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The TCPA New Communities Group: ambitious councils working together to deliver large-scale new communities



This case study was researched and written for PAS by Alex House, Town and Country Planning Association

1. Introduction

Some local authorities are working hard to ensure new large scale housing developments really do create new communities. They are using the opportunity to plan holistically and to work across traditional disciplinary borders. The economy of scale enables the ambitions of sustainable development to be truly fulfilled by delivering multiple benefits including green space, a mix of housing, low carbon design, sustainable transport and local food sourcing. Large-scale new communities also offer a powerful prospect to put in place new governance structures that position residents at the heart of developing new places and owning community assets.

A key factor in the successful delivery of large-scale new development is the leadership and governance of the local authority. Delivering large scale housing needs clear vision, political leadership and the effective use of planning resources¹.

The members of the TCPA New Communities Group are examples of how local authorities can combine vision, political leadership and planning together to deliver successful large-scale new communities.

The key lessons as to what makes an effective approach to planning for large scale new communities are:

- a clear vision
- local leadership (corporate and political)
- building consensus and meaningful participation
- sufficient capacity to do the work
- governance which includes community representation
- public and private sector partnership working

2. How the TCPA New Communities Group works

The TCPA New Communities Group (NCG) was established in 2009 by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Its members are local authorities delivering large-scale new developments. The Homes and Communities Agency's Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS) is also a member and provides ongoing support to the local authorities through their expert knowledge in planning for large-scale development. The Group collectively helps to develop the proposals, provide political support and encourage a sharing of knowledge and best practice through seminars, workshops, study visits, parliamentary meetings and newsletters. Together the Group is providing innovative local leadership for plans delivering in the region of 65,000 new homes.

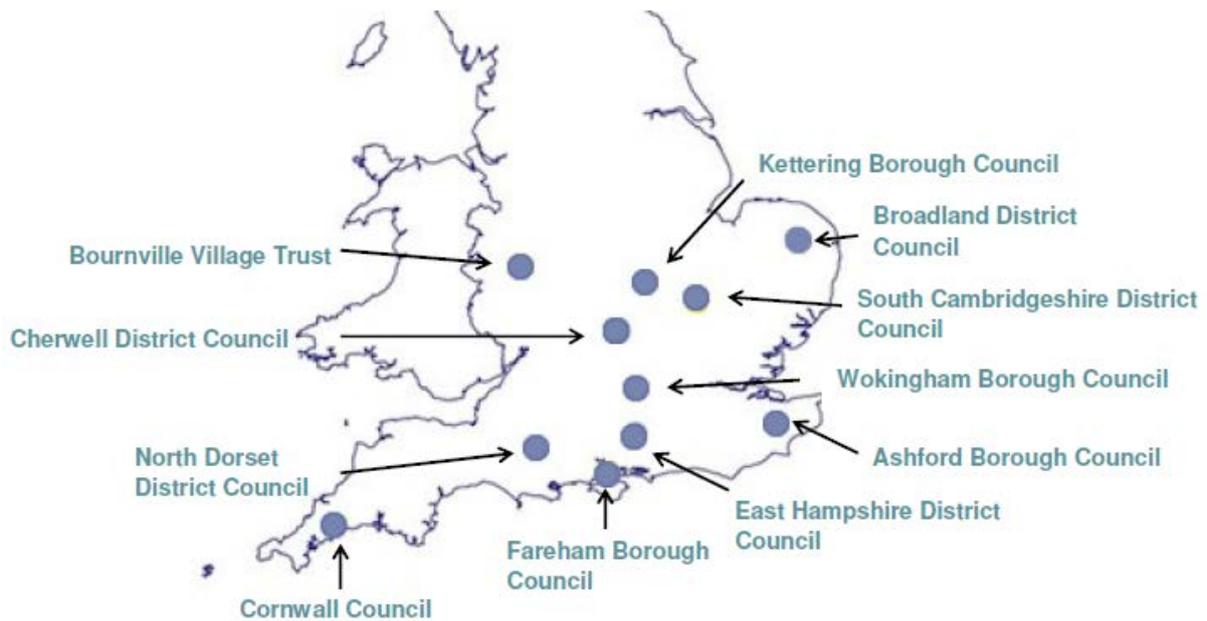
The objectives of the NCG are to:

- facilitate the exchange of information between planning experts and local authority peers
- provide learning opportunities through thematic seminars, workshops and site visits to developments
- provide a profile for large scale new developments at a national level, through political engagement with Ministers and MPs
- develop good practice in planning for large-scale development
- identify and implement European best practice

¹RTPI, 2013. *Delivering Large Scale Housing: Unlocking Schemes and Sites to Help Meet the UK's Housing Needs*. RTPI Policy Paper, September 2013.

- provide regular updates on key legislative and policy changes which will have direct relevance to the delivery of large scale new developments
- communicate progress of the new communities on the NCG website and newsletters, highlighting news on relevant policy announcements, training events and opportunities.

Members of the TCPA New Communities Group
Ashford Borough Council Development: Chilmington Green, 5,750 homes
Bournville Village Trust Development: Lightmoor Village, 800 homes
Broadland District Council Developments: Beeston Park, 3,500 homes and Rackheath, 4,150 homes
Cherwell District Council Development: Locations throughout Bicester, 13,000 homes including NW Bicester which has 6000 homes currently planned, SW Bicester 1,700 and resolution to grant planning permission for a further 700 homes and Graven Hill, permission for 1,900 homes.
Cornwall Council Development: West Carclaze Eco-community, 1,836 homes
East Hampshire District Council Development: Whitehill & Bordon Green Town, 3,350 homes
Fareham Borough Council Development: Welborne, 6,000 homes
Kettering Borough Council Development: East Kettering Sustainable Urban Extension, 5,500 homes
North Dorset District Council Development: Gillingham, 1,800 homes
South Cambridgeshire District Council Development: Northstowe, 10,000 homes
Wokingham Borough Council Developments: 4 Strategic Development Locations, 10,000 homes



Thematic seminars

The TCPA aims to organise seminars for the NCG that will be particularly beneficial to the planning of large-scale communities. Expert speakers are selected from across the public, private and third sectors. Members are able to attend these events for free and use them to exchange ideas and experience. Examples of recent events include:

- the economic impact of housing
- long-term stewardship of new communities
- creating healthy communities – lessons in reuniting planning with public health
- viability and infrastructure delivery plans
- from Industrial legacy to future energy: transforming the use of former industrial land for energy projects
- negotiating Section 106 agreements for large scale new developments
- Garden Cities and Suburbs: opportunities in Greater London and beyond
- New Towns - lessons for tomorrow.
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TCPA New Communities Group Seminar

viability and infrastructure delivery for large-scale developments

12.30 - 16.30, Tuesday 17 June 2014
 TCPA • 17 Carlton House Terrace • London SW1Y 5AS







TCPA New Communities Group Seminar

negotiating section 106 agreements for large-scale new development

12.30 - 16.30, Tuesday 14 October 2014
 TCPA • 17 Carlton House Terrace • London SW1Y 5AS



Site visits

Site visits to the NCG developments are arranged for the members to experience first-hand how their local authority peers are approaching the delivery of their large-scale developments. These visits facilitate conversations and help with the exchange of best practice. Visits to other areas of interest such as a recent guided tour around the Stratford Olympic Park District Energy Scheme, and exemplary developments in Europe are also carried out to help transfer knowledge and demonstrate what has been achieved elsewhere.



Political events

Demonstrating political support and leadership is a key purpose of the NCG. Regular meetings with Government ministers and shadow ministers are arranged to keep them informed of progress at the sites. A briefing on the NCG was recently held in the House of

Commons, where each local authority leader was able to explain their progress and highlight concerns to a cross sector of stakeholders. This demonstration of leadership ensures confidence is maintained amongst those involved in planning and delivering the developments.



Raising profile and sharing lessons

Another key aim of the NCG is to communicate the progress of the developments, to fellow members so that lessons can be learned, and to a wider professional audience. This is achieved through articles, newsletters, and the NCG website.

The collage features several key documents:

- town & country planning**: A magazine cover with a stylized illustration of houses and a lamp.
- tcpa new communities group newsletter**: A newsletter cover for June 2014, featuring the TCPA logo and a grid pattern.
- Whitehill & Borden proposals approved**: An article with a photograph of a residential development.
- Bicester silt NCG Steering**: An article discussing the Bicester Silt project and the role of the NCG Steering Group.
- Northstowe application submitted**: An article about the Northstowe development and the submission of an application.
- Work starts on site at North West Bicester**: An article with a photograph of a construction site, detailing the start of work on the North West Bicester development.

Plan Document against which can effectively be used as a 'manual' to consider a planning application. The AAP provides an up-to-date and robust expression of the Council's expectations that the application should be meeting.

Dedicated team of planners

Ashford Borough Council has a dedicated and experienced Strategic Sites Team, with a broad range of planning and urban design expertise in dealing with major applications. The Chilmington Green Masterplan and AAP process also involved many stakeholders, organisations and residents, through workshops, public exhibitions and bespoke topic groups.

Chilmington Green Quality Agreement

The Chilmington Green Quality Agreement⁴ is an agreement between the Council and developers to commit to a set of measures that will help to create quality place-making, and to commit to work together to make this happen. It includes design standards, build quality and a commitment to use expert local skills. It sends a powerful and positive message to potential purchasers, the local community and local politicians. This close working helps to achieve the best possible development in a joined-up way and includes a well resourced Quality Monitoring Team as part of the Section 106.

Community Management Organisation

It was important for the Council to demonstrate that the future governance of Chilmington Green will be inclusive and participative. It took skills and resources to establish the concept of a Community Management Organisation, which will be embedded in the Quality Agreement and based on the Letchworth Garden City model. It will be endowed with income from commercial units and from the residents' service charge, with any surplus put back into community services. The Trust will be underpinned in the early years with start-up funding through the Section 106.

Political support and local leadership

Leading local politicians are strongly supportive of Chilmington Green as the best planned solution to meeting the area's need for new homes. Robust joint working has also helped to progress the AAP. The developer team have committed to their involvement in the local community and to regular attendance at the community liaison meeting the Council has set up. This relationship continues post planning consent so that tight control is maintained over quality of delivery, and the creation of a strong community and local management structure.



Artist's impression: Chilmington Green Market Square and Discovery Park. Courtesy of Ashford Borough Council.

⁴ Chilmington Green Quality Agreement: <http://www.ashford.gov.uk/chilmington-quality-agreement>

“New community projects of any scale will now more than ever have to make their own way in a world where development finance will continue to be difficult and Government grant a declining species... All of this makes the experience and priorities of the New Communities Group (NCG), which the TCPA has co-ordinated since 2009, particularly relevant and useful. It also gives the NCG a basis on which to develop the agenda and press the Government to offer similar support to that set out in the Garden Cities prospectus for new community schemes of less than 15,000 homes – using enabling, brokerage and (limited) funding support to bring forward real projects which have obtained planning status and are deliverable.”

Henry Cleary OBE, Chair of the Standing Conference for Welborne New Community, Fareham

Cherwell District Council - Bicester

Cherwell District Council is planning comprehensive growth for the town of Bicester and has been designated as a Garden Town by the Government. The North West Bicester development demonstrates a holistic set of eco-credentials, including being zero-carbon across the site. It is a partnership project between lead developers A2Dominion and the Council. NW Bicester has 6,000 new homes planned; the first phase received planning approval in July 2012 and the Exemplar phase is now under construction. South West Bicester has 1,700 homes under construction and a resolution to grant planning permission for a further 700 homes. A site at Graven Hill has also been acquired from the Ministry of Defence to facilitate the delivery of the UK’s first large-scale self-build community which has permission for 1,900 homes.





Artist's impression of North West Bicester Exemplar. Courtesy of A2Dominion.

Strong policy

The Eco-Towns Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1(PPS1) has driven an approach by Cherwell District Council that has tackled the challenges involved in delivering sustainable development head-on. Underpinning the approach taken right from the early days has been the concept that although the Eco-Towns PPS standards apply just to North West Bicester, the project's ideals and philosophy should embrace the whole of the town – 'Eco Bicester', and therefore serve as catalyst for the wider transition to low-carbon lifestyles.

Long term political support

Cherwell District Council's Leader has actively supported the NW Bicester project from 2008. Bicester Town Council and Oxfordshire County Council have also been closely involved in the development process which has ensured confidence and commitment amongst all stakeholders.

Strategic vision

'One Shared Vision', drawn up by Cherwell District Council with the involvement of stakeholders sets out detailed aims for the Eco Bicester project. The principles contained in the Eco-Towns Supplement to PPS1 are largely captured in this document, translated to the local context. It is significant and entirely intentional that the underlying vision, 'To create a vibrant Bicester where people choose to live, to work and to spend their leisure time in sustainable ways', talks about Bicester rather than just North West Bicester.

'Building and maintaining bridges with a network of stakeholders – including the electorate – is crucial.'

Councillor Barry Wood, Leader, Cherwell District Council

Engaging and supporting the existing community early on

Cherwell District Council's role goes well beyond that of merely dealing with planning applications for the North West Bicester development – it has taken a far more promotional approach than would often be the case. The aim was to engage with Bicester people very early on, spread the word about the benefits of low carbon living, improve Bicester's infrastructure and keep people interested in advance of anything being built on the North West Bicester site. The Eco Bicester Project Team has led on a number of successful projects in the town. Initial funding from central government allowed work to start early on various demonstrator projects across Bicester. The team were also proactive in seeking

additional funding from various sources which has proved to be very successful. These projects gave the local community opportunities to learn more about sustainable buildings and low carbon lifestyles.



The John Paul II Centre – an Eco Bicester demonstrator project – is the largest civic building to be certified to PassivHaus standards in the UK.

Cornwall Council - St Austell and China Clay Eco-communities

St Austell and China Clay Eco-communities is a proposal to regenerate the China Clay Area through a series of new villages, job creation, and improved infrastructure. The Eco communities will be delivered by the private sector, led by Eco-Bos, and Cornwall Council is delivering a programme of projects to ensure that the Eco-communities provide real benefits for the area. The West Carclaze proposal aims to create a vibrant, new mixed-use community of 1,500 homes, with a wider masterplanned area for 1,836 homes, along with a new community facility, a new primary school, local employment or live/work space, and local renewable energy generation. A planning application for the West Carclaze Eco-community was submitted in December 2014.



West Carclaze, near St Austell. Courtesy of Cornwall Council.

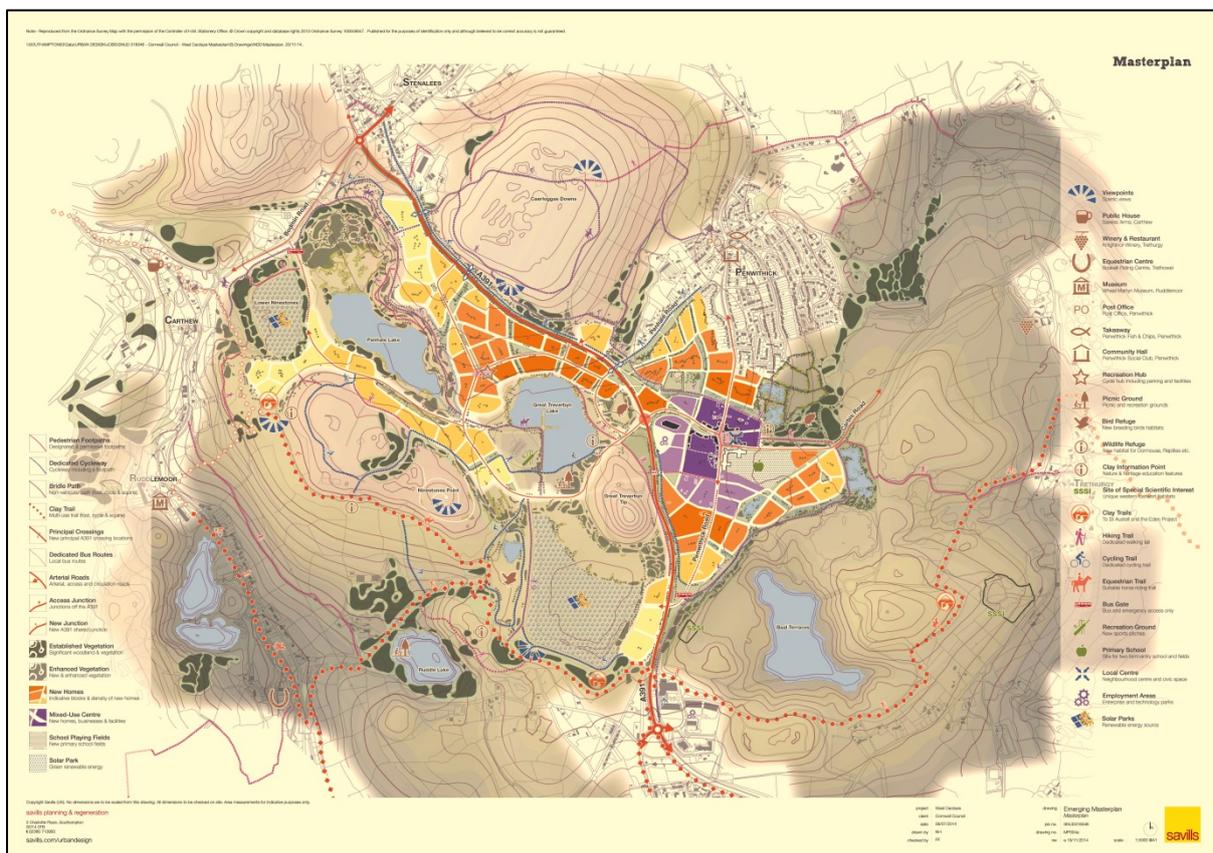
Local leadership

The importance of leadership at all levels of governance is crucial in the development of sustainable new communities. While it is clear that there is no single solution to follow, it is local leadership that delivers the long-term commitment that is needed. Councillor Julian German, Cornwall Council Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture, has, in his various

roles, taken on the strategic leadership of the Eco-community since 2009, maintaining the vision of the opportunity to meet local needs that a transformational regeneration project of this scale would offer for Cornwall. He argues that if the Eco-community is to be a success it needs long-term commitment. In addition to councillor leadership, Cornwall Council and Eco-Bos partnership working brings a commercial incentive to the project. Having a legal arrangement in place keeps the project secure when market pressures, development industry shifts and public sector funding changes come to bear. The certainty of change raises the importance of long-term collaboration and strategic planning for a project of this scale and timeframe.

'Although the project cuts across many Cabinet member roles, Cornwall Council decided at the beginning that there needed to be one voice that can speak with political clarity on the project. Although the Council administration and my Cabinet role have changed, I have remained the Cabinet lead for the project. This has ensured stability for the Eco-community and the networks that support it, as well as a depth of understanding and leadership that otherwise would need to be periodically rebuilt.'

Councillor Julian German, Cornwall Council Portfolio Holder for Economy and Culture



West Carclaze Masterplan. Courtesy of Cornwall Council.

Engagement with local communities

Planning large-scale new communities brings the opportunity of working with existing leaders in the community, resident groups and partners to shape and create a vibrant and inclusive place. In Cornwall, the proposal for a West Carclaze/Baal Eco-community has presented the opportunity to realise the possibilities created by regeneration of the China Clay Area through a masterplan that embraces Garden City principles. Various scenarios

have been discussed with the local community with the feedback informing the final application.

East Hampshire District Council - Whitehill & Bordon

Whitehill & Bordon, also listed in the Eco-towns PPS, is a town in East Hampshire with a population of 14,000 residents that has built up around an army facility which is now being closed. The new Green Town development presents an opportunity to achieve a number of objectives – meeting the clear need for better local facilities, helping the community to protect the natural environment, creating new jobs, and providing affordable and high quality homes. The adopted masterplan includes plans for up to 4,000 new dwellings.



Aerial image of Whitehill & Bordon. Courtesy of East Hampshire District Council.

Governance structure

A new fit-for-purpose governance structure, designed to facilitate an accelerated rate of delivery, is in place and up and running. The new structure consists of a powerful new Strategy Board, a Delivery and Implementation Board, and a consultative tier – together these provide strategic overview, efficient and speedy delivery, and effective consultation. The Strategy Board is chaired by the Leader of East Hampshire District Council. It consists of all the major stakeholders and landowners in the regeneration scheme – the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, the Homes and Communities Agency, Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council, and the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Strategy Board endorses and monitors the Delivery Plan for the next tier to work to. The Delivery and Implementation Board consists of senior officers or board members from the organisations listed above and is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive of Hampshire County Council. This bespoke board can make speedy decisions, which will give confidence to private sector partners and help to secure investment from them. The consultative tier, Our Voice, is chaired by a local councillor and involves numerous individuals and groups that will be working together in task-and-finish groups to provide local input and help advance work.

'Delivering large-scale developments is incredibly difficult. It is necessary to manage a wide array of relationships whilst keeping on top of an ever-changing set of technical issues. The support and guidance from peers that is provided by the TCPA New Communities Group is absolutely essential for helping us all overcome these challenges. Thanks a lot!'

Steve Pearce, Director, Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Project, East Hampshire District Council

LEP priority

The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership is very supportive of what East Hampshire District Council is trying to achieve in Whitehill & Bordon, and is represented on the Whitehill & Bordon Strategy Board. The LEP has awarded East Hampshire District Council 'step-up town' status, which means that it is a key priority for funding. It also establishes the town's need for investment to raise employability levels and skills, and boost the local economy.



Artist's impression of the Quebec Park development. Courtesy of East Hampshire District Council.

Partnership working and unlocking public sector land

The key element in the delivery of a sustainable vibrant community at Whitehill & Bordon is the public sector landowners (the Ministry of Defence, Hampshire County Council, and East Hampshire District Council), working together in partnership with a clear common vision, programme and a masterplan. The Delivery Board's role is to oversee delivery and to ensure that the delivery and partnership working is aligned around a shared vision for Whitehill & Bordon. The Board is working to make sure that there is a phased, co-ordinated release of the 340 hectares of land owned by different public sector organisations. Investing time in making these often complex relationships work to best effect is absolutely essential if the many challenges of delivering large-scale developments are to be overcome. The town has suffered repeatedly from piecemeal development. The initiative is now being taken to turn the tide and seize the opportunity of the land release to create jobs, homes and better prospects for residents.

Planning and development update

2014 saw tremendous progress on delivery of the project:

- planning consent was granted for 100 Code 5 and Zero Carbon Homes, and 100 jobs at Quebec Barracks. A local registered provider, Radian, has been appointed to deliver this mixed-tenure scheme and work will start on site in spring 2015
- outline consent was granted for 500 homes and land for 500 jobs at Louisburg Barracks. Discussions on the delivery of both a construction skills training facility and enterprise support centre are advanced. A developer will be appointed by the landowner (the Homes and Communities Agency) in early 2015 and work is expected to start on site in the spring
- an outline planning application was submitted in December 2014 for the comprehensive redevelopment of the last remaining operational barracks - Prince Philip Barracks. This includes proposals for 2,400 homes; a new town centre; a wide range of community facilities including a new secondary school, a new primary school and a new leisure centre; new and improved open space and sports pitches; a town relief road and other transportation improvements; and additional employment space. A developer will be appointed by the landowner - the Defence Infrastructure Organisation - in early 2015; the army will depart in September 2015; and development is expected to start in early 2016.

Fareham Borough Council - Welborne

Welborne will be a major new community located to the north of Fareham, providing approximately 6,000 homes, workplaces, schools, green spaces, shops and local community services. New infrastructure such as roads and utilities infrastructure will also be required to support the new community.



Aerial image of Welborne. Courtesy of Fareham Borough Council.

‘Standing Conference’

A ‘Standing Conference’ has been established to help facilitate the preparation of the Welborne Plan. Independently chaired, it includes representatives from local community groups, local businesses, adjoining local authorities, and key service providers. The body has been instrumental in helping to establish the type of place that Welborne aspires to be, and in identifying and prioritising key items of social infrastructure. The Standing Conference can be viewed as a critical friend, but is unanimous in supporting the principle that if a bespoke 21st century Garden Community is to be created at Welborne, it must have the highest possible environmental and sustainability standards and be supported by a sufficient and timely level of infrastructure.



Artist's impression of Welborne. Courtesy of Fareham Borough Council.

A corporate priority

Having promoted the site as the most sustainable means of meeting Fareham's future growth, it has been incumbent on the Council to act proactively to bring the development forward. Delivering Welborne is a corporate priority that cuts across traditional Council departmental responsibilities. The development of Welborne is not seen as something that is being imposed on Fareham from above, but as a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity in which the Council can play an integral role in ensuring success and in making sure that the new community achieves the highest standards of sustainable design, bringing with it the widest possible benefits for the local community.

The infrastructure costs are high, and include the need to upgrade Junction 10 of the M27 motorway. So creating a viable and deliverable scheme is proving extremely challenging, but Fareham Borough Council is working closely with the principal landowners and with funding agencies such as the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership and the Homes and Communities Agency to explore radical and innovative means of funding the necessary infrastructure.

'The need for more homes is clear. We can pepper-pot them around, stretching creaking infrastructure, or bring them together in a new garden community with all the required facilities, thereby allowing us to protect the countryside gaps between our town and our villages.'

Councillor Seán Woodward, Executive Leader, Fareham Borough Council

The Welborne Plan

The broad objectives for the development of Welborne were established in the Fareham Core Strategy but the detail of how the development would come forward and the type of place Welborne would become have been developed through the Welborne Plan. Early on in the process of preparing the Welborne Plan the aspiration emerged that it would be a new Garden Community, based on a 21st-century interpretation of the long-established Garden City principles, which have been redefined in a contemporary way to respond to the unique characteristics of the locality.

Wokingham Borough Council – Strategic Development Locations

Wokingham Borough Council has identified four Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) within its adopted Core Strategy for the delivery of a total of 10,000 new homes

- South of the M4 – 2,500 homes
- North Wokingham – 1,500 homes
- South Wokingham – 2,500 homes
- Arborfield – 3,500 homes.

Strategic approach

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been adopted for each SDL, alongside a Town Centre Masterplan SPD. The SPDs set out the principles against which development proposals are assessed by case officers at application stage. In addition, the Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD sets out expectations for infrastructure provision. Each SDL is producing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan based on the Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD and linked to Section 106 obligations. Many applications have now been approved, work has started on site, and homes have been sold off-plan.

Wokingham have recognised the need for realism - the SDLs are in multiple landownership, so it is important to recognise that development will happen in phases. There needs to be a

lead player or consortium with majority control taking an SDL-wide view; however, joint working is key. The Council has taken a strategic (rather than piecemeal) approach to growth, and is working together with developers on land equalisation.

Trading approach to housing delivery

Wokingham Borough Council has set up their own housing company 'Wokingham Housing Ltd', which is providing social housing in the Borough. The first homes have been constructed in Shinfield and were funded by £1.5 million from the Borough, topped up with £350,000 from the Homes and Communities Agency's care and support specialised housing fund. It is the first development supported by the fund in England to be completed. The Borough's Councillors are very supportive of the initiative and have provided the leadership for the scheme to take place.

Dedicated team of planners

The Council have recognised the importance of putting a large team of planners in place to facilitate the delivery of the SDLs, which has enabled the successful progress to date. Each SDL has a dedicated Delivery Manager; the team also includes a Lawyer, Accountant, and Monitoring Officer, as well as DM Highways being part of the team. This means they are able to take a holistic approach and turn around the determination of applications and delivery of development very swiftly. It also means that they are responsible for the delivery of major infrastructure; such as the Eastern Relief Road, which has come forward due to £24.7 million Local Infrastructure Fund money from the Homes and Communities Agency and enabled the development of over 2,500 dwellings to be delivered early, along with the delivery of the Thames Valley Science Park which will have a profound impact on the economics of the area. Communication with residents has also been an integral part of the planning process, and there is a community forum every quarter for each SDL.



Members of the NCG visiting Wokingham.

4. Lessons

By examining the experiences of the TCPA New Communities Group members it is possible to identify a number of key leadership skills that have been integral in the successful planning and delivery of their new large-scale communities, these are discussed below.

Vision

Well-planned new communities provide an opportunity to create high-quality sustainable places, allowing for the highest sustainability standards, economies of scale, and better use of infrastructure. Setting a strong vision early on provides an opportunity to consider how homes and neighbourhoods can be made attractive places in which to live and work, in environments which are socially inclusive and resilient to climate change. If new communities are to be successful, they need strong leadership and ambition, with a clear vision and firm commitment. This commitment should be made as early as possible in the Local Plan process to provide reassurance and certainty for all parties involved, even though development may not commence for some time.

Pioneering local corporate and political leadership

Strong political will and support is needed to ensure that local authorities can continue to deliver new communities. Councillors need support and encouragement to think boldly and in the long term. They have a vital role in explaining to local residents and businesses the long-term vision and the multiple benefits of attracting investment in high-quality, large-scale development. In communicating the advantages of meeting local housing need through the creation of a new large-scale development, councillors can also highlight that an alternative 'no growth' scenario would not necessarily equal 'no change' for a community. By not going for growth, communities may face a range of detrimental scenarios, including overcrowding, failing infrastructure, and a lack of investment as the population continues to rise. Councillors also have a role in maintaining momentum on the development of a new community, and they must be clear that they are in it for the long haul.

Building consensus and meaningful participation

Building cross-party consensus on the need for jobs and homes in large-scale sustainable new communities is vital, because implementation is almost certain to continue beyond several electoral cycles. Large-scale new communities provide the scope for local community input on planning proposals right from the beginning. To engender confidence and trust in the project within the local area, existing communities (and where possible the future community) should have an opportunity to engage with the proposals for a large-scale new community at the earliest opportunity. If engagement is to be meaningful, it must begin before the first draft masterplan is created, to ensure that local wishes are taken into account and not perceived as just consultation. Ongoing 'demonstrator projects' that take place before the development is built are a useful way to avoid local disenchantment and scepticism, and help build community support. Councils should start early and be opportunistic when it comes to seeking funding for such additional projects.

Getting capacity in place

The experience of the NCG members has been that putting a team of planners in place to work solely on the large-scale development has been integral in pushing delivery forward. Council leaders should demonstrate this commitment early on in the planning process.

Governance

The governance structure of the new community, whether a local authority strategic board or a separate delivery vehicle, should be considered from the outset and should include community representation. This will help to build social capital by supporting interaction and involving local people in planning (as well as in running services) in the new community. A community 'company' set up in the early stages of development could gradually develop into

a long-term management organisation, forming a key part of the governance structure of the large-scale new community.

Facilitate and lead - working in partnership

Partnership working between public and private sectors is also an essential ingredient for delivery. Councils can play a vital role in co-ordinating land assembly and planning. This is particularly important when a proposal for a new community requires large sites, involving a number of landowners, who in turn may each have different agreements with developers. Partnerships between the private sector and the council can take place with or without the council having a stake in the land. The role of land equalisation in private sector agreements with landowners is extremely important in bringing forward land, and here councils can play a co-ordinating role.

Acknowledgements

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- Steve Pearce, East Hampshire District Council
- Toby Ayling, Fareham Borough Council
- Tracey Coleman, Wokingham Borough Council

For more information about the TCPA New Communities Group please see:

<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/> and <http://communitiesgroup.org.uk/>