

Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Delivery Board

MINUTES

Friday, 3 October 2025, 10 a.m. – 12 noon

Attendees:	Bob Lane OBE (Chairman) (BL)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Councillor Adrian England (AE)	Dacorum Borough Council
	Darren Welsh (DW)	Dacorum Borough Council
	Councillor Jacqui Taylor (JT)	St Albans City & District Council
	Amanda Foley (AF)	St Albans City & District Council
	Christine Traill (CT)	St Albans City & District Council
	Councillor Paul Zukowskyj (PZuk)	Hertfordshire County Council
	Colin Haigh (CH)	Hertfordshire County Council
	Fionnuala Lennon (FL)	Homes England
	Julia Krause (JK)	Homes England
	Robin Oliver (RO)	Homes England
	Phillipa Zieba (PZ)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Nathalie Bateman (NB)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Selma Hooley (SH)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Vanessa Cooper (VC)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Ross Whear (RW)	Dacorum Borough Council
	Jonathan Wellstead (JW)	Hertfordshire County Council/ Hemel Garden Communities
	Adam Wood (AW)	Hertfordshire Futures
Apologies:	Sarah McLaughlin (HCC); Mark Doran (HCC), Councillor Sally Symington (DBC), Councillor Paul de Kort (SADC), Chris Briggs (SADC), Ronan Leydon (DBC), Issy Spence (HGC/SADC), Councillor Simy Dhayani (DBC)	

Item	
1.	<p>Welcome and apologies</p> <p>Apologies as above.</p>
2.	<p>Previous minutes – 25 June 2025</p> <p>Ross Whear attended the previous meeting however, he was not included in the attendance on the previous minutes.</p> <p>The previous minutes were agreed.</p> <p>Actions: PZ and AW to discuss opportunities for Herts Futures to support HGC's programmed workstreams.</p>

	Other items have been actioned.
3.	<p>Programme Director's Update</p> <p>PZ provided an update of progress since the last meeting in June 2025:</p> <p><u>Transport</u></p> <p>Local Plan transport modelling is complete. The combined COMET model to 2050 has identified an increase in congestion on some parts of the network. However, some conlooked at growth to 2050 and noted modelling over this extended period of time can be challenging.</p> <p>The Northern Sustainable Transport Corridor specification and routing work is complete which included a 400m distance from developments. This work has refined the HGC Framework Plan and HGC Framework and Transformation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>The Hemel Hempstead Transport Study is being updated and feeding into the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).</p> <p><u>Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)</u></p> <p>The Joint HGC examination will take place on 21 October. SADC (Stage 2) examination of Land East Hemel Hempstead site allocations (H1-H4) will be considered on 22 October 2025.</p> <p>HGC are working on two SPDs – Framework & Transformation and; Stewardship and Placemaking. Subject to Authority sign off, both will go out for public consultation February/March 2026.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>CH queried if there were any observations on how the examination are going?</p> <p>DI noted the first phase for DBC went particularly well. There were some challenges with Matters Raised but there are very few points to come back to Inspectors on and there was nothing unexpected. RW noted that the Inspectors asked DBC to provide a note on the cumulative impacts on the strategic network and the Duty to Cooperate with National Highways. A two-week consultation period has been given. RW provided the link Consultation on National Highways Hearing Note Let's Talk Dacorum</p> <p>CT noted the first phase went well. The Duty to Cooperate has been really helpful. There have been no surprises.</p> <p>AE noted his observations from sitting in on the first morning of DBC hearings which included that there was a lot of challenge from Inspectors which Officers assured was normal. There was not much extra information requested which gave him assurances that the process was going ok.</p> <p>PZuk queried if there was the expectation that the two Local Plans would need modifications? PZ confirmed there would be with an early review to reflect the changes in the Government targets. A conversation took place on the likely timescales of an early review. PZ noted there are plans to move onto this straight away. CT noted SADC</p>

are optimistic for their Local Plans to be adopted late Spring/early Summer 2026. JT noted her understanding that the intention from Government was for plans to be in place within 12 months from commencement. It would be helpful if that target could be reached, noting for SADC that would be April 2026.

HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)

PZ noted the HGC IDP for the period to 2050 addresses 10 infrastructure categories and is an extensive document which takes both authorities IDPs into consideration.

Costs have risen significantly and presenting some viability issues. Some costs can be allocated to sole or multiple allocations, others per dwelling basis and some may require external funding to support delivery. There may be gap funding opportunities to take forward.

PZ shared on screen the 10 Infrastructure strategies with their estimated costs.

PZ noted the HGC IDP is a live document and will continue to be revised. Education has the highest costs but is based on worst case scenario noting over time there are Child Yield changes. Contingencies have been included.

There has been refinement on the prioritisation of the interventions and a graphic was shown on screen of the breakdown of the four prioritisation categories with overall estimated cost.

A conversation took place on prioritisation. PZuk shared his understanding that any desirable items could not be included in S106. PZ confirmed that advice was sought on the categories. Prioritisation has been carried out by line by line. With Transport, some initiatives that came out of the Hemel Hempstead Transport Study have been downgraded such as dropped kerbs, crossings that can't necessarily be pinned to one development. Allocations per dwelling basis was looked at but this puts pressure on the town centre flatter developments. Who pays for what will be kept under review so it is not overburdening. Prioritisation is a helpful feature to focus on as can be used to leverage funding for the more desirable aspects that cannot be pinned onto a certain development.

The Authority IDPs also include prioritisation. They are very similar but have slightly different wording used: DBC refer to *important* and SADC *desirable*.

PZuk queried the quantum of difference of the total ask? NB advised it is £340million less. There have been significant increases.

PZ noted the biggest caveat of the HGC IDP is that it is based on a moment in time and will change.

JK queried if there are any timings of the asks which have been prioritised, noting they are over 20-30 years and would be critical for Homes England funding streams and asking for it all in one go might be challenging. PZ advised phasing will be in the next assessment, identifying what falls into what timeframe.

DW noted it would be useful to understand the billion pounds of the net development value and how the infrastructure asks turns into a viability and funding gap. With viability assessment being the next steps to follow, DW queried what the process would be or if it needs to be carried out? BL noted a business case would be needed and queried if HGC have the facilities to do this or if help was needed.

Action: PZ to consider further and report back at the next meeting.

Planning and Delivery Strategy

The HGC Developer/Landowner Forum meets on a regular basis and is being supported by Pinsent Masons LLP.

TCE are working collaboratively with Pigeon and Bloor (P&B) however, smaller developers are being excluded.

BL queried if the Collaboration Agreement is just being looked at for TCE and P&B? PZ advised it is wider, to include Kitewood and Appin Land. However, there is the risk that TCE, P&B will develop their own agreement. Draft Heads of Term were developed by Pinsent Masons but P&B felt it went too far so P&B have agreed to take it away and draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and have this in place in time for their applications. HGC are doing their best to bring the other Developers along. AE noted his understanding was that HGC is trying to act as one coordinated development, so he is alarmed to hear this.

BL noted the need for the momentum to not be slowed down for those that are willing to proceed and to keep to the overall vision.

NB noted that Pinsent Masons are supporting HGC on policies and modifications for examination. They have suggested some modifications on ransoms and Collaboration Agreements and some additional wording has gone into the policies. An MoU would be really useful to support the local plans.

Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)

Submission is anticipated in December 2025 for TCE Land East of Hemel Hempstead, 4,000 dwellings.

Submission is anticipated November/December 2025 for Pigeon and Bloor Land North of Redbourn Road, 1500 dwellings.

Submission is anticipated in November 2025 for the TCE Westwick Row, 80 dwellings.

Communications and Engagement

HGC colleagues attended Generation Dacorum last week. A survey for the students focussed on the future of schools and leisure. There were approx. 200 responses. Early indication of results includes students wanting air conditioning, biodiversity and planting. There was the indication of the need for SEND support e.g. calm break out areas.

	<p>Action: PZ to present the results at the next meeting.</p> <p>PZ advised subject to approval, there are plans to consult on the emerging SPDs in the new year. It was noted that awareness of the HGC Programme/Developments is not as high as it could be in the community and the new year could be a good time for a refresh in promoting the programme. AE noted that the Pigeon and Bloor development is quite strategic from a bus point of view so there could be opportunities for communications on the fantastic bus service to be introduced.</p> <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>PZ advised that there were two items previously rated red that have now dropped to amber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the escalation of infrastructure costs with pressure on viability of flatter developers and; - the non-engagement of landowners – this could be mitigated by desk top referencing. <p>There is one item that remains red – the inability to achieve mode share targets. Further work is needed.</p> <p>AE noted there remains a large amount of amber items. It was noted that with the current momentum of the Local Plans, many items should turn green in the new year.</p> <p><u>Next steps for HGC Programme</u></p> <p>PZ provided an update on the next steps for the HGC Programme which included the continuation of support to the Local Plans through examination and to the PPAs referred to previously. There is also the need to finalise the draft SPDs which will govern transformation and stewardship, concluding the emerging draft HGC IDP to 2050, implementing a planning and delivery strategy and ongoing monitoring for external funding opportunities.</p> <p>PZ confirmed Pinsent Masons have been appointed to support the HGC Programme.</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u></p> <p>DS referred to the work that has taken place on the HGC IDP and noted there has been a phenomenal amount of work carried out over the past few weeks. Officers should be commended. BL noted he agrees entirely - there has been remarkable progress over the past 6 months and gave thanks to everyone who has been working on it.</p>
	<p>AOB</p> <p><u>Homes England Update:</u></p> <p>JK provided an update from Homes England including that there is a new Chief Executive. There has been a huge amount of work carried out on the national housing bank and lots going on behind the scenes ready for 1 April 2026. Discussions are ongoing with regards to the national delivery fund and how funding will be split. There</p>

prioritisation is on the ability to deliver. JK will hopefully be in a position to update the Board further at the next meeting.

Action: JK to provide an update on delivery funding.

BL noted he had not seen anything about garden communities and queried if this was unchanged? FL noted the Minister has backed his commitment to garden communities. FL has previously been in touch with PZ about submitting a bid. The programme is continuing and noted there is increasing pressure on what can be delivered.

DW referred to the New Towns Taskforce announcement at the weekend which identified Cruz Hill in Hertfordshire, close to Hemel Hempstead as a possible new growth area. A conversation took place on possible collaborations and HCC being part of the UK Innovation Corridor meetings. CH will provide an update at the next HGC Board meeting on the outcome of the UK Innovation Corridor meeting taking place on 21 October.

Action: CH to provide an update on the UK Innovation Corridor meeting.

Next meeting date: Monday, 24 November 2025, 2 – 4 pm