

Hemel Garden Communities (HGC) Delivery Board

MINUTES

Tuesday, 16 June 2026, 10.30am - 12.30pm

Location: Conference Room 2, The Forum, Hemel Hempstead

Attendees:	Bob Lane OBE (Chair)	Hemel Garden Communities
	Councillor Sally Symington	Dacorum Borough Council
	Councillor Adrian England	Dacorum Borough Council
	Darren Welsh	Dacorum Borough Council
	Councillor Paul de Kort	St Albans City & District Council
	Amanda Foley	St Albans City & District Council
	Christine Traill	St Albans City & District Council
	Councillor Ruth Brown – (RB)	Hertfordshire County Council
	Colin Haigh	Hertfordshire County Council
	Julia Krause	Homes England
	Robin Oliver	Homes England (online)
	Phillipa Zieba	Hemel Garden Communities
	Nathalie Bateman	Hemel Garden Communities
	Vanessa Cooper	Hemel Garden Communities
	Issy Spence	Hemel Garden Communities
	Adam Wood	Hertfordshire Futures (online)
	Mark Patchett	Community Stewardship Solutions (Item 2 only)
Apologies:	Councillor Paul Zukowskyj (Hertfordshire County Council), Jonathan Wellstead (Hemel Garden Communities), Sarah McLaughlin (Hertfordshire County Council), Fionnuala Lennon (Homes England)	

Item	
1.	Welcome and apologies RB, deputising for Councillor Zukowskyj, was welcomed to the Board. Apologies as above.
2.	Presentation on Stewardship Hubs Business Case (Community Stewardship Solutions (CSS)) Mark Patchett (MP) gave a short presentation on the HGC Stewardship Hubs Business Case. A copy of the Business Case Executive Summary was distributed and questions tabled.

3.	Previous minutes – 17 March 2026 The previous minutes were agreed. PZ confirmed that the Westwick Row Summary Pack had been circulated and an update meeting with TCE scheduled for 1 July. A summary paper for the Youth Forum engagement will be circulated after the meeting. The official opening of the Cherry Tree Lane planting will be discussed under Item 4.
4.	Programme Director's Update PZ referred to the Programme Director's Update report circulated with the agenda and summarised progress since the last meeting (March 2026), covering: • Local Plan progress; • Advancement of the draft Supplementary Planning Documents (Framework & Transformation and Stewardship & Placemaking); • Transport workstreams, including the behaviour change and bus strategy, and forthcoming parking and Green Loop feasibility work; • Planning applications, including submission of site H1 by Pigeon and Bloor Homes on 27 May; • Capital projects, including progress on parklets and the Grand Union Canal feasibility study; and • The Risk Register. RW advised that on Friday 12 June, DBC was placed under special measures in relation to major planning application decisions, following an assessment of recent planning appeal performance. The designation is expected to remain in place for approximately one year. The assessment period (March 2023 to April 2025) showed that overturned appeals narrowly exceeded the 10% threshold. A short discussion took place regarding the likely implications, including DBC's view that applicants with an established relationship with the Council are likely to continue to seek determination by the Local Planning Authority. RW further noted that, in addition to the planned briefing with Development Management teams on the HGC Stewardship and Placemaking SPD, it may be beneficial to arrange a briefing for the Development Management Committee.
5.	Finance Report PZ referred to the annual Finance Update circulated with the agenda and summarised the key points as follows.

Total expenditure for 2025/26 was £1,091,129. A breakdown of commissioned work was presented. It was noted that legal costs accounted for 26% of total commissioned expenditure; however, this reflected the breadth of support provided, including work on the Section 106 framework, guidance for the Stewardship Business Case, and input into viability, funding, and land assembly.

The proposed 2026/27 budget, compared to 2025/26, includes a 37% increase in technical studies. This reflects the addition of new transport studies covering Behaviour Change, Bus Strategy, Parking, and the Green Loop. The 207% increase in Communications, Engagement, and Other Supplies relates primarily to a planned overhaul of the HGC website. While the percentage increase is significant, the overall cost remains relatively modest.

PZ outlined the forecast income for 2026/27 and 2027/28. HCC has now provided their full capital commitment to the programme, however, Herts IQ has committed funding for the next three years. The forecast assumes match funding from Homes England / MHCLG for 2027/28, which will need to be kept under review.

Based on the current income and expenditure projections, the anticipated carry forward is £365,717 for 2026/27 and £32,826 for 2027/28. Both funding and expenditure will continue to be monitored and reviewed.

Recommendation:

PZ asked the Board to note:

- the 2025/26 programme delivery and year-end financial position as set out in the HGC Finance Paper;
- to endorse the HGC programme and budget for 2026/27; and,
- the indicative budgets for future years set out in the HGC Finance Paper.

RB queried why legal costs were relatively high. PZ advised that this reflected the significant level of input required, including multiple reviews of the HGC Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents, particularly the Stewardship and Placemaking SPD. Legal support, while inherently costly, is providing advice across all three authorities. Usage is being carefully monitored and managed.

PZ noted that in previous years the HGC team had taken an ambitious approach to programme delivery; however, this has now been moderated to align with what is considered realistically achievable.

JK noted that the National Housing Bank is now operational and reiterated that previous funding streams, such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), are no longer available. Homes England is keen to engage with HGC to explore

	funding opportunities and appropriate timing. JK highlighted that once funding has been secured for a scheme, it cannot be accessed again for the same purpose, which can present challenges. However, there remains a strong national focus on delivery within the current Parliament. JK also noted the number of competing strategic projects in the region, meaning that future funding decisions will be influenced by strategic fit. The Board endorsed the budget for 2026/27.
6.	AOB PZ will circulate an agenda for the TCE meeting scheduled for 1 July. PZ added that TCE are seeking more regular meetings with Chief Officers. HGC are looking at potential dates.
7.	Next meeting: Tuesday, 15 September 2026: 10.30am –12.30pm