

# East Herts Council Report

## Executive

**Date of Meeting:** 6 October 2020

**Report by:** Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

**Report title:** Harlow and Gilston Garden Town: Sustainability Guidance and Checklist, draft for consultation

**Ward(s) affected:** Hunsdon

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## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE:

**(a)that the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainability Guidance and Checklist be agreed for a six-week period of public consultation between October and December 2020.**

### 1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable consideration of the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Sustainability Guidance and Checklist and that it be agreed to go forward for a period of consultation. Throughout this report the document is referred to as the 'Guidance and Checklist'. The document is attached as **Appendix 1**.

### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Guidance and Checklist document provides practical and technical guidance on how relevant sustainability indicators and policies (environmental, social, and economic) in the HGGT Vision, HGGT draft

Transport Strategy and Garden Town partner authorities' Local Plans will be applied to new strategic developments in the Garden Town.

- 2.2 The Guidance and Checklist is to be used by applicants and partner authority officers when preparing and discussing masterplans, pre-application proposals, planning applications and the discharge of conditions applications. This will ensure coordinated and integrated consideration of sustainability principles and targets at an early stage across the Garden Town. The Guidance and Checklist is to be applied to major developments (10 homes and above).
- 2.3 Once consultation has taken place and any appropriate amendments made, the document will be reported back for endorsement and become a material planning consideration in the assessment of planning applications for developments coming forward within the Garden Town. It will inform pre-application discussions and assist decision-makers in sustainability matters. The document will also be utilised by HGGT Quality Review Panel reviews to help form the basis of environmental and socio-economic sustainability discussions.

### **3.0 Reason(s)**

- 3.1 The Guidance and Checklist has been prepared in-house by the HGGT team, with input from all partner authorities<sup>1</sup> and external expertise where appropriate. The Guidance and Checklist is intended to provide practical and technical guidance for applicants and officers, in relation to environmental, social and economic sustainability within the Garden Town.
- 3.2 The Garden Town seeks to set the agenda for

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

sustainable living through ensuring growth that will be net carbon neutral by 2030, and building strong and integrated communities across new and existing places.

- 3.3 The Guidance and Checklist relate directly to the principles and indicators within the HGGT Vision, draft HGGT Transport Strategy and the Garden Town Local Planning Authorities adopted and emerging Local Plan policies and SPDs. In particular, the Guidance and Checklist will support the Sustainability SPD being produced by East Herts Council. The Guidance and Checklist will have the status of guidance – and therefore attract less weight in decision making than the SPD, once it is finalised. However it addresses in a more fine grained way, the matters that need to be considered and addressed to ensure that sustainability is achieved.
- 3.4 There has been extensive input from officers from all partner authorities into the draft Guidance and Checklist. It has also been subject to assessment by the HGGT Quality Review Panel and through topic focussed workshops (developers, members, local groups, charities and organisations). Expert advice has also been commissioned from the UK Green Building Council (UKGBC), through the facilitation of two Sustainability Workshops, to review and discuss the draft Guidance and Checklist with over 30 experts in Sustainability in attendance.
- 3.5 Following agreement at this meeting, the Guidance and Checklist will be published for a six-week period of public consultation between October and December 2020. Following consultation and any subsequent revisions to the document, it is intended that the final Guidance and Checklist will be agreed as a material consideration in planning decisions including for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other

development management purposes.

- 3.6 The Garden Town is also aiming to simultaneously consult publicly on the HGGT Healthy Town Framework (this was endorsed through a non-key decision in April 2020).

## **4.0 Options**

- 4.1 The feasible alternative options in this matter include either proceeding with the finalisation of the Guidance and Checklist without consultation or halting further work on the preparation of the document at this stage.
- 4.2 In the case of the first of these options, this would not appear to be an appropriate way forward. Third parties could challenge the content of the document as they would not have been afforded a formal opportunity to comment. As a result, any finalised document could only be assigned less weight than one that has been subject to consultation. Pursuing this as an option would likely undermine the value of the final document.
- 4.3 With regard to the second, halting further preparation work is not a reasonable option, there being no reason to do so. With the value invested so far in the document, there is no apparent reason not to seek to pursue the work to a conclusion.

## **5.0 Risks**

- 5.1 Risks are considered to be minimal. Issues raised through consultation will be subject to technical assessment and decisions made about amendment to the draft document as a result.

## **6.0 Implications/Consultations**

- 6.1 The report seeks endorsement to undertake a consultation exercise.

## **Community Safety**

No

## **Data Protection**

Yes – all information received as a result of the consultation exercise will be handled in accordance with data protection protocols

## **Equalities**

Yes – subject to Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Environmental Sustainability**

Yes – this draft document focusses on measures to be taken, through planning decisions, to address sustainability issues.

## **Financial**

No – there are no direct financial implications.

## **Health and Safety**

No

## **Human Resources**

No

## **Human Rights**

No

## **Legal**

No

## **Specific Wards**

Yes – the document is specifically related to the HGGT area within the Hunsdon ward.

## **7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – Draft HGGT Sustainability Guidance and Checklist

**Contact Member**

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