



Report to Cabinet

Date: 16th June 2020

Title: Aylesbury Garden Town Board Terms of Reference and Masterplan

Relevant councillor(s): Bill Chapple and Steve Bowles

Author and/or contact officer: Lisa Michelson/Stephen Hill

Ward(s) affected: Aylesbury wards

Recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

To approve the proposed structure and composition of the Strategic Oversight Board and Programme Delivery Team for AGT as set out in the report and in the proposed Terms of Reference at Appendix 1.

Recommendation 2:

To recommend approval of the Masterplan and 2050 Vision for Aylesbury Garden Town to Council.

Reason for decision: The existing Aylesbury Garden Town Governance Structure needs to be revised to reflect the new Unitary Authority arrangements and to align with the Programme's future priorities. The Masterplan has been the subject of extensive public engagement and provides the basis of a comprehensive delivery strategy to transform Aylesbury into a Garden Town over the coming decades, achieving the 2050 Vision.

Content of Report

1.1 Over recent months and in the lead up to the creation of Buckinghamshire Council, the Aylesbury Garden Town (AGT) Delivery Board has been reviewing the overall governance and delivery structures for the Aylesbury Garden Town project. This review is timely, given the progress being made with the AGT Masterplan and a focus on its delivery going forward. In January this year, the AGT Delivery Board endorsed a draft governance structure and approach for recommendation to the new Buckinghamshire Council for

approval and subsequent implementation. This was in the expectation of Council elections in May 2020. Clearly, the Covid 19 crisis has changed this picture.

- 1.2 Over April, the AGT Project Team undertook an impact assessment of the current crisis on the AGT programme for 2020/21. Given the largely long term and regenerative impacts of the programme, the projects identified represent a major opportunity to enhance the environment, economy and social role of Aylesbury over the coming years and decades. This will be particularly important as Aylesbury looks to recover from the imminent recessionary effects of Covid 19. It is, therefore, considered that the key priorities and projects as defined in the Masterplan should still be pursued and, accordingly, that it is important to also progress the refinements to and evolution of the governance and delivery arrangements for the project in order to best support and enable this.
- 1.3 In order to revise the Board in line with Buckinghamshire Council, and the key role going forward in providing strategic oversight, it is recommended that the membership of the existing AGT Board is amended and extended slightly. This will provide for a greater focus on Programme delivery, with increased community involvement, to reflect the important role of Town and Parish Councils in delivering services and the establishment of the Community Boards. The key purposes, core functions, and proposed membership of the **Strategic Oversight Board** have been incorporated into the draft Terms of Reference, which are included at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 As the AGT programme is transitioning into more of a delivery focus (based on implementing the proposals contained within the masterplan), it is now also appropriate to consider a revised and refocussed programme delivery structure, to sit alongside the evolution to a Strategic Oversight Board. Consequently, it is recommended that the **Programme Delivery Team (PDT)** is refined to ensure a clearer decision making and co-ordination process. The proposed composition of PDT is set out in para 2.2.
- 1.5 Work has been ongoing over the last 18 months to produce an AGT Masterplan and associated high level Vision. To move forward on the future delivery programme the Council needs to sign off and approve the Masterplan and Vision. The Vision sets out the high level aspirations and principles for what Aylesbury should look like as a Garden Town by 2050. The Vision identifies 8 key principles which build on Aylesbury's heritage, strengths and opportunities as a Garden Town to tackle the Town's challenges head on and for the benefit of all. This series of interrelated principles underpin proposals and initiatives within the Masterplan. The Masterplan sets out in detail how the AGT Vision will be delivered through a comprehensive and co-ordinated town-wide plan. Together, they provide the framework from which the programme will be derived.

- 1.6 The Vision and Masterplan have been the subject of extensive engagement with key stakeholders throughout its 18 months development. The public consultation on the Draft Masterplan took place over 6 weeks from the 6th January until 14th February 2020 and received largely positive feedback. In response to the main issues raised, a series of key changes and actions have been made to move the Draft AGT Masterplan to a final version (available here: <https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk/masterplan>) A Statement of Community Involvement has been produced and is available alongside the Masterplan, this sets out a summary of the key issues raised and amendments are set out on pages 20-22 of this document. Specifically, appropriate images have been sourced and amended within the Vision (Appendix 3) and final Masterplan, to convey aspirational and inspirational examples of high quality, sustainable development. An Executive Summary of the Masterplan has been produced and is provided at Appendix 4. The Executive Summary contains a more succinct and digestible programme of key actions and projects, which will be updated on a regular basis to ensure continued relevance in years to come. The final Masterplan, incorporating all changes, will be submitted to Cabinet and Council for approval.
- 1.7 It is recommended that the Vision, Masterplan and accompanying Executive Summary and Statement of Community Involvement are approved by the Council, these documents have been signed off by the Corporate Management Team. Approval by the Council will provide the documents with status and weight needed to ensure the Vision and Masterplan objectives can be realised to make Aylesbury a truly transformational Garden Town.
- 1.8 Following approval, emphasis will then turn towards delivering the proposals of the Masterplan. The current crisis has increased our awareness of the importance of access to green spaces and nature, high quality living environments, and walking and cycling for our health and wellbeing. It has also heightened our sense of community through collective action to support the vulnerable and the need to ensure Aylesbury town centre recovers from the Covid 19 induced recession, to become a central focus for community, cultural and social activities . The delivery of projects identified in the masterplan will help Aylesbury's communities to recover from and build on the positives that have emerged from this unprecedented challenge. Action to invest in the town centre as a priority and delivery of the Gardenway proposals will help to achieve this, alongside creation of new accessible walking and cycling routes. Creation of high quality new neighbourhoods with local community hubs will also support Aylesbury's recovery and its future resilience.
- 1.9 Feedback during the consultation emphasised the importance of the town centre in supporting the local economy and providing a focus for community activities. Addressing the challenges facing the town centre will be even more pertinent as Aylesbury looks to recover from the Covid-19 crisis, and therefore the production of

a Town Centre Action Plan will be prioritised and can be used as a major opportunity to create a positive response to the recovery of the town.

2.0 Recommended Changes to Terms of Reference for the Board and PDT

Core Membership

2.1 The Board should represent the fact that the AGT Programme requires a partnership between the Council, its key delivery partners and community representatives, in order to deliver transformation on the ground. Board composition is proposed to comprise the following:

- Buckinghamshire Council Cabinet Member(s) with appropriate responsibility
- A representative from Buckinghamshire Growth Board
- Representatives from Community Board(s) related to AGT
- Representative Ward Member from Aylesbury
- Buckinghamshire Council Senior Officers with responsibility for Environment, Transport, Property, Regeneration & Growth
- Representative Officer and Elected Member from Aylesbury Town Council
- Representatives (2) from the AGT area Parish Councils (recommended to be one from the northern group of parishes and one from the southern)
- Board member or nominated representative from Bucks LEP
- Representative from Homes England
- Representative from NHS Health
- Representative from NEP
- Open invitation to Local MPs

2.2 The PDT is envisaged as a small focussed group comprising the AGT Programme Lead (supported by AGT team members as appropriate) plus senior Buckinghamshire Council officers responsible for planning, transportation, implementation etc. These officers would be complemented by representatives from key partner organisations, such as the LEP and Homes England. It would however have the option to invite other disciplines and partners, depending on project needs at the time. It is

recommended that the PDT is re-focussed around a series of Technical Working Groups, to reflect the main action areas and projects as identified in the Masterplan, such as the Town Centre; Movement Network; Delivering Quality Communities etc. (more information on the proposed structure is contained in Appendix 2). These working groups will be multi-disciplinary both from within the Council and from key partner organisations, to reflect the task in question and could include a Board Member to ensure consistent decision making and communication between the key projects and the Oversight Board.

Chairmanship

- 2.3 The Chair will be elected by the Board at its first meeting following establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council in April 2020, and annually following this.

Meetings

- 2.4 A minimum of 1 meeting per quarter will be held throughout the year, with additional meetings able to be scheduled if required.

Decision Making and Reporting Lines

- 2.5 Whilst the Board has oversight and will direct the delivery of the AGT Programme, it has no statutory decision making powers. Formal decision making (for example on planning applications; statutory plan making; funding allocations) will continue to take place through the existing decision making routes and structures of the organisations represented on the Board, but with the added benefit of clear reporting and recommendations (when relevant) from the Board.
- 2.6 Board Members will be empowered to make AGT related activity and operational decisions on behalf of their respective organisations, subject to each representative organisation's scheme of delegation and management arrangements. The Board will receive reports and progress updates from the AGT Programme Delivery Team which will be focussing on the day to day management and needs of the project and will manage and implement the project plan and decisions of the Board.

Review Dates

- 2.7 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually from the point of their first approval, or as required.

Other options considered

- 2.8 A series of workshops were held with the previous AGT Board members to consider a range of options and these are set out in Appendix 2.

Legal and financial implications

None identified.

Corporate implications

The AGT Programme promotes sustainable development for Aylesbury and proposes climate change mitigation measures and responses up to 2050.

Consultation and communication

As referred to above, the previous AGT Board were involved extensively in the proposed recommendations and the results of the AGT Masterplan consultation process have also been taken into account as well as the impacts of the current Covid 19 crisis.

Next steps and review

Once the Terms of Reference have been approved by Cabinet, after it has been through the forward plan process, it is proposed to convene the new Strategic Oversight Board in June 2020. The approved Masterplan will provide the basis for the programme of projects for the new Board.

Background papers

See Appendix 2

Your questions and views (for key decisions)

None relevant

