

Harlow Town Plan - 'Harlow @ 100'

Structure and notes

Title	Notes	
Introduction	<p>Harlow has expanded considerably since it was initially developed as a New Town, it is now not large enough to have the critical mass required to support and sustain a range of leisure and entertainment facilities, retail provision and new business opportunities, together with the supporting infrastructure that larger towns have access to. Being a former New Town developed in a relatively short time span over 70 years ago, some areas of the town built in that time are beginning to show their age, and require regeneration and rejuvenation.</p> <p>Plans are already in place for significant expansion of Harlow, very much in line with those put forward by the town's original master planner Sir Frederick Gibberd in the 1970's.</p> <p>This 'greater Harlow' will have an additional 19,000 homes and the population will be close to 130,000, a small city. This is an opportunity to deliver the vital critical mass required to attract the infrastructure and facilities we have been seeking for some years. However, it is important we have the infrastructure, vital to sustainable development, provided at pace which avoids the town being overwhelmed.</p> <p>Much has been achieved in recent years, including the adoption of the Harlow Local Development Plan that will shape the growth and development of the town until 2033, together with a host of regeneration initiatives and the designation of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. Moving forward, however, it is important that the Council maps out a pathway that looks to the future - to 2047, the 100th anniversary of the designation of Harlow New Town. Consequently we are developing a vision to set out how the town could develop based on what we know today and how we want the town to grow and develop over this period, reflecting the ambitions and aspirations of the community. This will be the 'Harlow @ 100' Vision that will adapt</p>	

	and evolve over time.	
<p>Background Large-scale investment announced or coming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In recent years the ambitions and aspirations of Harlow, and it's positive attitude towards sustainable growth, has resulted in large scale investment announcements for the town. This has been reinforced by the designation and development of the Harlow Enterprise Zone and the adoption of the Harlow Local Development Plan that has provided certainty and confidence for business investment. • This has been strengthened by road improvements in recent years including the Hamburger, Clock Tower and St Marks Roundabouts, London Road improvements and Edinburgh Way. These are coupled with upcoming road improvements including £85m on a new J7a on the M11, £172m of infrastructure works to the north of the town to facilitate the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town developments including widening the existing Stort crossing, creating a new eastern crossing and building a new railway bridge. • In addition plans are being put in place for a new £600million hospital to replace PAH, and a new headquarters in the town for UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) (£500million). • In addition, other funding has been secured including Town's Fund investment (£24million) • Harlow Investment Fund (£50million) and potential funding through the Community Renewal Fund and the Levelling up Fund for which bids have recently been submitted. • Developer investment in the town centre has been positive – including new residential, planned together with retail and commercial. 	
<p>Numerous organisations involved in Harlow</p> <p>All bodies and organisations have their own aims and objectives and are moving along their own paths – we need a vision to pull them all together into the same direction with a cohesive plan</p>	<p>Across Harlow many organisations contribute to the vitality of the town, so in addition to the Council, it is important that we continue to work with our partners to understand and develop aims and ambitions that can be consolidated into a shared vision. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex County Council, • Harlow & Gilston Garden Town, 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harlow Growth Board, • Harlow Chamber of Commerce, • UK Innovation Corridor, • Epping Forest District, East Herts District Councils and Hertfordshire County Council are also key players in the town moving forward 	
<p>Vision</p> <p>Looking forward from now until Harlow at 100 (2047), which is almost two Development Plan periods</p>	<p>What is happening in Harlow now and the elements we can comfortably predict should be used as a basis for a unified cohesive vision for the town and its hinterland, so all agencies and stakeholders are working towards the same goals, in the same direction, and to the same timetable.</p> <p>Vision Statement</p> <p><i>Harlow Council has an ambitious Vision for its future. Looking forward Harlow will be a place of aspiration, innovation and prosperity for all. The town has faced challenging times recently, especially due to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on residents and businesses alike but through the vision set out in the Town Plan the Council will ensure a sound platform is in place to aid Harlow's recovery and its future development and success. The Council intends to develop a vision set out in the overarching Town Plan that will provide a long term framework for the growth and regeneration of the town until 2047, drawing on what has been planned and achieved to date, which will evolve and develop over time to reflect our ambition and aspirations.</i></p> <p>By 2047:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Harlow will continue to grow and prosper</i> • <i>Regeneration will continue at pace where needed</i> • <i>Growth & prosperity will go hand in hand and the town centre will be a competitive retail centre and a place to work, live and spend leisure time</i> • <i>Harlow will have grown significantly as the Gilston Garden Town villages</i> 	

	<p><i>further expand and by other developments to the east, west and south of the town</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Harlow will have an excellent reputation due to its position as the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor creating the basis for sustained business investment</i> • <i>Harlow will be at the centre of administration for the 'Greater Harlow' area</i> • <i>Growth will be sustainable, planned and integrated with the existing town</i> • <i>Growth will continue to be underpinned by Gibberd's principles</i> • <i>Growth will be matched by social and physical infrastructure at pace with new development</i> • <i>Growth will continue to be managed by good governance and planning</i> • <i>Harlow will be a beacon for sustainable development and beautiful design</i> • <i>New buildings in Harlow will be recognised for being exemplary in terms of mitigating against and adapting to climate change, while existing buildings will have been retrofitted to ensure they are also playing their part</i> • <i>Harlow will have an enviable sustainable transport network which will have brought about significant modal shift so that residents will be able to move around the town sustainably, by walking, cycling and by exemplar public transport systems</i> • <i>Measures will be developed and implemented to address climate change</i> • <i>New business will be wanting to locate in Harlow, taking advantage of its location and facilities</i> • <i>Harlow will be a world class digital area with ultra-fast broadband linking seamlessly with residents, transport, business</i> • <i>The Green Wedge and Green Finger network, as well as biodiversity assets, will have been retained and maintained to ensure Harlow's continued status as a 'green' town</i> 	
Growth	<p>In the short to medium term Harlow will continue to grow reflecting the growth set out in the Harlow Local Development Plan with over 9,200 new homes planned to meet the town's identified need until 2033, together with land for businesses to grow, supported by a range of infrastructure. But we need to look beyond that date and determine the nature and shape of future growth to 2047 and how it should be</p>	

	<p>delivered.</p> <p>Growth is planned for south and west of Harlow, which is in the adjoining Epping district and largely beyond our control – we will seek to secure the right infrastructure (including social) solutions for these developments as the development moves forward, so the impact upon our town is minimised, and actively oppose development if it does not meet our criteria.</p> <p>New communities will be integrated with the existing town through sustainable connections, and where possible bring positives benefits to Harlow residents through access to community facilities and other infrastructure</p> <p>To ensure the effective and meaningful integration of these developments with Harlow, the Council will lobby for boundaries to be amended to encompass all these developments within the district to provide logical governance.</p>	
Placeshaping/placemaking	<p>As the growth of Harlow continues, significant opportunities arise to ensure something fantastic is created to provide a lasting legacy, that the town is somewhere where people want to live, work in and spend their leisure time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Garden City principles, and use of Harlow’s new Design Guide, in new developments in the HGGT will contribute greatly to ensuring that new residential and commercial buildings in Harlow are beautiful, energy-efficient, safe and appealing to residents and visitors • New buildings in the town centre will include innovate design techniques, such as green walls, roof-top gardens, use of buildings for renewable energy production (e.g. small wind turbines) and surrounding streets which work with, rather than against, the new buildings • New development will be adaptable so that it can change its use in the future • Surveillance and safety will be a key priority, so residents and visitors feel safe to be in the area, even at night and during other relatively quiet periods • The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of residents having easy access to open spaces, so provision of open space in new developments will be a key element 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sustainable Transport Corridors, as well as enhancements to the existing footpaths, cyclepaths and bridleways, will deliver a modal shift in transport use • Sir Frederick Gibberd’s original principles for the former New Town will be retained, so the Green Wedges, Green Fingers and other open spaces will be maintained, plus facilities will be within walking distance for residents. 	
Housing strategy	<p>We want to be able to provide a wide range of housing to meet the needs of our residents, including market housing and a range of affordable options</p> <p>Whilst current policy seeks 30% affordable housing, with a mix of tenures, the Council should consider social housing and First Homes with the Council as a developer and facilitator.</p> <p>An overarching housing strategy will be developed to consider this, setting out specific aspirations and then how they will be delivered over the period</p>	
Model shift/climate change	<p>Climate change is a huge issue. We need to do all we can to minimise our carbon footprint. Harlow Council intends being an exemplar in tackling climate change and commits to achieving Net Zero carbon emissions in advance of Government targets and potential seeking to achieve negative carbon status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability in development: new buildings will, in accordance with the forthcoming revised Harlow Design Guide SPD, be able to mitigate against and adapt to the effects of climate change. This can be achieved in a number of innovative ways, including basic site design which ensures habitable rooms are south-facing (where possible) with deciduous trees which let in sunlight during the winter but provide shading in the summer. Buildings themselves can be designed in various ways to ensure they benefit as much as possible from passive heating, cooling and ventilation, which in turn reduces the carbon footprints and energy costs of buildings when they are in use. • Sustainability in transport: Car use will remain, albeit it at a lower level and using cars which are predominantly electric or powered by hydrogen fuel. Policies and proposals will be in place to encourage people to change to electric and/or hybrid, and to get them out of cars onto bicycles and on foot, making use of the excellent footpath, cyclepath and bridleway 	

	<p>network already in place in Harlow, much of which is located in the town's Green Wedges and Green Fingers. Programmes are being developed to encourage use of eBikes and eScooters, as well as enhancements to the cycle network, can also be used to assist with this. The Council is committing to delivering exemplar standards in its renewal of the pedestrian and cycling networks across the town.</p> <p>HGGT is currently devising a Transport Strategy for the garden town. We will take it one step further and outline how we are going to deliver modal shift and address climate change but still enable residents to use their cars when they need to.</p>	
Transport infrastructure	<p>Sustainable Transport Corridors will be integral to the aim to secure modal shift and these will be in place when the new homes are built.</p> <p>There is a necessity for a clean, modern, reliable, frequent and affordable transport system, perhaps using electric or hydrogen-fuelled buses, for the benefit of new and existing residents and visitors for both leisure and work/commuting purposes.</p> <p>As with above, we will work with HGGT and ECC to extend the transport network and facilitate how the improvements are going to be delivered and when.</p>	
Transport connections	<p>Harlow needs better external connections as it grows. Looking forward, and in addition to the measures that are currently being developed, other initiatives will be considered including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A possible extension of the Central Line to Harlow • Lobbying to extend London Transport zones to Harlow • Examining connectivity to CrossRail 2 • Promoting Four-tracking of the mainline to Stansted • Working collaboratively with Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils in the development of HERT (Herts and Essex Rapid Transit system) • Securing Public Transport links to Epping Underground station upgraded as part of the STC <p>We will outline our specific aspirations in terms of external transport links and then lobby to be included and for investment to make them happen.</p>	
Town Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key part of our growing town – need to have a vibrant and modern heart which can compete successfully with other retail centres in the area, such as surrounding towns and large shopping centres. We have ambitious plans for regeneration and reinvigorating our town centre 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential growth will bring vibrancy, increased spending, increased investment, higher levels of activity and a new night-time economy • A Master Plan for the town centre is currently being worked on to define what we want, which will lead to the Town Centre Action Plan. Height will be a key consideration with the anticipation that the regeneration will include new tall buildings. Housing type/tenure to be considered. • The emerging strategy is a series of ‘quarters’ and ‘corridors’, for example a Cultural Quarter around the Playhouse and new developments there, a retail corridor running north from the Water Gardens to Sainsbury’s and an entertainment and hospitality quarter around the market Square going west. These will be detailed in future policy documents, including the masterplan. 	
Stewardship	<p>You cannot have an urban area of the proposed size which is run by three district and two county councils. It is not practical. There will have to be some rationalisation to ensure a unified and consistent approach to governance.</p> <p>We will aim to lobby for a boundary change to encompass HGGT</p>	
Leisure / open spaces	<p>Harlow was built with a network of open spaces which has evolved into the Green Wedges and Green Fingers which the town greatly benefits from today. The expansion of the town will continue to be along the same lines as designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd. This means the existing GW/GF network will be enhanced and maintained, with encouraged greater use of the footpaths, cycleways and bridleways which run through the network. Biodiversity assets, many of which are Local Wildlife Sites, will continue to be afforded protection, and new ones will be designated where appropriate.</p> <p>The Council will review existing leisure facilities, including sports pitches and playing fields, to ensure that they meet the requirements of the town and its increased population.</p> <p>Aside from open space based leisure, the arts in Harlow will become a key attractor and the town will capitalise upon its Sculpture Town status through increased national recognition for our cultural assets. As part of the work on a town centre masterplan and other policy documents, the provision of a new theatre that can attract large</p>	

	touring west end shows or concerts will be explored.	
Health & Wellbeing	Health and wellbeing of residents is paramount, highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, and it will be built into all plans for development going forward. With the UK Health Security Agency (formerly Public Health England) coming to Harlow and a brand new hospital being developed, we have an opportunity to further embed health and wellbeing into our town's developments and services.	
Library strategy	With a growing town we need to ensure all residents can access library services, while considering what services libraries provide and what their future role is in the community. We need to develop a long term strategy with ECC so that we can meet the town's needs. Upgrade of the existing town centre library is about to start and will run in parallel to conversations to the longer term needs.	
Harlow & Gilston Garden Town	After many years of planning, the next phase of the HGGT will be its delivery. HDC will take a lead role, given its location at the heart of the HGGT, and will continue to be key in the moulding of our town going forward. HGGT board will become smaller and more focused on delivery and strategic co-ordination. and the development of a legacy trust to take care of stewardship. Aim is to have the whole town run by as simple system as possible – not multiple trusts, community groups, councils, etc	
Harlow Growth Board	This has achieved a good job of partnership working in the town, mainly around bids for Government money such as the Towns and Levelling Up funds.	
Procurement	Harlow Council will become an exemplar of public procurement building in social value wherever possible. This will include local employment and skills, local supply chains and local investment. Use of anchor organisations to roll-out this example to private sector.	
Promoting Harlow	Something pretty spectacular is happening in our town. Where else have five district and county authorities, plus numerous organisations and developers, got together and co-operated to develop a massively ambitious garden town? What is being done is ground breaking. We are the leading modern garden town and many are watching what we are doing to use as a template for when they bring forward their garden towns. We need to be shouting about this across the country, putting Harlow on the map.	

	This will have the added benefit of hopefully attracting further investment into the town, both commercial and retail, with obvious far-reaching positive effects.	
Waste and Recycling	The new communities around Harlow are not going to travel long distances to go to a tip, they are going to come to Harlow. The current recycling centre does not have the capacity and is not in the right place – we will look for an alternative site in partnership with ECC	