





# Cabinet



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<b>Report for:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Title of report:</b>	Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter
<b>Date:</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter Appendix 2 – Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter – Terms of Use Appendix 3 – Community Impact Assessment
<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	None

<b>Report Author / Responsible Officer</b>	
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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	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
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	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	To present information on the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter and seek endorsement
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	That Cabinet endorses the Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	Two years from date of Cabinet decision

## **1 Introduction/Background:**

- 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 how 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 its 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 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 Consultation**

The Hertfordshire Development Quality Charter has been launched at a Hertfordshire Infrastructure Development Board event where officers, members and developers were present. The report and recommendation was presented to Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Any feedback will be provided verbally to Cabinet.

## **4. Financial and value for money implications**

- 4.1 None arising from the decisions in this report.
- 4.2 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 the 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.

## **5. Legal Implications**

5.1 None arising from the report.

5.2 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.

## **6. Risk implications**

There is a risk of low take up from developers volunteering to meet the requirements of the Charter. However, it is still considered worthwhile for the Council to endorse and sign up to the Charter to set expectations of quality across the borough from developers.

## **7. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

7.1 Community Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 3. The Charter would have a positive impact on any protected groups occupying a building built to higher environmental standards. They may see positive benefits such as reduced bills, reduced need for retrofitting and a more comfortable living environment, for example limiting impacts of solar gain.

7.2 There is a risk that a development may cost more to provide this quality, but early evidence shows any extra cost is likely to be absorbed as part of the development and the improved quality of the development would outweigh this cost. However, each application in the future will have the opportunity to consider this on a scheme basis and balance any increased costs associated with meeting the Charter against the quality of the scheme. Therefore, the conclusion in the CIA is a neutral impact upon protected groups.

7.3 Human Rights – There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

## **8. Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)**

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.

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

None arising from this report.

## **10. Statutory Comments**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

This is a voluntary charter which is not legally binding on the Council as LPA or developer and therefore its application will need to be assessed and evaluated on a case by case basis.

**S151:**

No further comments to add.

## **11. Conclusions**

The purpose of the Development Quality Charter is to achieve a new benchmark for high quality and sustainable development in Hertfordshire. It is recommended that Dacorum Borough Council endorses this approach.