

Crown Estate and Newton Nottingham LLP ***Press Release : 14 January 2009***

Eco-town focus on former RAF Newton

The Partnership of Defence Estates, The Crown Estate and Newton Nottingham LLP are to focus on the former RAF Newton as a possible location for a new sustainable community in Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire, under the Government's Eco-town initiative.

This follows extensive community and stakeholder engagement and further guidance published recently by the Government.

Further research by the Partnership will now be undertaken to help inform the Government's assessment of which sites have the potential to become Eco-towns. The final list of locations will be set out by the Government in a Planning Policy Statement expected in 2009.

The previously developed land at the former RAF base lies within the wider area examined by the Partnership under the Eco-town concept earlier in 2008 (this also embraced north of Bingham and Newton). It was within this broad area that the Partnership commissioned initial assessments and undertook extensive consultation following a Government invitation to look at the idea in April 2008.

At the beginning of November 2008 the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) published a Sustainability Appraisal of the various Eco-town locations being considered across the UK. The appraisal ranked the Newton and Bingham area as one which 'might be a suitable location subject to meeting specific planning and design objectives'.

In responding to the CLG report Neil Hall from Entec, representing the landowning partners, said: "Initial studies commissioned have revealed opportunities and challenges to an Eco-town concept in the Newton and Bingham area. Following the CLG report indicating this is a potentially suitable location, we will now undertake further investigations into a possible Eco-town. This research will focus on the former airfield and adjoining land. In the meantime we understand that CLG will be conducting a consultation programme in Rushcliffe on the Eco-town initiative starting early in the New Year."

CLG's Sustainability Appraisal and feedback from public engagement carried out in the summer by the Partnership highlighted transport infrastructure as one of the most important considerations. Neil Hall commented: "We recognise the important role investment in transport infrastructure will play in ensuring the sustainability of any potential Eco-town. As such, our ongoing investigations will include a more detailed assessment of local transport infrastructure and will pay particular attention to recent announcements on extra funding for planned improvements to the A46."

Locations which are finally identified under the Government's Eco-town initiative will still be subject to normal local planning processes and policy considerations. If a location is deemed suitable in Rushcliffe a planning application would need to be submitted and considered by the Borough Council before further progress could be made.

Notes:

The Crown Estate partnership with the Defence Estates and Newton and Bingham LLP brings together the principal landowners in the Newton and Bingham area and will also engage the Princes Foundation in supporting the preparation of any future planning application with an Enquiry by Design public engagement programme.