



GARDEN COMMUNITIES

- and how to counter them

A report by Smart Growth UK
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<http://www.smartgrowthuk.org>

Smart Growth UK

Smart Growth UK is an informal coalition of organisations and individuals who want to promote the Smart Growth approach to planning, transportation and communities. Smart Growth is an international movement dedicated to more sustainable approaches to these issues.

In the UK it is based around a set of principles agreed by the organisations that support the Smart Growth UK coalition in 2013:-

- 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.



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Local communities are supposed to have a “meaningful say in developing proposals” -
but they’re not allowed to oppose them [*StopNUTown*]

Executive summary

Despite their obvious unsustainability, cost and community opposition, the Government continues to designate new garden communities and to lavish millions of pounds on their development.

Garden communities:-

- squander land;
- maximize the infrastructure needs of new development;
- damage ecosystem services;
- degrade biodiversity;
- have lay-outs which often fail to meet their objective of encouraging walking and cycling;
- mostly have limited public transport access;
- where they have public transport, it is seldom part of a comprehensive network;
- damage landscapes;
- are often not “communities” in any sense at all - they are merely agglomerations of the sprawl developments around a town, or a series of towns;
- are a slow and expensive way of building houses;
- usually fail to meet the required “Garden City Principles” on things like land value capture and long-term community ownership and control of assets.

Fighting garden community developments is a long struggle but, as several campaigns show, it is both possible and desirable to fight them.

Analysis of the current garden community schemes in England clearly confirms that:-

- they are overwhelmingly greenfield;
- they are a mix of stand-alone, urban extensions or just agglomerations of all the sprawl in the area;
- few have rail access and none is closely linked to a dense city rail network;
- they squander land;
- they would be extremely profitable for land owners, developers and their consultants;
- they have been a boon to the PR industry and greenwash.

Introduction

In 2017 and again in 2018, Smart Growth UK published reports on the Government's plans for "garden towns", "garden villages", "garden communities" etc.. Our reports had substantial input from campaigns around the country who have been exposing the wretchedly unsustainable nature of most of what is being imposed.

Our 2017 report¹ concluded that the developments' contribution to housing shortages would be minimal and the claims that they would be "innovative" and "transformational" foundered on the rock of reality. Our 2018 report² concluded the proposals were an expensive way of creating the wrong sort of development in the wrong places. The groups who contributed agreed that an urgent rethink is needed by the Government. Yet the programme continues to expand and millions of pounds of scarce public money continues to be wasted on it. Plainly a rethink is now urgent.

The current situation

Between 2017 and the beginning of 2019, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government recognised six garden towns and 17 garden villages. The Ministry's current definition³ says garden villages should have 1,500-10,000 homes while garden towns must have more than 10,000.

But increasingly, the distinction between "garden towns" and "garden villages" is becoming less precise and the Government appears anxious to increase this confusion by dubbing some as "garden communities". In this report, therefore, we shall use the latter definition, even though the garden town and garden village names are still being used.

Ebbsfleet which, almost uniquely, is predominantly brownfield, was formerly referred to as a "garden town" but has now become a "garden city", despite only planning 15,000 homes. It has in any case, apparently, been excluded from the MHCLG garden communities scheme.

During 2019, more and more new "garden communities" were added to the 23 original developments, one of which apparently involved three completely separate proposals at widely separated places. The absence of anything resembling a single coherent community has, however, never prevented designation as a "garden community", the North Essex and North Northamptonshire Garden Villages for instance. Some, like "Aylesbury Garden Town", have no specific site at all and simply refer to new and unrelated developments in the area.

In May 2019, MHCLG announced that another 20,000-house "garden settlement" would be "built across Exeter". No site was announced for the new scheme, apparently called "Greater Exeter", although Exeter, East Devon and Teignbridge Councils were said to be working together on the plans - another pseudo-community that is not, in reality, a community at all.

It is sometimes hard to determine which ones MHCLG is actually supporting, but the list in mid-June 2019 appeared to be as follows:-

- Aylesbury Garden Town
- Bailrigg Garden Village
- Basingstoke Garden Town
- Bicester Garden Town
- Culm Garden Village
- Didcot Garden Town
- Dunton Hills Garden Village
- Easton Park Garden Community
- Grazeley Garden Settlement
- Greater Exeter
- Halsnead Garden Village
- Handforth Garden Village
- Harlow-Gilston Garden Village
- Hemel Garden Communities
- Infinity Garden Village
- Longcross Garden Village
- Long Marston Garden Village
- Meecebrook
- North Essex Garden Communities
- North Northamptonshire Garden Villages
- North Uttlesford Garden Community
- Otterpool Park Garden Town
- Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village
- St Cuthbert's Garden Village
- Spitalgate Heath Garden Village
- Taunton Garden Town
- Tewkesbury-Ashchurch Garden Community
- Tresham Garden Village
- Welborne Garden Village
- West Carclaze Garden Village
- West of Braintree Garden Community

Then, on 27 June 2019, the Government announced support for a further 19 garden villages:-

- Berinsfield Garden Village
- Borough Green Gardens
- Burtree Garden Village
- Cyber Central
- Dalton Barracks
- Dunsfold Park

- East of Biggleswade
- Newton Abbot Garden Community
- North Dorchester
- North East Chelmsford Garden Community
- Shapley Heath Garden Village
- Skerningham Garden Community
- South Godstone Garden Community
- South Seaham Garden Village
- South of Ashford Garden Community
- St George's Barracks
- Threemilestone Garden Village (already renamed Langarth Garden Village)
- West of Elvington (already renamed Langwith Garden Village)
- Whetstone Pastures

Millions of pounds of public money continues to be lavished by MHCLG on these schemes. In March it announced that the five newly designated developments would “receive a share of £3.7m of funding to fast-track specialist survey work and planning works necessary for each new town’s development”. Then, in January 2020, a further £6m was announced to “help new locally led garden towns and villages progress plans to deliver up to 200,000 new homes”⁴.

MHCLG also announced yet another garden village would receive Government backing, this time the one at Wynyard in the Tees Valley, though it admitted the development had already received £150,000 from the Government. This would, it said: “make it the largest new settlement in the North East, delivering up to 6,800 new homes”.

It’s difficult to assess how much has now been thrown by Whitehall at garden community development, but it is already a substantial ten-figure sum of public money at a time of austerity, including more than a billion pounds aimed at them through the Housing Infrastructure Fund according to a recent report by Lichfields⁵.

In addition to officially approved proposals, developers are continuing to dub many substantial greenfield proposals as garden villages despite there seldom being anything to distinguish them from any other bit of large-scale sprawl.

Many other places face the threat of having a garden community imposed on them. The “Oxford-Cambridge Arc” remains an area under particular threat. It is supposed to accommodate a million new greenfield homes – the equivalent of nine new Milton Keyneses.

Tentative plans have been revealed to accommodate nearly half of this in four new “garden cities”, the size of Milton Keynes, one of them on the HS2 line at Calvert, to facilitate commuting into London.

A further target is another out-of-town HS2 station and plans have already been aired for garden villages around the station at Toton.



“Calvert Garden City”

[*Stella Stafford*]

Wales has one garden town officially approved by the Welsh Government at “Plasdwyr” outside Cardiff.

What's wrong with garden communities?

Garden communities are plainly at odds with the Smart Growth principles set out in the preamble to this report. But this is no mere abstract set of principles. They are designed to allow us to house our growing population while minimizing the damage to our increasingly fragmented and degraded environment. We believe that garden communities would cause substantial damage to it.

Urban sprawl has been the main default way of building since the Great War. Built at low-densities, mostly on greenfield sites at car-dependent locations, they have squandered the scarce building land of a densely populated island and they have damaged the supply of vital ecosystem services our land provides. All too often, major development is located in places which have little or no sustainable public transport and their layouts militate against walking and cycling. They are a land-hungry, high-carbon form of development which should have been buried with the 20th century. The specific objections to garden communities are that:-

They squander land. Nearly all the new crop of garden communities, like most of their predecessors, are planned to be built wholly or predominantly on non-previously developed greenfield land. Most are built at low, or ultra-low densities in accordance with long-standing principles for such developments, ensuring they squander as much land as possible. Few make good use of the brownfield land which needs regeneration.



Garden communities overwhelmingly use greenfield sites

[Hands Off Wivenhoe]

They maximize the new infrastructure needs of development. Major developments within the footprint of existing conurbations can make better use of underused existing infrastructure and sometimes even keep schools and hospitals from closure. Urban extensions have some ability to do this but new settlements almost invariably require 100% new infrastructure.

They damage ecosystem services. The undeveloped land that garden communities are almost invariably built on provides us with a range of ecosystem services which are necessary to our well-being and survival. It provides us with all of our water, most of our food and much of our flood control, timber, outdoor leisure and carbon sequestration, plus all the intangible benefits the countryside provides.

They degrade biodiversity. Much is made in new garden community proposals about the inclusion of small areas set aside for wildlife. Some wilder claims even suggest the approach will lead to an increase of biodiversity or a “doubling” of nature in their areas. These claims depend on the view that modern farmland is a sort of nature-free area, and while agriculture should be doing much more to promote biodiversity, this is far from the case. But major new developments bring air, noise and light pollution and disturbance and they seal huge areas of soil, preventing it from carrying out its important natural functions. Small areas set aside for wildlife cannot compensate for this damage.

Their lay-out encourages motoring and discourages walking and cycling. Recent garden community proposals have made much of the fact they include some cycling and pedestrian

infrastructure (lacking in earlier proposals). But their low-densities mean they will be large and you still see winding roads and cul-de-sacs in the proposals both of which militate against walking and cycling. They remain, essentially, car-dependent developments.

Their access to public transport is limited. Some garden city proposals are set around, or near, a railway station. But many studies have shown that it takes more than a single station to get a majority of people out of their cars. Modern multi-car households in such developments tend to work in multiple directions and only a minority can make use of the rail service.

They seldom, if ever, have access to dense urban public transport networks. Getting people out of cars necessitates having a diversity of public transport routes, preferably rail-based. Yet all that is on offer in many garden communities is low-frequency bus services, or even just a single bus service. Proximity to motorways or major trunk roads, however, remains hugely alluring to garden community promoters.



Garden community promoters find motorway junctions irresistible, despite all the rhetoric about sustainable transport [*Smart Growth UK*]

They damage landscapes. One of the key ingredients for attractive landscape is continuity. This doesn't preclude all development, but such continuity is fragmented by major developments like urban extensions or, worst of all, new settlements. Connectivity is also vital for wildlife; habitat fragmentation is one of the principal causes of biodiversity decline.

Some would not be “communities” in any sense of the word. Some garden community proposals are simply a rolling together of all the major housing developments around a town, or even several towns. Examples include “Aylesbury Garden Town”, “Greater Exeter” and “North Northamptonshire Garden Villages”.

Beyond these obvious and tangible disadvantages, there is the whole question of community. Up until the Great War, cities, towns and villages were built at much higher densities than the “garden suburb” type of development which followed. While some of the early garden communities have evolved community spirit, we believe it is much easier to grow a genuine sense of community and purpose when people live in rather more densely populated and less car-dependent areas, rather than living behind the hedges and high walls of the modern low-density suburb and only venturing out in a car.

They are a slow and expensive way of building houses. In December 2019, consultancy Lichfields published a review⁶ of all the Government-approved garden communities in England. It found they plan 403,000 homes, 182 primary schools, 56 secondary schools and 600 hectares of employment land. But the programme would be unlikely to reach a critical mass of delivery until the 2030s even though many local plans are dependent on garden communities to allow the local authorities involved to meet their Government imposed housing targets. In some cases councils are relying on them to meet two-thirds of their target.

The report estimates the programme could build up to 16,000 annually in the 2030 to 2044 period, a small fraction of the Government’s 300,000 annual target. “Only a third have a permission and/or an allocation in an adopted plan,” says the report. “Another third are in emerging plans, and a full 30% are yet to achieve formal planning status. This means two-thirds still need to establish the principle of development and are therefore subject to ongoing levels of planning risk.”

The report also notes the heavy dependence on Government funding to provide early infrastructure development and says no less than £1.35bn of Housing Infrastructure Fund money is dedicated to them already.

“Garden City Principles”. The Government’s *Garden Communities* prospectus⁷ says that all proposals for such a development “must set out a clear vision for the quality of the community and how this can be maintained in the long-term, for instance by following Garden City principles”. It supplemented this with a vague set of 10 “qualities”, such as that they should be “well designed” and include “great homes”.

But the reference to “Garden City Principles” was thus enshrined in the programme. Developers, of course, were quick to assume this meant the things they’ve always loved about the garden city philosophy like building remote, ultra-low-density, isolated communities on greenfield sites despite their inevitable car-dependency, not because of their virtues, but because they are most profitable.

The Town & Country Planning Association has tried to keep other elements of Ebenezer Howard’s vision alive with a set of values which have proved less popular with house builders and land owners.

In January 2020, the inspectors carrying out the examination-in-public of Uttlesford’s local plan wrote⁸ to say they had found it unsound, largely because of three garden community proposals in the District. An important part of their concern was the failure to develop the garden

communities in accordance with the Council's wish that the TCPA Garden City Principles should be key pillars in that development.

The inspectors detailed which Principles they mean: "Principle 1 concerns land value capture for the benefit of the community. Strong vision, leadership and community engagement are identified in Principle 2. Principle 3 expects community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets. However, the mechanisms by which these guiding principles will be delivered and ensured are not readily evident in the plan".

This strikes at the heart of the garden communities programme as these are essentially commercial developments driven both by land owners' huge expectation of uplift in the value of their land (often a hundredfold on farmland) and house builders' expectations of large commercial returns on their own land holdings. Both would be severely restricted by things like land value capture.

It is not clear just how far the vision statements prepared for all garden communities require these values to be respected, though it is clear a number do. Nor is it clear whether those that ignore them should be eligible for the Government money that has been doled out to make these developments a commercial success. What is clear is that where they have been insisted on, the Planning Inspectorate is likely to be making sure they are adhered to, a possibility that may give promoters further pause for thought.

How to counter garden communities

Many of the garden communities being imposed around the country face stiff and determined opposition from campaigns determined not to let such unsustainable developments permanently damage their areas. Here, four of those campaigns set out their experiences and give valuable guidance to other campaigns on how to defeat these developments.

Bailrigg Garden Village, Lancaster

by Citizens of Lancaster Opposed to Unnecessary Development (CLOUD)

According to Lancaster City Council: "Bailrigg Garden Village (BGV) presents the best opportunity in generations to extend Lancaster's strategic housing supply in a manner which respects and reflects the ethical beliefs of the local community about sustainable living, local identity, and high levels of connectivity through public transport and cycling". (*Lancaster Bailrigg Garden Village, Expression of Interest*).

Since the Council didn't seek the views of the local community before issuing this statement, however, its validity must be in doubt.

It is proposed that Bailrigg garden village consist of 3,500 houses, rising potentially to 5,000, located on green fields mainly to the west side of the mainline railway to the south of Lancaster. Its boundary would extend from the southern Lancaster suburb of Scotforth to just short of Galgate, taking in the Lancaster University campus.

This would be an enormous development, nearly three times the size of the existing Galgate village (currently 1,200 houses). The land is farmland, and other amenities include the Lancaster Canal, ancient woodland and significant Roman archaeological sites at Burrow Heights. To be viable, the garden village would require extensive, costly new road links to provide access under and over the West Coast Main Line railway to connect to the M6, a reconfiguration of M6 Junction 33, as well as a road crossing of the canal.



“Bailrigg Garden Village”

[C.L.O.U.D.]

BGV represents urban sprawl with no significant boundary with Scotforth. Indeed, in the final report on the local plan consultation published February 2016 (prior to the Government call for garden village proposals) a key segment of the land, now designated BGV, was Urban Extension 1 (UE1) (p14 of *Lancaster Local Plan 2016*). The supposed area of separation from Galgate is not secure, with part already likely to have road infrastructure running through and no guarantee beyond a 15-year period.

CLOUD’s concerns are summarised in the table in Appendix 1 and relate to the local plan which includes Bailrigg Garden Village. This was approved in December 2017 and was examined by planning inspector Richard McCoy in April/May 2019. We are currently (December 2019) awaiting his final report.

See also the Smart Growth UK report *Garden Communities – Why Communities Say No*⁹.

Background to CLOUD

Bailrigg Garden Village (BGV) was announced, without any prior notification to Lancaster residents, on 2 January 2017 as one of 14 prospective garden villages selected by the Government. The first that two current CLOUD committee members knew about the proposal for 3,500-5,000 houses was when a BBC reporter knocked on their door to ask them what they thought about such a large development, literally on their doorstep.

A local community action group of concerned residents was formed in winter 2017 during the City Council consultation period. This began as an informal group of five people meeting in someone's front room which set up Galgate Community Action Group Facebook. They drew up a petition which was signed by nearly 400 residents from Galgate, Bailrigg and Burrow and presented it to a meeting of Lancaster City Council in April.

Councils are obliged to debate petitions with this level of signatories. For legal reasons, the Council decided to defer this debate until December 2017, when the draft local plan was debated and approved. This was despite serious concerns that a revised flood risk assessment was needed following serious flooding in south Lancaster in November 2017.

CLOUD - Citizens of Lancaster Opposed to Unnecessary Development - evolved from the original group. It was formally constituted in October 2017¹⁰ and now (December 2019) has 226 members.

The life of a campaign group

We first contacted Jon Reeds and Smart Growth UK in June 2017, having read its report, *Garden Towns & Villages: Unwanted, Unnecessary and Unsustainable*¹¹. After our petition there was a danger of all the initial energy being lost and this was when the idea of CLOUD was born. A few of us felt the petition was a starting point, rather than an end in itself.

Talking to Jon was invaluable in highlighting what was needed and crucially getting in touch with other active campaigners. He has continued to offer support and advice along the way. He put us in touch with Rosie Pearson at [CAUSE](#). Her campaign dwarfs ours in scale and ambitions, but her advice and experience, along with Jon Reeds', helped to shape CLOUD. It is quite extraordinary now to be in a position to advise new campaign groups after two-and-a-half years on an extremely steep learning curve. We hope the following helps any campaign group starting out. All groups are different and so there is no blueprint, just thoughts about what has worked or not worked for CLOUD:-

1. Emotion has no place in planning. Be passionate about your campaign to energise people, but all planning consultation responses, planning meetings and contributions to hearings with planning inspectors need to be emotion-free and based on facts and evidence.
2. Learn the language and procedures of planning. This is a daunting task but an essential one if you are to make effective objections to planning proposals. Local authority planners and property developers/house builders are familiar with all aspects of planning and campaign groups need this expertise as well.

3. If your campaign involves local plan hearings with a planning inspector, it's worth trying to get to another hearing beforehand. We regret not having time to do this, as it would have reduced the level of shock which comes from witnessing the dominance of the developers, their consultants and QCs, ranged down the whole length of the room.
4. Decide what the key issues are for your campaign to fight against. Then draw on expert advice, especially for any complex or technical issues you face. You may be lucky to recruit experts, perhaps retired, willing to work on a voluntary basis. Alternatively or additionally, you may have to fund an expert consultant or adviser (perhaps on legal or on planning matters) to cover any gaps in your expertise - if so, you need to organise fund-raising early in your campaign. CLOUD has had a number of wonderfully helpful voluntary experts including a retired planning solicitor, with experience of local plans, an air quality expert, a retired transport planner and a surveyor. They helped in so many ways including helping us ask the right questions, weigh up which issues counted in planning terms and helping us write specialist elements of our responses.
5. One of the key issues affecting Lancaster has been inflated job and demographic projections which impacted on housing need. Challenging housing need under the *National Planning Policy Framework* is highly technical and requires more than just a statistician; it needs a statistician who is familiar with planning. The cost of his report¹² and his hearing appearances were in the region of £6,000 which were partly funded by membership and partly privately by some committee members and a city councillor. Scroll through our summary of local plan hearings in April and May 2019¹³ to housing need.
6. Be prepared for the unexpected and unpredictable (our Council had a knack of launching yet another round of fairly pointless consultations just when we thought we'd responded to everything), for changing deadlines, for massive time commitment (see below for summary).
7. Be persistent! The planning system requires local authorities to consult residents (which is fine), but it doesn't oblige them to listen or take account of the responses they get. There is something of a tick-box approach, with planners just needing to show they've been through the motions of consultation.
8. Ensure your campaign group is constituted. Drawing up a constitution can seem daunting, but there is much advice available online. CLOUD's constitution is based on a model constitution for small voluntary organisations, prepared by a community support charity in Buckinghamshire. This model constitution was produced with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund¹⁴. We kept our *Constitution*¹⁵ simple and had it checked by our voluntary legal expert. You need to ratify this at an inaugural AGM.
9. You need to have a constitution if you want a bank account and you need a bank account to receive donations from supporters and pay expenses. We use the Cumberland Building Society, a regional bank with an office in Lancaster (important for over-the-counter donations) providing all the banking services which small voluntary organisations require. Their account is free. Not all banks offer accounts to small voluntary organisations - you'll need to check.
10. Our constitution ensures that we cannot spend money unless we have it, thus reducing danger of incurring debts. We fund-raised for meeting costs and especially to cover the cost of our paid expert. We do not have a membership fee for CLOUD so all donations are voluntary, raised at meetings but also through donations to our bank account.

11. Get volunteers involved to share the load. To kick CLOUD off in the summer of 2017 we had 7,000 leaflets¹⁶ printed and employed a firm of direct distributors as this would have been far beyond the energy of the existing handful of people. It did work, up to a point, as our inaugural meeting was packed. On a regular basis, when around 2,500 leaflets are distributed, it is far better to call on volunteers from the membership. We now have around 20 regular flyer deliverers. It is a great way of getting to know the membership too and discover areas of your town you never knew existed. We leaflet when we are having a general meeting or have major issues to alert people to - normally no more than once or twice a year.
12. Avoid losing focus and wasting energy by trying to embrace everything of concern in your area. In our area fracking and flooding are major issues both of which have strong, active and knowledgeable groups. Far better to collaborate with them than try and be expert on everything, simply to build membership by seeming to reach out to more and more people.
13. Trusted councillors have been vital, but CLOUD, like most campaign groups is apolitical and that is an essential strength. Members and Committee are drawn from across the political spectrum.
14. Communication is key and campaign groups need more than an unmoderated Facebook group and to be able to communicate by email, social media, face-to-face and with paper. Communication has two main streams: first with members of your group so that they know what's going on and when to submit objections to their local authority etc., while the second stream is external - to your local authority councillors and MPs (who may or may not support your cause!) and to the local media (and nationally if you can manage it).
15. A website is invaluable. If you have a designer among you that is great. It is possible to design a functional website without knowledge of coding using Wix as we did for CLOUD using a premium version and buying a domain name. This creates a more professional looking site and URL: <https://www.cloudbgv2017.co.uk/>. For security and simplicity, we chose not to run CLOUD email through the website but kept the membership database separate and set up an entirely separate email. The website is a useful filing cabinet but is not a discussion site. Having a forum is fairly dated now and creates problems of moderation but also invites spam and hacking. If a visitor wants to contact us from the site we offer a message option¹⁷.
16. To keep our members up to date with planning and consultation issues we offer a regular electronic *Newsbrief* by email. So people can easily search and review; there is a searchable archive using the blog tool on the site. We are currently on *Newsbrief* 62!¹⁸. We recognise that while e-*Newsbriefs* are convenient, they don't reach everyone.
17. To alert people about crucial meetings or consultations we distribute printed A6 postcards. We have these printed by Vistaprint - around £120 for 2,500 with very rapid turnaround. These are much easier to deliver than A4 flyers, which need folding and disintegrate in the rain and people tend to keep them, even if only as bookmarks. We have also done laminated posters.
18. It is important to communicate with and through the local press and we write press releases which have been regularly carried from the petition in April 2017 through to date. Most recently we collaborated with our two local flood groups to produce a very powerful piece on the cumulative impact of building development in South Lancaster on surface water flooding¹⁹.

19. CLOUD has active Facebook and Twitter accounts. Our Facebook page is useful for sharing CLOUD news with the local flood groups and community groups. Twitter has been invaluable for building contact with other campaign groups and keeping up to date with planning initiatives.

Reading this makes it sound a bit as though it was easy and that we had all the answers. It wasn't and we didn't! We have learned on the job and the key is a good team of people, some laughter, homemade cookies, a lot of patience and determination. It won't be easy!

The prime purpose of CLOUD, from October 2017, to date has been to challenge the Local Plan and the associated concept of Bailrigg Garden Village. From January 2017, until the Main Modifications of the Local Plan in October 2019, there have been a daunting array of consultations as well as the Local Plan Hearings as summarised in Appendix 2.

North Essex Garden Communities

by Rosie Pearson of the Campaign Against Urban Sprawl In Essex (CAUSE)

I didn't think I would become a "local plan campaigner" when I grew up. I was blissfully unaware of local politics and the existence of local plans until the first "garden community" sprouted in north Essex several years ago.

Since then that initial garden community proposal has grown and is England's biggest greenfield housing proposal: the 24,000-home "West Tey". And now it has brothers and sisters, the 9,000-home "East Colchester", and the 13,000-home "West of Braintree", in the form of the "North Essex Garden Communities' project".

To complicate things still further, neighbouring Uttlesford proposes two more. They are all part of the Government's garden towns and villages programme as discussed in detail in this Smart Growth UK report.

The north Essex ones are new towns. There is nothing "garden" about them and there are huge problems with their financing and delivery. My campaign group, CAUSE, believes that large new settlements can never be viable without billions of pounds of government subsidy, something which is definitely not forthcoming. We also agree with Friends of the Earth, which believes that government's garden communities project should be halted in favour of transit-oriented planning – the very thing advocated by Smart Growth UK.

My focus here is to offer three tips on how to run a campaign, based on my personal experience.

Create a team

Campaigning takes up many, many man (and woman) hours. Gather a group of people together, set a monthly meeting date and hunker down for the long term. With luck it won't be as long as we have had to hunker down for, but planning does move slowly.



A “North Essex Garden Community”

[C.A.U.S.E.]

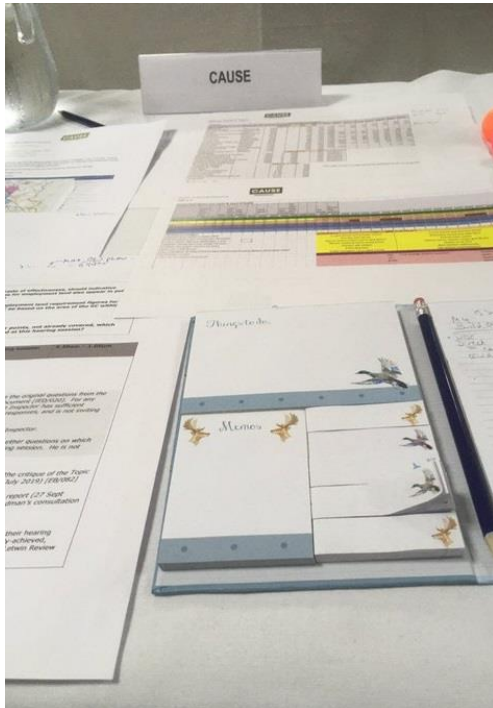
Allocate roles early on. Different people are good at, and enjoy, different things. Some like leafleting and manning stalls at the village fete. Some like social media and creating banners. And some actually enjoy reading council documents. I’m one of those...

Doing things by committee is excruciatingly painful. To counter that, we have split into semi-autonomous sub-groups. That means that we can move fast and make decisions without having to involve 25 people in thousands of emails. Suggested roles are chairperson, secretary, public relations (we were advised to nominate ONE press spokesperson), community organizer, consultation team organiser, chief fund-raiser, treasurer and events organizer.

Be prepared to support each other through thick and thin. Tensions will run high. So long as you recognize that it is normal to be stressed, you can remain focused on the goal – to stop whatever it is you are fighting. Your team needs to stick together; you’ll probably have more than enough enemies outside. It is worth developing a thick skin - councillors will not be nice to you.

Evidence

The planning system doesn’t care about your view or your house price. It doesn’t give a monkeys that you feel really, really upset about a hedge being destroyed or a favourite dog walk being lost forever. In other words, it doesn’t do emotion. It does cold, hard fact. So you will need people in your team to read local plan agenda packs, draft local plans and thousands and thousands of pages of evidence.



Check the council website and find out when local plan, cabinet and full council meetings are. Diarise meetings and send someone to each one to read a three minute statement in the public “have your say” session. That way it will be minuted and it will stop councilors from thinking that no-one cares about whatever unpopular thing it is they are proposing.

Respond to every consultation going. It all helps to ensure that your group is seen as a “stakeholder” worth listening to when you eventually get to examination. Inspectors want to see that people have attempted to engage and to influence, and, in the event of any judicial review a paper trail will be helpful.

Learn the *National Planning Policy Framework*!

Community awareness

Your legitimacy as a campaign group and your ability to pressurize the powers-that-be is based on your support base.

Start a petition. Write letters to the paper and encourage people to do so. Create press releases. Keep a lively debate going on Facebook. Join Twitter – it’s the best place to meet fellow campaigners, learn what is going on across the country, keep in touch with planning issues and share war stories. Set up a basic website. Create posters and car stickers. And encourage consultation responses.

Our supporters have delivered around 50,000 leaflets over the past few years. We find that however much we use the local newspapers and social media, people still are not aware of the new towns on their doorstep.

Hold village meetings – we have held loads and attended others for other groups. Get your parish council on side.

Give supporters actions – simple, clear cut and with as much work done for them as possible.

And fund-raise. It’s highly likely that you will need professional input of some form. We have hired a barrister, planning consultant, transport consultants, air quality expert and sustainability appraisal consultant over the years. It’s been expensive.

With luck, for most people reading this, the area you need to cover will not be as enormous as ours. It is much easier to galvanise one community into action for one short, sharp campaign

than it is to galvanise communities across the whole of north Essex for a seemingly never-ending campaign. Consultation fatigue is a real problem.

Is it worth it?

The odds may seem as though they are against you. We have found that our local authorities have no interest in what residents say. We were ignored from start to finish in the local plan system. (That said, they read every word we put on social media or in the local papers...).



Examination-in-public

[C.A.U.S.E.]

However, there is, at the end of the tunnel, a planning inspector. He or she will not be swayed by local political motivations. Evidence will be all that matters. So, get your head down, prepare your consultation responses, stick to your guns and get ready for the Examination in Public if your other efforts are ignored by the powers-that-be.

The best bit is that you will meet some fantastic, interesting and supportive new people and learn loads. Campaigning can be great fun.

North Uttlesford Garden Community

by the StopNUtown Action Group

An early lesson in opposing NUGC was that not everything we were told by the Council was true. Some was driven by a party-political position and self-interest, some of it by ignorance and some by a self-deluding denial of reality. An alarming volume of half-truths were circulated by the then Conservative-led administration. That of course, may not be true of every council but it

does seem to be an all-to-common trait of those proposing garden communities. So maintain a sceptical eye and demand evidence.

The first task was to harness opposition and support among the nearest communities and to create a formal action group with a brand, website, social media and “presence” that the Council could not ignore. Try to create a team with a division of responsibilities (info gathering, knowledge base, PR/press liaison, fund raising, social media etc.).



“North Uttlesford Garden Community”

In our case we have a motivated, well-organised parish council that handles the formal representations against the GC proposal, so the Action Group’s primary objective is to raise funds to support the PC and to fund legal representation at the public examinations.

To make fundraising work effectively needs constant public awareness of the issues, so alongside fundraising is the need to keep “the story” in the public eye. Don’t be afraid to use what may seem like old fashioned tactics such as protest marches, putting up posters, leafleting and so on. And keep your local press informed on what you are doing and where there might be a photo opportunity. The more people see and hear your campaign, the more likely they are to engage and join in. Target key local issues such as traffic and air quality, and drill down on the deliverability of genuinely affordable homes and those for social needs and key workers.

South Godstone Garden Village

By the Tandridge Lane Action Group

We have spent the last two and a half years fighting this proposal to build what is effectively a new town of 4,000 houses in supposedly-protected pristine green belt countryside. The result now hangs in the balance: a three week “examination-in-public” – at which the proposed garden community was roundly attacked both by residents groups and by many developers - took place last autumn in front of an inspector and we await his verdict.

The proposal is an initiative by the local Tandridge District Council - which has the highest proportion of green belt land in the country (94%) - and forms the centrepiece of its emerging local plan. The plan essentially envisages abandoning house building in its most sustainable

existing settlements, even “Tier 1 towns”, and concentrating it instead in the “garden community”, concreting over hundreds of acres of beautiful countryside in the process. The Council’s whole spatial strategy is therefore flawed.

The plan was put forward by the ruling Conservative party, which long dominated the council. But it is also supported by the opposing LibDems, who overwhelmingly represent the more urban part of the district around Caterham. This is, by any measure of good planning, much the most sustainable place to build homes, with much the best transport links and other facilities such as schools and hospitals, but LibDem councillors are protective of it and have welcomed the proposal to divert construction to the countryside in another part of the district.

This plan has, however, attracted enormous public opposition. Tandridge is not a NIMBY district. Over the last decade or so, its people have tolerated the building of twice as many houses as are laid down in its official plans (the adopted *Core Strategy*) with little or no protest. But they have drawn the line at the garden community and the unnecessary removal of a huge swathe of land from the green belt. Repeated consultations have shown that only about 5% of respondents support the idea, but these overwhelming rejections have been consistently ignored by the Council, along with most evidence put forward at consultation stage!

We have concentrated on fighting and campaigning within the system with a two-pronged attack: building an incontrovertible case against the garden community in planning terms and fighting (and defeating) councillors who support the development at elections.

The first of these has involved a massive amount of reading, digesting and analysing a seemingly unending avalanche of Council reports and documents on the garden community, as well as getting to grips with national policy. We have commissioned expert reports from leading authorities on the state and value of the local green belt, associated transport and infrastructure, local ecology and the economic viability of the garden community.

We also engaged a planning consultant from a leading firm that does not normally represent objectors to developments who agreed to work with us because he and his colleagues became so convinced of the soundness of our case and also the paucity of the emerging local plan. We took the advice of a QC early on how best to present our case, and – indeed – took the plunge and hired one to represent us for the most crucial two days of the examination in public at the last minute when we saw the impact that the QCs representing other parties were having. We have raised some £70,000 from local people to pay for it all.

As a result, we believe we made a compelling case that building the garden community would run directly counter to national policy, whether considered under the old or new *National Planning Policy Framework* and it would almost certainly be economically unviable as well. We showed that the plan breached the *NPPF* in at least 10 places; that the “exceptional circumstances” that would be needed under it to justify removing the land from the green belt do not exist; that the railway line on which it was supposed to depend will never draw many passengers, lacking a direct service to London; that the infrastructure that would be required is not fully costed; and that it would not attract employment either, simply becoming a commuter town instead a sustainable community.

We argued that any development should instead be concentrated on existing, sustainable towns, especially in the north and west of the district near employment centres and good transport links. Most of the other participants in the examination took similar positions and there was almost universal opposition to the garden community, even from many developers.

Indeed, the Tandridge Housing Forum, a developers' grouping, produced compelling evidence that the Council's plans were hopelessly over-optimistic and that the garden village would never be able to provide the housing required of it in the requisite time scale. But only time will tell whether we have all managed to convince the inspector.

The second prong of our attack, fighting local elections, has scored spectacular successes. But, again, it is too early to say whether it will succeed.

When we started work, the political odds looked to be overwhelmingly stacked against us. After the 2016 elections, the Conservatives, promoting the plan, had 33 seats on the 44-seat Council, having held control of it since the turn of the millennium. The LibDems occupied another seven, and an independent who supports the garden community held one of the remaining two.

There was just one councillor on the other side, and she had just been elected that year. But, in a sign of things to come, she had trounced the leader of the Council by over 1,000 votes, standing for the Oxted and Limpsfield Residents' Group (OLRG), another leading opponent of the plan. Over the next months she was joined by an OLRG colleague through a big by-election upset, and by two Conservatives who crossed the floor in protest.

There was no election in 2017, but the following year the combined residents' groups took five seats, which - together with LibDem gains – brought the Conservative majority down to two. The chairmen of the Planning Policy Committee, that was pushing through the garden community, and of the Housing Committee both went down to heavy defeats by objectors.

In 2019 residents took another five seats, depriving the Conservatives of control for the first time in two decades, and becoming the second largest party. This time the new leader of the Council and the new chair of the Housing Committee were ousted by one-thousand vote majorities. Indeed, so overwhelming was the opposition to the plans that nearly twice as many people voted for residents' candidates in the seats where they stood as did for the Conservatives and LibDems combined.

Since then both the Council's chief executive and the chief planning officer behind the garden community have unexpectedly disappeared from the scene. Only one of the original five architects of the scheme remains.

Yet victory still remains elusive. The Conservatives and the LibDems continue to join forces to push the plans and, though the residents are likely to form the largest party after May's elections, they are expected to go on doing so, if the inspector approves them. So we await his verdict...

MHCLG approved garden communities

Aylesbury Garden Town

Site: "... there is no new town planned. Garden Town status provides the opportunity to receive additional funding so that Aylesbury can become a well-designed area with good infrastructure, quality green spaces and new job opportunities".

The *Aylesbury Garden Town Draft Masterplan for Consultation*²⁰ covers the whole of Aylesbury plus urban extensions.

Promoters: Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council and two local enterprise partnerships (Buckinghamshire Thames Valley and South East Midlands).

<https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/>

Local authority: Aylesbury Vale District Council (shortly to be Buckinghamshire Unitary Council)

Area: Unspecified.

No. of houses: Unspecified. Proposal included all 15,000 houses around Aylesbury for next 20 years (and possibly another 12,000 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: Three stations and services to London, Princes Risborough and Milton Keynes. Major road the A41. "The south of the district is well connected by road to London and access to the M40 and M25 motorways" Buses.

Opposition campaign: Stoke Mandeville Action Group

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

History: Urban extensions to Aylesbury and other local development.

Current position: Proceeding, insofar as it exists in any meaningful sense. Consultation on masterplan January 2020.

The case against: Simply an agglomeration of unrelated urban extensions whose only relationship is that they are in or near Aylesbury.

PR: "By 2050 the aim is for Aylesbury to be a destination town with an attractive town centre and new garden communities, connected to the existing neighbourhoods through really good, innovative design."

Bailrigg Garden Village

Site: South of Lancaster.

Promoter: Lancaster City Council.

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/bailrigg-garden-village>

Local authority: Lancaster City Council.

Area: Between 300 and 350 hectares.

No. of houses: 3,500 - 5,000

Other development: Not immediately.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield sites – will join Bailrigg to Lancaster and Galgate will be nearly in Bailrigg Garden Village – gap between likely to attract more development.

Transport Links: A6 will be in the middle of development. M6 close but nearest junction is south of Galgate. Nearest railway station - centre of Lancaster.

Opposition campaign: Citizens of Lancaster Opposed to Unnecessary Development

<https://www.cloudbgv2017.co.uk/>

History: Galgate is nearest village, pop 1,200, Bailrigg is currently the Lancaster University Campus.

Current position: Not yet built.

The case against: Houses not needed, air pollution from increased cars, congestion on A6, infrastructure costs better spent creating jobs, public services already being cut and will have extra people to provide for, flood risk to Galgate, loss of natural and historic environment. Again this is a ridiculously low housing density at 6 houses per acre.

Basingstoke Garden Town

Site: Manydown, west of Basingstoke.

Promoters: Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council, Hampshire County Council, Urban & Civic and Wellcome Trust.

<https://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/Manydown>

[https://planning.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-](https://planning.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OM587BCR0AP00)

[applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OM587BCR0AP00](https://planning.basingstoke.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OM587BCR0AP00)

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

Local authority: Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council.

Area: 321 hectares – will apparently include 101 hectare country park and 59 hectares of parks and play places.

No. of houses: 3,520

Other development: Businesses, community facilities, schools and country park. Planned to have two primary schools, two local centres, one health centre, one sports area including pavilion and five gypsy and traveller pitches.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Vehicular access via A339, B3400 and Roman Road. Wrong side of Basingstoke for M3. Station in Basingstoke but 3-4km from new development.

Opposition campaign: There have been significant objections during the public consultation, plans have been adjusted several times.

History: Basingstoke was a small market town but was allocated as a London Overspill town in 1961 – it currently has about 70,000 households and around 175,000 people. The rapid growth has all been across greenfield sites.

Current position: Developers will be Urban and Civic. Work is finalising contracts for the destruction of the Manydown country area.

The case against: Greenfield sites with ecological damage. Planning permission was given by Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council to itself although it claims it was considered in the same way as any other application, local secondary Fort Hill School was closed although a new secondary school is proposed for the Garden Village but this school will not be built for phase one as too few students are claimed. Transport links are limited to roads and will further overload the A339. Only 4 houses per acre. This is a ridiculously unutilised sprawl even if some of it will supposedly be parkland. A case of higher density and leave the greenfields where they are required.

Berinsfield Garden Village

Site: Berinsfield already exists but has been given “garden village” status which will “unlock new development”.

Promoters: South Oxfordshire District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council.

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/news/2019/2019-06/garden-village-status-awarded-two-locations-southern-oxfordshire>

Local authority: South Oxfordshire District Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: More development around Berinsfield is expected to follow the award of “garden status”.

Other development: Unclear.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: road only, close to A4074 to Oxford and Reading but this is not a dual carriageway.

History: Berinsfield was built as a huge new council estate on an area used as a war time airfield but essentially a greenfield site in 1960. The first new village to be built on greenfield for over 200 years.

Current position: Awaiting announcement of any further expansion.

The case against: Greenfield, will do ecological damage and has very limited transport links

Bicester Garden Town

Site: Residential: Graven Hill, Elmsbrook, Kingsmere and Wretchwick Green

Industrial: Network Bicester, Bicester Gateway, Bicester Heritage, Bicester Office Park Link 9, Graven Hill and Wretchwick Green.

Promoter: Cherwell District Council.

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/206/bicester-developments/428/bicester-garden-town>

Local authority: Cherwell District Council.

Area: Pre-development 8.58km², population in 2011 was 32,642 – this is expected to double. Graven Hill is 187 hectares. Other areas are smaller – mainly 1-20 hectares. Bicester Heritage (old airfield) is 32 hectares although not all is yet due for development.

No. of houses on new sites: 13,000

Other development: Very likely to get even more development as part of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.

Greenfield/brownfield: Some of the sites are old airfield, Graven Hill is old Ministry of Defence land, but most of each site is previously undeveloped even if there is historic justification for brownfield claims. Elmsbrook is supposedly the first truly eco-settlement (house prices to match, £390,000+)

Transport Links: Road and rail links to London and Birmingham via Junction 9 on M40 and Bicester Village and Bicester North Stations, road links to Oxford via A34 and Aylesbury via A41. Claim that “few places in the UK are as well connected as Bicester” is not justified however.

Opposition campaigns: The new developments were announced by central Government so opportunities for objection were limited.

Bicester Traffic Action Group attempts to protect quality of life in Bicester.

No Expressway Group are active locally to object to Expressway and Arc.

Save Gavray Meadows for Wildlife:

<https://bicesteritag.jimdo.com/>

<https://www.noexpressway.org/>

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/savegavraywildlifemeadows/>

History: Bicester is an old market town, settlement first established in Saxon times, name Bicester used since mid-17th C. Pre-development 8.58km², population in 2011 was 32,642

Current position: Development already in progress.

The case against: Most of the development is already under construction. Arc development still being opposed.

PR: “Bicester has transformed itself from a quiet market town, tucked away in rural Oxfordshire, to being recognised as a town spearheading managed growth, sustainability and innovation.”

Borough Green Gardens

Site: between M26 to the North, A20 to the East, Ightham bypass roundabout to West and village of Borough Green to south.

Promoter: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

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

Local authority: Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 3,000

Other development: Relief road to divert 900 vehicles at rush hours from Borough Green, two primary schools, new employment floorspace, community and neighbourhood hubs, doctors surgery, local shops, sports centres and playing fields.

Greenfield/brownfield: Green belt and partly within an AONB. Brownfield according to the local authority as it includes former quarry workings and the H+H Celcon factory site. But there are many mature trees, pastureland and natural areas much larger in area than the quarry workings. This area is described as “scrubland” by the local authority, so much of it is previously developed land restored to green end uses which has become, therefore, greenfield.

Transport Links: As well as the relief road there are plans to increase public transport and add cycleways. Close to M26 and A20.

Opposition campaign: Stop Borough Green Garden City – BGGC Stop 19.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/266669194046522/>

History: The consultation on the local plan (including Borough Green Gardens) was held in October and November 2018.

Current position: Local plan modifications.

The case against: There is a claim that the site will “increase biodiversity” especially as “the consortium of landowners behind the Borough Green Gardens scheme live or work locally or onsite and are very aware of the existence of flora and fauna on their land” but it appears to be the usual removal of current biodiversity to replace it with “ecological corridors”, “new habitats”, “high quality green spaces” and “woodland planting”. However, replacing mature trees and topsoil following modern estate creation methods would take 100-10,000 years. The website is very keen on expressing its green “credentials” which suggests local opposition on ecological grounds.

PR: “A crucial part of the proposals for Borough Green Gardens is the inclusion of a much-needed Relief Road, created to improve access and reduce existing traffic on the A25 and A227.”

Burtree Garden Village

Site: Faverdale

Promoter: Darlington Borough Council and Hellens Group.

<https://hellens.co.uk/garden-village-success/>

Local authority: Darlington Borough Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 2,000, of which 500 affordable.

Other development: 200,000m² of employment space, care home, shops and primary school.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: “Major infrastructure upgrades to help improve local connectivity in and out of Darlington.” Essentially car-dependent.

History: Given garden village status in June 2019 before any details had been made public or formal application received by the Council.

Current position: Developer says work is likely to start in 2020. There are very few details about this development on the web.

The case against: Concerns raised about lack of smaller housing.

Culm Garden Village

Site: Farmland east of Cullompton.

Promoter: Mid Devon District Council.

<https://culmgardenvillage.co.uk/>

Local authority: Mid Devon District Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 1,750 to 2033, 850 after that & eventually 5,000.

Other development: 20,000 m² of employment space.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Beside M5. New town centre relief road planned.

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

Opposition campaign: Residents against Cullompton Expansion.

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

History: Previously East Cullompton. Garden village status imposed in January 2017.

Current position: The first two phases of the garden village are to be imposed for development under the Mid Devon local plan review. The final phase would be imposed under the “Greater Exeter” proposals.

The case against: Classic car-dependent, greenfield sprawl.

PR: “A key structuring element of the landscape and green infrastructure vision for Culm Garden Village is the potential to connect together key existing and proposed landscape features, parks, open spaces and green corridors to deliver a ‘Green Triangle’.”

Cyber Central

Site: To the west of Cheltenham

Promoters: Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, Gloucestershire County Council and GFirst LEP.

<https://www.gfirstlep.com/news/cyber-central/>

<https://www.cybercentralcheltenham.co.uk/>

Local authority: Cheltenham Borough Council.

https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/news/article/2365/cyber_central_next_steps_revealed

Area: 132 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,100

Other development: This development is centred on the concept that: “Cheltenham is internationally recognised as the ‘cradle of cyber innovation for the UK’. Our investment of £22M is the largest of all our project investments and will fund the necessary road infrastructure to deliver this ambitious project.” There would be 45 hectares of business park.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: The £22m is being used for various infrastructure improvements but these are mainly for road traffic although an improved cycleway and pedestrian access is mentioned.

History: The business park site bought by Cheltenham Council for £37.5m in August 2019.

Current position: Firm proposals awaited. The two borough councils are discussing using compulsory purchase powers to force land owners to agree to surveys and “engagement”. Search for a development partner getting underway.

The case against: Classic greenfield sprawl.

PR: “The aim is to deliver a vibrant community, bringing high quality housing, opportunities and services to our residents and businesses, that also places Cheltenham and the wider Gloucestershire county firmly on the map as a world leader in cyber tech.”

Dalton Barracks

Site: Close to Abingdon including on what used to be Abingdon Airfield.

Promoter: Vale of White Horse District Council. Hankinson Duckett Associates are preparing the Supplementary Planning Document.

<http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/dalton-ba>

Local authority: Vale of White Horse District Council.

Area: 288 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,200 and possibly up to 4,500.

Other development: Not stated.

Greenfield/brownfield: Green belt but on a recently used military airfield, so part brownfield, part greenfield. Proposers apparently sensitive to the Cothill Fen Special Area of Conservation on the site so plans include provision of parkland. Degree of surface water flood risk throughout the site.

Transport Links: The design will incorporate “sustainable transport initiatives”. It is between the A420 and A34 both of which give links to Oxford. Also a planned access to the nearby Lodge Hill Park and Ride. Suggestions that the Oxford-Cambridge Arc plans will reduce A34 traffic.

History: Currently an Army base and likely to remain so until 2029 but still in local plan. Added to garden communities programme June 2019.

Current position: Supplementary planning document being prepared.

The case against: Doubts about its availability and remote from rail transport.

Didcot Garden Town

Site: East and west of Didcot.

Promoters: [South Oxfordshire District Council](#), [Vale of White Horse District Council](#).

<http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/business/support-business/supporting-our-town-centres/didcot/didcot-garden-town-0>

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

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 15,000

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

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Buses and the A34. Would also be close to the proposed Cambridge-Newbury “Expressway”.

Opposition Campaign: Didcot Garden Town Community.

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

History: Urban extensions around Didcot. *Didcot Garden Town Delivery Plan* published in 2017. Consultations to revisions to South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Joint Allocations policy in March 2019.

Current position: Going through planning system.

The case against: Car-dependent sprawl on the grand scale.

Dunstable Park Garden Village

Site: Dunstable Aerodrome.

Promoter: The Rutland Group.

<https://www.dunstableparkmasterplan.com/>

Local authority: Waverley Borough Council.

Area: 253 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,800

Other development: Employment space, school and health centre.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mixed.

Transport links: The A281.

Opposition campaign: Protect Our Waverley.

<http://powcampaign.org/>

History: Dunstable Park includes Dunstable Aerodrome and adjoining business park. Ownership was transferred to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 2013 and it entered a partnership with former owner, the Rutland Group, to progress development. Plans to impose 1,800 homes on the former airfield were approved by the secretary of state in March 2018. The High Court rejected a challenge by POW and CPRE in November 2018 and the Court of Appeal upheld this in October 2019. Dunstable Park’s garden village status was imposed in June 2019.

Current position: A new access road from the A281 was approved in October 2018.

The case against: Car dependent with inadequate road infrastructure, set in an Area of Great Landscape Value at a site remote from other centres of population.

PR: “It offers a new concept in rural living, surrounded by parkland, inspired by its aviation history and landscape context. Like a traditional village, Dunstable Park will combine working and living and will offer a degree of self-containment in its provision of local services. It will be integrated with the surrounding landscape, dedicated to recreation and biodiversity.”

Dunton Hills Garden Village



“Dunton Hills Garden Village”

[R.A.I.D.]

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

Promoter: Commercial Estates Group.

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

Local authority: Brentwood Borough Council.

<http://www.brentwood.gov.uk/index.php?cid=2607>

Area: 264ha.

No. of houses: 2,700 by 2033 and 4,000 eventually.

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.

Opposition campaign: Basildon Residents Against Inappropriate Development.

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

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1870000989981679/>

History: 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. Added to garden village programme in 2017.

Current position: Council has received £630,000 from Homes England to plan the development.

The case against: Standard greenfield sprawl and no exceptional circumstances to justify green belt loss.

East of Biggleswade

Site: Urban extension east of Baden Powell Way in Biggleswade and “visibly and physically” separate from the town”, though in reality contiguous to existing suburbs.

Promoter: Central Bedfordshire Council.

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy/468/local_plan_-_overview/4

Local authority: Central Bedfordshire Council.

Area: 100 hectares+.

No. of houses: 1,500

Other development: Healthcare facilities (subject to NHS), a mix of retail and at least one drinking establishment, day nurseries, early years, school and sixth form facilities, indoor sport and leisure facilities.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Provision of transport links including public transport to Biggleswade town centre and station, cycleways and pedestrian access. This development would be supported by the “Oxford-Cambridge Arc” transport links; the Council says: “We will continue to engage with central government to seek improvements to the A1. The proposed East-West Railway and the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway will also support this development”.

History: Development brief approved November 2018.

Current position: Unclear.

The case against: Standard car-dependent, greenfield sprawl.

Easton Park Garden Community

Site: On land north of A120 between Stansted Airport and Great Dunmow.

Promoter: Uttlesford District Council.

https://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/media/6225/5-Three-garden-communities-locations/pdf/5_Three_New_Settl_Locs.pdf

https://uttlesford.gov.uk/media/7013/Easton-Park-Garden-Community/pdf/Easton_Park.pdf

Local authority: Uttlesford District Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 1,800 by 2033 and ultimately 10,000.

Other development: seven primary schools (two form entry), one secondary school (seven form entry), early years and childcare facilities, healthcare facilities, community and youth centres. Employment space.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield, including an area of ancient woodland and high yielding agricultural land.

Transport Links: Close to A120 and M11 – there would be a direct link on to the A120 which would be improved, as would M11 Junction 8, though this would have delayed the scheme. Other “enhancements to the local highway network”.

Opposition campaign: Stop Easton Park.

<https://www.stopeastonpark.co.uk/>

History: Added to local plan 2018.

Current position: Rejected by local plan inspector who found plan unsound, January 2020.

The case against: Would have a huge impact on infrastructure, productive farmland, employment, wildlife and possibly a listed building within the area. Concerns have also been raised about the site's proximity to Stansted Airport and there is a recently discovered high-pressure gas pipeline across the site.

Grazeley Garden Settlement

Site: Somewhere near Grazeley.

Promoters: Thames Valley LEP, Wokingham Borough Council, Reading Borough Council and West Berkshire District Council. Englefield Estate, Hallam Land Management and Wilson Enterprises.

www.wokingham.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/GatewayLink.aspx?allId=422580

Local authorities: Wokingham, Reading Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: Up to 15,000.

Other development: Claims to be large enough to be self-sustaining but also being promoted as having easy access to London and Reading for employment and education. Employment space, three primary and two secondary schools, health centres, new road links, park and ride etc..

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Claims to have “easy access to Heathrow and Gatwick”, close to A33 and easy access to M4, but 4km from railway station at Reading.

History: This development has been planned since about 2012 but dependent on large inputs of government grant.

Current position: Seeking £300M towards the estimated £750M needed for infrastructure. Bid submitted in parallel to planning process.

The case against: Expensive, car-dependent, greenfield development.

Greater Exeter Garden Settlement

Site: “Across Exeter and the surrounding area”, with suggestion it would be a collection of garden villages rather than one larger settlement. Plans are, however, nebulous for exactly where. The *Greater Exeter Strategic Plan* was delayed by at least another year in October 2019.

Promoters: Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council.

<https://www.gesp.org.uk/>

Local authorities: Exeter City Council, Devon County Council, East Devon District Council, Mid Devon District Council and Teignbridge District Council.

Area: Unclear.

No. of houses: 20,000 (Exeter currently has 53,000).

Other development: Unclear although it is receiving a grant for “infrastructure”.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield although a suggestion that a Network Rail site would be taken over.

Transport Links: Impossible to tell without firmer plans.

Opposition campaign: East Devon Watch.

<https://eastdevonwatch.org/category/greater-exeter/>

History: A “call for sites” for “Greater Exeter” ran in the spring of 2017. Developers proposed over 700 sites and further calls may be launched.

Current position: The *Greater Exeter Strategic Plan* will be a new formal statutory document, providing the overall spatial strategy and level of housing and employment land to be provided in the period to 2040.

The case against: Not a “settlement” in any meaningful sense, but likely to be blobs of mostly car-dependent greenfield sprawl, many proposed by developers.

Halsnead Garden Village

Site: The former Halsnead Park Estate astride the M62.

Promoter: Knowsley Borough Council/Bloor Homes.

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

Local Authority: Knowsley Borough Council.

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

Area: 174ha.

No. of houses: 1,600

Other development: 22.5ha of employment space.

Greenfield/brownfield: Majority 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”.

Opposition campaign: Save Whiston’s Greenbelt.

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

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

Current position: Masterplan being finalized.

The case against: Entirely road-dependent and majority is greenfield in a region with plenty of brownfield.

PR: “The site benefits from excellent access to the strategic road network, not least given its location adjacent to one of the major economic development corridors in the North West, the M62 motorway.”

Handforth Garden Village

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

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

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

Local Authority: Cheshire East Council.

<https://cheshireeast-consult.objective.co.uk/file/5240684>

Area: 102ha.

No. of houses: 1,500

Other development: Care home, primary school, shops and hotel. 12 hectares of employment land.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield.

Transport Links: The A34 and A555.

Opposition campaign: Hands Off Handforth Greenbelt.

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

History: CS49, the “North Cheshire Growth Village”.

Current position: SPD adopted December 2018.

The case against: Low-density sprawl.

Harlow-Gilston Garden Village

Site: Gilston, north of Harlow.

Promoter: Places for People/City and Provincial Properties.

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

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

Area: 1,500ha.

Other development: Education, health, leisure and community facilities.

No. of houses: 10,000

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield, mostly formerly green belt (being removed).

Transport Links: Buses, the M11 and A414 plus a new road bridge over the River Stort.

Opposition campaign: Stop Harlow North.

[http://www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/council-](http://www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/council-indiv.php?id=627&name=STOP%20HARLOW%20NORTH)

[indiv.php?id=627&name=STOP%20HARLOW%20NORTH](http://www.eastwickandgilston.org.uk/council-indiv.php?id=627&name=STOP%20HARLOW%20NORTH)

<https://www.facebook.com/STOP-Harlow-North-Campaign-151589618240500/>

History: Previously Harlow North. Included in the East Herts District Plan.

Current position: Three planning applications submitted summer 2019 for 8,500 homes.

Neighbourhood plan drafted to try to influence the design.

The case against: Development imposed on green belt land in response to local authority meeting “housing need”. “Countryside and the character of the local area is important,” says developer’s PR. “Because of this, our plan is for a series of villages rather than one large development.” As a result 60% of the overall area would not be developed, vastly increasing the envelope and impact of the development.

PR: “Most of the land within the Gilston Area is currently quite intensively farmed. Our proposals will restore much of this land to open countryside, enabling residents to enjoy new walking paths, trails and open green space.”

Hemel Garden Communities

Site: Land in Borough of Dacorum and St Albans District of Hertfordshire, north and east of Hemel Hempstead.

Promoters: Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and The Crown Estate.

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/hemel-garden-communities-charter.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

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

Local authorities: Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council.

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/hemel-garden-communities>

Area: Several hundred hectares.

No. of houses: 11,000

Other development: Claims also 10,000 jobs, “green infrastructure” including a ‘country park’.

Greenfield/brownfield: Entirely greenfield and partly green belt.

Transport Links: Remote from rail access but good links to M4, A414. “Charter” includes claims that density would support services “within walking distance” and there would be “clustering around public transport routes”, presumably bus stops.

Opposition campaign: CPRE Hertfordshire.

Website: <https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/news/current-news/item/2577-hemel-hempstead-garden-communities?highlight=WyljoZW1lbCJd>

History: Successful bid submitted to MHCLG for funding in November 2018.

Current position: Being pursued through local plans processes.

The case against: Typical car-dependent sprawl.

Infinity Garden Village

Site: Wragley Way, near Stenson Fields.

Promoter: Hallam Land Management.

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

Local Authorities: Derby City Council and South Derbyshire District Council.

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

Area: 450 hectares.

No. of houses: 3,740

Other development: Schools and shops.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

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 Sinfen 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...”

History: Previously just the “Wragley Way Allocation” and “Lowes Farm” in local plan.

Current position: Proceeding.

The case against: Car-dependent, greenfield urban extension.

Langarth Garden Village (formerly Threemilestone Garden Village)

Site: Langarth, near Truro.

Promoter: Cornwall Council.

<https://lovetruro.net/langarth/>

Local authority: Cornwall Council.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/langarth-garden-village/>

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 2,700 (critics say long-term plans for 4,000).

Other development: Community facilities, school and a site for the “Stadium for Cornwall”.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: New £47m Northern Access Road.

History: Planning consent already before it was added to the garden communities programme as “Threemilestone Garden Village” in June 2019.

Current position: Funding for a masterplan and land acquisition released November 2019.

The case against: Standard car-dependent sprawl.

PR: “Langarth Garden Village will be home to people of different ages and lifestyles.”

Langwith Garden Village (formerly West of Elvington)

Site: Land to the West of Elvington Lane outside York.

Two other York sites are also marked for future “garden” developments - one on land east of Metcalfe Lane near Osballdwike would contain 845 new homes while a larger site on land west of Wigginton Road and across the Ring Road from Clifton Moor would have 1,348 new homes.

Promoters: York City Council and Langwith Development Partnership (Sandby York Ltd and Oakgate/Caddick group).

<http://www.landscapeagency.co.uk/new-garden-village/>

Local authority: York City Council.

<https://www.york.gov.uk/localplan>

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: Up to 5,000.

Other development: “Shops and schools”.

Greenfield/brownfield: greenbelt and greenfield.

Transport Links: Not stated.

History: Land previously earmarked for the new village of Whinthorpe.

Current position: Information on this scheme is extremely limited.

The case against: Green belt, greenfield and judged too small to be ‘sustainable’.

Longcross Garden Village

Site: Former Defence Evaluation and Research Agency site and Longcross Studios.

Promoters: Crest Nicholson/Aviva Investors.

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

Local Authority: Runnymede Borough Council.

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

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

Area: Longcross North 36 hectares, Longcross South 87 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,400

Other development: 80,000m² of commercial floorspace, school, shops, care home.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly brownfield.

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

History: Long-standing out-of-town development beside the M3, subsequently dubbed a “garden village”.

Current position: Development now underway.

The case against: Car dependency and traffic generation.

PR: “Our vision for Longcross Garden Village will be a diverse new 21st century community which combines the exceptional attributes of Surrey Village life, the unique setting of the site and the principles of modern day garden villages to create a truly distinctive, unique and sustainable living and working environment.”

Long Marston Garden Village

Site: Long Marston Airfield.

Promoter: Stratford on Avon District Council and Cala Homes.

<https://www.cala.co.uk/land-and-planning/planning-applications/marston-mead-garden-village>

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/planning-building/long-marston-airfield-spd.cfm>

<https://www.stratford.gov.uk/doc/205940/name/ED1531%20LMA%20Long%20Marston%20New%20Settlement%20Vision%20February%202014.pdf>

Local Authority: Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Area: 205 hectares.

No. of houses: 3,500

Other development: Western Relief Road, 13ha of employment space, two primary schools, leisure facilities and “village centre” but these will be built gradually as houses are built and sold. e.g Western Relief Road is not envisaged to be completed until after the first 950 houses are built, second primary school only after 2200 homes built.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mixed – on the site of Long Marston Airfield.

Transport Links: On the B4632 but a new Western Relief Road is supposed to be built as part of the development infrastructure. The usual claims for sustainable transport are made; the area is flat which will encourage cycling and there may also be buses.

Opposition campaigns: Stratford Residents Action Group and CPRE Warwickshire are objecting to the Western Relief Road on which the development depends.

<https://srag.co.uk/>

<http://www.cprewarwickshire.org.uk/planning/>

History: One of the (many) unsuccessful “eco town” proposals but proof that developers seldom give up on a bad idea. Allocated again as a proposal in the core strategy adopted in 2016 and subsequently “garden village” status was pasted on.

Current position: Outline consent for 400 homes agreed. Application submitted for remaining 3,100. Currently dubbed “Marston Mead Village”.

The case against: Objection to development from Environment Agency due to proposed Western Relief Road being a flood risk. Usual claims of sustainable and green corridors etc. throughout the “vision”. Appears to be insufficient road linkage or planned public transport for this number of houses.

Meecebrook Garden Town

Site: Cold Meece near Stone in Staffordshire.

Promoter: Stafford Borough Council.

<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/meecebrook-new-garden-settlement>

Local authority: Stafford Borough Council.

Area: 1,000 hectares.

No. of houses: 10,000

Other development: Plans still nebulous - possibly schools, health centres, new West Coast Mainline station, new junction to M6, 200 hectares of employment land.

Greenfield/brownfield: Former MoD land but mainly greenfield.

Transport Links: Not very far from the M6, linked via the substandard A519 and the A51 - essentially rural roads not suitable for traffic from this many houses. West Coast Main Line passes through the area.

History: Chosen for garden settlement in March 2019.

Current position: To be pursued via the local plan.

The case against: MoD land claimed to be brownfield but in actuality is mainly a greenfield site, no suitable existing road network.

PR: “The proposals to create the garden settlement could relieve the pressure of building more homes in other towns and villages across the borough – helping to retain the area’s ‘shire identity’.”

Newton Abbot Garden Community/Town

Site: Several sites north, west and south of Newton Abbot, yet to be agreed, including Decoy Woods.

Promoter: Teignbridge District Council.

<https://democracy.teignbridge.gov.uk/documents/s5763/Newton%20Abbot%20Garden%20Community%20bid%20-%20Executive%20Summary.pdf>

http://gis.teignbridge.gov.uk/TeignbridgePlanningOnline/Results.aspx?Type=Appeal&Refval=19%2F00059%2FFREF&MN=Y&fbclid=IwAR2cyzYGpXJwbg6nFb6IEK1evsxEVznH2uz67rtUMJo8W5BAqpiiPA4_vR0

Local authority: Teignbridge District Council.

<https://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/news/latest-council-news/august-2019/rosy-future-beckons-for-teignbridge-garden-community/>

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: “Garden Community opportunities could deliver around 6,800 additional new homes over a 20 year period.”

Other development: 40 hectares of employment space south and west of the town. primary school, restaurant, bar, hotel, local centre, open space, care home, 12,500 m² of employment space on 40 hectares.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield including Decoy Woods adjacent to Wolborough Fen. 250 homes on brownfield land.

Transport Links: Multiple sites yet to be agreed.

Opposition campaign: Newton Says No.

<https://www.newtonsaysno.co.uk/>

History: Received “garden community” status in March 2019.

Current position: The Council will decide on “growth locations” through the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan and local plan review due to be adopted by 2022.

The case against: Not a town or community at all, just an agglomeration of urban residential and employment developments around Newton Abbot. Mostly greenfield, too many houses and unsuitably priced for local need.

PR: “The future growth and prosperity of Newton Abbot and the surrounding area could be secured by confirmation of the town’s status as a ‘Garden Community’.”

North Dorchester Garden Village

Site: An arc of land from Charminster to Stinsford, to the North of Dorchester and the water meadows and the River Frome.

Promoters: Dorset Council, North Dorchester Consortium including Persimmon Homes.

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/planning-buildings-land/planning-policy/dorset-council-local-plan/reviews-of-the-plans-from-the-former-council-areas/west-dorset-weymouth-and-portland/local-plan-review-west-dorset-weymouth-portland.aspx>

Local authority: Dorset Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 3,500

Other development: GPs, dental surgeries, employment land for business growth, shops, community facilities and a school campus for first, middle and secondary age children.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield including the River Frome which is a SSSI.

Transport Links: Link road to A35 and A37. Separated from Dorchester itself by flood plains.

Opposition campaign: STAND (Save The Area North of Dorchester).

<https://stand-dorchester.net/>

History: Originally proposed by West Dorset District Council to meet the bulk of its Government housing target. West Dorset became part of Dorset Council in April 2019.

Current position: New local plan being developed for Dorset. Consultations overwhelmingly against North Dorchester but the Government has given it £150,000 to develop the garden village.

The case against: The development would increase the population of Dorchester by 35%. The claim is that houses are needed for work places in Dorchester to stop people commuting, but this would just leave empty houses elsewhere. There is no indication of local need for these houses. Poundbury on other side of Dorchester is still growing. The new houses are across a flood plain from Dorchester making building road links very difficult. The land is all greenfield and will damage the local ecology including SSSI sites.

North East Chelmsford Garden Community

Site: Unclear.

Promoter: Chelmsford City Council.

<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/developments-and-improvements-in-chelmsford/chelmsford-garden-village/>

Local authority: Chelmsford City Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 10,000

Other development: 45,000m² of employment space, neighbourhood centre, three schools.

Greenfield/brownfield: Unclear.

Transport Links: Part of the new Chelmsford North East By-pass and a new radial distributor road. Bus services.

History: Proposed as part of local plan.

Current position: Being developed through the local plan.

The case against: Very much part of road expansion in the area.

North Essex Garden Communities

Sites: Three new towns, totalling up to 43,000 homes, at three sites along the A120 corridor:

- **Colchester Tendring Borders Garden Community (“East Colchester”)**
 - Up to 9,000 homes; 424 hectares, proposed start date 2023/24.
- **Colchester Braintree Borders Garden Community (“West Tey”), west of Colchester & Marks Tey**
 - Up to 24,000 homes; 1,170 hectares; proposed start date 2028/29.
- **West of Braintree Garden Community (“WOB”)**
 - Up to 13,000 (includes 3,000 in the Uttlesford Local Plan); 685 hectares; proposed start date 2023/24.



A “North Essex Garden Community”

[Hands Off Wivenhoe]

Local Authorities: Essex County Council, Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council. The four councils jointly own a “delivery vehicle”, North Essex Garden Communities Ltd. Spending to date £7.6m on feasibility studies. NEGC Ltd wishes to become the first ever Locally Led New Town Development Corporation.

<https://www.ne-gc.co.uk/>

Other development: Employment, retail, education etc..

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield. (There is an active airfield and flying school at ‘WOB’, and hence not deemed “previously developed”).

Transport Links: Colchester/Tendring – No rail access. New link road between A120 and A133 proposed with HIF bid to ‘unlock’ the community. West Tey – served by Marks Tey station on Great Eastern main Line, currently running at full capacity, and most of the site too far from the station for walking – access difficult and dangerous by bike and foot anyway. Sandwiched between 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. Employment land will be allocated in all three towns, but there is not robust employment strategy to address the council promise to provide one job per dwelling in or near the garden communities.

Opposition: Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex (CAUSE).

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

Stop Erosion of Rural Communities in Local Essex.

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

Hands Off Wivenhoe.

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

History: The proposals were examined in 2018 and the inspector found them unsound.

Current position: The authorities decided to continue preparing additional evidence. This will be examined 14 January 2020 for two weeks. Inspectors for the Uttlesford local plan rejected the garden communities, including its section of West of Braintree, as unsound, January 2020.

The case against: CAUSE analysis demonstrates that very large new settlements cannot be viable. The group believes that “garden cities” must be tested for ‘seaworthiness’ to prevent further waste of tax-payers’ money and has published a paper calling for a ‘Plimsoll line’ for the planning of garden cities. The group says government and local authorities must learn from the mistakes of the North Essex Garden Communities project and carry out a full assessment of economic and environmental cost.

CAUSE draws parallels with Samuel Plimsoll, who campaigned for a rigorously calculated “load line” to ensure that ships are not overloaded and unstable. The Government’s garden towns project needs equally rigorous analysis to decide whether to build a “garden city”, where and how big it should be.

The report demonstrates that large new garden cities cannot be funded by land value capture in today’s economic and political environment. In the absence of very significant Government subsidy, the costs of infrastructure, land control and interest repayments are too great.

The issue of the most efficient size and location for a new town has not been addressed, nor has the impact on infrastructure beyond a new town’s perimeter. Unsustainable garden cities are trying to set off from port overloaded with promises that cannot be delivered.

CAUSE demonstrates that there is a more economically efficient way of capturing land value: transit-oriented development in the form of an alternative planning proposal on the Colchester-Clacton line ‘Metro Plan’. The report concludes that thinking in terms of a planning Plimsoll line would ensure that environmental costs and financial costs are properly analysed. The result will

be better planning. <http://www.cause4livingessex.com/garden-cities-what-cost-time-for-a-plimsoll-line/>

The inspector's letter of June 2018 provides the best analysis of the very many problems with the proposals, including viability, infrastructure provision, sustainability appraisal, employment provision: [https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/7906/ied011 - inspectors section 1 post-hearing letter to neas - 8 june 2018](https://www.braintree.gov.uk/downloads/file/7906/ied011_-_inspectors_section_1_post-hearing_letter_to_neas_-_8_june_2018)

PR: "A Garden Community is a 'holistically planned development which enhances the natural environment, tackles climate change and provides high-quality housing and locally accessible jobs'."

North Northamptonshire Garden Villages

Sites: Six 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.

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.].

<http://www.nnjpu.org.uk/delivery/garden-communities/>

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

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 25,000

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.

History: North Northamptonshire growth area, "North Londonshire".

Current position: Five of the developments have received consent. Rushden East still awaiting it.

The case against: Not villages, just greenfield urban extensions mostly remote from public transport.

North Uttlesford Garden Community

Site: Adjacent to the village of Great Chesterford. The Essex/Cambs border and A11 form northern boundary of the site.

Promoter: Grosvenor (also JTP, Bidwells, Peter Brett Associates, EDP and Four Communications).

<http://northuttlesfordgc.commonplace.is/>

Local authority: Uttlesford District Council.

Area: 455ha.

No. of houses: 5,000

Other development: A local centre, offering retail, employment and community facilities, primary schools and a secondary school, community parks, recreation and amenity space, allotments and orchards, sports hub, sustainable transport links.

Greenfield/brownfield: 95% greenfield (almost entirely productive farmland).

Transport Links: Alongside the A11 but with no proposals for access. Close to Junction 9 of M11 but with access only going south (towards London). Rail station (Whittlesford) proposed to serve the new settlement is 3.5 miles away by road.

Opposition campaign: StopNUTown.

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

History: The site was first put forward by Bidwells some years ago and previously rejected by Uttlesford District Council as unsuitable for development. That it now forms part of the Uttlesford draft local plan is a sad tale of political expedience and dysfunctional planning.

Current position: Inspectors rejected the site in finding the local plan unsound, January 2020.

The case against: This exercise in urbanizing one thousand acres of farmland goes against fundamental planning norms: it sits at the highest elevation in the area and will be visible from miles around; it will disrupt important chalk aquifers that supply water to south Cambridgeshire and risks exacerbating flooding along the River Cam; and it has considerable archaeological sensitivity to the extent that Historic England has strongly objected.

In no way can it be considered sustainable. This will be an isolated car-dependent dormitory serving employment around Cambridge and south to Stansted Airport and London. Rail or bus don't offer workable alternatives to the car. The developer's claim that 60% of journeys will be by cycle or on foot is absurd.

The location (in the elbow of the M11 and A11) may look right on a map but in reality it won't work without massive spending on the surrounding roads for which no funding has been earmarked, nor timescale established. While there is a nearby southbound M11 junction there is no northbound access towards Cambridge (or southbound exit from the north). This forces traffic along the B1301 and A505 to junction 10 of the M11. The A505/Junction 10 and A505/B1301 intersections are already high on south Cambridgeshire's list of traffic blackspots. The villages of Ickleton, Hinxton and Duxford are plagued by rat running.

NUGC will have no primary shopping. Residents will head for the medieval town of Saffron Walden (four miles) along a narrow country road. To reach supermarkets requires crossing the town along lanes where traffic pollution already exceeds legal limits. The only alternative is to join the traffic heading towards Cambridge to reach Sawston (5 miles) or Cambridge city centre (15 miles), or to Haverhill (17 miles) along the notorious A1307, nick-named "death alley".

Since the site was proposed as part of the draft Uttlesford local plan consent has been provided by neighbouring South Cambs Council for a 1,500 house development approximately 600m the other side of the county and district border. The cumulative effect will be potentially disastrous for the existing communities in the area. There was negligible cross-border consultation.

PR: "Set within the tops and valleys of the North Uttlesford landscape, North Uttlesford Garden Community will be a new community for those who treasure a blend of rural and modern living. NUGC will be a forward thinking, vibrant and sustainable place that will delight those who live, work and visit."

Otterpool Park Garden Town

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

Promoter: Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Cozumel Estates.

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

Local Authority: Shepway District Council.

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

Area: 615 hectares.

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.

Opposition campaign: No Otterpool New Town.

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

History: Framework and masterplan published 2018. MHCLG awarded development £1.25m in 2019.

Current position: £100m funding secured November 2019.

The case against: Standard, low-density, greenfield sprawl.

PR: “A place in the countryside; a place where people and businesses want to be; a creative space, connected to wherever you need to be – that’s our vision for Otterpool Park. Everything is possible from this unique location, a short distance from Folkestone, Kent. Live and work in the Garden of England countryside, enjoy walks and bike rides from your doorstep and be inspired by the heritage and natural beauty of the area.”

Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village

Site: Immediately north of Eynsham village in West Oxfordshire, separated from the village by the width of the A40 (not dual carriageway at this point, nor intended to be in future, although there will be dual carriageway to the east and west of this bottleneck).



“Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village”

[Nigel Pearce]

Promoter: Grosvenor Britain and Ireland.

<https://www.thegardenvillage.org/>

<http://oxongv.co.uk>

Local authority: West Oxfordshire District Council.

Area: 215 hectares.

No. of houses: 2,200 north of the A40.

Other development: A 40-hectare science/business park and a Park & Ride, plus 1,000 new houses south of the A40, as a western extension to Eynsham, with another “through road” joining the A40.

Greenfield/brownfield: “The site is primarily greenfield with the vast majority of it currently being used for agriculture,” says the Council’s original ‘Expression of Interest’ submitted to central government in July 2016.

Transport Links: Beside the A40. Buses east to Oxford and west to Witney and Carterton along the A40 (bus lanes are planned), railway station at Long Hanborough (two-three kilometres away) serving trains to Oxford, London, and stations in the direction of Great Malvern and Worcester.

Opposition campaign: Principally EPIC (Eynsham Planning Improvement Campaign).

<https://eynsham-pc.gov.uk/org.aspx?n=EPIC>

Also, other local groups are supportive or involved.

History: Originally not in the Council’s Local Plan 2031, both the garden village and the Eynsham western extension appeared, without any prior consultation even with the district councillors who represent Eynsham, in a revised version of the Plan in 2016. This was in response to the demand by Oxford City Council that the surrounding Districts needed to contribute to the City’s “unmet housing need”, based on an arbitrary figure for future housing requirements. This figure has always been questioned, not least since the Office for National Statistics reduced their household projections for the area by about a third.

Current position: As of end-2019: the final version of the Council’s Area Action Plan for the garden village (but not the western extension) demanded by the planning inspector, who passed the Local Plan in 2017, will go out for consultation in early 2020. Grosvenor’s masterplan will be submitted as a planning application about the same time.

The case against:

- Revised household projections, together with alternative assessments of Oxford City’s requirements and capacity for building, suggest that the “unmet housing need” is significantly less and could even be accommodated within the City’s administrative area. Thus, the garden village is not necessary.
- The choice of location was based on (1) a group of landowners wishing, or willing, to sell their land as a consortium; (2) one of those landowners being Oxfordshire County Council, who proposed their land for the Park and Ride and business park; and (3) the ease with which the problem of Oxford’s unmet housing need could be “solved” in this District by dumping it all in one parish (out of 80 communities in West Oxfordshire) without having to give the Local Plan a radical overhaul. The site was therefore chosen for reasons of personal/corporate financial gain and ill-thought-out convenience.
- The gloss put on the choice boiled down mainly to proximity to Oxford and transport links, making the garden village, in contravention of the principles it is supposed to follow, a commuter community and dormitory suburb. Indeed, the Expression of Interest and Local Plan made it clear that these two large developments were specifically for “Oxford’s unmet housing need”.

- Another contravention of garden village principles, in addition to the perverse choice of a greenfield site, arises from the site's proximity to Eynsham village, undermining the claim that it is a separate and distinct settlement. This basic flaw in the plan has bedevilled the development ever since: is it a stuck-on part of Eynsham or is it an entirely separate rural service centre? How will the two be safely connected across the congested A40, especially if schools and other facilities for both communities are on the garden village side?
- The Expression of Interest submitted to government was based on a previous assessment of site suitability that covered only the southern half of the site, thereby entirely missing many of the major constraints that existed in the more sensitive northern half, most of which were already known.
- The subsequent Sustainability Appraisal process was deeply flawed (repeating several of the same mistakes and omissions as the Expression of Interest), misleading, agenda-led and biased.
- The plans for "improving" the A40, themselves unimaginative and inadequate, have proceeded almost entirely separately from plans for the garden village, because of separate funding streams. This means that the impact on traffic of a garden village, Park and Ride and business park on one side of the main road, and 1,000 new homes and a through road on the other, not to mention the other large developments planned along the A40 corridor, *has hardly featured in the County Council's A40 consultations.*
- Both developments at Eynsham will destroy areas rich in biodiversity, and best and most versatile agricultural land. They will also have an impact on water shortages, local flood risk and sewerage capacity. At a time of climate emergency and potentially catastrophic biodiversity decline, the choice of site beggars belief.

PR: "Imagine having the opportunity to create a garden village with beautifully designed homes that meet the needs of all generations; a distinctive place that complements its rural setting and one that focuses on sustainability with links to pedestrian, cycle, bus and rail networks."

Shapley Heath Garden Village

Site: Between Basingstoke and Farnborough.

Promoters: Hart District Council, Gallagher Estates, Lightwood, Barratt Homes, Enterprise M3 LEP, Rushmoor, Surrey Heath and Basingstoke and Dean Borough Councils, Hampshire County Council, East Hampshire District Council, Bracknell Forest Council.

https://www.hart.gov.uk/sites/default/files/4_The_Council/Policies_and_published_documents/Shapley_Heath/Shapley%20Heath%20Vision%20Document.pdf

Local authority: Hart District Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 5,000 with a possible 5,000 more to follow.

Other development: 200 ha of open spaces, care village, health centre, community hub, early years, 4xprimary, 1xsecondary, 1 local centre, 2 neighbourhood centres.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield. Unacceptable elements, such as the existing qualities of the site (fields, small copses and woodland within an undulating landscape) are presented as advantages. The site, apparently, "naturally provides pockets of developable areas, each unique in character, connected through a network of green corridors".

Transport Links: Astride the M3 and close to the A30. Winchfield already has a railway station which promoters appear to think will be sufficient.

Opposition campaigns: We Heart Hart.

<http://wehearhart.co.uk/category/shapley-heath/>

Say No to Shapley Heath Garden Village (Sic).

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/386648765353927/>

History: Lightwood, Gallagher Estates and Barratt Homes have been working to impose development on Shapley Heath for more than eight years and have bought land.

Current position: Proposal under development.

The case against: The entire development is 5,000 homes more than is required in the local area and the developers are apparently unable to distinguish open countryside from a housing estate: “The unique selling point of Shapley Heath is that we are not trying to create a place from scratch. Shapley Heath is already rich in character, and we are simply adding homes to create a ‘community of gardens’ where a community can flourish. Shapley Heath’s mature undulating landscape setting, which includes fields, lakes, small copses, canal and sprawling woodland centred around a Victorian railway station, provides natural pockets within which development to take place. Each pocket has its own distinctive character that will inform the character of the built environment. These will be connected through a green and blue network of spaces and open up over 200ha of private landscape to be publicly accessible. It is not only the garden community that will benefit. Shapley Heath is at the heart of the District and the ambition is that the green corridors created will be extended across the District. The garden community will act as a catalyst to improve the quality of life across the rest of the District.” To meet these objectives, the development would be at a net density of just 30dph, thus squandering land. There is also the threat of a further 5,000 homes.

PR: “This is an unusual opportunity to create a place with character and maturity from the very start. This is not an area consisting of large featureless fields, which when developed for housing resulting [*viz*] in a hard landscape that requires the passage of time to soften into the surrounding landscape. Instead the patchwork of fields, small copses and sprawling woodland centred around a Victorian railway station within an undulating landscape naturally provides pockets of developable areas, each unique in character, connected through a network of green corridors.”

Skerningham Garden Community

Site: Urban extension to north-east of Darlington.

Promoter: Darlington Borough Council and Theakston Estates Ltd.

<https://microsites.darlington.gov.uk/local-plan/themes-and-masterplans/skerningham-masterplan/>

Local authority: Darlington Borough Council.

Area: 500ha.

No. of houses: 4,500

Other development: Unclear.

Greenfield/brownfield: All greenfield.

Transport links: A new link road between the A1 and A66 has been identified as part of the development.

Opposition campaign: Whinfield Residents Association.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1QSRucK6hI>

History: Consultation on masterplan October 2017.

Current position: Local plan paused in July 2019 for further analysis.

The case against: Skerningham Garden Community would be the third garden village to be imposed on Darlington whose population of around 100,000 has not increased much in years. With the other sites around the town within the local plan, there could be 16,000 new homes, when the Government's OAN figures say only 3,540 may be needed. The site is all greenfield, mainly arable farmland. This garden settlement appears to have no purpose at all.

South Godstone Garden Community

Site: South and North of South Godstone, either side of the Redhill-Tonbridge railway line.



“South Godstone Garden Community”

[Tandridge Lane Action Group]

Promoters: Tandridge District Council, Land Logic and others.

Local authority: Tandridge District Council.

<https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Planning%20and%20building/Planning%20strategies%20and%20policies/Local%20plan/Local%20plan%202033/Area%20South%20of%20South%20Godstone/South-godstone-south-vision-and-masterplan.pdf>

Area: In excess of 400 hectares.

No. of houses: 4,000.

Other development: Medical facilities, shops and services, light industrial units. “Good schools within walking distance” – to be provided as part of the new development. Will require major upgrades to the A22 and Junction 6 of the M25. Flood mitigation work will also be required but this has never been costed.

Greenfield/brownfield: All greenfield, mainly farmland (and this is a definite shortage commodity in this area) and also all green belt that under the Council's own analysis is shown to be serving several purposes well. It "would only use 0.8% of the whole green belt in Tandridge".

Transport Links: Godstone railway station on the Redhill-Tonbridge line, a little used east/west shuttle that no longer has a direct service to London. Close to the A22 and Junction 6 of the M25.

Opposition campaigns:

Tandridge Lane Action Group.

<https://tlag.org.uk/>

Godstone Village Association.

<http://www.godstone.net/aboutus/tandridge-local-plan/gva-response-to-garden-village/>

History: One of a number of Tandridge DC Garden Village proposals that were put out for consultation in 2017. Subsequently included in draft local plan in 2018 and subject to EiP in late-2019. Added to garden communities programme in July 2019.

Current position: The local plan was considered at an EiP in late 2019 and the inspector's report is awaited. Many participants highlighted considerable failings under the Duty to Co-operate but the indications are that the plan will not be failed on these grounds. The inspector has intimated that many modifications will be required but it is quite unclear whether he will find for or against the South Godstone proposal. He should, especially as the key Tier 1 towns in the district have very few allocated sites, e.g. development is being focused in all the wrong areas.

The case against: Although this is all greenfield and green belt, the promoters actually claim the development would "create new green belt boundaries which, through use of existing natural features and sensitive buffer landscaping, can hold the line for future generations". The Council's Area of Search includes areas that its own advice says should not be built on. The Council also aspires to deliver the scheme itself, something it is totally unequipped to do. For example, it wants to borrow >£100m to acquire land, which is in hugely fragmented ownership – this is a council with an annual budget of just £9m.

PR: "It will be a leafy place not an urban jungle. The masterplan will respect existing hedges and will connect new neighbourhoods with good paths and cycleways to keep people safely away from the busy A22 and encourage a healthy life."

South Seaham Garden Village

Site: Land south of A182 Seaham, County Durham.

Promoters: Tolent, Home Group and Durham County Council.

<http://idpartnership.com/portfolio/masterplanning/south-seaham-garden-village/>

<https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=P6YWQNBB00Q00>

Local authority: Durham County Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 1,500 in planning application.

Other development: Shops, a café, a primary school with sports facilities, a park and village square, a community hub with health and well-being facilities (to include a gym), as well as an innovation hub that businesses and regional universities will use for research.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: Vehicular access to A182.

History: Developed as a “national and regional exemplar” with the National Innovation Centre for Ageing at Newcastle University and Northumbria University, the 1,500 homes will also be expected to accommodate “first-time buyers and renters, families, empty nesters” as well as retirees.

Current position: Planning consent granted and construction due to begin early 2020.

The case against: Low-density sprawl at a car-dependent location with no rail access. Hard to see how such a small mixed community with poor access to many services for those who lack cars would do much, if anything, for retirees.

South of Ashford Garden Community

Site: Multiple sites south west of Ashford: Chilmington Green, Courtlodge Farm, Kingsnorth Green.

Promoters: Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council, Homes England, various developers.

<https://news.ashford.gov.uk/news/south-of-ashford-garden-community/>
<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/major-new-developments/chilmington-green/>

Local authority: Ashford Borough Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: Chilmington Green alone is 5,750.

Other development: Chilmington Green - a secondary school, four primary schools, shops, healthcare, sports and leisure facilities.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport Links: A28 Chart Road will be widened but work will not start till at least 2022. In the meantime the transport links appear to be on existing roads. Remote from the railway station.

Opposition campaign: An 8,000 person petition was signed against it and ignored.

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/major-new-developments/chilmington-green/chilmington-green-faqs/>

History: The Council has long pushed low-density house building and Ashford was formerly a Government growth area.

Current position: Chilmington Green already being constructed, the other two await the go-ahead.

The case against On top of the destruction of greenfield land, lack of transport provision and lack of amenities (these will be “built later”), is a warning that “If you are considering buying a home at Chilmington we would like to make you aware of some of the legal obligations which will be linked to your purchase. As part of the purchase you will be asked to sign up to three estate rent charge deeds, which are legal covenants attached to the deeds of the house.” Ashford Borough Council has presented the cases against on their own website as “FAQs”.

<https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/major-new-developments/chilmington-green/chilmington-green-faqs/>

PR: “These places have the potential to become vibrant new communities where people can live and work, and to create a legacy that will be enjoyed and valued by future generations.”

Spitalgate Heath Garden Village

Site: On southern fringe of Grantham.

Promoters: Buckminster Estate, Homes & Communities Agency, South Kesteven District Council.

Local Authority: South Kesteven District Council.

<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s17042/Spitalgate%20Heath%20Garden%20Village%20Final%20Prospectus%20July%202016%20pdf.pdf>

Area: 224 hectares.

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.

History: Previously Grantham Southern Quadrant urban extension. Included in draft local plan approved in May 2018.

Current position: Local plan consultations autumn 2019.

The case against: Mostly greenfield, remote from public transport and essentially car-dependent.

PR: “Imagine a village in a park, containing the very best of town and country. Conjure a vision of sustainable reality, with new homes, a business park, community hub with schools, healthcare and sports facilities and green public open space.”

St Cuthberts Garden Village

Site: Between J42 of the M6 in the east and the A595 to the west. Definitive boundary not yet fixed.



“St Cuthbert’s Garden Village”

[SmartGrowth UK]

Promoter: Carlisle City Council.

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

<https://www.hemingwaydesign.co.uk/st-cuthberts-garden-village/>

Local authority: Carlisle City Council.

<http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/planning-policy/Carlisle-South>

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 10,000

Other development: Employment space, community facilities.

Greenfield/brownfield: mostly greenfield.

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).

History: Previously "Carlisle South". £275,000 of public money awarded to the Council in December 2017, and a further £300,000 in February 2019, to develop the proposals. Local plan 2015-2030 makes provision for a major, mixed use development towards the south of the city.

Current position: Consultations on the draft options for the masterplan in autumn 2019.

The case against: A classic case of a new ring-road or by-pass being used to free up greenfield land around a town for building development. Low-density, car-dependent, greenfield sprawl on the grand scale. Overall it would increase the built-up area of Carlisle by well over half, all for just 10,000 homes.

St George's Barracks

Site: The St George's Barracks site in North Luffenham – barracks are open till 2021/2022.

Promoter: Rutland District Council.

<https://www.stgeorgesrutland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/St-Georges-Barracks-Master-Plan-as-at-18-11-18.pdf>

Local authority: Rutland District Council.

Area: 289 hectares.

No. of houses: 2,215

Other development: Business space, a new primary school, healthcare facilities.

Greenfield/brownfield: Majority greenfield.

Transport Links: Junction improvements to local road network. Hopes for a bus service.

Opposition campaign: North Luffenham Parish Council.

<https://northluffenham.com/category/parish-council/st-georges-barracks-development/>

History: Former military airfield.

Current position: The barracks appear to be still in use till 2021/2022.

The case against: Low-density, car dependent sprawl at a remote location. See:-

<https://northluffenham.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/LPR-St-Georges-Consultation-2018-summary-of-responses.pdf>

Taunton Garden Town

Site: Urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe/Truil and Staplegrove.

Promoter: Somerset West and Taunton Council.

Local Authority: Somerset West and Taunton Council.

<https://www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk/garden-town/>

Area: Unspecified.

No. of houses: 10,000

Other development: Employment, schools etc..

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield.

Transport Links: “New A303/358 ‘SW Expressway’, connecting to Taunton and M5, J25”.

History: Urban extensions previously identified – Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe/Trull and Staplegrove. Awarded garden town status in 2017.

Current position: “Vision” document and “design charter” approved in 2019.

The case against: Not a town in any sense, merely several large greenfield urban extensions with good motorway access.

PR: “The Council has recently declared a climate emergency and we are passionate about making Somerset West and Taunton carbon neutral by 2030. This aim underpins the vision.”

Tewkesbury Ashchurch Garden Community

Site: Surrounding Junction 9 of the M5.

Promoters: Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gladman Developers.

<https://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/news/gardentownstatus>

<https://www.tewkesburygardentown.co.uk/>

Local authority: Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Area: 604 hectares.

No. of houses: 10,195 (to fix a Tewkesbury “shortfall” of “2,500 by 2031”).

Other development: 100 hectares of employment land, six schools, health centre, district centre.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield – the development was to include an MoD site but this is now withdrawn for at least 10 years.

Transport Links: “The area enjoys excellent proximity to Junction 9 of the M5; however there are severe capacity and congestion issues at this junction and along the A46 which must be addressed to facilitate strategic development and provide site access.” Potential for a rail connection.

Opposition campaign: STOP THIS.

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

History: The Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy was adopted in 2017 and is now under review. Added to garden communities programme November 2018. and £750,000 paid to Council in March 2019.

Current position: Being considered via the Joint Core Strategy Review.

The case against: According to a briefing note to Homes England, the problems with the scheme include:-

- Development north of the MoD base would need an £8.1m link road and bridge over the railway
- Infrastructure investment required would be £202m, split mainly between roads and schools
- Not included in the above is an off-line A46 to allow any development beyond 3,000 homes
- The recently adopted CIL charging would require the development to contribute £20m
- Land assembly is complex due to multiple land ownership

- The MoD base may not be available for 10 years
- There are existing flood zones to the north and centre acting as green buffers.

https://tewkesburyborough-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/g/personal/website_tewkesburyborough_onmicrosoft_com/EWLbFuDXrDIHnIrvW7LfRsBxQ1OhRUhvNwtfSA5qtYZZg?rtime=kz7PhdKH10g

According to the Council, there is a (well-founded) perception of Tewkesbury as a “detached” place affected by flooding. The A46 is a busy road and cuts through Ashchurch and a school accessed by major vehicular road. The railway tracks and M5 cause severance and prevent east-west movement. Lack of green belt/AONB protection risks piecemeal and speculative development. There is severely limited transport capacity at Junction 9 of the M5 and on A46. Release of the MoD site is delayed and its rail spur line is still in use. There are extensive flood zone areas along the brooks running east-west, together with flood zones between Ashchurch and Tewkesbury”.

Tresham Garden Village (formerly Deenethorpe Garden Village)

Site: Former Deenethorpe Airfield, east of Corby.

Promoters: Deene Park Estate.

<http://www.treshamvillage.uk/>

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

<http://deenepark.com/tresham-village/>

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

[https://www.east-](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200153/planning_and_buildings/1791/major_planning_developments_in_the_district/1)

[northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200153/planning_and_buildings/1791/major_planning_developments_in_the_district/1](https://www.east-northamptonshire.gov.uk/info/200153/planning_and_buildings/1791/major_planning_developments_in_the_district/1)

Area: 250ha.

No. of houses: 1,500

Other development: Primary school.

Greenfield/brownfield: “A major brownfield site”. In reality most was turned over to agriculture in the 1960s, so 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.”

History: Formerly Deenethorpe Airfield, then Deenethorpe Airfield Area of Opportunity, then Deenethorpe Garden Village.

Current position: Has been adopted by East Northamptonshire and work appears to have begun.

The case against: Bog standard car-dependent greenfield sprawl.

Welborne Garden Village

Site: North of Fareham.

Promoter: Buckland Development (owner/developer as part of the Southwick Estate).

<http://bucklanddevelopment.com/>

<https://welbornegardenvillage.co.uk/>

Local Authority: Fareham Borough Council.

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

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. Buckland have proposed a new health facility within the centre of the development, but the local CCG have said that they have no plans for a new GPs practice and that Welborne must be served by adjacent surgeries in Wickham and Fareham. So, the new building may remain empty.

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. The problem is that the M27 is already at full capacity, and is regularly gridlocked, even without the new housing proposed at Welborne and other large sites along the motorway corridor.

The irony is that Welborne is located on the existing Eastleigh-Fareham railway line, and although feasibility studies were done by Network Rail into a new station, nobody is prepared to pay for it. The site is located close to a station closed in 1964, Knowle Halt, and the concrete supports of the former platform still exist alongside the now single track of the Eastleigh to Fareham Line. The only good news is that the developer Buckland has agreed to safeguard a plot of land which could be used for a new station in the future should funding permit.

Opposition: Going back to the time of the SE Plan, opposition was led by a group of CPRE Hampshire, community organisations and parish councils, under the umbrella SHUV - South Hampshire's Unheard Voices. SHUV was named in response to the grouping of local authorities under the title of PUSH - Partnership for Urban South Hampshire. SHUV has now been disbanded and the main leaders of the campaign have now resorted to working alongside the developer Buckland to contribute and improve Welborne as best they can. Buckland says it regards the site as a legacy project and is aiming to avoid the pitfalls of bog-standard estate planning.

History: Originally the “Welborne Plan”. Added to garden communities programme January 2017.

Current position: Outline planning consent given October 2019.

The case against: Greenfield, car-dependent development.

West of Braintree Garden Community

See North Essex Garden Communities.

West Carclaze Garden Village

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

Promoter: Eco-Bos.

<http://westcarclaze-gardenvillage.co.uk/>

Local Authority: Cornwall County Council.

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/eco-communities/about-the-eco-communities-project/>

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/eco-communities/latest-eco-communities-news-and-consultations/>

Area: 210ha.

No. of houses: 1,500.

Other development: Employment space, retail etc..

Greenfield/brownfield: Part brownfield.

Transport Links: “Whilst Eco-Bos’ application stalled, Cornwall Council continued to support the development by aligning funding opportunities from DCLG and Europe to secure road and employment infrastructure for the West Carclaze/Baal sites. As a result the Carludon A391 road improvement which includes a new section of road, roundabouts, bridges and walking and cycling links has been constructed.” “Case for extending the A391 diversion out to the A30”

Opposition: No Eco Town.

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

History: 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).

Current position: Cornwall Council awarded £300,000 of public money to “support delivery”.

The case against: Car-dependency.

Whetstone Pastures

Site: South-west of village of Countesthorpe and 10km south of Leicester City Centre.

Promoter: Blaby District Council.

<https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/0842dc3a/files/uploaded/Developer%20Prospectus.pdf>

Local authorities: Blaby District Council and Harborough District Council.

<https://www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/major-developments/whetstone-pastures/>

Area: 486 hectares.

No. of houses: 3,500

Other development: Schools, healthcare, sports facilities, new local shops and community facilities. The new motorway junction is acting as a magnet for logistics developers who claim it has “regional and national significance” – the ambition is for 371,612m² of logistics space.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: A new junction would be created on the M1 where the new A46 Expressway met the motorway.

Opposition campaigns: Whetstone Pastures Rural Action.

<https://www.whetstonepasturesruralaction.co.uk/>

South and East Leicestershire Action Group.

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

History: Added to garden communities programme June 2019.

Current position: “The District Council and the landowners of Whetstone Pastures are currently in discussions around aspirations to create a mixed-use community at the site.”

The case against: On a greenfield site with agricultural land, flood zones, woodland, wildlife, proximate to an SSSI etc.. But promoters claim: “It will be possible to enhance the biodiversity value of the site through the inclusion of native species together with other species of wildlife

interest”. Highly car-dependent and connected to highly unsustainable freight distribution proposals.

Wynyard

Site: Beside the A689 between Sedgefield and Billingham.

Promoters: Joseph Homes, Taylor Wimpey, Avant Homes, Story Homes, David Wilson Homes.

Local authorities: Stockton Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council.

Area: Not specified.

No. of houses: 6,800

Other development: Wynyard Business Park.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield.

Transport links: Beside the A689 and close to the A19.

History: Wynyard Park Joint Venture Company founded in 2005 to build housing and business space on 358ha. Masterplan agreed November 2019.

Current position: Added to garden communities programme January 2020.

The case against: Car-dependent development remote from a railway station incorporating a high proportion of larger 4,5 and 6-bedroom houses.

PR: “Wynyard Park is truly splendid – the last element in the transformation of the historic Wynyard country estate into a different concept for living and working.”

Welsh Government supported garden communities

Plasdŵr Garden City

Site: Farmland west of Cardiff.

Promoters: The Plymouth Estate, Redrow Homes and Bellway.

<https://plasdwr.co.uk/>

Local authority: Cardiff Council.

Area: 368 hectares.

No. of houses: 7,000

Other development: Shops, offices, schools, health centres, leisure centres and catering.

Greenfield/brownfield: Mostly greenfield.

Transport links: Improvements to Llantrisant Road, Heol Isaf and Pentreban Road, a bus lane, wider footpaths and cycleways. But “cars will naturally have their place”.

History: Masterplan approved 2017 and start made on first 126 homes one month later. First phase includes 630 homes.

Current position: 120 homes being built by Bellway. Planning consent for the first 71 or 235 more by Redrow.

The case against: Large-scale, car-dependent, greenfield sprawl.

PR: “Imagine a place... where nature takes the lead, where green space, fresh air and sunlight combine to let you breathe deeply, roam freely and live well.”

Developer-designated garden towns and villages

Buckover Garden Village

Site: Part of Tortworth Estates, Buckover, lying in the north of the District, is approximately 0.5 miles east of Thornbury, approximately 1.0 mile south-west of Falfield, approximately 1.0 mile west of Cromhall and approximately 10 miles north of the wider Bristol Area – in the parishes of Falfield and Thornbury.

Promoter: South Gloucestershire Council, Tortworth Estate Company.

<http://www.tortworthestate.com/gardenvillage>

[https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/9741621/1/Appendix 2Buckoverpdf](https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/9741621/1/Appendix%20Buckover.pdf)

https://www.ridgeplanning.co.uk/site/assets/files/1405/concept_document.pdf

Local authority: South Gloucestershire District Council.

Area: 191 hectares.

No. of houses: 3,000

Other development: The usual claims for employment facilities, health facilities, education facilities, transportation infrastructure, communication infrastructure, retail provision, community facilities and open space.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield and half green belt.

Transport Links: Straddles A38.

Opposition campaign: TRAPP'D (Thornbury Residents Against Poorly Planned Development)

Thornbury Town Council is also opposing the scheme, as is the local MP.

<https://trappdgroup.weebly.com/buckover-garden-village.html>

[https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/9741621/1/Appendix 2Buckoverpdf](https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/9741621/1/Appendix%20Buckover.pdf)

History: Twice rejected for MHCLG funding as being inappropriate but supported by South Gloucestershire Council who put it forward as one of the major development sites in the *West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)*. However, the *JSP* was roundly rejected by inspectors in the summer of 2019.

Current position: The big question is now whether South Gloucestershire will continue with its support for Buckover in the next version of the *JSP*, and if not whether the developers will try to go it alone as a speculative site. Tortworth has recently refused to say whether they would pursue Buckover as a speculative development.

The case against: It would represent a satellite “dormitory town” serving Bristol with transport based almost entirely by the private car on a site that (astonishingly) straddles the busy A38, which is also the designated relief road for the M5. While the word “local” is mentioned 51 times in the *Expression of Interest*, it is opposed by the local community, but in reality nothing could be further from the truth. It would destroy agricultural land, including two SSSI sites. The local MP commissioned a survey in which 92% of residents said “No” to Buckover.

PR: “It is taking a refreshing look at how we plan for the homes we will need in the future and begins with what is, in effect, a largely blank canvass [*sic*].”

Capel Garden Village

Sites: Tudeley (midway between Tonbridge and Paddock Wood - 2,300 houses) and East Capel (west of Paddock Wood – 1,500 houses).

Promoter: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

<https://beta.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/local-plan/consultations>

Local authority: Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 4,300

Other development: A senior school on a separate site east of Tonbridge.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: Astride Tonbridge-Ashford railway.

Opposition campaign: Save Capel.

<https://www.savecapel.com/>

History: Proposals included in draft local plan.

Current position: Consultations closed in draft local plan.

The case against: Greenfield sprawl.

Clare Garden Village

Site: Darren Farm, west of Cowbridge, Glamorgan.

Promoter: Taylor Wimpey, Newydd Housing Association.

<https://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk/find-your-home/wales/glamorgan/cowbridge/clare-garden-village>

Local authority: Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 457

Other development: School. Business park planned on adjacent site.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: “Well positioned for commuters with easy access to the A48, A473 and the M4. For more exotic trips, Cardiff Airport is also less than 20 minutes away by car.” Five miles from nearest railway station.

Current position: Development underway.

The case against: Greenfield and car-dependent.

PR: “Tucked away in Cowbridge between breathtaking Welsh countryside, the cold waves of the Bristol channel, and bustling cities, Clare Garden Village has an extensive range of 4 and 5 bedroom homes designed in keeping with the landscape and finished with unique, contemporary features.”

Fairoaks Garden Village

Site: Fairoaks Airport.

Promoter: Fairoaks Garden Village Ltd., jointly owned by Albemarle Fairoaks Airport Ltd, TEREFA ADP Fairoaks and Fairoaks Investment Ltd..

Website: <https://www.fairoaksgardenvillage.co.uk/>

Local authority: Surrey Heath Borough Council/Runnymede Borough Council.

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/planning/fairoaks-airport>

Area: 155 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,000

Other development: Employment space, primary school and community buildings.

Greenfield/brownfield: Part brownfield/ part greenfield. Green belt.

Transport links: A new link road would be provided through the site between the A319 to the north to the A320 to the east. Bus service to Woking also proposed.

Opposition campaign: Fairoaks 2020.

Website: <http://nofairoaksnewtown.org/>

History: Promoters submitted expression of interest to the Councils in 2016 but not included in the Government supported schemes. Planning applications submitted October 2018.

Current position: Further information submitted September 2019 following objections by Woking Borough Council.

The case against: It conflicts with adopted and emerging local plans and would cause significant harm, put increasing stress on local medical services, force local businesses to close, generate thousands of car journeys, involve unworkable changes to the road network, damage flora and fauna and open landscape. No very special circumstances exist to justify loss of green belt.

PR: “The proposed masterplan retains areas of high quality habitat, including woodlands, the River Bourne and associated flood plain, as many hedgerows as possible and areas of wetland / wet grassland.”

Galtres Garden Village

Site: Land north of North Lane and Monk’s Cross, York.

Promoter: Galtres Garden Village Development Company – a consortium of local land owners and consultants “with local interests at heart”.

Website: <http://galtresgardenvillage.com/>

Local authority: York City Council.

Area: 93 hectares.

No. of houses: 1,740

Other development: Care homes, recreational facilities, school, surgery and shops.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: “The team will work closely with the Council to address traffic and congestion and maximise the benefits of widening the ring road in this area. It will use the A64 as a key access road encouraging traffic away from Earswick and Huntington and residents will have easier access to the superb Vanguard shopping facility at Monk’s Cross”. No rail access.

History: A late submission to the local plan consultation in 2017.

Current position:

The case against: Car-dependent sprawl.

PR: “This is not a case of urban sprawl; the new community will sit neatly in its own environment. But at the heart of the designs is the Green agenda. The Garden village approach emphasises the ‘human’ nature of village life. Certainly, the green routes, pathways and flora will be central to the designs but so will the creation of the village facilities and transport links.”

Kennett Garden Village

Site: Off Station Road near Kennett village.

Promoter: Palace Green Homes.

<https://www.palacegreenhomes.co.uk/developments/kennett-garden-village/>

Local authority: East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Area: 40 hectares.

No. of houses: 500

Other development: Employment space, care home plus station car park.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: Near the railway station.

Opposition campaign: Kennett Action Group.

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

History: Planning application approved April 2019.

Current position: No call in by secretary of state.

The case against: The greenfield development would more than quadruple the size of the village. Claims that it is a “community-led project” are denied by the local community.

PR: “Set in a leafy landscape, just off Station Road in Kennett, to the north of the train station, Kennett Garden Village looks set to redefine the standard in village-based property developments.”

London Colney Garden Village (aka Redwell Garden Village)

Site: Green belt land surrounding London Colney village, St Albans, on the Hertsmere/St Albans border (Hertsmere side).

Promoter: Hertsmere Borough Council.

Local authority: Hertsmere Borough Council.

Area: 809 hectares.

No. of houses: 5,000

Other development: Unclear

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield and all green belt.

Transport links: Road only, beside Junction 22 of the M25.

Opposition campaign: Campaign for Colney (C4C).

<https://campaignforcolney.co.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/205940479946559/>

History: May 2018: plans published for a new 6,000-home garden village (Redwell). “Turley has been actively engaged in this project for the Estate since 2017 providing planning, design, sustainability and economics advice throughout each stage of the emerging Hertsmere Local Plan,” says the Turley website. According to *The Watford Observer* of 7 November 2018, “Hertsmere Borough Council [originally hosted] five exhibitions across the borough but not in London Colney. The green belt land in question for development falls within Hertsmere, however people living in London Colney, which this project would most affect, live in St Albans district.”

Current position: Awaiting announcement of local plan. “Consultation” has taken place and final plan release is imminent.

The case against Greenfield, will do ecological damage, will affect drainage issues in the area, as well as already stretched public services. It has very limited transport links and no infrastructure

plans have been forthcoming. A further junction onto the M25 is not possible due to its proximity to Junction 22. There has been a dereliction of the duty to consult and stakeholders locally say they have been ignored despite numerous attempts to engage and be listened to.

PR: “Redwell Garden Village represents an opportunity to develop a highly sustainable new garden village community in a key strategic location within the borough of Hertsmere on the site of previously used green belt land.”

Mayfield Market Towns

Site: Albourne, Shermanbury, Woodmancote and Wineham area of West Sussex.

Promoters: Mayfield Market Towns Limited/Clarion Housing Group.

<https://www.mayfieldtowns.co.uk/>

Local authority: Mid Sussex District Council.

Area: Not stated.

No. of houses: 7,000-10,000

Other development: Mid Sussex's proposed district plan sets a housing requirement of 10,600 homes between 2011 and 2031. The Mayfield site is not one of the strategic sites identified.

Greenfield/brownfield: Greenfield.

Transport links: No railway line nearby; A23 and A24 would be main north-south roads.

Opposition campaign: Locals Against Mayfield Building Sprawl.

<https://lambs.org.uk/>

History: Rejected in 2015, thus predating the government's “locally-led garden villages, T towns and cities” initiative of March 2016.

Current position: So far still rejected by local MPs, Parish & District Councils and local residents, and deemed “unsustainable” by a planning inspector in March 2018.

The case against: Mayfield Market Town would destroy thousands of acres of pristine countryside in the Sussex Weald, exterminating vital local habitats. The proposed new town slices through the world-renowned views of Devil's Dyke. It would destroy a key part of the Sussex countryside forever. It would destroy the rural setting and way of life for all surrounding communities. The local economy would be impacted by the loss of several tourist sites. Over 5,000 acres of nationally important wildlife habitats are set to be lost. The area is prone to flooding.

PR: “Our plans include an integrated and accessible public transport system both serving Mayfields and linking up to existing infrastructure. A bus network will connect Mayfields and all the key surrounding centres and railway stations.”

Findings

The shortcomings with garden communities we identified earlier in this report are amply borne out by examination of what is on offer.

The developments are overwhelmingly greenfield. The Government's Garden Communities prospectus²¹ said priority would be given to proposals “demonstrating exceptional quality or innovations, *development on predominantly brownfield sites*, being in an area of particularly high housing demand, or ability to expand substantially further in the future” [*our italics*].

Those in Whitehall responsible for prioritizing support for garden communities will have had little trouble in determining which proposals are predominantly brownfield; there are so few of them. Plenty of developers are, however, making extravagant claims about their proposals being brownfield, but appear to have forgotten that the official definition of brownfield land²² excludes “land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape”. It also excludes land that has never been developed, like the huge areas of grass that have always made up the typical former aerodrome.

A couple of the Government sponsored garden communities can claim to be mostly brownfield and a handful of others have substantial brownfield areas within greenfield sites. But the majority are overwhelmingly or wholly greenfield. Worse still, many incorporate substantial areas designated as green belt and a few include parts of AONBs. Yet there is no sign of any genuine “exceptional circumstances” which would justify even consideration of such sites, let alone substantial Government subsidies to promote their destruction.

The developments are a mix of stand-alone, urban extensions or just aggregations of all the sprawl in the area. The prospectus talks of “garden villages”, “garden towns” and “garden communities” with the suggestion they would all fulfil Ebenezer Howard’s vision of new standalone settlements, safe from the “sunless cities” he decried. Yet many are not stand-alone developments at all. Quite a few are simply urban extensions, some around multiple towns miles apart, yet nowhere does the more accurate term “garden suburb” appear.

To be fair, urban extensions do at least offer the possibility of utilising some existing infrastructure within the towns, including any public transport. Stand-alone settlements demand 100% new infrastructure and are much better at fragmenting nature and undermining biodiversity.

One or two of the most grotesque proposals are unable even to identify where the hoped-for “communities with local character, good employment opportunities, strong services, integrated and accessible transport, innovative uses of technology – and beautiful green spaces” would be, for they are simply aggregates of all the sprawl proposals in the local plan. The *Garden Communities* prospectus²³ aspiration that “this is not about creating dormitory towns, or places which just use ‘garden’ as a convenient label” is simply laughable.

Few of the developments have rail access and none is closely linked to a dense city rail network. A minority of the developments are beside, or close to, a railway station, but many studies have shown it needs much more than this to ensure a high percentage of journeys are not made by car, particularly where small, remote developments like many of these are concerned.

There is a great deal of greenwash in the developments’ publicity material about how they will be designed to facilitate walking and cycling. In itself this is good, but all too often the public relations stuff about sustainable transport proves to be footways, a couple of cycle paths and a bus service. The reality is that only a very small minority of journeys would be made by active travel in such small and low-density developments, even if they are made permeable and house builders’ favourite walking-and-cycling-eliminator, the cul-de-sac, is avoided. But large greenfield sites close to motorway junctions are all too attractive to garden community promoters.



Greenfield sites near motorway junctions are favourite sites for garden communities despite the greenwash about sustainable transport [*Smart Growth UK*]

Given that many of the developments are remote from the towns and cities where the majority of their inhabitants would work, or where the employees for the new employment space most of them plan would live, and the fact such destinations would lie in a multiplicity of directions, the overwhelming majority of garden community journeys would be made in cars.

Add to this the fact that all most of these relatively small developments could expect in the way of public transport would be an infrequent bus service, the car-dependency of the vast majority of these developments is clear.

Garden communities squander land. The mountain of public relations stuff which accompanies garden community proposals will inevitably emphasise how much of the sites under threat will be turned over to open space, parkland, landscaping or even pocket nature reserves. Promoters are, however, much less keen to reveal just how low the residential densities they propose are and these often do not emerge until planning consent is sought, if then. They propose heavy destruction of the “best and most versatile” agricultural land (i.e. Grades 1, 2 and 3a) at a time when climate change and world events both threaten food security.

However, low residential densities are central to the garden city philosophy which garden community promoters are quick to claim as their own. Ebenezer Howard’s admirers claim he never actually advocated very low densities, though this is debatable. What is beyond doubt is that the movement’s founding principles on density were actually set by Sir Raymond Unwin

who decreed a *maximum* net density of 12 to the acre, roughly 30 dwellings per hectare. The 1918 Tudor Walters Committee which set the standards for the 100 years of low-density garden suburbs that followed specified maxima of 12 to the acre on urban sites and eight to the acre on rural. House builders like these densities as they are actually more profitable on greenfield sites than making sustainable use of the land by building at the higher densities that centuries before the 20th regarded as the norm.

The intensive PR about the supposed green benefits of garden communities has even led some to claim that building thousands of houses in a rural area would actually benefit nature, (a) because farmland is alleged to be worthless in biodiversity terms and (b) because a few of the strips and patches of greenery in the developments may be managed for nature. Against this, it is clear that farmland is far from worthless and that nature fragmented by urban development with its roads, light pollution, air pollution, noise pollution and disturbance may actually be of little benefit to biodiversity.

Given that not all the proposals have revealed their likely land-take, it is not possible to quantify this exactly. But given the sort of average sizes of the developments, it looks as if an area of (mostly greenfield) land the size of the urban area of Liverpool or Newcastle-Gateshead is under threat.

England is the most densely populated large country in Europe. A heavily indebted country in an uncertain world, with a growing population which needs to import more than a third of its food and is about to replace its free-trade arrangements with a future that is at best uncertain needs to protect its farmland. A country whose biodiversity is under serious strain needs to protect that carefully too. We need to stop squandering our precious land on unsustainable developments like garden communities.

They would be extremely profitable for land owners, developers and their consultants.

Garden communities may be an environmental disaster, but they are extremely profitable for those involved. Most advantaged are land owners, particularly owners of relatively low-value farmland which can see a hundredfold increase in value once planning consent is granted for residential development.

On this gravy train too are house builders, who are one of the main beneficiaries of Government subsidies for things like Help to Buy and the money given to local authorities to allow them to pass planning consents for garden communities at less cost to the developer. On top of that is a small army of consultants – property consultants, planning consultants, engineering consultants, hydrology consultants, biodiversity consultants, public relations consultants and architects who stand to make huge profits out of this environmental destruction.

While technically they are supposed to incorporate land value capture and other Garden City Principles which would seriously affect the returns, there is little sign of this.

They have been a boon to the PR industry and greenwash. The reality of rural destruction unleashed by any garden community is very hard to spot in the flood of public relations propaganda which accompanies them.

Conclusions

There is much talk of a “housing crisis” and certainly a great need for the right types of housing in the right places. Garden communities do little to address housing need and are almost all built in the wrong places. They are already swallowing more than a billion pounds of public money to produce a small proportion of the Government’s housing targets over a very long period.

Whatever the housing need, this country, like the rest of the planet, faces a climate and biodiversity crisis. Like many other countries it also has a growing population it is unable to feed from its own resources. It therefore relies on its economic performance to pay for our food imports. In a very uncertain world it would be foolish to assume this will work in perpetuity. We need to protect our farmland.

There are those who believe that fragmenting our countryside with roads, low-density housing and other built development can actually benefit nature. We do not share this view. The disturbance, air, noise and light pollution and soil sealing that building development brings do serious damage to biodiversity. Trying to recreate nature on sites where it is depleted is a process which can take decades or centuries. Where those sites are small and fragmented and close to human settlements, it can only ever be a very partial process.

England is also running into problems with water. Shortages, exacerbated by climate change which is causing rainfall to arrive in ever more concentrated packages separated by periods of drought, are particularly concentrated in those very regions where there is most pressure to build sprawl developments in general, and garden communities in particular. The soil sealing that greenfield development causes is a major exacerbating feature in our growing struggle to control flooding, while increased demand in stressed regions can only exacerbate shortages.

Hanging over all these crises is climate change. Serious action has been taken on greenhouse gas emissions from power generation, rather less action has been taken on emissions from other industries and less still on buildings’ emissions. Where the fight has yet to seriously begin is transport. Those who cannot even bear the thought of tackling our dependency on cars and lorries fantasise that electric vehicles will solve the problem but, even when the electricity is generated from fossil-free sources, their whole-life emissions are still around 50% of petroleum-powered vehicles. We need 100% reduction and, it is fast becoming clear, we need it soon.

The Smart Growth approach addresses all these concerns; indeed it is the only serious approach to the unsustainable nature of our planning and transportation now on offer. We need to build the right homes in the right places and we need not only to reduce our driving, but our need to drive by living in compact communities with good public transport, rail-based where possible. Garden communities, especially those at remote, stand-alone locations are utterly incompatible with the fight against climate change.

Contrary to what some critics claim, Smart Growth UK has never said there should be no greenfield development at all. Some is inevitable. But what we must have is a robust brownfield-first policy to ensure development goes first to suitable and sustainably located brownfield sites. This will not necessarily be the most profitable for development but, given some of the margins

house builders have enjoyed in recent years, that may not be a problem. Where building takes place, we need transit-oriented development to ensure sustainable transport is central to major developments from Day 1. Where greenfield development does take place, the enormous profits ought to be leveraged to fund reclamation of brownfield land.

Higher residential densities, not the ultra-high ones of the tower block, but the medium densities that produced the great, liveable places of the 19th century, are an urgently needed necessity too. It is time to put the garden suburb approach, which has squandered so much of our land for 100 years, quietly to bed.

We need to protect our land and our soils from further development. This is not some sentimental piece of “NIMBYism”; it is cold, hard, practical necessity. Our countryside is essential for most of our food, all of our water, most of our flood control and biodiversity, much of our timber and outdoor leisure and all the intangible but very real benefits that getting away from towns and cities can give.

And finally we need a serious rethink of our whole spatial and economic strategy which is shifting wealth and population ever southward. Inevitably such movements are hugely damaging to our economy, our environment and our society. We need to stop worrying less about hyper-development in the south and worry more about economic development in the north, a concern reflected by the prime minister in his comments following his election victory in December.

The Smart Growth approach addresses these issues; the garden communities programme would make them all worse. These developments can be defeated by determined action by well-disciplined campaigns over a period of years and this report shows how. But it would be so much simpler were the Government to end its support for garden communities.

Appendix 1

CLOUD's Concerns about Bailrigg Garden Village

Subject	Key issues
Jobs and the Lancaster economy.	<p>Lack of evidence-based quantification for the 9,500 projected jobs.</p> <p>Lack of evidence on where those living in BGV would work.</p> <p>Lack of evidence from Lancaster University on expected jobs growth from the Health Innovation Centre and future student and staff numbers.</p> <p>Impact of Council's revised plans (March 2018) for the Canal Corridor.</p>
Lancaster's housing needs.	<p>Excessive house-building in relation to forecast job growth.</p> <p>This encourages commuting and so runs against national planning policy of reducing greenhouse emissions.</p> <p>Lack of evidence to support high house-building target - despite clear evidence that houses in Lancaster are already more affordable than in most other cities.</p> <p>High infrastructure costs of BGV will constrain ability to achieve affordable housing targets.</p>
Flooding - existing issues and impact of BGV.	<p>Local plan recognises flooding as a current and major issue but fails to identify specific measures to address its causes. The locations of rivers and becks are crucial in this respect, yet there is no map to show which ones were responsible for the 22 Nov 2017 flooding across Lancaster.</p> <p>The proposed development of BGV and the associated link road to M6 Junction 33, together with development of Lancaster University's Health Innovation Campus (just started), all add to the flooding risk for south Lancaster and Galgate in particular. The Local Plan lacks specific measures to address these risks.</p>
Road Infrastructure	<p>Lack of comprehensive cost estimates for BGV infrastructure.</p> <p>Sources of funding for infrastructure development not identified..</p> <p>High cost per house</p> <p>Reason why residents have no up to date information</p>
Traffic and Transportation	<p>Lack of detailed modelling on the impact of BGV residents on road use. Questions not asked included :</p> <p>Percentage of adult population travelling to work daily</p> <p>Where they would work</p> <p>How they would travel</p> <p>The same questions were also asked about journeys to and from school</p>
Air Quality	<p>Lancaster has an existing and serious poor air quality problem. The Local plan lacks specific measures to address this.</p> <p>The proposed relocation of Junction 33 (as part of the BGV scheme) would provide only localised amelioration. It would not address air quality issues along the A6 corridor through south Lancaster or at the Pointer roundabout or in Lancaster city centre.</p>

	Ecological habitats damaged.
Education and health services	<p>Growing ageing population yet no plans to expand hospital or ambulance service. Not clear what will be accessible for those without car.</p> <p>Primary and secondary schools within BGV, but lack of information on how these are to be funded.</p>
Garden village boundaries.	<p>Successive iterations of the maps associated with the local plan have shown extensions to the boundaries of BGV. No justification for these changes has been provided.</p> <p>The original area of separation between BGV and Galgate has been eliminated.</p>

Appendix 2

CLOUD's Involvement in Consultations and Local Plan Hearings 2071-2019

Date	Type of consultation/event	Comments
2 January 2017	Announcement of government support for garden villages.	Most Lancaster people first heard of Bailrigg Garden Village when it was announced on the TV News on 2 January 2017 and report in the <i>Lancaster Guardian</i> 5 January 2017 . This included a sketchy map of a proposed “Bailrigg Garden Village” which alarmed residents.
27 January - 24 March 2017	<p>Developing a Local Plan for Lancaster Consultation</p> <p>BGV was to be the centre-piece of the Local Plan. This development of some 3,500 houses (though a Senior Planning Officer did subsequently refer to a potential 5,000), agri-business Centre, Health innovation Campus generating 2,000 jobs.</p>	<p>363 responses. Lancaster City Council Report of June 2017. Acknowledged that “there remains :</p> <p>1) A lack of confidence in the validity of and robustness of the objectively assessed housing need”</p> <p>2) A “strong view...that the aspirations for economic growth in the district was [sic] overly optimistic”.</p>

		<p>3) A “key concern” was also the “delivery of infrastructure in terms of how it would be delivered and the costs”, these matters relating to “education, highways, healthcare, open space and other local service provision”.</p> <p>4) Noticeably “a consistent response from the development industry suggested that the draft Local Plan places a heavy reliance on the delivery of strategic greenfield sites which require infrastructure (in particular Bailrigg Garden Village)”.</p> <p>5) Concern was also raised about the lack of detail about the proposed reconfiguration of junction 33 on the M6, and the cost.</p>
October 2017	<p>Further Drop-Ins specifically relative to BGV. It was stated that these events were ‘not directly part of the work taking place to bring forward the Local Plan’, but ‘they do supplement the Local Plan process’.</p> <p>Indicative topics were advertised, such as managing drainage, housing density, employment, roads and traffic, schools and facilities, the cycle superhighway, bus rapid transit and - a curious one - ‘The university in the village’. As far as we know, the university has no intention of opening facilities within BGV</p>	<p>Responses were invited, but those who attended the consultations reported that while questions could be asked little information on matters of key local concern was available. We are not aware of a report on that consultation.</p>

20 December 2017	Local Plan approved by Lancaster City Council	At that meeting officers confirmed more work was needed on the Local Plan, implying that at that stage it was not 'sound'.
21 December 2017	Sent to all on consultation mailing list	List of major matters yet to be addressed: flood risk and ecology; engagement with the community, landowners and developers; work with the Lancashire County Council to plan community facilities, transport and infrastructure for the Garden Village; securing necessary funding. Among the items to be determined, it seems, was "what land to allocate in South Lancaster, including for the Garden Village".
9 February - 6 April 2018	Local Plan published, including chapter 12 relating to BGV	Respondents were asked whether they judged it "legally compliant" (a question hard to answer for lay people) and "sound", and if judged unsound whether that was because it was "not positively prepared", "not justified", "not effective", or "not consistent with national policy". CLOUD's response , submitted on 3 April, explained in detail why, in the opinion of its members, elements of the Local Plan were neither "sound" nor "evidence-based".
15 May 2018	Lancaster City Council submitted the Lancaster District Local Plan for independent examination	
24 May 2018	Lancaster City Council invited consultees by email to comment specially and separately on a Bailrigg Garden Village Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Paper . during June 2018	The setting up of the Area Action Plan for Bailrigg Garden Village confused consultees. It was the source of major concern from consultees - outlined above throughout the consultations, yet seemed to be being pulled out of the Local Plan.

19 September 2018	Work continuing on Local Plan	Renaming of Bailrigg Garden Village to South Lancaster Growth Plan
October-November 2018	Consultation on Modifications to Local Plan Proposed date for Hearings on Local Plan by Planning Inspector Richard McCoy expected 8 January 2018	The modifications to previous versions of the Plan were often considerable.
21 November 2018	Announcement that Hearings would not start on 8 January 2018	Correspondence between Planning Inspector and Lancaster City Council
7 January -15 February 2019	Consultation on Evidence and Additional Information	Announcement sent to Consultees with block of documents amounting to 2,000 pages. Summaries posted to consultees 17 January 2019. CLOUD response to Evidence and Additional Information
11 April -21 May 2019	Hearings of Lancaster Local Plan by Planning Inspector Richard McCoy	9 Days of Hearings spread across several weeks, interrupted by Easter. CLOUD Hearings Statement . There was an extra day to discuss the issues surrounding Objectively Assessed Housing Need, prompted by our paid expert Neil McDonald. Summary of Hearings and CLOUD Contribution
12 August - 9 October 2019	Main Modifications out for Consultation	CLOUD response to Main Modifications

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