

# Delivering New Communities

A Technical Guide to Project and Programme  
Management for Local Authorities





## **Delivering New Communities – A Technical Guide to Project and Programme Management for Local Authorities**

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### **Acknowledgements**

## **AECOM**

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The TCPA is grateful to the local authorities that responded to a baseline survey, individuals who agreed to take part in interviews, the practitioners who attended a stakeholder roundtable to inform the preparation of this guide, and those who contributed remotely. The guide aims to reflect the range of opinions shared in the survey, interviews and roundtable, but not every detail contained within it reflects the opinions of all the contributors to the discussion. It does, however, reflect the spirit of constructive collaboration and considered debate.

#### ***Local authorities that responded to the survey***

Ashford Borough Council, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council, Bath & North East Somerset Council, Blaby District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Carlisle City Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council, East Hampshire District Council, East Herts District Council, Knowsley Council, Lancaster City Council, Runnymede Borough Council, South Kesteven District Council, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, Stratford-on-Avon District Council, Tewkesbury Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Uttlesford District Council, and Waverley Borough Council.

#### ***Attendees at a stakeholder roundtable held on 4 March 2021***

Patrick Clarke (Director, AECOM); Sam Ellis (Director, AECOM); Clare Howe (Principal Major Development Officer, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council); Fionnuala Lennon (Head of Garden Communities: High Growth and Settlements, Homes England); Katy Lock (Director of Communities and Project Delivery (FJ Osborn Fellow), TCPA); SallyAnne Logan (Chilmington CMO Project Manager & Corporate Co-ordinator, Ashford Borough Council); Andy Sharpe (Director of Project Management, Grosvenor); Bruno Sophia (Senior Consultant – Programme Management, AECOM); Andrew Taylor (Group Planning Director, Countryside Properties), and Deb Upadhyaya (Manager – Garden Towns and Villages, Homes England).

Cover illustration: Extract from the Masterplan for the new community at the Northern Arc, Burgess Hill. Image courtesy of Homes England who are Master Developer for the project. Masterplan by Lead Consultant AECOM.

# Delivering New Communities

## A Technical Guide to Project and Programme Management for Local Authorities

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# Executive summary

The delivery of large-scale new communities is a colossal task. Such developments are complex, long-term projects that require commitment from across the political, economic, corporate and planning divisions of the local authorities that help to deliver them. Success depends on robust programme management so that the new communities can be holistically planned and delivered. That in turn is reliant on a dedicated team with a breadth of expertise, and a culture of positive collaboration that builds trust among a wide range of stakeholders.

While there are different models of delivery, with local authorities playing different roles and exercising varying degrees of control, there is a huge opportunity for local authorities to drive delivery using project and programme management tools. There is a tendency to see these projects as purely planning issues, but they are much more complex development programmes that necessitate a programmatic approach from early on, following an overall execution plan, in order to navigate the planning process and smooth the path between planning consent and delivery.

Based on research carried out among local authorities, private sector delivery partners and government agencies, this guide provides technical guidance and sets out key principles for local authorities and other practitioners delivering large-scale new communities who wish to take a lead in a programmatic approach to delivery.

## Recommendations

### Recommendation 1

**Early on, a clear vision should be agreed by all partners, underpinned by a strong programme execution plan.**

### Recommendation 2

**Local authorities should carry out a skills, capability and capacity audit to ensure that they have the right skills and staff roles and the appropriate programme structures and processes in place from the outset.**

### Recommendation 3

**The governance structure should have a clear purpose, and the programme management team should make sure that the purpose aligns with the needs of each stage of the programme. The governance structure should be kept simple but under regular review.**

### Recommendation 4

**Local authorities should ensure that they have the right type of stakeholder partnership and should secure broad public participation – the project and programme management office should act as the thread that integrates it all.**

### Recommendation 5

**Each local authority should develop a way of reporting that is effective in its context and is refined for its audience.**

## Section 1

# Introduction

Large-scale new communities are an important part of the portfolio of ways to meet housing and growth needs in England. They offer a highly sustainable alternative to the current, often-piecemeal approach to housing growth. Large-scale new communities are complex, long-term projects that require commitment from across the political, economic, corporate and planning divisions of the local authorities that help to deliver them.<sup>1</sup> Their delivery requires consideration of a multitude of issues, such as ownership and control of land, skills capacity, investment sources, infrastructure delivery, and community development and stewardship.<sup>2</sup> Success depends on robust programme management so that all these elements can be holistically planned and delivered. That in turn is reliant on a dedicated team with a breadth of expertise, and a culture of positive collaboration that builds trust among a wide range of stakeholders.

As highlighted by members of the TCPA's New Communities Group (NCG),<sup>3</sup> there is both a desire for guidance on best practice in project and programme management for large sites, and a wealth of experience among local authorities that have delivered successful new communities upon which others can draw to inform future projects. Researching questions such as 'What internal structures within the authority have worked well?', 'Who has provided the integral leadership role?' and 'How has monitoring taken place?' helps to build on success and deliver high-quality new places.

### Who is this guide for, and how was the research underpinning it undertaken?

There is a major opportunity for local authorities to drive delivery using project and programme management tools. This document provides technical guidance for local authorities and other practitioners delivering large-scale new communities (hereafter referred to as new communities) on what resources need to be considered if they are to take a more programmatic approach to delivery – following an overall execution plan or schedule. There is a tendency to see new community projects as purely planning issues, but in reality they are much more complex development programmes that necessitate a programmatic approach from early on, in order to navigate the planning process and to smooth the path between planning consent and delivery.

#### Notes

- 1 *Unlocking the Potential of Large-Scale New Communities*. Briefing Paper. TCPA, Mar. 2021. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/unlocking-the-potential-of-large-scale-new-communities>
- 2 *Guide 2: Finance and Delivery*. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities. TCPA, Nov. 2017. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guide-2-finance-and-delivery>
- 3 The New Communities Group (NCG) is a group of local authorities and development corporations planning and delivering exemplary large-scale new communities. The NCG helps in developing plans, providing political support, and providing a platform for the sharing of knowledge and best practice through seminars, workshops, study visits, parliamentary briefings, ministerial meetings, and newsletters. See <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/new-communities-group>



## The difference between project and programme management

Project management is focused on delivering a project as efficiently as possible, while programme management is the process of bringing together many projects to ensure timely delivery and achievement of strategic goals across projects and organisations. This guide uses both terms as it is intended to help local authorities to achieve their strategic vision in planning and delivering new communities effectively.

It is acknowledged that every local authority operates in a different context and may play a different role in the delivery of the new community, as outlined in Section 4. This guide does not specify how local authorities should conduct their in-house project and programme management; rather, it sets out key principles that should be considered and complements the suite of TCPA guidance on delivery.<sup>4</sup>

This guide is informed by desk-based research; a baseline survey of local authorities involved in the NCG and the Homes England Garden Communities programme, carried out to examine current circumstances and ambitions; a series of one-to-one diagnostic interviews with key local authority representatives; and a stakeholder roundtable held to consider innovative and best practice and to test recommendations.

## A programmatic approach

The planning and delivery of new communities entails highly complex development programmes involving multiple stakeholders, and requiring infrastructure investment of between £150 million and £750 million. Furthermore, new communities are built out over a period of 15-30 years. A programmatic approach identifies the opportunities and challenges that might emerge in the planning and delivery of a new community. It is about transposing the strategic vision and objectives for the new community into achievable outcomes. Project execution plans set out a clear and viable delivery route, and an effective management approach should be agreed early on in the process.

Programme management also ensures that benefits set out in the vision continue to be relevant throughout the programme's lifecycle – an important consideration for developments that are built over decades in an ever-changing environment. Programme management gives local authorities the tools to improve the chance of success when uncertainty is a significant factor, by anticipating key milestones and interconnections. It also enables learning from experience and improvement during the development process. This is particularly useful when there are several sites at different planning phases, and several developers with different legal agreements. Ultimately, both project and programme management are about ensuring that the right processes are in place to deliver new communities effectively.

### Note

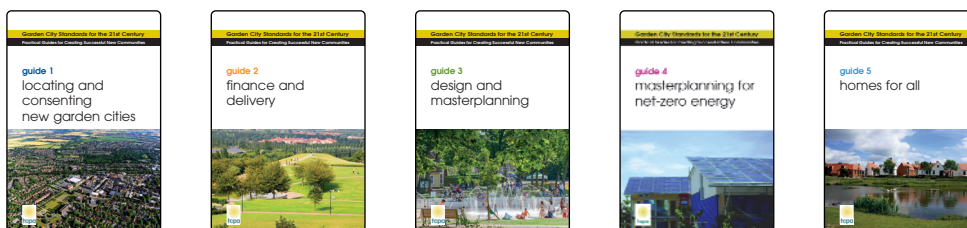
<sup>4</sup> The suite of guidance on delivering new Garden Cities published by the TCPA is available at <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guidance-for-delivering-new-garden-cities>

## Section 2

# Existing project and programme management guidance for new community delivery

This Section highlights existing guidance on how to deliver new communities, including TCPA guidance on following the Garden City approach, and other publications that focus on project and programme management for large-scale developments.

### The TCPA's Garden City Practical Guides



The TCPA has published a major report making the case for the Garden City approach<sup>5</sup> and a set of Practical Guides on the Garden City approach to planning for and delivering new communities, focusing on location and consent; finance and delivery; design and masterplanning; planning for energy and climate change; homes for all; planning for arts and culture; planning for green and prosperous places; creating health-promoting environments; long-term stewardship; 'edible' Garden Cities; people, planning and power; modern methods of construction; and sustainable transport.<sup>6</sup>

The Practical Guides set out the scope of opportunities for ambitious councils that want to create high-quality, large-scale new developments, whether or not they are able to follow all the Garden City Principles.

#### Note

<sup>5</sup> *The Garden City Opportunity: A Guide for Councils*. TCPA, Jan. 2020.

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=f3272413-6d74-44c3-870f-fd333161f3a1>

<sup>6</sup> The Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities are available from the TCPA website, at <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guidance-for-delivering-new-garden-cities>

### ***Building Successful New Communities: Lessons from the TCPA's New Communities Group***

The TCPA's *Building Successful New Communities* publication,<sup>7</sup> issued in 2018, sets out the key lessons that had emerged from the members of the TCPA New Communities Group's experience of working to deliver large-scale new communities. The report outlines the findings of a working group that focused on strategic programme management aimed at ensuring the co-ordinated delivery of a new community. The group made proposals on how to facilitate the delivery of a large-scale new community, and highlighted the importance of conversations at a high political level within the local authority and involving the core planning team.

The publication suggests that successful project and programme management depends on a long-term and overarching vision of the new community. It also sets out key questions that should be asked when considering project and programme management – which have now been expanded as follows:

- What are you trying to achieve, and by when?
- What are the main tranches of activity that need to be managed?
- What are the skills and resources required to achieve this over time?
- How will you measure success and know what good quality looks like?
- What is your project management approach?
- What tools, processes and systems are required?
- Who are the key stakeholders?
- How will you foster collaborative working?
- Are you co-ordinated?
- What is the framework for decision-making?
- How will you effectively manage change and maintain alignment with the strategic vision?
- What is your approach to meaningful community engagement?
- How will you ensure that you progress at a decent pace?
- Are you flexible and adaptable?
- Are you ready to take opportunities where you can?
- What is your communications approach?

### ***Garden Communities Toolkit***

The government's *Garden Communities Toolkit*<sup>8</sup> provides information on how to plan, design and develop a new 'garden community'. It sets out a series of key points on how to deliver new communities, including a requirement for strong project management to ensure delivery on time and to expectations. It sets out guidance in six key areas:

- 'Understanding the scope of your project';
- 'Define the project aims and objectives';
- 'Define the scope of your project';
- 'Draft the project plan';
- 'How to manage the project plan'; and
- 'Presenting your project plan'.

#### **Notes**

7 *Building Successful New Communities: Lessons from the TCPA's New Communities Group*. TCPA, May 2018. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=66797ff7-2f46-49c0-af62-d254b590b994>

8 'Project management'. In *Garden Communities Toolkit*. Homes England, Sept. 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/garden-communities/project-management>



### ATLAS Guide

The *ATLAS Guide* sets out advice on the large-scale development project planning process from inception to delivery. It was published by the Advisory Team for Large Applications (ATLAS), an independent advisory service set up by government in 2004 to support local authorities dealing with large-scale housing-led projects. ATLAS has since been dissolved, but the archived guide can still be accessed.<sup>9</sup>

The guide suggests that project management is key to delivering a large-scale new community and highlights the importance of working collaboratively across a wide range of stakeholders. The key elements of the project and programme management approach advocated by the guide include:

- Identifying specific individuals to play key roles in directing and managing the project, with specific skills and attributes to drive the process forward. When multiple partners are involved, each partner must identify relevant individuals in their team.
- Organising an appropriate management structure, with steering groups and working groups as appropriate. A strong 'development team' approach should be adopted, drawing on personnel from both the developer/promoter and the local authority.
- Establishing an overall project plan and timetable against which key decisions need to be made, drawn up in light of the risks of not complying with those timelines.

#### Note

- <sup>9</sup> The *ATLAS Guide* is available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)

## Section 3

# The challenges

The delivery of a new community is a demanding task. While project and programme management arrangements and processes vary greatly between local authorities delivering new communities, a set of key challenges that affect project and programme management were identified in the research carried out for this guide:

- **Ownership of land and delivery:** The delivery of new communities involves numerous partners, and the process is particularly complex when land is not in local authority ownership. Often there is a patchwork of landowners, with no master-developer, or multiple developers operating in different ways, which makes it difficult for local authorities to manage delivery.
- **Strategic infrastructure funding and delivery:** With multiple delivery partners, it is often challenging to identify who is responsible for funding, delivering and managing strategic infrastructure, and there are frequently funding gaps.
- **Multi-decade delivery timeline:** The scale of development is such that delivery timelines run over decades, so local authorities and their partners need to project plan with long-term contingencies and the future needs of stakeholders in the plan in mind. Local authorities need to be able to adapt to the challenges posed by the uncertainties arising from changing economic, political and climatic landscapes.
- **A myriad of stakeholders:** Large-scale programmes involve multiple partners and stakeholders, often with differing views, all of whom need to be kept engaged. Achieving a unified vision held by all project partners is crucial to developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with programme partners and keeping the project on track.
- **In-house skills and resources:** While some local authorities are well resourced, many struggle to maintain funding for dedicated staff with programme and project management experience. Consequently they have to employ consultants or use other external experts to undertake tasks relating to the development programme, including some tasks directly relating to project and programme management.

## Section 4

# The range of local authority roles in project and programme management

The role played by the local authority in the project and programme management of a new community will vary, depending on the specifics of landownership and delivery organisation. The processes adopted and the resources needed are likely to differ not only from case to case, but also throughout the lifetime of each programme. For example, if a local authority is acting simply as a planning authority, it will commonly handle major planning applications on a reactive basis, while a local authority acting as a master-developer or partnering in a joint venture may wish to establish and invest in early project and programme management processes. Some private sector partners reported that in joint ventures the developer will lead on project and programme management; however, the research carried out for this guide found that in some places there was a more of a joint effort between developer and local authority.

The nature of the local authority's involvement in programme management depends on the role that it plays. The local authority may play more than one role. The main relationships are illustrated in Fig. 1, on the following page.

Further information on delivery vehicles is set out in the TCPA's *Finance and Delivery* Garden City Practical Guide.<sup>10</sup>

### Note

<sup>10</sup> *Guide 2: Finance and Delivery*. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities. TCPA, Nov. 2017. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/guide-2-finance-and-delivery>

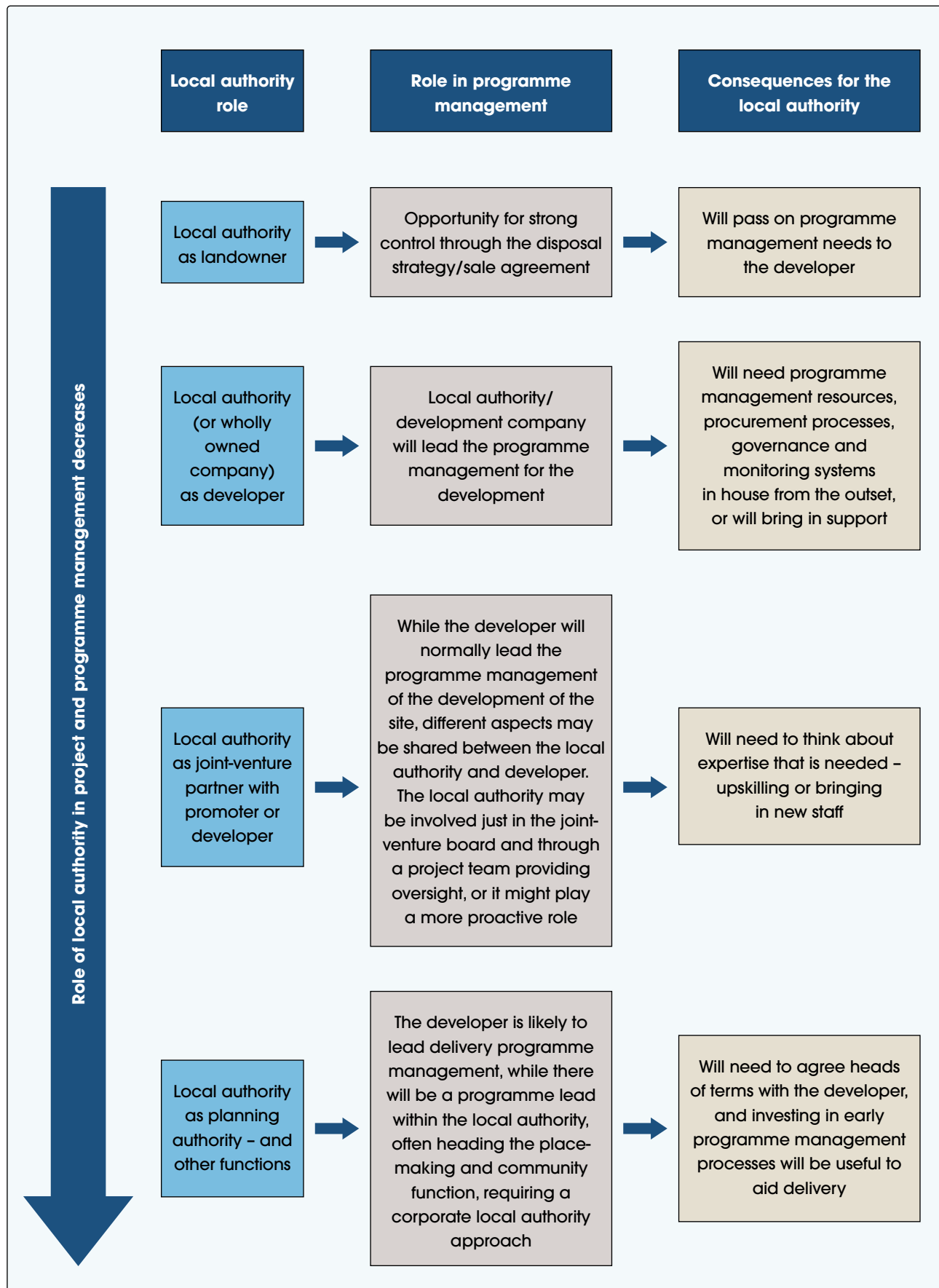


Fig. 1 Local authority roles in programme management

## Section 5

# Key principles for success

As illustrated above, there are different models of project and programme management, depending on the role that the local authority plays. The principles set out here are directed at those who wish to take a lead in a programmatic approach to delivery.

### **There should be a clear vision and a mutually agreed execution plan**

The creation of new communities is a complex and long-term endeavour. The use of a programmatic approach can provide clarity of purpose and agreement on the direction of a development. It is about creating a framework for what a local authority wants to achieve (and when) that sets a common journey for all partners involved in creating the new community to follow. Upfront commitment from all partners is needed, along with mutual agreement on what is needed for successful delivery.

A strong shared vision for the new community is important in order to ensure that development is not pursued in a piecemeal way, and to ensure that the ambition of the local authority and its partners is achieved. It should be set from the outset and should be the golden thread that provides clarity and consistency on what will be delivered. It is crucial for the vision to have strong corporate and political buy-in within the local authority. The vision is likely to be different for each development, but local authorities may wish to adopt the Garden City Principles,<sup>11</sup> which provide a framework for the delivery of high-quality affordable housing, locally accessible work in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities, and an enhanced natural environment.

Local authorities each operate with different resources and under different geographical and policy contexts, so the project and programme management approach is very likely to be unique to each new community and will be influenced by the extent of work that may have already gone into the project, the expectations of the partners, and any specific local sensitivities or circumstances. These issues should be taken into account early in the overall process to inform the creation of the most suitable project management structure and to build confidence in, and local consensus over, the scheme.<sup>12</sup> The structure should be clear and simple, should fit with the planning framework of the new community, and should be sufficiently flexible to respond to changes in context.

While front-end planning is, of course, vital, the success of these major, multi-decade developments is dependent on the flexibility to adapt, rather than being

#### **Notes**

11 The TCPA's Garden City Principles are set out at <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

12 See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)



## Planning Performance Agreements

The Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is a flexible project management tool that can help in creating and structuring a collaborative process between partners building a large-scale new community. PPAs are accountable and open to scrutiny. The PPA should be drawn up at the earliest stages of the project and should include collaborative work between partners on visioning, feasibility, and developing Local Plan documents that support its delivery. PPAs can also cover post-decision phases, such as the consideration of reserved matters and conditions, if agreed between the parties.

The process that the PPA sets out will depend on the particular circumstances of the local authority involved, and its complexity will depend on the nature of the new community that is to be delivered. As for most project and programme management tools, the agreement should be as simple as possible. It will usually be drawn up in the spirit of a memorandum of understanding, rather than as a legally binding contract.

Further information is available in *The Pre-application Suite*. Local Government Association/Planning Advisory Service. Local Government Association, Jun. 2014.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/pre-application-suite-3e1.pdf>

rigidly tied in to certain codes and policies. Local authorities that wish to support new communities should embrace change and a different way of thinking, and must establish trust between partners in the development. Outline consents should allow site-wide strategies to develop and should not seek to fix Section 106 contributions over elongated timeframes. It is important to think about the long term and ensure that the vision and design that are promoted can, like the planning framework, also be changed in response to changing circumstances.

### ***An overall programme execution plan***

A key task in the programme management process is to create an overall programme execution plan, providing an overview of the stages in the process for the whole life of the programme. It could run up to the grant of planning consent, or beyond, depending on the role that the local authority is playing. The plan should seek to answer the six strategic questions of what, why, where, when, who, and how. It should also identify the personnel resources that will be needed, and when they are needed, and their roles and responsibilities in the programme. The plan can help to co-ordinate matters of responsibility for delivering strategic infrastructure, integrate the investment programmes of multiple stakeholders, and set key milestones. It should be fit for purpose, focus on the key deliverables, and be clear about expected outcomes, rather than creating processes for the sake of it.

A key component of the execution plan is an integrated schedule, which should, at a minimum, include the identification of:

- tasks that should be undertaken to enable issues to be resolved, and the individuals/partners responsible for their resolution;
- milestone dates, such as deadlines for key issues to be resolved, when outputs (such as consultation and final drafts of documents) are to be produced, and the timing of formal progression to planning and/or adoption; and
- third parties and relevant stakeholders, together with when and how they are to be drawn into the process.<sup>13</sup>

### **Notes**

- 13 See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)

## A vision and strategy for the South of Ashford Garden Community



(Janetka Platin)

Resident artist workshop at Chilmington Green Primary School

Ashford Borough Council (a member of the TCPA New Communities Group) has developed a vision for its new South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC), which comprises three developments (Chilmington Green, Court Lodge, and Kingsnorth Green) providing in total 7,250 homes (2,175 affordable), over 1,000 jobs, a 142 hectare park, new schools and health facilities, and play spaces, along with the protection of ecological areas. The new community is being developed as part of the Homes England Garden Communities programme. As of March 2021, at Chilmington Green 1,501 homes had reserved-matters approval, with over 100 houses completed and occupied. Outline planning applications have been submitted for Court Lodge and Kingsnorth Green, with committee dates expected later in 2021.

Early precedents on design quality and long-term stewardship were set at Chilmington Green. They were secured in policy through the Area Action Plan<sup>A</sup> and the Design Code,<sup>B</sup> and further supported by a Section 106 agreement, as well as non-statutory documents such as the *Quality Charter*<sup>C</sup> (signed by all private and public sector partners) and the *Community Development Strategy*,<sup>D</sup> to be led by the Chilmington Management Organisation (CMO) – a distinct non-profit stewardship body dedicated to the long-term management and maintenance of all community facilities and open spaces. The establishment of the CMO was based on best practice found across England. The model combines community-led governance with an incremental approach to adopting assets to be cared for sustainably in the long-term interests of residents.

With three separate developments being built over different timeframes and involving seven developer partners, a cohesive vision is vital. Plans for a strategic park for the borough are central to the SAGC, spanning both Chilmington Green and Court Lodge, and necessitating a council-led design approach. Looking beyond red line boundaries both within the SAGC and, where existing communities could be involved, outside of it, a series of collaborative workshops and focus groups helped in drawing up an approach to link up transport, landscape design and community amenities in the interests of both existing residents and new residents to come. This resulted in widespread endorsement by partners and community members of the SAGC vision and strategy<sup>E</sup> – containing an action plan and the first illustration of the whole garden community.

### Notes

- A *Chilmington Green Area Action Plan*. Ashford Borough Council, Jul. 2103. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/chilmington-green-area-action-plan/>
- B *Chilmington Green – Design Code*. JTP, for the Chilmington Green Consortium. Jul. 2016. [https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/tzkjuqvn/chilmington-green\\_design-code-low-res-version.pdf](https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/tzkjuqvn/chilmington-green_design-code-low-res-version.pdf)
- C *The Chilmington Green 'Quality Charter': 30+ Commitments to Help Make a Great Place*. Ashford Borough Council. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/adopted-development-plan-documents/chilmington-green-area-action-plan/chilmington-green-quality-agenda-and-design-code/>
- D *Building a Community at Chilmington – An Early Community Development Strategy January 2018 – December 2022*. Chilmington Management Organisation, Mar. 2021. <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/major-developments/south-of-ashford-garden-community/chilmington-green/building-a-community-at-chilmington-green/>
- E See Ashford Borough Council's 'Setting a Vision for the South of Ashford Garden Community' webpage, at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/major-developments/south-of-ashford-garden-community/setting-a-vision-for-the-south-of-ashford-garden-community/>

The outcome from the project planning component should be the creation of a short document that presents a flow of tasks set against key timescales. It does not necessarily need take the form of a full Gantt chart (see page 21), but it should contain enough detail to guide the overall process to achieve the required outputs.<sup>14</sup>

### Recommendation 1

**Early on, a clear vision should be agreed by all partners, underpinned by a strong programme execution plan.**

The following principles for success focus on different aspects of local authority project and programme management in planning for and delivering a large-scale new community.

### Resourcing project and programme management should be commensurate with the role of the local authority and its involvement in delivery

Local authorities should commit significant time and resources to setting up appropriate structures and processes from the outset in order to guide and manage the development process. As noted in Section 4, the role of the local authority in delivering project and programme management will depend on its level of control over, or its role in, the delivery of the new community, and resourcing will vary accordingly. Local authorities with more control over delivery should have bigger teams and staff with project and programme management qualifications and experience. At the other end of the scale, where the local authority acts solely as the planning authority a smaller team may be in place, but there would still be benefit to be gained from a project manager within the local authority, overseeing the development.

### Outsourcing

Certain aspects of management, knowledge-gathering and service delivery will almost certainly be outsourced from the very earliest stages of work. Clearly, the requirement for specialist project and programme skills will vary over time, and it may not be practical for local authorities to maintain such resources in-house. The research undertaken for this guide confirmed that local authorities are often lacking the necessary experience or formal training in project and programme management. It is therefore essential that personnel with the necessary skills are brought into the team from the outset. Local authorities have several options here, including services seconded through existing professional services frameworks, and employing a programme integrator or programme management officer. The outsourcing of such activities to a professional services consultancy can give the local authority access to 'best-in-class' skills, tools, and systems.

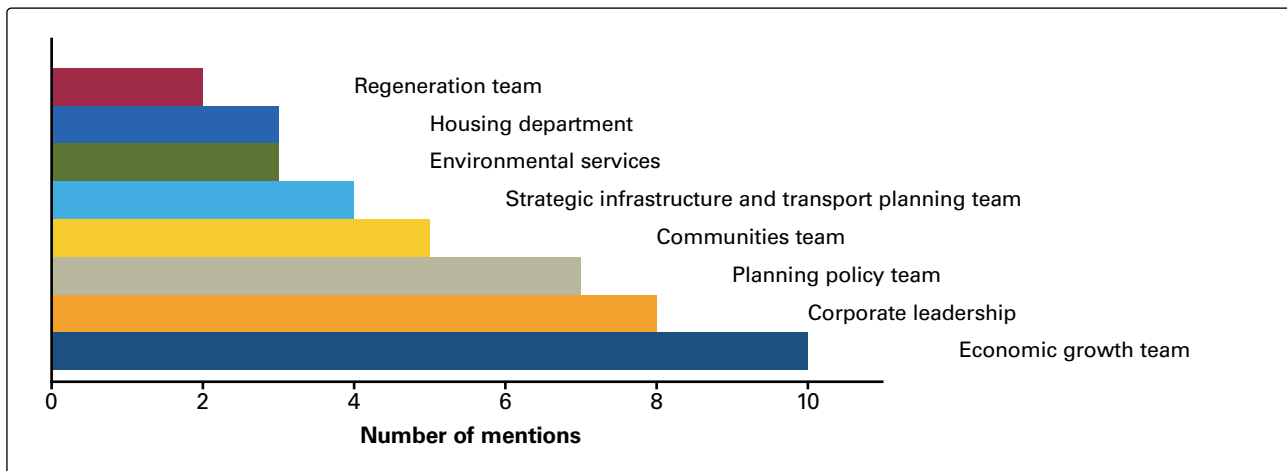
The Local Government Association has issued guidance on procurement to help local authorities and councillors ask the right questions, set the right objectives, and measure progress.<sup>A</sup>

#### Note

A *A Councillor's Guide to Procurement: 2019 Edition*. Local Government Association, Oct. 2019.  
<https://www.local.gov.uk/councillors-guide-procurement-2019-edition>

#### Note

14 See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)



**Fig. 2 Responses to the survey question ‘What are the key departments and positions that are involved in delivering the large-scale development in your local authority?’ – illustrating the breadth of departments involved**

Responses categorised by the number of times that a department was mentioned

### Case study

#### Roles in a project and programme management team – Manydown, Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council

The Manydown new ‘garden community’ is being delivered by Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, in a joint venture with developer Urban & Civic and the Wellcome Trust charitable foundation. The northern part of the new community received planning permission for up to 3,250 new homes in July 2020. It is expected that infrastructure and the first homes will be delivered by the end of 2022.

The case for a dedicated team with the resources to deliver the proposed vision was made early on. The 12-strong team, borrowing expertise from the two councils, includes:

- a head of commercial development, working on the necessary procurement and delivery commercial contracts;
- an accountant, working on the finances of the joint venture;
- a communications and engagement officer, who leads on consultation and online engagement;
- a procurement officer, who deals with contracts for procured technical work; and
- a policy manager, responsible for strategic policy, such as the ‘Manydown Standard’ on build and environmental quality.

Whether the resourcing of the team is local authority or partner led, it is crucial to identify key roles, such as a programme director or programme manager, and the right people to fill those roles. When the team is being set up, it is useful to carry out a skills, capability and capacity audit to assess how the local authority and other partner organisations will be able to take the project forward. This may reveal a need to bring in project-specific project and programme management personnel, such as secondees, contract or consultant support.<sup>15</sup>

The research undertaken for this report found that economic growth and corporate leadership teams were most cited as being involved in delivering large-scale developments, but, as shown in Fig. 2, a wide range of departments are involved. To maximise their contribution, good project managers are needed (in both the public and private sectors) to undertake project planning and risk assessment, and

### Note

- <sup>15</sup> See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)

to set a work schedule and timetable for decision-making. Once a suitable structure has been put in place, each of the participants will need to be allocated clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and follow agreed terms of reference, set within an overarching project plan.<sup>16</sup>

### Recommendation 2

**Local authorities should carry out a skills, capability and capacity audit to ensure that they have the right skills and staff roles and the appropriate programme structures and processes in place from the outset.**

### The governance structure must meet the needs of the development task

The governance structure for the delivery of the new community establishes a decision-making framework and ways of working.<sup>17</sup> Governance arrangements should be set up from the outset, and should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they are fit for purpose as delivery progresses. The governance of the programme should ensure that the right stakeholders and members of the local authority team are held accountable.

The approach taken is likely to differ from development to development, but the key requirements in setting up a governance body are to:

- ensure that it has a clear purpose, and that the purpose aligns with the needs of each stage of the programme;
- ensure that it is kept simple and under regular review;
- ensure that it is flexible and adaptable so as to involve different stakeholders at different times;
- ensure that it is aligned with the vision for the new community; and
- consider the use of working groups for specific tasks.

The most important factor in the governance structure is to involve the right people at the right time. Each stakeholder may be involved at different stages of the programme, and so the structure should have the flexibility to adapt accordingly. The project and programme management approach should set out what the governance structure needs to achieve, starting from a simple structure of key stakeholders, which may vary from place to place, depending on the key issues in each case.

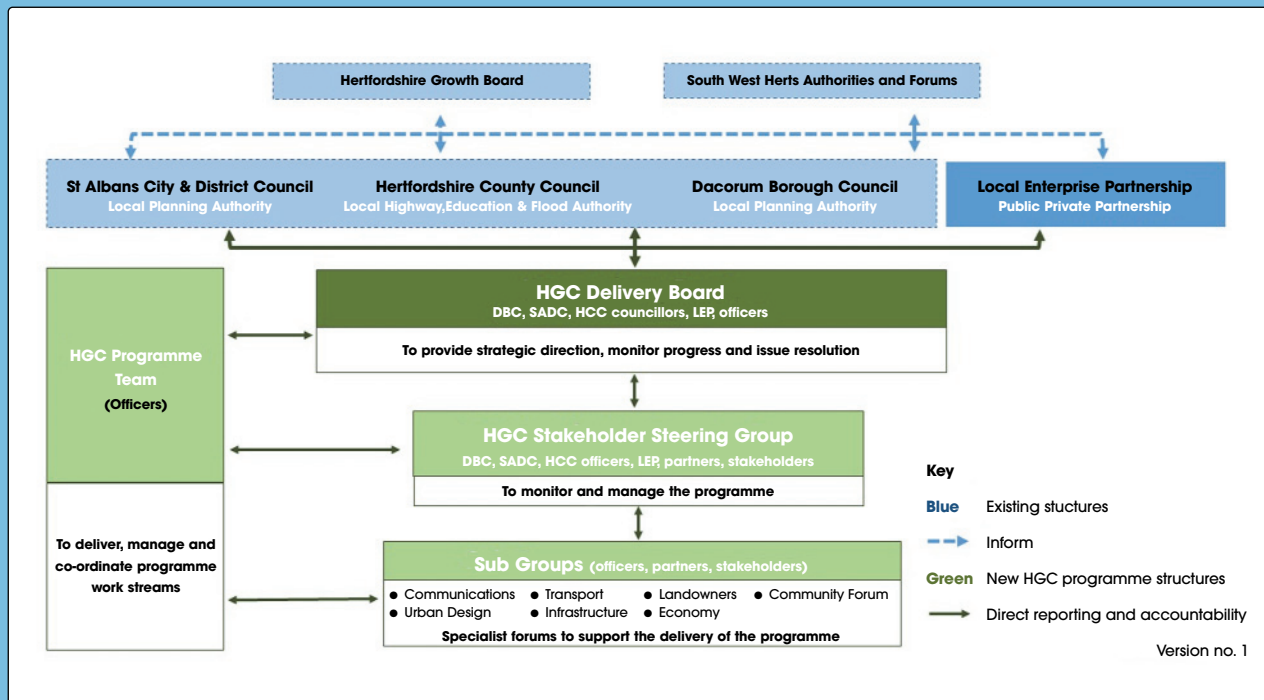
The purpose of the governance body is to both make decisions and provide leadership. Decision-makers need to understand the vision and aims of the development, and there should be corporate buy-in to the value of project and programme management. This will help in making financial (and other) decisions but will also help stakeholders and elected members in promoting the new community externally. Steering groups and working groups can be considered to be part of the governance and decision-making structure at appropriate times. Steering groups should be action orientated, and there should be a group

### Notes

- 16 See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)
- 17 *Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow: A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*. TCPA, Jan. 2014. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/built-today-treasured-tomorrow2014>



## Governance arrangements for Hemel Garden Communities



### Governance structure for Hemel Garden Communities, as at December 2019

The Hemel Garden Communities development programme operates as a partnership between St Albans City & District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and The Crown Estate. As a cross-boundary programme, clear governance is crucial to ensuring that all the parties are equally represented, and also to achieving consensus. The governance structure, shown above, allows input from all the partners and clearly outlines how information flows and reporting operates between the various stakeholders. The governance groups are being kept under review to ensure that they are effective as the new community develops.

dedicated to establishing direct links to member and community forums – and working groups should be set up as necessary to explore and resolve other specific issues.<sup>18</sup>

### Business planning

The governance framework will also need to monitor the business case for the various projects initiated within the programme, with a view to ensuring that the business case and the development vision remain aligned throughout project delivery. This can be achieved through benefits realisation management.

### Recommendation 3

The governance structure should have a clear purpose, and the programme management team should make sure that the purpose aligns with the needs of each stage of the programme. The governance structure should be kept simple but under regular review.

### Note

<sup>18</sup> See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)

### Relationships with programme partners should be underpinned by effective communication and collaboration

A large number of stakeholders and partners are likely to be involved in the delivery of a new community, so positive collaborative working is crucial. Project partners should undertake a process of consensus-building to ensure that the vision of the development is agreed by all the parties, and so avoid later dispute and blockages. This principle is underpinned by communication, a common sense of purpose, and collaboration.

Local authorities should plan for the resources necessary for communication and collaboration, rather than considering them as an afterthought. It is the responsibility of the project and programme manager to ensure that stakeholder engagement occurs, but it is not necessarily the manager's role to lead the engagement: it is a matter of creating the opportunities to make sure the right people talk to each other at the right time. Stakeholders can include all tiers of local government, landowners, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the local community, businesses, developers, and master-developers, and it is important that the politics of these groups are managed. Matters can be particularly difficult if there are multiple landowners to engage, who may each have differing interests and views. The stakeholders are crucial to the future of the development, but the levels of engagement may vary throughout the lifetime of the development. Stakeholders may join at different parts of the programme, and it can be a useful exercise to map their involvement out, based on level of importance and influence.

Corporate buy-in is crucial if new community building is to succeed, and there needs to be a high degree of political engagement to help win the hearts and minds of stakeholders if the vision is to be realised. Engagement with local elected members can help in communication with, and in promoting the benefits of the new community to, local residents. However, in many cases the political environment poses difficulties that have to be handled carefully: some local authorities operate in two-tier areas, while others may be engaged in cross-boundary working with councils that have a different political alignment. Strong leadership experience is thus a key requirement for the programme manager.

#### Community participation

In any large-scale development, but especially in those that follow the Garden City Principles, people and community should be central to the vision of the new place. Community involvement is not a straightforward process, and there are no easy ways to secure meaningful public participation; but there are many opportunities to engage honestly and openly with the local community. Participation processes must be set within a deliverable framework which has a clear scope and defined objectives.<sup>A</sup>

It is important that the local authority engages with the public and has visual presence in the new community, is in communication with existing and new residents, and promotes a sense of community through events and activities. Communication officers that engage with residents, both online and offline, have an important role to play, and online interaction is likely to increase as community groups organise themselves through social media – local authorities should consider focusing resources on this type of engagement. Further guidance on how to achieve active and participative dialogue is set out in the TCPA's *People, Planning and Power* Garden City Practical Guide.<sup>B</sup>

#### Notes

A *Guide 11: People, Planning and Power*. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities. TCPA, Mar. 2019. <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/tcpa-practical-guides-guide-11-people-planning-and-power>

B *Ibid.*

### Case study

#### St Cuthbert's Garden Village, Carlisle City Council – land value equalisation and community engagement

The St Cuthbert's Garden Village project (designated a 'garden village' under the government's Garden Towns and Villages programme in 2017) is led by Carlisle City Council. St Cuthbert's Garden Village will be a major mixed-use development of up to 10,000 new homes. A masterplan framework was completed in October 2020 to inform the council's Local Plan, and a Regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultation took place between November and December 2020.

In addition, a Strategic Design Supplementary Planning Document, to guide early applications and safeguard quality, was adopted in April 2021.



Display on the St Cuthbert's Garden Village virtual exhibition

There is no master-developer for the project, but with 120 separate landowners there is a complex network of stakeholders. Working with the Hive Land & Planning consultancy, the local authority has been leading engagement with the landowners – mostly farmers and some commercial ownerships. Landowners have been generally willing, and the council has worked with them on land value aspirations and raised the issue of land value equalisation – i.e. valuing land for building the same as land for green infrastructure. It has been important for the local authority to understand the landowners' positions. For example, some farmers own land that is subject to clawback arrangements. Others are keen to invest in another farm outside the area but are dependent on such an opportunity becoming available, while others are keen to retire and so are willing to sell more quickly. Attempts to understand these issues have helped to bring about a good relationship between the council and landowners.

The fragmented pattern of land ownership has made it imperative that landowners are willing to collaborate and accept the concept of equalisation; and the key messages here have generally been understood and supported. However, as the council may also need to take a more interventionist approach in places, it is currently using the recent award of government 'development corporation competition' funding to explore the most appropriate delivery mechanism for the development.

Recognising the need to promote St Cuthbert's as a high-quality destination in which to live and work, Carlisle City Council has also been proactive in engaging the local community. Based on feedback received from a Design Review panel, a strong narrative ('St Cuthbert's story') was created to bring the new community proposal to life, and is now used in both public consultations and wider place marketing. The council found that developing 'a brand' early was useful, and a simple measure such as wearing branded jumpers or T-shirts during events or exhibitions has enabled the public to quickly identify who to speak to.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, local authority representatives were available on site to talk to the public during hours which suited them (important because of the location within a farming community). The team visited schools and colleges and used a postbox and 'graffiti wall' to encourage engagement. They spoke at Rotary Clubs and are in touch with the Carlisle Dementia Alliance, who are advising on dementia-friendly environments. A Regulation 18 Local Plan consultation was held online during the pandemic, and a 360° virtual exhibition, with 'display panels' outlining a narrative and links to documents (including an online questionnaire), was made available through phone, tablet or laptop/PC access.

Further information is available from the St Cuthbert's Garden Village website, at <https://www.stcuthbertsgv.co.uk/>

#### **Recommendation 4**

**Local authorities should ensure that they have the right type of stakeholder partnership and should secure broad public participation – the project and programme management office should act as the thread that integrates it all.**

### **Monitoring and reporting will be effective when the methods used are relevant to the context**

Delivery monitoring and reporting arrangements are likely to vary greatly, depending on the development, internal structures in the local authority, and the governance frameworks. Monitoring may be required on housing completions, reserved matters, the discharge of conditions, implementation of any Section 106 agreements, delivery of supporting infrastructure, biodiversity, and ultimately completion of the scheme. Some local authorities monitor progress through routine meetings with relevant stakeholders and democratic forums, with officers producing reports that are presented regularly to senior leadership teams, and are then presented to relevant council committees as appropriate. Others use frameworks and performance metrics to set milestones and monitor risks and delivery – such as PRINCE2, Agile, and APM.

Each local authority should develop a way of reporting that is effective for its context, depending on who the officers are reporting to. Reporting should not be done for its own sake, and the quality of information is, of course, crucial. When producing an effective monitoring report, local authorities should consider the following:

- Why are we creating the report?
- Who is the audience for the report?
- What is being reported on, and for what purpose?
- How is the information going to be collected?
- How is this information going to be delivered?
- How is the report going to be used to link back to the vision of the development?
- What is going to be done with the information afterwards?

### **Dashboards**

Dashboards are frequently used by local authorities to display metrics for the performance or progress of projects or highlight key issues that require attention. Increasingly, programme level dashboards can be generated from data that is pulled directly from project reports. This allows a live view of the current situation, enabling the local authority to pre-empt rather than react to issues, and ultimately deliver programmes more efficiently.

At Chilmington Green in Ashford a dashboard is used to highlight the key aspects of importance to the local authority and the partnership. The local authority has its own dashboard which highlights risks and milestones that are of particular relevance to the local authority and a separate dashboard for the partnership. Both dashboards contain information on forecast and actual completions (a bar chart), risks ('red', 'amber' and 'green' rated), key strategic projects and Section 106 obligations due or on the horizon. The information is contained within an Excel spreadsheet with tabs for a range of more detailed data. The dashboards are managed and monitored by the council and complement a more detailed Delivery Plan, used to monitor individual work streams under key headings. Both the dashboard and the Delivery Plan are used for resource management and for focusing discussion within the partnership about priorities, progress, and decision gateways.

### Traffic light assessment for reporting to elected members

The traffic light system (based on simple red, amber and green annotation to show the state of progress) is a commonly used project and programme management approach. Some local authorities use it to report the progress of a development to elected members in an easily digestible manner. The local authority may well face different risks to those faced by the partnership as a whole, and these should be monitored and managed separately. The assessment indicates progress on activities and in reaching milestones, and on the project overall. The system is easily understood and is a good way to communicate performance information effectively.

### Gantt charts

ID	Task mode	Task	Start	Se No Ja MaMaJu Se No Ja MaMaJu Se No Ja MaMaJu S
1		Programme Level	01/11/19	
2		SADG - Street and Adoption Design Guide	01/11/19	
5		Flood Model Peer Review (execution and approval)	01/11/19	
6		Drainage Masterplan (execution and approval)	29/11/19	
7		Foul Water Masterplan	01/11/19	
8		Biodiversity Assessment (execution and approval)	27/01/20	
10		Healthcare Provision Engagement	01/11/19	
11		Infrastructure Level	01/11/19	
12		Public Transport Strategy	11/12/20	
24		EBLR - East Bridge and Link Road	02/11/19	
34		F&C - Footways and cycleways	11/06/21	
51		WBLR - Western Bridge and Link Road	01/11/19	
65		NAA - Northern Arc Avenue	24/09/22	
76		Utilities Diversions	01/11/19	
105		New utilities provisions - Electricity - East Side Solution	24/12/21	
106		New utilities provisions - Electricity - West Side Solution	15/04/20	
107		P&OS - Parklands and Open Spaces	18/03/21	
120		CBRF - Community Buildings and Recycling Facilities	11/09/21	
126		CFCS - Centre for Community Sports	11/09/21	
130		P1.2 & P2.2 - Primary Schools	30/11/19	
136		P1.1 - Secondary School	22/12/20	
139		Neighbourhood Centres (Local Centres)	27/04/20	
146		Projects Level	01/11/19	
149		Phase 1	01/11/19	

#### Section of an example programme and project Gantt chart

Gantt charts can be used to track delivery. A horizontal bar chart represents the programme plan over time, showing the timeline and status of the tasks in all the projects. In local authorities they tend to be used internally as they give a more complete overview of the programme, breaking down project tasks so that they can be assigned and their timelines defined. A Gantt chart can show how tasks relate to and depend on each other, highlight key milestones, and show the full project schedule from start to finish. By bringing all this information together within a high-level integrated schedule that can be represented on a single page, the Gantt chart is a useful tool to simply communicate the overall plan to stakeholders, supporting a common understanding of planned activities and helping to build and maintain momentum.

Office Timeline tutorials on how to make a Gantt Chart in Excel and PowerPoint are available at <https://www.officetimeline.com/make-gantt-chart/excel>



A key aspect of monitoring and reporting is the identification and management of risk – a matter that is the responsibility of everyone involved in the delivery of the new community. The local authority, developers and other stakeholders will have a responsibility to identify, evaluate and manage strategic and operational risks specific to their activities, and they must bring these to programme management's attention when they may potentially pose a risk to the successful outcome of the programme as a whole. Risks need to be identified and evaluated (along with the uncertainties involved) in a consistent and controlled manner, and their impact minimised. The *ATLAS Guide*<sup>19</sup> suggests that a steering group should be set up to co-ordinate the monitoring of risks to:

- *'Establish key risks to achieving a successful outcome and assess probability and impact.'*
- *'Keep aware of new risks as these arise and change over time and ensure that all partners are fully aware of how they may influence project outcomes.'*
- *'Guide working practices to minimise exposure to risk and mitigate against impacts as and when these may arise.'*
- *'Consider the role that mediation could play to resolve or head off conflicts as they arise.'*

#### **Recommendation 5**

**Each local authority should develop a way of reporting that is effective in its context and is refined for its audience.**

### **Opportunity to support successful delivery**

The use of a programmatic approach offers a significant opportunity for local authorities to successfully drive the delivery of new communities. This guide has outlined the first steps to take in that process. Section 6 outlines further sources of information on the broad use of project and programme management tools.

#### **Note**

- 18 See the *ATLAS Guide*, available from the National Archives website, at [https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout\\_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation\\_articleId=5](https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20170601151933/http://www.atlasplanning.com/page/about/index.cfm?coArticleAbout_articleId=5&coSiteNavigation_articleId=5)

## Section 6

# Further resources

- ***The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation***

HM Treasury, 2020

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/938046/The\\_Green\\_Book\\_2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938046/The_Green_Book_2020.pdf)

Guidance issued by HM Treasury on how to appraise policies, programmes and projects. Also provides guidance on the design and use of monitoring and evaluation before, during and after implementation.

- ***Guide to Developing the Programme Business Case. Better Business Cases: Better Outcomes***

HM Treasury, 2018

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/749085/Programme\\_Business\\_Case\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749085/Programme_Business_Case_2018.pdf)

Provides a framework for thinking about spending proposals and a process for developing and gaining approval which is flexible and scalable, as well as a range of tools that can be applied proportionately to provide clarity in the decision support process.

- ***Guide to Developing the Project Business Case. Better Business Cases: Better Outcomes***

HM Treasury, 2018.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/749086/Project\\_Business\\_Case\\_2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/749086/Project_Business_Case_2018.pdf)

Practical step-by-step guide to the development of business cases, using the 'Five Case Model' – in a scalable and proportionate way. Recognises and aligns with other best practice in procurement and the delivery of programmes and projects.

- ***Treasury Approval Process for Programmes and Projects***

HM Treasury, Nov. 2016

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/567908/Treasury\\_approvals\\_process\\_guidance\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/567908/Treasury_approvals_process_guidance_final.pdf)

Guidance on the Treasury Approval Point (TAP) process and arrangements for the scrutiny and approval of major project and programme spending proposals above Delegated Authority Limits (DAL) set by the Treasury.




- ***Government Functional Standard. GovS 002: Project Delivery. Portfolio, Programme and Project Management***

HM Government, Aug. 2018

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/746400/Project\\_Delivery\\_Standard\\_1.2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/746400/Project_Delivery_Standard_1.2.pdf)

Sets expectations for the direction and management of portfolios, programmes and projects in government.

The **Town and Country Planning Association** is an independent charity working to improve the art and science of town and country planning. the TCPA's strategic priorities are to:

-  Work to secure a good home for everyone in inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities, which support people to live healthier lives.
-  Empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.
-  Support new and transform existing places to be adaptable to current and future challenges including the climate crisis.

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April 2021**

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