

Summary points of the government's recently published Eco-towns Prospectus

1. In publishing this prospectus the Government is looking to encourage and support local authorities *and the private sector* to bring forward around five new eco-town schemes. The prospectus sets out the context for the programme and explains how the Government will support these projects. It also outlines the criteria by which scheme proposals will be assessed.
2. The Government believes that new settlements and urban extensions have the potential for quicker, easier and more ambitious delivery of affordable housing. New eco-towns could play a significant role in easing the affordability crisis by ensuring that between 30 and 50 per cent of the new housing is affordable.
3. Any new town must be of sufficient size to ensure a good level of services, jobs and community facilities to create an attractive and sustainable place to live. There also need to be adequate and sustainable links to nearby larger towns and cities.
4. The Prospectus features a number of case studies both within the UK and abroad that embody the eco-principles the Government is seeking to encourage. These include the garden cities built earlier this century as well as more current schemes in Cambridge, Northstowe and the Thames Gateway.
5. The essential requirements the Government is looking for are:
 - Eco-towns must be new settlements, separate and distinct from existing towns but well linked to them. They need to be *additional* to existing plans, with a minimum target of 5,000–10,000 homes;
 - The development as a whole should reach zero carbon standards, and each town should be an exemplar in at least one area of environmental sustainability;
 - Eco-town proposals should provide for a good range of facilities within the town – a secondary school, a medium scale retail centre, good quality business space and leisure facilities;
 - Affordable housing should make up between 30 and 50 per cent of the total through a wide range and distribution of tenures in mixed communities, with a particular emphasis on larger family homes;
 - A management body or delivery organisation (i.e. a new town development organization) which will help develop the town, provide support for people moving to the new community, for businesses and to co-ordinate delivery of services and manage facilities.

6. Where practicable the government wants to encourage the development of eco-towns on surplus public sector land or brownfield land.
7. The government envisage that a large proportion of future investment in eco-towns is likely to be made by the private sector. To provide additional funding for the infrastructure needed for new settlements, the government is extending the New Growth Points Scheme. Resources will be made available to facilitate the minor review or Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) where it is necessary to identify the broad locations of potential towns.

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