



**BRIEFING PAPER**

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# Garden cities, towns and villages

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# 1. Summary

Ebenezer Howard's 1898 vision advocated the principles of a garden city model. This was broadly followed by the first garden cities in Letchworth and Welwyn. Separately, the New Towns Act 1946 established an ambitious programme for building new towns to aid post World War II recovery.

It is generally accepted that not enough new homes are being built to meet growing need. Housing projections up to 2039 were published in July 2016, which indicated that around 210,000 new homes would be required each year. This exceeds the number of homes added to the dwelling stock in recent years by a considerable margin – in the 12 months ending December 2016, 140,660 houses were completed, which is 1 per cent lower than the year to December 2015.

The idea of creating new garden cities remains an attractive option to meet this shortfall. For example, the Lyons Commission October 2014 report, *Mobilising across the nation to build the homes our children need*, commissioned by the Labour Party, called garden cities “essential to meeting housing need over the medium to long-term”.

There is disagreement over the delivery of new towns or garden cities and whether it should be done on the basis of public sector support or private investment. In their April 2015 report, [Making New Garden Cities Happen](#), the Wolfson Economics Prize finalists set out the “fundamental principles” and priorities of garden cities for the next Government. The report proposes that “smarter sharing of the land value” between developers, investors and public authorities can deliver a wider range of benefits for local people.

The former Conservative Government [announced](#) in January 2017 a commitment to the support for 14 new garden villages across England. The [Housing White Paper](#), published in February 2017, set out the Government’s support for “a new wave of garden towns and villages”. It planned to introduce legislation to allow for locally accountable New Town Development Corporations, which will enable local areas to use them as the delivery vehicle.

Garden Cities were not mentioned specifically in the [2017 Conservative Party Manifesto](#). It did however commit to “fix the dysfunctional housing market” and deliver a million and a half more homes by the end of 2022. It also committed to deliver the reforms in the Housing White Paper to “free up more land for new homes in the right places” and “give councils powers to intervene where developers do not act on their planning permissions”.

The [Queen’s Speech](#) set out proposals to “help ensure more homes are built”. It committed the Government to deliver the proposed reforms set out in the February 2017 Housing White Paper to increase transparency around the control of land in order to free up land for new homes in “the right places”.

An example of a garden city in progress is Ebbsfleet. In *Budget 2014* the Coalition Government announced that it would support a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet in Kent, for up to 15,000 new homes based on existing brownfield land. It set out the [plans](#) for the future development of Ebbsfleet Garden City and invited views in a [consultation](#) on the project. In its [response](#) to the consultation the Government welcomed the overall support for the Corporation and set out its powers, which included the power to purchase land on a compulsory basis “for the purposes of its objectives and functions”.

This note applies to proposals and legislation relating to England only.

## 2. The Garden City Concept

Ebenezer Howard's book "*Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*", published in 1898, put forward a vision of towns that would take the best elements of the city; good employment prospects, relative wealth for its inhabitants and good communications and merge it with the best elements of the countryside; a healthy and affordable setting. Parkland was central to the design, as was a covered space where people could shop. The Garden City was intended to be of limited size – 32,000 people and surrounded by an agricultural belt to help make it self-sufficient in food and to prevent unchecked sprawl.<sup>1</sup>

To create these new towns a series of Garden City Companies were founded. Investors in the scheme became shareholders, expecting a return, although some of the proceeds went into a community trust fund. First Garden City Ltd was formed in 1903 and purchased around 1600 hectares (almost 4000 acres) of agricultural land in the three adjacent villages of Letchworth, Willian and Norton. [Letchworth Garden City](#) was founded in 1903 as the first Garden City.

Welwyn Garden City was the second garden to be built. It was established in 1922 and initially built with private capital. It was later developed by the State as one of the first generation of post-1945 New Towns.

### 2.1 The New Towns Programme

Towards the end of the Second World War, attention was directed to the post-war reconstruction of Britain's towns and communities. The possibility of building new towns had been accepted in 1945 by a government committee chaired by Lord Reith. The committee included a number of leading figures in the Town and Country Planning Association, originally the Garden Cities Association, founded in 1899. The New Towns created were largely based on the work of Patrick Abercrombie, a leading town planner. He advocated a new urbanism based on ease of movement of the motorcar and separation of housing, commercial and industrial into dedicated estates. <sup>3</sup>

The 1946 *New Towns Act* established an ambitious programme for building new towns. It gave the government power to designate areas of land for new town development. A series of "development corporations" set up under the Act were each responsible for one of the projected towns. Stevenage, in Hertfordshire, was the first new town created under the Act, with ten others following by 1955. Most were intended to accommodate the overspill of population from London. Since the Act, Parliament has authorised further developments of New Towns in England, Scotland and Wales and Northern Ireland.

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<sup>1</sup> Britain's New Towns: Garden Cities to Sustainable Communities, Anthony Alexander, Routledge, 2009, p59

## 2.2 Problems with New Towns

A number of [criticisms](#) have been levelled at new towns. Some of the main ones are:

- Transport infrastructure: that the dispersed nature and low density of development in all the New Towns and the segregation of uses results in residents needing to travel further than in many traditional towns and cities.
- Town centres: That the shopping centres at the centre of all New Towns have suffered from poor design and layout. Most are now out-of-date and inflexible to meeting changing needs. As a result, residents are choosing to shop in other locations.
- Housing design and public space: Much of the housing was put up quickly and some designs have not stood the test of time. Some provision of community facilities such as playgrounds has been judged to be inadequate and needs more investment.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee, *New Towns: Follow-Up*, Ninth Report of Session 2007–08 HC 889, 11 July 2008

### 3. The current housing context

It is generally accepted that not enough new homes are being built to meet growing need. Housing projections up to 2039 were published in July 2016, which indicated that around 210,000 new homes would be required each year.<sup>3</sup> This exceeds the number of homes added to the dwelling stock in recent years by a considerable margin – in the 12 months ending December 2016, 140,660 houses were completed, which is 1 per cent lower than the year to December 2015. In that same year 153,370 homes were started in the 12 months to December 2016, a 5 per cent increase from the 12 months to December 2015.<sup>4</sup>

Garden Cities were not mentioned specifically in the former Conservative Government's Election 2017 manifesto, which addressed housing in Chapter 4, under the heading "Homes for All". The manifesto made a commitment to "fix the dysfunctional housing market" and to meet the Government's 2015 commitment to "deliver a million homes by the end of 2020 and [...] half a million more by the end of 2022."<sup>5</sup> It also committed to deliver the reforms in the 2017 Housing White Paper to "free up more land for new homes in the right places" and "give councils powers to intervene where developers do not act on their planning permissions".

The 2017 [Queen's Speech](#) set out proposals to "help ensure more homes are built". It committed to deliver the proposed reforms in the January 2017 Housing White Paper to increase transparency around the control of land in order to free up land for new homes in "the right places".

Statistics and Live tables on house building are available from the [Government website](#).

For further information about housing see related Library briefing papers:

- [Planning for housing](#)
- [Green belt](#)
- [Tackling the under-supply of housing in England](#)
- [Stimulating housing supply - Government initiatives \(England\)](#)
- [Housing Market: Key Economic Indicators](#)

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<sup>3</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [2014-based Household Projections: England, 2014-2039](#), 12 July 2016

<sup>4</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [House building: new build dwellings, England: December Quarter 2016](#), 23 February 2017

<sup>5</sup> [Conservative Party Manifesto 2017](#), [accessed 21 June 2017]

## 4. Principles and delivery of garden cities

There is disagreement about how new towns or garden cities should be delivered and whether their basis should be public sector support or private investment:

- The [Centre for Policy Studies](#) May 2013 report recommended that the private sector should be free to design, fund and build new garden cities; that development rights for their construction should be auctioned; and that covenants should lay down responsibilities for infrastructure such as urban parks, retail shops and leisure facilities.<sup>6</sup>
- In contrast, property consultancy [GVA](#) said that evidence showed that the market would never deliver planned settlements given issues of infrastructure funding, land assembly, local politics, local market and value protection. It advocated “empowerment” of the public sector to lead the delivery of new planned settlements, with Government backed funding.<sup>7</sup>
- A Town and Country Planning Association July 2014 report recommends the establishment of Development Corporations with “strong delivery powers”. Effective delivery mechanisms should “de-risk the development process” which allows for the financing of Garden Cities through a “mixture of private and public funds”.<sup>8</sup>

In 2014 some private sector companies, including Legal & General, Aviva and Prudential announced their willingness to help finance new towns and garden cities through pension funds.<sup>9</sup>

The 2014 Wolfson Economics Prize finalists—Barton Willmore, Shelter, Urbed, Chris Blundell and Wei Yang & Partners—published a report, [Making New Garden Cities Happen](#), in April 2015 in which they set out the “fundamental principles” and priorities of garden cities for the next Government. The report cites three critical features of the garden city concept that distinguishes it from other developments:

- Retaining value in the place: the “uplift” in the value of the land can be shared more equitably than currently;
- Localising stewardship of community assets: rather than taxing developments, the ownerships of assets are granted to the community itself, which helps foster positive relationships between residents, businesses and stakeholders; and
- Unlocking access to patient capital: the scale of garden cities makes them attractive to “patient capital” from long term investors.

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<sup>6</sup> Centre for Policy Studies, [Simplified planning](#), May 2013

<sup>7</sup> GVA Research Bulletin, [Unlocking Garden Cities](#), March 2014

<sup>8</sup> Town and Country Planning Association, [The art of building a garden city](#), July 2014

<sup>9</sup> [“Radical thinking could back new towns with pension funds”](#), The Independent, 24 January 2014

## 4.1 Town and Country Planning Association

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has long campaigned for garden cities and is now campaigning for a new generation of garden cities to form part of a solution to the nation's housing crisis. It has developed a set of "garden city principles", which include:

- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types that are genuinely affordable
- A wide range of local jobs in the Garden City within easy commuting distance of homes
- Development that enhances the environment<sup>10</sup>

Following Government announcements on support for garden cities, the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) published, *The Art of Building a Garden City – Garden City Standards for the 21st Century*, June 2014, which is aimed at local authorities, the private sector and communities, setting out practical information on the standards required to deliver Garden Cities.<sup>11</sup> The TCPA also produced a report in February 2014, *New Towns Act 2015?*, which examined whether the existing new towns legislation was fit for purpose today and whether new primary legislation should be introduced to help deliver new garden cities and to support new development corporations with appropriate powers. The TCPA has published [research](#) on garden cities and new towns which looks at what lessons can be learned from how they have been approached before.

## 4.2 Lyons Commission Report

In December 2013 the Labour Party set up a Housing Commission, led by former local authority chief executive Sir Michael Lyons, to look at, amongst other things, "how to drive forward a new generation of new towns and garden cities". The Lyons Commission final report, *Mobilising across the nation to build the homes our children need*, was published in October 2014. It called garden cities "essential to meeting housing need over the medium to long-term". In its summary, the report made a number of recommendations to government:

The next government should immediately initiate such a programme, to be delivered by new Garden City Development Corporations and New Homes Corporations based on reformed New Towns Legislation.

Government should set out criteria that Garden Cities would be expected to meet so that local authorities can come forward with proposals to be developed in partnership. Proposals from private promoters will be accepted, but only where they can demonstrate local support.

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<sup>10</sup> Town and Country Planning Association, [The Garden City principles](#) [accessed 15 May 2017]

<sup>11</sup> Town and Country Planning Association, [The art of building a garden city - Garden city standards for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#), July 2014

[...]

The aim should be for local leadership to promote and enable many more new settlements through a mix of freestanding new Garden Cities, new Garden Suburbs, and remodelled towns, in a range of places across the country. Together our recommendations could help accelerate the delivery of up to 500,000 homes.<sup>12</sup>

In December 2016 the Lyons Commission met again on a “wholly independent basis” and published an [update report](#) in February 2016, which addressed the former Conservative Government’s “ambitious target” to build one million new homes by 2020. The report summarises the views of the Commission on the Government’s housing policy initiatives.

### 4.3 New Garden Cities Alliance

New Garden Cities Alliance is a collection of organisations—both commercial and not-for-profit—whose aim is to work with existing bodies to “establish standards for Garden Cities that Britain can be proud of”.<sup>13</sup> The Alliance has put forward a “[Letchworth Declaration](#)”, which is to be a mechanism for putting into place agreed principles of what makes a garden city so that the concept can become established. The Declaration proposes to establish the New Garden Cities Alliance as a “Community Interest Company”. The Alliance wants to set minimum standards for garden cities, including: transformation of existing urban precincts; requiring mutual ownership of all land; and attracting investors, entrepreneurs and established and new businesses to add value to the community.

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<sup>12</sup> The Lyons Commission, [Mobilising across the nation to build the homes our children need](#), October 2014

<sup>13</sup> New Garden Cities Alliance, [Welcome to the New Garden Cities Alliance](#) [accessed 22 May 2017]

## 5. Government support for garden cities, towns and villages

### 5.1 2015-17 Government

As part of its “ambitious housing programme”, the 2015-17 Conservative Government made a commitment in its election manifesto to “support locally-led garden cities and towns in places where communities want them”.<sup>14</sup>

In the [2016 Budget](#), the Chancellor said the Government supported the construction of a “new wave” of garden towns and cities which had the potential to create over 100,000 homes. He announced that the Government would legislate to enable local authorities to work together to create new garden towns.

In March 2016 the Government published a prospectus called [Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities](#), in which it extends the existing offer of support to local areas wanting to create “garden communities on a smaller scale”.<sup>15</sup> The prospectus was divided into two parts, for “different scales of development”.<sup>16</sup> The first half of the prospectus invited expressions of interest up to 31 July 2016 for “garden villages of between 1,500 to 10,000 homes”.<sup>17</sup>

The second half of the prospectus invited expressions of interest “on a rolling basis” for new garden towns and cities of more than 10,000 homes. The Government offered a “tailored package” that could include funding, available in 2016-17 and 2017-18 with further funding “subject to review”.<sup>18</sup> These expressions were to be led by, and have the backing of, local authorities—including the county council in two-tier areas—although applications that included support from the private sector and/or landowners are also welcomed. Information about how to apply is provided in the prospectus.

The design and development principles of the garden communities was set out by Housing Minister, Gavin Barwell MP in a January 2017 PQ:

We do not want to impose a set of design or development principles on communities. We want to support local authorities and communities in developing their own vision for locally-led garden towns and villages, taking account of local plans. We expect to see ambitious proposals that set high standards for design, quality and the provision of green space.

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<sup>14</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities](#), March 2016

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> [Department for Communities and Local Government Policy paper, Locally-led garden villages, towns and cities](#), March 2016

<sup>17</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities](#), March 2016

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

We are working with local areas to establish how best to measure and ensure those ambitions are being delivered.<sup>19</sup>

## January 2017 decision on locations

Following on from its prospectus the Government issued a [press release](#) in January 2017 in which it committed to the funding for 14 new garden villages across England. The villages would have access to £6 million over the following two financial years. Also announced in this press release was the support for three new garden towns, with a further £1.4 million to support their delivery.

These projects, described as “distinct new places with their own community facilities, rather than extensions to existing urban areas”, will consist of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes each.<sup>20</sup> The 14 new garden villages are:

- Long Marston in Stratford-on-Avon
- Oxfordshire Cotswold in West Oxfordshire
- Deenethorpe in East Northants
- Culm in Mid Devon
- Welborne near Fareham in Hampshire
- West Carclaze in Cornwall
- Dunton Hills near Brentwood, Essex
- Spitalgate Heath in South Kesteven, Lincolnshire
- Halsnead in Knowsley, Merseyside
- Longcross in Runnymede and Surrey Heath
- Bailrigg in Lancaster
- Infinity Garden Village in South Derbyshire and Derby City area
- St Cuthberts near Carlisle City, Cumbria
- North Cheshire in Cheshire East

The three new garden towns are:

- Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire
- Taunton, Somerset
- Harlow & Gilston, Essex and Hertfordshire

More information about some of these garden villages and towns can be found in section 5 of this Briefing Paper.

## Housing White Paper proposals

The Government’s Housing White Paper, published in February 2017, set out its support for “a new wave of garden towns and villages”.<sup>21</sup> It said that it would introduce legislation to allow for locally accountable

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<sup>19</sup> [PO 60145 \[on Garden Communities: Construction\]](#), 16 January 2017

<sup>20</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [First ever garden villages named with government support](#), 2 January 2017

<sup>21</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Fixing our broken housing market](#), February 2017

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New Town Development Corporations, which would then be used as delivery vehicles.

The Paper set out how garden cities, towns and villages might offer opportunities for

bringing large-scale development forward in ways that streamline planning procedures and encourage locally-led, high quality environments to be created<sup>22</sup>

It asked for views on how streamlined planning procedures could “support innovation and high-quality development” in garden towns and villages.

### Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017

Section 16 of the [Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017](#) gives powers to allow the Secretary of State to make regulations allowing a local authority to oversee the development of an area as a new town. The functions that would be transferred to local authorities for this purpose would be set out in secondary regulations. It would support the creation of garden towns and villages by enabling the responsibility for any development corporation created under the New Towns Act 1981 to be transferred to a local authority or authorities. This section was added to the then Bill in the House of Lords by Liberal Democrat Peer Lord Taylor of Goss Moor, who explained the intention behind this section:

This amendment is aimed at empowering local government communities to bring forward settlements of the highest quality, ensuring that the value that comes from development taking place is captured to create great places and deliver wonderful facilities for those places and is not captured in excessive profits for landowners or developers, and ensuring that the Government’s objectives in bringing forward the garden villages, garden towns and garden cities programme are met in terms of the delivery of what comes forward, with opportunities for small builders, self-builders and contract builders to grow and deliver in new ways better quality, more affordable homes and all the facilities in these places to create sustainable and vibrant 21st century communities.<sup>23</sup>

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth confirmed that the Government supported Lord Taylor’s amendment.<sup>24</sup> No further regulations under this section have yet been made.

## 5.2 2010-15 Coalition Government

In 2011 the then housing Minister said that “the scale of housing need that we now face means that we need imaginative proposals to come forward which get us back to Howard’s original ideas.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> HL Deb 15 March 2017 [c1893](#)

<sup>24</sup> HL Deb 15 March 2017 [c1898](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Housing Network Blog, “Garden cities: reshaping the ideas of the past for the 21st century”, by Grant Shapps, The Guardian](#) 19 September 2011

In a March 2012 speech the then Prime Minister said that Government would do more work on “how to apply the principles of garden cities to areas with high potential growth, in places people want to live.”<sup>26</sup>

The Government’s 2012 National Planning Policy Framework supports the establishment of new settlements following garden city principles. Government had also previously supported new large scale housing developments through the Local Infrastructure Fund.

In *Budget 2014* the Government announced that it would support a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet in Kent, for up to 15,000 new homes based on existing brownfield land, involving up to £200m of public investment and to be driven forward by a development corporation with compulsory purchase powers. For more information see section 5 of this Briefing Paper.

On 14 April 2014 the Government published a prospectus called [Locally-led Garden Cities](#). The prospectus sets out a support package which the Government could offer to local areas which were interested in forming a new garden city.

Although falling short of the 15,000 needed to qualify as a garden city under the Government’s [Locally-led Garden Cities](#) support package as set out above, in the [Autumn Statement 2014](#) the Government announced plans to “support Bicester to provide up to 13,000 new homes subject to value for money.”<sup>27</sup> It also announced plans to trial a different model for delivery of homes at Northstowe:

1.136 The government will take forward the development of Northstowe. The government will trial a new delivery model on the site, with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) taking the lead on delivery, including through master-planning and commissioning. This will support the construction of up to 10,000 new homes, up to twice as fast as conventional development routes. The government will undertake an evaluation of the Northstowe development, and of the feasibility and economic impacts of pursuing this model on a larger scale. The government will report by Budget 2015 on the delivery vehicle, governance and investment in the site.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> New Statesman, [Full transcript David Cameron Speech on infrastructure](#), Institute of Civil Engineering, London, 19 March 2012

<sup>27</sup> HM Government, [Autumn Statement 2014](#), para 1.135

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, para 1.136

## 6. Case studies of garden cities, towns and villages

Below are a selection of different garden city, town and village case studies from across the country at different stages of development.

### 6.1 Ebbsfleet

In *Budget 2014* the Coalition Government announced that it would support a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet in Kent:

1.145 The government will support a new Garden City at Ebbsfleet. Ebbsfleet has capacity for up to 15,000 new homes, based on existing brownfield land. To date, under 150 homes have been built on the largest site. The government will form a dedicated Urban Development Corporation for the area, in consultation with local MPs, councils and residents, to drive forward the creation of Ebbsfleet Garden City, and will make up to £200 million of infrastructure funding available to kick start development. This will represent the first new garden city since Welwyn Garden City in 1920.<sup>29</sup>

A Written Ministerial Statement from December 2014 summarised the planned improvement to transport infrastructure:

Improvements to the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions will be delivered as part of the Highways Agency programme. The Government will also undertake a review of transport provision for the Ebbsfleet area, including Crossrail, High Speed 1, Southern and Southeastern rail services.<sup>30</sup>

In August 2014 the Coalition Government set out the [plans](#) for the future development of Ebbsfleet Garden City and invited views in a [consultation](#) on the project. The Government published its [response](#) to the consultation in December 2014.

The Government established the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) on 20 April 2015 as a statutory, non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The EDC is now the local planning authority responsible for the determination of planning decisions for its area. Its powers also include the ability to purchase land on a compulsory basis “for the purposes of its objectives and functions”.<sup>31</sup>

#### Housing on the Ebbsfleet site

The following developers are currently on site at Ebbsfleet: Barratt Homes, Charles Church/Persimmon, Circle Housing, WW Martin, Countryside and Redrow.

Figures for starts and completions over the last three years were listed at January 2017 as follows:

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<sup>29</sup> HM Treasury, *Budget 2014*, March 2014

<sup>30</sup> [HC Deb 2 December 2014 c3WS](#)

<sup>31</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government, [Ebbsfleet Development Corporation: Analysis of consultation responses and next steps](#), December 2014

## Housing starts and completions in the Garden City Area

Existing housing starts and completions by 2017/18

Year	Original developer forecast		Current developer Actual (at 27/1/17)		Revised forecast (Actual and remaining forecast figures)	
	Starts	Complete	Starts	Complete	Starts	Complete
2014-2015	9	0	9	40	-	-
2015-2016	83	56	73	60	-	-
2017-2018	425	129	443	118	542	156

Source: [Ebbsfleet Development Corporation: Track Our Performance](#)

Further information about the Ebbsfleet Garden City Plans and Maps are available from the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation [website](#). A [Development Report](#) was published by AECOM on behalf of the DCLG in June 2015. The report provides a “compendium of information” about the site and the opportunities and constraints that Ebbsfleet Development Corporation faces in delivery of the garden city.

### Challenges for Ebbsfleet

The Government’s 2014 Consultation response addressed concerns that had been raised about infrastructure being adequate to support the development. Respondents to the consultation had said that services such as hospitals, roads and schools were already overburdened. In addition to the £200m the Government made available to support the infrastructure, the Corporation would be required to identify sources of funding and “unlock the critical infrastructure needed to support development”.<sup>32</sup>

Some of the key challenges highlighted in the press for the garden city have been:

- Infrastructure: the absence of infrastructure and utilities has held up work. The different sites are served by different utilities providers
- Coordination issues: A “Patchwork of planning consents [are] in place for 11,000 homes”<sup>33</sup>. Several landowners are involved and the site is “divided between Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils”.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Mark Wilding, *The challenges facing the Ebbsfleet garden city project*, Planning Resource, 22 April 2016

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

- “Fractured and incoherent” vision: an architect was quoted as saying that the planning of Ebbsfleet is of a type where “you link one type of arm to another type of leg and hope it can walk”.<sup>35</sup>

A 2014 *Guardian* article identified one problem: there is already a town in the area—Swanscombe—and its residents feel that they have not been consulted on the development and that they are being “erased from the map”.<sup>36</sup> Bryan Read, Councillor on Swanscombe and Greenhith town council said, “The development is not the problem – the problem is everyone is telling us what we need instead of asking us what we want”.<sup>37</sup>

## 6.2 Spitalgate Heath Garden Village

This village is located on the southern fringe of Grantham, south west Lincolnshire. The site covers approximately 224 hectares and is mostly formed of south west facing arable land which rises from the River Witham valley. A proposed new “habitat-rich green blue corridor” will run along the river and provide pedestrian and cycle routes. The village will “encourage a wide demographic” to be reflected in a mixed housing. New central primary and secondary schools will be built with “additional community leisure facilities”.<sup>38</sup> Highways England has announced that it will provide a £5 million funding boost for a new junction on the A1 to enable plans for the Spitalgate Heath garden village to move forward.<sup>39</sup>

## 6.3 Halsnead Garden Village in Merseyside

Halsnead occupies a “strategic location” with easy access to the Liverpool and Manchester city centres but is in a semi-rural setting. The development has the potential for 1,600 new homes. It will integrate a new “Country Park” and be linked by “high-quality green corridors”.<sup>40</sup> The site comprises the former Halsnead Park Estate and has areas of woodland and water bodies. The infrastructure requirements of the site are set out in the [Local Plan Core Strategy](#). The strategy sets out proposals for “Public Open Space” and key infrastructure services, including a new primary school.<sup>41</sup>

## 6.4 Welborne Garden Village in Hampshire.

Plans are underway to create a “major new community” north of Fareham in Hampshire. It will include up to “6,000 homes, workplaces, schools, green space, shops and local community services”.<sup>42</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> [‘Vision of Ebbsfleet garden city for 65,000 struggles to take root’](#), *The Guardian*, 4 January 2016

<sup>36</sup> [‘Britain’s housing crisis: are garden cities the answer?’](#), *The Guardian*, 1 October 2014

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

<sup>38</sup> [Spitalgate Heath Garden Village Prospectus](#), July 2016 [accessed 10 May 2017]

<sup>39</sup> Highways England, [£5 million government funding boost for new Grantham A1 junction](#), 5 December 2016

<sup>40</sup> Halsnead Masterplan SPD, [Halsnead: A sustainable garden village](#), December 2016 [accessed 10 May 2017]

<sup>41</sup> Ibid

<sup>42</sup> Fareham Borough Council, [Welborne](#) [accessed 8 May 2017]

Council's vision for the village is for a "self-contained Garden Village with thriving new district and local centres, new jobs, schools [and] facilities".<sup>43</sup> Fareham Borough Council was awarded over £228k in 'capacity funding' to help progress the Welborne Garden Village proposal. The Council published an invitation for bids from "developers, investors or consortia across Europe" to be a delivery partner in the project.<sup>44</sup>

## 6.5 St Cuthberts Garden Village (Carlisle South)

St Cuthberts forms part of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015-20130 and makes provision for a "major, mixed use development towards the south of the city".<sup>45</sup> It is described as a "broad location for further growth with the concept embedded in the recently adopted Carlisle District Local Plan (2015-2030)".<sup>46</sup> The area comprises a development of "up to 10,000 new homes; strategic employment offering; supporting infrastructure and a new southern link road".<sup>47</sup> There is no definitive boundary at the moment and the fixed extent is to be determined through the masterplanning process.

## 6.6 Bicester Garden Town

Bicester was designated a "garden town" in 2015.<sup>48</sup> It is the site of the the "UK's largest self-build scheme [and] the country's most sustainable housing development".<sup>49</sup>

The development of Bicester Garden Town is set out in the Cherwell [Local Plan](#). Between 2011 and 2031 over 10,000 new houses are planned for Bicester. The preferred sites for development (with numbers of homes) are:

[North West Bicester](#) = 3,923  
[Graven Hill](#) = 2,100  
[South West Bicester \(Kingsmere\)](#) = 2,468  
[South East Bicester](#) = 1,500  
[Gavray Drive](#) = 300

Source: [Growing Bicester](#)

Over the next 15 years the town is to receive "millions of pounds" of investment to help fund, in addition to new homes: 18,500 new jobs, new rail lines, town centre regeneration projects and improved road and cyclist routes.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [Welbourne: A Garden Village](#), [accessed 10 May 2017]

<sup>44</sup> Fareham Borough Council, [Council invites bids to become Welborne delivery partner](#), 24 March 2017

<sup>45</sup> Carlisle.gov.uk, [St Cuthbert's Garden Village \(Carlisle South\)](#) [accessed 11 May 2017]

<sup>46</sup> Carlisle.gov.uk, [Carlisle South – Garden Village](#), [accessed 11 May 2017]

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> Cherwell District Council Executive, [Bicester Garden Town Announcement](#), 5 January 2015

<sup>49</sup> Growing Bicester, [Delivering for Bicester](#), [accessed 16 May 2017]

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

## 7. Controversies, problems and dissent

The new garden villages have attracted criticism from various quarters. British Architect Richard Rogers has criticised the garden city proposals as a “return to the mistakes of the past”. He argued that there is no need to build on greenfield sites when there is still capacity to build more than one million homes on brownfield land. His remarks were made after a report by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the University of West of England (UWE), which proposed more homes be built on brownfield land, was published in November 2014.<sup>51</sup>

A report, *Garden Towns and Villages – unwanted, unnecessary and unsustainable*, published by Smart Growth UK in May 2017, looked at the underlying garden city “principles”, whether the new towns and villages intended to use brownfield land, whether they would have adequate infrastructure and alleviate housing shortage. In its conclusions the report criticised the contribution of the garden towns and villages to local housing shortages as “minimal”.<sup>52</sup> The report concludes that these towns and villages are:

no more than simple car-dependent, low-density, greenfield sprawl – environmentally destructive but highly profitable for their developers.<sup>53</sup>

With regards to Bicester, an article in the Guardian questioned whether the local people were persuaded that Bicester could become a garden town or whether they saw the development as “just a rebrand for unsustainable, sprawling dormitory suburbs”.<sup>54</sup> According to the article, lack of adequate transport infrastructure worries some of the local residents. They expressed concern about the gridlock and foresaw worsening traffic.

The Campaign to Protect Rural England is sceptical that the development of garden cities can help solve the housing crisis, saying that they will make “next to no difference to meeting housing need”.<sup>55</sup> CPRE argues that the focus should be on developing brownfield land across the country. In addition to this is the criticism that there is no definition of what constitutes a garden city, town or village. Without a clear definition, CPRE argues that we will have to accept them as being “anonymous, soul-less, land-hungry housing estates”.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Campaign to Protect Rural England, *From Wasted Space to Living Spaces*, 14 November 2014 [accessed 16 May 2017]

<sup>52</sup> Smart Growth UK, *Garden Towns & Villages, Unwanted, unnecessary and unsustainable*, May 2017

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> *‘Britain’s first garden town: housing crisis solution or “dog’s breakfast”?’*, *The Guardian*, 19 January 2016

<sup>55</sup> Campaign to Protect Rural England, *Planting the seeds for real Garden Cities*, 5 May 2015 [accessed 5 June 2017]

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

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