

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**                                    **Stratford on Avon Area Committee**

**Date of Committee**                                   **19 March 2008**

**Report Title**     **Information Report on Proposed 'Eco-town'  
at Former Long Marston MOD Depot**

**Summary**

As part of the national 'Eco-towns' initiative, a proposal to develop a new settlement of 6,000 dwellings has been submitted to the Government by the private landowners of a 240 hectare site, largely comprising the former MOD Depot at Long Marston. Government expects to announce a short-list of preferred broad locations for at least ten eco-towns across the country in early March with an announcement of the final choices in July. This information report was requested by the Area Committee at its last meeting.

**For further information please contact**

Andy Cowan  
Chief Planner  
Tel. 01926 412126  
andycowan@warwickshire.gov.uk

**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?**

Yes/No

**Background Papers**                                    Promotional brochures provided by the landowners.

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**                                    *Details to be specified*

Other Committees                                     .....

Local Member(s)  
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Councillor Mrs I Seccombe – ‘I welcome the opportunity for members to understand the implications of the proposal for an Eco-town in Stratford District, and to review what opportunity of influencing decisions may be available to Members. I believe that the speed of the timetable of decisions needs to be reflected alongside the Council’s decision making calendar in order that we can properly feed in considerations at an appropriate stage.’

- Other Elected Members  Councillor M Heatley – for information.
- Cabinet Member  Councillor C Saint – for information.  
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance  .....
- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION**                      **YES/NO**      (*If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps*)

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :**

*Details to be specified*

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Stratford on Avon Area Committee - 19 March 2008

### Information Report on Proposed 'Eco-town' at Former Long Marston MOD Depot

#### Report of the Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

#### Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report.

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government's 'Eco-town' initiative, announced in the 'Housing Green Paper' "Homes for the Future" last year, has resulted in over 50 proposals being submitted nation-wide for small new towns of 5-20,000 homes. The aim of an 'eco-town' is to increase housing provision, improve housing affordability and to be "large-scale free-standing new settlements that are exemplars of sustainable building and living, with the opportunity to design in low- and zero-carbon technology from the start".
- 1.2 A short-list of preferred broad locations for eco-towns across the country is expected to be published in early March with an announcement in July of the final choice of ten or more new eco-towns nationally - at least one in each region. Government expects that some of the chosen schemes could be at the planning application stage before the end of the calendar year. However, it is also possible that the short-listed preferred locations could be the subject of some form of public consultation in April/May but this has not been confirmed.
- 1.3 At this stage, Government is keeping information about the eco-town submissions private - on grounds of commercial confidentiality. However, around a dozen of the promoters nationally have publicised their proposals, including three in the West Midlands i.e. Long Marston (largely) in Warwickshire; Throckmorton, near Pershore in Worcestershire; and Fradley in Staffordshire.

### 2. The Long Marston Depot Proposal

- 2.1 The 'eco-town' proposal at Long Marston relates to a site of 240 hectares on the county boundary with Worcestershire and Gloucestershire and includes the former Engineer Resources Depot and land to the south-west, which is currently used as a recycling facility. (See Context - Map 1 and Site – Map 2 attached as **Appendices A and B.**) The proposal has been submitted by the private

landowners – St Modwen and the Bird Group. They have provided complimentary copies of their submission documents but no support has been requested of, nor given by, any of the county or district councils concerned.

- 2.2 St Modwen and the Bird Group refer to their proposed eco-town as 'Middle Quinton' and their vision is to create a new town to achieve zero-carbon development and more sustainable living using the best new design and architecture. They identify the key features of the eco-town proposal as: a separate and distinct identity; good links to the surrounding towns and villages; zero-carbon development - an exemplar in environment and technology; new schools, retail, business space, leisure and a visitor attraction; between 30-50% affordable housing; and a delivery organisation (e.g. a Neighbourhood Trust) to manage the development of the town and the creation of a new community.

### **3. Strategic Policy Context**

- 3.1 When the County Council's Cabinet considered the Housing Green Paper on 27 September 2007, it concluded that, at that stage in the Phase 2 Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy, there appeared to be no need for an 'eco-town' in Warwickshire to assist in delivering sufficient housing to meet the latest household projections. This conclusion was arrived at in the context of endorsing the advice of the Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Forum (CSW Forum) – subsequently taken on-board by the Regional Assembly – to accommodate the housing growth implied by the latest Government household projections by focussing large scale growth on existing towns in the corridor from Nuneaton/Bedworth through Coventry to Warwick/Leamington and also Rugby, rather than the less sustainable districts of Stratford on Avon and North Warwickshire.
- 3.2 The existing Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), approved by Government in September 2004 (currently going through a three-phase review) provides for housing growth in rural areas – such as Stratford on Avon District – to be limited to local needs and the Regional Assembly's Draft Phase 2 Revision proposals seek to maintain this element of the strategy by providing for 5,600 dwellings to be built in the district over the 2006-26 period. At 6000+ dwellings, the proposed eco-town at Long Marston Depot would be about half the current size of Stratford-upon-Avon or Warwick and provide the equivalent of the total housing growth experienced in the whole District over the past 10 years.
- 3.3 Government is not satisfied with the Regional Assembly's proposals for the Phase 2 RSS Revision because it does not consider that full account had been taken of its policy to improve affordability by increasing housing supply. Consequently, Government has appointed consultants to look at ways of topping-up the housing numbers proposed by the Regional Assembly and the results are to be considered at the Public Examination of the Draft RSS Phase 2 Revision in November 2008. The Regional Assembly expects that any Government preferred 'eco-town' proposals will be also be 'tabled' at the Public Examination but this has not yet been agreed; nor is it yet clear whether or not 'eco-towns' will be regarded as part of the Government's 'topping-up' proposals or meeting a separate need (i.e. in addition to the top-up).

3.4 The strategic planning issues raised by the large redundant sites of former hospitals, airfields and military depots were recognised in the Warwickshire Structure Plan 1996-2011 (WASP) - Policy GD.7. It precludes development of such sites for strategically significant purposes that are planned to be met elsewhere in Warwickshire. This, in turn, provided the framework for Stratford on Avon District Local Plan's policy CTY18 - the specific policy on the Long Marston Depot – and the subsequent 'master planning' exercise being carried out by the District Council in conjunction with the local community and St Modwen.

#### **4. Briefing and Investigation**

4.1 Whilst this 'eco-town' proposal is clearly contrary to existing and emerging strategic planning policy, Government may impose a new policy which supports the principle of an eco-town in this location. Therefore, the local authorities and agencies concerned need to be in a position to identify and justify the infrastructure requirements in the interests of the communities that would be likely to be affected in that event.

4.2 In this context, the leaders/portfolio holders and chief executives of Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire, Wychavon and Worcestershire Councils wrote to the Department of Communities and Local Government in early January 2007 to point out their concerns about the lack of consultation and opaque nature of the process being adopted by Government and the serious policy and infrastructure implications of the proposed eco-town at Long Marston.

4.3 Subsequently, the chief executives of the adjoining county and district authorities have proposed a joint member group to consider the position of the 'eco-town' proposals, including assessment of infrastructure and service requirements. This group would not be a decision making body but would enable the authorities to ensure that members are effectively briefed and share information. Support would be provided by an officer group, also drawn from all six authorities, which will have an investigative role.

4.4 If Government provides for a period of public consultation on its short-listed preferred broad locations, a report will be made to Cabinet recommending an appropriate response. It may be necessary to address the issue in the report to Cabinet proposed for 19 June - to respond to the Government's proposals for topping-up the RSS housing figures.

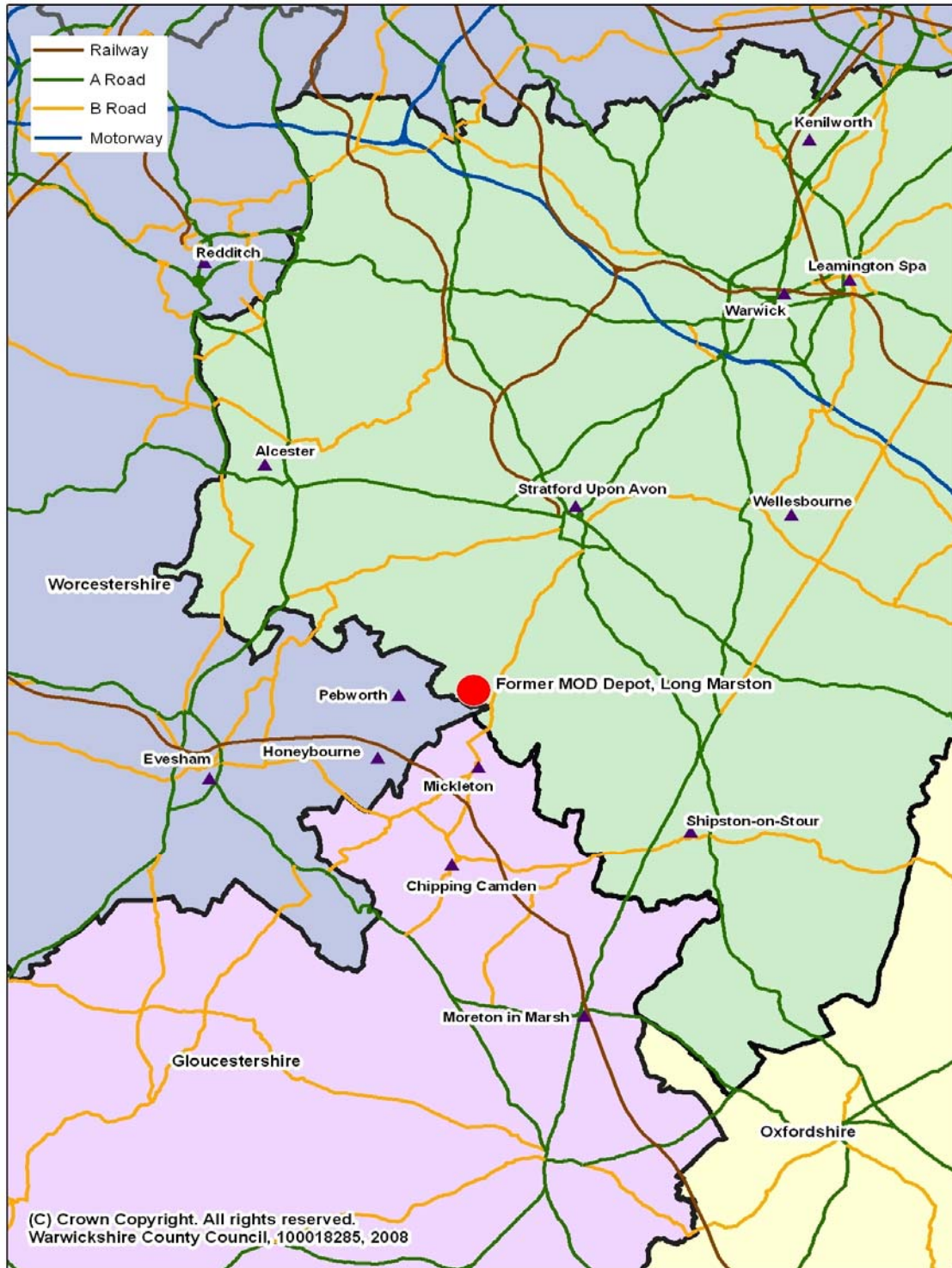
DAVID PYWELL  
Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Economy  
Shire Hall  
Warwick

27 February 2008

Stratford on Avon Area Committee - 19 March 2008

Information Report on Proposed 'Eco-town' at Former Long Marston MOD Depot

Context - Map 1



**Stratford on Avon Area Committee - 19 March 2008**

**Information Report on Proposed 'Eco-town' at Former Long  
Marston MOD Depot**

**Site – Map 2**

