

**Meeting Note – Garden Town Member Board  
6.30pm, 30 April 2018  
Monks Barn, Harlow Study Centre**

**Attendance**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Officers</b>
East Herts DC	Cllr Linda Haysey (Cllr Haysey) Cllr Bob Brunton (Cllr Brunton)	Claire Sime (CS) Liz Watts (LW)
Epping Forest DC	Cllr John Philip (Cllr Philip)	Derek Macnab (DM) Alison Blom-Cooper (ABC) David Coleman (DC)
Harlow DC	Cllr Danny Purton (Cllr Purton) - Chair Cllr Mark Ingall (Cllr Ingall)	Graeme Bloomer (GB) Julie Houston (JH) Brian Keane (BK)
Essex CC	Cllr Lesley Wagland (Cllr Wagland)	David Sprunt (DS) Rich Cooke (RC)
Herts CC	Cllr Derrick Ashley (Cllr Ashley)	Jan Hayes-Griffin (JHG)
Garden Town	N/A	Claire Hamilton (CH) Sarah Pullin (SP)

**1. Welcome and introductions – Chair****2. Apologies - Chair**

Cllr Kevin Bentley, ECC

Cllr Nigel Bedford, EFDC

David Hill, ECC

Marc Davis, PAH

Cllr Whitbread, EFDC

**3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising - Chair**

Agreed minutes of March meeting.

Actions from March meeting - Cllr Haysey will send presentations of two events attended to SP/CH for circulation.

**4. Progress report from the Garden Town Director - CH**

CH talked through her progress report that was circulated as part of the meeting papers pack.

## HIF

JHG provided an update on the HIF Bid. The Garden Town bid, led and submitted by HCC, was successful in first round, meaning HCC has been invited to prepare a Business Case. HCC officers are awaiting contact from Homes England to advise further. The intention is that Homes England will sit down with officers to explain what is required; it's not clear what is required at this stage, meaning that work on the business case cannot yet commence.

Last Friday HCC had to submit a range of technical work (e.g. transport modelling) to Homes England at their request.

A meeting of officers from the partner authorities was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April to discuss what the HIF money should be spent on and further meetings will be held over the coming weeks.

The purpose of the HIF money is to enable the infrastructure to be delivered early in order to unlock housing growth. It will then be re-cooped through Developer Contributions towards infrastructure and will be used as a rolling fund to support further growth.

JHG advised that there will be a fairly substantial cost associated with developing the business case, meaning there will be a call on the Garden Town budget. JHG also advised that the HIF programme is significantly over subscribed.

DM asked whether the money used from the Garden Town to develop the business case could be replaced back into the GT pot, if and when successful. JHG advised that this would depend on the rules set out as part of HIF as to whether some of the money can be 'top-sliced' for the development of the business case.

The preparation of the business case requires a huge amount of work to be done in a very short period of time; Homes England have assured HCC that 'the clock hasn't started ticking yet', meaning the 6 month preparation period is not decreasing while officers wait to learn what is required as part of the development of the business case. The invitation to bid suggested that work on the ground would need to begin in 2021, in order to be eligible for the funding – this is an extremely tall order.

It was noted that there are a large number of complex issues associated with delivery of the project, which will need to be addressed if successful, including legal issues.

JHG also advised that a letter is currently being drafted to go to go to developers setting out exactly what the Garden Town aspirations are around movement/transport for Gilston.

The resource issue associated with undertaking the work to prepare the business case, as well as processing the GT site planning applications was highlighted. It was noted that all the partner authorities are committed to funding the resources required, but there is concern over the limited pool of people resources available and with all authorities advertising for similar skills it was highlighted that this is a problem. This will be addressed in the skills and resources piece of work which is currently being undertaken.

### Sustainable Transport Corridor work

Cllr Purton advised the Harlow Council has started to look at options for the rapid transit vehicles, which the Council hopes will feed into the Sustainable Transport Corridor work. Cllr Purton advised that there is a need a 'different kind of transport'; transport that is 'aspirational' and which people want to use in order to help achieve the modal shift required. CH confirmed that this would be picked up as Stage 2 of the STC work.

### Economic Development

Cllr Haysey informed the group that Cllr Kevin Bentley is going to be arranging a meeting to enable all parties to establish what work is being carried out so that it can be coordinated in order to avoid duplication.

**ACTION:** Members of the Board to monitor progress on the above and keep the GT Board updated with details of any meetings arranged.

### Air quality mitigation strategy

Cllr Philip advised that DM and he had met with the City of London Conservators and that a meeting is scheduled to take place on 14<sup>th</sup> May to agree the release of the information required in order to develop the mitigation strategy.

### Consultation and engagement

Cllr Purton asked officers to approach and commence conversations with communities now, even if there isn't a huge amount to discuss. CH advised that the Consultation Strategy is due to come to the Board in July.

Cllr Haysey suggested that it would be beneficial if a positive update of work could be prepared and shared with, the Gilston Steering Group.

LW and Cllr Haysey highlighted the importance of being careful with the wording around housing numbers for the Garden Town in press releases – there's a need to agree a clear set of wording, because a press release (agreed by all parties) went out stating that there would be 23,000 new homes in Gilston.

**ACTION:** Comms and branding workstream to develop some clear wording setting out housing numbers for the Garden Town, which avoids any possible misinterpretation or confusion.

## Hospital update

CH advised that she met with the hospital on 26<sup>th</sup> April and Marc Davis of PAH was keen to stress that they are not reigning in their ambitions for a new health campus, as previously was feared by officers.

**ACTION:** SP to update the forward plan meeting dates.

## 5. Local Plan updates

Harlow – GB advised that the Plan has been taken to full Council and was approved for Regulation 19 publication. Officers had an advisory meeting with PINS last week, which was a very useful and positive meeting. Regulation 19 consultation will begin after the elections – date to be confirmed. The Inspector advised officer to focus on preparing topic papers on the big issues in/with Plan and advised not to prepare topic papers for all parts of the Plan, in preparing for the examination hearing sessions.

East Herts – CS advised that the Inspector received a request for an additional hearing session from CPRE as a result of the Main Modifications representations. The Inspector responded to say that she has all the information that she requires and that she would not be holding a further hearing session. It was noted that CPRE seem to be taking this approach to all Green Belt releases across the country.

The Inspector's report is expected at end of May, rather than end of April as previously expected, because 1,500 Regulation 19 reps were received, meaning the Inspector needs more time to get through all of the responses.

A lot of concern was raised by the main modifications requested by Inspector because they resulted in the words 'at least' being put in front of the housing numbers set out in the Plan policies. Officers are not concerned by this because other policies within the Plan will limit the number of houses that can go on a site.

EFDC – Cllr Philip advised that EFDC is waiting for the judicial review hearings to take place and that little progress can be made in moving the Plan forward until that process has been concluded. The hearing sessions are scheduled to take place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> May.

## 6. Delivery Model work – Statement of Common Ground and Draft Appraisal Matrix

Cllr Haysey asked if there could be some Member education around this issue as she felt that Members don't necessarily have the knowledge required in order to know what is the right answer (in terms of the delivery model) at the end of the process.

CH advised that the delivery model legal advisors could be asked to come and talk through the options, but CH advised that she thinks the process of populating the matrix to assess each of the options needs to happen as a starting point. The options will be presented to show the implications of each option. CH met with Homes England and has also met with legal advisors to get the input required to feed into the evaluation process. This should enable the delivery model to be selected by a process of elimination.

Cllr Wagland suggested the addition of a scale of importance to the matrix so that it is clear what are the most important factors in selecting a delivery model – Cllr Wagland noted that some things will be more important than others and the GT Board will need to agree this. JHG and DM agreed.

CH suggested that the weighting process is not implemented at this this point as she intends to keep the assessment process simple at this stage in order to identify which options are realistic options.

Cllr Wagland expressed a need to hear from people who have followed each approach and also felt that it may be the case that each of the options may not work individually and that a combination of models may work better.

CH suggested that a workshop on delivery model options is organised.

JHG suggested that the delivery model may need to evolve as the project moves through different phases and also expressed the need to add in economic growth as well as housing growth to the delivery model assessment matrix.

**Decision:** The Board agreed for CH to proceed with the assessment approach set out in order to develop a shortlist for discussion.

**ACTION:** CH to add economic growth to the matrix

**ACTION:** CH into look into the arrangement of an educational workshop

**ACTION:** CH to expand point 5 of delivery model assessment matrix to include control over DM outcomes

**Decision:** The Board agreed to endorse the strategic statements presented and circulated ahead of the meeting.

## 7. Garden Town revised budget

CH presented the GT budget sheet.

**Decision:** The Board approved the budget.

Cllr Haysey asked if the LEPs had been approached to see if they would like to become a part of the project, Cllr Haysey understands that they wish to be involved and suggested that it is possible that the LEPs may have some funding to contribute.

**ACTION:** CH to approach the LEPs to introduce the Garden Town project to them and to see if and what level of involvement the LEPs would like in the project.

**ACTION:** Cllr Purton asked for an indication of which companies are potential options to develop website so that Members can look at examples before selecting a preferred company.

## 8. Risk Register

CH advised that following a discussion with East Herts' internal audit team, the 'risk owner' would be added to the Garden Town risk register.

## 9. Forward Plan

SP presented the Forward Plan and advised that while the Garden Town workstreams are in the early stages the Forward Plan is likely to be a movable feast.

Cllr Purton suggested some offline meetings / seminars / presentations may be required for Member education in order to enable Members to make the decisions that are required, with the appropriate knowledge and background to the issue in hand.

Cllr Ashley – suggested that workshops are arranged in-between Member meetings.

**ACTION:** CH/SP to look into arranging slots in diaries to be used as a workshop or seminar that can be used if required/appropriate.

## 10. Activities coming up in next month

- East Herts trip to Almere in the week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> May

- First QRP meeting looking at the Spatial Vision to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> May

## **11. A.O.B.**

Cllr Philip asked enquired about the Employment MoU that is currently being prepared. The Board agreed that the MoU will be completed and signed off via email before EFDC submits its Local Plan.

## **12. Dates of next meetings**

- a. 19.30, 18 June 2018 – TBC
- b. 19.30, 23 July 2018 – TBC