

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

20 FEBRUARY 2008

**STATEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNTY
COUNCILLOR HELEN SWIERS**

DEVELOPMENT & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICES

Economic Development

The County Council is currently involved with its Leeds City Region partner authorities on how the City Region can meet the Government's new targets for housing growth. These discussions focus on two key areas : increased housing figures to be accommodated through the Regional Spatial Strategy and proposals for an Eco Town in the city region.

The Government is seeking to double the number of new houses built in the City Region to meet its Housing Green Paper national target. This target could mean 19,000 new houses per annum. City Region authorities are looking to undertake a full and robust review of housing potential to understand opportunities for growth, including consideration of sustainability and implications on the Green Belt. It is recognised that there are some local authorities, particularly in West Yorkshire, with considerable constraints on development in the short term. Within North Yorkshire, Craven has indicated that it could increase its housing figures.

As part of the Government's agenda to increase housing figures, it invited proposals from local authorities and the private sector to develop "Eco Towns" which will be new settlements of between 5,000 and 25,000 houses developed on sustainable principles. The City Region authorities proposed a study to identify a suitable site within an area of search to the east of Leeds, including areas within Selby district. Government received three proposals from the private sector to develop an Eco Town within the City Region. One of these – Willow Green – would develop a settlement of 15,000 houses in the southern part of Selby district around Eggborough. The County Council, Selby District Council and other local authorities have concerns about the feasibility and viability of these proposals. There were no consultations with the County Council as the major provider of services on the proposal at Eggborough. Urgent discussions are taking place with partners to seek to influence the Government's approach to Eco Towns ahead of an anticipated announcement in February on which sites Government is considering taking forward.

**County Councillor Helen Swiers
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