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Garden City Principles for the 21st Century: Practical Guidance for Delivery

Guide 2: Finance and Delivery Vehicles - October 2026



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Garden City Principles for the 21st Century: Practical Guidance for Delivery - Guide 2: Finance and Delivery Vehicles – Summary
Town and Country Planning Association
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Sustainable Workspaces
County Hall, 5th Floor
Belvedere Rd
London SE1 7PB

020 7930 8903

tcpa@tcpa.org.uk

www.tcpa.org.uk

Authors

This report has been written by Katy Lock, Lachlan Anderson-Frank and Jeanette Aves.

Front cover image

Aerial view of Wichelstowe, Swindon. The project is a case study in the guide on delivery through a public private joint venture. Image © Adobe Stock, Radd, #2079659781

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**The Lady Margaret
Paterson Osborn Trust**

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:

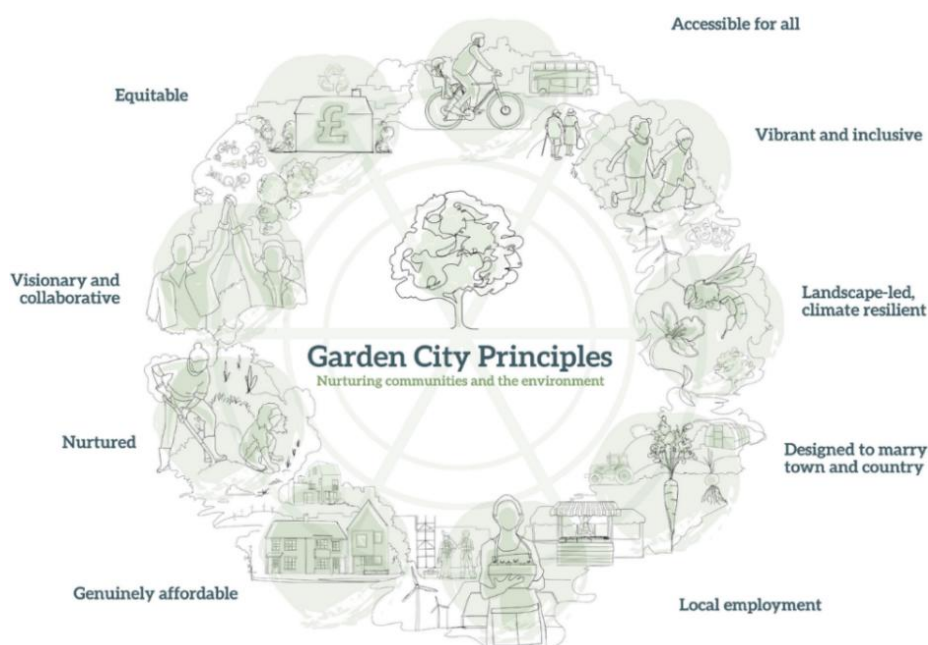
- Work to secure a good home for everyone in inclusive, resilient and prosperous communities, which support people to live healthier lives.
- Empower people to have real influence over decisions about their environments and to secure social justice within and between communities.
- Support new and transform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

Introduction to the TCPA Practical Guides for Creating Successful New Communities

A range of solutions are needed to deal with the UK's shortage of housing. Alongside the renewal of our towns and cities, there is now wide recognition of the need to design and build new large-scale developments. New towns, urban extensions and regeneration areas provide an opportunity to create ambitious, high-quality developments, that enable people to have healthy lifestyles and which facilitate economic growth and will be attractive places for generations to come.

But there is also a risk that these developments become soulless, car-dominated dormitory suburbs; how can we prevent this? The answer lies in the Garden City development model – a proven way of funding, creating and maintaining successful high-quality places. There is lots of terminology used to describe large-scale developments – from new towns to garden communities. These labels come and go, but the TCPA is clear that the Garden City Principles remain a unique foundation for thinking about how we can do things differently. The term new 'Garden City' is used throughout the guide and relates to a specific set of development principles.¹

The TCPA has produced a suite of guidance on how to deliver the Garden City Principles.² These guides are being made available as an online resource, which enables them to be updated periodically as policy and legislation changes, and as learning evolves. There are specific opportunities for larger scale sites of 10,000 homes or more, but the Garden City Principles can be applied to development at any scale. The Guides will help anyone attempting to create great places, regardless of whether they are trying to deliver a new 'Garden City'.



¹The TCPA has produced an extensive set of policy and practical resources on Garden Cities, which can be found [here](#).

² [Garden City Standards for the 21st Century: Practical Guides for Creating Successful New Communities](#)

Introduction

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This [web-based Practical Guide](#) is aimed at local authority officers and elected members considering the delivery of an ambitious new community (a new town, urban extension or other large-scale housing and regeneration project) in their area. It is designed to help you to learn more about how to deliver and finance the project in a way that will contribute to achieving the Garden City Principles.³

Use of the value that results from the development process to fund delivery and long-term stewardship is a fundamental aspect of these Principles and is closely tied to the type of organisation that delivers the development. There are specific opportunities for larger sites, such as new towns, of 10,000 homes or more. However, much of the information set out here is also applicable to smaller projects, 'garden communities' or urban extensions that aspire to the Garden City Principles. Where this is not an aspiration, we hope this guide will help you understand some of the options available for finance and delivery and improve the outcomes of your project.

Delivering the Garden City Principles requires ambition and staying power. It requires consideration of land ownership and control, planning powers and skills, investment, infrastructure, delivery management, community development, and stewardship. But the prize is highly sustainable and well-located development which supports people's health and well-being. That has to be better for everyone than uncoordinated urban sprawl.

The guide aims to demystify the development process and outlines options for finance and delivery including development corporations and other local delivery vehicles. It offers case studies and principles for success. It emphasises the importance of setting clear expectations upfront, so land values reflect infrastructure and quality requirements. The Government's current interest in new towns creates an opportunity to meet housing and growth needs while promoting high-quality placemaking. This guidance will be helpful for projects included in that programme but is primarily aimed at those places currently planning for new communities outside this formal programme and the support it provides.

Developing a new community is a uniquely complex and long-term project requiring up-front, and patient investment for long-term benefit. History has shown that proactive public-sector land assembly, strong development standards and delivery organisations with sufficient control of land are essential for successful delivery at this scale. Development Corporations remain a proven approach to delivery and de-risking investment necessary to finance such projects. We hope this guide will help communities to choose the best option for them and support those who wish to leave a legacy of well connected, healthy and highly sustainable new communities.

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³The Garden City Principles are referenced in national planning policy:
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles/>

Policy and legislative context

The National Planning Policy Framework 2026 supports identifying locations for large-scale development with appropriate infrastructure and facilities, sustainable development, environmental opportunities and constraints, quality expectations, build-out assessment and a mix of tenures. It also identifies the TCPA's Garden City Principles as an example of relevant placemaking principles.

Changes under the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 and Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 have created a more consistent and flexible framework for the five types of development corporation. Development corporations must also have regard to sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Government has also made helpful changes to compulsory purchase law with a revised approach to hope value with the aim of making public-interest land assembly more effective and reducing compensation for land needed for public infrastructure and community facilities.



Olive Lane is being delivered as part of a new town centre at Waverley in Rotherham. The project is a case study in the guide on delivery by a master developer.

Image © Harworth Group

Choosing the right local delivery vehicle

The guide explores the importance of getting the right structure in place to deliver new places over the long term. Whether a joint venture or development corporation, there are some common issues to consider:

- **Building a shared vision:** Establish and communicate a masterplan transparently and inclusively, reflecting existing residents' and local communities' priorities.
- **Effective governance and managing complex relationships:** A dedicated delivery body can help to coordinate different interests, build confidence and reduce risk for public and private partners. A clear business plan with defined responsibilities and transparent open-book accounting will help to maintain democratic oversight, alongside appropriate representation for key partners.
- **Long-term stewardship:** Agree stewardship and asset-management arrangements early. Reinvest land value uplift into enduring bodies such as endowed trusts, Community Land Trusts or councils to maintain assets and minimise resident service charges and enable residents to participate in managing their neighbourhoods.

Key issues for funding, finance & investment

Financing a new Garden City is about more than securing the investment capital needed to deliver infrastructure and development. The following principles highlight some of the key considerations in creating a financeable and investable proposition:

- **Capturing the increase in land values for public benefit:** Set infrastructure, affordability and quality expectations early through Local Plan policy so land prices reflect them. Maintain land control and CPO powers as a backstop where necessary. Combine early public infrastructure funding, which can de-risk development and smooth peak debt, with patient private capital from pension funds, housebuilders and Registered Providers.
- **Diversity of Supply and partnership models:** Reduce reliance on sales-led volume housebuilding by working with Registered Providers, Build-to-Rent operators and Community Land Trusts. Forward sales can generate early cash flow and support simultaneous development across phases. Engage early with national finance institutions, including the National Housing Bank, National Wealth Fund and Public Works Loan Board, for long-term debt, revolving infrastructure funding and guarantees.
- **Building a strong business case:** Prepare a Strategic Outline Business Case aligned with HM Treasury's Green Book, covering economic benefits, commercial viability, financial affordability and management capacity. Combine market evidence with social, environmental and place-based appraisal.

Key takeaways

- 1. There is always an opportunity for land value capture but it requires early action.** Funding will come from a mix of public and private sources, but by planning income and expenditure, the sharing and reinvestment of land value uplift can help places become self-financing over time. Publicly led delivery offers the greatest opportunity on larger sites, although smaller or more advanced schemes may still offer some opportunities.
- 2. The right delivery body will de-risk the process for investors and stakeholders by building consensus.** A dedicated organisation with the necessary skills can coordinate delivery, maintain standards, attract investment and demonstrate commitment to communities.
- 3. Successful places require a long-term stewardship model and this requires sustainable investment.** A proportion of development value should support organisations that maintain community assets and provide long-term benefits alongside council-funded services.
- 4. Strong, evidenced Local Plan policy is important.** Section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy can capture value, but clear and early Local Plan policies provide a stronger basis for securing infrastructure, affordability and quality requirements including through equalisation. Early policy allows land markets to adjust and should be tested through plan examination.
- 5. Land values have a limit.** Land value capture cannot fund every requirement, particularly where schemes face major transport, flood-resilience or other infrastructure costs. Where landowners or developers will not adjust to policy requirements, compulsory purchase and locally led delivery vehicles may be necessary.

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