

Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Delivery Board Minutes

1 October 2024, 09:30 – 11.00 a.m.

Location: Hybrid – MS Teams & Conference Room 1, The Forum, Hemel Hempstead

Attendees:	Bob Lane OBE (Chairman)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Councillor Adrian England	Dacorum Borough Council
	Councillor Paul de Kort	St Albans City & District Council
	Councillor Stephen Boulton	Hertfordshire County Council
	Claire Hamilton (CH)	Dacorum Borough Council
	James Doe	Dacorum Borough Council
	Amanda Foley	St Albans City & District Council
	Christine Trill	St Albans City & District Council
	Colin Haigh (CHa)	Hertfordshire County Council
	Chris Briggs	St Albans City & District Council
	Fionnuala Lennon	Homes England
	Julia Krause	Homes England
	Phillipa Zieba	Hemel Garden Communities
	Nathalie Bateman	Hemel Garden Communities
	Issy Spence	St Albans City & District Council/ Hemel Garden Communities
	Jonathan Wellstead	Hertfordshire County Council/ Hemel Garden Communities
	Vanessa Cooper	Hemel Garden Communities
Virgina Blackman	Avison Young (for Item 4 only)	
Alison Squires	Avison Young (for Item 4 only)	
Apologies:	Adam Wood (Hertfordshire Futures), Sarah McLaughlin (Hertfordshire County Council), Selma Hooley (Hemel Garden Communities), Mark Doran (Hertfordshire County Council)	

Attachments

- Item 2 – Draft HGC Delivery Board Minutes 18 July 2024
- Item 3 – HGC Programme Director's Update Report
 - Appendix A: Programme Plan Timeline
 - Appendix B: Risk Register
 - Appendix C: Engagement & Activity Plan
 - Appendix D: CRG Menti-meter Feedback
 - Appendix E: Team Organogram
 - Appendix F: HGC Procurement Plan

Item	
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1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>The Chair noted the apologies received and welcomed Julia Krause from Homes England.</p>
2.	<p>Previous minutes: 18 July 2024</p> <p>The minutes of the HGC Delivery Board, 18 July 2024 were agreed.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>The HGC Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been updated to reflect new Board members. <i>Note</i> – Councillor England and Councillor de Kort have now signed the MoU.</p> <p>HGC have invited Harlow and Gilston Garden Town transport representatives (Matt Cottam, HCC) to attend the Board meeting in January 2025.</p>
3.	<p>Local Plans update, HGC Policies approach and NPPF consultation</p> <p>CB provided an update. The SADC Reg 19 consultation went live on 26 September, following sign off from the Planning Policy and Climate (PP&C) Committee. The vote to proceed went through 11:2 and the consultation is now live until 8 November. Next steps are a report to full Council on 16 October, to agree submission subject to PP&C approval, following a review the Regulation 19 responses, on 28 November. The target submission date would be on or around 2 December. However, if there are any significant issues arising from the Regulation 19 responses, it would need to be referred back to full Council.</p> <p>The Regulation 19 was originally due to go live at the end of October with submission end of March 2025. The programme has been accelerated to meet the current proposed transitional arrangements of the draft NPPF, but has been supported by a robust process.</p> <p>The Chair congratulated SADC on this progress.</p> <p>JD provided an update on the Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) Local Plan. DBC would have liked to accelerate their Regulation 19 plan but the Regulation 18 consulted on last year did not meet the current housing target in full. In view of the draft NPPF, advice given to Members is that they will have to meet the current housing target in full, which is 1,016 dwellings per annum.</p> <p>In terms of key dates, the intention is to go to Overview and Scrutiny on 9 October. The agenda, draft plan and supporting documents, including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, will be published tomorrow. JD thanked the partners, particularly HCC, for their input to this and the HGC team who have worked hard in providing text for HGC elements.</p> <p>DBC has had to find more sites to achieve their housing target – 2 allocations on greenbelt land in Hemel Hempstead, 2 smaller sites at Berkhamsted and a couple of large sites at Tring, which featured in the 2020 consultation.</p>

	<p>The Plan will be reported to Cabinet on 14 October and Full Council on 15 October. It will go out to Regulation 19 consultation as soon as possible, however DBC has two by-elections pending. Legal advice is being sought on whether consultation can be carried out during the pre-election period. Members will be asked for full authority to be granted to submit the plan after the Reg 19 consultation ends, with no reporting back to committee.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the NPPF consultation. Victoria Collins MP and David Taylor MP have been briefed.</p>
4.	<p>Land Assembly - Presentation by Avison Young, followed by Q&A</p> <p>Virginia Blackman (VB) and Alison Squires (AS) from Avison Young joined the meeting and were welcomed. Avison Young has been advising HGC on land assembly.</p> <p>AS shared some background to the company and an overview of the early work carried out which included a review of draft planning policies, the Vision Statement and Concept Plan, land ownership and uses. It was noted that the Reg 18 drafts contained differing levels of detail and the need for consistency was highlighted.</p> <p>A key area for the project is to ensure there are clear delivery policies, such as how developers / landowners might be required to deliver key infrastructure such as the sustainable transport corridor, schools, health facilities, etc.</p> <p>VB shared their views on next steps which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land referencing – including a more detailed analysis of ownership, to include unknown ownership, access routes, and key connections to the existing community. • Landowners’ engagement - the Landowners’ Forum has now been established. • Ensure robust and consistent planning policies • Strategic Transport Corridor – whether this should be delivered early and where more work might be needed. • Delivery options - public sector funding availability, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (which addresses, for example, providing land for educational facilities), etc. <p>CH noted that the presentation was really helpful and reassuring. Referring to planning policy, CH queried whether the advice had been picked up by the respective planning teams. It was confirmed it had.</p> <p>PZ confirmed that HGC has also commissioned another piece of work from Dentons on Delivery Strategies and HGC now need to bring these two pieces of work together. The delivery strategy workstream has identified a series of options and further work now needs to be done, for example, on the specification of the strategic transport corridor, route options and potential delivery vehicles.</p>

	<p>VB noted guidance is still outstanding on Section 190 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, which might be relevant.</p> <p>The Board thanked Avison Young for attending.</p>
5.	<p>Programme Director's Update</p> <p><u>Central Government Activities</u></p> <p>PZ confirmed that HGC have submitted reps for the NPPF consultation, focussing primarily on the need for greater flexibility around transitional arrangements. A couple of other issues were flagged, including a suggestion that land released from the greenbelt would have a target of 50% affordable housing, which could impact financial viability, and a suggestion that affordable housing be prioritised over everything and an aim to reduce the use of viability assessments, which can be useful tools to facilitate stalled sites.</p> <p>PZ and NB attended a round table on 18 September, facilitated by Homes England, to discuss wider implications of the draft NPPF across the Garden Communities' programme.</p> <p>BL and PZ met with Victoria Collins MP and Daisy Cooper's office manager to discuss the HGC programme and draft NPPF challenges. A meeting took place with David Taylor MP on 20 September to stress the importance of keeping the local plans on track and to highlight the significant contribution that HGC can make to housing delivery in the medium term.</p> <p>PZ provided a summary of the consultation on the New Homes Accelerator Programme, which appears to have little merit to the HGC programme.</p> <p>Terms of Reference for the New Town's Task Force were published on 18 September. Subject to the agreement of the Board, PZ and BL would like to recommend reaching out to them to discuss how this programme might support the delivery of HGC. The Board endorsed the recommendation.</p> <p>A discussion took place on the merits of Development Corporations. BL shared his experiences and raised concerns over timing and likely powers. JK advised that Homes England has some expertise from within their wider team and this could be called upon if needed.</p> <p><u>The Crown Estate</u></p> <p>The Planning Performance Agreement with TCE is progressing, with monthly meetings and representatives from the HGC partners.</p> <p>PZ advised that Homes England have expressed an interest in being a signatory to the HGC / TCE MoU and have submitted some comments on the draft to TCE.</p> <p>TCE have submitted a planning application for the Cherry Tree Lane Community Garden and are waiting for it to be validated.</p>

	<p>TCE have produced a vision for LEHH which has been shared with the Chief Executives and planning teams. PZ advised that she would like to suggest a separate session is arranged for this to be presented to Board members. It was agreed a separate briefing should be arranged and the invite extended to other relevant councillors.</p> <p>Action: PZ to arrange for TCE to present their Vision to Councillors.</p> <p><u>Comms & Engagement</u></p> <p>PZ gave an update on recent comms and engagement which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CRG Workshop – 12 September 2024 • Landowners’ forum – 20 September 2024 • Stewardship briefing at Highfield Park Trust – 24 September 2024 • Generation Dacorum Careers Fair – 2 October 2024 • TCE’s public consultation • Local Plan Reg 19 consultation • CRGs - HGC will be arranging more CRGs in 2025 looking at Framework & Transformation and Stewardship SPDs. <p>PZ noted that with regards to the TCE consultation, HGC had been very clear on the need for plans to be shared in advance, particularly where HGC is referenced.</p> <p>AF noted that the need to ensure clashes with pre-election periods are respected.</p> <p>Action: BL to raise, with TCE, the need for early awareness around future consultation events and particularly timing sensitivities around pre-election periods.</p> <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>PZ noted a key red risk around the local plans being delayed or failing. Amber risks included the sustainable funding strategy and long-term financial considerations were discussed at the last meeting. Risks also surround the emerging NPPF and delivery against our challenging mode shift targets.</p> <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>PZ gave an overview of the next steps which includes a transfer from a planning to a delivery focus. This includes ongoing work on land assembly and delivery mechanisms: the Framework Plan & Transformation SPD; Stewardship SPD.</p>
6.	<p>HGC Procurement Plan</p> <p>NB advised that the full Procurement Plan aligns with the HGC programme, budgets agreed with the Board and DBC procurement guidance.</p> <p>NB gave an overview of the plan which includes existing contracts and new planned commissions broken down by those over £75k and those under £75k.</p> <p>CH commented that it was really good to see all of the procurement happening which is gearing us up for the next stages. BL echoed this.</p>

7.

AOB

The next meeting date is 16 January 2025 at 3.00 p.m.

BL noted that there has been lots of progress and congratulated the HGC Team.

There were no AOB items.