

**19 March 2019**

**Policy, Projects and Resources Committee**

**Dunton Hills Garden Village Project Governance**

**Report of:** *Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning*

**Wards Affected:** *Herongate, Ingrave and West Horndon*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 In January 2017, Dunton Hills Garden Village became one of 14 Garden Village proposals across the UK to receive a garden settlement designation and funding to bring forward its delivery. Dunton Hills Garden Village is one of four strategic allocations in the Council's Pre-Submission Local Development Plan (February 2019).
- 1.2 Local leadership is needed to ensure delivery of the garden village in line with emerging policy. The Council should play a significant role in shaping a locally-led masterplan so that it meets local needs and the garden city principles.
- 1.3 To this end, a Governance Framework (Appendix A) has been prepared to ensure the masterplan and development process delivers the best possible outcome for the planned, locally-led Garden Village in accordance with the Council's emerging Local Plan policies. The Governance Framework details the organisational structure, roles and responsibilities, reporting lines and project controls put in place to ensure effective and timely decision-making, to enable project success. The framework is a living document, to be updated as the project progresses.
- 1.4 Approval of the Governance Framework is important to ensure:
  - a) Land ownership integration;
  - b) Consistent quality;
  - c) That development is locally-led; and
  - d) Deliverable.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To approve the approach defined by the Governance Framework (Appendix A), recognising that this will need to evolve as the project progresses through different stages of development and delivery.**
- 2.2 To approve the membership of the governance arrangements outlined in the Governance Framework.**

## **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1 In January 2017, Dunton Hills Garden Village became one of 14 Garden Village proposals across the UK to receive a garden settlement designation and funding to bring forward its delivery.
- 3.2 Dunton Hills Garden Village is one of four strategic allocations in the Council's Pre-Submission Local Development Plan (February 2019), which will help deliver growth in the Borough in line with Housing Delivery Targets (HDT). The site is proposed to deliver a minimum of 2,700 homes within the plan period up to 2033, and around a total of 4,000 homes over the life of the site. In addition, the development will deliver a new self-contained community with accompanying employment, local services & facilities, community infrastructure (schools etc), and will be characterised by connected green spaces.
- 3.3 This project is focused upon the facilitated "locally-led" delivery of a new garden village at Dunton Hills. There are a series of headline strategic principles which underpin this project, including the need to support high quality place-making and the establishment of a new community supported by a comprehensive range of infrastructure.
- 3.4 Three strategic aims and 12 sub-objectives underpin the policies for this project, focusing on how the new settlement will be designed, how it will function, and how it will be governed and managed in the long-term. The strategic aims are:
  - a) Create a distinctive and well-designed new settlement;
  - b) Deliver a place of prosperity that promotes enterprise, innovation and learning as part of the delivery process; and
  - c) Create a process and legacy of co-design, co-delivery leading to cohesive community spirit and stewardship.

- 3.5 Local leadership is needed to ensure delivery of the garden village in line with emerging policy. Since being designated one of 14 Garden Villages across the UK in 2017 the project has received Government funding to take it forward. This implies that the Council cannot wholly leave the delivery to the planning application process alone; it should play a significant role in shaping a locally-led masterplan so that it meets local needs and the garden city principles, as set out by Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)<sup>1</sup> and the Government's Garden Communities Prospectus (2018)<sup>2</sup>, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England.
- 3.6 To this end, a Governance Framework (Appendix A) has been prepared to ensure the masterplan and development process delivers the best possible outcome for the planned, locally-led Garden Village in accordance with the Council's emerging Local Plan policies. This will involve managing the coordinated collaboration between landowners; the coordinated evolution of a coherent masterplan across the allocation site; and assurance of adherence to site policies.
- 3.7 The Governance Framework (Appendix A) details the organisational structure, roles and responsibilities, reporting lines and project controls put in place to ensure effective and timely decision-making, to enable project success. Attention is brought to the need for a hybrid role to be undertaken between the Planning policy and Development Management teams, to ensure the project maintains a locally-led focus, notwithstanding the need to also recognise the demarcation between what is driven locally (i.e the masterplan framework and design guidelines in line with policy) and applicant proposals that respond to these quality controls. The framework is a living document, to be updated as the project progresses.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 In addition to the Dunton Hills Garden Village project having its own Governance structure, it is also considered important to bring key issues and decisions to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee. In addition, it may be appropriate to audit elements of the project through revised terms of reference of Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

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<sup>1</sup> TCPA (2018). Understanding Garden Villages. An Introductory Guide [online] <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=3507c991-fde2-4218-8920-641416f521b5>

<sup>2</sup> MHCLG (2018) – Garden Communities Prospectus [online] [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/734145/Garden\\_Communities\\_Prospectus.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734145/Garden_Communities_Prospectus.pdf)

## 5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 Approval of the Governance Framework is important to ensure the following:

- a) **Land Ownership Integration:** While there is one dominant site owner who owns most of the land (promoted by Commercial Estates Group (CEG)), there are up to eight different land parcels/ownerships within the site allocation. This will require careful coordination and site-wide planning to ensure masterplan integration, so that the Garden Village feels coherent and cohesive, as well as the appropriate apportionment of infrastructure delivery costs.
- b) **Consistent Quality:** The masterplan and design guidance across the whole site allocation should be underpinned by Garden Community principles and additionally incorporate the locally-led spatial vision. A masterplan framework and design guidance should ensure that proposals clearly set out a coherent development across all land interests, irrespective of which developer brings forward the respective sites.
- c) **Locally-Led:** Strong local leadership is one of the garden community principles and is crucial to developing and delivering the long-term vision and eventual stewardship arrangements for this new garden village community. Proposals should have the backing of the local authority in which they are situated, including Essex County Council. While the planning application process is being led by a master developer and potentially other developers, it is important that the right governance is in place to ensure that proposals align with local aspirations and requirements of the local area in order to achieve this aim.
- d) **Deliverability:** Planning a garden village requires a substantial amount and the timely delivery of new infrastructure to address the impact of development and aid the early establishment of a cohesive community. This involves complex liaison with a number of statutory bodies, utility suppliers and the local community to ensure sustainable investment in infrastructure. The governance arrangements ensure that the right stakeholders will be brought into the process at the right time.

## **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 Delivery of Dunton Hills Garden Village has been part of several Local Development Plan consultations in recent years. It is part of the Council's Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation currently taking place.
- 6.2 The Governance Framework has been shared with Essex County Council and Homes England for their input. The document reflects all feedback received to date.

## **7. References to Corporate Plan**

- 7.1 The project is relevant to the Council's Local Development Plan, which is a key priority in the Council's 'Vision for Brentwood' Corporate Plan 2016-2019.

## **8. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

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- 8.1 In previous years, the project has been awarded £528,000 of capacity funding from Homes England. This has enabled funding of necessary resources to deliver the project to date, including a dedicated project team, facilitation of a number of workstreams (education etc), and specific technical studies as part of the evidence base. A further £100,000 of Homes England capacity funding has been announced this February 2019.
- 8.2 Looking forward to the coming financial year 2019/20, it may be necessary for the Council to provide additional funding for the project as part of efforts to progress the Local Development Plan and as the capacity funding received to date is used. Homes England has indicated the intention to run future rounds of capacity fund bidding and for these to cover a two-year period rather than year-to-year as at present.

### **Legal Implications**

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- 8.3 As the project transitions into delivery, securing the Section 106 agreements will be key to the successful implementation and construction of the Garden Village. This will require legal input.

- 8.4 Other relevant agreements may also need to be drawn up, such as agreement between landowners on cooperation. Subject to these agreements and given the scale of the development there could be scope for compulsory acquisition of land. Legal input would be required.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.5 Legacy implications will need to be carefully mapped out soon. It is envisaged that some asset management issues may arise that will need careful consideration of options, e.g. stand-alone community trust versus enlargement of parish council role. A business case will be brought to the relevant committee in due course.

## **9. Background Papers**

- 9.1 Background papers for the Local Development Plan and Dunton Hills Garden Village project are published on the Council's website via [www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/localplan).

## **10. Appendices to this report**

- a) Appendix A: Dunton Hills Garden Village Project Governance Framework (Version 0.4, March 2019)

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