Chelmsford Garden Community (CGC) Delivery Board Minutes

2.30pm, Tuesday 23 June 2026, Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

- Paul Brookes (PB), Director of Sustainable Communities, CCC (Chair)
- Jeremy Potter (JP), Assistant Director- Planning and Place Shaping, CCC
- Cllr Stephen Robinson (SR), Leader of Chelmsford City Council
- Cllr Richard Lee (RL), Cabinet Member for Planning and Place Shaping, CCC
- Karen Short (KS), Development Manager (Garden Communities), CCC
- William Stanley (WS), Senior Planning Officer, CCC
- Cllr Robert Jerome (RJ), Essex County Council Ward Member for Chelmer Ward, ECC
- Graham Thomas (GT), Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, ECC
- Billy Parr (BP), Head of Network Development, ECC
- Rosa Etherington (RE), Project Director (Planning), Countryside L&Q
- Peter Dowling (PD) Director, Ptarmigan Land
- Olivia Dickie (OD), Assistant Development Director, Ptarmigan Land
- Olly Buck (OB), Planning Director, Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree)
- Alison Jennings (AJ), Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager, Homes England

Apologies:

- Nick Eveleigh (NE), Chief Executive, CCC

2. Minutes of Previous Meetings and Actions

24.02.26 - Minutes agreed and to be uploaded.

3. Zone 2 Planning Committee

JP provided an update to the board that the committee papers for the Zone 2 outline planning application had now been published, and the application would be considered by Planning Committee on 30th June.

KS noted that City Council officers had held briefings with City and County Council members and separately with the Chelmsford Garden Community Council.

KS also noted that following publication of the committee report matters relating to the ECC Historic Environment Branch consultation response, minor changes to the Heads of Terms and condition wording and updates to the list of documents for approval would be included within the committee update paper.

RE thanked City Council officers for their work on the Zone 2 application and for publishing the reports in a timely manner; this sentiment was echoed by PB and JP.

RL queried the length of time the application would likely take to be considered by Planning Committee given the length of time the Zone 1 and 3 applications took to be considered. JP confirmed that the consideration of the Zone 2 application was not expected to take as long given attention was focussed on a single application.

4. Zones 1 & 3 s106 Agreements

KS informed the board that as the time frame for completing the PFA, approving the Stage 1 Masterplan and completing the required CIL Reinvestment Funding Agreement and the Zones 1 and 3 s106 Agreements was due to expire on 15th June 2026 it had proven necessary to take the Zone 1 and 3 applications back to Planning Committee to seek a four month period from the expiry of the agreed resolution to allow officers time to negotiate, setting and complete the legal and funding agreements. The Planning Committee had resolved to agree to extend the timeframe by four months to 15th October 2026.

KS advised that good progress had since been made on the drafting and reviewing of the various schedules with City Council officers holding weekly meetings with lawyers and fortnightly meetings with the applicants and their solicitor to discuss specific schedules and topics. An in-person meeting had been arranged for 1st July.

GT provided the board with updates on the ECC specific matters and confirmed that an education meeting had been held on 23rd June and that this matter was now moving forward. Progress had also been made on the various highways schedules.

OB noted that whilst good progress was being made on the CCC matters, there were still concerns regarding the ECC position, particularly in relation to education and highways matters. Halley required the legal agreements to be signed, and decisions issued by the end of July so that work on construction of the NRDR could be commenced. OB requested all parties pull together to realise this objective. PD endorsed this position.

5. CGC Healthcare Provision

KS advised the board that discussions with the NHS ICB were ongoing but noted that officers were struggling to make progress on this.

A response had been received from the ICB on the Zone 2 planning application requesting the following:

- A rent free period of no less than 5 years
- No increases made to the service charge for a minimum of five years
- Rent paid by the ICB to be no more than 20% market rent taking into account the DV valuation of healthcare buildings.

The ICB had indicated that if the above principles were not agreed, then they might not be able to take on the lease of the healthcare buildings.

RE noted that Vistry would be able to offer a rent free period of 3 years and no increase in service charge for five years but would not be prepared to offer the lease at a rent of 20% of market rent.

PD confirmed that Ptarmigan would also not be able to meet all of the terms requested by the ICB.

JP confirmed that the ICB had been asked to justify their costs and a meeting was to be arranged to discuss a way forward.

PD noted the concerns associated with the delay in reaching agreement with the NHS ICB and queried whether there might be some flexibility built into the s106 Agreement were they unable to agree a position before the end of July.

6. Community Stewardship

KS noted that several meetings had taken place with the CGCC and their consultant in relation to stewardship matters. The draft Business Plan had been significantly progressed, and City Council officers were in the process of finalising a draft asset schedule.

JP noted that there was disagreement on who would manage some of the assets and in relation to the per dwelling stewardship contribution but that this matter would need to be discussed in a separate meeting.

7. Homes England / National Highways / ECC - A12 J19 Mitigation Scheme & Roundabout 5 – Funding Update

BP updated the board that following the last meeting, ECC had held positive discussions with Homes England and National Highways. Homes England had agreed to a variation to the existing HIF agreement so that £14 million of the existing HIF project contingency could be spent on the Beaulieu Access Package works at Junction 19 and roundabout 5 works (estimated to total £38 million).

ECC had received a positive letter from National Highways indicating that the Beaulieu Access Package met the requirements to receive funding from them. A final decision on funding from National Highways was expected following a board meeting on 16th July 2026.

Following the National Highways board meeting, ECC proposed to take a paper to their Cabinet on 24th July 2026 to ask the Cabinet to agree to provide an £8 million contribution from ECC towards the Roundabout 5 works and to confirm that they would also deliver the works.

PB queried if a paper would be considered by the ECC cabinet in July with or without National Highways confirmation of funding post their meeting on 16th July. BP confirmed that ECC were proposing to present to Cabinet in July and would be seeking an in principle agreement until such time as National Highways funding was agreed.

8. CIL Reinvestment & CIL Funding agreements

JP reminded the board that the CCC Cabinet resolved to ringfence up to £66.3 million of CIL money generated from the scheme to be reinvested into the Garden Community to fund infrastructure and to seek a policy compliant scheme of 33% affordable housing or the largest amount of affordable housing if the financial viability gap were larger than £66.3 million/

The agreed committed CIL reinvestment for Zones 1 and 3 equated to £10,336,115 for Zone 1 and £10,489,350 for Zone 3. The CIL reinvestment for Zone 2 could not therefore exceed £45,474,535. Testing of the financial model submitted with the Zone 2 viability submission had concluded that the maximum level of affordable housing provision deliverable within Zone 2, were the CIL reinvestment fixed at £45,474,535 was 18.9%, which would be rounded to an affordable housing provision for Zone 2 of 19%

RE noted the position regarding the maximum amount of CIL available for reinvestment but asked if officers could have a discussion with Vistry post Planning Committee to enable the Zone 2 scheme to deliver 20% affordable housing.

RE also asked queried whether the percentage of affordable housing had been mentioned at the recent members briefing. JP noted that comments had been made but that these had been addressed in the committee report and would be addressed at Planning Committee if members posed questions.

9. PFA & IDP Update

KS noted that the PFA was in a substantively agreed form, pending confirmation of the funding agreement from ECC and National Highways prior to signature. The intention was that the PFA would be capable of being signed by the end of July.

10. Risk Register

KS noted that the Risk Register had been updated to reflect the latest position, including the funding position (updated register is available in the SharePoint folder). KS ran through the risk register for the board members.

11. Communications

JP noted that the Communications Group Meetings had paused due to the ECC pre-election Purdah period. The CCC comms team intended to restart these meetings to continue discussions on the communications plan. CGCC were very interested in being involved in the comms group.

KS and RE noted that press releases had been prepared by CCC and Vistry respectively to be issued Post Planning Committee

12. Project Milestones

Planning Awards 2026: Award for Infrastructure Planning - Beaulieu Park Railway Station

13. Any Other Business

KS raised the need for the consortium to reach agreement on a Statement of Common Ground in relation to the Local Plan and requested that this be progressed by the consortium.

14. Date of Next Meeting

Agreed that the next meeting would take place at the end of September. WS to send out invite.

Chelmsford Garden Community Team
15 July 2026