

REPORT TO: CABINET POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

DATE: 10 MARCH 2022

TITLE: HARLOW TOWN PLAN - CONSULTATION RESULTS

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RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The results of the Town Plan consultation are noted and any further comments provided to enable a revised version of the document to be produced.

BACKGROUND

1. Public consultation was undertaken on the Town Plan between Monday 15 November 2021 and Monday 31 January 2022.
2. Copies of the plan were made available online and in the Civic Centre, Latton Bush Centre and Harlow libraries. A survey was available online which residents could complete, or they could complete a hard copy which was available in the Harlow Times. Comments were also accepted via email or post.
3. A total of 66 residents and 11 organisations responded to the consultation. The 11 organisations included the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board, Hertfordshire County Council, Epping Forest District Council, Eastwick/Gilston/Hunsdon Parish Council, the Harlow Civic Society, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Systems and Designing Out Crime (Essex Police), as well as a number of planning agents acting on behalf of developers.

4. All organisations offered support for the Town Plan, in particular the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board, while offering ideas and suggestions for improvement. Residents also offered high levels of support, as evidenced by the responses to the “yes/no” questions.
5. Some respondents, however, raised concerns that while the plan’s vision is informative, it is not sufficiently strategic and is too narrow, with insufficient explanation of what Greater Harlow is. Suggestions were also made to include comparative assessments of where we are now, as well as combining points in the vision and committing to full engagement with residents.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

6. Table 1 provides a list of the questions and, for the “yes/no” questions, the percentage of those responding with “yes” or “no”. Each of the “yes/no” questions had 54 to 58 answers, except Questions 13 and 17 which had 47 and 51 respectively.

Table 1

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q1 - Do you agree with the vision for Harlow @100?	55	45
Q2 - Do you agree that the vision should look to 2047 for Harlow?	60	40
Q3 - Should the vision set out any other ambitions or priorities for Harlow to 2047?	72	28
Q4 - What do you think the vision for the future of Harlow should be?*	N/A	N/A
Q5 - Do you think future growth in Harlow should come forward through a mix of greenfield and brownfield sites, redevelopment of existing sites and both small and larger sites?	71	29
Q6 - Do you think future growth in Harlow should come forward through a range of dwelling types including opportunities for more high rise buildings/flats close to public transport and the town centre?	72	28
Q7 – What design principles should help shape Harlow as a place?*	N/A	N/A
Q8 - Should existing neighbourhoods and employment areas mirror the same quality, design and energy efficiency as new developments?	85	15

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q9 – Do you agree that Sir Frederick Gibberd’s principles should remain an essential element of Harlow New Town?	91	9
Q10 – What types of housing do you think it is important to provide in Harlow?*	N/A	N/A
Q11 – Do you support Harlow Council in achieving Net Zero carbon emissions by 2040, in advance of Government targets?	91	9
Q12 – Do you support measures that help to achieve sustainability in development and transport?	89	11
Q13 – Do you agree with the transport initiatives set out in this section of the Town Plan?	72	28
Q14 – Do you agree that the town centre should be developed into a series of areas, each with their own distinct use such as entertainment, eating, drinking and shopping?	76	24
Q15 – How do you think that open spaces, leisure facilities and other community assets in Harlow could be managed in the future?*	N/A	N/A
Q16 – Do you agree that Green Wedges and Green Fingers should be included in new developments around the town?	84	16
Q17 – Are there any sporting or leisure facilities that are lacking or require improvement in Harlow?	75	25
Q18 – Do you agree that the council should develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy?	93	7
Q19 – What improvements would you like to see made to your local neighbourhood centre, hatches or the street you live in?*	N/A	N/A
Q20 – Do you agree that there needs to be a longer term strategy for library provision in Harlow?	88	12
Q21 - Do you have any suggestions for improvements to the way the council’s buys goods and services (procurement)?*	N/A	N/A
Q22 – How can local businesses and organisations be better considered in the council’s procurement process?*	N/A	N/A
Q23 - Please provide any comments on waste and recycling services and facilities below*	N/A	N/A
Q24 – How can the council and residents put Harlow ‘on the map’ and really promote the town, the facilities and services we have and the opportunities it provides?*	N/A	N/A

Question	Yes (%)	No (%)
Q25 – What further information would you like to know about Harlow?*	N/A	N/A

* *open-ended question*

DETAILED ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

7. This section provides summaries of responses to the open-ended questions. Various topics were raised across the answers to questions, so the summaries are organised by topic, with references to the questions the responses were answered under. Council responses, where necessary, are ***bold and italicised***.

Safety (Qs 3a, 4 & 7)

8. Many respondents raised the need to commit to increasing and improving policing, whilst increasing the overall safety of the town by reducing anti-social behaviour. A point was also raised regarding ensuring young people are better educated about crime.
9. Respondents suggested that perception of safety is considered, specifically Secured by Design and associated accreditation, Safe System / Vision Zero approach to road layout and design, and Health Impact Assessments reflecting the health and wellbeing of the community.
10. Other issues relating to preventing crime through design which were suggested relate to access and movement, structure, surveillance, ownership, physical protection and management & maintenance.

Development (Qs 3a, 4, 6a & 7)

11. There were mixed views regarding the expansion of Harlow, with some believing there should be a commitment to the town becoming a bigger authority or even merging with others, while some felt expansion should be avoided to stop it becoming a mini city.
12. Among the other points raised for the vision of future development were the importance of the use of brownfield land, adherence to the original Gibberd principles and the importance of the Garden Town being 'ultra green'. A point was also raised about the need for strong, energetic leadership to change the direction of Harlow.
13. ***The Harlow Local Development Plan (HLDP) prioritises the use of brownfield land over greenfield land and ensures adherence to the original Gibberd principles where relevant. The Garden Town is focussed on the Garden City principles, which ensure sustainability is at the heart of development and that***

expansion of Harlow will be planned and delivered in a suitable way that respects existing development and delivers new opportunities for new and existing residents.

14. Respondents recognised the opportunity for the use of brownfield land in the town centre for housing, including high-rise. There was also a general recognition of the need for development and expansion to aid regeneration – so long as appropriate infrastructure was in place first – although respondents indicated the creation of a ‘metropolis’ should be avoided.
15. It was also suggested that green spaces should be incorporated into development as a priority, to reflect the original Gibberd principles, and that transport links must be improved, including to Epping railway station. One point was made about the possibility of removing out-of-town retail areas to use them for housing, as well as the removal of older buildings and warehouse employment areas. Other respondents recognised the need for a mix of social and private housing in new developments.
16. The Harlow Civic Society supports the Garden City and concept of facilities within walking distance, but emphasised that it should be explained how principles are to be achieved, and that statements and activities about placemaking and community and social development should be added.
17. A point was also raised about the need for design and adaptation to create inclusive and accessible environments.
18. ***The HLDP protects green spaces and ensure new provision is provided in new developments, as well as ensuring a mix of housing types and tenures and the use of brownfield land for new development wherever possible. The Harlow Design Guide (and Addendum) ensures design and adaptation create inclusive and accessible environments.***
19. Epping Forest DC raised concerns regarding whether a different set of design principles will need to be considered that reflect different approaches to development now reflected in the NPPF and elsewhere, and that clear justification is required if divergence from the HGGT sites and principles is suggested. They also suggested that new buildings must operate at net-zero by 2030.
20. ***Divergence from the HGGT sites and principles is not suggested. New buildings operating at net-zero by 2030 may be considered in a review of the HLDP.***

Education (Qs 3a & 4)

21. Respondents felt the vision should address education as a priority, with a number of suggestions including adding commitments to Lifelong Learning, the recreation of

the Science Education Centre and creation of a grammar school. A point was also made about the vision ensuring children are supported to meet their full potential.

Environment (Qs 3a, 4, 6a & 7)

22. The environment was another key issue for respondents to this question, with suggestions that there should be a great commitment to retaining, protecting, maintaining and enhancing green spaces, biodiversity, ecology, wildlife and the Green Wedges and Green Fingers.
23. Among this, points were also raised for emphasis in the vision regarding reducing car usage, reducing pollution, addressing the climate crisis, increasing access to green spaces, creating more green spaces for children, allocating land for food growth and enhancing and maintaining heritage assets including the town's sculptures. Concerns were also raised about the time it takes to see a return on increased energy efficiency and the cost of retrofitting existing buildings.
24. Respondents highlighted the importance of protection and enhancement of green spaces and habitats, and the use of the Environment Act's net-gain in biodiversity to aid this. Concerns were raised about infill development and the wider Garden Town removing green spaces.
25. ***The HLDP policies & supporting guidance and Council strategies & policies ensure the above points are strongly addressed in new and existing developments, to ensure the environment of Harlow is protected and enhanced now and in the future.***
26. Respondents also suggested that the good work on improving the Town Park should continue, as well as planting new trees across the district. The positive impacts of green spaces on mental health were also recognised, as well as the opportunity for natural shading to be provided in green spaces.
27. ***The Council is committed to the further enhancement of green spaces in Harlow through a number of forthcoming projects. The Council is also contributing to work on a joint Green Infrastructure Strategy across the Garden Town area, which will inform Green Infrastructure management in Harlow in the longer term.***
28. Eastwick, Gilston & Hunsdon Parish Councils also suggested that the Stort Valley corridor should be considered as a blue and green corridor of significance, and that a public realm strategy is created to manage the Green Wedges and cycle highways.

Housing (Qs 3a, 4, 6a & 7)

29. Respondents particularly considered that housing should be a key part of the vision, particularly the provision of better quality affordable houses, especially for young adults, as well as the replacement of council housing and the need to provide a complete range of types and tenures.
30. Points were also raised about avoiding the use of high-rise residential, continuing to address HMO issues, and removing housing which had been converted from offices/warehouses.
31. Respondents made a variety of suggestions for housing. As with other responses to the Town Plan, importance was placed on having a variety of tenures for all age groups and families, both private and council housing, with good access to public transport, appropriate density, adherence to Gibberd's principles, provision of gardens and the end of use of office buildings for housing. Points were also made about the importance of development having character to differentiate between old and new developments, with good quality being a priority.
32. Some respondents opposed the use of high-rise flats, due to health and safety grounds in light of the Grenfell Tower disaster, as well as problems with parking and privacy. The Harlow Civic Society stated that the use of limited high-rise in the town centre, less than 20 storeys high, is appropriate.
33. ***Policies in the HLDP ensure as much affordable housing as possible is provided, and that a wide range of types and tenures of housing are provided in new development, preferably with good access to public transport. The Design Guide Addendum provides guidance on private amenity space in new developments. HMO issues are managed by the Council using Environmental Health tools, as well as Planning tools such as Article 4 Directions.***
34. ***The Harlow Design Guide Addendum provides guidance on tall buildings in the town, to ensure they are safe and provide sufficient amenities for residents. The removal of housing which has been converted from offices/warehouses is not possible, as such conversions are allowed under central Government 'permitted development' rules.***
35. The lack of space for housing in the district was recognised and a suggestion was made that neighbouring districts should provide more. It was also suggested that the Council should have more ownership, with increased sheltered housing and CPO powers to renovate derelict housing.
36. ***Discussions with adjoining local authorities, regarding wider housing requirements, will continue under the Duty to Co-operate when the HLDP is reviewed in full.***

37. Respondents raised the importance of designing well-built housing with good-quality materials and a minimum floorspace, with the development having a dedicated neighbourhood centre and an overall classic style of development which won't become outdated. The importance of recognisable landmarks, carbon-neutral construction, provision of electric charging points and high energy efficiency standards were also commented on. It was also recognised that communities could be helped to form by, in part, ensuring easy access to green space.
38. ***The above points are addressed by the HLDP and Design Guide (and Addendum).***

Housing, continued (Q10)

39. Respondents recognised the need for affordable housing, both social and rented, both private and council-owned. Among ideas to aid this, suggested by respondents, were caps on landlord rent, the reduction of private renting, reduction of service charges for flats and the reduction of outside agencies using the housing.
40. Respondents reiterated the need for all types of housing to be provided, including annexes for elderly people, bungalows and family homes, as well as an encouragement of home ownership. Further ideas included the encouragement of downsizing, use of modular homes, allocation of specialist units for victims to have safe accommodation, build-to-rent and shared/co-living opportunities. A developer raised the issue of balancing against viability issues.
41. ***See above for information on how the HLDP ensures a mix of housing is provided, including affordable housing.***
42. Both Eastwick with Gilston & Hunsdon Parish Council and Epping Forest DC stated concerns over the reference to "adjoining areas" regarding delivery of social housing. Epping Forest DC also suggested reviewing proportions (of affordable housing?) to 40% in a review of the Local Plan.
43. The Harlow Civic Society suggested that the term "affordable" be replaced with something which reflects the real economic situations of low-income families.
44. ***Affordable housing issues in planning will be reviewed during the full review of the HLDP.***

Economy (Qs 3a, 4 & 6a)

45. Respondents provided a range of points, including attracting higher-skilled businesses and upskilling current and future residents – and as part of this, helping younger people into employment. It was also suggested that the vision should see the Enterprise Zones being used to their full potential, hatches and neighbourhood

centres being regenerated, business rates being reviewed and green industries being developed with digital technology.

46. Essex County Council raised the issue of employment land and floorspace being in high demand and that allocation of new employment sites should be considered a priority.
47. ***The HLDP provides policies regarding the regeneration of hatches and neighbourhood centres. This is also a key priority for the Council. New employment land has been allocated in the HLDP and this will be reviewed when the HLDP is fully reviewed.***

Town Centre (Qs 3a, 4 & 7)

48. A particular element that respondents raised for the vision of the town centre was the importance of regeneration to provide a number of improvements, including more evening/night-life and cultural venues and the 'greening' of the centre. There were also suggestions made including removing betting shops and takeaways so they can be used for other purposes to improve the existing good range of shops available, along with the reintroduction of the market. It was also suggested that housing in the centre should be avoided.
49. It was suggested by respondents that the town centre is badly designed and prioritises car owners, with ad-hoc development causing a loss of the town centre's heart.
50. ***The Council is committed to the regeneration of the town centre and considers it a priority, to ensure Harlow is a place where people want to visit, live and work. The above issues are being addressed in the forthcoming Town Centre Framework SPD.***

Town Centre, continued (Q14a)

51. Respondents generally endorsed the idea of regenerating the town centre, with the possibility of different quarters for leisure, housing and shopping, along with better integration of the Water Gardens with the rest of the town centre. However, some respondents raised concerns around distinct quarters being 'dead' at certain times of day and possible associated crime issues, meaning police presence would need increasing but, preferably, crime would be 'designed out' during development and increased security and surveillance.
52. Suggestions regarding the quarters included Market Square for entertainment and the market, Water Gardens for shops and food. However, respondents also recognised the current lack of entertainment and cultural opportunities and made suggestions to develop Harlow's cultural heritage, including a new theatre, exhibition centre and concert hall, along with free parking.

53. There was also an awareness in the responses regarding the changing nature of retail, thanks largely to online shopping, and the challenges this brings including higher vacancy rates, the increasing competition between shopping areas, and the future of the town needing to incorporate uses other than retail.
54. Suggestions were made for an improved pedestrian and cyclist experience on the approach to the town centre, particularly from the railway station, as well as improved public realm, greening and landscaping in the town centre.
55. It was also identified in the responses that further healthcare is likely to be needed in the town centre, so areas need to be flexible to react to changes.
56. ***The Council is committed to the regeneration of the town centre and considers it a priority, to ensure Harlow is a place where people want to visit, live and work. The above issues are being addressed in the forthcoming Town Centre Framework SPD.***

Community (Qs 3a & 4)

57. Respondents considered that the community – and in particular a sense of pride in the town – was an important element for the vision, to ensure Harlow is considered the best place to live and run a business.
58. As well as this, suggestions were made to promote education, arts & performance, and commit to a thriving voluntary sector with sufficient social, leisure and cultural activities. It was also suggested that initiatives should be referenced in the vision, such as Help Through Art, as well as ensuring the happiness of residents and ensuring elderly people are well cared for, including outdoor leisure and sports provision for older people.

General Infrastructure (Qs 3a & 4)

59. Infrastructure in the town was raised by many respondents and how this could form part of the vision. There was a general feeling among respondents that infrastructure in the town should be improved and in place before further development takes place, including the creation of new infrastructure ranging from creating a new ring road around the town to creating a new recycling centre.
60. ***The HLDP provides policy requirements relating to infrastructure, and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan provides information on the delivery of infrastructure in relation to new development.***

Transport (Qs 3a & 4)

61. Regarding transport, concerns were raised over the effectiveness of the Sustainable Transport Corridors (STCs), while others recognised that they should have higher

priority in the vision. Linked to this, respondents stated the importance of improving roads and their surface quality, creating park & ride to reduce congestion and parking issues, keeping cars out of the town centre, and providing better bus links with an improved bus station.

62. ***The STCs are considered a priority by the Council, to ensure transport is improved in the town and modal shift is improved in the early stages of new major development as part of the Garden Town.***

Transport, continued (Q13a)

63. A number of general initiatives were suggested, including mapping of walking routes, improving road safety for mobility scooters, refreshing underpasses, legitimising electric scooters and providing safe routes for active travel for primary schools. It was also suggested that more information should be provided on how sustainable transport methods will be achieved and the options available.
64. Regarding cycling, suggestions by respondents included cycle path improvements (including lighting), new paths alongside roads and off roads, more secure cycle parking and a programme to educate people on cycling on the road.
65. There was a mix of suggestions for public transport initiatives. Issues with the cost, frequency and reliability of public transport were raised, as well as the need for improvements to services which run to well-used nodes such as Epping tube station. Suggestions were also made that local public transport should be free for residents and that use should be encouraged in people from an early age.
66. While a suggestion was made for the introduction of trams, one point was made that new systems – including an extension of the Central Line – could damage the environment during their construction. Other respondents also expressed concerns over the feasibility of extending the Central Line.
67. Respondents raised concerns about the discouragement of car use, including how a weekly shop isn't possible without a car. It was also suggested that residential parking be improved, electric charging points be installed, car share initiatives be encouraged and improvements made to roads.
68. ***The HLDP addresses issues including electric car charging points and bicycle parking in developments.***
69. The Harlow Civic Society raised concerns regarding use of phrases like 'world-leading' not being quantified and lack of clarity on how an improved transport system would be funded. They support, however, a focus on improving the cycling network, the STCs (although question the focus on town centre journeys), extension of London Transport travel zones to Harlow, Crossrail 2 connectivity and upgrading links to Epping tube station.

70. The Eastwick with Gilston & Hunsdon Parish Council stated that the station transport interchange is poorly designed and that development must be planned effectively to meet modal shift.

Health (Qs 3a & 4)

71. Regarding health, respondents felt that better facilities for the improved hospital should be a key part of the vision, including enhanced health care provision and access.

Sir Frederick Gibberd's principles (Q9a)

72. There was a general feeling among the responses that Sir Frederick Gibberd's legacy has been successful, with neighbourhood areas remaining key and lessons being learned from his original plans, but that certain elements of his principles should be made more explicit, such as those relating to open spaces.
73. Green spaces were one of Gibberd's main principles in the design of Harlow, and respondents recognise the need to continue this legacy by keeping green spaces around the town and between neighbourhoods.
74. However, respondents also recognised that Gibberd didn't envisage Newhall and Gilston and that his principles shouldn't prevent new ideas and creativity. Additionally, respondents recognised that many areas of Harlow could be improved and brought up to standards.
75. ***As explained previously, the HLDP, in its policies, continues to apply the principles of Gibberd where relevant, particularly in relation to the protection and enhancement of the Green Wedges and Green Fingers (among other issues).***

Sustainability (Q12a)

76. Regarding car usage, respondents made a number of suggestions including no or reduced parking charge for electric cars, free charging for employers, electric points in car parks, discouraging car use and ensuring only one car per household.
77. ***The Essex County Council Car Parking Standards for new developments are currently being updated.***
78. It was suggested for cycling that routes should continue beyond the town centre and be maintained in a good condition to encourage use.
79. Suggestions were made by respondents regarding affordable options for public transport, as well as more efficient buses using hydrogen and electric energy, and the redevelopment and improvement of the bus station.

80. Regarding net-zero, respondents were supportive but suggested discounts for residents due to the high initial costs. Opinions on the different types of alternative power were provided, including wind power being noisy and visually unpleasant, and hydrogen power being the best option.
81. There were also mixed views on whether Harlow should go ahead of the government targets on net-zero. Some respondents stated that net-zero by 2040 is too late (and one respondent even stated the Council should take a greater lead and increase Council tax as a result if necessary), while others stated Harlow shouldn't try to go ahead of the government. It was also suggested that sustainability should be better defined.
82. ***The HLDP will consider the requirement of net-zero buildings in the next full review.***
83. A point was also made that developers should use the 'safe system approach' when designing local roads, to ensure rapid access for emergency vehicles.
84. A developer raised the point that the modal shift target relies on a step-change in travel patterns in the community, and that the overall Town Plan should place greater importance on wide benefits of strategic infrastructure.
85. The Harlow Civic Society raised a particular point about whether low traffic neighbourhoods would feature along with an emphasised focus on safer roads and support measures to achieve sustainability in development and transport.
86. Eastwick with Gilston and Hunsdon Parish Council raised a concern over the lack of links between sustainability and biodiversity, and lack of clarity on how the Eastern Stort Crossing achieves sustainable transport.

Asset Management (Q15)

87. Respondents gave the management of Pets Corner as an example of how management of assets should be undertaken in the future, including ensuring local community groups have a role in management. There were also suggestions that such management should include giving discounts to local residents to encourage greater use.
88. Eastwick with Gilston & Hunsdon Parish Council suggested that there should be a single legacy body to manage all legacy open spaces, so ownership could rest with the community and wouldn't be a commercial outfit. Epping Forest DC also raised the Garden Town-wide approach to stewardship. The Harlow Civic Society also similarly commented. However, the Eastwick with Gilston and Hunsdon Parish Council also stated that they do not share the ambition that Harlow will have a role to play in governance of Gilston Garden Villages or that a single legacy trust under the aegis of the HGGT board will be the right way to manage stewardship.

Sport and Leisure Facilities (Q17a)

89. Respondents provided examples of facilities requiring improvement. These included:

- a. Allotments
- b. Playhouse (increase in size)
- c. Harlow rock school (needs bigger facilities)
- d. Football pitches and tennis courts
- e. Sport accessibility in general
- f. Parks and equipment in them
- g. Facilities for people with disabilities
- h. General litter issues
- i. Increased use of museum

90. Examples of facilities that are lacking included:

- a. Concerts in park and music venues
- b. Ballroom dancing, trampolining, snow sports and water park
- c. Pitch and putt, bowling, hockey, skating rink, ski slope, riding school, outdoor gym facilities, lit and secure running circuits, open air swimming pool, cycling track, gymnastics club centre, badminton and squash courts
- d. Football league
- e. Grassroots youth sports club

Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Q18a)

91. A number of suggestions were made by respondents regarding what could be included in the Strategy. These included:

- a. Commitment to Sure Start (or similar)
- b. Walking routes and groups for the elderly and people with dementia
- c. Neighbourhood resident groups, community projects, charity work, after-school activities and youth schemes
- d. Active lifestyle champion
- e. Commitment to increase doctor surgeries and provisions of accessible healthcare facilities
- f. Discouraging poor diets
- g. Reopening public toilets
- h. Organic food markets
- i. A wellbeing hub
- j. Greater mental health support
- k. Zero tolerance to alcohol and drug abuse
- l. Open space access
- m. Safe, secure and accessible developments

92. Epping Forest DC stated that duplication of work through the Essex Live Well campaign should be avoided.

Local improvements to neighbourhood centres, hatches or streets (Q19)

93. Parking was a key issue for respondents and suggestions included lifting front garden parking restrictions, ensuring garages are not used for storage, restricting commercial vehicles entering estates, installing charging points and stopping cars parking on footpaths and verges.
94. Within neighbourhood centres and hatches, safety at night was identified by respondents as a problem. It was also suggested that The Stow and Bush Fair in particular require improvements (including Essex Police who specifically suggested regeneration of these neighbourhood centres), while there needs to be a greater choice of independent shops at hatches and an increase in community hubs and health facilities. The Harlow Civic Society also recognised the reduction in need to travel if hatches and neighbourhood centres are improved.
95. ***The Council are committed to the regeneration of the neighbourhood centres and hatches, and the HLDP provides policies relating to this.***
96. Various potential general environmental improvements at a local level were also identified, including in relation to litter, cleaning, signage replacement, painting and redevelopment of council houses, replacement railings and better street lighting.

Longer term strategy for library provision in Harlow (Q20a)

97. Respondents contributed ideas on how libraries in Harlow could be improved. These included:
- a. Wider reading choice, modernisation and information made available on local charitable groups
 - b. Longer opening hours
 - c. Increased mobile libraries
 - d. Diversification of uses to include cafes and community meeting spaces
 - e. Use of online membership
 - f. Drop-ins for council services
 - g. Use of volunteers to reduce costs
 - h. Toilet installation
 - i. Promotion in schools
98. The Harlow Civic Society raised a question as to why libraries have a separate theme in the plan but arts and culture do not.

Improvements to the way the council's buys goods and services (procurement) (Q21)

99. Respondents made a number of suggestions for improvements. These included:

- a. Staff with expertise
- b. Joining with other authorities for more buying power
- c. Be competitive and more transparent
- d. Anti-corruption initiative
- e. Source from local suppliers and businesses
- f. Ensure goods and services are best value for money (not always cheapest), potentially including buying in bulk
- g. Greater in-house work
- h. Investment in companies with net zero targets
- i. Application of relevant security standard for security goods
- j. Greater publicity for upcoming procurement and purchases

100. Eastwick, Gilston & Hunsdon Parish Councils commented that it was unclear why the procurement strategy is part of the plan.

Considering local businesses and organisations in the council's procurement process (Q22)

101. Respondents made a number of suggestions. These included:

- a. Developing register of local businesses and organisations that meet criteria of benefiting local community
- b. Advertising procurement opportunities more widely
- c. Offering support
- d. Consultation with local businesses
- e. Include business representatives on procurement panels

Waste and recycling services and facilities (Q23)

102. Respondents made a number of suggestions for improvements. These included:

- a. Collections need to be more regular across Harlow
- b. Greater range of materials which can be recycled
- c. New recycling centre built
- d. Restoration of heavy squad service
- e. 'Swap item' schemes
- f. Longer opening times and increased disability access
- g. Remove trade waste restriction
- h. Increase bins and bin sizes
- i. Energy generation from waste
- j. Neighbourhood recycling points

Putting Harlow 'on the map' and promoting the town and its facilities, services and opportunities (Q24)

103. Respondents made a number of suggestions. These included:

- a. Digital and paper guides, articles on social media and local press, tourist information centre, improved website, regular newsletter and notice boards
- b. General maintenance and cleaning of the town, including verges, furniture, signage and planting
- c. Leading on tackling the climate crisis, improving transport services and ensuring exemplar new development
- d. Ensuring safety is improved
- e. Promoting Harlow as a sculpture town and destination for culture, art, entertainment, leisure, retail and business
- f. Walking and cycling tours for local art with events
- g. Town manager role created
- h. Attraction of department stores
- i. Promoting small businesses
- j. Work with third-sector organisations and initiatives
- k. Encourage students to attend university
- l. Greater Councillor activity

Requests for further information about Harlow (Q25)

104. Respondents had various requests, including:

- a. Detailed map showing all offerings
- b. Progress on demolition and construction projects, development plans (including scale of town's expansion) and other improvements
- c. What makes this document different from others
- d. Activities
- e. Offers from local businesses
- f. Services offered by local churches and groups

NEXT STEPS

105. These comments will be reviewed, along with those received at the Cabinet Policy Development Working Group, and then incorporated into a final draft document for discussion.

IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Growth and Regeneration

The Town Plan seeks to develop a longer term vision for Harlow, beyond the current Local Plan period, to look at how Harlow may develop by the time Harlow is 100 years old in 2047. The document is still in its early stages of development and this first stage consultation will help to shape the document into a second draft for further discussion with Members.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance

None specific.

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

Housing

None specific.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Communities and Environment

None specific

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance

None specific.

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Appendices

None.

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

CPO – Compulsory Purchase Order

DC – District Council

HGGT – Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

HLDP – Harlow Local Development Plan

HMO – House in Multiple Occupation

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

SPD – Supplementary Planning Document

STC – Sustainable Transport Corridor

