

case study 4

East Hampshire District Council, Whitehill & Bordon – taking a strong lead in holistic development

Innovation topic: Long-term leadership in integrated new community development

Summary

- Strong leadership from East Hampshire District Council has enabled a wide range of partners to collaborate for many years with consistent, shared objectives for the major regeneration scheme of Whitehill & Bordon.
- The philosophy underpinning the regeneration of Whitehill & Bordon is to maximise land values by building infrastructure at the same time as new housing.
- The management model for the development project has been designed to ensure that the town's regeneration is delivered effectively and efficiently, with a three-level structure of a governance board, an implementation and delivery board, and a consultative tier.
- Whitehill & Bordon has secured significant investment funding, including £16million from the Homes and Communities Agency. In addition, the development is one of the top investment priorities for the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- A major project is under way to bring high-profile employers to the town and offer opportunities for start-ups and growing businesses.
- The development partners have worked with other agencies to secure NHS England Healthy New Town status.

'By the end of 2019, close partnership working, combined with clear vision and commitment, will deliver the 'community of the future' to the current and future residents of Whitehill & Bordon and set the standard for others to follow.'

Councillor Ferris Cowper, Leader of East Hampshire District Council

Introduction

The regeneration scheme at Whitehill & Bordon in East Hampshire, well established for many years on the national government radar, is progressing well, and the first homes of the development are now available to buy. The regeneration project based on the former army barracks in the town is committed to delivering, in total, 3,350 homes and 5,500 new jobs, as well as a large investment in supporting infrastructure.

The multi-agency nature of a programme of such scale has required strong collaborative working and commitment from all partners to the project ethos. The partners in the regeneration project are East Hampshire District Council, the Homes and Communities Agency, Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, Hampshire County Council, the Defence

Infrastructure Organisation, the Whitehill & Bordon Regeneration Company, David Wilson Homes, and Radian Group. It is intended that the developers and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation will benefit from the increase in the value of the scheme arising from the holistic approach taken to building infrastructure as well as homes.

In 2016, the northern section of a £24 million relief road was opened, funded by the Homes and Communities Agency and Enterprise M3 and delivered by Hampshire County Council. The first housing development of 100 homes was also completed, together with employment locations for 100 jobs. Another 500 homes will follow soon. Funding of more than £20 million has been secured to build a primary and a secondary school by 2019-2020, and capital funds to develop new leisure facilities have also been agreed.



Councillor Ferris Cowper, Brandon Lewis MP and Damian Hinds MP at the Quebec Park development in Whitehill & Bordon

Housing and planning context

The town was designated in 2009 as a potential eco-town by the Department for Communities and Local Government. In 2012 the revised Whitehill & Bordon Framework Masterplan was adopted, setting out the overall framework for the scheme, based on extensive community consultation. The East Hampshire District Local Plan Joint Core Strategy adopted in 2014 sets out a strategic housing allocation at Whitehill & Bordon and outlines the objectives and design principles for the development.

How is it innovative?

Whitehill & Bordon demonstrates the benefits of a local authority taking a strong lead, collaborating with delivery partners, and taking a holistic approach to a development project. East Hampshire District Council created a clear vision for the whole town early on in the process, focused on the masterplan. A strong lead from the Council has been required to take forward the development, especially given the various land-ownerships of the site overall.

The development partners collaborated with other agencies to achieve NHS England Healthy

New Town status²⁵ for Whitehill & Borden, one of only ten areas in the country to be selected. The main ethos of the Healthy New Town bid, which was led by East Hampshire District Council, was to create a healthy environment for the town, with a state-of-the-art health campus in the centre of the town and services co-located, integrated and built around patients' needs. The concept has been extended to incorporate a substantial care home and a dementia unit, drawing inspiration from examples in the Netherlands.

Other plans under the Healthy New Town umbrella include a new cycle route which will ring the town, a large attractive green space, which will be the second largest suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) in the country, and a commitment to public transport and road design that makes it easier to walk and cycle round the town and the integrated health campus. The Council's intention is that healthy eating will be encouraged and fast-food outlets will not be located close to schools.

Underpinning the strong leadership from the Council are solid and effective governance and project management structures. The first step in the project was to design the management

Notes

25 See the NHS England Healthy New Towns webpages, at <https://www.england.nhs.uk/ourwork/innovation/healthy-new-towns/>

model for the project, involving streamlining the membership from approximately 30 people to a more focused group, to ensure that the town's regeneration is delivered effectively and efficiently. A three-level structure was put in place, overseen by a strategy board comprising a small number of senior personnel from key partners – the councils, the landowner and the developers – and chaired by East Hampshire District Council. Operating beneath the strategy board is the delivery and implementation board, membership of which is drawn from the same organisations, but from operational executives charged with making things happen on the ground. Importantly, there is also a 'consultative tier' comprising members of the community (either as standing members or those called upon as and when needed), which works to ensure that the public has an efficient and direct line to policy-makers on all aspects of the scheme. It is expected that this body will lead to the establishment of a community development trust that will enable local people to take control of their facilities.

The Council's plan is for the highest standards of environmental building techniques to be deployed, along with plans for universal high-speed broadband, state-of-the-art public transportation, postgraduate training and education facilities, and 'intelligent' systems for homes, businesses and health care locations, all located in an area of the highest standards of

environmental protection in Europe. The LEP has provided £4 million for the development of a construction skills centre to train residents so that they can work directly on the regeneration of the town. A further £4 million has been provided by the LEP to deliver a business and enterprise centre providing employment space and targeted support for small and new start-up businesses.

Lessons

The Council believes that the support of all partners has been a crucial success factor for the project. Landowners, developers and all public and private sector agencies have been working together to bring about a pioneering new development that is about more than just housebuilding, aimed at bringing into being a high-quality community for existing and new residents.

The development of Whitehill & Bordon has shown the importance of a clear and transparent governance structure to facilitate the phased, co-ordinated release of large amounts of public sector land. The development has required investment of a significant amount of time to develop relationships that will help to overcome the challenges that have arisen, and the strategy board has been key in facilitating relationship-building.

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