

News release from The Co-operative Group

## **CO-OPERATIVE GROUP LAUNCHES ECO-TOWN WEBSITE TO KICK START CONSULTATION**

### **Government shortlisting sparks start of community engagement**

The Co-operative Group will be launching a consultation website on 21 April in response to the Government's shortlisting of its proposals for a new eco-town for Leicestershire - [www.ecotownforleicestershire.coop](http://www.ecotownforleicestershire.coop)

The website, the first step in an ongoing programme of community consultation and engagement, will provide more information on the Co-operative Group's ideas for the eco-town as well as encourage people to join the debate.

Graham Ramsbottom, Head of Land Development & Ventures for The Co-operative Estates, said: "Now that we have been shortlisted by the Government and more details have been provided about the next steps in the eco-town selection process, we want to start sharing our vision and ideas for what we think can be achieved on our land south east of Leicester. At this early stage, we want to start focusing on the ideas that can make a difference and which will help us to deliver a standard setting eco-town for Leicestershire. Our new website will be an important first step in this process as we look to involve and engage people in the debate."

The new website will be a dynamic and developing site. It will be updated regularly as the project progresses and will keep people informed on progress with the emerging proposals. It has been developed specifically to support the community consultation process.

Graham Ramsbottom added: "It's vital to involve people in the eco-town debate because these are big and important issues we are dealing with and we need to get them right. We are delighted that the Government has recognised the potential for an eco-town for Leicestershire and we intend to work closely with everyone involved in the process to develop the best possible proposals for our site. We believe that, by developing our ideas with input from the community, we can deliver a fantastic proposal which meets the need for more housing locally and which can deliver a wide range of regeneration, economic, and broader benefits to Leicestershire."

The Co-operative Group's vision for an eco-town in Leicestershire was one of the 15 schemes shortlisted by Government on 3 April. The Government has invited proposers of these schemes to develop their ideas in more detail during 2008 with a view to publication, by Government, of a final list of those locations with the potential to be an eco-town late in 2008. Successful schemes can then submit planning applications for consideration in the normal way.

**end**

## Notes to editors:

1. Further details of The Co-operative Group's plans for public consultation will be published in due course.
2. Further background on the Co-operative Group is available at [www.co-operative.coop](http://www.co-operative.coop).
3. 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/>
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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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