

MISSION STATEMENT

***To Improve the Quality of Life
For Those Who Live and Work in the District***

Please ask for: Ken Robinson
Direct Dial No: 01757 292007
Fax No: 01757 292020
E-mail kerobinson@selby.gov.uk

3 June 2008

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to An Extraordinary meeting of the Selby District Council to be held in the Civic Suite, Civic Centre, Portholme Road, Selby on **Wednesday 11 June 2008** commencing at **6.00 pm**.

Yours sincerely

M Connor
Chief Executive

Opening Prayers will be offered.

AGENDA – PUBLIC SESSION

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive apologies for absence.

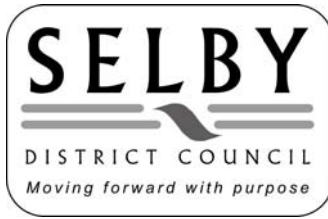
2. **Disclosure of Interest**

To receive any disclosures of interest in matters to be considered at the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 117 of the Local Government Act 1972, and Sections 50, 52 and 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by the Council.

3. **Eco Towns**

To consider the report of S Martin, Strategic Director (to follow).

COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED TO UPDATE THE REGISTER OF INTERESTS AFTER ANY CHANGE IN CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY AFFECT CURRENT ENTRIES



Title: The Eco Town debate
To: Extra Ordinary meeting of Council
Date: 11 June 2008
Author: Martin Connor, Chief Executive

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Council with an opportunity to debate Government plans for an Eco Town in the Leeds City Region in general and within Selby District in particular.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **That Council considers this report and provides the Leader with a remit for his meeting with the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board on 12 June 2008.**

3 Executive Summary

- 3.1 Within a relatively short timescale, the Council and residents of the District have been drawn into a debate on the potential for a major new settlement in Selby District. The debate has not been an open debate. Information has been limited and we have suffered from a drip feed effect where it has been difficult to determine fact from speculation. The whole process has lacked transparency and has left a bitter taste across the district.
- 3.2 Trying to avoid the imposition of a new town site within the district, a report was commissioned by the Leeds City Region (LCR) in an attempt to identify a more suitable site. This process itself added to local concern by identifying four short listed sites which were all located in Selby District.
- 3.3 The Leeds City Region Leaders' Board will meet on 12 June to consider the recommendations of GVA Grimley the consultants commissioned by LCR.

3.4 Despite my confidence expressed at Council on 3 June, the Grimley report has not been made available and will only be revealed to the Leaders' Board tomorrow.

4 The Report

4.1 In October 2007 the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board agreed in principle to the location of a new settlement within the city region as an aid to meeting the demanding targets for new housing in the region believing that this new settlement would reduce the target figures to be achieved by other means. They considered at that time that, given the tight timescales, an independent site search could not be delivered in time.

4.2 In January 2008 we became aware of bids for the development of eco towns submitted by the private sector and being considered by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). At that time the sites in the LCR were:

- Micklefield (Leeds)
- Willow Green, Eggborough (Selby)
- Darringfield (Selby/Wakefield)

4.3 The timescale given then by DCLG was for a February announcement, a short consultation period and a July decision. Local reaction was immediate and there then followed a series of meetings and representations which culminated in an agreement by the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board to the commissioning of a study into more appropriate sites within the LCR. Even then, there were concerns over the true requirement for an eco town, the established housing need or the appropriateness of alternative provision through other growth points.

4.4 GVA Grimley were commissioned in February/March to research suitable sites across the entire city region. Their remit was to produce a report on recommended sites for the meeting of the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board scheduled for 12 June. When questioned at Council on 3 June, I fully expected that the Grimley report would be provided for Leaders in advance of the 12 June meeting but in fact this is not the case. The report has been withheld until the presentation at the meeting. The Agenda report is reproduced at Appendix A to this report for councillors' information.

4.5 What we do know is that the Grimley report will identify four sites in the city region which, in their view, made the final shortlist:

Willow Green, Eggborough
Burn (airfield site)
Gascoigne Wood (former mine site)
Church Fenton (airfield site)

All of the sites are within Selby District.

4.6 The four sites were distilled from an initial list of 14:

- 1 Flaxby
- 2 Kirk Deighton
- 3 Clifton Gate
- 4 Elvington Airfield
- 5 Acaster Airfield
- 6 Church Fenton
- 7 Gascoigne Wood
- 8 Burn Airfield
- 9 Willow Green
- 10 Darringfield
- 11 The Greens
- 12 Allerton Bywater
- 13 Micklefield
- 14 Thorp Arch

4.7 The list of 14 all lie in a search area to the east of Leeds and this is because of the application of a weighting system as set out below:

- New Growth Point (NGP) Impact (x3)
- Regeneration Area Impact (x3)
- Housing Affordability Impact (x3)
- Rail link to CRDP employment (x2)
- Spare Capacity on rail link (x3)

4.8 Having established through the weighting system that the new town will be to the east of Leeds, the 14 sites were subjected to the following “gateway” tests:

1. Is the site big enough to accommodate upwards of 5,000 new homes?
2. Is the site covered by Flood Zone 2 or 3 designations?
3. Does the site have supportive ownership?
4. Does the site have proximate rail links to the centres of CRDP employment growth?
5. Is there spare capacity on the principal rail lines connecting with the site?
6. Does the site location relate to a housing market sub area exhibiting high and/ or extreme affordability pressures?
7. Is the site located outside the Green Belt?

- 4.9 The application of these tests left only the four Selby District sites in the frame.
- 4.10 The next stage of the Grimley study concentrated on these four sites. They looked at the capacity of the sites in relation to:
- Ownership
 - Physical constraints eg flooding,
 - Access
 - Rail and other infrastructure
- 4.11 Yorkshire Forward, owners of the Burn site, have no interest in the site being put forward for eco town development. The Grimley assessment is that the site is too constrained and is too close to Selby to be further considered.
- 4.12 The Ministry of Defence, owners of the Church Fenton site, are currently looking at their site ownership nationally and have indicated that they will not consider the development of the Church Fenton site ahead of this national review.
- 4.13 This leaves the Eggborough and Gascoigne Wood sites in the frame. UK Coal have now indicated that they would be interested in entering a bid for the development of an eco town on the Gascoigne Wood site and have engaged consultants to progress this bid. The bid from the GMI property company is still on the table for the Eggborough site.
- 4.14 Both sites have constraints and the developable area would provide nearer 5,000 new dwellings rather than 15,000 but both still, apparently, meet the criteria set by DCLG. At any rate, DCLG see both sites as worthy of consideration.
- 4.15 The Grimley preferred site is Gascoigne Wood and this will be the site recommended to the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board tomorrow.
- 4.16 I attach at Appendix B a document prepared by Selby District Council officers comparing the four sites against the eco town criteria. This document does not express any view or recommendation but is intended to be a factual statement to assist the Council debate.
- 4.17 In determining a remit for the Leader when he meets with LCR colleagues, the Council might consider a range of options but, hopefully, this background will be helpful to those discussions.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Councillors are asked to consider their position on the eco town proposal and give the necessary remit for the Leader to take to the Leeds City Region Leaders' Board tomorrow.

7 Link to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 This report links to the Promoting Prosperity and Better use of Resources themes of the Corporate Plan.

8 How Does This Report Link to the Council's Priorities?

- 8.1 The report links to the Stronger Communities priority.

9 Impact on Corporate Policies

9.1	Service Improvement	No Impact
9.2	Equalities	No Impact
9.3	Community Safety and Crime	No Impact
9.4	Procurement	No Impact
9.5	Risk Management Active participation in the process is essential to safeguard the future social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community.	Impact
9.6	Sustainability The proposal would have significant impact on the future sustainability and character of our District.	Impact
9.7	Value for Money	No Impact

10 Background Papers

- 10.1 None



Originator: Colin Blackburn 0113 395 2261
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Report of: The Chief Officer

Date: 12 June 2008

Subject: CITY REGION ECO TOWN STUDY

1.0 Purpose of this report

1.1 To consider the final outputs and recommendations of the Leeds City Region Eco Towns Study to explore the potential for an eco town within the city region.

2.0 Background information

2.1 On 3 April 2008, the Government announced fifteen locations for further investigation as potential locations for eco towns in England. One of these locations is the Leeds City Region. The Government published these proposals for consultation with a deadline of the end of June.

2.2 At the previous Leaders' Board meeting on 21 February 2008, Leaders reiterated their previous concerns over the Government's process for identifying an eco town within the Leeds City Region, which centred on proposals being put forward solely by the private sector with little or no local authority input. The announcement on 3 April confirmed that six private sector proposals were originally submitted at Thorpe Arch, Oulton / Rothwell, Micklefield, Darrington, Eggborough/Kellington and Clifton.

2.3 Leaders also confirmed at the meeting their support in principle for an eco town in the city region, as part of a potential package of measures including the proposed New Growth Points in the city region, to support economic growth and help meet future housing and housing affordability needs. However, Leaders instead made a proposal to Government for the city region to undertake a robust strategic spatial study to consider the potential for an eco town in the city region, including a preferred sustainable location. This was considered as essential to ensure that local issues, particularly in relation to regeneration, economic development, transport and local housing affordability needs, are fully taken into account in considering this matter.

- 2.4 Unlike elsewhere in the country where specific sites have been identified, the Government agreed to the city region's proposal to undertake the study in their announcement on 3 April 2008. This presents the city region Partnership with an opportunity to exert a strong influence on the preferred location of an eco town in the city region, which is more fully integrated with city region and local spatial, economic and housing priorities. A commitment was given to complete the study by July 2008 in order for the outputs of the study to feed into the wider national eco towns consultation process.
- 2.5 The consultants GVA Grimley were commissioned to undertake an independent technical evidence based study to inform Leaders' consideration of the potential for an eco town in the city region. Further detailed investigations such as in relation to detailed transport schemes, as well as widespread public consultation and engagement would be required to take forward an eco town proposal in the city region. The consultants will present their strategic findings and recommendations at the meeting.

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 The Government has announced that in July it will publish for public consultation full sustainability appraisals of each of the fifteen potential eco town locations which are intended to provide greater detail on environmental sustainability and other issues and test them against reasonable alternatives. The Government also intends to publish and consult on a draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) on Eco Towns, which will set out the core principles and criteria for eco towns and will become a material consideration in determining planning proposals for eco towns at the local planning level.
- 3.2 In the event that city region Leaders wish to recognise a preferred location for an eco town in the city region, it is understood that this location would be incorporated within the Government's public consultation process beginning in July. This would offer local communities and all other interested parties, individuals and stakeholders the opportunity to comment on the shortlisted location.
- 3.3 The Government will take the final decision on whether to select the city region as a location for an eco town, and if so, where the eco town should be located, taking into account comments received through the consultation process. The Government has indicated its intention to select upto ten locations nationally for eco towns by the end of the year/early 2009, and Ministers have stipulated that these will then be subject to consideration through formal planning processes. Further details are likely to be set out in the draft PPS.
- 3.4 It will be important that the whole range of infrastructure is provided that will be necessary to both support an eco town, and to ensure that the benefits to existing local communities are maximised and the negative impacts are minimised. Infrastructure requirements would include transport infrastructure, support for local regeneration initiatives, and provision of health and education facilities. Furthermore, to be a truly 'eco' eco town the

many eco principles such as in relation to design, layout and use of materials will need to be integrated into the development – but this would be considered more fully through the masterplanning process and through consideration of a planning application.

- 3.5 The Government has indicated that additional funding and support will be available locally to support the delivery of eco towns in the specific localities, including but not exclusively through the Government's Growth Fund and Community Infrastructure Fund. However, it will be important that further public and private funding is secured to deliver the infrastructure requirements. The Government has indicated that it expects a large proportion of the infrastructure costs to be secured through the development itself.
- 3.6 It is understood that the private sector eco town proposals that were originally submitted to the Government in 2007 are still 'on the table.' The Government is therefore still in a position to take forward and select one of these sites as its preferred location for an eco town in the city region, in the absence of a potential alternative location.

4.0 Recommendations

- 4.1 On the basis of a position emerging that the Government determines the Leeds City Region as an appropriate location for an eco town, Leaders are requested to:
1. Identify a location with the potential to offer the most appropriate and sustainable location in the city region for an eco town, having regard to the independent conclusions and recommendations of the city region eco town study [to be presented at the Leaders' meeting on 12 June], and emphasising the importance of undertaking further detailed investigations and widespread public consultation;
 2. Subject to Leaders' consideration of Point 1 above, support representations to Government on the necessary infrastructure investment 'package' that will be required on-site and in neighbouring localities to both support the sustainable development of the eco town and to maximise the benefits and minimise the potential impacts on local communities [details to be presented at the Leaders' meeting on 12 June]. This will include, but will not be limited to, investment provisions for:
 - Improved and new road, rail, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure;
 - New primary and secondary schools;
 - New childrens and early years facilities;
 - Additional hospital and primary health care facilities;
 - New leisure facilities, parks and open spaces;
 - Additional civic facilities and amenities such as new libraries;
 - Additional support for the provision of local services;

- Suitable regeneration projects in neighbouring towns and villages; and
 - Support for new and existing local employment growth opportunities.
3. Confirm the importance of the necessary levels of both Government and other public funding, and private funding being secured to deliver the infrastructure requirements; and
 4. Support the requirement for additional Government funding support, particularly to Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council, to help manage the delivery of the eco town through the preparation and planning processes, including to support full and meaningful public consultation and engagement in the planning process.

COMPARISON OF ECO TOWN PROPOSALS

	Burn Airfield	Church Fenton	Gascoigne Wood	Willow Green
CLG / GVA Grimley Criteria				
Flood risk / drainage	Affected by the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b – high risk) of the River Aire which covers approximately two thirds of the former airbase and extends eastwards beyond the Selby to Doncaster railway.	Land to the west of the Chuch Fenton to Ulleskelf road and south of the Church Fenton to Ryther road falls within functional floodplain (high risk). Land to the east of the airbase is medium risk (Zone 2). The airbase itself and land to the north is low risk (Zone 1).	Land north of the Leeds – Hull railway is predominantly low risk (Zone 1), with narrow lines of functional floodplain following existing drainage ditches. There is an area of high/medium risk south of the railway to the west of Hambleton.	Central part of the site is low risk (Flood Zone 1) with functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b high risk) extending into the northern, western and southern parts of the site particularly around Kellington.
Public transport	Buses On a bus route, Selby to Doncaster.	Buses On Tadcaster to Pontefract bus route.	Buses Not on a bus route.	Buses On two bus routes Selby to Doncaster and also to Pontefract.
	Trains Nearest Station is Selby	Trains Stations at Church Fenton and Ulleskelf, access to Leeds and York.	Trains Nearest railway stations are Sherburn and South Milford, both have good links to York and Leeds. Potential for new passenger station at Gascoigne Wood.	Trains Railway Station at Whitley, currently only one train per day to Leeds. Service however could be improved.
Impact on roads	Accessed from A19. Close to A63 Selby Bypass. Approximately 4.5 miles from M62 motorway.	Will impact on the network of unclassified roads serving a number of small villages and hamlets including Ryther (off the B1223), Biggin, and Little Fenton as well as Church Fenton and Ulleskelf. Nearest A road is the A162, (Sherburn to Tadcaster Road) which is approximately 2 miles via Church Fenton or 3 miles via Ulleskelf. Site is aproximately 6.5 miles from the A64 and 7.5 miles from the A1.	Accessed from the B1222 Cawood to Sherburn Road. Site is approximately 2 miles from the A162 Sherburn bypass, 7.5 miles from the A64 and 5.5 miles from the A1. Alternative access to the A1 via the A63 could be provided by bridging the Leeds – Hull railway line, which would reduce the impact on the B1222 and A162 routes.	Accessed via A645 and A19(Eggborough to Knottingley Road). Within 0.5 miles of M62 junction 34. Will significantly increase traffic using the rail crossing at Whitley Bridge
Public Sector land / pdl	Airfield owned by Yorkshire Forward. 196 hectares Runways and associated aprons / buildings qualify as pdl. Airfield itself could accommodate a maximum of 5000 dwellings.	Runways, officer quarters and hangers retained in MOD ownership. Extent of ownership unknown. Residential properties to west of Ulleskelf road sold off to private purchasers. Airfield itself could accommodate a maximum of 5000 dwellings.	Former Gascoigne Wood surface mine and adjoining land amounting to 240 ha owned by UK coal.	Greenfield site in private ownership. The promoters claim that they will control 225 ha of land before the end of the year and that negotiations are under way to acquire up to a total of 600 ha

Relationship with surrounding settlements	Within 1.5 miles of a principal service centre (Selby). Burn village would be absorbed. Thorpe Willoughby, Brayton, Camblesforth, Gateforth, West Haddlesey, Chapel Haddlesey and Hirst Courtney within 3 miles.	Within 3 and 6 miles respectively of Sherburn and Tadcaster local service centres. Church Fenton and Ulleskelf would be immediately adjacent and / or absorbed. Saxton, Towton, Ryther, Barkston Ash, and Biggin within 3 miles	Within 1.5 miles of a local service centre. (Sherburn in Elmet). Little Fenton, Biggin, South Milford, Monk Fryston, Hillam and Hambleton within 3 miles.	Within 2 miles of a principal service centre (Knottingley – one of the '5 Towns' in Wakefield) and 5 miles of Selby. Eggborough and Kellington would be immediately adjacent and / or absorbed. Birkin, Beal, Kellingley, Whitley and Hensall within 3 miles.
Agricultural land quality	Predominantly Grade 2 (runways Grade 4) with Grade 3 to west, east and south	Former airbase is Grade 4, surrounded by predominantly Grade 2, with Grade 4 to south west	Predominantly Grade 3 with Grade 2 to south east	Grade 3
Economic Factors				
% of residents who travel less than 20 km to their place of work	50.06%	47.37%	65.23%	56.11%
% of residents who travel more than 40 km to their place of work	5.85%	5.35%	4.33%	5.95%
% of people aged 16-74 in employment in the area who travel less than 20 km to work	62.71%	Data not available	70.89%	63.50%
% of people aged 16-74 in employment in the area who travel more than 40 km to work	2.68%	Data not available	3.46%	6.42%
Biodiversity	No international, national or local designations	No international or national designations Paradise Wood, south of the Church Fenton to Ryther Road is a protected SINC site (site of local importance for nature conservation) identified in the SDLP	No international or national designations. Bishop Wood to the east, which impinges on the area of search is a protected SINC site identified in the SDLP.	No international, national or local designations

Additional Criteria				
Green belt	Not affected by Green Belt designation	The York – Leeds railway defines the outer edge of the west riding Green Belt. MOD land is outside the Green Belt	Mostly unaffected by Green belt designation although land to the north and east of Monk Fryston (south of the Leeds – Hull railway line) falls within the west riding green belt	Approximately 50% of the proposed site is affected by Green Belt. Proposals would have to be scaled down to avoid Green Belt
Landscape quality	Comprises runways and concrete aprons associated with the former Burn airbase, surrounded by a mixture of open and semi enclosed farmland . Open, flat landscape. Outward views of Drax Power Station to the east and Eggborough Power Station to the south. Selby urban area and bypass immediately to the north.	The central core of the site is formed by the remaining part of the former Church Fenton airbase , including operational runways and hangers. Surrounding area is a mixture of open and semi enclosed farmland, with woodland and hedgerows.	The central core of the site is formed by the remaining infrastructure, buildings and sidings of the former Gascoigne Wood surface mine site which is screened by bunding and a landscaped spoil mound from the surrounding flat, open agricultural land. Bishops Wood curtails long distance views to the east. The site is separated from Sherburn in Elmet by employment development on the former Sherburn airfield and the remaining airstrip situated to the north west.	Degraded agricultural landscape comprising open fringe farmland and semi enclosed farmland, with significant hedgerow loss. Affected by overhead power lines and outward views of Eggborough Power Station immediately to the east and Ferrybridge and Drax in the mid distance. Aire valley and washlands situated to the north, and M62 to the south.
Mineral resources				Likely to be affected by future subsidence from coal mining associated with Kellingley Colliery. This could affect the timing / phasing of delivery.
Built heritage	No significant built heritage	The airbase includes a number of scheduled ancient monuments (gun placments and fighter pens). There are 6 listed buildings in nearby Church Fenton including a grade 1 Church and 4 listed building in Ulleskelf.	No significant built heritage	Kellington Church of St Edmund and associated cross and gate piers is Grade 1 listed. Kellington Windmill is grade 2 listed.
Air quality	Not affected by significant air quality issues	Not affected by significant air quality issues	Not affected by significant air quality issues	Not affected by significant air quality issues. Would need to examine the potential impacts of Ferrybridge and Eggborough Power Stations
Other constraints	Western limit to development could be defined by the east coast main line with Selby bypass / canal to the north . Would be necessary to bridge either the	The east coast main line could define the eastern limit to development Would require cessation of training activities	Cost of new rail bridge could be prohibitive because of ground levels	Site crossed by two national grid overhead power lines associated with Eggborough Power Station.

	east coast main line or the Selby – Doncaster – London line in order to accommodate a town approaching the upper end of the scale	and closure of emergency RAF runway.		
Opportunities	Selby Canal could be exploited as a feature (marina activities)		There would be an opportunity to bridge the Leeds - Hull line linking with a new bypass for Monk Fryston rerouted to the north of the village. The landscaped spoil mound could be further developed as a country park / leisure feature	Knottingley to Goole Canal could be exploited as a feature.
Local affordability				
% of houses in Council Tax bands below band D	62.81%	45.11%	70.25%	63.45%
% of houses in Council Tax bands above band D	18.56%	36.95%	10.26%	20.31%
% of houses that are owned (either outright or mortgaged)	89.76%	78.63%	76.45%	84.11%
% of houses that are social rented (Council or other social rented)	5.76%	9.27%	16.85%	10.67%
Affordable Housing	The Housing Needs Study suggests that there is a shortage of affordable housing in Burn, and of the 4 sites is the area with the largest Council waiting list numbers	There is a shortage of affordable housing in this area and a fairly large waiting list	There is a large waiting list in this area	The need for more affordable housing is present in this area, again with a relatively large waiting list