

PRESENTATION TO CALL-IN CTTE HARLOW METRO PROPOSAL THURSDAY 7TH JANUARY 2021

CLLR DANNY PURTON – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT

LEAD HARLOW MEMBER FOR HARLOW & GILSTON GARDEN TOWN PROJECT

Qualifications

Honours Degree (with distinction) in Civil Engineering – Regent St Polytechnic

Associate Member – Institute of Municipal Engineers – Institute of Civil Engineers – Chartered Engineer

Relevant Experience

Leader of Joint HDC/ECC project group for development of Harlow Area Transportation Strategy (HATS)

Member of Harlow Metro 10 joint panel – National Bus Awards – Winners of Community Partnership Scheme

Leader of DfT National Pathfinder project – Harlow Quality Bus Partnership

Project Manager – Transportation Study for Harlow Expansion Options

Transportation Consultant – Palm Jumeirah – Dubai – United Arab Emirates

Member of Herts CC A414 Corridor Working Party – Proposal for Rapid Transit System

Background to Policy Development

The local development of Transportation Policy has gone through numerous iterations since I first came to Harlow in 1967 to work at Harlow Development Corporation – At that time the policy was “predict and provide” which had led to an overall plan for dual carriageways with multi-level Interchanges along all the main Avenues.

We have now arrived at a new radical approach to movement which fits with other Climate Change strategies addressing the need to reduce the consumption of Carbon-based fuels and improving Cycling and Walking.

In broad terms we need, where practical, to reduce the need for travel with a 15-minute society for local activities connected to housing areas and then Sustainable Transportation Corridors for longer urban and inter-urban journeys connected to Work, Leisure, Shopping, Commerce, Training etc.

Harlow METRO Proposal

The most important factor in encouraging people to use public transport is reliability – if you can be sure that all public transport vehicles that you wish to utilise for your journey will arrive on time and deliver you to your destination without delay then you are more likely to commit to regular use – for any system to achieve this standard necessitates off-highway routes with priority crossings which cannot be then delayed by other traffic.

Other physical factors including quality, information, comfort, connectivity are also important, together with less tangible but important issues such as aspiration and style.

The proposed HGGT Sustainable Transportation Corridors linking the new Housing Developments, Employment Centres and the new Hospital – North / South & East / West – provide the ideal opportunity to deliver such a high - quality public transport system that is considered essential if the targets of 60% sustainable journeys are to be met.

Other parts of the Town are already served by a public transport network which when legislation allows could be improved with more modern vehicles and route priority.

Feasibility Study

In order to evaluate the METRO proposal a specialist Transportation Consultant AECOM together with their associates in a joint venture (Perfect Circle JV Ltd) have been requested under the SCAPE framework to deliver a feasibility assessment including innovative technologies, engineering requirements, cost and benefits, operating models and a business case.

I have now received details of their project proposal and I attach below the technical elements which describe the scope of the study – the fee quotation aspects of the AECOM proposal are obviously confidential.

AECOM are familiar with developments in the Harlow Area having provided Consultancy advice on other aspects of the A414 Corridor and HGGT policies. This engagement will be jointly progressed between Harlow Council and HGGT Board recognising our joint interests in delivering the outcome.

Included in the proposed Study timetable are two provisional opportunities for Member consultation / workshops in March and May with the final report delivered in June/July – This timetable will be subject to discussions at an inception meeting with follow-up involvement that I will be arranging as soon as possible.

CLLR DANNY PURTON – January 2021

Perfect Circle – Harlow Metro - Project Overview

Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town in 2017. Harlow, East Herts and Epping Forest District councils are working together in partnership to deliver an ambitious growth plan for the Harlow area that will deliver significant housing growth in a sustainable way that creates a living environment for current and future residents of Harlow.

As part of this development of the Harlow area, a transport strategy was developed in 2019 which emphasised the need for innovative and affordable public transport travel. This is required in order to meet the sustainable travel targets of 50% of all trips originating from and ending within the whole Garden Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes, with the target rising to 60% for trips originating from and ending within the new Garden Communities.

As part of the plan for reaching these targets for sustainable travel, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town board want to undertake high-level feasibility work to explore the options for a Harlow Urban Metro Mass Rapid Transit network as a system for providing high quality public transport services across the Garden Town. The intention is that this will interface with and operate upon the network of Sustainable Transport Corridors, currently under design development.

This project is to deliver that feasibility assessment and explore what innovative public transport technologies can aid in delivering these sustainability travel targets as an Urban Metro system for Harlow and the new growth areas, including Gilston.

This project will:

- ❖ identify innovative public transport technologies and how they could suit the delivery of the mode of transportation required for a Harlow Metro system.
- ❖ explore at a high-level the engineering requirements for the delivery of the new public transport Metro system.
- ❖ assess, where possible, the costs and benefits of the new public transport system.
- ❖ identify potential operating models from good practice case studies in other urban areas, both in the UK and abroad.
- ❖ assemble a high-level feasibility and an indicative business case based on the above for a Harlow Urban Metro system.

Overview of Deliverables and Outcomes

This appointment report on the recommendations for an Urban Metro system and technology for a Harlow Urban Metro system.

The steps for the delivery of the study will be as follows:

1. An inception meeting will be held with the client to confirm the goals and deliverables of the study. At this inception meeting, any sources of data and transport model outputs for the study to use will be confirmed (assumed to be sourced from Essex County Council models). The assumptions underpinning the proposed methodology for the study will be discussed, the scope for the study and the project plan will be confirmed.
2. An initial review will be undertaken of available data, traffic model outputs and other sources of relevant information including reports detailing the plans for the Harlow and Gilston Garden town growth plans and transport strategy. This will inform the final study methodology and the form of some of the study outputs (i.e. to establish whether there is enough data, data of sufficient quality or model outputs which already exist to conduct an assessment of the Urban Metro benefits).

Deliverable A: Inception note and study methodology. This note will confirm the study scope, goals and outputs. The Note will present a methodology to be used for the study and the extent of the feasibility assessment to be undertaken. It will also report on what is planned to be included in the Harlow Urban Metro indicative business case in the final report.

3. A series of growth scenarios will be developed which will represent possible growth scenarios for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. This will take into account the plans for the 16,500 new homes to be built in the areas to the north, south, west and east of Harlow and potential employment growth hubs. The growth scenarios will also be developed for short (0-5 years), medium (6-15 years) and long (16-25 years) term and will be used in the feasibility and options assessment. This assumption will be confirmed after reviewing all available resources on past studies and forecasts.

4. Different options for the public transport technologies for the Urban Metro will be identified. This could include such technologies as BRT, Tram and guided bus. Any innovations in public transport technology for these types of transport systems will be investigated, including different propulsion technologies and automation. This could include case studies from existing urban transport systems, both nationally and internationally. PC CP16-1 Rev J 6 Fee Proposal

5. An assessment will be carried out of the feasibility of these public transport systems identified in step 4. This includes:

- Possible patronage levels for the different systems, using the growth scenarios identified in Step 3. This will be a judgement-based assessment using available data, and not a modelling exercise.
- High level engineering assessment of the operability, reliability and speed of the systems for Harlow and the identified growth areas; e.g. will it operate with the current and planned Harlow transport infrastructure and alongside other travel modes in the town.
- High-level strategic assessment of the possible environmental impacts of the systems on the natural, social and built environment of Harlow.
- The safety and accessibility impacts of the public transport system options for Harlow residents and visitors.

6. A workshop will be held with the client and a mixed group of officers and councillors to review the options identified for the Urban Metro transport system and the findings of the above assessments. A shortlisting and sifting exercise will be undertaken at the workshop which will aim to shortlist some preferred options for the Urban Metro system based on the assessment undertaken.

Deliverable B: Interim report and summary of options assessment. This report will include a description of the options reviewed for the Urban Metro system, a summary of the assessment undertaken to date and a summary of the output from the client workshop from step 6

7. From the short-listed options from the sifting workshop, more detailed assessment will be undertaken of the costs and benefits of the options. The benefit assessment will be a high-level assessment which will be based on data and model output if available. There will also be a professional judgement assessment made of possible impacts on growth, the local and regional economy and other social aspects of residents and workers in Harlow. The cost assessment will also be a high-level assessment of the likely costs of the Urban Metro options and could be based on benchmarking against costs from existing Urban Metro systems elsewhere. It is likely the estimated costs will be expressed as ranges and will be caveated given the stage and detail of assessment.

8. Possible operational arrangements for the Metro System will also be investigated. Different forms of operational partnerships with the private sector will be assessed. Fare regimes and possible fare revenue estimates will also be made, but will be based on high-level assumptions on patronage, operational and maintenance costs and operational set-ups.

9. A second client member workshop will be undertaken which is anticipated to involve 30 – 60 officers and councillor representatives. From our experience, workshops of this scale can be more difficult to manage and therefore more than one workshop may be required. We have however assumed a single, large workshop for the purposes of this proposal. The workshop will aim to be as interactive as possible with outputs recorded to inform a final shortlisting of options that will feed into the recommendations of the final report. At this present time, we anticipate the workshop to be held virtually however if circumstances change it is possible the workshop could be held in person, most likely in Harlow.

10. The final stage of the study will be to produce a final report and indicative business case which will include a summary of the assessment and feasibility work undertaken to date, outputs from the sifting and shortlisting exercises.

Deliverable C: Final report and indicative business case. The final report and indicative business case section will summarise the findings from the study and include recommendations on the type of public transport technology that should be investigated further for the Harlow Urban Metro service. A draft final report will be submitted before taking client comments and feedback into account and producing a final report. Within the final report will be a indicative business case section which will summarise, as far as possible with the data available, the potential costs and benefits of the recommended options along with operational set-ups and ownerships models that would also warrant further investigation and study.