



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	13 November 2018
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Hemel Garden Communities Charter
Contact:	Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure Responsible Officer: James Doe, Assistant Director, Planning, Development & Regeneration Authors: Nathalie Bateman, Team Leader Strategic Planning and Regeneration – Infrastructure and Project Delivery Claire Covington, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer
Purpose of report:	To seek approval for the content of the draft Charter to guide and steer the development of the Hemel Garden Communities proposals and to note progress on submission of the Garden Communities Prospectus bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
Recommendations	1. That the Hemel Garden Communities Charter, with the proposed amendments as outlined in this report is endorsed. 2. That progress on submission on the Garden Communities Prospectus bid is noted.
Corporate objectives:	The proposals for major development at north and east Hemel Hempstead through the Hemel garden Communities proposals are wide-ranging and relate to all corporate objectives.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> None directly arising from this report. The submission of the bid to MHCLG has the scope for the award of substantial financial assistance to the Council and its other local authority

'Value for money' implications	<p>partners in the project, St Albans City and District Council and Hertfordshire County Council for the purposes of steering and shaping the development.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The award of funds through the bid will afford the local authority partners excellent value for money as it will bring additional capacity and reduce the amount of resources that would otherwise have to be allocated to the project.</p>
Risk implications	<p>A high level risk assessment has been prepared which will be submitted to MHCLG with Hemel Garden Communities application to join the Garden Communities Programme.</p> <p>Detailed risk assessments will be prepared prior to each phase of the master planning and delivery programme and will be informed by risk management workshops.</p>
Community Impact Assessment	A Community Impact Assessment will be developed as the project progresses and the requirement to meet the needs of all groups within the community will a key focus of the work.
Health and safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Consultees:	<p>Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director (Housing & Regeneration)</p> <p>Property Management Board</p> <p>Leaders Liaison Group</p>
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>The report makes it clear that approval by Cabinet does not designate the land for development. Formal designation can only be done through the Local Plan process once all statutory processes have been completed including full consultation on the proposals. Approval of the draft plan will also need to be agreed by full Council at the relevant time.</p> <p>Deputy S.151 Officer</p> <p>No further comments to add.</p>
Background papers:	<p>Reports to Cabinet on the Dacorum Borough Local Plan, 31 July 2018 and 16 October 2018</p> <p>Draft pre-submission St Albans Local Plan, SADC, 2018</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>HCC – Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>HE – Homes England</p> <p>HGC – Hemel Garden Communities</p>

	<p>LEP – Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership</p> <p>MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</p> <p>SADC – St Albans City and District Council</p>
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Introduction

1. Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) is a proposal for a major expansion of Hemel Hempstead to its east and north. The Crown Estate is promoting the development and owns significant land in this area. The map attached to the report at Appendix 1 shows the area. The land is divided roughly 50/50 between Dacorum and St Albans' administrative areas.
2. Recognising the exceptional need for growth, and through the respective preparation of Local Plans, both Dacorum Borough Council and St Albans City and District Council, together with Hertfordshire County Council, are undertaking a strategic visioning approach to housing and employment growth at Hemel Hempstead. The Hemel Garden Communities proposal in total would accommodate around 10,000 new homes and 10,000 jobs within a new 55 hectare business park with capacity for about 2 million sq. ft. of commercial floorspace and through the delivery of new district and local commercial centres. It should be stressed, however, that in carrying out this work it is recognised that any development would only take place in the Dacorum element if it is included in the Local Plan following proper assessment and consultation. This is dealt with in further detail in paragraphs 19-22 below.
3. The commercial development would effectively be an extension to Maylands Business Park and it comprises the major development opportunity for the Herts Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone. The proposal would be supported by significant investment in ambitious new infrastructure and community facilities, with the intention of transforming the town as a whole and providing a great legacy.
4. Hemel Garden Communities includes close partnership working with Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and local businesses to support the delivery of the Herts Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone. This aims to create an internationally recognised employment zone focussing on green technology at Maylands Business Park, the largest business park in Hertfordshire, in addition to the Building Research Establishment and Rothamsted Research, both of which are located in the St Albans district. The Government has expressed its support for this new employment area, which will help deliver against its clean growth agenda.

5. The Crown Estate own around 70% of the land concerned. It has begun preparing a masterplan for the whole area with input from senior Officers from DBC, SADC, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Highways England and the Hertfordshire Enviro-Tech Enterprise Zone.
6. The draft Charter, attached at Appendix 2, has been developed by the local authorities with input from these stakeholders at regular meetings.
7. The purpose of the Charter is to set a vision framework of agreed development principles to take this proposal forward. Based on Garden City principles promoted by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), nine aspirational principles have been developed to guide the design, development and delivery of the communities over the next 25 years and beyond.
8. The key principles that sets this apart from other vision documents are the principles regarding empowering communities, innovative approaches to delivery and active local stewardship. The Charter also provides an overall aspiration to integrate the proposal with surrounding existing neighbourhoods and identifying opportunities that will help transform the wider town to ensure it meets the Garden Town Status we are aspiring too.
9. The scale of Hemel Garden Communities is significant and therefore can bring forward much needed infrastructure that has the potential to transform the town as a whole.
10. These would include major improvements to junction 8 of the M1 motorway and a new link road running from the B440 Leighton Buzzard Road through the development area to connect to the M1 motorway at an improved junction 8 and possibly a new junction 8a or enhanced junction 9. The traffic options for enhanced connections to the M1 in addition to upgrading junction 8 are still being modelled.
11. New schools, health and community facilities and a series of local centres are proposed to offer local shopping facilities and the scope for small business space, in addition to the major expansion to Maylands in the Enterprise Zone.
12. Critical transport infrastructure improvements aim to improve connectivity between Maylands Business Park and the Hemel Hempstead railway station and provide improved public transport services in the town and services used by commuters. The proposals include a new multi-modal transport interchange for Maylands and aim to incorporate innovations in public transport such as demand-responsive services.
13. The proposal also aims to provide easily accessible green infrastructure for existing and new residents of the town such as a Country Park and significant connected open space with new leisure facilities. There are also transformative opportunities to help connect the railway stations and town centre with Maylands Business Park and the new communities as well as pedestrian and cycle routes to link us better with St. Albans.
14. As the detail of the plan develops, and as work on new Local Plans for both Dacorum and St Albans progresses, there is a need to update Members and

engage Member representation into the governance of the development programme.

Planning Status of the development area

15. Both DBC and SADC are considering what makes up the Hemel Garden Communities proposals in their respective new Local Plans, which are currently under preparation. The Crown Estate, as principal landowner and promoter of the scheme has requested the allocation of the land for development of both authorities. Currently, all of the land is within the Green Belt.
16. SADC published its 'pre-submission' Local Plan for consultation in September 2018, which sets out its preferred approach to meeting development needs in the St Albans District. This allocates their part of the proposal for a minimum of 5,050 new homes in three parts of the site and 55 hectares of employment land in the Enterprise Zone to deliver new jobs. A range of other uses and facilities are included in the draft Local Plan including M1 junction 8 improvements, new primary and secondary schools, new country park, multi-modal transport interchange and new gypsy and traveller sites.
17. Consultation on the St Albans Local Plan closed on 17 October, and it intends to submit it formally to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in March 2019, which would give rise to a formal public examination of the plan's contents, which will be conducted by a Planning Inspector.
18. Members will be aware that DBC carried out an initial 'issues and options' consultation for the new Dacorum Local Plan in late 2017. The Local Development Scheme for the new Local Plan was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 31 July 2018 and this foresees the publication of a 'pre-submission' plan for consultation in August 2019. The same report did however explicitly refer to the HGC proposals with reference for the need for a supplementary planning document on strategic sites design.
19. Any inclusion of the Dacorum element of the HGC proposal will need to be tested formally through the statutory Local Plan preparation process, which is ongoing. As the Local Plan evidence base develops over the next few months, the Council will need to take decisions in relation to the Local Plan whether to include the land to the north of Hemel Hempstead as a proposed development site.
20. In this context, however, Members should note that in 2012 the Planning Inspector for the Dacorum Core Strategy highlighted the need for joint working with SADC to explore the further development of land at east Hemel Hempstead, which now forms part of the HGC proposal. The work that would be resourced by a successful outcome to the current bid, and other work flowing from the Charter would help to strengthen the evidence base.
21. For the avoidance of any doubt, formal endorsement of the HGC Charter, as recommended in this report, does not seek to allocate the site for development as this is a matter for the Local Plan alone.

22. This is made clear within the Hemel Garden Communities Charter, 2018 within the introductory text (at page 4) as follows:

"The Hemel Garden Communities proposals fall roughly equally between land in both the Borough of Dacorum and the St Albans District. The proposals in their entirety represent a major strategic urban extension to Hemel Hempstead and need to be thoroughly considered and tested by both DBC and SACDC as the respective Local Planning Authorities in their emerging Local Plans"

There will be further consultation on the Charter through stakeholder workshops next year.

Garden Communities Prospectus and Proposed Bid

23. MHCLG published the Garden Communities Prospectus on 15 August 2018. As part of the Government's drive to significantly boost the supply of new housing, and to deliver high quality new developments, it is promoting the development of new garden communities – either in the form of freestanding settlements or extensions to existing towns and cities. HGC would fall into the latter category.
24. A copy of the prospectus is attached as Appendix 3 to this report, and can be found at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734145/Garden_Communities_Prospectus.pdf
25. The prospectus offers funding to authorities and developers to support the delivery of new garden communities, the prospectus advises that '*We want to see vibrant, mixed-use, communities where people can live, work, and play for generations to come – communities which view themselves as the conservation areas of the future. Each will be holistically planned, self-sustaining, and characterful*'.
26. The timescale for submitting bids is short, by 9 November 2018. Officers have begun work on preparing a bid, with SADC, HCC and The Crown Estate. Cabinet agreed to support the submission of a bid at its meeting on 16 October 2018.
27. The prospectus points towards support for projects that deliver a minimum of 10,000 new homes and have good prospects for early delivery. For proposals such as HGC that build onto existing settlements, they must demonstrate how the new garden community development will transform the host town. Officers began working up a transformational strategy some months ago. With this, and the other criteria set out in the prospectus, the HGC proposals are considered a very good fit and on the face of it have a good chance of success for receiving funding.
28. The bid submission form requires evidence of support from a range of stakeholders including the LEP, Hertfordshire County Council, the local

community and local MPs. The affected MPs for both authorities would be Sir Mike Penning, Anne Main and Bim Afolami.

29. Though funding levels are not specified, the support on offer is aimed at staffing resources and knowledge that need to be put in place to ensure successful and timely delivery of new garden communities. The fund does not directly provide capital funding, though MHCLG cross-refer to garden community schemes possibly forming part of a Housing Deal with Government.

30. Specifically, the funding could cover:

- a. Resource funding – to cover staffing, technical reports and studies. This would be immensely helpful to the HGC project.
- b. Delivery advice and support – with reference to Homes England resources being provided to assist. HE is already engaged with the project.
- c. Delivery vehicles – such as Joint Venture companies or development corporations. These have not yet been considered as part of the project.
- d. Cross-government brokerage
- e. Peer learning and networking
- f. Bespoke support proposals that bidders might put forward.

31. Funding through the bid will enable all the public sector partners to deliver a better development. It would lessen pressure on constrained budgets to enable the public sector to steer the project effectively, and help provide access to other Government funding schemes such as the Housing Investment Fund. Currently DBC is using already busy staff with a range of other demands on their time to work on the project. Workload on HGC is only going to increase as the project develops, and if the local authorities are to lead the project to deliver outcomes in the public interest there will be additional costs to Dacorum and the two other Councils. The alternative would be a developer-led scheme with less public engagement and fewer public benefits.

32. The final bid, with the agreement of the partners to be submission will be signed off by senior officers and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure in time for submission on 9th November.

33. MHCLG has not said when it expects to make decisions on funding but this is not likely until the end of the calendar year at the earliest.