



Cabinet



www.dacorum.gov.uk

Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Hemel Place Strategy
Date:	24 May 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Hemel Visuals Appendix B - Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HPB – Hemel Place Board

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Sara Whelan, Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager



Sara.whelan@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228590 (ext. 2590)

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Climate and ecological emergency
-----------------------------	--

Wards affected	All Hemel Hempstead wards
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To seek Cabinet approval to launch the Hemel Place work publicly in early July 2. To seek Cabinet approval to launch a Hemel Champions Programme 3. To seek Cabinet approval to carry out community and investor engagement to inform the drafting of the Hemel Place Strategy
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet approves the public launch of the Hemel Place Strategy 2. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree details of the Hemel Champions' Programme including the launch date 3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree the approach and timing of community and investor engagement following consultation with the Hemel Place Board
Period for post policy/project review:	2 years

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed, in April 2021, to create a new Place Strategy for Hemel Hempstead and to establish a Hemel Place Board. As part of this work, strategy development for the future of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre was also agreed.
- 1.2 In September 2021, the Council's Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager was appointed and, in November 2021, the Hemel Place Board was formed. The Independent Chair, Andrew Percival, was appointed in January 2022.
- 1.3 The Hemel Place Strategy development is in progress and includes key themes as well as key geographic areas which need intervention. The first geographic area of focus is Hemel Town Centre, and this is being worked on at the same time as the Hemel Place Strategy. This report provides an overview of how the strategy will be presented and next steps including a public launch of the Hemel Place Strategy work in July, followed by consultation with communities and investors over the summer months and the launch of the Hemel Place Champions.

2 Launch of Hemel Place work and Hemel Champions

- 2.1 The Hemel Place Strategy will set a clear direction of travel for Hemel Hempstead so that residents, businesses, stakeholders and the investment community can clearly see the level of ambition for the town. Once this is in place, every strategy, plan, intervention, development etc. can be aligned so that it contributes to the strategy and people will be able to see how activity within Hemel is delivering the place they want to see. Leaders and Ambassadors for the place can use their networks, contacts and credibility to 'sell' the place, as set out in the agreed Strategy.
- 2.2 Thinking Place, the Council's Place consultants, have carried out stakeholder engagement and they have composed the 'Story of Hemel Hempstead', capturing the stakeholders' feedback and ambitions for Hemel Hempstead. The story includes a big idea and three themes;

Big idea...

- Growing a fresh new future

Three themes

- A vibrant destination for enterprise
- Enhancing your wellbeing in Hemel
- Where connections matter

- 2.3 The vision for the future of Hemel Hempstead is:

'Hemel is a family of welcoming neighbourhoods and thriving communities, that working together will shape our future with confidence'.

The main strapline to be used in marketing and demonstrating this message is;

'Hemel - where life is greener'

- 2.4 This story has been designed into a set of visual images which will be used to promote Hemel Hempstead. The visuals can be used to dress the Town Centre and options include visuals on site hoarding, lamp post banners, posters and any printed materials as well as on social media. A new website (www.thinkhemel.com) will be launched to host the new

Hemel Place approach. The attached presentation provides an overview of the new Hemel visuals (Appendix A).

- 2.5 The Hemel Place Strategy work will be launched at an event in early July and guests who will play an important role in the successful future of Hemel Hempstead will be invited. The new visuals will be used to dress the town. The team is exploring possibilities of lamppost banners, site hoarding, feather flags and crowd barriers to promote the Hemel Place launch.
- 2.6 The Hemel Place launch event will include a call to action, inviting people to become 'Hemel Champions'. This will include community and business leaders and ambassadors throughout Hemel Hempstead who are interested in engaging with the Hemel Place Strategy work and being advocates for Hemel Hempstead. They can use their networks, contacts and credibility to 'sell' the place in any conversation or situation they are in.
- 2.7 The Hemel Champions will be invited to meet every four months, and the Council will provide strategic updates on how delivery of the Hemel Place Strategy work is progressing. Partners will also be able to contribute updates on their activities to the meeting. The events will provide a networking opportunity and a platform to showcase other important interventions happening in Hemel Hempstead so that all Champions are aware of the shared vision and ambitions for Hemel Hempstead as well as considering how they can participate in delivering future ambitions.

3 Consultation for Hemel Place Strategy

- 3.1 The Hemel Place Strategy will include ten key themes:
 - Vision / Ambition for Hemel Hempstead
 - Sustainable/active travel
 - Meanwhile Uses
 - Digital
 - Cultural
 - Social Value outcomes
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Landscape / Public realm
 - Education & Skills
 - Net Zero Carbon
- 3.2 Each theme will be presented in the Hemel Place Strategy with ambitions and objectives, proposals and guidance and actions. The actions will range from short, medium and long term, and the Hemel Place Board will have oversight on the progress and risks associated with the delivery of these.
- 3.3 The strategy will be based on evidence, drawing in sources which have been both recently commissioned for the place strategy or the emerging local plan, and other evidence collected in house, for example on health and wellbeing. The next steps include engaging with the community on each of the themes. As well as engaging with communities there will also be engagement with potential investors to understand how Hemel is understood as a town and to hear what its wider reputation is and to hear about the perceived opportunity for investment. An important part of this will be understanding what information investors want to see about Hemel and how the Council can attract strong investment in the future.
- 3.4 In order to prepare for this engagement, the team will use the below principles when drafting the community engagement plan:
 - Support – The Council will identify and overcome barriers to participation using support from the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Officer
 - Planning – there will be a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions

- Working together – The Council we will work effectively across its services, and with partners, to achieve the aims of the engagement
- Methods – The Council will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose, including a Commonplace platform which has been used successfully for the Paradise Design Code and Hemel Old Town engagement
- Communication – The Council will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement
- Inclusion – The Council will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement
- Impact – The Council will assess the impact of the engagement and use what has been learned to shape the Hemel Place Strategy and Town Centre Strategy and any future community engagement.

3.5 This report seeks approval to launch community and investor consultation, starting in the summer and concluding in early autumn, based on the broad approach above. The details of the community engagement will be agreed at the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and endorsed by the Hemel Place Board.

4 Options and alternatives considered

4.1 The recommendation is to carry out community and investor consultation focusing on communities' needs and ambitions as well as how Hemel Place is perceived as a place for investment. The following options have been considered;

Do nothing (no consultation)

4.2 This option is not recommended, as the qualitative data from our existing communities and how the place can support them, and their ambitions, is important to achieve community support and buy in to the future proposals for Hemel Hempstead. The aim of the place work is to support existing communities as well as to attract investment to improve the place.

Rely on previous consultations

4.3 Previous consultations on the Local Plan, Two Waters Guidance, Paradise Design Code and Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision have been analysed. They show some key themes. For example, respondents in all consultations wanted to see design quality in new developments, distinctive neighbourhoods and had crime and safety as a key priority. The Hemel Place consultation will look at the whole of Hemel Hempstead and how people feel about the town rather than about the buildings or future development in the town, which is different to previous consultations.

5 Consultation

James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)

Andrew Percival – Hemel Place Board Independent Chair

Alex Robinson – Assistant Director, Planning

Phillipa Zieba – Hemel Garden Communities Director

Bob Lane – Hemel Garden Communities Independent Chair

Kelvin Soley – Head of Communications

Ben Trueman – Head of Digital Technology and Digital Transformation

Matt Rawdon – Assistant Director, People

Allison Westray-Chapman – Interim Assistant Director, Place, Communities and Enterprise

6 Financial and value for money implications:

6.1 The costs for the launch of the Hemel Champions and the consultation and engagement exercise will be met by the Hemel Place budget which was approved by Cabinet in April 2021. Hosting this consultation using our existing partners and resources provides the best value for money for the Council.

6.2 Having a shared story will help the Council to bid for, and attract, Government funding as the development of a Place Strategy considered to be a best practice approach for investment. The approach will help create interest in the investor and developer community who want to see a strong and shared vision for a place before they consider investing.

6.3 The Hemel Place Strategy and Champions programme will help to leverage the support and engagement of stakeholders who may have played no role in the place before. This approach should open up other funding opportunities from the Local Enterprise Partnership and other organisations as a result.

7 Legal Implications:

None

8 Risk implications:

The launch of the Hemel Place work will mitigate the risk of missing investment opportunities and will help to support the future of the town.

9 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

9.1 The Community Impact Assessment has been reviewed and is annexed to this report. The consultation and outreach activities will need to ensure that opportunities are provided to all sections of the community

9.2 Human Rights – the consultation and engagement will be optional and there will be free text boxes to capture all feedback. This would not contravene respect for private and family life, home and correspondence, freedom of thought, belief and religion, freedom of expression and protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms.

10 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

The Hemel Place Strategy will seek to be ambitious on climate change, health and wellbeing and community safety. The proposed consultation will help to shape the actions required to improve on all sustainability matters.

11 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no implications for Council infrastructure arising from this proposal.

12 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

S151 Officer:

The Hemel Place Programme has an approved budget to fund these proposals.

13 Conclusions:

13.1 Dacorum Borough Council is progressing the Hemel Place Strategy and Town Centre Strategy. The public launch of the work, including giving residents the opportunity to support this work programme by becoming Hemel Champions, is critical to our next step in the development of the Strategy. The Hemel Champions programme will allow ambassadors

in the community to learn about the Council's strategic priorities, and work together as a community.

- 13.2 Engagement will be carried out with members of the community and investors to inform the themes of the Hemel Place Strategy before it is presented to Cabinet for approval later this year.