

APPENDIX 2: Evolving the AGT Governance and Delivery Arrangements - Background

In January 2019, the AGT Delivery Board directed a review of governance and delivery model options to explore and make recommendations for the future delivery of AGT, based on the place-making objectives set out in the AGT Masterplan. The agreed scope of the review was to consider the key delivery circumstances for AGT; to review approaches to governance and delivery within other contemporary garden communities; and to make recommendations for options to be considered further for AGT.

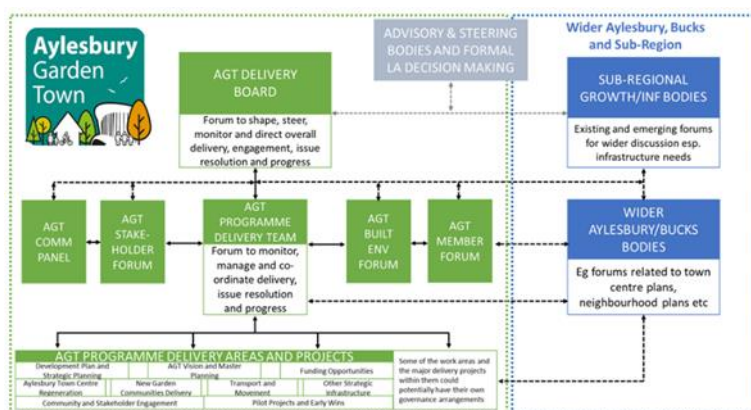
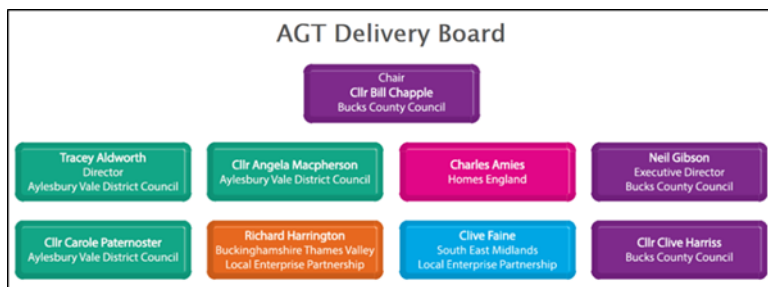
An interim Delivery and Governance Options Review Report was considered by the AGT Delivery Board in July 2019. This recommended that a bespoke/combination approach to delivery is continued to be followed at AGT with further evolution and refinement as part of the transition to Buckinghamshire Council. The transition can also seek to accommodate and respond to the anticipated changes to the approach to the wider governance and decision making across Aylesbury and Buckinghamshire. Of key relevance are the creation of the Buckinghamshire Growth Board, which will provide a single forum for the development and oversight of growth and place-making in Buckinghamshire, including AGT; and the establishment of Community Boards to strengthen local democracy and provide a forum through which local communities and stakeholders can work together to find solutions to local issues.

In addition, over the course of 2019 and early 2020, the Vision for AGT to 2050 and the accompanying AGT Masterplan has progressed to draft stage. The Vision and Masterplan have both been the result of extensive engagement with key partners and the local community, with the Masterplan process culminating in a six week public consultation exercise over January and February 2020. Whilst the Masterplan is still in draft and therefore subject to further potential amendments (as described later in this report) and approval by the AGT Board, it represents a comprehensive picture of how Aylesbury can be transformed over the next 20 to 30 years into a high quality, sustainable community based on garden town principles. In particular, the draft Masterplan identifies a number of key themes and strategic projects that will require focus and investment from Buckinghamshire Council and its partners to ensure its implementation. These themes and projects have informed the suggested future governance and overall resources for AGT going forward.

Following the Interim Report in July 2019, the AGT Delivery Board commissioned a Working Group to further consider and evolve proposals for governance and delivery at AGT to report in January 2020. The key outcomes of this are described below and led the AGT Delivery Board to agree to endorse the recommendations relating to the Board and Programme Delivery Team that are now set out in this report (exceptions being those items which directly reference the Covid-19 issues and responses).

A Summary of Existing AGT Governance Arrangements

The AGT Delivery Board included representatives from AVDC, BCC, BTVLEP, SEMLEP and Homes England and is defined as a “forum to shape, steer, monitor and direct overall delivery, engagement, issue resolution and progress”. It oversees the work of the AGT Programme Delivery Team (PDT) which has focused to date on the preparation of a Masterplan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan for AGT. The structure, composition and relationships are illustrated in the diagrams below.



These governance arrangements have been effective in maintaining momentum during the planning stages of the project and, accordingly, the key areas of work (i.e. masterplan) are now nearing completion. Along with a future Infrastructure Delivery SPD, the Masterplan will provide an appropriate tool to influence and guide future growth within AGT. As noted, the AGT Delivery Board endorsed the conclusions of the working group set up to review the governance and delivery arrangements. It agreed that without further refinement and evolution of both the Board and PDT, there is a potential risk that the Masterplan and other ambitions for AGT may fail to be effectively delivered or may be delivered in a piecemeal and uncoordinated manner, resulting in the loss of opportunity for quality place-making and regeneration in accordance with the emerging vision and garden town principles.

Proposed Evolution to a Strategic Oversight Board for AGT

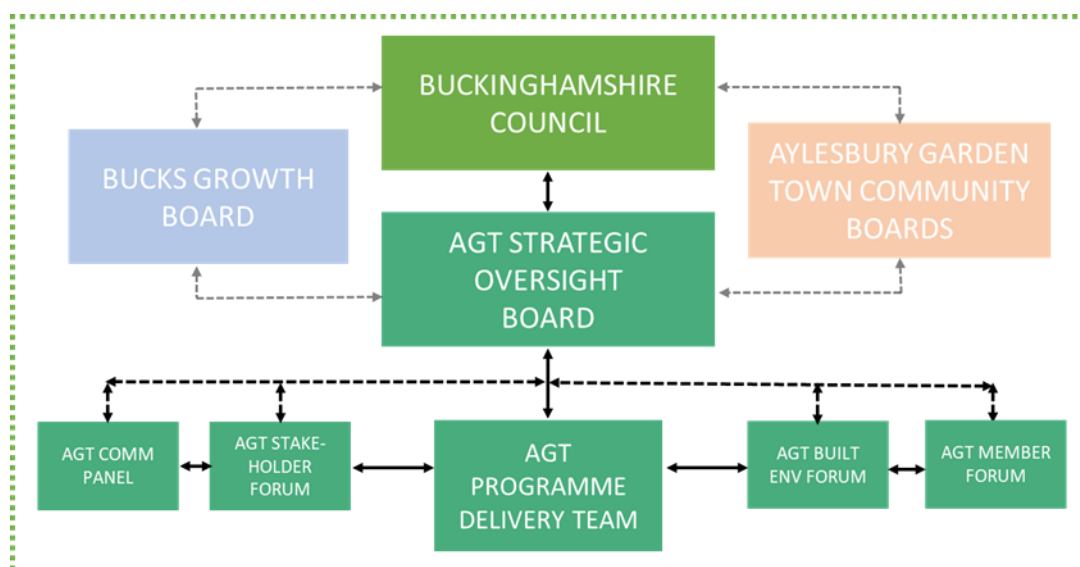
Throughout the Working Group sessions, it was agreed that the current partnership approach to delivery will continue, but that an opportunity exists for an enhanced role for the AGT Board. This would include supporting a greater enabling function than at present, through provisions (included in the ToR) to influence the delivery of projects through close working with partner organisations, as well as generally overseeing and co-ordinating the AGT programme of delivery and the use of the designated Garden Town capacity funding from the sponsoring body MHCLG (through Homes England). This oversight and co-ordination will be particularly important where there is a requirement for further public sector investment and co-ordination between partners in supporting the delivery of the projects set out in the Masterplan. The Oversight Board, as an extensive partnership organisation focussed on Aylesbury, can play a very positive role in the town's recovery from Covid 19 and its further regeneration and transformation as set out in the Masterplan and accompanying Vision 2050. Overseeing co-ordinating the implementation of key transformational projects, through all key partners working together, will be a crucial role.

In January 2020, the AGT Delivery Board resolved to recommend to the new Council the principle of it evolving into a **Strategic Oversight Board**, enabling the Board to offer further added value to AGT through the following:

- Provide support and direction on the emerging COVID-19 recovery programme and initiatives relating to AGT.
- The completion and approval of AGT focused planning framework and enabling documentation to stimulate and encourage quality development within AGT (e.g. SPDS, strategies and feasibility studies)
- Proactive communication with communities (e.g. Community Boards), influencers (e.g. Growth Board) and decision-makers to ensure the delivery of a shared vision for AGT is prioritised
- Ensuring that projects delivered through partners are undertaken in a co-ordinated manner and so benefits and opportunities are optimised e.g. through encouraging information sharing and consensus between town centre delivery partners
- Through ensuring that funding is secured and co-ordinated to support the comprehensive and timely delivery of AGT projects e.g. through an overview of central government funding (HIF, capacity funding), local funding, S106 contributions etc.
- Through the provision of resources to facilitate the delivery of key AGT projects, including capacity support to services where required and the use of designated Garden Town capacity funding.

- Through influencing third party proposals via an interface with development management e.g. through negotiating GI delivery and improvements to meet masterplan targets within housing sites and link road design.
- The provision of leadership in communications and publicity across all partner organisations, ensuring that AGT remains a key priority for delivery.
- Through continuing to review progress of AGT, including ongoing consideration of opportunities/need to influence development where necessary to ensure timely and quality development is achieved.

As previously noted, of key importance for the successful implementation of the proposed delivery model and governance structure, in order to ensure approaches are aligned and information is shared transparently, will be the inter-relationship between the AGT Strategic Oversight Board and other key delivery partners. The following illustration shows how the evolved structure would position the AGT Strategic Oversight Board to deliver the overall programme alongside decision makers and key stakeholders.

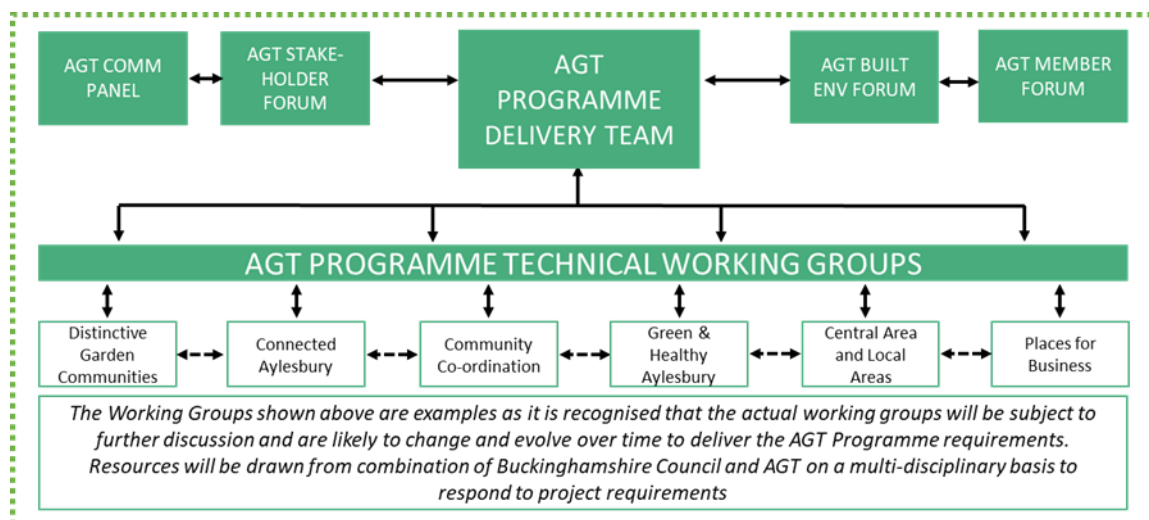


Refinement of Programme Delivery Team (PDT) & Creation of Technical Working Groups

PDT currently operates as a fairly wide forum of individuals from different organisations, meeting on a monthly basis to manage and monitor the AGT Programme. This wider forum of organisations has been appropriate and helpful in progressing from overall project definition and set up, through to the commissioning and drafting of the AGT wide masterplan. However, the fact that the AGT programme is transitioning into more of a delivery focus (based on implementing the proposals contained within the masterplan), suggests it is now appropriate to consider a revised and refocused structure going forward to sit alongside the evolution to a Strategic Oversight Board.

As noted, alongside the immediate responses to the recovery post coronavirus, the AGT Masterplan and Vision will inform and influence the future governance and delivery arrangements and deployment of resources going forwards. The draft masterplan proposes a number of key overarching projects, with detailed action plans for each. These will require delivery of a combination of new projects and more detailed strategies, in order to bring about the transformation of Aylesbury over time and deliver the Vision for AGT. To achieve these aims and objectives will require the input and co-ordination of a wide range of disciplines, both from within Buckinghamshire Council and from partner organisations.

Consequently, it is recommended that the PDT is re-focussed around a series of Technical Working Groups to reflect these action areas, ensuring that those attending each working group have a set of clear aims and objectives, that are both appropriate to their discipline/organisation and ultimately the aims of the wider masterplan. A number of potential working groups are set out below although it is recognised that the precise type and number of working groups will evolve and vary over time to deliver the AGT Masterplan and delivery programme. The following diagram illustrates the relationships of the TWGs to the PDT.



Programme Delivery Team

As illustrated above, it is proposed that the work programmes of all individual workstreams is overseen by the revised PDT. The PDT is envisaged as a small focused 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 officers 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 projects needs at the time.

The PDT will focus on the overall management of the programme. The group will monitor the implementation of the overall project plan for AGT, including overseeing the work of the

Technical Working Groups and advising/reporting to the Board on progress and issues arising. The group is likely to meet bi-monthly to maintain momentum on the project. Key roles of the PDT would comprise:

- Steering and managing the AGT Programme to meet the aims of the Masterplan and to directly support the Covid-19 recovery programme
- Ensuring appropriate resources are allocated to the Technical Working Groups as required to progress the Project Programme.
- Identifying any potential showstoppers/risks as they arise and reporting to the Board on potential solutions
- Monitoring an overall project plan, including key tasks and milestones
- Reporting and making recommendations to the Board on overall Programme progress
- Co-ordinating consultation with third parties, including the public and statutory agencies on key projects
- Monitor the AGT budget and lead on the formulation of external funding bids.
- Ensure co-ordination of the AGT Programme with other relevant programmes across Bucks Unitary, such as HIF etc.

Technical Working Groups

These groups will focus on the delivery of key work areas, comprising of individuals and organisations responsible for the implementation of the defined projects emanating from the masterplan.

The TWGs will be responsible for identifying a strategy and action plan for their thematic areas, informing the implementation of the masterplan. These thematic areas relate to the actions as set out in the Masterplan. The TWGs will report progress to the PDT through an identified technical lead, who will be a member from the AGT team. The frequency of meetings can be determined by each individual TWG, depending on their agreed programme/action plan and may include a Board Member where appropriate.

Initially, TWGs have been identified that relate directly to the identified main project and delivery areas as set out in the AGT Masterplan and a brief summary of their potential activities and focus is set out below:



Connected Aylesbury

To co-ordinate the development and implementation of key strategic infrastructure relating to the movement and transportation network of AGT, for example:

- HIF and LCWIP infrastructure
- Healthy streets
- Input to strategic road implementation/improvement

Community co-ordination

Managing the programme of community engagement actions, including:

- the community funding pot.
- Stakeholder and partners funding
- Community liaison on wider masterplan initiatives

Central Area and Local Centres Network

Responsible for interpreting the actions as set out in the masterplan relating to the town centre, in terms of identifying redevelopment opportunities; preparing development briefs and procuring appropriate advice; enhancing the public realm; contributing to the wider cultural strategy/ promotion of Aylesbury etc. Considering opportunities to promote sustainable neighbourhoods across AGT, for example the development of a strategy; liaising with external partners and organisations to encourage investment in neighbourhood centres etc.

Green and Healthy Aylesbury

Implementing environmental schemes and projects across AGT, with the aim of providing a connected and multi-functional blue and green infrastructure network, as set out in the Masterplan. This will include key projects such as:

- The Gardenway
- Watercourse naturalisation
- Natural Capital Assessment

Distinctive Garden Communities

The masterplan focusses on ensuring a co-ordinated approach to delivering high quality design and place making is achieved across the new 'Garden Communities'. Ensuring housing delivery is a key aim of AGT and its success is an indicator for MHCLG influencing Capacity Fund allocation. This workstream would bring together professionals and partners

responsible for delivering the major strategic housing sites, to drive forward quality, as defined by the masterplan and the Design Guide. For example, this group would oversee the implementation of a design review panel; input to relevant site specific SPD's etc.

Places for Business

Driving forward opportunities for innovative employment and economic investment in the town is a key objective of the masterplan and was recognised as a priority through the public consultation. This group would bring together key disciplines to understand how this can be achieved and to co-ordinate and implement appropriate actions focussed on job creation and employment innovation.

