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| REPORT TO: | Special Scrutiny Committee | |
| DATE: | 18 November 2025 | |
| PORTFOLIO: | Councillor Melissa Fisher - Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration) | |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | Mark Hoyle, Head of Regeneration and Housing | |
| TITLE OF REPORT: | Huncoat Garden Village | |
| EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A) | No | Not applicable |
| KEY DECISION: | No | If yes, date of publication: |

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Huncoat Garden Village project.

2. Recommendations

I recommend that Special Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

2.1 Note the progress being made with the Huncoat Garden Village (HGV) project and raise any questions arising from the report.

3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

3.1 The HGV project forms a key part of Hyndburn Borough Council's growth plans. It is a residential-led, brownfield housing development project with the potential to transform the housing market within Hyndburn.

3.2 The HGV Masterplan and Framework and Delivery Strategy, approved by Cabinet in October 2021, sets out a framework for the new housing development and expanded settlement of Huncoat, with the Masterplan Framework becoming a material consideration for planning applications for the Garden Village area. A design code sets out good design principles including rules (the dos and don'ts) for the creation of a high-quality residential development and environment and this will be used by Hyndburn Borough Council, landowners, developers, house builders, etc. as the project is delivered.

3.3 The £463 million project will bring back into beneficial use the site of the former Huncoat Power Station, and the site of the former Huncoat Colliery, to create an extension to the existing Huncoat village using new garden community principles. It will deliver 1,816 new homes of mixed tenure (including affordable and social housing) over a circa 15-year period, alongside a new local centre meeting amenity needs, an expanded primary school, 24 hectares of strategic and functional open space, including a safeguarded area of ecological importance, new woodland and networked open space, and infrastructure in the form of a new residential relief road, car parking provision at Huncoat Railway Station, and localised road junction upgrades as required.

3.4 HGV also forms a key part of the emerging Local Plan (Hyndburn 2040: Local Plan {Strategic Policies and Site Allocations}), Policy SP2. It is therefore important to stress that Huncoat Garden Village project is contingent on the adoption of the emerging Local Plan, and vice versa. Without both, the Council will not be able to meet required housing targets.

3.5 Following the submission of a robust business plan, Homes England has awarded the Council a £29,897,722 grant for the HGV project towards key infrastructure costs as follows:

- A new 1.1km residential relief road connecting Huncoat directly with the A56
- Land acquisition to enable the delivery of the new residential relief road
- Brownfield land remediation on the former colliery and power station sites
- A contribution towards improvements to junction 8 on the M65 motorway (and potentially to improvements to the nearby Shuttleworth Mead junction) to improvement junction safety

3.6 The project will have significant regeneration and growth benefits for Hyndburn by diversifying the housing offer and providing modern housing in a high-quality environment. The scale of development supports the Council's and Lancashire's wider economic growth plans and will provide access to open space and recreational and sport facilities.

3.7 In addition to Hyndburn Borough Council, key partners include Homes England, Lancashire County Council, National Highways and local landowners.

3.8 Good progress continues to be made on the HGV project, including:

3.8.1 The Council entered the BIL grant funding agreement with Homes England on the 31st of March 2025.

3.8.2 A full planning application for the proposed residential relief road was submitted and subsequently validated on the 3rd April 2025. Determination of the application is currently delayed until outstanding objections by Lancashire County Council's Highways and Lead Flood Authority are resolved. These are "technical" objections which are expected to be resolved. The application is likely to go to Planning Committee on the 17th of December 2025 or the 14th of January 2026.

3.8.3 The Council claimed and recovered historic costs on the project to date, amounting to £710,569. This was paid by Homes England on the 29th May 2025.

3.8.4 The Council entered a s274 agreement with National Highways that will facilitate the transfer of £2.19m grant funding to National Highways towards improvement works at junction

8 on the M65. In the meantime, the Council continues to engage with National Highways and Lancashire County Council over the scope, timing and implementation of the proposed improvement works to both Junction 8 of the M65 and at Shuttleworth Mead.

3.8.5 A Design Code for the project was approved by Cabinet on the 18th of June 2025.

3.8.6 The new, draft Local Plan was subject to the examination in public during the period 15th of September to the 25th of September 2025. The examination appeared to go well, and the inspector's interim determination is expected in the very near future.

3.8.7 The Council has selected Eric Wright Civil Engineering Limited as preferred contractor to construct the proposed residential relief road. Stage 2 of the tender process has commenced which includes progressing the road design to RIBA Stage 4, and the contractor firming up its final tender price.

3.8.8 On the 18th of June 2025, Hyndburn's Cabinet has given its consent to start the process towards a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the proposed new Relief Road should the Council fail to acquire the required land for the road by agreement. A further report will be presented to Cabinet on the 21st of January 2026 seeking authority to make the CPO.

3.8.9 The former power station site owner and their house builder partner are about to submit an updated outline planning application for the site.

3.8.10 The owners of the former colliery site have selected a preferred house builder and are now preparing an outline planning application and a remediation strategy.

3.8.11 The Council is in discussions with Homes England seeking to extend the grant availability period from March 2028 to March 2029. This is to allow for additional time, should a CPO for the proposed relief road be required.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 N/A. The purpose of this report is to update the Committee with progress with the project.

5. Consultations

5.1 The HGV Masterplan Framework was subject to extensive consultation leading up to its approval by Cabinet in October 2021. In addition, HGV formed part of the consultation on the new, emerging Local Plan (Hyndburn 2024: Local Plan {Strategic Policies and Site Allocation}).

5.2 The proposed residential relief road was subject to pre planning consultation and subsequent consultation as part of the planning application

5.3 All known landowners have been made aware of the need to acquire part of their land to deliver the road as a vital part of the delivery of the HGV.

6. Implications

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| Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council) | The Council has secured Brownfield Infrastructure and Land grant funding of circa £30m to enable the development of HGV. |
| Legal and human rights implications | N/A – the report is for information and comment only |
| Assessment of risk | N/A – the report is for information and comment only. The project is subject to a comprehensive risk register which is reviewed at least quarterly in conjunction with Homes England. |
| Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i> | N/A - the report is for information and comment only. |

7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985: List of Background Papers

- 7.1 The Huncoat Garden Village Masterplan Framework and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy was approved by Cabinet on the 20th of October 2021.
- 7.2 Huncoat Garden Village Update and Appointment of External Consultants – Cabinet, 31st May 2023
- 7.3 Huncoat Garden Village, approval to accept the Homes England Grant Award with delegated authority to enter into a grant funding agreement with Homes England – Cabinet, 30th October 2024.
- 7.4 Huncoat Garden Village update report including the main provisions of the Home England Grant Funding Agreement – Cabinet, 26th March 2025
- 7.5 Huncoat Garden Village Relief Road – Appointment of Preferred Contractor Emergency Decision dated 27/05/25 and Cabinet Report 18th June 2025.

8. Freedom of Information

- 8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.