

## HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN

**Report to:** Harlow Growth Board

**Title:** HGGT Update

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021

### I. Introduction

The HGGT project is now transitioning from a policy and plan making ‘duty to cooperate’ partnership to the delivery phase of the HGGT initiative. This paper provides an update briefing of the key HGGT work priorities for 2021/22.

### 2. HGGT – Next Steps for the Partnership - Governance Review

During 2020/21, a series of Governance review reports were presented to the HGGT partnership board and the Garden Town Council Leaders. discussions are now underway with the Lead Members and Chief Officers of the five partner Councils to address the current challenges and delivery issues facing the partnership.

Challenges include the ability to deliver cross boundary project delivery activities, address the crucial need for a set of formalised governance, audit and accountable body arrangements – these are currently not in place; establishing a back to back agreement between all five partner Councils to provide the formal framework within which the strategic and accountable political leadership can be enabled. Provide the formal arrangements that can manage the exposure to both programme and project risk and deliver the appropriate formal reporting line to third parties as the initiative transitions into the delivery phase.

The key objective is to ensure that the Councils can deliver their adopted HGGT Vision that is now embedded into each Councils respective Local Plans, alongside the commitments made to Government to deliver the quantum of new homes (some 23000) through a programme of accelerated housing growth which includes cross boundary supporting and enabling infrastructure.

To maintain Harlow’s position as a destination for both Government led and private sector investment the next iteration of the five Council partnership needs to be developed and formalised at pace.

Meetings with the 3 District Council Leaders and Chief Executives have taken place and a Governance Task & Finish Group established to provide recommendations to the HGGT partnership board scheduled for October 2021.

The five Councils are currently working on the establishment of a formalised ‘Joint Committee’ arrangement to which the initiative can be led from and report to.

### 3. Harlow Town Centre

A thriving Harlow Town Centre delivering retail, leisure, culture & creative industries, hospitality, small business spaces, homes and public services is key to the success of the whole Garden Town ‘good growth’ concept.

The five Council partnership recognise that the four new garden communities alongside the current residents of Harlow will look to a thriving and prospering Harlow town centre. This is a delivery priority and brings with it a great opportunity as well as a regeneration challenge.

The HGGT team is keen to continue to collaboratively work alongside Harlow colleagues and the Growth Board to support the town centre plans coming forward and contribute to the delivery teams programme management work.

Post-covid planning allows for the opportunity to re-think and review how many work and live in their homes and communities. The opportunity for small business space creating conditions for growth is vital as is revitalising



Harlow's hatches and the town centre with a thoughtful and planned mix of residential, retail, cultural and commercial uses.

## 4. HGGT Delivery Programme

The project delivery programme is currently being fundamentally reviewed with a report to October HGGT Board expected.

There are three key programme priorities for the Partnership at the current time, these are:

**a) Rolling Infrastructure Fund (RIF)** – the operation and governance of the £172m RIF needs to be agreed over the next few months. This is potentially a significant resource for the Partners all with a vested interested in its future allocation. This is intrinsically linked to the governance work and the formalisation of the Partnership as set out in section 2.

### b) Gilston Villages I – 6 Planning Application

Planning application proposals for the 10,000 home garden community development at Gilston is currently going through due Planning process led by both Harlow and East Herts Local Planning Authorities. Planning Committee meetings to determine the applications are likely to be in the early part of 2022.

The Councils and applicants continue to work together to secure a development related funding package through a s106 Agreement, that will deliver a full range of supporting infrastructure and other service provision including transport connectivity enhancements, education provision and significant affordable housing delivery.

**c) Housing Trajectories** – the Harlow 'share' of housing delivery expected by HMG and set out in the MHCLG capacity funding bid as what we are expected to achieve, is set out in the table below.

Achieving these figures is critical in terms of reputation, confidence in awarding more resource to Harlow and the five Council partnership. The Growth Board should anticipate increased scrutiny from HMG of this delivery.

Garden Town neighbourhood	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
East Harlow – (EFDC)	0	0	0	0
East Harlow – (HDC)	0	0	0	100
Latton Priory (EFDC)	0	0	0	50
Water Lane (EFDC)	0	0	0	100
Gilston (EHDC)	0	0	200	250
Harlow regen (HDC)	407	603	767	621
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>967</b>	<b>1,121</b>

## 5. Programme delivery revenue support funding



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The primary source of external delivery revenue funding for the HGGT initiative has, to date been Garden Town Capacity Funding. This funding is made available by central Government and allocations are managed by Homes England.

The five partner Councils submitted an application delivery revenue support funding in September 2020. The funding award announcement was made in June 2021 confirming an allocation of £475,000.

