



**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE**  
**CRITICAL THINKING**  
Introduction to Critical Thinking

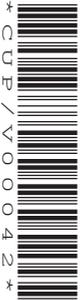
**F501/RB**

**RESOURCE BOOKLET**

**To be opened on the day of the examination**

**Monday 12 January 2009**  
**Afternoon**

**Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes**



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Use Documents 1 and 2 to answer the questions.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

- This document consists of 4 pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

## Background information:

### What is an ecotown?

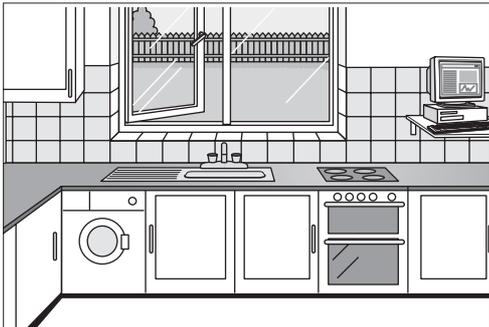
The government has made a proposal to develop ecotowns in several areas across England. These towns will be entirely new settlements of up to 15,000 homes, designed to a strict set of environmental criteria. For example, the amount of energy taken from the national grid to run the town has to be less than or equal to the amount put back through renewable power. Each new settlement should have a “separate and distinct” identity with good links to surrounding towns and cities for jobs, transport and services. A secondary school, shops, business space and leisure facilities are also required.

### Where are the ecotowns going to be?

The government has announced 15 potential locations across England. These include former Ministry of Defence land, disused airfields and former pits and industrial sites. Ministers have promised that no new homes will be built on green belt land i.e. an area of open land around a town or city with building restrictions placed upon it because of its value as open countryside.

## Document 1

### Ecotowns: Location, location, location!



Ecotown houses will be more energy efficient, as a computer in the kitchen monitors energy use.

1. In April 2008 fifteen locations across England were proposed by the Government as potential “ecotowns”. This proposal had a very mixed reception, with conflicting views expressed. Supporters advise that the proposal for ecotowns built to the highest environmental standards should be welcomed, because it would be a valuable step towards easing the housing crisis. The Housing Minister claimed, “The ecotown schemes would help tackle the twin challenges of climate change and affordable housing.” She added, “None of them will be sited on green belt land.”
2. But those who value the countryside should recommend rejection of this proposal, as many of the sites are inappropriate, such as Weston Otmoor in Oxfordshire which is in open countryside without green belt protection. Also local residents may fear that the new developments will damage existing communities. More importantly local authorities are concerned that these ecotowns will put pressure on services and infrastructure, such as schools and bus services.

Document 1 continued

### Protests:

3. There is already active local opposition to plans for the ecotown of up to 15,000 homes in Oxfordshire. Longtime residents include the parents of a famous tennis player, who has backed protests against siting the new development on his parents' doorstep. The 67yr old father said he would continue to fight government plans for the "horrendous" site, which he feared would destroy their village.
4. The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), which published detailed comments on each site protested, "The majority of proposals appear to be in unsuitable, unsustainable locations and conflict with established plans and strategies."
5. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) warned that the proposal could be deeply problematic because the Government risked creating a "soulless suburbia", if it did not ensure the new settlements were well-linked to existing developments. Similarly, the Local Government Association (LGA) predicted that ecotowns would become "the eco-slums" of the future, if they were built without regard to where residents could access jobs or training.

## Document 2

### Ecotowns: Helping to deliver a change in the quality and availability of homes for the people of England

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) were recently commissioned by a government department to provide practical advice on how the ecotown initiative can be taken forward. Drawing on practical experience, the TCPA carried out a review of current good practice in the expansion of urban areas and the establishment of new settlements. Applying these lessons to ecotowns, the TCPA claims that sustainability involves three main criteria:

- *Environmental* – Consideration must be given to energy and carbon dioxide, water, materials, waste, transport and access, ecology and green infrastructure. In April 2007 the Minister of State for Housing said: "Nearly half of our carbon emissions come from buildings. A quarter from our homes. We need substantial changes to the way we heat and power our buildings."
- *Economic* – As much employment as possible should be within, or accessible from, the community.
- *Social* – Sustainable communities should be of a scale and mix to be able to support a secondary school and support social and economic activity.

Successful urban development will offer people a decent home of their own, built to high environmental standards, in an attractive and welcoming community and within easy reach of schools and workplaces.

Town and Country Planning Association, July 2007

*We are an independent charity that inspires government, industry and campaigners to take a fresh perspective on major issues including climate change and regeneration. We create ideas, knowledge, publications, campaigns, independent policies. We aim to secure homes, empower communities and deliver a sustainable future through planning.*



*Acknowledgements:*

Introduction V Miller et al., *Q&A: Ecotowns*, The Guardian, 3 April 2008 © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2008  
Doc 1 M McCarthy, *Protesters fury as ecotown shortlist targets 'unsustainable' locations*, 4 April 2008, © The Independent  
Doc 2 Text adapted from D Lock and TCPA, *Eco-towns: scoping report*, from [www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk) © Town and Country Planning Association

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