

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	27 February 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Tewkesbury Garden Communities Charter
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director: Place
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Leader of the Council / Lead Member for Built Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Two

**Executive Summary:**

As part of the earlier gateway review of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme, the recommendations of which were reported to Council in September 2023, it was proposed that a programme charter document be developed, which would help stakeholders better understand the concept and set out a shared set of aspirations for the garden community programme. Since that time, the scope of a draft charter was developed through a series of community events, on-line consultation and detailed discussion via the Garden Communities governance structure, a draft was issued for consultation in December 2023.

Attached to this report (Appendix 1) is a 'response report' which lists the comments received during the consultation with a series of responses detailing any actions/amendments included within the charter (Appendix 2) proposed for adoption by Council. Also included within the charter is the opportunity for all stakeholders to 'sign-up' to the document and, subject to Council adoption and authority to proceed, this is recommended as the next step in this process.

**Recommendation:**

**To CONSIDER the draft consultation responses and ADOPT the Tewkesbury Garden Communities Charter and commence the process of stakeholder 'sign-up'.**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no specific financial implications linked to the adoption of the charter. Future Council support for the programme will be predicated on its continued financial support from UK Government as part of its national Garden Communities programme

**Legal Implications:**

The Charter is an aspirational document and does not bind development within the proposed Garden Communities programme area. Adoption of the Charter is a statement of intent and provides a framework for on going discussion about the scope and quality of the development.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

The proposed Garden Communities programme is focussed upon securing sustainable development including an aim of supporting carbon zero development. The charter builds on this ethos explaining further how such objectives can and should be met.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

The development of the charter has involved certain amount of resources. This has been met in the majority, with external funding from Homes England in support of the Garden Communities programme.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

There are no safeguarding implications resulting directly from this report.

**Impact on the Customer:**

On the basis the customers are the various stakeholders, the charter should have an impact on the development being proposed in the area. Whilst this will be positive for the majority there may be some impact on the developers who seek to deliver the aspirations of the charter and in most cases this should also be a positive impact.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In implementing the recommendations of the Garden Town's (now named Garden Communities) gateway review as well as a recommendation from Homes England, it was agreed to develop a charter to detail the expectations/aspiration the Council has for the development proposal.
- 1.2 Critically, the charter is a not a planning policy document – this remains the role of the local planning authority through the statutory Development Plan. Preparation of a new local plan is currently underway - the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) - and whilst the charter may assist in informing emerging policy, the charter itself will carry very little weight in planning terms for the time being. It may well form the basis for drawing up more detailed guidance, however, as the draft SLP advances.
- 1.3 Another key recommendation within the gateway review was detailed community engagement and so the charter development engagement steps have been critical in this process whereby the new governance structure has been directly involved in the charter's development along with the wider community through the charter consultation.

**2.0 CHARTER DRAFTING, ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION AND RESPONSE REPORT**

- 2.1 The draft charter was developed from earlier work on the Garden Communities proposal with a special focus on the guiding principles of the development generated from the UK garden communities programme "Model Of Development" and listed within the local "Evolution of the Concept Plan", issued in 2021. There are nine 'principles' within the working draft charter and each is further expanded to explain what is expected for any development to deliver that principle.

- 2.2 In addition, the working draft included the previous vision and noted that this requires updating as highlighted from the initial engagement sessions held last year. One of the questions in the consultation document asked for further thoughts on the vision and feedback has resulted in an update to this earlier vision which is also included within the charter document proposed for adoption.

The revised vision:

*To deliver a well-planned networked development in a way which supports “**good growth**” enabling residents and businesses, both new and existing, to fulfil their potential and improve quality of life. **Revitalising Tewkesbury** as a hub, which serves and supports the wider heartland. A place which drives the success of the borough.*

**A working definition of “Good growth”** – makes people’s lives, of all ages, better and mitigates the impact of climate change, provides for better jobs and work-places, better housing choices, better health and well-being, improved ecology and access to green spaces and provision of community facilities and infrastructure in advance of or alongside new development. Providing a platform for all communities and businesses to directly influence the best stewardship of their place.

- 2.3 Since December 2023, a number of discussions have been held through the Garden Communities programmes new governance and engagement structures, relevant meetings, engagement sessions held with the wider community and a public consultation on the draft charter which ran from 20 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

- 2.4 The list of all consultation responses is included within the response report – attached to this report as Appendix 1. This response report details the responses/comments made and highlights changes made to the charter proposed for adoption by Council (Appendix 2). Of note is that many of the responses/comments are of a more detailed nature and will be addressed as the development progresses through the strategic and local plan (SLP) process and/or via any planning applications.

### 3.0 **CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 See Appendix 1

### 4.0 **ASSOCIATED RISKS**

- 4.1 None

### 5.0 **MONITORING**

- 5.1 The Garden Communities governance arrangements will remain fully involved with monitoring the take up and impact of the charter document as the development progresses.

**6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**6.1** The delivery of the garden town programme is a priority within the current Council Plan.

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**Background Papers:** None

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**Appendices:** 1: Garden Communities Charter Response Report  
2: Garden Communities Charter – clean version