

# New Garden Cities Alliance

January 2016 Issue 1



## About the NGCA

We are an alliance of organisations aiming to support new, genuine Garden Cities that Britain can be proud of.

## New Garden Cities Alliance Vision Goals and Activities

The vision of the New Garden Cities Alliance is to create an accreditation process for garden cities so that the name 'garden city' isn't a buzz word or a marketing term, but has both architectural design and social value, so accredited garden city status is a guarantee of a good place in which people can live and work. Naturally we are inspired by the work of early pioneer Ebenezer Howard, but our work is an interpretation of garden city

principles fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Some people have described what we are doing as being to form a kitemark, others see it as being like the 'Appellation Controlée' scheme for wine. Both views are correct: our aim is that any settlement using the term 'garden city\town\suburb' should only do so when it is the genuine article. Our task is to define what the 'genuine article' is and see if it can be assessed.

This is not an academic exercise, but one rooted in the realities of today's world, so whilst we may wish to challenge existing paradigms and structures, we will begin by successfully working within them, and challenge only when absolutely necessary. Our goal is to develop an accreditation system that has broad support from institutions, planners, developers and communities, and is a system that is pragmatic and principled, and that will work.

### Inside this issue

1. **Packed House of Lords Roundtable mandates garden city accreditation**
2. **BSi – Sustainable Development**
3. **Our Committees**



## The Roundtable

In March 2015 the New Garden Cities Alliance held a Round-table meeting at the House of Lords to discuss the prospects of producing an accreditation system for garden cities.

Lord Glasman welcomed a packed room of architects, planners, community groups and institutions. Attendees included the 2014 Wolfson prize winners and shortlisted entrants: Urbed, Shelter, Barton Willmore, Golding Homes and Wei Yang & Partners. Also in attendance were members from professional practices and institutions including the TCPA, RTPI, Landscape Institute, Community Land Trusts, Co operative movement, RICS, CABI and others

Lord Glasman announced that he considered the garden city agenda to be bigger than any single political party and the goal is to build on the cross party consensus that is already forming.



The key question debated was “do we think that the term “garden cities” should mean something definite and if so how can we make that happen?”

A wide-ranging discussion followed on both the garden city principles and the need for democratic structures. The debate considered both how to get a garden city designated and how to run it.

Chairman Patricia Nevins outlined the next steps, which were to establish three working parties to look at the areas of ‘Principles and evolution’, ‘Accreditation’ and ‘Operations’ of the Alliance.

There was general agreement to

this proposed course of action and on a show of hands it was overwhelmingly endorsed. The Chairman encouraged those present for any reservations, dissensions or adverse comment and none were raised. The meeting agreed that the Working Groups were therefore fully mandated to bring their proposals to the next meeting of the Alliance.

Photos: Roundtable meeting at the House of Lords, March 2015.



## About the NGCA

We are an alliance of organisations,  
- both commercial and not-for-profit - as well as individuals, and we are dedicated to promote the formation of new, genuine Garden Cities. These could also be retrofitted within existing urban areas.

Our aim is to work in partnership with existing bodies to establish standards for Garden Cities that Britain can be proud of. Also we aim to find and establish exemplars for an environmentally sustainable society that promotes the wellbeing of all citizens.

**Those are our goals. This year we have made strong progress. Our meeting at the House of Lords effectively gave us a mandate to proceed. Since then we have worked on lobbying and building up our network.**



Wandsbek Gartenstadt, a Garden Suburb in Hamburg Germany, Philip Ross visited in Summer 2015.

## News Roundup

**Progressive cities...** a symposium in Seoul discussed the idea of Progress Cities and there was considerable interest in the garden city model and the work the Alliance has done, not least from the Mayor of Seoul.

**Barratt Developments** has published *Places for all Ages: Delivering the future Garden Village*. Oct 2015. The [report](#) outlines results of a research project done by Barratts JRF and other partners.

**Health focused Garden Cities....** Should garden cities have a particular focus?

For example, we could look at the

Garden City with a focus on health and care.

Is this a way forward? We will put this on our agenda for discussion in 2016.

**Connectivity...** We are looking forward to work to be published in this area by Connected Cities.

**Bicester...** We were pleased to address a public meeting organised by the CPRE in Bicester on what is in our vision of a garden city.

**TCPA [conference](#)** on re-creating social town planning is on **19 January 2016**.



### More from Philip Ross ...

"As an IT person I have applied analysis skills to the problem so that we can structure and manage the ideas that we have collected, which you can read more about below. Our goals now are to put this out for broader consultation.

Internationally there is talk about creating 'progress cities' and the need for citizen participation in progress cities.

We have a few technology challenges and are seeking the best interactive models.

We are also seeking now to engage the finance community and housing developers.

We have a place on the BSi sustainable development committee and will seek to embed strong garden city principles into it. "



### BSi – Sustainable Development

Following the development of our initial model for the principles of a garden city, members of the alliance brokered an introduction to the British Standards Institute. We presented our goals and our draft model for a garden city accreditation. There was considerable interest in our work around social, economic and ecological sustainability. We have subsequently been invited to join their committee that is establishing a standard for Sustainable Development - SDS/001/04.

Members who are interested in this area of work can contact us for details.

### Accreditation – what kind of system to use?

Our aim is for an accreditation system that will be of primary use to community leaders, to communities themselves and to the developers that will plan and build places. Firstly we see it as being taken up by local leaders who need to build new settlements (also in existing communities) and seek a vision they can proffer to their communities. Secondly, to be used by the people in those communities who need a vision of the garden city, and accreditation that they can see is based on defined principles, rather than taking things on trust from their local leaders or the developers. Thirdly by developers, who – if it will help with the development of such communities – can sign up because they know that they could call their new developments 'garden cities/towns' or 'garden suburbs' with confidence. There is value in an accreditation scheme for all these three categories of key stakeholders in the development of a new community.

**2016 will be a defining year for the garden city movement and I hope we can continue to work for the common good.**

## Our Committees

At the House of Lords meeting in March it was agreed to establish three committees. One for defining the principles, one for defining an accreditation process and one for operations covering how the alliance should be run and financed.

### Principles Committee

We have met twice. The first time was to endorse an approach to create a Garden City / Town / Suburb / Village definition. The committee proposed to consider three aspects. The first is to form a vision for a garden city that is then based on a set of principles. Each principle is supported by methods that show how it can be achieved.

This process needs to be open-source and to be easily usable. An IT model was created using Access, which has allowed us to form an XML file (an open source standard). A style sheet was then created for this file, which has effectively turned it into a webpage. **The result is that data can be collected, entered and a new model immediately generated.**

The second Principles meeting examined the data collected so far and Philip demonstrated the model. The proposed next stage is to generate a consultation process where this model can be shared and discussed widely. At present we are looking at on-line tools to allow this to be more of an interactive process. Any help that can be offered in this area would be much appreciated. (Contact [philip@gardencities.org.uk](mailto:philip@gardencities.org.uk))

Philip Ross Chair of the Principles Committee says: *"We have created a workable model on which a garden city accreditation process can be built. We have embedded into it inspiring vision statements, strong principles, and workable methods. Our next step is to take these materials and blend them together to create a workable definition of a garden city that can be used in an accreditation process."*

Contact details: [Philip@gardencities.org.uk](mailto:Philip@gardencities.org.uk) 07881 685 952

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"It is in doing this next step that we will need to support, experience and energies of our supporters in the Alliance and we will also need to move out and start engaging with developers and supporters"

The [model](#) is here

On the next page is an example of a vision statement and the principles that can be linked to it.

## Vision statements

### 1 - My vision is of a city that has community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets

*Garden City land is owned by the people that live and work there not by absent landlords. The aim will be to capture rises in land value for the benefit of the community in the long terms, not just for the building of the settlement. This is similar to V4. It is about effective community ownership and management of assets (P4).*

- **Principle** : 1- Land value capture for the benefit of the community

Method : 1 - Community Land Trust - UK

Method : 2 - Co-operative Land Bank

Method : 24 - Local alternative or complementary currency on local dividend

- **Principle** : 4- Community ownership of land and long-term stewardship of assets

Method : 1 - Community Land Trust - UK

Method : 2 - Co-operative Land Bank

Method : 6 - Community Land Trust - USA model;

## Accreditations Committee

The goal of the accreditations group is to draw on the experience of other organisations on how to implement and govern an accreditation process. The accreditation process itself will use the output from the principles group.

## Operations Committee

The goal of the New Garden Cities Alliance is to be complementary to existing groups and institutions. Its aim is to foster collaboration and cooperation. The business plan and funding is assessed together with the progress in the principles and accreditation committees. The NGCA has been properly constituted as a Community Interest Company.

## Garden Cities can bring their own money – Building links with finance

One of the strong messages that came from the House of Lords meeting and from other members of the Alliance is the potential to link a garden city standard and accreditation with access to finance. As a consequence we have been speaking with the Climate Bonds initiative to raise finance – green bonds – for ecologically sustainable projects. Their model is to accredit projects that meet fixed criteria. We have also spoken with Social Impact Bonds groups. This is a model of ensuring that development provides a social return, which again links with our garden city principles. The third Principle – economic sustainability – can be derived from these two but is also linked with capturing uplift in land values and endowment of assets to the community. Plans are being put together to run an open seminar in Spring 2016 in the City of London with financiers to promote and generate interest. Full details on how to contact us are below. If you would like to attend or to speak contact us.

### NEW GARDEN CITIES ALLIANCE – Community Interest Company

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