



Chelmsford Garden Community (CGC) Delivery Board Minutes

4pm, 26 November 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
- Karen Short (KS), Principal Planning Officer, CCC
- William Stanley (WS), Senior Planning Officer, CCC
- Cllr Lee Scott (LS), Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Regeneration, ECC
- Graham Thomas (GT), Head of Planning and Sustainable Development, ECC
- Billy Parr (BP), Head of Network Development, ECC (Virtual)
- Rosa Etherington (RE), Project Director (Planning), Countryside L&Q (Virtual)
- Olly Buck (OB), Director, Ptarmigan Land (Virtual)
- Olivia Dickie (OD), Assistant Development Director, Ptarmigan Land (Virtual)
- Viktoria Oakley (VO), Strategic Land Director, Greycoat (Halley/Oaktree Development)

Apologies

- Alison Jennings (AJ), Senior Partnership & Business Development Manager, Homes England
- Jon Kenny (JK), Development Director, Strategic Land – Greycourt (Halley/Oaktree Development)
- Fionnula Lennon (FL), Head of New Settlements and Garden Communities, Homes England
- Claire Burnett (CB), Interim Head of South East, Homes England

2) Minutes of Previous Meeting and Actions

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

Actions table updated.

3) A12 DCO/Strategic Highway Matters including National Highways Holding Objection

BP advised the board of ECC's recent dialogue with National Highways on the A12 Development Consent Order (DCO). National Highways are expecting an update from the Department of Transport (DFT) in Spring 2025 when they will receive their funding for the year; this will be followed by a multiyear spending review. National Highways will then confirm which items will receive funding in Autumn 2025.

Should the A12 works approved under the DCO scheme not happen, then this would have major implications for the CGC and delivery of other sites along / close to the A12 corridor. BP noted that ECC have been considering options for what might happen if the A12 widening does not happen.

OB advised that certainty on when works might proceed was critical and based on current feedback this was not expected until Autumn 2025.

RE noted that Countryside's Group Planning Director Andrew Taylor had recently met with Matthew Pennycook, Minister of State for Housing and Planning who now understood the position and the urgency to find a resolution. The Minister agreed to raise this with the Secretary of State for Transport.

JP stated that the City Council intends to send a further letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government reiterating the importance of the A12 widening scheme and the implications for housing were this not to go ahead. The letter would be issued shortly and signed by SR and the Member of Parliament for Chelmsford.

LS confirmed that he was happy to sign the CCC letter on behalf of ECC and would also raise the issue with Right Honourable Kemi Badenoch, Leader of the Opposition, and Member of Parliament for North-West Essex.

BP noted that Kemi Badenoch had visited the Beaulieu Park Station site last week and had been made aware of the housing delivery issues, which she had agreed to raise these alongside the power supply issues with National Grid.

SR said that he would raise the matters with his regional counterparts.

VO and GT asked who would be co-ordinating the letters to the SoS. VO referred to internal discussions and the potential to appoint Cratus to co-ordinate the matter. VO willing to take these discussions further if it would be considered helpful.

RE expressed concern on behalf of the consortium regarding delays and the need for the consortium to consider all options and make a collective decision on next steps by the end of January 2025. The options it was noted might include lodging an appeal against non-determination. The consortium would be taking legal action on the next steps to move matters forward.

JP asked the Consortium if they could set out the potential alternative options that they were considering. OB acknowledged that further discussions on options would be required, but that the Consortium acknowledged that an alternative scheme to the A12 DCO proposal would potentially be necessary.

BP provided feedback on a meeting held on 26th November between the consortiums transport consultants, ECC and National Highways. The Consortium were to seek National Highways approval to access their model, to enable them to progress their own modelling work and consideration of an alternative scheme design for J19.

4) Active Travel Route to Broomfield - Consultant Brief

Weekly Highways Meetings

KS informed the Board that CCC officers had drafted a brief for the crossing of the river valley between CGC and Broomfield. Preparation of the brief followed a site meeting and discussions with all relevant interested groups including Essex Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, ECC (including the PRoW and Structures teams) and the City Councils Principal Heritage Officer. KS noted that Luke Worsfold within the CGC team would be meeting with the procurement team shortly to discuss the tender process. CCC were hoping to include a specification on the safer route to school, but as this had not yet been provided by ECC, circulation would follow at a later date.

JP noted how important the route is as a route linking CGC with Broomfield and as a safe route to school so needs to be delivered. GT acknowledged the importance of the link and its role as a safe route to school.

5) Strategic Education Matters

Weekly Education Meetings

GT set out the education position to date; agreement was being obtained internally within ECC, but this had been complicated by the need to progress discussions with four different ECC teams. GT had met with the Head of the Education Service to discuss matters and advised that a more progressive solution had been agreed, which included a mix of hybrid transport and temporary education costs.

GT hoped to agree the education position and present the Consortium with one combined ECC solution by the end of January 2025.

6) Community Stewardship

Consultant Brief

JP informed the Board that the consultant brief had been drafted, which would shortly be sent to the consortium for them to agree the scope of works. JP confirmed that Homes England had advised that they would be able to fund the work. The brief would also be shared with ECC.

VO thanked JP for the solution and noted that the Consortium would be keen to find a pragmatic solution.

7) Biodiversity Net Gain

JP sought clarification on the BNG position for the CGC. The Consortium confirmed that 20% biodiversity net gain was being achieved on site in accordance with the Development Framework Document.

RE referenced discussions with the ECC Minerals & Waste Team who were seeking early delivery of landscaping including woodland buffer planting as part of the restoration scheme at Bulls Lodge Quarry. RE advised that Vistry would be submitting a s73 application to amend the timing and implementation of the landscaping scheme.

LS noted that minerals matters were within his portfolio and requested he be kept updated on any issues.

8) Update on Viability, PFA & IDP

JP confirmed to the Board that the Consortium have sent CCC their latest viability information, which indicated a clear deficit. CCC's and the consortiums Viability consultants are reviewing the inputs and are very close to agreeing how the model works. The final stage is agreeing the inputs. JP is hopeful that the model will be agreed before Christmas.

LS left the meeting.

9) Planning Application Zones Updates

KS advised that good progress had been made in resolving the few remaining matters on Zones 1 and 3. Amended plans had been submitted for Zone 2 and consultations were being sent out.

10) Timeline to Planning Committee

All noted that the timeline to Planning Committee was intrinsically linked to progress on the National Highways matters and no firm dates had yet been set.

11) Infrastructure Updates

- Chelmsford NE Bypass (CNEB) & Beulieu Park Station
- Park & Ride Extension Applications
- Beaulieu Health Centre
- Beaulieu Sixth Form Centre
- White Hart Lane Downgrading Scheme

BP provided an update on the CNEB and station. Works to construct Beaulieu Park Station were progressing well with opening still programmed for 2025. A further blockade was proposed for Christmas 2024, when amongst other matters signalling works were programmed. The expectation remained that all the associated facilities serving the station, including the bus interchange, car parks, bus link road and the like would be opened on day one. ECC were currently in discussions with the bus operator in relation to the delivery of the bus interchange.

BP confirmed that Octavius have been appointed as the contractors for CNEB with works commencing early in 2025.

GT confirmed that the planning applications for the Army and Navy works and the extensions to the Chelmer Valley and Sandon Park and Rides have been approved by the ECC Planning Committee. The formal decisions to be issued shortly. Post Meeting Note: The decision notices for all three applications have now been issued.

RE provided an update on the Beaulieu Health Centre; handover to the NHS was expected to be completed before Christmas. Surgery expected to open in first quarter of 2025; this was subject to the lease being agreed.

KS informed the Board that the planning application for a sixth form centre at Beaulieu Park School had recently been granted planning permission; it is hoped to open the centre for the start of the next academic year in September 2025.

KS also provided an update on the White Hart Lane downgrading scheme; the last update from ECC had indicated that works would start in early January 2025 but this would be verified. Post Meeting Note: The Highways Authority have confirmed that the works are scheduled to commence on 6 January 2025.

12) Garden Communities Programme

Homes England Update

No Homes England officers in attendance.

JP confirmed to the Board that Homes England have agreed to provide money to pay for progression of the work on Community Stewardship.

13) Future Communications Strategy

JP noted that this item has been on the agenda for a while and that a co-ordinated approach between all groups would be really helpful. Board members agreed to consider about how this could be provided but noted that this might be easier to co-ordinate post committee resolution.

14) Any Other Business

JP informed the Board that Beaulieu had won an Academy of Urbanism Award in The Great Neighbourhood Category and an Essex Housing Award for Excellence in Design and Placemaking; he congratulated Countryside and also thanked officers for their hard work.

15) Date of Next Meeting

The Board agreed that the next meeting should take place at the end of January 2025. WS to arrange next meeting.

4th December 2024

Chelmsford Garden Community Team