

**Meeting Note – Garden Town Member Board
7.30pm, 22 January 2018**

Attendance

Organisation	Councillors	Officers
East Herts DC	Cllr Linda Haysey (Cllr Haysey)	Liz Watts (LW) Claire Sime (CS) Kevin Steptoe (KS) Adam Halford (AH)
Epping Forest DC	Cllr John Philip (Cllr Philip) Cllr Nigel Bedford (Cllr Bedford)	David Coleman (DC) Derek Macnab (DM)
Essex CC	Cllr Lesley Wagland (Cllr Wagland)	David Sprunt (DS) David Hill (DH)
Harlow DC	Cllr Danny Purton (Cllr Purton) - Chair	Graeme Bloomer (GB) Julie Houston (JH) Brian Keane (BK)
Herts CC		Jan Hayes-Griffiths (JHG)
Garden Town	N/A	Sarah Pullin (SP) Claire Hamilton (CH)

1. Apologies

Cllr Derrick Ashley, Herts County Council

Cllr Bob Brunton, East Herts

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Essex County Council

Alison Blom-Cooper, Epping Forest District

2. Draft notes of meeting of 13 November 2017 – including review of action points

Minutes agreed

3. Update on current projects Update on working arrangements**a. Project Director**

Claire Hamilton attended the meeting in advance of her formal start date – 5 February 2018.

CH introduced herself to the group.

b. Rescheduled Member Board workshop

SP reminded the Board that the cancelled December workshop has been rescheduled for

Thursday 8th February and will be held in Epping Forest District Council's Committee Rooms.

c. Approach to delivery

SP advised that, following a meeting with Garden City Developments in December, a further meeting to discuss the approach to delivery of the Garden Town has been arranged between the chief executives and leaders/portfolio holders to discuss the approach to delivery of the Garden Town.

Cllr Haysey asked for a paper on the pros and cons of the options. SP noted that a paper had been prepared by Paul Jarvis of ARUP and was circulated to officers in November last year.

LW noted that the paper by ARUP was very high level and highlighted the need for more detailed work. It was agreed that this was something that CH would be asked to pick up.

ACTION – CH to prepare a briefing paper for the delivery meeting on 23 February.

JHG stated that this is a matter that has implications for the county councils and requested that they are included in the meeting and that the paper is circulated at least a week in advance of the meeting.

Cllr Purton raised the Government's New Towns Act Regulations consultation.

SP informed that group that a collective response had been prepared and submitted on behalf of the Garden Town LPAs ahead of the deadline. It was noted that this was a high level response that principally noted the authorities' support for the transfer of powers from national government to LPAs, to give LPAs the power to establish locally-led delivery vehicles.

DH informed the group that ECC had submitted a substantial response to the New Towns Act Regulations consultation – noting that the proposed funding cap had been raised as a problem in the response. DH also noted that ECC should share learning around the set-up of Locally-led delivery vehicles from their involvement with North Essex Communities.

ACTION – DH to send a copy of ECC's consultation submissions to SP for circulation to the Board

ACTION – SP to extend delivery meeting invitation (23 February) to David Hill and Jan Hayes-Griffiths.

4. Current budget position: (see budget note circulated)

a. Planning Delivery Fund application

SP informed the Board that an Expression of Interest had been submitted for the Joint working element of the Planning Delivery Fund for £113,000 for 2017/18 and £290,000 for 2018/19 on 11 January (it was agreed that a submission would be made at an informal gathering of Garden Town authorities (chaired by Cllr Purton) on 7 December as there were no formal meetings scheduled for the period between publication of the funding opportunity and the deadline for submission of bids – which was a very tight window).

The funding was requested to cover the following:

- Consultancy fees for the production of a Garden Town Infrastructure Plan, including viability work and identification of potential funding mechanisms
- Funding to carry forward the outcomes of the Sustainable Transport Corridor work with more detailed design work
- Professional advice and support, including legal advice in helping to establish appropriate cross-boundary delivery arrangements.
- An Urban Designer post in the Garden Town Team to assist with masterplanning and to help inform proposals for the sites as part of the Planning Performance Agreement process.

b. Garden Town Capacity funding and grant for 2017/18

SP advised that the HCA (now Homes England) sent the funding agreement for this money in early January, which has been signed and returned. The stipulation is that the funding has to be 'claimed' with evidence, such as invoices or contracts, on a project by project basis and is not an upfront grant in the way that the 2016/17 funding was. Claims must be submitted by 31 March, any funding not claimed for by the cut-off date is lost. The Agreement specified what the funding could be used for – water, transport, Quality Review Panel and other technical studies, plus an element of 'allowable costs' for costs incurred in connection with the supervision and/or implementation of the project.

It was agreed that the £175,000 would be spent on the following projects/items:

- Sustainable Transport Corridor Study
- Quality Review Panel
- Air Quality Monitoring associated with the Epping Forest SAC MoU
- Final run of Harlow Strategic Transport model

- Water Cycle Study
- Staff time for implementation/supervision of the project

(Note: Subsequently to the meeting, the HCA advised that copies of contracts to demonstrate committed funds will not be sufficient to make claims with – that evidence must show expenditure already incurred (invoices). For this reason, officers will need to have another look at the budget and expenditure to-date and reallocate the funds again in order to avoid losing any of the funding)

c. Meeting with Homes England (previously HCA)

SP informed the Board that officers from the three Garden Town authorities met with Homes England (formerly the HCA) on Monday 15 January. The purpose of the meeting was primarily to update Homes England on progress with the Garden Town. A key point of interest was that Homes England has funding available to purchase sites to help bring forward delivery and is happy to CPO land, meaning that is a potential option if needed for the Garden Town. Officers were also informed that it is not known whether any Garden Town Capacity funding will be made available for the next financial year.

d. Future funding

It was noted that the budget note identifies a £57,000 budget shortfall at present, with no funding for expansion of the Garden Town Team. A previous Board meeting action was for Chief Executives to identify funding to plug the budget gap.

LW informed the Board that the Chief Executives had agreed in principle that any budget shortfall in the Garden Town budget will be covered up to £20,000 for each of the GT authorities (so a total of £60,000).

5. Infrastructure Plan

DC presented a paper to the Board which was circulated earlier on in the day, ahead of the meeting. It was noted that there was reference to an Appendix A, but that it was missing from the paper. DC confirmed that the Appendix was not material to the report, but rather provided helpful background in relation to joint work undertaken to date.

The report highlighted the urgency and importance of moving forward work to plan the delivery of 'strategic' infrastructure for the Garden Town which requires a coordinated approach across administrative boundaries. DC explained that at present there is no clearly defined process established or agreed in relation to the future funding and delivery mechanisms for strategic infrastructure required to support the Garden Town, and that this poses a risk to successful planning and delivery of sites. The report proposed a potential way forward following discussions held at Officer level.

ACTION – Cllr Purton requested an amendment to scope no. 5 of the paper - infrastructure levy to add “and or land value capture”.

There was some discussion over the work and it was collectively agreed that the work was needed. The Board agreed that officers should continue the conversation about how to proceed with this work. LW noted concern that county councils were not included in a meeting held by officers of the three Garden Town authorities and also noted that East Herts would want to follow a full procurement process, rather than adding it to an existing EFDC contract – LW noted that the group should avoid rushing into the wrong commission.

JHG agreed there is a need for a strategic infrastructure plan and stated that there is a need to look creatively at funding options, which may include looking into the possibility of establishing a ‘Bank of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town’, to enable forward funding of infrastructure. JHG stated that this is a significant piece of work which the county councils need to be involved in.

Cllr Wagland noted agreement with JHG and suggested the Board should investigate whether it would be possible to seek an exemption from S106 pooling from government.

Cllr Purton suggested that officers could proceed with the first part of the work – identifying infrastructure and costs, and there would then be a separate piece of work on identifying funding, following on from that.

DC stressed the fact that the identification of infrastructure requirements, including cost estimates and an approach to S106 pooling relates specifically to the first part of the work and that this is vitally important in supporting Harlow and EFDC’s Local Plans and to provide a basis for Gilston’s PPA and application process, and for the production of Strategic Masterplans on other Garden Town sites.

GB agreed with the two part approach to the work and considered the second part to be a much more significant piece of work, to be undertaken over a longer timescale – with a need to complete the first part before the end of March 2018.

No decision reached by the Board – Cllr Purton asked the Board to consider the way forward and asked officers to continue the conversation.

BK asked all authorities to respond to the issue by email / phone to resolve the situation before the next Board meeting due to the urgent need to press ahead with the work.

ACTION: Comments on proposed approach set out in paper to be supplied to DC to enable progression of work required.

6. Waste Water Infrastructure Needs and Planned Growth

GB advised that a meeting had been held between officers, the water authorities, Environment Agency and their consultants. A first report is anticipated in February and will be brought to the next Garden Town Board meeting.

6a. List of difficult issues update (agenda item moved across from Co-op Board agenda)

This item was deferred.

DC advised the Board that EFDC had been holding meetings with the promoters/developers of the EFDC Garden Town sites – and advised that they had raised their concerns about Harlow's outstanding objections to EFDC's Plan and asked when the objection would be withdrawn, given that the objection poses a risk to the progression and delivery of sites. DC posed this question to the Board so that he could report back to the developers/promoters, and sought clarification on whether Harlow would be removing their objection to the Plan within their representations to the EFDC Reg. 19 Local Plan Publication period, which ends on 29 January.

DC also reiterated the importance and urgency for officers to define and agree costings for PPAs.

Cllr Purton advised that Harlow Council is looking to bring the objections to a conclusion in the next two months.

7. A.O.B.

Cllr Haysey advised that the trips to look at good examples of development elsewhere are continuing and informed the group of a planned trip to Almere in Holland in May, advising that Board Members are welcome to join the trip. A trip to Poundbury has been arranged for 16 February.

8. Dates of next meetings

- a. 19 February 2018, 7.30pm - Harlow Council Offices, Committee Room 2B
- b. 26 March 2018, 7.30pm - Harlow Council Offices, Committee Room 2B