



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

MEETING WITH DAVID SEVIOUR, FORMER CEO OF LEICESTER HOUSING ASSOCIATION ON 9 OCTOBER 2008

The Panel met with David Seviour, a former Chief Executive of Leicester Housing Association. Mr. Seviour discussed the proposed development in relation to the possible effects it might have on housing.

Prior to discussing the proposed Eco-Town development Mr. Seviour wished Members to note that he was a Board member of the Leicester Regeneration Company and had previously been a member of Regeneration East Midlands. He therefore asked that his comments be taken in that context.

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

- It was difficult to define exactly what was meant by affordable housing and get a clear picture of the availability of such housing. The simple split was between social housing for rent and shared ownership housing;
- In the last 6 years there had been an underachievement of housing build in the City and current estimates were that only 50% of the social housing planned for had been provided;
- The proposed development, if delivered as promised, could play an important role in addressing social housing needs and particular social housing needs for families;
- Given the size of the proposed development it was difficult to envisage it as a self contained, self sustaining community. It could essentially be viewed as a Sustainable Urban Extension of the City and as such would need to develop rapid transport links into the City and to some extent to surrounding areas of Oadby and Wigston, Harborough and Thurmaston. The links with the City would become more significant given recent investment in regeneration, employment and particularly the huge expansion in retail;
- Pennbury offered the potential of delivering significant numbers of social rented units. Recent history suggested that the planned increases in housing envisaged in the Regional Plan were likely to be under-delivered and the current economic climate had seen a number of developers applying for planning permissions but then banking the land. As such, Pennbury should not adversely affect the building of socially rented

accommodation in the City;

- The issues of nomination rights particularly for residents of Oadby and Wigston and Leicester City would need to be discussed with the relevant local authorities;
- The viability of Pennbury and the extent to which it could then deliver affordable housing would depend in part on land values and the Co-op's expectations in terms of a commercial return.