



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
Council

19th March 2009
26th March 2009

Report addendum
‘Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Statement on Eco-Towns’

Report of the Service Director, Planning and Policy

1. Following consideration of a report ‘Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns’ submitted to Cabinet on 16 February 2009 the decision has been called in and referred to Full Council on 26th March. The call in was ‘on the grounds that consideration has not been given to significant reports on the Eco-Town made available since the decision of full council; in particular the report by Halcrow and the Transport Modelling Study’. This addendum provides a position statement on these two issues and also refers to a document published by CLG since the report to Cabinet on 16th February, ‘Financial viability study of the eco-towns programme’.

The deadline for comments on the eco towns PPS has been extended to the end of April by CLG.

2. Joint Halcrow Strategic Assessment

- 2.1 This report was commissioned jointly by the four relevant local authorities (City, County, Oadby and Wigston and Harborough) to consider, at a strategic level, issues raised by the proposed Pennbury Eco-town. The report highlighted a series of outstanding questions in respect of Pennbury and also highlighted particular areas of opportunity, for instance in dealing with the difficulties of delivering affordable housing in the sub-region. The Co-op has since provided a response to the Halcrow report following concern over some of the factual and technical information. Both the Halcrow report and the Co-op response will be referred to CLG as part of their information gathering work contributing towards consideration for shortlisting of the Pennbury Scheme.

- 2.2 The City Council's position on the Pennbury Eco-town since the October 2008 report to Cabinet has been in-principle support for the potential site at Pennbury and the housing, transport, environmental and community benefits it could bring to the sub-region. The October report recognised issues particularly relating to transport and employment that continue to need to be addressed further before the proposal can be considered fully acceptable.
- 2.3 The Halcrow report highlighted particular benefits from Pennbury in terms of new jobs, homes (including affordable), open space (60% of the site), community facilities, infrastructure and pioneering new approaches to zero carbon living. The report noted the potential additional benefit that could be delivered as a result of the scale of the proposal as compared to a more dispersed pattern of development.
- 2.4 The report particularly highlighted concerns over the lack of specific information to justify assumptions made in the Co-op Vision and the lack of directly comparable schemes in the UK. Issues were highlighted in relation to scale of housing required; clarity over who will live and work in Pennbury; how local housing needs would be met; whether the town would produce the number and type of jobs required and its appeal to new businesses; retail impact; environmental assumptions; detailed design proposals; delivery of proposed transport infrastructure and modal split.
- 2.5 The Co-op Vision is at a relatively early stage in the masterplanning process and acknowledges the need for further more detailed studies that will need to be prepared should the site be shortlisted. Considerably more work will be required to address many of the issues raised in the Halcrow report and by others including the City Council. At this stage the Halcrow report is not considered to raise any substantive strategic issues that would alter the City Council's in-principle support. To do so at this stage would prevent full and proper consideration of the potential benefits that Pennbury could bring to the City and the sub-region as a whole and would remove a potential alternative to other housing growth scenarios which have not at this stage been scrutinised at anywhere near the level of detail applied to Pennbury.

3. Transport Issues

- 3.1 A position statement from the City Council's Highway and Transport authority perspective is included as Appendix 1. In short this indicates that the view that improvements to the Leicester transport system can be delivered to accommodate the impact from Pennbury. A tram system is considered necessary linking to the City centre and also from Wigston. This would be essential to deliver the modal shift required and the transport capacity from the new homes and also existing homes in the London Road – Wigston corridor. It is acknowledged however that in the early phases of the development a bus based solution is likely to be necessary until a critical mass of development is achieved and the tram can be phased in.
- 3.2 The position statement notes the benefits of delivering the critical mass of housing growth on the scale proposed and the contribution this could make to

achieving the required transport infrastructure for the future of the City. It notes that whilst there are differences with the Co-op proposals that need to be worked on these are not 'showstoppers' for the eco-town as a whole.

- 3.3 A transport assessment has also been carried out by consultants White Young Green on behalf of the County Council. This raises a number of concerns related to required transport infrastructure, bus operations, park and ride sites and tram proposals. Appendix 2 contains a summary of relevant issues from the consultants report and City Council comments in response. Again this does not raise any substantive issues that would be considered 'showstoppers' for the eco-town, rather that more detailed work is required in a number of areas related to the transport proposals to refine the approach.

4. Financial viability study

- 4.1 Since the Eco Town PPS Cabinet report of 16th February CLG has published an assessment of the financial viability of the Co-op Pennbury proposal in its consultation document 'Financial viability of the eco-towns programme'. This document can be seen on the Councils website at:
<http://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council--services/ep/planning/pennbury-eco-town-hp>
- 4.2 The financial viability study is intended to advise whether, on the basis of an initial high level assessment, an eco-town could be economically viable in the locations listed. The study is primarily about the viability of the location. The particular scheme put forward is considered because it helps illustrate whether that location could be viable. For Pennbury the report concludes that 'The financial assessment indicates....that the development proposal has the potential to generate sufficient value to cover the direct and indirect costs of delivering the scheme without recourse to public subsidy. The proposal has potential to generate a surplus (contingency) over and above the estimated direct and indirect costs of delivering the scheme'. The report acknowledges that further work is required by Co-op on issues and uncertainties identified in the report as part of preparations for an outline planning application.
- 4.3 Comments will be made on the report to ensure that all key infrastructure requirements have been taken into account in the financial assessment and in particular the contribution that the Pennbury scheme will need to make to delivery of the required tram system is fully taken into account.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This Addendum to the report to Cabinet on 16 February 2009, 'Consultation on Draft Planning Policy Statement on Eco-towns' responds to two specific issues raised as part of a call in to Full Council in respect of the Halcrow joint report and also transport studies. Whilst raising issues that will need to be considered in more detail should the Pennbury proposal be shortlisted for further consideration later this year, there are no substantive issues that would alter the Council's position of in-principle support for the proposal at this stage. The benefits to the City and wider sub region deriving from Pennbury identified in the report to Cabinet in October 2008 remain potentially

deliverable and these can be pursued in much greater detail should Pennbury be shortlisted. The introduction of a tram system in particular is considered critical to the success of the eco town and considerably more work will be required to develop this further with Co-op and central Government.

6. Report Author:

Andrew Smith – Service Director Planning and Policy

Appendix 1

Eco Town for Leicestershire Leicester City Council's Position Statement as Highway and Transport Authority March 2009

1. Summary
Leicester City Council believes that improvements to the Leicester transport system can be delivered to accommodate the impact from the provision of 15,000 new homes at the Leicestershire Eco Town (known as Pennbury). The improvements will include a tram system to Leicester City Centre from the Eco Town and also from Wigston. A tram is ultimately necessary to achieve the modal shift that is required from the new homes and also from existing homes in the London Road/Wigston corridor, as well as transport capacity.
2. Leicester City Council's Position
The RSS allows for the provision of 45,500 new homes in and around Leicester to 2026. The City Council believes that the Eco Town will have less transport impact pro rata than much smaller traditional developments spread around the urban area. There is a critical mass such that step change interventions can be secured such as a tram. This will have immense overarching benefits for the Leicester area and bring forward wider economic benefits.
3. The Eco Town is the catalyst for trams in Leicester. It will be a public system serving existing residents in the London Road - Wigston corridor with a branch to the Eco Town. It will be procured in a similar way to Nottingham's tram, with the Coop in our case contributing to the 25% required local contribution. A tram is the only solution that fits in with the council's emerging 25 year vision - One Leicester: Planning for people not cars, Reducing our carbon footprint, Creating thriving, safe communities, Improving wellbeing and health, Talking up Leicester, Investing in skills and enterprise.
4. Leicester City Council believes a tram is ultimately necessary to achieve the modal shift that the analysis work to date shows is required from the new homes, as well as to provide the necessary future capacity. It is also required to achieve a modal shift from existing homes to allow for the inevitable increase in traffic due to the Eco Town eg a modal shift from existing homes in the Wigston area. A major development at this location will not work without a tram although it is accepted that a bus based solution is likely to be required in the early phases. A tram is required due to its ability to attract car users in sufficient numbers. There is no pollution at point of use and it could be powered from green energy. It is against a background of the number of new homes in Central Leicestershire due to grow by c20% to 2026 (the 45,000 new homes). A bus based rapid transit system would not attract sufficient car users compared to a tram and so the additional congestion would be

unacceptable, without a tram.

5. The Coop has done a lot of work in designing a tram and has costed it out as between £250m - £300m with an additional c£100m for a Wigston branch. They have indicated that they are willing to put in £1m per year for the next five years for the tram development and have indicated that the approx £40m reserved for BRT could be redirected into a tram. A tram is a complex project to deliver and it would take several years to procure. The current Government rules require 25% of the capital costs to be from local contributions. It would almost certainly be financed as a Government PFI scheme and would be a public system for Leicester with capability for future expansion to other parts of Greater Leicester. The City Council is totally committed to developing the business case for trams and would work in partnership with the Coop in carrying this work out jointly. We are linked into the expertise developed by Nottingham City Council in tram development and delivery.
6. The Coop will need to support the capital interventions with the whole package of rigorous parking restraint through to all possible smarter choices, including personalised travel planning to all the existing homes in the London Road - Wigston corridor. There will inevitably be some car trips generated from the Eco Town, but these need to be minimised and capacity on the existing radials created by encouraging some existing car users to use the tram and bus services. This will be facilitated by the intense personalised travel planning. The critical mass of development will also be a catalyst for other interventions encouraging lifestyle changes such as the development of smart cards and enabling our real time PT information system to be modernised.
7. Our current five year and longer term transport strategy is contained in our Central Leicestershire LTP, which has been assessed as excellent by DfT. More detail is provided in the Central Leicestershire Urban Congestion Target Delivery Plan, which has been assessed as very good by DfT. Our strategy recognises that there will be increased travel due to new homes and regeneration. In order to cater for the new trips due to the increased travel demand, we are making the most of the funding available with a very comprehensive package of both hard and soft interventions based on encouraging bus use, and park and ride in particular. We are already planning to deliver much of what the Coop propose in their transport strategy to deal with the forecast conditions without the Eco Town. The delivery of the new growth points housing already means an acceleration of the roll out of our LTP transport strategy. We believe that we can just about manage congestion within acceptable parameters with this approach and with the benefit of the additional funding that we are able to draw upon. There will be many new travellers between the Eco Town and Leicester and vice versa for which we need to ensure there are adequate new interventions, over and above what we already have planned, to deal with the new trips. This is why we believe that a tram is essential, to provide that added

capacity and persuade more car users out of their cars, backed up by a comprehensive package of all the best of the softer measures.

8. We would want to encourage cycling and walking with easy and pleasant links into the City as both a transport choice and to encourage healthy lifestyles. We recognise the importance of orbital bus services that will need subsidy in the early years.

9. Comments of Others

We have noted quite a lot of comments about the impact on the City transport system, which have been made without engagement or consultation with the officers or members of the City Council and clearly without an in depth knowledge of the City transport system. Some of the adverse comments are without foundation and others have achievable solutions. For example, we acknowledge that there needs to be a step change improvement in City Centre bus stopping and routing, so we are developing a proposed Leicester City Centre New Bus Termini and Routing Scheme covering both short and long term requirements. A scheme has already been accepted into the RFA as a Regional Priority for the period 2012 - 2017. We would say that we do not agree entirely with all the Coop's proposals, but that there are no 'showstoppers' in any differences we may have and we are confident on agreeing satisfactory interventions fairly quickly.

- 10 Conclusion

Leicester City Council believes that there are achievable and practical solutions to accommodate the transport demands brought about by the Leicestershire Eco Town. The solutions are more achievable due to the opportunity presented by the 'critical mass' of all the development being in one place as opposed to an alternative scenario of the development being spread around the Principal Urban Area. A tram is an essential part of the transport strategy backed up by intense travel planning and softer measures.

Appendix 2

RESPONSE TO WYG WORKING PAPER OF 2ND DECEMBER 2008

PENNBURY ECO-TOWN

PUBLIC TRANSPORT – REVIEW OF SEPTEMBER 2008 TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT PROPOSALS

Key concerns raised in WYG report	Significance	Potential way forward	City Council comments
That the TA proposes very little infrastructure improvement. The level of infrastructure proposed is considerably less than that outlined in the July 2008 Arup report.	Moderate	It is acknowledged that further work is required to quantify the actual level of transport infrastructure required.	<p>A detailed transport assessment (TA) will be undertaken prior to any planning application to fully assess the actual level of infrastructure required. In general it will be possible to lever in considerably more infrastructure due to the critical mass of all the houses being in one location compared to the alternative of the houses being spread around Leicester. It is possible to get a step change improvement in transport with this critical mass.</p> <p>Leicester City Council believes that improvements to the Leicester transport system can be delivered to accommodate the impact from the provision of 15,000 new homes at the Leicestershire Eco Town (known as Pennbury). The improvements will ultimately include a tram system to Leicester City Centre from the Eco Town and also from Wigston. A tram will ultimately be necessary to achieve the modal shift that is required from the new homes and also from existing homes in the London Road – Wigston corridor, as well as to provide transport capacity.</p>
The number of bus services operating along the A6 will	High	It is acknowledged	We believe that it will be possible to accommodate the additional bus services, pending the introduction of the tram. There will only be limited bus patronage

<p>increase by more than 50% in some locations. As such the proposed volume of buses operating along sections of the A6, a road that currently has no spare capacity during peak times, will create significant practical difficulties.</p>		<p>that further work is required to fully and realistically assess the impact on this corridor.</p>	<p>increases in the very early years as building commences and completed house numbers begin to build up. None the less, a significant public transport innovation will be required to accommodate demand on this corridor, which will lead to a tram. The Co-op will need to support the capital interventions with the whole package of rigorous parking restraint through to all possible smarter choices, including personalised travel planning to all the existing homes in the London Road – Wigston corridor. There will inevitably be some car trips generated from the Eco Town, but these need to be minimised and capacity on the existing radials created by encouraging some existing car users to use the tram and bus services. This will be facilitated by the intense personalised travel planning.</p>
<p>The proposal for the use of articulated buses. The paper considers the general pros & cons of articulated buses. States that the critics claim that articulated buses in London have a poor safety record, being involved in 75% more accidents and three times as many collisions with cyclists as conventional buses. That the theoretical operation of the articulated buses assumed in the TA cannot in practice be achieved for the various reasons stated.</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Agree on the viable alternatives that we know are available.</p>	<p>Leicester City Council do not support using articulated buses in the city for several reasons including their adverse impact on pedestrian & cycling amenity & safety. It should be noted that Transport for London are currently in the process of withdrawing articulated buses from routes within their control as contracts come up for renewal. We do not believe that articulated buses are crucial to the delivery of quality public transport and that there are viable and better alternatives such as conventional single and double deckers. What is more important is that they must be low pollution buses, to minimise any adverse impacts on the City.</p>
<p>The suggested improvements</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>It is</p>	<p>A detailed transport assessment (TA) will be undertaken prior to any planning</p>

<p>within the TA consist primarily of bus laybys and selective bus priority at traffic signals. These measures in themselves are insufficient to mitigate the impact of the transport demand from the proposed development. The TA does not propose any new bus lanes on the main A6 corridor or any improvements to the quality of the existing bus lane facilities. Such improvements were included in previous submissions but are now omitted.</p>		<p>acknowledged that further work is required to quantify the actual level of transport infrastructure required.</p>	<p>application to fully assess the actual level of infrastructure required. We believe that affordable and deliverable solutions will be found</p>
<p>The practical deliverability of the proposals. Bus journey times with the TA are assessed at 40% faster than existing services. These bus journey times are considered practically unachievable. Reasons given.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that further detailed work is required to fully and realistically assess the bus journey times within this corridor.</p>	<p>The Co-op's transport consultants, ARUP, have indicated that they have already made reasonable assumptions related to delays within their model and that they could provide additional information/evidence to inform the debate.</p>
<p>Continuous bus lanes, laybys and bus priority strategies as proposed in the July 2008</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that further work</p>	<p>A detailed transport assessment (TA) will be undertaken prior to any planning application to fully assess the actual level of infrastructure required.</p>

<p>Arup report would offer maximum benefit through the peak periods. However absolute bus priority is not deliverable and this is assumed in the TA. Deliverability is also a serious issue. The need to acquire land to deliver the proposals is a serious concern and runs through the report.</p>		<p>is required to quantify the actual level of transport infrastructure required.</p> <p>WYG state that if required they can prepare plans showing the likely maximum and minimum highway footprints for such a scheme.</p>	<p>The work required to establish the necessary highway footprint should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity to allow a better understanding of the challenges surrounding the practical deliverability of the scheme. However we believe that solutions will be deliverable as they are in other parts of the City. 45,500 homes are due to be built in Greater Leicester to 2026 and similar solutions will be required generally in the City. The critical mass of this Eco Town proposal does enable worthwhile improvements to be delivered and step changes provided. Bus numbers will be low in the early years anyway, before passenger numbers build up as the tram is delivered.</p>
<p>The A6 Park and Ride is considered and although deliverability is still a concern the report concludes that 'in the context of a congested peak hour scenario it is still a worthwhile benefit if it can be protected over time and not undermined by trips transferring from other routes.'</p>	<p>Moderate</p>	<p>Further work is required, however Leicester City Council are already planning to deliver much of what the Co-op propose in their transport strategy to deal with the forecast conditions without the Eco Town. The tram will make the big positive</p>	<p>Our strategy recognises that there will be increased travel due to new homes and regeneration. In order to cater for the new trips due to the increased travel demand, we are making the most of the funding available with a very comprehensive package of both hard and soft interventions based on encouraging bus use, and park and ride in particular. Our current five year and longer term transport strategy is contained in our Central Leicestershire LTP, which has been assessed as excellent by DfT. More detail is provided in the Central Leicestershire Urban Congestion Target Delivery Plan, which has been assessed as very good by DfT.</p>

		difference.	
The A47 Park and Ride was proposed in the July 2008 Arup report. This is no longer proposed in the TA.	Moderate	It is acknowledged that further work is required to quantify the actual level of transport infrastructure required.	See above plus: A detailed transport assessment (TA) will be undertaken prior to any planning application to fully assess the actual level of infrastructure required.
Improvements in the Humberstone Gate area are critical as there is not adequate kerb space to cater for the increase in buses, particularly articulated buses.	High	Leicester City Council is currently investigating this issue in consultation with the Co-op and a series of design proposals are expected shortly.	This issue is fundamentally one of bus kerb space capacity in the city centre. The City Council has adopted proposals for a major project to improve bus termini and routing within the City Centre. The importance of this proposal is recognised as part of the Regional Funding Allocation (RFA2). Thus a solution will be delivered.
Improvements to the area in front of the rail station are suggested so that an improved public transport interchange will be provided but the TA does provide any details of the proposal.	Moderate	Leicester Regeneration Company is currently working on this in partnership with Network Rail, East Midlands Trains, Leicester	The City Council are part of 'The New Business Quarter – Station Investment Board' and actively involved in delivering improvements for rail users.

		City Council, Post Office, etc.	
Smartcards technology has the potential to impact on public transport journey times but this is not in the gift of the developer.	High	Detailed discussions are required to realistically assess the timescale for operationally delivering this technology in Leicester.	The critical mass of development will also be a catalyst for other interventions encouraging lifestyle changes such as the development of smart cards and enabling our real time PT information system to be modernised.
WYG consider the cost of the tram route proposed to be approximately £296 million based on other similar British project costs.	Moderate	It is acknowledged that further work is required to fully assess the deliverability of the tram, however the City Council broadly agree with the estimated costs. The Coop has done a lot of work in designing a tram and has costed it	The Eco Town is the catalyst for trams in Leicester. It will be a public system serving existing residents in the London Road – Wigston corridor with a branch to the Eco Town and with the capability for future expansion to other parts of Greater Leicester. It will be procured in a similar way to Nottingham’s tram, with the Co-op in our case contributing to the 25% required local contribution. The Co-op have indicated that the £40m (approx) reserved for BRT could be redirected into a tram. The City Council is totally committed to developing the business case for trams and would work in partnership with the Coop in carrying this work out jointly. We are linked into the expertise developed by Nottingham City Council in tram development and delivery. A tram is the only solution that fits in with the council’s emerging 25 year vision – One Leicester: Planning for people not cars, Reducing our carbon footprint,

		<p>out as between £250m - £300m with an additional c£100m for a Wigston branch. They have indicated that they are willing to put in £1m per year for the next five years for the tram development</p>	<p>Creating thriving, safe communities, Improving wellbeing and health, Talking up Leicester, Investing in skills and enterprise. It is acknowledged however that in the early phases of the development a bus based solution is likely to be necessary until a critical mass of development is achieved and the tram can be phased in.</p>
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Leicester City Council – General Comments

The RSS allows for the provision of 45,500 new homes in and around Leicester to 2026. The City Council believes that the Eco Town will have less transport impact pro rata than much smaller traditional developments spread around the urban area. There is a critical mass such that step change interventions can be secured such as a tram. This will have immense overarching benefits for the Leicester area and bring forward wider economic benefits.

Leicester City Council believes a tram is ultimately necessary to achieve the modal shift that the analysis work to date shows is required from the new homes, as well as to provide the necessary future capacity. It is also required to achieve a modal shift from existing homes to allow for the inevitable increase in traffic due to the Eco Town e.g. a modal shift from existing homes in the Wigston area.

A bus based rapid transit system would not ultimately attract sufficient car users compared to a tram and so the additional congestion would be unacceptable, without a tram. It is acknowledged however that in the early phases of the development a bus based solution is likely to be necessary until a critical mass of development is achieved and the tram can be phased in.

