

# Preserving and Maintaining the Concept of Letchworth Garden City

Paper presented by John Lewis at the Society of American City and regional Planning History Toronto Conference, October 3-6 2013

## Introduction

Letchworth Garden City is the world's first Garden City. The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation ([www.leitchworth.com](http://www.leitchworth.com)) is a self-funding charitable organisation re-investing for the long term benefit of communities in Letchworth Garden City. The Foundation is the descendant of First Garden City Limited, a private company set up in 1903 to test and prove the validity of Ebenezer Howard's garden city principles by developing the world's first garden city. From the outset the company was committed to create the newly acquired Estate in Letchworth, North Hertfordshire, England in order to build a town for the benefit of the people who would live, work and visit there. Letchworth Garden City has had a challenging journey from inception to the present day and is proud to have delivered and maintained the original garden city principles which remain as relevant and appropriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as they did in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## The Garden City Principles

Ebenezer Howard sought to combine the very best of town and country living to create healthy homes for working people. In his book *'To-Morrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform'* Howard described how garden cities would be planned new settlements respectful of the natural environment providing high quality affordable housing and locally accessible jobs. Each city would be part of a cluster of other garden cities (each approximately 32,000 population) which would surround a larger central city (58,000 population). Howard captured his vision in a simple diagrammatic form (the Social City diagram) which identified the components, scale and connectivity of the group of 'slumless, smokeless cities' creating an overall conurbation of 250,000 people. Residents would enjoy a full range of social, educational and leisure facilities as well as jobs, decent homes and an environment which would promote health and wellbeing.

The development of garden cities was underpinned by a set of principles which helped to convert Howard's utopian ideals into real living places. In 2012 The Town and Country Planning Association ([www.tcpa.org.uk](http://www.tcpa.org.uk)) produced a guide for local planning authorities to help them to deliver successful new settlements in areas needing to accommodate a growing population. Advocating the principles of garden cities as a modern day answer to creating sustainable development the Association quoted their definition of garden cities in the publication as adopted in 1919 which said that

*'a Garden City is a town designed for industry and healthy living; of a size that makes possible a full measure of social life, but not larger; surrounded by a permanent belt of*

*rural land; the whole of the land being in public ownership or held in trust for the community.’ (Creating Garden Cities and Suburbs Today – a guide for councils TCPA 2012)*

The Association also reaffirmed the key principles in a modern context. The principles set out were:

- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement
- Land value capture for the benefit of the community
- Community ownership of land and long term stewardship of assets
- Mixed tenure homes and housing types that are affordable for ordinary people
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with gardens in healthy communities
- A strong local job offer in the Garden City and within easy commuting distance of homes
- Opportunities for residents to grow their own food, including allotments
- Generous green space, including: a surrounding belt of countryside to prevent sprawl; well connected and biodiversity-rich public parks; high quality gardens; tree lined avenues; and open spaces
- Strong local cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable neighbourhoods
- Integrated and accessible transport systems.

### **Building and Managing the First Garden City**

In the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Howard was only able to dedicate his spare time to the promotion of the Garden City Movement. It was not until the formation in 1902 of The Garden City Pioneer Company that Howard as the company’s salaried Managing Director was able to dedicate all his time to realising his ambitions. The Pioneer Company’s single aim was to find a site which could become the location for the first garden city. Whilst land in North Staffordshire was originally the favoured location, the acquisition of the Letchworth-Willian Estate on 24 June 1903 secured 3818 acres of land as the canvas upon which to paint the ideals of Ebenezer Howard. The Pioneer Company then registered on 1 September 1903 First Garden City Ltd, a private company responsible for the development of the Letchworth Estate as the first garden city in England. Whilst the company dismissed Howard’s original plan to enable all profits generated to be distributed entirely for the benefit of the town, the founders agreed to limit the dividends to shareholders to a maximum of 5% with the remaining surpluses to be captured and distributed for the benefit of all local communities.

As Sir Edgar Bonham Carter, Chairman of the company in 1931 said

*'The true beneficial owners of the land at Letchworth are not the shareholders ..... but the people of the town who...will eventually be entitled to surplus profits (Plinston 1981, 7).*

The early years of development were slow starting and raising capital alongside a restricted level of return constrained investor participation. However as development momentum grew to reflect the confidence that Letchworth could provide good quality housing and plentiful employment, real estate values increased. This emerging commercial success exposed the company to the interests of profiteering developers and corporate speculators. A change to the company's Memorandum of Association in 1949 rescinded the limited dividends to shareholders. Whilst the intention behind this change may have been thought of as appropriate at the time, the amendment eradicated the original intentions of Howard, leaving the assets and profits with the company and therefore no longer guaranteed for the town itself. The tenacity of the local authority and the community led action against the situation resulted in the establishment of the Letchworth Garden City Corporation in 1963 by way of an Act of Parliament. The Corporation purchased the company's assets and took responsibility for the continued management and development of the garden city in accordance with the community model originally envisaged. This arrangement was more in line with the company's long term plan to vest the developed estate in a public body which would hold and manage it on behalf of its community. However as a consequence of national politics in the early 1990s, the government was committed to the reduction of publicly funded organisations and so an alternative organisational arrangement was required.

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation Act 1995 was passed creating the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. The Foundation, established as an Industrial and Provident Society with Charitable Status (*Registered No. 28211R* [www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)) was vested the original Estate, which had grown in size to 5300 acres, in order to manage it on behalf of the communities of Letchworth.

The earnings of the Estate were now sufficiently robust in order to sustain a new charitable organisation whose purpose was determined by its 6 charitable objects. The objects were detailed in the Foundation's governing document which described how the Foundation was

*'to carry on for the benefit of the local community of Letchworth Garden City, the industry, business or trade' of the organisation'. (The Rules of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation – [www.letchworth.com](http://www.letchworth.com).)*

The Objects clearly determined the range of activities that the Foundation could support, successfully reflecting the ambitions of the original garden city principles. in

## Letchworth's Legacy – Unwin and Parker Masterplan

In order to provide context for the activities of the Foundation it is useful to first consider Letchworth's process of physical development from the outset.

The legacy of Raymond Unwin is invaluable to Letchworth and preservation of his design principles is an important aspect of the Foundation's overall responsibilities in the town. Furthermore these principles are not just of historical importance but help to guide the future development of the town.

Whilst Unwin played an active role in assisting Howard in his assessment of suitable sites for the first garden city his formal involvement in its eventual development was secured following the joint submission with Barry Parker, a designer of middle class houses, of the winning plan for Letchworth. This was endorsed by the First Garden City Ltd in 1904. Parker and Unwin's masterplan detailed the overall layout of the estate. Working with the topography of the land the masterplan set out a design which created the shape of the entire garden city.

Whilst Letchworth is often described by its aesthetic qualities

*'the idea of the promoters of the Garden City was not to build an artistic town. Their whole idea was to build a town in which the best possible physical conditions for a community might be secured. Raymond Unwin himself said that "we must first see that our citizens are decently housed".'* (Purdom, 1913, 64).

In 1904 the Company issued a pamphlet before any development started, which provided guidance on their views as to how 'beauty' could be achieved through

*'simple straight forward building, and from the use of good and harmonious materials...discourage useless ornamentation, and to secure that buildings shall be suitably designed for their purpose and position'* (Purdom, 1913, 66).

The Company provided building plans which set out areas for phased development, guidance on boundaries and boundary treatments, densities, street layouts, frontages, light, air space and building materials. Parker and Unwin in their role as Consulting Architects to First Garden City Ltd were responsible for the overall general design of houses and for building control in order to

*'enforce the aesthetic interpretation of the building regulations'*(Purdom,1913, 69).

Their role was not always straight forward particularly when the Company was eager to encourage the pace of development. The securing of each construction contract in the town provided a physical manifestation of investors' confidence in the garden city and its long term future. In the drive to attract such marks of success, the partnership's

priority to ensure that the quality of design and construction were maintained at a high level could at times be seen as a secondary consideration when judged against the Company's ambition to see development underway. However these challenges did not deter Parker and Unwin from exercising their control over both the quality of design and construction. This commitment continued throughout their appointment, which ran until 1914 (*Miller, 2002, 47*).

To ensure that the garden city was a viable town, it was vital that local people moving to Letchworth had the offer of local employment. With this in mind the masterplan included 135 acres of land designated to the east of the town for commercial development. The land was serviced by rail, road and utilities. Spacious plots were available to provide for current and more importantly, the future expansion needs of businesses looking to locate in Letchworth. The challenge for the Company was to attract businesses to an area which had benefits in terms of physical infrastructure and open space but lacked a local labour force. Speculative commercial development would have helped to bring business to the town but the Company's financial capacity could not manage the scale of investment required. The Company therefore adopted a competitive pricing strategy offering businesses a very affordable rent for serviced plots. Engineers, printers, and consumer goods manufacturers were attracted to the town. Accessibility and affordability were key in the decision to locate in Letchworth. However it is interesting to note that some companies, in particular the Spirella Company, were also attracted by the principles of the Garden City Movement, keen to locate to a town that was being developed under the guidance of these principles. (*Miller, 2002, 106*).

The physicality of place making often dominates the process of planning for new towns and settlements. However from the outset Letchworth was planned to deliver more than just the physical aspects of a new town. It was about creating a place that met the needs and desires of the people who were to live and work there. It was about creating a place that could provide physical, social and psychological wellbeing. The personality, culture, and identity of the town were recognisable from its original inception and engendered a sense of pioneering which in the early years was both celebrated and ridiculed (*Miller 2002*). However this feeling of camaraderie was identified in many of the UK New Towns at their early stages of development where new residents found themselves brought together in places with no real sense of history or identity. This led to many residents and businesses actively seeking to create networks and communities to provide that sense of belonging in a physical environment which was yet to be completed (*Clapson, 1998*).

Today's communication channels give people and business the choices inconceivable when the Company was looking to attract people to Letchworth. But at the time the Company was presenting a sophisticated offer seeking people to engage in more than just the physical attributes available within the town. The offer of a new way of life in the first garden city which would reflect individuals' own values and culture became a serious factor for those considering moving to the town. This approach has since been

adopted by many towns and cities across the world as companies seek more than just a convenient location in which to base their organisation. Companies are looking to associate with places that possess a cultural identity which reflects their own company's core values and/or commercial image (*Landry, 2000*).

As the Heritage Foundation looks to preserve and maintain Letchworth (*The Heritage Foundation's Corporate Plan 2013/14 [www.leitchworth.com](http://www.leitchworth.com)*), the opportunity for recapturing the pioneering ambitions of the town and promoting the socially responsible ethos on which it was founded may prove to be a competitive advantage with which to attract inward investment.

### **Involvement in future proposals**

Letchworth is a town which has played a significant role in influencing the design of towns and suburbs across the world. The town is proud to celebrate and preserve its past and is a town that is eager to be a place which continues to meet the needs and desires of its residents and businesses today and in the future. Therefore when considering the development of new projects and proposals the Heritage Foundation is committed to involving local residents to ensure that the balance of today's demands are discussed in the context of past achievements. With a population of over 32,000 residents there is now a community to talk to. Unlike the founding Company who had to make decisions on behalf of future residents, there is now an established community willing and able to fully participate in the shaping of future ideas.

The Foundation's role today is about capturing these views and ideas, involving residents at the earliest stages so that their ideas can feed into new development proposals. The use of consumer research techniques by way of on line forums ([www.audienzenet.co.uk](http://www.audienzenet.co.uk)) has helped to shape the Corporate Plan (referred to above) so that projects deliver what people want. An on line community panel has been created to reflect the socio economic profile of the town and gives access to over 2% of the population to understand their ideas and receive their feedback. For more in depth consultation exhibitions, workshops, and surveys are undertaken in a variety of places and venues to connect with a cross section of the town. As Letchworth embarks on long term planning for accommodating additional housing development within the town, the need to involve local people in the decision making process is of vital importance. Modern day pressures to provide affordable homes and places to work sits well alongside the garden city principles. However the possible development of these homes on part of the original 'belt of rural land' (*TCPA 1919*) suggests that change could challenge some of these principles.

## **Community Participation - Town Centre Case Study - Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation**

Letchworth Town Centre is dependant on the local population to support its offer of retail and leisure facilities. In these times of economic uncertainty and expanding customer choice from alternative locations and on line retailing, the town centre is in need of support to arrest decline by creating a centre for social interaction, interest and local services. In 2011 an 18 month public participation programme started with local residents and businesses who were asked what they thought the town centre required based on their views and not driven by any preconceived ideas or plans. The process included a week long exhibition where those attending were invited to set out their ideas, not only in writing but through interactive large scale plans and a 'think tree' where ideas could be posted on its branches. These comments along with points raised in discussions with local groups, through on line forums and in sessions with local schools, determined the topics of eight workshops held to discuss matters in detail. All those who registered an interest were invited to attend. Following the workshops a walking audit of the town centre was held with the local community. These initiatives helped to build a greater understanding of the key issues and aspirations for the town centre which was fed into a design symposium – a one day charette attended by all the key stakeholders. Overall the process provided an appreciation of the significance that the community places in Letchworth's status as the first Garden City, on its attractive environment, and on the importance of niche independent businesses.

The next stage of the consultation process was to publish all the comments received as transparency was essential for the local community to feel truly engaged in the exercise.

The subsequent design process resulted in further consultation focused on three options for the town centre. Exhibitions, presentations, online forums and sessions in local schools were held. This led to the agreement of a preferred option and support of the town centre wide plan.

This process has resulted in a strategy which has community support and to which local people feel they have made a significant contribution – and a greater understanding of how people use the space and what they expect from their town centre. It has also led to the Foundation having a greater connection with the community with improved communication links with key local groups and many individuals who had previously felt disengaged. It has enabled the local residents to have a genuine involvement in an important decision making exercise which will be used to shape the physical and cultural development of their town centre over the coming years.

### **The Social Reinvestment Model**

The legacy of Unwin and Parker is clearly evident in Letchworth Garden City. The maturing tree-lined avenues, open spaces and arts and crafts architecture provide a

strong visual identity for the town which has subsequently influenced place development globally. However what is less known by the many visiting academics, local authority representatives, developers and landowners from the UK and abroad is the existence of the town's reinvestment model.

At the heart of the Garden City concept is a social model of capturing value created within the town and then reinvested back into the town for the benefit of the local community. This fundamental principle from the Garden City Movement has been preserved and continues today under the management of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. In the spirit of the town's founding private company, the Heritage Foundation has been established as a self-funding charity supporting the social, physical and economic infrastructure of the town. The Foundation has assets of more than £100 million comprising a varied commercial and residential property portfolio, gifted by way of transfer from the public sector run Letchworth Garden City Corporation.

It was a very clear aim of the founding company First Garden City Ltd, to create rental value through the development of this portfolio, generating commercial revenue and recycling the surpluses for the public benefit of local communities - an entrepreneurial approach managed through a culture of altruism.

The Foundation's assets create an annual income stream of approximately £9 million of which over £4million is made available for reinvestment in a wide and varied range of projects and initiatives in the town. The six charitable commitments set out below dictate the themes under which the Foundation can support projects and services for the benefit of local communities in the town. The Charitable Commitments are:

Heritage and Environment;

Education and Learning;

Recreation and Leisure;

Health and Well Being;

Locally based Charities; and

Charitable Activities undertaken in Letchworth.

The Foundation directly runs and funds: a free health treatment centre; a four screen art deco cinema; a free local transport network to take residents to and from their social clubs; community information hub and meeting space ; an international garden cities exhibition; a garden city study centre; tourist information centre; and farm attraction. The income also funds the administration of the Scheme of Management, which helps to retain the physical heritage of the town. It also provides for grants to individuals,

groups and organisations to support a wide variety of activities that bring depth and interest to the town ensuring it is more than just a model of urban planning.

The Foundation whilst independent maintains a close working relationship with the Local Authority ([www.north-herts.gov.uk](http://www.north-herts.gov.uk)) and the County Council ([www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org)). Both these organisations are public statutory bodies funded by local taxes and central government to provide public services such as schools, social care, public parks, recreation areas and highway maintenance. The Foundation has no statutory responsibilities and the services provided are guided by their charitable commitments.

### **Governance – The Heritage Foundation**

A group of 30 governors has the role of steering the strategic approach of the organisation, 16 of which are elected or nominated by residents/groups in the town with 14 selected through interviews by the governors themselves. From within the governor group, nine trustees are elected to serve as the Foundation's Board. The Foundation is non political with no governors able to be selected on the basis of political association. A multi-disciplined team of approximately 100 is employed by the organisation to provide direct service support and to manage contracted out service providers. The governance structure means that important decisions on where income is invested does not rest with the Executive, but with the Governors and Board of Trustees, the membership of which is either elected by the local community, nominated by local clubs and societies or appointed by the Heritage Foundation. The Board also comprises Councillor representatives from the District and County Councils.

It is this governance structure and the social reinvestment model that leads people to describe the Foundation as a unique organisation, with a very special remit. In reality, whilst the remit is special it is also very simple, as is the funding model that supports it. In basic terms, the model is about earning money commercially and recycling the surpluses for the public benefit of the local communities in the town. What makes Letchworth unique is that this operational model has not been replicated on this scale anywhere else.

### **Governance and accountability**

The governance structure of the Foundation ensures that the overseeing of the organisation and the selection of the Trustees who have ultimate responsibilities for the organisation's financial activities is controlled by the governors themselves. The manner in which the governors become involved ensures that there is a good mix of individuals who represent groups and societies or have been directly elected or appointed through an interview process. The challenge is therefore more about creating an operational process which enables a broad involvement of community views to ensure that the strategic decisions are taken in the context of an understanding of what people want.

All governors are volunteers and whilst the majority live within the town (only 6 can be non residents) it is quite a challenge for 30 volunteers to capture all the views of the majority of Letchworth. As referred to in the Case Study above, it is important that the views of the wider local population are incorporated in plans and projects proposed for the town. Community Participation is therefore critical in order to maximise the public benefit achieved from all activities. Whilst the Foundation is not a fully democratically elected body, the Foundation's governance structure incorporates an element of democracy which gives local people the ability to appoint governors to the organisation.

The Foundation's commitment to openness and transparency helps to connect activities with the aims and aspirations of the town. Feedback and views are shared through monthly public 'drop in' surgeries hosted by the Governors, and a more formal annual open town meeting which sets out how the Foundation has performed over the past year and details the services provided and the grants given.

### **Scheme of Management - Preserving and Maintaining the Legacy**

First Garden City Ltd insisted on retaining freehold ownership of its Estate. It did so in order to control developments on its land and create the necessary financial resources to fund future investment for the benefit of the town.

Many years later, national legislation, the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 (LRA), gave individual leaseholders of residential properties the right to buy the freehold from the landlord. Many have taken up this option. The legislation meant that the landlord and tenant relationship ended for many areas within the estate risking the loss of overall management which aimed to maintain the design principles of the original plan. To help address this concern the LRA enabled the creation of a Scheme of Management in order to continue the management of properties where the owners have purchased their lease. The Scheme of Management is managed today by the Heritage Foundation and applies to properties whose freeholds were previously owned by the Foundation. This excludes the large Estates compulsorily purchased from First Garden City Limited, post the Second World War.

In Letchworth Garden City, those buying their freeholds were, and still are, required to sign up to the Scheme of Management. The Scheme's objective is to preserve the appearance and character of Letchworth Garden City. Under this, permission is required before making external changes to Garden City homes. If a resident wishes to make external changes to their home they need to apply for consent. This requirement is separate from the permission required from the local authority under planning legislation and the building regulations. In addition, many residents living in leasehold properties have covenants under which they are also required to obtain prior consent for external work to their property.

A set of Design Principles ([www.letchworth.com](http://www.letchworth.com)) have been developed which provide guidance to owners of homes in either a Heritage or Modern Character Area. Taking into account the style and characteristics of specific homes and streets, rather than simply the age of the buildings, each area has been defined through a detailed examination of characteristics relevant to individual homes and streets, including the date of the property, house style, detail and materials, road layout, parking, house orientation, the building line, trees and verges, front gardens, boundaries and density. A third set of Design Principles also specifically addresses new housing developments. In addition, the design of some homes will differ from their Character Area. For example where individual modern properties have been built within the Heritage Character Area, or where an older home lies within the Modern Character Area. In all cases each home is considered on its own merits, although the impact of alterations on the surrounding context, as well as an individual property is an important element in considering any proposed alterations.

The Scheme also prevents plots being divided for small scale demolition and re-development. This has helped to preserve the original density of development within the town. Works to trees and front hedges also are subject to applications as are any plans to amend the front garden to accommodate parking. The aim of this is to preserve the group value of these properties, as the cumulative value is the key to maintaining the character of Letchworth. Approximately 1,000 pre-application and formal application submissions are submitted each year to the Foundation. Over 90% of applications are agreed either on application or after some modification which indicates that the design principles provide sufficient guidance so that applicants are aware of what is acceptable in respect of modification plans.

Even with this level of approval, management of the Scheme can often be the source of some difficult and subjective discussions with homeowners who do not always welcome the existence of the Scheme. Clearly the role of the Scheme of Management is to preserve the architectural integrity of the town and this is understood and appreciated by the majority of residents. This is particularly the case for those who have chosen to live in Letchworth due to its special character and identity which in part is preserved and maintained by the effective management of the Scheme. The difficulties can occur when the individual homeowner wants to alter their home to meet their own accommodation needs. Often proposals to convert garages to living rooms, build side extensions to create bedrooms and install dormer windows to convert loft space to living space can have merit from the individual's perspective given their need for more room. However to the passer by the proposed alterations may reduce the aesthetic quality of the property and the street scene. This would therefore impact detrimentally on the physical attributes of the garden city, creating a town wide issue which would need to be considered in the context of the concerns of the wider community.

## **Environmental Challenge**

It is important that the desires of the individual do not override the wider implications for the community. With this in mind it is interesting to consider the applications for environmental improvements to garden city homes. As many residents become more sensitive to the environmental performance of their home the desire to install more thermally efficient windows and doors, insulation solutions for single skin external walls, and solar panels to south facing roof pitches is increasing. Whilst some applications seek to pursue the altruistic aim of reducing their carbon footprint by improving the energy efficiency of their home, others want to make changes in order to reduce energy costs. The issue of fuel poverty has become a challenge for a widening segment of the local community. The financial cost of heating poorly insulated homes is likely to become a greater factor in the minds of potential occupiers of the early garden city homes leading some to ask whether inefficient homes could become unsaleable over time? Current home owners may find that their household budget is only able to meet the daily costs of heating their homes, leaving limited funds to undertake annual repairs to the fabric of the building. This prompts the question at what point does the preservation of the aesthetic become secondary to the practicality of living comfortably and affordably in the homes themselves?

Fortunately the improvement in product availability is likely to provide design solutions which can successfully balance these competing demands of environmental efficiencies and aesthetic responsibilities. Internal insulation, high quality thermal glazing, solar technology integrated in glazing and roof tiles, water recycling, and district heating systems all have the potential to address this balance. The Heritage Foundation's Sustainability Guide ([www.letchworth.com](http://www.letchworth.com)) helps homeowners and the Design Principles set out how current technologies can be incorporated into existing homes. The Foundation is also about to assess the environmental upgrade of an early garden city home to test current market products by installing and monitoring effectiveness so that this 'demonstration home' can help residents understand what can be achieved without undermining the architectural integrity of their home.

## **Conclusion**

The legacy of Raymond Unwin's masterplan and the principles of the Garden City Movement are preserved, maintained and continue at Letchworth Garden City. This legacy is more than just of historic importance. It is the translation of this legacy into a modern interpretation that offers the greatest opportunity for maintaining the successes of the past.

Unwin was very aware that in order to create successful places it was equally important to focus on the quality of building standards as well as the overall physical design. The long term success of Letchworth can be attributed to its understanding at the outset of the importance of having an Estate stewardship regime in place. However beautifully

designed a place may be, if it is not properly maintained the impact of decline and deterioration will undermine its initial success. The Garden City principles clearly have long term stewardship as a priority, yet often the development of towns, suburbs and other new settlements do not consider how they will be maintained in perpetuity.

The combination of income streams generated from within the town and the mutual ownership of local assets has the ability to support an operational mechanism which can ensure the long term success of the place itself. To make this happen requires a commitment to adopt a long term approach. Unfortunately this need to plan for the long-term can sometimes be challenged by short-term internal and/or external pressures. The key therefore is to ensure that the creation of a new town is not derailed by inappropriate management and governance structures. A successful organisation needs to be non political, have a clearly defined role and be able to focus on achieving long term objectives.

The First Garden City Ltd believed it had created such a structure yet its governance was not sufficiently robust to ensure that its original ambitions could survive societal changes. However its successor now seeks to deliver this legacy.

The Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation as a charitable organisation has all the components to be the model that others could copy. The challenge is making sure that it continues to successfully manage its resources for the town in order to meet the needs and desires of local communities today and in the future.

### **John Lewis - Chief Executive Letchworth garden City Heritage Foundation**

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**September 2013**