

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	3 February 2021
<b>Subject:</b>	Tewkesbury Garden Town Governance Proposals
<b>Report of:</b>	Tewkesbury Garden Town Programme Director
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Leader of the Council
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

## **Executive Summary:**

This report is to update the Executive Committee on the status of the Tewkesbury Garden Town (TGT) Programme including governance proposals and on the key workstreams.

In April 2019 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) awarded Tewkesbury Borough Council Garden Community status (Town level) for the planned development of 10,195 homes and approximately 100 hectares of employment land. Since then, work has been continuing as part of a programme involving a range of Garden Town workstreams.

A report was taken to Council in May 2019 and it was resolved that updates on the programme would be reported to the Executive Committee.

As part of the work programme, a Garden Town governance review has been undertaken and this report proposes a new governance structure suitable for the programme at this time.

## **Recommendation:**

### **That the Executive Committee:**

- 1. NOTES the progress made to date on the Tewkesbury Garden Town programme.**
- 2. APPROVES the Tewkesbury Garden Town governance structure and delegates authority to the Tewkesbury Garden Town Programme Director to implement it.**
- 3. Notes the financial update of the Tewkesbury Garden Town programme.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To update the Executive on progress with key elements of the Garden Town programme and to approve new governance proposals.

**Resource Implications:**

The Tewkesbury Garden Town work programme is primarily resourced by the Garden Communities team and so there are no specific additional resource requirements outlined within this report.

The Tewkesbury Garden Town programme has recently bid for further government funding this fiscal year 2020/21. However, whilst no decision has yet been made as to any allocation, if this is not forthcoming at any time, alternative sources of funding, including the Council's own resources, will need to be considered. Clearly, without funding to cover core costs, delivery of the whole programme could be put in jeopardy.

**Legal Implications:**

The proposed governance structure does not affect the formal decision-making process for the Tewkesbury Garden Town project, this being maintained by Executive Committee and Council. The governance arrangements will continue to be reviewed as the programme develops.

**Risk Management Implications:**

The risks associated with the recommendations are limited as the governance structure itself is low risk and will help the flow down of the formal decision-making process and serve to inform and engage a broader group of interested parties.

The wider Garden Town delivery programme however has a range of risks associated with the many workstreams and these are included within the programme management documentation.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

The overall programme's performance is managed/regularly reported to the Member Reference Panel and the Officer level Programme Board.

**Environmental Implications:**

The primary aim of the Garden Town development programme is to promote transformational housing and employment development in design and future proofed sustainability terms, so all associated developments will be expected to embrace high standards of design, take full account of environmental impact and mitigate any implications as part of the guiding master plan and subsequent planning application processes.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** Since the award of the Garden Town status, and receipt of initial seed funding of £750,000, focus has been on resourcing the team to deliver the Garden Town, progression of the Ashchurch rail bridge project and further master planning work to bring forward comprehensive and well-planned development.
- 1.2** To deliver such a large programme, a number of workstreams are now underway and this report will give the Executive Committee an overall programme update with specific detail on the governance proposals.

## **2.0 Tewkesbury Garden Town – Programme Status Updates**

### **2.1 Resourcing**

**2.1.1** To deliver the Tewkesbury Garden Town team, resourcing has taken place, successfully recruiting a Programme Manager, Project Coordinator, Strategic Advisor, as well as external legal resource. The recruitment process is set to continue further with the appointment of a Place Manager role and marketing/place promotion support.

### **2.2 Master Planning**

**2.2.1** To support phase 1 development (area to the north of the Ministry of Defence base), master planning continues with detailed framework master planning, as well as the ongoing discussions with landowners and Homes England on the preferred way to comprehensively bring forward the area for development.

**2.2.2** Master planning reviews will consider the land use planning effect of recent announcements of the Ministry of Defence indicating that a substantial investment will take place in the base and it will remain operational for approximately the next 30 years. In addition, the recent planning consent for 850 homes at Fiddington will also be taken into account.

### **2.3 Ashchurch Rail Bridge**

**2.3.1** Having signed the Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) in December 2019, work has continued on design and progression of the planning application for the Ashchurch railway bridge. The application (Application reference – 20/00896/FUL) is now under planning assessment and currently scheduled for consideration by Planning Committee in February.

**2.3.2** The proposed bridge will be located approximately 150m north of the residential area of Northway and the scheme will provide a 7.3m wide vehicular carriageway as well as 3m wide shared use paths on each side.

**2.3.3** As the planning application progresses, attention is now turning to the construction phase with discussions continuing with Gloucestershire County Council and consultants Atkins on the overall timing schedule, and the selection of a construction partner to start in the Spring. In addition, discussions continue with the two relevant landowners on access/license requirements.

**2.3.4** Further status reports on the progress of these workstreams will be brought back to a future Executive Committee.

### **2.4 Tewkesbury Garden Town Governance Proposals**

**2.4.1** To ensure that the Programme meets its objectives, work has continued, with the support of the Member Reference Panel and Homes England, to define the most appropriate governance structure. Critical to this is the opportunity to work closely with other agencies and collectively align the delivery strategy.

**2.4.2** Within Appendix 1 is an organogram which proposes an indicative structure.

**2.4.3** These arrangements reflect the Programme at its current development stage and consequently, it is expected that the structure will continue to evolve as the programme develops.

**2.4.4** These proposals bring together, at a senior level, the many agencies and stakeholders

involved, such as Homes England, GFirst LEP and the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC). This ensures that the aims of government and key local strategic growth plans are incorporated into the overall vision to support future investment opportunities and core funding requirements.

**2.4.5** Experience elsewhere has shown that with programmes of this nature, with the potential for competing interests to distract delivery, it is entirely appropriate for the managing authority to facilitate the formation of the relevant Management Boards and Advisory Panels, with any funding required to be met from the Garden Communities Team core funding.

**2.4.6** The proposed arrangements include:

*The Council* as the final decision point.

*The Executive Committee* to support the Council with delegated powers.

*Member Reference Panel* to act as a sounding board for the Garden Town's workstreams, ensuring the needs and aspirations of the Borough's communities are fully considered as the programme evolves and develops.

*Oversight Board* - aligned with the Member Reference Panel, it is proposed the Board will be chaired by the Leader of the Council, however, an independent Chair may be preferred and appointed once the Board is fully operational and in-place.

**2.4.7** Membership of the Board is proposed to be overseen and managed by the Council and will include:

- Leader of the Council – Chair.
- Lead Member for Built Environment.
- Chief Executive, Tewkesbury Borough Council.
- Tewkesbury Garden Town Strategic Advisor – consultant.
- Homes England representative.
- Gloucestershire County Council Member and Officer.
- GFirst LEP representative.
- Community representation – a representative (nominally the Chair) of the two panels: Community and Business (see below for explanation).
- Other attendees as required.

**2.4.8** The Board will be supported by Tewkesbury Borough Officers as required, including the Head of Finance and Asset Management, Head of Development Services and the Tewkesbury Garden Town Programme Director.

**2.4.9** The proposed frequency to meet is every four months, with the key objective of maintaining a strategic overview of the programme and the key deliverables in-line with Council approval.

**2.4.10** *Multi-Agency Delivery Board* is a Working Group of Officers chaired by the Chief Executive of Tewkesbury Borough Council. The role is to deliver the programme as per the Council's decisions. The Delivery Board will present the programme to the Oversight Board and report regularly to the Member Reference Panel.

**2.4.11** *The Garden Communities Team* is the Working Group of Officers and consultants as required.

- 2.4.12** *Community Panel* - to ensure the Programme evolves with suitable community engagement, it is proposed to set up a Tewkesbury Garden Town Community Panel. As noted in the organogram, and to ensure there is an opportunity to directly influence the programme's development, the Panel will feed into the *Tewkesbury Garden Town Multi-Agency Delivery Board* and have a seat on the *Oversight Board*. The role of the Panel is to put forward thoughts on the programme from the wider community perspective and to facilitate the initial setup. It is proposed that Council Officers will support, at least until it is up and running effectively. The specific details will be determined as the Panel takes shape, however it is expected that this will focus on the local Parishes, local schools, the local churches, as well as other community-based groups which may include health, sports clubs etc. It is proposed that the Chair of the Panel will have a seat on the *Oversight Board*.
- 2.4.13** The *Business Panel* is similar to that of the Community Panel, but involving businesses located, or with interests in, the area. To facilitate the setting up of the Panel, it is proposed that initially Council Officers take the lead and that the Chair would also have a seat on the *Oversight Board*.
- 2.4.14** *Stakeholders* - listed in the organogram are those stakeholders where meetings may already routinely take place, namely the local Parishes; Ashchurch Rural and Northway Parish, the 'Design Review Panel' and developers. The list is not exhaustive and as the programme evolves, further stakeholders may be included.
- 2.4.15** *Major Projects* - noting that in many cases the projects are not 'managed' by the Garden Communities Team, these projects are nonetheless important, if not critical, to the programme's overall success. Updates on the status of these projects will be regularly reported into the Tewkesbury Garden Town governance structure through this route.
- 2.4.16** Whilst the Tewkesbury Garden Town programme is in the earlier phases of being setup, the various Boards/Panels/Groups will be stood up as and when appropriate, based upon progress with, and the respective stages of, the wider programme.
- 2.4.17** The work of the various Boards/Panels/Groups may incur some costs and it is proposed that these will be met by the Garden Communities core funding and/or additional external funding, as required and as further bids are made.

## **2.5 Programme Financial Status**

- 2.5.1** At the time of the award of Garden Town status in 2019, the Council was granted £750,000 seed/capacity funding to launch the programme. To date, expenditure totals £460,000, leaving a balance of £290,000. Commitments are scheduled to spend this balance.
- 2.5.2** The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government announced further funding for this financial year (a total national fund of £9 million) and a further capacity bid was made in September 2020. The outcome of the bid is expected shortly.
- 2.5.3** The Housing Infrastructure Fund award for the Ashchurch bridge of £8,132,465 (capital) has a contained schedule for draw-down as work is completed and invoiced.
- 2.5.4** As mentioned previously, an Expression of Interest was submitted to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government against a fund of £10 million, an outcome is also expected shortly.

**2.5.5** In addition, there is the Council's £600,000 Growth Fund ring fenced to support Garden Communities development and all large-scale developments and planning requirements in the Borough. To date, this has been utilised to support activity for the West Cheltenham Garden Village, with £280,000 expended and a balance of £320,000 remaining.

**2.5.6** The Medium Term Financial Strategy provision budget proposal is also understood to be recommending a one-off top up of £100,000 to the Borough Growth Reserve which, if approved, will be available to support Garden Community initiatives, along-side other strategic growth projects.

### **3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

**3.1** None.

### **4.0 CONSULTATION**

**4.1** Routine Member Reference Panel engagement on the workstreams, plus community via the local Parishes. On specific issues, key stakeholder liaison, including Gloucestershire County Council, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council and Homes England. Project Board in place overseeing Ashchurch rail bridge delivery, with representation from Network Rail, Gloucestershire County Council and Homes England.

### **5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**5.1** None.

### **6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

**6.1** None.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

**7.1** The Tewkesbury Garden Town work programme is primarily resourced by the Garden Communities team and so the work listed will be delivered by that team and there are no specific additional resource requirements outlined within this report.

**7.2** The team is still being built and a further key post of 'Place Manager' is currently being assessed for recruitment shortly.

**7.3** There is an underlying risk to staffing commitments made using the programme core capacity funding from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (£750,000). To maintain vital continuity and momentum of the programme, at this evolutionary stage, the staffing resources to deliver the full range of activity within the programme and as a priority, the work listed in this report, need to be recruited on permanent contracts. Capacity funding received to date will cover these resources for a further period of approximately one year, but there is less certainty beyond.

**7.4** The Garden Communities team has recently bid for further funding this fiscal year 2020/21. However, whilst no decision has yet been made as to any allocation, if this is not forthcoming at any time, alternative sources of funding, including the Council's own resources, will need to be considered. Clearly, without funding to cover core costs, delivery of the whole programme could be put in jeopardy. For the medium term, in addition to funding direct from government, other investment options to support the programme's development, in future years, will continue to be investigated.

**8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

**8.1** None.

**9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

**9.1** None.

**10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

**10.1** None.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:** 1. Governance structure