

Chelmsford Garden Village (CGV) Delivery Board Minutes

10am 9 June 2020, MS Teams

1. Welcome and Introductions

Nick Eveleigh (NE), Chief Executive, CCC
Cllr Stephen Robinson (SR), Leader of Chelmsford City Council
Cllr Mike Mackrory (MM), Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, CCC
Cllr Lesley Wagland (LW), Deputy Portfolio for Infrastructure, ECC
Jeremy Potter (JMP), Spatial Planning Services Manager, CCC
David Green (DG), Director for Sustainable Communities, CCC
Gemma Nicholson (GN), Planning Policy Officer, CCC
Graham Thomas (GT), Head of Planning, ECC
Amy Burbidge (AB), Senior Planning Manager, Homes England
Andrew Taylor (AT), Director, Countryside Zest
Olly Buck (OB), Director, Ptarmigan Land

Apologies

Iain Macpherson, Hanson

2. Minutes of previous meeting and actions

13.2.20 – minutes agreed. Update: CLG event for March was postponed – virtual engagement will be investigated.

Actions list updated. Discussion have started to take place with Registered Providers. JMP and GT have also started discussions in regard to grant funding and further discussions with Homes England will be undertaken.

3. Planning and Workstream Updates

Local Plan was adopted on the 27 May 2020. The Masterplanning process will be key next stage. Each of the strategic sites has its own Strategic Site Policy detailing infrastructure and site-specific requirements. Each of these sites requires a masterplan to be produced and approved by the City Council.

DG confirmed that the planning service is continuing as business as usual with consultation on masterplans continuing as well as site visits and enforcement. Planning committee to be held on 9 June 2020.

4. Resources

PPA – details resources for both ECC and CCC. It provides certainty for the level of service the Consortium will receive from both Councils. It was noted by all that the PPA is integral for moving forward as currently the City Council Spatial Planning Team is not resourced to continue work on the masterplanning process. Negotiations have taken time but the PPA is now at the point where parties can agree and sign.

The only remaining issue was securing the final landowner approval within the Developer Consortium. The Delivery Board were in agreement that the PPA needs to be signed as soon as possible.

Cllr Robinson was keen to understand the timing of the signing of the PPA in order for team resources to be allocated. Cllr Robinson requested that an update be provided back to the Council within 2 weeks of this meeting. It was agreed, that, if needed, separate discussions should be had between the City Council and landowners/Consortium team to resolve the issue as soon as possible. AT would take this back to the relevant landowners.

Discussion also took place around the relationship between HIF funding and PPA. This is also a vital element of the project delivery. It was noted that HIF contract needs to be signed imminently. Cllr Wagland raised that if there are issues surrounding the HIF, if these could be summarised in a briefing paper, Cllr Wagland to follow this up.

Actions

- To have agreed and signed PPA as soon as possible
- AT to provide an update on PPA to JMP by 23 June 2020.
- Meeting to be arranged with Countryside, ECC HIF team and solicitor team by 23 June 2020.

5. Project Plan Timeline

The timetable follows the PPA, which runs from April to August. The first stage will be for engagement and stakeholder involvement in the development of the DFD. This will include virtual consultations to be held. Formal consultation with the public will follow this. A Quality Review Panel (QRP) will also feed into this first stage of engagement. Formal feedback from CCC is to be provided in October. Any modifications to the DFD would take place between November – January 2021. Final draft is expected in January 2021 with a second QRP held. Formal sign off is expected in March 2021 by the Chelmsford Policy Board and reported to Cabinet for approval in April 2021.

It was recognised that the timetable may need reviewing given the current circumstances and challenges, however, it was emphasised that this is timetable the teams are working to.

Consortium reassured that the timetable can still be met. Virtual consultations will be a challenge but there are consultancies which can support this type of engagement and it is

more likely to be the 'norm' moving forward. There are a variety of methods which support virtual engagement.

Actions

- None for this item.

6. Vision Statement

OB outlined that substantial progress had been made during the lockdown period on various work streams using virtual platforms which has been beneficial and appreciated by the Consortium.

Consortium shared 'draft Chelmsford Garden Community Vision Statement' which sets out overarching vision for the aspiration of the place.

Garden City Principles brings forward best practice approach which will be the starting point for the development. Introduction of a foreword to the vision statement to define what makes the place special – community stewardship, sustainability, building in resilience, nature and green infrastructure; and transport modes are all noted.

Vision document and DFD to be published online once agreed.

Delivery Board member comments:

- Cllr Robinson – not ambitious enough for an 'exemplar' development, it needs to be ahead of the game now otherwise it will just be standard practice in years to come. Vision should set out clearly what the objectives are for the time period it covers for example e.g. expected to be carbon neutral by 2050 so what is this development's aim to achieve this? Could the site be a business incubator site to help small business?
- Cllr Wagland – changes in market forces are driving forward and highlighting that you can live and work anywhere in sustainable places, highlighted even more by the impact of Covid-19, this should be reflected.
- NE – Vision needs clear metrics to really emphasise what the garden communities will deliver and how it can be reflected back on to ensure it delivered what it set out to achieve. NE mentioned that a Tech Ambassadors group has been set up which involves CCC, ECC, the University, LEP and large companies in the Chelmsford area to look at innovation, sustainability and how to attract business to relocate to Chelmsford. It is important that homes, jobs, key place-shaping principles such as green spaces really support sustainable places to live, work and enjoy leisure time.
- AB – need to consider the 'hearts and mind' for metric, benefit in understanding the vision is to make it real for the people that would live there. Also consider the vision from different age group perspectives. The age group perspective is echoed by Cllr Robinson.
- JP – deliverability of the vision. All elements can be deliverable if all parties are signed up to this to help deliver the step change needed. Suggestion of a 'Charter' to

sit alongside the vision to provide a high-level commitment. Need a strong USP for Chelmsford. Vision should be shared document and owned by Consortium, CCC and ECC collectively.

- GT – highlighted climate change commission is due to start soon which would provide a good opportunity to position this GV as part of this.
- Cllr Mackrory – noted that the document includes a lot of good work, providing a good basis. Discussions coming out of the workshops has been incorporated well into the document, but need to be translated into something more fixed, echoed the discussions on metrics.

Actions

- Consortium to review comments from delivery board members and CCC/ECC officers and provide updated vision document.

7. Presentation of agreed DFD Scope

OB outlined the current work to date to produce the agreed DFD Scope. Scope of the contents of the DFD have been updated following the last Delivery board and were presented back to members. Masterplan principles were outlined. The masterplan will comprise Development Framework Document (DFD), Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and Planning Framework Agreement (PFA). These will be interrelated to ensure that design and delivery issues are addressed in tandem. This framework will help overcome issues with multiple landowners and delivery infrastructure. It will also help with the overarching S106. IDP will be a living document.

Parameter and illustrative plan will also set out land uses, access/movement hierarchy and green infrastructure for when planning applications come forward, more detailed masterplan have to sit within these parameters.

CCC commissioned work on an Employment strategy. Lichfields have produced a draft study which CCC have reviewed. Lichfields have been asked to carry out a further element of work to review what has been learnt over the last 12 weeks, and general impact of Covid-19 may have longer term. It was recognised as a key opportunity to update the study in light of Covid-19 and reflect on new ways of thinking from impacts of Covid-19. This will help with future proofing our response to how people will be working in different ways.

Long term stewardship and management is also included in the DFD scope with emphasis placed on community involvement going forward. Discussions will continue and it was noted that it is important to get the right approach from the outset.

Cllr Wagland would like tenures to be addressed within the document and the relationship with long term stewardship.

Actions

- OB and AT to note the discussion and continue with producing DFD with comments in mind.

8. Planning Strategy

CCC has taken advice from Dentons. Final report has been received which CCC are currently reviewing. Recommendations will be shared in due course.

Actions

- CCC to review recommendations of the Dentons report by 23 June 2020, these will subsequently be shared with the Consortium.

9. Infrastructure Update

Infrastructure schedule circulated.

Actions

- Any updates to the schedule to be provide back to CCC.

10. Garden Communities Programme

Grant funding - JMP confirmed that ECC post will still be covered by Garden Communities funding.

Future Garden Communities – no timeframe currently for next round of bids. Homes England are expecting more of a mix in funding opportunities reflecting changes in status of developments, i.e. adopted Local Plans, progress in garden village/town development.

AB mentioned that the Garden Communities forum/events have been changed to webinar events. These will continue over the summer. There is a webinar on modal shift expected. AB raised that changing garden community status from village to garden town status needs ministerial sign off and is not a Homes England decision. Evidence will be needed to support this and Homes England will continue to provide support.

11. Any other Business

An internal stewardship event is taking place on 10 June 2020 facilitated by Homes England.

GT raised that ECC are keen for Beaulieu Health Centre to come onstream. AT raised that this was discussed at recent monthly Countryside meeting and assured that is under action. The delay has been due to changes in NHS commission process.

JMP reported that the Livewell Development Accreditation is expected to be launched in early July. This will be report back to the Delivery Board.

AB raised that 'Building for Life' is being updated and a new version being prepared called 'Building for Healthy Life' is to be launched late summer.

12. Date and time of next meeting

14th October 2020