

# HGGT JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Monday 10 February 2025, 6.30 pm - 7.05pm  
Council Chamber, Harlow Civic Centre, Water Garden, Harlow CM20 1AJ

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors D Swords (Chairman) S Boulton (Vice-Chairman), C Whitbread, B Crystall and L Wagland
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor(s) N Bedford
<b>Officers In Attendance:</b>	Osian Evans (HGGT), Sara Saunders (HGGT), Jennifer Gould (Strategic Director and Chief Operating Officer), Jonathan Schifferes (ECC Head of Housing), Tanusha Waters (HGGT), Colin Haigh (HCC Director of Growth), Gary Woodhall (Team Manager - Democratic & Electoral Services), Therese Larsen (Democratic Services Officer) and Amanda Apcar (Principal Planning Lawyer)

## [A RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS AVAILABLE FOR REPEATED VIEWING](#)

### 28 WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Joint Committee had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### 29 SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitutions were noted:

- Councillor C Whitbread had been appointed for Councillor Bedford.

### 30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

### 31 MINUTES

**Resolved:**

- 1) That the minutes of the HGGT Joint Committee held on 22 July 2024 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 32 MATTERS ARISING AND OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There were no matters arising or outstanding actions from the last meeting of the HGGT Joint Committee held on the 22 July 2024.

### 33 REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE JOINT COMMITTEE

No requests to address the Joint Committee had been received.



### 34 QUALITY OF LIFE MONITORING STRATEGY AND UPDATED ACTION PLAN

Adeola Pilgrim, HGGT Quality of Life Lead, introduced a report on Quality-of-Life Monitoring Strategy and Updated Action plan.

The Quality-of-Life Indicators are performance indicators that are used to measure and evaluate health and wellbeing. The HGGT Joint Committee was tasked with monitoring reports on Quality-of-Life indicators in Harlow and the new neighbourhoods. By undertaking Quality of Life Monitoring, changes in quality of life can be monitored and the outputs from this can inform future policy and planning decisions.

Quality of Life Monitoring is the process of measuring responses to the same set of Quality-of-Life questions over a period of time consistently and observing any changes in the feedback. As new data is collected over time, it will identify positive or negative trends in people's responses - thus showing whether there is a positive or negative trend in residents' perceived quality of life. The outputs from this can inform future policy and planning decisions, such as for social value, stewardship, engagement, and design quality; indicate priorities for investment; as well as monitor performance of development overall, in relation to quality of life.

The primary purpose of the QoL Monitoring Strategy therefore is to enable future quality of life assessments against the 2022 baseline data – and then again against future years, including with future communities - so that quality of life data, aggregated over geographical areas and time, can inform policy and planning decisions to support better quality of life for the community.

The Monitoring Strategy has been developed through workshops and discussions with officers from across the partnership representing a range of service areas. The Strategy consists of nine main steps requiring different levels of input, expertise and resources.

The HGGT Quality of Life Action Plan outlines specific tasks and goals, with recommendations for implementation, and is to be read alongside the Monitoring Strategy. The Action Plan was formulated based on the Quality-of-Life Foundation's recommendations to HGGT for how to improve and measure quality of life and the desire to turn these into actions for HGGT and potentially partners going forward. With sections A, B, C, S and D, previously agreed by the HGGT Board in February 2023, these have since been updated to reflect progress and next actions. Additional actions have also been recommended to support QoL monitoring as well as the recommendations previously agreed by the HGGT Board.

The Quality-of-Life Action Plan is to be reviewed and updated at least annually, to report on progress and reflect any recommendations which arise as a result of QoL monitoring. With Your Quality-of-Life consultations recommended to take place every 3-5 years, the Monitoring Strategy itself is reviewed with each consultation to ensure it remains relevant.

It will be important for each of the 5 Council partners to consider how their approach to community engagement aligns with the QoL Framework as there is the potential for the Quality-of-Life Consultation to replace or reduce the length of other surveys.

The Quality-of-Life project is split into 4 phases:

Phase 1 covered the YQoL Consultation and Monitoring Baseline which have now been completed. The approval of the Monitoring Strategy and updated Action Plan will round off Phase 2 of the project.

Phase 3 is currently progressing and involves integrating Quality of Life monitoring indicators and consultation data into a digital consultation hub - the HGGT Data Dashboard. The dashboard is the platform where Quality of Life Monitoring will be consulted on, reported and



shared back with the community. This will enable better sharing of consultation data across HGGT and partner boundaries, and supports better engagement, transparency and accountability with key stakeholders. Several outputs from Phase 3 have already been delivered or being progressed. The integration of QoL monitoring data into the HGGT Data Dashboard is now complete and expected to be accessible to the public by early 2025.

Phase 4 of the project will be defined through the updated Action Plan and is expected to include a programme of both internal and external engagement covering elements such as user training on the data dashboard and future YQoL Consultation. Although the next YQoL consultation is not anticipated until 2026, some elements such as aligning further strategies to QoL indicators can be progressed now, enabling further benefits to be experienced sooner.

The allocated budget for Phase 3 has been used up, with a few key tasks outstanding. Phase 4 is also currently unfunded, although, several elements can be progressed in the interim, as HGGT in-house resource allows. The project will therefore benefit from further budget allocations and funding opportunities. A key outcome the project is seeking to achieve is scalability, for increased and accelerated impact, which could support future funding opportunities.

The Joint Committee commented on and agreed the recommendations in the report:

- The Joint Committee commented on the importance of reviewing, consulting and keeping the Joint Committee up to date on any challenges in the various workstreams.

**Resolved:**

- A. That the HGGT Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be agreed.
- B. That the updated HGGT Quality of Life Action Plan, as set out in Appendix B of the report, be agreed.
- C. That authority be delegated to the Acting HGGT Director to make minor amendments to the final HGGT Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan as required for final publication, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee, be agreed.
- D. That the recommendation to use HGGT Quality of Life Monitoring Strategy and Action Plan to benchmark and align the approach to community engagement across the Garden Town area, be agreed.

**35 HGGT WATER LANE STRATEGIC SITE - "PROPOSALS FOR THE WAY FORWARD"**

Peter van der Zwan, Principal Planning Officer, introduced the report on HGGT Water Lane Strategic Site – “Proposals For The Way Forward”.

The HGGT Vision is for early community engagement that brings local people into the conversation about the planned growth across the HGGT area. The Water Lane Stakeholder Engagement Proposal aims to enable the 5 Council partners and the developers of the Water Lane strategic site to communicate effectively with communities and stakeholders in a way that intends to build trust and ensures that the delivery of the Garden Town is the result of genuine collaboration. It will also assist in monitoring the performance of the development overall, in relation to Quality of Life.



The Developers understand that any development proposal for the Water Lane strategic site needs to be designed to deliver benefits for current residents and businesses of both Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils as well as integrate with existing services and communities. They are therefore proposing to embark on a programme of stakeholder engagement collaboratively with HGGT. The engagement will assist in understanding the needs of the broader community, how those needs can be met in line with policy requirements, as well as seeking to address concerns that residents may have about the new development.

The proposed approach to engagement is supported by the HGGT Quality of Life Framework as it would provide a baseline for measuring the social impacts of growth and change in the area. It would also help establish community-led stewardship by building relationships and social capital with local communities and increasing community influence in planning decisions. It would therefore be beneficial to link any proposed consultation with the HGGT Quality of Life Indicators.

This round of stakeholder engagement will be in 'listening mode' and is not intended to present masterplans or other proposals. Rather, feedback from these discussions will help inform and shape the masterplanning process. The expectation is that the programme will engage existing Parish Councils, Ward Members, community groups and representatives including resident groups and associations, and local businesses as a minimum. The opportunity to develop a Community Panel which puts local people at the heart of decision[1]making would also be explored.

This phase of the project is crucial for advancing proposals to develop the HGGT Water Lane strategic site. The Developers envisage that early engagement with stakeholders would help align development proposals with the needs of local residents and businesses which would in turn demonstrate the wider benefits to the community.

Following the decision of the Joint Committee, a project plan will be prepared collaboratively between the Developers and the HGGT partners, setting out a programme of events and agreed milestones. This would enable the stakeholder engagement to commence in January 2025 as proposed.

The Developers have also agreed to appoint and work in partnership with a third-party engagement consultant to help facilitate the stakeholder engagement process. This would ensure that the project receives the attention and expertise necessary for a successful implementation.

If approved, the Water Lane Stakeholder Engagement Proposal will lead to more informed decision making and better outcomes and will also enable the delivery of the HGGT Water Lane strategic site to advance to the next phase.

The Joint Committee commented on and agreed the recommendations in the report:

- The Joint Committee commented on how important it was to liaise with residents, developers and Councillors from the start.
- The Joint Committee noted that effective communication would be key to build trust and genuine collaboration with residents and developers.

#### **Resolved:**

- A. That the Water Lane Stakeholder Engagement Proposal as set out in Appendix A of the report, be endorsed.



- B. That any proposed consultation with the HGGT Quality of Life Indicators is to be linked, be agreed.
- C. That delegated authority to the Acting HGGT Director to finalise the consultation arrangements and programme as may be required, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Joint Committee, be agreed.

### 36 HGGT 3-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

Osian Evans, Acting HGGT Director, presented the HGGT 3 Year Business Plan (2025-2028) is set out in Appendix A. The three areas of the plan that require approval are the strategic objectives, the financial plan, and the annual programme of enabling work for 2025/26.

The strategic objectives section includes delivery themes and 3-year objectives for each of the key workstreams in the enabling programme of work. This section connects the Vision with the Programme's initiatives and is also a requirement stipulated in the IAA.

The financial plan assumes, for the purposes of modelling, that contributions are maintained at £120,000 per Council partner for 2025/26 and maintained at £150,000 per Council partner for subsequent years. It is important to note however - that the contributions from each Council partner are diminishing year on year. The HGGT Annual Programme of Work 2025-26

The HGGT Programme of Co-ordination and Enabling Work 2025/26 has been created and refined by the Executive Officers' Group with support from HGGT Lead Officers. It can be found at Appendix A with commentary found at Section 5.

The HGGT officers assessed the co-ordination and enabling work required to meet the HGGT agreed delivery themes as set out in the Business Plan.

This shows that, assuming £120,000 contribution from the 5 Council partners, income covers staff and running costs, as well as committed contracts, leaves no reserve to fund enabling new initiatives.

The Joint Committee commented on and agreed the recommendations in the report:

- The Joint Committee commented that securing finance was especially important with the changes due to happen in local government.
- The Joint Committee noted that they will continue to lobby Central Government for funding.

#### Resolved:

- A. That the HGGT 3 Year Business Plan (2025-2028), be approved.
- B. That the proposed 2025/26 HGGT Programme of Work set out at Appendix A of the report, be approved.
- C. That the HGGT 5 Council partners contribute £120,000 per partner for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A of the HGGT Business Plan, be agreed.
- D. That the Strategic Objectives and 2025/26 Annual Programme of Co-ordination & Enabling Work, specifically with alignment to the HGGT vision, be noted.



### 37 HGGT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT REPORT

Osian Evans, Acting HGGT Director, presented the HGGT Programme Management Report. This report provided the Joint Committee with oversight of progress against its agreed programme of work for 2024/25 which aims to progress delivery of its HGGT Vision.

This report provides the HGGT Joint Committee with key reporting benchmarks setting out at Appendix A the progress of the 2024/25 work programme noting the baseline programme agreed at the Joint Committee meeting held on 22 July 2024.

This approach to programme management will enable the Joint Committee to meet its formalised governance and audit responsibilities and to respond to key issues and emerging risks.

2024/25 Key delivery themes:

- Delivering the Garden Town Vision of quality, beautiful and sustainable places
- Enabling the Infrastructure Foundations for Growth
- Maximising and Accelerating Delivery with a focus on outcomes by 2025
- Ensuring our Governance is Fit for the Future

2024/25 programme priorities for the HGGT partnership:

- Enabling the HGGT Strategic Sites to come forward
- Enabling Achievement of HGGT Modal Transition Target
- Demonstrating and engaging with the community on the benefits of growth
- Delivery of the long-term stewardship arrangements

Central Government Funding has been made available to date to support the work of the HGGT partnership. This is the result of annual bidding rounds and while the funding is both welcome and essential, this approach creates uncertainty in planning for enabling and delivery work. Officers of HGGT will continue dialogue with HGGT partners and Government for future arrangements in an attempt to establish multi-year revenue funding agreements. Each council partner considers contribution to the HGGT partnership as part of the annual budget setting.

The Joint Committee commented on and agreed the recommendations in the report:

- The Joint Committee commented that with multiple sub-programmes it was very important to have robust governance on project management, in order to deal with future issues and risks.
- The Joint Committee also noted that with multiple sub-programmes it becomes important to keep cost forecasts for different work streams under control.

#### Resolved:

- A. That the Programme Management Report, as set out in Appendix A of the report, be noted.

### 38 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other business for consideration by the Joint Committee.





**39 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The Joint Committee noted that their next meeting would be on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 at 6.30pm.

**40 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Exclusion:** To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
15	EXEMPT HGGT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT REPORT	3

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

**41 HGGT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Osian Evans, Acting HGGT Director, presented the exempt continuation of the HGGT Programme Management Report.

The Joint committee were informed that the first product in the Integrated HGGT Programme Dashboard was the 5 Year HGGT Master Programme which shows the key delivery activities taking place over the next 5 years in the Development Sites, Infrastructure and Wider Regeneration Sub Programmes.

The second product featured in the Integrated HGGT Programme Dashboard was the Level 0 Strategic Risk register, which contains the top 10 risks in the programme, their risk rating and the mitigating actions associated with them.

The top 3 programme risks were of particularly high importance for comment from the five council partners. Under existing HGGT governance, they are expanded upon in this report.

These risks are:

- Delivery of Gilston planning permissions, Section 106 Agreement & HIG Spend.
- Modal Transition Implementation & Delivery Plan for the STC's
- Land Assembly Complexities

The Joint Committee commented on and agreed the recommendations in the report.

**Resolved:**

- A. That the HGGT Master Programme for Delivery featured in the HGGT Level 0 Integrated Programme Dashboard Appendix A of the exempt Programme Management Report, be noted.
- B. That the top 10 programme risks and proposed mitigation actions in the Level 0 Strategic Risk Register featured in the HGGT Level 0 Integrated Programme Dashboard in Appendix A of the exempt Programme Management Report, be noted.

