

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 6 September 2018
Title: Update on Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board June – August 2018
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Howard Rolfe Leader of the Council
Report Author: Dawn French, Chief Executive **Key decision:** No
01799 510400

Summary

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

Recommendations

2. To note the update for meetings of the Garden Communities Delivery Member Governance Board between June 2018 and August 2018

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

- 5.

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 merging local plan,
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

6. 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 appended to this report (Appendix 1).
7. 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 2). Since the last quarterly update there have been three meetings of the Board, two Study Tours and a member briefing session.

Key Themes

8. There are a range of themes that are being pursued by the Board and in the last three months the following topics have been discussed:
 - Updates and Briefings on New Legislation
 - Bidding for Resources and Government Liaison
 - Securing Agreement with Promoters on the Principles
 - Co-ordination with the other Essex Councils
 - Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing
 - Sustainable Transport Provision
 - Health and Wellbeing Agenda
 - Community Assets and Parks
 - Programme of Study Visits
 - Community Infrastructure Levy

Updates and Briefings on New Legislation

9. A presentation was made by Stephen Ashworth (partner of the legal firm Dentons) about the 2018 Regulations and Guidance that enables local authorities to establish Locally Led New Towns. The presentation provided a

brief history on the legislative arrangements for new towns, and then described the process of designating a new town, the appointment of an oversight authority and the powers to set up a development corporation. The role of the oversight authority in respect of approving masterplans and any local development order was also explained.

Bidding for Resources and Government Liaison

10. Securing funding and resources to support the delivery of the proposed garden communities continue to be an important priority for the Board. The publication of a 'Garden Communities Prospectus' came after the most recent meeting of the Board however the opportunity to make a bid (closing date 9 November 2018) will be a high priority for the Board.
11. Communities Secretary, James Brokenshire MP announced the new programme to support the government's plans for more locally led developments with the focus on high quality homes and green spaces. Government is establishing a programme of tailored support for local authorities that includes resource funding, expert delivery advice from Homes England and cross government brokerage to resolve barriers to delivery. The programme will prioritise new Garden Communities of more than 10,000 new homes but will consider bids for new Garden Communities over 1,500 new homes too.

Securing Agreement with Promoters on the Principles

12. A major focus of the Board at the moment is the potential to reach in principle agreement with the Garden Community promoters about delivery arrangements. Formal discussions have commenced with Grosvenor (North Uttlesford Garden Community) and Landsec (Easton Park Garden Community). It is expected that these 'Stage One' discussions will be completed by 14 September 2018 to allow formal consideration of the outcome prior to the submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in October 2018.
13. The discussions are being 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.

Co-ordination with the other Essex Councils

14. Claire Hamilton, the Director of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, gave a presentation on the work of her team. It is clear that each new garden settlement faces similar challenges and the presentation highlighted the importance of sharing experiences and knowledge to ensure that best practice is identified and delivered.
15. The Board has also received updates on the North Essex Local Plans which propose three new garden communities (including West of Braintree Garden

Community). Recent letters from the Local Plan Inspector, Roger Clews, have highlighted the need to develop the evidence base for the North Essex Garden Community proposals and the District Council continues to work closely with Essex County Council and the other districts in their response to the Inspector's letters.

Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing

16. The work of the Board is currently focussing on the strategic issues of housing delivery and more specific work is underway involving a Sub Committee of the Scrutiny Committee. It is expected that a report on affordable housing in the Garden Communities will be considered by that Committee on 25 September 2018. Discussion at that meeting will help inform a review of the Housing Strategy which would be available for consideration by the Cabinet in March 2019.

Sustainable Transport Provision

17. Sean Perry, Head of Transportation and Smarter Travel at Essex County Council, gave a presentation to the Board on the subject of delivering 'high mode share in the Garden Communities'. The Garden Communities will be required to secure 60% of all trips to be by walking, cycling and public transport. The presentation set out the options to achieve this level of sustainable transport and explained the approach that Essex County are taking to realise this ambition.

Health and Wellbeing Agenda

18. The Board previously received a presentation by Laura Taylor-Green, Head of Wellbeing and Public Health at Essex, about creating Healthy Garden Communities. The Board has supported the setting up of a Task and Finish Group consisting of members of the Uttlesford Health and Wellbeing Board which will oversee a review of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy to include provision for the new Garden Communities. It is expected that the Strategy will be available for consideration by the Cabinet in March 2019. The Task and Finish Group will also have the opportunity to help share the masterplanning work on the new Garden Communities to ensure that the health perspective is embedded in both the design, and delivery of the new places.

Community Assets and Parks

19. David Foster (Chief Executive of the Milton Keynes Parks Trust) gave a presentation to the Board about the approach in Milton Keynes. The Trust manages 5,000 acres of greenspace and is a limited company and a registered charity governed by a board of trustees. The organisation has £137m of assets that generate £9m per annum (including about £1m per annum earned through activities). The Trust is a very interesting model that will be considered further.

Programme of Study Visits

20. There have been two study visits made by the Board. One to view the Grosvenor and Oxford City Council scheme on 94 acres of land at Barton Park which comprises about 900 new homes, a primary school, food store, community hub and a new linear park. The second visit was to Ebbsfleet Development Corporation to meet Ian Piper (the Chief Executive) and to view progress on a Garden City scheme of 15,000 new homes with 30,000 new jobs. Both of these schemes have highlighted important learning points for the Board in securing successful new schemes.

Community Infrastructure Levy

21. Presentations have been made on Community Infrastructure Levy as a means to secure development funding.

Conclusions

22. Over the last six 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.

23. The next three months will be important in terms of completing initial discussions with Grosvenor and Landsec and determining the future delivery programme for the new Garden Communities.

Risk Analysis

24.

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.