

Chelmsford Garden Village (CGV) Delivery Board Minutes

12 November 2019, 10am Crompton Room, CCC Offices

1. Welcome and Introductions

Nick Eveleigh (NE) – Chief Executive, CCC
David Green (DG), Director for Sustainable Communities, CCC
Cllr Stephen Robinson (SR), Leader of Chelmsford City Council
Cllr Mike Mackrory (MM), Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford, CCC
Jeremy Potter (JMP), Spatial Planning Services Manager, CCC
Gemma Nicholson (GN), Planning Policy Officer, CCC
Karen Short (KS), Principal Planning Officer, CCC
Amy Burbidge (AB), Senior Planning Manager, Homes England
Graham Thomas (GT), Head of Planning, ECC
Ian Turner (IT), Major Project Sponsor, ECC
Chris Cooper (CC), Senior Principal Engineer, Jacobs
Hugo Kirby (HK), Managing Director, Ptarmigan Land
Olly Buck (OB), Associate Director, Ptarmigan Land
Rosa Etherington (RE), Associate Director, Countryside Zest
Andrew Taylor (AT), Director, Countryside Zest
Ryan Murphy (RM), Director, Bradley Murphy Design– Landscape Architects
Joanne John (JJ), Associate, Bradley Murphy Design– Landscape Architects
Graeme Phillips (GP), Partner, JTP - Masterplanners
Iain MacPherson (IM), Hanson

Apologies

None

2. Minutes of previous meeting

AT requested correction of Countryside to read 'Countryside Zest'.

For the action regarding information being made available online – a page is being created to be hosted on CCC's website specifically for Chelmsford Garden Village. Delivery Board Agenda and Minutes, once agreed, will be available with links signposting to other work streams and Consortium webpage.

3. NE Chelmsford – HIF Presentation

IT and CC gave a presentation providing an update on the HIF bid and the projects covered. The submitted bid to the Housing Infrastructure Fund was successful in August 2019 and has been awarded £218m. ECC continue to work with partners (CCC, Network Rail and Countryside Zest) to finalise the Term & Conditions with Homes England. Gary MacDonnell, Network Co-ordinator, is managing this.

Station Scheme Update

The station will:

- Provide 40 minutes commute time to London Liverpool Street
- Provide 3 platforms with passing loop for enhanced reliability and network resilience
- Relieve crowding at Chelmsford station
- Act as a transport interchange to encourage sustainable travel

The station design is progressing with the recommended preferred option of a full bi-directional loop option, at a cost of £157m. Currently at GRIP stage 3, the outline design is due to be completed in Spring 2020. This will enable 4 trains per hour in morning and evening peaks, and 2 trains per hour in both directions off peak. Next stage in the process is to have formal sign off of the preferred option, commence agreement in principle (AIP) and review programme for GRIP4 (planning, Transport and Works Act and network changes).

An artist impression of the Station and proposed layout designs were shown. The design includes multi-storey carpark, ground spaces, disable spaces, bus stop facilities, electric charging points, cycle parking (200-300 spaces) with the potential to expand on cycle parking provision. The station will become an important transport hub with links to Maldon and other areas.

There was discussion around the potential to link across to the southern side of A138 and railway line given there is a key employment corridor with Sainsbury's, Car Auction, Council's Waste and Recycling Depot at the Employment Areas of Colchester Road/Drovers Way and Hedgerows Business Park. The area would benefit from the proximity of the new station although the large span over A138 and Railway line will result in a high cost. Funding is not available under this project, but the design is allowing for the opportunities to be taken in the future.

There are improvements to cycle and pedestrian links for Generals Lane crossing and pedestrian crossing from Boreham.

The multi-storey car park was not shown in the artist impression. It would be located near to the Generals Lane road structure, which also has the RDR/Bypass connections and business park. The visual impact of this was a raised as a concern but was noted that the levels are much lower in this area. Within North Chelmsford Area Action Plan (NCAAP) heights are limited and parameter plans are in place following the examination to NCAAP.

Bus Link will connect up to White Hart Lane with cycle provision included. Details are held by Countryside Zest.

ACTION: Countryside Zest (RE) to send Cllr Mackrory details for White Hart Lane junctions.

Bypass – overview:

This will be an 8km new highway linking the A131 and A12. It will connect strategic traffic in the South to A120, Braintree and Stanstead in the North. At the local scale it will alleviate traffic from Essex Regiment Way, White Hart Lane and the residential areas.

The 1st phase will continue from the existing dual carriage at Gt Leighs (A131 in north) to a new roundabout at Chatham Green (Section 2), before going 'off-line' through agricultural land (Section 1) to connect to RDR1 as a single carriageway link. This will be future-proofed for Phase 2 to complete the dualling.

There are three rural road to cross, Drakes Lane, Cranham Road and Gt Leighs Roads, it is expected that these will be consolidated into two crossing point. Future updates be provided to the Delivery Board.

S106 funding from future growth is being used to secure the dual for the By-pass. Boreham Interchange with new bridges onto A12 is reliant on Highways England working on A12 scheme. There is a £250m cap on HIF bid.

The design is due to be fixed at the end of the year which can then be discussed in more detail.

The key milestones for the by-pass are:

- Planning Qtr.1 2021
- CPO Qtr.2/3 2021
- Construction Qtr.4 2022 – Qtr.1 2024

Informal consultation – public engagement events will take place in the Spring. The communications will be joint between ECC and CCC. This would include fly through videos.

Network Rail input – ECC are the clients, Network rail are the delivery agent with the skills and capacity to build it.

Funding – as part of the T&Cs, there is a spending profile, applications are submitted to HE quarterly for reimbursement of the cost of the programme as it moves forward. It is a contract arrangement which is the normal process for major road projects.

There is a pre-contract and post contract that is signed between ECC and Homes England/MHCLG March sign off is expected.

4. Planning and Workstream Updates

Local Plan – please see additional note circulated for Item 4.

JMP confirmed that an announcement was made by PINS that they will not be issuing any letters regarding the soundness or legal compliance of local plans, or final reports (including for fact check) ahead of the General Election. The Inspector's Report will be viewed by the Secretary of State so timings could be affected by ministerial appointments.

If the report is received before Christmas, it is intended that the Local Plan be adopted at Full Council on 22nd January. Although a Special Full Council could be held in February if there is any delay to receiving the Inspector's report.

Consultation on the SPDs will follow adoption of the Local Plan. This includes Making Places which will take into account the new national design guidance and Model Code (template to be published in January). The SPD will not replicate the new national guidance but be a streamlined SPD for guidance to implement the Local Plan policies, local standards are already included the Local Plan appendices.

Masterplan Vision – JTP (GP)

The team have been taking a step back to review what we are trying to achieve at this site, keeping in mind the Garden City principles. This has been a collaborative process with two key events as outlined below:

Community Liaison Group – 26th September

About 45 attended this workshop session which tested issues and opportunities for the CGV from a community and social perspective. Post-it notes were used to gather thoughts which are being collated and will form an appendix to DFD. Opportunities for the vision was also reviewed, this raised 'day to day' items but things people felt were important for the community.

The themes of the challenges raised included future proofing and legacy, infrastructure, facilities and employment including the provision for young people (11-17 years), movement and connectivity, maintenance and management.

The themes for the opportunities included future proofing and legacy, movement and connectivity for the future, improved maintenance and management, landscape, wildlife biodiversity and recreation, technology, waste, recycling and energy.

Vision Workshop – October

A technical workshop was led by JTP with officers from CCC, ECC Highways, Landscape and Highways experts. A presentation was given by David Mooney, London Wildlife Trust, on nature recovery.

This workshop was split into different sessions focusing on the qualities of place in different scenarios. The 10 ten qualities from the day have been summarised and include landscape, network recovery, connectivity, less car dominance, integration, emotion features (joyful and happy place) appear across several themes, wild infrastructure – not just green, blue and grey, super parks, community sharing and growing of community stewardship.

From these two events, a vision is being brought together to form a vision statement "A Shared Place" with the following principles

1. Boundless Connectivity
2. Liberated Living
3. Symphonic Sustainability

4. Wild Infrastructure – interwoven with nature and wildlife, explorable landscapes, ‘redefine the street’
5. Spirited Stewardship

Next steps will be to produce a user-friendly vision document that can be made available on the website for the community to see how comments have been taken on board.

Concern was raised that health and wellbeing isn’t really highlighted in the vision. Whilst it is embedded in the ideas it is not explicitly said.

PPA –

A signed PPA is in place with the Consortium which was based on the site promotion for the Local Plan. This is now being updated to reflect the masterplanning process and reflect ECC’s involvement. It will reflect the significant amount of resources needed to undertake the work. Whilst the Garden Communities bid was successful there is still a gap in resources which the PPA highlights and this will inform the basis of the next Garden Communities bid. The revised PPA is close to being signed in principle.

5. Bradley Murphy Design (BMD) Presentation

A presentation was given by JJ and RM. BMD are a landscape architects and urban design practice. BMD are currently working to support reserved matters planning applications for the final phases of Channels. This included the Lakes (Phase 6) and the community park (Phase 6+).

The presentation explored a landscape led approach to masterplanning:

1. Inherited assets – understand and respect the context, review site history and existing features to safeguard high value assets and setting
2. Nature and wildlife – evaluate existing baseline, opportunity for development to enhance the isolated habitat pockets
3. Health and Wellbeing - promoting active and healthy lifestyles, recognise mental and physical health benefits from green spaces, integrate access for all
4. Key destinations – social facilities, connecting spaces, places to visit ‘super park’
5. Landscape intervention – promote activities outside, access throughout the year, outdoor working, opportunity for food production to bring communities together
6. Sustainable movement – provide safe, direct and attractive sustainable movement network, walkable neighbourhoods
7. Garden streets – future proofing, opportunity for new ‘car free’ streets, reducing car dependency
8. Development parcels – working in harmony, creating attractive places to live and work based on landscape approach

BMD provided some current case examples as outlined below. BMD have worked with JTP on the case studies shown.

Alconbury Weald, Cambridgeshire

- A former airfield acquired by Urban & Civic in 2009
- Mixed use development with 5,000 new homes

- Concept for Landscape led Vision: Green 'runways' – A life off for nature
- Key to reconnect native woodland, recycling water and replenish grassland
- Important early engagement with community with a week-long design inquiry held in former hanger on site
- Tree nurseries were created on site even before the scheme commenced. Seeds were collected from the ancient woodland with pledges made by site promoters to allow the trees to be translocated back throughout the development. The community were involved in this stage and 90% of tree planted have survived.
- The allotment was also delivered early on
- The design team focused on instance impact, what people would see from day 1 moving onto the development.

Rugby Radio Station, Warwickshire

- Consented in 2014 to provide 6,200 new homes
- This case is the most similar to NE Chelmsford in terms of ecology and composition
- Great Crested Newts were a key consideration on site, a network of wildlife corridors were created to link up ponds and other waterbodies for newts integration with the wider Green Infrastructure strategy
- Another key priority was to save rare apple trees which were stored to be brought in later into the scheme working with surrounding orchards
- The team looked at a day in the life of the new residents, created network corridors first, looked at the movement network and community facilities such as primary school

Waterbeach, Cambridge

- Former RAF airfield and barracks together with adjoining farmland
- Allocated site in South Cambridge Local Plan as a new 10,000 homes settlement
- Urban and Civic PLC area for 6,500 new homes and 120hectare of habitat-led open space
- A rich landscape already existed on site
- Have worked with adjoining landowners through the SPD work
- It is a smaller site in terms of ecology, more constrained
- A landscape led vision to create a lakeside destination, interconnected habitat mosaic, reinstating the causeway, uninterrupted network of fenways with development parcels nestled around this.

BMD Lessons Learnt

- Establishing a strong vision and getting buy-in
- Building relationships with the community and stakeholders. 3D Visualisations for public community events are really useful
- Early engagement – pledges and delivering on promises
- Long Term Management
 - Stewardship
 - Balance of instant and evolving landscape
 - Educating/feedback and listening to residents – drawing on feedback when on site and attending events. It would be helpful to have a landscape pack or

vision pack not just 'home owners pack' – residents can then understand why the landscape is a certain way from day one.

HALO

A Collaborative submission with JTP, PBA and Sebastien Boyesen to the Ebbsfleet Healthy Garden City competition. HALO, a model for growing healthy infrastructure for 21st century garden community won this competition.

'HALO' comprises four key principles that can be adopted to suit any site and create a healthy garden city. It encompasses all green, grey, blue and built infrastructure which all embed into the 'healthy infrastructure'.

Hives – Access to others, bringing people together, social activity hubs

Arcs – reconnecting to nature, uninterrupted access to nature

Links – Access for All, localised green grid network, community and wildlife movement

Organics – edible landscape, food production and habitat creation

This model was applied to Ebbsfleet 'Blue Lake' and a visual prop shown at the meeting, highlighting how visually this helped to demonstrate the vision to others.

Discussion took place around virtual reality, which can really help in design review to portray scale and size of spaces. Although it was noted that this only works really on small group at a time. Videos can be useful for key stakeholders and outline planning stages.

MM questioned how perceived safety issue of using the former quarry was overcome. The safety concerns were related to the steep sides and persons entering the water unsupervised. These can be made safe by a variety of methods from infill or planting edges/margins to make it difficult to access, providing floating walkways, passive surveillance and stewardship – a place can be safe if managed appropriately.

6. Garden Communities Programme

Homes England provided an update on the GC programme – there are now 15 garden towns, 33 garden villages on the programme with the capacity to deliver 350,000 homes by 2050. It is a significant Homes England programme with a large proportion of communities located within Essex. Events are being arranged to get programme members together to help share knowledge and provide networking opportunities.

Homes England can provide cross government support & brokerage to help overcome barriers for delivery and broker solutions, for example with Highways England or DfT/Network Rail.

Garden Communities Toolkit now available .gov website:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/garden-communities/legacy>

Other Garden Communities examples include:

- Didcot – focusing on embedding technology into the garden town to be a smart/digital place, working with technology companies

- Bicester Garden Town – focus on custom and self-build scheme at scale, sustainable place-making and part of the NHS Healthy New Town, have provided 'NHS Blue Route' which is a painted blue route on the ground to show safe routes
- St. Cuthberts – also HIF funded, community engagement focused, buy-in and engagement with landowners to deliver ambitions
- Otterpool Park, Folkestone – Council has leading role as landowner, up to 10,000 new homes, Place Panel and Design Charter in place, proactive project planning and use of PPA process, focusing on building a sustainable town and a landscape led approach to place-making
- North Northants – design-led approach, consistent delivery at pace, building connections and creating a diversity of new places, edible streets example - how to embed orchard trees with normal street trees
- Dunton Hill – focusing on youth engagement and working with University of Birmingham.

Lesson learnt from other projects:

- Project have a high level of local leadership – and not just through a planning focus
- Dedicated resource put in place early on
- Appropriate governance and decision-making structure put in place early on
- Projects viewed and managed as corporate projects
- Effective working relationships
- Clarity on vision, barrier and outcomes underpinned by a project plan

Garden Communities Grant Spending:

JMP outlined four main streams which CCC are looking to fund through the garden communities fund, these are:

- Employment Study
- Planning strategy – CCC are looking to take advice on best way forward. This is focussing on a legal perspective to the planning strategy and is a key priority.
- Landscape - joint brief with the Consortium
- Community stewardship – a brief has been prepared. AT mentioned that TCPA are undertaking some work in relation to this which Countryside are sponsoring.

GT mentioned that Community Stewardship can be an added resource which if set up can generate additional income and this be spent on better quality public realm and keeping the place sustainable in the longer term.

All keen to ensure that work is not to duplicate.

Actions

JMP to provide update on spend profile for the Homes England Garden Communities Grant and what is proposed for future workstreams. This is to help justify support and funding for future bid processes.

7. Infrastructure Delivery Update

A12 consultation ongoing – Junction 19

Actions

JMP to produce rolling schedule of infrastructure delivery for future meetings which can be updated and provide as note.

8. Any other business

Future Agenda Items:

- Vision document to be brought to 13th Feb meeting for agreement and discussion.

9. Date of Next Meeting

13 February 2020