



Chelmsford Garden Village (CGC) Delivery Board Minutes

11am, 20 February 2024, Waterhouse Room

1) Welcome and Introductions

- Nick Eveleigh (NE), Chief Executive, CCC (Chair)
- Cllr Stephen Robinson (SR), Leader of Chelmsford City Council
- Cllr Ian Fuller (IF), Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, CCC
- Paul Brookes (PB) Director of Sustainable Communities, CCC
- Jeremy Potter (JP), Spatial Planning Services Manager, CCC
- Karen Short (KS), Principal Planning Officer, CCC
- William Stanley (WS), Senior Planning Officer, CCC
- Alison Jennings (AJ), Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager, Homes England
- Rosa Etherington (RE), Project Director (Planning), Countryside L&Q
- Olly Buck (OB), Director, Ptarmigan Land
- Jon Kenny (JK), Development Director, Strategic Land – Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree Development)
- Graham Thomas (GT), Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, ECC

Apologies

- Viktoria Oakley (VO), Strategic Land Director, Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree Development)
- Cllr Lesley Wagland (LW) Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning, ECC

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

11.10.23- Minutes agreed and to be placed on the website.

Actions table updated.

3) Planning Application Updates (Zones 1-3 and NRDR)

An application updates document setting out the position of each of the applications was issued to all Board members prior to the meeting.

KS set out to the Board the current position, as shown in the update document, on each application.

A highways mitigation workshop was held on 21 January. This meeting looked at the key issues relating to highways and identified 5 key issues which required further technical discussions and meetings. The five key themes are:

1. Bus Strategy including Park & Ride
2. Active Travel & Public Rights of Way
3. Potential Sustainable Transport Corridor (Essex Regiment Way)
4. Prioritisation, Triggers & Phasing
5. Highways Improvements / Junctions

Meetings have subsequently been held to discuss the five key themes and following these meetings a list of items that require further discussion has been provided to the workshop organiser. A follow up workshop has been arranged for 6 March where the outstanding matters will be discussed and it is hoped that a final position will be agreed on all matters.

Zone 1

CCC Officers have been holding weekly catch-up meetings with the Zone 1 team to identify outstanding matters.

The applicants submitted amended plans in January 2024 in relation to the outstanding matters identified.

A finalisation meeting was held on Friday 16 February to discuss the remaining issues and agree ways forward. This was a productive meeting, and the outcomes are being actioned.

Final comments are awaited from ECC Highways on both the full and outline applications; the highway authority has been asked to categorise these as a) those matters requiring resolution prior to Planning Committee, b) those matters which can be addressed by a planning condition and c) those matters which can be addressed through the highway technical agreements.

Zone 2

The outline planning application for Zone 2 was submitted in November 2023.

Since January 2024, CCC Officers have been holding weekly topic-based meetings to discuss various aspects of the proposal. To date, the meetings have covered all aspects of Green & Blue Infrastructure, Health and Community infrastructure and Education.

It is hoped to conclude these meetings by the end of March after which the applicants will amend their documents and drawings to respond to matters raised in the meetings.

Zone 3

CCC Officers are holding weekly meetings with the Zone 3 team to identify and resolve the outstanding issues. Amended plans will be submitted shortly.

As with Zone 1 final comments are still awaited from ECC Highways on both the FULL and Outline elements of the scheme. These are required urgently to allow for the resubmission and consultation of the amended documents ahead of Planning Committee.

NRDR

An all-parties meeting including the developer team, CCC, ECC and Active Travel England was held on the 6th February to discuss detailed highways matters in relation to the road and revisions to the landscape approach. This was a productive meeting, and a way forward was identified. Amendments to the drawings are currently being prepared to address the comments.

JP indicated that it is hoped to take the Zone 1, Zone 3 and NRDR planning applications to Planning Committee on the 16th April but this is dependent on all matters being resolved, highway responses, agreement of a baseline position in relation to the IDP and an agreed position on the PFA. . JP asked if ECC could also clarify the corporate position on the ERWSTC as this was integral to finalising the Zone 1 amendments.

GT noted the concerns relating to the delays and confirmed that the highways comments were being progressed but that there was a lot of information to review. GT to discuss with the officers and provide a date for when comments will be submitted.

Action: ECC to progress highways comments as soon as possible and to provide responses to Zones 1 and 3 which clearly set out what matters need to be addressed before committee, those which could be conditioned and those which would be addressed through the highway technical agreements.

4) Update on Viability, PFA and IDP

A meeting was held at the City Council Offices on 17 January 2024 to understand the viability position of each application so that the PFA could be finalised. The information presented at that meeting showed that the Zones 1 and 3 applications were viable but that the Zone 2 application had viability issues.

OB confirmed that PFA and viability discussions were still ongoing between all three consortium members, but that the matters were particularly complex. The consortium were looking at measures to help make the schemes viable whilst ensuring a policy compliant scheme. The main issues affecting the PFA and viability are HIF, Education and the Bus Strategy.

Meetings are ongoing to try and reach an agreed PFA position before Committee in April. A consortium wide meeting is to be held on the afternoon of 20 February with a feedback paper provided following the meeting.

The Consortium are seeking to present a baseline position on the IDP prior to committee in April.

RE explained to the Board that the viability position for Zone 2 has worsened since the meeting in January. The main reason for this related to a silt lagoon associated with the Hanson quarry, which had implications for the delivery of 300 houses and might delay the build by up to potentially five years. In addition other matters such as education costs, the suggestion that ECC should procure the bus service, the requirement for an additional plot within the travelling show person site and a request to accommodate a gypsy and traveller site within Zone 2 had impacted viability.

RE stated that Countryside were looking at all options including the potential need to submit a viability assessment with their application and potentially pausing their application until extraction has concluded in 2032.

AJ to examine whether Homes England might assist with the viability issues but a position was not likely to be confirmed before committee.

Action: AJ to discuss the viability matters with Homes England to discuss if there is any way they can assist. Consortium to provide feedback paper following latest meeting.

5) Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), Chelmsford NE Bypass and Beaulieu Park Railway Station

GT confirmed that the Beaulieu Park Train station is progressing successfully and is currently on schedule.

He also confirmed that the CNEB is more complicated as an area of land in Countryside's ownership is required before the road can be built but the PFA needs to be signed before Countryside can draw down this land.

RE confirmed the plan is to draw down the land once the PFA is signed and to then hand this onto ECC.

The next in the series of CNEB/HIF meetings is scheduled to take place on 21 February 2024. The road and land ownership discussions will be discussed further in that meeting.

GT confirmed that the tenders process for the CNEB is to be completed by May with the plan to start on site in October and to deliver Phase 1 by March 2026. An addendum is required to the ES for the CNEB planning permission to recognise the phasing.

6) Infrastructure update

JP confirmed that construction of the Beaulieu Health Centre was making excellent progress and work on the second primary school was well underway and due to open in September 2024.

Since the last Board meeting the RDR bridge has opened.

RE explained to the Board that Countryside are now looking to progress planning applications to build out the sites on both sides of the RDR next to the bridge.

IF asked when the pedestrian/cycle/equestrian bridge from Boreham over the A12 would open JP was unsure but agreed to review and feedback.

Action: JP to review when the pedestrian bridge from Boreham will open.

7) Community stewardship

JP notified the Board that CCC have instructed Mark Pratchett and Anthony Collins Solicitors to provide advice on community stewardship. A report had been drafted by the consultant / solicitor and shared with the consortium.

OB explained that he and RE had met with the with Chelmsford Garden Community Council earlier in the day to obtain their views on the stewardship proposals/options as they have existing on the ground experience. The consortium are to provide a stewardship statement taking account of the recent advice paper on the role, function and operation of a Community Benefit Society and taking account of the views of the CGCC; they are seeking to make the stewardship arrangement as streamlined as possible so that it works well.

SR asked whether it would be possible to include some of the existing facilities at Beaulieu and Channels and incorporate the management arrangements within the umbrella of the new stewardship body. OB confirmed that this could be looked at.

The principles of stewardship will be set out in the PFA.

8) Future Communication updates

Communication on matters ongoing in Beaulieu and the CGC currently comes from various sources. JP proposed that there is one central location that all groups can feed into so that it is clear where people should go for updates. This was agreed in principle by the Board.

RE explained that she and her colleagues as well as Cllr Goldman were interviewed before Christmas regarding recent developments at Beaulieu but it was unclear what stage this update had reached and if it had been supplemented by written information. CCC will explore this matter further and feedback to RE and the consortium.

Action: Further thoughts to be given to a central communication point. CCC to explore whether the Beaulieu update interview has been posted.

9) Garden Communities Programme

AJ had nothing further to add on HIF funding or capacity funding.

10) Any other Business

Strategic Review Board

Prior to the meeting VO circulated papers which proposed to set up a Strategic Review Board. The papers set out the idea and purpose of the board which are to be as follows.

- a) Provide holistic planning, land, legal and technical oversight to the delivery of CGC
- b) Identify key milestones and resource plan accordingly
- c) Monitor the progress of delivery against strategic programmes
- d) Report key issues identified to Delivery Board for their consideration, awareness and if necessary decision making

In VO's absence JP presented this proposal to the Board meeting.

It was agreed to set up and formalise the Strategic Review Board with the core group of attendees set out in the paper plus additional attendees when required.

Site Visits

A site visit around Beaulieu and Channels had been arranged by CCC officers and Members of the Hemel Hempstead Garden Community for 19th March.

Local Plan

JP notified the Board that the Preferred Options as part of the review of the local plan will be presented to Policy Board on the 14 March. He confirmed that the new plan assumes 6250 homes and 56,946 sqm of employment floorspace for the CGC. The consultation will start after the PFCC election in early May.

11) Date of next meeting

To be arranged