can be mitigated with the potential for net benefits.
- Despite the focus of development at the airfield site, development of greenfield land is considerable.

- The rural tranquil landscape will experience a high magnitude of change.
- Public perception, attitudes and issues of community cohesion will require careful attention and will be important in ensuring that the scheme is successful.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Concerns over the transport implications of the eco-town and, in particular, the scope for increased congestion (with corresponding impacts on air quality)
- Concern over whether or not the proposed scheme can deliver sufficient jobs
- The potential threat posed by the eco-town to regeneration in Leicester and other urban areas in the vicinity
- Concern over the potential for increased flood risk in the area as a result of the development
- Increased visitor pressure on Rutland Water Special Protection Area (SPA) as a result of the development

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.

A scheme in this location could have the potential to benefit Leicester in terms of affordable housing supply, green infrastructure and other sustainability benefits. However, there would be pressure on local environmental capacity and a significant loss of valued landscape and greenfield areas close to the city. The proposals for this location contained some highly innovative approaches, as many consultees recognised, which would be capable of wider application.

(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.

The transport proposal for the location represents a very ambitious modal shift to be delivered by bus transport and bus priority for which the implementation measures are uncertain. Evidence from the County Council transport appraisal indicated the challenges faced by the existing public transport offer in the proposed location and this is reflected by about 90% of existing trips being car based. The main element of the developers' proposal in the submitted scheme is to create a new public transport corridor to the centre of Leicester based on bus priority schemes, and through a combination of smart travel choices, containment in the eco-town, and other charges/incentives to reduce external car based trips to around 25%. However, priority bus roads would need to be created along existing urban routes which are already heavily congested, particularly at peak hours. Transport appraisal indicates doubt that this very high modal shift from car to public transport is achievable with, at best, 25 minute bus journey to the centre of the city, which when the full development is achieved would require a double-decker bus every 3 minutes. The final costed proposals and viability assessment for the eco-town show that the scheme would not in itself support a tram.

(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	There would be some significant delivery risks in creating the infrastructure proposed for this location, for example, in providing additional bus priority measures along already highly congested main routes within Leicester.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	There is some potential for economic benefit through attraction of new business sectors such as environmental industries, but also a potential threat to neighbouring centres including the regeneration of Leicester. Transport pressures would be further exacerbated if it were not possible to achieve the ambitious employment strategy for the large scheme proposed for this location.
(v) Would taking forward an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and other deliverability issues.	With the exception of Leicester City who supported the location subject to conditions, other authorities' policies would not support a major scheme in this location. The consultation responses suggest a high level of opposition to the scheme from local organisations and communities which would adversely affect securing co-operation with local partners for early delivery of a successful scheme.

### ***Decision***

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time.**

## Middle Quinton

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of location*

- The potential to provide a rapid transport link between Honeybourne Station, Middle Quinton and Stratford.
- This is a brownfield development and there is potential to develop the functioning of the existing recycling plant.
- There are a range of ecological considerations, but development of site would not necessarily result in the loss of an established ecologically coherent landscape. There is the potential for biodiversity enhancement.
- There is the potential for links to nearby academic institutions, as well as potential to capitalise on the local horticulture and food production industries.
- A rail station is located relatively nearby. It should be possible to develop rapid transport systems between key destinations including the rail-station.
- An existing well used cycle route runs between the site and Stratford. There may be the potential for a rapid transport system to run along this route as well as retaining a cycleway.

### *Key weaknesses of location*

- This site conflicts with the strategic plans for growth and regeneration at the regional and local level. The local area is affluent and not in need of regeneration.
- This is a rural area and there is the potential for an eco-town to impact upon rural communities and economies.
- The site is remote from any city or major town, which could result in long-distance travel by car.
- Those likely to locate to the eco-town because of the offer of affordable housing are likely to move from the wider region rather than the local area (although there is a considerable need associated with Stratford). This could have an affect on local economies and sustainable transport patterns.
- About 700 people are employed on the site currently. The majority of these jobs will be lost.
- There is a degree of land contamination, although this can be mitigated.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Consideration should be given to the impacts of the potential eco-town on the economic wellbeing of nearby settlements
- The need for a deliverable sustainable transport strategy in order to minimise long distance travel by car; the question mark over the re-instatement of the railway line between Honeybourne and Middle Quinton is crucial in this regard
- Some impacts remain uncertain and a range of further studies would be necessary should the proposal be taken forward including a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA); a Water Cycle Strategy (WCS); and a landscape and visual assessment with particular regard to impacts on the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

### ***Decision***

**As indicated elsewhere, no decision on this location will be made until after receipt of the report of the Examination Panel currently reviewing the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.**

# Whitehill-Bordon

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- Development here is seen as complementing regional and local planning objectives, including the economic objectives of the Western Corridor/ Blackwater Valley sub-region.
- There is a need for regeneration, which will worsen when the MOD leaves.
- Expansion of Whitehill-Bordon offers an opportunity to make the settlement more sustainable in relation to increasing local accessibility to jobs, services and facilities and thereby helping to reduce existing high levels of car dependency.
- This is an opportunity for the redevelopment of brownfield and public sector land.
- There is excellent access to high quality and biodiversity rich countryside, not least the proposed South Downs National Park.
- There is a good degree of existing community support.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- There is potential for a range of significant biodiversity effects unless carefully managed and mitigated.
- There are existing unsustainable transport and more general lifestyle patterns amongst residents of Whitehill-Bordon. There may be some inertia to change.
- Trying to create an eco-town by grafting on development to an existing town will pose particular challenges and it may be more difficult to achieve a strong sense of living within an eco-town.
- Higher order settlements are distant and it is not clear that the eco-town can be linked to higher order settlements in such a way that will make sustainable transport an attractive option.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Uncertainty over the availability of water resources; the Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy indicates that the current status is 'no water available'
- Further, more detailed work is required in relation to the Water Cycle Study (particularly in relation to the application of efficiency measures to existing development at Whitehill-Bordon and capacity at the Bordon Sewage Treatment Works)

- Concern that development at Whitehill-Bordon may lead to congestion, particularly in relation to the junction of the A3/A31, and that future residents may use Haslemere rather than Liphook station (easy access to Liphook could be developed but rail services from Haslemere are faster and more frequent)
- Impacts on nearby European wildlife sites must be fully taken into account. Natural England has indicated that various studies will need to be undertaken with the results fully informing the number and distribution of homes that the location can sustainably accommodate; the type and distribution of green infrastructure in the development; and other mitigation and management measures needed to protect the European sites

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	Although there are significant constraints in relation to biodiversity and water, there are also good opportunities for the location to exemplify new approaches on water use and bio-diversity and to extend this innovation into existing development.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	Proposals for additional infrastructure to make the location function as an eco-town need to be taken further, but work done so far indicates that it should be possible to successfully serve the new development with a mix of relatively straightforward and sustainable transport options and avoid unacceptable pressures on the road network. Proposals on water supply and sewage treatment capacity also need further development. Similarly green infrastructure proposals, already ambitious, will need to go further, and the scale of the development adjusted, to ensure that adverse impacts on key biodiversity sites are avoided.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	The infrastructure proposals contain a number of proposals and options which are generally deliverable and affordable. Some such as rail re-opening may only be justifiable and affordable at a later stage in the project should a business case be demonstrated. However, the location is not dependent on this.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	The economic benefits of developing the location are substantial, given its proximity to existing development in which employment will fall if the MOD withdraws, as well as the existing need for regeneration and improvement of the shopping, cultural and sports facilities. Introducing new business opportunities through the eco-town will help stimulate employment growth.
(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.	The principle of a strategic development in this location has been accepted in the South East Plan on a comparable scale to the eco-town. Consultation responses have indicated local support for the substantial work on the project to date by the local authority (LA) and this improves the prospects of early delivery, as indicated in their work on a masterplan and implementation strategy.

### **Decision**

**The location has the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements to be successfully developed as an eco-town.**

# Weston Otmoor and Cherwell (including Shipton and North West Bicester)

## Weston Otmoor

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of the location*

- The provision of affordable and commercial housing in an area of extreme housing pressure.
- The proximity to the Oxford-Milton Keynes railway.

### *Key weaknesses of the location*

- Almost entirely greenfield.
- 30 per cent of the site falls within the Oxford Green Belt.
- High grade and versatile agricultural land (Grade 2).
- The site incorporates Ancient Woodland, SSSI and a Nature Reserve, with further Ancient woodland and SSSIs adjacent and within close proximity to the boundary. A number of nationally important species have been identified within the SSSI.
- The area is identified as an area of 'serious' water stress.
- It is close to Bicester and has the potential to prejudice current development plans for the town.
- It is close to a congested road junction on the M40 and A34 which may both encourage commuting and exacerbate congestion.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Part of the proposed site falls within the Oxford Green Belt
- High grade and versatile agricultural land is present (Grade 2)
- Development at Weston Otmoor could potentially undermine the viability of economic development at nearby Bicester and have a 'destabilising' effect on the town's local services

- Employment at Weston Otmoor could lag behind housing leading to a high level of out-commuting for an extended period
- The area is identified as an area of 'serious' water stress and the resources unit in which it is located is known to have limited capacity to supply additional demand
- Concern over the capacity of on-site and downstream watercourses to receive the additional wastewater discharge that would result from the development
- The proposal would require the construction of a new sewage treatment works or a major extension to the existing works at Bicester
- Concerns over the adequacy of the Water Cycle Study undertaken
- The landscape character of the site may be severely compromised by the development envisaged
- Development at Weston Otmoor may potentially affect several SSSIs as well as the Oxford Meadows SAC
- There are significant transport-related issues associated with development at Weston Otmoor; in particular, the impacts on the road network and the deliverability of the rail proposals
- Uncertainty over the archaeological impacts of development

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	The location remains extremely challenging in sustainability terms, as set out in the SA and update, which identify the very substantial conservation and sustainability risks.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	Innovative approaches to transport provision, management and travel incentives have been applied in working up proposals for this location, but these are dependent on very substantial infrastructure investments, including rebuilding a motorway junction, rebuilding an existing (and in part disused) railway line, a new station, a major Park and Ride, a substantial new tram system and road toll charges of up to £15 per day. Notwithstanding the ambitious public transport package, car use via the M40 would remain attractive for many destinations.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	Major areas of deliverability risk remain in relation to the timing and funding of M40 junction rebuilding, delivery of elements of the rail proposals and other transport investments. Critically, the success of the overall approach is dependent on a very high and untested level of incentives/road charging and traffic management. There is high risk of unacceptable impacts on the M40, A34 and other local roads if at any point these systems failed or the road use charging scheme was to be rejected by the new community.

<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>There are very significant concerns set out by the local authority and stakeholders, and assessed in the ARUP/SEEDA study on the impact of the development on the economy, local services and community of Bicester and its regeneration. Although the eco-town would provide employment, it could also seriously threaten the prospect of Bicester's growth and regeneration.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the innovative proposals for the location there are major concerns on the clash with existing policies on Bicester and the potential for harmful impact on conservation sites. Wide opposition to the scheme would damage the prospects of successful early delivery.</p>

***Decision***

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time.**

# Shipton

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of the location*

- The provision of affordable and commercial housing in an area of extreme housing pressure.
- The proximity to the Southampton-Birmingham railway.
- Regeneration of a disused quarry, defined as previously developed land.

## *Key weaknesses of the location*

- The proposed location contains a geological SSSI, although 98 per cent is described as unfavourable, declining condition and measures have been agreed to enhance the SSSI through further rock exposures.
- The ecological importance of the County Wildlife Site (although development affecting the site has already been agreed).
- A significant proportion of the site falls within the Oxford Green Belt but the acceptability of development in the quarry, within the Green Belt, has been accepted.
- The area is identified as an area of 'serious' water stress.
- It is close to Bicester and has the potential to prejudice current development plans for the town.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.

The proposals for the location were at an early stage of development and while containing innovative approaches also raised significant concerns on environment and conservation issues.

(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.

The proposals for the location were at an early stage of development. Although the location benefits from proximity to the railway, proposals for a passenger service were at a very early stage of development and road access to the site is poor.

<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>The proposals for the location were at an early stage of development and insufficient evidence was available on these issues.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>Although close to Oxford, the location is challenging in transport and employment terms.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>The local authority opposes development of this site as a new settlement as harmful to its wider policies e.g. on strengthening existing communities such as Bicester.</p>

***Decision***

**This location was not shortlisted by Government but considered in the Sustainability Appraisal as an alternative. The evidence available was limited and did not demonstrate the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements to be an eco-town.**

## North West Bicester

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of the location*

- The location is not constrained by environmental designations, the agricultural land falls within Grade 3 but it is not known if this is the most versatile land.
- Proximity to existing community facilities within Bicester.

### *Key weaknesses of the location*

- The fact that the site is adjacent to Bicester will mean that it is less separate and distinct than if it were more removed. This may lessen infrastructure innovation (easier to use existing systems), lessen behavioural change (Bicester is on the doorstep) and make the creation of a distinct community more difficult.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- The existing sewerage system is near capacity and transferring sewerage to the Bicester sewage treatment works is problematic
- Concern over the capacity of on-site and downstream watercourses to receive the additional wastewater discharge that would result from the development
- The assumed boundary contains Flood Zone 3
- Development at North West Bicester could potentially impact on the Otmoor SSSI
- The location is adjacent to Bicester and, as such, it may be challenging to fully realise the eco-towns concept.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

<p>(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.</p>	<p>The potential for sustainability innovation is high, including the opportunity to extend new energy and heating systems into the existing development at Bicester, and strengthen its overall position in terms of employment and services. It is challenging in areas such as car use and environmental infrastructure such as waste water. The potential to create and actively and beneficially manage new green infrastructure is a strength.</p>
<p>(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.</p>	<p>Developing the Bicester proposal faces challenges on infrastructure issues, but also significant strengths in that the additional infrastructure requirements are likely to be relatively straightforward and modest in scale for example in town (quality bus) public transport. The proposal fits well with local investment priorities and benefits from well developed prospective transport investment, including that by Chiltern Railways for an Oxford-Bicester-London (Marylebone) service.</p>
<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>Although not yet fully developed or assessed, the additional infrastructure likely to be needed in this location looks to be relatively affordable and deliverable.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>The needs and priorities of Bicester, as set out in the Arup/SEEDA study, illustrate the potential to fit well with existing local economic and social priorities and help Bicester as a whole function more sustainably through the creation of a major new community, well linked to the existing town. The development would help boost the role of Bicester and its potential within the Oxford – Milton Keynes/ South Midlands growth access.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>The proposal fits with regional and sub regional priorities. Early deliverability prospects for this location are supported by strong local leadership and local engagement, including the recent emergence of a firm private sector proposal.</p>

**Decision**

**The location has the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements to be successfully developed as an eco-town.**

# Ford

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- The limited landscape, ecological and historic interest of the site and the potential to create ecological gain.
- The proximity of the railway station.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- Potentially severe congestion on the surrounding road network and a heightened need for an A27 bypass at Arundel.
- It is almost entirely green field.
- It is high grade agricultural land.
- Although the area is not designated there is still a potential to change the setting and character of local villages (e.g. Climping and Yapton).
- Issues of flood risk, particularly ground water, but should be manageable with thorough assessment and development proposals.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- The location is almost entirely greenfield and high grade agricultural land
- Potential for increased congestion on the local road network and a heightened need for an A27 bypass at Arundel, which is likely to be completed after the eco-town has been built
- Concern that eco-town residents might commute via Barnham Junction station which offers better services than Ford leading to increased congestion in Barnham
- Concern that job creation at the location might displace employment created elsewhere in the locality
- Concern that development at Ford might undermine the regeneration of nearby towns including Littlehampton
- Limited capacity for development at the site to utilise existing Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- Concerns over water availability
- The location is currently within a strategic gap
- Potential impacts on the character of local villages (e.g. Climping and Yapton)

<p><b>Government response</b> Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:</p>	
<p>(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.</p>	<p>Proposals for the location demonstrate potential for innovative approaches on renewable energy and other sustainability benefits in this location, but there are also significant environmental constraints.</p>
<p>(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.</p>	<p>Infrastructure proposals have been developed to meet some of the issues raised by the draft PPS, with the exception of transport, where a much more substantial set of proposals on sustainable transport and active travel management (including smarter choices) would be necessary to reduce car use and mitigate additional congestion. Other areas which would require further work include water supply and waste water.</p>
<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>The transport aspects of the scheme represent a substantial risk. In particular there is a danger of unacceptable impacts on the local roads and on the A27, which is subject to significant environmental constraints given the proximity of the South Downs National Park and the built-up area of Arundel. The appraisals and consultation did not indicate with confidence that a robust and continuing programme of sustainable transport and modal shift measures could be achieved, which would avoid these impacts.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>Consultation responses indicated that in terms of local economic growth the employment strategy for the site was highly ambitious and could also threaten regeneration of the coastal towns.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>Although significant employment growth on the site has taken place, its wider potential role is not resolved. The potential for an eco-town was one of the options on which the local authority has consulted ahead of its submission of a preferred option, in its core strategy expected later this year.</p>

**Decision**

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time.**

## St Austell (China Clay)

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of location*

- The limited landscape, ecological and historic interest of the site and the potential to create ecological and biodiversity gain.
- The potential for renewable energy generation including wind, wave, tidal, geo and solar thermal and PV technologies.
- The opportunity to provide additional services and community infrastructure closer to existing rural residents who may otherwise travel greater distances to meet their needs.
- The potential development of Imerys' existing road infrastructure to help manage traffic demand.
- Small development sites are likely to result in relatively lower impacts on existing communities.

### *Key weaknesses of location*

- Development over several sites is unlikely to deliver the critical mass required to support a stand alone sustainable community.
- Individual sites will not have critical mass and will have to rely on existing neighbourhood infrastructure and local towns more so than other sites within the eco-town programme.
- Poor local and regional road networks are already severely congested with existing users.
- Limited and/or no rail connectivity between the development sites and local centres.
- The likelihood of high car dependency.

Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:

- The potential impacts of development on future clay extraction
- The need to deliver a successful sustainable transport strategy
- Potential impacts on European wildlife sites as a result of increased recreational pressure

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

<p>(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.</p>	<p>The multi site location approach is challenging but makes good use of the unique characteristics of the area, and there is good potential for renewable energy and other environmental innovation linking well to existing development. Collectively, the total area available is many times larger than would be needed for an eco-town and the mass and scale necessary for an eco-town is achievable, providing at least one of the larger sites is developed early in the sequence.</p>
<p>(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.</p>	<p>The multi-site aspects of the proposed location create additional challenges and further work is needed in a number of areas, including addressing water cycle and utility issues. However, the concept makes good use of the scope for new transport schemes to make the sites link well to each other, using former mineral railway and road routes. The proposals have been further developed as set out in the Cornwall County Council consultation response, which also indicates significant further progress on transport and employment issues identified in the SA. While significant issues remain these appear to be capable of resolution at the next stage.</p>
<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>The location incurs a shortfall in the estimate and modelling of long term financial viability in the appraisal by PwC. However, in their response to the consultation, Cornwall Council and South West Regional Development Agency have, with the scheme promoter, reviewed the phasing, costs and development mix of the scheme proposed for this location and identified a number of options for overcoming these, including rephasing and likely European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, which appear to be a reasonable projection at this stage. The financial viability of the project has been reassessed on an open book basis between the parties, as set out in Cornwall Council’s response to the consultation, and this gives additional support to the revised projection.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>Significant local support for the location is manifest in the emerging joint venture between the site promoter and Cornwall Council, and would be a significant benefit in terms of early delivery of exemplar developments.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>The location is compatible with emerging policy priorities at local, regional and sub regional level such as the joint programme in preparation for ERDF Convergence Funding and local partnership and cross agency support strengthens the prospect of successful early delivery.</p>

**Decision**

**The location has demonstrated that it can meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements to be successfully developed as an eco-town.**

# Rossington

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- All the new development will take place on brownfield or previously developed land.
- The limited landscape, ecological and historic interest of the development site itself, means there is significant potential to create ecological and landscape gain.
- There are a number of employment centres close to the eco-town, including the local airport, Doncaster Lakeside Business Park and a potential inland port which could create 4,000 jobs. Doncaster is within one of the Government's new 'Growth Points'.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- The most significant public water supply within the Idle and Torne CAMS area (where the proposed eco-town lies) is the Sherwood aquifer, which is currently over licensed and over abstracted.
- Reducing the potential adverse impact on the local road network of the eco-town is dependent upon the delivery of the Finningley and Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme, which would provide a northern gateway from the M18. However, this scheme has not yet been approved.
- There is potential conflict between the Proponent's aspirations to develop a heat loop system and the Environment Agency's concerns over the potential impacts on groundwater. Elevated contaminants on site means that remediation of the land could be challenging and costly.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Potential impacts on the local road network, with the potential need for a motorway link
- Water resources are an issue, with parts of the Sherwood Sandstone aquifer (around Selby) currently over-licensed and over-abstracted (with a moratorium on new licenses); a full Water Cycle Study will need to be undertaken
- An ecological survey, a landscape character assessment and traffic impact survey should be undertaken
- The environmental impacts of removing the spoil heap on the proposed site should be considered.

<p><b>Government response</b> Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:</p>	
<p>(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.</p>	<p>The location makes use of a major brownfield site adjoining the former colliery village of Rossington and has good potential for innovative approaches, e.g. on energy and shared infrastructure, which would also benefit the existing community.</p>
<p>(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.</p>	<p>Sound proposals have been developed on several aspects of the infrastructure needed to support an eco-town in this location. However, a number of issues require further work including: biodiversity, a water cycle strategy and landscape issues including the likely use of the spoil material currently on the colliery site. Road access to the eco-town remains a significant issue, which requires further work. Reducing the potential adverse impact of the eco-town on the road network is dependent on providing high quality public transport access to Doncaster and other centres, while restraining access to the M18 which is already under pressure. The Finingley and Rossington Regeneration Route (FARRRS) scheme has not yet been approved. Access control from the site would be required to prevent a flow of traffic onto the M18. Work by the location promoter indicates that an option of accessing the eco-town without FARRRS should be possible, although the approach previously outlined would need to be adapted to fit Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's (DMBC) Local Transport Plan.</p>
<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>The location incurs a shortfall in the estimate and modelling of its long term financial viability in the PwC viability report. The response to consultation by DMBC identifies options by which this shortfall might be overcome, but this needs to be further tested.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>There is local support for the growth in this location and its potential for regeneration benefits for the former colliery site and local community, but also a need to test the proposals further in these areas, for example the robustness of the employment strategy for the eco-town.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>There is potential for wider benefits through development of this location, but this needs to be tested further and work on DMBC's Core Strategy provides a good basis for doing so.</p>

**Decision**

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time. However subject to further work to resolve outstanding deliverability issues, it could have potential and an offer to support that further work will be made to the relevant local authorities.**

## North East Elsenham

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of location*

- Limited ecological constraints and the potential to create ecological gain.
- Proximity to a railway station and the potential for rail to be used to access off-site employment and services.
- Potential to attract business investment given close proximity to the M11 and Stansted.
- Improved access to services, facilities and public transport for residents of local villages.

### *Key weaknesses of location*

- Located within a water-stressed area.
- A greenfield location comprising versatile agricultural land.
- Close to the major road network but with capacity constraints on local roads leading to the potential for congestion and pressure to upgrade and widen rural lanes.
- Unsuitability of local roads for walking or cycling.
- The potential to change the setting and character of historic villages.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- The site has assessed as having generally moderate archaeological potential
- Located within a water stressed area
- Concerns over the capacity of the local road network
- Concern that improved train services at Elsenham would be at the expense of services at other nearby stops
- The potential to impact on the character of nearby villages
- The loss of agricultural land
- The presence of protected species in the vicinity.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	There is scope for the location to achieve high standards of sustainability if developed in the right way with ambitious application of eco-town standards on transport, water and green infrastructure.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	The location benefits from its rail access and good prospects for further transport investment. There is potential for some strong innovative ideas, which demonstrate a cohesive approach to sustainable transport development, including an integrated public transport interchange at Elsenham, which builds on enhanced rail services and a new orbital bus service linking local village centres and employment areas, Bishop’s Stortford and Stansted Airport. However, wider impacts of improved services at Elsenham also need to be considered. Water issues for the location are challenging both in terms of waste water and water supply but can be mitigated by strongly pursuing the high standards set out in the PPS and potentially going further.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	Further work is needed on planning and implementation of transport proposals, for water infrastructure and for impacts on SSSIs and historic/archaeological sites but these issues appear likely to be resolvable and affordable. The Financial Viability Study by PWC indicates a potential surplus which would allow these issues to be better addressed.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	There are important concerns in relation to impact on the historic villages of Henham and other historic features, and in relation to the regeneration of Harlow, and careful planning will be needed to avoid harmful impacts. However, generally the development has the potential to work well as a focus for growth including employment within the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough corridor.
(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.	Substantial work is being undertaken on the option of a 3,000 home settlement in this location by Uttlesford District Council (following selection in issues and options appraisal) and this is continuing ahead of submission of the Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy, although further testing is needed of whether there is potential for 5,000 homes. This work and consultation responses suggest that the application of PPS standards would help to achieve high standards of sustainability in this location.

**Decision**

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time. However, subject to further work to resolve outstanding deliverability issues, it could have potential and an offer to support that further work will be made to the relevant local authorities.**

# Rushcliffe

## Former RAF Newton/Bingham

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

### *Key strengths of location*

- The location benefits from local transport infrastructure including the existing railway station at Bingham.
- Proximity to the Sustrans cycle route which could provide a cycle route to Nottingham.
- Existing planning permission for a business park which could create up to 9,000 jobs.
- Part of the site is brownfield.
- Part of the site (former RAF base) could be contaminated and the development would provide an opportunity to remediate it.

### *Key weaknesses of location*

- Part of the site is greenfield and located on the edge of the Green Belt.
- Parts of the site are Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land.
- The road infrastructure around the site is under great pressure.
- There is an area at high risk of flooding within the site, to the east of the A46 and north of the existing settlement at Bingham. The flood risk area covers approximately 15 per cent of the total area of search.
- Potential for significant landscape impacts due to the rural and flat nature of the area.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Part of the site is greenfield and located on the edge of the Green Belt
- Parts of the site are Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land
- The road infrastructure around the location is under significant pressure
- Approval has been granted for the duelling of the A46 which passes through the area; the implications of this for the configuration of the development and travel patterns to Nottingham and elsewhere should be the subject of further investigation

- Concern over the extent of train services from stations including Bingham and the likelihood of these being improved
- There is an area at high risk of flooding within the site, to the east of the A46 and north of the existing settlement at Bingham; the flood risk area covers approximately 15 per cent of the total area of search
- Potential for significant landscape impacts due to the rural and flat nature of the area.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	There is scope for the brownfield location of RAF Newton to exemplify high sustainability gains and the proposals for this location contained some highly innovative approaches. However, the proposals for this location need further work to see how and whether and at what scale they could be developed further to support a successful eco-development.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	The feasibility of developing this site is considerably eased by the commencement of work on dualling of the A46 (Widmerpool-Newark), but a number of other elements of the transport proposals for the location require significant further work, for example through modelling of impacts and the development of a more detailed, stronger smarter choices and public transport package. An exact location was identified after the SA was carried out and should be the subject of further appraisal.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	Preliminary indications are that necessary infrastructure measures could be affordable. In the case of transport, a strong smarter choices approach will need to be developed to minimise the impact on existing infrastructure and services.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	Further work is needed to demonstrate an effective employment and economic strategy, which would ensure benefits to Bingham and cohere with the wider economic strategy for this area.
(v) Would taking forward an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and other deliverability issues.	A number of wider issues, in relation to the location, remain to be resolved including the appropriateness of release from the Green Belt and the wider planning context for the site (the next RSS), and whether an eco-town scale of development would be appropriate for the RAF Newton site.

### **Decision**

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time. However, further studies of potential in this area and the wider sub-region should include further assessment of this location.**

# Kingston

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- Natural features that would contain the development in the landscape.
- Proximity to major employment locations (airport, power station, etc).
- Planned improvements to local roads (A453, M1) that are likely to go ahead.
- Proximity to a future Midlands Mainland Station (East Midlands Parkway Station).

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- The site is greenfield and is located within the Nottingham and Derby Green Belt.
- Parts of the site are Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land.
- Although road improvements are going ahead, the new settlement could negate the benefits of these improvements to the area. In addition, these improvements could facilitate Kingston becoming a commuter town. Finally the improvements only go as far as the beginning of the built up area (Clifton) and could end up merely creating a bigger bottleneck nearer Nottingham.
- Risk of coalescence with and/or loss of character of surrounding settlements.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- Kingston is subject to periodic flooding
- East Midlands Parkway Station is now open and providing train services to cities in the East Midlands and beyond
- The location is greenfield and within the Green Belt
- Parts of the site are Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land
- Concern over the implications for the surrounding road network.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	The location is challenging because its closeness to the M1 could encourage a high level of car based commuting and the public transport and local employment offer would need to be very high to counterbalance this. This is a significant weakness.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	Consideration in the initial cross government review of eco-town proposals led to this location not being shortlisted, in view of the transport and other infrastructure issues it raised. Major transport issues remain to be resolved if the location were to be taken forward.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	Only limited further evidence was provided for this site in the consultation. Consultation responses indicate some improvement in potential for improving the transport offer.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	The location benefits from proximity to East Midlands airport in economic and employment terms, but significant concerns on impact on neighbouring settlements remain to be resolved.
(v) Would taking forward an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and deliverability issues.	The local authority is strongly opposed to this location and as a large scale Green Belt site the appropriateness of release vis a vis other sites still needs to be considered at RSS level.

**Decision**

**This location has not demonstrated the potential to meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements for successful development as an eco-town at this time. However, further studies of potential in this area and the wider sub-region should include further assessment of this location.**

# Cotgrave Place

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- Existing disused mineral line which could be reopened and used (however, Department for Transport (DfT) has warned that there are many problems inherent in reopening the disused mineral line, the main one being the viability of the service).
- Proximity to Nottingham which could encourage walking and cycling to work.
- The proximity of the Grantham Canal and possibility of using as a walking/cycling route and recreational resource.
- Good range of links to accessible countryside for recreation, e.g. the Grantham Canal, Cotgrave Country Park, and Holme Pierrepont Country Park.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- The site is located within the Green Belt.
- There are a number of small settlements/proposed developments in the area so there could be a risk of coalescence (the proposal includes relocating the existing golf course between the site and Cotgrave to avoid this).
- The road infrastructure in Rushcliffe and around the site is under great pressure.
- It could become a commuter settlement because of its proximity to the strategic road network.
- The site is greenfield and part of it is Grade 3 agricultural land.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- A water cycle study is required
- A more detailed landscape strategy is required
- Expert assessment needed to confirm whether the proposed railway link at Cotgrave Place and enhancement of road access and services for Bingham station are achievable
- There could be implications from long distance hydraulic connections via the River Trent to the Humber Estuary
- Transport proposals need further consideration.

<p><b>Government response</b> Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:</p>	
<p>(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.</p>	<p>The proposals for the location were not sufficiently developed to judge this issue.</p>
<p>(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.</p>	<p>The proposals for the location are at an early stage of development and insufficient evidence was available on these issues.</p>
<p>(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.</p>	<p>The proposals for the location are at an early stage of development and insufficient evidence was available on these issues.</p>
<p>(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.</p>	<p>Although close to Nottingham, the location is challenging in sustainable transport and employment terms.</p>
<p>(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.</p>	<p>As a large scale Green Belt site the appropriateness of release needs to be considered at RSS stage.</p>

**Decision**

**Evidence provided on how this location could be taken forward sustainably and on deliverability was very limited and was not sufficient to enable a view to be taken on its potential as an eco-town.**

# Rackheath

The Sustainability Appraisal summary published in November 2008 for consultation assessed this location as follows:

## *Key strengths of location*

- Close to existing operational railway with station access.
- Proximity to Norwich and the location within the Norwich Priority Growth Area.
- The location is being considered in the Core Strategy by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership.

## *Key weaknesses of location*

- The location is split into two sites extending either side of the proposed Northern Distributor Road (NDR).
- The great majority of the site has not been previously developed.

*Following review of the consultation responses, and any additional evidence, the SA addendum published today alongside the PPS has summarised the key sustainability issues as follows:*

- The availability of water resources is a key issue; the Environment Agency notes that there is no water available at low flows in any local catchments and that the catchment from which the Rackheath site draws is over-abstracted
- Impacts on water quality from development at Rackheath are also a key issue
- A Water Cycle Study covering Rackheath should be undertaken
- Further investigation of impacts on European wildlife sites from development at Rackheath are crucial.

**Government response** Government has considered the issues raised in the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, supporting studies and updates and the issues identified in the summary of consultation responses under the following headings:

(i) Scope for the location to exemplify high sustainability gains (in terms of PPS standards) in relation to its context and surrounding area.	There is strong potential to achieve wider environmental innovation in this location, given the close proximity to Norwich, integration with local development and the presence of local centres of expertise on these issues. However, there are also significant environmental constraints which must be addressed.
(ii) Whether infrastructure proposals for the location, such as transport, are sufficiently developed to be able to achieve sustainability standards of the type set in the PPS.	Good rail access with the potential for improvement is a strength. Issues remain to be resolved on how best to provide road and sustainable transport. The local authority view is that road access should be part of the proposed NDR, which is an RFA regional priority. A further significant issue is the need to tackle the extreme water stress of the area, to develop new and detailed proposals on water supply and to manage water discharges to avoid unacceptable pressure on the Broads SPA. These do not appear to be strategic barriers to successful delivery of a scheme in this location, but require significant further work. Further work on green infrastructure and on management measures to address impacts on biodiversity will also be required.
(iii) Whether the infrastructure proposed for the location is likely to be deliverable, taking account of affordability and public sector constraints.	The proposed NDR has yet to receive DfT major scheme approval, although consideration of the scheme is well advanced, but alternative means of improving road access to Rackheath are also achievable. Apart from the NDR and the need for innovative new water supply and additional waste water measures, the infrastructure delivery issues for this location are likely to be relatively straightforward and capable of resolution.
(iv) Is the location likely to work well in terms of economic and employment links and impacts on neighbouring settlements.	The location is well placed in relation to employment areas nearby and links well to neighbouring settlements and is strongly supported by the Great Norwich Development Partnership.
(v) Would taking forward and deliverability of an eco-town in this location fit well with current or emerging policies on planning and wider growth and regeneration issues.	As the consultation responses indicate deliverability prospects are strong, given the support for this direction of growth in the work supporting the Greater Norwich joint Local Development Framework (LDF) and growth point delivery plan. It also benefits from positive community work by the local authority and the active involvement in public engagement of the Climate Change unit at UEA.

**Decision**

**The location has demonstrated that it can meet the sustainability and deliverability requirements to be successfully developed as an eco-town.**







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