

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Project Planning, Management and Delivery Support Update

Report to the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board 31 July 2017

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the proposed Harlow and Gilston Garden Town interim governance arrangements are endorsed and**
- (2) That other update matters are noted.**

Executive Summary:

This report seeks:

- (a) To update members of the progress of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project planning, programme management and project delivery support activities undertaken by Arup since their appointment in June 2017.**

Arup has provided recommendations (see Section 2) on the setting up of a Garden Town Member Board, a Garden Town Officer Steering Group and a Garden Town Project Team. The Member and Officer Boards would be ‘sub-groups’ to the existing Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Boards and would meet on a monthly basis. The existing Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Boards would then move to meet on a two-monthly cycle.

Other updates to note are also set out in relation to:

- Project programming;**
- The preparation of a Sustainable Transport Corridor Concept and Feasibility Study Brief and**
- Establishing a Design Review Panel**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As Members will be aware, on 2 January 2017 the Government announced its support for the Expression of Interest submitted to the Government’s locally – led Garden Towns prospectus on behalf of East Herts Council, Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and Harlow Council. Epping Forest District is acting as lead authority.**
- 1.2 The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Project recently tendered for consultancy support to assist in putting in place suitable and appropriate governance and project**

management arrangements for the Councils to work together efficiently and effectively and to continue to build relationships with external organisations, including infrastructure providers, and local communities.

- 1.3 Arup was appointed in June 2017 to take forward these workstreams and an Inception Meeting was held with the Garden Town Officer Steering Group on 07 June 2017.
- 1.4 The key priorities identified to progress were:
 - a) Development of Interim Governance Arrangements
 - b) Preparation of a project programme
 - c) Preparation of a Sustainable Transport Corridor Concept and Feasibility Study Brief
 - d) Establishing a Design Review Panel
- 1.5 This report provides an update to Members on progress on the above workstreams and seeks approval to move forwards with the proposed interim governance arrangements.

2. Interim Governance Arrangements

- 2.1 Arup is tasked with identifying and considering potential models for the delivery of strategic growth around Harlow drawing on knowledge and experience of recent best practice examples. Arup is drawing from recent experiences in establishing similar joint working and governance arrangements elsewhere in order to deliver cross-boundary strategic growth and is having regard to the outcomes and proposals put forward by ATLAS at the Joint Officer Workshop held on 08 February 2017.
- 2.2 An initial assessment by Arup of various case study examples of existing or emerging Garden Towns has shown a number of common threads:
 - a) **Three tiered approach to governance:** the majority of existing/emerging Garden Towns have three levels of governance – a member advisory board, an officers steering group and a project team led by representatives of the Council or a specially appointed team. In some cases, the member board has decision making powers, but in the majority of cases it is the Executive Board which should act as decision maker.
 - b) **Stakeholder engagement and involvement:** the case studies have shown the importance of integrating inputs from the range of stakeholders which have a part

to play in development of a Garden Town through community groups, developer forums, and integrated approach with infrastructure providers and others etc.

- c) **Utilising existing networks:** many emerging Garden Towns propose to use existing bodies initially before expanding or developing these bodies and groups to meet the needs of the Garden Town. This provides a more efficient approach than establishing wholly new bodies and needing to find availability for these.

2.3 Building on the above, and an understanding of existing governance arrangement within and between the three districts of EFDC, EHDC and Harlow, a governance structure is proposed below. It is recognised that the proposed arrangements may flex as the Project progresses.

2.4 Mirroring the common three tiered approach to governance, it is proposed that the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town would be governed by:

- a) The Garden Town Member Board – Acting as a Sub-Group to the principal Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Member Group it is proposed that the Garden Town Member Board would meet monthly with the principal Board meeting every other month immediately after the Garden Town Member Board meeting
- b) The Garden Town Officer Steering Group - Acting as a Sub-Group to the principal Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Officer Group it is proposed that the Garden Town Officer Steering Group would meet monthly (or more often as required) with the principal Co-Op Officer continuing to also meet monthly given, amongst other matters, the Local Plan progress of the three District Councils
- c) The Garden Town Project Team – this team would be responsible for setting, managing and delivering the workstreams required to facilitate the development of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

2.5 Sitting alongside and underneath these groups would be a series of forums and groups who will feed into the development and growth of the Garden Town, as follows:

- a) The Developer Forum – the existing EFDC Local Plan Developer Forum for strategic sites around Harlow was established (together with its Terms of Reference) alongside the progression of the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan, to provide a basis for ongoing discussions with relevant landowners, site promoters and stakeholders. (Note there is a separate forum for other sites in the rest of the District). The Developer Forum provides a basis for the long term planning and implementation of sites identified for allocation in the Local Plan and provides a basis for the coordination and management of Strategic Masterplans and planning proposals associated with the sites. The Forum could also usefully provide the

appropriate mechanism to discuss the spatial visioning/design charter and sustainable transport corridor workstreams with these stakeholders.

The core membership of the existing Developer Forum comprises

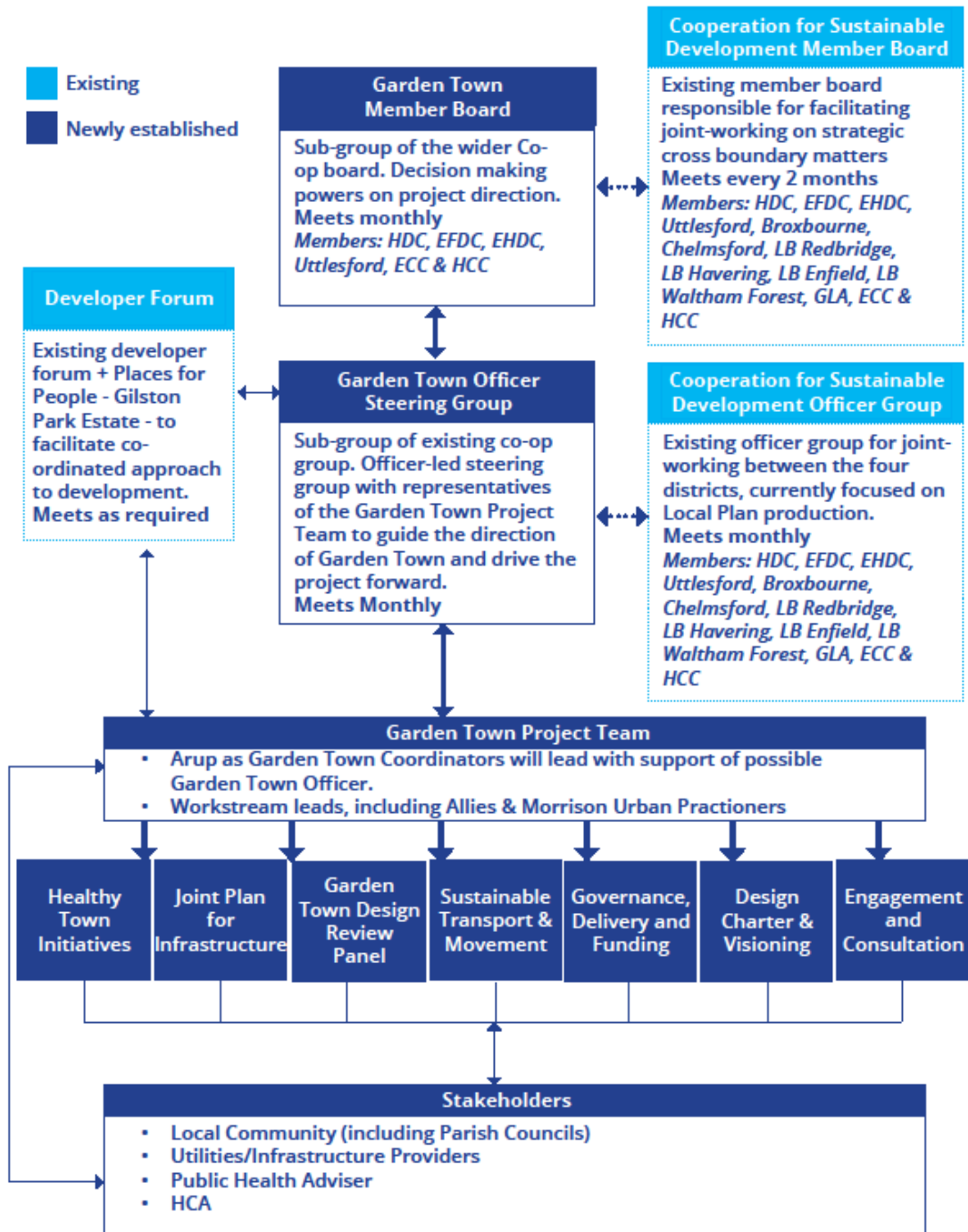
- Promoters / landowners / planning agents of strategic sites around Harlow
- EFDC Officers – including Planning Policy, Development Management, Conservation, Housing, Environmental Health and others as required
- Essex County Council Officers – including Planning, Transport, Education and others as required
- Harlow District Council Officers and;
- East Herts District Council Officers

In addition to EFDC, as noted above, officers from East Herts and Harlow District Councils also attend so to, in part, ensure a basis for the consideration and consistent implementation of utilities and statutory providers' approaches across the Districts.

It is recommended that representatives from 'Places for People' (re: Gilston Park Estate in East Herts) be invited to the existing EFDC Developer Forum (note: the East Harlow site is already represented as the same promoter/landowner already attends for that part of the site within EFDC) to ensure joint planning of the Garden Town.

- b) Workstreams of the Garden Town Project Team (with associated consultant leads)
- c) Stakeholder fora and/or groups

2.6 Figure 1, below shows the interaction between these groups. The remainder of this section summarises the role of each group, and their interactions with each other in further detail.



Garden Town Co-op Member Board

- 2.7 The existing Co-operation for Sustainable Development board (the Co-op board), is a joint member body established in 2014 with elected members from EFDC, EHDC, HDC, Uttlesford District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Broxbourne Council, Chelmsford City Council, LB Redbridge, LB Havering, Enfield Council, Waltham Forest Council and the GLA. Other key bodies and organisations necessary to support the work of the Board, such as Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, City of London (Conservators) and Natural England, the Environment Agency, Highways England, either through direct support/advice or through joint projects are also involved. This body currently has responsibility for administering and facilitating joint-working on strategic cross boundary matters affecting the area. The Chair of the existing Co-op board is rotated, and the Leader of Harlow District Council is the current Chair.
- 2.8 It is proposed that a sub-group of the Co-op board be established to consider issues specifically associated with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - the Garden Town Member Board. It is recommended that this should consist of members from East Herts, Harlow, EFDC, Essex County Council, Herts County Council and Uttlesford (noting that Uttlesford would attend in an 'observation non-voting' capacity and that whilst Uttlesford do not have sites in the Garden Town much of the work that will be undertaken relates to Uttlesford e.g transport, FEMA, SHMA etc). The Garden Town Co-op Board would meet monthly, and as far as possible on the same dates as Co-op Board meetings, to ensure efficiency and maximise availability of members. On the month that the main Coop Board meetings also take place it is recommended that the Garden Town meeting takes place first for an hour and is then followed by the main meeting.
- 2.9 The Garden Town Co-op Board will be responsible for ensuring co-operation between the three Districts and two Counties (with Uttlesford) on the growth of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. In addition, it is envisaged that the body would have decision making powers over the Garden Town project, allowing them to provide strategic project direction, guided by the Garden Town Officer Steering Group and Project Team (see below).

Garden Town Officer Steering Group

- 2.10 In line with the existing Co-op board, an Officer working group also exists, chaired by the Chief Executive of Epping Forest District Council. This working group deals largely with topics relating to the preparation of the Councils' respective new Local Plans, ensuring that cross boundary strategic planning matters are discussed and prepares papers for the Coop Board meeting.

- 2.11 It is proposed that a new, Garden Town Officer Steering Group is established to provide Officer direction for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. This would include Senior Officer representatives from each of the three Districts and two Counties (with Uttlesford to have a watching brief), as well as a representative of the Garden Town project Team (see below). The Garden Town Steering Group would co-ordinate its programme to ensure meetings take place prior to the Garden Town Co-op Board to allow for the outcomes to feed through efficiently to the elected members and decision makers.
- 2.12 The Garden Town Officer Steering Group would have responsibility for guiding the direction of the Garden Town and driving the project forward. In co-operation with the Project Team, they would guide the objectives and vision for the Garden Town; prepare, agree and coordinate the Garden Town work programme; review the outcomes of the individual workstreams; and manage and review positive engagement with developers and communities, including pre-application engagement on strategic planning applications.

Garden Town Project Team

- 2.13 The Garden Town Project team would be responsible for setting, managing and delivering the workstreams required to facilitate the development of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. This team is currently led by Paul Jarvis supported by a team from Ove Arup and Partners. The workstreams shown in the Figure one reflect the priority areas identified at the Joint Officer Workshop held in February 2017 - it is recognised that other important themes such as strategic infrastructure (physical, social and community), education and green infrastructure will also be progressed in parallel as the Project moves forward.

Developer Forum

- 2.14 As set out in paragraph 2.5 above, an existing EFDC Local Plan Developer Forum is already established for the purposes of Local Plan making, which crosses all three districts and includes 'strategic sites' within its remit for discussion. The proposal is to utilise this forum, and to invite 'Places for People' - Gilston Park.
- 2.15 It will also be necessary, as the project develops, to establish strong one-on-one relationships with developers and other delivery partners to ensure they and the Garden Town are working together towards common goals. These individual meetings are to commence shortly.

Stakeholder Groups

- 2.16 As identified from a case study review, the engagement of the wide range of relevant stakeholders will be central to successful delivery of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

2.17 The range of stakeholders, includes the following:

- a) Local Community
- b) Parish Councils
- c) HCA

2.18 Arup is undertaking a wider stakeholder review with the Garden Town District Councils to ensure that any Garden Town-focused stakeholder engagement does not add to further 'consultation fatigue'. The range of stakeholders is evidently much wider than the non-exhaustive list noted above and it will be important to ensure that any Garden Town consultation where possible feeds into existing Local Plan and Neighbourhood Planning exercises.

2.19 It is not proposed that a separate community forum is established, but rather that a programme of community and stakeholder engagement is established to ensure the community feel included in the development of the Garden Town. This may include presentations to Parish Councils, liaison with Neighbourhood Plan groups, drop-in sessions for local residents and the setting up of a website, and possibly newsletter and email list. Community engagement will be particularly important at the early stage for the Spatial Vision and Design Charter workstream, and as the strategic Masterplans are developed.

3. Project Programme

3.1 Having regard to the various project workstreams, Arup has prepared an interim project programme. This is a live document with progress on each workstream to be reported to each Co-operation for Sustainable Development Garden Town Member and Officer Group meetings.

3.2 A summary of key dates / workstreams is as follows:

- a) *Interim Governance and Delivery Structure:*
 - i. Proposal for Initial Sub-Group arrangement(s) presented to Board **26 June**
 - ii. Revised proposal, incorporating comments made on 26 June 2017, reported to Garden Town Officer Steering Group **20 July**

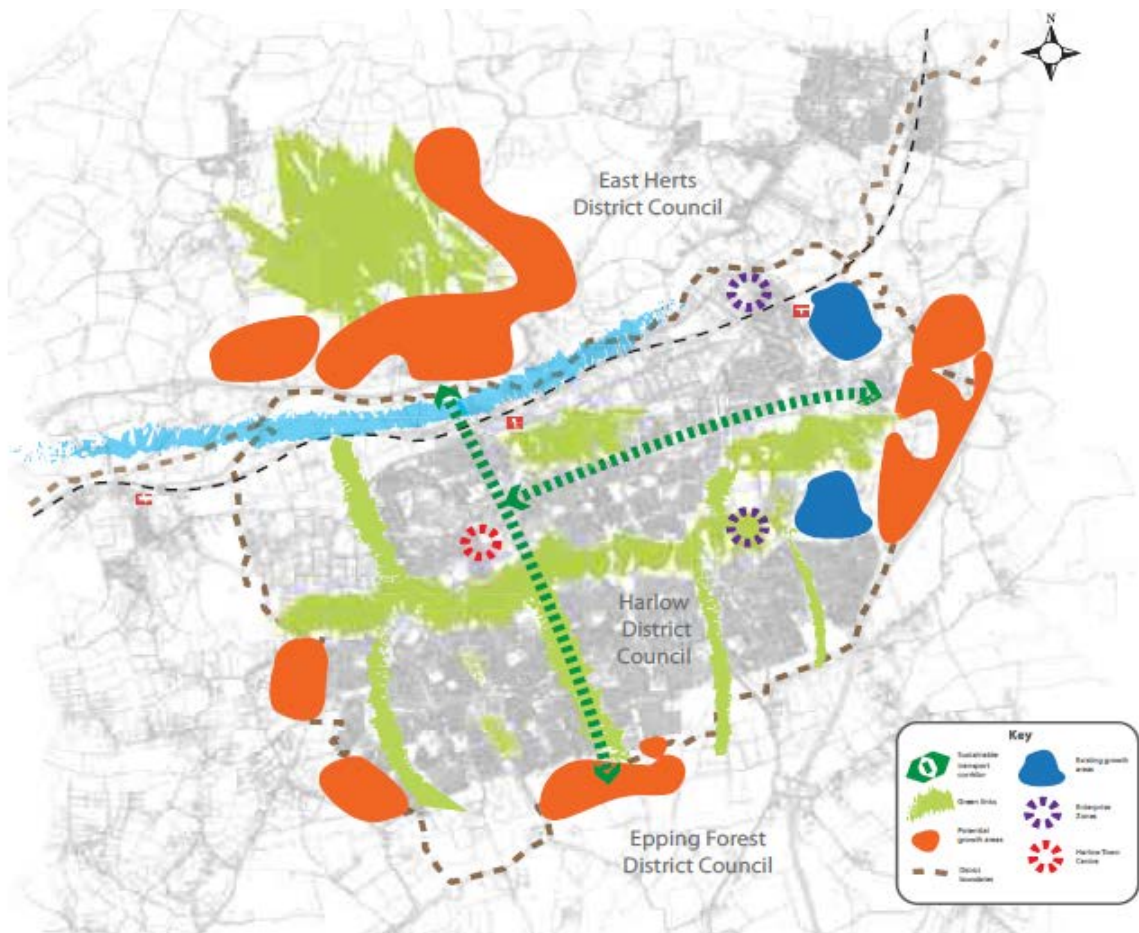
- iii. Reporting to Member Sub-Group **31 July** for sign-off
- b) *Establishing Quality Review Panel:*
 - i. Briefing Note to Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Officer Steering Group
07 September 2017
 - ii. Reporting to Member Sub-Group **18 September**
 - iii. Advertise for supplier to manage panel process – complete by
Sept/October 2017
 - iv. Interviews **October 2017**
 - v. Appointment by **October 2017**
 - vi. Further report to Member Sub-Group **October 2017**
- c) *Brief for Sustainable Transport Corridor*
 - i. Update for the Co-Op for Sustainable Development Member Group **31 July**
 - ii. Tender period complete **September 2017**
 - iii. Interviews **September 2017**
 - iv. Appointment **September 2017**
- d) *Website Templating*
 - i. Officer Sub-Group review of briefing note complete by **September**
 - ii. Tender period for suppliers complete by **September**
 - iii. Appointment **by 31 October**

4. Preparation of a Sustainable Transport Corridor Concept and Feasibility Study Brief

4.1 All three Districts consider transport, and sustainable transport measures (including walking, cycling and public transport) as central to the successful growth of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The Councils share an ambition to create sustainable

transport corridors as part of managing overall travel demand and linking new communities and Enterprise Zones through a choice of transport modes.

- 4.2 As part of this vision, the Councils recognise it is essential to provide a robust and deliverable policy framework to promote and deliver a step change in sustainable travel, and to manage overall travel demand. For example, early delivery of a second River Stort crossing is essential to facilitate a north-south sustainable travel corridor, significant modal shift and wider network benefits to Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
- 4.3 Two indicative Sustainable Transport Corridors are already identified in emerging Local Plans – these run North-South and East-West through Harlow to provide the connectivity required to support growth of the Garden Town. It is expected that these will form the starting point for the consideration of sustainable transport in the area – see the indicative pan below:



- 4.4 Arup is preparing a brief for the undertaking of a Sustainable Transport Corridor Concept and Feasibility Study for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and is liaising with Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners to ensure the Spatial Vision and Design Charter workstream ties in with this Brief. The purpose is to provide recommendations

for an integrated package of sustainable travel infrastructure improvements (and traffic management) in and around the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area.

- 4.5 The study outputs should help to inform an integrated and accessible transport strategy, in line with Garden City principles, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport. It is envisaged that the study will also help to unlock additional transport capacity, which would otherwise prevent economic growth and development. The development of sustainable transport corridors must also be underpinned by consideration of the strategic network of green wedges and green fingers which are set out in Gibberd's original vision for Harlow.

5. Establishing a Design Quality Review Panel

- 5.1 Arup is also tasked with a review of options for the establishment of a Quality Review Panel with the objective of embedding high quality design into emerging proposals in a consistent way across the Garden Town. If, as expected, the Design Review Panel process is successful in raising the quality of design in the planning process and secures development of the highest quality then it is envisaged that the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town model could be adopted across the three Districts as a tool for early engagement as part of the planning process masterplanning and pre-application stages. By engaging at an early stage, design teams and applicants can help to reduce the uncertainty and therefore risk at the decision making stage.
- 5.2 In order to ensure 'placemaking' and a consistent design message across the Garden Town, Arup will be coordinating the Quality Review Panel workstream alongside the preparation of the Spatial Vision and Design Charter that is being progressed by Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners. Design panels are already well established across England at national, regional and local levels and provide an independent, expert assessment of architectural proposals and are now an essential part of the planning process.
- 5.3 Arup is reviewing a number of models and will be reporting on their recommendations.