

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Title:** Update on Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board Update September 2018 – May 2019  
**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor John Lodge, Leader of the Council  
**Report Author:** Adrian Webb, Director of Finance and Corporate Services  
01799 510421  
**Date:** Thursday, 13 June 2019  
**Key decision:** No

---

## Summary

1. This report describes the work of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board, the progress made over the last eight months and identifies the current work programme.

## Recommendations

2. To note the update for meetings of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board between September 2018 and May 2019.

## Financial Implications

3. All financial implications arising from the work of the Governance Board are reflected in the approved budgets of the Council

## Background Papers

4. No papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report.

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	No impact to date. Future work programme will address consultation and stakeholder programme.
Community Safety	No impact
Equalities	No impact
Health and Safety	No impact

Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact
Sustainability	Linked directly to the local plan.
Ward-specific impacts	Indirect link to all wards in conjunction with the emerging local plan,
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

## Situation

5. The Member Governance Board has been set up as a “reference panel” to give advice and guidance to Cabinet members and Council officers. The objectives of the Board are:
  - to take a strategic view about the potential delivery of the Garden Communities over and beyond the period of the local plan;
  - promote the delivery of Garden Communities that will be provided in compliance with the Town and Country Planning Association garden city principles,
  - to promote the new Garden Communities as exemplars of 21<sup>st</sup> Century living providing well designed and well built homes, high quality employment services; and good quality facilities to meet the needs of residents and business;
  - to advocate a high quality of place and high quality of life in both the new and existing communities in the district with long term management and stewardship arrangements; and that community engagement forms a central element in the delivery of the Garden Communities; and
  - to help facilitate both environmental and economic sustainability for the new Garden Communities; and to support the economic development objectives of the District Council for the district and the sub region.
6. There is a twelve month work plan in place to manage and co-ordinate the work of the Board and the latest version is attached (Appendix 1). Since the last update there have been nine meetings of the Board and a Study Tour.
7. The Member Governance Board includes senior member and officer involvement from Essex County Council which is especially important given that

the new Garden Communities will have a significant impact on public services with investment in public infrastructure totalling many £100millions.

### **Key Themes**

8. There are a range of themes that are being pursued by the Board and since the last report the following topics have been discussed:
  - Bidding for Resources and Government Liaison – the Garden Prospectus Bid
  - Securing Agreement with Promoters on the Principles
  - Governance Structure & Community Engagement
  - Affordable Housing
  - Sustainable Transport Links
  - Education Provision
  - Affordable Housing
  - SMART Garden Communities
  - Garden Communities and the Arts
  - Programme of Study Visits
  - Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy
  - Garden Communities Economic Strategies

### Bidding for Resources and Government Liaison

9. The District Council and Essex County Council submitted a joint bid to join the National Programme of 23 Garden Communities and to secure funding to supplement provision in the Council's approved budget. The bid was £1.1million per annum for each of the next five years.
10. The joint bid was successful and one of only five new Garden Communities bids to be accepted on the National Programme out of a total of 100 applications. A one off sum of £750,000 was secured for 2019/20. The Government has not set out future years funding but it has been made clear that whilst the one off sum is not 'ring fenced' it would be important to spend this money on Garden Community related work if a case is to be successfully made for funding in future years.
11. Acceptance on the National Programme not only assists in relation to future bids for funding, but also in providing direct access to expertise and networking that represents best practice in Garden Community provision both within

Government, amongst other exemplar authorities, and public agencies like Homes England.

#### Securing Agreement with Promoters on the Principles

12. Discussions with promoters continued throughout the period. The discussions have been led by an expert negotiating team and there are two main strands that are being explored. Firstly the specification of each Garden Community to ensure that there is clarity about the level and timing of provision and infrastructure. Secondly, the opportunity for a formal 'Quality and Collaboration Partnership' between the Council and each promoter.
13. On specification, it is vitally important that the Garden Communities reflect the Council's priorities in all matters especially quality of design, affordable housing provision, impact on existing residents, environmental quality, community engagement and employment opportunities for young people. The Council has reserved its position on the appropriate delivery mechanism to secure these objectives, with making the case to Government for the establishment of a locally led development corporation being an option if direct public intervention is required. Each promoter has been asked to enter into a 'Quality and Collaboration Partnership' which comprises clear commitments at each stage of the planning and delivery process to ensure that the chosen delivery mechanism does achieve the Council's priorities.

#### Garden Communities Governance Structure & Community Engagement

14. The Board endorsed a structure for engaging with the community, promoters and landowners and this is set out in Appendix 2. In the case of the Garden Communities at North Uttlesford (NUGC) and Easton Park (EPGC) it was agreed that a Local Delivery Board be established for each Garden Community. The Local Delivery Boards are to be made up of elected members and the promoters as set out in Appendix 3 (there was a minor variation between the two Garden Communities due to NUGC being close to the county boundary). A preliminary officer and promoter meeting has taken place in respect of the NUGC Delivery Board. These Local Delivery Boards provide an important opportunity for elected members and the promoters to meet and oversee the preparation of Garden Community Development Plan Documents.
15. The Board also endorsed the establishment of a Community Forum for NUGC and EPGC. These Forums are charged with the responsibility to support the Local Delivery Boards and to act as a voice, not only for the needs of existing local communities, but also the future residents. It was agreed that each Forum would be chaired by an experienced independent person with strong local connections. The membership of these Forums is being finalised so that the first meetings can take place shortly in accordance with the approach set out in Appendix 3.
16. A further area which has been a priority of the Board has been engagement with young people. The Board has been briefed on a housing workshop organised by Uttlesford Youth Council. Work is underway to develop a smartphone app to establish a Digital Youth Council that can help inform future work on the

Member Governance Board, the Local Delivery Boards and the Community Forums.

### Affordable Housing

18. The Board has received regular updates on progress with a review of the Council's Housing and Allocations policy. Specialist advice is being commissioned to consider widening the affordable housing allocations policy to support all local workers in full time employment (subject to household income limits) as well as existing residents in housing need. This approach will both support the local economy as well as reduce the need to travel with the environmental benefits that will follow.

### Sustainable Transport Links

19. The Board has received presentations and reports on both Stansted Bus Rapid Transit proposals and Mass Rapid Transit opportunities at North Uttlesford. The discussion at the Board has emphasised the importance of widening the benefit of such proposals beyond the proposed Garden Communities. Further work on these proposals is being undertaken.

### Education Provision

20. Presentations have been made on the importance of good quality educational provision in each Garden Community and the need to ensure that timing of primary and secondary schooling matches the phasing of the new communities. Discussions also include the potential to link up school provision with businesses, for instance in North Uttlesford with the Life Sciences Sector.

### Garden Communities and the Arts

21. A presentation was given by Angela Dixon, Chief Executive of Saffron Hall, about the importance of the Arts in the new communities. The Board recognised the importance of the provision being shaped by the community itself and also the role of shared provision with education and it was agreed that work should be done on preparing an Arts and Culture Strategy for the district.

### SMART Garden Communities

22. The Board discussed the need for real time information for transport. The technology for this is here now and that it is important not to leave existing communities behind. There are issues in the district with cable and mobile connectivity. Smart technology need to be available outside of the Garden Communities as well as within.
23. The Board discussed thinking a whole generation ahead. When one compared technological advances from the same timeframe looking back there was no way that accurate predictions could have been made as to the technologies required in 30 years' time. Therefore the specific solutions would be implemented at a later date. However focus was needed now to ensure that the

foundation is in place which will make it easier for solutions to be added at the appropriate time.

#### Programme of Study Visits

24. Following previous visits to Barton Park and Ebbsfleet a third study visit was made to Eddington, near Cambridge. The Board was accompanied by two members of the Youth Council. The Board recognised that visiting and seeing development is a powerful means to see best practice in action and also to learn how to avoid mistakes. Both Barton Park (Grosvenor/Oxford City Council) and Eddington (University of Cambridge/Cambridge City Council) demonstrated the potential for an effective partnership. For instance Eddington demonstrated how a good quality primary school provided at the very start of the development acts as a significant draw for parents with young children.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy

25. Presentations and a report have been provided on Community Infrastructure Levy as a means to secure development funding and work is being commissioned to consider the introduction of a charge for the district.

#### Garden Communities Economic Strategies

26. In April the Council commenced work on the Garden Communities Economic Strategies. It is recognised that a sustainable community needs to ensure that housing and employment policies work together to avoid creating commuter settlements which add to transport and environmental pressures. Further work is underway to consider how the new Garden Communities can develop a strong local economy which also complements existing business activity in the district.

### **Conclusions**

27. Over the last fourteen months the Member Governance Board has established an effective work programme that guides and informs work on the proposed Garden Communities and assists co-ordination across the District Council and, through the involvement of Councillor Bentley, the Deputy Leader at Essex County Council, the County Council too.
28. The role of the Board is very important in helping to ensure that the Garden Communities are planned and delivered in line with the Council's priorities. The work plan for the next six months includes further work on community engagement, affordable housing, sustainable transport, safe and secure issues, urban design and quality panels and overseeing negotiations with the Garden Communities promoters.

### **Risk Analysis**

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
------	------------	--------	--------------------

<p>The proposed Garden Communities are not delivered in accordance with the TCPA principles</p>	<p>Medium risk given that not all of these principles are normally secured through the planning process</p>	<p>The impact would be high given that the Council is committed to create Garden Communities that are in accordance with the TCPA principles</p>	<p>Establishment of an effective negotiation strategy and careful monitoring of the progress of the negotiations to inform appropriate delivery arrangements</p>
---	---	--	--

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.