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Media Information

### **O&H SETS LONG-TERM PLANNING STRATEGY FOR MARSTON VALE**

O&H Properties Ltd has announced that it is to pursue planning permission for a sustainable new settlement in the Marston Vale, Bedfordshire, through its inclusion in the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the East of England, and the relevant Local Development Frameworks.

The resulting planning applications will follow the established, plan-led route for obtaining consent, rather than the current Eco-Town evaluation process

O&H is a major land owner in the Marston Vale, and remains resolutely committed to sustainable, mixed-use development in the area. In seeking to deliver this, it will continue to balance social and environmental responsibility with innovative design and a thriving community. The core themes set out in the Eco-Town concept will become embedded in national planning policy, and will ultimately determine what any Eco-Town development should be.

David Reavell, Director, O&H Properties Ltd said: “After a searching review, **we have made the decision to withdraw from the current Eco-Town evaluation process.** It is clear to me that sustainable development in Marston Vale will be best achieved through the plan-led system. Despite our withdrawal, it is important to note that all planning policy will before long be informed by the Government’s planning policy statement on Eco-Towns, upon which it is currently consulting.”

“Despite this, it is the case that the master plan, which we will take forward for planning permission, is likely to be different to the vision plan that formed the basis of our Eco-Town bid to DCLG. Sustainability will remain a central focus, but we want to have an open mind on the shape of the settlement we propose. In doing so, we want to be free to develop our plans with the community without the time constraint of the current Eco-Town process.”

“O&H Properties Ltd remains a keen supporter of the rationale behind the Eco-Town concept, but after significant consultation, we feel that timely delivery of the development, and best use of investment, lie in adopting an alternative planning strategy.”

“Once decisions by national, regional and local government are made in mid-2009, and sufficient clarity around growth plans for the region emerges, O&H Properties Ltd will begin the detailed preparation of its planning application.”

“The preparation of the application will be a matter for public comment and debate, and we will continue to ensure that meaningful dialogue is held with local residents and stakeholders.”

Ends

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