



Chelmsford Garden Community (CGC) Delivery Board Minutes

11.30am, 27 September 2024, Waterhouse Room

1) Welcome and Introductions

- Nick Eveleigh (NE), Chief Executive, CCC (Chair)
- Cllr Stephen Robinson (SR), Leader of Chelmsford City Council
- Cllr Rose Moore (RM), Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, CCC
- Paul Brookes (PB) Director of Sustainable Communities, CCC
- Jeremy Potter (JP), Spatial Planning Services Manager, CCC
- William Stanley (WS), Senior Planning Officer, CCC
- 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
- Olly Buck (OB), Director, Ptarmigan Land
- Jon Kenny (JK), Development Director, Strategic Land – Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree Development)
- Viktoria Oakley (VO), Strategic Land Director, Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree Development)

- Fionnula Lennon (FL), Head of New Settlements and Garden Communities, Homes England (virtual)
- Claire Burnett (CB), Interim Head of South East, Homes England (virtual)

Apologies

- Alison Jennings (AJ), Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager, Homes England
- Karen Short (KS), Principal Planning Officer, CCC
- Cllr Lesley Wagland (LW) Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning, ECC

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

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

Actions table updated.

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

BP provided an update on Beaulieu Park Station and the CNEB.

The construction of Beaulieu Park Station is well underway. Working towards opening towards end of next year but may be earlier. Network Rail have confirmed that there will be four trains an hour in peak. SR asked about pricing in particular a train to Chelmsford Station, but this has not been shared yet by the Train Operating Company.

Land agreements have been agreed for the CNEB Section 1a. These are about to be issued for signing. ECC hoping to issue contract for the main works next week via the cabinet member. RE confirmed that Board approvals have also been agreed by Countryside and Hanson and Tpen.

4) National Highways: Holding Objection

JP and OB set out concerns that National Highways Holding objection is still in place and that if the A12 DCO scheme does not come forward or further mitigation is required then at least 11,000 new homes may not be delivered in Chelmsford. This would be significantly worse across the entirety of the A12 corridor.

BP informed the Board that the letter to government, signed by council leaders and the local MPs, setting out the importance of the A12 DCO scheme has not yet been sent as it is still missing some signatures from MP's. SR indicated that his preference is for the letter to be signed without the remaining signature as the Budget decisions need to be made next week.

FL explained how Homes England met with DFT on Wednesday 25th to discuss strategic schemes with specific relation to those that have HIF funding. She informed the board that Homes England will be meeting again with DFT shortly to specifically discuss A12.

JP set out how CCC have met with National Highways as part of the local plan review and they were not fully aware of the implications to housing delivery. He suggested to write to their CEO to explain the situation with regard to the A12 DCO and the impact it would have on housing delivery if it does not go ahead.

Action: Letter to be drafted to National Highways CEO setting out the importance of A12 DCO scheme and why it needs to be delivered. Update since meeting, email sent to Chief Executives of Homes England and National Highways. Update: since meeting, letter has been signed by all MPs and sent to Secretary of State for Transport.

5) Site Wide Highway's Infrastructure

BP updated the Board on the highways matters and noted that all parties are making progress on this via the weekly highways meetings and ticking off items including the Bus strategy and Essex Regiment Way Sustainable Transport Corridor.

OB agreed that progress was being made but noted that the consortium was being asked for detail well ahead the norm for an outline application. This is resulting in a lot of money being spent on highways consultants and limited funds are available until a decision is granted.

RE noted that there has increase in cost from around £41 million to around £85 million.

OB requested certainty on timings and suggested a workshop so that all parties can discuss a timeline and what matters need to be dealt with before committee.

BP acknowledged consortium position but noted that the increase in costs was inevitable given the complication of the scheme and the fact it is a garden community. Noted that ECC are also spending lots of money outside the PPA.

GT confirm that ECC has willingness as a partner to achieve a timely resolution and agreed to the workshop suggestion.

JP agreed that a workshop is helpful and that it would be useful to have a discussion on when the committee date is and work back from there to confirm the relevant workstreams. NE agreed that there would be a benefit in setting a date so everyone knows what they are working towards.

Action

CCC to set up workshop with key parties to discuss key strands required to take matters to committee and who is doing each and when. This will set out the timeline for committee. CCC to set out headings and then to be filled in at the workshop. Update: Workshop has been set up for 11th October.

6) Education – Temporary Education Costs

GT set out the current position on education costs and noted that ECC have responded to the consortiums original legal note. He noted that all parties agree what the end position is with four primary schools and a high school. The issue is the interim solution and the costs of these solutions to the consortium.

RE noted the position and confirmed that the consortium do not intend to respond to the recent legal note and will instead discuss matters in weekly meetings.

Weekly meeting set up to discuss education matters with first meeting set for 2nd October.

7) Update on Viability, PFA and IDP

OB noted that there was not any further updates on the viability of PFA matters. RE noted that there is currently a £178 million deficit. Consortium and CCC to discuss viability situation when this becomes clearer.

VO queried how long it would take it get the PFA agreed and what form it needs to be in to go to committee. Will this be streamlined and when can this be signed. Further consideration to be given to the position of the PFA.

JP noted that it may be worth seeking legal advice on the PFA.

Action

CCC to seek legal advice from Dentons on the status of the PFA before committee.

8) Planning Application Updates- Zones 1-3, NRDR and enabling works.

WS provided an update on the applications. Regular meetings are being held with Zones 1 and 3 and good progress is being made on resolving the outstanding matters on each application. However, the highways comments are still outstanding and this is causing further delay and uncertainty.

GT asked for a list of outstanding ECC matters and he will then provide a priorities list and dates for when they will be issued.

Noted that whilst comments are outstanding on Zones 1 and 3 no highways comments have been provided on Zone 2.

Action

WS to send a list of outstanding ECC matters to GT and he will review and provide a timeline. Update: List of outstanding items sent to GT who has provided a timeline for responses.

9) Infrastructure update

- Second Beaulieu Park primary School
- Park and Ride Extensions applications

RE presented some images to the Board of recent developments in Beaulieu. This included photos of the recently opened second primary school, the CNEB conveyor bridge, Beaulieu healthcare centre, assisted living scheme and Beaulieu Park Station.

RE confirmed that the healthcare centre is due to be completed in October with an opening date scheduled for January 2025. Countryside expecting to submit the planning applications for Zone Z in November with the Zone ZZ to follow early next year.

WS confirmed that a pre application has been submitted for the Beaulieu Exchange employment site. Meeting scheduled for middle of October.

BP showed the Board a short video of the station and what this could look like. He also informed the board that ECC intend to take the Army and Navy and Park and Ride Extension applications to Planning Committee on 25 October.

10) Community stewardship

JP noted that this is a key issue that would need to be resolved. He asked if Homes England can provide some help and expertise on this matter?

FL confirmed that Homes England would be able to provide resources that would help to unlock this matter and find a way forward.

11) Future Communication updates

JP reiterated the desire to have one combined communication resource so that all information about the CGC is coming from a central source.

12) Garden Communities Programme

CB confirmed that Homes England are still waiting for the new Government to provide update on new funding streams. Hoping to receive an update shortly.

FL stated that Homes England are reviewing the Garden Communities programme with the ministry with an eye on the forthcoming budget.

13) Any other Business

VO mentioned the strategic review board and how do we link everything together. This is to be considered further.

RE informed the Board that Beaulieu has been nominated for an Academy of Urbanism award in the great neighbourhoods category. Beaulieu is in a shortlist of three which is being reviewed in November to determine the winners.

14) Date of next meeting

JP noted that to move matters forward following the workshop we need to hold another Board meeting before the end of the year.

Action

WS to organise another Board meeting in November 2024.