

# HARLOW TOWN CENTRE

## Area Action Plan

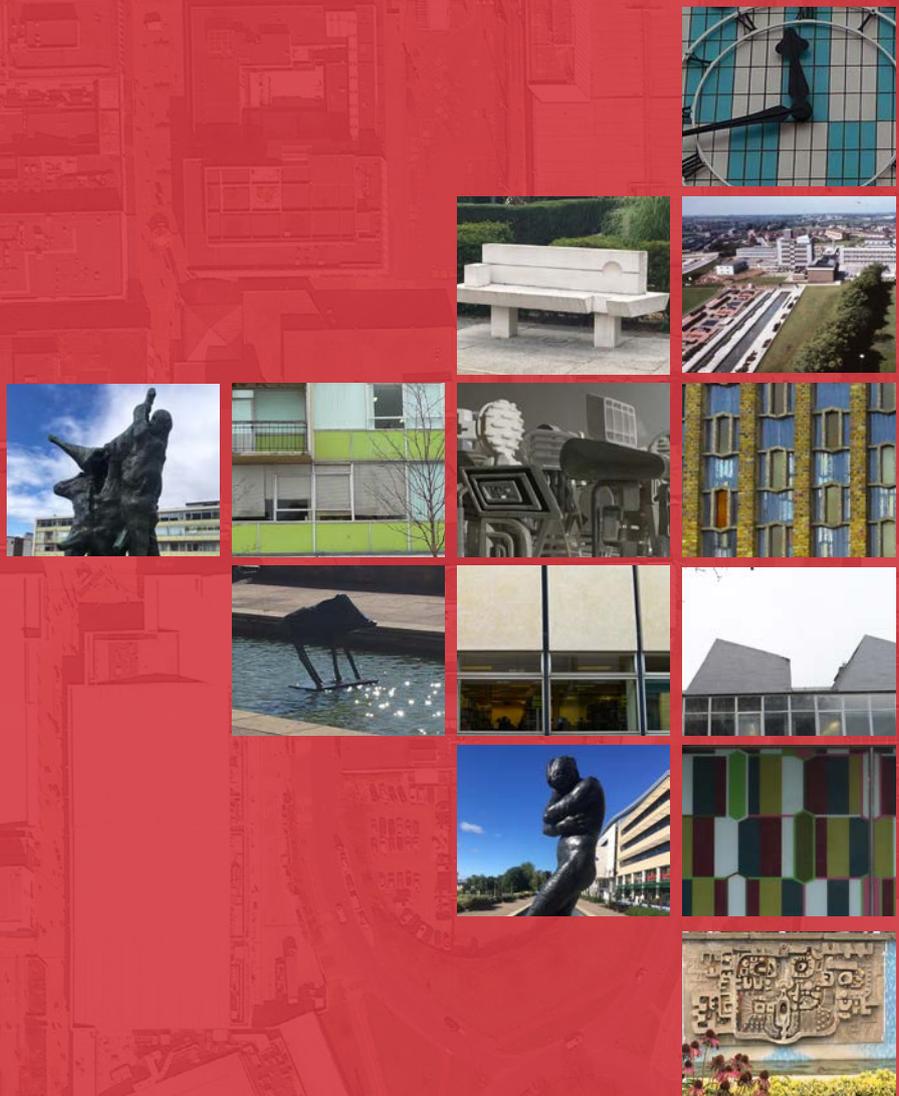
Regulation 19 - Pre-submission draft

Work-in-progress draft for Cabinet

Harlow Council

Allies and Morrison  
Urban Practitioners

July 2019







# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Background

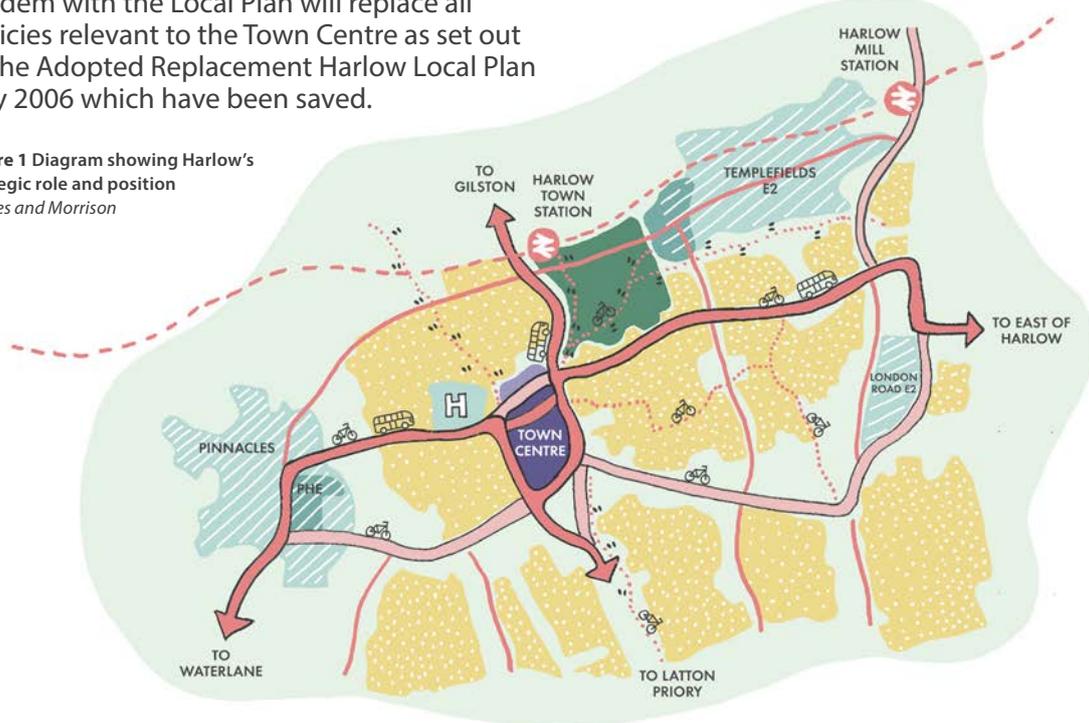
- 1.1. Although it has experienced significant change over the past 65 years, many of the distinctive attributes of Sir Frederick Gibberd's original masterplan remain evident in the structure and character of Harlow Town Centre, as the heart of Harlow New Town.
- 1.2. Similar to many town and city centres across the UK, shifting economic trends have had, and continue to have a profound impact on the performance and prosperity of Harlow Town Centre. The Town Centre has experienced a decline in the retail ranking from 168 in 2012 to 185 in 2017 (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Final Report, May 2017).
- 1.3. Although policies already exist which establish the primacy of the Town Centre and seek to protect and enhance its performance, the planning process has the potential to play a more proactive role in strengthening the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and enabling regeneration. The preparation of a more specific set of planning policies presents an opportunity to create the conditions for a resilient, successful centre. The Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan (HTCAAP), in combination with the Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP) and other guidance will enable Harlow Council alongside wider stakeholder, landowner and developer partners to plan positively for managed change and a sustainable, coordinated approach to growth.
- 1.4. The role and performance of the Town Centre requires broader consideration in the context of the proposed growth which is anticipated across the wider area and neighbouring districts.
- 1.5. Harlow Council, alongside Epping Forest District and East Hertfordshire District Councils have identified potential for 16,100 new homes at Harlow and Gilston Garden Town through their Local Plan processes (up to 2033), with an additional c.7,000 new homes identified in the Gilston area beyond this plan period.
- 1.6. This residential growth is part of ambitious plans for Harlow and Gilston's future economy, which is uniquely placed to connect into the UK Innovation Corridor (previously referred to as the London Stansted Cambridge Corridor) - one of the UK's fastest growing economies, with jobs growth 2.5 times the national average between 2009 and 2014.
- 1.7. The Strategic Site Assessment (September 2016) identified sufficient suitable sites in and around Harlow to accommodate around 16,100 new homes. These strategic sites fall across all three authorities and form the basis of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- 1.8. It should be noted, that in addition to the strategic sites, approximately 6,600 new homes will be developed within Harlow District either through completed and granted planning permissions, as well as intensification and urban brownfield sites.
- 1.9. In addition to housing growth, there is also significant economic momentum, with Public Health England relocating to the GSK offices near the Town Centre. Office floorspace and other employment opportunities are also being realised through Harlow Enterprise Zone which includes significant focus on life science, advanced manufacturing and ICT / digital.

**Status and purpose of the HTCAAP**

- 1.10. The HTCAAP is a Development Plan Document that will sit alongside the Local Plan which is being produced for the District as a whole.
- 1.11. The HTCAAP provides a spatial planning framework to guide development and secure the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre for the period up to 2033. This takes into account the key role the Town Centre performs across the wider Harlow district, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) area and sub-region, reinforced by the need to accommodate additional retail provision, arising from increased housing growth being brought forward. The proposals and guidance in the HTCAAP will set the content for an ongoing process of change and growth beyond the plan period.
- 1.12. Ultimately, the guidance in the HTCAAP, in tandem with the Local Plan will replace all policies relevant to the Town Centre as set out in the Adopted Replacement Harlow Local Plan July 2006 which have been saved.

- 1.13. The policies and guidance in the HTCAAP are consistent with national policies and guidance which set out the Government’s planning policies and guidance for England and how it expects them to be applied.
- 1.14. National policies state that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which has three roles:
  - An economic role by contributing to a strong, responsive and competitive economy.
  - A social role by supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities.
  - An environmental role by contributing to the protection and enhancement of the environment.

**Figure 1** Diagram showing Harlow’s strategic role and position  
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### HTCAAP boundary

- 1.15. Harlow Town Centre and its environs have changed over the years and the Town Centre boundary has been amended in HLDP to reflect and align to the natural boundary that exists today but also to take account of potential changes in the future. The new boundary incorporates the contemporary pattern of commercial, civic, leisure and educational uses and recognises sites of future change that are likely to have significant impact on the town centre. Although Princess Alexandra Hospital has a relationship with the Town Centre, it is considered to be beyond the HTCAAP boundary. The new areas incorporated within the updated boundary include:
- Harlow College campus, which is an important education site incorporating Harlow College, Harlow Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Centre and BMAT STEM Academy which is a major trip generator for the town centre;
  - Harlow Leisurezone, which is both a very popular leisure centre in the town and serves as a town centre car park for many visitors;
  - Sainsbury's to the north of the town centre, which could have a stronger relationship with the centre and could come forward for redevelopment in the Local Plan period, up to 2033; and
  - The Clarion Housing site which has recently been demolished, has planning permission for residential development and likely to progress within the Plan period.
- 1.16. This expansion is significant as it has a number of potential benefits from a planning policy perspective:
- The wider boundary encourages greater emphasis on the potential regeneration opportunities of sites beyond the immediate core Town Centre. By including them within the boundary, there is potential to encourage a more joined up approach which is integrated with the broader direction of travel for the Town Centre as a whole.
  - The HTCAAP is likely to include a number of integrated proposals for improvements to the roads which form a collar around the Town Centre. The wider boundary might assist in achieving a comprehensive context for movement and public realm projects which could assist from a delivery perspective.
- 1.17. The adjacent drawing illustrates the Town Centre boundary and the HTCAAP boundary. The previous iteration of the Town Centre boundary is shown as a dashed line, which is drawn more tightly to the roads which form an edge to the core Town Centre area.

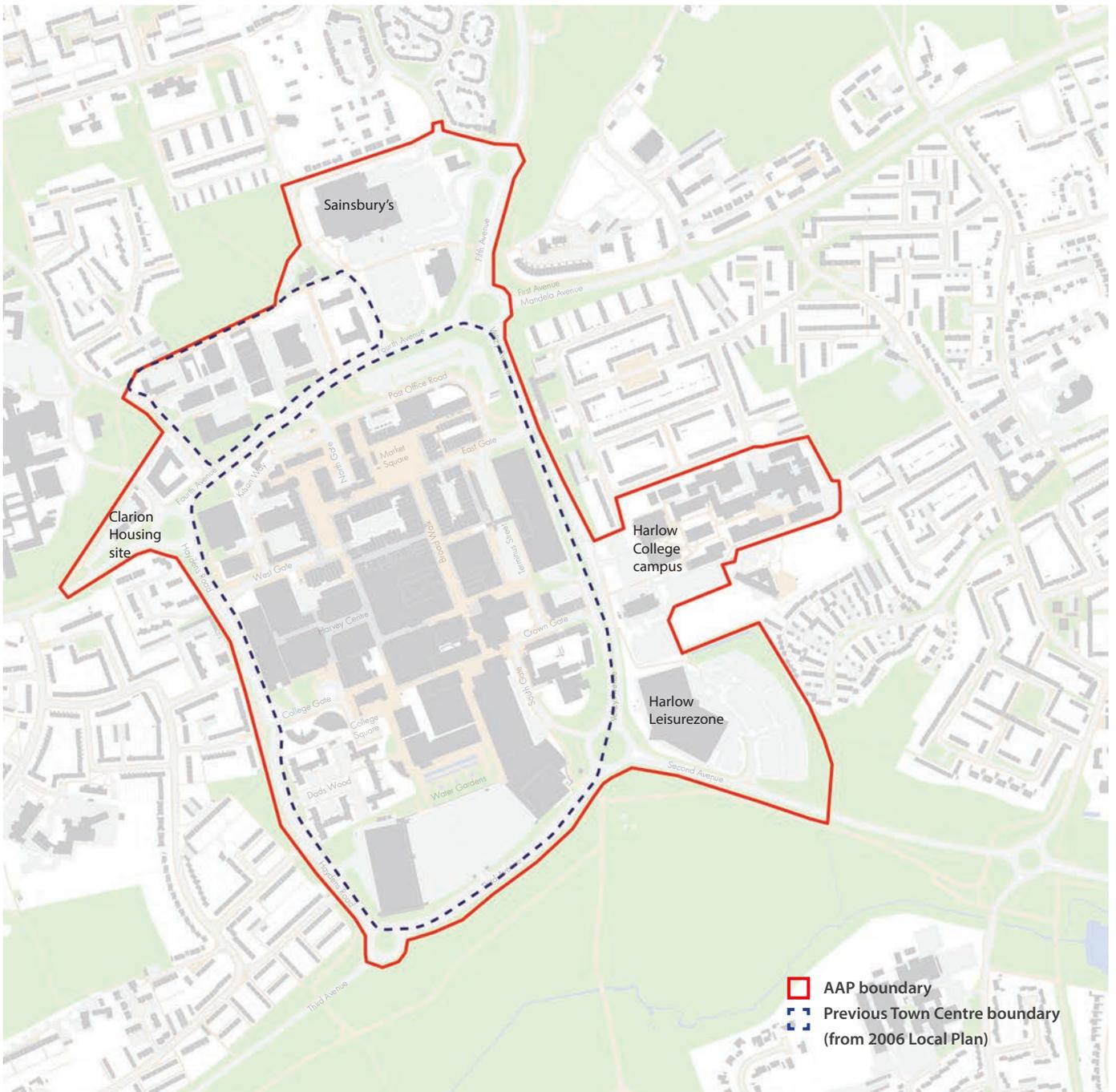


Figure 2 Town Centre and Area Action Plan boundary. The boundary as shown now coincides with the revised town centre boundary as per proposed Local Plan Policy RS2-1. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627 (2018)

### Process and programme

- 1.18. The following diagram summarises the stages of preparation for the HTCAAP:
- Evidence base and background research including consultation;
  - Synthesis of evidence and initial consultation;
  - Preparation of Issues and Options report and Sustainability Appraisal;
  - Regulation 18 consultation on Issues and Options Report;
  - Preparation of draft Area Action Plan which has been informed by the iterative development of the Sustainability Appraisal;
  - Regulation 19 Pre-submission consultation;
  - Submission of Final Draft to Inspector and Examination in Public; and
  - Inspectors report and adoption of the Plan

### Relationship with HLDP

- 1.19. The HTCAAP sits underneath the HLDP to guide the future regeneration and redevelopment of Harlow town centre.

### How to respond

- 1.20. The new Area Action Plan for Harlow Town Centre contains Policies which provide overarching guidance and a framework for the Town Centre, supported by Policies which provide more detailed planning guidance. The HTCAAP has been prepared in accordance with national legislation and guidance, including the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.21. We are now consulting on the Pre-submission consultation draft of the HTCAAP. This is the version of the Plan that will be submitted for examination. Comments made should be limited to the tests of soundness. According to national policies, a Local Plan is considered sound if it meets four tests:
- **Is it positively prepared?** It should be based upon a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;



Figure 3 Programme for preparation of the Area Action Plan

- **Is it justified?** It should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based upon proportionate evidence
- **Is it effective?** It should be deliverable over the Local Plan period and based upon effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities
- **Is it consistent with national policy?** It should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with national policies.

1.22. You can submit comments on this document at **[www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/planning-policy)**

1.23. All comments must be submitted by **XXX**. Any comments received after this date will not be considered.

1.24. Comments can be submitted in one of the following ways:

- Using the **online consultation portal** - external website (recommended option)

- Complete the **representation form** (pdf) and post it to: **Forward Planning, Place Services, Harlow Council, Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow, Essex, CM20 1WG** or email it to **myharlow@harlow.gov.uk**. Copies of the representation form can be found on the website above, and hard copies are available in the Civic Centre reception; or
- Send an email or letter to the Council with the data consent form.

### Important notes

1.25. Please note that it is not possible for representations to be considered anonymously. You must include your name and address on any comment in order for it to be accepted.

1.26. For more information on how Harlow Council collect, use and protect personal information generally, please visit **[www.harlow.gov.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/privacy-notice)**

### Structure of the document

1.27. Following the introduction, chapter 2 summarises the existing policy context. Chapter 3 provides a concise portrait of Harlow Town Centre and includes a historic overview and mapping of contextual elements e.g. topography and green space. The vision for Harlow Town Centre is set out in Chapter 4 alongside spatial objectives and desired outcomes.

1.28. The main focus for the document is Chapter 5. Chapter 5 gives thematic guidance and policies, structured around the themes of: strategic growth and delivery; movement; urban design and heritage; and land uses. The final chapter sets out the delivery and phasing strategy. An appendix outlining the scope of supporting documents for the HTCAAP is included at the back of the report.



### Previous consultation and community engagement

- 1.29. The Issues and Options stage of HTCAAP production represented the first stage of formal consultation on the Area Action Plan for the Town Centre. As set out in the NPPF para 182, the purpose of the document was to set out and consider reasonable alternatives. Building on baseline analysis, emerging evidence base studies and early engagement, the document identified the key issues, challenges, and opportunities facing the Town Centre and set out different options for the HTCAAP to consider and explore.
- 1.30. The document was published for formal consultation and feedback on the options has shaped the development of policy guidance in response to the issues. This has formed the basis of the draft HTCAAP. The overarching summary of comments are:
- **General support for the HTCAAP** and its overarching vision for a sustainable town centre with a strong mix of uses. Many recognise the combination of several options to set a robust context for delivery. Support for either the medium or high intervention scenario.
  - **Place greater emphasis on the relationship between the Town Centre and the wider area** by considering the opportunities the Garden Town could bring to the town centre; the role of Town Centre in the wider area; and the Town Centre's position within the UK Innovation Corridor.
  - **Seek more opportunities for engagement with Essex County Council and Garden Town authorities.**
  - **Emphasis on flexibility of policy guidance** to allow design to be led on a site-by-site basis.
- **Emphasis on quality** for all new proposals within the Town Centre.
  - Support for the emphasis made on the **importance of culture and heritage** in achieving the HTCAAP's vision and outcomes.
  - People were pleased to see the spatial objective to **retain the plan aesthetic of Gibberd's original masterplan.**
  - **The southern part of the Town Centre** should be given enough focus within the HTCAAP to ensure it remains an attractive and viable part of the Town Centre.
  - **Support for quality green space** in the town centre and for opportunities to connect green infrastructure.
  - The document should make **recommendations for 'quick wins'** and set out a phasing plan for the package of measures.
  - **Approach to movement received the most comments.** These related to the location of the bus station, recognising two sustainable transport corridors, pedestrian and cycling movement and the approach to parking. Work with ECC and Garden Town Board to explore way forward for bus station and sustainable transport corridors.
- 1.31. The representations received at this stage of consultation have informed the preparation of the draft HTCAAP document.

## 2 POLICY CONTEXT

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019

- 2.1. The HTCAAP has been prepared in line with the revised NPPF (February 2019). The revised NPPF sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

### Harlow Council: Working Together for Harlow, Corporate Plan 2019/20-2021/22

- 2.2. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision, priorities and goals to steer improvement over the next three years.
- 2.3. The five Council priorities are:
- More and better housing
  - Regeneration and a thriving economy
  - Wellbeing and social inclusion
  - A clean and green environment
  - Successful children and young people
- 2.4. The Plan recognises the important role the Town Centre plays as a sub-regional destination and gives goals for the next three years relating to the Council's priority to support regeneration of the town. These include driving forward the regeneration of the Town Centre by producing an Area Action Plan, delivering public realm improvements and continuing to explore and develop opportunities in partnership with Town Centre stakeholders and potential investors.

### Harlow Local Development Plan Pre-Submission Publication (May 2018)

- 2.5. The new Harlow Local Development Plan (Pre-Submission Publication) guides future development in the District to 2033 and replaces the 2006 Harlow Local Plan. The plan sets out a long term planning vision which ensures that development is sustainable and meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors in the area. It is the basis upon which planning applications will be determined. The HTCAAP sits underneath the HLDP.
- 2.6. The HLDP is currently undergoing examination. The final version of the HTCAAP will be updated to incorporate any modifications arising from the examination process.
- 2.7. The document includes a number of relevant strategic objectives for the regeneration of the Town Centre in Chapter 3. These cover the following areas, all of which reflect the Council's wider aspirations for achieving a town centre where everybody has an improved quality of life :
- High quality built environments connected to revitalised green spaces;
  - High quality design of new development;
  - Protecting and enhancing the historic environment;
  - Climate change adaptation and mitigation;
  - Identification of sites to meet local housing needs;
  - Range of high quality housing tenure and type;
  - Diversifying and investing in the district's employment base;
  - Economic revitalisation - reinforcing Harlow's reputation as a centre for Research and Development;
  - Improving educational opportunities and skills base;

- Regenerating the town centre to provide a range of shopping needs;
  - Enhancing sporting, leisure, recreational facilities and cultural opportunities;
  - Education, healthcare and other community facilities to support residents;
  - Reducing reliance on car travel by promoting sustainable modes of transport; and
  - Improving transport links to community facilities.
- 2.8. Policy SD1 sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development that accords with the Local Plan will normally be supported unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 2.9. The main chapters regarding the redevelopment of the Town Centre are Chapter 9 - 'Retail Ambitions and Town Centre Redevelopment', and Chapter 15 - 'Prosperity'. A number of strategic growth policies are set out within Chapter 9 and are listed below:
- RS1 - Retail Hierarchy: redevelopment must be directed to Harlow Town Centre first (followed by the centres set out in the retail hierarchy).
  - RS2 - Future Retail Floorspace: RS2 refers to the emerging Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan which will look to deliver a significant proportion of the retail floorspace requirements through site redevelopment and regeneration opportunities, and which will identify the future retail floorspace capacity of the Town Centre. The HTCAAP will also identify environmental and public realm improvements, alongside access and infrastructure schemes and opportunities for providing a broader range of uses in the town centre. These include community, leisure, commercial and residential uses.
  - RS3 - Protecting and Enhancing Existing Retail Centres: RS3 highlights the importance of retail floorspace which contributes towards the viability, vitality and function of Harlow Town Centre. The policy indicates that this will be protected, subject to the outcomes of the HTCAAP.
- 2.10. Other relevant strategic policies are:
- ED4 - Developing a Visitor Economy: a visitor economy will be developed, building upon the district's arts and cultural attractions, the 'Sculpture Town' status, the New Town heritage and natural features such as the River Stort. Proposals will be supported where they provide local economic benefits, are underpinned by appropriate infrastructure and are scale, type and appearance appropriate to the locality.
  - WE4 - Heritage: heritage assets and their settings will be preserved and enhanced.
  - SIR1 - Infrastructure requirements: a commitment to work alongside groups to deliver the timely provision of infrastructure and to review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
  - SIR2 - Enhancing Key Gateway Locations - includes reference to integrating and improving the vehicular and pedestrian access points to the north of the Town Centre.
- 2.11. The draft Local Development Plan also includes a number of Development Management Policies that were recently consulted on. Several policies are of specific relevance to the Town Centre including the following:
- PR5 - The Sequential Test and Principles for Main Town Centre Uses: PR5 reiterates the sequential approach to main Town Centre uses – specifically, that these must be

directed to the Town Centre first. The policy also includes general principles for main Town Centre uses which encourage active frontages, preservation and enhancement of retail vitality and viability and improvements to public transport facilities.

- PR6 - Primary and Secondary Frontages in Town Centre – PR6 states that Primary Frontages supported where the development is for A1 class use, or development is for use class A2 or A3 and 60% or more of the overall primary frontage length is retained for A1 uses and the site has been vacant and actively marketed for at least 12 months. Main Town Centre uses (except office use), evening and night-time uses will be supported in Town Centre secondary frontages.
- PR7 - Sub-division and Internal Alteration of Town Centre Units: PR7 supports sub-division of Town Centre units if: for units larger than 2,500 sqm, evidence has been provided to demonstrate unit has been marketed to the satisfaction of Council for at least 2 years and sub-division or internal alteration would retain active frontage
- PR11 - Evening and Night Time Economy: PR11 states that evening and night time uses must be directed to Town Centre first locations. Evening and night time uses will be supported if development has positive effect on the vitality and viability of the retail centre, its night-time economy and local area, and mitigation through legal agreements or conditions to minimise negative impacts on the local area.
- H8 - Affordable Housing: H8 supports major residential development where affordable housing is provided at a rate of at least 30%. Any reduction of this rate will require an independent viability assessment.
- IN1 - Development and sustainable modes of travel: IN1 encourages sustainable accessibility patterns in the Town Centre. Improvements will be required to provide safe and direct cycleways and footpaths (including contributions), safe and convenient cycle storage, other facilities for cyclists where appropriate and electric charging points for vehicles.
- L3 - Development Involving the Provision or Relocation or Loss of Public Art: L3 indicates that public art should be provided within major developments, and that any proposals involving the provision, relocation or loss of public art should be agreed with the Council.
- PR3 - Employment development outside employment areas and neighbourhood service areas: PR3 supports proposals for B1 office uses above ground floor level in the Town Centre and sets criteria for the assessment of their loss.
- L2 - Sporting, Cultural and Community Facilities: Development for the provision of recreational, sporting, cultural and community uses and facilities will be supported if there is evidence of need and if it is easily accessible by all sectors of community by public and private transport. Proposals which result in a loss of facilities will only supported if it meets one or more criteria
- PL11 - Heritage Assets and their Settings: Development will be assessed on harm it causes to significance of heritage. Key factors to be considered include impact of development on character and appearance of the asset, design quality of the development, and the extent to which the development is sympathetically integrated within the area.

### Local Development Scheme

2.12. Harlow Council is required to prepare a Local Development Scheme under section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011). The Development Plan Documents that comprise the Local Development Scheme for Harlow include the Harlow Local Development Plan and Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan, alongside a number of other Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), strategies, Article 4's and Local Development Orders (LDO's).

2.13. Relevant SPDs for the HTCAAP are:

- Harlow Design Guide SPD (2011)
- Open spaces, sport and recreation SPD (2007)
- Affordable Housing SPD (2007)

### Harlow Economic Development Strategy (2017)

2.14. The Strategy sets out priorities and ideas for delivery for the next five years that, among other goals, will lead to "a vibrant, creative Town Centre that is an asset to our communities and businesses". 'Priority 4: Transformation of Harlow Town Centre' (within the 'Place' theme) promotes a "high quality, high amenity centre that provides for residents of all backgrounds and aspirations, and provides attractions for the workforce of key employers."

2.15. Proposed actions for delivery include:

- Public realm improvements;
- Increase community, leisure and commercial activity;
- Deliver quality residential opportunities;
- Secure longer term investment and regeneration;
- Embed modern working environments into future Town Centre developments;

- Ensure opportunities to deliver space and resources to enable business activity (for example shared/co working space, meeting spaces, access to wifi, live/work accommodation etc.); and
- Support continued space for creative industries and cultural activities.

### Harlow Retail and Leisure Needs Study (2016)

2.16. The study forms part of the evidence base which underpins the new Local Plan and informs the retail policies and potential allocation of retail floorspace in Harlow Town Centre. The study considers:

- The national trends in the retail sector;
- The wider study context including key competing centres;
- The composition, role and function of current shopping and commercial leisure provision in Harlow town centre through a health-check assessment;
- Retail capacity;
- The quantitative 'need' for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace in the District up to 2033;
- A review of commercial leisure provision within and outside of the District; and
- Conclusions, strategic guidance and recommendations on future change and growth within the District's network of centres, including Harlow Town Centre.

### Harlow Retail Frontages Study (2019)

2.17. The Retail Frontages Study gives an annual review of the primary and secondary retail frontages in Harlow and has helped to inform the preparation of planning policies set out in the new Local Development Plan. The amount of vacant primary frontage in the Town Centre

in early 2019 was 11.5%, a 3% increase since 2013. The BHS unit vacancy accounts for 5.5% of the vacant frontage. Whilst some previously vacant frontage became in use again between the start of 2018 and 2019, other units became vacant, including the Harvey Centre units previously occupied by Argos and Blue Inc., which have long frontages.

- 2.18. The amount of vacant secondary frontage in the Town Centre in early 2019 was 15.7%, a decrease of 7.5% since 2013. The study also gives a table of frontages that require further review and a series of maps with proposals for possible new frontages, as well as the possible removal of frontages within the Town Centre.

#### Statement of Community Involvement (2014)

- 2.19. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council involves the community in preparing local planning policy and deciding planning applications within the District. The statement outlines the Council's commitment to consult with as many people and organisations as possible, meeting at the very least the required minimum legislative requirements. The SCI gives the various methods for planning policy consultation, with explicit reference made to 'hard-to-reach groups'.

#### Harlow District Cycling Action Plan (2018)

- 2.20. The Cycling Action Plan for Harlow District sets out a long term plan that will lead to a significant and sustained increase in cycling in Harlow District and in Essex. One of the aims of the Action Plan is to create a usable, high quality cycle network that connects residential areas with key employment locations, railway stations, and Town Centres. A recommendation of the Plan is to enable improved cycle access

through the currently pedestrianised town centre, and improving the cycle infrastructure links between the town centre and nearby railway stations. Cycle routes around the Town Centre are considered particularly important routes and these should be maintained.

#### Draft Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan Delivery Strategy (2019)

- 2.21. The emerging Delivery Strategy for Harlow Town Centre establishes a broad viability and delivery context for the HTCAAP. The strategy provides an overview of the property markets relevant to Harlow Town Centre and considers the overall proposed scale and mix of development, for the town centre as a whole and for specific opportunity areas. The work has informed Chapter 6 of the HTCAAP on implementation and delivery.

#### Other evidence base documents

- 2.22. The AAP has also had regard to:
- Delivery Study for Harlow and Surrounding Area: Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018)
  - Local Plan Viability Assessment, Affordable Housing and CIL Review (2018)
  - Harlow Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy 2018-2028
  - Green Wedge Review (2014)
  - Sports Facilities Study (2017)

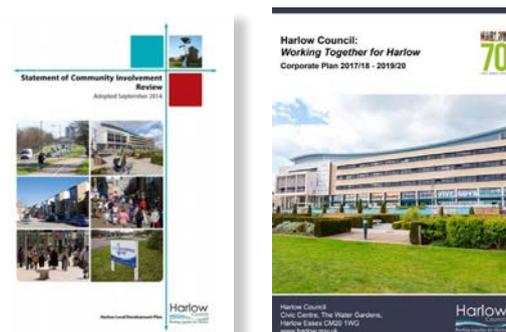


Figure 4 Sample of relevant policy documents

### HGGT strategies, guidance and frameworks

- 2.23. The HGGT partners are preparing a number of key documents which are relevant to Harlow town centre including the following:
- **HGGT Vision and Design Guide:** These documents set out the expectations and requirements that need to be met by developers to ensure the delivery of good quality villages and neighbourhoods, homes, jobs and infrastructure for new and existing residents. These guides will be used as a material planning consideration when considering planning applications/ proposals and masterplans, and will provide assurances to communities and businesses about what they should expect from Garden Town developments.
  - **HGGT Sustainable Community Transport Hub:** As part of the HGGT project, guidance is being produced for Sustainable Community Transport Hubs also known as Mobility Hubs. These hubs are a key part of the overarching strategy for the Gilston Garden Town in the context of the emphasis on active and sustainable modes of movement. They will act as a focus for convenient interchange across a series of different scales.
  - **HGGT Healthy Town Framework:** HGGT is preparing guidance for health infrastructure and the creation of creating healthy places.

### Essex County Council documents

- 2.24. Public consultation is currently taking place on the draft Essex Walking Strategy 2019-2025 which sets out a strategy to promote more walking and improve the pedestrian environment. The document will replace the last Essex Walking Strategy (2001) to be in line with the revised NPPF (2019) and other more recent Government policies.
- 2.25. Essex County Council have produced a draft Green Essex Strategy (2019) that takes a proactive approach to enhance, protect and create an integrated network of high-quality green infrastructure in Essex. The document is currently out for public consultation.

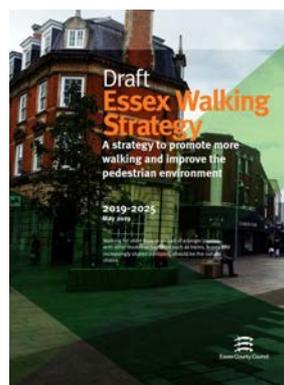


Figure 5 Sample of Essex County Council documents

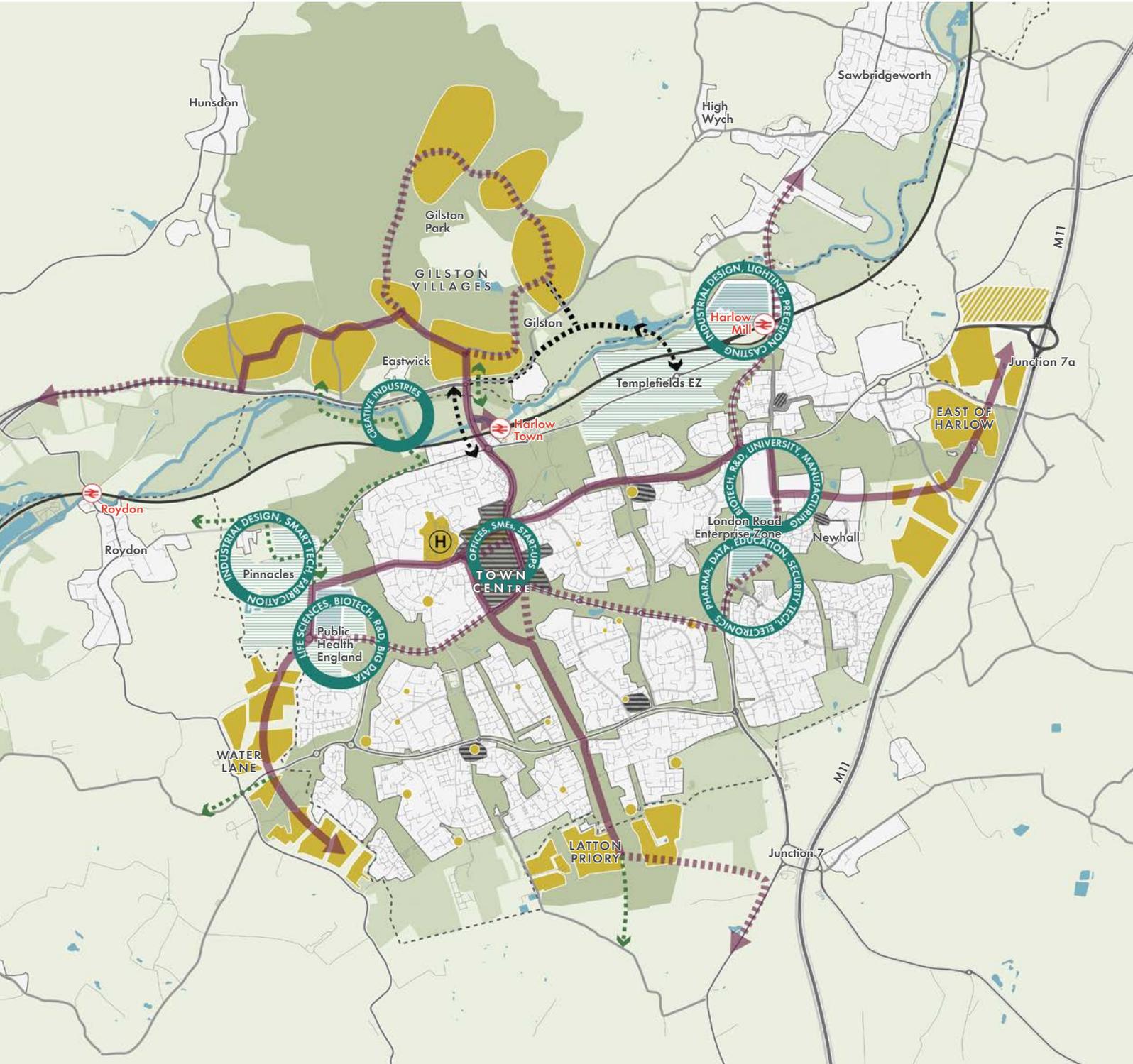
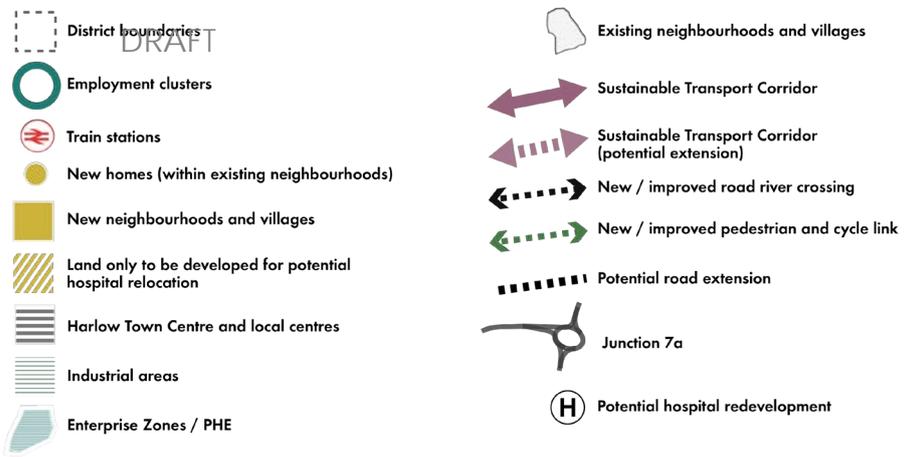


Figure 6 Growth context showing the strategic sites where new homes will be delivered in the Plan period within the Housing Market area (Harlow District Council, Epping Forest District Council and East Herts District Council) Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627 (2018)

# 3 PORTRAIT OF HARLOW TOWN CENTRE

## Historic overview

- 3.1. Before the planned development of Harlow New Town, the area was largely fields with dispersed farmsteads and manors. The commercial centre grew around Old Harlow's medieval market square and the more informal Churchgate Street to the south-east. The population grew from 1,514 people in 1801 to 3,471 in 1931, small in comparison to the 60,000 people for whom the new town was planned (later this increased to 90,000). In 2017 the population was 86,191 people (Office for National Statistics - mid-year population estimates, issued June 2018).
- 3.2. Frederick Gibberd's vision and masterplan for Harlow New Town reflected the New Town ethos of the 1940's, drawing inspiration from the earlier Garden City movement and the drive to provide high quality and spacious homes with access to clean air and open space.
- 3.3. The 1952 masterplan was based on three fundamental principles - an essentially human environment (that the design should be based on the pedestrian); an urban atmosphere; and the principle of evolution. According to Gibberd, "the third predicted a flexible approach. The first two were basic to the concept of new towns."

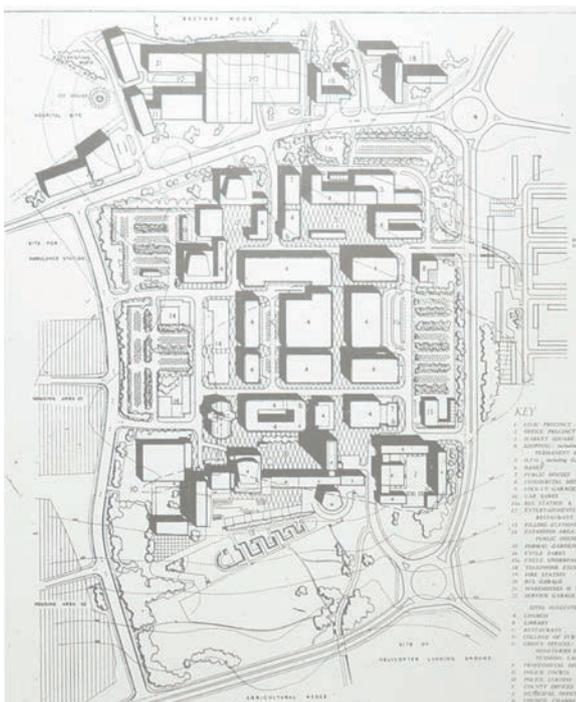
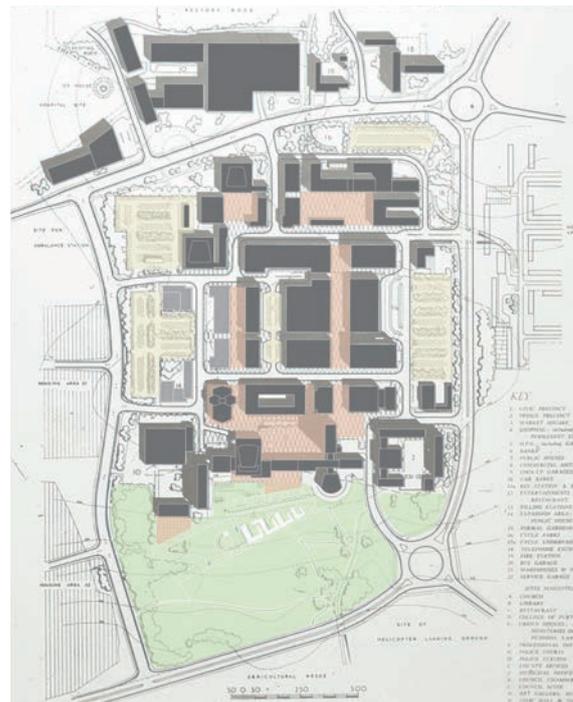


Figure 7 1952 masterplan of Harlow New Town



- Pedestrianised public realm
- Parking
- Green space

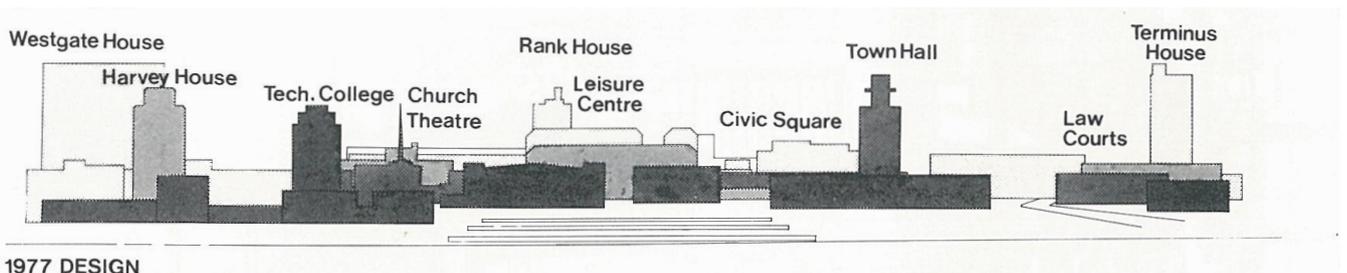
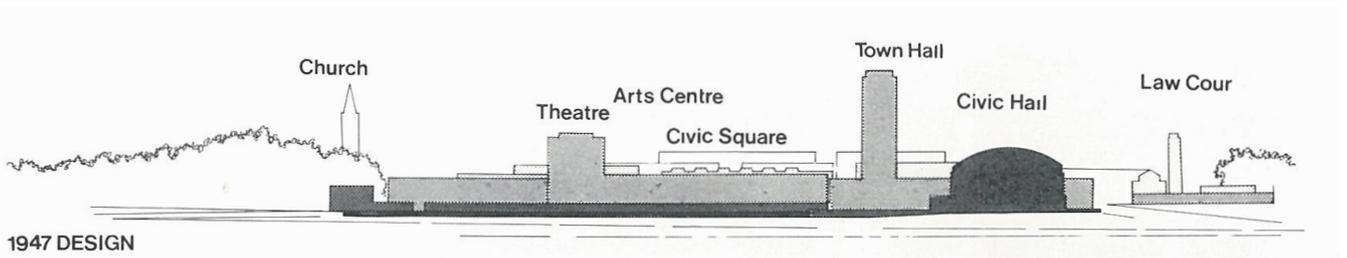
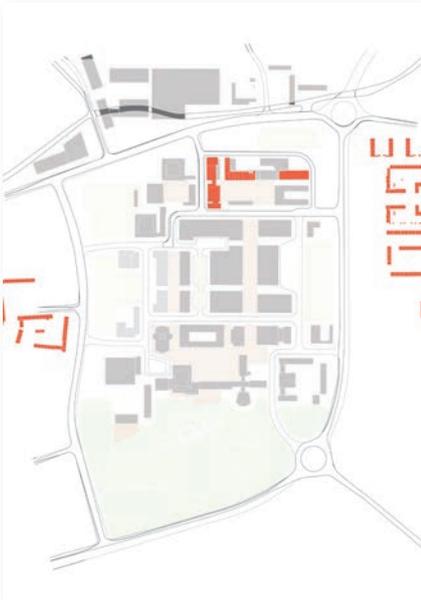


Figure 8 Gibberd's vision of rationalising and separating the town and industry from surrounding residential neighbourhoods

## Evolution of Town Centre

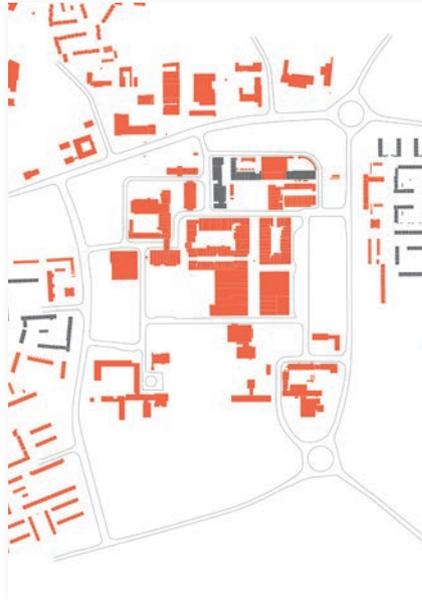
- 3.4. Since the conception of Harlow New Town, the Town Centre has undergone several stages of expansion. The diagrams below show its evolution from 1952 to today. The original plan intentionally separated residential areas from the Town Centre. This now has a negative impact on the current operation of the Town Centre, in contrast to historic market towns which are activated in the evening by people living in the centre.

**1952-1960**



The first buildings were completed around the Market Square.

**1960-1966**



The area north of Fourth Avenue is built out including Wych Elm area and Fire Station. The Market Square, Town Hall and Library have been built south of Fourth Avenue.

Car parks around the perimeter of the centre act as arrival points.

The Water Gardens are completed to the south with a large green area as the setting.

**1960-1975**



Multi-storey car parks and Joseph Rank House are developed on car park sites.

The Playhouse is built next to the Church.

There is further development of businesses and light industry in the Wych Elm area.

**Figure 9** Plans showing the evolution of Harlow Town Centre  
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**1975-1980**



1980 marks the dissolution of the Development Corporation. Harvey Centre is extended to include a multi-storey car park and BHS between the Library and Church.

Redstone House is built opposite the Library to announce the end of the Broad Way, and Sainsbury's supermarket is built to the north of the Town Centre.

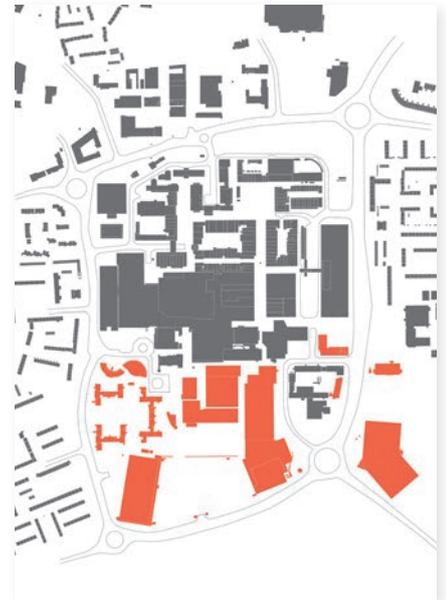
Vehicular connections across the Town Centre are lost between East Gate and West Gate and from College Square to Crown Gate.

**1980-1995**



Harvey Centre begins to fill out the area west of the Broad Walk and infill development bridges across North Gate.

**1995-2017**



More recently there has been a large amount of development to the south of the Town Centre alongside residential development in the centre at Dads Wood including Ocasio House. There is a loss of the majority of green space in the Town Centre.

The Water Gardens development involved the relocation of the Water Gardens and Harlow College and the addition of a multi-storey car park to the south of the Water Gardens.

Harlow Leisure Zone is built south east of the Town Centre and there is major investment at Harvey Centre including a new cinema.

### Nearby neighbourhoods

- 3.5. The surrounding neighbourhoods are separated from the Town Centre by green wedges and major roads.

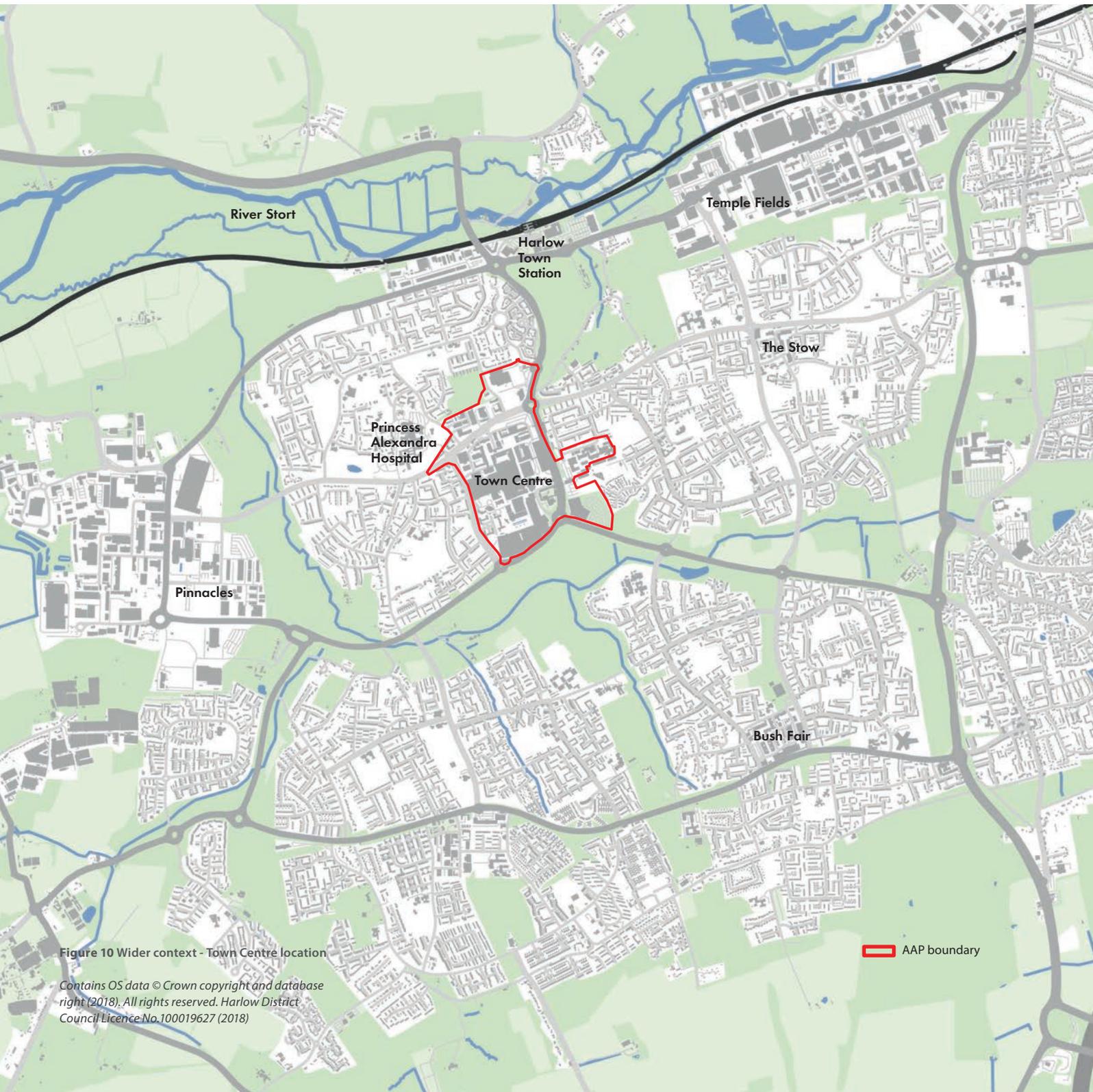


Figure 10 Wider context - Town Centre location

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 AAP boundary

### Green infrastructure

3.6. Natural landscape and green space can be easily reached by foot from the Town Centre, including the Town Park, although the centre itself lacks planting and open spaces. The Green Wedge network was an essential part

of Gibberd's vision for Harlow and often accommodates cycling and walking routes. The HTCAAP seeks to strengthen the relationship between the Town Park and wider green space network.



Figure 11 Wider context - Green space

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## Topography

3.7. The Stort Valley runs to the north with land rising gradually to the south, reaching a ridgeline of about 70 metres above the valley level to the south of existing settlement.

Harlow was planned to be contained within the cradle of Rye Hill, with this distinct topography offering expansive views of the surrounding countryside.

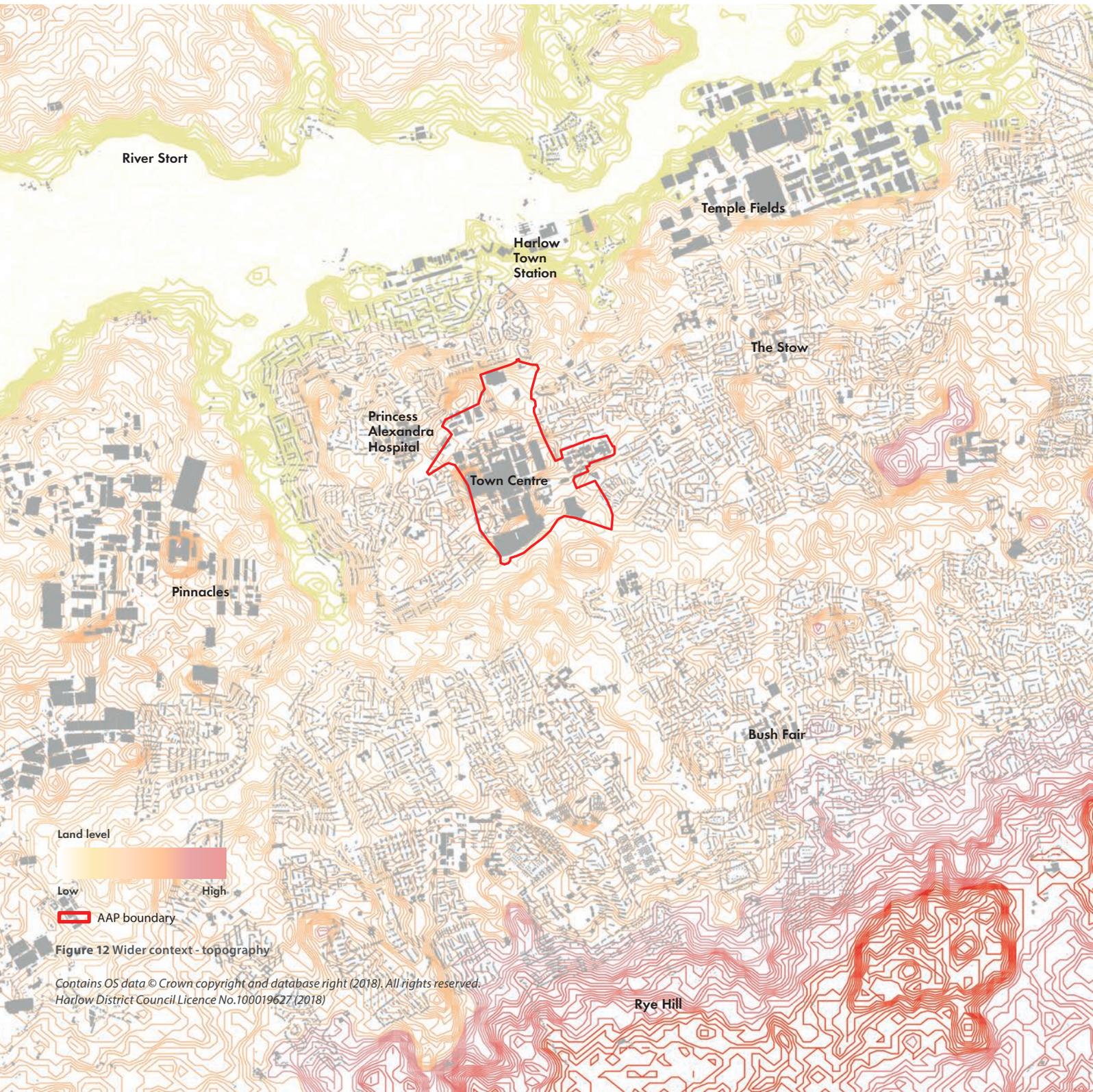


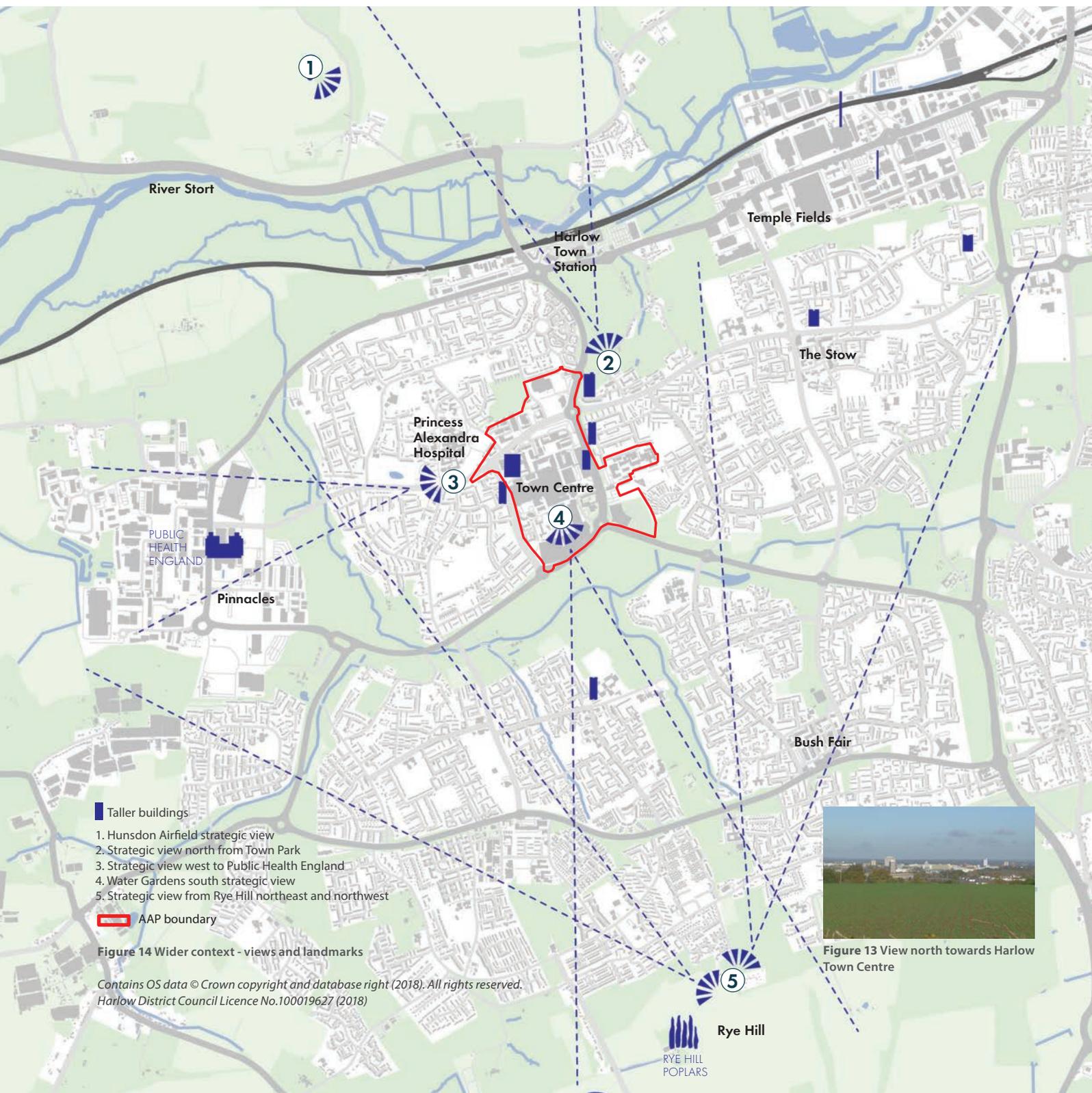
Figure 12 Wider context - topography

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## Landmarks

3.8. Views of landmarks aid legibility across Harlow. A row of poplar trees at the former Woodbridge Farm and the southern water tower are clear features on the horizon and can be viewed from

The Water Gardens looking south. The view back is shown in the photo below.



### **Town Centre position and context**

- 3.9. Harlow Town Centre is positioned in close proximity to major transport corridors, including the A10, M25, A414 and the M11, which stretches from London to Cambridge and beyond towards Peterborough. Stansted Airport is located to the north of Harlow. The Town Centre is served by Harlow Town Railway Station alongside a network of local buses. The integration of transport planning with efficient mixed land uses and improvements to the public realm are essential for the regeneration of the Town Centre. Harlow has a strong relationship with Cambridge which lies just 50km north of Harlow and is part of the 'Core Area' within the UK Innovation Corridor.



Figure 15 Regional context ©Allies and Morrison

UK Innovation Corridor

### Retail sector context and trends

- 3.10. Harlow has large shopping population in its catchment but the Town Centre has experienced a decline in retail ranking from 168 in 2012 to 185 in 2017 (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Final Report, May 2017). This could be due to a lack of inward investment and changes to the national retail sector and shopping habits, alongside the relative improvement of directly competing centres in the wider area including Bishops Stortford, Brookfield and Welwyn Garden City. Competition from sub-regional shopping centres also has an impact.
- 3.11. As set out in the recent Market Assessment for the Town Centre (2017), recent studies indicate a significant expenditure leakage to competing centres. The centre has a lack of major occupiers and a relatively poor evening economy offer. The proximity of the Town Centre to a strong out-of-town retail offer, notably Queensgate Centre, also affects the performance of the Town Centre retail economy.
- 3.12. The Harlow Town Centre AAP Delivery Strategy (Cushman & Wakefield, 2019) summarises the latest sector trends that are changing the function of town centres and high streets across the UK. These include:
- Reducing store portfolios - large retailers are increasingly focusing on a smaller number of prime locations for their stores;
  - New, flexible store formats - shopping is becoming more leisure focused and activity based;
  - The click-and-collect market - reduces 'last mile delivery' costs and can create additional sales volumes;
  - Improved digital capability - online interest has created 'digital economy' demands and opportunities which should be embraced by town centres;
  - Shared space - greater collaboration between retailers in terms of sharing space;
  - Increase in pop-up shops and other uses - enables retailers to lease space on a short-term basis and bring animation and vibrancy to the high street; and
  - Leisure and all-round experiences - importance of strong leisure 'anchors' increasingly evident. Leisure plays an important role in supporting the night time economy.
- 3.13. The Strategy also points to a weaker economic outlook and Brexit uncertainty during the final quarter of 2018 which has taken a toll on consumer confidence.



Figure 16 Town Centre performance rating ©Allies and Morrison

- KEY**
- Competing centre
  - Other New Towns
  - Retail ranking

## Growth potential

- 3.14. Significant housing growth will be required to support the level of forecast population growth (19.6% increase by 2032). The SHMA identified need for 7,409 new homes within the Harlow district between 2011 and 2033 with demand mostly for two and three bedrooms. The award-winning Newhall development at Harlow offers an innovative approach to accommodating new homes.
- 3.15. The existence of employment opportunities associated with Public Health England and Enterprise Zone status have significant potential to establish greater momentum in Harlow. Other positive drivers for growth include the Town’s strategic role in the UK Innovation Corridor and investment in sustainable transport modes and an integrated walking and cycling network.
- 3.16. The Town Centre is not understood to be an established office market due to size, quality of existing stock and high vacancy rates. However, significant growth opportunities exist within the Enterprise Zone for new office space with a focus on Med Tech, Life Science and ICT sectors alongside SME manufacturing space and the emergence of a national science base for Public Health England.
- 3.17. The conversion of office to residential within the Town Centre is undermining good quality growth and impacting upon the amount of employment space needed to help meet wider economic needs associated with the new homes proposed for the District. The Council is seeking Article 4 directions for a number of areas including Harlow town centre to remove the right to Permitted Development conversions from offices to residential.
- 3.18. Residential growth and employment generation are expected to go hand-in-hand with a growth in future Town Centre consumer demand and its regeneration. This is an opportunity for Harlow Town Centre.
- 3.19. The table opposite illustrates the forecast level of retail capacity over the plan period under a medium housing growth scenario, as set out in the Harlow Retail & Leisure Needs Study (2016). The table shows that the Council will need to plan for indicatively up to 37,900 sq.m net additional comparison goods floorspace by 2033. There is a quantitative ‘need’ for an additional 2,900 sq.m net convenience goods floorspace for the period to 2026, increasing to (indicatively) 4,700 sq.m net by 2033.
- 3.20. A preferred option has been identified for the relocation of Princess Alexandra Hospital (PAH) from its current site north of the town centre to a greenfield site east of Harlow, close to J7a on the M11 and the planned eastern Garden Town neighbourhood.
- 3.21. This will enable the hospital to respond to population growth and increasing demand. The hospital is the largest employer in the district and serves an extended population of up to 500,000. The relocation away from the existing site will impact town centre employment figures and daily footfall and the Council will consider how some of these jobs may be reprovided. The existing site has been identified for approximately 550 new homes, which will support the town centre.

|   | Forecasting year |        |        |        |
|---|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|   | 2021             | 2026   | 2031   | 2033   |
| Comparison goods floorspace capacity (sq. m net)  | 4,900            | 17,200 | 31,600 | 37,900 |
| Convenience goods floorspace capacity (sq. m net) | 1,600            | 2,900  | 4,200  | 4,700  |

Existing retail floorspace: 82,000 sq. m net

Figure 17 Forecast Retail Capacity - Medium Housing Growth / ‘Baseline’ Scenario (figures are cumulative)  
Source: Harlow Retail & Leisure Needs Study, 2016, GVA.



Figure 18 Photos of Harlow Town Centre

**SWOT analysis**

- 3.22. Drawing on the Market Assessment report (2017), the following analysis assists in distilling the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT).

**Strengths**

- Harlow's strategic location
- Excellent transport connections (Harlow)
- 30 minutes to London by train (Harlow)
- Lots of shoppers
- Representation of national mid-range multiples
- Adequate town centre parking
- Private investment e.g. Addington scheme
- Asda forms an 'anchor' alongside the established restaurant offer at The Water Gardens
- Harlow College Campus
- Voluntary and community
- Public art
- The Water Gardens Shopping Centre

**Weaknesses**

- Too much retail floorspace which could result in a fragmented town centre in the event of a downturn in retail performance
- High vacancy rates (highest of all comparators)
- Lack of medium - large shops
- Lack of higher end retailers
- Lack of quality small independents
- Lack of vibrant night-time offer
- Limited commercial leisure offer
- Location of train station
- Poorly laid out and unwelcoming bus station
- Low quality, under-utilised public spaces
- Poor town centre connections
- Library site (physical/physiological barrier)
- Lack of council-owned town centre sites
- Lowest average income of all comparators

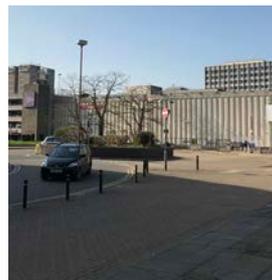
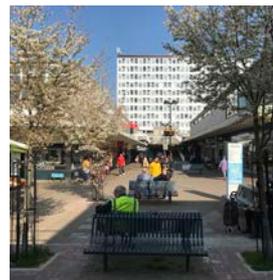
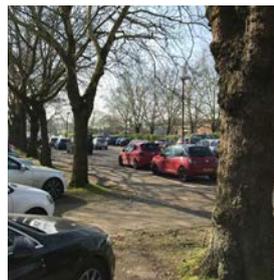


Figure 19 Photos of Harlow Town Centre

## **O** Opportunities

- Potential development sites in northern town centre area (Market Square / Stone Cross and Post Office Road)
- Council role in stimulating regeneration
- Increase the resident population of both the town and within the town centre
- Consolidation of town centre shopping area
- Consolidation of public sector services
- Greater non-car town centre linkages
- Cinema-anchor scheme completed in Harvey Centre, introduction of new restaurants
- Potential for new theatre offer
- Planning permission granted for major redevelopment of town centre west
- Improve and maintain shops along Broad Walk
- Improve accessibility by public transport
- Proposals for the improvement of the library site
- Public Health England and Enterprise Zone (Harlow)
- The role of Harlow College Campus in reducing the jobs and skills mismatch by improving skills, training and qualifications within the district
- Role of the development of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town for the delivery of better, more sustainable accessibility



## **T** Threats

- Limited town centre development pipeline or certainty of developments
- Minor developments / investment delivered in isolation
- Lack of department store
- Increasing competition from other centres (including Chelmsford)
- Trends in retail sector (polarisation, multi-channel retailing, changing store formats)
- Poor quality office-residential conversions
- Economy uncertainty
- Continuation of lowest average income of all comparators

### Key market drivers

3.23. The Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis report (2017) identifies five main market drivers. It is important that these drivers are embedded in parallel with the spatial objectives set out in the next chapter.

#### 3.24. **Social infrastructure**

- The Town Centre has strengths in education, and convenient and safe pedestrian links would encourage users to visit the Town Centre more frequently.
- The cultural offer should be retained and enhanced where possible.
- Other community facilities in the centre are disparate in sub-optimal locations. There is scope for co-location of facilities in more convenient locations in more efficient buildings.

#### 3.25. **Quality of environment**

- A high quality public realm is important for attracting shoppers seeking a high quality experience
- Positive environmental characteristics will promote development and growth.

#### 3.26. **Accessibility**

- The Town Centre has a significant amount of parking but quality and security is generally poor.
- Relative distance between rail station and Town Centre hinders the success of centre. There is a need for better walking and cycling links and a more efficient and frequent bus route.
- There is an opportunity to consider the re-provision of the bus station to release land for development and to provide a safer, better quality facility.

#### 3.27. **Site promotion**

- A clear planning framework can assist in encouraging development and growth in the Town Centre. In this context, the HTCAAP will provide coherent framework that sets direction for change in Harlow Town Centre.

#### 3.28. **Place management**

- Proactive Town Centre management can improve quality of environment, safety and security and marketing and promotion of Town Centre.
- Town centre management vehicles such as Business Improvement Districts can also improve performance, as well as the possible use of Local Development Orders (LDOs).

Figure 20 Harlow Library

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NEW LOOK

the Water  
Gardens

Essex County Council

Harlow Library

HARLOWSAVE

HARLOWSAVE

pawnbroker  
jeweller  
safe keeper

fish

EXHIBITION

# 4 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

## Vision

- 4.1. In the future, Harlow Town centre will be a successful, sustainable place which serves as the commercial centre for the existing town of Harlow and the planned Garden Town of Harlow and Gilston. The town centre will play an important part in helping Harlow and Gilston to step up to a more active economic role within the UK Innovation Corridor.
- 4.2. In order to do this, the town centre will have a strong mix of shops and services; offices and employment space; civic and leisure uses; and a thriving evening economy and cultural offer. The town centre will also have a decent range of homes that can support a mixed and balanced community.
- 4.3. The town centre will be accessible to all, by public transport, cycle, on foot and by car and will help the District to minimise reliance on private cars in the future. The town centre will be a healthy place for everyone, contributing to the well-being of the community and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

## Objectives

- 4.4. We have defined the following outcomes to help assess whether the proposals and investments will help to deliver the vision. By 2033, the HTCAAP will support:



- A **unified centre** which re-balances the northern and southern areas.



- A Town Centre which supports **wider economic growth** in the District providing shops, services and homes, and a diverse mix of commercial activity in the Town Centre.



- A **retail and leisure offer** which appeals to Harlow's catchment and limits expenditure leakage to competing centres.



- A **high quality public realm** and environment with active public spaces.



- An **inclusive and accessible destination** with excellent transport links capitalising on Harlow's strategic location that enable and encourage local trips by sustainable and active travel modes.



- A **strong cultural offer** which is supported by residents and visitors to the Town Centre.



- **Community facilities** which support the town's population.



- A **cohesive place**, supported by uses and design proposals which complement one another and work towards the overarching vision.

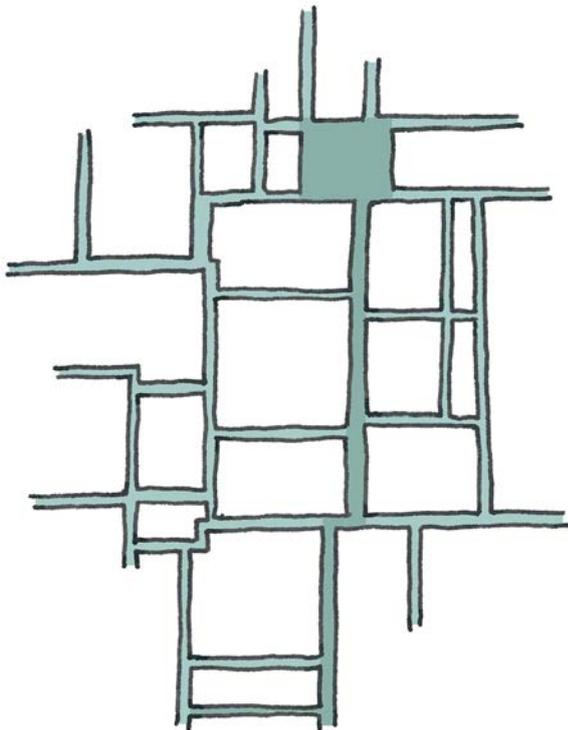


- A **commitment to retain the ethos** and respond positively to the defining elements of the Gibberd masterplan including the plan aesthetic, public art and spaces, heritage assets and positive architectural characteristics.



- A town centre that is **resilient** to increasingly variable conditions resulting from **climate change**.

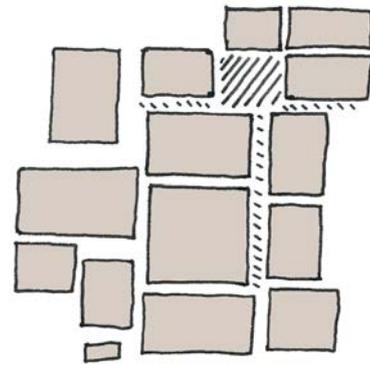
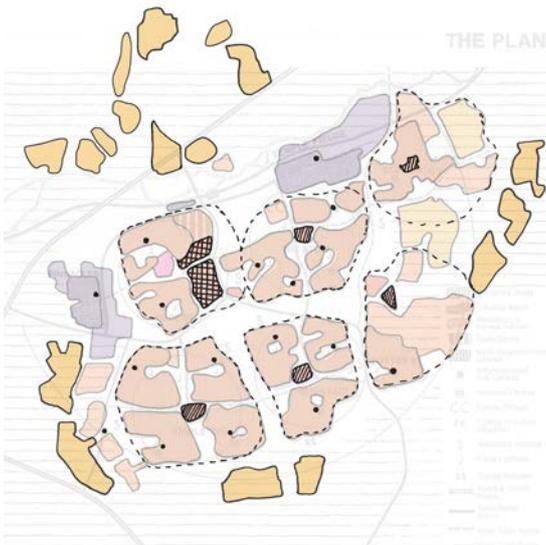
## Spatial principles



### Plan aesthetic

- 4.5. There is a formal composition to the arrangement of the streets and spaces in Harlow.
- 4.6. Buildings and public spaces have been set out on an irregular rectilinear grid, aligning frontages and with clearly defined corners.

## Spatial objectives (continued)

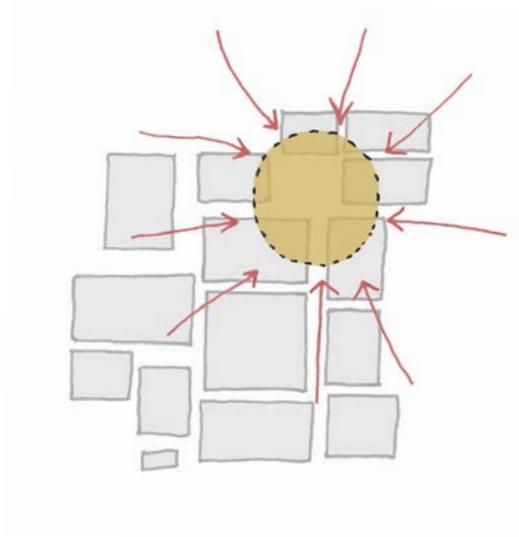


### 1 Garden Town

- 4.7. The future role and prosperity of the town centre is intertwined with the HGGT project and wider movement proposals i.e. strengthening the link from the town centre to Harlow Town train station.
- 4.8. The town centre has the potential to be reinvigorated as a vibrant place within the constellation of new settlements and communities around Harlow.
- 4.9. The HTCAAP has a key role to play in future-proofing key movement interventions and embedding place-making aspirations.

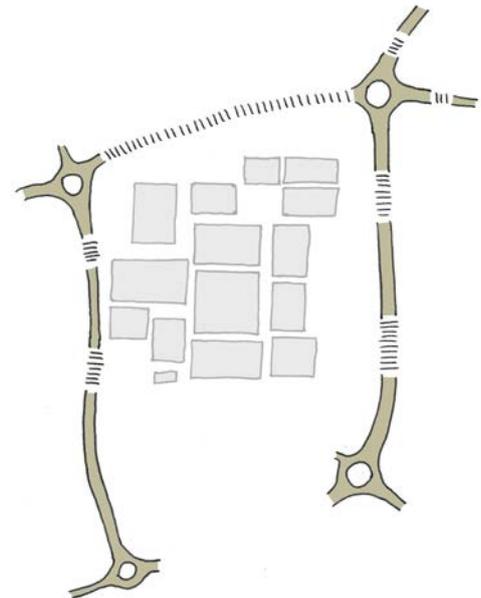
### 2 Respond to the urban structure

- 4.10. Working with the original bone structure of the town, taking a cue from the network of streets and spaces and the plan aesthetic as well as the original buildings.
- 4.11. Using the masterplan to 'repair' spatial conditions which are not currently working and to support spatial conditions which are currently successful or have potential to be so.



### 3 Rebalance the focus of gravity northwards

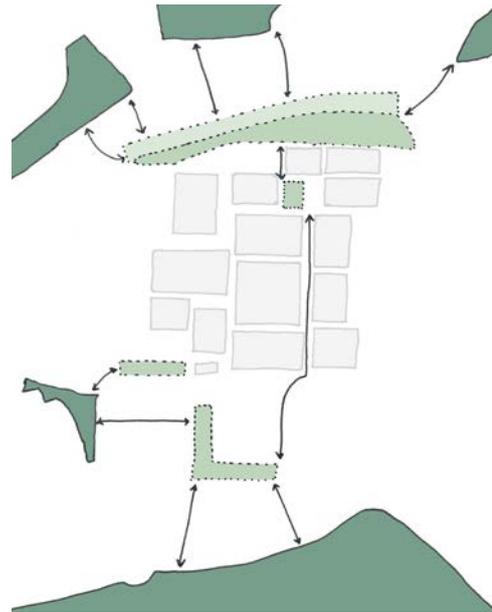
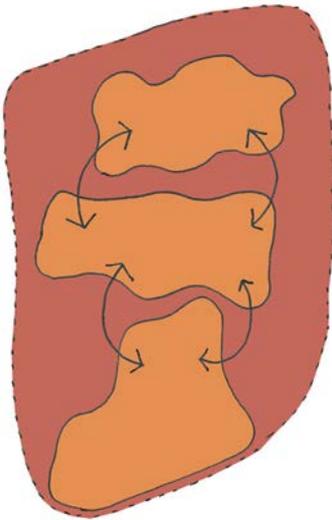
- 4.12. Accommodating uses which can help to shift the centre of gravity within the Town Centre northwards again
- 4.13. This does not mean to make the southern and the western areas less active, but to bring the Stonecross area up to this level.



### 4 Change the street character of the inner ring road

- 4.14. Changing the character of the inner ring road to a fronted boulevard on First Avenue with connections across to shift away from a dual carriageway
- 4.15. Adding at-grade pedestrian crossings increasing accessibility and priority given to pedestrians / cyclists to encourage sustainable and active travel to and from the town centre.

**Spatial objectives (continued)**

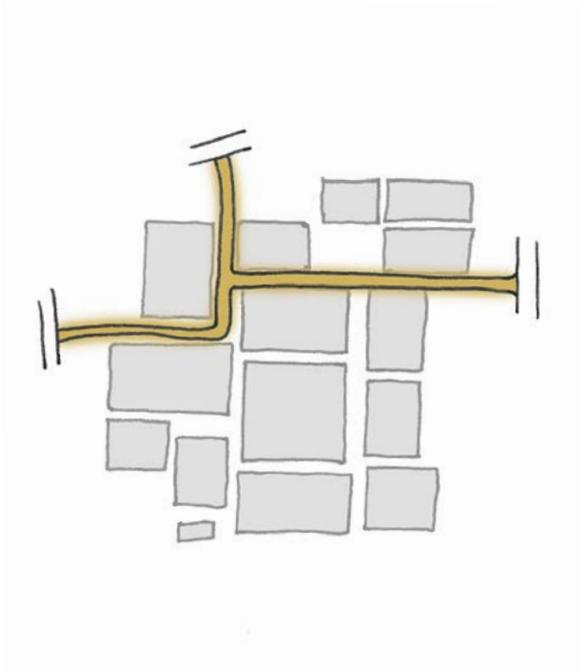


**5 Establish a unified centre**

- 4.16. Helping the town to operate as one centre rather than three separate areas
- 4.17. At present, the Water Gardens and the Harvey Centre act successfully as insular areas but have very different characters and do not have a relationship with one another or with the Stone Cross area.

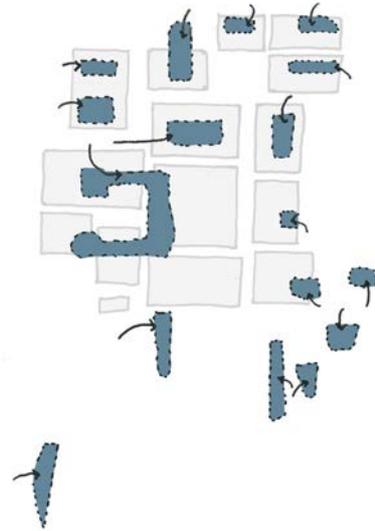
**6 Connect to and draw in green spaces**

- 4.18. A landscape wedge along the northern edge of the Town Centre reflecting Gibberd's original masterplan principles.
- 4.19. Stronger connections to the green spaces that surround the Town Centre, as intended in the original plan and which will facilitate and promote better sustainable accessibility to and from the town centre.



## 7 Reinstating vehicular access through the town centre

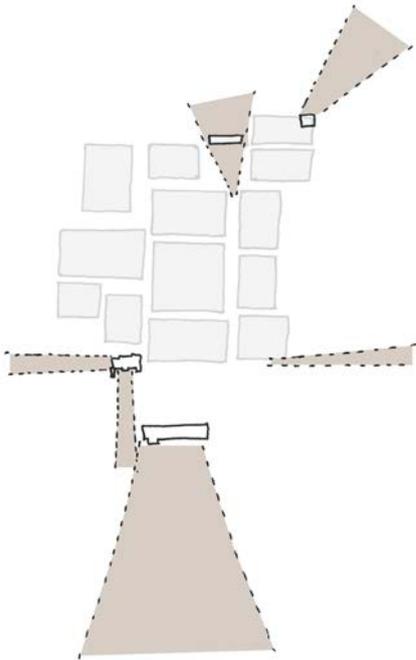
- 4.20. Bringing public transport back into the centre to provide a comfortable, safe environment in the evening and to raise the profile of the Stone Cross area.



## 8 Establishing street frontages and attractive approaches

- 4.21. Addressing servicing approaches to the Town Centre, where possible, so that people are welcomed to the Town Centre as they approach.

**Spatial objectives (continued)**

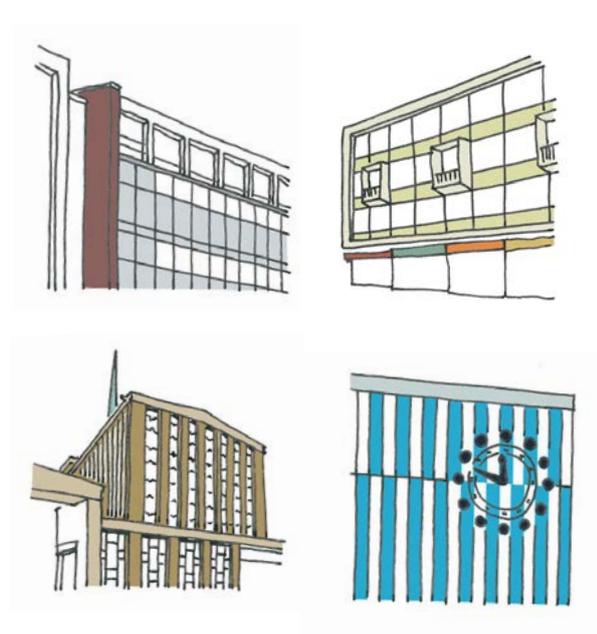


**9 Frame views of key buildings and spaces**

- 4.22. Improving the visibility of the Town Centre from the surrounding roads and framing views of key buildings such as the church to improve their setting.

**10 A vibrant town centre**

- 4.23. Looking forward, Harlow town centre should continue to play a role as a destination for a range of retail and leisure uses.
- 4.24. The HTCAAP will seek to create a resilient framework which is capable of responding to the changing economic dynamics.
- 4.25. Building on a core retail offer, the HTCAAP seeks to create a context for a rich and flexible mix of community uses, varied workspace, leisure activities, homes and shops.



## 11 Celebrate and reflect design heritage

- 4.26. Celebrating the unique design heritage of Harlow and using this to inform future development proposals
- 4.27. Ensuring that these design cues are followed for future development in the town taking consideration of the qualities of colours, materials and detailing of the original fabric, and the integration of public art and sculpture
- 4.28. Identifying buildings and qualities of value which could be transformed through refurbishment

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# 5 THEMATIC GUIDANCE AND POLICIES

## Overview of policies

5.1. This sections gives thematic guidance and policies to guide future sustainable development in Harlow Town Centre.

5.2. The policies are:

### 1. Strategic growth and delivery

HTC1: Strategic growth

### 2. Movement

HTC2: Sustainable movement in the town centre

HTC3: Active travel - walking and cycling

HTC4: Public transport

HTC5: Car parking

### 3. Urban Design and Heritage

HTC6: Urban design principles for Harlow Town Centre

HTC7: Heritage assets in the town centre

HTC8: Views and landmarks

HTC9: Public realm, art and sculpture

### 4. Land uses

HTC10: Retail and leisure

HTC11: Flexibility and resilience

HTC12: Town centre living

HTC13: Workspace

HTC14: Cultural uses and evening economy

HTC15: Civic and community uses

## Structure

5.3. The chapter is structured by policy theme. The following headings sit beneath each theme:

- **Introduction** - background to each group of policies sitting under the theme.

5.4. For each policy in the theme, the structure is as follows:

- **Policy statement** - concise statement of policy guidance.
- **Justification** - statement justifying the approach as set out in the draft policy.
- **Implementation** - supporting text which sets out how the policy will be progressed and taken forward.

5.5. The town centre policies map (Figure 44) identifies the key spatial policy allocations and designations in the HTCAAP area. An inset map (Figure 43) illustrates the designated retail frontages.

Figure 21 Looking towards Terminus House

strategic growth  
and delivery

movement

urban design  
and heritage

landuses

## THEME 1: STRATEGIC GROWTH AND DELIVERY

### Introduction

5.6. Harlow Town Centre is at an important juncture in the process of plan-making, regeneration and place-making. It benefits from a strategic location with a growing catchment. It is important that the town centre capitalises on recent investments and capitalises on the catalytic relationship with the Harlow Gilston Garden Town Project.

5.7. The Town Centre has a distinctive character and an impressive collection of public art and amenities which could be better celebrated. Clear opportunities exist to enhance the public realm and to capitalise on the latent development potential of the area.

5.8. In this context, policy HTC1 encourages a comprehensive, long-term view, establishing a context for positive incremental change across the plan period.

#### Corporate Priorities

5.9. This section and the policy contained within it will help deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as follows:

- More and better housing
- Regeneration and a thriving economy
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- A clean and green environment

#### Policy context

5.10. The Garden Town proposals set out an agenda for significant growth in the Harlow and neighbouring authorities of up to 16,100 new homes.

5.11. Policies in the Local Plan (Pre-Submission Draft 2018) update the existing policy approach in relation to the sequential approach, frontage

guidance, sub-division, evening and night-time economy, improvements in the sustainability of travel. Development Management policies are set out in relation to public art, community and sports facilities and heritage assets.

#### HTCAAP objectives

5.12. Theme 1 will assist in the delivery of the AAP objectives as follows:

- A **unified centre**
- A Town Centre which supports **wider economic growth** in the District
- A **competitive retail and leisure offer**
- A **high quality public realm**
- An **inclusive and accessible destination** with excellent transport links and that encourages local trips by sustainable and active travel modes
- A **strong cultural offer**
- **Community facilities**
- A **cohesive place**, supported by uses and design proposals which complement one another
- A **commitment to retain the ethos** and respond positively to the defining elements of the Gibberd masterplan
- A town centre that is **resilient to climate change**

### Policy HTC1 Delivery

Proposals for the town centre should demonstrate a positive response to the vision, objectives and spatial principles set out in Chapter 4 of the HTCAAP.

Applicants should demonstrate how proposals prioritise the strategic role of the town centre in relation to the wider Harlow Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) project and Enterprise Zones with a view to achieving co-ordinated planning, design, movement and regeneration outcomes.

Proposals should be responsive to shifting market trends and dynamics, providing a clear demonstration of their role in establishing a resilient town centre.

Incremental, early-win or phased proposals should demonstrate how they accord with spatial opportunities, and future-proofing the realisation of longer-term illustrative proposals in the HTCAAP.

### Justification

- 5.13. Harlow Town Centre benefits from a strategic location with a large catchment and significant investments including the Harvey Centre upgrade which will have a wider catalytic impact. The Town Centre has a distinctive character and an impressive collection of public art and amenities which could be better celebrated. Clear opportunities exist to enhance the public realm and to capitalise on the latent development potential of the area.
- 5.14. Unfortunately, the Town Centre suffers from a mismatch in retail floorspace. Commercial advice set out in Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Report (2017) indicates that there is an excessive provision of retail compounded by a lack of good quality floorspace, a lack of high-end operators and high vacancy rates. The area also suffers from a limited evening economy offer and poor accessibility. The absence of a department store and the strong performance of competing centres in the region is a potential constraint to a step change in the strategic performance of the Town Centre.
- 5.15. Harlow's existing urban area is rectangular in form, with the long axis running west-to-east parallel to the river valley. The Town Centre is relatively close to the northern edge of the settlement. However, the development of garden villages at Gilston and Garden Communities to the north and south of the town will result in a settlement that is much more evenly distributed around the central core.
- 5.16. The Town Centre's centre of gravity has moved south since the original 1952 masterplan, which was focused on the Market Square at the northern end of the Town Centre. The key

attractors are now the more modern Harvey Centre to the south-west, The Water Gardens Shopping Centre to the south, and the Harlow Leisurezone to the south-east. The traditional centres – Market Square, West Gate and Broad Walk – all lie away from these locations, and do not correspond to any significant walking routes from key arrival points, the most notable being the bus station and car park at Terminus Street, which runs parallel to Broad Walk.

- 5.17. Through the Garden Town proposals and the arrival of Public Health England, there is a genuine prospect that the Town Centre could harness the benefits of major residential growth in the immediate vicinity of Harlow (16,100 new homes to 2033 with a further 7,000 at Gilston after 2033).

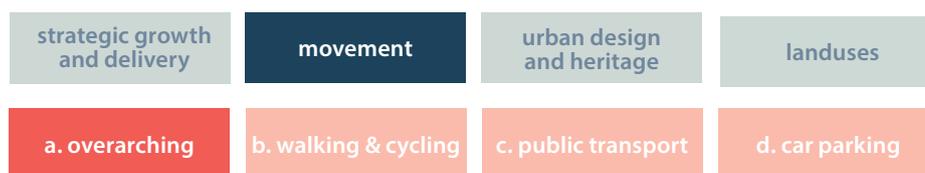
### Implementation

- 5.18. The Council will seek to avoid piecemeal development, encouraging an ambitious approach to growth and placemaking which creates the conditions for a successful and sustainable town centre with an emphasis on high quality streets, spaces and buildings.
- 5.19. The Council intends to work closely with Central Government, Homes England and other key delivery agencies to progress the HTCAAP. A range of supporting strategies and initiatives could be developed relating to the co-ordinated planning and development of public estate assets, joined-up proposals for transport and infrastructure, initiatives and strategies related to the successful performance of Harlow as a town centre, and branding / marketing initiatives. The Council will adopt a proactive approach to developing funding bids and initiatives as set out in the delivery strategy in the HTCAAP.
- 5.20. Where there is a compelling case in the public interest, the Council will consider the use of its compulsory purchase powers to assemble sites within the HTCAAP Area.
- 5.21. Chapter 5 sets out the proposed approach to delivery across the plan period and beyond. Proposals are earmarked according to early phases (0-5 years), medium-term (6-10 years) and long-term (defined as being beyond the plan period).
- 5.22. The HTCAAP embeds a degree of flexibility around the precise mix of town centre land uses.
- 5.23. The Council will consider the preparation of site-specific Development Briefs to supplement

the HTCAAP. Working in partnership with stakeholders, the local community and development partners, Development Briefs will provide an opportunity to establish specific parameters around uses, design and infrastructure, which advance the more general principles and indicative illustrative material in the AAP. Development Briefs could be led by the Council, but where appropriate, these documents will be prepared jointly in partnership with landowners or development partners. Key sites which would benefit from Development Briefs include the Post Office site, Crowngate Island and the Bus Station area.

- 5.24. Proposals should demonstrate how they adhere to the general and site-based policy guidance and criteria in the HTCAAP. In doing so, positive reference should be made to the illustrative material which is set out in chapter 5 and appended Opportunity Area and Public Realm guidance.
- 5.25. Initial masterplanning guidance has been established for the main Opportunity Areas and key sites in the town centre (see Appendix 1). Initial guidance for catalytic and longer-term public realm projects has also been prepared. This work has played a key role in influencing the policy direction in the HTCAAP and is appended to the HTCAAP for reference. The Council will require development proposals to demonstrate how they integrate with the specific principles of the relevant Opportunity Area with reference to public realm, movement and highways, land uses and design.
- 5.26. The Council will embrace a phased delivery strategy comprising a range of early-win projects and longer-term initiatives and development proposals including the future-proofing of infrastructure (including digital).
- 5.27. Proposals for key sites should be proactive in integrating and embracing the proposed public realm projects as set out in Appendix 1. Schemes will be expected to make development contributions to enable delivery of key public realm interventions, potentially via pooled contributions. Where fundamental to the transformation of a site, public realm interventions should be delivered as a core element of the scheme. All proposals should demonstrate how they future-proof the future delivery (or phased delivery) of public realm proposals as set out in the HTCAAP and supporting documentation.
- 5.28. Proposals for transformational projects which are beyond the HTCAAP boundary but would benefit the performance of the town centre such as connections to Harlow Town Station will also be promoted by the Council.
- 5.29. The Council will expect major town centre development schemes (including streetscape, highways and infrastructure proposals) to engage with the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Quality Review Panel. Early review will play a key role in securing the commitment to quality as set out in the HTCAAP.
- 5.30. The Council is also considering the establishment of a town centre Business Improvement District and a regular landowner and developer forum.
- Early delivery of public realm and infrastructure improvements will be encouraged, alongside a creative approach to meanwhile uses to set a positive context for future proposals.

## 5

POLICY  
THEMES

## THEME 2: MOVEMENT

### Introduction

5.31. The Movement theme is divided into four policies relating to: overarching movement guidance, walking and cycling, public transport and car parking. The balance and integration of these four strands of movement are vital for the future success of Harlow Town Centre.

5.32. Policies HTC2, HTC3, HTC4 and HTC5 set the context for a range of interventions which will support the ambitions for modal shift across Harlow District and the HGGT area.

### Corporate Priorities

5.33. This section and the policy contained within it will help deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as follows:

- More and better housing
- Regeneration and a thriving economy
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- A clean and green environment

### Policy context

5.34. Policy SIR1 (Harlow Local Plan, Pre-Submission Draft, 2018) outlines a commitment to deliver the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support development in Harlow, including the North-South Sustainable Transport Corridor. Policy SIR2 identifies key gateway locations which will be integrated within the wider transport and green infrastructure network of Harlow, enhanced by improvements to the public realm. This includes vehicular and pedestrian access points to the north of the Town Centre.

5.35. Policy IN1 promotes sustainable modes of travel as part of development proposals, including the provision of electric charging points for vehicles

in accordance with the latest government guidance. Policy IN2 sets out criteria for development with relation to adequate, safe and convenient loading and servicing arrangements.

### HTCAAP objectives

5.36. Theme 2 will assist in the delivery of the HTCAAP objectives as follows:

- An **inclusive and accessible destination** with excellent transport links and that encourages local trips by sustainable and active travel modes
- A **unified centre**
- A town centre that is **resilient to climate change**



Figure 23 Moving around Harlow

### Policy HTC2 Sustainable movement in the town centre

Movement proposals should have regard to the modal hierarchy as set out in the Harlow Local Development Plan. Proposals should demonstrate how they will support the realisation of strategic modal shift targets.

Proposals should incorporate greater use of non-vehicular modes of transport to minimise vehicle emissions to improve air quality in the local area.

Proposals should incorporate a joined-up approach to the softening of the collar-roads which encircle the core town centre to create more accessible connections into and across the town centre, and a more welcoming experience for pedestrians and cyclists.

### Justification

- 5.37. The 1952 masterplan for Harlow New Town was based on the concept of a “human environment” which prioritised people and pedestrians.
- 5.38. The original street grid has resulted in a condition where internal streets do not correspond with external gateways, which exacerbates a sense of isolation in the Town Centre. The HLDP sets a context for a modal shift to establish a more sustainable pattern of transport. Cycling and walking routes into and within the Town Centre should be improved to provide better linkages, encourage more sustainable methods of transport and to promote healthy lifestyles. This will be essential for the regeneration of the Town Centre, alongside considering the impact of air pollution caused by the possible re-introduction of vehicular traffic to the Town Centre. There are a handful of locations where active frontages and movement routes are integrated, but otherwise the Town Centre is generally characterised by sudden changes in environment, emphasised by the collar effect of the four roads that surround it.
- 5.39. Harlow Town Centre lacks a strong northern gateway, despite this being the arrival point from the railway station and the A414 road. The most prominent gateways into Harlow Town Centre lie to the east, south and west – at the Bus Station, The Water Gardens Shopping Centre and College Square respectively.
- 5.40. One natural gateway can be found at College Square, outside the Harlow Playhouse Theatre and St Paul’s Church in the western fringes of the Town Centre. College Square is one of the few places in Harlow where activity and routes co-exist, with the taxi turning circle outside the Theatre providing a focus for activity.

- 5.41. At the opposite side of the Town Centre, the intersection of East Gate, Post Office Road and Terminus Road acts as an eastern gateway, with shops fronting onto the junction and overlooking the bus station.
- 5.42. By contrast, North Gate provides a very sudden transition from the northern collar road. It serves primarily as a rear service road, but also provides a walking link into the northern part of the Town Centre. It is well-used for informal “kiss and ride”, as one of the closest places to drive into the Town Centre to drop off or pick up passengers. Despite this, it does not feel like a legible part of the Town Centre.
- 5.45. The AAP also defines specific policies relating to parking, cycling and public transport. Linkages by walking and cycling with the wider neighbourhoods and further afield to HGGT will be promoted (Policy HTC3). In practice, the level of town centre / public parking will reduce over time, reflecting the desired shift in favour of walking, cycling and public transport.
- 5.46. Figure 24 provides an illustrative explanation of the future approach to connections in the town centre.

## Implementation

### General

- 5.43. The Council, working in partnership with Essex County Council has identified a clear priority of promoting a more sustainable pattern of movement in the town centre through a series of key moves and policy principles as part of an overall ambition that 60% of all journeys within the new Garden Town Communities, and 50% of all journeys across Harlow, will be undertaken by sustainable (including active) modes. The Council will work collaboratively to encourage a joined-up approach in relation to the town centre alongside HGGT and the Enterprise Zone.
- 5.44. In order to realise aspirations for a more sustainable pattern of movement, the Council will promote a series of interventions to create a clearer hierarchy of streets in the town centre. In clarifying the overall hierarchy, the Council will place greater emphasis on access for less able people, walking, cycling and public transport. Vehicular movement will continue to be important, but the AAP embodies a general shift away from cars in terms of decision-making priority.
- From “Collar Road” to “Boulevard”**
- 5.47. The Council will encourage a fundamental shift in character of the peripheral “collar road” which includes Velizy Avenue, Third Avenue, Haydens Road and Fourth Avenue to create a more welcoming and attractive boulevard character. This could be achieved through a series of phases, with Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue having greatest priority alongside adjacent development opportunities which could transform the existing edges of the town centre and sense of arrival.
- 5.48. The creation of a “boulevard” along Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue will provide strong east-west and north-south principal streets which will play a vital movement function for all forms of transport. Further design and traffic modelling would be required to fully understand how these streets would operate, but key principles include the creation of defined footways and cycleways, at-grade crossings, landscape planting and establishing active frontages wherever possible.
- 5.49. Haydens Road and Third Avenue would also benefit from this treatment, although these routes are less critical to the achieving a fundamental shift in the arrival experience. The Council will work closely with the Highways

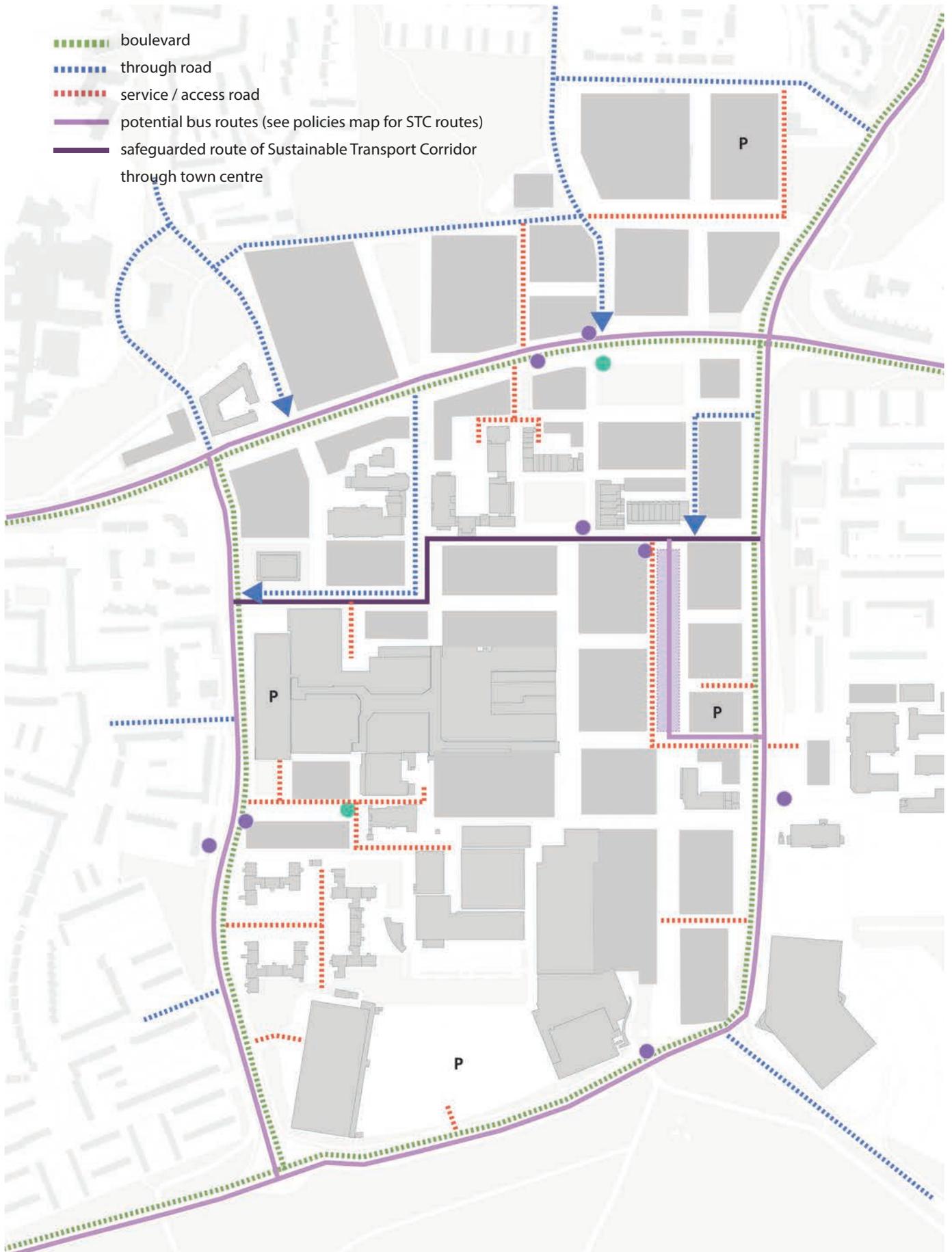


Figure 24 Indicative street hierarchy (including servicing) Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627 (2018)

Authority to understand the management of bus movements on Haydens Road – seeking to prioritise bus movements without creating unintended traffic impacts on Fourth Avenue.

- 5.50. Further illustrative guidance is set out in Appendix 1.

#### **Improving junctions for active transport**

- 5.51. As part of the boulevard proposals, the Council will work with the Highways Authority to consider the arrangements of key junctions on the collar roads. The overall emphasis is to make junctions more accessible for walking and cycling.
- 5.52. A range of interventions will be considered holistically in partnership with Essex County Council and the HGGT authorities.
- 5.53. Roundabouts are generally not pedestrian and cycle friendly because they encourage continuous flow of vehicles, with fast exit speeds. Where possible, the Council will encourage the provision of signalised junctions to replace roundabouts. In some locations existing roundabouts could be made more pedestrian and cycle friendly by being laid out in a continental design. These operate with the same priority arrangement as UK roundabouts, but narrower entry and exit paths coupled with a tighter circulatory carriageway result in slower traffic speeds all round and thus easier conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 5.54. Traffic modelling should test whether the existing four-lane dual carriageway roads would operate satisfactorily with fewer lanes, and thus being more suitable for continental geometry roundabouts with integration of cycle tracks alongside. This could provide a shorter desire-line route for NCN1, which currently diverts north around the Town Centre on a cycle track

which is hemmed in between the backs of industrial units and heavily planted trees, thus offering a poor level of safety.

#### **Surface crossings**

- 5.55. The Council will seek to replace the existing pedestrian subways with surface crossings, particularly on Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue as part of the creation of boulevard streets. As a minimum, the subways should be converted to dedicated cycle-only subways. While the subways offer relatively convenient traffic free routes, the gentle gradients that make for comfortable cycling conditions results in lengthy ramps that lack active frontage and thus offer poor safety for pedestrians who must traverse them much more slowly.

#### **Town centre access**

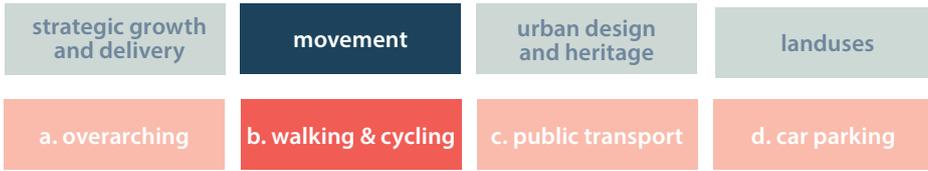
- 5.56. Local points of access should be provided from the boulevard streets into the town centre and wider HTCAAP area. In general, the continued location of car parking at the edge of the town centre will seek to avoid unnecessary penetration of private vehicles. Proposals should seek to demonstrate how existing / new access will be provided for residential and non-residential properties in the town centre. Out-of-hours servicing will be promoted as far as possible.
- 5.57. The Council will be proactive in exploring improvements to existing servicing arrangements where this could result in wider benefits to the vitality of the town centre. The Council will seek to avoid the proliferation of potential rat-running via through-routes.
- 5.58. Proposals should demonstrate an integrated approach to the deliveries and collection points, with potential to identify consolidated facilities at accessible points adjacent to hubs / key town centre gateways.



Figure 25 Indicative diagram showing proposals for improved connection between town centre and Harlow Town train station (see policies HTC1, HTC2 and HTC4)  
©2018 Google earth

5

POLICY THEMES



**Policy HTC3 Active travel - walking and cycling**

The Council will prioritise improvements to the walking and cycling network to strengthen the grid of pedestrian and cycling connections across the town centre.

All development proposals should demonstrate how existing connections can be improved, and how new connections will be created or future-proofed.



Figure 26 Photos of walking and cycling condition in town centre

### Justification

- 5.59. The purpose of policy HTC3 is to realise strategic modal shift targets as described in the supporting text to policy HTC2.
- 5.60. Harlow is fortunate that dedicated space for walking and cycling was provided from the outset as an integral part of the design of the new town. This means that unlike many existing towns, providing sufficient space within the highway is generally not a constraint to walking and cycling. Footways and cycle tracks are of generous dimensions and adequate to serve the current levels of demand.

### Existing cycle infrastructure

- 5.61. There are segregated cycle tracks alongside sections of the ring road and cycle access across is provided by one subway on each side of the town. There is no way to cycle from west to east across the Town Centre. It is possible to cycle east to west via Post Office Street, Kitson Way and West Gate. Cycling is not permitted in the pedestrianised central streets and squares.

### Existing pedestrian infrastructure

- 5.62. All of the cycle routes crossing the inner ring road as subways are available to pedestrians. In addition to this there are surface level signalised crossings at Haydens Road, Fourth Avenue and Central Avenue. There are some uncontrolled crossings (dropped kerbs and tactile paving) at the junction of Fourth Avenue/Haydens Road; at the junction of Haydens Road and Third Avenue; and across Allende Avenue. Zebra crossings are provided where the subway exits meet Post Office Road, and where the path from the signalled crossing crosses Kitson Way.

### Issues for pedestrians and cyclists

- 5.63. There are two primary issues for walking and cycling. One is crossing the ring road, and the

second is passing through the edge of the Town Centre which is typified by large blocks of multi-storey car parks and the service yards for large retail premises. The combination of the busy road crossing and a lack of attractive routes through the edge of town acts as a both a physical and mental barrier to walking and cycling between the Town Centre and neighbouring residential areas.

### Crossing the inner ring road

- 5.64. There are two places where pedestrians cross the ring road without formal facilities - Fourth Avenue by Sainsbury's where people cross the road and climb through a fence to get to the Town Centre, and Haydens Road near the TKMaxx service yard. Furthermore, existing surface level pedestrian crossings are staggered with a narrow central reserve making them inconvenient for cycling. This is particularly an issue by Harlow College.

### Accessing the Town Centre

- 5.65. Within the Town Centre the main issue for pedestrians is that many access points involve crossing service and delivery areas and car park entrance/exit routes. There is a real lack of coherence. In addition, most of the pedestrian routes into the Town Centre from the outside are relatively narrow and have a lot of blank brick and concrete frontages because the orientation of shops and businesses is 'inwards' to the central streets and squares. This makes the approach routes unattractive and uninspiring.
- 5.66. Once inside the central area there are good quality linear routes and public squares, and the wider open spaces make navigation much more intuitive. Cycling is prohibited in the pedestrianised Town Centre although cycle parking is provided. This is often remote from building entrances and in less convenient and less secure locations.

## Implementation

### Walking

5.67. The Council will require proposals to integrate the following key priorities and interventions as illustrated in Figure 27:

- Integration of walking routes beyond the town centre, drawing green wedges / fingers and neighbourhood desire lines across the collar roads and across the town centre supported by a coherent set of public realm proposals and greening where possible.
- Safe, secure conditions for walking with good over-looking;
- Surface-level crossings and dedicated footways as part of boulevard streets;
- Improved walking connections, wayfinding and legibility from the station to the town centre;
- Better integration of walking routes across the bus station;
- Strengthening of east-west connections to Harlow College, University Centre and the Leisure Zone; and
- Clearer views and improvements to legibility and routes at the junction of Cross Street, Broad Walk and the Water Gardens.

### Cycling

5.68. As illustrated in Figure 28, the HTCAAP seeks to enhance the accessibility of the town centre for cycling through a series of east-west and north-south cycling connections, and provision of cycle parking hubs in key locations. The diagram indicates that while some key shopping streets are not appropriate for cycling such as Broad Walk and Water Gardens, parallel routes would allow an appropriate level of accessibility.

5.69. Proposals should seek to integrate the following key priorities and interventions:

- Step-change in the quality of cycling provision between the railway station, the town centre and beyond to Public Health England;
- Excellent and accessible cycling routes along the four boulevard routes which define the current boundaries of the town centre;
- Cycle provision east-west from Velizy Avenue to Haydens Road via East Gate and West Gate;
- Potential provision of a further east-west cycle connection via Crown Gate and Cross Street and St Paul's Church.
- Potential retention of a cycle connection along Terminus Street as part of any future enhancement of the bus station area.
- Dedicated cycle connections across the boulevard streets, ideally as surface crossings, with potential for existing crossings to be re-purposed as cycle-only routes.
- Provision of cycle hub parking in strategic "interceptor" locations adjacent to key spaces and streets, and in close proximity to onward connections north-south or east-west.
- Provision of other incidental cycle parking spaces adjacent to key destinations in the town centre.
- Provision of high levels of private cycle parking for residential and non-residential uses in the HTCAAP area, making positive use of ground floor and internal courtyard / podium spaces as appropriate.
- Potential to encourage cycling excellence in Harlow town centre with an integrated cycle cafe and community facility as part of hubs including the bus interchange area

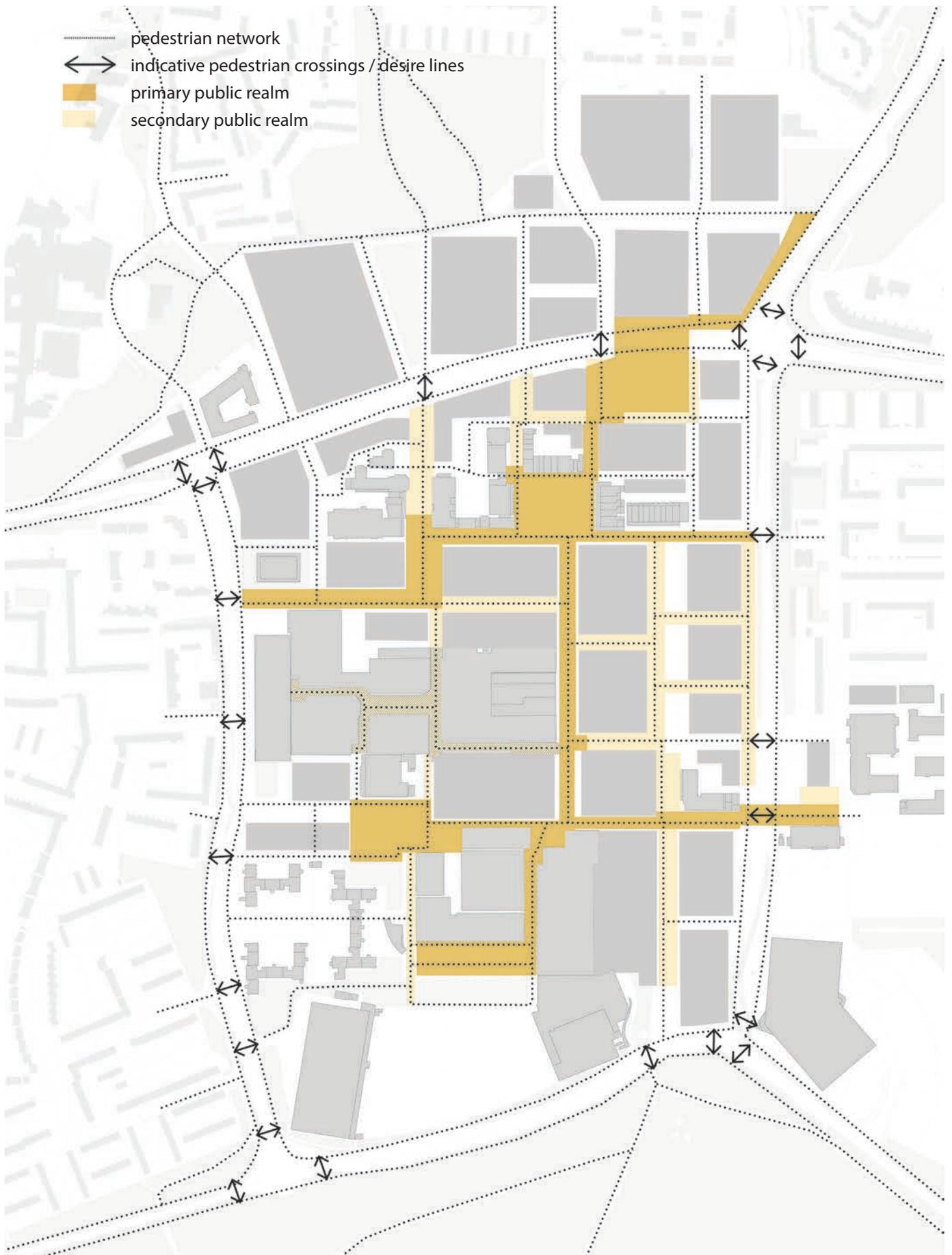


Figure 27 Indicative walking framework Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627



Figure 28 Indicative cycling framework Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

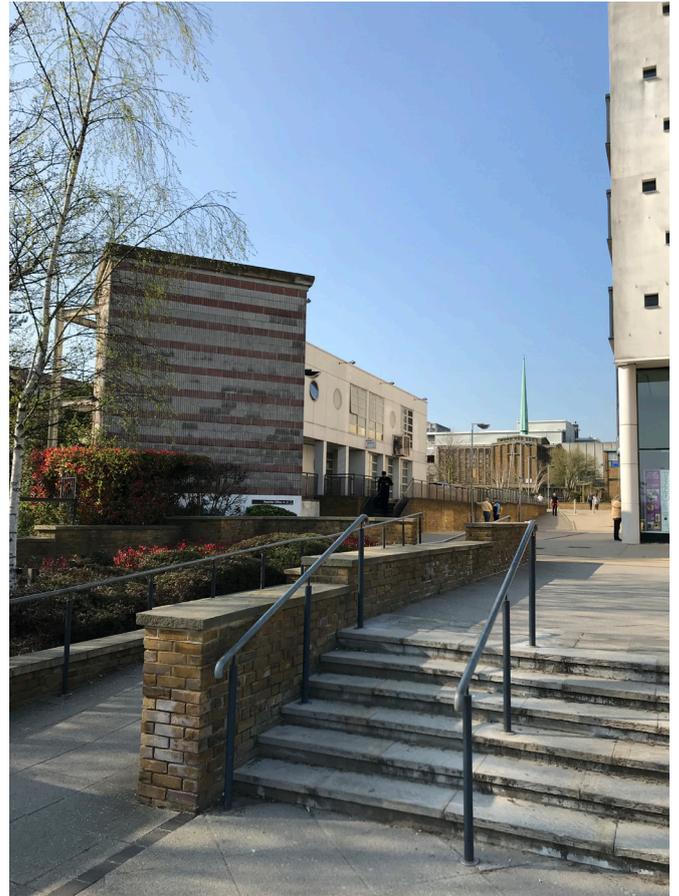
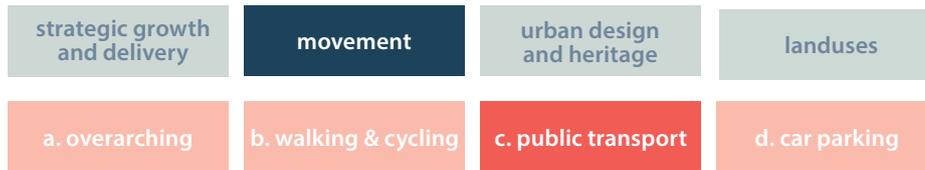


Figure 29 Photos of active travel in the town centre

## 5

POLICY  
THEMES

### Policy HTC4 Public Transport

The Council will work with partners to secure improvements in the level of public transport accessibility and capacity with a view to creating an accessible town centre which minimises reliance on private cars.

The AAP promotes improvements to the capacity of existing local bus services and bus station, and the integration of a high-quality interchange between rapid transit services and local bus routes. Opportunities to enhance the physical connections and wayfinding to Harlow Town station and other strategic destinations in the District and HGGT will be encouraged.

The AAP identifies preferred routing of the STC corridors on the policies plan and reserves an east-west route for the STC through the town centre via East Gate and West Gate.

### Justification

#### Bus network

- 5.70. The bus network in Harlow is focused on Harlow Bus Station. The network takes a hub and spoke form, the bus station forms the hub from which the spokes radiate.
- 5.71. Feedback has suggested the Town Centre is currently poorly connected to the Edinburgh Retail Park by bus, a particular issue with the recent conversions of office buildings to residential here. Greater demand will come from the growth areas and, in particular, the new site for the proposed Health Campus accommodating the relocated Princess Alexandra Hospital.
- 5.72. There are a number of frequent routes serving the bus station, with several routes running up to every 15 minutes. A selection of routes serving the bus station only operate on certain days of the week, these are less frequent.
- 5.73. The current bus station on Terminus Street is in an optimum location for access to the Town Centre when considered alongside future aspirations to rebalance the focus of gravity northwards again.

#### Rail network

- 5.74. Harlow is served by two railway stations: Harlow Town, and Harlow Mill. Harlow Town station is found around 1km to the north of the Town Centre and has regular direct services to: London Liverpool Street, Bishops Stortford, Stansted Airport, Cambridge North and Stratford.
- 5.75. Harlow Town is within walking distance of the Town Centre; however, the route is severed by a number of main roads. A number of bus services provide access to the station. In addition, 52 bicycle parking spaces are available at the station.

## Implementation

### Sustainable Transport Corridors

- 5.76. Sustainable Transport Corridors will support active travel through a high-quality network of cycle and walking 'Super Greenways' that run along these. Bus Rapid Transit will run on routes that connect key destinations including Harlow Town railway station, the HGGT settlements, key commercial locations and other locations including schools and local centres.
- 5.77. The Council will work with partners to prioritise the implementation of the BRT / STC with a view to supporting enhanced connectivity with the town centre. In the longer term, the Council will seek to promote the future extension of the Bus Rapid Transit network to wider settlements and transport hubs including Broxbourne, Epping and Stansted Airport.
- 5.78. Proposals should embrace the following principles and interventions:
- The Council will support the introduction of buses via East Gate and West Gate in order to realise sustainable movement objectives alongside wider aspirations for a thriving evening economy. Changes to bus routing across the Town Centre must demonstrate how bus movements are to be balanced with aspirations for place-making to facilitate wider pedestrian and cycling benefits. The East Gate - West Gate connection should incorporate cycle and pedestrian movement, with opportunities to retain buildings such as the distinctive Citizen's Advice Bureau building.
  - The Council will work closely with Essex County Council to future-proof the potential routing of the BRT and local services through and around the town centre. As illustrated in Figure 30, public

transport routes could follow any one of the boulevard routes which define the four sides of the town centre. The detailed approach and management of movement should be considered holistically, with a balanced approach to establish the character and emphasis on walking / cycling as set out in policy HTC5.

### Improved bus station as an Interchange /hub

- 5.79. The Bus station area is identified as a key project in the HTCAAP and should be considered alongside comprehensive strategic proposals for adjacent sites.
- 5.80. The Council will support development proposals that recognise the strategic role of the bus station for Harlow Town Centre and incorporate improvements to the existing bus interchange within their proposals, alongside improvements to Velizy Avenue and Terminus House. Proposals for enhancements to the bus station must demonstrate how bus connections and interchange facilities in the town centre will be future-proofed.
- 5.81. Key objectives for the bus station are to:
- View the bus station as a strategic project and site;
  - Allow for the future growth in capacity for local buses;
  - Integrate the Bus Rapid Transit and Sustainable Transport Corridor proposals;
  - Provide high quality interchange facilities;
  - Allow for flexibility and potential for a phased strategy of implementation; and
  - Enable the timely delivery of the HGGT proposals alongside town centre improvements.

5.82. The HTCAAP does not include an indicative design for the bus station, but the Council will expect proposals to respond positively to the following principles:

- Re-configure bus stops and circulation to future-proof increased capacity with two-way movements through the bus station
- Create a greener, more attractive bus street with greater activity and overlooking
- Support the transformation of Velizy Avenue with more active ground floors and welcoming frontages
- Establish a coherent interchange with the BRT route via East Gate and West Gate
- Improved pedestrian connections to Broad Walk and across Velizy Avenue
- Potential to redevelop town centre blocks to the west between Terminus Street and Broad Walk
- Explore a spectrum of options for Terminus House car park, potentially with a reduced level of car parking in a new smaller structure, with direct surface level access
- Seek to maintain existing cycle way along Terminus Street

### **Bus routes**

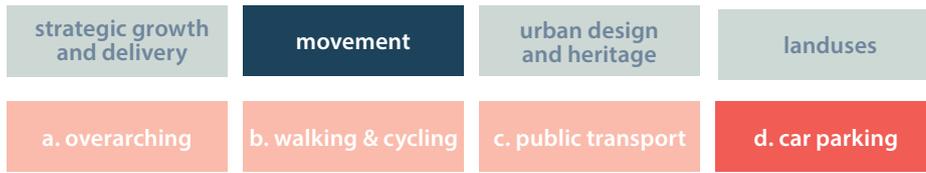
- 5.83. Through the HTCAAP, the Council will seek to preserve sufficient flexibility for the strategic improvement of public transport facilities in the town centre and wider District / HGGT area. Strategic interventions will be promoted to enhance the operation and character of the existing bus station, alongside the creation of a new bus connection for BRT services along East Gate – West Gate. The potential location of other routes and local stops on the collar roads should be integrated in the future phased design and implementation of the boulevard streets.
- 5.84. Strategic provision will also be required for bus standing areas, potentially on Velizy Avenue or at the edge of the town centre.



Figure 30 Indicative public transport framework - bus and taxi Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

5

POLICY THEMES



**Policy HTC5 Car parking**

In line with Policy IN3 and the Essex Vehicle Parking Standards, Council Vehicle parking should be provided in accordance with the adopted Essex Vehicle Parking Standards. In keeping with these provisions, the Council will expect proposals in the town centre to assume a starting position with a low ratio of parking spaces in the context of its public transport accessibility which will increase through the implementation of policy HTC3 and HTC4.

**Justification**

- 5.85. An analysis of existing car ownership has been undertaken by Phil Jones Associates in the three wards contiguous with the town centre to understand local demand for car parking.
- 5.86. Analysis using the method set out in the DCLG Residential Car Parking Research paper (2007) indicates an opportunity to review the approach to residential parking in the town centre. Allocated spaces are spaces assigned to individual dwellings whereas unallocated spaces are shared car parking spaces e.g. on-street parking. A mix of allocated and unallocated spaces is considered the preferred approach to the provision of residential parking. The level of spaces provided across the town centre as a whole could be reduced if the unallocated are provided in public / town centre parking areas.
- 5.87. In many cases, under-used public car park sites occupy very visible locations which undermine the overall quality of the street environment and sense of arrival in the Town Centre. Surface car parking is an inefficient use of valuable town centre land which could be used more intensively.
- 5.88. A summary of car parks within the study area is provided in Figure 31. In addition to this, a number of alternative car parks are available outside of the HTCAAP boundary, but still in walking distance to the Town Centre.

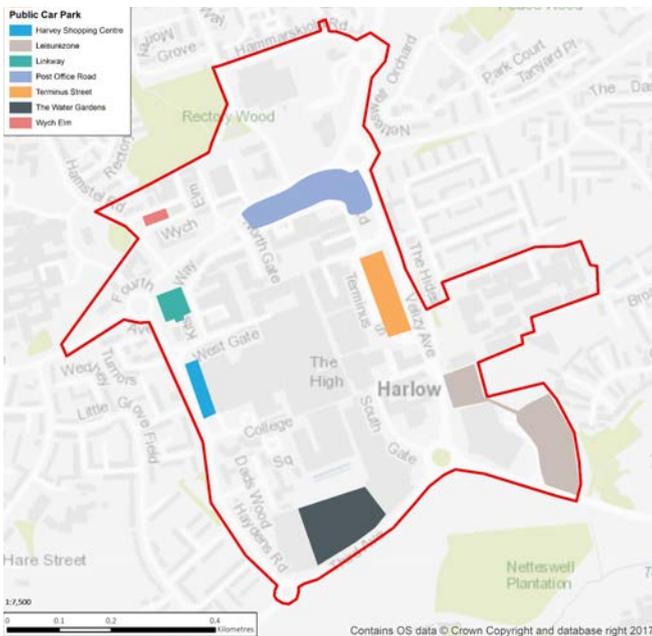


Figure 31 Existing public car parks Contains Google maps data ©2018 Google

- Harvey Shopping Centre - 720 spaces
- Leisurezone - 550 spaces
- Linkway - spaces unknown
- Post Office Road - 139 spaces
- Terminus Street - 600 spaces
- The Water Gardens - 1200 spaces
- Wych Elm - 120 spaces

## Implementation

### Public / town centre parking

- 5.89. In order to realise the regeneration potential of the Town Centre, the Council will encourage the consolidation of surface car parking as decked structures or multi-storey car parks to make better use of valuable town centre sites. This could free up space for development of new town centre uses.
- 5.90. Wherever possible, opportunities to create parking facilities which are integrated into the street scene to establish active streets should be taken.
- 5.91. Flexibility could be established to future-proof parking buildings to allow conversion to other uses as demand for parking falls in the future in response to the implementation of public transport and active transport proposals. It is anticipated that the overall quantum of town centre parking spaces will remain broadly consistent across the plan period. Given that the amount of town centre floorspace is projected to increase, this would represent a proportional reduction in the parking standard.

### Residential parking

- 5.92. Overall, a low level of parking provision is anticipated with appropriate justification on a scheme-by-scheme basis.

Proposals for residential uses should consider existing and future public transport accessibility and provide a clear parking strategy which considers the overall level of allocated and unallocated spaces in relation to the type and size of dwellings proposed. Proposals should consider the identification of unallocated parking provision within the consolidated town centre car parks, with the allocated provision forming part of the developments themselves. Alternatively, some unallocated parking could be provided as on-street parking within the new town centre streets. Early engagement with HDC will be encouraged in relation to this issue.

### Commercial parking

- 5.93. Through proactive use of Travel Planning and an integrated approach to the enhancement of public transport, the Council will seek to encourage a low level of dedicated parking for new commercial workspace in the town centre, potentially car-free.

### Charging Points

- 5.94. Electric Vehicle Charging points should be provided in line with HDLP policy IN1.

|                         | Allocated Spaces |         |        | Unallocated Spaces |         |        |
|-------------------------|------------------|---------|--------|--------------------|---------|--------|
|                         | 1-2 bed          | 3-4 bed | 5+ bed | 1-2 bed            | 3-4 bed | 5+ bed |
| House - owned/mortgaged |                  | 1       |        | 0.75               | 1       | 1.25   |
| House - rented/shared   |                  | 1       |        | 0.5                | 0.75    |        |
| Flat - owned/mortgaged  |                  | 1       |        |                    | 0.75    |        |
| Flat - rented/shared    |                  | 1       |        |                    | 0.5     |        |

Figure 32 Evidence based approach to parking allocations as set out in AAP issues and options (see Appendix 2)

strategic growth  
and delivery

movement

urban design  
and heritage

landuses

## THEME 3: URBAN DESIGN AND HERITAGE

### Introduction

- 5.95. Frederick Gibberd's vision and masterplan for Harlow New Town reflected the New Town ethos of the 1940's, drawing inspiration from the earlier Garden City movement and the drive to provide high quality and spacious homes with access to clean air and open space. Gibberd described Harlow as, "an organism which would go on changing and being rebuilt as the needs of the people altered."
- 5.96. Policies HTC6, HTC7, HTC8 and HTC9 set a context for managing this process of on-going evolution and change. They define criteria to protect and enhance the defining characteristics and identity of the town centre. The policies also establish a bold approach to resolving and repairing parts of the town centre which are less successful to create a more successful, sustainable place.
- Corporate Priorities**
- 5.97. This section and the policy contained within it will help deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as follows:
- More and better housing
  - Regeneration and a thriving economy
  - Wellbeing and social inclusion
  - A clean and green environment
- Policy context**
- 5.98. Good design is a key commitment in the Harlow Local Plan, Pre-Submission Draft (2018) with reference to general opportunities to high quality architecture, sustainability, spaces and connections and positive reference to the New Town heritage associated with the Gibberd masterplan. Key emerging policy references in this context are PL1, PL2, PL3, PL4, PL5, PL7, PL11 and L3. PL1 includes reference to public realm improvements and L3 provides guidance in relation to public art and sculpture and several make reference to green and open spaces.
- 5.99. Policy PL11 sets out draft guidance relating to heritage assets and their settings included Listed and Locally Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Archaeology, and Enabling Development. Strategic policy WE4 'Heritage' gives further guidance on heritage assets and their settings.
- 5.100. Harlow Design Guide (2011) and Essex Design Guide (2005) gives underlying design principles to guide development and encourage a design-led approach. The documents make reference to general place-making principles, urban character, building heights, inclusive design, public open space, permeability and legibility.
- 5.101. A Spatial Vision and Design Charter for Harlow and Gilston Town has been prepared in parallel with the AAP which sets out a clear vision and framework that will support the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre by drawing on true Garden Town principles.
- HTCAAP objectives**
- 5.102. Theme 3 will assist in the delivery of the AAP objectives as follows:
- **A unified centre**
  - **A high quality public realm**
  - **A strong cultural offer**
  - **A cohesive place**, supported by uses and design proposals which complement one another
  - **A commitment to retain the ethos** and respond positively to the defining elements of the Gibberd masterplan

### Policy HTC6 Urban design principles for Harlow Town Centre

Proposals should adhere to the spatial principles identified in chapter 4 of the HTCAAP which establish the core urban design guidance for the town centre. Development should respond to key design principles as follows:

- Responding to the plan aesthetic of the town centre.
- Greater integration between the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods and areas beyond the collar roads.
- More welcoming and clearly defined edges and points of arrival.
- Greater mix of uses to enhance vitality and resilience.
- Clearer identity and hierarchy of spaces and routes to make the town centre more legible.
- Stronger sense of enclosure and an uplift in density.
- Emphasis on realising sustainable design opportunities.

### Justification

- 5.103. Despite its relatively recent evolution, Harlow Town Centre has an important story to tell in terms of its historic development, heritage and urban design. The Town Centre retains its authentic plan aesthetic, as well as a number of individual buildings and sculptures that date back to Gibberd's original masterplan. Opportunities exist to retain and enhance this grain and heritage through the HTCAAP.
- 5.104. The original plan aesthetic consists of a formal composition to the arrangement of the streets and spaces in Harlow. Buildings and public spaces have been laid out on an irregular rectilinear grid with aligning frontages and clearly defined corners. The ring road that encloses the rectilinear grid has contributed to a high degree of separation between residential neighbourhoods and the town centre. In addition, a lack of clear hierarchy and absence of a typical structure reduces the overall legibility of the Town Centre from surrounding neighbourhoods. However, a number of central landmark buildings characterise views from the rural hinterland and act as a marker for the Town Centre.
- 5.105. Analysis has identified buildings which negatively impact on the character of the Town Centre and are recommended for redevelopment. Building heights and scale also influence the Town Centre experience and can negatively impact the setting of heritage assets if not sympathetically integrated.

## Implementation

5.106. Development proposals should provide a clear understanding of their design rationale. The Council will consider proposals against the following criteria:

- **Plan aesthetic:** Proposals should seek to retain and enhance the original “Plan aesthetic” of Harlow town centre. The layout of blocks, streets and spaces should have a formal composition, reflecting the prevailing irregular rectilinear grid. This should be strengthened by aligning frontages and establishing clearly defined corners.
- **Integration:** Proposals should seek to address the sense of severance and separation between the town centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. This should be achieved by the introduction of a greater mix of uses in the town centre, and the transformation of the collar roads into a more welcoming and accessible series of boulevards.
- **Edges and thresholds:** Key edges of the town centre are poorly defined by weak parking or service areas and backs of buildings. These poorly defined spaces have a negative impact on the perception and identity of the town centre. As part of the creation of boulevards, proposals should seek to resolve and repair these thresholds to create safer and more legible views and points of arrival.
- **Mix of uses:** Proposals should seek to introduce a richer mix of uses in the town

centre as a counter to the original zoning strategy. The blurring of boundaries, particularly through the growth of town centre living on upper floors will play an important role in enhancing the vitality and resilience of the town centre. Flexibility in block design and dimensions should be encouraged to establish greatest flexibility for alternative future uses.

- **Hierarchy of spaces:** Parts of the Town Centre suffer from a confusing arrangement of building frontages and spaces. The open grid of streets and spaces has resulted in areas where service areas or building backs open onto public spaces or thoroughfares. Proposals should seek to repair these conditions through opportunities for comprehensive redevelopment, the completion of urban blocks and public realm interventions to establish greater clarity or animation.
- **Enclosure:** The general height of buildings in the town centre is two or three storeys. The Council will encourage denser forms of development across the town centre. Key streets and spaces could accommodate a general height of four to six storeys. This will create a greater sense of enclosure and overlooking of key streets and spaces. Key marker locations might also be appropriate for slightly taller elements subject to a clear rationale and a high standard of design.
- **Views:** Proposals should respond positively to the topography of the town centre and the surrounding landscape. Further guidance is set out in policy HTC8.

- Sustainable design:** Proposals should embrace Local Plan policy PL3 in relation to the realisation of high standards of sustainable design, construction and energy usage. Reference should also be made to other sustainability guidance including the HGGT Vision and Design Guide. Opportunities for brown roofs and Modern Methods of Construction should be considered.

5.107. These principles and guidance are embedded in the indicative opportunity area guidance in Appendix 1.

5.108. As noted in policy HTC1, the Council will be proactive in encouraging schemes to engage in a process of design review with the HGGT Quality Review Panel.

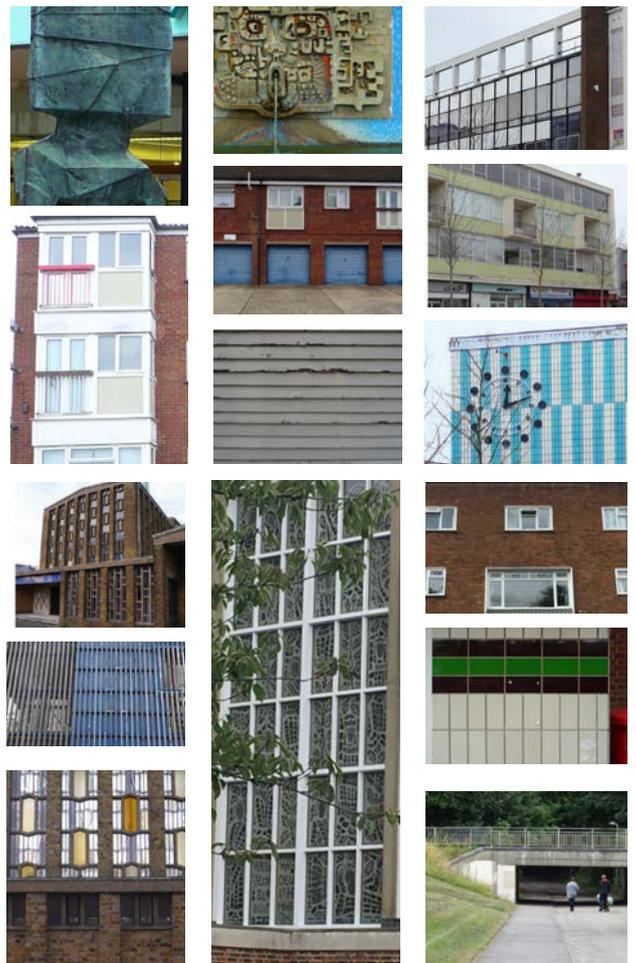


Figure 34 Features and materials specific to Harlow Town Centre

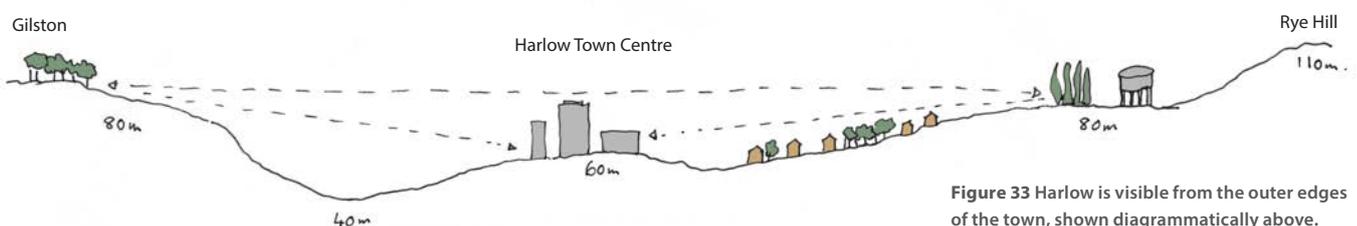


Figure 33 Harlow is visible from the outer edges of the town, shown diagrammatically above.  
©Allies and Morrison

**Policy HTC7 Heritage assets in the town centre**

Development should adhere to Local Plan Policy PL11 in relation to heritage assets and their settings. In the Town Centre, the Council will seek to encourage the retention and re-use of undesigned assets which make a positive contribution to the identity of Harlow Town Centre. Proposals should make positive reference to the features and typical palette of materials which define the original character of the Town Centre to encourage more imaginative design solutions and opportunities.

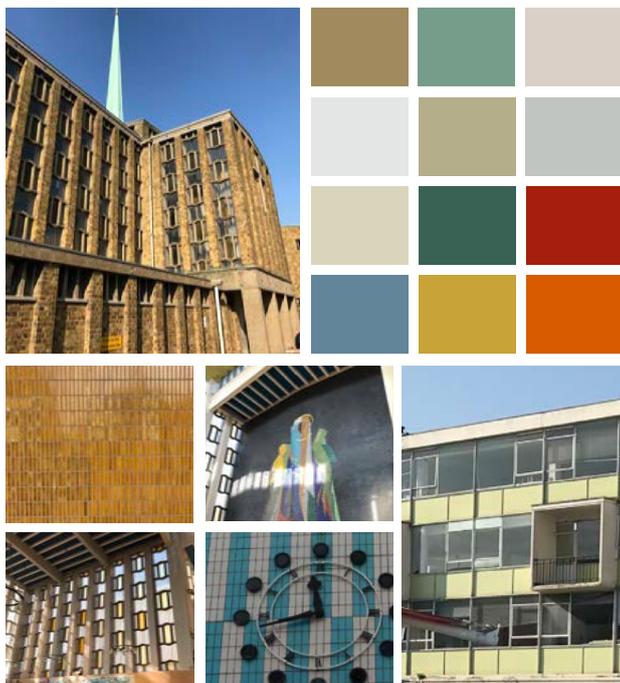


Figure 35 Materials, features and colours of Harlow's original Town Centre character

**Justification**

5.109. Harlow Town Centre has an important story to tell in terms of its historic development and heritage. St Paul's at College Gate is the only listed building in the Town Centre, however, several buildings have distinctive historic character, including a number from the original Gibberd masterplan which are still present. Some of these examples include features which are specific to New Town architecture and Harlow. The Water Gardens are Grade II listed, built between 1960 and 1963 to the designs of Gibberd, and along with their setting, contribute positively to the heritage of Harlow Town Centre. A number of sculptures also have a special historic character and identity which are an important part of the fabric.

5.110. St Paul's at College Gate is the only listed building in the Town Centre, however, several buildings have distinctive historic character, including a number from the original Gibberd masterplan which are still present. Some of these examples include features which are specific to New Town architecture and Harlow.

**Implementation**

5.111. The Council will actively encourage landowners and developers to consider options to work creatively with existing buildings where they contribute to the townscape character and identity of the town centre.

5.112. Development proposals should take cues from the features and typical palette of materials of Harlow's original New Town character to inform its building design. Buildings have colour accents and use is made of tile and other materials to complement brick, stone and concrete.

- 5.113. Features to consider include the vertical articulation of façades, large protrusions on façades and rhythm through the repetition of geometric shapes. The glazing on many buildings is encased by slender window frames which give a delicate distinctiveness to the façades and is fundamental to Harlow's character.

### Policy HTC8 Views and landmarks

Proposals should make positive reference to key views and incorporate an appropriate level of assessment as part of application documentation. The Council will encourage positive integration and assessment of views of heritage assets, landmark buildings, green spaces and arrival points.

### Justification

- 5.114. Views are important as they assist an understanding of the character of the Town Centre and can help to establish a strong sense of arrival. Landmark buildings add visual interest for views and assist with wayfinding.
- 5.115. It is important for development proposals to respond to views and integrate them in proposals as they have potential to strengthen the connection between green spaces and the town centre, as intended in Gibberd's original masterplan principles.

### Implementation

- 5.116. The key primary and secondary views are identified indicatively for reference in Figure 36.

### Views of heritage assets

- 5.117. Development should adhere to Local Plan Policy PL11 in relation to views of heritage assets and their settings. The Council will consider the extent to which development is sympathetically integrated within the Town Centre, including its setting in relation to wider vistas and views.
- 5.118. Views towards heritage assets in the Town Centre should be promoted, protected and enhanced. The Council will support proposals that enhance existing views towards St. Paul's and that offer new views of the church from all directions.

- 5.119. Any development in the foreground or background of views towards heritage assets should be of exceptional design quality and contribute positively to the composition and setting of these buildings.
- 5.120. Existing and future potential views to sculpture should also be considered and integrated.

### Views of landmark buildings

- 5.121. Suitable locations for landmark buildings are shown in Figure 36. Landmark buildings should be of exceptional design quality and views towards landmark buildings should be promoted, protected and enhanced.
- 5.122. A primary view is from Harlow Town Park to the north-eastern corner of the town centre. Any proposal for a landmark building at this corner should demonstrate how it will strengthen the sense of arrival from the train station to the town centre by enhancing views towards it.

### Long views towards green spaces

- 5.123. Long views out of the town centre towards green spaces are encouraged. The Council will support proposals that seek to establish and / or contribute positively to a long view between the town centre at North Gate towards Rectory Wood, along a proposed landscape wedge (View 9), and from St. Paul's Church south towards Rye Hill (View 20).
- 5.124. The panoramic view south towards Rye Hill from the Town Hall and The Water Gardens (View 21) has historic significance as an important element of Gibberd's original vision for the town. This view must be protected and opportunities sought for its enhancement.
- 5.125. In the short term, the Council should consider the replacement of existing car park lighting for shorter structures that minimise visual intrusion. In the longer term, the foreground of this view should remain open and not be developed. There is an opportunity to retain parking at the lower level and redesign the upper level for public open space. This would help to maintain and strengthen the original connection between the Town Hall, The Water Gardens and the Rye Hill landscape.

### Arrival points

- 5.126. Proposals should seek to improve the sense of arrival to Harlow Town Centre by strengthening and creating long views along north / south and east / west routes from pedestrian and cyclist entry points into the town centre.

#### Key views

1. Long view from Harlow Town Park along Fifth Avenue towards landmark building
2. Panoramic view from Fifth Avenue towards landmark building and open space
3. Panorama from Fourth Avenue towards open space
4. Panorama across open space from Fourth Avenue
5. Market Square from northeast corner
6. Market House, Adams House and Square from north-west corner
7. Market House, Adams House and Square from southwest corner
8. Adams House and Square from southeast corner
9. Long view north towards Rectory Wood from along North Gate
10. Long view south from green wedge towards North Gate
11. View east along West Gate towards Town Centre from Haydens Road
12. View north along Broad Walk towards Market Square
13. View south along Broad Walk
14. View east along Playhouse Square towards St. Paul's from Haydens Road
15. Panoramic view north of St. Paul's and open space
16. View west towards St. Paul's from Broad Walk / Cross Street space
17. View west from Harlow College along Cross Street towards St. Paul's
18. View north towards bus station
19. View south towards Third Avenue
20. View south towards Rye Hill from St. Paul's Church
21. Panorama towards Rye Hill

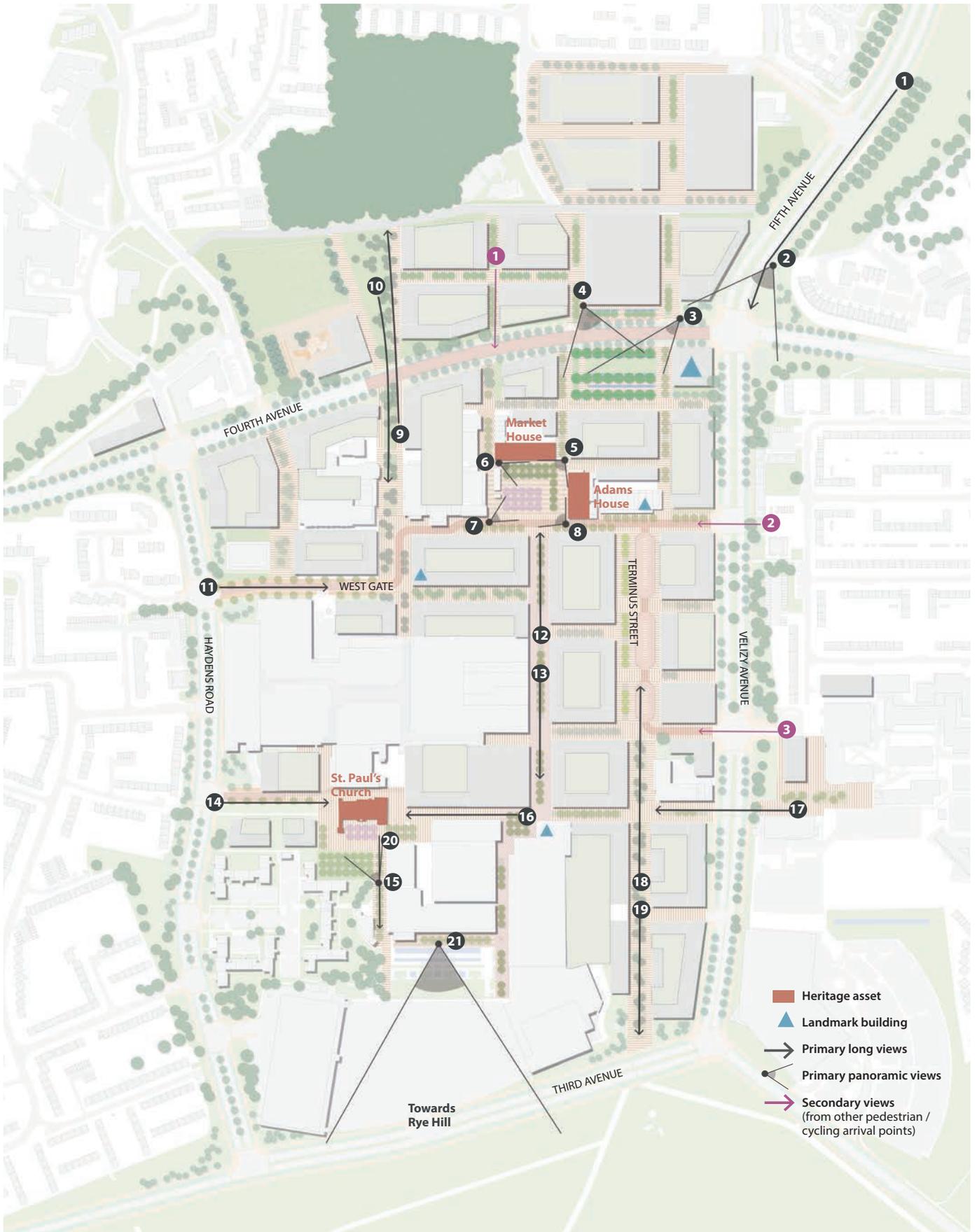


Figure 36 Indicative views and landmarks Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

### Policy HTC9 Public realm, art and sculpture

Development should place significant emphasis on the quality of streets and spaces. All proposals should articulate how they will enhance the existing public realm and contribute to realising the public realm proposals in the AAP.

### Justification

- 5.127. Within the Town Centre, many public spaces lack any sense of night-time or leisure uses which contributes to a significant lack of life and vibrancy in the evenings. Similarly, low quality arrival points, poor legibility and the absence of frontages on some pedestrian routes has a very negative impact on the experience of being in the Town Centre.
- 5.128. Harlow Town Centre has a varying quality of public realm across the main shopping areas. The existence of street clutter, poor quality street furniture and paving create a negative perception. Service yards and associated access severs many central areas of public realm.
- 5.129. Although the wider town boasts an impressive framework of green wedges and landscape, the Town Centre itself has a lack of planting and green spaces. Mature tree planting is often limited to car parking areas rather than public spaces or streets. There is a need for a concerted programme of tree planting and “greening” across the town centre. This intervention will enhance the experience of arriving, passing through or pausing to relax in the town centre.
- 5.130. There is a proud tradition of sculpture in the town. There are opportunities to improve the setting of these important works of public art. Public realm improvements, including landscaped gardens, have recently been made to the south of Harlow Town Centre, as part of The Water Gardens Shopping Centre redevelopment.
- 5.131. A number of sculptures also have a special historic character and identity which are an important part of the fabric. The Water Gardens are Grade II listed, and along with their setting, contribute positively to the heritage of Harlow Town Centre.



Figure 37 Sculpture

## Implementation

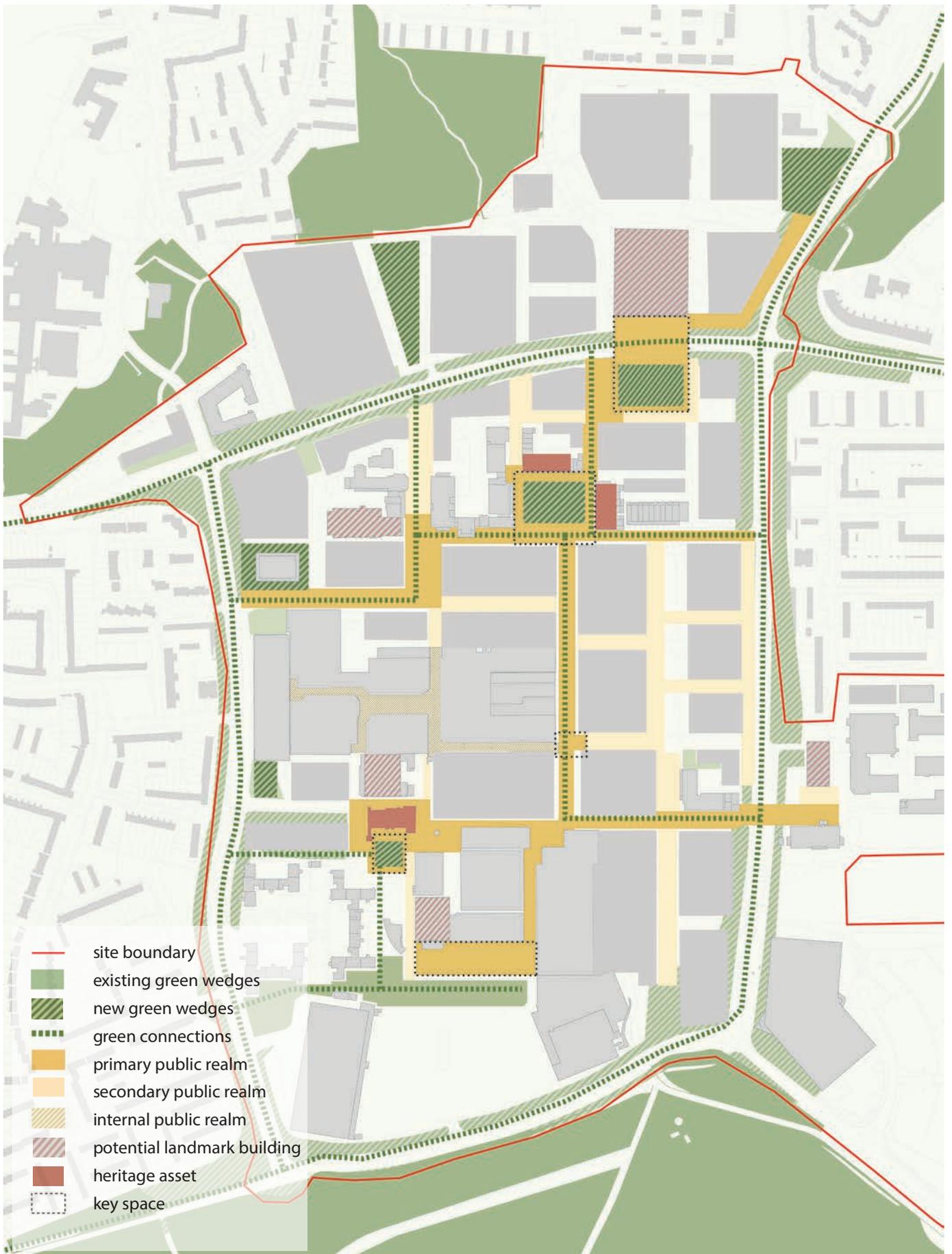
- 5.132. The Council will take a proactive role in facilitating the delivery of a series of catalytic and longer-term projects which will play an important role in defining the quality of the environment in the town centre and supporting broader strategies to enhance health and wellbeing.
- 5.133. The Council will expect all proposals to embrace the following principles and make positive reference to the indicative guidance in Appendix 1:
- **Setting the tone:** Proposals should seek to avoid street clutter, poor quality street furniture and paving to improve the overall perception of the Town Centre
  - **Work with and enhance the New Town:** Proposals should embrace a simple, rational approach which is consistent with the overall plan aesthetic and the Modernist character of the original buildings in the Town Centre. They should seek to resolve negative conditions including poor legibility, the confused arrangement of fronts and backs and exposed service areas.
  - **Trees and planting:** Individual schemes will be required to deliver or contribute to public realm planting for adjacent urban spaces as appropriate. Although planting is likely to come forward incrementally in response to a phased programme of delivery, the Council will take a coordinated approach to delivery to ensure species selection and layout responds to the indicative guidance in Appendix 1.
- **Green fingers and green streets:** The framework plan (Figure 39) and illustrative indicative guidance (see Appendix 1) promote the creation of new green fingers to improve strategic connections from the broader network of green wedges to the town centre. These fingers have the potential to draw green into the town centre, crossing the collar roads and penetrating the core town centre as a series of strategic “green streets”. The Council will liaise with landowners to consider how groups of sites could be brought forward in tandem to enable the delivery of new strategic green spaces. Potential locations include Wych Elm to connect into Rectory Wood, and South Gate as part of the Crowngate proposals.
  - **Green Infrastructure including Sustainable Urban Drainage:** Proposals should seek to integrate proposals for Green Infrastructure including Sustainable Urban Drainage and ecology at an early stage in the design process drawing on indicative guidance in Appendix 1.
  - **Public art and sculpture:** Harlow benefits from a unique collection of public art and sculpture, much of which is of national or international significance. The Council will work with Harlow Art Trust to protect and enhance the collection. This might entail refurbishment or repair of existing works and the careful curation of the collection – either retaining pieces in situ or establishing appropriate new locations. There might

also be opportunities to commission new sculpture if this is of the highest quality and consistent with the typical ethos of the existing sculptures in the town. New green fingers, key public spaces and key routes as denoted by the primary public realm category in Figure 39 could be suitable justifications. Opportunities for an expansion of the interpretation strategy could also be pursued. These elements could be delivered as part of development schemes or secured via developer contributions.

- Playful town centre and performance:**  
 Opportunities to create the setting for informal, playful activities which assist in creating safe and successful spaces will be encouraged. This could include sculpture as playable pieces. Designated sites for busking and performance will also be encouraged.



Figure 38 Sculptures around Harlow



**Figure 39** Indicative landscape and public realm framework plan Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

## 5

POLICY  
THEMESstrategic growth  
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landuses

a. retail and leisure

b. homes

c. offices and  
workspaced. cultural uses and  
evening economye. civic and  
community uses**THEME 4: LAND USES****Introduction**

5.134. Theme 4 comprises policies for activities including retail and leisure, homes, offices and workspace, cultural uses and civic and community uses. There are significant opportunities to deliver a mix of complementary uses and strengthen the overall role of the Town Centre as an economic, social and cultural hub. A diverse mix of commercial activity will support nearby neighbourhoods and the planned Garden Town of Harlow and Gilston.

**Corporate Priorities**

5.135. This section and the policy contained within it will help deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities, as follows:

- More and better housing
- Regeneration and a thriving economy
- Wellbeing and social inclusion
- A clean and green environment

**Policy context**

5.136. Draft policies in the emerging Local Development Plan (2017) include guidance for retail, leisure and evening economy activities. Strategic policies RS1-RS3 set out the Council's retail ambitions and gives guidance for the redevelopment of the Town Centre with regards to future retail floorspace and protecting and enhancing existing retail centres. Development Management policies relevant to retail include PR5, PR6 and PR7. Policy PR11 gives guidance for evening and night time economy activities.

5.137. The Local Plan sets an agenda for significant growth in Harlow and neighbouring authorities of up to 15,000 new homes and 20ha of employment space. 9,900 new dwellings have been identified in the SHLAA (2013) - 4,027

committed units, 541 completed dwellings and a further 4,300 homes. The emerging Local Development Plan (2017) identifies a requirement to deliver at least 30% affordable housing (policy H8). Policies H1 to H10 outline priorities including guidance relating to a range of housing types and sizes, across a range of tenures in major residential development.

5.138. The emerging spatial strategy (2014) highlights the target of 8,000 to 12,000 new jobs, although much of this is likely to be associated through the Enterprise Zone areas. Policy PR3 in the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) identifies support for the provision of B1 office uses above ground floor level in the Town Centre. PR3 also sets out criteria which must be met in relation to the loss of existing B1 activities outside of the designated Employment Areas.

5.139. Policy L2 of the Draft Local Development Plan (2017) sets a context for the provision of new recreational, sporting, cultural and community uses and facilities and also identifies criteria to manage their loss resulting from development proposals. Strategic Policy SIR1 gives further guidance on education, healthcare and community facilities.

**HTCAAP objectives**

5.140. Theme 4 will assist in the delivery of the HTCAAP objectives as follows:

- A **unified centre**
- A Town Centre which supports **wider economic growth** in the District
- A **competitive retail and leisure offer**
- A **strong cultural offer**
- **Community facilities**
- A **cohesive place**, supported by uses and design proposals which complement one another

### Policy HTC10 Retail and leisure

The Council will require proposals to be in conformity with Local Plan policy RS2, which establishes a needs-based retail target for the District to 2026 and beyond. Proposals should be in accordance with HLDP Policy PR6 in relation to primary and secondary frontages which are defined on the frontages plan, and seek to maintain a resilient, successful retail core.

### Justification

- 5.141. A key outcome of the HTCAAP is to strengthen a retail and leisure offer which appeals to Harlow's catchment and limits expenditure leakage to competing centres. Retail studies show a lack of medium to large shop units suitable for modern retailing requirements, a lack of higher end retailers and a limited commercial leisure offer which is limiting the overall performance of the Town Centre. Investment is underway through the Cineworld scheme and the re-configuration of the former Marks and Spencer's unit. By drawing on the area's distinctive design heritage, a positive place-making strategy could be developed to assist growth in retail and leisure.
- 5.142. There is an apparent over-supply of retail floorspace in Harlow (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis Report, 2017), potentially due to lack of investment from private land owners or due to future development aspirations. The closure of large stores (i.e. M&S and BHS) led to a reduction in active primary frontages from 78% in 2003 to 60% in 2017. The latest Retail Frontages Study (2019) indicates that the amount of vacant primary frontage in the Town Centre in early 2018 was 11.5%, a 3% increase since 2013. The BHS unit vacancy accounts for 5.5% of the vacant frontage. Whilst some previously vacant frontage became in use again between the start of 2018 and 2019, other units became vacant, including the Harvey Centre units previously occupied by Argos and Blue Inc., which have long frontages. There are units undergoing redevelopment and this should increase the A1 frontage once complete.
- 5.143. The amount of vacant secondary frontage in the Town Centre in early 2019 was 15.7%, a decrease of 7.5% since 2013.

- 5.144. Studies indicate that there is a lack of medium to large shop units suitable for modern retailing requirements. A lack of higher end retailers and limited commercial leisure offer constrains the overall performance of the Town Centre. Despite the presence of the bus station, the Town Centre has a relatively poor level of accessibility by public transport and is characterised by many areas with poor public realm and underwhelming spaces which creates a poor perception.
- 5.145. Investment is underway through the Cineworld scheme and the re-configuration of the former Marks and Spencer's unit. The existence of clear development opportunities alongside the strategic catchment position and a projected trajectory of growth is major advantage for the Town Centre. There is also a sense that the area's distinctive design heritage in terms of public realm and public art could form the basis of positive place-making strategy which would assist in generating the setting for retail and leisure growth.
- Retail frontages**
- 5.146. Chapter 7 of the NPPF (2019) identifies strategic guidance for the preparation of planning policies in relation to town centres. Para 85 a) places an emphasis on achieving long-term vitality and viability and references the need to allow growth and diversification in a way "that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries".
- 5.147. Para 85 b) highlights the importance of defining the "extent of town centres and primary shopping areas...as part of a positive strategy for the future". However, there is no explicit requirement to define shop frontages in the NPPF.
- 5.148. In that context, HTCAAP has elected to retain the use of frontages as a policy device for two reasons:
- Shop frontage designations are considered to be an effective way of protecting the extent of the core retail and leisure area. Although the precise trajectory of retail growth is hard to predict, the protection of a resilient core area is supported as a priority.
  - It is considered appropriate for the HTCAAP to adopt a consistent approach with the rest of the HLDP which also identifies town centre frontages.
- 5.149. The retail frontages inset plan (Figure 43) incorporates the recommendations from the 2019 Retail Frontages Study (Harlow Council, 2019).

### Implementation

- 5.150. Capacity studies indicate that the HTCAAP area offers significant opportunities for new town centre floorspace which could make a significant contribution to meeting retail need across the plan period.
- 5.151. There is a commitment to keep retail need figures under review in relation to the changing dynamics of the retail and leisure economy, and the exact housing growth coming forward in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- 5.152. Figure 43 illustrates the designated primary and secondary frontages in the HTCAAP area. These frontages define the principal core of the town centre retail offer, and proposals must be in accordance with Local Plan policy PR6. Proposals for sites beyond the designated frontages should seek to maximise opportunities for retail and leisure provision as far as possible, with regard for the policy HTC11 which establishes the context for a flexible approach.

## 5

POLICY  
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a. retail and leisure

b. homes

c. offices and  
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evening economye. civic and  
community uses**Policy HTC11 Flexibility and resilience**

The Council will seek to encourage greater flexibility with a view to protecting and enhancing the future vitality and resilience of the town centre. Proposals will be encouraged to incorporate a flexible, adaptable approach which is responsive to shifting trends and economic patterns. The Council will work with partners to promote catalytic interventions which create the conditions resilient growth including early investment in the public realm and meanwhile uses.

**Justification**

- 5.153. In parallel with the need to accommodate retail expansion and to define a clear retail core (see policy HTC10), the Council recognises the need for broader growth and diversification in response to on-going changes in the retail and leisure industries.
- 5.154. Para 85 a) of the NPPF (2019) places an emphasis on achieving long-term vitality and viability and references the need to allow growth and diversification in a way “that can respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries”.

**Implementation**

- 5.155. Proposals should respond positively to the indicative ground and upper floor plan (figures 41 and 42) and the indicative Opportunity Area guidance in Appendix 1. Taken in combination, these set out the broad character and mix which is considered appropriate for different parts of the Town Centre. These should not be treated as prescriptive, and the Council will require proposals to provide a clear narrative and justification for the proposed mix of uses in relation to property market demand and opportunities on a site-by-site, and phase-by-phase basis, informed by the preparation of development briefs as noted in policy HTC1.
- 5.156. In this context, the Council will encourage the introduction of new residential accommodation in the town centre (see policy HTC12). In addition, the Council will take a flexible view of uses and activities on the ground floor beyond the designated retail frontages. A rich mix of uses will be embraced including retail and leisure, workspace, civic, cultural and community uses. The Council will also take a positive view of meanwhile or temporary

activities to animate key spaces or ground floors. Development proposals should be coordinated with public realm improvements which will set the tone for investment and high-quality development.

- 5.157. Where appropriate, the Council will work with partners including landowners and developers to prepare development briefs for groups of key sites. This will include a focus on the definition of appropriate uses and activities as a progression of the more general position in the HTCAAP.

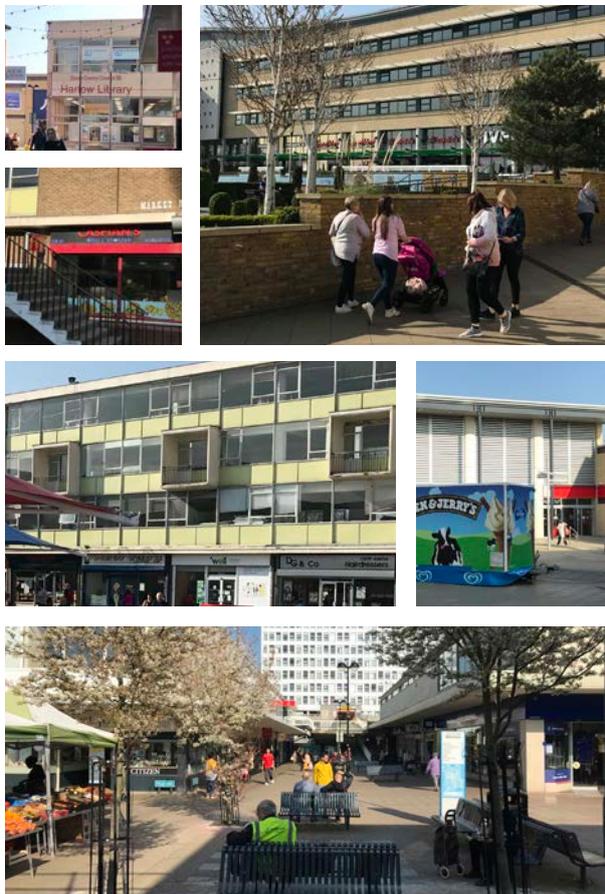


Figure 40 Town Centre activities and uses

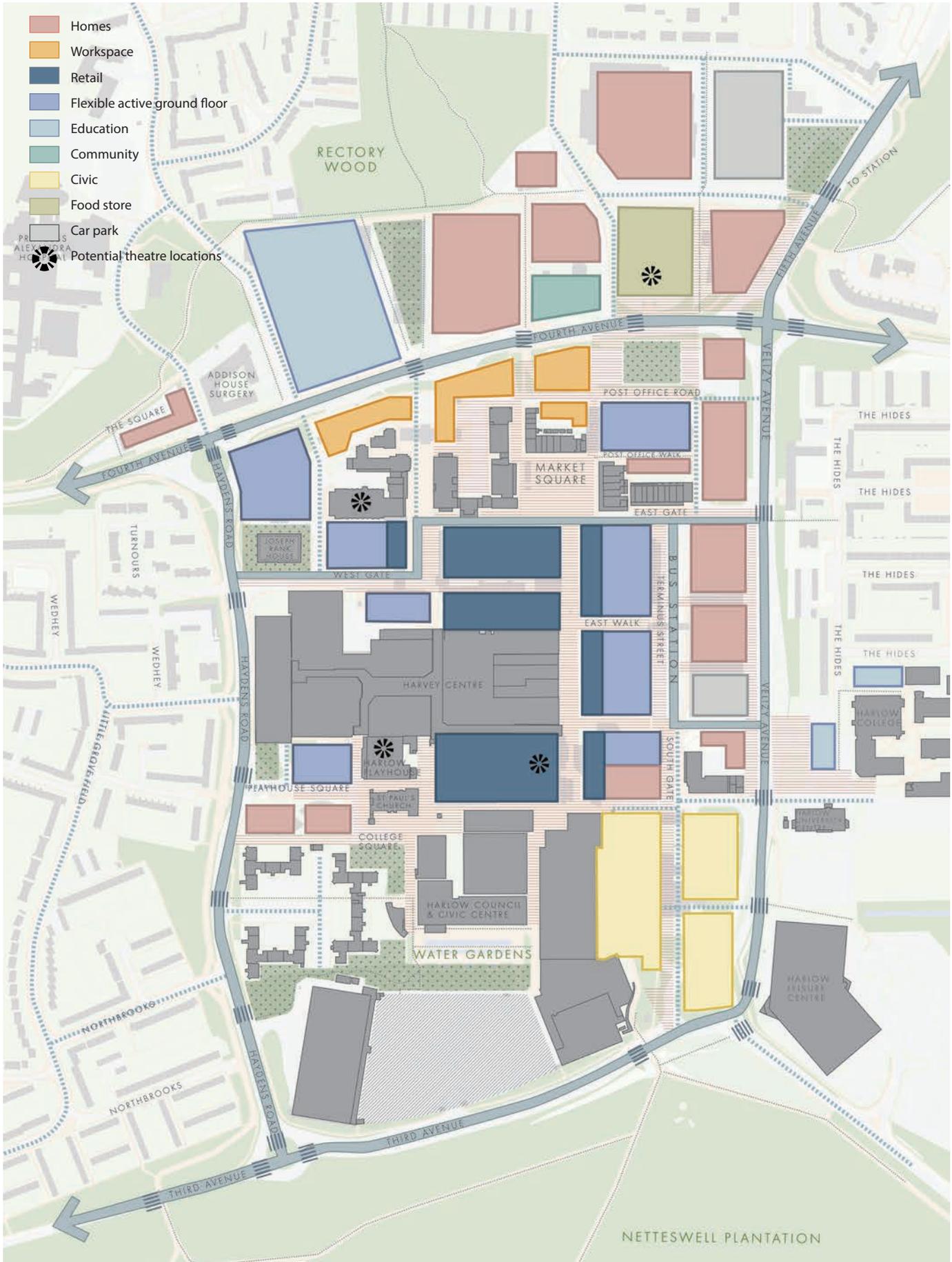


Figure 41 Indicative ground floor uses plan Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627



## 5

POLICY  
THEMESstrategic growth  
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landuses

a. retail and leisure

b. homes

c. offices and  
workspaced. cultural uses and  
evening economye. civic and  
community uses**Policy HTC12 Town centre living**

Proposals for new town centre living and residential accommodation in the town centre will be encouraged with a view to creating a mixed and balanced community across the District. The town centre has an indicative capacity of up to [1,478] new homes in the plan period.

**Justification**

- 5.158. New dwellings will play an important role in enhancing the overall vitality of the town centre and supporting sustainable patterns of travel for new residents working in a wide range of new industries across the District.
- 5.159. The Emerging Local Development Plan sets out a requirement for 9,200 new dwellings from 2011-2033. Although significant opportunities exist to deliver new homes in the Town Centre, a significant proportion of growth is likely to come forward in surrounding areas. In that context, other thematic issues, particularly those relating to movement will be important in establishing improved connections from surrounding neighbourhoods and adjacent settlements, and employment destinations to the Town Centre.
- 5.160. New homes in the Town Centre could improve the overall viability of regeneration proposals, bring greater footfall into the Town Centre and also improve the evening economy. The impact of increased residents and a greater evening offer must be considered to ensure a well-managed environment.
- 5.161. A number of sites are already being progressed as office to residential conversions under Permitted Development Rights. The Council is seeking Article 4 directions for a number of sites in Harlow town centre to remove the right to Permitted Development and gain greater control over the process. In the meantime, the policy seeks to encourage a more comprehensive approach to residential rather than exercising PDR rights which can undermine the overall quality of place.

5.162. Chapter 6 provides further details on the indicative phasing and location of residential development sites in the town centre. [This is currently subject to ongoing test and review in relation to the supporting evidence base and other documents and will be updated accordingly prior to publication]. The capacity estimates are indicative and will evolve as schemes come forward during the plan period.

### **Residential proposals**

5.163. Proposals should adhere to the following principles:

- Residential development in the town centre should be of a high design quality in relation to internal space standards, environmental and sustainability performance and architectural character / materiality. Provision of flexible, accessible internal layouts will be encouraged as far as possible.
- The Council will be proactive in encouraging landowners and developers to adopt a comprehensive approach to development wherever possible.
- Within the town centre, residential dwellings are likely to come forward as terraced apartments or perimeter blocks. Proposals should seek opportunities to create terraces and balcony spaces, or podium level amenity spaces where possible.

5.164. As set out in policy HTC5, it is assumed that car parking provision would be low, with parking spaces accommodated at undercroft / podium levels, on-street or within surplus capacity in town centre car parks. Car parking should be carefully designed and integrated to avoid the creation of long, blank frontages which undermine opportunities to create attractive streets and spaces.

5.165. Opportunities to establish active uses at ground floors will be encouraged. Beyond the key town centre primary frontages, it might be appropriate to bring residential accommodation down to the ground floor.

### **Affordable housing**

5.166. The Council will require schemes to comply with HLDP policy H8.

5.167. HLDP policy H8 sets out the context for any consideration of a reduction in the proportion of affordable housing on a specific development proposal (as defined in HLDP policy H8), it is important to highlight that the realisation of AAP aims and objectives should be considered as part of any independent viability assessment of the development to ensure a complete picture of viability.

5.168. For clarity, the Council will expect all development proposals to respond to the following placemaking and regeneration priorities as well as affordable housing:

- An overall imperative for delivery of effective regeneration in the town centre including an appropriate and desirable mix of active ground floors and other town centre uses.
- The overall performance and vitality of the Town Centre in relation to design quality, town centre management branding and identity, infrastructure delivery, the desire to retain and re-use key historic buildings, public realm improvements and projects including green infrastructure and planting.
- Other relevant, wider S106 priorities such as education and community provision as part of flexible ground floor uses.

## 5

POLICY  
THEMESstrategic growth  
and delivery

movement

urban design  
and heritage

landuses

a. retail and leisure

b. homes

c. offices and  
workspaced. cultural uses and  
evening economye. civic and  
community uses**Policy HTC13 Workspace**

Proposals for new a range of new office and commercial floorspace in the town centre will be encouraged. A range of formats will be supported ranging from larger requirements for single tenants, to more flexible co-working spaces.

**Justification**

- 5.169. Alongside retail and leisure is the need for new homes and suitable office space. Most new homes will be delivered in the surrounding areas but those that are located in the Town Centre could improve the overall viability of regeneration proposals, bring greater footfall into the Town Centre and also improve the evening economy. The supply of office space has been eroded by Permitted Development conversions of office space to residential and the Council is in the process of seeking to remove the right to Permitted Development at sites in the Town Centre. The relocation of Public Health England to Harlow and the Enterprise Zone status will bring significant benefits to the Town Centre alongside improved connections from the Town Centre to nearby employment sites.
- 5.170. Harlow Town Centre is not considered to be an established office market "owing to its size, quality of existing stock and high vacancy rates" (Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis report, May 2017). Some limited provision is located close to Harlow but these units are not fully let and some have been converted to residential use. In addition, a number of Permitted Development conversions of office space to residential have already occurred in the Town Centre which has eroded the supply of workspace in the Town Centre.
- 5.171. The decision for Public Health England to locate a national science base in Harlow is major opportunity and is forecast, alongside Enterprise Zone status, to have positive effects on the office market and values. Significant businesses have signed 15-year lease agreements at Kao Park within the Enterprise Zone. A number of other opportunities exist

within the Enterprise Zone including 20,000 sqm of "Grade A" office space and Data Centre development at London Road South, a 14ha design and build site at London Road North for Med Tech, Life Science and ICT sectors, and SME space at Templefields industrial estate.

- 5.172. The Market Analysis report notes that better links are needed between the Town Centre and employment sites are needed to enable Town Centre living for staff in an accessible, well-served location which is close to their work.
- 5.173. The preferred relocation of Princess Alexandra Hospital from its current site north west of the town centre to a greenfield site east of Harlow, close to J7a on the M11 and the planned eastern Garden Town neighbourhood, will enable the hospital to respond to population growth and increasing demand.
- 5.174. Whilst an increased number of jobs would be supported at the new location (through planned establishment of a Health Campus), replacement jobs close to the town centre should be considered, to support the health and vitality of shops and services. This also strengthens the requirement for better transport links to/from the centre.

### Implementation

- 5.175. Although residential development is likely to form the predominant upper floor use on many sites, workspace will be an acceptable alternative. Proposals will be encouraged to respond positively to the respond positively to the potential location of workspace clusters as set out in the indicative ground and upper floor plans (figures 41 and 42) and the indicative Opportunity Area guidance in Appendix 1.
- 5.176. The Council will be proactive in seeking to encourage affordable, start-up space for businesses in the town centre. Civic office space will also be encouraged in the town centre as set out in policy HTC15.

5

POLICY THEMES



**Policy HTC14 Cultural uses and evening economy**

Proposals for cultural uses and creative activities will be supported in the Town Centre. The Council will seek to encourage the retention or re-provision of existing cultural uses, alongside new facilities as appropriate. Where possible, existing arts and cultural buildings should remain in cultural uses.

Evening economy uses will be encouraged in the town centre particularly where they support the vitality of the town centre as a destination for cultural activities and leisure.

**Justification**

- 5.177. There is a strong tradition of cultural activities and enterprise in Harlow Town Centre which continues to have a positive impact on the Town Centre offer, creating diversity and bringing a different audience to a Town Centre location. The HTCAAP has a role to play in reflecting this strength and potential as a component in the broader growth of the area.
- 5.178. Harlow Playhouse is a popular, well-used venue. There is potential to expand the theatre offer through a larger capacity facility and HTCAAP identifies a number of potential locations which could be suitable for this. The Council will work with partners to consider the feasibility and funding / delivery options for a new facility.
- 5.179. Parndon Mill has several small creative businesses in an attractive historic environment on the River Stort. There is also limited creative

business space at the Gibberd Gallery and Eastgate Arts. These are both centrally located in the Town Centre but could have a far greater profile.

**Implementation**

- 5.180. Cultural activities should play a key role in the activation and animation of ground floors and public spaces, potentially as temporary or meanwhile activities. For example, community, co-working, evening economy and cultural facilities might form part of an ensemble of ground / first floor uses clustered around key public spaces.
- 5.181. The Council will work closely with partners including Harlow Art Trust to explore potential for new facilities in the town centre including gallery space and music venues.
- 5.182. The HTCAAP is supportive of the long-standing ambition to deliver a larger capacity theatre in the Town Centre and will continue to consider the more detailed business case and brief for a new building alongside existing facilities.
- 5.183. Opportunities to find synergies between different activities, uses and public spaces will be encouraged, particularly where this enhances the deliverability of new facilities and cultural activities or enterprise.

## 5

POLICY  
THEMES**Policy HTC15 Civic and community uses**

Proposals for community and civic uses in the Town Centre will be supported with potential for a new cluster of civic activities on the Crowngate Island site.

**Justification**

- 5.184. Harlow Town Centre already has clear strengths in education and cultural activities e.g. Harlow Playhouse, Gibberd Gallery, Harlow College and Sir Charles Kao UTC, amongst others.
- 5.185. Harlow Town Centre has clear strengths in education including Harlow College, Sir Charles Kao UTC and Harlow Advanced Manufacturing & Engineering Centre. These assets are poorly integrated with the Town Centre and feel separate from the core of the Town Centre by Velizy Avenue. There is also scope for a more efficient approach to community facilities in terms of locations and buildings across the Town Centre. There are currently various community services that exist within the Town Centre in units on temporary leases yet which provide diverse and added uses. Princess Alexandra Hospital is located to the north of the Town Centre and provides essential health and well-being services to residents.
- 5.186. Integrating existing facilities into the Town Centre as well as identifying other locations and buildings across the Town Centre for community and cultural uses is a key priority of the AAP.

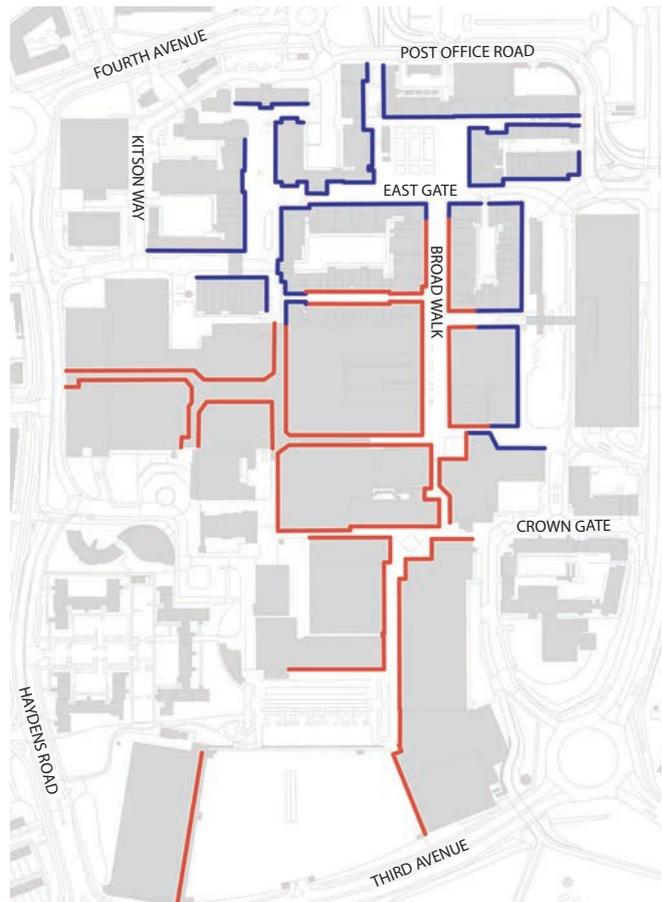
**Implementation**

- 5.187. The Council will work with public sector partners including Essex County Council, Homes England and Central Government to establish opportunities for the co-location of civic uses where this would allow the wider release of sites for development to support an overall regeneration strategy for key parts of the Town Centre, and the enhancement of civic facilities. This is currently being progressed through the One Public Estate initiative.
- 5.188. Development proposals should also seek to identify opportunities for community and voluntary sector space at ground floors and lower storeys within the Town Centre as part of a broader mix of active town centre uses.

## POLICIES MAP AND INSET MAP

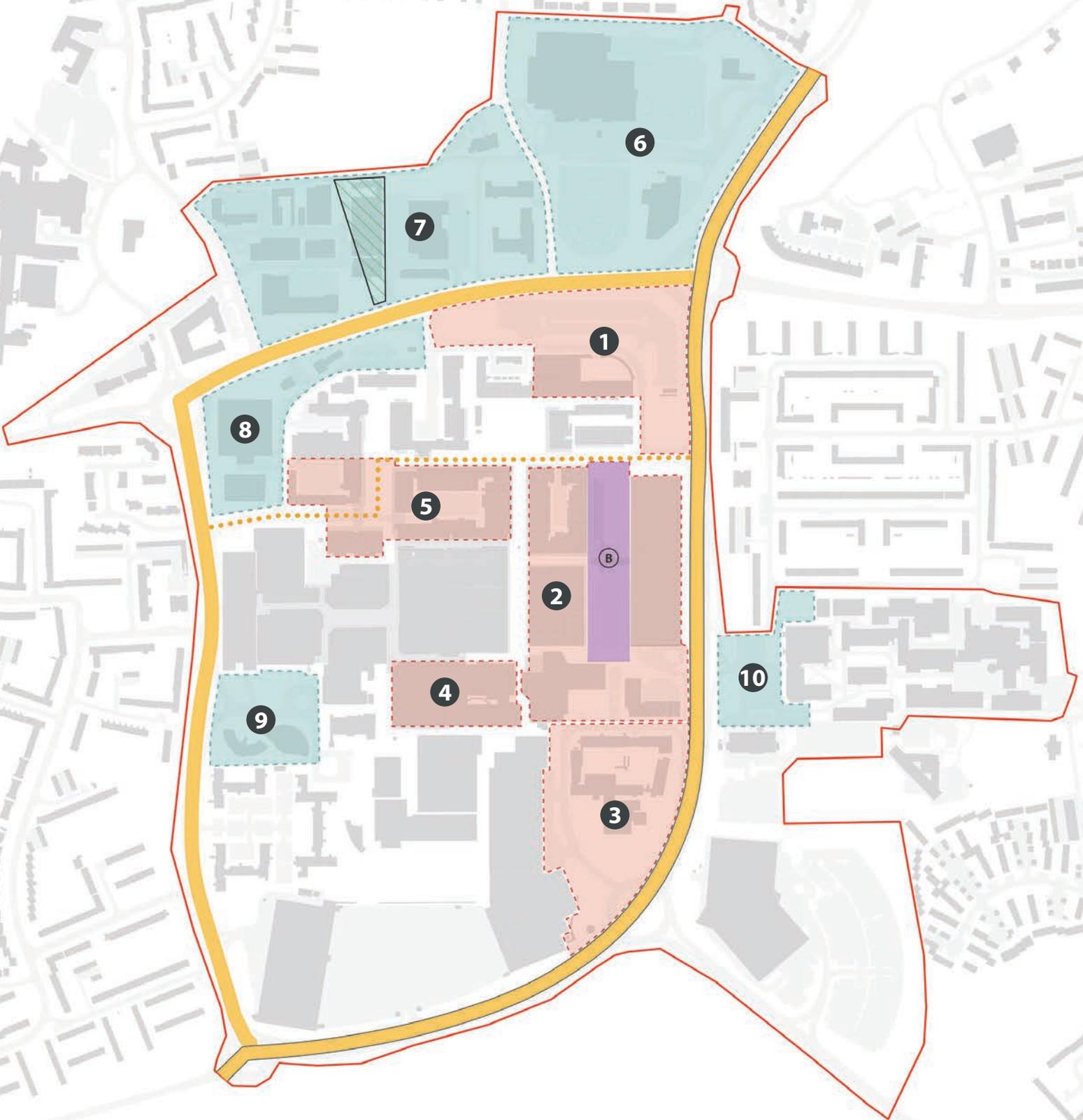
### Policy summary

- 5.189. The plan opposite (Figure 44) summarises where the different AAP policies apply.
- 5.190. The principal movement interventions are:
- Indicative Sustainable Transport Corridor including a safeguarded route through the town centre, along East Gate and West Gate (policy HTC4)
  - Boulevard treatment to collar roads (policies HTC2, HTC3)
  - Reconfiguring the bus station (HTC4)
- 5.191. The plan also shows areas identified as key development sites. These are:
1. Post Office Road area
  2. Bus station area
  3. Crown Gate Island
  4. BHS site and library
  5. Blocks either side of West Gate / East Gate (former Addington site)
- 5.192. A number of areas are identified as other development sites which have potential to come forward in the plan period and beyond:
6. Sainsbury's area
  7. Wych Elm
  8. Kitson Way area
  9. Occasio House and Playhouse Square
  10. Harlow College
- 5.193. Development site boundaries reflect a strategic approach to development. The precise detail of scheme boundaries will evolve through the planning process.
- 5.194. There is potential for a new green finger for the town centre that would extend from Rectory Wood to Fourth Avenue.



**Figure 43 Inset plan - town centre frontages plan** Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

- Primary frontage
- Secondary frontage



-  Indicative Sustainable Transport Corridor (policy HTC4)
-  Boulevard treatment to collar roads (HTC2, HTC3)
-  Safeguarded route of Sustainable Transport Corridor through town centre (HTC4)
-  Key development sites (HTC1, HTC10, HTC11, HTC12, HTC13, HTC14, HTC15)
-  Other development sites (HTC1, HTC10, HTC11, HTC12, HTC13, HTC14, HTC15)
-  Bus station (HTC4)
-  Potential new green finger (HTC9)
-  AAP town centre boundary

Figure 44 Policy map Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

# 6 IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

## Summary

- 6.1. This chapter summarises the delivery strategy for Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) as prepared by Cushman and Wakefield (2019). The Delivery Strategy is a standalone document prepared as a companion document to the AAP which follows Cushman & Wakefield's Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis (2017) ('the 2017 Market Analysis Report').
- 6.2. The full delivery strategy report provides an up-to-date overview of the property market sectors relevant to Harlow Town Centre (namely residential, retail and offices) and considers the overall proposed scale and mix of development for the town centre as a whole and within broad Opportunity Areas. It then sets out delivery considerations for individual Development Sites that will likely be the main foci for the bulk of development over the course of the AAP period and beyond.
- 6.3. This summary captures the main points from the Delivery Strategy in relation to the indicative amount of development for each use, delivery commentary for each site and an estimation of the estimated phasing strategy.

## AAP development delivery

- 6.4. The AAP will provide a spatial planning framework to guide the scale and mix of development in Harlow Town Centre up to 2033 and beyond.
- 6.5. This section considers the overall proposed scale and mix of development envisaged by the AAP, for the town centre as a whole and within broad Opportunity Areas, in the context of the Council's evidence base and market signals. Within each Opportunity Area key Development Sites and the indicative phasing relevant delivery considerations have also been reviewed.
- 6.6. It is important to note that these figures represent an early estimate of development capacity in the town centre. Over time, these figures will be subject to ongoing review and refinement as Council-led development briefs and wider proposals come forward.
- 6.7. The indicative development schedule is set out in Figure 44 below.

| Land use                         | Indicative ground floor (sqm GEA) | Indicative upper floor (sqm GEA) | Total (sqm GEA) | Indicative residential dwelling numbers |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| Residential                      | 26,127                            | 201,329                          | 227,455         | 2,216                                   |
| Flexible non-residential         | 13,479                            | 0                                | 13,479          | -                                       |
| Education                        | 2,984                             | 6,802                            | 9,786           | -                                       |
| Workspace                        | 3,989                             | 20,098                           | 24,087          | -                                       |
| Flexible workspace / residential | 845                               | 13,873                           | 14,718          | 133                                     |
| Community                        | 2,001                             | 0                                | 2,001           | -                                       |
| Foodstore                        | 5,200                             | 0                                | 5,200           | -                                       |
| Retail                           | 17,870                            | 0                                | 17,870          | -                                       |
| Civic                            | 9,817                             | 10,005                           | 19,822          | -                                       |
| Car park                         | 7,908                             | 26,940                           | 34,848          | -                                       |
| <b>Totals</b>                    | <b>90,221</b>                     | <b>279,046</b>                   | <b>369,268</b>  | <b>2,216 to 2,349</b>                   |

Figure 45 Harlow Town Centre AAP development schedule (indicative capacities for the plan period and beyond)

- 6.8. The development schedule indicates that the residential floorspace equates to [2,216] new dwellings; or up to [2,349] new dwellings including the flexible workspace/ residential floorspace. For the plan period, the emerging estimated figure is likely to be lower [1,478 to 1,562 dwellings].
- 6.9. The AAP provides a flexible approach to land use planning, particularly since some of the Development Sites are longer term and unlikely to come forward over the course of the AAP period. Flexibility in the precise mix of uses will be important to maximise delivery prospects and to ensure that the future regeneration of the town centre can adapt to emerging market trends and 'needs' as they evolve.
- 6.10. The delivery of the overall quantum of development envisaged by the AAP will require the co-ordination of Development Sites and a complex set of interrelated factors such as viability, market capacity and phasing. It will also be necessary to ensure that existing and planned infrastructure (physical and social) can support the development proposed for the town centre and its proposed increasing resident population. This will need to be coordinated in terms of delivery with broader population growth and infrastructure investment associated with the Harlow Gilston Garden Town.
- Residential**
- 6.11. The indicative AAP proposals include approximately [2,216 – 2,349] new dwellings within the town centre, of which [1,478 to 1,562] are identified as being in the plan period (see figure 120), which would be additional to those planned at strategic growth locations in the District or on the edge of the Harlow urban area.
- 6.12. The figures for Harlow town centre envisaged by the AAP therefore equate to 24.1 – 25.5% of the total number of new dwellings planned though the Pre-Submission Local Plan (i.e. at least 9,200 dwellings as described below). Aside from contributing towards the District's housing land supply, there are significant benefits associated with high density housing and the resulting step-change in the resident population of the town centre. In particular, it will generate additional expenditure to support local shops and services and improve the general vibrancy of the town centre. This will be key to transforming Harlow Town Centre and perceptions of it as a place to live, work and socialise. In addition, there is an opportunity for this higher density housing in a town centre environment to complement the different types of housing that will be provided as part of the Harlow Gilston Garden Town growth, helping to give Harlow as a whole a more diverse and mixed housing market in the future.
- 6.13. Objectively assessed need for some 51,700 dwellings between 2011-2033 is forecast by the West Essex and East Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2017 (SHMA), including both market housing (38,100 dwellings) and affordable housing (13,600 dwellings). Of this, the SHMA identifies a need for 7,409 dwellings in Harlow between 2011-2033 (or 337 per annum).
- 6.14. Policy HS1 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan seeks to deliver at least 9,200 dwellings over the same period (thus more than the objectively assessed need). Of these:
- 1,436 dwellings are completed as at 31 March 2017;
  - 4,122 dwellings are committed as at 31 March 2017; and
  - 2,600 dwellings are allocated at Strategic Housing Site East of Harlow.

- 6.15. The Pre-Submission Local Plan states that 1,042 dwellings are to be identified. For a more up-to-date picture, it is helpful to consider the latest Annual Monitoring Report 2017-2018 (AMR) and recent commitments. The AMR reports that 281 dwellings were completed during 2017-2018, which is lower than the preceding year (340 dwellings during 2016-2017) and the annual target of 337 dwellings.
- 6.16. Since the above reported commitments, *inter alia*, planning permission ref. HW/FUL/17/00097 has been granted (2 August 2018) for 447 new dwellings as part of the mixed use redevelopment of land adjacent to the Harvey Centre in the town centre. This development has not been implemented to date.
- 6.17. Objectively assessed housing needs should not be treated as 'ceilings' or maximums not to be exceeded: they are minimums and the Council should plan for such needs accordingly. A co-ordinated approach to delivery and phasing will be necessary to mitigate the risk of 'flooding the market' and exceeding infrastructure capacity. To that end, it is unlikely that all 2,216 – 2,349 new dwellings identified for the town centre will come forward over the course of the AAP period. Some residential development will continue beyond 2033 as longer term Development Sites are delivered, as considered under section 3 below.
- 6.18. A key objective for housing delivery in Harlow town centre relates to the creation of a balanced and sustainable housing mix. An important factor will be the Council's affordable housing policy which. This policy approach will have wider associated benefits, such as increasing the economically-active resident population and thus expenditure to support local shops and services. The proposed affordable housing policy for the AAP is set out in chapter 4 (see policy HTC13).

### Education

- 6.19. The AAP proposes a potential new school (9,786 sqm GEA) to serve the growing resident population. It will be important to plan for such social infrastructure over the AAP period and beyond, which will add to the mix of active uses within the town centre boundary. The precise need, demand and phasing of a new school will be subject to ongoing review by the Council.

### Workspace

- 6.20. The indicative AAP proposals identify 24,087 sqm GEA of workspace in the town centre (or up to 38,805 sqm GEA including the flexible workspace/ residential floorspace). Relative to existing workspace within the town centre, this is a substantial quantum.
- 6.21. The Employment Land Review (ELR) (2013) reports that Harlow is not a recognised office location and therefore struggles to attract footloose requirements for major office occupiers. Delivering the overall proposed scale of workspace development in the town centre, as envisaged by the AAP, will require improvements to the quality of the town centre's environment and its amenity and leisure facilities. These are important pre-requisites for town centre working and attracting demand from occupiers who, at the national level, are increasingly seeking flexible workspaces.
- 6.22. The Cushman and Wakefield property market review identifies that Harlow's office market is overwhelmingly focused on small businesses and micro firms with 0-9 employees. The development of flexible workspace in the town centre has the potential to serve these types of occupier and cater for a different market compared with existing supply across the District. That said, delivering the substantial quantum of workspace envisaged by the AAP will require a careful approach to phasing, having regard to factors such as potential occupier demand and avoiding market saturation.

### Community

- 6.23. The indicative AAP proposals identify 2,001 sqm GEA of community floorspace. Like other non-retail floorspace proposed at ground floor level, such floorspace will provide opportunities for community facilities and supplement the wider mix of town centre uses.

### Retail/ Food store

- 6.24. The AAP proposals identify 17,870 sqm GEA of retail floorspace (note this is not net additional floorspace) and a food store measuring 5,200 sqm GEA (note this is a replacement store for the existing Sainsbury's and is not therefore net additional floorspace). The flexible non-residential floorspace (13,479 sqm GEA at ground floor level) could also comprise retail or community uses, subject to location and demand.
- 6.25. Policy RS2 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan states that the AAP 'will look to deliver a significant proportion of the retail floorspace requirements through site redevelopment and regeneration opportunities.' This reflects Harlow town centre's position at the apex of the retail hierarchy, as per Policy RS1 of the Pre-Submission Local Plan.
- 6.26. The revised NPPF (2019, paragraph 85 bullet d) requires planning policies to 'allocate a range of suitable sites in town centres to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed,

looking at least ten years ahead. Meeting anticipated needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses over this period should not be compromised by limited site availability, so town centre boundaries should be kept under review where necessary.'

- 6.27. Harlow's retail floorspace requirements are set out in the Retail & Leisure Needs Study 2017 (RLNS). The requirements are based on potential housing growth scenarios which could come forward over the plan period and beyond.
- 6.28. The RLNS 'high growth' scenario, which forms the basis of Policy RS2, assumes 17,650 new dwellings in and around the Harlow urban area between 2021-2036. It forecasts capacity for net additional comparison and convenience goods floorspace up to 2033, as set out in Figure 119.
- 6.29. Clearly the GVA retail capacity forecasts, which are net additional, are substantially greater than the quantum of retail (and flexible non-residential) floorspace envisaged by the AAP. However, since the preparation of those forecasts in 2017, the retail market has continued to evolve at pace.
- 6.30. Our property market review set out in section 2 identifies the latest UK trends that are changing the retail landscape and in turn the function of town centres. A significant trend in recent years has been the polarisation and downsizing of

| Year          | Comparison goods floorspace capacity – HIGH GROWTH (sqm net)  |
|---------------|---|
| 2021          | 4,900   |
| 2026          | 18,100  |
| 2031          | 33,500  |
| 2033          | 40,200  |
| Year          | Convenience goods floorspace capacity – HIGH GROWTH (sqm net) |
| 2021          | 1,600   |
| 2026          | 3,200   |
| 2031          | 4,900   |
| 2033          | 5,500   |
|               | 7,908   |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>90,221</b>   |

Figure 46 Retail capacity forecasts (RLNS, 2017)

retailers to a smaller number of prime locations, as they adapt to the growth of online retailing. Administrations and CVAs mean that there are fewer retailers to fill the voids left by others, while retailer collaborations (e.g. Sainsbury's and Argos) are increasingly common as occupiers look to share space. As a result, many town centres have too much retail floorspace and Harlow falls into this category (as identified by the Harlow Town Centre Market Analysis 2017).

### **Civic**

- 6.31. The indicative AAP proposals identify 19,822 sqm GEA of civic floorspace. This quantum of floorspace is driven by the understanding that in the future:
- the existing police facilities will be relocated out-of-town, with only front-of-house offices and custody suites being re-provided within the town centre; and
  - the existing job centre requires only front-of-house desk space.
- 6.32. The delivery of the overall proposed scale of civic floorspace in the town centre will largely depend on the relocation of existing facilities. Notwithstanding, such floorspace will form an important component of the broader mix of town centre uses proposed by the AAP.

### **Theatre**

- 6.33. The AAP masterplan proposals identify potential locations for the re-provision of the existing theatre to larger, more suitable premises in the town centre.
- 6.34. The RLNS provides a qualitative assessment of the need for commercial leisure floorspace in Harlow (focusing on restaurants, cafes, bars, cinema and cultural facilities such as theatre, galleries, etc). The analysis reflects the potential housing growth scenarios and the additional leisure spending likely to be available.
- 6.35. The RLNS comments that 'commercial leisure activities are being an increasingly important component of successful, vital and viable town centres, and the relative lack of many types of

leisure uses in Harlow town centre represents a key opportunity area for the Council to improve [over the plan period]'. It identifies the opening of the new Cineworld cinema and restaurants in the Harvey Centre and states that further leisure provision – namely restaurants and cafes – is necessary to support the town centre and its existing cultural facilities, such as the Playhouse theatre.

- 6.36. The foregoing is consistent with the property market review, which highlights the importance of strong leisure-orientated 'anchors' in town centres as consumers seek non-retail attractions and all-round experiences. Good cultural/leisure facilities will also help to support flexible workspace opportunities and a shift towards town centre working.
- 6.37. A replacement theatre, in the right location, will contribute towards the future vitality and viability of Harlow town centre, improving the evening economy and complementing the broader mix of uses proposed by the AAP.

## KEY SITES

### Overview

6.38. A total of 8 Opportunity Areas have been identified for the purpose of the AAP. These are:

1. Sainsbury's
2. Wych Elm
3. Town Centre North
4. Bus Station
5. Harvey Centre
6. Water Gardens
7. The Courts
8. College & Leisure Zone

6.39. We consider each Opportunity Area in terms of the scale and mix and approximate disposition of land uses across the town centre as envisaged by the AAP. Several Development Sites (i.e. the main foci for the bulk of development over the course of the AAP period) and the indicative phasing of such. Many of these were loosely defined in the 2017 Market Analysis Report as catalytic opportunities and key priorities for action in the town centre, requiring some form of Council intervention.

6.40. Commentary on the principal Development Sites / Opportunity Areas (see Figure 41) is provided below, including with regards to delivery considerations and potential interventions.

6.41. Further detail on delivery considerations for Development Sites within the Opportunity Areas is set out below.

#### **Areas 1&2 - Sainsbury's and Wych Elm**

6.42. This site currently accommodates a bus depot and Harlow Central fire station as well as part of the car parking area for the Sainsbury's foodstore. It is prominently located off Fourth Avenue to the north of the town centre. Subject to the relocation of existing uses, we consider that this site would be suitable for employment uses and/or residential development.

6.43. In terms of delivery considerations:

- It is considered that the existing uses under-utilise this site, which has good connections with the town centre.

- For the entire site to be considered as a potential development opportunity, it is likely that the existing bus depot and fire station uses would need to be relocated. We understand that Harlow Central Fire Station would be open to a relocation; however, the position is uncertain with regards to the Arriva Bus Depot. Relocation is unlikely to be straightforward as it is likely that suitable alternative sites would need to be found and replacement facilities funded. Strategically, these relocations should be considered not just in the context of the AAP for the town centre but in relation to the broader growth of the greater Harlow area linked to the Harlow Gilston Garden Town initiative to ensure all appropriate relocation opportunities are considered and delivery can be phased appropriately.

- The AAP identifies the potential to locate a theatre on part of what is currently a car park servicing the Sainsbury's foodstore. The acquisition of land, replacement of any lost car parking and funding for the construction of the theatre are likely to require significant public sector funding in order to be delivered. Given these delivery challenges on this site, the AAP proposes a number of different alternative options for a new theatre as part of the regeneration of the town centre.

- In terms of alternative uses, we consider that employment uses and higher density residential development would be suitable options for this site.

- The site presents an opportunity to better integrate the town centre with the area to the north, which is currently separated by the busy inner-ring road. This would benefit the regeneration of the town centre including the Market Area.

- Due to the extensive work which would be required to relocate the existing uses, the site is considered to be a longer term opportunity (over the AAP period and beyond).

### Area 3 – Town Centre North

6.44. This area comprises:

- The Market Area
- Land North of the Harvey Centre

The 'Market Area' broadly covers the part of the north eastern corner of the town centre which lies within the ring road. It currently accommodates a range of land uses including car parking, a Royal Mail distribution facility, commercial uses and public open space. Within the context set by the AAP, the site is likely to be most suitable for residential-led mixed use development with flexible ground floor retail and/or commercial uses.

6.45. In terms of delivery considerations:

- The proposed extent of commercial floorspace proposed for the area could be challenging to deliver in terms of viability due to low rental values prevailing in the town centre at present and limited occupier demand for an area that lies beyond the commercial core of the town centre. This position could change over time as improvements in the town centre promoted by the AAP encourage occupier demand, for example, and demand for business space rises linked to the arrival in the town of Public Health England and the growth of the Harlow Gilston Garden Town. However, in the shorter term it is prudent to assume flexible commercial uses for these sites or residential.
- Given the range of existing ownerships, land assembly may be challenging if a comprehensive scheme for the area is sought.
- The multiple ownerships and/or unwillingness of key landowners to 'commit' to the vision for Market Area could constrain the pace and extent of any regeneration scheme. Therefore, a flexible approach to the regeneration of this area should be adopted in terms of the scale of the potential development opportunity.
- The relocation of existing occupiers, principally Royal Mail and the Post Office, would be potentially time consuming and costly. For example, in relation to the Royal Mail facility it is likely that an alternative suitable site would need to be found and a replacement facility funded and built.
- Due to the complex nature of the site, its overall comprehensive redevelopment is considered to be a phased medium-to-long term opportunity (over the AAP period and beyond). However, this would not preclude certain schemes coming forward for part of the area and accelerating development, for example the Council-owned land at Post Office Road where delivery can be proactively pursued by the Council and could help to establish momentum in the area, build confidence amongst other landowners to bring forward schemes and could establish expectations in terms of quality of design.
- In terms of the land North of the Harvey Centre, it is understood that Strawberry Star Group acquired land in this area from Addington Capital (owners of the Harvey Centre) in March 2019. The site has planning consent for 450 residential units and 40,000 sq m of retail floorspace. The framework set by the AAP for the broader regeneration strategy of the town centre assumes this scheme will be delivered.

#### Area 4 - Bus Station

- 6.46. Terminus House has recently been converted to residential use. As such – and given the likely significant costs of redevelopment due to the complexity of the building structure – we do not anticipate redevelopment being viable in the short to medium term.
- 6.47. Subject to viability and development of a feasible car parking solution, there could, however, be an opportunity to develop a more effective car parking solution in this area that would replace the existing multi storey car park with a new facility and deliver residential units on any surplus land.
- 6.48. Following the enhancement of the bus station and improved quality of pedestrian links from the bus station to the rest of the town centre, there is an opportunity to expand the retail units to the west (fronting Broad Walk) to provide larger, more flexible units suitable for modern retailers. Such a redevelopment could also include residential above. Such a redevelopment will be encouraged by improvements to the bus station and is hence linked to infrastructure improvements that relate not just to the town centre but to the broader Harlow Gilston Garden Town-related growth which will bring improved public transport links between the town centre and the rest of Harlow, including the proposed growth areas. Delivery therefore needs to be coordinated appropriately.

#### Area 5 - The Harvey Centre

- 6.49. The Harvey Centre is the town centre's main shopping centre. It accommodates a range of retailers predominantly catering for the mass and 'value' ends of the market, and a growing leisure-based offer (with the new Cineworld-anchored scheme). It is considered that the opportunity presented by The Harvey Centre is one of good asset management, including the diversification of its offer to better reflect consumer habits and expectations.
- 6.50. The Harvey Centre is a purpose-built indoor shopping centre owned by Addington Capital (acquired in 2011). Current occupiers include

Tesco, Wilkinson, Argos, Primark, Clintons Cards, Poundland and a range of other multiple and independent retailers.

- 6.51. Recent changes at the Harvey Centre include:
- The delivery of a new cinema (Cineworld) and a number of restaurant units
  - Reconfiguration of the former Marks & Spencer unit which has been re-occupied by several operators including Holland and Barrett, Peacocks, F Hinds, Nationwide, Starbucks and Papa's Café.
- 6.52. In terms of development potential, similar to the recent reconfiguration of the former M&S unit, there is an opportunity to re-use the former BHS unit. This could potentially involve the sub-division of the unit, thereby creating a number of smaller but flexible units suitable for the needs of modern retailers. We consider that this option, if feasible, would be more appropriate than retaining the unit as existing, the size of which would restrict retailer demand and/or potentially limit the potential end-user to the 'value' end of the market. Some residential uses and/or a new theatre (two potential theatre locations are identified by the AAP) could also be options for this area, potentially combining a replacement library facility subject to viability and a likely need for public sector funding in the case of a theatre and library. The business case for this funding may be strengthened by consideration of the provision of these facilities in relation to the growth of Harlow including the Harlow Gilston Garden Town initiative and the growing population that will help to justify the provision of new community and cultural facilities.
- 6.53. Other asset management options for the centre could include general refurbishment and the continued diversification of its offer, in order to improve activity and unit take-up.

### Area 6 - Water Gardens

- 6.54. The Water Gardens comprises an edge-of-centre shopping destination with food and beverage uses and extensive car parking.
- 6.55. No immediate proposals have been identified for this site, but longer-term opportunities (beyond the plan period) to enhance the area as annotated on figure 44.

### Area 7 - The Courts

- 6.56. The site is situated to the southeast of the town centre. The predominant occupier is the Police Station. We consider the site to be suitable for a taller building, most likely comprising a high density residential-led development.
- 6.57. The site is situated to the southeast of the town centre and is bordered by Velizy Avenue, Crown Gate and South Gate. It is a prominent site viewed from the inner-ring road and has good connections to/from the town centre's main shopping area. The site comprises the town's Police Station, Job Centre and the (recently closed) magistrate's court. The existing buildings are somewhat dated; the Police Station site in particular appears inefficient/unsuitable for their operational requirements. In terms of delivery considerations:
- The site is well located for a well designed, relatively tall 'gateway' building.
  - We consider that a higher density residential-led development would be appropriate on this site, subject to the relocation of existing occupiers.
  - Alternatively, the site represents an opportunity for public sector consolidation on a more efficient footprint, releasing land for residential development alongside. Demand for employment uses in the town centre is low at present but could be an opportunity in the future (please see the comments made on this point in relation to the Market Area, above)

- A One Public Estate opportunity for collaboration and funding could be achievable which could assist in accelerating redevelopment.
- Likely a short-medium term opportunity (over the AAP period).

### Area 8 - College and Harlow Leisurezone

- 6.58. Harlow College and Leisure Zone are significant non-retail attractions at the southern end of the town centre.
- 6.59. Education (potentially to include nursing/co-education workspace) are proposed to complement and support the College. This medium-term proposal would provide 'spin out' space for the College to extend its activities and further sustain this part of the town centre.

## DELIVERY STRATEGY

- 6.60. To support these site-specific delivery initiatives, the following initiatives to improve the town centre as a whole are also being considered:
- The Council is exploring the potential to establish a town centre **Business Improvement District**.
  - The Council is aiming to establish a regular **landowner and developer forum** to improve communication and encourage coordination of activity.
  - The Council also has a lead role to play in terms of forward funding **catalytic and longer term public realm projects** that set high quality standards and contribute towards a step-change in the town centre's physical environment, which is an important pre-requisite for growth by helping to create the conditions necessary to attract and retain investment. The delivery of these improvements needs to be planned and delivered in harmony with the growth in greater Harlow that the Harlow Gilston Garden Town project will bring. This is because the successful future of the town centre will significantly benefit from attracting custom from new Garden Town residents as well as the existing Harlow population. To help ensure new Garden Town residents are persuaded to use Harlow town centre rather than competitor locations, it is critical that improvements to the town centre are delivered in a coordinated way with the Garden Town's growth trajectory.
  - The Council will continue to explore opportunities for **funding bids** to Central Government and other funding partners. Potential / ongoing streams include One Public Estate, Future High Streets and housing delivery funding.
- 6.61. For those Development Sites where the Council is able to take a more proactive role in implementation, potential roles (disposal, contractual partnership, joint venture or direct delivery) that the Council could take are set out in Figure 47 overleaf.
- 6.62. Policy HTC1 sets out planning guidance associated with the delivery strategy.

|                            | Disposal   | Contractual partnership   |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Key characteristics</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council would secure planning permission then dispose of sites on the open market, leaving subsequent purchasers to bring forward proposals.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council procures a development partner, with delivery arrangements governed by a development agreement between the parties.</li> <li>There would be various conditions precedents and subsequent phasing and subsequent schemes could be brought forward through the mechanism of a development proposal notice.</li> </ul>                        |
| <b>Pros</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relatively cheap (costs of planning and disposal)</li> <li>Sale and capital receipt could be achieved quickly</li> </ul>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tried and tested approach, well understood by the market</li> <li>No separate entity created</li> <li>Clear delineation of objectives, roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Cons</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council would lose influence over development on their land beyond planning</li> <li>Does not necessarily optimise value</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential lack of flexibility and ability to manage change requiring, as we have seen, deeds of variations to account for/ deal with market conditions.</li> <li>Lack of a separate identity, making dealing with third parties more complex in that reference has to be "made back" to the Development Agreement and cascaded through.</li> </ul> |

Figure 47 Potential delivery mechanisms

| Joint venture   | Direct delivery  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council procures a partner and establish a common enterprise JVCo in which they share returns and risks. This sharing would be controlled through the shareholders agreements.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council implements the scheme themselves by appointing a development manager &amp; contractor rather than a developer to deliver the scheme. Council could retain freehold of the land and take ownership of the completed properties which could then be leased.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of distinct entity encourages focus on shared business plan and objectives</li> <li>• Easier branding and marketing</li> <li>• JV Co can enter into contracts in own right if required</li> <li>• Flexibility and durability to address changing market circumstances</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High level of control for Council</li> <li>• Development profit (but also risk) would sit with Council and could either be retained or folded back into the scheme to deliver greater outcomes</li> <li>• Assets would be retained by Council who could therefore potentially benefit from both revenue streams and capital growth</li> <li>• Existing framework agreements could be utilised.</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relatively complex and costly to establish</li> <li>• Parties will need to consider the majority of issues pertinent to the contractual partnership route as elements which would in that route form part of a development agreement will need to form part of the Shareholders Agreement</li> <li>• Potentially exposes Council to different types and levels of (commercial) risk</li> <li>• Potential concern of insufficient accountability to parent organisations</li> <li>• Council would need to understand its role as members/officers who take on the role as directors of the JV will be liable as directors and there are potential conflicts of interests between their duties to the Council and to the JV.</li> <li>• Dilution of the Councils "independence" in that should JV be in breach, the Council may need to consider how it deals with itself as shareholder in the JV being in breach</li> <li>•</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council would need to provide capital funding for the scheme to be delivered.</li> <li>• Council would be exposed to commercial risk rather than this being passed on to a developer.</li> <li>• The absence of a developer would mean the scheme is less likely to maximise its commercial potential, as the developer's skill set is absent.</li> </ul>   |

## PHASING

- 6.63. Figure 48 below sets out the overall scale and mix of development proposed in Harlow Town Centre based on indicative phasing. This is illustrated graphically on Figure 49. The details of phasing and development extents will continue to evolve through the plan period.
- 6.64. The AAP will establish a spatial planning framework to guide future development up to 2033 and beyond. Given the length of this timescale and the potential for change and uncertainties facing the property markets relevant to Harlow Town Centre, a flexible approach to land use planning will be important. This will serve to maximise delivery prospects and ensure that the future regeneration of the town centre can adapt to emerging market trends and 'needs' as they evolve.
- 6.65. The delivery of the overall quantum of development envisaged by the AAP will require the co-ordination of Development Sites and a complex set of interrelated factors such as viability, market capacity and phasing. It will also be necessary to ensure that existing and planned infrastructure (physical and social) can support the development proposed for the town centre and its increasing resident population. This will also need to be phased to link with the growth in population and infrastructure delivery associated with the Harlow Gilston Garden Town initiative.
- 6.66. The level of housing delivery proposed for the town centre is significant. Net dwelling completions across the District have totalled 1,176 homes over the past five years (since 2013-14), while the HTCAAP plans for [788] homes over the next five years within Harlow Town Centre alone. An additional [690] homes are proposed in 6-10 years. Notwithstanding the risk of 'flooding the market' and exceeding infrastructure capacity, there is a clear strategy for the proposed level and phasing of key residential development opportunity sites in the town centre:
- In the **short term** (0-5 years) a high proportion of the [788] homes will be delivered by Strawberry Star at the Land North of the Harvey Centre; and at the Post Office Road site, which is Council-owned
  - In the **medium term** (6-10 years), when the HTCAAP plans for [690] homes, the preceding delivery of the short term opportunities will have served to enhance developer confidence in the town centre housing market and set the conditions necessary to unlock additional Development Sites. These include but are not limited to the Sainsbury's foodstore and car park, the Royal Mail site and (part of) the Bus Depot / Fire Station site to the north of the town centre. However the delivery of these sites will also be contingent on – for example – early actions to work to relocate the bus depot and fire station.

| Land use                         | Short-term<br>(0-5 years)<br>sqm GEA | Medium-term<br>(6-10 years)<br>sqm GEA | Long-term<br>(10 years + /<br>beyond plan<br>period)<br>sqm GEA | Total<br>sqm GEA |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|------------------|
| Residential                      | 37864 [788]                          | 76548 [690]                            | 81988 [739]   | 196401 [2216]    |
| Flexible non-residential         | 1556                                 | 5299                                   | 6625  | 13479            |
| Education                        | 0                                    | 9786                                   | 0   | 9786             |
| Workspace                        | 5687                                 | 0                                      | 18400   | 24087            |
| Flexible workspace / residential | 0                                    | 9344 [84]                              | 5375 [48]   | 14718 [133]      |
| Community                        | 0                                    | 1001                                   | 1001  | 2002             |
| Foodstore                        | 0                                    | 5200                                   | 0   | 5200             |
| Retail                           | 11272                                | 0                                      | 6599  | 17870            |
| Civic                            | 4956                                 | 14867                                  | 0   | 19822            |
| <b>Totals</b>                    | <b>61334</b>                         | <b>122044</b>                          | <b>119986</b>   |                  |

**Figure 48** Overall capacity and phasing - note: residential dwelling numbers in square brackets as appropriate - please note that phasing and capacity by phase is subject to review and testing through the evolution of the evidence base and supporting documents to the AAP - the precise number of units/ floorspace is therefore square-bracketed where these are quoted in policies, supporting text and the monitoring framework.

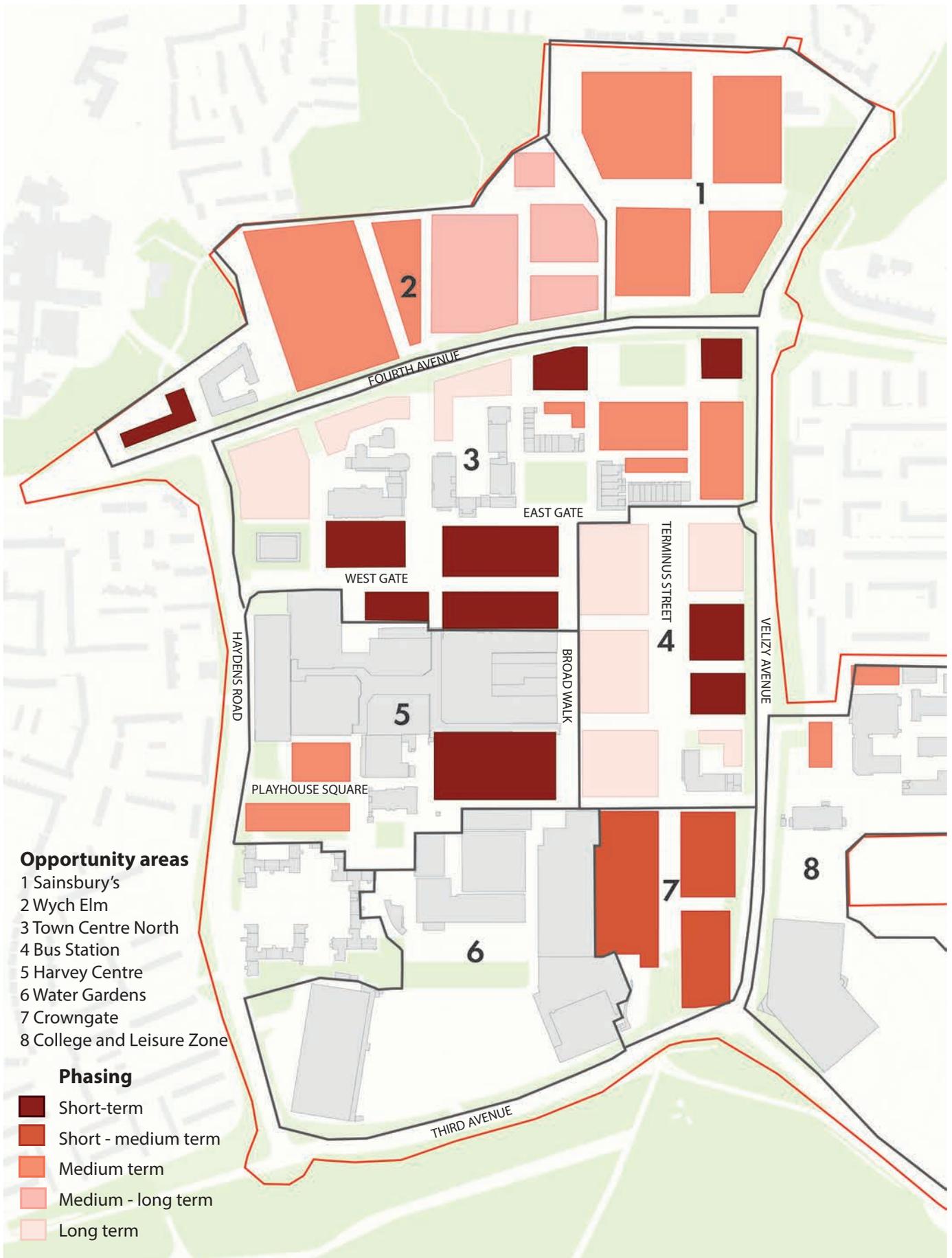


Figure 49 Indicative phasing plan - this phasing plan is currently under review and will be updated prior to publication Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right (2018). All rights reserved. Harlow District Council Licence No.100019627

# 7 MONITORING FRAMEWORK

- 7.1. Monitoring the Local Plan is an important, ongoing activity which identifies how the policies contained in the Plan are being implemented. The Council is required to produce an Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) at least annually. The AMR monitors progress against milestones in the Local Development Scheme and contains an assessment of the extent to which objectives set out in the Local Plan are being achieved.
- 7.2. Where it becomes apparent that objectives and targets are not being met, or if circumstances have changed nationally or locally, this may give rise to a review of the Local Plan or other elements such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) or additional Development Plan Documents (DPDs).
- 7.3. The monitoring framework for the Area Action Plan is set out below. This contains a series of performance indicators and other areas on which updates may be given which will be incorporated into the AMR.
- 7.4. It should be noted that the Local Plan sets out monitoring requirements in relation to Local Plan policies.

| Policy area                                    | Indicator  | Target   | Monitoring policies |
|--|--|--|---------------------|
| Housing Strategy and Growth Locations          | Net additional dwellings built   | Deliver up to [1,478] dwellings on the short and medium term sites up to 2033  | HTC1, HTC12         |
|  | Percentage of Affordable Housing built in new major residential developments   | At least 30% for the new major residential development (Reduction of this rate will require an independent viability assessment)   | HTC12               |
| Economic Development and Prosperity Strategy   | New workspace in town centre   | Deliver up to [5,687] sqm of new workspace in town centre - flexibility in location, earmarked to south of Fourth Avenue   | HTC13               |
| Retail Ambitions and Town Centre Redevelopment | Quality of retail environment in Harlow  | Qualitative improvements to streets, spaces and accessibility in the town centre through an annual high level "healthcheck"  | HTC9, HTC10         |
|  | Provision of new retail floorspace in the town centre                          | Provide up to 11,272 sqm new retail floorspace and up to 6,855 sqm of new flexible no-residential space (potentially including retail) up to 2033<br>Increasing trend in evening and night time uses | HTC10, HTC11, HTC14 |
|  | Percentage of Primary Frontage in the Town Centre in Use Classes A1, A2 and A3 | At least 60% of the overall Primary Frontage length is A1 use and 100% retention of primary frontage length  | HTC10               |

| Policy area  | Indicator   | Target  | Monitoring policies |
|--|---|---|---------------------|
| Linking Development Sites to the Wider Environment | Delivery of trees and planting on key streets and spaces in the town centre | Delivery of new town centre trees alongside all development and major infrastructure schemes in the town centre   | HTC1, HTC6          |
|  | Potential delivery of new green finger in Wych Elm area                     | Planning progression / delivery of new green finger connecting from Rectory Woods to the town centre towards the end of the plan period   | HTC6                |
|  | Change in number of heritage assets in the town centre                      | No loss in number of heritage assets<br>Retention and positive refurbishment of assets (including non-designated assets as identified)  | HTC7                |
|  | Townscape setting and character   | Protection or enhancement of setting of heritage assets (including non-designated assets)<br>Protection and enhancement of existing views, or creation of new views<br>Improvements in setting / townscape character / legibility of key sites in the town centre | HTC6, HTC8, HTC9    |
| Strategic Infrastructure Requirements              | Delivery of enhancements to public transport                                | Enhancement of local bus service provision and interchange by 2033<br>Realisation of STC provision to / through the town centre by 2033<br>Enhancement of connections to Harlow Town railway station by 2033  | HTC4                |
|  | Delivery of improvements to town centre walking and cycling connections     | Improvements to walking and cycling connections across the urban collar roads by 2033   | HTC3                |
| Lifestyle  | Enhancement of urban streets and public spaces                              | Enhancement of key streets and spaces by 2033   | HTC9                |
|  | Quality of public art provision in Harlow                                   | Increase in the number of public art / sculptures and number of refurbished / relocated pieces in the town centre   | HTC9                |

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# APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - OPPORTUNITY AREA AND PUBLIC REALM GUIDANCE

APPENDIX 2 - ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT



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