

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	29 November 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	Tewkesbury Garden Town - Programme Delegations
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director: Place
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Leader of the Council / Lead Member for Built Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	None

## **Executive Summary:**

On 26 September 2023, following a programme gateway review, the Council approved a new governance structure for the Garden Town programme and, subsequent to this, work has begun to implement the enhanced governance arrangements, which was a key recommendation of the review. For this governance structure to be effective, a level of delegation is now required so that various workstreams can progress at pace and at the correct time, with updates presented to the Executive (and Council) every three months. To progress the Garden Town programme, as well as meet the expectations of all stakeholders, a critical path for delivery needs to be followed. Whilst the joint strategic local plan process continues, parallel actions are also required to provide certainty for stakeholders and continue to foster investment, leverage government funding, deliver fulsome stakeholder engagement and good place making in line with Garden Town principles. The work streams that make up the programme's critical path are centred on bringing forward development and infrastructure proposals in-line with the aspirations and ambitions of the Council and the community while helping manage the risk of speculative planning applications, noting that these are always subject to the statutory planning process. Therefore, to best progress the various workstreams, it is requested that Executive recommend to Council to grant the delegated authorities set out below.

## **Recommendation:**

**To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to:**

- i) prepare bids for external revenue funding to support the delivery of the Garden Town programme;**
- ii) accept grants of external revenue funding and agree any terms and conditions associated with those awards;**
- iii) deploy the revenue resources in line with the funding bids and the Garden Town programme following the Council's normal procedures for procurement and the appointment of staff;**
- iv) ensure continued stakeholder engagement related to the programme takes place informed by production of a Tewkesbury Garden Town Charter for subsequent, specific approval by Council in February 2024;**

- v) undertake activities to progress the Garden Town programme, including sourcing potential partner capital funding, whilst seeking specific Council approval for:
  - acceptance of any partner grant for capital works; and
  - acting as lead for delivery of infrastructure elements of the programme where necessary; and
- vi) provide quarterly update reports to Council on progress with the Garden Town programme.

**Financial Implications:**

The scope of continued activities of the Garden Town programme will be subject to the award of further revenue funding from Homes England, as the lead agency for the national Garden Town programme.

**Legal Implications:**

The Council has the power to accept capacity funding under s1-3 of the Localism Act 2011. One Legal on behalf of Council will review any capacity grant funding agreement before it is signed on behalf of the Council to advise on the conditions of the grant and to ensure that there are no unusual or onerous conditions associated with the grant award.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

Environmental and sustainability implications associated with the development of the Garden Town proposals will be managed within the programme with environmental improvements, flooding infrastructure and biodiversity net gain being emphasised as key deliverables.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

Implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations and the new programme are addressed in the relevant sections of this report.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

There are no safeguarding implications resulting directly from this report.

**Impact on the Customer:**

A key recommendation from the recent Garden Town review was to create a transparent governance structure and enhanced community involvement. This is reflected within these recommendations to enable the new governance structure and continuing stakeholder engagement to be implemented to better deliver planning for the garden town.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Tewkesbury Garden Town was identified within the government’s garden communities programme in March 2019. A garden town is defined as a ‘holistically planned development, which enhances the natural environment, tackles climate change and provides high quality housing locally and accessible jobs in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities.’

- 1.2** A priority for the Council in respect of the garden town is to ensure that development is promoted by the Council, rather than being developer led. The Council is committed to ensuring development is well planned and delivers the expected social, economic and environmental benefits central to the principles behind the national Garden Communities programme. The Council can ensure that the best interests of the new and existing local communities are best addressed side-by-side, with appropriate, timely infrastructure improvements being secured to complement an overall managed development approach
- 1.3** Following the recent gateway review and ongoing implementation of its recommendations, delivery of the programme's key actions requires delegated authority to ensure that the new governance structure is efficient and effective. This report therefore highlights the pressing delegated authorities necessary to move the programme forward.

## **2.0 RESOURCES**

- 2.1** The Tewkesbury Garden Town programme has been funded to date through grant from Homes England Garden Communities programme and a recent bid to extend this support has been submitted – as requested by Homes England – requesting revenue resource funding for enhanced engagement and project management capacity, including development and production of a Garden Town Charter document, as well as master planning and transport expert advice.
- 2.2** Whilst the final details are not yet confirmed, the bid covered funding until end of the current financial year as well as an indicative request for future years. Following any final agreement, work will need to continue to prepare job descriptions, so that once confirmed recruitment can take place.
- 2.3** At this stage it is expected that resource funding support will only cover this financial year and so recruitment is most likely to consist of contract-based staff to deliver key activities.
- 2.4** In addition to implementation of any further approved resource funding, delegated authority is also sought to explore opportunities for third party capital funding when these present themselves. Such funding can help in unlocking development within the garden town as well as supporting the viability of development. This proposed delegated authority will allow bids to be discussed/submitted with the relevant partners and grant bodies, where appropriate and accepts that if successful, a further report to Council will be made asking for approval to accept such a grant and will outline the relevant terms.

## **3.0 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** Through the new governance structure and ongoing stakeholder engagement programme, consultation will continue with all stakeholders on the programme's evolution and subsequent delivery.

## **4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

- 4.1** To support the delivery of the Garden Town, especially to the principles and aspirations of the Council and community, there is the need to bring forward external funding for both revenue and capital projects as well as to coordinate with developers in the Council's capacity as promoter, separate from the Council's development management function. To be successful, there is the need to continue the programme workstreams and therefore manage the critical path for delivery through these delegations, the risk is for timely progression of key programme actions to be mitigated.

## **5.0 MONITORING**

**5.1** The revised governance arrangements include a number of review and check points to ensure full oversight and monitoring of the garden town programme. Most importantly, it schedules a regular review of risks associated with the programme so that, appropriate mitigation can be implemented.

## **6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**6.1** The transparent, inclusive delivery of the Garden Town programme is a priority within the emerging Council Plan.

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**Background Papers:** None

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**Appendices:** None