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## Middle Quinton ECO-town MEDIA RELEASE

### NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS BACK ECO-TOWNS AS NEW REPORT SHOWS 700,000 PEOPLE REQUIRE AFFORDABLE HOMES IN RURAL ENGLAND

The proponents of the Middle Quinton ECO-town have welcomed two major announcements this week that confirm widespread backing for eco-towns and an urgent need for the affordable new homes they would deliver.

The first announcement comes from a coalition\* of more than 20 of the UK's leading organisations involved in the environment and social justice. These include, among others, the Town and Country Planning Association, Help the Aged, the National Housing Federation, the National Union of Students and RIBA.

The coalition says that eco-towns provide the opportunity to build homes and places of the highest design and environmental standards, providing blueprints that can be used to influence future developments. They also recognise the potential contribution of eco-towns in providing thousands of affordable homes.

**John Dodds**, regional director with St.Modwen, the joint-promoter of the Middle Quinton scheme with the Bird Group of Companies, commented:

"These are national organisations with real influence and widespread public respect, so when they come together to express support for the principle of eco-town development it is a very significant move. It's good to see there is a powerful lobby that supports the work we and other developers are doing to try and create new communities for the future which meet real social and environmental needs," said Mr Dodds.

Coalition member **Gideon Amos**, chief executive of the Town and Country Planning Association, said:

"This coalition brings together environmentalists with housing bodies and those concerned with social justice – a genuinely cross sector voice backing eco-towns – reflecting the majority of opinion within the country. While some sites will need to be further tested against agreed plans, the truth is that the standards already set for eco-towns far outstrip those for any other development."

National Union of Students President, **Wes Streeting**, said:

"Many aspects of the eco-town scheme will appeal to students, from sustainable energy solutions to promoting social justice. The affordable housing provided by eco-towns will give students a chance to integrate fully within the community, without being 'ghettoised' or exploited by unscrupulous landlords."

**Tony Bird** OBE, chairman of the Bird Group of Companies, said that he particularly welcomed support from the NUS, as young people would be among the real beneficiaries of eco-town development:

*"I get a sense of real enthusiasm from the young people I speak to about the ECO-town. Many of them simply cannot get on the housing ladder in the local area which forces them to live elsewhere. They are also very concerned with environmental matters, so the opportunity to potentially live in an ECO-town is of real interest to many of them."*

On the same day as the coalition released its show of support, a study by the **National Housing Federation and the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)** highlighted the dramatic shortage of affordable homes in rural England with over 700,000 people in need of this accommodation.

The Charter launched by the Federation and CPRE and titled – 'Save Rural England, Build Affordable Homes' – calls on all rural planning authorities to set ambitious but achievable housing targets.

**David Orr, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation**, warned: "The rural housing crisis is intensifying rapidly, with more and more people being priced out of the market and having to live in cramped and unsuitable conditions. Without urgent action by ministers many of our villages are in danger of becoming the preserve of the rich and weekend playgrounds for second home owners, with schools, pubs and post offices at risk of closing because of a lack of customers."

\*Members of the Coalition include Help the Aged, Crisis, Town and Country Planning Association, National Housing Federation, National Union of Students, RIBA, RADAR, Sustrans, Social Enterprise London, Waterwise, BioRegional, Buglife, Centre of Accessible Environments, Chartered Institute of Housing, Energy centre for Sustainable Communities, Shelter, the Federation of City farms and Community Gardens, Landscape Institute, TUC, National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, Permaculture Association, Woman's Design Service.

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