

News release from The Co-operative Group

CO-OPERATIVE GROUP PLANS NEXT PHASE OF ECO-TOWN DEVELOPMENT

The Co-operative Group and English Partnerships have expressed their appreciation to the 2,000 people who took the time to attend the eco-town roadshow – and has pledged to publish alternative layouts for the proposed new community in the next few weeks.

The Group is now refining its proposals to address specific issues that have been raised, including the delivery of major new public transport infrastructure and how this can best be achieved.

Work on preparing the masterplan for the site has been taking place in parallel with the consultation process and views from the public have been incorporated into a series of alternative outline designs for the eco-town.

The Group is planning to publish these to gauge public opinion in advance of producing its final plan for exhibition later this summer.

To ensure widespread participation, this next stage in the Group's consultation will look to engage directly with communities and groups who did not take up the opportunity to attend the first round of public consultation.

Speaking on the day which marked the end of the first phase of the Government's consultation process (30 June), Lynda Shillaw, Managing Director of The Co-operative Estates, said: "We are grateful to everyone who has taken the time to give us their opinion. As we develop these proposals into more detailed plans and take these back out for more consultation, I am confident we can develop a truly standard-setting plan."

The Group's public exhibition events started in Market Harborough earlier this month and continued in Oadby, Leicester and on the eco-town site itself. The Group will be publishing details of the feedback received at the same time as the alternative layouts are issued.

The proposals for the eco-town, provisionally named Pennbury, on land owned by the Co-operative Group and English Partnerships to the south east of Leicester, have already been examined by the Government's Eco-Town Challenge Panel, established to ensure the new sustainable communities are developed to the highest standards.

Responding to the Panel's call for further information on the plans, the Group welcomed the Challenge Panel's assessment that the Co-operative's governance structure and ethos means that it is 'well placed to deliver an eco-town'.

More information on the Group's proposals is available on the consultation website at www.ecotownforleicestershire.coop

The Group is partnering with English Partnerships, the national regeneration agency, on the project. English Partnerships owns a proportion of the total landholdings covered by the eco-town submission.

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Notes to editors:

1. Further background on the Co-operative Group is available at www.co-operative.coop.
2. Other useful websites with information about sustainable communities include:
The Town and Country Planning Association
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/>
The Academy for Sustainable Communities
<http://www.ascskills.org.uk/pages/home>
The Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment
<http://www.princes-foundation.org/>
3. The Group is an acknowledged leader in sustainable development. Voted Britain's most ethical brand in 2006, we have also received the Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, the Renewable Energy Association's Pioneer Award and Business Commitment to the Environment's Peter Parker Award for Environmental Leadership.
4. English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency, supporting high quality sustainable growth in England. A non-departmental public body, it is sponsored by the Communities and Local Government department (CLG). English Partnerships owns around 80 hectares of land to the south of Great Glen which is included in the proposals.
5. Midlands Co-operative Society, which operates stores in the Leicester area, is an independent Co-operative business, which is not involved in the eco-town proposal.

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