

**Smart Growth
UK**

GARDEN TOWNS & VILLAGES

Unwanted, unnecessary and unsustainable

A report by Smart Growth UK
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Contents

- I. **GARDEN TOWNS & VILLAGES**1
- II. **Executive summary** 3
- III. **Introduction**..... 5
- IV. **What are “garden city principles”?** 7
- V. **What are garden towns and garden villages?**.....10
- VI. **Are they new settlements?**13
- VII. **Would they make good use of scarce building land?**.....15
- VIII. **Do they use brownfield land?**.....17
- IX. **Would they have adequate infrastructure?**..... 20
- X. **Would they alleviate housing shortages?** 23
- XI. **Are their proposed transport links sustainable?** 26
- XII. **Are they supported by existing communities?**..... 29
- XIII. **A better way**31
- XIV. **Conclusions** 33
- XV. **Appendix A – West Tey Case Study by C.A.U.S.E.** 34
- XVI. **Appendix B – DCLG-supported Garden Towns and Villages** 36

Executive summary

Government support for the “garden towns” and “garden villages” programme has echoes of New Labour’s “eco towns” programme for creating large-scale developments in the countryside. The 10 garden towns and 14 garden villages supported by DCLG have secured support from their local authorities, but only following the promise of cash for the hard-up councils involved.

The settlements’ developers claim to be pursuing an idealistic vision but, in reality, their developments would simply create new garden suburbs using the very low-densities and greenfield locations garden city principles demand.

DCLG has contradicted its claim to want them to adopt “garden city principles” by saying they need not adopt *any* set of principles. Many are simply existing large greenfield development proposals rebadged with some green-wash rhetoric. At least two are former eco town proposals.

All of the “garden towns” are simple agglomerations of major urban extensions already proposed, in many cases miles apart and lacking any relationship to one another. Only three of the 14 garden villages meet DCLG’s land-hungry requirement that they should be discrete settlements, but several of their promoters admit they hope to add further sprawl, once initial developments are complete.

While most of the proposals are vague about proposed densities, it is clear they will squander scarce building land by using very low densities.

DCLG urged applicants to make good use of brownfield land, but nearly all the approved proposals are mostly or wholly greenfield.

At very best, the programme could generate around 10,000 homes a year, a tiny proportion of the new homes the Government believes are needed. Their location does not respond to those areas most in need of new homes. Most also aim to meet local ambitions for economic growth by including new employment space, but such space is likely to attract new residents to their areas, further reducing their potential to reduce housing shortages.

Their low-densities and rural locations militate against their ability to attract sustainable transport and, despite rhetoric about walking and cycling, the best most can expect is low-frequency bus services. A few are close to railway stations, but proximity to a rail-based *network* is needed to attract significant proportions of residents away from cars. Almost all the approved schemes, however, sit beside or astride major trunk roads or motorways.

Although the developments are supposed to enjoy “community support”, opposition is growing despite the strongly moralistic rhetoric about garden city principles adopted by promoters. But there is nothing ethical about a heavily indebted and densely populated country, which can already only feed just over half its rising population, squandering scarce farmland on low-density housing.

The Smart Growth approach offers a better way to meet the country’s housing need without the acute environmental damage the garden towns and villages programme threatens.

We recommend the Government, devolved administrations and local authorities withdraw support from garden town and garden village developments.

Smart Growth UK

Smart Growth UK is an informal coalition of organisations and individuals who support the Smart Growth approach to planning, transport and regeneration.

The organisations supporting the coalition adopted a set of principles in 2013 to guide future work:-

- Urban areas work best when they are compact, with densities appropriate to local circumstances but generally significantly higher than low-density suburbia and avoiding high-rise. In addition to higher density, layouts are needed that prioritize walking, cycling and public transport so that they become the norm.
- We need to reduce our dependence on private motor vehicles by improving public transport, rail-based where possible, and concentrating development in urban areas.
- We should protect the countryside, farmland, natural beauty, open space, soil and biodiversity, avoiding urban sprawl and out-of-town development.
- We should protect and promote local distinctiveness and character and our heritage, respecting and making best use of historic buildings, street forms and settlement patterns.
- We should prioritize regeneration in urban areas and regions where it is needed, emphasising brownfield-first and promoting town centres with a healthy mix of facilities.
- Civic involvement and local economic activity improve the health of communities.



Introduction

“Garden towns” and “garden villages” represent a fresh attempt by the Government to gain public acceptance for major new residential settlements. They are supposed to revive the spirit of the garden city movement, but have actually revived unhappy memories of other attempts to create new settlements in the countryside, most recently New Labour’s fruitless “eco towns” initiative.

In March 2016, following the Budget, the Department for Communities & Local Government published a paper¹, *Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities* calling for expressions of interest in garden villages of 1,500 to 10,000 homes and garden towns and cities of more than 10,000 homes. It was already supporting such developments at Ebbsfleet, Bicester, Basingstoke, Didcot, north Northamptonshire and north Essex.

The Government insists it will only support garden towns and villages that are “locally led” but it appears that only means that the projects DCLG is supporting have followed expressions of interest from local authorities. In December 2015, DCLG announced² the “garden towns” at Didcot and in north Essex would be supported with £1.1 million of public funds. In November 2016, the Department gave £1.5 million to Basingstoke, Bicester, Didcot, north Essex and north Northamptonshire and approved a new garden town at Otterpool Park. Then, in January 2017, DCLG announced it had approved 14 garden villages and three further garden towns with access to £6 million of public money. The projects will also have access to a share in the £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund.

English councils are now desperately short of funds but are also being forced to allocate land for massive and unsustainable house building and to pay for it to be planned, so expecting them to stand out against significant Government funding for garden settlements is a forlorn hope. Perhaps “locally induced” might be a better description.

Many developers, not just those supported by DCLG, are applying the term “garden village” to any bit of low-density, greenfield development. In a sense all such developments, even those not so called, share a common “garden suburb” heritage which, in essence, is simply car-dependent sprawl with a bit of green-wash applied. But the Government-supported garden towns and villages, while typical of this form of development, come laden with all self-applied moral authority of the garden city movement. Their claims to moral superiority are, however, at odds with reality.

What they say...

“The primary asks of Mid Devon District Council relate to... (a) a request for £690,000 to build capacity within the Council to expedite the master planning, application and development process. This includes being able to commission the detailed designed work for the Cullompton town centre relief road and modifications to Junction 28.”

Mid Devon District Council’s Culm expression of interest

“The announcement that Brentwood Borough Council’s application for initial funding from the Government’s Garden Village Scheme has been successful, means Dunton Hills Garden Village will have access to part of the £6 million allocated to develop new communities and garden villages countrywide.”

Brentwood Borough Council press release

“The proposal for Dunton Hills Garden Village can deliver... approximately £35 million in Council Tax and New Homes Bonus which is Government funds given to local authorities to pay for additional infrastructure in areas where new homes are built.”

Dunton Hills website

“The backing of Government brings with it access to part of a £6 million fund over the next two financial years to support the delivery of this new opportunity.”

Runnymede Borough Council website

What are “garden city principles”?

The original garden city principles were formulated by Ebenezer Howard around the turn of the last century. Howard specified that his new garden city would be a carefully planned new settlement of around 50,000 people on a greenfield site remote from existing development and would have satellite towns of around 30,000 people built nearby. It would enjoy a communitarian system of economy and governance and, although the housing would be cottages with small gardens, the “garden” principle applied mainly to large areas of landscaping. His design also anticipated the development of shopping malls and ring roads. Only two garden cities were built in the UK and Howard’s communitarian principles never got very far, but the spatial principles, greatly expanded, underpinned much of the post-war new towns programme.

What the garden city movement did generate, however (to Howard’s impatience), was the garden suburb movement. Its vision of low-density suburban sprawl, so perfectly suited to the era of mass car ownership, became the default for major areas of new housing throughout the rest of the 20th century and remains so today.

A key element of garden suburbs, specified by their leading early advocate Raymond Unwin, was low residential density which his 1912 pamphlet *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding*⁹ laid down as a fundamental principle. Howard was a visionary, but his disciple Unwin was a more practical man whose lobbying helped low-density become the default mode for new developments after the Great War. His insistence that “12 homes to the acre” (about 30 per hectare) should be the *maximum* density of development exacerbated the hypersprawl of the inter-war years and scarce building land continues to be squandered in support of this low-density paradigm to this day.

Promoters claim low residential densities mean generous open space, but much of the wastage comes from the garden city style of road layouts, with extensive grass verge landscaping and ornamental trees, superficially pretty to look at, but ecologically near-worthless. They waste land on the grand scale but developers favour this as low-density development is usually the most profitable.

This garden suburb approach is highly unsustainable as it destroys greenfield land, squanders scarce building land and increases our already dangerously high greenhouse gas emissions thanks to its inevitable car dependency. It does, however, underpin the proposed development of garden towns and villages and is the most environmentally destructive way of providing housing.

Garden cities and why West Tey isn't one



GARDEN CITY CHECKLIST	West Tey reality
In a Garden City, land value capture should benefit the community.	West Tey will be a new town for newcomers. We need a Local Plan for local people, not a vanity project.
Strong vision, leadership & community engagement are key.	Local people are being told what is best for them and their views are being ignored time and time again.
Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets is vital.	Local communities are not represented on the delivery company's board. Land-owners and councils stitch up the ownership.
Garden Cities offer mixed and affordable housing types.	Colchester has reduced its affordable homes target and West Tey will attract Londoners. Will local people be able to afford to live there?
A Garden City offers a wide range of local jobs within easy reach of homes.	A new town at Marks Tey will encourage commuting. What is the vision for employment?
Garden City homes are beautifully and imaginatively designed, combining the best of town and country.	Easy promises but the cost assumptions in the council's financial modelling will not allow quality housing.
Integrated and accessible walking, cycling and public transport are key in a Garden City.	17,000 homes means 24,000 cars and as many as 10,000 rail commuters! Our councils need to think beyond West Tey itself to the impact on the Borough and beyond.

Source: Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex

Many of the proposals, however, are decidedly vague about what garden city or suburb principles actually are. Basildon and Brentwood say⁴ “the principles relate to the design of the suburb such as making sure it is laid out so that it provides high-quality housing of different tenures (for sale, to rent, social, shared ownership, self-build, etc.), industry buildings and local facilities within easy reach of open spaces and transport networks”.

Carlisle’s St Cuthberts proposal⁵ says the principles include “quality design, cutting edge technology, accessible and attractive networks of green space and a high quality and distinctive public realm”.

But all these qualities are things routinely expected of any major development.



Garden cities are essentially car-dependent towns

Source: Smart Growth UK

What they say...

“The name ‘garden town’ comes from the garden city movement of urban planning, created back in the 19th and early 20th century. The concept was all about well-planned, sustainable towns – and this still applies today.”

Aylesbury Vale District Council website

“Garden towns are even more relevant today than when they were first introduced more than 100 years ago, precisely because of their contribution to the environment combined with sustainable growth.”

Taunton Deane Borough Council press release

What are garden towns and garden villages?

The June 2016 prospectus was a little unclear about this. In just two paragraphs, DCLG confirmed there would be no single template but claimed they would have “a clear and distinct sense of identity”. They would demonstrate “innovative approaches and solutions” rather than following a set of rules, and DCLG warned against using “garden” as a convenient label. The developments would, said the Department, embed key garden city principles to develop communities that stand out from the ordinary, although it then contradicted this by saying it did not want to impose a set of development principles on local areas.

The new garden housing estates will, therefore, have to adopt garden city principles, but will not be forced to adopt *any* set of principles.

The programme has rekindled memories of New Labour’s “eco towns” initiative in 2007 when DCLG ran a competition to build up to 10 of the new settlements. It received over 50 bids, but it quickly became apparent that many were simply existing proposals, some of them already rejected, with the dust blown off and a bit of green-wash applied. Eventually a short-list was approved which did not include the two proposals at sustainable urban locations and chose instead mostly rural sites, some of them at remote locations. Analysis of the sites showed the Government was trying to unload some unwanted former airfields and ordnance depots and that most of the sites were mostly or totally greenfield. Public transport links were poor or non-existent for the most part and the proposals provoked heavy local opposition.

Only four sites were ever approved and although some development followed, none was completed. At least two, West Carclaze in Cornwall and Long Marston in Warwickshire, have however now metamorphosed into garden villages.

DCLG’s prospectus, while eschewing rigid requirements, did specify that a garden village:-

- would have 1,500 to 10,000 homes;
- must be a discrete settlement, not an extension of an existing town or village (although a few existing homes would be allowed);
- would follow a local authority “expression of interest”, although expressions of support from developers and land owners were allowed.

Garden towns may also confusingly be called “garden cities” or “garden communities” and are expected to have:-

- at least 10,000 homes;
- new sites, or be “transformational developments, both in nature or in scale to an existing settlement”;

- local authority “expressions of interest”, although expressions of support from developers and land owners were allowed.

Both, it was stressed, should meet housing need locally, be “viable and deliverable”, possibly use brownfield land, employ good design and innovations, include “starter homes”, support SME builders where possible and have clearly assessed infrastructure needs. They would also need the backing of the local enterprise partnerships and local authorities in their area.

To ensure that financially challenged councils came on board whether they liked the idea or not, a “tailored package of support” was promised through 2016 to 2018 and possibly beyond.

“Inclusion within the programme brings access to tailored technical guidance and support, access to funding and wider expertise, priority access to relevant funding where proven to add value or address identified funding gaps, planning freedoms, brokerage across Government departments to reduce delays and internal processes down the line and access to a network to share best practise [sic] to better understand and aid innovation.”⁶

Millions of pounds have since been made available to councils willing to promote garden towns and villages. Most of the proposals already existed before the prospectus was published and many of the garden villages are simply greenfield extensions to existing communities, virtually none meeting the requirement that they should be discrete settlements. Most of the garden towns, meanwhile, are simply aggregations of the urban extensions councils are proposing in local plans. They are only “transformational developments” in the sense they would make the towns much larger.

In England, DCLG has so far approved eight garden towns and 14 garden villages. Beyond those approved by DCLG, however, numerous developers are describing many low-density greenfield developments as “garden villages”. Wales has a “garden town” called Plasdwr on farmland outside Cardiff.

What they say...

“The settlement is an opportunity to build on the Garden Cities pioneering spirit.”

Lighthorne Heath expression of interest

“Model villages and garden cities represent a significant milestone in urbanism history.”

Lighthorne Heath expression of interest

Any developer can, apparently, dub their development a garden village. There is little to distinguish them from the mass of mediocre large greenfield developments apart from some rhetorical green-wash; indeed there is little to distinguish many from those approved by DCLG. One, Lighthorne Heath in Warwickshire – 3,000 homes on 249ha of farmland beside Junction 12 of the M40 – not only claims⁷ to be embodying the principles of the garden city movement, but also those of the urbanist movement which are directly at odds with them.

Land-owners on the band-wagon?

In north Essex, it would seem that every major land-owner is leaping onto the “garden communities” bandwagon. Three are garden cities are under consideration with Government backing. A fourth, 15,000-home “Monks Wood”, centred on the hamlet of Pattiswick, was thrown into the pot late in the game, i.e. as the preferred options consultation closed, thus avoiding public scrutiny.

The DCLG rejected the Monks Wood pitch by land promoters Lightwood on the basis that Monks Wood had no “local support”. There was no local authority support for the proposal, nor do residents support it. Undeterred by this rejection, Lightwood is promoting it as “the Poundbury of north Essex”. Early indications suggest that Monks Wood has few similarities with Poundbury. It will be a sprawling, stand-alone town on rolling farmland accessed by narrow country lanes from a congested, single-carriageway trunk road. It is far from jobs, far from urban services and far from public transport. Cycling and walking to nearby urban centres? Not a chance.



No planner in his or her right mind would choose Pattiswick, an unspoilt rural area, as the location for significant development. Yet, because of the obsession with garden communities as the solution to the “housing crisis”, this proposal is being taken seriously. It's the “garden community” label which prevents it from being thrown straight in



the bin, and it represents another example of failure of the planning system to plan for properly connected places, with infrastructure first in the right place, rather than responding to land owner proposals in the wrong place.

Contributors: **Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex** and **Residents of Pattiswick**
<http://www.cause4livingessex.com/>

Are they new settlements?

According to DCLG, garden towns are supposed to be “on a new site away from existing settlements, or take the form of transformational development, both in nature or in scale to an existing settlement”⁸. None of the 10 approved by DCLG is on a wholly new site, with the possible exception of Ebbsfleet which lies across four sites, all contiguous with existing development. The other garden towns appear simply to be one or more urban extensions (in some cases miles apart) simply bundled together and dubbed a “garden town”. The north Northamptonshire urban extensions are so far apart they are simply dubbed the “North Northamptonshire Garden Communities”, though it is difficult to identify what is meant by community here. Similarly, DCLG requires that a garden village “must be a new discrete settlement, and not an extension of an existing town or village. This does not exclude proposals where there are already a few existing homes.”⁹ The only ones that could plausibly be said to meet this requirement are Deenethorpe, Longcross, Long Marston and West Carclaze. The rest are urban extensions and do not, therefore, meet the DCLG criteria. Despite this, the Welborne website claims: “Welborne Garden Village will be a distinct new community set apart from, but connected to, Fareham”.

Garden towns and villages are often promoted as one-offs, a once-and-for-all stand-alone settlement surrounded by its own little green belt (the destructive, land-hungry vision that Ebenezer Howard proposed). But all too often they represent the thin end of the wedge. Just as the new towns sprawled and have grown hugely since their original plans were formulated, so the garden towns and villages would grow beyond the level so far admitted. As Brentwood Borough Council said¹⁰ when “Dunton Hills” won DCLG backing: “Proposals for a new garden village, housing up to 2,500 new homes, with the possibility of further housing being built in future decades...” Lancaster City Council proposes 3,000 homes at Bailrigg, but talks of ultimately 5,000 or more. The *North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy*¹¹ warns: “the identified sustainable urban extensions have potential to continue to grow beyond 2031”.

What they say...

“The Garden Town is Aylesbury - no new town will be constructed.”

Aylesbury Vale District Council website

“Development will centre on urban extensions already identified - Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrove/Trull and Staplegrove.”

Taunton Deane Borough Council press release

“Bailrigg Garden Village abuts the narrow southern boundary of the city of Lancaster.”

Lancaster City Council’s Bailrigg expression of interest

E.P.I.C.'s objection to "Oxfordshire Cotswold Garden Village"



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Among the Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign's objections to the proposed development is that it would fail to deliver on the basic Government requirement for a "garden village", which is that it should be a stand-alone settlement.

The proposal was put together hastily, without any local consultation whatsoever. It has not been thought through in sufficient detail, and ignores the real situation on the ground.



It is basically unachievable. A smaller, better balanced, better integrated development of the existing, thriving community of Eynsham is a much preferable strategy for this area.

Contributor: Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign
<http://eynsham.me.uk/>

Would they make good use of scarce building land?

Most of the proposals are a little vague about their proposed residential densities, but very low or ultra-low densities have always been a feature of development based on garden city principles. For decades the maximum was assumed to be “12 to the acre” (30 dwellings per hectare or dph) limit specified by Raymond Unwin in 1912 and adopted as a standard after the Great War.

Very low densities are confirmed by the north Essex proposal which stipulates “average residential density 30 dwellings per hectare – allows for walkable environments and can support public transport”¹². This is disingenuous. 30dph is about the lowest density which can support a low-frequency bus service without substantial subsidy, whereas new rail-based transit requires much higher densities to be viable. 60-100 dwellings per hectare is the minimum likely to generate a “city of short distances” where walking and cycling make up most short journeys.



Low densities ensure maximum destruction of farmland

Source: Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex

The sort of very low densities typical of garden suburb type developments, however, deter walking by putting many residents at significant distances from services. There is no reason to suppose any of the garden towns or villages are planning much in the way of denser development than this and many will be proposing even lower densities.

Objectors to large-scale greenfield developments sometimes complain the proposals' densities are too high for a rural environment, even when they are not particularly high at all. But if they are right, and only low-density is appropriate on greenfield sites, that's not a reason for building at low densities; it's a reason not to build on such sites at all. Most parts of the UK where there is pressure for house building are already densely populated (England is Europe's most densely populated country) and squandering land on low-density housing should no longer be an option, anywhere (except occasionally for very small developments at particularly sensitive locations).

The housing white paper¹³ does, however, admit that some current development at least is not making good use of building land and says the Government intends to amend the *National Planning Policy Framework*. It proposes "to make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing requirements".

All the garden town and village proposals claim to be helping to meet local housing requirements which are not being met by current availability of land. So the low densities dictated by the garden city principles would therefore suggest they cannot meet the Government's requirements in this respect.



Garden suburb type layouts squander land on pointless landscaping

Source: Smart Growth UK

What they say...

“Average residential density 30 dwellings per hectare (dph)- allows for walkable environments and can support public transport.”

North Essex Garden Communities Concept Feasibility Study

Do they use brownfield land?

DCLG's *Locally Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities*¹⁴ prospectus includes maximizing use of brownfield land as one of the Government's objectives for housing and it says "we encourage expressions of interest which make effective use of previously developed land (brownfield land)".

In a large majority of cases, however, the DCLG-approved schemes are predominantly or wholly greenfield.



The garden towns and villages would overwhelmingly be sited on greenfield land

Source: **Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex**

As the *North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy*¹⁵ says: "the supply of suitable previously developed land is limited compared to the identified housing requirements. The delivery of the Plan is therefore largely reliant upon the timely delivery of the sustainable urban extensions and other strategic housing sites". Government policy to encourage brownfield reuse does not yet, however, include regional policies directing growth to regions where brownfield land is plentiful.

It is evident that some planning authorities are susceptible to strong economic and political temptations to apply the term "brownfield" to sites that fail to meet the official definition of it, or of "previously developed land". Brownfield is even applied to sites which any normal observer would fail to identify as such, being land in agricultural or other green uses.

The definition of previously developed land in the *National Planning Policy Framework Glossary* explicitly excludes land that was once developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape in the process of time. A change was also made to the definition of brownfield land in 2010 to explicitly exclude gardens.

A feature of the eco town proposals was claims by developers that sites like disused airfields, ordnance depots and hospitals were "brownfield". Certainly buildings or hard standings on such

sites should be considered brownfield, but much of the land on these sites has never been developed and even some parts that were once developed have blended back into the landscape. In the case of airfields, most of the site would always have been grassland which has never been developed

East Northamptonshire District Council's Planning Policy Committee, for instance, was told in 2014 that "Deenethorpe Airfield is a major brownfield site, currently occupied by aviation uses and open storage"¹⁶, even though Deene and Deenethorpe Parish Council had queried the designation the year before. The *North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031*¹⁷, adopted in July 2016, says it "contains extensive areas of previously developed land including parts of the main runway from the WWII USAAF bomber base". Parts of the site were previously developed and one runway and a few buildings remain, but most of it was always grassland and some developed parts have long been turned over to agriculture, including two of the runways.

R.A.I.D.'s objections to "Dunton Hills"

Our campaign group, Basildon Residents Against Inappropriate Development, was formed at the beginning of 2015 when Basildon and Brentwood proposed a development of up to 6,000 homes on an area of green belt adjoining the west of Basildon.

Our main objections to the development are:-

- the location is in a critical stretch of green belt keeping urban areas from Basildon to Southend separated from London;
- it is an important wildlife corridor with a landscape that has not changed for centuries, including areas of ancient woodland and a local wildlife site with protected habitats;
- the A127 which runs past the site is already over capacity and in a rundown state. The large funds required to widen it are well beyond what the new development can provide.

Basildon pulled out of its half but Brentwood now proposes a "garden village" of 3,500 homes there. They have made it clear that they want to concentrate most of their new housing and traveller sites in this corner of their borough next to Basildon to protect their own towns and villages from development. This is despite them receiving the benefit of several billion pounds in infrastructure funding for the A12 and Crossrail further North.

Contributor: **Basildon Residents Against Inappropriate Development**

<http://raid.org.uk/>



Few of the developers plan to make significant use of brownfield land

Source: **Inform Fareham**

What they say...

“The majority of land is currently used for agriculture or grazing with scattered rural housing.”

Basildon Borough Council’s Dunton Garden Suburb FAQ

“Halsnead is a 174ha site strategically located on the eastern side of the Tarbock Island Interchange where the M62 meets the M57. The site comprises the former Halsnead Park Estate and has an attractive gently undulating topography with areas of substantial woodland and water bodies. There are panoramic views across the Mersey Valley.”

Knowsley Borough Council’s draft Halsnead supplementary planning document

“The site is primarily greenfield with the vast majority of it currently being used for agriculture.”

West Oxfordshire Garden Village expression of interest

Would they have adequate infrastructure?

Any major new development will require provision of significant new infrastructure: utilities, wastewater, drainage, flood control, public transport, roads, lighting, education, healthcare etc.. This is unavoidable.

The form of development that requires the least such investment is development within an existing conurbation because it can utilize much of the existing infrastructure in all these fields. Indeed, by helping things like repopulating under-subscribed schools, it can actually improve the economic viability of the facility. This is one of the strong arguments in favour of the Smart Growth approach.

More demanding in infrastructure terms is the urban extension which will require most of it to be newly provided. And worst of all is the new settlement which will inevitably require investment to procure almost 100% of its infrastructure from scratch.

Most of the DCLG-approved garden towns and garden villages are urban extensions, while three of the garden villages can claim to be new settlements. They all, therefore, would place demands on infrastructure which, under current arrangements, would only be met to a limited extent by the developers profiting from these developments. The bulk of it would fall on the public purse or not be provided at all, placing intolerable strains on existing infrastructure.

One of the big constraints on accelerating provision of housing is lack of infrastructure and the present system is plainly incapable of overcoming this. Despite the existence of things like the community infrastructure levy and Section 106, developers are failing to pay for more than a small percentage of the infrastructure their developments need. Often developments proceed without sufficient infrastructure being provided, placing unacceptable pressure on local healthcare, education, transport, drainage etc.

Writing recently, Housing & Finance Institute chief executive Natalie Elphicke said¹⁸ research carried out by the Institute had shown that house building is being slowed where utilities are not provided in a timely fashion and some sites had been stalled indefinitely where costs asked for were prohibitive. Further analysis showed the problem was particularly acute in South East England and goes far beyond utilities. A pilot study in Essex, Kent and East Sussex, supported by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the Home Builders' Federation, confirmed lack of infrastructure is holding back building and some homes are being lost for good. Where public bodies did provide funding was mostly on larger sites, despite the fact that smaller sites account for the majority of homes built.

Larger developments like garden towns and villages are, therefore, are placing the heaviest demands on infrastructure, being urban extensions or new settlements and involving very large numbers of

homes. And much of this unnecessary cost is falling on the public purse, despite the fact they are essentially private investments seeking commercial returns.

Evidence from garden town and village developments supports this. The consortium developing the Comeytrove urban extension as part of the Taunton Garden Town proposals has reportedly told Taunton Deane Borough Council¹⁹ that the demand that a quarter of the homes should be affordable is not financially viable because “the site is subject to significant infrastructure and cost burdens”. The developers also wanted to discuss requirements for a primary school, flood alleviation and road works.

And this affects garden villages too. North of Swindon is planned the strangely named Tadpole Garden Village which, although not DCLG-approved, would add a further 500 homes to other recent greenfield urban extensions. The local primary school is full and no new facilities are planned.

A key element of the Smart Growth approach is transit-oriented-development, one aspect of which demands that new rail-based transit is built and operating by the time any major housing development is completed. But this should be true of all the infrastructure that major developments require, wherever they are, and which cannot be paid for commercially. Urban extensions and new settlements place unacceptably heavy demands on our infrastructure and are plainly unwilling to pay for it out of their commercial returns.

CAUSE's vision for North Essex

CAUSE (the Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex) is supportive of Smart Growth UK's positive approach to sustainable planning and the emphasis on compact and accessible urban communities and reduced car dependency. We do not oppose garden city principles *per se* but believe it is important to recognise that scale, location, and connectivity are all crucial for success. We would not, for example, oppose a compact “garden community” built on brownfield land, adjacent to an urban area with jobs, which fully meets garden city criteria and with infrastructure in place first. However, we do have concerns about the deliverability of infrastructure and of garden city promises. We see a very real risk that “garden community” becomes synonymous with unpopular, car dependent sprawl on greenfield land, delivered without the necessary infrastructure.

CAUSE believes that planning can be more than a zero-sum game. Too many communities concentrate on their own interests and as a result there is rarely debate about where housing should go. CAUSE has a set of principles which are relevant to a wider vision for North Essex and elsewhere.

First and foremost, it is important to build for the local economy and not for London. We know that commuting will continue to grow but we think that sensible long term planning can tilt the playing field slightly in favour of the local economy.

Simply zoning land for employment does not necessarily work – jobs don't just grow on trees. Jobs come from real people and real businesses built up around some sort of focus. In north Essex, we have two credible growth nodes – around the fast-growing University of Essex and Knowledge Gateway in the east and Stansted in the west. We should ensure that housing is located to favour these locations, rather than commuting to London.

Secondly, existing infrastructure should be used wisely. Economist and urban designer, Nicholas Falk, who has advised CAUSE, points out that new settlements have been difficult to get off the ground in the UK due to the high cost of providing full infrastructure. He argues that it is better to link them to existing settlements and that transit systems should be designed before the settlements are built, not as an afterthought.

This thinking makes sense in north Essex where the over-crowded main line to London will be very expensive to expand. Meanwhile, there is an underused line between Colchester and Clacton which passes close to the university. This is already dual tracked and electrified and would cost in the order of £1 billion to build from scratch. Only modest investment would be required to convert it in to a Metro line linking the communities along it with frequent trains. This transit-oriented approach will be much less costly and more deliverable than the new mass rapid transit systems being promised as part of the garden communities project.

Much of Tendring and Colchester's proposed growth is along the Colchester-Clacton line but unfortunately both councils are ignoring the opportunity for modal shift onto rail. There is scope for a new station at the fast-growing University, with its expanding Knowledge Gateway, and this would connect into the proposed East of Colchester Garden Community. Our councils continue to ignore the £1 billion infrastructure asset on their door-step, while aiming to borrow billions of pounds to build the infrastructure needed for brand new garden communities.

Contributor: **Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex**
<http://www.cause4livingessex.com/>

Would they alleviate housing shortages?

There are three reasons why the approved garden towns and villages would make little contribution to alleviating housing shortages, even where a proportion of “affordable” housing is included.

1. They would only make a very small contribution to the number of new homes the Government believes necessary. Announcing three more garden towns and 14 garden villages in January 2017, housing and planning minister Gavin Barwell said²⁰ they could provide almost 200,000 homes. But as this would spread over a period of up to 20 years, there is plainly little prospect of them generating much more than 10,000 new homes a year, under 5% of what the Government believes is necessary. Given the much higher infrastructural needs and land costs of such greenfield development, they could even actually reduce the overall number of homes built.

2. The location of the approved garden towns and villages does not directly respond to those areas in greatest housing need. An analysis of the approved sites by planning consultant Turley²¹ demonstrated they meet a relatively limited proportion of their areas’ housing need, their location was not influenced by reference to affordability and there is limited evidence they will deliver a rapid number of completions. “It is noteworthy that only one of the new garden settlements announced is located in a local authority which is within the top 10% of growing authorities nationally, as measured by the household projections,” says the analysis. “This finding suggests that the location of garden settlements does not necessarily respond to those areas in greatest housing need.”

This is confirmed by Lancaster’s expression of interest²² for Bailrigg which cited other work by Turley complaining that Lancaster has low levels of natural population growth, low levels of inward migration and outward migration by “hidden households”.

3. Most garden settlement proposals say they would not just be “dormitory developments” but would also include new employment opportunities. Normally, of course, a good mix of uses is an essential feature of place-making for major developments and part of the Smart Growth approach. But there is a contradiction here; parts of the country are indeed short of housing but have relatively full employment while other regions have little need for new housing but a great need for new jobs.

The garden settlements are large, destructive greenfield developments, so the normal rules should not apply. Most garden towns and villages are advocated by their supposed ability to alleviate housing shortages. But new employment sites need new employees and new employees need somewhere to live, simply increasing pressure on local housing demand. Including major employment space would actually reduce or even eliminate their contribution to improving housing availability

For example, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership CEO Nigel Tipple said²³ of Didcot Garden Town: “The Garden Town is exactly the sort of initiative the LEP is looking for – only by properly resourcing housing and infrastructure, can we continue to attract the high end, knowledge economy jobs that Oxfordshire is famed for.” South Oxfordshire leader John Cotton responded²⁴: “By successfully applying for Garden Town status, we’re helping to support the new families moving to Didcot, but we’re also making sure the people already there continue to benefit from investment in the town.”

This lies at the heart of this contradiction. Would Didcot Garden Town help support economic growth by housing employees moving to new jobs there? Or would it alleviate local housing shortages? Despite this obvious contradiction many, or indeed most, of the garden town or village proposals in areas of housing stress their contribution to accommodating local business growth.

Conversely, a couple of the garden villages – Bailrigg and St Cuthberts – are in areas of low housing demand and relatively low economic activity yet still propose substantial increases in local housing which would further depress local markets.

Gavin Barwell’s claim²⁵ that “locally-led garden towns and villages have enormous potential to deliver the homes that communities need” is therefore unsupportable. Most, if not all, include plans for new employment space, so communities expecting the ratio of housing to local employee numbers to improve face serious disappointment.



New businesses need new employees who, in turn, increase pressure on local housing

Source: © [Peter Facey](#) and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

What they say...

“The provision of land for employment related opportunities and the creation of new jobs are central principles to the development of Otterpool Park Garden Town.”

Otterpool Park Garden Town website

“It is clear that the Greater Exeter area will need more sustainable locations to accommodate the levels of economic growth that is envisaged and the housing needs that are likely to be generated.”

Mid Devon District Council’s Culm expression of interest

“The eight strategic objectives for the development of Halsnead are to... (7) create significant new employment development at a strategic location adjacent to the intersection of the M62 and M57, meeting market demand for distribution and logistics space or other appropriate employment uses within the Liverpool City Region key economic sectors.”

Knowsley Borough Council’s draft Halsnead supplementary planning document

“The current preferred approach proposals for Longcross, consulted on as part of the local plan, include approximately 1,500 homes and over 850,000 square feet of new commercial floorspace.”

Runnymede Borough Council website

“A key element of our proposal is the development of a high quality, landscaped, campus-style ‘science park’ to be developed over a period of several years and acting as a magnet for inward investment as well as providing expansion opportunities for existing businesses.”

West Oxfordshire District Council expression of interest

“Work undertaken by Turley Associates to provide the evidence base for Lancaster District’s emerging local plan 2013-2031 highlights... low levels of natural population growth.”

Lancaster City Council’s Bailrigg expression of interest

“With Bicester’s population set to almost double by 2031, it is important there are not just the homes to accommodate people, but the jobs as well.”

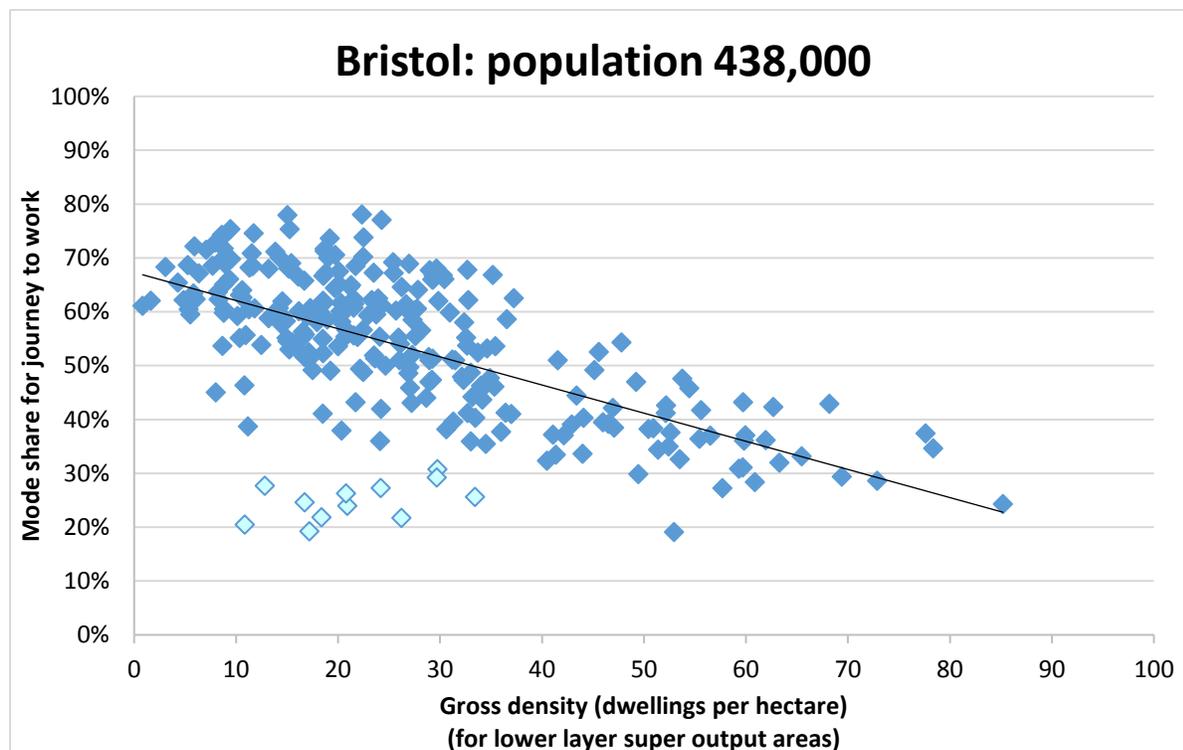
Growing Bicester website

Are their proposed transport links sustainable?

Large-scale, low-density development starts with an inevitable handicap in providing sustainable transport. Most garden town and village prospectuses lay great stress on their plans to encourage walking and cycling but, of course, virtually any form of modern development allows walking and cycling, with one exception. The residential layout which strongly militates against both forms of active travel is the cul-de-sac which imposes long, circuitous and daunting journeys on walkers and cyclists but they remains as popular as ever with garden suburb type developments which are inevitably car-dependent.

What we should be aiming at is development that reduces the *need* to drive and so reduce our impact on the climate. Recent estimates suggest we now need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions from transport by 92% by 2050 to avoid potentially catastrophic climate change. We can help achieve this by keeping the things we need to visit like shops, schools, healthcare and other services within easy reach by walking, cycling or public transport. But many studies have shown that higher residential densities than the ultra-low garden suburb paradigm are needed to improve the way we travel.²⁶ This doesn't mean cramming ourselves into high-rise flats. Our Victorian and Edwardian ancestors built attractive houses at three or four times the densities of garden cities.

Car use relationship to density



Source: Census 2011 (Norris). © Transport for Quality of Life

Note: Output areas are drawn to cover all land area, so in cases where high net density housing is combined in a single output area with significant areas of open space the gross density appears much lower. For this reason, the light blue squares should be viewed with caution, and probably do not represent genuine deviations from the overall trend.

A few of the garden towns and villages are close to, or surround, railway stations. Others have one some distance away, though parts of the site would be much more distant and well beyond the distance people are normally prepared to walk. However, research has shown²⁷ that even where a development is served by a single railway station, a high proportion of residents' journeys will be made by car. A single railway line is unlikely to meet the majority of travel patterns of a two or three car family and may only be used for a single journey to work, if that.

For the most part, however, the garden towns and villages are close to, or bestride, motorways or trunk roads: Aylesbury (A41), Basingstoke (M3 and A33), Bicester (M40, A 34 and A41), Didcot (A34), Ebbsfleet (A2), Harlow & Gilston (M11 and A414), north Essex (A12 and A120), north Northamptonshire (A6, A14, A43, A45, A427, A509 and A6116), Otterpool (M20), Taunton (M5 and A358), Bailrigg (M6 bisects site), Culm (M5), Deenethorpe (A43), Dunton Hills (M25 and A127), Halsnead (beside M57/M62/A5300 junction and astride M62), Infinity (A50), Longcross (astride M3), Long Marston (five miles from A46 and A429), North Cheshire (A34 and A555), Oxfordshire Cotswold (A40 and A44), St Cuthberts (M6 and A595), Spitalgate (A1 and A52), Welborne (M27) and West Carclaze (A390).

Only Long Marston could be said to be less than advantageously placed to allow residents access to the trunk road network and most lie alongside or astride motorways or major routes. For a large majority of journeys, residents will find using the car very much easier than using sustainable modes of transport.



Garden towns and villages would generate traffic, cause congestion and increase emissions

Source: Inform Fareham

While promoters are keen to stress that their residents will be able to walk, cycling or use the bus, many clearly expect that a large number, or a majority, of residents will actually commute by car.

What they say...

“With new dualled roads like the A43, Priors Hall Park is well connected to all major road networks – making the commute to work a breeze not a bind. Within 30 minutes of leaving The Park you can be on the M1 heading south to London or north to Sheffield, York etc. Or pop across to Birmingham and the Midlands with easy access to the M6.”

Priors Hall (Corby) website

“Towns often sprawl out haphazardly, with bolt-on neighbourhoods that fill the green spaces and get further and further away from the town centre. More people need a car to get to work or to the shops, the roads get congested, and the bus routes can’t take the strain. It’s a stressful, expensive and environmentally-damaging way for a town to grow. We’re doing it differently”

North West Bicester website

“The creation of a garden village enables a critical mass of development to be promoted which addresses these challenges by... facilitating growth along the congested A6 Corridor by the construction of a major junction redesign to M6 Junction 33, including potential new northern slips relocated close to the Lancaster University.”

Lancaster City Council’s Bailrigg expression of interest

“One of the key benefits of garden village status is that it will assist in delivering urgently needed infrastructure for Cullompton. We propose to prioritise any government financial support to highway improvements including the town centre relief road and M5 J28 improvements...”

Mid Devon District Council website

“The primary asks of Mid Devon District Council relate to... (c) access to a loan facility to enable modifications to Junction 28 of the M5 and provision of a town centre relief road as a necessary package of highway improvement measures. The estimated cost of the Junction 28 improvements is around £40m, of which land value capture for 5,000 homes can contribute fully over time, paying back into a revolving infrastructure fund.”

Mid Devon District Council’s Culm expression of interest

“Halsnead is highly accessible to the strategic highway network (M62, M57 and A5300). Highways surround the land on all sides offering opportunities for vehicular access to serve development north and south of the motorway. It lies within a 20 minute drive-time to the east of Liverpool City Centre and 35 minute drive-time to the west of Manchester City Centre.”

Knowsley Borough Council’s draft Halsnead supplementary planning document

Are they supported by existing communities?

The garden towns and villages have not – yet – attracted quite the level of opposition stirred up by the eco towns programme, despite simply reviving those failed schemes in a couple of cases. But opposition is growing fast as communities appreciate what their localities face.

One reason for hesitation is the strong moral tone adopted by promoters, a feature of garden city type developments ever since the movement was founded by Ebenezer Howard.

But there is nothing ethical about promoting unsustainable development. A heavily indebted country with a growing population in an uncertain world which produces little more than half the food it eats cannot afford to squander its farmland on low-density living. A world which is facing runaway climate change cannot afford development which is car-dependent. These, surely, are the real moral issues.



Once it's gone, it's gone

Source: Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex

What they say...

“The events generated largely positive feedback specifically around the regeneration benefits for Harlow, the village structure, the ethos of Places for People, the level of investment in infrastructure and the proactive efforts made to engage with the wider public.”

Gilston Park Estate website

“STOP Harlow North is a group of residents from close-by villages and towns, actively supported and endorsed by their relevant parish / town councils, which believes these proposals are completely unsustainable and which, if allowed to proceed, would have an overwhelming negative impact on the quality of life in those villages and towns.”

Stop Harlow North website

“In partnership with the local community, Otterpool Park will provide the homes and jobs that will enable future generations to remain in the area in which they were raised, and the necessary amenities and services to support the residents, as well as bringing increased economic benefits to Shepway’s wider communities.”

Otterpool Park website

“The ongoing lack of honesty and transparency from our local Council cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. Another public protest is scheduled for 22nd April in Hythe - more details to be confirmed. It is vitally important that anyone who objects to the way the Council are riding roughshod over local residents comes along, so we can make our voices heard.”

No Otterpool New Town

“Brentwood Borough Council did not write to all residents in West Horndon. As with Basildon Borough Council’s approach, it wrote a letter or email to anybody or organisation who had electively registered on its Local Plan consultation database.”

Basildon Council Dunton Garden Suburb FAQs

“It took a persistent Freedom of Information request from R.A.I.D to make the councils publish the full comments submitted to the consultation. We found that not only were they overwhelmingly against the development but they included a high proportion of long well-thought-out arguments explaining why the Dunton Garden Suburb development would be harmful. Brentwood council had been given the task of responding to individual comments but they never did so. We can only conclude that they have no reasoned responses to offer.

Residents Against Inappropriate Development website

A better way

A Smart Growth approach would address things very differently.

The primary justification for building garden towns and villages, indeed for any major greenfield development, is to address what many commentators call “the housing crisis”. But few agree what constitutes this crisis. Is it simply a shortage of homes given a rising population? Is it lack of enough homes to buy at prices first-time-buyers can afford? Is it lack of social housing?

Since the Barker reviews in the early 2000s, the Treasury has pushed heavily to get more houses built, at whatever cost to the environment or community. The Treasury argued, rightly, that the housing market’s ups and downs have a deleterious effect on the national economy and, wrongly, that building many more homes would have a beneficial effect on affordability. Any foreseeable rate of house building only adds a tiny percentage to the overall number of homes and its effect on house prices is negligible.

For some years now the big greenfield push has also been justified by national household growth projections which suggest the growth of households is far outstripping the rate of building. But this is highly misleading; the number of “households” that form is entirely dependent on the number of homes available and how they are configured. The projections are nonetheless informative. Much of the publicity around greenfield development, including garden settlements, suggests their objective is more homes for young families. Perhaps surprisingly however, the latest projections for England show this is the area of least need.

The most recent projections²⁸ predict average annual household growth in England will be around 214,000 a year between 2014 and 2039, well below the quarter-million figure still cited by many. But it’s the break-down of the figures which really undermines the building-for-families philosophy. The projections suggest that no less than 64% of the growth will be over-65 households. Those headed by someone between 25 and 34 are, however, expected to *decrease* by 9,000 a year. Almost all the other 36% of the growth not accounted for by senior citizens is projected to be one-person households. It’s not family housing we need, it’s housing for the elderly, for single people and, perhaps most importantly, for those who cannot afford to buy a home or to meet the cost of private renting – social housing in fact.

A Smart Growth approach would suggest a very different set of policies.

Regional policy is urgently needed. The ever-growing imbalance between the economically successful parts of the UK and those that are struggling shows we need to direct new economic activity away from those areas that are doing well to those that are not. And, coupled with that, we

need to abandon the “one-size-fits-all” approach to forcing unrealistic housing numbers on local authorities, most urgently for places that don’t need it.

House building need should be genuinely objectively assessed. At the moment too many people are aware that commercial appetite for development makes up a substantial amount of the process and that requirements on deliverability and viability militate against brownfield development.

Brownfield-first policies for housing and employment need to be reimposed. Given the relative commercial costs of building on brownfield and greenfield, the absence of a brownfield-first policy is, effectively, a greenfield-first policy. And there is much more brownfield land of all types than those with a vested interest like to suggest.

House building densities need to rise. Garden city principles have squandered our scarce building land for a century now. Higher densities such as those traditionally used in cities, towns and villages need not involve high-rise but they do facilitate provision of facilities, town centres, active travel, public transport and community. Very low-densities don’t.

Transit-oriented development should be the norm for major developments, not the exception. Major development should only be contemplated where it is situated on major public transport networks, usually rail-based. This needs more than simply locating them beside, or near, a single railway station. The public transport should be in place well before the development is completed.

Public investment should be switched from supporting sprawl into sustainable development. Spending should be diverted from the costly infrastructure needed for greenfield development and the road building programme into urban regeneration and sustainable transport, particularly urban rail.

Conclusions

Garden towns and villages are supposed to be “innovative” and “transformational”, but there is little innovation in the proposals and the only transformation would be growth in the size of the settlements so extended and destruction of the surrounding countryside. Indeed, there is little or nothing to distinguish even those garden settlements approved by DCLG from the mass of low-density, greenfield sprawl developments now disfiguring our land, quite a few of which describe themselves as “garden villages”.

Ebenezer Howard would have recognised few, if any, of these proposals as garden cities, though his disciple Raymond Unwin would have happily dubbed them garden suburbs. They look to perpetuate that destructive concept which has given us a century of low-density, car-dependent sprawl, mostly lacking in sustainable transport and consuming scarce agricultural land.

Even their contribution to local housing shortages would be minimal. Few have made any significant attempt to use brownfield land and such out-of-town developments have inevitably high demands for infrastructure which their developers are not willing to fund in full. They are the product of a national obsession with raw house building numbers with little thought for our actual housing needs; their construction would squander undeveloped land for little gain other than the commercial returns sought by their promoters. The whole programme is as misguided as the “eco towns” project which spawned it and as little deserving of success.

Despite the hurricane of green-wash and propaganda from public relations practitioners and even some professionals, it is clear that “garden towns” and “garden villages” are no more than simple car-dependent, low-density, greenfield sprawl – environmentally destructive but highly profitable for their developers. We need to abandon the concept, stem the whole tide of greenfield development and rethink strategic planning along Smart Growth lines.

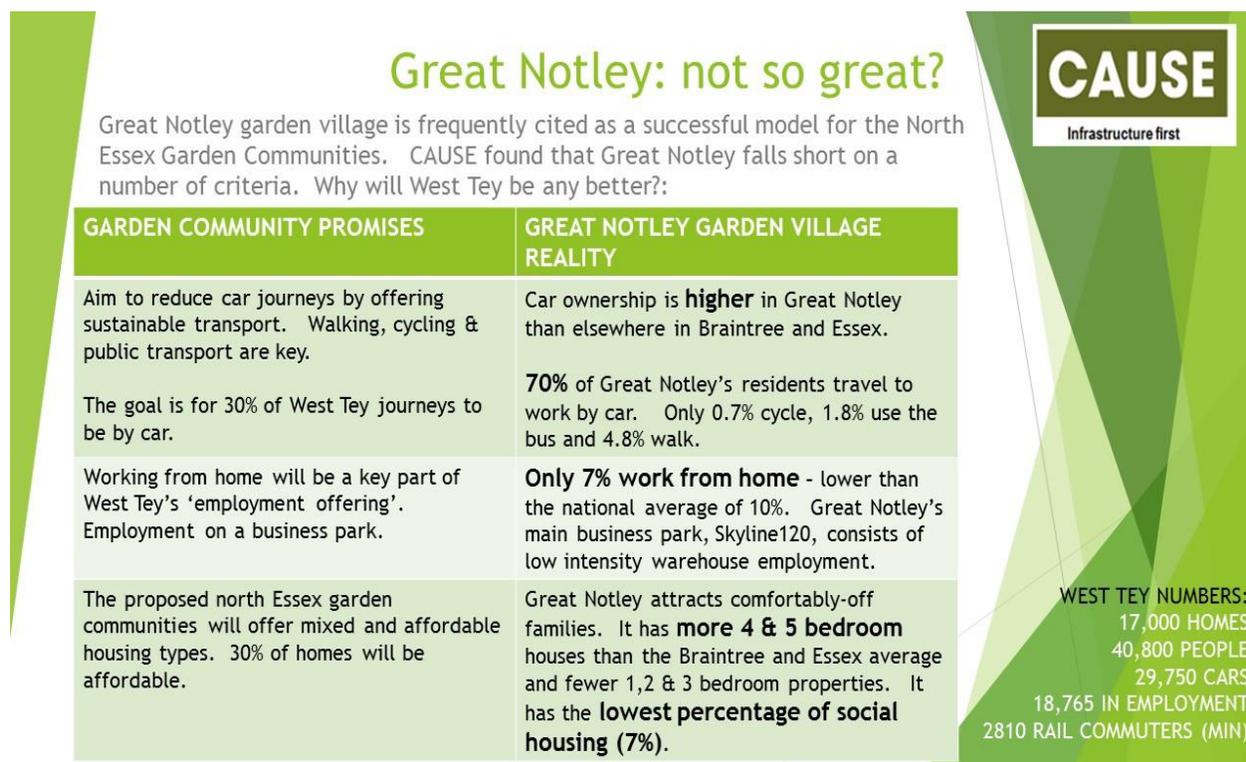
We recommend the Government, devolved administrations and local authorities withdraw support from garden town and garden village developments.

Appendix A – West Tey Case Study by C.A.U.S.E.

The Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex lobbies for transit-oriented growth, close to employment and ideally on brownfield land.

“West Tey”, a proposed “garden city” (and now part of a “garden town”) of up to 28,000 homes at Marks Tey in north Essex, is none of these things. It will be built on around 1,000 hectares of green field land. Colchester Borough Council (now backing the scheme) told the Planning Inspectorate in 2008 that it had concerns about the impact of sprawl across open countryside of a settlement of this type at Marks Tey. The settlement will straddle, and be split by, congested major trunk roads, which Colchester Council told the Inspectorate in 2008, would encourage car travel and would cause issues of severance, noise and air quality.

The Great Eastern Mainline railway runs through, and splits, the settlement and there is a station. This is presented by the councils as a positive but in fact would encourage commuting to London which is only 50 minutes away. Studies indicate that the GEML cannot absorb the forecast increase in passenger traffic and Colchester expressed concerns in 2008 about the inadequacy of the train service and the station at Marks Tey.



Source: Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex

There is no focus for employment at the West Tey site. Land will be set aside for employment, yet it is likely that (as at Skyline 120, a similar site adjacent to Great Notley Garden Community nearby) plans for intensive employment will not come to fruition and the site would attract low intensity warehousing-type businesses. The population of West Tey will be unlikely to be able to work in the new community and road and rail commuting will be a problem.

Very little attention has been given to the interaction of this new community with its outside area. It is too far from other urban areas (Braintree & Colchester) for walking and cycling and mass rapid transit is impractical because the rail and road networks are congested already.

Finally, there are questions about the affordability of properties in West Tey, which are likely to be marketed to Londoners (as at Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford). Great Notley Garden Village (see graphic) does not set a good precedent.

Appendix B – DCLG-supported Garden Towns and Villages

Garden Towns (DCLG-supported)

Aylesbury, Bucks

Site: Urban extensions around Aylesbury.

Local Authority: Aylesbury Vale District Council

<https://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/aylesbury-receives-garden-town-status>

Promoter: Aylesbury Vale District Council

<http://www.sm-ag.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ConceptPlan4.pdf>

Area: Unspecified

No. of houses: Unspecified – proposal included all 15,000 homes around Aylesbury over the next 20 years (and possibly the 12,000 others to be built in the district.)

Other development: Employment sites

Greenfield/brownfield: “Largely major urban extensions” (i.e. greenfield) “along with smaller brownfield sites within the existing built-up area”

Transport Links: 3 stations and services to London, Risborough and Milton Keynes, the A41. “The south of the district is well connected by road to London and access to the M40 and M25 motorways.” Buses

Previously: Urban extensions around Aylesbury

Opposition: Stoke Mandeville Action Group

<http://www.sm-ag.co.uk/>

Basingstoke, Hampshire

Site: 12 allocations around Basingstoke including “Manydown”

Local Authority: Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council

Promoter: Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and Hampshire County Council

<http://manydownbasingstoke.co.uk/>

Area: Unspecified

No. of houses: 15,300

Other development: Unspecified

Greenfield/brownfield: 12 greenfield allocations in local plan

Transport Links: Buses, the M3 and A33

Previously: 12 allocations around Basingstoke including “Manydown”

Bicester, Oxfordshire

Site: Five sites around the town.

Local Authority: Cherwell District Council

Promoter: Cherwell District Council

<http://growingbicester.co.uk/>

<http://nwbicester.co.uk/>

Area: NW Bicester 400ha, Graven Hill 187ha,

No. of houses: 13,000 (NW Bicester 3,923, Graven Hill 2,000, SW Bicester (Kingsmere) 2,468, SE Bicester 1,500 and Gavray Drive 300)

Other development: “Six new sites to accommodate major employment opportunities”

Greenfield/brownfield: Mixed – includes significant greenfield

Transport Links: Buses, the M40, A34 and A41

Previously: North West Bicester Eco Town, Bicester Garden City

Opposition: Save Bicester

<http://www.savebicester.com/>

Save Gavray Meadows for Wildlife

<https://www.facebook.com/savegavraywildlifemeadows/>

Didcot, Oxfordshire

Site: East and west of Didcot

Local Authorities: South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council

Promoter: South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council

<https://didcotgardentownplan.commonplace.is/>

Area: Not stated

No. of houses: 15,000

Other development: Employment space for “20,000 high tech jobs”

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield

Previously: Urban extensions around Didcot

Transport Links: Buses and the A34

Ebbsfleet, Kent

Site: Swanscombe peninsula, the Eastern Quarry, two sites on Northfleet Embankment and sites around Ebbsfleet Central

Local Authorities: Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council

Promoter: Ebbsfleet Development Corporation

<http://ebbsfleetdc.org.uk/>

Area: Not stated

No. of houses: 15,000

Other development: 45,000m² of employment space

Greenfield/brownfield: Predominantly brownfield

Transport Links: Ebbsfleet International Station is at one side of the site. Stations also on the north Kent line along the north of the site. Two “Fastrack” bus lanes and other local buses will run across the site. The A2.

Previously: Ebbsfleet Development, Ebbsfleet Garden City

Harlow & Gilston, Essex and Hertfordshire

Site: Gilston, north of Harlow

Local Authorities: Epping Forest, East Herts and Harlow District Councils

Promoter: Places for People/City and Provincial Properties

<http://www.gilstonparkestate.com/>

Area: 1,500ha

Other development: Education, health, leisure and community facilities

No. of houses: 10,000

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield, mostly green belt

Transport Links: Buses, the M11 and A414

Previously: Harlow North

Opposition: Stop Harlow North

<http://www.stopharlownorth.com/newindex.php>

CPRE Hertfordshire

<http://www.cpreherts.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2406-garden-town-for-harlow-and-gilston-in-new-government-plans>

North Essex

Site: Three sites: on the Colchester/Tendring boundary (east of Colchester), west of Colchester & Marks Tey and west of Braintree

Local Authorities: Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/article/20139/Lord-Kerslakes-North-Essex-Garden-Communities-Peer-Review>

Promoter: North Essex Garden Communities Ltd

<http://www.colchester.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=21629&p=0>

Area: East of Colchester 850ha

No. of houses: 35,000 (7-9,000 Tendring/Colchester, 20,000 west of Colchester and 13,000 west Braintree)

Other development: Employment, retail, education etc.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield apart from small amount of brownfield at west Braintree on an airfield ((the airfield is still very active club and flying school, and hence not deemed “previously developed”))

Transport Links: Colchester/Tendring – Hythe station at one end of east Colchester site no rail access to north Colchester but both close to A12 and A120. West Tey – served by Marks Tey station

on Great Eastern main Line, currently running at full capacity. Also by A12 and A120. West of Braintree – remote from railway. A120 runs alongside site but it would have access to A120 (eastbound) via country roads and westbound via a 12km drive. The councils are claiming employment will be to the west of Essex close to the M11

Previously: North Essex Garden City, North Essex Garden Communities

Opposition: [Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex](#)

<http://www.cause4livingessex.com/>

[Stop Erosion of Rural Communities in Local Essex](#)

<http://www.sercl.org.uk/>

North Northamptonshire

Site: Urban extensions at North-East Corby (Priors Hall), Kettering East, Wellingborough East, Wellingborough North, Desborough North, Irthlingborough West and proposals at Rothwell North, West Corby and Rushden East

Local Authorities: North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit and Joint Delivery Unit (Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering, Northamptonshire and Wellingborough Councils)

Promoters: Barratt Developments, Taylor Wimpey and David Wilson Homes (Priors Hall), Barratt Developments, Taylor Wimpey, Great Oakley Estates and Rockingham Castle Estates (West Corby), Barratt Developments and Taylor Wimpey (Rushden East), *[etc.]*

Previously: North Northamptonshire growth area, “North Londonshire”

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 24,000

Other development: Urban extensions will support “employment development of a scale and mix identified within commitments and approved master plans”

Greenfield/brownfield: Predominantly greenfield

Transport Links: The A6, A14, A43, A45, A427, A509 and A6116. Wellingborough, Kettering and Corby have railway stations, Rushden and Irthlingborough do not. All the urban extensions except Wellingborough East are remote from the stations.

Stand alone? No. All are urban extensions

Previously: North Northamptonshire growth area, “North Londonshire”

Otterpool Park, Kent

Site: Beside Junction 11 of the M20 between Folkestone and Ashford.

Local Authority: [Shepway District Council](#)

https://www.shepway.gov.uk/media/3726/Otterpool-Park-Expression-of-Interest/pdf/Shepway_District_Council_EoI.pdf

Promoter: [Folkestone Racecourse, Cozumel Estates](#)

<http://www.otterpoolpark.org/>

Area: 615ha

No. of houses: 12,000

Other development: “85ha of employment land and the associated social infrastructure”.
“Maximizing the opportunities for strategic new employment space in close proximity to Junction 11 of the M20”. Education, health, energy and community facilities
Greenfield/brownfield: 90%+ greenfield
Transport Links: Beside Junction 11 of the M20. Westenhanger station at one corner of site.
Stand alone? “The new community will not be an extension of the existing surrounding villages and the master planning work will protect and enhance their character while seeking to improve local services such as schools, GP and health clinics.” But it adjoins Lympne and Sellindge
Previously: -
Opposition: No Otterpool New Town
<https://www.facebook.com/nootterpoolnewtown/>

Taunton, Somerset

Site: Urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe/Truil and Staplegrove
Local Authority: Taunton Deane Borough Council
<http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/irj/public/news/directory/articles?rid=/wpccontent/Sites/TDBC/Web%20Pages/News/Articles/Taunton%20gains%20garden%20Town%20status>
Promoter: Various
Area: Unspecified
No. of houses: 8,000
Other development: Employment, schools etc.
Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield
Transport Links: “New A303/358 ‘SW Expressway’, connecting to Taunton and M5, J25”
Previously: Urban extensions already identified – Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe/Trull and Staplegrove.

Garden Villages (DCLG-supported)

Bailrigg in Lancaster

Site: South of the city and incorporating Lancaster University’s Bailrigg Campus.
Local Authority: Lancaster City Council
<http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/assets/attach/1885/Publicity%20Document%20Bailrigg%20Garden%20Village%20Lancaster.pdf>
Promoter: Lancaster City Council
Area: Unspecified
No. of houses: 3,000 up to 2031
Other development: Expansion of Lancaster University’s Health Innovation Campus
Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield

Transport Links: Sited around M6 junction which would need improvement and new (road) crossings of WCML to “unlock” land for 3-5,000 homes. It would “be built around the most effective public transport corridor linking Lancaster city centre with the University’s public transport hub” (a bus route).

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension Lancaster

Previously: -

Culm in Mid Devon

Site: East of Cullompton

Local Authority: Mid-Devon District Council

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning-policy/culm-garden-village/>

Promoter: Lightwood Land

Area: Unspecified

No. of houses: 2,600 + second phase taking it up to 5,000

Other development: 20,000m² of employment space

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield

Transport Links: “We propose to prioritise any government financial support to highway improvements including the town centre relief road and M5 J28 improvements”.

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension of Cullompton to the east

Previously: East Cullompton

Opposition: [Residents Against Cullompton Exploitation](#)

<http://www.raceculmvalley.org/>

Deenethorpe in East Northants

Site: Former Deenethorpe Airfield

Local Authority: North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (Corby, Wellingborough, Kettering and East Northamptonshire)

Promoter: [Deene Estate](#)

<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/news/newsdetail.asp?id=79>

Area: 250ha

No. of houses: 1,000-1,250

Other development: Unspecified

Greenfield/brownfield: “A major brownfield site”. In reality most turned over the agriculture in the 1960s and 90%+ greenfield

Transport Links: “The airfield is located close to the A427 (and public transport services between Corby and Oundle) and development could potentially improve the highway network by providing a link between this road and the A43.”

Stand-alone? Yes

Previously: Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity

Dunton Hills near Brentwood, Essex

Site: South of the A127 between West Horndon and Laindon, up to borders of Basildon and Thurrock boroughs.

Local Authority: [Brentwood Borough Council](#)

<http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/press.php?pressId=2549>

Promoter: [Commercial Estates Group](#)

<http://www.duntonhillsgardensuburb.co.uk/>

Area: 264ha

No. of houses: 3,500

Other development: 22,000m² of commercial space, two primary schools, healthcare campus and neighbourhood centre. An enterprise park is proposed nearby in the local plan

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield (farmland and golf course). Also green belt. Near nature reserves at Langdon Hills and Thorndon.

Transport Links: A128, A127, M25 and C2C line station at West Horndon

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to Basildon (500m to east) and West Horndon (500m to west).

Previously: Part of Dunton Garden Suburb (264ha in Brentwood and 156ha in Basildon) – 2,500 houses in Brentwood (including Dunton, Garden Village) and 2,300 in Basildon, all green belt.

Opposition: [Residents Against Inappropriate Development](#)

<http://raid.org.uk/>

Dunton Community Association

Halsnead in Knowsley, Merseyside

Site: The former Halsnead Park Estate astride the M62.

Local Authority: [Knowsley Borough Council](#)

<https://halsnead.knowsley.gov.uk/>

Promoter: Knowsley Borough Council

Area: 174ha

No. of houses: 1,600

Other development: 22.5ha of employment space

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield, part reclaimed colliery. 60% north of M62 is all greenfield. 40% to south is partly reclaimed colliery

Transport Links: At junction of M57 and M62. North site is "... highly accessible to the strategic highway network (M62, M57 and A5300). Highways surround the land on all sides offering opportunities for vehicular access to serve development north and south of the motorway. It lies within a 20 minute drive-time to the east of Liverpool City Centre and 35 minute drive-time to the west of Manchester City Centre." Whiston station 600m north of the north side of the site. Local bus services. South site access "currently limited to (to the west) Tarbock Island / Cronton Road, a busy traffic-dominated highway, and (to the east) Fox's Bank Lane, passing under the M62".

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to Whiston.

Previously: South of M62 was intended as a country park and has planning consent. Both sites later identified for “sustainable urban extensions”

Opposition: [Save Whistons Greenbelt](#)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/151257111624588>

Infinity in South Derbyshire and Derby City area

Site: Wragley Way, near Stenson Fields

Local Authority: Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council

Promoter: [Hallam Land Management](#)

<http://www.wragleyway.co.uk/>

Area: Not stated

No. of houses: 2,000

Other development: Schools and shops.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield

Local Plan: Land identified for urban extension.

http://www.derby.gov.uk/media/derbycitycouncil/contentassets/documents/policiesandguidance/planning/Core%20Strategy_ADOPTED_DEC%202016_V3_WEB.pdf

Transport Links: “New strategic highway infrastructure will be required to support the development and to provide mitigation for the wider growth strategy. A new road (The South Derby Integrated Transport Link, Phase 1) will be constructed linking from Stenson Road across the site south of Wragley Way and across Sinfyn Moor to the A50 junction at Chellaston... to ensure that impacts of new traffic generated by the site can be mitigated properly, the two local authorities will give consideration to the maximum number of dwellings that can be built before the road link is completed between the site and the Bonnie Prince junction at Chellaston. The full extent of the site within the city can be developed in advance of the new link road being completed but development in South Derbyshire will be limited to an appropriate level to be agreed by South Derbyshire District Council, until the infrastructure is in place.”

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to Derby.

Previously: Wragley Way Allocation

Longcross in Runnymede and Surrey Heath

Site: Former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and Longcross Studios

Local Authority: Runnymede Borough Council

<https://runnymede.gov.uk/gardenvillage>

<https://runnymede.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16097&p=0>

Promoter: Crest Nicholson/Aviva

<http://www.longcrossvillage.info/>

Area: Longcross South 84ha

No. of houses: 1,500

Other development: 80,000m² of commercial floorspace

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly brownfield

Transport Links: Astride the M3. Longcross station adjoins NW corner of Longcross North. 250m grid for cyclists.

Stand-alone? Yes

Previously: Longcross South

Long Marston in Stratford-on-Avon

Site: Long Marston Airfield

Local Authority: Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Promoter: Cala Homes

Area: Unspecified

No. of houses: 3,500

Other development: 13ha of employment space, schools and “village centre”

Greenfield/brownfield: Mixed

Transport Links: Unspecified

Stand-alone? Yes

Previously: Long Marston Eco Town

North Cheshire in Cheshire East

Site: East of Handforth, bounded by the west by the A34 and on the north by the A55

Local Authority: Cheshire East Council

Promoter: Engine of the North (council-owned company)

<http://northcheshiregrowthvillage.co.uk/>

Area: 102ha

No. of houses: 1,650

Other development: Not stated

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield

Transport Links: The A34 and A555.

Stand-alone? No. Eastward extension of Handforth.

Previously: CS49, the “North Cheshire Growth Village”

Opposition: Hands Off Handforth Greenbelt

<https://www.facebook.com/HandsOffHandforthGreenBelt/>

Oxfordshire Cotswold in West Oxfordshire

Site: North of Eynsham and A40.

Local Authority: West Oxfordshire District Council

<http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/planning-building/planning-policy/local-development-framework/garden-village/>

Promoter: West Oxfordshire District Council

Area: 320ha

No. of houses: 2,200 homes by 2031 plus more beyond that
Other development: 40ha science park and other supporting development
Greenfield/brownfield: Nearly all greenfield (farmland)
Local Plan: Included in local plan examination
Transport Links: Beside the A40. “Close to Hanborough station” – actually nearly two miles from site boundary. Proposals for bus park-and-ride, “high quality walking and cycling route across the A40 to link into Eynsham” and for dualling the A40 between Oxford and Witney
Stand-alone? No. “It will be a stand-alone settlement”. In fact an urban extension to Eynsham north of the A40
Previously: -
Opposition: [Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign](http://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/org.aspx?n=EPIC)
<http://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/org.aspx?n=EPIC>

St Cuthberts near Carlisle City, Cumbria

Site: Between J42 of the M6 in the east and the A595 to the west. Definitive boundary not yet fixed.
Local Authority: Carlisle City Council
<http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/planning-policy/Carlisle-South>
Promoter: Carlisle City Council
Area: Not stated
No. of houses: Up to 10,000
Other development: Employment space
Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield
Local Plan: Local plan 2015-2030 makes provision for a major, mixed use development towards the south of the city
Transport Links: The M6 and A595. New southern link road between J42 and the A689 proposed. “Support a choice of transport modes to reduce pressure on existing road connections into the city centre” (not specified)
Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to the city
Previously: “Carlisle South”

Spitalgate Heath in South Kesteven, Lincolnshire

Site: On southern fringe of Grantham
Local Authority: [South Kesteven District Council](http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11578)
<http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11578>
<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s17042/Spitalgate%20Heath%20Garden%20Village%20Final%20Prospectus%20July%202016%20pdf.pdf>
Promoter: Buckminster Estate/Homes & Communities Agency
Area: 224ha
No. of houses: 3,700
Other development: 110,000m² of employment space

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield (arable land) with brownfield former Invicta Works

Transport Links: The A1 and A52

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to Grantham

Previously: Grantham Southern Quadrant urban extension

Welborne near Fareham in Hampshire

Site: North of Fareham

Local Authority: Fareham Borough Council

<http://www.fareham.gov.uk/welborne/intro.aspx>

<http://www.welbornegardenvillage.co.uk/>

Promoter: Buckland Development

<http://bucklanddevelopment.com/>

Area: 371ha

No. of houses: Up to 6,000

Other development: 97,250m² of new office, light industrial and warehouse floor space in 20ha of employment land, hotel, care home, 9,210m² of retail space, four schools etc..

Greenfield/brownfield: Mainly greenfield apart from a few farm buildings

Transport Links: “The site is located to the immediate north of the M27 and encompasses Junction 10. The M27 links Portsmouth and Southampton (and Southampton Airport) and leads to the A3(M) to the east and the M3 to the west, both of which provide direct links to London.... These connections to the strategic road network mean that Welborne is situated in a very accessible location, particularly in relation to attracting potential business investment into well-placed employment areas” Remodelled M27 J10, three new junctions with the A32. Bus route proposed into Fareham

Stand-alone? No. Urban extension to Fareham

Previously: The Welborne Plan

Opposition: [Inform Fareham](#)

<http://www.informfareham.org.uk/index.php>

West Carclaze in Cornwall

Site: In former china clay land at West Carclaze and Baal

Local Authority: [Cornwall County Council](#)

<http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/eco-communities/projects/west-carclaze-eco-community/>

Promoter: [Eco-Bos](#)

<http://www.westcarclaze.co.uk/index.html>

Previously: Part of the Imerys China St Austell and Clay Community for 5,000 homes, then (2008)

West Carclaze Eco-Community (1,800-2,500 homes)

Area: 210ha

No. of houses: 1,500

Other development: Employment space, retail etc.

Greenfield/brownfield: Part brownfield

Transport Links: Improvement to A391 already built. “Case for extending the A391 diversion out to the A30”

Stand-alone? Yes

Previously: Part of the Imerys China St Austell and Clay Community for 5,000 homes, then (2008)

West Carclaze Eco-Community (1,800-2,500 homes)

Opposition: No Eco Town

<http://noecotown.co.uk/>

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