

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 24 May 2018
Title: Update on Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board February – May 2018
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Rolfe, Leader of the Council
Report Author: Dawn French, Chief Executive **Key decision:** No
01799 510400

Summary

This report describes the work of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board and the progress made over the last four months.

Recommendations

To note the update for meetings of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board between February 2018 and May 2018

Financial Implications

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

Background Papers

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

Impact

1.

Communication/Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No impact to date. Future work programme will address consultation and stakeholder programme
Community Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No impact
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No Impact
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No impact

Human Rights/Legal Implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linked directly to the draft local plan that addresses environmental sustainability issues and is subject to an Sustainability Appraisals
Ward-specific impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect link to all wards in conjunction with the emerging Local Plan
Workforce/Workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impact

Situation

2. The Member Governance Board has been set up as a “reference panel” to give advice and guidance to Cabinet members and Council officers. It is important to note that the Board does not have any decision making powers but has been established as a forum to discuss and advance plans and to test innovative ideas whilst also protecting the Council’s negotiating position with landowners and promoters of the proposed Garden Communities.

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 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.

There is a six month work plan in place which sets out key action areas to keep the process on track. This can be seen at Appendix 1. The six month work plan is designed to support negotiations with the landowners and promoters which will take place in Summer 2018.

Key Themes

3. Land Securities own the land identified for the Easton Park Garden Community and Grosvenor has an agreement with landowners who own the site for the North Uttlesford Garden Community . The Council has established a professional team to negotiate with the two promoters to secure all the garden city principles identified by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). The team includes Cushman & Wakefield (property consultants), Arup (consultants), Hyas (viability specialists) and Dentons (legal). Key areas for leverage have already been established and a comprehensive strategy is being developed. This will ultimately lead to a decision by the Council at the end of the summer as to the best method to deliver the proposed Garden Communities. It also important to note that engagement with key stakeholders and other parties (eg Essex County Council and North Essex Garden Communities Limited) will be an important part of the process going forward, especially in relation to the proposed West of Braintree Garden Community.
4. A housing strategy for the Garden Communities is being developed in line with the TCPA principles. Most recently a member workshop took place to help officers work up the strategy for formal consideration. The focus is around mixed and balanced communities with provision to support vulnerable people; healthy lifestyles with access to leisure facilities and open space; improved infrastructure and access to employment, education and community facilities. Suggested housing principles were discussed to include:
 - Mixed and Balanced Communities;
(including mixed tenures, ages, ethnicity and income)
 - Provision to support Vulnerable People;
(including people with learning difficulties, people with mental health issues and people with physical disabilities)
 - The opportunity for healthy lifestyles;
 - Good access to work;
 - Good leisure, recreation and community facilities;
 - Places where people live out of choice rather than necessity;
 - Housing for local workers;
(especially key workers and workers who cannot currently to afford to live in the district)
 - Houses and places that are well managed in the long term;
 - Phasing and programming designed to meet these objectives throughout the delivery period;
 - Full engagement by the community in the planning, delivery and management of the place;
 - Improved quality in housing design and construction;
 - High environmental sustainability;
 - Future proofing for changes in lifestyle; and
 - An approach that takes account of the needs of the whole district.

5. Health and wellbeing is a key issue for new garden communities and these objectives will be built into the whole approach to designing, delivering and managing the new Garden Communities. A presentation has been made to the Member Board. There are so many factors that have an impact on human health (including education, socialisation, housing, income and employment) by focussing on providing better built environments from the outset we can help people to choose to live healthier lives. Many aspects of healthy living chime with the TCPA principles including: access to quality open space, active travel principles to increase physical activity, affordable and adaptable housing and promoting community and social cohesion with access to leisure and recreation facilities.
6. The health and wellbeing implementation strategy is to be considered in greater detail at an officer meeting on 24 May 2018. The importance of whole system working will underpin the approach. All key stakeholders need to be involved, including developers and health professionals, to ensure that the scale afforded to a garden community development means a new kind of environment to promote healthy communities can be delivered.
7. Members will be aware that work is taking place with North Essex Garden Communities Limited (NEGC) in connection with the West of Braintree Garden Community. NEGC follows the TCPA principles and consequently has the same aims as the District Council in this respect. A long term plan is being developed to bring forward new settlements over 25 years, providing innovative infrastructure, employment opportunities and sustainability features. Working with NEGC will help develop a streamlined approach with the high quality plans for delivery. The Council is also engaging key stakeholders from the outset by including on the Board Councillor Bentley as Deputy Leader of Essex County Council along with David Hill who is a Director of the authority . The District Council alone cannot deliver on all aspects of Garden Communities and support is needed for key issues like transport infrastructure and education.
8. Community engagement from a very early stage will be one of the most important factors in winning over the hearts and minds of the public. The scale of the proposed development means that there is likely to be some level of opposition. By engaging with key stakeholders and interested parties from the outset the Council can listen to the concerns of surrounding communities and also take account of a wide range of groups who will have an interest in the new Garden Communities. Consultants will shortly be appointed to lead a comprehensive programme of community engagement and to communicate the proposals as they are brought forward.
9. The Board is also visiting other examples of new communities and recently a visit took place to Alconbury Weald. This is an Urban & Civic scheme of 5,000 new homes. Key learning points from the visit were that early and consistent community engagement is key to gaining support for the development; large scale and early infrastructure is probably the most important pre-development

issue and forward planning for adequate healthcare provisions from the outset is very important.

Risk Analysis

10.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
The proposed Garden Communities are not delivered in accordance with the TCPA garden city 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.