

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 17 January 2022

Report by: Councillor Linda Haysey – Leader of the Council

Report title: Harlow and Gilston Garden Town: Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP)

Ward(s) affected: Hunsdon and Sawbridgeworth

Summary

- The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is the Garden Town partnership's response to the Government's call to develop a local LCWIP. The LCWIP will assist Highway and Planning Authorities in obtaining funding from government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, sub national transport bodies and developers. The HGGT LCWIP along with other plans, also informs the delivery of sustainable zero emission movement as set out in the HGGT Vision and HGGT Transport Strategy.
- The LCWIP has been prepared in accordance with the process set out by the government and identifies priorities for investment into walking and cycling infrastructure in the Garden Town area. It is recommended that the Council endorses the HGGT LCWIP through noting that it has been prepared and is now in place.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION:

(A) That the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town LCWIP be noted.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2017 the Government set out the need for a standard approach to assess and prioritise walking and cycling schemes. This would ensure that schemes allocated funding were representing value for money and supporting the Government's aspiration of doubling the number of journeys undertaken by walking or cycling. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) process was developed in response to this need.
- 1.2 An LCWIP is an investment plan, subject to resources being made available, that identifies investment priorities (in accordance with the guidance) for new infrastructure which is designed to support a greater number of people making journeys on foot or on cycle. This is the first time the LCWIP approach has been applied in the Garden Town area. It needs to be seen as a document open to review but principally a mechanism to secure funding within the Government's framework.
- 1.3 The LCWIP has considered both the existing urban area of Harlow and the proposed new Garden Communities. It has also taken into account the emerging Harlow town centre master plan, which calls for a step change in the quality of the public realm in the town centre.
- 1.4 The LCWIP links to other strategic transport planning documents, such as the HGGT Vision, HGGT Design Guide, HGGT Transport Strategy, Harlow Cycling Action Plan, Harlow town centre master plan (draft), development proposals and other local initiatives, to ensure its compatibility with other local transport priorities that tackle congestion and enable growth.
- 1.5 The HGGT Transport Strategy sets out the Mode Share

Objective, which states that: *“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 and Gilston Garden Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes.”*. A key principle to deliver on this is to give greater priority across the network and where appropriate to walking, cycling and public transport.

2.0 Process

- 2.1 The preparation of an LCWIP, as set out by the Department for Transport (DfT), follows a very prescriptive and evidence-led approach. This aids the DfT in standardising and comparing schemes across the country and within different contexts. The DfT are increasingly relying on LCWIPs to allocate active travel funding, with some funds only available to bidders that have completed an LCWIP. The evidence from the LCWIP can be used to ensure schemes meet a high cost to benefit ratio which the DfT requires. Essentially, a LCWIP highlights strategic improvements that will get the most people travelling actively and be the best value for money for the Government.
- 2.2 The goal of an LCWIP is to enable the increase in the use of cycling and walking as the mode of travel and identifying the routes and areas where more residents would choose these modes in preference to other means of travel. The LCWIP considers total travel demand regardless of mode, it does not focus alone on existing walking and cycling trips. Cycling and walking networks should be an integral component of a transport system that considers the needs of all users, and connects people with people, places, goods and services.
- 2.3 The prescribed preparation process, set by DfT, includes: determining the scope of the study, gathering the necessary information and data, planning the cycling and walking elements, prioritising the outputs, and integration into the

wider strategic transport programme.

- 2.4 As indicated, the LCWIP has considered both the existing urban area of Harlow and the proposed new Garden Communities.
- 2.5 In relation to Gilston, the LCWIP prioritises the need for investment into the two cycling corridors which have been identified through the consideration of the outline planning applications for Villages 1-6. Those are the route from Eastwick via Parndon Mill into Harlow, and the route along the Fifth Avenue/ Burnt Mill Lane via Harlow Town station and into the town centre. The report sets out options for improvements to the routes which will be used to inform the requirements for delivery as part of any planning approval for the site.
- 2.6 The report does not identify the Gilston area as a priority area for walking improvements. This is because of the criteria on which the assessment is based – considering the current development in the area. The provision of good quality walking infrastructure will be secured however through the emerging master planning work for the area and through the development proposals coming forward.
- 2.7 The LCWIP comprises the following:
- LCWIP Report – **Appendix A**
 - Cycle Infrastructure Recommendations – **Appendix B**
 - Walking Infrastructure Recommendations – **Appendix C**
 - Combined Walking and Cycling Proposals Map – **Appendix D**

3.0 Next Steps

- 3.1 Following endorsement by the HGGT Board at its meeting of 14 December 2021, endorsement is to be secured from ECC

for the HGGT LCWIP as ECC is the lead Local Highway Authority for the majority of the walking and cycling routes identified within the LCWIP. The HGGT Board also sought confirmation that the remainder of the Garden Town partners note the preparation of the report. Following that the LCWIP will be published and be publicly accessible in spring 2022.

3.2 The approved and endorsed LCWIP will be used to:

- Identify short, medium, and long-term investment projects in the cycling and walking infrastructure network.
- Support and or inform the development of Local Plans, HGGT strategies and the HGGT IDP as evidence base.
- Support bids for investment to fund the delivery of the schemes identified.
- Support the negotiation of Section 106 financial contributions or other forms of infrastructure tariffs e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Support and inform the development of master plans and or Planning applications.

3.3 The LCWIP will subsequently be reviewed every three years coordinated by the HGGT partnership. Particular attention will be given to any significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, and as walking and cycling networks mature and expand.

4.0 Options

4.1 There is an option of not noting the preparation of the report. This would likely result in less weight being given to the work when bids for investment are prepared. Given the recommendations for investment in the report are aligned with development proposals coming forward in the Gilston Area as part of the Garden Town, it is not recommended that this is pursued as an option.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Any risks arising through the noting of the LCWIP report are considered to be minimal. The risk of not agreeing to note the report, with regard to future investment, is referred to above.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

Community Safety

Yes – the basis of the LCWIP is to secure investment into walking and cycling infrastructure thereby increasing the safety of the use of such infrastructure and providing attractive and safe healthy sustainable travel opportunities.

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

Yes – by supporting the potential for investment into healthy and active travel the LCWIP has a role to play in securing higher levels of sustainable travel.

Financial

None immediately – but the purpose of the LCWIP is to support future investment opportunities and bids for funding.

Health and Safety

Yes – by supporting into attractive and safe walking and cycling infrastructure.

Human Resources

Yes/No

Human Rights

No

Legal

No

Specific Wards

Yes – Hunsdon and Sawbridgeworth

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

None

Contact Member

Councillor Linda Haysey, Leader of the Council

linda.haysey@eastherts.gov.uk

Contact Officer

Sara Saunders, Head of Planning and Building Control, Tel: 01992 531656. sara.saunders@eastherts.gov.uk

Report Author

Kevin Steptoe, Garden Town Lead Officer, Tel: 07739 285526.

kevin.steptoe@eastherts.gov.uk