



SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL ON THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECO-TOWN

MEETING WITH ANDREW GRANGER OF ANDREW GRANGER ESTATE AGENTS ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2008

The Panel met Andrew Granger of Andrew Granger Estate Agents in order to receive evidence on the demand for 'eco housing' within the context of the current market climate.

Prior to discussing the proposed Eco-Town development Mr. Granger wished Members to note that he was a Board member of the Leicester Regeneration Company and President of the Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, both of which had interests in the proposed development. He therefore asked that his comments be taken in that context.

The Panel NOTED the following points that arose from that meeting:

- There would likely be buyers for all of the various types of housing in the proposed development but it may take time for the market to become established. The number of potential buyers would likely be increased by growing fuel and heating costs in the wider economy and the energy saving features that would be an integral part of housing at Pennbury;
- The proposed car parking restrictions could make it more difficult to sell houses at Pennbury but this would be countered if the public transport in the area was of a good enough standard. Some people may use cycles but there was little evidence to suggest that people in this country would be willing to do this all year round;
- It had proved increasingly difficult to sell apartments in the City that had few or no car parking spaces;
- Businesses in the proposed development area would find it difficult to function without adequate car parking. There was evidence that some employers in the City Centre were moving away from their City Centre premises due to a lack of parking spaces;
- The covenants that the Co-op were proposing to place on properties limiting one car every two homes would be difficult to enforce and would likely result in a number of cars being parked on the street;
- It was likely that some housing sites already allocated for development elsewhere would be put on hold because of the proposed development for 15,000 units at Pennbury. A number of regeneration projects had relied on an element of housing to cross subsidise other developments –

there was a real concern that Pennbury would undermine such an approach. There was currently some uncertainty with LDFs and Pennbury could affect the balance of development elsewhere in the County with a consequent loss of Section 106 monies;

- Buyers were always attracted to new developments and even buyers at the 'bottom rung of the housing ladder' would be attracted to the proposed Eco-Town. The pleasant environment and cost saving eco measures would all be attractive. Locations such as those to the south of the City were always marketable;
- If the proposed development went ahead there would be an increased need for a southern relief road;
- Despite the Co-op's indication that their ownership of the land surrounding the proposed development was a positive factor and would help to limit development in the surrounding area, it was felt that most developers would be keen to build around the proposed Eco-Town following the infrastructure already being in place. The Co-op would probably attract such interest in its non developed land in future years and could sell that land for development in the future. Strong planning policies did not always work and decisions for further development can often be won on appeal;
- The proposed development needed to be looked at on a strategic regional basis and not in isolation from other parts of the City and County with a view to all developments looking to deliver high eco standards;
- In terms of demand for companies relocating jobs to Pennbury, manufacturing jobs could be limited because of the proximity to houses. High tech jobs would also be more appropriately located in the LRC areas where there was a need for both housing and jobs or potentially near the three universities. Graduate retention was an issue which the LRC was seeking to address.