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Health, hope and prosperity:
a vision for healthy new towns

tcpa

The Lady Margaret Paterson Osborn Trust

Nationwide Foundation

About the TCPA

The TCPA (Town and Country Planning Association) works to challenge, inspire and support people to create healthy, sustainable and resilient places that are fair for everyone. We do this by shaping policy and practice internationally, nationally, locally and through working with communities. Informed by the Garden City Principles, 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.

Foreword

The government's initiative in establishing a New Towns Taskforce provides the opportunity to demonstrate at scale how vibrant, healthy, economically successful and environmentally sustainable communities can be delivered by the public and private sector working together. Its work will undoubtedly influence and shape development at smaller scales throughout the country.

There is a very real risk that, at a time of housing crisis, there will simply be a rush to build – almost regardless of quality – which will have damaging long-term consequences. We have seen this far too many times in the past and I know from a health perspective how dangerous this can be: with deaths from mould, injuries from poor standards, stress and mental health issues, and deaths and illness resulting from excess heat and cold. The Building Research Establishment estimates that this costs the NHS at least £1.4 billion a year in treatment, alongside the enormous human and societal cost.

I therefore greatly welcome this initiative and am delighted to write the foreword to this paper from the TCPA which draws on its deep knowledge of the subject and provides insight into many similar developments in the past. It also suggests some ideas for the future and offers support to the Task Force in its work. I hope the offer will be accepted.

There are many vital messages in the paper. Above all there needs to be clarity about what the major investment of time and money is designed to achieve – what the vision is – and what success will look like.

Vision

This paper suggests a bold and ambitious vision which is about delivering economic goals alongside social, health and community goals as well as environmental and sustainability goals. Each area will influence and reinforce the others. This three-part vision is underpinned by public and private partnerships and a set of principles derived from the existing Garden City Principles.

There are many lessons to learn here from past experience in New Towns, Healthy New Towns, Garden Cities and earlier philanthropic developments such as Bournville and Port Sunlight as well as from the experience of other countries. These lessons need, of course, to be updated to meet modern conditions and concerns about, for example, the environment, resilience in the face of pandemics and other emergencies, the changing economy, and new developments in people's expectations.

Importantly, we have all understood much better in recent years the way in which social, environmental and economic issues determine our health. Research estimates suggest that these wider determinants are responsible for somewhere between 60 and 80% of our ill health. We need to tackle this with prevention as well as more appropriate health care delivery but also through creating health – creating the conditions for people to be healthy and helping them to be so. I have argued elsewhere that we need a healthy and health-creating society. Nowhere is this more important than when we come to build new towns and communities.

Delivery

Vision, ambition and plans, however, are nothing without delivery. The test of success will be in what is delivered. Here there are some very specific lessons to be learned from the past, many of which are spelled out in this paper.

Top of my list, alongside a clear vision, would be not to underestimate the role of development corporations and not to close them down prematurely. New Towns need to have structures within which they can grow organically over generations and development corporations need to be able to respond to changing needs as they guide and promote the overall development – acting perhaps rather like gardeners in nurturing and developing the new community.

Other key lessons are the importance of continual community engagement, the need for adequate skills and supply chains, public private partnership and, vitally important, economic viability.

Finally, I wish the New Towns Taskforce every success in this very important work.

Lord Nigel Crisp

Chief Executive of the English NHS and the UK Department of Health 2000-2006

Introduction: building the next generation of New Towns

The development of New Towns provides an opportunity to create exemplar new communities which address the health, housing, climate, and nature challenges facing the nation while transforming the way we deliver homes.

New Towns can directly address the shortcomings of the current development model, which prioritises short-term viability over long-term considerations about, for example, health and wellbeing. In practical terms they allow the public sector, acting as a master developer, to bring greater long-term benefits to people and to the natural environment while derisking investment for home builders and institutional investors.

The government's New Towns Taskforce therefore has a unique opportunity not only to explore lasting solutions to the housing crisis but to deliver on many of the government's other objectives from the environment and the economy to health and wellbeing.

A new and more effective development process which creates affordable and high-quality homes and neighbourhoods will help shape the whole arc of people's lives. It offers the prospect of creating places which not only meet people's basic needs for warm accessible homes but provide neighbourhoods of walkable streets with easy access to work, culture and recreation. And this all needs to be situated in an environment which enhances biodiversity and gives people access to nature.

Combining the Garden City principles with the power of the New Towns delivery model to master plan and derisk development creates the potential to deliver on a range of government priorities simultaneously. For example, innovative design can reduce costs to the NHS and on social care budgets, by creating inclusive intergenerational environments that meet the diverse needs of children and young people, as well as of working and ageing populations. In short, to be able to apply holistic place-making to address the causes of ill health rather than treating the symptoms.

We pay particular attention to human health in this document both because good quality housing contributes so much to health but also because health is so intimately tied to other desirable outcomes including improving education, participating in employment and economic growth. The World Health Organisation described health as being about mental, physical and social well-being and not just the absence of disease. In this context it is important to create health as well as prevent disease by providing the conditions for people to be healthy (1). Achieving an exemplar healthy community requires paying attention to all the foundations that enable a fulfilling and thriving life, including the health of the planet upon which we depend. As Nigel Crisp has argued, the health of the individual is intimately connected to the health of the community, the health of wider society and the health of the planet (2)
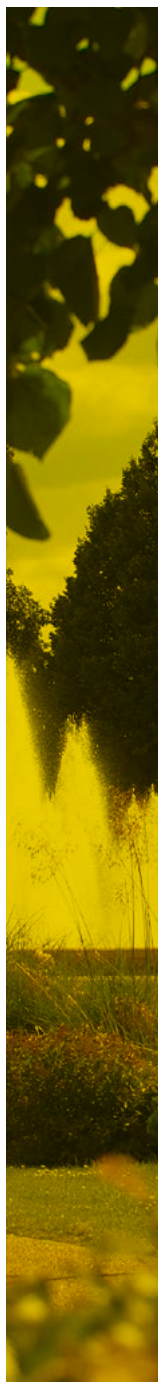
All these aspirations for new communities must be delivered in the context of major societal challenges around human health, climate, nature, technology and demographic change. The UK has proven design and delivery solutions at our disposal to address these challenges. While many of the outcomes of the current approach can lock people into unhealthy and unsustainable lifestyles, this is not because we lack the understanding or the design skills to produce better outcomes. It is largely because we have failed to transform our dominant development model.

Part one of this paper outlines the kind of vision for healthy places that will be vital to securing high-quality outcomes. Part two sets out the current context and trends a future town will need to address. Part three presents examples from the UK and Europe of new towns and communities that are seeking to apply elements of the Garden City Principles. Part four draws on some of the key lessons from the past New Towns programme and the headline preconditions for future success. The conclusion, presents our offer of support to contribute to the vital work of the Task Force.

The golden thread of this work is to explore the relationship between Garden City vision and the post-war new town delivery model to demonstrate how visionary outcomes can be made practically deliverable.

1. New communities that enable fulfilling lives

A clearly expressed vision for a new community is essential for successful outcomes. A vision acts as both an inspirational goal and as a discipline by providing a benchmark against which to test the outcomes. We have drawn on the TCPA's Tomorrow 125 project to provide a high-level vision statement of the kind of place we should be aiming to build.

This is a holistic vision focused on enabling fulfilling and healthy lives. It is not a rigid framework to be imposed on people. It reflects the importance of our social lives but also our need for individual agency. There is nothing new in this aspiration for flourishing lives but the extensive learning from the New Towns and Garden City experience makes clear that three overarching and interconnected principles must be met to make this vision a practical reality:

- **Prosperity for all** – a foundational economy is one that is designed to meet every-day needs equitably, in terms of food, housing, education and skills, health services, transport, and to do so within planetary limits. The local economy of the town is based on this foundational and mutualised model – supporting the retention of local assets in perpetuity and stimulating opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and employment – enabling wealth creation to meet immediate and long-term needs.

Our vision is for a new community where everyone can thrive - economically, socially and environmentally, where all basic needs to secure physical, mental and social health and wellbeing are met, where people have real agency over their lives and where the other diverse artistic, cultural and spiritual needs of human beings, the things that which make life worth living, are enabled.

- **A thriving community** – enabling a socially vibrant, complete, compact and connected community, which prioritises democratic and participatory structures which encourage engagement, ownership and inclusion. The New Town will provide strong enabling foundations, with inclusive access to community facilities (buildings, open spaces, infrastructure as appropriate) and social infrastructure, including education, health care, cultural and recreational opportunities, healthy food and food growing opportunities, and sustainable and active transport.

- **A health-giving environment** – the built and natural environment are designed and managed to work together symbiotically, enabling access to good design and nature, delivering both human and planetary health outcomes. Designing and maintaining connected neighbourhoods that actively responds to the climate and nature crises, through promoting multi-functional grey, green and blue infrastructure that can both mitigate the negative impacts of development and be resilient to change.

The Garden City Principles (see figure below) provide a framework that brings together these three interdependent themes to reinforce each other - promoting prosperity, health and agency, and environmental sustainability, which together help to tackle inequalities and promote thriving.

There is, at face value, nothing particularly radical about this goal but it signals a significant change to the orthodox approach to development, by placing the human experience as the key test, rather than the outcomes of a fixed financial model. The current approach limits innovation in healthy living because, for example, of fixed expectations about returns to landowners and developers. So, while there may be consensus about the need to radically improve the outcomes of what we build, there remains an important question about who should pay for and take ownership of the outcomes we need.

One key question for the new taskforce will be to explore how the current New Towns development model might evolve so it more effectively promotes the goal of health and wellbeing. That in essence was the proposition which Ebenezer Howard delivered at Letchworth Garden City.
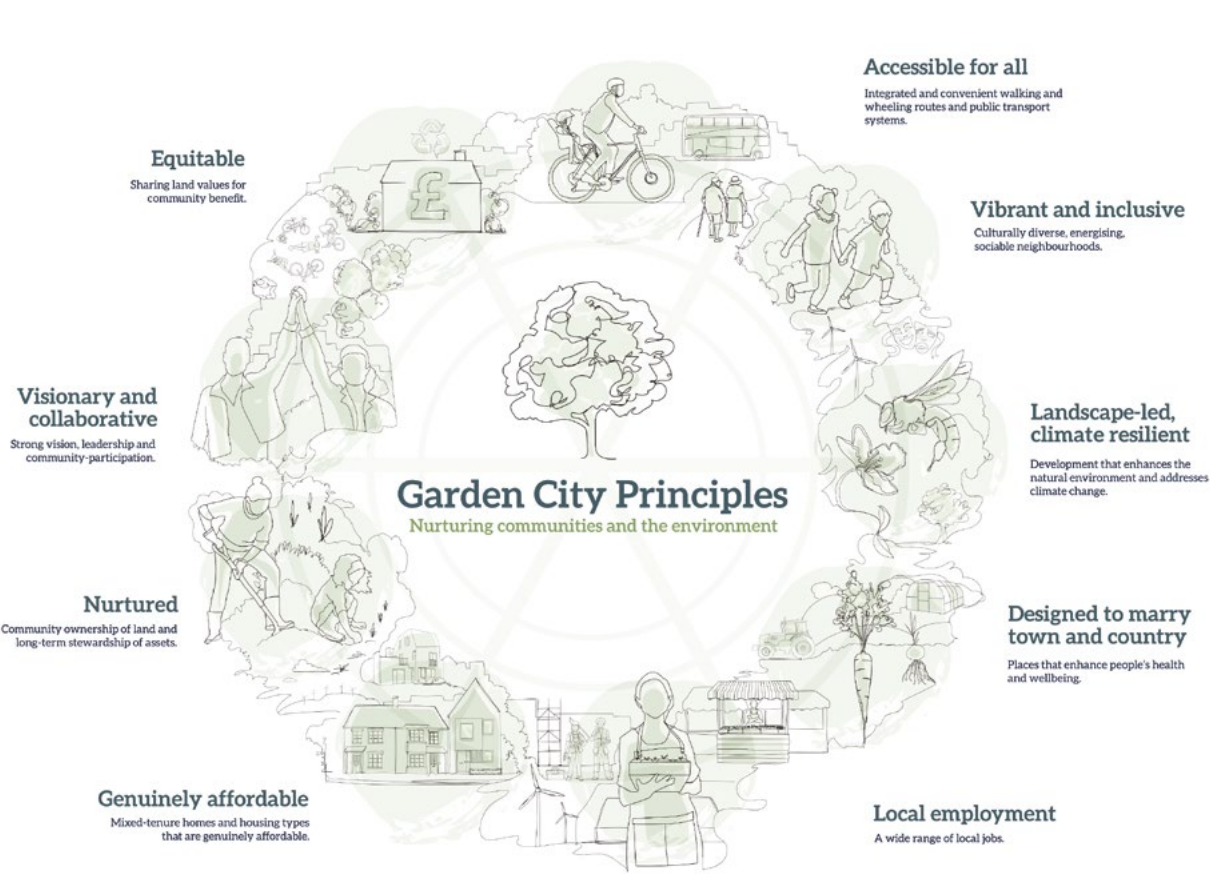
The Garden City Principles - tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles

2. Understanding the changing context of new communities

The success of building an exemplar new community depends on a detailed understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our society, as well as designing in the flexibility to manage unforeseen trends. That context is shaped by the major national trends, set out below. Each one of these is supported by an extensive evidence base.

Critical trends facing UK communities

Health

- **Inequalities** – levels of life expectancy have declined in the last ten years. Especially for people living in more deprived areas, for women and for people from black and ethnic minority backgrounds (12,13).
- **Obesity** – rising levels of child and adult obesity are associated with increased risk of health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease (13).
- **Mental health** – rates of loneliness, social isolation and poor mental health have grown, particularly amongst children and younger people (14,15)

Population

- **Growth** – the UK population is set to grow by nearly 10% in the next 15 years, with net immigration the main driver (16).
- **Ageing** – more people living for over 85 years will increase the need for adaptable housing (16) and the need for intergenerational living (17).

Economy

- **Digital** – contributing to around a fifth of the UK's total economic value (19), the rapid pace of digital transformation, including Artificial Intelligence, services and online commerce is impacting employment, skills, and local business.
- **Construction and real estate** – the UK is in the top six countries for public R&D expenditure in renewable energy technologies, but construction and real estate sectors recorded the highest increase in GHG emissions between 1990 to 2021, 76.2% and 40.1% respectively (20). Infrastructure, housing and maintenance sectors will require over 250,000 extra construction workers by 2028 (21).
- **Skills and innovation** – despite world-leading research institutions, transferring this into domestic commercial success has been more limited (20). Decentralised investment is required in key economic areas, including construction, arts and culture, and circular and low carbon economies.

Politics

- **Disengagement and disinformation** – declining trust in politicians and public institutions impacts people's willingness to engage in democracy and placemaking. The ONS found only 27% of people trusted the government in 2023 compared to 33% in 2022 (18)
- **Centralisation and underfunding** – one in five councils face bankruptcy (18) and inadequate funding settlements are impeding their ability to plan and work effectively for their communities.

Housing

- **Standards** – private rental and leasehold markets remain the worst performing in terms of housing quality (7), with only voluntary requirements (e.g. New Housing Ombudsman) and no statutory obligations regarding quality beyond minimum building regulations. New homes are not legally required to meet national space standards and over 91% do not have basic accessibility features (8). People living in poor quality homes are twice as likely to have poor health (9) and the impacts on health are estimated to cost the NHS and wider society at least £18.5bn a year (10).
- **Affordability** – the high cost of private rental and home ownership has contributed to widening inequalities (11). Rates of homelessness and people in sub-standard temporary accommodation have grown, with 1.29 million households on waiting lists in England as of March 2023 (12).

Environment

- **Climate** – meeting ambitious net zero targets and responding to increasingly extreme and uncertain weather patterns will have wide implications for the location and quality of new homes and communities, as well as infrastructure, food, water, nature and energy security (3)
- **Biodiversity** – habitat loss and wildlife decline has continued (4), despite nature-based solutions being a critical part of the response to the climate challenge and ensuring long term human health (5)
- **Water supply and quality** – intense water demand and increased insecurity, especially in London and the South East, have not been supported by water efficient homes or sufficiently resilient infrastructure (6)

Importantly, we do not advocate a one-size fits all solution to addressing these trends. Future New Towns must also be informed and shaped by the local context in the regions and areas they will be situated – demographically, historically, geographically, and economically.

The planning system has the potential to address these multiple challenges by shaping the creation of strategically placed thriving new communities that reflect the highest design standards. While the system regularly exceeds the annual target of 300,000 homes set by the previous government in terms of delivering consents, too many of these consents are either not delivered or, where they are built, fail to support healthy communities.

There are many reasons for this failure, including: deregulation; lack of investment in skills; lack of public sector delivery powers and investment in social housing; right-to-buy; high cost of land assembly; failure to build out infrastructure first (transport, health care, educational and recreational amenities); expected real estate returns on investment slowing the pace of delivery.

The result is that we do not have a planning or development system which is fit for purpose in meeting multiple challenges facing the nation. It is for this reason that there is renewed interest in the New Town concept and the role of development corporations which did so much to solve the process issues outlined above and in the context of the nation recovering from a global conflict.

3. Learning from current practice

We hope the taskforce will recognise that while there are complex barriers to building exemplar communities, they do not impede our technical ability to design and build world class healthy, resilient and net zero places. The UK remains a world leader in master planning and design, even if most of this expertise is exported to shape projects in other nations. We have all the technical and design solutions to the housing crisis at our disposal but have often lacked the political will to make them a reality.

Whilst many local planning authorities are working hard to promote higher quality communities, it remains true that there are no large-scale sites in the UK that exemplify the kind of holistic approach to health and well-being set out in our vision statement. There are, however, examples where ambitious local authorities have implemented key elements of the vision and even committed to the Garden City Principles in policy, despite inconsistent support from national government. The following examples highlight that town-building takes time. Phased delivery, over two or more decades, requires careful management of community engagement and expectations, as well as sufficient resources and opportunities to enable reflection on what is working and what needs to be adjusted for each current and future phase.

A healthy new town by design - Northstowe, Cambridgeshire

Overview: 10,000 new homes for around 26,000 residents on former RAF Oakington barracks near Cambridge. L&Q Estates started phase one in 2014, with the first residents moving in 2017. Homes England is now developing the next two approved phases.

Positives: Northstowe's first principle is to be a 'healthy town' by design. Adopting strong energy efficient sustainable building standards, promoting active travel and play, connection to nature, and site-wide use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Modern methods of construction are used to deliver new homes. At Inholme, customers could choose the internal layouts of their homes.

Modular homes use two thirds less energy to build compared to a traditional build. Energy-saving features include high-quality insulation, energy efficient windows, LED lighting, a hot water cylinder with integrated air source heat pump and electric heating, which is clean and emission-free.

Challenges: timing and sequencing of infrastructure and amenities. The first phase included 1,500 homes, a primary school, public transport and sports facilities, however residents have to access some services, such as the GP surgery and retail facilities, in the surrounding villages. Phase two is currently being delivered and has a 'healthy living, youth and play' strategy. Northstowe's education campus is now largely open and offers a secondary school and SEN school, with an additional primary school under construction. Homes England has paid £16.4 million towards a civic hub, with a library, and health facility for phase two, and is providing land at no cost. As Northstowe develops, there has been a shift in focus towards community building.

Northstowe town civic centre (Image: Homes England)

Facilities such as the Cabin, a temporary community centre, the Northstowe Tap and Social, the town's first pub, as well as regular community events, offer opportunities for the new community to come together and connect.

◎ **www.northstowe.com**

Meet the Northstowe Neighbours:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELNMx-jGRN-E&t=4s

Stewardship for nature – Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Overview: Milton Keynes is a Mark Three New Town, designated in 1967. The town's intended population was 250,000; by the 2021 census, it had grown to 287,000. The new town's grid masterplan and underpinning policy allowed flexibility to accommodate future adaptation and support the ambitious environmental and social goals.

Positives: Milton Keynes has an extensive network of high-quality green space, including linear parks, SuDs, and extensive grid roadside planting. Following the windingup of the new town's development corporation, a Parks Trust was established to own and manage the city's green infrastructure in perpetuity. The Parks Trust was originally given a 999-year lease to manage 4,500 acres of open space; this has since increased to 6,000 acres. The Parks Trust's biodiversity policy aims to ensure wildlife conservation is a high priority for the organisation. Its 2010 Biodiversity Action Plan identified ten key habitats and fifteen priority species requiring specific action plans. Milton Keynes remains a growing city, and new green infrastructure is regularly acquired by the Parks Trust from developers. By bringing the city's green space under one organisation, Milton Keynes' green infrastructure is secured for the community at a high standard for the long term.

Challenges: Milton Keynes has, however, faced challenges. While the original master plan was designed to enable all modes of transport, the privatisation of public transport in the 1980s led to the proliferation of cars in the city. Milton Keynes also designed extensive Redway cycle paths, but these are now perceived as unsafe, and maintenance of them needs to be sustained. There are opportunities for the city to innovate with transport provisions, especially as the city continues to grow.

Parkland in Milton Keynes (Image: TCPA)

◎ **tcpa.org.uk/new-town/Milton-Keynes/**

While these and many other examples provide some reassurance of the technical feasibility of achieving the vision, international experience also provides lessons and greater confidence that healthy new towns and urban extensions can be delivered that promote thriving at scale.

Firstly, looking at the Netherlands' newest city, Almere, and secondly, a smaller district extension project in Germany.

Nature-based and climate resilient city template – Almere, Netherlands

Overview: This is the Netherlands newest and eighth largest city with over 220,000 inhabitants. It was built on reclaimed land over IJsselmeer, an inland sea. Almere was created to address significant housing pressures in the nearby cities of Amsterdam and Utrecht. A new masterplan aims to grow the area to 300,000 by 2040.

Positives: The multi-nuclear structure of the city is based on the Garden City Principles – seeking to create vibrant and harmonious neighbourhoods, with contemporary housing design, schools and health care centres, good access to public transport and nature integrated throughout – with 100% more green space per inhabitant compared to similar sized Dutch cities. Resident engagement and innovation are encouraged, such as in the Homeruskwartier neighbourhood where over 1,500 residents build their own homes, set within tree-lined boulevards, parks and waterways, accompanied by schools, markets and community facilities. 'Play the City', created by Ekim Tan at Delft University of Technology, has been used by local groups to help make decisions about future land use and infrastructure design. Using this gaming tool resulted in amendments to development plans to ensure residents had greater access to waterfronts, and helped locals see where compromise on road layouts was needed.

Almere (Image: FelixxPosadMaxwan)

◎ **bbc.com/future/article/20220404-the-dutch-city-experimenting-with-the-future-of-urban-life, https://worldlandscapearchitect.com/nature-based-city-of-almere-development-plan-2040/?v=3a1ed7090bfa** and
preventionweb.net/news/climate-resilient-city-template-almere-netherlands

Challenges: While the freedom to develop using self-build through simplified planning or zoning requirements in parts of the city has encouraged variety, minimum requirements and protections still apply. This includes the proportions of land that can be allocated to different uses: housing, agriculture, industrial, community centres and other uses. Residents and landholders need to reach a collective agreement to ensure all these necessary components and infrastructure needs are met to become a functional community, including roads, energy supply, waste disposal, water storage, and public parks.

Grass roots sustainable district - Vauban, Freiburg Germany

Overview: A former French army barracks, this is a grassroots-led development where squatters won the rights to four of the original twenty barracks. The remaining thirty eight hectares were acquired by Freiburg Council and given to a community group, Forum Vauban. As of 2020 5,267 residents live in the 'ecodistrict'.

Positives: The allocation of small parcels of land to different developers, client groups and community-led housing groups (Baugruppen) enabled flexible housing options based on simple guidelines set by the city. Bids were assessed to favour families with children, older people and Freiburg residents. Public amenities and institutions were designed to accommodate evolving requirements for both housing and community need (22). Seventy percent of inhabitants live without a car. Pedestrian and bicycle paths form a highly connected, efficient, green transport network. Every home is within walking distance of a tram stop, and all schools, businesses, and shopping centres are within walking distance. All buildings must meet minimum low energy consumption standards, some meeting passive standards, and every building has solar panels on its roof. Waste levels have been reduced by almost two thirds since 1988 and the residual waste is burnt for energy.

Challenges: The city and district have sought to respond proactively to the climate challenge but there has also been recognition there are limits to what a community and even a city can do in response to global events. This points to the role of the national government in creating a supportive legislative and policy context to enable rather than inhibit innovation and action (23).

⦿ **en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vauban,_Freiburg**

Vauban eco-district (Image: Wikipedia)

4. Learning from the past and looking ahead

There is a wealth of experience and learning from the post-war New Towns programme, from recent government initiatives such as the Eco Towns and Garden Communities, and private sector attempts at building at scale (24). The ten NHS Healthy New Towns also highlight opportunities to set a healthy built and natural environment as a central intention in decisionmaking, from planning through to delivery (25). Specific lessons from the New Towns programme include:

- **The importance of a long-term political consensus about the value of new communities:** the sudden decision in 1980 to dismantle the New Towns programme before many of the communities were complete did lasting damage to their economic and social well-being.

- **Location:** national government must play an enabling role in supporting strategic site identification in partnership with local communities. That requires a detailed evidence based national spatial strategy to match growth with infrastructure opportunities. New Towns were not imposed and must have local government support.

- **Delivery:** New Town Development Corporations are effective institutions for delivering large-scale new communities, but they require the modernisation of their objectives and governance to reflect changing expectations on health, climate and participatory democracy.

- **Finance:** New Towns require up-front, long-term investment, but they can and do pay for themselves over time. This requires an effective approach to land value capture.

- **Management:** stewardship of community assets is vital to a sustainable outcome. The premature closure of the New Towns programme and the fire sale of development corporation assets left many places without the means to invest in renewal.

- **Design and innovation:** innovation and learning during design and delivery is important, but design experimentation must not come at the expense of resident wellbeing.

- **Public participation:** people need to be trusted and empowered to be at the heart of decision-making from the outset in order to shape all aspects of the governance of their New Town (26).

It is worth emphasising the vital importance of binding together the ability to plan, with the power to deliver through a public body that can drive land assembly and de-risk the development process. The lessons from the UK suggest that this body is a development corporation created by the powers of the New Towns Act. The New Towns legislation was last consolidated in 1981 and remains on the statute books. The TCPA believes that the basic architecture of the legislation remains useful, but some amendments are necessary to make the legislation fit for purpose in the 21st century. This includes modernisation to ensure New Town Development Corporations, and the places they deliver, address the climate and nature emergencies, support public participation, healthy placemaking, and carry a commitment to the long-term stewardship of assets.

The preconditions for successful New Towns

The success of any future programme of new settlements depends on the application of a rigorous assessment of what worked and what did not. There are six important preconditions which flow from this learning, preconditions which must be met if a programme of new settlements is to be successful:

1. **A clear and shared vision for healthy, resilient and affordable places across England**, which is clearly articulated in national policy and supported with minimum legal standards. The vision should be supported by the Garden City Principles which together will shape the look and feel of new and expanded communities by laying the foundation for detailed master plans.

2. **A national strategy to enable the necessary skills and supply chains to support the practical ambition for net zero, healthy homes and communities.**

3. **A long-term political commitment to the necessary investment to create new places through a coherent package of infrastructure investment.** The foundation of the financial success of the Garden Cities and New Towns relied on capturing the values that arose from the development process and reinvesting that income in the quality, commercial success, and long-term stewardship, of the community. In modern terms, the focus is on generating social value. This approach remains central to the financial success of large-scale new communities and requires a suite of measures to capture both land value uplift and the income from land sales and rents as the town matures.

4. **A sustained commitment to building consensus and public participation in both the designation and management of new communities.** This must include a new emphasis on opportunities for community-led and cooperative housing development.

5. **A coherent and detailed set of delivery tools and, particularly, the use of modernised New Town Development Corporations with all the necessary powers to capture land values and deliver new communities.** In using development corporations everything hangs on the quality of the team who are assembled to manage the process.

6. **New policy and legal requirements to ensure effective long-term stewardship of community assets and the public realm.** One of the starkest lessons of the New Towns programme is the fatal mistake of abolishing development corporations before their key task of nurturing the development of a place and community was complete. Building a new settlement is an intergenerational task, and development corporations should expect to operate for a minimum of 40 years. There is a need to consider how the long-term stewardship of a wide variety of community assets will be managed and resourced. This requires a clear plan to be outlined at designation, which will set out the need to transfer assets and responsibilities to community and charitable organisations that will manage them for the benefit of the citizens over the long term.

5. Conclusion – an offer of support

New Towns are a once in generation opportunity to create exemplar new communities which address the acute health, housing, climate, and nature challenges facing the nation while transforming the way we deliver homes. They directly address the shortcomings of our current development model, which prioritises short-term viability over long-term health and wellbeing. They allow the public sector, acting as a master developer, to bring greater long-term benefits to people and to the natural environment while derisking investment for home builders and institutional investors.

The success of the new programme of strategic growth depends, however, on both a powerful vision for sustainable living, as distilled in the Garden City Principles, and the power of New Towns legislation to drive delivery. Amongst all this learning, it is vital the programme is people centred, meeting the needs of 21st-century living while genuinely giving people a voice in both the designation and governance of new places.

The TCPA looks forward to working with the New Towns Taskforce – to promote the central vision of creating new towns and communities where everyone can thrive.

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