

Agenda Item 11

Report to: HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN JOINT COMMITTEE

Title: 'Re-imagining How We Can Travel Differently' – A HGGT Framework (HGGT Modal Transition Delivery Framework)

Report Reference: JC-006-2024/25

Date: 22 July 2024

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Enclosures: Appendix A – 'Re-Imagining How We Can Travel Differently' – A ,
HGGT Framework

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

The HGGT Joint Committee is asked to:

- A. Approve the Framework 'Re-Imagining How we Can Travel Differently' (The Framework) as set out in Appendix A.
- B. Recommend to HGGT Council partners that the Framework is considered in the evidence base for execution of highways and transport planning decisions and developer contributions.
- C. Require the HGGT Council partners to work together to continue to develop an overarching programme plan of key activities required to deliver modal shift, informed by the Framework.
- D. Agree that an update on progress is report to the Joint Committee in Spring 2025.

Executive Summary



1.1 The 5 Council partners have committed to transforming how current and future residents of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town can travel in the future as set out in the Local Plans of the three Local Planning Authorities in conjunction with the Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the two County Councils. This ambition underpins the sustainable growth objectives of the Garden Town and aims to improve the quality of life for the community. The principles of the approach were formally agreed by the HGGT Board through the HGGT Transport Strategy which has been endorsed by each of the 5 Council partners concluding in October 2022.

Appendix A contains the Framework document 'Re-Imagining How We Can Travel Differently' which provides a high-level unfunded approach setting out a range of draft actions and interventions which aim to underpin the objectives as set out in the HGGT Transport Strategy.

The project consultants (ARUP) were commissioned to work with the HGGT 5 Council partners to develop the Framework.

Reasons for proposed Decision:

The HGGT Joint Committee has been formed by the 5 Council partners to develop and approve the HGGT Transport Strategy and oversee the implementation of the Transport Strategy. This includes the delegated function to develop and maintain an overarching programme plan of key activities required to deliver the HGGT modal shift targets.

The Framework will enable the 5 Council partners to programme and plan those initiatives working with the modal shift assumptions in planning permissions for the HGGT sites. It will also assist in seeking funding, where required, from other public and private sources. The HGGT 5 Council partners are also required, as part of the Housing Investment Grant (HIG) funding provided by Homes England, to evidence that progression towards achieving the modal transition target is being made.

Other Options for Action:

It could be determined not to approve the Framework presented at Appendix A and to take no further action in relation to it. This option as a course of action is not recommended. It would not support and enable the development of the 5 Council partners approach to sustainable travel and leave the HGGT Transport Strategy (endorsed by each HGGT Council partner) without further detail on proposed actions. It would also leave landowners, developers, community representatives and other stakeholders without further guidance from the 5 Council partners on the steps towards meeting the agreed modal transition target in the adopted Local Plans. A lack of a coherent modal shift strategy could potentially mean developers will have grounds to argue out of their commitments that should contribute and/or

align to the modal shift target or underperform in relation to it at site level. It would also mean the contractual commitments of HIG to provide evidence on how the mode share targets will be achieved could not be met.

2. Introduction

2.1 The HGGT Transport Strategy was endorsed by the 5 Council partners in October 2022 to give weight in Planning decision-making for the three Local Planning Authorities in conjunction with the Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the two County Councils.

2.2 The Transport Strategy developed the HGGT Vision in respect of the key principles for Healthy Growth through a focus on sustainable movement as set out in the Local Plans. It is also consistent with the principles of the Town and Country Planning Association Garden Community Guidance.

2.3 Alongside the objectives to improve air quality, health and wellbeing and reduce congestion and to deliver sustainable growth for the wider community, the Transport Strategy identifies a primary overarching objective:

'50% of all trips starting and/or ending in the existing communities 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 & Gilston Garden Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes.'

2.4 It was agreed by Members of the HGGT Board that further work would need to be undertaken to refine the Transport Strategy programme, and the Framework in Appendix A, begins to scope out how the mode share objectives could be achieved under different scenarios.

2.5 The initiatives identified in the Framework are unfunded in the same way that the HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Instructure Plans (LCWIP's) and Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) are unfunded plans. The approval of this Framework by the HGGT 5 Council partners will assist officers in securing funding from a variety of sources including developer contributions and Government grants.

2.6 Similar to other documents relevant to transport (e.g. the HGGT Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) and the HGGT LCWIP) the Framework is not a statement of agreed and committed actions to be taken by any or all the HGGT Council partners. It recognises that each community has a range of different challenges and opportunities.

2.7 To accommodate this each partner can mix and match to ensure that the benefits of any of the potential future proposals – their costs, and any other implications of implementation and delivery – are appropriate to justify a decision to commit resources and execute.

2.8 The Framework also recognises that any future interventions will need to be assessed and measured against wider economic and social contexts.

3. HGGT Sustainable Travel Infrastructure – Achievements to Date

3.1 The HGGT 5 Council partners have already achieved several significant milestones in progressing the required infrastructure to support the delivery of a growing community as set out in the three District Councils Local Plans. These include:

- Junction 7A on the M11 - £76 million
- £171 million Housing Infrastructure Grant (HIG) to forward fund travel infrastructure and establishment of the Rolling Infrastructure Fund (RIF) for future infrastructure delivery
- Planning permissions granted for a new Eastern Stort Crossing & enhanced Central Stort Crossing
- Improvements to Edinburgh Way/Howards Way junctions
- Gilston S106 Heads of Terms securing for the Garden Town initiative include:
 - £42.1 million contribution for delivery of the Sustainable Transport Corridors
 - £6.58 million for bus services including serving Harlow destinations
 - £12.23 million for Sustainable Transport and Innovation initiatives
 - £3.3 million for Stort Valley enhancements including cycle routes
 - £0.5 million (feasibility) and £5.1 million (implementation) for Harlow Town station northern access plus £88,000 for enhanced cycle parking
 - £0.275 million Bus stop upgrades
- £2.62 million to deliver new cycling infrastructure in Harlow from the LCWIP
- Breaking ground on 2 km of the new sustainable transport corridor in Harlow 'North to Centre' and completion of the Cambridge Rd junction scheme improving access to Templefields industrial area
- New transport interchange at Harlow Town Centre to be constructed by 2025/26

4. Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) Network

4.1 The development of a network of Sustainable Transport Corridors (STCs), and a rapid bus transport system, are a key enabling factor in improving air quality, reducing congestion and enabling the planned growth of the Garden Town as set out in the Transport Strategy and the Local Plans. The STCs will also provide additional safe walking and cycling routes.

- 4.2 The North to Centre STC section, connecting the Gilston Area development with Harlow town centre, is the most advanced and construction has begun, delivered by Essex County Council and funded by the HIG grant from Homes England.
- 4.3 Design work has continued for the remaining network and programme risks associated with the timing, funding and delivery have been discussed with the HGGT 5 Council partners.
- 4.4 The service that will run on the STCs will need to be agreed with the 5 Council partners as well as the developers of the strategic sites and other stakeholders.

5. Purpose Of The 'Re-Imagining How We Can Travel Differently' Framework

- 5.1 The 5 Council partners have committed to transforming how current and future residents of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town can travel in the future as set out in the Local Plans of the three Local Planning Authorities in conjunction with the Local Transport Plans (LTPs) for the two County Councils. This ambition underpins the sustainable growth objectives of the Garden Town and aims to improve the quality of life for the community. The principles of the approach were formally agreed by the HGGT Board through the HGGT Transport Strategy which has been endorsed by each of the 5 Council partners concluding in October 2022.
- 5.2 The HGGT Transport Strategy established a clear set of mode share objectives and a set of principles which are aligned to the planned delivery of 23,000 new homes across the Garden Town area.
- 5.3 The teams focussing on the new garden community neighbourhoods around Harlow, all at different stages of planning and delivery, have been considering and responding to these principles, with the Gilston Villages the most advanced. However, existing communities must be supported through a range of travel options which are complimentary to the success of any of the new modal transition options and interventions currently being delivered as part of the Garden Town initiative. To date there has been less focus on the existing communities and what those options might be and how they might need to be funded.
- 5.4 The Framework sets out a range of possible interventions which could, subject to funding and further detailed assessment and engagement, be implemented to achieve the objectives set out in the Transport Strategy. It seeks to set out how the overarching mode share objective could be achieved under different scenarios through the prioritisation of initiatives. It also provides basic estimates of the scale of contribution different actions could make towards achieving the mode share objective. The Framework provides evidence for the highways and transport authorities to consider in implementing and reviewing the Local Transport Plans which form the statutory transport plans covering the Harlow Gilston area.

6. Approach To Developing The Framework

6.1 The Framework has been prepared to guide decision makers in understanding the types of interventions that may contribute towards the achievement objectives of the HGGT Transport Strategy. As part of the development of the Framework, stakeholder engagement has been at the centre of the drafting work and the contributions made by partners have been a critical influencing factor in the Framework. Significant levels of engagement have been undertaken with the 5 Council partners at officer and senior leadership level, with elected members, developers, and other key stakeholders.

6.2 The approach taken by the consultants to produce the Framework included three stages:

- Diagnostic Review – comprising of a discovery exercise on work completed to date
- Prioritisation and Scenario Testing -setting out interventions and scenario tested considering additional wider benefits
- Delivery Pathway – includes a roadmap for potential interventions

7. Next Steps

7.1 Once the Framework is endorsed the next steps are:

- Conduct further work to better understand the scope, cost, deliverability of a priority set of these initiatives.
- Progress the work of the HGGT Active Travel Engagement Officer

Implications - Resource Implications:

None at this stage of framework approval but significant additional resources will be required to be able to deliver further scope and subsequently deliver specific Framework interventions.

Equalities and Diversity - Equality Impact Assessment:

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?	No
Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy or decision	To provide an overarching framework for pursuing Modal Transition interventions for HGGT to achieve its strategic transport objectives
What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?	NA

Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? 	No – it is only a framework at this stage
Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?	No – it is only a framework at this stage
Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?	No – it is only a framework at this stage
Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council’s other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?	Yes – it seeks to integrate with those
What does the information tell you about those groups identified?	N/A
Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?	N/A
If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:	Extensive consultation took place on the Transport Strategy that sets the policy context for this Framework. Further consultation will be undertaken on initiatives prior to implementation as required.
Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.	
Age, Disability, Gender, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy/maternity, Marriage/civil partnership, Race, Religion/belief, Sexual orientation	Assessment of impact on equality groups will be made as part of progressing individual initiatives.
Does the EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No

HGGT Vision Assurance

1. What principles of the HGGT Vision does this seek to achieve?

Healthy Growth through a focus on sustainable movement

2. What steps have been taken to ensure the HGGT Vision is embedded into the project?

The Framework sets out a range of potential actions which aim underpin the objective of sustainable travel, improving air quality and reducing congestion. The Framework also provides a long-term vision of the types of interventions that may contribute towards the achievement of the modal objectives.
