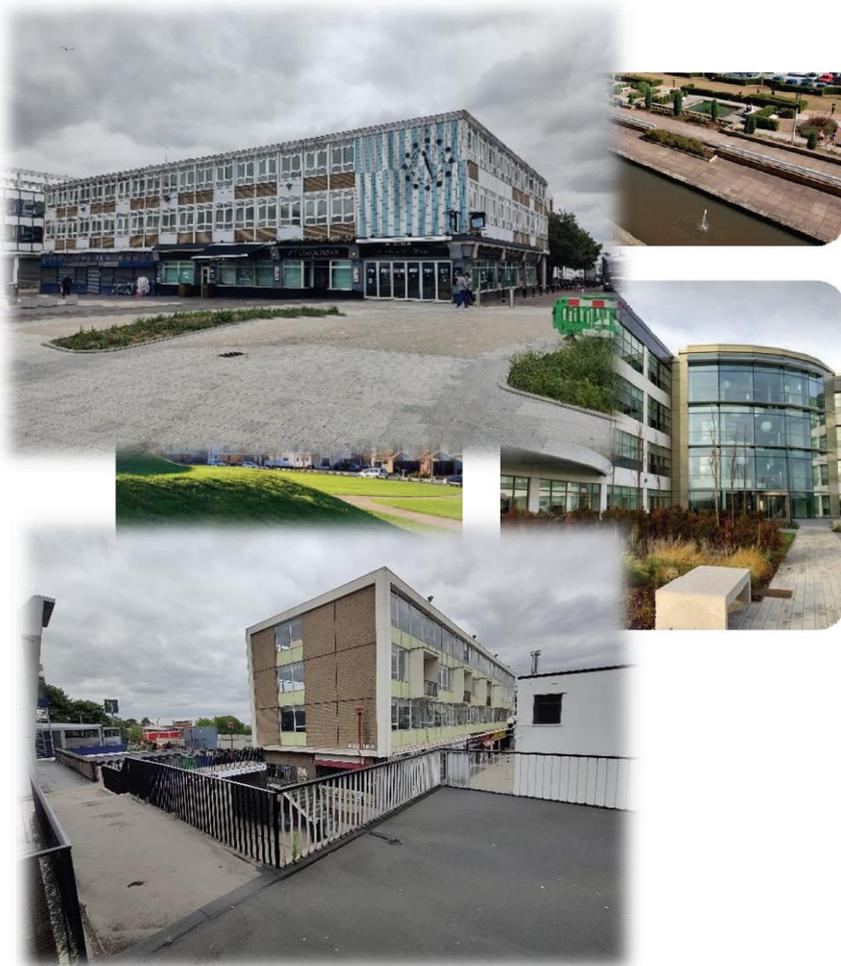


# TOWN CENTRE NORTH DEVELOPMENT BRIEF: Introduction and Background

March 2023



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## **1. What is a development brief?**

A development brief helps to guide the regeneration and redevelopment of an area, in this case the area around Stone Cross Square, Post Office Road and West Gate in Harlow Town Centre. The purpose of a development brief is to inform developers and other interested parties of the constraints and opportunities presented by a specific site or area, and the types of development expected or encouraged by local planning policies. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications along with other supporting documents.

## **2. What area does the development brief cover?**

The development brief covers the northern part of the town centre from Velizy Avenue to the east over to Haydens Road to the West and from Fourth Avenue to the north to East Gate to the south. This follows the boundary of Opportunity Area 3 in the Council's [Town Centre Masterplan Framework \(HTCMF\) SPD](#), as set out in Appendix A. Further details of the HTCMF SPD can be found below. The exact boundary of the development brief area can be found in Map 1. The map also identifies key buildings and spaces in the development brief area, some of which have been identified for specific redevelopment or regeneration proposals. Some areas already benefit from some form of improvement or planning consent. Further details for each of the key buildings and spaces can also be found in Appendix B.

## **3. What is included in the development brief?**

This introduction and background paper provides an overview of the area including any constraints, landownership, key buildings and spaces. It also sets out objectives for the area and a delivery strategy including potential infrastructure requirements. A separate paper has been prepared which incorporates several site briefs for buildings and spaces that have the opportunity for redevelopment or regeneration.

## **4. Harlow Local Development Plan and Town Centre Masterplan Framework**

The [Harlow Local Development Plan](#) (HLDP) was adopted in December 2020. Policy RS2 of the HLDP identifies the future retail floorspace for the district and states that a Harlow Town Centre Area Action Plan (HTCAAP) will be prepared. This will look to deliver a significant proportion of the retail floorspace in the town centre through site redevelopment and regeneration opportunities. It would also identify environmental and public realm improvements, access, other supporting uses and infrastructure.

A Regulation 19 HTCAAP document was approved for consultation in 2020 and this is a material consideration in the determination of proposals for the town centre. However, as a

result of a number of planning and non-planning related matters as set out in the Council’s [HTCAAP Update Note \(August 2021\)](#), it was agreed to pause work on the HTCAAP.

In order to help guide applications coming forward in the town centre in absence of an AAP the Council has adopted a [Town Centre Masterplan Framework Supplementary Planning Document](#) (HTCMF SPD). This document was adopted in March 2022 and includes masterplan drawings and frameworks for individual opportunity areas, guidance brought over from the Regulation 19 HTCAAP and more detailed public realm strategies. The Strategic Objectives for the HTCMF SPD include:

- A strong retail and leisure offer
- A unified town centre
- A town centre which supports wider economic growth
- A high quality public realm
- An inclusive and accessible destination
- A strong cultural offer
- First class community facilities
- A cohesive place
- Retaining the ethos and respond positively to Sir Frederick Gibberd
- Increase resilience to climate change

The Town Centre North Development Brief aims to respond to these individual objectives.

Opportunity Area 3 (Town Centre North) has been identified in the HTCMF SPD for a mix of retail and leisure activities supporting a balance across the town centre. The area has an opportunity to become an impressive and enticing gateway. Indicative masterplanning for the area shows there are opportunities to provide further business workspace and retail uses including places to eat, drink and entertainment activities as well as residential development. Stone Cross Square has the potential to become a high-quality destination for leisure and hospitality and a Sustainable Transport Corridor for buses, cycling and pedestrians connecting Velizy Avenue to Fourth Avenue via Post Office Road has been identified. The document suggests the following indicative capacity estimates for Town Centre North.

|                          |        |                             |       |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|-------|
| Residential GEA (sqm)    | 34,700 | Estimated residential units | 350   |
| Flexible active GF (sqm) | 7,500  | Workspace (sqm)             | 2,800 |
| Education (sqm)          | 0      | Community (sqm)             | 0     |

Indicative capacity estimates for Town Centre North – HTCMF SPD

The indicative estimates do not include planning consents that were in place at the time the HTCMF SPD was written including a consent to the rear of Market House, an existing consent at Strawberry Star and the car park at Kitson Way. The HTCMF SPD masterplan images for the town centre north area can be found in Appendix A. They show a mix of redeveloped areas including several tall buildings fronting Velizy Avenue and Fourth Avenue and a very tall building fronting the Velizy/Fourth Avenue roundabout. These buildings would include mostly ground floor flexible active uses and upper floor residential use with some supporting workspace.

The HTCMF SPD sets out design guidance for the town centre including guidance for the public realm, tall buildings and movement and it is important that applicants take this into consideration when designing their schemes. In particular, applicants should consider the following public realm projects identified in the HTCMF SPD for the Town Centre North area:

- 1) **Stone Cross Square** which has been identified as a priority project and categorised as a Garden Square in the HTCMF SPD. This space should be active with a functional hub of leisure and hospitality uses and event space set within landscaped areas and opportunities for play space
- 2) **Post Office Road Car Park** which is to be transformed into an urban park and gardens with large areas of soft planting, areas to sit, relax and play set in natural space incorporating sculpture, artwork and water features
- 3) **West Square** which should be a high-quality open space for play and recreation, particularly a place for 12 to 18 year-olds, providing exercise and recreational opportunities for adults as well within a high quality landscaped setting.



Figure 113 Central Wharf Plaza, Boston. Project by Reed Hilderbrand



Figure 110 David H. Koch Plaza at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Project by OLIN

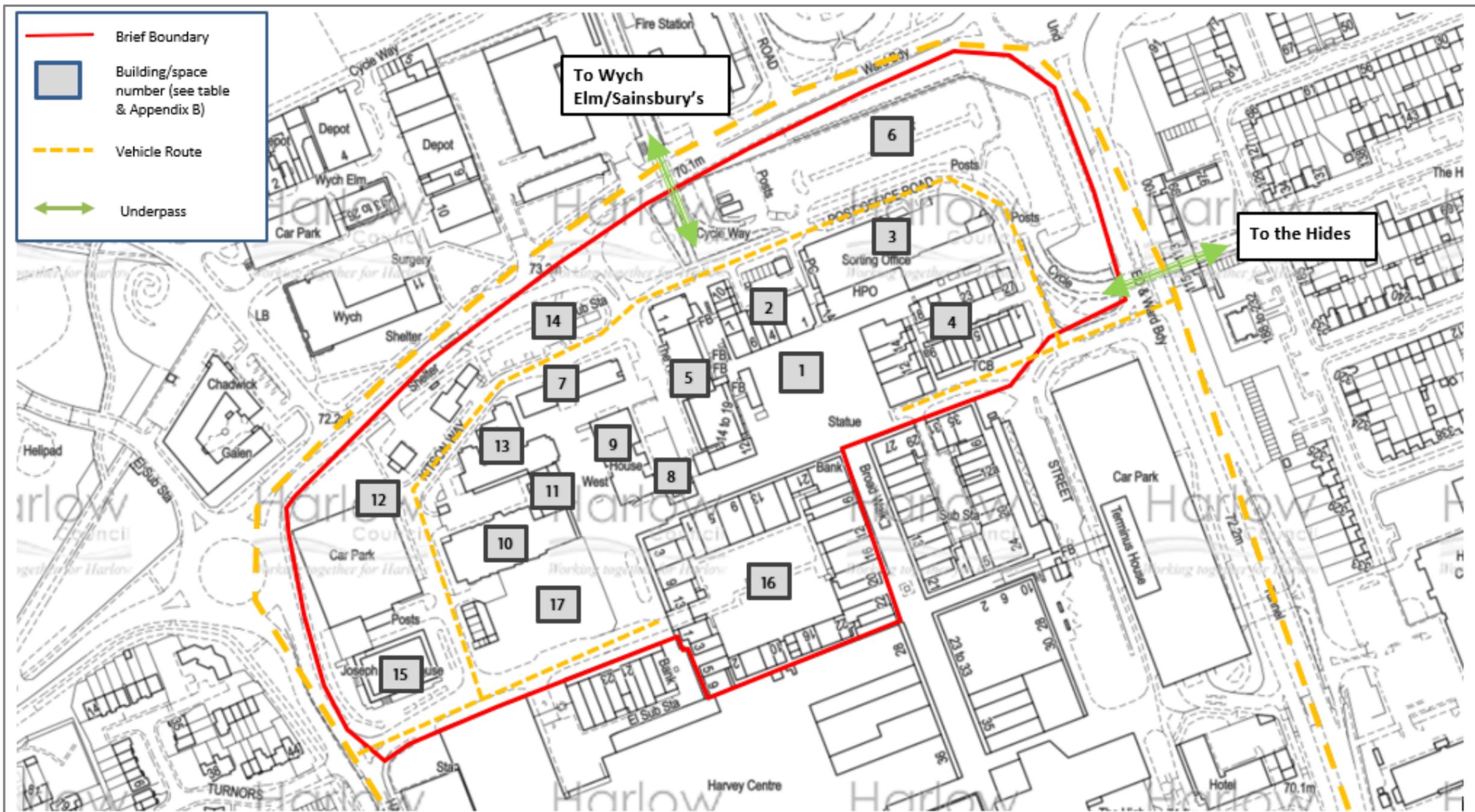
In addition to the three major public realm areas highlighted above, applicants should consider the improvement of other green spaces and pedestrian links and routes in the area ensuring that the following principles are applied:

- Improving wayfinding, legibility and connectivity with safe and direct crossing points
- Active ground floor uses and orientating buildings to provide natural surveillance
- Opportunities to re-use vehicle space for pedestrians and cyclists, providing cycle hubs
- Greening and landscaping routes, improving surfacing materials and lighting with places to sit and use of public art



*Image 2: TCMF SPD proposals for green spaces and green links*

Any additional requirements which are not specifically identified in the HTCMF SPD will be set out in the individual site briefs for sites and buildings.



| Map Reference Number | Building/Space Name                       | Map Reference Number | Building/Space Name             | Map Reference Number | Building/Space Name  |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| 1                    | Market/Stone Cross Square                 | 7                    | Aylmer House                    | 13                   | Mitre Buildings  |
| 2                    | Market House                              | 8                    | Former Citizens Advice Centre   | 14                   | Kitson Way Car Park  |
| 3                    | Royal Mail Depot                          | 9                    | West Gate House                 | 15                   | Joseph Ranktree House                                      |
| 4                    | Adams House                               | 10                   | Former Odeon Cinema             | 16                   | Former Little Walk – Strawberry Star Scheme                |
| 5                    | The Rows                                  | 11                   | Rothwell House                  | 17                   | Block A of Strawberry Star Scheme and building to the west |
| 6                    | Post Office Road Car Park and Underpasses | 12                   | Petrol Station and Linkway MSCP |                      |  |

Map 1: Development Brief boundary, important buildings and spaces and vehicular access routes

## 5. Landownership, planning constraints and accessibility

### Landownership

A large proportion of land at Town Centre North is owned by Harlow Council including public/pedestrian spaces around Stone Cross/Market Square, West Gate Square and the pathways leading in and out of the area such as East Gate and West Gate, Post Office Walk and Bird Cage Walk. The Citizens Advice Centre at West Gate and 21 The Rows are the only buildings currently owned by the Council. The Council also owns Post Office Road Car Park to the north. The remainder of the area is privately owned. Appendix C shows which land is in Council ownership (as of 2023) as well as information on land constraints set out below.

### Constraints

There are no local environmental designations in Town Centre North, but the Meat Porters sculpture located just south of Stone Cross Square is Grade II listed as is The Portrait Figure of Elisabeth Frink Sculpture which is currently located outside the entrance of the Harvey Centre (see Appendix C). The HTCMTF SPD also identifies Market House, Adams House and 12 East Gate as buildings of distinctive historic character.

The trees at Post Office Road Car Park form part of the historic Harlow landscape proposals by Dame Sylvia Crowe and are the largest grove of mature trees in the town centre. It is important that these are retained and protected.

This area, along with much of Harlow, is within a Secondary Aquifer, an area designated for drinking water abstraction from groundwater. Therefore, the bedrock and groundwater are vulnerable to mobilised contaminants. Any development will need to demonstrate how it will not negatively affect water quality in surface water or groundwater bodies. Suitable sustainable drainage systems will need to be incorporated into any development proposal and subject to the scale of development, upgrades to the wastewater network may be required.

The area is within the town centre boundary as shown on the [Harlow Local Development Plan \(HLDP\) Policies Map](#). The Policies Map also outlines an indicative Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) route at Fourth Avenue, Velizy Avenue and Haydens Road. It shows an indicative STC route through East Gate; however, the HTCMTF SPD and this brief identifies an alternative route via Post Office Road. The STC will include a network of walking and cycling routes with dedicated space for buses across the town. More information on the STC can be found in the [Transport Strategy for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town](#) (HGGT).

The site is within walking distance of the Green Wedge network to the north at the Town Park. It is also within proximity of the Princess Alexandra Hospital which has been allocated in the HLDP for housing (subject to its relocation).

### Accessibility

The area is currently accessed on foot via two underpasses to the north under Fourth Avenue towards Wych Elm and to the east under Velizy Avenue towards The Hides. There are limited footpaths along the main roads at Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue but Haydens Road includes pedestrian paths. The area can also be accessed by pedestrians

from other parts of the town centre via Broad Walk. There are at-grade pedestrian crossings further along Velizy Avenue at the entrance to the College, Fourth Avenue outside Wych Elm House and adjacent to the Harvey Centre Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) at Haydens Road.

The bus station is situated south of Post Office Road and is accessed from Velizy Avenue. Vehicles can use this access to enter Post Office Road where the public car park and servicing areas are situated. Some of Post Office Road has a segregated footpath and cycle path leading to the Wych Elm underpass. Post Office Road then connects with North Gate, which services The Rows and into Fourth Avenue via a roundabout. Kitson Way to the west directs vehicles out onto West Gate and Haydens Road.



Adams House fronting Stone Cross Square with the Market Clock and blue and white tiles

## 6. Why does Town Centre North require a development brief?

There are several reasons why the northern part of the town centre requires a development brief. These are set out below:

1. There are several existing **redevelopment and public realm schemes in the area which will begin to stimulate investment and encourage regeneration** of this area. This includes public realm and landscaping improvements at East Gate, the Towns Fund investment proposals at the bus station, the most recent Strawberry Star planning consent as well as other development proposals at Wych Elm and Kitson Way. The area can capitalise and build on these providing further regeneration and enhancements in the area. This brief is required to set out a coordinated approach to delivery and ensure that layout and design principles in the HTC MF SPD are considered. More details on existing schemes and projects can be found in Appendix D.
2. Due to the age of the buildings, some lack of maintenance and upgrades, **particular areas have sadly become dated and 'shabby'**. However, there are important buildings in this area which strongly represent the architectural qualities of the early New Town with important historical features that need to be carefully considered in development proposals. This includes the interconnecting bridges at The Rows, the Market Clock and tiles on Adams House and the distinctive placement of windows, balconies and colours at Market House. This brief recognises these important features but also identifies buildings where complete redevelopment will significantly improve the area.
3. Vehicles were no longer allowed to use East Gate in 1964 and as a result **there is a lot of empty space** at Stone Cross Square and between East Gate and West Gate. However, this could be seen as a positive opportunity for re-purposing this public realm area as set out in the HTC MF SPD. The brief ensures that any redevelopment opportunities support this.
4. **The orientation and location of buildings has resulted in poor legibility** particularly for pedestrians arriving on the periphery and from the underpasses. There is little to no signage as visitors arrive and it is difficult for pedestrians to find a direct, pleasant route through to Stone Cross Square. The lack of well-placed at-grade crossings to the north and east has also resulted in people crossing dangerously at Fourth Avenue and Velizy Avenue thereby creating their own desire lines through bushes and fences. Opportunities to improve this through development have been identified in the brief.
5. The **appearance around the edge of the area at Post Office Road and Kitson Way is poor**, but this is unsurprising given much of this area is for servicing of retail units. For Post Office Road in particular, this is the first arrival point from the underpasses and is therefore visually and perceptively unpleasant. The rear of The Rows (or North Gate) is not particularly attractive and although most visitors to the town centre do not arrive at this point, it is where West Gate offices, residential units and some retail units are accessed. There are also pedestrian connections from here under The Rows to Stone Cross Square and close to the Advice Centre. Development sites as well as public realm

improvements will improve this.

6. The area has **more vacancies than other parts of the town centre** as shoppers have gravitated south towards Broad Walk, the Harvey Centre shopping centre and the Water Gardens. The Council has been awarded Levelling Up Fund money for Playhouse Square which will provide upgraded theatre facilities, potential music venue, performance space, new homes, and better public realm. As Broad Walk, Harvey Centre and the Water Gardens have become the main retail core, the brief needs to set out an identity for Town Centre North to attract visitors and reduce vacant units.
7. Like many parts of the town centre, **the area lacks green space, trees and landscaping**. The brief ensures that redevelopment opportunities consider and support the HTCMTF SPD proposals for improving the public realm and tree planting/landscaping opportunities.

The Town Centre North Development Brief has been prepared to help address these issues through enhancements, regeneration projects and development schemes. The objectives below have specifically been identified for the area.

## **OBJECTIVES FOR TOWN CENTRE NORTH**

- |   |
|---|
| <p>1. <b><u>Create an identity</u></b>, thereby securing its place in the town centre and providing a unique offering for visitors. This will address the current imbalance of shoppers and visitors drawing trade northwards, reducing vacancies and bringing the area 'back to life'.</p>   |
| <p>2. <b><u>Improve the appearance</u></b> of the area through enhancements to the public realm, planting, buildings, spaces, tackling blank frontages and unattractive servicing areas and making the area more appealing to investors.</p>  |
| <p>3. <b><u>Making better use of space</u></b> by re-purposing existing uses and land and transforming vacant and under-used spaces for other purposes particularly in and around Stone Cross Square.</p>   |
| <p>4. <b><u>Protect the area's important architectural values</u></b> including, where appropriate, buildings, spaces, features and details so as to not to lose the area's New Town heritage.</p>  |
| <p>5. <b><u>Improve the legibility and movement for pedestrians and cyclists</u></b> by creating safe, accessible, interesting and pleasant gateway entrances, removing cars wherever possible from the area and also promoting public and sustainable transport opportunities.</p>   |
| <p>6. <b><u>Significantly 'green' the area</u></b> building on existing features such as pockets of green space, the Post Office Road car park trees, taking advantage of the abundance of space available. Opportunities for play space, community space, public art and other forms of formal and informal Green Infrastructure will be considered.</p> |

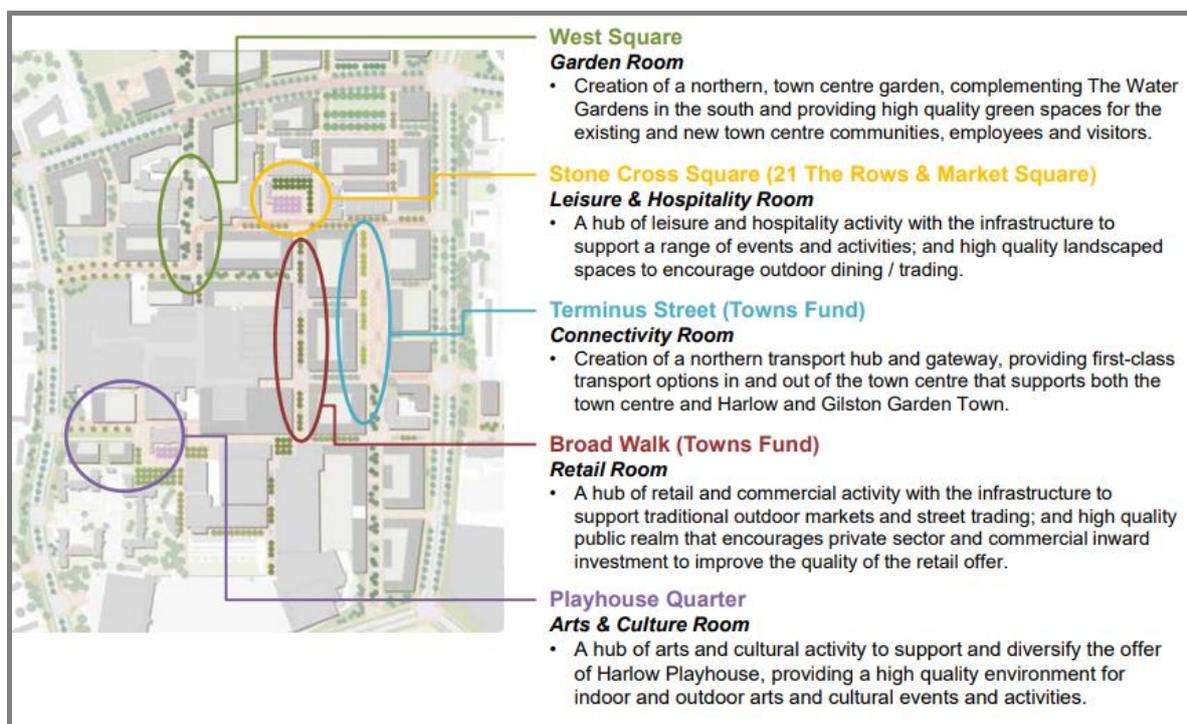
## 7. Creating an identity for Town Centre North

Objective one of the development brief is to create an identity for Town Centre North. The delivery of development sites, regeneration proposals, public realm and accessibility projects set out in the brief and HTCMTF SPD will help develop an identity for the area. This will help bring back visitors, generate new residents who will use the area, deliver space for new uses and activities and help attract more investment and business. One of the spatial principles of the HTCMTF SPD is to rebalance the focus of gravity northwards in the town centre through the accommodation of different uses to the north, such as those identified in both the SPD and this brief. This will be centered around hospitality and outdoor dining, recreation and green space, independent retailing, and a concentration for residential development.

As outlined in the public realm guidance in the HTCMTF SPD, the town centre will be divided into five individual 'rooms' as shown in the image below. These are linked to five specific public realm projects, each with their own defined role and function that supports the immediate environment and complements the wider town centre. This will create diversity, interest and vibrancy, all within a safe and connected environment. For the Post Office Road/Stone Cross Square area, this will become the leisure and hospitality room with infrastructure in place to support events and activities, outdoor dining and trading. The West Square area will be developed into a town centre garden providing high quality green spaces for communities, employees and visitors.

### ***Town Centre North Identity***

***The identity for Town Centre North is focused around Garden and Leisure & Hospitality rooms at West Gate and Stone Cross Square and delivery of outdoor dining & trading, recreation & green space, independent retailing and residential development.***



*Priority public realm projects or 'rooms' in the town centre*

## 8. Delivery Strategy

The Town Centre North area forms a large and important component of the town centre acting as the northern gateway with links to the bus station, town park and train station. It is important that revitalising the area is done holistically and applications that come forward will need to carefully set out how they will help deliver the principles set out in this brief and the HTCMTF SPD. This will ensure that the overall movement, legibility, public realm and layout of the area is enhanced. If a proposal is unable to deliver specific objectives or projects set out in the brief, applicants should explain and clearly demonstrate how their scheme will enhance the vitality, vibrancy, and viability of the area.

### 1. Delivering planning consents and Council buildings/sites

There are already several planning consents that, when delivered, will contribute towards making significant improvements to Town Centre North including the Strawberry Star scheme which will deliver huge benefits for this area and act as a catalyst for further regeneration. The Council will work with developers of existing planning consents to ensure that their proposals are delivered. The Council will also proactively work to bring forward development opportunities for Council owned buildings/sites including actively working with statutory bodies and other delivery partners to reach solutions for any constraints. Opportunities to use government bid money for schemes and public realm improvements will also be sought and the Council may consider joint partnership arrangements with developers to bring forward sites.

### 2. Working with key partners and landowners/businesses

The Council will proactively work with developers, landowners and existing businesses who wish to support the regeneration of Town Centre North and will encourage joint ventures where appropriate.

The area contains several small, medium and large businesses and retailers as well as residents in existing buildings. To deliver a comprehensive redevelopment of the area, the Council will consider the relocation of uses where there is an opportunity to do so and where there are suitable alternative sites. In some cases, this may be within the Town Centre North area within an alternative development/unit. For example, the relocation of the Royal Mail Delivery Office and car park would enable their existing site to come forward or existing cafes and restaurants may be better placed at Stone Cross Square to support a café culture in this area. The Council will work closely with landowners and businesses to carefully consider relocation options and ensure it will not impact upon the operation of their business and viability of the town centre.

### 3. Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

The brief identifies the redevelopment of two car parks in the area, Post Office Road for an urban park and the privately owned multi-storey car park for mixed use. The private Kitson Way car park also has consent for residential use. These car parks are used for visitors, businesses and retailers with permits, as well as Princess Alexandra Hospital. There are also disabled parking spaces. The Council will be undertaking a parking strategy for the town centre to understand the impact of their loss, and the potential requirement for car parks

across the town centre in the future considering the impact upon retailers, businesses and visitors. This will help establish a short-, medium- and long-term strategy for delivery of the urban park at Post Office Road and multi-storey car park development site.

#### 4. Stewardship of the public realm

The public realm at Town Centre North is mostly owned by the Council, and this gives the local authority control over the use and improvement of these areas. Improvements, as set out in the HTC MF SPD and development brief, will need to be maintained at a cost, particularly as they are likely to include a lot more landscaping, drainage, water features, new surfacing and public art. Stewardship of these spaces will be an important consideration and the Council will work with applicants and developers to agree long term maintenance strategies of these spaces including the potential for commuted sums or management companies.

Development proposals should be coordinated with public realm improvements, including provision of multifunctional space which will set the tone for investment and high-quality development. The priority, as one of the five projects in the HTC MF SPD, is the Stone Cross Square area and contributions and proposals should look to deliver this first. Development Sites A, B and C should also consider how they can enhance and contribute towards the urban park at Post Office Road.

It will be advantageous for developers to work together to ensure the costs and benefits of developing sites are shared, with measures put in place to equalise and apportion costs. This mostly relates to public realm improvements but could also relate to the use of shared servicing and parking arrangements.

#### 5. Delivering comprehensive schemes

The site briefs set out which sites could come forward together in order to deliver a more comprehensive scheme which in some cases will help deliver wider benefits for the immediate area. However, the Council will consider the merits of any proposal or scheme that is submitted, including sites not identified in this development brief, so long as it is consistent with the principles and objectives of this document and the HTC MF SPD and does not prejudice the potential delivery of other sites coming forward.



West Square public realm outside the former Cinema site and Rothwell House

## 9. Supporting infrastructure provision

Development proposals will have an impact on infrastructure provision and therefore mitigation measures will be required in the form of planning contributions. This is in accordance with HLDP Policy IN6 and is subject to viability. The infrastructure items that will likely require contributions from town centre developments are listed below, but these may change depending on the individual circumstances of each planning application:

- Affordable housing or contributions towards off-site affordable housing
- Primary School Education
- Early Years and Childcare
- Local walking and cycling projects
- Sustainable Transport Corridor and modal shift
- Healthcare provision
- Libraries contribution
- Public art either within the development or an off-site contribution
- Town Park and other open spaces in accordance with the Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space SPD
- Public realm projects

## 10. Contact details

### **To discuss the contents of the brief:**

Forward Planning Team:

01279 446878

[Myharlow@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:Myharlow@harlow.gov.uk)

### **To make a pre-application enquiry:**

Development Management Team

01279 446578

[Planning.services@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:Planning.services@harlow.gov.uk)

### **To discuss a land ownership/regeneration enquiry:**

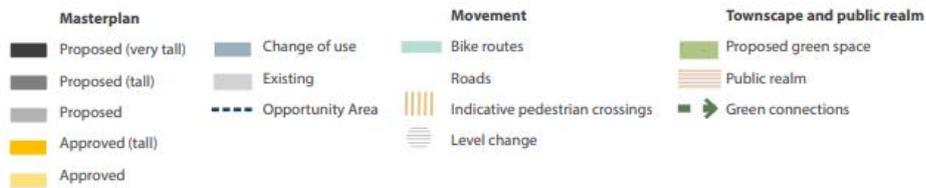
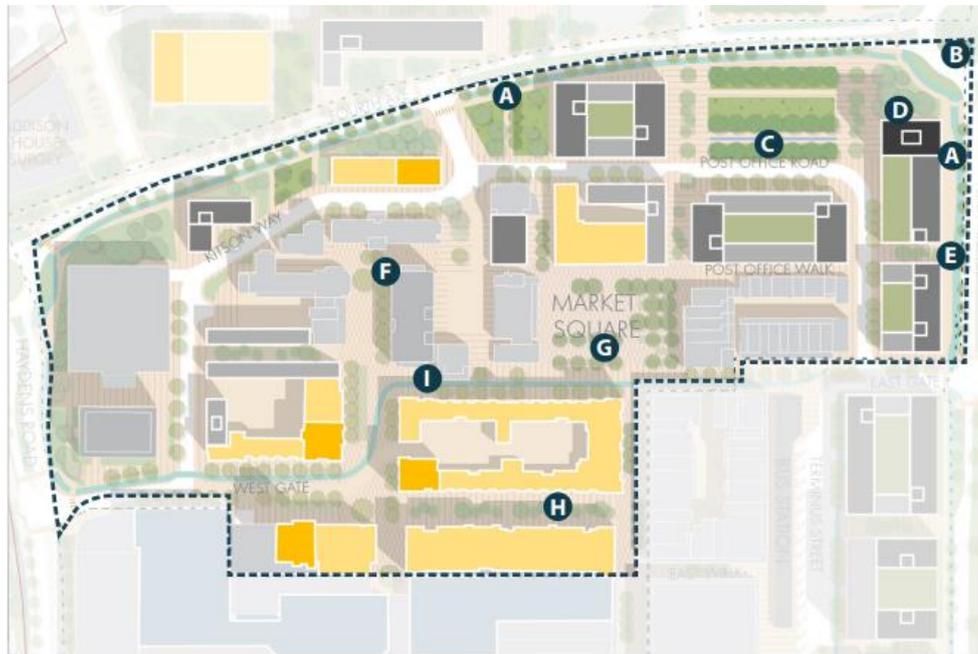
Regeneration Team

01279 446862

[regen.enquiries@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:regen.enquiries@harlow.gov.uk)

# Appendix A: Town Centre Masterplan Framework Opportunity Area 3

(Extract from Town Centre Masterplan SPD 2022)



## GROUND FLOOR LAND USES



## UPPER FLOOR LAND USES



## Appendix B: Key buildings and spaces in Town Centre North

| Number as marked on Map 1 | Building/Space  | Description including use  |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| 1                         | <b>Market Square/Stone Cross Square, East Gate to West Gate and West Gate Square (public space areas)</b> | Stone Cross Square was the original name of the square adjacent to what was Stone Cross Hall. Its name was later changed to Market Square due to the markets that were hosted in the space. East Gate is a wide pedestrianised path linking the bus station to West Gate which is situated adjacent to the northern entrance point into the Harvey Centre. Public realm improvements have already taken place along East Gate. West Gate Square is a pedestrianised/partly landscaped area outside Rothwell House, West Gate House and Aylmer House. <i>The Council owns these spaces.</i>   |
| 2                         | <b>Market House and land to rear</b>  | Market House is a 4-storey building which forms part of the early phases of the town centre. There are several ground floor retail units, which are now mostly vacant. Market House has been given various prior approval consents to convert floors from office to residential use, none of which have been implemented. In addition to this, consent was granted in 2021 for an additional 5 <sup>th</sup> storey comprising 8 flats together with alterations to the facades (HW/FUL/21/00178). Consent was also granted in 2019 for the redevelopment of the existing garages and parking area to the rear which would provide an 8-storey residential block of 33 flats with a replacement retail unit and roof garden at 1 <sup>st</sup> floor connecting to Market House (HW/FUL/19/00431). Both of these consents are yet to be implemented.   |
| 3                         | <b>Royal Mail Delivery Office</b>   | This is a 4-storey office building with associated car park/delivery area operated and owned by Royal Mail. The site includes vehicle maintenance as well. It is also leased by Post Office Ltd. The site is one of the largest spaces in the area.  |
| 4                         | <b>Adams House</b>  | Adams House is a part 3 and 5 storey building, the original part of which fronts Stone Cross Square to the west and includes retail and residential above. An additional block to the rear was built, fronting Post Office Walk to the north and the bus station/East Gate to the south. This provided an additional 34 units and ground floor retail units. Some of the retail units at Adams House, including a large one fronting Stone Cross Square, are vacant (as of 2023). The building includes an important historical feature on the front, the Market Clock along with blue and white tiles. Planning consent was granted for an additional storey for 5 residential units and conversion of first floor to 6 residential units (HW/FUL/18/00438) to the north. An application was recently submitted (2023) for an additional storey on the original part of Adams House fronting Stone Cross Square to provide 8 new flats. |
| 5                         | <b>The Rows</b>   | The Rows is a 2-3 storey building located centrally within the development brief area. It consists of both ground and first floor retail units as well as a large 3-storey retail unit fronting Post   |

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
|    |   | Office Road. There are also some vacant units, including 21 The Rows which is a small building fronting Stone Cross Square. The Rows also includes 12 residential units. The building forms part of the early phases of the town centre and is uniquely designed with a series of balconies, staircases, and bridges. Consent was granted in 2018 for additional storeys, creating 13 flats ( <i>HW/FUL/17/00465</i> ). This has yet to be implemented. |
| 6  | <b>Post Office Road Car Park and underpasses</b>        | To the north-east of the area is the Council owned Post Office Road car park which is used for public and commercial vehicles including permit holders. It includes several mature Plane trees and is enclosed by hedges. It is situated in-between an underpass to the west which links to Wych Elm and Rectory Wood under Fourth Avenue, and an underpass to the east under Velizy Avenue which connects into The Hides.                              |
| 7  | <b>Aylmer House</b>                                     | Fronting Kitson Way to the north and West Gate Square to the south, Aylmer House is a 4-storey mixed-use building. It is currently home to the Wetherspoons Public House at ground floor and NHS offices on the floors above. Pre-application discussions have been held for additional storeys to the building.  |
| 8  | <b>Former Citizens Advice Centre</b>                    | The old Citizens Advice Centre is a uniquely styled building, jutting out onto East Gate. It is owned by the Council and is 2-3 storeys in height. It is currently partly used by Harlow College.   |
| 9  | <b>West Gate House</b>                                  | West Gate House is a fairly modern large building which fronts onto North Gate, the servicing area for most of The Rows. It is an 8-storey building with ground floor retail, three storeys occupied for offices and four occupied by residential units, converted from office under Permitted Development.   |
| 10 | <b>Former Cinema</b>                                    | This site fronts West Gate Square and is a former Odeon Cinema theatre but is now vacant. It is a 3-storey building with some parking to the rear.  |
| 11 | <b>Rothwell House</b>                                   | Rothwell House adjoins the former cinema and also fronts West Gate Square. It is a 3-storey building with a solicitor firm on the ground floor and vacant offices on the two floors above.  |
| 12 | <b>Petrol Station and Linkway Multi-Storey Car Park</b> | The petrol station and car wash, located to the north of the brief area, can be accessed either via Kitson Way or Fourth Avenue and is opposite the Mitre buildings. Further along Kitson Way is a privately owned multi-storey car park (Linkway) which has 5 decks. This is predominantly used for NHS staff. The entrance and exit for the car park are from Kitson Way.   |
| 13 | <b>Mitre Buildings</b>                                  | The Mitre Buildings are situated in the north-west corner of West Gate Square adjacent to Aylmer House and fronting Kitson Way. They consist of two buildings, one larger (3/4 storey) and one smaller (3-storey), which have mostly now been converted from offices to 66 residential dwellings under Permitted Development ( <i>HW/COUOR/17/00482</i> ).  |
| 14 | <b>Kitson Way Car Park</b>                              | The car park is located off Kitson Way adjacent to Aylmer House. It previously served a now, converted office building. In 2021 consent was granted for the erection of a building ranging between 7 and 9 storeys providing 49 flats ( <i>HW/FUL/20/00161</i> ). This is yet to be implemented.  |
| 15 | <b>Joseph Rank</b>                                      | Joseph Rank House is located to the far west of the area,   |

|           |   |  |
|-----------|---|--|
|           | <b>House</b>  | bounded by Fourth Avenue to the north, Kitson Way to the east, West Gate to the south and Haydens Road to the west. It is a 12-storey building which was occupied by offices. In 2007 it was granted consent for 11 of the floors to be converted into 132 residential apartments and commercial on the ground floor ( <i>HW/FPL/07/00006</i> ). The ground floor was converted into a further 7 dwellings on appeal in 2017 ( <i>HW/FUL/17/00081</i> ). Proposals are now in place for the building to be demolished due to issues with the building fabric.  |
| <b>16</b> | <b>Little Walk (Strawberry Star Scheme)</b>                   | Little Walk was a small indoor precinct cutting through from Broad Walk to the Harvey Centre entrance to the north. It comprised a series of small shops which mostly became vacant over time. The building was then later demolished. Consent was granted in 2022, subject to a S106 agreement, ( <i>HW/OUTAM/21/00251</i> ) for the redevelopment of this area and land west of West Gate Square (Block A in the consent). This will include several blocks, up to 16 storeys in height providing 447 dwellings and a mix of commercial/retail ground floor use. This is in addition to a separate consent for Block D (just outside development brief area but along West Gate) for 163 units ( <i>HW/FUL/19/00291</i> ). |
| <b>17</b> | <b>Building rear of cinema and Block A of Strawberry Star</b> | Block A which forms part of the Strawberry Star planning consent is situated further west of Little Walk on the former site of Gate House (now demolished), south of the former Odeon Cinema site. To the west of this, and rear of the former cinema, is a separate 2-storey building which fronts Kitson Way and is currently occupied.  |

Appendix C: Landownership and constraints map



## Appendix D: Schemes and projects within, and on the periphery of Town Centre North

### Towns Fund Bid

The Council was awarded money from the Government's Towns Fund bid to support the implementation of several projects across the town. The projects are set out in the [Town Investment Plan](#) and include redevelopment of the bus station into an improved Sustainable Transport Hub and Interchange with facilities to support and promote first class sustainable travel. This will include:

- a landmark building for the transport hub
- a high-quality gateway experience for visitors
- a new operational layout for buses; and
- infrastructure that supports the interchange including cycle storage, seating and shelter as well as digital infrastructure which will enable real time passenger information



*Indicative images of the proposed bus station Improvements*

Further bid money has already been spent on making public realm improvements to East Gate outside Stone Cross Square including new surfacing and landscaping. This proposal is phase 1 where phase 2 will be the improvement of the public realm around Broad Walk including the connection from the bus station.

### Wych Elm Development Brief

The Council has prepared a development brief for the Wych Elm area, located north of Fourth Avenue. It divides the area into eight distinct parcels and sets out what uses are considered appropriate in each as well as appropriate building heights and development principles. It also identifies two 'green links' where improvements for pedestrian and cyclist movement and landscaping and public realm will be made. This includes the underpass which connects the Wych Elm area to the Town Centre North area.

### Strawberry Star Development at Little Walk/West Gate

The Strawberry Star development involves the delivery of a series of blocks, building on the

former Little Walk and Gate House site (Blocks A-C) within the development brief area and development of a separate block (Block D) at 15-29 West Gate.

Block D was granted an earlier consent (HW/FUL/19/00291). This will provide 163 residential units and approximately 390sqm of flexible commercial space within a part 8 and part 12 storey building. Approval was granted, subject to a S106 agreement, for the remaining blocks in 2022 (HW/OUTAM/21/00251) which will provide a further 447 residential dwellings.

Strawberry Star Scheme – view looking from Market/Stone Cross Square



The tallest element of the block will be 16 storeys and the design, materials and façade will look to take cues from the surrounding area particularly important New Town architectural qualities. It will also provide green spaces and public realm improvements through garden boulevard streets, community squares and a linear urban park as well as private amenity space for the new residents. The proposals will significantly help to regenerate and rejuvenate this part of the town centre and be a catalyst for bringing forward other redevelopment opportunities in Town Centre North.

### Harlow Arts and Cultural Quarter

The Council received £20m of Levelling Up Fund money to deliver an arts and cultural quarter in the town centre. This will transform the Playhouse and College Square by delivering a new live music and performance venue including a music school and recording studio, upgrades to the Playhouse, space for outdoor performances, dining and outdoor cinema and play space, studio, art and rehearsal space and residential apartments. Although this is on the other side of the town centre it is a significant opportunity to attract investment, visitors and business to the area for the overall benefit of the town centre.



## Appendix E: Planning documents for consideration

### Harlow Local Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents

The [Harlow Local Development Plan](#) (HLDP) was adopted in December 2020 and sets out the long-term vision for Harlow to 2033 including a series of strategic objective and policies. The HLDP identifies the need for further retail provision in the town centre and an opportunity for the town centre to deliver new homes. The HLDP identifies specific key gateway locations which should be enhanced including vehicle and pedestrian points to the north of the town centre such as those around Post Office Road.

There are also various Development Management Policies in the HLDP which must be taken into consideration in the preparation of a planning application including, but not limited to, design and amenity principles, housing mix including affordable housing, development in secondary frontages (which the majority of the Town Centre North area is designated as<sup>1</sup>), public art, health and wellbeing, travel and servicing. As per the HTCMTF SPD, the minimum parking standards set out for Essex and Harlow as per Policy IN3 of the Local Plan, are not applicable to the town centre. A low level of parking provision or car free development will be encouraged in new residential developments and where commercial workspace with appropriate justification (as set out in the HTCMTF SPD) and applicants should consider the use of car clubs, changing and charging facilities.

In addition to the HLDP, the Council has prepared several Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that applicants must consider when bringing forward proposals. This is in addition to the HTCMTF SPD. They include:

- [Affordable and Specialist Housing SPD](#) which sets out the Council's approach to securing planning obligations in respect to both affordable housing and specialist housing (including older people's housing and self / custom build housing).
- [Affordable and Specialist Housing SPD: Addendum on Commuted Sums and Alternative Sites](#) which sets out a formula for calculating off-site affordable housing contributions.
- [Green Infrastructure and Public Open Space SPD](#) which sets out how green infrastructure and landscaping, including trees and hedgerows, should be considered and how they can be implemented in new developments, biodiversity net gain and standards for specific open spaces and play facilities which new developments must consider.
- [Design Guide SPD](#) and [Design Guide Addendum](#) which both set out design standards for development proposals. The addendum provides specific guidance in respect of tall buildings, climate change, private garden space standards and amenity standards.

### Harlow and Gilston Garden Town documents

Harlow forms part of the [Harlow and Gilston Garden Town \(HGGT\)](#) where partner authorities are bringing forward transformational growth through several Garden Communities. The town centre lies at the heart of the HGGT and will be an important provider of services.

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<sup>1</sup> [See Council's guidance note and image on retail frontages here](#)

The [HGGT vision document](#) includes a section on the town centre and the following principles:

- The town centre becoming the heart of the HGGT with high quality homes, shops, workspace and leisure uses
- It will be an accessible hub for day and evening activities
- The gravity of the town centre will be adjusted by new development to the north of the centre and through enlivening Market Square (Stone Cross Square)
- The physical environment will be enhanced whilst integrating with the New Town fabric
- The town centre will be readily accessible with Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) links

Details on the Sustainable Transport Corridor and the mode share objectives (STC) are set out in the [HGGT Transport Strategy document](#). New development proposals should aim to achieve the modal shift targets set out in the Transport Strategy document as set out below.

***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.***

Additional documentation prepared by the HGGT Team are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and are available to [view on their website](#).

#### Validation Checklist

Applicants will need to ensure that they have completed the relevant [validation checklist](#) before submitting a planning application to the Council.