



Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter
Date:	15 July 2024
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter Appendix 2 – Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter – Terms of Use
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	None

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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 - Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery - Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All

Purpose of the report:	1. To endorse the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That the Council signs the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter
Period for post policy/project review:	Two years from date of Cabinet approval

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hertfordshire Growth Board has prepared and endorsed a Development Quality Charter to set and achieve a new benchmark for high quality and sustainable development. It is a voluntary agreement that developers can sign to improve the quality of their developments.
- 1.2 This report introduces the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter and sets out that the Council will engage with applicants/developers throughout the planning process using this document as a tool to build high quality and sustainable development. This could include the Council, in their role as developer in the future.

2. Herts Development Quality Charter

- 2.1 Improving the construction, heating, cooling and powering of homes and buildings is a positive way to tackle climate change. It is also recognised that people are more supportive of development if it is well designed, uses high quality materials and fits into its surroundings.
- 2.2 The website [HGB - Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter \(hertfordshiregrowthboard.com\)](http://hertfordshiregrowthboard.com) contains a downloadable copy of the Charter, a sign-up sheet and a terms of use document that sets out how councils and developers should use the Charter once they have signed it.
- 2.3 It is ultimately hoped that all councils, as Local Planning Authority and a significant number of developers will voluntarily sign the charter in order to set a new benchmark for high quality and sustainable development. Dacorum borough Council will sign the charter for use as Local Planning Authority and work towards meeting the charter in its role as developer in the future.
- 2.4 For developers to achieve the pledges set out in the Charter they will need to show evidence on design and sustainability. For design, this includes the preparation of a design and access statement; masterplans, community engagement, design review panels and stewardship strategies for major sites; considerate construction practices; and biodiversity net gain. For sustainability, this means identifying and achieving a sustainability standard above building regulations, with a focus on carbon emissions from regulated energy.

3 Options and alternatives considered

- 3.1 Not endorsing the document – this was discounted as although the document would not be an adopted planning policy the endorsement of the Council shows that the Council is open to development which is high quality and sustainable.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)
- 4.2 Diane Southam – Assistant Director, Place Communities and Enterprise
- 4.3 David Barrett – Assistant Director, Strategic Housing and Delivery
- 4.4 Julie Abbey-Taylor – Head of Investment and Delivery
- 4.5 Philip Stanley - Head of Development Management

4.6 Ronan Leydon – Team Manager, Strategic Planning

5 Financial and value for money implications:

Financial

5.1 None arising from decisions on this report.

Value for Money

5.2 None arising from this report.

5.3 The financial implication of the Charter is that it may cost the Council more money to build high quality and sustainable developments in the future. These costs have not been calculated as they will be different for each type of development and actual scheme that the council progresses. Signing this charter does not commit any future housing development schemes, it will be important to judge any additional costs against the outcome of a higher quality development.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 None arising from this report.

6.2 The Council signing up to the Herts Development Quality Charter sets out our positive position seeking high quality design and sustainable development throughout the planning process. It will be something an applicant can acknowledge when submitting their application. However, the charter will not form part of the development plan and therefore will not be an adopted planning policy.

7 Risk implications:

7.1 None arising from this report.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

8.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

8.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

8.4 No EqIA or Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to this report. There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

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

9.1 The sustainability impacts of this report are that future planning applications which voluntarily sign up to the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter exceed current building regulations.

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

10.1 None arising from this report.

11 Conclusions:

11.1 Not applicable

Appendix 1 - Performance Report (attached separately)

