

HGGT Infrastructure Delivery Plan



Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	12 October 2023
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Michael Hardware, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Lead Officer:	Pauline Elliott, Interim Head of Planning and Building Control (01279) 446595
Contributing Officer:	Amy Wright, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town District Lead (01279) 446565
Key Decision:	Yes
Forward Plan:	Forward Plan Number I013959
Call In:	This decision is not subject to call-in procedures as it stands as a recommendation to Full Council
Corporate Priorities:	Restore Pride in Harlow Rebuild our Town Secure Investment into Harlow
Wards Affected:	All Wards

Recommended that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

- A** Subject to all authorities within the Harlow and Gilston Garden (HGGT) partnership approving the updated wording of the revised HGGT Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), the HGGT IDP is supported and agreed and will form the basis of identification of the infrastructure needed in the Garden Town area. The IDP sets out the necessary infrastructure requirements and their phasing, to support the sites allocated for development within the HGGT area.
- B** Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, to make any necessary, non-consequential and minor amendments and to liaise with the HGGT Chair and Director.

Reason for decision

- A** In order to ensure that appropriate infrastructure mitigation is identified, so that it may be scheduled and implemented to support the planned growth for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- B** To ensure that the views of Harlow District Council are given appropriate consideration.

Other Options

- A** There is an option not to ratify the HGGT IDP and to rely on the previous 2019 version. However, this could limit the effective delivery of infrastructure that is considered necessary to accompany the planned development in Harlow town and the surrounding area identified for development as parts of the agreed Garden Town. This would prevent opportunities for sustainable development, which has the potential to harm the future living, working and leisure options for existing and future occupants of Harlow town and surrounds.

Background

1. An IDP was commissioned by the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) partner authorities in 2018 that was informed by previous district-led IDPs in support of previous local plans. A range of infrastructure is encompassed within an IDP including: transport, healthcare, emergency services, community facilities, open space, sports and leisure, utilities and flood defence. IDPs generally do not encompass all material planning considerations and are limited in scope to topics directly linked to infrastructure. IDPs are iterative and as such need to be reviewed regularly.
2. The first HGGT IDP was published in April 2019. A review was commissioned in 2021, and an updated draft was presented to the HGGT Board in June 2022 whereupon it was approved subject to fact checking. This has been concluded and now the updated IDP has been presented for endorsement. The HGGT Board considered the IDP acceptable at its September Board meeting, subject to ratification by its partner authorities.
3. The HGGT IDP identifies the following infrastructure pertaining to Harlow and the HGGT area:
 - a) A need for early years provision, primary schools and one new secondary school at East of Harlow;
 - b) An approximately £283 million sustainable transport corridor network supports mode shift across the HGGT area with other active travel measures such as walk and cycleway improvements. There is £217 million to be invested in highway

infrastructure such as upgrades to J7 and 7a of the M11, two Stort crossings, local road network upgrades and accesses in Essex and Hertfordshire;

- c) There will be approximately 1,675 square metres at East of Harlow allocation for community halls. Within Harlow there is to be a proposed community leisure centre including a 6 lane 25 metre pool, teaching pool, 4-court sports hall, fitness suite. There will also be a new community sports hall containing 4 courts. At East of Harlow allocation there will be a dedicated youth facility. There will be other contributions to enhance existing facilities subject to assessment;
- d) Upgrades to Harlow Town Park, and access to a new country park, natural and semi-natural green space, amenity space and play areas at East of Harlow;
- e) Town centre public realm improvements and new town centre transport interchange and hub;
- f) Refurbishment of Harlow Town library with possible future expansion and relocation; and
- g) Improvements to the Playhouse Theatre. An extension to Harlow Museum. Harlow Town cultural trails and town artist enhancements.

Issues/Proposals

- 4. The IDP has now been fact checked by the partner authorities, and this has resulted in amendments to the monies sought in support of different types of infrastructure, with some requirements increasing and others decreasing, even within one type of infrastructure such as transport. The IDP enables stakeholders to identify infrastructure delivery and therefore identify any associated business cases and establish the viability of developments.
- 5. Although there was low developer participation in the workshops following the HGGT Developer Forum, the feedback received identified the importance of the Sustainable Transport Corridors in order to achieve modal shift targets and secure sustainable development. This requirement should be met in part by site developers where reasonable and appropriate to the development proposals, in accordance with national and local planning policy principles. It is usual for developers, for example, to provide appropriate access to their development site and the principle of active and sustainable transport provision to enable mode shift is enshrined in the Transport Strategy for the HGGT as well as national planning policy and good practice guidance such as Gear Change. In the Gilston area, the developer is already committed to delivering the Central and Eastern Stort Crossings across Stort Valley.
- 6. The HGGT Developer Forum facilitated a discussion of draft heads of terms between East Herts District Council (EHDC) and Places for People regarding the Gilston area

villages 1-6. EDHC Development Management Committee endorsed the terms on 28 February 2023 and these terms are to be taken forward to the full s106 agreement and are also reflected in the updated IDP schedules.

7. There are established Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with four HGGT partners, (Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Harlow Council, and Herts County Council,) with an agreement with EHDC still pending. The MoUs set out how the partners will use the HGGT IDP in respect of their own IDP requirements, Developer Guides for Contributions, and implementing the IDP recommendations. It also sets out a review process for the IDP as necessary. The HGGT IDP aims to complement other existing and emerging planning policy as well as growth and regeneration documents in the area. The HGGT IDP is expected to supersede any other established IDP documents for the partner organisations.
8. The HGGT IDP is a snapshot in time and will require continuous review in respect of evidence to support infrastructure needs as they evolve for new developments in the area. The HGGT IDP MoU anticipates biennial reviews by partner authorities, or other such time as is deemed necessary. In any case, information will be shared amongst the HGGT partners to enable the creation of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for the Garden Town, which will be presented to the HGGT Board, or equivalent, annually to enable delivery to be monitored.
9. The HGGT IDP and IFS will be made available online once fully approved. It represents a collaborative process between Authority partners and stakeholders. Within two years of publication, the HGGT IDP will require a further update to ensure it remains up to date and fit for purpose. The most recent reviews encompass the concept of stewardship and this is considered to better reflect the Town and County Planning Act Garden City Principles on which the HGGT Vision was based.

Implications

Equalities and Diversity

The HGGT IDP has been screened for an equalities impact assessment, and a full assessment is not necessary at this time, but can be carried out later in the year.

Climate Change

The HGGT IDP identifies the provision of appropriate supporting infrastructure that will ensure that the development proposed in the HGGT area is sustainable over the long term. It aims to deliver services and facilities for new residents that are largely within walking, cycling and wheeling distance of development or can be accessed by public transport. This includes schools, open spaces, healthcare provision, play space, and sustainable forms of transport and the delivery of the Sustainable Transport Corridors which will help support the HGGT modal shift target and ensure that people in new developments can live according to 15-minute neighbourhood principles. The IDP also ensures appropriate infrastructure to support

future development in relation to flood risk zones, potable and waste water so that existing communities and businesses are not harmed and future developments are fit for purpose.

Finance

None specific.

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

Governance and Corporate Services

The document is intended to underpin future, supplementary planning guidance, and also reviews of the local plan, which will come before members as and when they are prepared. The revised IDP codifies the requirement for other HGGT partners engage with the council in relation to sites surrounding Harlow.

The revised document also introduces the ability for partners or stakeholders to update the document if required. Monitoring of the MOU Can also now be considered by the senior officer working group reporting to the HGGT board. Other amendments to the document are minor, and don't give rise for concern.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

Housing

This is an important step forward in the governance and development of the HGGT. This will bring much needed homes and investment to the District and its residents.

Author: Neil Euesden, Interim Director of Housing

Strategic Growth and Regeneration

The delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town will be one of the country's largest growth projects extending over more than 20 years. The programme is moving into a delivery phase with planning applications now determined for some of the Gilston developments and the associated infrastructure. It is important that in order to achieve sustainable development, all new proposals are underpinned with appropriate infrastructure to support the growth proposed and reflect the Garden Town Vision.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Chief Executive

Appendices

Appendix A – HGGT Infrastructure Delivery Plan Review

Appendix B – HGGT IDP MoU

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used:

EHDC – East Herts District Council

HGGT – Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
IDP – Infrastructure delivery plan
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
STC – Sustainable Transport Corridor