

15. Yeovil Urban Village and Extension Eco Town Development Department of Communities and Local Government Growth Fund Bid Submission Document (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To inform members and gain approval of the Yeovil Urban Village and Extension Eco Town Development funding bid submission document to be presented to the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and for members to note and sponsor the content of the associated bid for sustainable development demonstrator schemes including that for the “Foundry House” site submitted by developers Zero C.

Forward Plan

This report did not appear on the District Executive Forward Plan because the opportunity to bid for Eco Town funding was uncertain until recent government confirmation was received.

Public Interest

South Somerset District Council is investigating the potential for a proposed urban extension to Yeovil to be brought forward as a world leading eco-town. The Department of Communities and Local Government has indicated, subject to formal bid, that a proposed urban extension to Yeovil will be one of 9 areas in the UK that will benefit from a £10 million pot that will support the design and development of aspirational eco-town standards (£5m) and Demonstrator developments to showcase development with high standards of carbon saving (reflecting eco town standards).

Regional housing figures and policies identify the need for a 5000 home urban extension to Yeovil to meet the areas growing housing demand. The Council is currently in the consultation stage of where and how this extension will come forward, and in line with the Council's high aspirations for reducing carbon emissions there was already the expectation that the urban extension would be designed to the highest possible standards of sustainability.

The funding that could be available will be used for feasibility studies and master planning in order to establish whether the urban extension could meet the highest sustainability standards ever required for new development and for enhanced eco standards on identified demonstrator developments.

Recommendation(s)

That Members

1. consider the content of the Yeovil Urban Village and Extension Eco Town Development bid submission document to CLG (previously submitted by 19th February 2010 CLG deadline and Appendix 2 to this report - this document is sent under separate cover.) and inform District Executive accordingly
2. consider the summary content of the Demonstrator development capital bid (including that by Zero C) and recommended to CLG for funding by 26th February 2010 CLG deadline and inform District Executive accordingly.

Background

The Government published Planning Policy Statement 1 “Eco towns a supplement to PPS1” in July 2009 and within that announced Government objectives for Eco towns, the 4 chosen sites and the opportunities to pursue further Eco towns through Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks.

The Government, in a letter to Regional Planning Bodies and others of 24th August 2009, announced funding of £5m for further planning and feasibility work for other potential Eco Towns and invited expressions of interest.

This Council, after clarifying that the Yeovil urban extension would qualify as an Eco town and be available for funding, submitted an expression of interest on 30th October 2009 for the Yeovil urban extension. This was accepted by the Government on 17th November in a letter that indicated areas for clarification for the South Somerset bid.

A news release was published by the Housing Minister on 1st December 2009 indicating that 9 further expressions of interest had been received from Local Authorities including Yeovil (and Taunton) and promoted an additional £5m funding for low carbon demonstrator projects. A further letter was received dated 21st January setting out in more detail the requirements for the bid. The Government have subsequently clarified for demonstrator projects particularly they are looking at what additional eco town standards will be forthcoming for the provision of grant aid.

Revenue Bid

The purpose of the revenue bid is to identify a list of studies that will form a programme of work towards establishing the urban extension for Yeovil to be brought forward under eco-town standards. A successful bid for Eco town status will clearly commit the Authority to progressing the urban village and urban extension at eco town standards. The Revenue bid document is attached as Appendix 1 - this document is sent under separate cover.

The proposed studies are set out in priority order as requested by Government below:

- Urban extension Master Plan and Design Codes
- Viability, Deliverability and Land Assembly
- Transport
- Urban Village Master Plan and Design Codes
- Water Cycle Strategy
- Renewable Energy Studies
- Sustainable Waste and Resource Plan

The business case for each of the above studies is set out in section 6 of the Bid document with reference to the Eco Towns PPS and other relevant National, Regional and Local Guidance.

The Core Strategy for South Somerset is currently establishing a strategic location for the urban extension for 5,000 dwellings. To date a sustainability assessment has been run around the urban periphery and there has been engagement with Town and Parish Councils and key stakeholders to establish a preferred option for the extension deriving from realistic alternatives. From a list of 6 options deriving from the workshops with local councils a shortlist of three has emerged from a further sustainability assessment. This is to be the subject of review with a further meeting with the councils and stakeholders and will also be the subject of further assessment in terms of infrastructure requirements and deliverability.

It was recognised that the Urban extension for Yeovil requires planning now but will not yield development on the ground for several years. It was considered however that the Urban Village proposal, set out in the Yeovil Urban Development Framework, and achievable as a brownfield town centre site, is legitimately linked to the extension both in conceptual terms and possibly geographic terms also and should be identified as phase 1 of development with subsequent phases in the extension to come along in due course.

Capital Bid

The Capital Bid document consists currently of the Foundry House site proposed development within the urban village. An invite to private sector developers active in South Somerset has been made and at the time of writing this report the deadline for potential submissions had not passed. In the event that schemes that are put forward to the Council and forwarded with the Council's sponsorship to CLG by the 26th February deadline they will be the subject of a supplementary addendum to this report.

The Foundry House scheme's high eco standards, location within the urban village and the close involvement of the District Council in the scheme made an excellent prima facie case for this proposal to be presented as a demonstrator.

The Foundry House capital bid sets out Eco first Consultant's views on how developers Zero C could make best use of additional funding to take the Glove Factory development in Yeovil to higher levels of sustainability.

Funding levels of £500k, £750k and £1million are considered. The measures suggested, in approximate order of merit (and dependent upon level of funding) are:

- Biomass (wood pellet) district heating scheme
- Planning permitting: A wind turbine (~20kW) on the hill to the south of the site
- Solar Photo Voltaic arrays on the roofs of the houses, and possibly on the flats and the Glove Factory
- Rainwater harvesting systems for the house (individual) and apartments (communal)
- Improving sound insulation, recycling facilities provision, and security
- Increase biodiversity through extensive ecological planting
- Converting one terrace of houses to Structural Insulated Panels construction with Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery and triple glazing

- Increasing the proportion of Building Research Establishment Green Guide A+ rated materials specified
- Low energy street lighting and a small hydro generation scheme to power them
- Education and outreach features such as an art installation on the hydro scheme and an education centre (possibly combined with a Tourist Information Centre) in the building housing the biomass boiler

A combination of each of these measures has been addressed for each of the budget levels. EcoFirst have considerable experience with the Code and sustainable construction allowing them to fairly accurate estimation of the achievable Code levels and conclude that they are confident what is proposed can be achieved. The actual bid document contains considerable detail, some of which is of a commercial nature and hence a summary of the bid is presented here for member endorsement.

Financial Implications

A successful bid to CLG for eco-town funding will generate additional project management work beyond the current human resource capacity of the Spatial Planning Team. Within the bid, funding has been set aside for a temporary project manager role to oversee the appointment of consultants, coordinate the study work and manage project delivery.

There is no direct financial implication associated with sponsoring the Foundry House capital bid by Zero C and recommending it to CLG for funding.

Corporate Priority Implications

Relevant South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy

Goal 3: Healthy and active	Strategic priority 8: improve delivery of services through joined up local approaches to address inequalities in health
Goal 4: Quality public services	Strategic priority 13: support the development of integrated low carbon transport infrastructure
Goal 5: high performance local economy	Strategic priority 15: improve the diversity and adaptability of businesses as we move towards a low carbon economy
Goal 7: Distinctiveness	Strategic Priority 19: support the continued development of distinctive local economies
	Strategic priority 20: deliver the Vision for Yeovil supported by high quality community involvement
Goal 8: Quality development	Strategic priority 21: maximise and focus resources to achieve sustainable development and regeneration
	Strategic priority 22: all new development applies sustainable construction principles and new and existing buildings move towards being carbon and water neutral
	Strategic priority 23: South Somerset Together partners are exemplars in sustainable development
Goal 9: Homes	Strategic priority 25: make sure that there is enough land supply for housing development to better meet the identified needs of the District
	Strategic priority 26: increase the number of affordable homes in the District to meet identified need

Goal 10: Energy	Strategic priority 28: year on year reduction in the district's carbon footprint towards a carbon neutral economy in 2030
	Strategic priority 30: produce 20% of the district's electricity and heat from renewable sources by 2015
Goal 11: Environment	Strategic priority 33: asses the risks and opportunities in South Somerset that arise as a result of climate change
Goal 12: Environmental education	Strategic priority 34: South Somerset together champions environmentally friendly approaches
	Strategic priority 35: promote environmental education at all levels with all groups and communities

Relevant Local Area Agreement issues and key LAA targets:

LAA Issue	LAA Target
Minimise waste and manage it sustainably	NI 191 Residual household waste per head
Address the rising trend in obesity and overweight in the population.	NI 56 Obesity in primary school age children in Year 6
Climate Change – adaptation & mitigation.	NI 186 Per capita CO ₂ emissions in the Local Authority area
Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
	LPI (5) Accessibility in Somerset
Housing	NI 154 Net additional homes provided
	NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

Bid is relevant to theme 1 of the Corporate Plan, Increase economic vitality, especially supporting the economic vitality of Yeovil (key target 1.12)

It is relevant to theme 2, enhancing the environment, especially targets 2.10 and 2.11 ensuring all developments have the highest feasible standards of sustainable construction. It is also relevant for target 2.21 –23 increasing community understanding of sustainability issues. It is relevant to theme 3, improving the housing, health and well being of our citizens, and in particular targets aimed at improving affordable housing.

Carbon Emissions & Adapting to Climate Change Implications (NI188)

The Eco Towns PPS sets out a range of minimum standards which are more challenging and stretching than would normally be required for new development. The standards act to ensure that eco-towns are exemplars of good practice and provide a showcase for sustainable living and allow Government, business and communities to work together to develop greener, low carbon living.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The eco-towns programme presents a rare opportunity to build new settlements that are designed and organised from the outset to provide all inhabitants – regardless of age, disability, faith or gender – with places where dwellings are responsive to individual need and are located within easy access of employment, services and leisure; where the public realm does not exclude people; and where all residents are enabled to participate fully in public life and enjoy a real sense of belonging to their community.