

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 4 NOVEMBER 2021

TITLE: HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN:
TRANSPORT STRATEGY

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR MICHAEL HARDWARE,
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This is a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I012711
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect all Wards.

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** Cabinet consider the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy, October 2021 (as set out in Appendix A to the report), together with the accompanying appendices including the high level programme (as set out in Appendix B to the report), consultation report (as set out in Appendix C to the report) and equality impact assessment (as set out in Appendix D to the report).
- B** Cabinet approves the Transport Strategy as a material consideration in the planning process for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purpose for all sites within the Garden Town area, including Harlow District in its entirety.
- C** Cabinet delegate to the Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth and the Director of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town to make any minor text or design amendments to the Transport Strategy prior to publication should there be necessity for clarification or changes proposed by the respective decision makers of East Herts, Harlow and Epping Forest Districts and Essex and Hertfordshire Counties in order to ensure a consistent document.
- D** Cabinet endorses the future transport network plan (on pages 34-35 of the Transport Strategy) in so far that it identifies, illustratively, the proposed Sustainable Transport Corridors extending from the Town Centre to the north,

east, south and west and confirm support in principle for the delivery of new infrastructure that supports safe and attractive travel by walking, cycling and public transport that will benefit existing neighbourhoods of Harlow and sustainably integrate any proposed new allocations with the town.

- E** Cabinet acknowledge that the ambition, mode share objective and principles in the Transport Strategy should help shape existing and future work programmes of the Highway Authorities across the Garden Town, and can provide supporting justification for funding submissions and spending commitments in relation to transport. Content will also be relevant to development, regeneration and other initiatives undertaken by Harlow Council.
- F** Although recognising that endorsing the Transport Strategy is not a legally binding act, Cabinet agrees that it will not introduce a congestion charging scheme for Harlow and will continue to work to improve residential parking amenity for existing Harlow residents.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** To ensure that the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy is afforded suitable planning weight by approving it as a material consideration in the planning process. This will ensure that development proposals across the Garden Town contribute to the Council's and its Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Authority Partner's sustainable mobility ambitions, and that clear and consistent parameters are established for future pre-application advice, preparation of masterplans, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes across the Garden Town area.
- B** To establish a common approach to supporting sustainable travel across the Garden Town area that will inform the work of the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Authorities.

BACKGROUND

1. Harlow Council, working with East Herts and Epping Forest District Councils and Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils (the 'HGGT Authority partners') has committed to the principle of growth in and around Harlow through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town ('HGGT') in consideration of the Garden City Principles.
2. The HGGT Authority partners have set out a Vision for this growth (the 'Vision'):
 - a) "The pioneering New Town of Gibberd and Kao will grow into a Garden Town of enterprise, health and sculpture at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor. Harlow and Gilston will be a joyful place to live with sociable streets and green spaces; high quality homes connected to fibre optic broadband; local centres accessible by walking and cycling; and innovative, affordable public transport. It will set the agenda for

sustainable living. It will be adaptable, healthy, sustainable and innovative.”

3. The HGGT Transport Strategy (the ‘Transport Strategy’) has been prepared on behalf of the HGGT Authority partners to further articulate the ambitions for sustainable movement of, and to help deliver, the HGGT Vision against the backdrop of the challenges of future travel demand linked to planned growth. The Local Plans of East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils include shared commitments to secure the delivery of sustainable growth through cooperative cross-boundary working. The growth strategies of these Local Plans emphasise the need for an integrated Garden Town that promotes the use of active and sustainable travel.
4. The Transport Strategy is intended to be embedded as a material planning consideration into the masterplanning and planning processes for the new Garden Town communities, neighbourhoods and other developments within Harlow through ongoing work with the relevant partner Councils, site developers and planning applicants to ensure that the ambitious sustainable mode share objective, as set out, is being achieved.
5. The ambition, Mode Share Objective and Principles in the Transport Strategy should help shape existing and future work programmes of the Highway Authorities across the Garden Town, and can provide supporting justification for funding submissions and spending commitments in relation to transport. Content will also be relevant to development, regeneration and other initiatives undertaken by Harlow Council.
6. The Transport Strategy will provide a base of evidence and best practice which will continue to evolve and be taken into consideration when developing transport schemes. The Transport Strategy will be reviewed every three years to ensure evidence and measures are still relevant.
7. The Transport Strategy was subject to public consultation in early 2020, including exhibitions, Member briefings and workshops with key stakeholders, just before the Covid-19 lockdown and results were presented to the HGGT Board in June 2020. Further consultation was requested to secure input from unrepresented groups – specifically young people, businesses and local organisations – and to increase the overall consultation response. A second round of consultation was therefore conducted over four weeks in late 2020 focussing on young people, businesses, charities and internal Officers through a series of workshops.
8. In total there were 154 responses to the survey, over 150 workshop attendees and over 900 comments were received from all engagement undertaken. This was enhanced through a more effective use of social media which was significantly developed following the first round. A HGGT Member Briefing was also held on 20 September 2021. Further detail on the consultation process and results can be found in Appendix C to the report.

9. Key updates and changes to the Transport Strategy to respond to comments received from this engagement include:
 - a) The updated Transport Strategy has now been simplified to incorporate a single Mode Share Objective with three principles which incorporate the former Objectives 2 (The user hierarchy) and 3 (A culture of active and sustainable travel) from the first draft Strategy. In addition, there is a further principle around accessibility and inclusion which was absent from the earlier draft versions. The number of Actions has been condensed from 8 to 5 to avoid repetition and consolidate information.
 - b) Significant design changes have been made to the formatting to improve engagement, interactivity and accessibility for use online.
 - c) Greater clarity has been provided on the future role of Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) in the Garden Town after requests from Members, in recognition that the market share of ZEVs is likely to increase substantially given the ban on sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.
10. Since the publication of the draft Transport Strategy the Government has released three important national transport strategy documents:
 - a) Gear Change – A bold policy for walking and cycling – July 2020
 - b) Bus Back Better – National Bus Strategy for England – March 2021
 - c) Decarbonising Transport – A better greener Britain – July 2021
11. The Transport Strategy aligns with these national documents setting an ambitious mode share target and development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to invest in the active travel network; the development of the Sustainable Transport Corridors to enhance public transport operation and supporting development of Enhanced Bus Partnerships in response to 'Bus Back Better'; and developing strategies to introduce electric vehicle charging.
12. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been undertaken and is set out in Appendix D to the report. As indicated the consultation highlighted the need to include a principle on accessibility and inclusion. The design and format of the Strategy has been reviewed against Shawtrust accreditation to ensure legibility and accessibility for online viewing.
13. The above changes and others were taken into consideration in the final Transport Strategy now being presented and as detailed in the EQIA.
14. The Transport Strategy was approved by the HGGT Board on 12 October 2021, for submission to the East Herts District Council Executive; the Epping Forest District Council Cabinet; the Harlow District Council Cabinet and the relevant portfolio holders of Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils to be endorsed.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

15. The purpose of this report is to enable consideration of the final version of the Transport Strategy and to formally acknowledge its purpose, content and confirm its approval as a material planning consideration. The finalised document is attached as Appendix A to the report.
16. With the amendments set out above following the consultation on the Transport Strategy it is now considered that a robust final document has been produced and one which can be approved.
17. Once approved, the Transport Strategy will become a material planning consideration in connection with the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes for sites within the Harlow and Gilston, including Harlow District in its entirety.
18. Following agreement to approve as a material consideration, Harlow as a Local Planning Authority, would expect to see the Transport Strategy referenced in future planning applications and officer reports that will come before the Development Management Committee.
19. The Transport Strategy establishes a clear Mode Share Objective and set of Principles which aligns with the growth strategies within the respective Local Plans. It was developed to deliver the HGGT Vision in respect of the key principles for Healthy Growth through a focus on Sustainable Movement to support the scale of ambitious housing and economic growth set out in the Local Plans. The Strategy sets out how this planned growth can be achieved through modal shift towards sustainable and active travel and details a number of measures to achieve this modal shift and the ambitious targets proposed for sustainable travel.
20. Investment in travel choice for residents, workers and visitors, to achieve the Mode Share Objective, reduces the impact on the existing public highway from all new developments and from the existing town, preserving capacity in the network for those that require it. This allows the new developments to be delivered without negatively impacting on the ability of the public highway to operate safely and acceptably, whilst also contributing positively to health, wellbeing and environmental quality across the Garden Town.
21. The Transport Strategy therefore does not advocate increasing highway capacity as the default 'predict and provide' response, taking instead a 'vision and validate' response – developing schemes that align with the HGGT Vision rather than continued provision of extra road capacity. Through this approach the Transport Strategy promotes redesigning the transport network and supporting residents and businesses to bring about a modal shift towards active, sustainable and inclusive modes of travel.
22. The Transport Strategy proposes one overarching Mode Share Objective, three Principles and is supported by five key actions. These are set out below:

a) The Objective:

- i) Mode Share Objective – 50% of all trips starting and/or ending in the existing settlement area of Harlow Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes and 60% of all trips starting and/or ending in the new Garden Communities of Harlow & Gilston Garden Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes.

b) The Principles:

- i) Principle 1 – User hierarchy: Decisions should be shaped by following the user hierarchy which gives priority to reducing unnecessary travel, walking, cycling and public transport.
- ii) Principle 2 – A culture of active and sustainable travel: The Garden Town should be an environment where active and sustainable travel is valued, prioritised, and supported to ensure that the associated social, environmental, wellbeing and economic benefits are available to everyone.
- iii) Principle 3 – Accessibility and Inclusion: Infrastructure should be designed for everyone and with consideration of those with the greatest need first. Everyone should have the opportunity to choose more sustainable and active modes of travel.

c) The Actions:

- i) Action 1: Enabling Choice ...means creating connected communities that offer local facilities and travel options for everyday activities.
- ii) Action 2: Streets for People ...means making our streets and neighbourhoods places that are safe, sociable and enjoyable – for everyone – by creating attractive places that people want to walk and cycle in.
- iii) Action3: Quality Public Transport ...means connecting people to the places they want to go, providing independence and mobility to those who need it most, while reducing air pollution and congestion. The development and delivery of the Sustainable Transport Corridor network will facilitate this.
- iv) Action 4: A Network that Works ...means providing reliable, high-quality alternatives to private vehicles whilst ensuring the network effectively supports those that depend upon it for essential journeys and services.
- v) Action 5: Maximising Opportunities ...means exploring and introducing new and innovative transport technologies as they develop.

23. The Strategy acknowledges that there will be continued use of private motor vehicle (i.e. 50 per cent for the existing town and 40 per cent for new Garden Communities, based on the Mode Share Objective) but reliance on high levels of private car use is not sustainable in the context of the levels of growth set out in the Local Plans. Continuing to do so will result in increased congestion, which is likely to impede planned growth and will have negative impacts on quality of life in the Garden Town, especially to deliver quality places to live and work.
24. Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) are a powerful tool in the transition to a sustainable transport network and there is a clear need for additional infrastructure to support uptake. ZEVs will be particularly important to ensure that the 50 per cent (existing town) and 40 per cent (new Garden Communities) of journeys in the Garden Town which do not utilise active and sustainable modes have a reduced impact on the environment and society. However, ZEVs are not considered sustainable within the HGGT active and sustainable transport modes definition. There are several reasons for this, although within the context of the Garden Town there are two primary concerns:
 - a) It is essential that Developers deliver on the HGGT Principles for healthy growth and provide the financial support for active and sustainable transport services and infrastructure. Including ZEVs in the Mode Share Objective would greatly increase the risk that the financial support needed for meaningful modal shift is not provided due to overreliance on ZEVs.
 - b) Including ZEVs as a sustainable transport mode will place a significant additional burden on highway capacity that does not align with the growth agenda supported by the HGGT Partner Councils. ZEVs do not address the issues of congestion, space and severance that can only be achieved through modal shift.
25. For the positive reasons set out above, supporting the transition from petrol and diesel private motor vehicles to ZEVs will remain an important ambition.
26. To meet the Mode Shift ambition and support the planned growth, the Strategy includes the development of a network of sustainable transport corridors (STCs) (a diagram illustrating these is included on pages 34-35 of the Transport Strategy) and a rapid bus transport system (a high-quality, frequent and fast bus service) which will help new and existing residents travel quickly and sustainably in and around the Garden Town. The STC will also improve the facilities for those walking and cycling.
27. Design work continues on the network with the North to Centre, Harlow Town Railway Station to Town Centre, section being the most advanced and anticipated to be engaged on in the near future.
28. An essential part of the STCs is the delivery and management of the public transport services and potentially other initiatives for the benefit of the customer. The Government's "Bus Back Better" strategy proposed a number of options for Local Highways Authorities to adopt to improve public transport. Both Essex and

Hertfordshire County Councils have decided to introduce Enhanced Bus Partnerships, Hertfordshire building upon its existing quality partnership. Through an Enhanced Partnership, services can be controlled and regulated including quality, level of service, ticketing and branding for a future HGGT service. Further work is required on the scope and extent of the enhanced partnerships covering the HGGT area and consultation will be required with users and operators at the relevant time.

29. Achieving the Mode Share Objective will be an incremental process but one that will require an extensive range of measures from the outset in the new Garden Communities and as soon as possible within the existing town. The Transport Programme, as set out in Appendix B to the report, presents a high level programme showing the mix of projects anticipated including the Sustainable Transport Corridor network and rolling programmes of behaviour change incentives.
30. Funding will be required to develop schemes and initiatives through to delivery and will be sought from a variety of sources such as developer contributions and Government grants. The HGGT Authority partners have already been successful in securing Housing Investment Grant (HIG) funding which will forward fund the Stort Valley Crossings and the North to Centre STC; and the Harlow Towns Fund which will transform the Town Centre Bus Station with submissions also recently made for Levelling Up and Active Travel Funding pending.
31. Securing the HIG funding enables the early delivery of essential transport infrastructure and sustainable transport corridors which have the potential to unlock planned growth in the Garden Town. The mechanisms associated with the HIG and Section 106 obligations associated with strategic schemes coming forward in the Garden Town area will enable the creation of the Rolling Infrastructure Fund (RIF). The initial RIF as estimated could amount to circa £129m through the recovery of the HIG funding and could grow further through developer contributions towards the STCs. In this way, the HGGT Authority partners have a vested interest in effective management of developer contributions comprised in the RIF and collective decision-making protocols and governance will be required to determine prioritisation of funding into the future HGGT transport infrastructure, projects, initiatives or measures as envisaged by this Transport Strategy.
32. There are a number of next steps for the HGGT Transport Strategy following endorsement by the District Cabinets/Executives and County Councils and publication of the Strategy (early 2022), these will be carried out by the HGGT Authority Partners and include:
 - a) Ensure the Strategy is hosted on the HGGT and Council websites as a key material planning consideration in assessing planning applications;
 - b) Ensure the Strategy guides the masterplanning decisions for, or impacting upon, the HGGT;

- c) Secure Public Sector funding for infrastructure and measures identified in the programme;
- d) Maximise developer funding/contributions, without which the Transport Strategy cannot be delivered;
- e) Identification of resources to develop a monitoring and evaluation strategy, building on the Transport Strategy's target;
- f) Develop a detailed delivery plan to produce a funded and prioritised programme as part of the HGGT annual business planning for delivery of actions, including:
 - i) Consideration of details such as timescales, funding sources, delivery options, locations and priorities;
 - ii) Alignment of principles, particularly the transport hierarchy, and speed of achieving the 50 and 60 per cent modal share target.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

Not to approve the HGGT Transport Strategy or endorse the HGGT Transport Strategy as a material consideration in the planning process, would mean that there would be no specific guidance to support the delivery of development proposals and achieve the objectives set out in the HGGT Vision.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

As contained in the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Community Wellbeing

As contained in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance (Includes HR)

The strategy has been considered in line with the Council's equalities duty and will help shape procurement processes undertaken in support of regeneration projects.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

Appendices

Appendix A – HGGT Transport Strategy, Summer 2021

Appendix B – HGGT Transport Programme

Appendix C – Transport Strategy Consultation Report, February 2021
Appendix D - Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[HDC Approval of the HGGT Vision and Design Guide \(6 December 2018\)](#)

[Harlow Local Development Plan \(December 2020\)](#)

[Gear Change, A bold policy for walking and cycling \(July 2020\)](#)

[Bus Back Better, National Bus Strategy for England \(March 2021\)](#)

[Decarbonising Transport, A better greener Britain \(July 2021\)](#)

The Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Garden City Principles

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/garden-city-principles>

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

EQIA – Equality Impact Assessment

HDC – Harlow District Council

HGGT – Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

HIG – Housing Investment Grant

STC – Sustainable Transport Corridors

RIF – Rolling Infrastructure Fund

ZEV – Zero Emission Vehicles