

new towns and garden cities

lessons for tomorrow

Stage 2:

Lessons for Delivering a New Generation of Garden Cities

creating garden cities and suburbs today





New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 2: Lessons for Delivering a New Generation of Garden Cities

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Summary

'Look, Harlow might not be Hampstead, but nor is it the accepted cliché of the metropolitan journalist. In my opinion, the New Town idea of providing affordable accommodation for working people in an attractive environment worked – I'm a product of it. But successive governments have let us down. They haven't recognised the extent of our infrastructure problems. If you build everything at the same time, particularly using experimental techniques, then everything is going to go wrong at the same time.'

Bill Rammell, MP for Harlow 1997-2010. Quoted in J. Cowley: 'Down town'. *The Guardian*, 1 Aug. 2002

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2002/aug/01/urbandesign.architecture>

Immediately after the Second World War the United Kingdom faced an acute shortage of housing. But the nation was also gripped by a desire to create a new and better future. Learning from the earlier experience of the Garden City movement, the post-war Government initiated a programme of 'New Towns' in response to the housing crisis. Although it led to the creation of homes, jobs and communities within 32 New Towns across the UK, many people are nevertheless dismissive of the New Towns programme and unaware of the useful lessons it holds as we face today's housing shortage.

Many think they know the story – it was a top-down, state-led initiative which imposed large built-up areas on communities that didn't want them; a process that resulted in car-dominated modernist estates which have largely failed. Similarly, although Garden Cities have received a lot of political and media interest in recent years, they are often dismissed as old-fashioned – the product of an outdated concept that led to bland, low-density suburban environments. But anyone who has actually visited the places that were created, or has taken the time to understand the detail of the various developments, knows that the reality is far more complex. The Garden Cities and the New Towns were visionary experiments in finding a better way to live and are today part of an evolving story of urbanism across the UK from which we still have a lot to learn.

While much has changed since the Garden City pioneers were busy building what they hoped would be utopia in Hertfordshire 100 years ago and since the 1946 New Towns Act introduced the New Towns programme, we still face the challenge of providing genuinely affordable homes in healthy, sociable environments, using a financial model that allows places to be looked after in the future. And today we also face the challenges of dealing with a changing climate and living within a globalised economy.

This report is the result of a two-stage research project into the lessons – both good and bad – from the Garden

Cities and the post-war New Towns programme. The research has ventured beneath the surface of many common assumptions about these two initiatives, and this report demonstrates that the approaches they used are now more relevant than ever. Four key messages emerge from the findings:

- The sites for many of the post-war New Towns were identified using a local-authority-led process.
- The New Towns programme was a profitable long-term investment for HM Treasury and continues to this day to provide income for the Government.
- The New Towns programme created homes for a current population of over 2.8 million people and was driven by a scale of ambition for good place-making that has not been rivalled since. Central government played an essential role in enabling this process.
- The financial model used to build Garden Cities created an income which could pay for their upkeep in perpetuity. This financial model was not applied to the New Towns, and now many are run-down and in need of considerable investment.

The TCPA has been campaigning for a new generation of Garden Cities – combining the high ideals and place-making principles of the Garden City movement and the effective delivery mechanisms of the post-war New Towns programme – as an important part of the range of solutions (including urban regeneration) needed to meet the UK's housing and growth needs.

The research reported here has revealed a series of important lessons for creating new Garden Cities today (and, indeed, any high-quality, large-scale new places) – as set out in the panel on the facing page. The TCPA is exploring many of the issues raised in this research in more detail and will shortly publish a series of 'Practical Guides' to support those engaged in creating high-quality large-scale new developments and Garden Cities.

Key lessons for creating 21st century Garden Cities or other high-quality developments

Creating new communities is a complex endeavour that requires mechanisms designed specifically for the task. It requires long-term political leadership and commitment to good place-making that transcends political cycles.

Finding sites for new Garden Cities

- Learning from the New Towns programme, the process of finding locations for new Garden Cities should be led by local authorities (or groups of local authorities), enabled by government and underpinned by a strong evidence base within a national or sub-national policy framework.

Getting planning consent for new Garden Cities

- The New Towns programme allowed for a delivery process that was much faster than is possible under today's statutory development plan system. New Garden Cities would benefit from a dedicated planning consent mechanism which allows for speed of delivery without compromising democratic accountability. Amendments to the New Towns Act could achieve this objective.

Delivery bodies for new Garden Cities

- The creation of new Garden Cities requires a dedicated delivery team (a Garden City Development Corporation) with the power and resources to do everything necessary to deliver the town, and guided by a legal commitment to implement the Garden City principles (i.e. to high-quality place-making), including meaningful engagement with residents and a commitment to long-term stewardship. These latter characteristics were missing from the New Town Development Corporations.

Paying for new Garden Cities

- New Garden Cities do not have to be a strain on the public purse – land value capture provides a proven model of patient investment for long-term gain.
- The New Towns programme was, ultimately, profitable for HM Treasury, which continues to receive receipts from former New Town assets to this day. The Government should provide the political certainty to de-risk private investment in new Garden Cities.

Ensuring that new Garden Cities are looked after in the future

- Requirements for the long-term stewardship of new Garden Cities should be embedded in updated New Towns legislation. For existing projects, local authorities should require consideration of long-term stewardship within all large-scale development proposals.

Encouraging support for new Garden Cities

- Local authorities and delivery bodies must make a commitment to secure high-quality development.
- Meaningful public engagement in the planning and development process should be a requirement of any large-scale development as part of evolving arrangements for long-term stewardship.
- New Garden Cities should be places in which people are proud to live and which provide a vibrant social and cultural life from the outset.

Renewal in the existing New Towns

- The existing New Towns have a legacy of generous community assets such as green space, but for the most part stewardship and funding mechanisms were not put in place to look after them.
- The Homes and Communities Agency still owns significant amounts of land in the New Towns which could be used to help fund their renewal.
- Local authorities also own large areas of land in and around the New Towns which could be used to generate income.

The need for legislative reform

- Updates to the New Towns legislation could be made to provide the necessary mechanisms to deliver the high-quality Garden Cities that the nation deserves in the timescale it needs them.
- The Government should review the Compensation Code with a view to bringing about a better balance between current-use values and market values when deciding what landowners should be paid for their land.

1

Introduction

1.1 About this study

There is today a severe shortage of housing in the UK. An important part of the solution to the housing crisis would be to build a new generation of Garden Cities, and there has been much discussion about this. To help inform the debate, and to respond to issues identified in successive House of Commons Select Committee and other reports, the TCPA has undertaken a research study to identify transferable lessons from the existing Garden Cities and the New Towns programme. The study addressed some of the gaps in research and knowledge about the New Towns programme. It was undertaken also to provide in-depth analysis and a greater understanding of the issues faced by the UK's established Garden Cities and New Towns today – and to outline ways forward to ensure that, where necessary, these communities are revitalised and renewed, especially in response to the need to rejuvenate town centres and ensure that the towns' housing and employment base remain fit for purpose.

The project has been conducted in two stages:

- **Stage 1:** The first part of the project involved collecting data about the UK's 32 New Towns and Letchworth Garden City in order to provide a snapshot of these communities today. The Stage 1 report – *An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*, published in December 2014 – tells the story of the Garden Cities and New Towns movement and includes a set of 'five-minute fact sheets' on each of the New Towns.
- **Stage 2:** This report constitutes the output of Stage 2 of the project, which undertook a more in-depth study of a selection of the UK's New Towns and its two Garden Cities to identify lessons on how to deliver a new generation of Garden Cities. The findings and recommendations in this report are relevant for all those trying to create high-quality new places, whether or not they are described as 'Garden Cities'.

Box 1

What are Garden Cities and New Towns?

Garden Cities and New Towns are two distinct, but related, models of planned settlement that have had a profound influence on planning and development in the UK and across the world. Inspired by radical utopianism, and driven by environmental and social concerns, Ebenezer Howard's invention of the Garden City in 1898, based on a vision of combining the 'advantages of the most energetic and active town life, with all the beauty and delight of the country'ⁱ in a high-quality sustainable community, had a worldwide impact and revolutionised the way that people thought about building towns and cities. Ultimately, the rather slow and fragile Garden City experiments led to the conclusion that government needed to take the lead in shaping a post-war programme of New Towns. The New Towns programme became a mould-breaking achievement in the history of large-scale planned development. The New Towns were essentially an evolution of the Garden City concept, with increased populations and wider strategic economic purpose and with very different methods of delivery, reflecting the specific political and social contexts in which they were developed.

A detailed description of Garden Cities and New Towns and the differences between them is set out in the report of Stage 1 of the research project *An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*.ⁱⁱ

i E. Howard: *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Swan Sonnenschein, 1898. Original edition reprinted, with commentary by Peter Hall, Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, by Routledge, 2003 (available from the TCPA)

ii *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

1.2 Creating 21st century Garden Cities today – some assumptions

The creation of new Garden Cities today, whether as individual initiatives or as part of a wider government programme, will take place within the current political and socio-economic context. This presents its own challenges and opportunities that all those involved in delivering new Garden Cities will have to consider.

A set of assumptions based on five common issues was developed to provide a focus for the research:

- **Issue 1: How should sites for new Garden Cities be identified?**

Assumption: The identification and designation of sites for new Garden Cities built today will have to be locally supported through a democratic and plan-led system.

- **Issue 2: Who should create new Garden Cities?**

Assumption: Delivering new Garden Cities requires a dedicated delivery organisation. The Development Corporation model, as set out by the New Towns Act, is still fit for purpose, but requires modernisation.

- **Issue 3: How should new Garden Cities be financed?**

Assumption: A programme of new Garden Cities would require both public sector commitment (and some start-up funding) and (patient) private sector investment.

Assumption: A programme of new Garden Cities must be undertaken alongside the regeneration of our existing towns and cities. We need both; this is not an either/or debate.

- **Issue 4: How can we ensure that new Garden Cities will be looked after in the long term?**

Assumption: A programme of new Garden Cities must apply all the Garden City principles, including an element of land value capture and arrangements for long-term stewardship so that the income generated can be invested in the upkeep of the place in years to come.

Box 2

What is 'land value capture'?

The principle of land value capture is straightforward; but the outcome of its implementation is extremely powerful, and land value capture could be used today to pay for the long-term maintenance of a new generation of Garden Cities without worsening public finances. In the UK the right to grant planning permission lies with the state, acting on behalf of the people. Councils grant planning permission through a democratic process. Once land has been given planning permission its value increases, usually considerably (this increase in value is called 'betterment'). For instance, a hectare of agricultural land costing a few thousand pounds could subsequently be worth several million pounds if planning permission for development upon it were granted. To whom should this huge increase in value accrue: the landowner (who has done nothing to create the value), or the state/community which has granted the planning permission and so created the value? While landowners have to pay costs to obtain planning permission, and developers have to make contributions to the local authority to help pay for things such as schools and roads, at the moment it is usual for most of the increase in value to go to the landowner (it is therefore, in effect, a development subsidy provided by the state).

However, it is possible for government (via a locally-led Development Corporation) to buy land at 'current-use' value (for example agricultural-use value) or something close to it, and then grant planning permission for a new Garden City (this is what happened during the early part of the New Towns programme). The increase in value would accrue to the Development Corporation, which would manage it to contribute to the long-term development and maintenance of the Garden City.

One of the reasons why the early New Towns were profitable is that they were able to obtain land at agricultural-use prices. Today, it is necessary to pay more than an agricultural-use price due to considerations such as 'hope value' – i.e. the value that may be created by the 'hope' of future development. The TCPA argues that Development Corporations set up to develop new Garden Cities should be given special exception status, enabling them to buy the land at a lower price and use the increase in values that result from development to help fund the long-term management of the Garden City. The TCPA is currently considering the level of compensation (payment) that should be paid to landowners, and its calculations will be set out in a forthcoming publication.

Even before the 1947 Act which instituted today's statutory planning system, land still increased in value as a result of development. Howard's Garden City model aimed to capture this increase in value for the benefit of the community. The Garden City development company would retain ownership of the land and commit to reinvest a share of the rental income back into the Garden City and for the benefit of its residents (see Section 4.1). As the company owned the freehold of the land, it would be possible to increase rents as land values increased, thus enabling them to contribute even more money towards the upkeep of the Garden City and to measures taken for the benefit of its residents. This principle was fundamental but proved difficult to implement in practice.

Box 3

How the New Towns programme worked



The locations and designation /founding dates of the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities

After the Second World there was an acute housing shortage as a result of bomb damage, an increased demand for higher-quality new homes to replace slums, and a rapid rise in the birth rate.

The New Towns Act 1946

The New Towns Act 1946 was an element of the post-war planning settlement which, based on the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, instituted the nationalisation of the right to develop land, the capture of land values generated by the grant of planning permission (see Box 2), and a reformed system of statutory development plan-making by local authorities. The success of the New Towns legislation was founded on a simple but powerful combination of site designation followed by the establishment of a New Town Development Corporation to acquire land at existing-use value and do all that was necessary to bring the town into being.

Finding a site

The need for a New Town and its location were typically identified by regional or sub-regional studies undertaken by various agencies of central and local government.

Consulting on the proposal

After public consultation the Government would publish a Draft Designation Order proposing the boundary of the New Town, and a public inquiry would hear objections and other submissions. Following any amendments the Government would make a final Designation Order.

New Town Development Corporations

The New Town Development Corporation was run by a board appointed by the Government. The board appointed key officers under a general manager, who then built up the necessary complement of staff. Annual budgets were agreed with the sponsoring government department and HM Treasury, and the board was required to report formally to the sponsoring government department Minister annually. These formal reports were

Stevenage Museum



Left: The Minister of Town and Country Planning, Lewis Silkin, speaking at a public meeting in Stevenage, the first New Town to be designated, in 1946. Right: Young residents of Newton Aycliffe in the 1960s

published and were laid before Parliament. Importantly, the interlocking nature of their planning powers made the Development Corporations very effective instruments of delivery. For example, section 7(2) of the New Towns Act 1981 enabled the Secretary of State to issue a Special Development Orderⁱ which effectively gave deemed consent for development inside the New Town boundary so long as this accorded with the submitted masterplan. Most detailed planning permissions could then be granted by the Development Corporation. Responsibility for the design, ownership and consent for new development was therefore held by a single public body accountable to the Minister.

The New Towns programme evolved in three phases, beginning in 1946, with the last New Town designation occurring in 1970. In this time 33 New Towns were designated across the UK, 32 of which were actually built.ⁱⁱ Different legislation was used in Scotland and in Northern Ireland.

The end of the New Towns programme

The New Towns programme eventually lost political favour. The old cities felt threatened by their relative success and expressed resentment at their budgets. There was criticism of aspects of their design and apparently generous space standards.

The New Town Development Corporations had acquired, and created, valuable assets in the form of land and property. Although it was originally planned to transfer the assets of mature New Towns to the relevant local authorities, the New Towns Act 1959 established a national agency, the Commission for the New Towns, to manage residual assets after the dissolution of each Development Corporation. A first tranche of Development Corporations was wound up in the 1960s. Some of the assets were transferred to local authorities and the Commission for the New Towns became landlord for the rest, with rent receipts going back to HM Treasury. The story began to change in the 1980s, following the election of the first Thatcher Government, which wanted all the New Town Development Corporations to be wound up as soon as possible. The Commission for the New Towns was instructed to sell its existing portfolio of land and property and any further land or property it received from the remaining Development Corporations as they were wound up. The Commission for the New Towns was later combined with the Urban Regeneration Agency to create English Partnerships, which later became the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The HCA still operates today as England's national housing and regeneration agency. In Scotland, Development Corporation assets were transferred to the local authority and the Scottish Executive. In Northern Ireland, New Town Commission (the Northern Ireland equivalent of Development Corporations) took on local authority functions on the passing of a Municipal Order, and on wind-up retained some of the land and property, with the rest going to the Northern Ireland Ministry of Development.

A detailed explanation of the New Towns programme, how it worked and why it ended is set out in *An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*ⁱⁱⁱ and *New Towns Act 2015?*^{iv}

i Special Development Orders were designated using a Statutory Instrument which has itself been amended (1985 No. 1579)

ii A 33rd New Town, Stonehouse, in South Lanarkshire, was proposed in 1963 and designated in 1973, but the idea was abandoned in 1976 and the area formally de-designated in 1977 following the publication of the West Central Scotland Plan, which prioritised the rebuilding of Inner Glasgow

iii *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

iv *New Towns Act 2015?* TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/new-towns-act2015.html>

● **Issue 5: How can public support and participation be secured?**

Assumption: There is likely to be some level of public opposition to new Garden Cities, which is a particular challenge for those involved in their creation. The motivation of the opponents must be understood and their anxieties answered sensitively but robustly. Often people dislike proposed new developments because they think the outcome will be of poor quality, so an emphasis on place-making and high quality is vital. The TCPA thinks this can best be achieved by following the Garden City principles.

Assumption: One of the key challenges in creating new places is planning for people who are not yet present. New Garden Cities must be developed alongside a process of meaningful public engagement with pre-existing communities from the outset, and help must be given to those who feel compelled to move elsewhere.

1.3 About the case studies

Seven case study locations were chosen for in-depth research. The case study locations and their reasons for selection are set out below:

- Letchworth Garden City, East of England, founded 1903. The first Garden City and the closest to a full realisation of the Garden City model.
- Welwyn Garden City, East of England, founded 1919. The Second Garden City, later designated a New Town.
- Cwmbran, Wales, designated 1949. The first New Town in Wales, and designed to provide housing for existing industry.
- Cumbernauld, Scotland, designated 1955. Built at a higher density than previous New Towns, with a distinctive role for the private sector in its development.
- Craigavon, Northern Ireland, designated 1965. Designed to provide a new major base for industry – to attract investment and contribute to regeneration of the rest of the province – as well as to relieve pressure for new housing in Belfast.
- Milton Keynes, South East England, designated 1967. The most successful New Town and the fastest growing town or city in England today, offering transferable lessons on finance, stewardship, and the role of the private sector.
- Warrington, North West England, designated 1968. Now one of the fastest growing towns and cities in England, with an important role in the North West of England economy.

1.4 A note on planning in the four UK nations

Although to date the UK's only Garden Cities are in England, the New Towns programme delivered 32 New Towns across the UK. When the New Towns were planned



Harlow Museum

The first wave of New Towns, such as Harlow, were profitable enterprises, and with the right mechanisms in place new Garden Cities can be profitable today

and built, the UK had one national planning system. However, the New Towns story played out differently in each of the UK's nations – a reflection of the political, economic and geographical contexts of each nation.¹ There was separate New Towns legislation in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and England and Wales.

Today, each nation has its own distinct planning policy. This means that new Garden Cities will be created in different ways in each nation. The case for new Garden Cities has gained the most political momentum in England. Scotland and Wales are exploring the role of new large-scale developments in meeting their own housing needs.

1.5 The structure of the rest of this report

Transferable lessons – both good and bad – from the 20th century Garden Cities and New Towns can be drawn from across the broad range of issues involved in the complex task of creating new communities. This study has concentrated on five crucial issues. These are considered in turn in Sections 2-6, which draw together the common lessons taken from across all the case study locations. Suggestions are made for how we might best deliver new Garden Cities today. The lessons are equally applicable for any large-scale new development. Section 7 presents findings from each of the case studies. Section 8 outlines the next steps in the TCPA's work on creating a new generation of Garden Cities for the 21st century.

1 Further detail is presented on pages 9 and 10 of *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

2

Overview of lessons for tomorrow: Identifying locations for new Garden Cities



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Letchworth Garden City today

2.1 How did the Garden City pioneers find sites for Letchworth and Welwyn?

In 1902 the Garden City Association (today the Town and Country Planning Association) set up the Garden City Pioneer Company, whose primary role was to find a site for the world's first Garden City. The company was tasked with finding six sites, which had to meet a range of

criteria, including offering land of 4,000-6,000 acres in a single block, in private hands and with a suitable rail link.² The process of site evaluation included canvassing manufacturers to ascertain whether they would move their operations to the new town.³ The site at Letchworth was chosen (a site near Stafford was nearly the choice) and the company bought the land with finance from 15 private individuals. Howard himself spotted the site for Welwyn Garden City while on his frequent train journeys between Letchworth and London. The land eventually became available in 1919, at which point Howard (without asking

2 G. Nagy and K. Szelenyi: *Garden Cities: The British Example*. English Edition revised by A. Eserin and T. Skottowe. Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust, 2013. p.57

3 M. Miller: 'Utopia Ltd – the development of the First Garden City', in *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. TCPA and RTP1 souvenir booklet of a conference held at Letchworth in 1989, p.7

his colleagues or having the necessary funds in place) committed to buy the land at auction and then set about finding the money to pay for it.⁴

A key aspect of Howard’s Garden City model was that the land should be acquired at agricultural-use value. The two Garden City sites at Letchworth and Welwyn were opportunistic purchases of agricultural estates. The purpose of the purchases was kept secret to prevent adjoining landowners putting up the price of their land.

2.2 Who decided where the New Towns were to be built?

The need for a state-sponsored New Town, together with its location, was typically identified by regional or sub-regional studies undertaken by various agencies of central and local

government. Such studies usually identified the role, purpose and scale of the proposed development. Where the Minister felt that the New Towns legislation should be used, consultation took place with relevant local authorities and legislation (called a Designation Order) was drafted, explaining the purpose of the project, addressing concerns raised through the consultation process, and setting out details of suggested boundaries. The draft legislation was open to objection and inquiry under a planning inspector, who reported back to the Minister. It was not uncommon for small boundary changes to be made in response to objections. Eventually, a final Designation Order would be adopted and development could begin.

Following the publication of the Barlow Report on the geographical distribution of the industrial population in 1940,⁵ which set the framework for the decentralisation of the nation’s industrialised cities, Patrick Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan of 1944 identified some potential

Table 1
Summary of the site identification process in the case study Garden Cities and New Towns

Garden City/ New Town	Outline of the site finding process	Regional/ sub-regional study?
Letchworth Garden City Founded 1903	Site finding by the Garden City Pioneer Company (a private organisation)	No (promotion by ‘private’ landowners)
Welwyn Garden City Founded 1919	Site identified by Ebenezer Howard of the Garden City Pioneer Company	No (promotion by ‘private’ landowners)
Cwmbran Designated 1949	A government committee set up to look at the use of the New Towns Act in Wales recommended following the Peterlee and Glenrothes examples of providing housing for existing industry. County councils were asked to nominate sites	Yes (the South Wales Outline Plan, 1949)
Cumbernauld Designated 1955	Site identified in the 1946 Clyde Valley Regional Plan. Recommendation for a New Town made in 1953 by the Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee	Yes (the Clyde Valley Regional Plan, 1946)
Craigavon Designated 1965	Identified in the Government-commissioned plan designed to provide a solution to Belfast’s housing and unemployment challenges	Yes (the Government-commissioned Matthew Report, 1962)
Milton Keynes Designated 1967	Buckinghamshire County Council’s Chief Architect and Planning Officer, Fred Pooley, undertook studies between 1962 and 1964 and proposed a New Town with a population of 250,000 in the area. The County Council approved the plans and promoted the proposals but could not afford to implement them	Yes (commissioned at county level)
Warrington Designated 1968	A succession of local politicians promoted sites in the Greater Manchester area as Manchester City Council sought areas to accommodate its housing needs. Lancashire County Council suggested the Royal Ordnance site at Risley, but this was not considered big enough. By 1965 needs were so pressing that the Minister intervened and announced that Risley should be developed as part of a wider area designated for a New Town	Yes (initial research carried out by Manchester City Council and Lancashire County Council; the Government then commissioned a detailed site selection study)

4 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, pp.39-40

5 *Report of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population*. Barlow Report. Cmd 6378. HMSO, Jan. 1940

locations or areas of search for eight 'Mark One'⁶ New Towns around London. In similar fashion various sub-regional plans identified sites for New Towns in Scotland and, later, in Northern Ireland. Sub-regional studies formed a basis for approving or discarding proposals for New Town locations. Other New Towns, such as Peterlee and (later) Milton Keynes, were voluntary proposals put forward by the relevant county councils, keen to relieve development pressures in their areas.

Compared with today's procedures, the site designation process was fast – progressing from a recommendation in a study to a confirmed Designation Order typically in three years, and sometimes less.

2.3 Key observations from the case studies

The site identification and designation processes for the New Towns were complex, and each place has a different story. However, there are some common lessons to be drawn:

- **A locally-led process, enabled by central government:** *The identification of sites for many of the New Towns was led by local authorities.* There is a common misapprehension that all the locations for the New Towns were determined by central government and the New Towns were imposed on places that did not want them. In the cases of Milton Keynes and Warrington – two of the fastest growing towns and cities in the UK – the New Town sites were promoted by the relevant county councils; likewise for Cwmbran, albeit at the invitation of the Welsh Ministry. For Cumbernauld and Craigavon regional bodies were responsible for identifying needs and locations. While the Minister was ultimately the person that designated the New Town, and was often the one to suggest the use of the legislation, in all the case studies explored in the research the need for a new community had been established by local authorities or local politicians or experts for some years preceding the use of the New Towns legislation.

However, central government had an effective role as *an enabler*. The role of the Minister was important, not just in terms of providing the legislative mechanism for delivery, but in cases such as Warrington or Milton Keynes, where the need had been recognised at the local level for some time, in providing a voice that was independent of local politics. The Minister used the New Towns Act to help create a more balanced approach to development that included the social and economic investment made possible under the Act.

- **The need for a strong and strategic evidence base:** *Regional or sub-regional studies provided important evidence and analysis.* The need for a programme of New Towns had already been determined through a national

study in the form of the 1940 Barlow Report, and regional or sub-regional studies provided evidence and analysis for the determination of New Town locations. Studies such as the Matthew Report in Northern Ireland (the Belfast Regional Survey and Plan, 1962) were designed specifically to prevent the unregulated sprawl of existing cities (Belfast, in the case of Craigavon).

Location is central to success – new communities are elements in a *national network*. The New Towns were intended to be as 'self-contained' as possible, in that as many homes and facilities as possible were to be provided to enable new residents to work and live within the towns. The aim was to help New Towns grow as viable communities in every sense rather than as dormitory towns – and, later, as the use of cars grew rapidly, to reduce traffic levels. The approach took advantage of national industrial strategies which, through to the 1970s, constrained office and industrial development in London and encouraged dispersal. A degree of self-containment was also helped by policies which stipulated that homes for rent were to be made available first to those who also took a job in the New Town. New Towns such as Warrington and Milton Keynes have benefited significantly from their locations: both have close links to major cities and have good transport connections.

- **Engaging the public in the designation process:** *Public consultation on the locations of the early New Towns was limited.* The New Towns Act required the Minister to identify and consult with 'all local authorities affected'. In practice, it was usually only one or two local authorities whose areas were considered to be in direct competition that objected. There is no evidence of consultation with existing local residents in the early New Town locations before designation, beyond an initial public meeting and the right to comment on the Draft Designation Order or through the parliamentary process. Post-designation, in Milton Keynes for example, the views of residents were considered as part of the masterplanning process, and would be monitored every few years throughout the development process.

2.4 How might we identify locations for new Garden Cities today?

In contrast with site identification for the first Garden Cities, locations for new Garden Cities must be found within a planning system that is plan-led. The New Towns used a combined national and local approach. Today the main options include the following:

- **The current approach – rely on local authorities to suggest sites:** The Government has committed to continuing its support for the 'locally-led Garden Cities'

6 The 'Mark One' New Towns are those built in the period immediately after the New Towns Act was passed (widely considered as those designated between 1946 and 1955)

initiative⁷ set out by the Coalition Government in 2014: *'We will support locally-led garden cities and towns in places where communities want them, such as Ebbsfleet and Bicester. When new homes are granted planning permission, we will make sure local communities know up-front that necessary infrastructure such as schools and roads will be provided.'*⁸

So far, this has led to Dartford Borough, Gravesham Borough and Kent County Councils (Ebbsfleet), Cherwell District Council (Bicester), Wellyingborough, Kettering and Corby and Borough Councils (North Northamptonshire) and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council (Manydown) receiving support from the Government through the 'locally-led Garden Cities' process. The locally-led approach ensures that projects have local authority support and have been identified through a democratic and plan-led process. Sites suggested in this way have already been subject to assessment and testing through Local Plan processes, and applications for planning permission for the sites may already have been made, which may allow for faster housing delivery.

However, waiting for sites to be suggested by local authorities does not allow for a strategic approach to the identification of locations informed by the geography of housing markets and needs, infrastructure provision, or the wider desire to rebalance the nation's economy. In addition, where existing projects already have planning permission or are some way through the plan-making process, the potential to implement the full range of Garden City principles by re-branding an existing project is reduced.

- **A strategic or 'larger-than-local' approach with a strong evidence base:** It is unlikely that a new Garden City, proposed as part of a local response to the need to create more homes, will emerge as an appropriate option solely within the boundaries of a single local planning authority (unless it is very extensive in territory and unitary in its powers). Unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, England does not have a national strategic plan, nor any level of strategic planning above the local authority level (with the exception of Greater London). The TCPA has long campaigned for a national spatial plan.⁹ In its absence it is necessary for local authorities to think beyond their Local Plan boundary when considering long-term growth needs. For example, where several local planning authorities share a housing market area there is an opportunity for them to plan together, and to plan for longer than the preferred 15 years required of ordinary statutory Local Plans. There may be a role for the Government in selecting areas of search. Whichever approach is taken, it must satisfy the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment.

2.5 How might new Garden Cities get planning permission?

While the first Garden Cities did not require planning permission, the New Towns Act instituted a consent process which took around three years, significantly faster than today's processes.

Today there are a number of options for consenting new Garden Cities:

- **Through existing Local Plan and development management processes:** Identifying new Garden Cities through Local Plan processes and using existing planning permission procedures allows for a thorough and democratically accountable process. However, it can also take a significant amount of time to get from site allocation to building on site. The project at Ebbsfleet, for example, has been in the planning system for over 20 years.
- **Through the National Strategic Infrastructure Projects regime:** It may be possible to include new Garden Cities as National Strategic Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) under the regime set out in the 2008 Planning Act. There is no doubt that this approach would provide greater certainty on the timescales for securing development consent (18 months). The possibility of including all required consents within a single process may also be attractive to local authorities as a time-saving measure, assuming they were willing to sacrifice that level of control over the development. This approach would also require the creation of a National Infrastructure Policy for housing – which would provide an opportunity to think strategically about housing locations at the national level and how they relate to other infrastructure networks.

However, there are fundamental drawbacks to using this approach for new Garden Cities. Planning and place-making is a social endeavour, more subtle and complex than building roads or power stations. Creating new communities requires consideration of all the complexities of urbanism and the creation of the spaces, places and interactions that enable people to live healthy and fulfilling lives (or prevents them from doing so). New communities will not be successful if people are not provided with an opportunity for meaningful engagement through a democratic process, which the NSIP regime does not provide. It is also not clear what role, if any, New Town Development Corporations could play if the NSIP regime is used for the development of new communities, or how proper consideration of the funding and operation of a stewardship body could take place.

7 *Locally-led Garden Cities: Prospectus*. Department for Communities and Local Government, Apr. 2014.

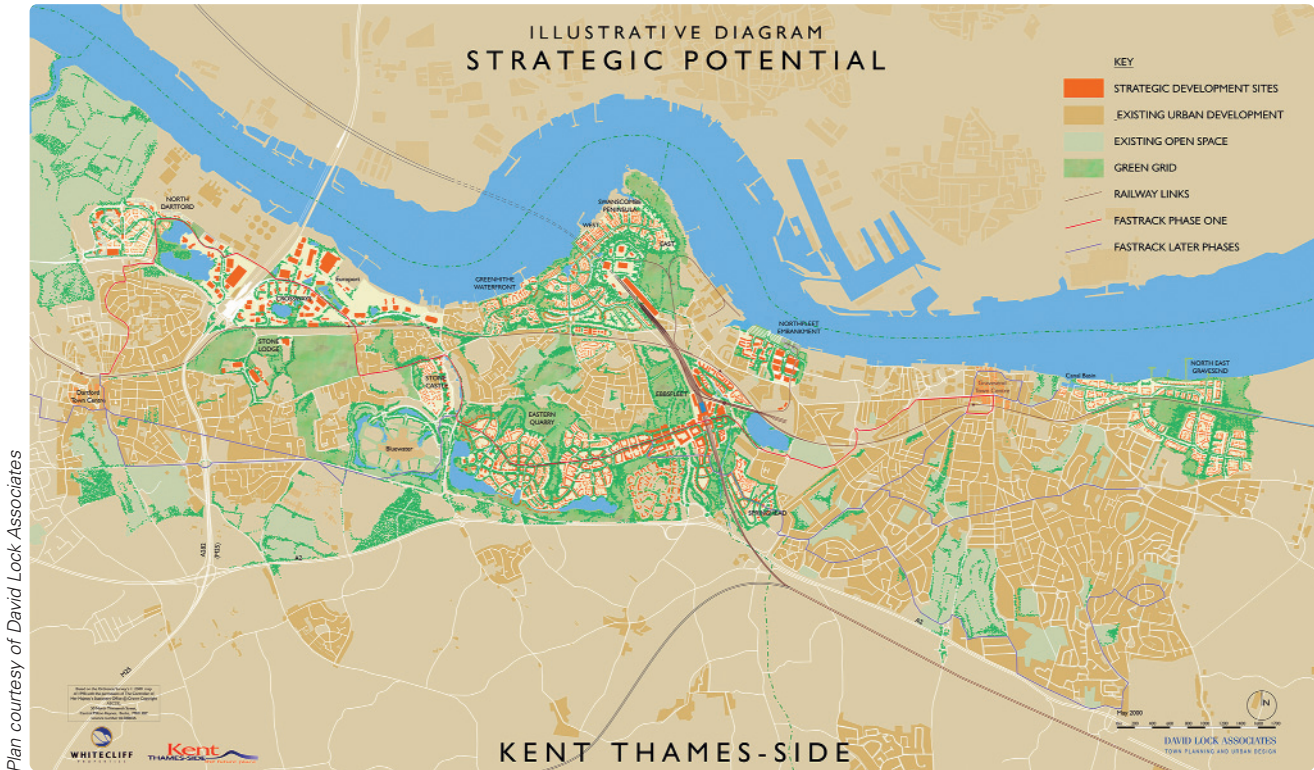
<http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/locally-led-garden-cities-prospectus>

8 *Strong Leadership. A Clear Economic Plan. A Brighter, More Secure Future*. The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015. Apr. 2015. p.52.

<https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/manifesto2015/ConservativeManifesto2015.pdf>

9 See, for example, *National Planning Framework. Making Planning Work: Briefing Paper 2*. TCPA, Sept. 2010.

http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/final_mpw_bp2.pdf



Plan courtesy of David Lock Associates

In the early 1990s a voluntary association of North Kent planning authorities, major landowners, the health authority, key businesses and the University of Greenwich prepared an informal 'larger-than-local' strategic vision, consulting the public twice. Over 30,000 homes and supporting employment and a local public transport network were included in this strategic vision. A very positive response gave the planning authorities the confidence to express the vision in statutory plans, and gave landowners the confidence to seek (and obtain) major outline planning permissions. The complexity of implementation, especially through the post-2007 recession, led the Government to announce the creation of a new Urban Development Corporation in 2014 to develop plans for a 'new Garden City' and get the core Ebbsfleet area moving

- **Through a specific consent regime for new Garden Cities using the New Towns Act:** Assuming the site for a new Garden City has been identified through a locally-led process, the New Towns Act could be used to designate the site and provide the necessary consent regime. One approach would be for the Government to identify 'areas of search' for new Garden Cities. The local authority, or group of authorities, would then approach the Minister, present the evidence base, and ask him or her to use the New Towns Act¹⁰ to designate the area and create a Development Corporation. The support of the Department for Communities and Local Government as sponsoring department and of HM Treasury, and of neighbouring authorities and statutory bodies and agencies, would have been nurtured as the locally-led planning process had unfolded.

satisfies the requirements of European legislation such as the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment Directives.

- **A new programme of Garden Cities would be greatly assisted by a national spatial approach to considering locations, to ensure that strategic infrastructure and other investment programmes can be co-ordinated for maximum cost-effectiveness.**
- **New Garden Cities would benefit from a dedicated consent regime that balances the need for speedy delivery with the need for transparency and allows for the capture of land values. A modernised New Towns Act could be used by local authorities who have provided the evidence base for a new Garden City as part of a nationally enabled process.**
- **The National Strategic Infrastructure Projects regime, as it stands, should not be used as the consent regime for new Garden Cities. However, there are components of the NSIP regime that might prove useful for the consent of new Garden Cities (such as a national infrastructure plan for housing).**

2.6 Recommendations

- **The identification of sites for new Garden Cities should be led by local authorities, individually or acting together, supported by the Government.**
- **Decisions on locations for new Garden Cities must be grounded in an appropriate evidence base that**

10 Modernised in line with the TCPA's recommendations – see *New Towns Act 2015?* TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/new-towns-act-2015.html>

3

Overview of lessons for tomorrow: What sort of organisation should deliver new Garden Cities?

Creating a new community is a long-term endeavour that is likely to take at least 30 years, depending on scale. It involves co-ordinating the creation of housing, public spaces, health facilities, schools, parks, roads, and more. A holistic approach is vital to give confidence to investors, local residents, local authorities, and all other partners in the enterprise. The TCPA's publication *New Towns Act 2015?*¹¹ found that in principle the New Town Development Corporation model, as established by the New Towns Act, is still broadly fit for purpose, but requires modernisation.

3.1 Who created Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities?

Ebenezer Howard envisaged that a group of 'responsible gentlemen' would form an organisation similar to a charitable trust that would build and manage the land and finances of the Garden Cities on behalf of the community, to create what he called a 'cooperative commonwealth'. In both Garden Cities a private company was established to purchase the land, to appoint masterplanners to create a vision, and to enable the building of homes and infrastructure for the Garden City. The companies also promoted the sites to entice new residents and industrial investors. They also established subsidiary companies. At Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn Builders and Joiners Ltd was created to develop the town. This was the first of a suite of subsidiary companies established to contribute to co-operative community life – from Welwyn Stores Ltd (providing a co-operative all-encompassing department store for the town), to Welwyn Laundry Ltd and Welwyn Bakeries Ltd. The company's directors and staff team were crucial to the delivery of the Garden City vision. For example, Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker at Letchworth and

Louis de Soissons at Welwyn were more than just architects and masterplanners; they became stewards of the design, dedicated to ensuring that the vision was maintained, even when delivered by different builders.

First Garden City Ltd, the development company at Letchworth, continued to develop the town until 1962, when, following an attempted takeover by property speculators, an Act of Parliament created a new public sector organisation – Letchworth Garden City Corporation. Today, following further legislation, the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (a charitable trust) is responsible for the estate. At Welwyn, Second Garden City Ltd and its subsidiaries continued to deliver the Garden City until 1948, when the town was designated as a New Town under the New Towns Act, and the assets were transferred to the Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation.

3.2 Who was responsible for building the New Towns?

New Towns were built by public Development Corporations directly financed by a combination of HM Treasury loans, budgets from other agencies (such as highways and health authorities) and the per capita budgets for local government services (for example schools). The powers and remit of New Town Development Corporations were set out in the New Towns Act 1946 (see Box 3). Once a site had been designated, the Development Corporation acted as the 'engine' of the New Towns approach. The success of the New Town Development Corporations was directly related to their ability to deploy the following core powers:

- the power to compulsory purchase land if it could not be bought by voluntary agreement;

11 *New Towns Act 2015?* TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/NTA2015.pdf>

- the power to buy land at current-use value (later, after the Myers legal ruling, some ‘hope value’ also had to be paid¹²) and capture the betterment for HM Treasury (and thus, ultimately, the public);
- the power to borrow money (initially primarily from HM Treasury but later in the programme from other sources as necessary), repayable with interest;
- the power to prepare a masterplan which, after public inquiry and approval by the Minister, would be the statutory development plan;
- the power to grant or refuse planning permission for development within the New Town designated area (with certain small exceptions, such as advertisements, although local ‘partnership’ agreements sometimes extended that range so long as they helped in the mission to deliver the New Town);
- the power to procure housing subsidised by central government grant and by other means, and to act as a housing association in the management of housing; and
- the power to do anything necessary for the development of the town, such as providing cash flow for the delivery of utilities or entering into partnership working with other agencies, investing in social and community development, promoting economic development, marketing the New Town in the UK and overseas, etc.

Importantly, the interlocking nature of the plan-making, development management and land ownership powers of the New Town Development Corporations made them very effective instruments of delivery. The role of central government was clear, and responsibility for the design, ownership and consent for new development was held by a single public body, ultimately accountable to the Minister. In Northern Ireland the Corporations were called New Town Commissions, and importantly also had municipal functions that New Town Development Corporations elsewhere did not have.

As set out in Box 3, the Development Corporations (and New Town Commissions) were wound up between 1962 and 1992, for the most part prematurely, and their assets were transferred to existing local authorities, the Commission for the New Towns, in Scotland the Scottish Executive, and in Northern Ireland the Ministry of Development.

3.3 Key observations from the case studies

There are some common lessons to be drawn from the Garden City and New Town case studies:

- **The Garden City companies and the New Town Development Corporations were able to identify and deliver a specific vision:** Although there was some dilution of Howard’s Garden City vision (see the

following point), a specific body with the task of delivering a new community and which committed to reinvest a share of profits back to the community and to carry out the delivery of a masterplan using subsidiary companies provided control over the means and quality of delivery. The New Town Development Corporations had plan-making powers and could therefore establish a vision to guide delivery over the long term, creating the ‘trellis on which the roses can grow where they will’¹³ over time. A challenge for successor organisations, such as the local authorities running the post-war New Towns today, is how to meet growth needs without compromising the original vision and ethos of place.

- **The Garden City companies were no more immune to the financial needs of their investors than other bodies:** Philanthropy and good will played an important part in the setting up and operation of the Garden City companies, but, ultimately, they were vulnerable to the financial demands of shareholders and directors. As the companies had not established in their ‘Memorandum and Articles’ that ownership of their assets would be transferred to the community (as per Howard’s vision), or that the freehold of land would be retained by the charitable company, these and other aspects of the Garden City vision were challenged by some members of the company, ultimately leading to a dilution of that vision.
- **The New Town Development Corporations could take risks and ‘do the deals’:** New Town Development Corporations were sufficiently independent of government to be able to negotiate deals with private investors, often telling government only afterwards (and receiving a ‘slap on the wrist’). It is sometimes argued that this is one of the reasons that central government later favoured Urban Development Corporations, which can be more tightly controlled.
- **The New Town Development Corporations were able to create places quickly, but at a cost:** Having the money and the remit to do ‘everything necessary’ to deliver the town (within a ‘pro-growth’ culture) meant that the Development Corporations could create New Towns very quickly. However, the Government gave the Development Corporations targets for – for example – housing numbers which even at the time employees knew were unrealistic. Delivering at speed also meant compromising on matters such as the quality of materials, which led to maintenance problems later.
- **The New Town Development Corporations were vulnerable to changing national policy:** Although the Development Corporations benefited from a significant level of autonomy, they were effectively arms of central government. One adverse consequence was that they were wound up a long time before they had completed their original task.

12 ‘Hope value’ is the value of a piece of land over and above the value created by any existing planning permission, derived from the hope that development will be permitted in future. The Myers case (*Myers v Milton Keynes Development Corporation* [1974] 2 All ER 1096) over compulsory purchase in Milton Keynes illustrates the complexity inherent in trying to work out what land would have been worth had there been no New Town designation and what sensible planning assumptions could otherwise be applied

13 *Forward into the Past: Garden Cities*. David Lock Associates, Jun. 2014, p.22.
<http://www.davidlock.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/forward-into-the-past.pdf>

- **The personalities of individuals in the Garden City companies and in the New Town Development Corporations had a direct influence on their effectiveness:** The New Town Development Corporations attracted the best young talent in the built environment at the time. Young employees were given the means and space to be creative, which led to some outstanding results – but also to some places where the ego of the designer was more evident than the needs of the resident.
- **There was often a challenging relationship between the New Town Development Corporations and local authorities:** Unsurprisingly, there was often tension between the local authorities in whose area the New Town was located and the Development Corporation – primarily resentment that what was seen as an imposed body had money and powers far beyond the resources and powers enjoyed by the local authority. Although in many of the New Towns there were representatives from local councils on the board of the Development Corporation, there was often a view that they ‘went native’ and became closer to the Development Corporation than the council they represented.

3.4 What type of organisation might be most suitable to deliver new Garden Cities today?

The research suggests that the creation of new Garden Cities requires an organisation which:

- is committed to the long-term project of building a new community (30 years or more);
- has planning and plan-making powers;
- commits to implementing all the Garden City principles at the outset and aims to make financial and governance arrangements for stewardship in perpetuity (even though the means to do so may evolve over time);
- establishes a masterplan with a strong vision and structure but which provides the flexibility for the place to evolve over time;
- has the power to do ‘everything necessary to deliver the town’, including powers on planning and compulsory purchase and social and economic development;
- enables existing authorities to feel actively engaged in the development of the town;
- allows for meaningful public engagement throughout the development process;
- has sufficient resources to ensure that quality is not sacrificed in order to deliver at speed; and
- prepares the relevant local authority/ies to take on the Garden City once it has been built and to sustain its ambitions.



Homes and Communities Agency

Milton Keynes Development Corporation staff in 1972 – the creation of new Garden Cities requires an organisation committed to long-term place-making

There are perhaps three main forms of ‘delivery body’ that might be considered for creating Garden Cities today.¹⁴ These are discussed below.

Private-sector/local authority partnerships

With the exception of places like Ebbsfleet, which is being delivered by an Urban Development Corporation (more on this below), the majority of large-scale developments currently in planning are being delivered by the private sector, with the involvement, encouragement and sometimes limited participation of the local authority. There are important exceptions to this, such as the sites at Bicester and Northstowe, where the local authority is taking a more significant lead. There are currently a very limited number of proposals for more than 10,000 housing units in the planning process, and none on the scale of the developments in the post-war New Towns programme.¹⁵

This lack of larger-scale projects suggests that the private sector is unable to assemble, promote and deliver schemes for more than 5,000-8,000 homes and related uses. Relying on the private sector alone has also left development vulnerable to the ‘stop-go’ effect of national economic cycles. The benefits of a local authority led scheme are that a democratically elected body is accountable, transparent and represents the public interest which it ought to safeguard. However, it is clear that if a new Garden City of, say, 15,000-20,000 homes is to be built the Government will have to take the lead and

14 *Eco Towns – Strategic Delivery Issues. Final Draft.* TCPA, for the Department for Communities and Local Government, 2009. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/annex_1_strategic_delivery_issues_delivery_study.pdf

15 *100 Biggest Planning Permissions.* Planning Resource. <http://offlinehbpl.hbpl.co.uk/NewsAttachments/RLP/Housingtables2.pdf>

underwrite the main risk: private capital and expertise will then follow.

Long-life, single-purpose government bodies: Garden City Development Corporations

Although TCPA research has demonstrated how effective the New Town Development Corporations were, the legislation that sets out their purpose would need to be updated if it is to be used effectively in today's context to create 21st century Garden Cities. Development Corporations are not defined in law as local planning authorities and so are not covered by the relevant provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 regarding current priorities such as sustainable development, good design, or climate change.

The TCPA began to explore these issues in *New Towns Act 2015*?¹⁶ and is currently examining these ideas while preparing a forthcoming further publication – a 'Garden Cities Bill'. It is possible to make minor amendments to existing legislation that would enable authorities delivering locally-led Garden Cities to request to use a 'Garden City Development Corporation'.

Short-life, single-purpose government bodies: Urban Development Corporations

The Government has shown interest in using the Urban Development Corporation model to deliver new Garden Cities, as at Ebbsfleet. New Town Development Corporations and Urban Development Corporations are both statutory bodies that share the common feature of having powers of planning, land assembly and investment. However, Urban Development Corporations do not have *plan-making* powers, have a shorter life, cover a smaller geographical area, cannot develop housing themselves, and are more likely to be micro-managed by their sponsoring department and HM Treasury. They do share the feature of 'belonging' to central government.¹⁷

Urban Development Corporations have been used by successive governments for area renewal and regeneration in places such as the London Docklands and, more recently, in West Northamptonshire. In the past they have driven change but have also proved controversial in terms of public engagement and securing high-quality outcomes. For example, some Urban Development Corporations in the 1980s appeared to make little effort to follow plans and policies laid down by the local authority, whereas many New Town Development Corporations made strenuous efforts to do so.¹⁸

The Government's use of an Urban Development Corporation at Ebbsfleet demonstrates the need for clear duties on quality and inclusion. Neither the Order setting

up Ebbsfleet Urban Development Corporation nor the policy brief from the Department for Communities and Local Government contains reference to any clear standards on social housing, climate change or long-term stewardship of development values for the community. As a result, while TCPA hopes for good outcomes at Ebbsfleet, there is little prospect of implementing the full range of Garden City principles and the opportunities they present.

Local authority development companies

Local authorities can also start their own development companies. A recent example of this is the Graven Hill Village Development Company, which is owned by Cherwell District Council and whose subsidiary, the Graven Hill Village Holding Company, will be responsible for delivering housing at the former Ministry of Defence site near Bicester.¹⁹

3.5 Recommendations

- **The New Towns legislation should be updated to allow for new Garden City Development Corporations. The Government should use the 2015-2016 session Housing Bill to update the New Towns legislation to enable the creation of new Garden City Development Corporations, operating with specific commitments to delivering high-quality places.**
- **There should be legal duties on those bodies delivering new Garden Cities to ensure that there is a long-term commitment to the Garden City principles.**
- **Joint ventures could be used for existing large-scale projects. For projects already in the planning system, local authorities, landowners and developers should consider entering into a 'Garden City joint venture' or 'local development agreement'. Capacity-building within public bodies is needed in this area to ensure that they become more adept at taking a strategic role and are empowered to take a lead in enabling development. Here, the role that could be played by Development Trusts, including Community Land Trusts, should also be considered.**
- **Where Urban Development Corporations are used for the development of new Garden Cities, the Garden City principles should be embedded in their objects and constitution. If the Urban Development Corporation model is used for new Garden Cities, the objectives of such bodies should be reformed using the wording suggested in Part 2 of *New Towns Act 2015*?²⁰**

16 *New Towns Act 2015*?TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/NTA2015.pdf>

17 'LDV case studies'. Annex 2 (on local delivery vehicles) to *Ensuring Eco-towns are Delivered: Eco-towns Delivery Worksheet*. TCPA, Jan. 2010. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/delivery.html>

18 *Ibid.*

19 'Companies approved to deliver Graven Hill vision'. Press Release. Cherwell District Council, 17 Jun. 2014. <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=10062>

20 *New Towns Act 2015*?TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/NTA2015.pdf>

4

Overview of lessons for tomorrow: Where should the finance for new Garden Cities come from?

Building a new community requires significant upfront investment in everything from design to road-building – but in the long term it is a highly profitable enterprise. History has shown that, properly managed and underwritten by the capture of land values that increase as a result of the development process, investment in new Garden Cities, far from being a strain on the public purse, can be highly profitable for government. The Garden Cities were privately funded, and the New Towns programme used long-term loans from HM Treasury (along with other public sector funding streams) to deliver infrastructure and later to attract private investment. This section considers what these two historical approaches can tell us about financing new Garden Cities today.

4.1 Who paid for Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities?

Ebenezer Howard was a practical utopian, and his book explaining the Garden City concept, *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, contained many financial calculations designed to persuade hard-nosed Victorian businessmen to invest in the Garden City project. The calculations were detailed but were based on land value capture (see Box 2). Under Howard's model a charitable trust, set up for the benefit of the Garden City, would own the freehold of all of the land. As time went by, the trust would receive an income from rents from the leaseholders, which would increase as the developed land became more valuable (as the rents would be increased accordingly). This income would be used in two ways: to repay the debts incurred in purchasing the land and building the Garden City; and to build up a fund to be spent on improving the Garden City

itself, for the benefit of its residents. As the original debts were paid off, the amount being spent on the Garden City would increase, until all the income would be used for a form of Garden City 'welfare state'.²¹

The Garden Cities at Letchworth and Welwyn were experiments in applying Howard's ideas in practice. At Letchworth, First Garden City Ltd was set up to build the town and manage its finances. The company attracted investment from private shareholders, who agreed to a limited dividend of 5%. The company struggled in the start-up phase, and the shareholders did not receive their 5% return until 1945. After the First World War, as demand for new homes increased, Letchworth became much more profitable. In 1962 it was subject to an attempted takeover by asset-strippers. There followed two parliamentary interventions which led eventually to the creation of what is today the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. The Foundation was endowed with £56 million of assets and today has an asset portfolio worth £128 million. It uses this portfolio to generate around £10 million per year, of which around £4 million is reinvested in the town through charitable initiatives. This is the most powerful practical vindication of Howard's model.

At Welwyn, Second Garden City Ltd also attracted private shareholders, who, perhaps wary of the Letchworth experience, agreed to a larger dividend of 7%. While not all of the features of Howard's model were implemented at Letchworth, his 'cooperative commonwealth' vision was further diluted at Welwyn as, although the freehold of the land was retained by the company, the leaseholders were given fixed rents (rather than rents which increased as land values increased). Welwyn also struggled financially and by the time of the Great Depression was suffering from huge

21 *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities.* TCPA, Dec. 2014. p.4. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf



Homes and Communities Agency



Homes and Communities Agency/Milton Keynes City Discovery Centre

Promotional material for Warrington and Milton Keynes – the Development Corporations were highly effective in marketing and promoting the New Towns

debts, at which point – and with Ebenezer Howard no longer alive to see it happen – the company changed its Memorandum and Articles to state that the community would *not* benefit from a share of the development profits. By the time the New Towns Act was passed in 1946, the company was more profitable and was in a position to buy more land to deliver the housing growth that was clearly necessary. When the Minister insisted that a New Town Development Corporation should be used to further develop the town, the company (and its subsidiaries) sold their assets to the Development Corporation for £2.8 million.

4.2 How were the New Towns paid for?

New Towns were financed by a combination of 60-year, fixed-rate loans from central government, budgets from other agencies (such as highways and health authorities) and the per-capita budgets for local government services (for example for schools). Initially, the New Town Development Corporations were allowed to borrow only from HM Treasury. In the early stages, land was bought by the Development Corporation at near existing-use values (which were, in the main, agricultural price levels, fixed at current prices), which provided the New Towns with the financial wherewithal for subsequent development. Infrastructure such as roads and parks had to be built in advance of population growth and demand, and thus before any increase in local taxation. New Town construction therefore required significant investment over a considerable period of time. As the New Towns progressed, the Development Corporations sold freeholds, as well as acquiring land. Land for schools and hospitals, for example, was sold to the relevant authorities or given away for free. Open space was typically given with an

endowment, either to the local authority or to some other not-for-profit body, in perpetuity.

The financing of housing built for rent in the New Towns operated in a way similar to that applying to local authorities, with central government providing subsidies to the Development Corporations. In terms of revenue, New Town housing activities evolved over time alongside central government's changing housing policy. Each of the New Towns built up very large housing revenue accounts, which, with inflation on the one hand and controls on rents on the other, required very large sums to be written off by central government.

In later years, revenue was raised by selling housing for owner-occupation through the 'Right to Buy' legislation, by selling land for housing for sale or self-build, and by disposing of land to housing associations to deliver housing for rent or shared ownership.

It is important to note that the New Town Development Corporations did not finance all aspects of the town's development. HM Treasury loans were supplemented by funds from the relevant existing public sector programmes in the area, refocused towards the New Town (to pay for key facilities such as schools, hospitals and some utilities such as water infrastructure), and by attracting inward investment from the private sector.

The first generation of New Towns proved so financially successful that, assisted by relatively low interest on the loans to the Development Corporations (set at a rate of 2% above Libor), they were net lenders to other public bodies. For example, Harlow repaid all its loans within 15 years and started to produce a surplus for HM Treasury. However, the cost of borrowing was a major financial burden for the 'Mark Three' New Towns during the 1970s and 1980s, when interest rates rose dramatically, up to

16%. In addition, the forced sale of Development Corporation commercial assets (both mature and immature) from 1981 onwards removed income growth from this source.

Table 2
Land in Homes and Communities Agency ownership in the former New Towns

Town	Area, hectares
Basildon	102.3849
Bracknell	0.2167
Central Lancashire	390.1614
Corby	27.2172
Crawley	229.6497
Hatfield	15.8488
Hemel Hempstead	94.4313
Milton Keynes	238.7712 ^a
Newton Aycliffe	28.7911
Northampton	529.6844
Peterborough	648.3814
Peterlee	52.1660
Redditch	95.5843
Runcorn	95.0443
Skelmersdale	57.6598
Stevenage	64.0976
Telford	901.7945
Warrington	705.0587
Washington	18.0998
Welwyn Garden City	8.1000 ^b
Grand total	4,303.1431

Figures provided by the Homes and Communities Agency, July 2015

Not all of the land included in these figures is land formerly owned by the Commission for the New Towns: the figures also include land owned by the former Urban Regeneration Agency and land purchased by the Homes and Communities Agency since the Commission for the New Towns ceased to exist

^a When Milton Keynes Council bought land in the town from the Homes and Communities Agency (land which is now managed by the Council-owned Milton Keynes Development Partnership), some areas were already ‘commercially advanced’ and so not made available for the Council to purchase

^b Figure for the town centre only. Provided by the Homes and Communities Agency Hertfordshire & Buckinghamshire Team, August 2015

Any subsequent sales by local authorities of the assets they had received from the Development Corporations were subject to ‘claw-back’, under which the increase in the value from the sale of any of the assets for commercial purposes had to be given back to the Commission for the New Towns or its successor bodies. This limited the ability of the New Towns to reinvest in their renewal and upkeep.

The total £4.75 billion loan made to the New Town Development Corporations by HM Treasury was repaid in early 1999 (assisted by the sale of sites). After that, by 2002, land sale receipts had generated around a further £600 million, of which only £120 million was reinvested in the New Towns.²² More recently, between 2010 and 2014 alone, land sale receipts generated a further £70,316,130 for HM Treasury.²³

Today, the Homes and Communities Agency (eventual successor to the Commission for the New Towns) still owns 4,303 hectares of land in the former New Towns (see Table 2), although not all of this is former Development Corporation land. The issue of claw-back to HM Treasury of former Development Corporation land was identified in *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1*²⁴ as an important issue for some of the former New Town local authorities. The covenants on this land vary from place to place, and the requirements are different for every transaction.

4.3 Key observations from the case studies

There are some common lessons to be drawn from the Garden City and New Town case studies:

The New Towns and HM Treasury

- **The New Towns programme can be considered to have been a profitable long-term investment for HM Treasury:** Since the £4.75 billion of loans taken out by the New Town Development Corporations was paid back (with interest) in 1999, the land in the former New Towns has continued to generate income for HM Treasury. It is difficult to obtain a precise figure for the economic return of the New Towns programme as some debt was written off by government, but there has also been a huge increase in the value of the remaining New Town assets. The New Towns represented a significant upfront investment for HM Treasury, but, overall, the investment has been returned, with interest. This is without consideration of the non-monetary benefits to society.

22 Memorandum NT 33, submitted by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions to the House of Commons Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee, Apr. 2002. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmtlgr/603/603m38.htm>. Published within *New Towns: Follow-Up*. HC 889. Ninth Report of Session 2007-08. House of Commons Communities and Local Government Committee. TSO, 2008

23 Figure provided by the Homes and Communities Agency, July 2015. Includes all land in the New Towns, and not just land formerly in the ownership of the Commission for the New Towns

24 *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

- **All the case study towns now play an important sub-regional or regional economic role:** For all the case study New Towns and Letchworth Garden City, investment in retail infrastructure and employment, in addition to the investment in housing, has produced places that play an important role in the wider economy.
- **The Homes and Communities Agency has an important role to play in the New Towns today and provides opportunities for renewal:** The Homes and Communities Agency still owns a lot of land in the former New Towns – land which continues to provide income for HM Treasury. In some places this ownership has restricted the ambitions of the local authority, but in the New Towns studied for this report the Homes and Communities Agency is working proactively and in partnership with the local authorities. In Milton Keynes land ownership has been transferred to Milton Keynes Council (which had to purchase the land), and the land is now managed by a Council-owned development company.

Financial operations of the Garden City companies and the New Town Development Corporations

- **For the Garden City companies, retaining the freehold of land and property provided a long-term income stream:** The Garden Cities were 100% privately funded during construction, using a financial model that called for long-term patient investors and in which income was recycled to pay off development debts and for reinvestment. This requirement was written into the companies' constitutions but in Welwyn Garden City was removed by the company's directors.
- **The ability of the early New Towns to purchase land at existing use values was essential:** The 'Mark One' New Towns were so economically successful that they became net lenders to other public bodies. Even the later New Towns, such as Milton Keynes, which had to consider hope value²⁵ when purchasing land, were able to generate profit from the development process.
- **Attracting employers to the New Towns was as important as building homes:** The Development Corporations had sufficient funds to make them highly effective in marketing and promoting the New Towns on the international stage (Milton Keynes had a budget of £20 million a year for marketing and promotion). The New Town Development Corporations also needed a level of autonomy to be able them to 'do deals'.

External influences on the Garden City companies and the New Town Development Corporations

- **The Garden City companies had good intentions but ultimately were vulnerable to the financial demands of their shareholders:** Although the Garden City companies were originally committed to Howard's

financial model and to sharing the profits of development with the community, it was possible for the directors, as at Welwyn Garden City, to simply change the constitution to dispense with this obligation. The community had no means of preventing such a course of action.

- **The financial affairs of the New Towns were mis-managed by government:** Today, many of the New Towns are in need of major investment. The lack of a sinking fund that could have accumulated funds during the many years in which the new infrastructure and property needed little maintenance has left the legacy of a great wave of necessary investment for which there are no specially allocated resources.
- **The Garden Cities and the New Towns were no more resilient to change than any other type of development:** The Garden Cities and the New Towns were directly influenced by wider economic and political changes. Inflation and changing interest rates affected the ability of later New Towns such as Milton Keynes to repay loans. The changing political climate in the 1980s had a direct impact on the role of the private sector in delivering the New Towns – as policy moved from a public to a private sector emphasis.

4.4 How could we pay for new Garden Cities today?

If a new community is to be a true 'Garden City' it must implement all the Garden City principles, including the capture of land values for the benefit of the community to ensure that money is available for reinvestment in the future. It is vital that new Garden Cities avoid facing the problems caused by lack of reinvestment that the post-war New Towns face today.

Land value capture

Access to land in the right location and at the right price is the foundation of making successful new places. Both local authorities and Development Corporations have the power to use compulsory purchase to assemble the land needed for a new Garden City. The issue of how much it is reasonable to pay for land is complex and is discussed in detail in *New Towns Act 2015*?²⁶ (see also Box 2). The issue is crucial because the capture of the uplift in land values which the granting of planning permission and development creates can be used to fund debt repayment and long-term reinvestment in a new community. It is necessary to strike a better balance between the needs of landowners and the wider public interest. If land deals are too generous to landowners, the long-term viability of the Garden City may be compromised through an inability to deliver public goods such as social housing or green space. If, on the other hand, compensation for landowners is

25 'Hope value' is the value of a piece of land over and above the value created by any existing planning permission, derived from the hope that development will be permitted in future. The Myers case (*Myers v Milton Keynes Development Corporation* [1974]

2 All ER 1096) over compulsory purchase in Milton Keynes illustrates the complexity inherent in trying to work out what land would have been worth had there been no New Town designation and what sensible planning assumptions could otherwise be applied

26 *New Towns Act 2015*? TCPA, Feb. 2014. <http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/NTA2015.pdf>

unfair, they may challenge decisions in the courts and delay land assembly in other ways.

Options for land value capture without the mechanism to buy land at current-use value (which was available to the early New Towns) rely heavily on planning obligations (through which developers pay local authorities contributions towards local facilities or services). Section 106 contributions relate directly to the impacts of the specific development, and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) requires developers to pay into a local authority ‘pot’ which is then used throughout the local authority area. Although planning obligations are the only form of land value capture that have withstood political changes,²⁷ they yield only a fraction of the share of the uplift in development values for the local authority. Not only is the process administratively complex, but it does not capture development values efficiently, because it relies on the profitability of a particular scheme, and not just on the value of the land. It is also, technically, a development impact fee rather than a means of capturing betterment.

HM Treasury investment in new communities

The Government could make available long-term low-interest loans to Garden City Development Corporations, and allow more flexibility in borrowing from different sources than was the case for the New Towns. Even without providing loans, the Government could guarantee (explicitly or implicitly) long-term, ‘patient’ private sector investment. This would not only assist with upfront finance, but would also help to ‘de-risk’ the investment process and so encourage private sector interest.

Private sector led finance

The private sector has an important role to play in financing new communities, and initiatives such as the Wolfson Economics Prize²⁸ have prompted thinking on whether new Garden Cities could in fact be funded entirely by the private sector. The need for upfront investment in infrastructure and the need for investors to be patient in terms of expectation of a return on their investment appears to suit the business model of pension funds. Some of these (such as Legal and General)²⁹ have already expressed interest. Private sector investment would still require a dedicated delivery team, whether provided by the local authority or a Garden City Development Corporation. The private sector alone does not have the ability to assemble a site that is sufficiently large for a full-scale new community for which planning permission can be secured, and does not have the benefit of compulsory purchase powers. Notably, the Reith Committee was always suspicious that private delivery companies would result in a ‘conflict between dividend and public service motive’.³⁰

4.5 Recommendations

- **Land value capture remains an essential component of financing new communities. Relevant legislation should be modernised to maximise opportunities for land value capture in new Garden Cities. The New Towns Act and the Compensation Code should be updated to provide better opportunities to capture land values when building Garden Cities.**
- **The Government should provide political certainty to de-risk private investment. The development of new communities takes time, and the build-out phase must be resilient in the face of changing economic climates and political cycles. HM Treasury has a crucial role to play in providing the level of economic certainty needed to help de-risk private sector investment. Furthermore, new Garden Cities can be profitable for the Government if a long-term, patient approach is taken.**
- **HM Treasury should consider removing housing development from the public sector net cash requirement. The current approach makes investment in housing a contribution towards the national debt, when in fact it is a long-term investment.**
- **There is an important role for private sector investment in new Garden Cities – but not at the expense of implementing the Garden City principles (on quality and social justice, for example).**
- **Garden City Development Corporations must make a commitment to the Garden City principles in their constitution. It is not enough to rely on the philanthropy and good will of those running new Garden City Development Corporations. Legislative change will be necessary to ensure that such a commitment is made.**
- **Local authorities should explore options for generating income through the re-municipalisation of activities such as energy generation and supply or the proactive management of a community asset portfolio. The TCPA is exploring the options for financing new Garden Cities, including through municipal energy companies.**

27 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, pp.232-33

28 See the Wolfson Economics Prize 2014 website, at <http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/wolfsonprize/item/wolfson-economics-prize-2014>

29 P. Inman: ‘Legal & General wants to create five new towns in UK in next 10 years’. *The Guardian*, 20 Jan. 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jan/19/legal-and-general-build-new-towns>

30 Minutes of the Reith Committee Meetings, PRO: HLG/84/4, quoted in S.V. Ward (Ed.): *The Garden City: Past, Present and Future*. Spon Press, 1992. p.169

5

Overview of lessons for tomorrow: **How can we create new Garden Cities that will be looked after in the future?**



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Howard Park, Letchworth Garden City

In 2015, a visitor to Letchworth would see that this 100-year-old Garden City looks in very good condition. In contrast, many of the New Towns, which are half the age of Letchworth, look run down. Why is this? Community assets such as parks and community centres are vital elements of high-quality, attractive places, but management arrangements and long-term funding to maintain such assets are often considered only as afterthoughts to new developments. In the Garden Cities and the New Towns the provision of community facilities from the outset was central to their vision of sociable communities, but both took very different approaches to the long-term management of their community assets. This section explores what these experiences can teach us about looking after these assets in new Garden Cities.

5.1 Why is Letchworth so well looked after today?

The most important legacy of the world's first Garden City is not its beautifully designed homes and greenways, but the fact that it still benefits from an organisation which retains elements of Howard's original vision of a 'cooperative commonwealth'. Unlike most towns, in Letchworth a charitable organisation uses income from its land and property in the town to provide benefits for residents. This is in addition to the services and facilities provided by the local authority (North Hertfordshire District Council). Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is the successor to the original development company (First

Garden City Ltd). The Foundation reinvests its income for the long-term benefit of the local community. Provision includes the operation of an art deco cinema, a treatment centre for the local community and people who work in the town, an archive on Letchworth and the Garden City movement, the International Garden Cities Exhibition, an educational family farm, a community hub, areas of open space, a greenway around the town, a minibus service, and a local and tourist information centre, which incorporates a shopmobility service. The Foundation has a Board of Governors – a mixture of appointed and democratically elected representatives of the community and other local stakeholders. Since the 1970s the Foundation has also operated a Scheme of Management which applies to most freehold premises within the Letchworth Garden City estate. The scheme sets obligations (or covenants) on these freehold property owners requiring them to seek prior approval for external alterations to their homes as well as for the removal of trees and hedges.

In Welwyn Garden City, the original development company was eventually bought out by the incoming Development Corporation, which itself was wound up in 1966. Welwyn therefore no longer has an organisation using income from assets to reinvest in the town. Responsibility for looking after its extensive green space lies with Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council. Since 1973, the Council has operated an Estate Management Scheme covering most of the town. This is similar to that in Letchworth and has enabled the Council to exercise some control over how Welwyn looks today.

5.2 Why are many of the New Towns struggling to look after their public spaces?

When the New Town Development Corporations were building the New Towns they put considerable effort into creating high-quality environments, with generous green space and a wide range of social and cultural facilities that could be enjoyed by residents from the earliest days of moving to the town. They had the resources to pay for everything from cutting the grass or looking after play areas, to employing artists in residence to add to the cultural vitality of the town. What was not made clear was what was to happen to the Development Corporations, and the assets that they were in charge of, when the New Towns reached maturity.

This issue had been discussed by the Reith Committee in 1945, which, in the spirit of the Garden City movement, suggested that when the New Towns matured the Development Corporations should be modified to include two elected residents on their governing body and carry on in perpetuity. The Minister of Town and Country Planning,

Lewis Silkin, did not agree with the proposition,³¹ and the New Towns Act of 1946 envisaged that the Development Corporations would hand over the assets of mature towns (namely the land, property and financial resources of the Development Corporations) to local authorities. However, this provision was amended by the New Towns Act of 1959, which created the Commission for the New Towns to take over the assets.³² From this point the financial benefits of the assets went back to HM Treasury rather than to the places that had generated that value in the first place. When all the remaining Development Corporations were forced to wind up in the 1980s, many before they had finished their town-building task, the assets that were transferred to the local authority, which included, for instance, social housing, quickly became a liability as funding streams to look after them were cut.

Today, many of the New Towns are in need of restoration and investment. Unlike the Development Corporations, councils do not have the funds to pay the high maintenance costs for huge areas of green space, public art or other public realm that was integral to the New Town vision. The failure to set up a sinking fund during the many years in which the new infrastructure and property needed little maintenance means that today, several decades after they were built, a huge amount of investment is needed for which there are no specially allocated resources. Although the New Town assets continued to generate profits for the Commission for the New Towns and its successors, they were used to fund other projects. The lack of a long-term stewardship strategy for the New Towns can be considered one of the major failures of the New Towns programme.

5.3 Key observations from the case studies

The community facilities provided in the Garden Cities and the New Towns are among their most important legacies. There are some common lessons to be drawn from the Garden City and New Town case studies:

- **The different experiences of the two Garden Cities demonstrates the importance of a stewardship body:** Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is not a direct manifestation of Howard's vision, but it is the closest example in existence today, and it demonstrates the social, economic and environmental benefits of Howard's ideas on stewardship. It is impossible to know what would have happened under Second Garden City Ltd if the task of building Welwyn had not been taken over by a Development Corporation; but it is hard not to conclude that the local authority would not be facing the town maintenance challenges it does today if its land and assets had been handed over to a trust for reinvestment, in a manner similar to the

31 *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities.* TCPA, Dec. 2014, p.19. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

32 R. Thomas: *The Economics of the New Towns Programme.* 1996. In *The New Towns Record.* Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

way that Letchworth's assets were handed to Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

- **The lack of a long-term stewardship strategy for the New Towns can be considered one of the major failures of the New Towns programme:** The Development Corporations had significant assets which continue to generate income that could have been reinvested in the New Towns.
- **Notable exceptions such as The Parks Trust in Milton Keynes demonstrate the lost opportunity for long-term stewardship:** In Milton Keynes an endowed Parks Trust and a Community Foundation were among not-for-profit local institutions set up to receive and maintain in perpetuity some key assets when the Development Corporation was wound up. Today, as a consequence, The Parks Trust is entirely self-financing and maintains over 5,000 acres of parks, meadows, river valleys, woodlands, lakes and the landscaped corridors which run along the main grid roads – about 25% of the town's area.³³
- **The capture of land values resulting from the development process for reinvestment in long-term stewardship can be profitable but must be considered early on in the planning and development process:** As demonstrated by The Parks Trust and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation land value capture and proactive management of a portfolio of assets can be profitable and can lead to better place-making.
- **Long-term stewardship bodies can take many forms:** The TCPA's *Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow – A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*³⁴ sets out the broad range of opportunities for stewardship in development of all scales, for assets ranging from homes and parks to theatres and renewable energy infrastructure. The New Town Development Corporations were stewardship bodies of sorts but better public engagement in the development process was needed, and the failure of the New Towns legislation to establish successful stewardship bodies is recognised as a key weakness of the New Towns programme. Housing associations became important stewardship bodies in the New Towns after the Development Corporations were wound up.
- **Today, the Homes and Communities Agency plays an important stewardship role for government:** The Homes and Communities Agency's management of land in the former New Towns still provides significant receipts for HM Treasury and in places such as Warrington and Milton Keynes (and, in an example not considered in the case studies, Telford) the Agency is working in partnership with the local authority to share some of this stewardship value. In Milton Keynes, for example, Milton Keynes Council has bought much of

the former New Town land from the Homes and Communities Agency and has created a development company. However, as an arm of the authority the company still has to get 'best value' for the development of land, which creates a tension between generating dividends and place-making. A form of trust might be a better model.

5.4 Ensuring long-term stewardship in new Garden Cities

The development of new Garden Cities by modernised Development Corporations committed to implementing all the Garden City principles, including the community ownership of land and the long-term stewardship of assets, would allow for the creation of places with the means to generate revenue for the management and maintenance of community assets in the long term. Until that requirement is included in updated legislation or national policy, it will be up to local authorities to require developers to demonstrate how opportunities for the long-term management of land and community assets in new development has been explored.

5.5 Recommendations

- **The Homes and Communities Agency should explore options for the transfer of assets back to New Town local authorities. Where the Homes and Communities Agency owns land in the former New Towns it should consider ways of transferring those assets to the relevant local authority, as has happened in Milton Keynes. Ideally, the management of this land would be in a form of trust so that there is more flexibility on how to achieve 'best value' for the land.**
- **Requirements for long-term stewardship should be embedded in updated New Towns legislation. The New Towns Act should be amended to include a requirement for Garden City Development Corporations to plan for the long-term finance and management of their assets.**
- **Local authorities should require consideration to be given to long-term stewardship within development proposals. Where a large-scale development already has planning permission, local authorities should include in their Local Plan or development briefs a requirement for developers to demonstrate how the project meets long-term stewardship requirements (and the Garden City principles). On smaller schemes, means of meeting these requirements could include Community Land Trusts or Development Trusts.**

33 For more on The Parks Trust, Milton Keynes, see *Build Today, Treasured Tomorrow – A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA_GC_Stewardship_Guide.pdf and the Trust's website, at <http://www.theparkstrust.com/about-us/the-parks-trust-model>

34 *Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow – A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA_GC_Stewardship_Guide.pdf

6

Overview of lessons for tomorrow: How can we encourage public support for new Garden Cities?



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Street festival at Letchworth Garden City

A core objective of the Garden City movement was to create places in which people had a genuine stake in the development process and were able to live happy, healthy sociable lives. The New Towns inherited this ethos and the creation of ‘balanced communities’ and opportunities for ‘discovering the best ways of living’ were core objectives of the Development Corporations. In recent years it seems that as a nation we have lost that ambition, and the result is widespread objection to new development. Many people feel they do not want new development to take place near to where they live.³⁵ Concerns about matters such as noise and physical disturbance during construction, or impacts on property prices, are combined with fears about the impact

on overburdened existing services such as schools or healthcare. In addition, many people do not feel that the quality of new development is good enough,³⁶ and it is clear that all too often bland and ugly development has been a symptom of the lost objective of good place-making. The Garden City principles offer a solid framework for pursuing this objective, and creating new Garden Cities presents an opportunity to offer people something better – a form of development they will be proud to live in, and an opportunity for meaningful participation in the development process. This section explores what the Garden Cities and New Towns can teach us about creating new Garden Cities that will transform the relationship between people and places.

35 See, for example, *Public Attitudes to House Building: Findings from the 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey*. Department for Communities and Local Government, Mar. 2105. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412347/British_Social_Attitudes_Survey_2014_report.pdf

36 See, for example, *Little Boxes, Fewer Homes: Setting Housing Space Standards Will Get More Homes Built*. Shelter, Apr. 2013. http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/652736/Shelter_Little_Boxes_v4.pdf

6.1 How did the Garden Cities engage people in place-making?

Although meaningful community participation in the development process was core to the Garden City vision, the land at Letchworth and Welwyn was purchased before there was a planning system, so there was no requirement to consult with existing authorities or local people. To ensure that land could be purchased at agricultural values the reasons for the purchase were kept quiet until the sales had gone through. Initiatives such as a 'Cheap Cottages Exhibition' at Letchworth were used to promote the development and generate interest. By the time Letchworth was being built, Howard's *To-morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* was internationally famous and had already been reprinted as *Garden Cities of To-morrow*. His vision of a 'cooperative commonwealth', in which the community owned the land and had a role in the governance of the place, was well known. Early Garden City settlers tended to be the 'idealistic, artistic middle class, who gave Letchworth a permanent reputation of crankiness that it later ill deserved'.³⁷

Although the opportunities for inhabitants to benefit from the profits of the development process as set out in Howard's vision were diluted in both the Garden City experiments, in both cases the development companies put huge effort into creating lively and sociable towns that people would enjoy living in from the outset. For example, the co-operative stores at Welwyn and Welwyn Builders and Joiners Ltd (a subsidiary of the original development company) provided an opportunity for people to have a stake in local economic initiatives. In both Garden Cities upfront investment was made in a whole range of artistic and cultural facilities and groups, such as theatrical societies and youth clubs, which set them apart from other developments at the time.

6.2 How were people involved in the development of the New Towns?

Reflecting the spirit of the Garden City movement, the purpose of the New Towns was not simply to provide homes and jobs, but to create socially balanced communities that integrated employment, homes and social life to provide opportunities for all. The new developments, and the new residents, were to be well integrated with existing communities. This was more easily achieved in some places than in others, reflecting local geography, the design of the masterplan in promoting physical integration, the effort invested in social development and community cohesion, and the complexity and challenges inherent in such an endeavour. Despite these good intentions and the urgent need for new housing, there

were local objections to the New Towns. Famously, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, Lewis Silkin, had his car tyres let down while he was speaking about the New Town proposal at a public meeting in Stevenage, and local residents also changed the railway sign to read 'Silkingrad'.³⁸ Local authorities were consulted on the Draft Designation Order for each of the New Towns and the public had an opportunity to comment during the public inquiry. Although the Minister had to demonstrate in the Designation Order how the concerns of local objectors had been addressed, ultimately he had the power to ensure that the development went ahead despite any local objections.

During construction, many of the New Town Development Corporations invested in social or community development, often employing officers to welcome new residents, publish newsletters, organise community events, or establish neighbourhood councils. This was designed to address what had come to be known as 'New Town blues' – feelings of isolation from social networks and activities consequent on moving to a new, only partially complete community. Many Development Corporations funded community meeting places and accelerated the establishment of networking institutions such as mother and toddler groups, scout and guide troops, allotment societies, local history groups, music, dance and singing groups, and so on.

6.3 Key observations from the case studies

There are some common lessons to be drawn from the Garden City and New Town case studies:

Approach to designation

- **The early New Towns compromised public engagement for the sake of speed of delivery (due to government pressure to deliver):** Compared with today's requirements for public engagement in the development process, opportunities were limited.
- **There were some commonly raised objections to New Town designations:** Such objections included concerns of the relevant local authorities over the competitive impact on retail and local economic activity in nearby towns, disquiet over the impact on local services, and concerns about the impact on local agricultural economies.

Creating vibrant and balanced communities

- **Later New Towns put specific efforts into considering the views of residents:** As part of the process of developing the masterplan for Milton Keynes, consultant planners Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor undertook a survey of residents living in the villages

37 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, p.32

38 *The New Towns: Five-Minute Fact Sheets. Appendix to New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014, p.4.
http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Fact_Sheets_15_01_20.pdf

within the potential designated area of Milton Keynes. Annual surveys of the views of new residents were also conducted by the Development Corporation. These included views on everything from the design of homes to whether ‘housewives’ felt they had enough employment opportunities.

- **The emphasis that the Development Corporations put on community development is one of the key positive legacies in the New Towns today:** There is a sense of civic pride among many New Town residents today, often represented in active community groups.
- **There is a stigma attached to some of the less successful New Towns which may affect how residents feel about their home town:** Several of the New Towns, such as Craigavon, face significant challenges in overcoming the stigma associated with their ‘New Town’ title. Preconceived ideas and assumptions are often based on past realities that no longer hold true and are not consistent with the sense of civic pride felt by many New Town residents.
- **Language is important:** The New Towns themselves have, over time, fallen in and out of love with their New Town heritage. Now the new community concept has regained political favour, many New Towns are once again proud of their heritage. Many Development Corporation employees though of and referred to their New Towns as ‘new cities’. Some New Towns are now among the fastest growing towns and cities in the UK. Although Milton Keynes is the fast growing place in the country, it does not have ‘official’ city status – something that many of its residents are acutely aware of.
- **There is a lack of research on the way in which residents’ views about living in a New Town have changed over the years:** Changes in residents’ views are hard to gauge because of the timescales involved, but it would be useful to know if perceptions of development change over time.

6.4 Encouraging support for new Garden Cities

A new generation of Garden Cities would provide an opportunity to offer people a better way of living. There is an important role for local leaders to promote and communicate the vision for new Garden Cities. Evidence shows that people are more likely to support new housing development in their local area if it is well designed and in keeping with the locality.³⁹ By listening and responding to people’s concerns about new developments it is possible to enter into dialogue and overcome local opposition and build the homes we need.



The Land Trust

Commitment to the Garden City principles can help in gaining local support for high-quality new development

6.5 Recommendations

- **Local authorities and delivery bodies must make a commitment to high quality. By making a commitment to the Garden City principles and high-quality development, local authorities and delivery bodies can help local people to understand what to expect from – and the benefits of – development.**
- **Considerations of long-term stewardship should also include meaningful public engagement. For a long-term stewardship body to be effective, and to include a role for local people, there must be a strategy for community engagement throughout the development process.⁴⁰**
- **New Garden Cities should provide a vibrant social and cultural life from the outset. The Garden City movement put great emphasis on the role of arts and culture in improving wellbeing as part of a co-operative approach to society. Some of the strongest criticisms of new places is that they are somehow ‘soulless’, reflecting a lack opportunities to socialise as well as a failure to see art and culture as being among the defining ingredients for the success of a new settlement.⁴¹**

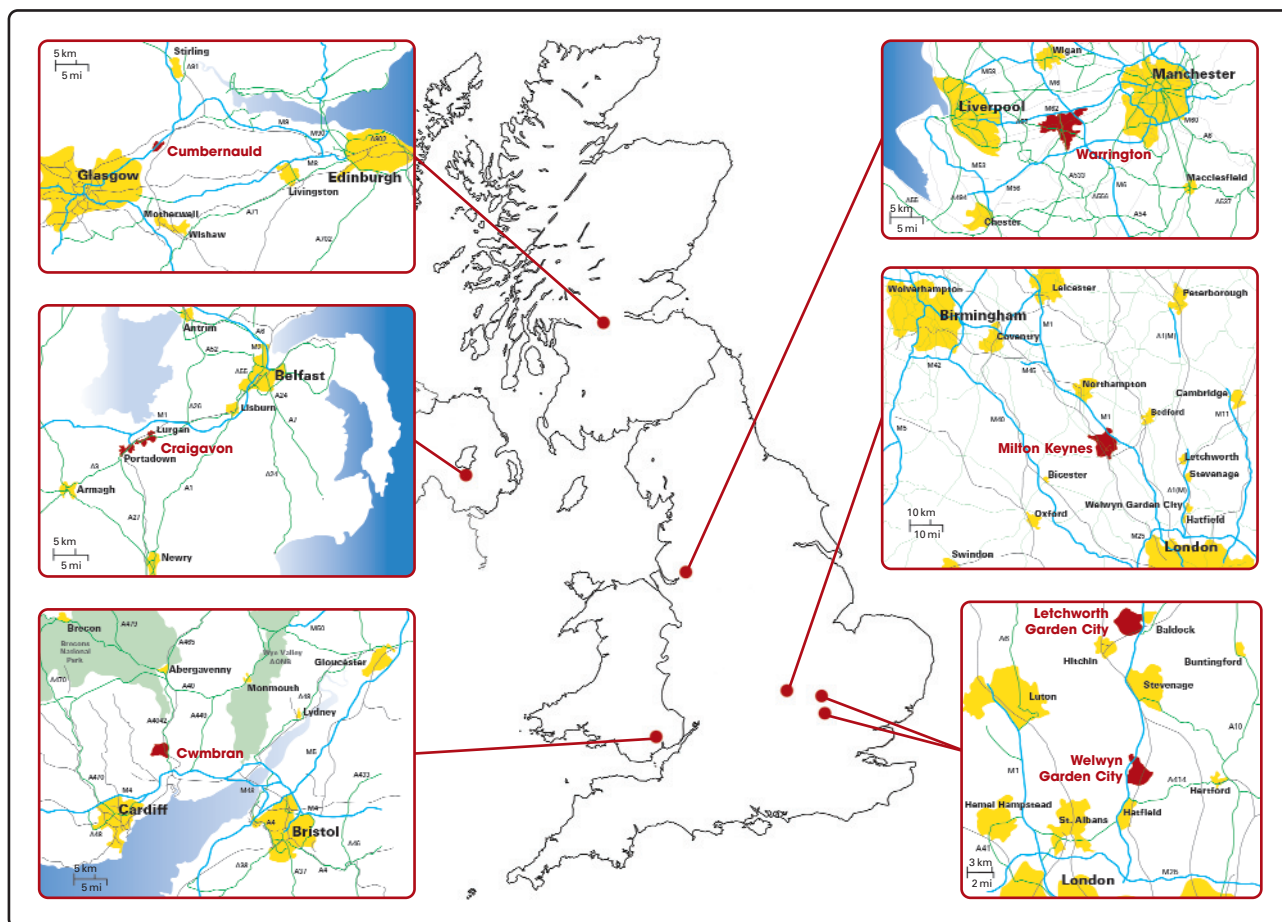
39 See, for example, *Little Boxes, Fewer Homes: Setting Housing Space Standards Will Get More Homes Built*. Shelter, Apr. 2013. http://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/652736/Shelter_Little_Boxes_v4.pdf

40 For a case study on this, see *Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow – A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/TCPA_GC_Stewardship_Guide.pdf

41 This issue is explored further in a forthcoming TCPA publication on creating a vibrant social and cultural life in new Garden Cities

7

Case studies



Locations and sub-regional context for the case study Garden Cities and New Towns

Information for the seven case study Garden Cities and New Towns chosen for the study reported here was gathered by desk-top research (drawing on published articles, books, annual reports of the New Town Development Corporations, etc.);⁴² online surveys of residents in the relevant New Towns; private discussions with relevant experts; and roundtable events held in Cwmbran, Cumbernauld, Craigavon, Warrington, and Milton Keynes in June and July 2015 at which local authority representatives, former Development Corporation employees and representatives of local businesses and

community groups were invited to discuss the key legacy issues in the case study areas.

Statistical information on the case study New Towns is set out, along with statistics on all the UK New Towns, in *The New Towns: Five-Minute Fact Sheets. Appendix to New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK’s New Towns and Garden Cities*.⁴³ Statistics on Letchworth Garden City are given in *An Introduction to the UK’s New Towns and Garden Cities*.⁴⁴

42 *The New Towns Record* was particularly useful source of secondary resources – *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

43 *The New Towns: Five-Minute Fact Sheets. Appendix to New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK’s New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014, p.4. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Fact_Sheets_15_01_20.pdf

44 *New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK’s New Towns and Garden Cities*. TCPA, Dec. 2014. http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf

Case study 1:

Letchworth Garden City

Hertfordshire. The First Garden City. Founded 1903



Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation

Residential area in Letchworth Garden City

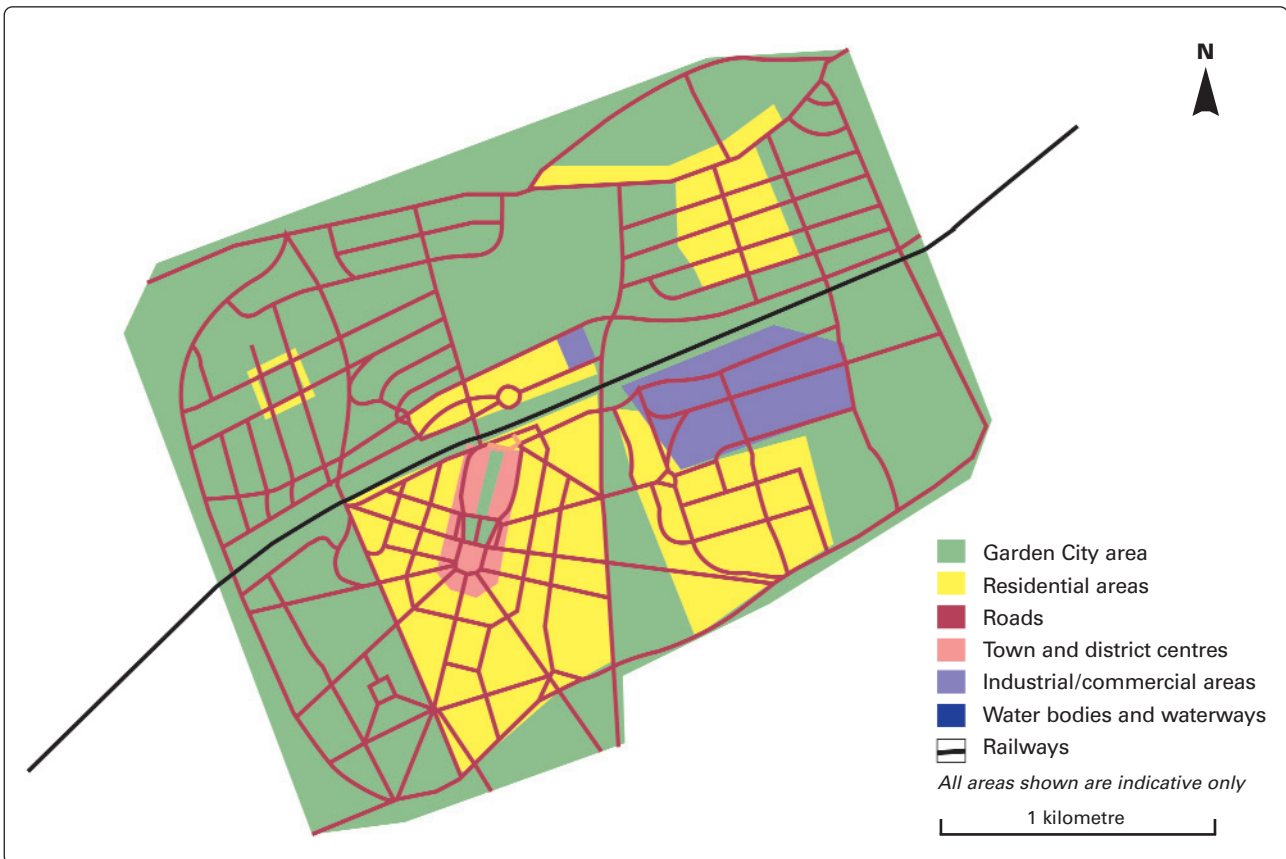
From humble but ambitious beginnings as the home for radical utopians in the early years of the 20th century, Letchworth today is one of the primary settlements in Hertfordshire and home to 33,000 people. Its beautiful architecture and tree-lined corridors are enjoyed by residents⁴⁵ and have been admired and copied across the world. What is less well known but what, in fact, makes Letchworth so special is the model of governance and long-term stewardship that has ensured that the public spaces, parks and architecture of the town are in such good condition today. This unique funding and governance model, now implemented by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, is one of the most important legacies of Letchworth's foundation as a Garden City, following the vision set out in Ebenezer Howard's book *To-morrow – A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*. Today, Letchworth is the best working example of the Garden City development model, but it faces its own challenges – regenerating its

town centre, creating a night-time economy, and dealing with future growth.

Finding a site for the world's first Garden City

When Howard and his supporters founded Letchworth Garden City in 1905 they did not have to concern themselves with local plans or national policy, as there was no statutory planning system. In 1902 the Garden City Association (now the Town and Country Planning Association) set up the Garden City Pioneer Company, whose primary role was to find a site. The company was tasked with finding six sites, which had to be of 4,000-6,000 acres in a single block in size, be in private hands, lie near London or another large city with a suitable rail link, and offer

45 A 2013 survey of Letchworth residents cited 'green space, strong sense of community, and design and layout' as key strengths – see <http://www.letchworth.com/heritage-foundation/get-involved/life-in-lethworth>



The Letchworth Garden City 1904 masterplan

'economically feasible' water supply and drainage.⁴⁶ The process of evaluation of the various sites included an assessment by Thomas Adams and Raymond Unwin and the canvassing of manufacturers to ascertain whether they would be willing to move their operations to the new town.⁴⁷ The site at Letchworth was chosen and the company bought the land with finance from 15 private individuals. After agreement was reached with the local railway company, and issues of water supply and drainage of sewage appeared to be resolvable, the purchase of the land went through.

Who built Letchworth, and how?

In 1903 the Garden City Association registered First Garden City Ltd as the company responsible for the development and governance of Letchworth Garden City. The company appointed architects Raymond Unwin and Barry Parker to provide a masterplan, and construction began a few months later. Company Board members included prominent businessmen such as Edward Cadbury and soap magnate WH Lever, who helped to promote the project. Tenders were invited for the development of the site, and in 1905 the 'Cheap Cottages Exhibition' was held, which leased sites to developers and attracted 60,000 visitors to see a 'Garden City in the making'.

Following Howard's vision, central to the company's ethos was a commitment to reinvest all profits back into the Garden City estate, once initial loans had been repaid. The company would retain the freehold of the land and generate income from leaseholders. However, in terms of community governance the company made a significant departure from Howard's original vision. There was no mention in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of First Garden City Ltd of any legal obligation to transfer power progressively to the community.⁴⁸ There was also disagreement among the Board on other issues, such as whether freehold land should be made available. But eventually progress was made and, albeit more slowly than had been hoped, Letchworth reached half its planned population by 1938. It was 'completed' after the Second World War, 'ironically aided by government subsidised decentralisation schemes, on a slightly smaller scale than originally planned'.⁴⁹

Employment was a key feature of Howard's model, and industry in Letchworth was to have a new image. The polluted environment of the Victorian factory was to be replaced by light and airy modern buildings with good working conditions (and genuinely affordable housing). It was seen as important to attract craft-based trades to the Garden Cities.⁵⁰

46 G. Nagy and K. Szelenyi: *Garden Cities: The British Example*. English Edition revised by A. Eserin and T. Skottowe. Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust, 2013. p.57

47 M. Miller: 'Utopia Ltd – the development of the First Garden City'. In *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. TCPA and RTP1 souvenir booklet of a conference held at Letchworth in 1989, p.7

48 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, pp.31-32

49 *Ibid.*, p.35

50 M. Miller: *English Garden Cities: An Introduction*. English Heritage, 2010, p.59

Following a profitable period and an attempted takeover by property speculators, a Private Members' Bill led to a 1962 Act of Parliament which transferred the assets, role and responsibilities of First Garden City Ltd to a public sector organisation – Letchworth Garden City Corporation. A further Act of Parliament (Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation Act 1995) wound up the Corporation, passing the then £56 million estate to Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation (more on the Foundation below).

How was Letchworth paid for?

The genius of Howard's ideas lay in the Garden City financial model, which allows the uplift in land and property values that result from the development process to be reinvested in the town and its residents for the common good. Income from leaseholders would be used to pay off the debts of development, and to make improvements to the town. Rents would be increased periodically in line with the increase in land values that resulted from the development process. As the development debts were slowly paid off, the amount used to invest back in the town would increase, until eventually all the income would be used for this purpose, enabling the Garden City to provide benefits for residents (everything from pensions to theatrical societies) in a form of Garden City 'welfare state'. The concept is illustrated in Howard's diagram 'The vanishing point of landlord's rent' in *To-morrow – A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*.

At Letchworth Howard's model was applied using private finance. The shareholders agreed to restrict the dividend to 5% in addition to repayment of the capital, and to devote all the revenue to the improvement of the Garden City and the benefit of its inhabitants. Property was made available only on leasehold, and the ground rent was paid to the company. However, progress was not smooth. A dividend to the stockholders was not payable until 1913, and then at only 1%. It took 20 years for the 5% dividend to be achieved, and payment of arrears was not completed until 1945.⁵¹ But in the inter-war years the company's finances took an upturn and demand for housing in the Garden City was high.

Since the Garden City estate was passed to Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation under the 1995 Act of Parliament, proactive commercial management of Letchworth assets, combined with market changes, has resulted in a current asset value in the region of £128 million, yielding an annual endowment income of around £10 million. Around 80% of this income comes from the property portfolio (industrial, office, and retail); the remaining 20% is income resulting from the delivery of services (such as the cinema) and interest on the investment portfolio. There are no shareholders who receive a dividend from this income, which is either utilised in the management of the property portfolio or reinvested in the community through the Foundation's charitable commitments, with approximately £4.11 million being reinvested over the past year.

Who looks after Letchworth's assets today?

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is the largest landowner and landlord in the Garden City, enabling it to work with the local authority and other stakeholders to help shape the strategic direction of the town. Endowment income generated mainly from its property portfolio enables the Foundation to provide additionality to services and facilities provided by the local authority (North Hertfordshire District Council). Priorities are based on a set of charitable commitments to provide funding and services for the benefit of Letchworth's communities. The Foundation is not governed by the community, as Howard might have liked, but includes democratically elected representatives and is committed to working on behalf of the community, providing in 2015 is the closest form of organisation there is to what Howard envisaged.

To protect the unique and special character of Letchworth, the Foundation also runs a Scheme of Management, which applies to most freehold premises within the Letchworth Garden City estate. The scheme sets obligations (or covenants) on freehold property owners to seek prior approval for external alterations to their homes, as well as for the removal of trees and hedges, and before running a business from home.

How were people engaged in the development of Letchworth Garden City?

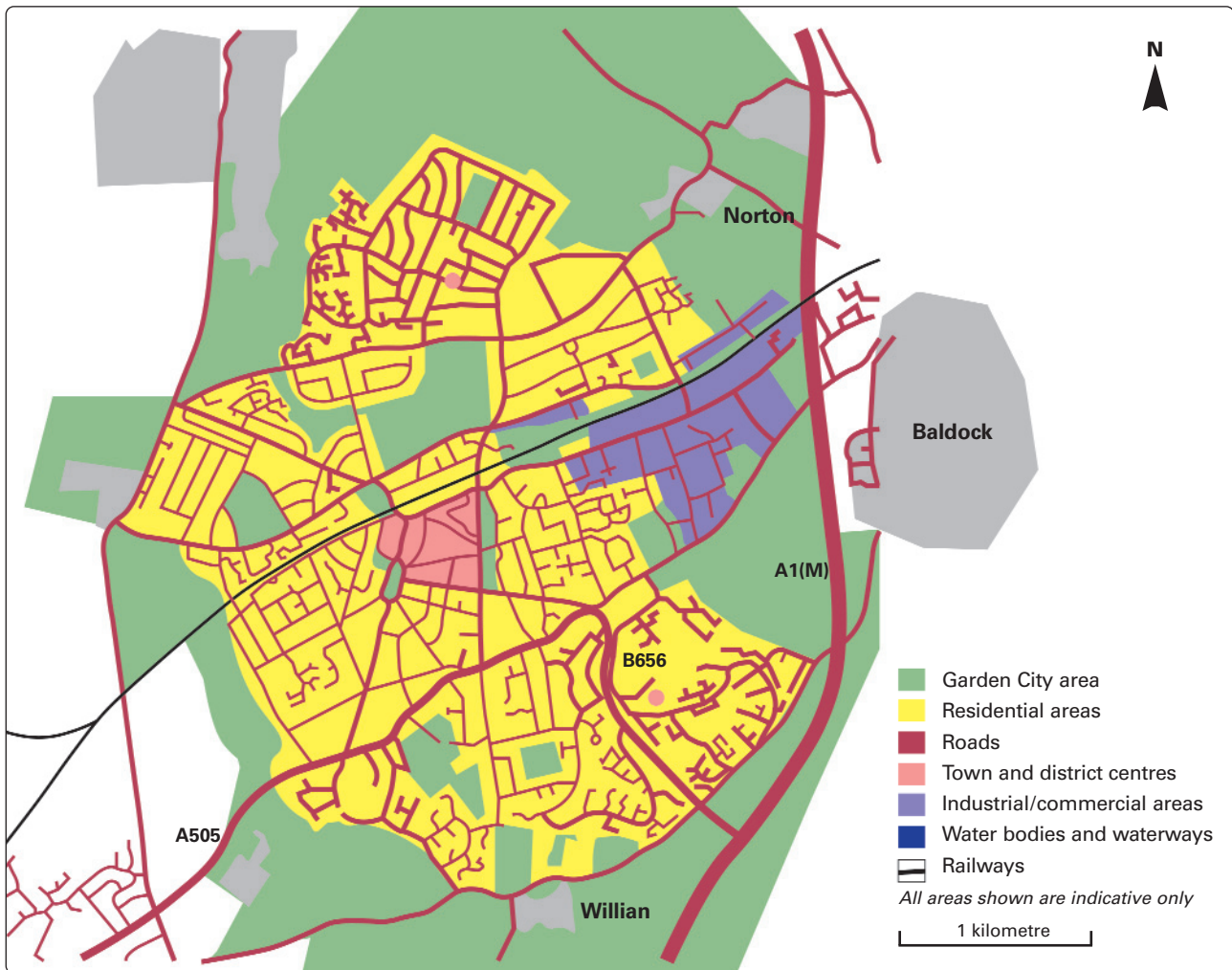
A major challenge for an organisation working for the benefit of the community lies in understanding what that community needs and what activities it will deliver – and then in matching different (and sometimes competing) needs with the right level of investment. This was a challenge for First Garden City Ltd and remains a challenge for Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

The Foundation has had to put specific efforts into building a positive relationship with Letchworth residents. Recognising that meaningful dialogue with the community is vital, the Foundation has undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at raising awareness and making the Foundation more accessible. It has undertaken wide-ranging engagement with residents about housing growth options for the town.

What challenges and opportunities is Letchworth facing today?

Although its critics may see Letchworth as an example of bland suburbia, its residents do not agree: 84% of respondents to a recent survey said they were proud to live in Letchworth, and 81% would recommend living in

51 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, p.31



Letchworth Garden City - current built area

Letchworth to others. Today, the town is facing the challenge of planning for growth and a sustainable future, while retaining and maximising the benefits of its unique Garden City heritage (of which 99% of residents are proud).⁵² In response to North Hertfordshire District Council’s request for housing land in Letchworth, the Foundation has been exploring options including an extension into the town’s northern agricultural estate.⁵³ Partly in response to consultation with residents,⁵⁴ the

Foundation is also seeking to revitalise the evening economy in the town centre and is using an ambitious arts and cultural programme to facilitate this. The Foundation is also supporting a number of community-led sustainability initiatives, working with groups such as Transition Towns Letchworth to promote sustainable living in the town and consider how to overcome the challenge of retrofitting Arts and Crafts designed homes.

52 According to responses to a 2013 survey of Letchworth residents – see <http://www.letchworth.com/heritage-foundation/get-involved/life-in-lethworth>

53 Following a wide-ranging consultation exercise, the Foundation is considering whether the site should be promoted within the Local Plan process. If this course were to be followed, the Foundation has said that, as well as ensuring that the integrity of the Green Belt is not compromised, it would commit to ensuring that development on the site meets high design standards and that any income from the development would contribute towards the Foundation’s charitable commitments – see <http://www.letchworth.com/your-views>

54 Some respondents to the 2013 survey of Letchworth residents felt that there needs to be more ‘life and soul’ in the town centre, better facilities for young people, and better parking. However, there is also a strong awareness of the cultural and arts offer in the town, something on which the Foundation is working hard to lead the way. The Letchworth cinema offers the greatest number of remote viewings of West End productions outside London

Case study 2:

Welwyn Garden City

**Hertfordshire. The Second Garden City. Founded 1919.
'Mark One' New Town. Designated 20 May 1948**

Welwyn Garden City has a unique story. Having started life in 1919 as England's second Garden City, built and developed by a private company working for the community, its designation as a New Town took it from private to public (state) delivery. Following a twin designation with Hatfield (developed by separate Development Corporations run by the same personnel, with Green Belt between the settlements), Welwyn Garden City became the largest settlement in the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield, providing homes for 44% of the Borough's population in 2001. The town's Garden City heritage is recognised as being of international significance.

Finding a site for Howard's second experiment

Ebenezer Howard had been contemplating a second Garden City project for some time when he concluded that a large unbuilt area north of Hatfield – observed on his frequent journeys from Letchworth to London – would be the perfect site. He was researching landowners when out of the blue a parcel of the land became available. Howard immediately called in favours from friends and acquaintances to cover the deposit and bid for the site on 30 May 1919, essentially 'without the cash to pay for it'.⁵⁵ On the same day he appointed Frederic Osborn to proceed with forming a pioneer company to assemble the land, and by October 1919 a company was formed and two further areas of were land purchased.⁵⁶ Being a short distance away from the first Garden City, linked by rapid public transport, the site would contribute towards Howard's strategic vision of a 'Social City'.⁵⁷

Who built Welwyn Garden City?

By 1920 the pioneer company had made sufficient progress with surveys and plans for a development company, Welwyn Garden City Ltd, to be formed. The company would retain the freehold of the land and provide homes and development plots at fixed rents. Houses were a mix



Early housing in a Welwyn Garden City cul-de-sac

of weekly and monthly rented and privately owned homes. Louis de Soissons was appointed planner and architect for the town, a role he was to oversee until his death in 1962. The company promoted land to developers and purchasers, but progress was slow so it established Welwyn Builders and Joiners Ltd to develop the town. This was the first of a whole suite of subsidiary companies, all of which would contribute to co-operative community life.

How was Welwyn Garden City financed?

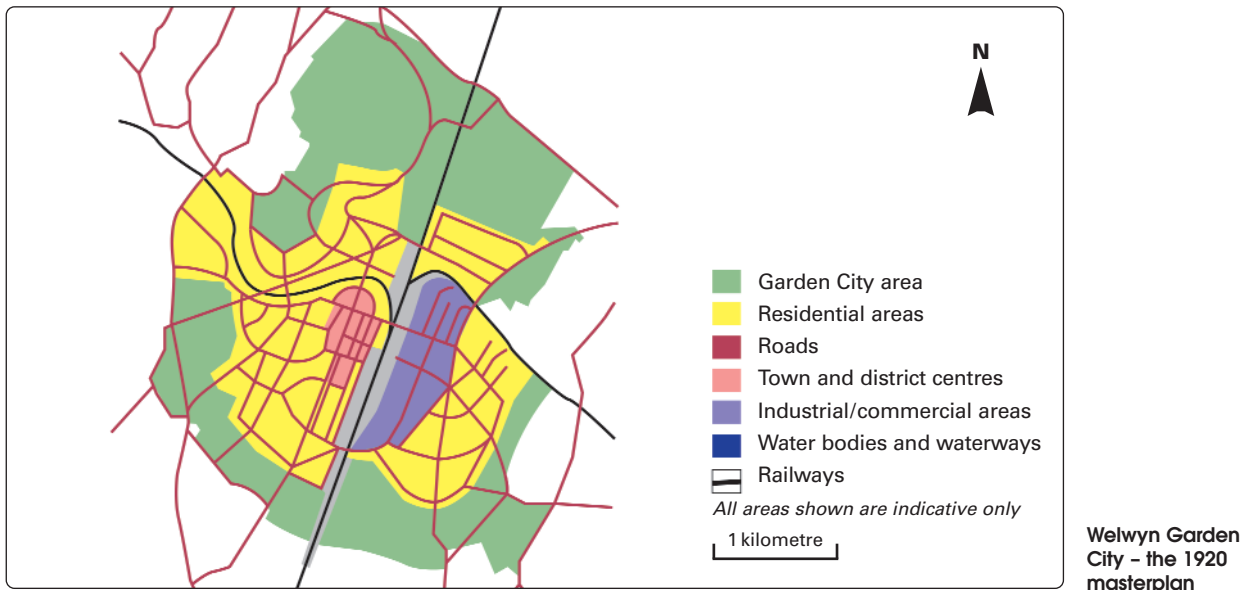
Welwyn Garden City Ltd was conscious of the financial challenges that Letchworth had been facing and appointed Sir Theodore Chambers, an experienced property magnate, as Chairman.⁵⁸ This time, the profit on capital was limited

55 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, p.40

56 F.J. Osborn: *New Towns after the War*. Preface, 1942 Edition. J.M Dent & Sons, 1942 (Revised version of the 1918 edition)

57 The 'Social City' concept, as set out in *To-morrow – A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, envisaged a network of smaller Garden Cities, surrounded by agricultural belt and linked by rapid public transport, which would provide, individually, a good scale of place in which to live and, together, all the benefits of a much larger city

58 G. Nagy and K. Szelenyi: *Garden Cities: The British Example*. English Edition revised by A. Eserin and T. Skottowe. Welwyn Garden City Heritage Trust, 2013. p.89



to 7%. Development costs were to be covered from ground rents, rents of public facilities (a cinema, a hotel, and commercial units) and various enterprises (including brick-making and construction). Primarily, the land was to be kept in communal ownership and the company decided to offer 999-year leases, with the rents to be revised every 80 years. However, this remnant of Howard's financial model did not last long. Lawyers advised the Directors (who were liable for security of up to £70,000) against it and the company reverted to fixing the price of the rents for the duration of the leases: 'Instead of the community benefiting, the gains passed to those individuals who bought the housing; all that survived [of Howard's concept] was that the company retained the freehold'.⁵⁹ By the time of the Great Depression the company was on the verge of bankruptcy, with liabilities of nearly £750,000, at which point the Directors changed the Articles of the company to exclude the Garden City and its inhabitants from any interest in the company and its profits. Howard was not alive to see this abandonment of the fundamental financial principle of his vision. By the time the 1946 New Towns Act was passed, the company was in good enough shape to purchase additional land to accommodate predicted growth needs, even though this was eventually to be taken over by Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation.

Identifying Welwyn as a New Town

Welwyn Garden City was one of the 'outer country ring' of growth points identified⁶⁰ in Patrick Abercrombie's 1944 Greater London Plan – in response to which, Welwyn Garden City Ltd increased its population target for the Garden City from 30,000-35,000 to 50,000, and bought some additional land to accommodate the growth. It submitted plans to Welwyn Garden City Urban District Council for this expansion. In 1947, having considered the

plans, the Government limited the population to 36,500 and in July Welwyn Garden City Ltd published a masterplan. By October that year the Government had decided it would be better to deliver the growth through a New Town Development Corporation and to designate Welwyn Garden City as a New Town.

Building Welwyn Garden City New Town

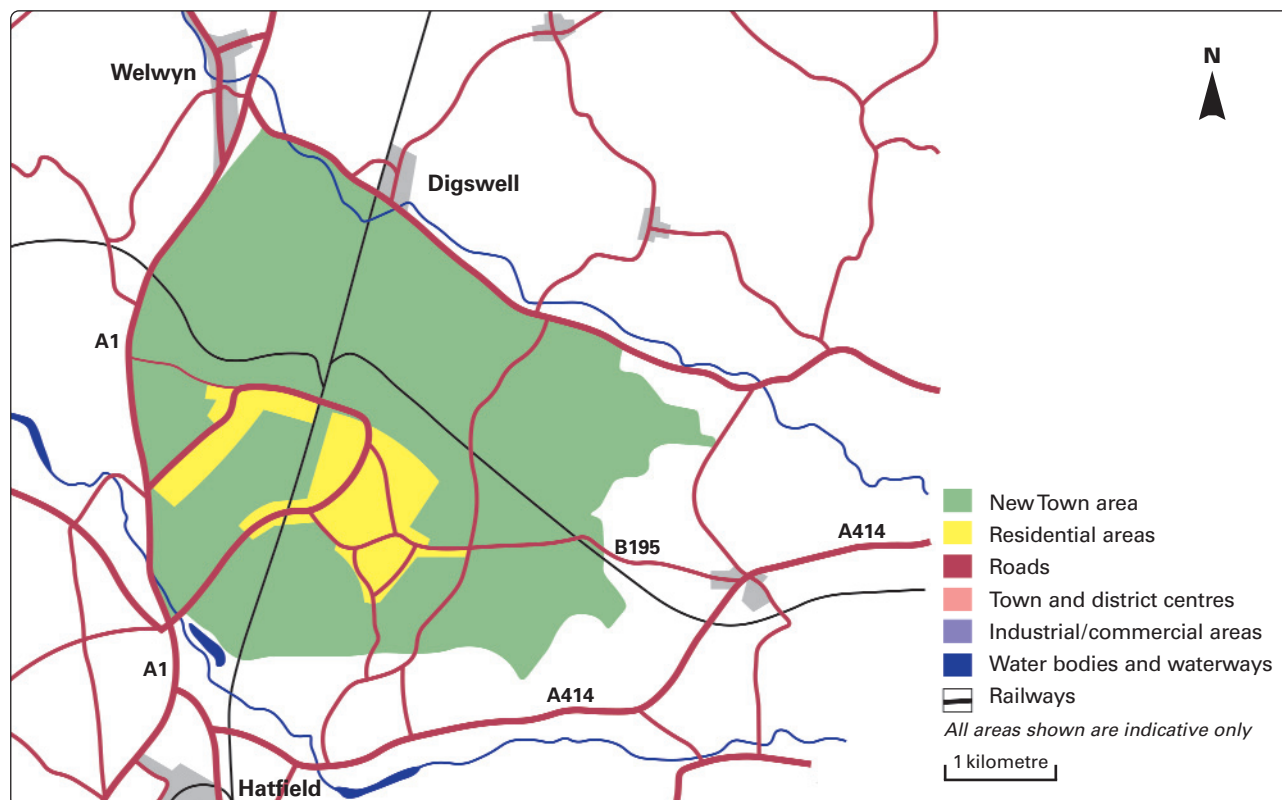
When the Minister decided the New Towns legislation should be used to develop Welwyn Garden City (along with neighbouring Hatfield), the company's time was up. Although the company was designed to act for the benefit of Garden City residents and had an experienced body of directors and a skilled staff, who as the Minister acknowledged had already done excellent pioneering work in the field of new town development, the Minister decided that the private company should be replaced by a public body 'representing the people'⁶¹ – Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation, which shared staff with Hatfield Development Corporation. A member of Welwyn Garden City Urban District Council and a member of Welwyn Garden City Limited were included on the Board of the Development Corporation. Joint meetings were held 'periodically' throughout the life of the Development Corporation to facilitate mutual understanding.⁶² Louis de Soissons, the architect of Welwyn Garden City, was retained as planning consultant to the Corporation to provide continuity of design. In the 1950s the Development Corporation undertook significant housing development, mainly to the east of the town's railway line. Much of this housing was considered to have departed from the Garden City principles. The Development Corporation was wound up on 31 March 1966.

59 P. Hall and C. Ward: *Sociable Cities: The 21st-Century Reinvention of the Garden City*. Second Edition. Routledge, 2014, p.40

60 Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield were both in the 'outer country ring' identified in Patrick Abercrombie's Greater London Plan

61 'Welwyn Garden City & Hatfield as twin new towns'. Government Press Release 8.1.48. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

62 *1966 Annual Report*. Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation, 1966. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



Welwyn Garden City - designated area (1948)
Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

How was Welwyn Garden City New Town financed?

The Development Corporation paid Welwyn Garden City Ltd., and some subsidiary companies with properties within the designated area, £2,800,000 for their interests and acquired the freehold interest in all land owned by the company in the designated area and the leasehold interest in factories, shop premises and most of the quarterly and weekly rented houses and flats (2,500 leases).⁶³ In 1966 the assets of Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation were transferred to the Commission for the New Towns, which continued to develop and manage them (assets 'in excess of £28 million' were transferred to the Commission for the New Towns, along with the liability to pay back a £26 million advance from government). On 1 April 1983 the housing and related assets of the Commission for the New Towns in Welwyn were transferred to Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (which itself was formed in 1973). In the ensuing years the industrial, commercial and land assets were offered for sale either to sitting tenants or on the open market.⁶⁴ Today, the Homes and Communities Agency, the successor to the Commission for the New Towns, still owns 8.1 hectares of land in Welwyn Garden City town centre and 46 hectares in the wider borough.⁶⁵

Who looks after Welwyn Garden City today?

Until Welwyn Garden City was designated as a New Town, Welwyn Garden City Ltd had acted as the town's developer and stewardship body. The government's takeover of Welwyn Garden City Ltd's assets was a terminal blow to Howard's second experiment in applying the Garden City financial model. When the Development Corporation was wound up and assets were passed to the Commission for the New Towns with no provision made for a long-term stewardship body, the opportunity to apply Howard's model was lost completely.

It was the Leasehold Reform Act of 1967 that led to a formal stewardship body being established in Welwyn Garden City once again. Using a condition in the Act, and due to the quality of the environment, an Estate Management Scheme covering most of the town was imposed through the High Court in 1973. Consent (separate to planning permission) is required for certain alterations as a means of maintaining the special character of the town.⁶⁶ Welwyn Garden City Society was established at the same time.

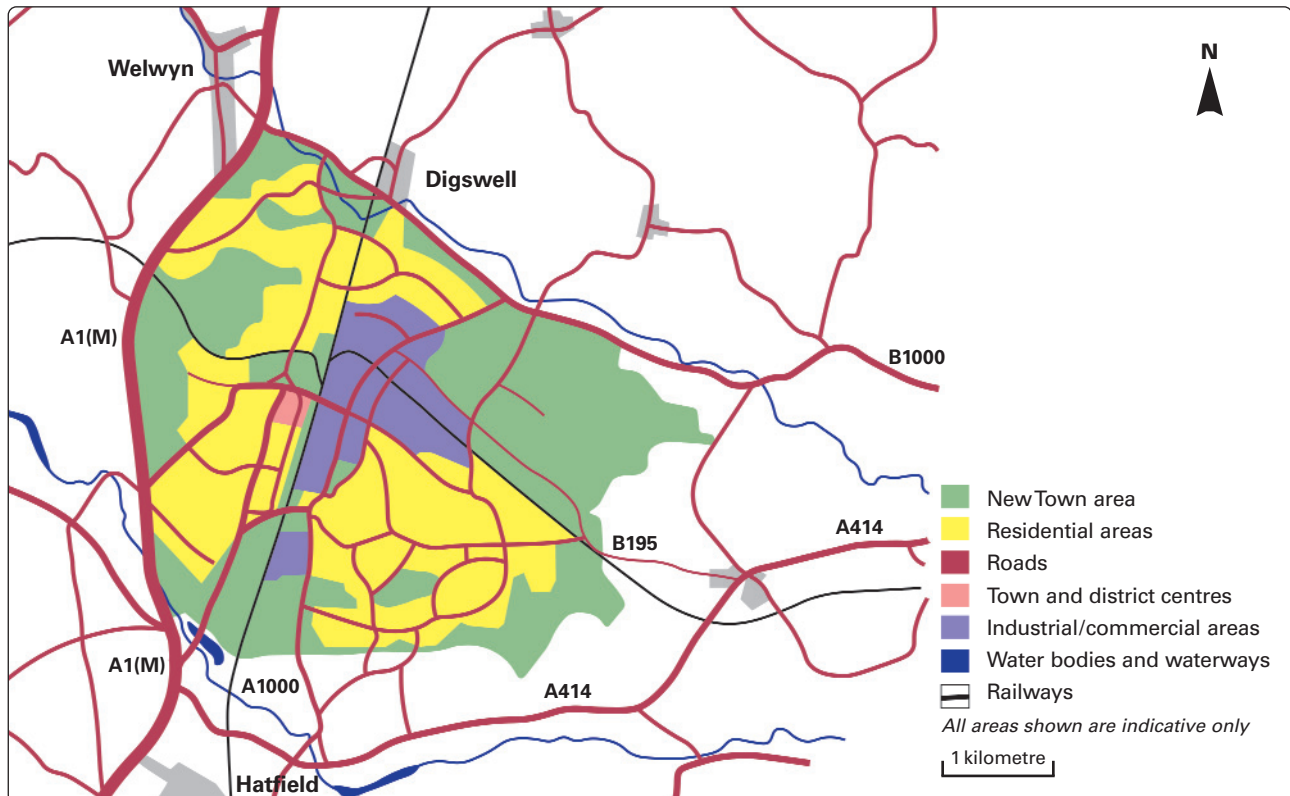
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council is unique in being a body with responsibility to enforce a scheme set up under

63 *1949 Annual Report*. Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation, 1949. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idx-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

64 'Welwyn Garden City overview', by Grant and Partners, 1995, updated with assistance from Welwyn Hatfield Council, 1997. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idx-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

65 Figures from the Homes and Communities Agency, Herts and Bucks Team, August 2015

66 See the Welwyn Garden City Estate Management Scheme website, at <http://www.welhat.gov.uk/EMS>



The 1957 Welwyn Garden City masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

the terms of the Leasehold Reform Act. Other areas with similar schemes have an independent body that enforces the scheme's requirements (such as Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust). This has proved a challenge for the Council, which is currently undertaking a review of the Estate Management Scheme, to ensure that the unique character of the Garden City is protected, while allowing the town to evolve and also to avoid an undue burden on the Council's resources.

Public engagement and social development

Meaningful engagement of local people in the development process was a key factor in Howard's Garden City vision. As such, Welwyn Garden City Ltd established numerous subsidiary companies and co-operatives. Focus was placed on creating a socially and culturally diverse environment for the people, and the first public building to open was a theatre.

The Development Corporation held a public meeting on commencement, and the draft masterplan was put on display for a fortnight and the public invited to comment. The Development Corporation made significant efforts to provide facilities for a range of age groups from the outset. Each of the New Town Development Corporation Annual Reports set out what provisions were made for community facilities and events in that year.

Residents today clearly appreciate the pleasant Garden City environment. The 93 respondents to the online survey conducted for this research cited the green spaces, walkability, access to the countryside, and the 'pleasant environment' – and John Lewis! (the successor to Welwyn Stores Ltd) – as things that they like best about living in Welwyn Garden City today. Some of the areas noted for improvement included a need for a stronger night-time economy, restaurants and a better retail offer.

The future

Today, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council faces the challenge of accommodating housing and employment growth while maintaining the quality of place and respecting the unique heritage and design of the town. There is a clear indication that the Council recognises the importance of the town's heritage but acknowledges that the Garden City must also evolve.

A major opportunity for the town is the regeneration of the former Shredded Wheat factory site. An application has been submitted for a mixed-use scheme of up to 850 new homes, alongside the creation of several restaurants and cafés in the proposed Goodman Square, the scheme's focal point.⁶⁷ The developers make frequent reference to Garden City principles. An extension to the Garden City – named Birchall Garden Suburb – is also under consideration.

67 Further information is available from the Old Shredded Wheat Factory website, at <http://oldshreddedwheatfactory.co.uk/>

Case study 3:

Cwmbran

Torfaen County (Monmouthshire). ‘Mark One’ New Town. Designated 4 November 1949

Cwmbran was the first New Town to be designated in Wales and was designed to provide housing for those employed in existing industry that commuted from elsewhere in the South Wales Valleys. It was thus an unusual ‘Mark One’ New Town in that it was intended to provide homes and not employment, and to correct an existing imbalance rather than create a new ‘balanced community’. Cwmbran is now the largest settlement in Torfaen County Borough and benefits from a good location (and beautiful natural setting), with good access to the M4 and the city coastal zone. Its ability to adapt to changing economies and politics has contributed to its success⁶⁸ and today Cwmbran has an opportunity to use its strong economic base and natural assets to create a liveable community for the 21st century.

Why was a New Town built at Cwmbran?

Ministerial committees set up to explore the applicability of the 1946 New Towns Act in Wales concentrated on opportunities to designate areas of housing to support existing industries. County councils were asked to nominate suitable sites. Sites in the Cwmbran area had been identified as potential New Town locations in the 1949 ‘Outline Plan’ for the South Wales region.⁶⁹ The South Wales Outline Plan proposed that the population of the Cwmbran area should be expanded through the creation of three new residential neighbourhoods, each housing 10,000 people. The Minister felt that neighbourhoods of such scale must be ‘accompanied by the provision of proper social and other facilities... entailing a heavier

financial and administrative responsibility than the local authorities concerned could be expected to carry’⁷⁰ and therefore that it was in the national interest that a Development Corporation should be used for the task.

In 1949 the Minister consulted with all the local authorities that appeared to him to be concerned. Except for Newport Borough Council, all the local authorities welcomed and supported the proposal. However, there was some difference of opinion over the most suitable site, and some concerns that the rights, responsibilities and operations of the local authorities might be affected by the designation and that the New Town Development Corporation might be given exceptional priority and special facilities.⁷¹ Newport Borough Council expressed ‘no opinion’ upon the necessity for the establishment of a New Town, but suggested as a possible alternative the expansion of Newport and Pontypool. Over 60 years later, Newport is seeking to strengthen its retail offer in the face of competition from Cwmbran.⁷² Industrial interests were also concerned that the designation of land and the preservation of the Green Belt would prevent them from obtaining land for expansion.⁷³ Cwmbran Development Corporation obtained 133 acres of land via a Compulsory Purchase Order. The first Annual Report of Cwmbran Development Corporation states that ‘none of the land owners objected to the order’.⁷⁴

Who built Cwmbran?

Cwmbran Development Corporation came into existence on 24 November 1949, aiming to ‘set a standard of what a modern Industrial Town should be’ and ‘to create a happy,

68 As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Cwmbran New Town, held in Cwmbran on 26 May 2015

69 *South Wales Outline Plan for the South Wales and Monmouthshire Development Area (excluding the Borough of Pembroke)*. T. Alwyn Lloyd and H. Jackson, for the Minister of Town and Country Planning. HMSO, 1949 (Commissioned in 1946 by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning)

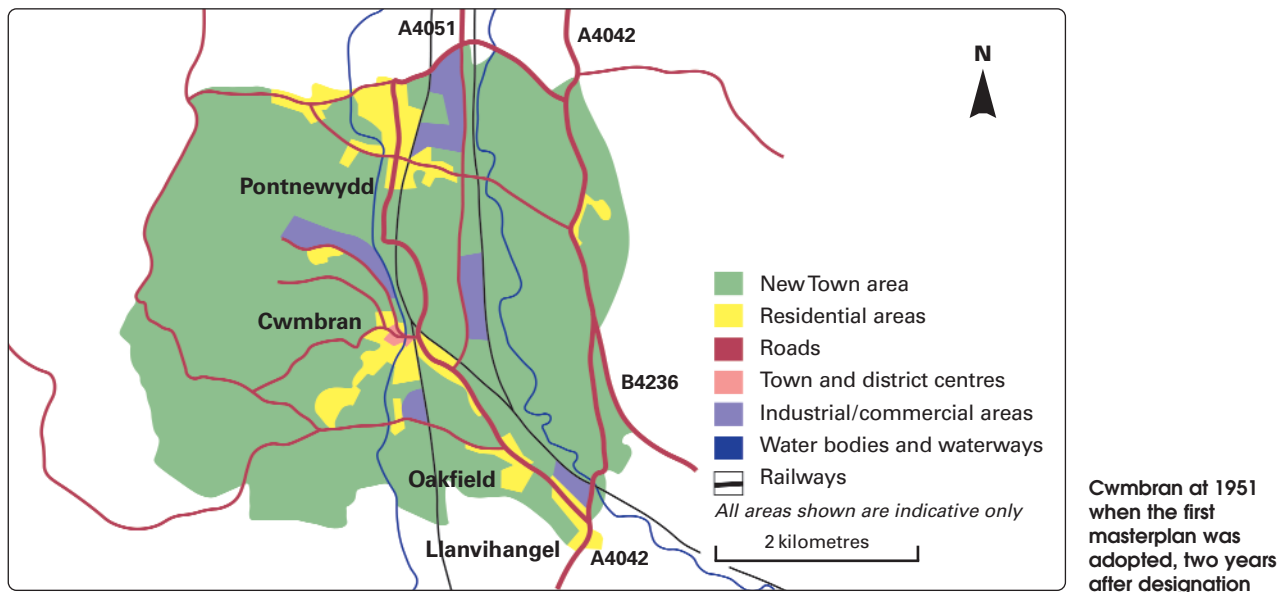
70 Draft Cwmbran New Town (Designation) Order, 1949. Explanatory Memorandum. HLG 91/577 14605, New Towns Act, 1946. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

71 *Cwmbran New Town Designation Order – Brief for Opening Statement by Minister’s Representatives*. Draft Cwmbran New Town (Designation) Order, 1949. Explanatory Memorandum. HLG 91/577 14605, New Towns Act, 1946. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

72 As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Cwmbran New Town, held in Cwmbran on 26 May 2015

73 *Cwmbran New Town Designation Order – Brief for Opening Statement by Minister’s Representatives*. Draft Cwmbran New Town (Designation) Order, 1949. Explanatory Memorandum. HLG 91/577 14605, New Towns Act, 1946. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

74 *First Annual Report for the Period Ended March 31st, 1951*. Cwmbran Development Corporation, 1951. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



friendly and pleasing town'.⁷⁵ Officials wrote to all local authorities near the designated area asking for nominations for Board members. Most simply nominated their Chairs, with only Newport nominating one from each political party.⁷⁶ The Board met fortnightly (later monthly) with a site visit in between. Some of the staff also worked for Mid-Wales Development Corporation, which was delivering Newtown.

The fact that Cwmbran Development Corporation was an undemocratic body caused some resentment among the district councils, who felt that the Development Corporation got more money from government and preferential treatment (in fact, this was not the case). The strength and nature of relationships between Cwmbran Development Corporation and the district and county councils varied between individual functions in the Corporation. While there were positive relationships between Development Corporation planners and the County Architect, there was some tension between Cwmbran Urban District Council and the Development Corporation, which improved in 1970 when Lord Raglan, a local landowner and politician, became the Corporation's Chairman.

How was Cwmbran financed?

By the time Cwmbran Development Corporation wound up in 1988, it had received a total of £105,033,935 in loans from HM Treasury. To supplement the Treasury loans, there was some diversion of existing local authority funding streams (for example for health and schools provision from Monmouthshire County Council and for a sports centre from Cwmbran Urban District Council, supplemented by

some funding from the Development Corporation). For many years Cwmbran's development was supported almost entirely by public expenditure, with commercial and industrial growth encouraged by sympathetic financial and estate management regimes. During its final years Cwmbran Development Corporation capitalised on the confidence from its rapid industrial growth to secure major private investment and create capital surpluses for reinvestment.⁷⁷

A lead-in time of three years was given for the winding up of the Development Corporation. In 1985 the Cwmbran Development Corporation Board and the Welsh Office agreed a detailed programme for the 'balanced, orderly and sensitive progress [of] the transfer of assets'. This included provisions that the town centre was to be sold to The Ladbroke Company and County Land Company Ltd, and industrial premises were to be sold on the open market. Between 1985 and January 1988 (the lead-in time for the wind-up of the Corporation), £14.7 million was raised by the sale of commercial interests in the town centre and of commercially developable land. Industrial and other developers bought factories amounting to 250 units for £7.7 million. The rest of the Development Corporation's industrial land and facilities were sold to the Welsh Development Agency in September 1987 for £11 million. Housing (around 6,000 homes) was transferred to Torfaen Borough Council, involving 'a most complex and sensitive series of statutory and administrative decisions'.⁷⁸ The Development Corporation built 10,199, mainly rented, dwellings. It sold 4,083 of these (of which 3,068 were sold in the 1980s, predominantly to sitting tenants), receiving £33 million in capital receipts. In 1985 discussions began with the Land Authority for Wales for the transfer of surplus housing land.⁷⁹

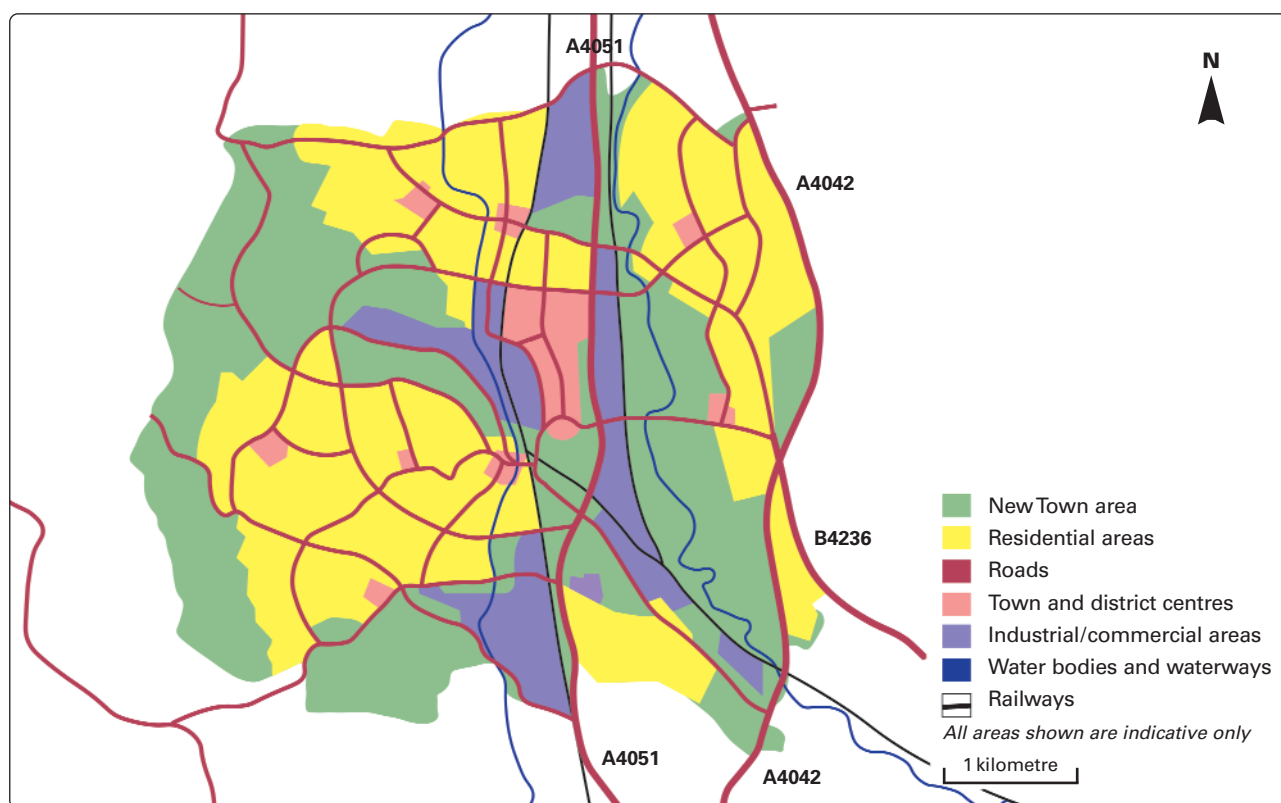
⁷⁵ *History of Planning in Wales*. RTPi, 2014, p.8. http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1238497/wales_centenary_history_project.pdf

⁷⁶ P. Riden: *Rebuilding a Valley*. Cwmbran Development Corporation, 1988, p.27

⁷⁷ P. Riden: *Rebuilding a Valley*. Cwmbran Development Corporation, 1988, p.238

⁷⁸ *Thirty-fifth Annual Report for the Period Ended March 31st, 1985*. Cwmbran Development Corporation. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

⁷⁹ The 1989 Commission for the New Towns Annual Report states that it 'inherited some residual responsibilities, mainly legal and financial, in the town of Cwmbran...'. No further details are provided



Cwmbran – the 1951 masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

Long-term stewardship in Cwmbran

There were no specific ‘stewardship’ bodies set up to manage Cwmbran’s assets after the Development Corporation was wound up. That task fell mainly to Torfaen Council. However, there are two major landowners in the town today, who in their own way provide important stewardship functions. Cwmbran Shopping owns most of the shopping centre, which is thriving with zero vacancy rates. Single ownership provides opportunities for the centre to be managed in a holistic way, but Torfaen Council has less control over the public realm in the centre, which presents its own challenges. Bron Afon, the housing association that took on ownership of Cwmbran’s social housing following asset transfer, also plays an important stewardship role in the town.

Engaging new and existing communities in Cwmbran

Like all the New Towns, Cwmbran aimed to create a balanced community that provided for a range of social and cultural experiences. The Development Corporation made specific efforts to engage with local community organisations:

‘I made it a practice of discussing all new schemes with Cwmbran District Council and, following reorganisation of Local Government in 1974, with Torfaen Borough

*Council and Cwmbran Community Council. I also spoke, probably once a week, to local organisations, including schools, on the history and planning of the new town and illustrated and explained the philosophy behind the planning of social housing. This I found helped to dispel the fallacy that the town was being designed by ‘faceless people’.*⁸⁰

A community development officer was not employed by Cwmbran Development Corporation until 1964, by which time the children of the early residents were teenagers and no facilities had been provided for them during their early childhood. Today, Torfaen Council has invested in engaging people in planning for Cwmbran, and Bron Afon is working with its tenants, co-owners and other local residents on a number of initiatives to change negative perceptions of the town and promote sustainability.

The majority of respondents to the online survey conducted for this research have lived in Cwmbran for between 30 and 70 years and so are well aware of how it has changed. Common reasons for moving to Cwmbran were for employment, its setting, and its good transport links. The most common features respondents liked about the town were its ‘geographic location, low crime rates, town centre, shopping, free parking, green spaces, and clean streets’. Many comments were made on the cleanliness and liveliness of Cwmbran’s town centre. Residents generally seem proud of the town’s centre and its surrounding ‘lovely’ green areas. A high proportion of residents also felt

⁸⁰ Interview with Jim Russell, Chief Architect and Planning Officer for Cwmbran Development Corporation (undated). In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

Case study 4:

Cumbernauld

North Lanarkshire. 'Mark One' New Town. Designated 9 December 1955



Brian Cairns/North Lanarkshire Council

The 10 metre 'Arria' steel sculpture overlooking the A80 at Cumbernauld

Cumbernauld is famous for its 'megastructure' town centre and hilltop location, and has suffered from a challenging reputation in the media.⁸¹ It is true that the town centre is in urgent need of maintenance to improve its accessibility and visual aesthetic, but that does not make its form any less impressive. Beyond the town centre, the housing areas in Cumbernauld demonstrate the sense of ambition and enthusiasm of Cumbernauld Development Corporation's young architects, who worked hard to create high-quality homes in a challenging physical environment (and at great speed). Cumbernauld was consciously designed to depart from the 'neighbourhood' principle adopted in the previous New Towns, and applied higher densities within fewer urban areas and a single town centre on the hilltop. It was designed to be more 'urban' than its predecessors.⁸² It contains some of the best examples of modernist architecture in the UK. It is a town of two halves, bisected by a motorway. The southern half

was built to modernist low-rise in a Radburn layout by the Development Corporation. The majority northern half was developed by the private sector, with the Development Corporation as facilitator. By the 1990s Cumbernauld had grown to be North Lanarkshire's biggest town.⁸³

Why was a New Town built at Cumbernauld?

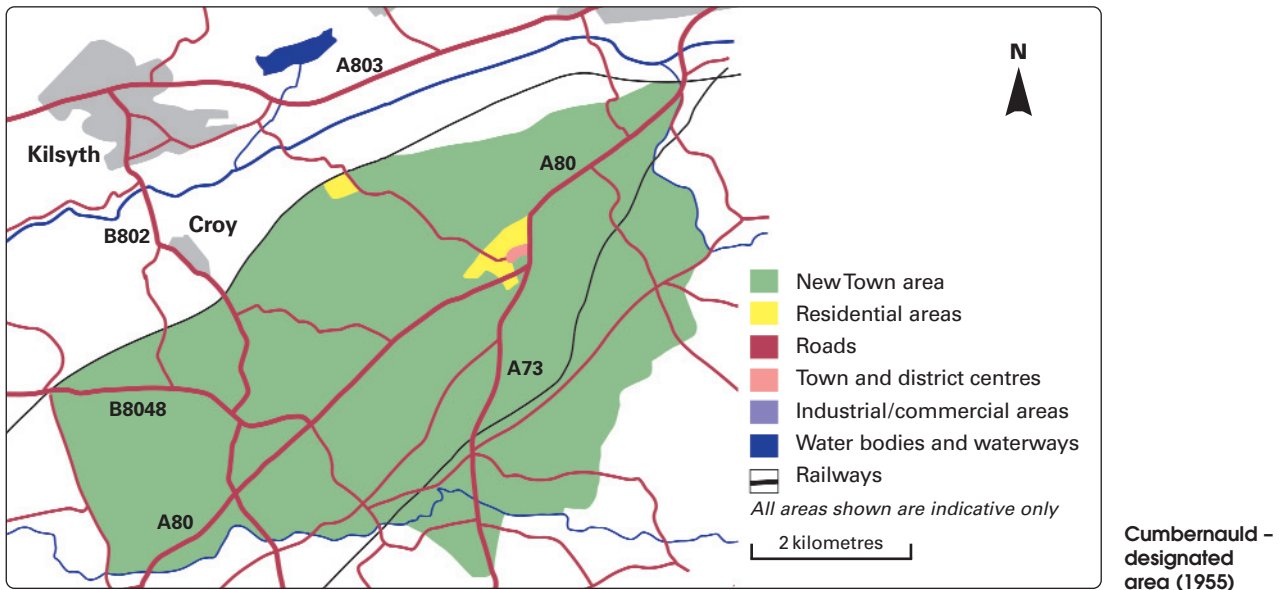
Cumbernauld was included in Abercrombie's Clyde Valley Plan of 1946, to accommodate some of Glasgow's population, but was not designated until nine years later.⁸⁴ The delay until designation was due to HM Treasury's concern that the New Towns were costing a lot of money and its consequent reluctance to agree to further designations. Meanwhile, Glasgow Corporation was hesitant

81 Cumbernauld was voted the worst town in Scotland in 2002, but the most improved town in Scotland in 2010. In 2012 it won the 'best town' Civic Pride Award, a new category in the Scottish Design Awards

82 'Cumbernauld: underlying principles of housing', written by Derek Lyddon, 1994, updated with assistance from North Lanarkshire Council, 1997. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idx-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

83 *North Lanarkshire Local Plan Policy Document*. North Lanarkshire Council, 2012, p.15. <http://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=8411&p=0>

84 'Cumbernauld town overview', written by Derek Lyddon, 1994, updated with assistance from North Lanarkshire Council, 1997. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idx-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



about making financial contributions to housing outside the city. However, the 1952 Glasgow Plan demonstrated that Glasgow could not solve its housing supply problems inside its own boundaries. The Clyde Valley Regional Planning Advisory Committee was reconstituted in 1953 and recommended that Cumbernauld should be the first large-scale housing development outside the city.⁸⁵ The changes in Britain's economic climate in the mid-1950s reversed government concerns over the cost of the New Towns, which were now generating profit that HM Treasury wanted to retain. In 1955 Glasgow Corporation eventually came to an agreement with the Secretary of State over contributions to the cost of Cumbernauld.

The Draft Designation Order was published in July 1955. During a public inquiry held in October most of the objections raised related to the demand by local councillors and several residents for a continuing role for Dunbarton County Council in providing new housing for Cumbernauld village. The inquiry was completed in one day as 'there were no serious objections to the principle of the New Town designation'.⁸⁶

Who built Cumbernauld?

Cumbernauld Development Corporation was established in February 1956 and was accountable to the Secretary of State for Scotland through the Scottish Office Industry Department. The first Chairman was General Sir Gordon Macmillan, and the Board included representatives from Glasgow Corporation, Dunbarton County Council and Cumbernauld District Council.⁸⁷ From the first meeting the Corporation knew that Cumbernauld would be different

from the New Towns that had been designated to date. This was partially in reflection of the need to fit 50,000 people into a small and challenging site, requiring densities to be 60% higher than in the older New Towns. It was also a reaction to what by then was perceived as a lack of 'urban' feel to the older lower-density New Towns. Multi-disciplinary design teams were assembled from the best talent across the UK: 'There was a rare atmosphere of pioneering adventure. Those involved believed themselves to be engaged upon something new, something unique.'⁸⁸ However, they were facing extremely challenging rates of delivery. By the mid-1960s the momentum of the housebuilding programme had increased to average 1,000 houses per annum.⁸⁹ Senior Cumbernauld Development Corporation employees knew even then that this build-out rate meant compromising on things such as the quality of materials. Nevertheless, the architects were keen to work with the contours of the site in the housing areas and deliver the vision of a balanced community in an expression of modern urbanism. The jewel in the crown of the hilltop town was Geoffrey Copcutt's town centre 'megastructure'. The building was widely anticipated and visited by students from across the globe. The engineering company contracted to deliver the centre went bankrupt, leaving sparse engineering plans for the site – which led to problems with structural integrity during build-out and the early degradation of the structure.

An extension to the designated area was granted in 1973. The extended area lies to the north of the town centre and its designation coincided with increased interest from the private sector in delivering housing in the New Town. Today, around 80% of the housing in the extended area is private sector housing.

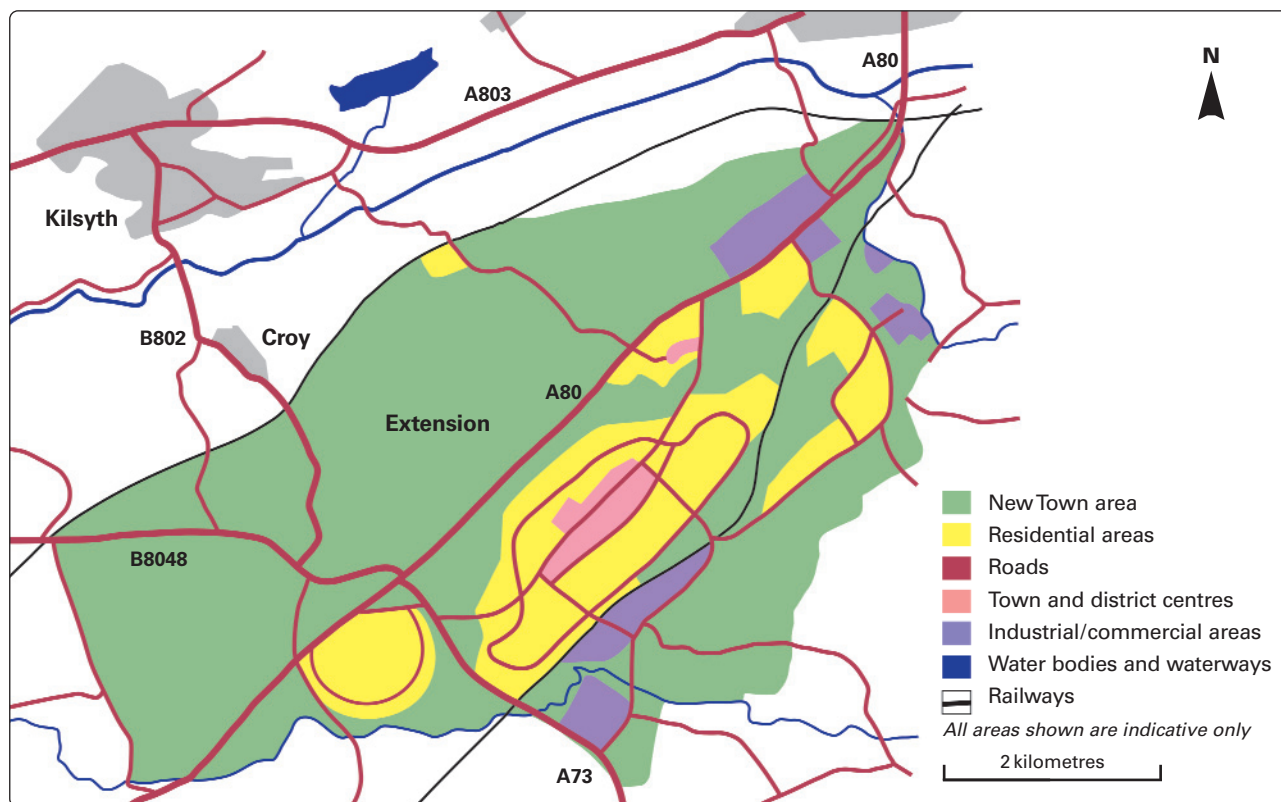
85 'Cumbernauld town overview', written by Derek Lyddon, 1994, updated with assistance from North Lanarkshire Council, 1997. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

86 *Ibid.*

87 D. Cowling: *An Essay for Today: Scottish New Towns 1947-1997*. Cumbernauld Development Corporation, 1997, p.52

88 *Ibid.*

89 'Cumbernauld town overview', written by Derek Lyddon, 1994, updated with assistance from North Lanarkshire Council, 1997. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



Cumbernauld – the 1962 masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

The dissolution of New Towns programme in Scotland was somewhat different from the procedure in England in that no statutory residuary bodies were created. In the main, the new unitary authorities inherited all the functions of the former Development Corporations. One exception to this is that industrial land was transferred to Scottish Enterprise to market and develop: ‘We would not appear to have suffered the same problems as the English New Towns have experienced when dealing with English Partnerships in this regard.’⁹⁰

How was Cumbernauld financed?

Until the 1970s all housing in Cumbernauld was delivered by the Development Corporation in the designated area to the south of the town centre. By the 1970s the attitudes of private builders began to change, and initially two private sector sites on the hilltop were developed and successfully marketed. By the 1980s the private sector was delivering a large number of homes in the north of the town, in the extension area. The private sector housing was dramatically different to that produced by the Development Corporation, being at a much lower density, without the local shops and community facilities that the Corporation had included in its developments, and often using stock designs. Unlike the Corporation’s housing, the private sector developments are not particularly sensitive to the dramatic contours of the site’s topography.

Who looks after Cumbernauld’s assets?

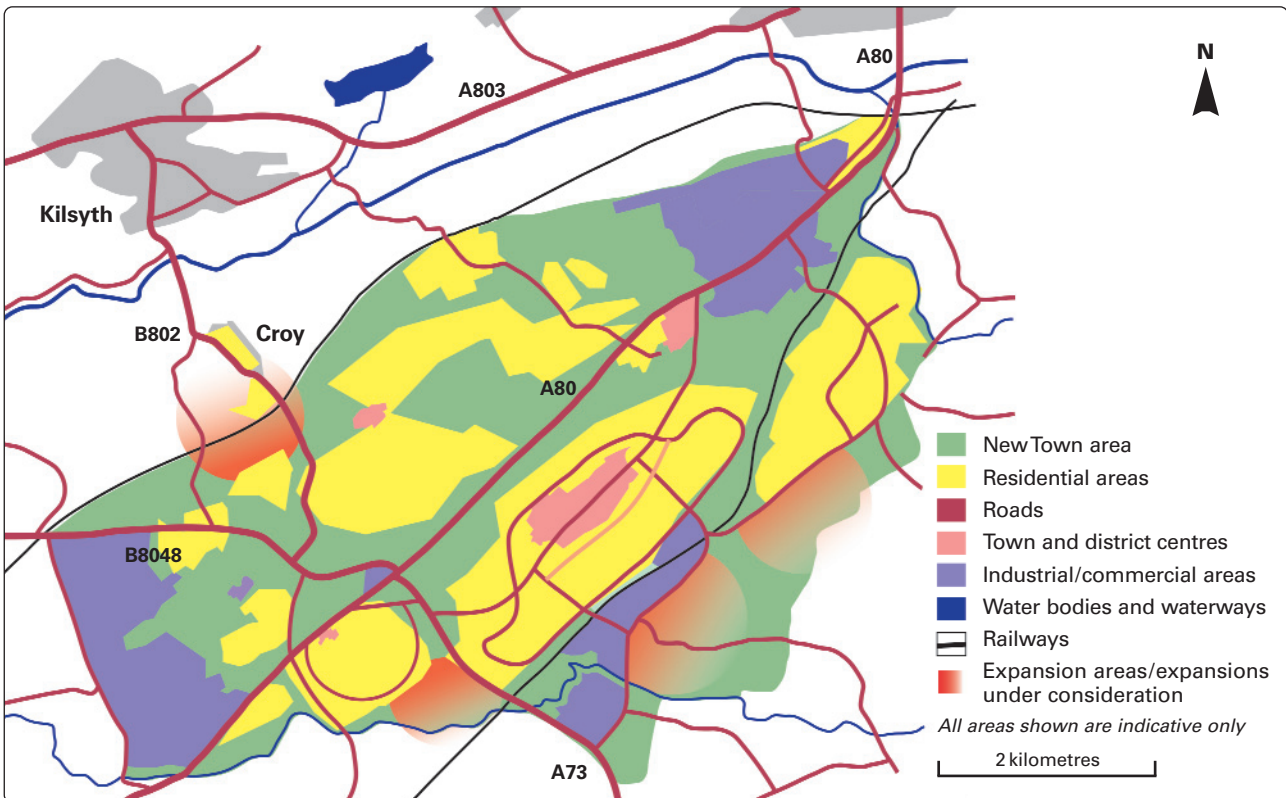
No specific stewardship bodies were set up when the Development Corporation was wound up. Today, housing associations play an important stewardship role, as does the Scottish Wildlife Trust. Over 50% of Cumbernauld town centre is made up of green space, making it one of the greenest towns in Scotland. The Scottish Wildlife Trust runs an initiative called ‘Cumbernauld Living Landscape’, which aims to maximise the benefits of this important asset in improving health, wellbeing and access to nature within the town.⁹¹

How were people involved in Cumbernauld’s development?

From the early days of development there was an active community arts scene in Cumbernauld. Members of the Development Corporation would meet in each other’s houses for talks, record recitals, poetry readings and organised visits to theatres in Glasgow. By 1961 they had formed the Cumbernauld Theatre Group and persuaded the Development Corporation to let them have a block of two ancient farm cottages. In 1973 the Theatre Group produced development proposals for what is now the Cumbernauld

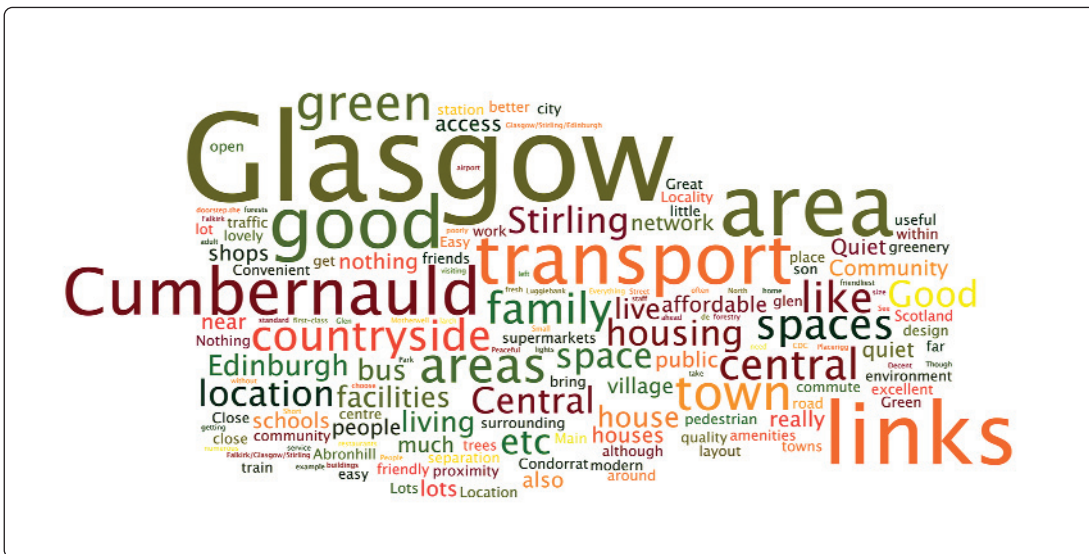
90 Memorandum by North Lanarkshire Council (NT 44) submitted to the Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions Inquiry on New Towns. *The New Towns: Their Problems and Future*. HC 603-I. Nineteenth Report of Session 2001-02. House of Commons Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee. TSO, Jul. 2002, Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence. <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm200102/cmselect/cmtlgr/603/60302.htm>

91 Further details are available from the Cumbernauld Living Landscape webpages, at <http://cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/>



Cumbernauld today, plus allocations and sites under consideration through Local Plan processes (not necessarily with permission)

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates



Theatre. The Cumbernauld Theatre Trust was set up in 1977, but today the theatre is run by the North Lanarkshire Council. There are a large number of active community groups in Cumbernauld today but not enough affordable spaces for them to use.⁹²

What's next for Cumbernauld?

North Lanarkshire Council has ambitious plans for growth in Cumbernauld, focused primarily in two urban extensions to the south of the town. As the Council owns the land at these two sites there are huge opportunities create new

developments which reflect the pride and ambitions of the town, using innovative approaches to land value capture and long-term stewardship. Ongoing town centre regeneration, including provision of a hub building for community activities and start-up businesses, is planned, alongside improvements to former public sector houses sold under the 'Right to Buy' and plans to retrofit homes for low-carbon energy efficiency. Scotland benefits from stronger place-making policy than England, but that does not necessarily translate to better outcomes on the ground. Cumbernauld has important assets (such as its green infrastructure and even the megastructure) that are already important catalysts for regeneration.

92 As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Cumbernauld NewTown, held in Cumbernauld on 10 July 2015

Case study 5:

Craigavon

County Armagh. 'Mark Two' New Town. Designated 26 July 1965



Although housing design outcomes have been mixed, Craigavon has been rated among the most desirable post code areas in the UK

The first of four New Towns in Northern Ireland, Craigavon was conceived in response to the 1962 plan for the Greater Belfast region as a linear regional town that included the existing towns of Lurgan and Portadown, with a new city centre to be built in between. Today, Craigavon is one of the largest urban centres in Northern Ireland, with around 70% of Craigavon Borough's population living within Craigavon urban area (which includes Lurgan, Portadown and Central Craigavon). Its designation as a New Town has been a major influence on the scale and nature of its development and has contributed to the emergence of a strong industrial base. A number of political issues, demographic changes, some resistance to planning, and over-provision of housing have attracted some criticism and have led to undeveloped areas within the central area. With the devolution of planning responsibilities in Northern Ireland that occurred in April 2015, for the first time since the Development Commission was in operation Craigavon now has a single body responsible for all aspects of planning and development (except highways).

How was Craigavon chosen as a location for a New Town?

By the mid-1950s problems of unemployment and housing shortages in Belfast were so acute that the Government decided direct intervention and centralisation of power was

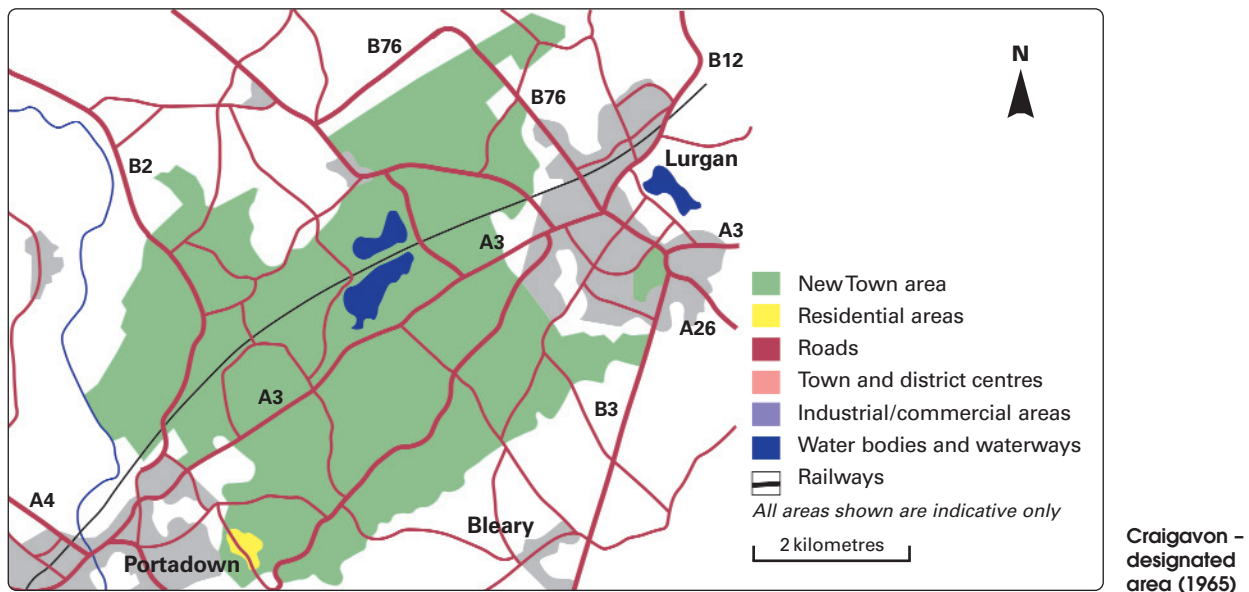
necessary. The Belfast Regional Survey and Plan, 1962 (the Matthew Report) was commissioned to explore the wider future of the Belfast region, bearing in mind the geographic, economic and cultural pattern of Northern Ireland as a whole. The plan included a proposal for the existing towns of Lurgan and Portadown to become the focus of a substantial new 'regional city' for approximately 100,000 people.⁹³ With the passage of the New Towns Act (Northern Ireland) 1965 the Minister of Development was empowered to designate an area as a New Town and to constitute a New Town Commission to carry out both development and municipal functions. Craigavon was designated the same year, with the intention to 'create a modern environment of the highest standards, embracing all aspects of living – urban, village, rural. All this must be developed in accordance with a single unified plan.'⁹⁴

Craigavon, like all the Northern Ireland New Towns, had a very large designated area (105 square miles – approximately 67,000 acres or 27,114 hectares). The aims of the Craigavon Development Commission were: 'firstly, to provide a new major base for industry, attracting British, European and American firms to the Province; secondly, to create a new residential settlement which would alleviate housing and traffic pressures in Belfast; thirdly, to form a service centre that could contribute to the regeneration of the south and west of the Province'.⁹⁵

93 'An overview of New Towns in Northern Ireland', written by Mark Strong, 1995. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

94 House of Commons debate, 17 Apr. 1978. *Hansard*, Vol. 948, para. 216. http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1978/apr/17/craigavon#S5CV0948P0_19780417_HOC_390

95 'An overview of New Towns in Northern Ireland', written by Mark Strong, 1995. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



The legislation gave New Town Commissions and the Ministry of Development powers beyond those which applied in the rest of the UK (a New Town Commission was able to take on municipal functions and operate in designated areas which included surrounding villages, and development was to follow very detailed plans set out by the Commission).⁹⁶

Who built Craigavon?

Craigavon Development Commission was established in July 1965, and within four months the name Craigavon was adopted for the 'New City', a Craigavon Advisory Committee was established, comprising representatives from all local authorities in the designated area, and members of the Craigavon Development Commission were appointed. In June the following year, 6,200 acres of land known as the 'distinguished area', was transferred to the Ministry of Development using compulsory purchase powers.⁹⁷

The New Towns Act (Northern Ireland) 1965 made provision for a New Town Commission to assume municipal functions in the interests of the efficient building and management of a New Town. On 1 April 1967 the Craigavon Development Commission assumed municipal responsibilities for the area of Lurgan Rural District Council, the Council being dissolved and the area becoming from that date Craigavon Urban District.⁹⁸ The Ministry of Development became the planning authority for the Craigavon designated area in July 1965 and was

advised by the Commission's Planning Division on applications and the control of development.

In 1973, Craigavon became the first Northern Ireland New Town Commission to be dissolved. The political and economic turbulence of the 1970s had already seen local government reorganisation, public housing falling under the remit of the newly formed Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and the introduction of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 that empowered the Ministry of Development to undertake comprehensive town centre development schemes (a key activity of the New Town Commissions). At that point, almost all of Craigavon Development Commission's housing, and certain other associated functions, were taken over by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, with effect from 4 December 1972.⁹⁹ In 1978, five years after the Development Commission was wound up, there was still 3,300 acres of undeveloped farmland that had been compulsorily purchased, and local MPs were asking if any of this land would be given back.¹⁰⁰

How was Craigavon New Town financed?

The work of the Northern Ireland New Town Commissions was financed by long-term loans from the Ministry of Finance. The New Town Commissions were also able, with the permission of the Ministry, to borrow temporarily from 'any other person'.¹⁰¹ At designation, it was estimated

96 House of Commons debate, 17 Apr. 1978. *Hansard*, Vol. 948, para. 217.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1978/apr/17/craigavon#S5CV0948P0_19780417_HOC_390

97 *Craigavon New City. Second Report on the Plan*. Craigavon Development Commission, 1967. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

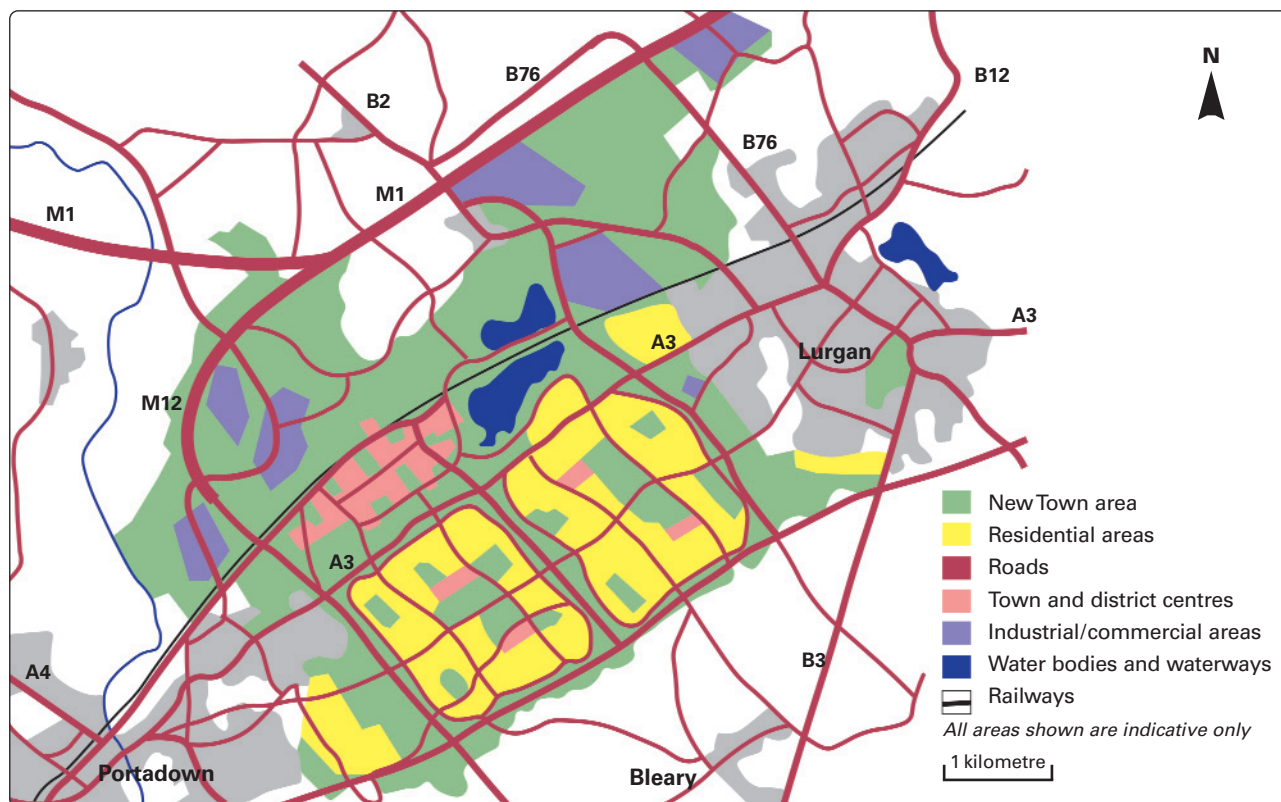
98 *Ibid.*

99 *Eighth Annual Report for the Year Ended 31st March 1973*. Craigavon Development Commission, 1973. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

100 House of Commons debate, 6 Feb. 1978. *Hansard*, Vol. 943, paras 449-450.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1978/feb/06/craigavon#S5CV0943P0_19780206_CWA_402

101 Section 18, 'Borrowing powers of new town commissions', of the New Towns Act (Northern Ireland) 1965. HM Government. HMSO, 1965. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/apni/1965/13/section/18>



Craigavon – the 1967 masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

that the total cost of Craigavon New Town would be £140 million.¹⁰² The first five-year programme of Craigavon Development Commission anticipated expenditure of up to £30 million. When expenditure from other agencies was factored in, the total for the plan period was broadly in line with the overall expenditure estimated.¹⁰³

The final report of the Development Commission, in 1974, recorded advances of £26,860,301. By 1979, the population of the Craigavon area had risen to 57,500, a long way short of the 1967 prediction of 100,000 by the year 1980 – which helps to explain why Craigavon’s finances fell short of forecasts.

Craigavon made a promising start. With state assistance, firms from America, Germany and Britain located in the town, with Goodyear offering 2,000 new jobs. But while 60 new companies arrived between 1960 and 1980, 52 closed in the same period.

The former New Town Commissions are still paying off their loans – £3.8 million has been paid back since 2009. Each year up to around £1.2 million is received by the Ministry of Finance from the former New Town Commissions.¹⁰⁴

Were organisations established to look after Craigavon after the Development Commission was wound up?

Craigavon Development Commission was wound up with the same speed with which it had been established. No specific stewardship bodies were established on wind-up. Today, Craigavon, as with the rest of Northern Ireland, benefits from policy approaches that recognise the role of long-term stewardship in good place-making.

How did people feel about the New Town at Craigavon, and how were they engaged in its development?

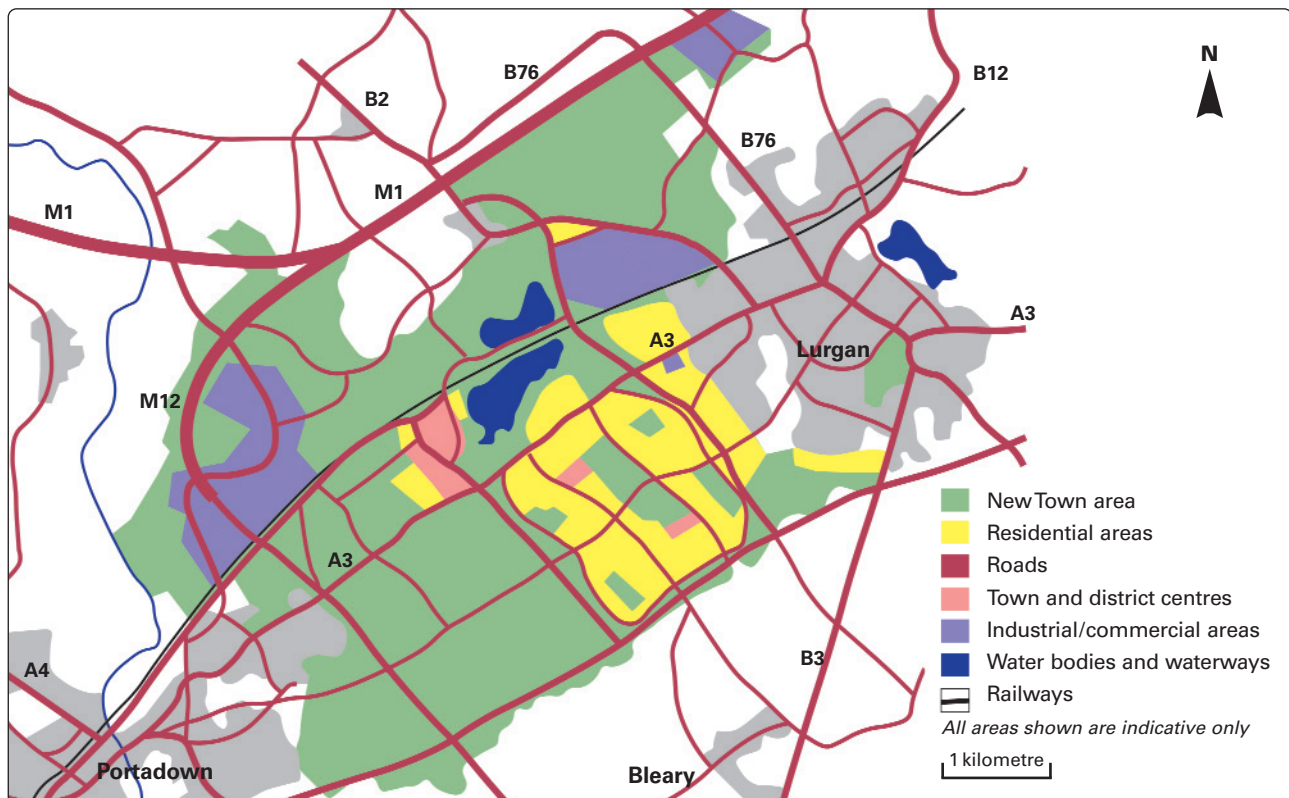
There was great pressure on the New Towns programme in Northern Ireland to deliver at speed. The full force of the legislation was used to assemble land quickly, much to the dismay of local farmers, some of whom

102 House of Commons debate, 17 Apr. 1978. *Hansard*, Vol. 948, para. 216.

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1978/apr/17/craigavon#S5CV0948P0_19780417_HOC_390

103 *Ninth Annual Report for the Six Months Ended 30th September 1973*. Craigavon Development Commission, 1973. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

104 The total outstanding debt of the Northern Ireland New Town Commissions was £13.4 million. This figure compares with a debt figure of £398 million for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive as a whole – see <http://www.dfni.gov.uk/afmd-pi-and-ea>



Craigavon – current built area

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

were furious at the prospect of losing land that had been in their family's ownership for generations. For some, that dismay turned to resentment when parts of that land were subsequently left undeveloped. Among residents today there is a recognition that the New Towns programme at Craigavon produced both 'good' and 'bad' housing design, but the best designed housing has stood the test of time. Despite dereliction in some places, there is a recognition that the designers were trying to implement something visionary, and there remains a sense of civic pride in the town.

Today, Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council is putting great emphasis on community engagement in delivering a positive future for Craigavon, and there are a number of active community groups working on proposals to make the Brownlow area an 'urban village'. Beyond Craigavon there is still a stigma attached to the name of the 'New City'. Even the Northern Ireland Executive's stewardship guidance includes a picture of Craigavon in its 'bad places' chapter.¹⁰⁵ The Council and the area's communities are working hard to address this, with future investment in the town centre and leisure developments designed to attract further private sector investment.

What's next for Craigavon?

Craigavon still feels like a town in three parts – a disconnection that is felt by many of its residents (many of Craigavon's residents recognise themselves as being from Lurgan or Portadown, but not Craigavon). Nevertheless, Craigavon has recently been lauded as being among the most desirable post code areas in the UK.¹⁰⁶ The new local government arrangements in Northern Ireland provide an opportunity for the new Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council to plan more strategically for the future of Craigavon. For example, plans to develop the leisure offer round the lake in Central Craigavon will no doubt encourage further private investment in the town and help to draw Craigavon's three 'parts' together. There is a desire to retrofit the central area to make it more like a traditional town centre. The central area is just one of the elements of Craigavon's impressive green infrastructure network (Craigavon is home to the Northern Ireland branch of the Landscape Institute), which could be an important tool for renewal of the town, helping to improve accessibility and the sense of place. There is an opportunity for the new administration to use its land ownership in the town to promote innovative models of stewardship and land value capture.

¹⁰⁵ *Living Places: An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland*. Paul Hogarth Company, with Gareth Hoskins Architects, CUi & WYG, for Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, 2014.

http://www.planningni.gov.uk/index/policy/supplementary_guidance/guides/livingplaces_-_web.pdf

¹⁰⁶ Craigavon (and separately Lurgan) were identified as two of the most desirable post codes in the UK in March 2015: 'Royal Mail said the study, conducted by the Centre for Economic and Business Research, looked at green spaces, affordable housing and commuting times' – see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32016713>

Case study 6:

Milton Keynes

Buckinghamshire. 'Mark Three' New Town. Designated 23 January 1967



Destination Milton Keynes

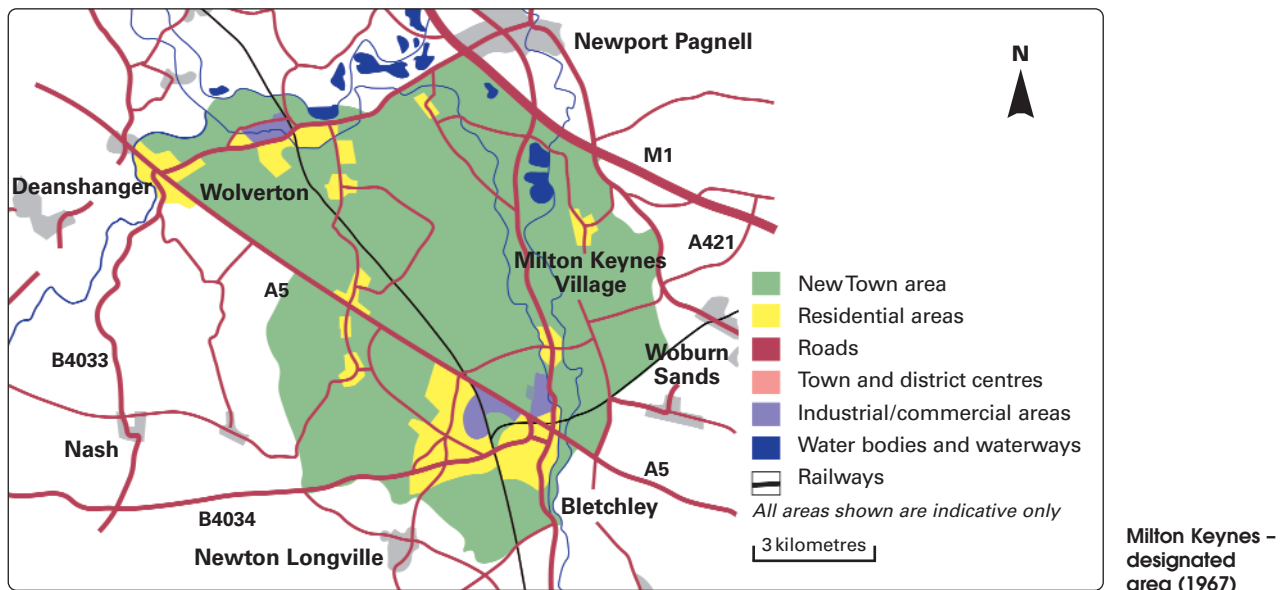
Milton Keynes – the UK's biggest and fastest growing New Town

Since its designation Milton Keynes has been a centre for innovation on matters ranging from recycling and low-carbon housing to community stewardship and the arts.¹⁰⁷ Designated to accommodate overspill from Greater London (the first New Town with this purpose since Bracknell was designated in 1949), Milton Keynes is the UK's largest and fastest growing New Town. Its strategic location has been key to its success in attracting industry and investment. Its iconic grid masterplan and supporting policy provided a framework intended to be flexible enough to accommodate future change and support high social and environmental ambitions. Despite financial setbacks in the 1970s, it has grown to be one of the UK's most successful towns and cities, and is set to double its population through urban extensions.

Why was Milton Keynes chosen as the location for a New Town?

By the early 1960s Buckinghamshire County Council had become concerned about the pressure for development in its southern area and was examining the possibility of promoting a 'North Bucks New Town', with the intention of diverting this pressure to the northern part of the county. Between 1962 and 1964 detailed studies and proposals were made by the County's Chief Architect and Planning Officer, Fred Pooley, culminating in proposals for a high-density monorail city for 250,000 people in the Bletchley-Wolverton area. The proposals were approved by the County Council, but the power and finance necessary to

¹⁰⁷ For example, Milton Keynes was home to the world's first solar house in 1972, and to the first UK door-to-door recycling scheme, from 1989



create such a city were not readily available to the County. Following the government-commissioned South East Study of 1964, which identified Bletchley as one of three possible locations for a New Town, Housing Minister Richard Crossman announced the intention to establish a New Town on the site. The precise location included in the Draft Designation Order issued in 1966 was decided following the Northampton, Bedford and North Bucks Study of 1965. An inquiry was held into the designation of the New Town in July 1966 and the Designation Order was confirmed in January 1967.

An interim report produced in 1969 was used as the basis of a consultation process that aimed to involve all the 40,000 inhabitants of the designated area, as well as official bodies such as the local authorities and statutory undertakings in the area. The proposals for Milton Keynes were amended in light of responses.

Who built Milton Keynes?

'We must try to offer [Milton Keynes residents] an environment as conducive as possible to good health, happiness, stimulation and satisfaction during their youth and working lives, and contentment and care in their old age.'
Lord 'Jock' Campbell, speaking at the first meeting of the Board of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, 15 June 1967¹⁰⁸

Milton Keynes Development Corporation was established in 1967. As with the New Towns that preceded it, the personalities of the Development Corporation team played a fundamental part in its successes and failures. In April 1967 Lord 'Jock' Campbell, 'a humanist, Chairman of the

New Statesman and... high-minded socialist', was appointed as the first Chairman.¹⁰⁹ Among the Minister's first appointments to the Development Corporation Board were four people with connections with North Buckinghamshire, emblematic of a local representation which was exceptional among English New Towns. The early Development Corporation also included representatives from the Greater London Council, but none of the town councillors from Wolverton, one of the main existing settlements.¹¹⁰

'The masterplanning by consultation might well be the special hallmark of the new Milton Keynes.'
Minutes of the first meeting of the Board of Milton Keynes Development Corporation, 15 June 1967¹¹¹

The Development Corporation's priorities were to 'build strong relationships with the local authorities and the Greater London Council, to get the appointment of the masterplanners right and to create a plan based on consultation; and to encourage the local authorities to go on building as fast as possible'.¹¹² Specific appointments and efforts were made to make this a reality and to gain confidence in the Development Corporation among residents, local authorities and the press. Milton Keynes Development Corporation attracted the best young urbanists from around the world to work on delivering the project. Llewelyn-Davies, Weeks, Forestier-Walker and Bor, appointed as masterplanners, set about collecting two years' worth of information on urban form in a study that was 'without precedent' in British town planning.¹¹³ Their iconic grid masterplan became one of the most distinctive of the 20th century and, with its visionary landscaping and capacity to accommodate change, it is one of the Development Corporation's most important legacies.

108 T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, p.37

109 *Ibid.*, p.34

110 *Ibid.*, p.37

111 *Ibid.*

112 *Ibid.*

113 The plans of all the New Towns designated after Milton Keynes were, to save time, commissioned by Whitehall



Caroline Brown/David Lock Associates

In addition to creating jobs and building homes, the Development Corporation planted more than 14 million trees and shrubs

Milton Keynes Development Corporation had the autonomy and powers necessary to deliver at speed – in the 1980s over 2,500 homes per annum were being built by the Corporation. Between 1967 and 1992 the Development Corporation enabled the creation of 83,000 jobs and the construction of 44,000 houses and planted more than 14 million trees and shrubs.¹¹⁴

The Development Corporation put great effort into creating a ‘balanced community’, through Community Development Officers, artists in residence, and annual surveys monitoring the views of new residents on everything from housing design to jobs for ‘housewives’. By the 1970s, the New Towns were attracting criticism for diverting funds from the inner cities, but Milton Keynes Development Corporation fought back hard on this issue (undertaking research which found that fewer than one-fifth of the jobs that moved out of London had ended up in the New Towns, and that only 1,095 had gone to Milton Keynes¹¹⁵). By the late 1970s, the Corporation began to switch its efforts to home ownership and other Conservative policies even before the first Thatcher Government was elected.¹¹⁶ At the beginning of the 1980s, more public than private housing was being built. By the end of the decade, the reverse was true.¹¹⁷

Once Mrs Thatcher’s Government came to power, immediate cuts to the New Town Development Corporations’ budgets were followed by challenges to the role of quangos and the requirement to sell New Town assets to pay off

HM Treasury debts. By 1981, Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine had announced that Milton Keynes Development Corporation would be wound up by the end of the decade. Whitehall’s control over the Corporation’s finances increased, and as inflation also increased all hopes of Milton Keynes following the example of earlier New Towns and becoming profitable was lost.

‘It has been very frustrating watching a group of unelected people spending our money.’
Kevin Wilson, Milton Keynes Labour Party leader, 1990¹¹⁸

How was Milton Keynes financed?

Milton Keynes Development Corporation recognised the importance of attracting employers and was particularly skilled at leveraging in private investment to supplement loans from HM Treasury and at diverting local authority funding streams. The Corporation understood from the outset that the New Town’s location gave it ‘unparalleled advantages’, and spent up to £20 million a year promoting Milton Keynes internationally as Europe’s top destination for doing business. The Development Corporation also took the initiative (and had relative autonomy) to take risks with its investments and ‘do the deals’, even if it risked losing money or reputation. The Corporation occasionally got its ‘wrists slapped’ by Whitehall, but the appetite for taking risks was fundamental to its success.¹¹⁹

114 T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, pp.265-66

115 *Ibid.*, p.183

116 L. Shostak and D. Crewe: ‘Here comes Maggie!’. Essay for Milton Keynes Development Corporation. Cited in T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, p.109

117 T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, p.233

118 *Ibid.*, p.127

119 As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Milton Keynes, held in Milton Keynes on 21 July 2015



Destination Milton Keynes

New housing in Milton Keynes

When the Development Corporations were ordered to sell off their assets, Milton Keynes Development Corporation had assets of £580 million and a debt of £350 million, but many of the assets had not had time to mature to their full value, and construction costs were rising faster than property prices. Meanwhile, high interest rates on the 60-year loans threatened the Corporation's ability to repay debts.¹²⁰ In the end central government wrote off £510 million of Milton Keynes' debts. This would later be more than paid back as a result of sales and development of land in Milton Keynes by English Partnerships and its successor bodies.

More recently, Milton Keynes has pioneered innovative development finance arrangements. For example, in 2007, following the identification of Milton Keynes as a 'growth area', Milton Keynes Council introduced a 'development tariff',¹²¹ raising money to go towards funding the infrastructure and services required to support growth up to 2016. The tariff was effectively an early example of the Community Infrastructure Levy.¹²² In 2012, the Government agreed the transfer of land, assets and responsibilities from the Homes and Communities Agency to Milton Keynes Council in a deal worth £32 million, which gave Milton Keynes control of its own growth agenda and put sole planning powers in the hands of locally-elected representatives for the first time.¹²³

What mechanisms were put in place to look after Milton Keynes' assets after the Development Corporation was wound up?

By the late 1980s Milton Keynes Development Corporation had made plans for the handover of its assets. Some land and buildings were sold to tenants and the rest were packaged with rent-producing industrial and commercial properties to make them self-financing. The main roads (but not their planting) plus all buildings for adult education, welfare and social services went to the County Council. Play areas, parks department depots, open spaces associated with housing, incidental open spaces and local and district recreation facilities went to Milton Keynes Borough Council. Meeting halls and allotments went, where possible, to parish councils.¹²⁴

Milton Keynes' network of parks, green spaces and landscaping is undoubtedly one of its crowning glories, and prior to its wind-up the Development Corporation proposed to the Department of the Environment that a Parks Trust should be created to manage the space for use by voluntary groups. The Parks Trust, formerly known as Milton Keynes Parks Trust, was established to own

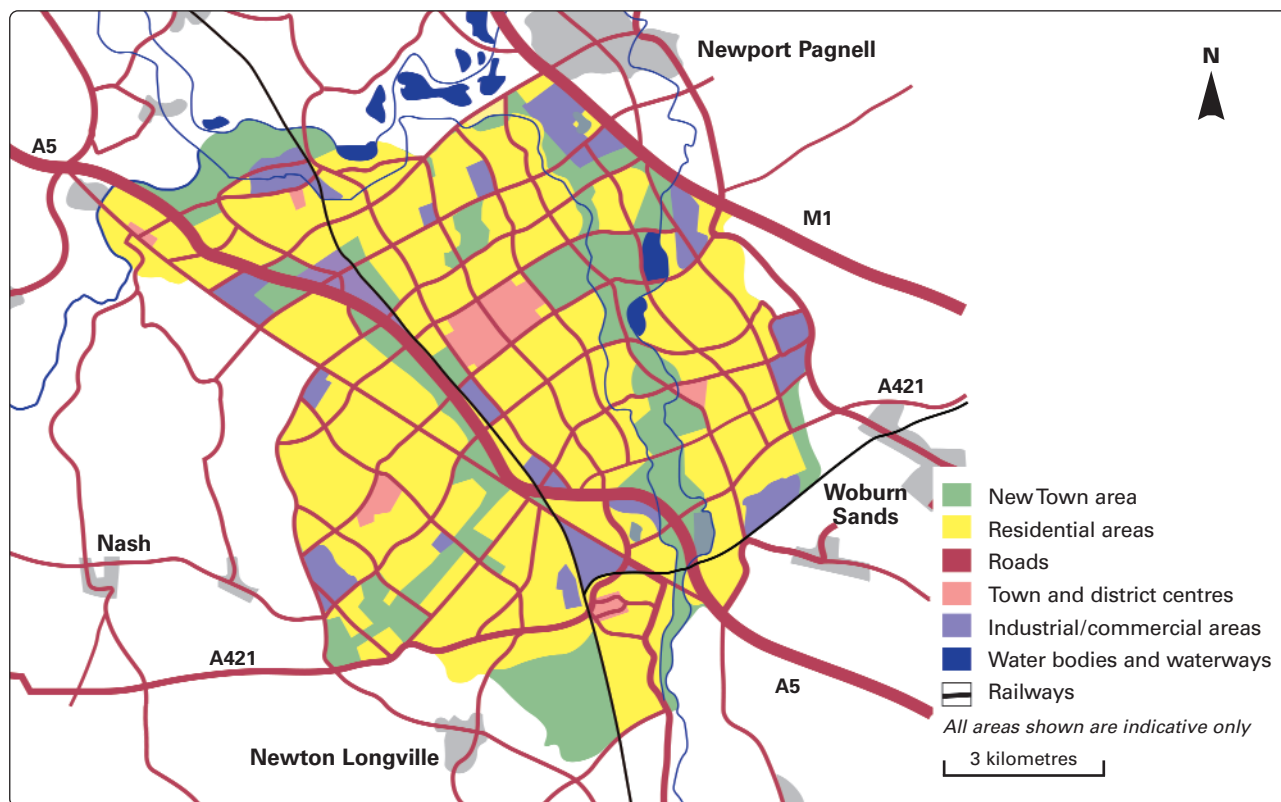
120 T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, p.195

121 A charge per residential unit, or per hectare of employment development, payable by owners of land in the city's Urban Development Area. Further details on the tariff are available from the Milton Keynes Council website, at <http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/milton-keynes-urban-development-area-tariff-supplementary-planning-document>

122 As a result of recent changes to legislation which prevent the pooling of contributions, Milton Keynes Council will not be able to collect tariff receipts for future expansion areas

123 Further information is available from the Milton Keynes Development Partnerships website, at <http://www.mkdevelopmentpartnership.co.uk/about-us/>

124 T. Bendixson and J. Platt: *Milton Keynes: Image and Reality*. Granta, 1992, p.259



Milton Keynes – the 1970 masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

and manage, in perpetuity, the strategic open space in Milton Keynes. It took a 999-year lease on 4,500 acres of open space and was given an endowment of around £20 million, mainly in the form of commercial property in Milton Keynes, with the rental income providing funding.¹²⁵

Today, the Trust manages over 5,000 acres of parkland in Milton Keynes, which includes over 200 pieces of public art and provides space for income-generating activities such as the World Picnic.

The Milton Keynes Community Foundation was also established in the 1980s, on the initiative of Milton Keynes Development Corporation’s Community Development Team. Pioneering the Community Foundation movement in the UK, it was one of many organisations for which the Development Corporation provided premises (for no or peppercorn rent). The Foundation has used property and land endowments from the Council, along with commercial and private philanthropic investments, to grow into a profitable enterprise providing a range of support and funding for the voluntary and community sector in Milton Keynes.¹²⁶

How were the public engaged in the development of Milton Keynes?

The masterplanners’ survey of existing residents in the designated area¹²⁷ was the first of frequent surveys of new and existing residents in the New Town. While there were more of the 3,242 respondents who felt that there would be advantages to building the New Town than there were those feeling that there would be disadvantages, there were notable concerns about the impact on existing transport networks, services and property values (as well as some fairly hostile views on how the new residents would settle in).¹²⁸

Today, among many of its residents there is a strong sense of pride and a willingness to defend Milton Keynes against its critics. Respondents to the online survey conducted for this research cited the green spaces, accessibility, the town centre, the redways (pedestrian and cycle paths) and trees as reasons that they enjoy living in Milton Keynes, along with the quality of the environment – ‘the way in which the town was designed to a standard and not to a budget.’¹²⁹ Some of the poorer estates and poor public transport were cited among the key challenges facing Milton Keynes today.

125 Further information is available from The Parks Trust website, at <http://www.theparkstrust.com/about-us/the-parks-trust-model>

126 Further information is available from the Milton Keynes Community Foundation website, at <http://www.mkcommunityfoundation.co.uk/>

127 *Technical Supplement No. 2: Household Survey. The Plan for Milton Keynes.* Milton Keynes Development Corporation, 1970, p.17.

128 For a detailed analysis of the social history of Milton Keynes, see M. Clapson: *A Social History of Milton Keynes: Middle England/Edge City.* Routledge, 2004

129 Respondent to the T CPA online survey of Milton Keynes residents, July 2015

Case study 7:

Warrington

Cheshire. 'Mark Three' New Town. Designated 26 April 1968

Initially designated with twin aims of accommodating Manchester overspill and revitalising industrial areas, Warrington's purpose soon became to provide a natural growth point for North West England. Warrington was one of three 'partnership New Towns'¹³⁰ identified in the 1960s (alongside Peterborough and Northampton). Today, Warrington is home to major national and international companies, attracting workers from across the region. Following a period of constrained growth, the town is undertaking an ambitious economic growth and regeneration programme which seeks to renew the town centre and harness the town's natural locational advantages in the pursuit of major economic growth. A public-private sector partnership has been established to drive growth forward.

Why was Warrington chosen as the location for a New Town?

By the mid-1950s Manchester City Council (which was facing some of the worst slum problems in the country) realised it would not be possible to accommodate its housing needs within the city's boundaries, and in response explored, with Lancashire County Council, the options for a new community in the North West, with a succession of local MPs promoting sites in the area. In 1964 a derelict Royal Ordnance factory at Risley was considered as a possible site after being promoted by Lancashire County Council,¹³¹ but it was considered to be too small. By 1965 the housing needs were so pressing that the Minister announced that in fact the Royal Ordnance factory at Risley would be developed as part of a comprehensive New Town plan for the whole Warrington area.¹³² Consultants were appointed in 1965 to find a suitable site for a New Town in the Warrington/Risley area, and then to prepare a draft masterplan. Warrington was formally designated three years later.

Before making a Designation Order the Minister consulted the authorities considered to have an interest in the proposal, along with a number of regional commercial and environmental boards and authorities. Lancashire County Council and Warrington Borough Council supported the proposal, and Cheshire County Council raised no objection once concerns about the co-ordination of development in Runcorn, Warrington and Widnes and a number of other stipulations had been addressed by the Minister. Manchester City Council and St Helens Borough Council raised no objections, and there was support from some other urban district councils. Where authorities objected, it was generally due to concerns related to the impact on infrastructure, air pollution and existing services and the loss of Green Belt and agricultural land. Several parish councils argued that they should have representation on the board of the New Town Development Corporation.

Who built Warrington New Town?

The inaugural meeting of Warrington Development Corporation took place on 5 June 1969. The Development Corporation (many of whose staff had come from Cumbernauld Development Corporation) was aware that it was in the beneficial position of being able to draw on the services, industrial base, and historical and architectural interest of the existing town, and it aimed 'with the collaboration of the local authorities and of private enterprise, [to] construct a New Town of dignity, efficiency and purpose, and, wherever possible, of brightness, novelty and elegance'.¹³³

In addition to establishing a strong partnership with Warrington County Borough, the Development Corporation recognised from the outset that it was vital to establish close communication with all the local authorities involved, and formed a Joint Liaison Committee of representatives of the Development Corporation and local councils.¹³⁴

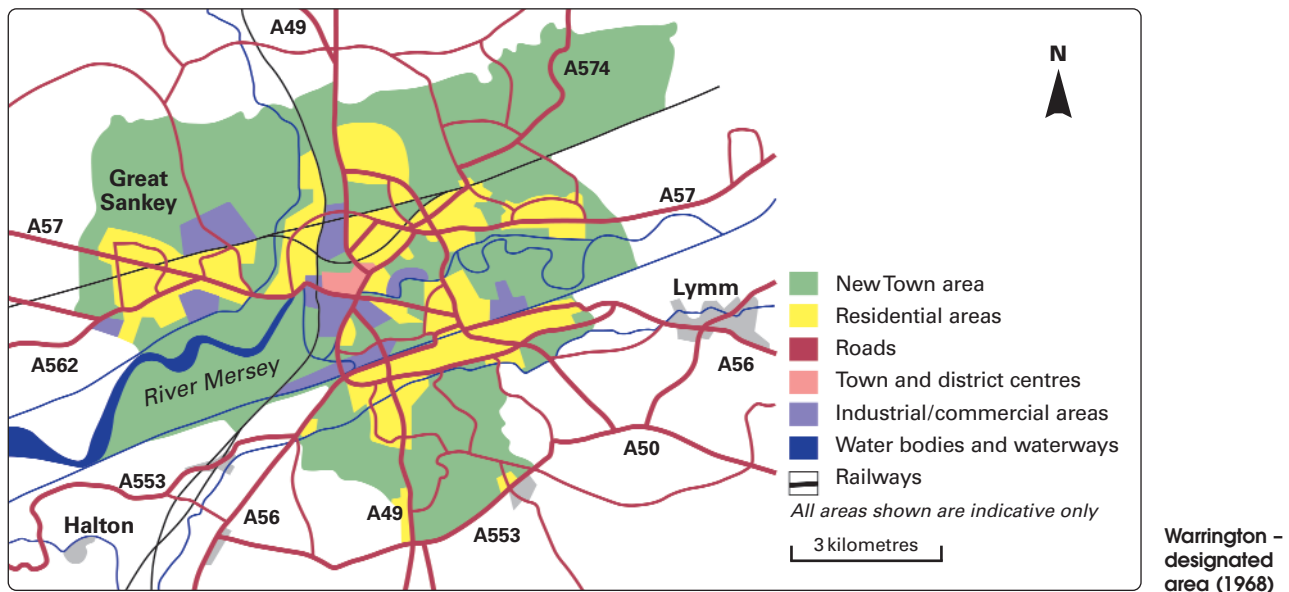
130 Partnership New Towns were places where there was already a significant existing urban area that would effectively be expanded using the New Towns legislation, and where the existing local authorities would have a much bigger role in the planning and initiation of development than in the non-partnership New Towns

131 *The Draft Warrington New Town (Designation) Order 1965*. Statement by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, 24 Feb. 1965. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html> (see also the House of Commons debate on 24 Feb. 1965. <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1965/feb/24/housing-north-west-region>)

132 *Ibid.*

133 *Annual Report 1990*. Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation, 1990. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

134 *Annual Report 1990*. Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation, 1990, Section 20. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



Despite such close working relationships there were fluctuations in the relations between the Development Corporation and Warrington County Borough Council. They could not agree on some points, which is one of the reasons (along with the premature wind-up of the Development Corporation) why the highways system was never fully completed.¹³⁵

Although Runcorn and Warrington New Towns had different objectives and development needs, Warrington Development Corporation maintained a close relationship with Runcorn Development Corporation (established a few years earlier in 1964), and in 1981 the two Corporations were amalgamated (partly because of the imminent wind-up of the New Towns programme), and thereafter operations were led from Warrington.

The Development Corporation was wound up in 1989, at which point its housing assets were transferred to four housing associations, while Cheshire County Council took responsibility for many of the community facilities and a further package of assets was transferred to what was by then Warrington Borough Council. The Council retained many areas of land that in other New Towns might have been sold off, and it still owns large areas of land which appeared to have been overlooked in the transfer.

How was Warrington financed?

From the outset Warrington Development Corporation realised that the New Town had a very advantageous strategic location on the M6, offering easy access to the whole of the North West and beyond, and it used this to attract new employers and investors. The Development

Corporation became a 'marketing machine', using the town's location as its 'unique selling point' and focusing on distribution rather than a traditional manufacturing base. Offering large sites enabled the Development Corporation to compete on a European scale.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Development Corporation built the bulk of the 15,000 rented homes, with a shift to private sector delivery in the 1980s.¹³⁶ In its last years, the Development Corporation became a net contributor to rather than a consumer of public funds. The final report of the combined Development Corporation makes clear its pride in handing over the New Towns' assets in a good financial position (it transferred £168.8 million of assets to the Commission for the New Towns when it was wound up).¹³⁷ The Homes and Communities Agency still owns a significant amount of land in the town.

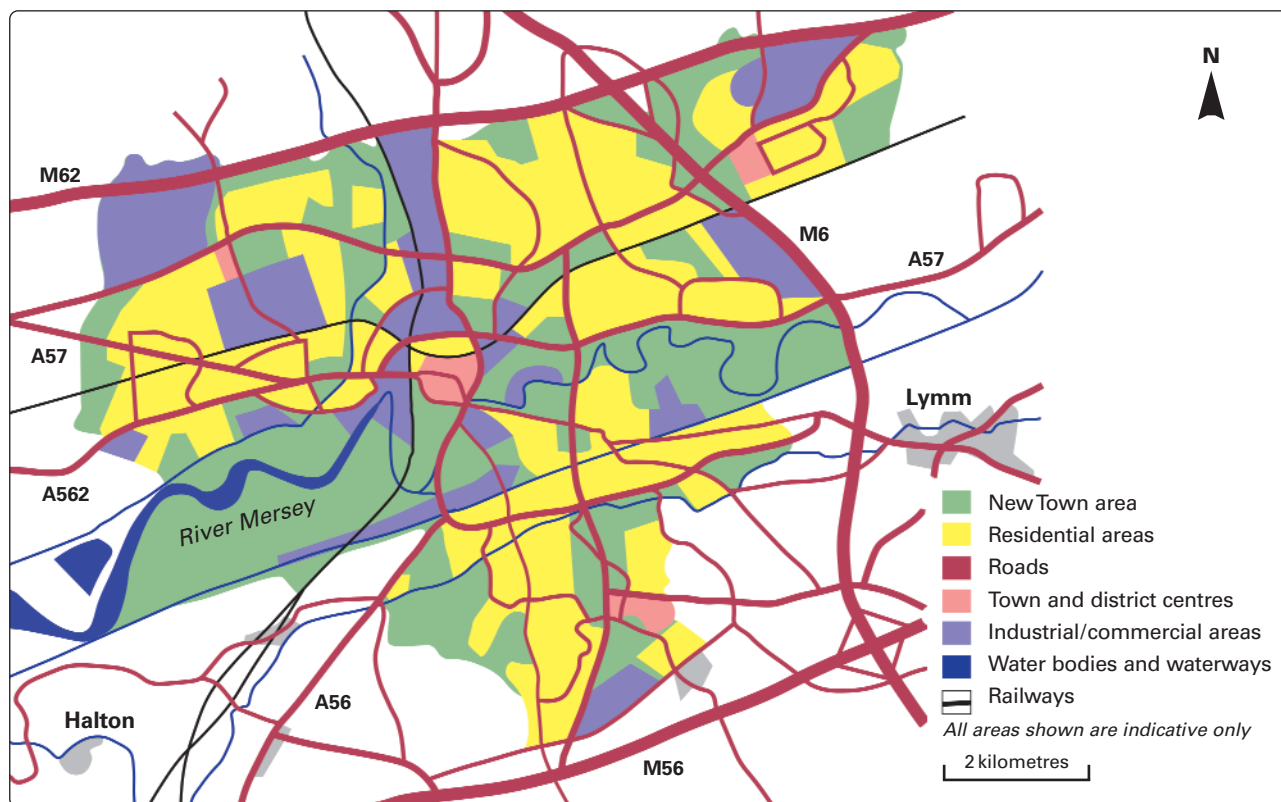
The Development Corporation created an investment culture in Warrington that endures to this day. A combination of providing the right sites, promoting and marketing the New Town as a location for investment and Warrington's resulting profile in the market led to investment in the town that became self-perpetuating. The New Town's very successful business parks (Birchwood and Walston Grange) have contributed to that success. The private sector has been able to capitalise on the Development Corporation's early investments in land, infrastructure and environmental improvements, and the town's lasting close relationship with the private sector has perhaps contributed to its relative resilience in times of recession.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Warrington New Town, held in Warrington on 12 June 2015

¹³⁶ *Annual Report 1989*. Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation, 1989, 'Financial situation' Section. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

¹³⁷ *Annual Report 1990*. Warrington and Runcorn Development Corporation, 1990, Section 20. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>

¹³⁸ As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Warrington New Town, held in Warrington on 12 June 2015



Warrington – the 1972 masterplan

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates

Long-term stewardship in Warrington

No specific stewardship bodies were set up to manage community assets when the Development Corporation was wound up. Some of the green space and green infrastructure was transferred to the Woodland Trust. Today, Warrington Borough Council is considering options for setting up a stewardship body for the town’s extensive green infrastructure. In 1991, two years after the Development Corporation was wound up Warrington 2000+ was set up with part of its remit being to continue the activities of the Development Corporation’s Economic Development Unit. Today, the Council is involved in a number of joint ventures, including Warrington & Co., which oversees the implementation of the Warrington regeneration framework and continues the work of Warrington 2000+.

Engaging the public in Warrington’s development

The Development Corporation recognised that it was essential to engage local people in development proposals from the outset. With a significant existing population who had been anticipating the development for several years,

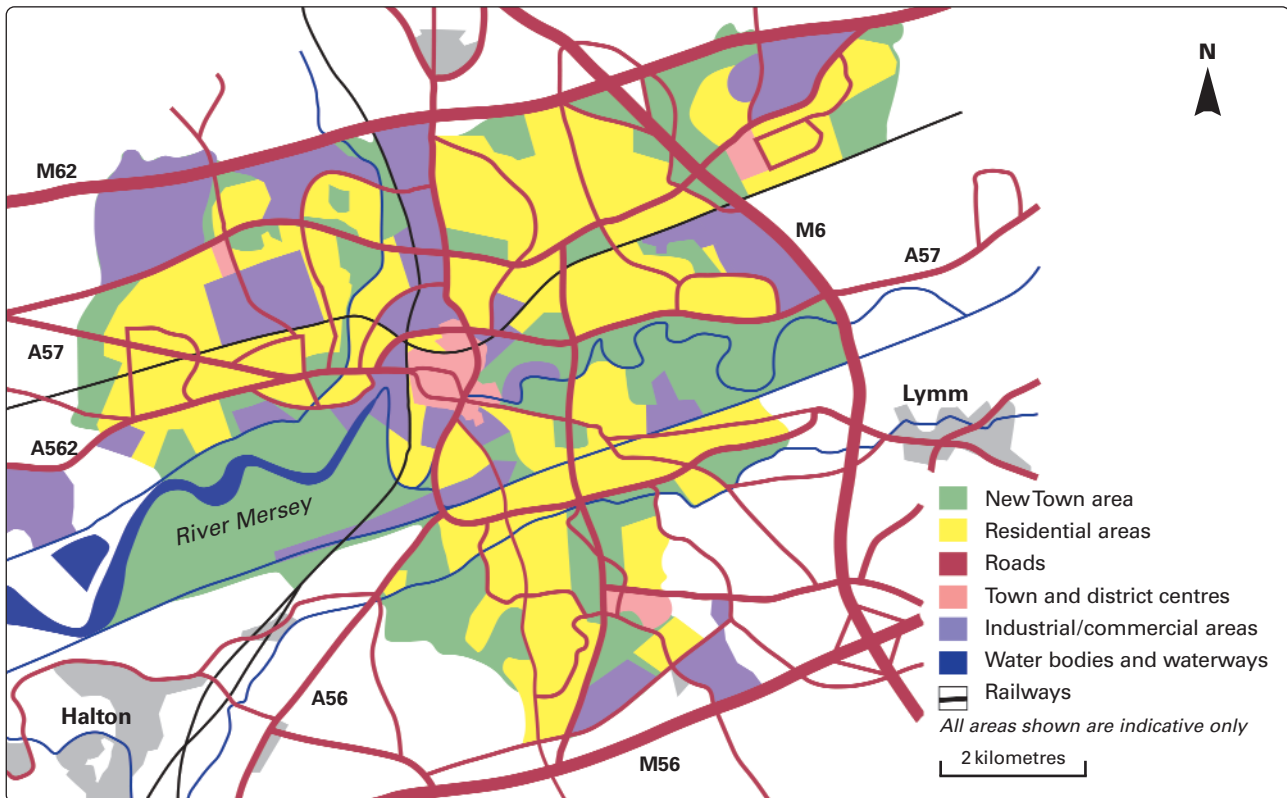
this was particularly important. Public exhibitions were held in the town and adjoining rural areas, and supplements were produced for the local newspaper. The Development Corporation claimed that one in four people aged over 10 years in the designated area visited a meeting or exhibition about the project.¹³⁹

Press reports from the time of designation tell a familiar story of anger among parish councils and community groups, expressing concerns over issues ranging from loss of farmland to a view that the younger generation of prospective residents had not been properly engaged.¹⁴⁰ Social development was an important part of the Development Corporation’s remit, and it was a particular challenge to co-ordinate social services over five local authorities. A series of community initiatives and groups were established, social and green infrastructure provision was developed, and grants were given to community initiatives. In the run-in to wind-up, the Development Corporation’s efforts on post-wind-up social development focused on Runcorn as the place most in need.

Today, Warrington has invested in a cultural quarter and new arts venues, but, unlike other New Towns, this is not a particularly strong legacy of the Development Corporation. Respondents to research study survey cited good access to Manchester, Liverpool and the Lakes, the amount of green space and parks and a ‘friendly’ people as things they like best about living in Warrington.

139 As noted at the TCPA Roundtable on Lessons from Warrington NewTown, held in Warrington on 12 June 2015

140 ‘Protest in flowers – and a song’; and ‘NewTown: ‘Rank bad planning’, Inquiry told’. *The Guardian*, 15 Sept. 1967. In *The New Towns Record*. Planning Exchange. Idox Information Service. <http://www.idoxgroup.com/knowledge-services/idox-information-service/the-new-towns-record.html>



Warrington – current built area

Based on maps from the *New Towns Record*, with additions and updates



Warrington Borough Council

Warrington's pro-growth' culture is a clear legacy of the Development Corporation

New Town legacy and Warrington's future

Warrington now has a population of 171,800 and is among the fastest growing towns and cities in the UK. It is currently one of the key centres for investment in the North West, playing an important sub-regional role as the 'cog' that helps Manchester and Liverpool to work together. Warrington Borough Council is clear that the 'pro-growth' culture in the town is a result of the Development Corporation's actions. Over 8,000 new homes are planned for the town centre in the next ten years as part of the 'Warrington New City' initiative.

The Council has a positive relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency over its large landholdings in the town. There is an opportunity for the Council and the Homes and Communities Agency to use municipal self-finance mechanisms and recycling of land assets in these areas to share development profits for the benefit of the town. Challenges – and negative legacies of the Development Corporation – include the simultaneously ageing estates and street furniture and the still incomplete highway network. Warrington is taking a positive approach to growth, and its strong relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency, combined with its strong economic base, provides opportunities to continue to innovate.

8

Next steps

The Garden Cities movement and the New Towns programme that followed it are now more relevant to contemporary issues than ever. Both initiatives provide a wealth of important lessons for all those involved in the delivery of new communities today. New Garden Cities can be places that provide not only the homes and jobs people need, but also the opportunity for people to live healthy and fulfilling lives, and for the nation to increase its resilience to climate change. Importantly, Garden Cities are underpinned by a financial model and governance structure that can provide the ongoing revenue to create and maintain places that people will still be proud to call their home in 100 years' time and that can enable people to be involved in how their neighbourhood is run.

The need for such places is clearly a UK-wide issue. While both Wales and Northern Ireland face different challenges when considering strategic growth, both have recently undergone administrative changes that provide an opportunity for local authorities to take control of planning for growth in their areas. In Scotland the role of new communities has already been mooted. The project that has resulted in this report is part of an ongoing TCPA campaign in support of a new generation of Garden Cities, and the Association will continue to engage with all four nations in the debate on mechanisms to deliver a new generation of Garden Cities.

The project has highlighted not just the relevance of Garden City and New Town experience to new place-making today, but also the need to consider the specific regeneration needs of our existing New Towns. There is an opportunity for local and national government to use their

existing landholdings in these places to provide the finance and space for innovative approaches to renewal.

This report has highlighted some important lessons from the UK's Garden Cities and New Towns, but has also raised a number of questions for further consideration. For example, how can we best balance the need for compensation for landowners with the need for good place-making? And what exact form should government's 'enabling' role take? The TCPA's campaign for a new generation of Garden Cities will use the lessons from this research to inform a programme of work addressing in detail questions such as these – questions which are crucial to enabling the delivery of new Garden Cities. This programme includes the following forthcoming publications:

- A series of 'Practical Guides' on delivering new Garden Cities and places which aspire to implement the Garden City principles. The guides will consider a range of delivery issues – from finance to masterplanning – and will be published shortly.
- A 'Garden Cities Bill', updating the New Towns legislation. This will be published by the TCPA in the winter of 2015/2016.

In addition, the TCPA is undertaking a UK-wide series of seminars for officers and elected members on applying the Garden City principles to large-scale development.

The TCPA has already produced a suite of guidance, research and briefings on a wide range of aspects of how to make new Garden Cities a reality. These publications are available on the TCPA's website, at

<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities.html>

Useful resources on Garden Cities and New Towns from the TCPA

The TCPA has produced a number of documents as part of its a re-invigorated campaign in support of a new generation of beautiful, inclusive and sustainable Garden Cities and Suburbs. The suite of documents listed below set out the practical actions needed to make 21st century Garden Cities and Suburbs a reality and provide detail and case studies on a wide range of key issues, including planning, investment, land assembly, delivery, and long-term stewardship.

- ***New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow. Stage 1: An Introduction to the UK's New Towns and Garden Cities*** December 2014
http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Garden_Cities_/TCPA_NTGC_Study_Stage_1_Report_14_12_19.pdf
- ***Five-Minute Fact Sheets. A Supplement to New Towns and Garden Cities – Lessons for Tomorrow*** December 2014
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities.html>
- ***Garden Cities Myth-Buster: A Short Guide to Myths and Truths about Creating New Garden Cities*** September 2014
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities-myth-buster.html>
- ***The Art of Building a Garden City – Garden City Standards for the 21st Century*** July 2014
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/garden-cities-the-art-of-building-a-garden-city-garden-city-standards-for-the-21st-century-241.html>
- ***New Towns Act 2015?*** February 2014
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/new-towns-act-2015.html>
- ***Built Today, Treasured Tomorrow – A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship*** January 2014
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/built-today-treasured-tomorrow.html>
- ***How Good Can It Be? A Guide to Building Better Places*** November 2013
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/gc-community-guide.html>
- ***Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today: A Guide for Councils*** March 2013
<http://www.tcpa.org.uk/pages/creating-garden-cities-and-suburbs-today-a-guide-for-councils.html>



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