

HGGT

HARLOW & GILSTON
GARDEN TOWN

STEWARDSHIP CHARTER

Summer 2023

DRAFT

Interactive PDF: best viewed on a computer screen



The Garden Town Definition of Stewardship

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town defines stewardship as, “The inclusive, proactive and responsive planning, placemaking and care of public assets alongside ambitious community development practices to ensure that the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the Garden Town can be enjoyed by present and future generations, equally.”

Revision	Date
01	June 2023



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Definition adapted from *Place-keeping, Open Space Management in Practice*, by Nicola Dempsey, Harry Smith, Mel Burton (2014).

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FOREWORD

A significant part of creating a thriving Garden Town and a great quality of life for residents is ensuring that long-term community led management is in place for the new buildings and neighbourhoods.

Creating this long-term approach should begin at the planning stages of a new development, placing stewardship at the heart of place making from the start not trying to introduce it at some later date.

This draft Stewardship Charter identifies six principles that are essential to enable effective and enduring stewardship. The six principles are currently in draft form and this consultation is an opportunity for you to comment on how they could be further enhanced.

The principles have been formed following initial contributions made by stakeholders from across all of the Garden Town proposed new neighbourhoods.. Those stakeholders have included elected Councillors, contributions from the five Councils, local communities, landowners and developers. .

As well as looking after the management of the new garden neighbourhoods, the stewardship arrangements are proposed to support both new and current residents.

This will be achieved by putting in place a lasting and meaningful neighbourhood-based stewardship relationship between leaseholders, tenants and freeholders and between residents and developers.

The six principles are currently in draft form and the Garden Town partners are keen to hear your feedback on how they should be further shaped.

Once the consultation phase has completed and the responses processed and responded to, the five Councils that make up the Garden Town initiative will sign up to the Charter and adopt the principles.

As development proposals come forward, existing communities and each new garden neighbourhood community can then work to form the leadership group for that neighbourhood and commence the application of the stewardship principles in practice.

Our expectation is that key stakeholders will sign up to the principles that are adopted and agreed.

Guy Nicholson
Independent Chair, HGGT



INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

WHO & WHAT IS THIS CHARTER FOR?

- This Charter is for use by landowners, developers, site promoters and planning applicants as guidance to support them in implementing stewardship arrangements to the required standard.
- It is primarily intended to apply to the four new communities which will come forward as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT or the Garden Town) but it may be appropriate to be applied to existing assets too.
- It is also for use by new and existing communities, so they can understand how they can expect to be involved.
- The Charter will be taken into account when assessing the acceptability of development proposals coming forward as part of the Garden Town; as such it is intended to be a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- The Garden Town Partners (see below) expect landowners and developers to sign-up to the Charter to demonstrate their support for aspirational stewardship arrangements across HGGT.

BACKGROUND

- The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is being supported and delivered by the five Garden Town Partners (East Herts District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Harlow District Council and Hertfordshire County Council). This Charter sets out their joint requirements for stewardship. The Garden Town Partners are looking for innovation and ambitious approaches to ensure that good quality outcomes are achieved.
- The Charter complements the [Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision](#). The Key Principles for Healthy Growth and how they are tied together by long term stewardship arrangements are set out in the Vision. This inter-relationship is shown in the Vision Wheel, included overleaf is an extract from the Vision.



Fig 1. Relationship between the Key Principles for Healthy Growth, as set out in the HGGT Vision, November 2018.

DEVELOPMENT WITHIN HARLOW

- As well as the four new communities, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town comprises the whole of the existing town of Harlow, developed as a New Town in the latter half of the twentieth century. Arrangements are already in place for the management and maintenance of public spaces and facilities within Harlow.
- Whilst not primarily intended as guidance in relation to the development of sites within the existing town, the Principles set out here can be considered in relation to those sites and development proposals if appropriate to do so. Consideration can also be given to the relationship between new stewardship arrangements and the arrangements in place for existing assets, where there are mutual benefits to be achieved.

THE NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES

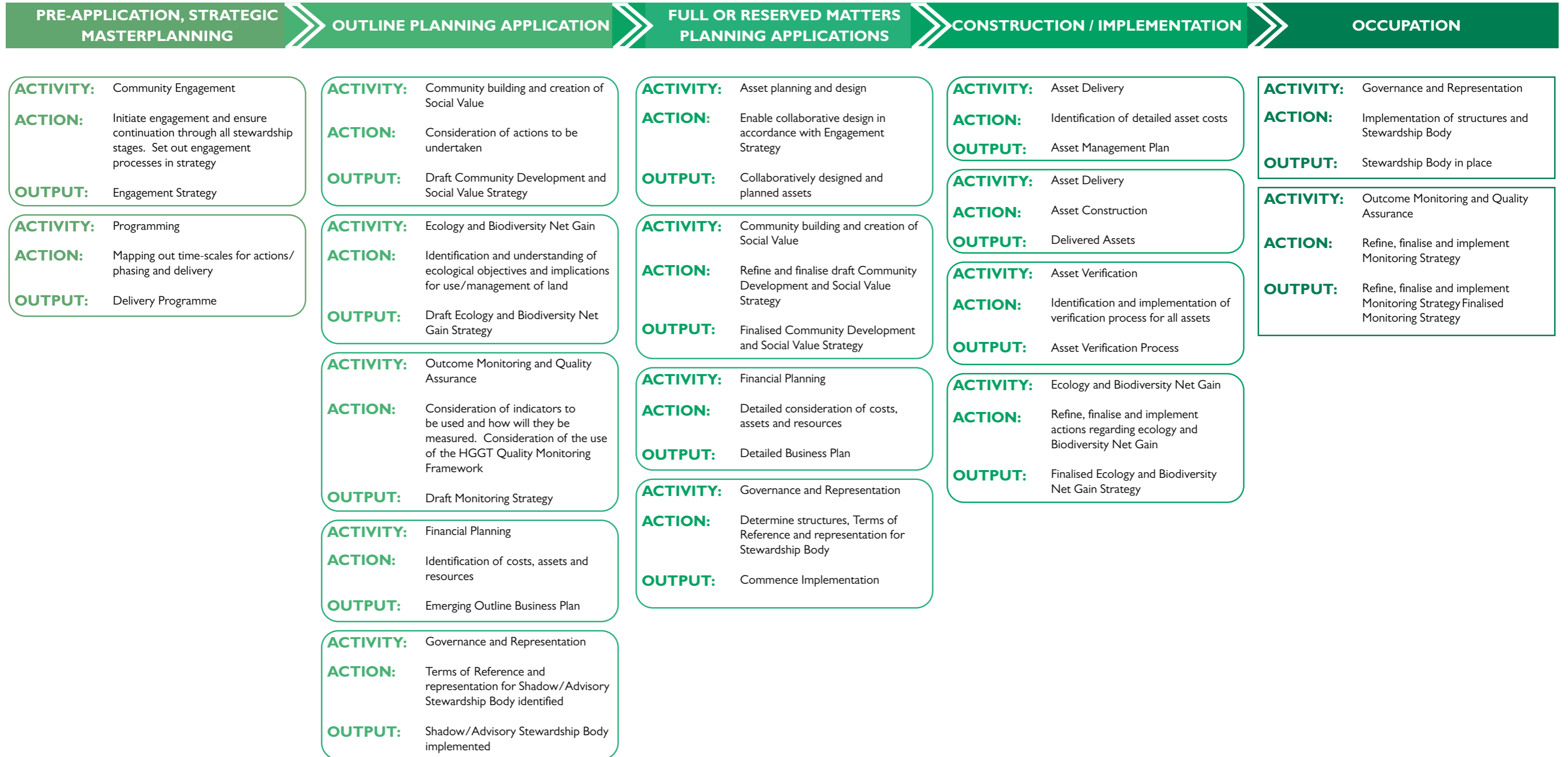
- The new communities element of the Garden Town comprises the delivery of four new, sustainable and cohesive neighbourhoods around Harlow.
- The design and delivery of attractive and functional places is integral to achieving this outcome. The new communities will include high-quality new homes, employment opportunities, sustainable transport infrastructure, and a range of other social and environmental enhancements.
- All of these elements should be delivered in a way that ensures they are accessible to existing residents in the area. Similarly, the residents of the new community developments should be able to easily access and support the ongoing services and facilities provided within Harlow.

SUCCESSFUL NEW PLACES AS PART OF HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN

- For the Garden Town to be a truly successful place, it will need to be more than just the initial creation of high-quality environments; the new developments will also need to be supported by long-term, inclusive decision-making, placemaking and place-keeping mechanisms to ensure that the long term stewardship and governance of each place is secured.
- The stewardship and governance arrangements have a role to play in ensuring that the new communities are integrated with the existing diverse communities which make up the Garden Town. They will enable inclusivity in all aspects of the future stewardship of these new places – so that they continue to be great places for future generations, long after initial development has been completed.
- Where a Stewardship Body takes on the management of any transport infrastructure, it will have a role to play in ensuring that the aspirations of the Garden Town partners in relation to transport outcomes are achieved. These are set out in the [HGGT Transport Strategy](#).
- In other words, stewardship at Harlow and Gilston Garden Town should and will be more than just the management and maintenance of public areas and green spaces: it will enable inclusive community participation, ensuring local and neighbouring residents and businesses are informed, involved and empowered in how their local areas are shaped and cared for.
- This Charter is required to be considered in the determination of planning applications relating to the Garden Town and, as such, all proposals for stewardship arrangements must demonstrate that they have had regard to its Principles. Where stewardship arrangements are secured through s106 Legal Obligation Agreements related to planning permissions, these will be binding on both initial and subsequent site developers, should land be sold on whilst development is taking place.
- A Glossary is included at the end of the Charter to ensure that the terminology used within it is understood.



TIMELINE





PRINCIPLE I:

Collaborative Stewardship

1.1 The Garden Town partners are committed to ensuring that stewardship arrangements are brought forward collaboratively by both those proposing development and the existing and future communities.

1.2 To achieve this, landowners, applicants, developers and site promoters must engage the community inclusively in each phase of stewardship development as outlined below and then described more fully in the later sections of this Charter.

1.3 This work falls under four areas:

- Development: Strategy, Planning and Business Development.
- Delivery: Delivering assets
- Governance and Quality Assurance: A decision-making body, which oversees and manages the work, including monitoring and reporting, finance, and resource management. (Principles 4,5,6). This can initially take the form of a 'Shadow or Advisory Stewardship Body', which would not perform all of the above functions on commencement. Set up in advance of the ongoing long term governance arrangements, a Shadow/Advisory

Stewardship Body would ensure early community representation in decision making.

- Ongoing Care and Management: Caring for social and physical assets, including their enhancement and / or replacement, and providing stewardship services in perpetuity.

1.4 An Engagement Strategy and Stewardship Delivery Programme will be produced early in the consideration of development proposals.

1.5 The Engagement Strategy will set out which stakeholders will be engaged, how they will be engaged and when in relation to the programme.

1.6 The Stewardship Delivery Programme will set out when the more detailed proposals for the long-term stewardship of the site will come forward.

1.7 Those detailed proposals will include collaboratively developed strategies and plans for the following:

- The detailed design and development of assets;
- Community development and Social Value;

- Ecology and Biodiversity net gain – which should explore the opportunities potentially available to ensure ecological outcomes, the relationship with recreational uses, future dynamic approaches to land managed by a Stewardship Body and positive financial outcomes this may enable;

- Outcome Monitoring and Quality Assurance.

1.8 Following its assessment of the view of residents on the quality of life in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area in 2022, (link), the Garden Town Partners will be undertaking a similar exercise in future to enable changes in views to be sought and considered. How this is undertaken will be set out in a Quality Monitoring Strategy. The expectation of the Garden Town Partners is that outcome monitoring and quality assurance in relation to stewardship will largely take place through the approach to be set out in the Quality Monitoring Strategy.

CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Engagement Strategy	Early engagement, pre-application or Strategic Master Planning stage
Delivery Programme	Early engagement, pre-application or Strategic Master Planning stage
Draft Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Draft Ecological and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Draft Monitoring Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Final Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Full or Reserved Matters planning application stage
Final Ecological and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Construction/Implementation stage
Final Monitoring Strategy	Occupation stage





PRINCIPLE 2:

Community assets: collaborative planning, design, delivery and care of physical infrastructure which is sustainable, responsive, effective, and established in perpetuity

2.1 Physical, social and community infrastructure is essential for the day-to-day functioning, health and wellbeing and overall success of the community. This infrastructure is referred to in this Charter as the community assets. The sustainability of the community assets will depend on how relevant they are to the community; and how well they are planned, designed, specified, delivered, and cared for.

2.2 Asset type, quality, location, and the timing of their delivery, as well as flexibility of their use over time, alongside community values and needs, are therefore essential considerations for achieving long-term, sustainable, collaborative stewardship.

2.3 Asset planning, design and delivery must therefore be undertaken collaboratively with the community, taking into account the proposals in community development strategies. Decision-making on masterplanning and the design of potential community assets should take into account future maintenance and management requirements and the associated costs.

2.4 The type of assets that are suitable for stewardship bodies to manage at a local level will be specific to each

development and will be influenced by what works best for both the asset and the local community.

2.5 Community assets subject to stewardship arrangements could include:

- Green and blue infrastructure, including biodiversity net gain land, sustainable drainage systems (subject to potential regulatory change in respect of SUDS adoption), allotments, and community orchards.
- Public open spaces, including the central focal area of developments where community facilities and services are provided, sports pitches, and play areas.
- Community buildings and services, including crèches, sustainable transport hubs and non-adopted highways, footpaths and cycleways, delivering positive outcomes in relation to the Garden Town partners transport aspirations.
- Income generating assets, including those which may only generate an income in the longer term, including commercial floorspace, potentially biodiversity net gain, renewable energy, and farmland.
- Meanwhile places, providing place-based activities, community development and income generating opportunities.

ensure that community assets are properly cared for over the long-term, including potential replacement.

2.7 Asset Management Plans must comprise transparent, robust, business plans, detailing the standards to which the asset is to be delivered and to ensure that quality and viability are verified.

2.8 As the development grows or plans evolve, further assets will be managed in the same way.

2.9 All transfers of community assets to the stewardship body will be subject to an Asset Verification Process to enable them to be confirmed as fit for purpose. This process will include a clear procedure to be followed where the quality of the asset is found to be sub-standard and where it cannot initially therefore be transferred to the stewardship body. The procedure must ensure that initially sub-standard assets do not remain in a transitional state.

2.10 Community assets will generally be freehold or subject to a long lease at a peppercorn rent (there may be circumstances where other arrangements would be appropriate, but these are likely to be the exception); and may also be leased or utilised in the shorter term for meanwhile purposes, where this serves the community's best interests

CHECKLIST:

WHAT	BY WHEN
Collaboratively Planned and Designed Community Assets	Full planning or reserved matters application stage
Asset Management Plans	Construction/implementation stage
Asset Delivery	Construction/implementation stage
Final Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Construction/implementation stage





PRINCIPLE 3:

Community development: collaborative planning, delivery and running of place-based community projects

3.1 Community development, like asset development, is the collaborative planning, delivery, and management of a project, supporting the social infrastructure of a community and its sense of ownership and care of a place.

3.2 It is as important as a community's physical infrastructure. Place-based community projects will ensure that the community's needs, and values are understood and enable those needs and values to be incorporated into how assets evolve and are used.

3.3 Such projects can also create opportunities for community collaboration and integration. Projects should be initiated alongside asset development and as soon as there is a community to work with. Projects should be in place, at the latest, by the time of any initial occupations at the site. They can support positive outcomes in relation to the future operation of the sites, e.g. in relation to the transport objectives set out in the HGGT Transport Strategy.

3.4 Developers, and subsequently the stewardship bodies who will inherit the responsibility, should collaboratively plan and deliver community development initiatives

with existing, emerging and neighbouring communities.

3.5 Development creates extensive opportunities for this as every asset and phase of its development enables community participation. Community participation brings benefits to places and assets through wider diversity of input and experience into the design process. It also has the added benefit of enhancing community feeling and bettering perceptions of places (with subsequent measurable social, socio-economic benefits).

3.6 Projects are expected to enable demographic representation, prioritising under-represented groups. They should work in partnership with existing local community and voluntary organisations.

3.7 Community development and Social Value strategies must therefore ensure linkages with other elements of the development of the place including with master planning and the programming of delivery of assets.

3.8 The stewardship body will also be responsible for delivering communication tools and community events, including:

- Welcome packs to new residents and carrying out associated welcome events
- Community events such as art, cultural, and sport festivals and celebrations
- Maintaining a website, newsletter, and community noticeboards to share information

CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Draft Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Final Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Full or Reserved Matters planning application stage





PRINCIPLE 4:

A representative and accountable governance structure to develop, deliver and manage stewardship

4.1 To ensure resilience, quality, equality, diversity and inclusion, stewardship governance structures and processes need to meet the following criteria:

- Be accountable to and representative of the community they serve with a representative governance structure;
- Be transparent in the way they are run and governed;
- Be adaptable, innovative entrepreneurial and maintain holistic and balanced approaches across socio-economic, ecological and social requirements;
- Have sufficient financial resources for start-up, development and long-term viability;
- Have the capacity and flexibility to provide the potential to integrate with neighbouring stewardship organisations, where appropriate and where enhanced collective value can be achieved;
- Have the flexibility to change over time to meet changing needs of the Stewardship Body and the community, with regular review periods built in to ensure this is happening.

4.2 The governance structure for the Stewardship Body will provide the necessary legal and strategic framework to enable all of these.

4.3 It will own or lease, assets, be responsible for resources, ensure quality management and be accountable for service delivery, demonstrable benefits, and inclusive community participation.

4.4 A robust governance structure will ensure it achieves the following objectives:

- Assets are properly safeguarded in the public interest, in perpetuity
- Community development and asset development are progressed together to optimise value
- Service delivery is effective and of a high quality
- Resilience is integrated to be able to deal with changing circumstances
- The community is empowered, and accountability is maintained

Governance structure

4.5 It is expected that the stewardship body will:

- Take the form of a charitable trust (such as a community management trust or similar);
- Be supported by a community forum (this is likely to evolve from early engagement work) to ensure local and neighbouring community views inform decision-making, and;
- Make use of a subsidiary body, such as community interest company, to allow commercial flexibility, where necessary.

4.6 A Shadow/Advisory Stewardship Body or Community Forum will be formed at the earliest opportunity to support strategy development and to help shape and inform the establishment of the Stewardship Body and the work it will be responsible for.

4.7 This Shadow/Advisory Stewardship Body will include representation from the local authority, landowners, developer(s), community, and other relevant stakeholders. In order to make the Shadow/Advisory Body and subsequent Stewardship Body accessible

for local community reps, consideration should be given to remuneration for their time.

4.8 Before occupation of the first homes, or completion of the first community asset, the full Stewardship Body will be implemented in place of the Shadow/Advisory Body. It is envisaged that the Stewardship Body will need to be established prior to first occupation of homes in order to be able to collect estate charges from new residents and have the necessary arrangements established from first occupation.

CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Shadow/Advisory Stewardship Body or Community Forum	Outline planning application stage
Determine structure, Terms of Reference and representation for Stewardship Body	Full or Reserved Matters planning application stage
Stewardship Body	Occupation Stage





PRINCIPLE 5:

Financial sustainability, resilience, and entrepreneurship

5.1 A long-term viable and prudent Business Plan must be developed which ensures the efficacy and success of the stewardship arrangements, ensuring financial sustainability and properly recognising the costs of the high-quality outcomes to be achieved.

5.2 The Business Plan must recognise the need for the Stewardship Body to be supported by sufficient resource, capacity, and expertise (which may need to be purchased if it is not available within the Body).

5.3 An Outline Business Plan will be expected early in the planning process with a detailed Business Plan prepared once the extent of the assets and community development work is starting to become crystallised, even if only for the initial phases of a development. A detailed Business Plan can evolve as more phases of development come forward.

5.4 Asset Management Plans are to be provided and agreed before the transfer of any assets to the Stewardship Body. Such plans should provide for long term maintenance liabilities over the full life cycle of the asset, including the need for sinking funds to be built up to deal with repair and renewal where appropriate. As a general principle, owners/ developers should remain ultimately responsible for performance and assets should not be transferred until long term sustainable financial arrangements are in place. Equally, transfer of assets should not be delayed too late in a development.

5.5 A diversity of income sources will be available to the Stewardship Body, enabling a flexible, adaptable, and entrepreneurial approach in its financial planning. Diverse income sources will also ensure long term resilience to changing circumstances or unforeseen events. This diversity of income sources will include the endowment of the Stewardship Body with physical assets that can generate a revenue to support their running.

5.6 Any service and estate charges (residential and/or commercial) will be set at and maintained at a reasonable level that is commensurate with the level of cost that is incurred in maintaining or servicing the relevant assets.

5.7 Any service charges will be enforced in an equitable manner without compromising the occupancy or ownership of residents' homes. Charging schedules will be subject to regular reviews to ensure value for money. Services charges will be properly brought to the attention of initial and future prospective residents within marketing materials and wherever else necessary to ensure early awareness.

5.8 The expenditure of the Stewardship Body will fall into four main headings.

Financial subsidy will be required from the developer(s) in the early years of delivery and must be available to allow early development work:

• Development

- Such as early stakeholder engagement and establishing community network.
- Place-shaping through developing strategies, plans and governance.
- Master planning and co-design.

• Governance and quality assurance

- Core infrastructure costs for the stewardship organisation including financial management, staffing and resources, and operations.
- Establishing quality targets, monitoring, and reporting.

• Delivery

- Project costs for community development, and service delivery.

• Ongoing management

- Management and care of all assets transferred to the body, including sinking funds for eventual long-term replacement.
- Facilities management and operation of community facilities.
- Training and upskilling.
- Being flexible, adaptable and entrepreneurial to ensure that opportunities to secure income are explored.

5.9 Stewardship Bodies will need to have the necessary resources and skills to apply for external funding opportunities to further the interests of the local community, however they will not be dependent on external funding to fulfil their responsibilities.

5.10 Appropriate arrangements should be identified and established that allow for independent scrutiny of the operation of the Stewardship Body to be undertaken if there are concerns that it is not operating acceptably. Potential arrangements should also be considered should a Stewardship Body, experience financial difficulties, or become insolvent.

CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Outline Business Plan	Outline planning application stage
Detailed Business Plan	Full or Reserved Matters planning application stage
Asset Management Plan	Construction/Implementation Stage





PRINCIPLE 6:

Ambitious Environmental, social, and socio-economic practice and monitoring

6.1 The Stewardship Body will ensure that all its activities are carried out in accordance with ambitious environmental, social and socio-economic practice, taking into account relevant national and local policies and guidance.

6.2 Local policies include:

- This Charter;
- The [HGGT Sustainability Checklist](#);
- The [HGGT Future Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy](#)
- The [HGGT Communications and Engagement Strategy](#)

6.3 Ambitious quality targets should be identified by the Stewardship Body aligned to the following six key themes for healthy growth, where these are within the scope of the activities of the stewardship body:

1. Placemaking and homes.
2. Economy and regeneration.
3. Landscape, ecology, blue and green infrastructure.
4. Sustainable movement.

5. Public health.

6. Social value and culture.

6.4 Transparent and outcome-focused quality assurance and monitoring arrangements will be required. Stewardship monitoring will sit within a wider monitoring framework with targets set out early and reviewed periodically. Many of these will be reviewed through the Garden Town partners Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy, which will include performance indicators linked to the six key themes listed above.

6.5 Examples of positive outcomes that could be identified for monitoring range from enabling positive behaviours for both households individually and for the community collectively e.g. recycling, home composting, school streets, co-design and build of public space, etc to using local small businesses for services and goods.

6.6 The following is a non-exhaustive list from which indicators could be drawn:

- Ecology (habitat creation, protection, and enhancement).
- Recreational uses.

- Climate mitigation and resilience.
- Biodiversity net gain.
- Social value.
- Community cohesion.
- Quality of life.
- Sustainable and active transport (modal shift).
- Economic growth and local job creation.
- Volunteering and skills development.

6.7 It will be expected that a culture of continuous improvement will be incorporated into the running of Stewardship Bodies so that they always seek to improve the quality of their services and deliver enhanced social value wherever possible.

6.8 It will also be expected that the stewardship bodies will share their knowledge with other stewardship ventures (locally and nationally), both to learn from their experiences and celebrate their achievements.

CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Draft Monitoring Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Final Monitoring Strategy	Occupation Stage





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Assets	Buildings, structures, spaces and land constructed or delivered as a result of the development which do not form part of residential properties. A range of these will be transferred to the care of the Stewardship Body. The terminology 'asset' is used in this Charter whether or not the particular building, structure etc may generate income through its use.
Community Development	Actions undertaken to enhance the community being created as a result of the development, its awareness of and sense of ownership and control over the new places being created.
Community Forum	Part of the governance arrangements. A Forum which seeks to ensure that all members of the community have an ability to express their views and influence decision making.
Engagement Strategy	A strategy setting out how all stakeholders will be invited, encouraged and enable to ensure their views are made and taken into account.
Governance	The formal structures and the operation of them through which the agreed stewardship arrangements are implemented.
Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT)	The whole of the existing town of Harlow and the proposed new communities to be development on land allocated for that purpose in the Garden Town partners Local Plans. These comprise the Gilston Area to the north of Harlow, land to the East Of Harlow, Latton Priory to the south of Harlow and Water Lane to the west of Harlow.
Material Planning Consideration	A matter which is to be taken into account in the determination of planning application proposals, with weight to be assigned to it by the decision maker.
Meanwhile Places/Uses	Spaces, buildings and uses of a temporary nature, put in place prior to the longer term and more permanent use of those buildings etc and which can be used to test initiatives, generate income and community cohesion.

New Communities	The proposals, as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, for significant new development at the Gilston Area to the north of Harlow, land to the East Of Harlow, Latton Priory to the south of Harlow and Water Lane to the west of Harlow.
Quality Monitoring Framework/ Strategy	The Strategy to be developed and implemented on behalf of the Garden Town partners to monitor the physical, social and socio-economic quality of the Garden Town as it develops. Through the Framework the specific attributes and indicators to be monitored will be identified.
Service Charges	Charges levied on all occupiers of residential and commercial property delivered as part of the development of the new communities and which will form an element of the income of the Stewardship Body.
Shadow/ Advisory Stewardship Body	An early form of the Stewardship Body (see below) which enables engagement and representation to be achieved early in the life of the delivery of stewardship outcomes.
Social Value	The outcome of a range of actions which can be taken to enhance and improve communities, contributing to a more holistic view of how places and projects are valued and what they provide to the community.
Stewardship Body	The body responsible for delivering the agreed stewardship arrangements for new development, through the agreed governance arrangements.

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