

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 26 FEBRUARY 2019

REPORT BY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY –  
DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION 2019

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WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

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**Purpose/Summary of Report**

- To agree that the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy is published for a six-week period of public consultation following the May elections; and
- To note that, following consultation and any subsequent revisions to the document, it is intended that the final Transport Strategy will be agreed as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, the preparation of the Gilston Area Charter, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE: To recommend to Council that:**

<b>(A)</b>	<b>The draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy, as detailed in Essential Reference 'B' to this report, be published for a six-week period of public consultation following the May elections; and</b>
<b>(B)</b>	<b>It is noted, that following consultation and any subsequent revisions to the document, it is intended that the final Transport Strategy will be agreed as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, the preparation of the Gilston Area</b>

<b>Charter, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes.</b>
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1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members will recall that an update on the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town was provided in September 2017 (see Background Papers). Since this time work has commenced on a number of different workstreams. This report is focussed specifically on transport strategy work that AECOM were commissioned to undertake in May 2018, working with the Councils<sup>1</sup> across the Garden Town.
- 1.2 Transport has a critical role to play in facilitating housing and employment growth; the housing growth planned for the Garden Town will also have an associated increase in travel demand. The TCPA's Garden City principles state that Garden Cities, or in this case, the Garden Town, will incorporate *"integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport"*.
- 1.3 The Vision for the Garden Town also states that the Garden Town will be sustainable and will include: *"a fully integrated public transport network that connects within and beyond the Garden Town"* and will be *"a place where people are inspired to work locally and encouraged to travel actively"*. It is for these reasons that it was considered critical that a Transport Strategy was prepared for the Garden Town.
- 1.4 The Transport Strategy is intended to be a high level document which sets out the key aims, objectives and principles in relation to movement, travel and transport in and around the Garden Town. A copy of the Transport Strategy is attached at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**

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<sup>1</sup> East Herts Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow Council, Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council

## 2.0 Report

### *Why does Harlow and Gilston Garden Town need a Transport Strategy?*

- 2.1 Planned significant housing growth will fuel an increase in travel demand. Economic growth is a national priority and will be needed to provide employment for the growing population. Transport also has a critical role to play in facilitating housing and employment growth. However, we cannot simply build more road capacity to accommodate this growth.
- 2.2 With increasing travel demand, continued reliance on high levels of single occupancy car use will result in worsening congestion which will constrain growth. Meeting this demand through significant increases in highway capacity will be expensive to deliver, will displace congestion to other locations, and will have significant adverse environmental impacts. Experience shows that new road capacity will soon be filled by additional trips reducing the initial benefits of investment.
- 2.3 Achieving a change in travel behaviours, including reducing the need to travel, and focusing on active travel modes (such as walking and cycling), will help facilitate sustainable growth and have wider social benefits, such as addressing health concerns.
- 2.4 Transport and travel is rapidly evolving and new transport services need to be flexible and adaptable to changing technology, such as real time travel information and electric vehicles.
- 2.5 Public transport will also need to be adaptable to changing market conditions and demands, such as possible longer-term conversion to Rapid Transport Systems (segregated light rail or guided systems such as electric tram or metro systems) or Bus Rapid Transport (high quality, high frequency bus-based equivalent), together with integration between modes and

more demand responsive transport.

- 2.6 The Transport Strategy sets out guidance that will assist the Councils, developers and transport providers to consider and plan for how Harlow and Gilston Garden Town will achieve the challenge of future travel demand linked to planned growth. The Transport Strategy has been prepared to deliver the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision through identifying measures to reduce the need to travel, whilst recognising that travel will continue to be important in our daily lives.
- 2.7 The Transport Strategy sets out three key objectives to:
1. Achieve a target where 60% of all journeys within the new Garden Town Communities<sup>2</sup>, and 50% of all journeys across Harlow, will be undertaken by sustainable modes (including walking, cycling and public transport)<sup>3</sup>.
  2. Ensure mobility options are based on a hierarchy of importance:
    - (i) Reduce the need to travel
    - (ii) Walking and cycling
    - (iii) Public transport
    - (iv) Private vehicles
  3. Support and encourage a culture of active and sustainable travel ensuring all journeys will be efficient and safe.
- 2.8 The planned housing and economic growth for the Garden Town provides a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to deliver a step-change in travel behaviour. Ensuring that transport

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<sup>2</sup> East Herts Council, Harlow Council and Epping Forest District Council are collectively allocating new neighbourhoods to the east, west and south and new villages to the north of Harlow as new communities within the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

<sup>3</sup> Currently 34% of travel within the town is by sustainable modes (see page six of the Transport Strategy).

infrastructure and services can adapt to new technologies, innovative new service models and changing habits is fundamental to ensure long term benefits for the Garden Town.

2.9 The Transport Strategy sets out existing movement challenges and seeks to maximise opportunities in order to create an attractive sustainable transportation network which benefits all members of the community. The Garden Town is well placed to provide a healthy and well-connected environment for existing and future residents and workers, and there is already good infrastructure in place to improve upon.

2.10 To maximise opportunities, the Strategy sets out a series of actions as follows:

- Action 1 – Reducing the need to travel
- Action 2 – Making better use of existing infrastructure
- Action 3 – Supporting and encouraging a culture of active and sustainable travel
- Action 4 – Sustainable transport corridors
- Action 5 – Supporting walking and cycling
- Action 6 – Public transport
- Action 7 – Infrastructure for road based travel
- Action 8 – Anticipating change

2.11 The Transport Strategy has undergone a significant amount of scrutiny during its preparation to ensure that it is fit for purpose. In particular, a draft of the Transport Strategy was reviewed by the Garden Town Quality Review Panel (QRP) on 11 October 2018. The Panel's report is attached for reference at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**.

2.12 The Panel felt that the strategy provides a good high-level statement of intent that it readable and ambitious. The Panel felt however that greater clarity around aims, objectives and actions was required. The final draft Transport Strategy takes account of a number of the Panel's comments. Other more

detailed points will be addressed through the next stages of work (see below) and the Panel has offered its continuing advice.

- 2.13 It is proposed that the Transport Strategy is published for a six-week period of public consultation following the May elections. It is anticipated that consultation will include staffed exhibitions, as well as an online response form/questionnaire. Consultation arrangements will be put in place over the coming months and will be advertised ahead of the consultation.
- 2.14 It is proposed that following public consultation, the final Transport Strategy will be presented to a Garden Town Board meeting in Autumn 2019 and it will then be given final formal approval by the partner local planning authorities, through their formal decision making processes.
- 2.15 Members are also requested to note the intention that the final Transport Strategy will be agreed as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, the preparation of the Gilston Area Charter, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes. This will help to ensure that development proposals will achieve Garden Town ambitions, and that clear parameters are established for future masterplanning and consideration of planning applications across the Garden Town in relation to movement, travel and transport. Prior to and following final adoption of the Strategy, the Local Plan policies for each of the District Councils, along with the transport policies of the County Councils will continue to be used to shape and assess development proposals.

### *Conclusion and Next Steps*

- 2.16 The Transport Strategy will ensure a unified approach to the delivery of the Garden Town, as set out in the respective Local Plans and the Vision for the Garden Town. It provides an

opportunity to support a pattern of development that minimises the need for travel, minimises journey lengths, encourages sustainable active travel, and enables accessibility for all members of the community.

#### 2.17 Next steps include:

- Ensuring the Transport Strategy is considered when preparing masterplans or guidance for development across the Garden Town;
- Securing infrastructure funding , initially in the form of £151m from the Housing and Infrastructure Fund;
- Securing developer funding for infrastructure;
- Developing a delivery plan to produce a detailed programme for delivery of the actions set out in the Transport Strategy.

### 3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

#### Background Papers

District Planning Executive Panel – 21 September 2017:

<http://democracy.eastherts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=151&MId=3236&Ver=4&J=3>

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