

Committee:	Cabinet	Date:	Thursday, 9 January 2020
Title:	Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board Update June 2019 – December 2019		
Portfolio Holder:	Leader of the Council, Lead for Planning and the Local Plan		
Report Author:	Adrian Webb, Director - Finance and Corporate Services awebb@uttlesford.gov.uk Tel: 01799 510421	Key decision:	No

Summary

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

Recommendations

2. To note the update for meetings of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board between June 2019 and December 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 set out in Appendix 1.
6. There is a rolling work plan in place to manage and co-ordinate the work of the Board and the version for 2019/20 is attached (Appendix 2). Since the last update there have been seven meetings of the Board and two Study Tours.
7. The Member Governance Board includes senior member and officer involvement from Essex County Council. This involvement is especially important given that the new Garden Communities will have a significant impact on public services with investment in public infrastructure totalling many £100 millions.

Overview of Progress

8. It is known that Councils that provide strong vision and corporate leadership are the most successful in creating Garden Communities and this principle is underpinning the whole approach by the District Council and Essex County Council.
9. Work on the planning and delivery of the Garden Communities has taken place in parallel to formal local plan processes. It is vital that this is done to ensure that the Councils remain in full control of the Garden Communities agenda. The alternative would create a ‘delivery vacuum’ with the result that the Councils would relinquish Garden Communities leadership to the private sector alone with the outcome that there would be very limited delivery of the Councils’ objectives in the future.
10. The Inspectors’ letter following the Stage 1 hearings of the draft Uttlesford Local Plan is expected during January 2020 and this will inform the Garden Communities future work plan. In addition it should be noted that the Inspector for the North Essex Local Plans, which includes the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community, will be conducting hearings in January 2020 to consider further evidence and that the Inspector’s letter is likely during March or April 2020.
11. A Government Grant has enabled the Councils to establish a Garden Communities Team comprising eight members of staff dedicated to work wholly on the Uttlesford Garden Communities. The Team includes skilled and

experienced staff that have responsibilities such as sustainable development delivery, transport planning, high quality urban design and infrastructure planning for strategic development.

12. In addition to establishing the dedicated Team the emphasis has been on supporting member oversight through the work on the Delivery Member Governance Board and successfully establishing local Delivery Boards for North Uttlesford and Easton Park Garden Communities. All these Boards are central to successful engagement with the master developers, to promoting best international practice and ensuring full consultation and engagement with the public and stakeholders through an agreed programme.
13. Engagement with the master developers has continued throughout the last seven months and formal Statements of Common Ground have been signed with three master developers. This approach forms the first stage in a 'Quality & Collaboration Partnership' model that seeks to ensure that the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) Garden City Principles are fully met.
14. A further consideration is the District Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and the potential for the Garden Communities to make a significant contribution to supporting the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. This issue is built into the Garden Communities work plan including examining the potential for a municipal local green energy company given the possibility of micro generation infrastructure to form part of the new Garden Communities.

Key Themes – More Detail

15. There are a range of themes that are being pursued by the Member Governance Board and since the last report the following topics have been discussed:
 - Being part of the national programme – support and resources in Homes England and the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG);
 - Securing Agreement with Master Developers on the TCPA Principles;
 - Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations;
 - Progress on the Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums;
 - Stansted Bus Rapid Transit Proposals;
 - North Essex Garden Communities Ltd Board; and
 - Other Issues for Consideration.

Joining the National Programme – Support and Resources from Homes England and MHCLG

16. The three Garden Communities in Uttlesford are now part of the National Garden Communities Programme following a successful joint bid by the District Council and Essex County Council. A grant of £750,000 has been received from Government to support this designation and the Member Governance Board has prioritised the spending of this funding to support the objectives of the two Councils.
17. One of the first priorities has been to use this funding to bring capacity and skills into a Garden Communities Team shared by the District Council and the County Council. The Councils have successfully recruited all the posts identified. The new team comprises a Project Manager, a Principal Infrastructure Planner, a Principal Transport Planner, two Senior Planners, a Principal Urban Designer, a Project Officer and a Communications Officer. These posts are fixed term and a mixture of full time and part time. In the case of the Transport and Infrastructure posts the officers are employed by the County Council working exclusively on the Uttlesford Garden Communities and sharing their time between the County and District Council offices.
18. The National Programme also allows authorities access to advice and a Government sponsored network. In our case this has led to a Homes England representative attending Delivery Boards and also the Head of the Garden Communities programme taking part in the Member Board.

Securing Agreement with Master Developers on the Principles

19. Discussions with the master developers continued throughout the period. Formal Statements of Common Ground were signed with Grosvenor, Landsec and North Essex Garden Communities Limited. These Statements commit the signatories to the TCPA Garden Community principles and Step One in a 'Quality & Collaboration Partnership'. Further steps following over the coming months seek to strengthen and formalise the Partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding, a Planning Performance Agreement and various Legal Agreements (including a Section 106 Agreement).

Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations

20. The Government has announced a new competition to access a £10m capacity fund to generate innovative proposals for new business backed development corporations and similar delivery models. The Member Board is currently investigating making an Expression of Interest to the competition in April 2020. The Locally Led New Town Development Corporation model provides an important option to the Quality & Collaboration Partnership for the Councils to achieve all the TCPA Garden City principles.

Progress on the Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums

21. The first meetings of the North Uttlesford and also the Easton Park Garden Communities Delivery Boards have taken place and received a presentation on

each Garden Community. These Boards support the Member Governance Board and comprise three District Council members, a County Council member, three representatives from the relevant master developer and a representative of Homes England. In the case of Easton Park, a member from East Hertfordshire District Council is involved and in the case of North Uttlesford then a member from South Cambridgeshire District Council and also a member from Cambridgeshire County Council is on the Board.

22. The work of these Local Delivery Boards will be assisted by the establishment of a Community Forum for each Garden Community. The first meetings of these Forums are expected in February 2020 and will be chaired by Angela Dixon who is independent from the two Councils. The Forums will include representatives from Parish Councils, the Youth Council and a range of stakeholders including the voluntary sector and other organisations that can represent the needs of future residents of the Garden Communities.

Stansted Bus Rapid Transit Study

23. The Board has received presentations on the Stansted BRT Study. This work has shown that a BRT system will play a significant role in helping the Councils achieve the objective of 60% of trips at Easton Park and West of Braintree Garden Communities being by sustainable modes. The next step is to undertake further work to prepare an outline business case. The Member Board has also identified the need to consider how a BRT system will assist sustainable transport objectives to the west beyond Stansted Airport.

North Essex Garden Communities Ltd

24. The District Council is not a formal member of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd (NEGC) however during the last few months the Leader has attended formal Board meetings and officers continue to be engaged in operational meetings of sub groups. Future involvement in NEGC will be informed by the outcomes of both the Uttlesford Local Plan and also the North Essex formal Local Plan processes.

Other Issues for Consideration

25. The Member Board has received presentations about the Essex Quality Review Panel, Sport and Physical Activity, Poundbury Model Village and from Essex Police on Secure by Design. Members have also undertaken site visits to sustainable Hastoe Housing Association schemes at Wimbish and Newport; and the development at Beaulieu Park. Best practice identified from these presentations and site visits are being built into the future workplan.
26. Some key points include the opportunities to set up a bespoke Quality Review Panel for each Garden Community that will include independent experts to guide urban and landscape design and also take account of health and wellbeing issues. The Passivhaus scheme at Wimbish highlighted the importance of high quality energy performance which not only benefits residents from very low energy costs but also transforms the potential to reduce the carbon footprint of development. Poundbury demonstrated the benefits of 'new

urbanism' with truly walkable neighbourhoods and innovative approaches to planning for local employment (for instance encouraging small artisan businesses dispersed through the development). Beaulieu Park showed how an effective long term stewardship arrangement can deliver well maintained public spaces and buildings.

Conclusions

27. Over the last seven months the Member Governance Board has had a full and active role in overseeing the emerging Garden Communities Programme. The Board has been very clear on setting out a commitment to best international practice.
28. The work plan for the next six months will be directly informed by the outcome of the formal local plan processes. During this time the role of the local Delivery Boards and associated Community Forums will become increasingly important with the preparation of Development Plan documents for full consultation. The work plan for the next six months includes work on community engagement, climate emergency, innovative delivery methods including Locally Led New Town Development Corporations, wildlife and biodiversity, water supply and drainage, affordable housing strategy, local economic strategies, sustainable transport links, intergenerational living, long term stewardship and overseeing negotiations with the Garden Communities master developers.

Risk Analysis

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

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.

APPENDIX 1

UTTLESFORD GARDEN COMMUNITIES DELIVERY MEMBER GOVERNANCE BOARD

OBJECTIVES

- 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 21st 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.

APPENDIX 2

GARDEN COMMUNITIES DELIVERY MEMBER GOVERNANCE BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME APRIL 2019 – MARCH 2020

16 April 2019 (am)

- Briefing on Quality & Collaboration Partnership
- Update on work with promoters
- Update on Garden Communities Programme Bid
- Brief for Local Economic Development Strategies
- Presentation on Community Involvement at Gilston Park Estate in Harlow
- Update on Communications and Community Engagement

1 July 2019 (am)

- Update on work with promoters
- Presentation of Garden Communities in Uttlesford
- Report on Garden Communities Programme
- Report on Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums

3 July 2019

- MHCLG/Homes England Garden Communities Induction Event

1st August 2019 (am)

- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on work with promoters
- Feedback from Homes England event – 3 July 2019
- Communications Strategy

20th August 2019 (am)

- Essex Police Briefing on Safe and Secure Issues
- Planning and Delivering West of Braintree Garden Community
- Update on work with promoters
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations

20th September 2019 (am)

- Passivhaus Tour of Wimbish and Hatfield Heath with Hastoe.

24th September 2019 (am)

- Noel Farrer giving presentation on Quality Review Panel
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations

- Update on work with promoters
- Briefing on Stansted BRT and brief for next stage of work
- Update on WOBGC and NEA progress
- Housing Strategy Study Update

25th October 2019 (am)

- Visit to new development at Beaulieu

29th October 2019 (am)

- Presentation: Fionnuala Lennon - Homes England – Best Practice in Garden Communities
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on work with promoters
- Local Energy Company
- Garden Communities Team Workplan

26th November 2019 (am)

- Presentation by Roy Warren (Sport England) and Laura Taylor-Green (ECC) on Sport and Physical Activity in the Garden Communities
- Lessons from Poundbury
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Notes from the Local Delivery Boards
- Climate Emergency and Local Energy Company
- Update on NEGC

17th December 2019 (am)

- Dr. Annie Gordon and Ruth Angrave from Essex Wildlife Trust presenting achieving net gain for biodiversity in new developments
- Update on work with promoters
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on Communications and Community Engagement
- Update on WOBGC and NEA progress
- Stewardship Models for the Garden Communities

21st January 2020 (am)

- Presentation on Water Supply
- Smart Garden Communities Project
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on work with promoters
- Report on Local Plan Inspectors letter

- Report from the Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums
- Update on Communications and Community Engagement
- Update on WOBGC and NEA progress

18th February 2020 (am)

- Presentation on Waste Water
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on work with promoters
- Report from the Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums
- Update on Communications and Community Engagement
- Update on WOBGC and NEA progress

24th March 2020 (am)

- Presentation on Intergenerational living
- Establishing Locally Led New Town Development Corporations
- Update on work with promoters
- Report from the Local Delivery Boards and Community Forums
- Update on Communications and Community Engagement
- Update on WOBGC and NEA progress