



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Locally-led Garden Cities

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April 2014

ISBN: 978-1-4098-4204-0

Foreword

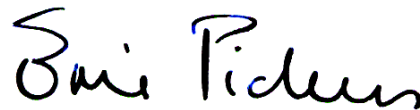
Supporting communities in delivering the new homes the country needs is a key priority for the coalition Government. We have already done a great deal. Over 160,000 new affordable homes have been delivered over the last three years, and housebuilding is increasing: in the last quarter, housing starts were 89% higher than during the crash. But we must go further, to help hard-working people get the homes they want.

Local people know what is best for their areas. We know that in many areas, people want to be ambitious and innovative in their approach to delivering the homes they need. We want to support that ambition, and importantly, we want to encourage them to go even further. New development at new settlement scale can offer a great opportunity to build in quality from the start in terms of design, open space, homes and jobs that make places great to live in.

The *Locally Led Garden Cities* prospectus sets out a broad support package that Government will offer localities which are ambitious in terms of scale and delivery, and set high standards for design, quality and the provision of green space. We want to encourage people to think in a new way about how they can meet their housing needs. Building on the historical Garden Cities concept, and a legacy of new town development we can be rightly proud of, we want to support localities in delivering inspirational new Garden Cities fit for the 21st century.



**The Rt Nick Clegg MP,
Deputy Prime Minister**



**The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP,
Secretary of State for Communities and
Local Government**

Context

1 The Government is investing in housing to help get Britain building again. When we came to power, we inherited a broken housing market, caused by a long term under supply of new homes. However, with the recovery now underway, there are real improvements to be seen. Mortgage approvals have increased, the number of first time buyers is growing, and more homes are being delivered. Delivering more well-designed, high quality homes, in thriving new communities is vital to building a stronger economy and a fairer society so that every person can get on in life.

2 Unlocking large scale housing developments is critical to driving the supply of new homes in the medium to long term. They can offer a more strategic and thoughtful alternative to sequential development (or “sprawl”) around existing communities. Unlike the previous Government’s Eco-Towns programme, this is a local solution, giving communities the power to choose sites, plans and designs for Garden Cities, not rather than Whitehall imposing what it thinks best for local people.

3 We need to build more homes. However, we know that people can be concerned that developers will throw up sprawling extensions to their communities which place additional pressures on local infrastructure. Garden Cities provide a unique opportunity for local areas to prevent this, by taking control of development, integrating planning to decide where best to locate developments and ensuring that public services, green spaces and amenities are hardwired into designs from the beginning. Development at a large scale creates the opportunity to secure real and important benefits: attributes that people most value – such as quality design, gardens, accessible green space near homes, access to employment, and local amenities – can be designed in from the outset. In short, Garden Cities are about far more than houses alone: they are about creating sustainable, economically viable places where people choose to live. These are the principles on which the Garden Cities movement was based, and they remain as relevant today as they were over a century ago.

4 We are investing over £1 billion of funding over 6 years, together with a wider support package, to unlock locally supported housing schemes capable of delivering up to 250,000 new homes. The 2015-2020 Large Sites Infrastructure Programme launches today with a Prospectus which invites bids for the £1 billion of funding announced at Autumn Statement 2013. The investment already committed through the programme has unlocked development in areas such as Cranbrook in Devon, and Wokingham in Berkshire.

5 In parallel we would like to work with local authorities who want to create locally-led Garden Cities. The potential for benefit to local areas is immeasurable: new Garden Cities which are properly designed can bring new jobs, an increased local tax base, and use using land value uplift to finance 21st century infrastructure. This prospectus sets out how local areas can benefit from this potential, to help them meet the challenge of starting to plan and deliver their ambitions, making use of ‘garden city’ design to bring together homes, jobs, open space and create great places to live and raise their children. We want local authorities to put forward their ideas for how they wish to develop Garden Cities, how they wish to make use of the existing central Government funding and support, and what other freedoms, flexibilities and support they need to make ambitious new Garden Cities a

reality. We believe innovation will come from local leadership: we look forward to hearing how central Government can support that in each area.

What do we mean by ‘Garden Cities’?

6 There are many reasons why local areas and communities should embrace Garden Cities. As well as the many benefits for future residents, a major Garden City is an opportunity for councils to take a strategic development decision about how they should meet housing need over the next decade and beyond. For existing communities, this offers the opportunity to plan to maintain and extend what people value most: high quality design, appropriate infrastructure and accessible green space within towns and nearby. However, we recognise that for any new settlement, there will be some disruption during development; local areas will need to consider how to engage and respond to the concerns of existing residents during this phase.

7 There has been a great deal of debate nationally in recent years about how large scale new settlements could and should be delivered, and what their guiding principles should be. The Government does not wish to impose any definition of what Garden Cities are, but instead intends to work with localities to support them in developing and delivering their own vision. Localities may find it helpful to consider some of the thinking which has already been done by bodies with an interest in this area. For example, in the view of the Town and Country Planning Association, at the heart of the Garden City concept is the development of holistically planned new settlements which enhance the natural environment, tackle climate change and provide high-quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs in beautiful, healthy and sociable communities. The Town and Country Planning Association have set out a number of principles that localities may wish to consider:

- strong vision, leadership and community engagement
- land value capture for the benefit of the community
- community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets
- mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are affordable for ordinary people
- a strong local jobs offer in the Garden City itself, with a variety of employment opportunities within easy commuting distance of homes
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens, combining the very best of town and country living to create healthy homes in vibrant communities
- generous green space linked to the wider natural environment, including a surrounding belt of countryside to prevent sprawl, well connected and biodiversity rich public parks, and a mix of public and private networks of well-managed, high-quality gardens, tree-lined streets and open spaces
- opportunities for residents to grow their own food, including generous allotments
- strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods
- integrated and accessible low-carbon transport systems – with a series of settlements linked by rapid transport providing a full range of employment opportunities

8 In essence, we think Garden Cities are liveable, viable, modern communities with the resident at the centre of planning. In addition, previous experience of large scale settlements suggests that there are particularly important considerations around local support, scale, connectivity, delivery arrangements, and land.

Expressions of interest

9 This prospectus seeks expressions of interest from local areas interested in delivering a new Garden City. We want to work closely with areas which bring forward strong expressions of interest to help them develop their proposals, understand the barriers to delivery, and offer Government brokerage and support through the Large Sites Infrastructure Programme and other existing schemes where it can help to unblock these.

What we expect from schemes

Local support

10 As the last Government's eco-town programme illustrates, large scale developments cannot succeed without local support. Schemes should therefore have the full backing of all local authorities in which Garden Cities are sited, including the county council in two tier authorities. Schemes will also need to consider how the local community will be involved as they go forward.

Scale

11 If they are to help address the long term under-supply of housing, new Garden Cities must be ambitious in scale. They should be designed so as to allow for the formation of integrated and thriving communities, where people want to live, work and play. Garden Cities should provide the full range of commercial, retail, educational and community facilities that people need, in such a way that they facilitate interaction between people. As an indication we would expect developments to be at or above the 15,000 homes level, delivered more quickly than is typical through the existing planning system.

Connectivity

12 Our approach is locally led, and we are not setting out any particular locations where we expect new Garden Cities to come forward. However, it is essential new Garden Cities benefit from being located with good access to either existing or planned transport infrastructure to provide connectivity to the rest of the country. Whilst road and rail infrastructure will be key, the inter-city bus network could also be considered as an alternative where locations are poorly served by rail.

Delivery arrangements

13 As complex projects with a life of many years, Garden Cities will need robust delivery arrangements. There are many forms that this could take, from publicly led arm's length companies, public private partnership arrangements such as joint venture companies, or, for the most demanding schemes, statutory bodies such as development corporations, as proposed for Ebbsfleet. We are not prescribing any particular model, but localities should give careful consideration to what the most appropriate delivery arrangements will be for

their scheme, to ensure that the main partners are able to take the key decisions effectively.

Commercial

14 Garden Cities need to be commercially viable during the development phase and beyond. As with the original Garden Cities, proposals need to consider how to draw in private capital and make use of the land value uplift to finance infrastructure.

Land

15 The Government wants to encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value. Expressions of interest which include a significant element of brownfield land will be particularly welcome.

What we can offer schemes

16 We recognise that proposals for new Garden Cities will vary in their needs, and the support required from Government will therefore vary. Different elements of the support package set out below will be relevant depending on the individual circumstances of schemes.

Brokerage

17 We will support schemes by working across Government with the Homes and Communities Agency to co-ordinate key partners and assist sites in overcoming barriers to delivery, including assistance with planning and non-planning consent regimes. This has been instrumental in helping to move some major housing schemes forward – for example, at Kettering, we have brought together Government departments (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Transport, and Department for Business Innovation and Skills), the Homes and Communities Agency, Highways Agency, the Local Enterprise Partnerships, developer and Local Authority into a partnership committed to taking the scheme forward. This has enabled a common understanding between Government and local partners on opportunities to move the scheme forward.

Direct planning support

18 We propose to give successful expressions of interest support from the Advisory Team for Large Applications in the Homes and Communities Agency. This team can assist with the planning and design process including the use of tools such as planning performance agreements, and supporting delivery through the use of new tools such as Local Development Orders, joint plans, or Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedules.

Capacity funding

19 To support the design, planning, and professional costs of developing a scheme to the point of gaining planning consent, the Government will make available a limited amount of funding from within the existing budget of the Department for Communities and Local Government to create the capacity at a local level to support the detailed development and implementation of new proposals. This funding is available in 2014-15 and 2015-16, with further funding subject to review. The capacity funding element of the Local Infrastructure Fund has already demonstrated the impact this can make – at places like Wokingham,

Cranbrook, Bicester and Didcot, capacity funding has enabled localities to put resources in place to drive delivery.

Capital funding

20 Expressions of interest should set out how the applicants plan to finance the development. We would expect expressions of interest to have considered how best to lever in private finance, and make best use of land and assets. Where an initial shortfall in funding is identified but the project appears fundamentally viable, Government will work with local partners to identify private sector funding solutions.

21 This may also include making bids into existing funding programmes, where schemes are sufficiently advanced to do so. The government will facilitate access into the Large Sites Fund, the Custom Build Fund, and the Builders Finance Fund, for schemes which are viable. The profiles, timings and nature of these funding streams are set out below.

Funding streams	Profile	Timing of the fund	Nature
Large Sites Infrastructure Fund	£109m for 2014/15 and £1bn up to 2019/20	A prospectus inviting bids for the 2014/15 tranche of funding was published today. The deadline for receipt of bids is 30 May	Recoverable loans
Local Growth Fund	£2bn per annum from 2015/16 to 2020/21	Localities are encouraged to consider whether investment proposals set out in LEP Strategic Economic Plans could facilitate the development of Garden Cities	Mainly grant funding, some recoverable
Custom Build Fund	£150m from 2014/15 to 2019/20	A prospectus inviting bids for funding will be published over the summer	Recoverable loans
Builders Finance Fund	£150m in 2015/16 £375m in 2016/17	A prospectus inviting bids for funding will be published by the summer	Recoverable loans

Freedoms and flexibilities

22 Localities considering making an expression of interest may wish to consider whether there are freedoms and flexibilities - with no impact on public sector borrowing or debt - which could facilitate the development of new Garden Cities.

You tell us...

23 We also appreciate that different areas may wish to innovate in ways which we have not anticipated. We want to hear about any other ways Government can support delivery of Garden Cities by removing barriers to acquiring land, planning settlements, or attracting private finance.

Forward process

24 Expressions of interest are invited on an ongoing, rolling basis from interested localities, rather than being subject to any fixed deadline. The Government will consider expressions of interest on the basis of fit with the broad criteria above to assess overall deliverability, and will support the strongest proposals in developing their schemes. Decisions on support will be taken on a case by case basis taking into account their their viability and fit with criteria.

25 Localities are also invited, by Friday 29 August this year, to submit their views on the issues and barriers they see in developing Garden City proposals, which will be discussed at a subsequent Local Growth Committee.

26 Expressions of interest, and submissions on issues and barriers, should be made by email to DCLG at locallyledgardencities@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

Expressions of interest

Expressions of interest do not need to be made in a specified format, but should enable the Government to assess proposals against the criteria set out above. They should include:

- A map setting out the proposed site boundary
- A general description of the proposal, including both policy aims and technical aims so far as they can be known (such as including housing numbers, retail and other commercial space, extent of green space, timescale for delivery etc)
- Evidence which demonstrates that the scheme responds to issues of local affordability, and that there is strong growth potential over the medium to long term
- evidence that the chosen location is fundamentally viable over time, and does not give rise to unusually high land or infrastructure costs is
- Evidence of the overall benefits of the scheme
- Financing plan
- Proposed delivery models