

## Agenda Item 10

**Report to:** HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN JOINT COMMITTEE

**Title:** HGGT STEWARDSHIP CHARTER

**Report Reference:** JC-005-2024/25

**Date:** 22 July 2024

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**Enclosures:** Appendix A – Summary of consultation responses and draft Charter amendments  
Appendix B – Report of the QRP  
Appendix C – Summary of points raised by the QRP and draft Charter amendments  
Appendix D – Young Persons engagement report  
Appendix E – Further amendments to the draft Charter  
Appendix F – Draft Charter Scenario Testing  
Appendix G – Stewardship Charter – final draft for adoption

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### Recommendations/Decisions Required:

#### The HGGT Joint Committee is asked to:

- A. Consider the result of the consultation exercise and consequential amendments to the draft Stewardship Charter as set out in paras 3.1 to 3.11 of this report.
- B. Agree the final Stewardship Charter as set out at Appendix G.
- C. Delegate authority to the HGGT Director to make further minor amendments to the final Stewardship Charter as may be required and to update the Charter Foreword in the version of the Charter for final publication in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee.

### Executive Summary:

The 5 Council partners have considered the approach to be taken to ensure effective stewardship of the new communities created for the Garden Town. In this respect stewardship comprises the

inclusive, proactive, and responsive planning, placemaking and care of new places. It was decided that Stewardship Guidance should be produced, providing direction to landowners, developers, community representatives and other stakeholders. This Guidance took the form of the Stewardship Charter, of six high level principles that set the expectations to achieve stewardship outcomes.

The draft Charter was subject to public consultation in the latter half of 2023. Feedback received during that consultation has been fully considered along with other inputs impacting on the Charter as set out in this report. Following that consideration a range of amendments have been made to the draft Charter bringing it into a final draft. The Charter can now be agreed by the Joint Committee.

## Reasons for proposed Decision:

To finalise and agree the HGGT Stewardship Charter to enable it to comprise a material consideration in planning and related decisions.

## Other Options for Action:

It could be determined not to agree the draft Stewardship Charter and to take no further action in relation to it. This option as a course of action is **not recommended**. It would not support and enable the development of the 5 Council partners of HGGTs approach to stewardship and would leave landowners, developers, community reps and other stakeholders without further guidance from the 5 Council partners of HGGT with respect to stewardship. Ultimately this could affect the way future places are looked after. There are few risks with the agreement of the Charter and the benefits of proceeding with agreeing the Charter are considered to far outweigh any risks associated with proceeding.

## I. Introduction

- 1.1 The care and management of the new places created as a result of the Garden Town development has been one of the primary considerations of the 5 Council partners of HGGT since its designation as a Garden Town in 2017.
- 1.2 The Garden Town Vision, produced in 2018, set out four Key Principles for Healthy Growth: Economy and Regeneration, Placemaking and Homes, Landscape and Green Infrastructure and Sustainable Movement. These four Key Principles are seen as being woven together by the common theme of stewardship. A definition for stewardship is set out in the Charter which, in summary, is the inclusive, proactive, and responsive planning, placemaking and care of new places.

1.3 Since the definition of the Vision, there has been extensive exploration of the stewardship theme and how good stewardship can best be delivered as part of the development of the Garden Town. The emerging Charter represents a significant element of this.

## 2. Background

2.1 During 2020, and following the delivery of the Vision, the 5 Council partners of HGGT commissioned ARUP to explore the stewardship theme and possible implementation arrangements. ARUP's report made recommendations about the type of organisations that could deliver stewardship outcomes. These recommendations were agreed by the Garden Town partners following consideration of the ARUP report in July 2020.

2.2 The 5 Council partners of HGGT considered the matter of stewardship again during 2022 and it was agreed that Stewardship guidance should be prepared to guide the content of development proposals that were coming forward at Gilston as part of the planning application process, but also for other sites across the Garden Town.

2.3 The scope, content and focus of any emerging guidance in relation to stewardship outcomes was agreed by the 5 Council partners of HGGT and this has shaped the Stewardship guidance presented here.

2.4 The 5 Council partners of HGGT also asked that the potential for more direct involvement in the implementation of stewardship structures be explored. This work remains in progress and it is anticipated that the outcomes of that consideration will be reported to the Joint Committee at its meeting in October 2024.

2.5 The Stewardship Charter presented here for agreement, will enable the 5 Council partners to formally set out their expectations of what they require of developers with respect to stewardship. It should inform any arrangements that are proposed by developers for the future maintenance and care of the new communities. It focusses on a range of core stewardship themes and issues. It will be a material consideration to which regard should be had in the determination of subsequent planning applications.

2.6 The Charter will help existing and emerging communities understand agreed expectations by the five Council partners as to the stewardship principles and outcomes for the new places that are to be developed. The Charter sets those principles and outcomes that will support the delivery of good growth across the Garden Town.

2.7 As it will apply across the entire HGGT area, and to sites and developments with individual characteristics, it is generic in nature setting out six high level Principles for stewardship that

the 5 Council partners of HGGT expect to see implemented as part of developments coming forward.

2.8 The Charter represents a significant step with the 5 Council partners jointly establishing the expectations for stewardship requirements to be delivered across the new HGGT neighbourhoods.

### 3. Consultation

3.1 The draft Stewardship Charter was reported to the HGGT Board meeting of 13 June 2023 who recommended it for consultation. The 5 Council partners of HGGT then individually endorsed the draft document for consultation and an eight-week consultation process commenced on 7 August 2023. The longer consultation period, rather than a conventional six-week period, was due to the commencement of the consultation during the August holiday period.

3.2 Consultation took place through the HGGT partners on-line consultation platform, Citizen Lab. The platform enables respondents to comment through a pre-defined questionnaire, or to comment freely on any part of the document. Prior to the commencement of the consultation awareness was raised at the HGGT Celebration Event Day of 15 July 2023 and through contact with all stakeholders identified on the HGGT contact database. Pre-consultation engagement had been undertaken with landowners/ developers through the Developer Forum event of 7 February 2023. Social media coverage was also undertaken at the time of the commencement of the consultation.

3.3 All Parish Councils (PC) within and adjacent to the HGGT area were informed of the consultation exercise and an offer made to attend any PC meeting at the request of the PC. In the event, only one request was received, and a presentation was made to a meeting of Roydon PC at its meeting of 2 November 2023.

3.4 Members will note that the date of the Roydon PC meeting was well beyond the initial eight-week consultation period. There were difficulties in attending an earlier meeting of the PC and as a result, the consultation period was allowed to run for a longer period, concluding after 14 weeks in mid Nov 2023.

3.5 It is considered that a wide audience was reached during the consultation period. There were over 20,000 views of the Facebook posts advising of the consultation. Over 4,000 of those views were pursued through to the weblink or by sharing the Facebook information. Given the strategic and high-level nature of the Charter, it was not anticipated that a substantive volume of responses would be received to the consultation. There were eight responses from community representatives, landowners/ developers, and other professional interests. There were three responses from individual members of the public.

- 3.6 All points raised by respondents through the consultation have been subject to consideration. The first table, in Appendix A, summarises the points raised in response to the consultation and the proposed amendments to the draft Charter, where considered appropriate, in relation to them.
- 3.7 The draft Charter was also subject to consideration by the Quality Review Panel (QRP) in April 2023. The Panel was supportive of the approach and was pleased to see the document coming forward. It considered that 'Charter' is the right terminology for the document, setting the right expectations, the principles included seem appropriate and that the draft Charter strikes the right balance between detail and brevity.
- 3.8 The feedback from the QRP has also been considered in detail, Appendix B comprises the report from the Panel. Appendix C sets out the detailed consideration of the points raised by the Panel and where amendment has been made to the draft Charter as a result.
- 3.9 The consultation exercise sought to draw from the outcomes of the Your Quality-of-Life consultation undertaken in late 2022. Following that consultation, the Quality-of-Life Foundation, one of the partners in the consultation, jointly drew up an Action Plan with the HGGT officer team. This was endorsed at the HGGT Board meeting of 7 February 2023. One of the identified actions was to seek the engagement of under-represented groups in subsequent consultation exercises. In that respect, engagement with a younger person audience was undertaken through the Harlow and Epping Forest Youth Council meetings in August and September 2023.
- 3.10 This consultation was led on behalf of the HGGT partners by consultancy 2-3 degrees. The post engagement report of 2-3 degrees is attached as Appendix D.
- 3.11 Appendix E comprises a further schedule of amendments to the draft Charter including:
- An amendment to the Charter as a result of the young persons engagement referred to above.
  - Amendments that have been considered appropriate as a result of further internal officer review of the document.
  - Amendments that are considered appropriate as a result of scenario testing of the draft Charter as recommended by the QRP.

The full details of the scenario testing exercise (following the review of the Charter by the QRP) are set out in Appendix F. Finally, Appendix G comprises the final version of the Charter for agreement. The only subsequent further amendment required will be to update the Foreword in the document. Delegated authority is sought to enable this to be undertaken by the Director in consultation with the Joint Committee Chair.

## 4. Implications:

- 4.1 Once adopted, the Stewardship Charter will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. It will also be considered in pre-application discussions and negotiations and other relevant development management and planning policy decisions. It will be necessary and appropriate for landowners and developers to take account of the Charter in the formulation of development proposals. It will also be a reasonable expectation of community representatives and other stakeholders that the 5 Council partners of HGGT seek to secure the outcomes set out in the Charter.

### Resource Implications

Securing appropriate stewardship outcomes at the Garden Town does have resource implications. One of the six principles set out in the Charter relates to the need for transparent and appropriate financial resilience, management and governance. Whilst there are financial implications for the delivery of good quality stewardship outcomes, it is not considered that the adoption of this Charter has significance in relation to those financial implications. They would need to be addressed regardless of the adoption of the Charter.

### Equalities and Diversity

#### Equality Impact Assessment

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?	Yes
Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy or decision	To set out the expectations of the 5 Council partners of HGGT in relation to appropriate stewardship outcomes for Garden Town developments.
What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?	Implementation of acceptable and appropriate stewardship outcomes across Garden Town developments.
Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• service users</li> <li>• employees</li> <li>• the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities?</li> </ul>	Service users and the wider community. Landowners and developers will be expected to have regard to the Charter in the preparation of proposals for the development of sites and land.  The wider community and community stakeholders will expect

	to see the outcomes set out in the Charter delivered within developments coming forward.
Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?	No
Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?	No
Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?	The Charter is related to the policies in place across the 5 Council partners of HGGT which seek to achieve appropriate stewardship outcomes for the development of sites. It supports the delivery of corporate policies in this respect.
What does the information tell you about those groups identified?	N/A
Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?	Yes – a range of views were set out as summarized in the appendices to this report. The appendices also set out where those views have resulted in amendment to the draft Charter.
If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:	N/A
<b>Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.</b>	
Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy/maternity, Marriage/civil partnership, Race, Religion/belief, Sexual orientation	There is not considered to be any impact in relation to protected groups.
Does the EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No



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## HGGT Vision Assurance

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1. What principles of the HGGT Vision does this seek to achieve?

The delivery of appropriate and high quality stewardship outcomes as a result of new developments coming forward as part of the Garden Town.

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2. What steps have been taken to ensure the HGGT Vision is embedded into the project?

The Stewardship Charter represents an element of delivery of the HGGT Vision. It is based on the concept set out in the Vision that stewardship is a thread that binds together all of the Key Principles for Healthy Growth set out in the Vision.

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