

Eco-town shortlist unveiled

PA

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The shortlist for a series of "eco-towns" to be built across the country was unveiled by the Government today.

The top 15 bids for the low-carbon, environmentally friendly towns includes up to 15,000 homes at a controversial site in Leicestershire and settlements planned for former Ministry of Defence sites and disused airfields.

But other proposals which sparked protests, including one planned for Grovewood, Derbyshire, have been rejected by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The full shortlist, which will be whittled down to up to 10 towns which will finally get the go-ahead, is:

- * Pennbury, Leicestershire
- * Manby and Strubby, Lincolnshire
- * Curborough, Staffordshire
- * Middle Quinton, Warwickshire
- * Bordon-Whitehill, Hampshire
- * Weston Otmoor, Oxfordshire
- * Ford, West Sussex
- * Imerys China Clay Community, Cornwall
- * Rossington, South Yorkshire
- * Coltishall, Norfolk
- * Hanley Grange, Cambridgeshire
- * Marston Vale and New Marston, Bedfordshire
- * Elsenham, Essex
- * Rushcliffe, Nottinghamshire
- * Leeds City Region, Yorkshire

The Government said the eco-towns project aimed to tackle the twin issues of climate change and affordable housing, with the successful proposals having to supply between 30 per cent and 50 per cent affordable homes.

The settlements of between 5,000 and 20,000 homes, none of which are to be sited on green belt land, will have to be zero-carbon as a whole and be an "exemplar" in at least one area of environmental sustainability.

But the eco-towns have been controversial since proposals for sites around the country began to emerge last year.

Today campaigners reacted angrily to the inclusion of proposals for up to 6,000 homes on a former Royal Engineers depot south west of Stratford-upon-Avon.

The Middle Quinton site, also known as Long Marston, has poor transport links, no need of housing or regeneration and will spoil the surrounding area, the Bard Campaign against the eco-town said.

Warwickshire county councillor Izzi Seccombe said: "Building 6,000 new homes at Long Marston is utterly inappropriate. It would put unsustainable pressure on Stratford's transport infrastructure and local services."

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