

Exemplar Housing Scheme – Greenfields, Shrewsbury

Government U Turn on Green
Policy

Shropshire Constructing Excellence



The Journey

- Concerns grew over meeting the 2016 Kyoto summit agreement standards from the 2008 economic climate change.
- SCE looked at examples of Zero Carbon builds and concluded that there was a potential 30% to 40% extra cost to a 'Code 6' house over a 'Code 3'.

- SCE devised a way to offset the land cost of an experimental project in Shropshire, to bring the overrun costs into budget and allow 8 separate developers to test out various designs in a 'real life' experiment, resulting in selling the property on the open market. The properties would also be real time tested over a two year period.
- The results would either prove or disprove the likely success of the Governments commitment to the alignment of Code 6 and the Building Regulations in 2016.



- SCE presented the idea to the then Labour Government who were clear in stating that a holistic approach to Zero Carbon design in 2016 was legally binding. This therefore triggered the push for the scheme to happen.
- If the scheme could be completed in 2012 we would have both economic and real life environmental results in 2014 – giving the SCE 2 years to influence policy.



- The SCE worked with both local authorities in Shropshire and the Town Council of Shrewsbury to find land for the project.
- Greenfields was finally selected.
- An SCE led design team was established and the work to make the site a real prospect was undertaken.

- The developer teams were assembled and Birmingham University were pulled in to monitor the buildings. Tenders were issued and were starting to be received.
- Meetings with Town Council, local residents, the Local MP and the new Minister were established.
- The meeting with Andrew Stunell OBE took place just after the Budget 2011 on 29th March.

- During the meeting we asked the question would the Coalition government chance their legal stance on the 2016 Zero Carbon agreement?
- The answer was ‘yes’ and for economic reasons. Both the SCE and Joseph Rowntrees concerns had also had an impact on the decision. The Buildings Regs would be the only regulatory standard in 2016 for Zero Carbon Emissions.



- In the 4th paragraph on page 117 of the plan for growth the Ministers statement was confirmed.
- This means that 'Code 6' will not become a mandatory element of the Statutory process. It means that only the Buildings Regs will be considered.
- Therefore the cost impacts we were anticipating with 'Code 6' are now dissolved.

- The SCE along with the Town and County Councils have had to make the hard decision to close the scheme as the goal posts have been moved.
- The press woke up to the news over the past two weeks and the SCE are appearing in a debate being aired on BBC World radio this month, directly asking how the Coalition could read the Kyoto legislation so differently to the previous Labour Government.



Conclusion

- We are waiting to see what is to be levelled at the Government from the opposition parties and the Green Groups, to see if a legal challenge arises.
- In the meantime we are looking at whether local developers are still interested in pushing the Environmental envelope.

Other Issues Arising

- The CIL;

‘Community Infrastructure Levy’

Will be adopted by Shropshire in October 2011.

We would like your thoughts.....