



Report for:	Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	1st December 2020
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision
Contact:	<p>Cllr Graham Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure</p> <p>Responsible Officer: Ian Charie, Programme Director, Hemel Garden Communities</p> <p>Authors: Nathalie Bateman, Hemel Garden Communities Lead Olivia Halper, Urban Design Officer</p>
Purpose of report:	To consult the Committee on the Draft Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision
Recommendations	To note and provide support for the final draft Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision
Period for post project review	A review of the Spatial Vision's impact and continuing relevance should be undertaken within 5 years.
Corporate objectives:	<p>The Spatial Vision provides a framework of spatial principles to inform the transformation and growth of Hemel Hempstead, as part of the Hemel Garden Communities Programme, in support of DBC's stated Corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment: the Spatial Vision promotes a network of green routes to support healthy lifestyles and active travel, access to nature, and safe routes and spaces which are inclusive to all local communities. • Building strong and vibrant communities: the Spatial Vision's engagement methodology enabled local communities to help shape a vision which sets out principles to create and reinforce a series of distinct, walkable neighbourhoods centred around lively, inclusive local centres with an offer of leisure, retail, employment opportunities, business space, culture and

	<p>community facilities to meet the needs of local communities. Hemel’s communities will be connected and engaged to be active participants in the transformation of the town, including through cultural activity, public art, knowledge and skills sharing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring economic growth and prosperity: the Spatial Vision provides a framework to diversify Hemel Hempstead’s employment offer and improve the resilience and sustainability of its economy, through localising supply chains, building skills, and implementing a circular economy, digital connectivity and innovative technologies that build on the growth of Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter to benefit existing businesses and the whole of Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding area. • Providing good quality affordable homes: the Spatial Vision sets a framework for delivery of new neighbourhoods with a mix of tenures including 40% affordable homes. • Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery: the Spatial Vision promotes innovative methods of engaging communities and use of digital technologies in the design and development of Hemel Garden Communities. This was commenced through engagement on the Spatial Vision itself (during the Covid restrictions period), which made use of digital methods to overcome social distancing and reach more children and young people. Running throughout the Spatial Vision are opportunities for community collaboration, leadership and stewardship to ensure that places meet the needs of the communities they serve.
<p>Implications:</p> <p>‘Value for money’ implications</p>	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>None directly associated with this report.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The consultants were appointed through a formal procurement process where value for money considerations were reflected in the scoring criteria.</p>
<p>Risk implications</p>	<p>Given the scale of future growth planned for Hemel Hempstead, it is critical that the HGC Programme can guide new development so that it responds to the needs of local communities and stakeholders, integrates new and existing communities and transforms the existing town of Hemel Hempstead, to meet the Garden Communities programme aspirations.</p> <p>If the Spatial Vision is not approved, the HGC Programme will be limited in its ability to secure the growth, infrastructure and transformation of Hemel Hempstead in a way which is rooted</p>

	in the local context and responds to the needs of the communities of Hemel and the wider area. This presents a risk to the town's Government-supported Garden Town status.
Community Impact Assessment	The HGC Spatial Vision forms part of the Draft Local Plan's Hemel Garden Communities Delivery Strategy. A full Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) is being carried out on the Local Plan which looks at social, environmental and economic impacts in detail and will be scrutinised at the future Local Plan examination by an independent inspector. The Council has also undertaken a Community Impact Assessment (CIA) on the draft Local Plan. A separate CIA for Hemel Garden Communities will be produced for the Cabinet Report.
Health and safety Implications	The masterplanning and design quality framework provided by the Spatial Vision will promote the physical and mental wellbeing of Hemel Hempstead's communities, and create safe, vibrant places.
Consultees:	<p>The following teams and organisations have been consulted on the Draft document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HGC partners comprised of officers and Members from Dacorum, St Albans, Hertfordshire County Council • Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership • The Crown Estate and masterplanning consultants • HGC Councillor Visioning Group • Dacorum services: Strategic Planning & Regeneration, Climate Change • St Albans City & District Council services: Planning & Building Control • Hertfordshire County Council services: Ecology, Public Health, Countryside and Rights of Way, Education, Sustainability, Highways Strategy & Implementation.
Background papers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet reports - Oct 2018, July 2019, Jan 2020 2. HGC Memorandum of Understanding 3. HGC Charter
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>DBC – Dacorum Borough Council</p> <p>HGC – Hemel Garden Communities</p> <p>LEP – Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership</p>

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and The Crown Estate are working in partnership to deliver HGC, a major expansion of Hemel Hempstead bringing transformative benefits for the existing town.

1.2 The Authorities were awarded Garden Town Status from Government in March 2019 and are working under the Town and County Planning Association (TCPA) New Communities programme to deliver HGC.

1.3 The programme is supported by the HGC Memorandum of Understanding and the HGC Charter, which sets out nine place-making principles, and is driven by a mission statement to *'take the best of the New Town heritage into the 21st century...anchoring the transformation of Hemel Hempstead and the wider area.'*

1.4 Hemel Garden Communities includes new development and transformation proposals for the town and wider connections. The catalyst for transformation of the wider town and its connections is the North and East of Hemel Hempstead Growth Areas, where housing growth is divided roughly equally between Dacorum and St Albans districts and the majority of the employment growth is located in St. Albans district – see Appendix 1 HGC Programme Area. All other development proposed for Hemel Garden Communities in the town of Hemel Hempstead set out in Dacorum's draft Local Plan will be supporting and shaping the transformation agenda either on site and/or through developer contributions. The proposals include a range of sites, some of which have been allocated in the adopted Local Plan whilst others will be allocated in emerging or future Local Plans or are simply windfall.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The Spatial Vision builds on Hemel Hempstead's strengths and explains how HGC will look and feel once the development and transformation is complete. It provides a locally specific narrative and framework to guide the transformation of Hemel Hempstead and its strategic growth, as a high-level, overarching document, which will guide all other masterplanning and design work for HGC.

2.2 The new development will be delivered in phases via the development management process. The ability of phased development to contribute to the HGC Programme's specific Garden Communities aspirations for Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding area relies on having the compelling and coherent vision, encapsulating both the TCPA's Garden City Principles and Hemel Hempstead's unique growth potential, which is provided by the Spatial Vision.

2.3 The joint Dacorum and St Albans Strategic Design Guide sets the Authorities' general expectations for best practice, high quality design, and sets out a design process to achieve these. In this context, the Spatial Vision will ensure that development proposals, designed in accordance with the Strategic Design Guide, achieve the specific Garden Communities ambitions for the growth and transformation of the town.

2.4 The status of the Spatial Vision is consolidated through the Authorities' emerging Local Plan policies and the joint Dacorum and St Albans Strategic (Sites) Design Guide. The HGC Programme partners will work collaboratively and put in place the appropriate legal mechanisms to ensure that each phase contributes towards the

Spatial Vision's aspirations for the quality of new growth and the transformation of the existing town.

2.5 The HGC Spatial Vision will be used to:

- Guide the HGC Programme and preparation of key studies: the HGC Framework Plan, Hemel Garden Communities Sustainable Transport Plan, HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plan, HGC Programme Delivery Plan and therefore the transformative impacts on Hemel Hempstead.
- Inform design and infrastructure requirements as part of the determination of planning applications for HGC.
- Provide direction for further evidence base work, studies and strategies required to support the HGC Programme framework (in the 'Delivery' chapter of the Spatial Vision).

3.0 Approach

3.1 The HGC Spatial Vision was created through collaboration between the HGC Programme Team and consultants DK-CM, working closely with the LEP and The Crown Estate. The Spatial Vision project team developed new engagement approaches to adapt with the COVID-19 pandemic social distancing requirements, including 'virtual' meetings and events where feedback was captured on digital whiteboards.

3.2 As an overarching engagement method, 'Hemel Channel', an Instagram-based social media channel was created. The Instagram site is being used by the HGC Programme team and the public to engage on activities and events but also as a virtual space to discuss programme matters.

3.3 The Hemel Channel acted as a central communications platform to keep members of the public up to date throughout a two-phase programme of engagement activities. The first phase engaged communities and stakeholders to gain a greater understanding the place, and the second phase enabled these groups to contribute to shaping the Spatial Vision in a hands-on way.

3.4 Phase 1: Understanding the Place: The Spatial Vision project team engaged with a broad range of communities of Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding area to explore and characterise the place and to create a picture of the town generated by the people who live, work and play here. Activities included a series of competitions inviting entries from children and adults showcasing what they find special about Hemel and the surrounding area and how they imagine its future. The team reached out to schools as part of this process, and held a live sketching session on Instagram. In parallel, the team held a series of 1:1 conversations with key stakeholders in the HGC Programme area and wider stakeholders to understand their aspirations for the future.

3.5 Phase 2: Shaping the Vision: The Spatial Vision project team held a series of events aimed at different groups, to allow the communities of Hemel Hempstead and the surrounding area to influence the emerging Spatial Vision. The events comprised:

- An interactive session with the Dacorum Community Review Panel
- A 'virtual' Public Workshop, attended by 40 members of the public and key stakeholders
- A Councillor Visioning Group, including Councillors from Dacorum, St Albans and Hertfordshire County Council.

3.6 In addition to the Spatial Vision project team, an Expert Group made up of notable specialists in their fields was formed to provide input on key areas: transport, inclusive design, history, cultural commissioning, urban futures, Garden Cities, ecology and sustainability. Members of the Expert Group are listed at the end of the Spatial Vision document.

4.0 The draft HGC Spatial Vision

4.1 The draft HGC Spatial Vision, attached as Appendix 2, explains how HGC will look and feel once the development and transformation is complete. It consists of an overarching Spatial Vision, which is broken down into four Pillars with individual spatial visions and spatial principles. Each Pillar is supported with best practice examples from Hemel Hempstead, the wider area and beyond, and a 'delivery' list of studies and next steps.

4.2 A series of maps and drawings has been produced to illustrate the vision, supported by best practice, local context, case studies, photography and indications of further guidance. These visuals show a concept interpretation of the built and green form with a range of indicative proposals, which represent the Spatial Vision.

4.3 A summary of the vision and its supporting pillars is provided below.

The Vision is:

'Hemel Garden Communities: creating a greener, more connected New Town.'

In the heart of the Golden Triangle between Oxford, Cambridge and London, Hemel Garden Communities will grow and transform into a greener, more connected New Town, building on the best of its heritage and culture. Transformation of existing neighbourhoods and the wider area, and the creation of new neighbourhoods, will support healthy lifestyles for everyone. Hemel Garden Communities will be home to inclusive, **integrated neighbourhoods** connected by a **green network**, and thoughtfully designed places with **engaged communities**, all underpinned by digital connectivity, **a self-sustaining economy** and pioneering green technology driven by Herts Innovation Quarter'.

The Four Pillars are:

A Green Network - A network of green and blue routes, travel and places will support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, climate resilience, environmental sustainability and the wellbeing of local communities.

Integrated Neighbourhoods – A series of walkable neighbourhoods, connected to each other, each with individual distinct identities, exemplar design and sustainability standards, centred upon lively, inclusive local centres.

A Self-sustaining Economy - Innovation in sustainability, circular economy principles and digital connectivity will be key employment drivers in Hemel Garden Communities and provide a strong theme for the economic identity of the town.

Engaged Communities – Connected and engaged communities will be active participants in the transformation of Hemel Garden Communities. Cultural and heritage activity, public art, knowledge and skill exchange and enterprise will all play a role, now and in the long term.

4.4 There are two cross-cutting themes running throughout: a **response to the climate crisis**, and **healthy lifestyles**, to which each Pillar's Spatial Principles contribute.

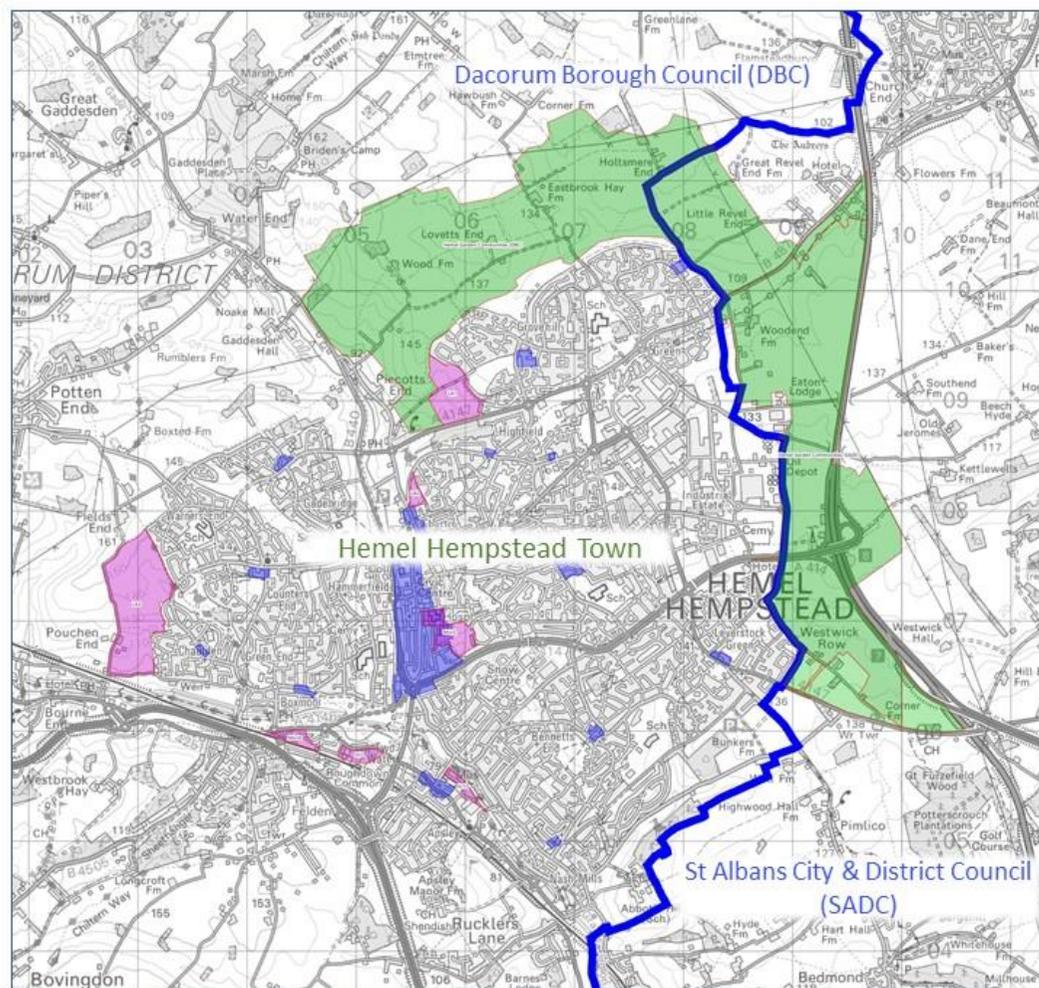
5.0 Next Steps

5.1 The draft HGC Spatial Vision has been reviewed by wider stakeholders but further changes will be made as a result of consultation with Council Members across the 3 partner local authorities.

5.2 The final draft will be submitted to Dacorum's Cabinet for endorsement in January 2021, and reported to St Alban's Planning Performance Committee and Hertfordshire County Council's Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and the Economy Cabinet Panel in February 2021.

5.3 As further studies in the programme are developed the HGC Programme team will report back to SPAE OSC.

Appendix 1 HGC Programme Area



Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Programme Area – January 2020

Key

 District boundary

Hemel Garden Communities Programme Area:

 DBC Strategic Sites and SADC Broad Locations

 Existing built up area of Hemel Hempstead Town including:

 DBC Existing allocations

 Hemel Hempstead town/local centres

Appendix 2 HGC Spatial Vision