

Report to: HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN JOINT COMMITTEE

Title: HGGT Programme Management Report

Report Reference: JC-015-2024/25

Date: 01 April 2025

Report Author: Osian Evans - Acting Director Harlow & Gilston Garden Town

Enclosures: Appendix A – 2024/25 HGGT Programme of Work

1. Recommendations/Decisions Required

1.1 The HGGT Joint Committee is asked to:

- 1.1.1 Consider and comment on the Programme Management Report, as set out in Appendix A, providing progress updates against the agreed HGGT 2024/25 annual work programme.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The purpose of the Joint Committee is to provide unified leadership to deliver the ambitious spatial growth proposals set out in the Local Plans of Epping Forest, East Herts and Harlow District Council, supported by Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils and to align and maximise opportunities for new and existing residents and communities.
- 2.2 The HGGT Joint Committee holds the responsibility to deliver the agreed HGGT Vision to promote healthy, sustainable communities and co-ordinate and facilitate the delivery of 16,000 new homes in the HGGT by 2033, and 7,000 new homes in the years after that, along with associated transport, community, and environmental infrastructure.
- 2.3 This report provides 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.

3. Reasons for proposed Decision



- 3.1 To adhere to governance procedures set out in the Terms of Reference of the Joint Committee for the HGGT Joint Committee to have oversight of the HGGT Master Programme.

4. Other Options for Action:

- 4.1 Not to receive programme reporting information. This option as a course of action is not recommended. Oversight is required to mitigate risks and maintain quality of decision-making and delivery amongst the five Council partners and the HGGT Team.

5. Introduction

- 5.1 This report provides the HGGT Joint Committee with key reporting benchmarks setting out at Appendix A the progress of the 24/25 work programme noting the baseline programme agreed at the Joint Committee meeting held on 11 June 2024.
- 5.2 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.

6. Background

- 6.1 The overarching strategic objective of the HGGT Work Programme is to co-ordinate and enable the delivery of 16,000 homes by 2033, along with associated infrastructure, delivering the Garden Town Vision, principles and guidance that has been agreed by the five Council partners.
- 6.2 The HGGT Work Programme is developed from across the five Council HGGT partnership in line with the **strategic objective, delivery aims, and programme priorities** agreed by the Joint Committee as set out below:

6.2.1 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

6.2.2 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

7. Delivery Highlight Updates

7.1 The following updates are provided for the HGGT strategic sites; the Housing Investment Grant (HIG) and the 2024/25 HGGT Programme of Work:

8. Strategic Site Updates

8.1 **Latton Priory:** A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is in place and an extension of time to determine the planning application has been agreed by the developers to EFDC until 25/04/25. Objections have been received to the scheme as submitted, including from HGGT and partner councils, which highlight some significant omissions in relation to the delivery of appropriate infrastructure including but not limited to transport. It is expected that the developers will respond to these formally. There is ongoing liaison with the Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board (HWE ICB), on the preferred location for a primary healthcare facility/ies to support the proposed development.

8.1.1 **Water Lane:** There is an allocation in the EFDC Local Plan for a minimum of 2,100 homes, a new primary school, local centre and strategic natural greenspace. A new Planning Performance Agreement for masterplan work is in the process of being agreed and signatories include the developer consortium, EFDC, HDC and ECC. The STC Connector Route Study for the STC connector from Water Lane Masterplan Area into the Pinnacles has been published. The site developers are due to implement a programme of stakeholder engagement to support the master planning process (Item 9 at HGGT Joint Committee, 10 February 2025).

8.1.2 **East of Harlow:** This strategic cross-boundary site includes an allocation in the Harlow Local Development Plan for 2,600 homes and an allocation in the EFDC Local Plan for 750 Homes. The allocation is for a mixed-use development including a Hospital Health and Wellbeing Campus in the EFDC portion of the site. HGGT partners have drafted an East of Harlow Masterplanning Guidance Supplementary Planning Document which was endorsed by the HGGT Board in December 2023 and adopted by EFDC on 28 May and HDC on 12 September 2024. The site continues to await appointment of a lead master developer.

8.1.3 **Gilston Villages:** Following the conclusion of the s106 Agreement, outline planning permissions for the Villages 1-6 and Village 7 development proposals were granted

in January 2025. Master planning activity is now the main focus of work. Once these are approved, reserved matters applications for initial parcels of site development (RMAs) will follow shortly afterwards.

- 8.1.4 **Harlow Town Centre – Arts & Cultural Quarter:** The Ex-Occasio House site demolition has been completed, and site cleared. Secured delivery partner of site via Harlow Regeneration Partnership. Full planning permission granted in April 2024. Further detailed designs have resulted in design changes. Procurement for the rest of the site is currently underway with expressions of interest complete and tender exercise via National Framework Partnership progressing with appointment expected early 2025.
- 8.1.5 **Harlow Town Centre – Broadwalk:** Contractor appointed, and works have begun. Construction to take place from August 2024 and scheduled completion June 2025. DLUHC had approved project adjustment request, confirming £1.6m funding for Market Square. Market Square proposals public consultation completed and informing detailed design, RIBA Stage 3 designs completed Autumn 2024 and start on site Spring 2025, complete December 2025.
- 8.1.6 **Harlow Town Centre Interchange & Hub STC Work:** Demolition of toilets, kiosk and Terminus House footbridge completed. Negotiating terms for full Design and Build JCT Contract, due to complete Winter 2024. Value engineering complete, the s.73 application has been approved by the Local Planning Authority. Planning application for the temporary bus station in Post Office Square was approved in September 2024, and this is now operational, which includes temporary stands, a waiting room, an information kiosk and the site links to the N2C STC that is underway. Construction on the permanent new Town Centre Interchange is due to start in imminently and complete Spring 2026.
- 8.1.7 **Walking and Cycling:** Construction on a new pedestrian and cycle route from the Town Centre to Pinnacles is due to be completed by November 2025 (ahead of schedule). Another route from the Town Centre to Churchgate Street/East of Harlow is currently in the design phase and Active Travel England funding, administered by ECC, will see early delivery of specific local improvements on the route in the next year.

8.2 Housing Investment Grant (HIG)

- 8.3 **Gilston HIG Programme:** Gilston area planning approvals now enable Places for People to move ahead with implementation of the Central Stort Crossing (CSC) granted planning permission in 2022. Initial site clearance and ground investigation has commenced. Essex County Council continues to implement the Burnt Mill roundabout to Town Centre element of the north to centre STC. To date £23,057,348 has been

claimed and been paid out by Homes England. The current HIG spend for 2024/25 is £25m.

8.4 Stort Valley Crossings: As part of the HIG delivery programme, there are two key projects to mitigate any increase in traffic across the Stort Valley between Gilston and Harlow due to housing growth across the Garden Town. Both crossings are approved under a single planning permission. The first one, called the Central Stort Crossing will enhance the existing A414 river Stort crossing with a significant increase in capacity for sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and buses. CSC construction has commenced enabling works, and completion is programmed by 2028. The second one, called the Eastern Stort Crossing, will increase general traffic capacity and provide an additional link into the Templefields area. Completion is scheduled for 2032.

8.5 North to Centre STC: Work has commenced on the North to Centre (Sustainable Transport Corridor) STC. It is the first stage of a wider network of enhanced routes to provide more sustainable modes of transport across the Town. It will link the Town Centre Interchange with the rail station and the expanded Central Stort Crossing and provide the opportunity for quick sustainable travel between Gilston and the Town Centre as the most direct route into Gilston will be a sustainable only mode access. The programme is estimated to complete in late 2025.

8.6 Cambridge Road Link: The Cambridge Road junction is the first project to be delivered as part of the HIG programme and is both an early enabler for the Eastern Stort Crossing but also provides the benefit of providing an alternative route for HGV and other traffic using the Templefields industrial area and diverting traffic away from Edinburgh Way. Work on Cambridge Road Link is now complete, despite initially being opened legal disputes meant it had to be closed again for a short period, but it is expected to open permanently in the near future following resolution of land transfers.

9. 2024/25 HGGT Work Programme Updates

9.1.1 Modal Transition Plan: The 5 Council Partners agreed to work together to continue to develop an overarching programme plan of key activities required to deliver modal transition, informed by the Framework. A progress update is provided at the HGGT Joint Committee on 1 April 2025.

9.1.2 Parking Guidance: The Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) Parking Guidance documentation has been approved by EPOA Chief Officers and sent to all Essex LPAs who will make their own decisions on adopting the guidance. The Parking Guidance has now been published in the Essex Design Guide.



- 9.1.3 **Data Dashboard:** The prototype data dashboard was recently presented to EOG (Executive Officers Group) and received positive feedback. Development has also commenced on a Quality of Life (QoL) Data Dashboard and User Guide, which has been reviewed by the QoL team. The project is now looking into incorporating some data sets such as pedal power GPS data and some Modal Shift monitoring data sets.
- 9.1.4 **Bike Hire Scheme:** An external advisor has been appointed to carry out the Phase 2 feasibility study to inform the ambition to introduce a bike hire scheme across the Garden Town area, piloting initially in Harlow, subject to approval and funding.
- 9.1.5 **Harlow Train Station Study:** Weston Williamson was commissioned to develop an opportunities and constraints study that examines the potential to make the Grade II Listed Station and its environs suitable for an expanding community with the sizeable housing and employment growth anticipated by the development of HGGT. The study is now complete and HGGT and key stakeholders are considering the next steps.

10. Implications

10.1 Resource Implications:

- 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 Partner Council considers contribution to the HGGT partnership as part of the annual budget setting.

11. Equalities and Diversity

11.1 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 budget and programme information to deliver the aims of the HGGT Joint Committee
What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (i.e. decommissioning or commissioning a service)?	Provide oversight of HGGT Programme and progress.

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? 	Yes - contributes to the delivery of the HGGT project to deliver 23,000 new homes and associated infrastructure in and around Harlow which will affect existing and future residents.	
Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?	No	
Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?	No	
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?	No	
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:	The work of HGGT has been subject to public consultation and will continue to be so in the future.	
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	N/A	
Does the EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high	No	See comment above

HGGT Vision Assurance

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

The objective of the HGGT Programme is to deliver the HGGT Vision.

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

The HGGT Programme ensures that the individual projects remain aligned to the HGGT Vision.

APPENDIX A

2024/25 HGGT Programme of Work – progress

		2024										2025		
Programme Item		April	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Sustainable Mobility	Modal Transition Delivery	LCWIP Refresh												Scoping
		Bus & Operational Services - Enhanced Bus Partnership						Bus Summit		Develop Operational Plan				
		Shared Mobility - Bike Hire	Feasibility report finalised					Feasibility Stage 2						
		Future Transport Review Group					Procure				TRG Recommendations			
		Active Travel Behavioural Change (Sustrans)		Onboard	Embed									
		Modal Transition Delivery Framework	Take forward prioritised initiatives as per delivery framework											
		Parking Guidance for Garden Communities and Large Scale Development						Present to EPOA						
		Harlow Town Rail and Access Improvements						Procure			Develop			
Policy and Strategy	IDP Update 2024		Endorsed											
	IDP Refresh 2026 Scoping												Scoping procurement brief	
Infrastructure and Delivery	Design Guide Refresh										Procure	Prepare Report		
	Land Assembly and CPO		Continued Delivery of the Land Assembly Programme											
Placeshaping & Community Engagement	HGGT Stewardship Charter		Consult			Joint Committee	Embed							
	HGGT Strategic Stewardship Options		Umbrella Body Update & Options Report			Review and Refine								
	Communications		Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Endorse Plan	Publish	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	
	HGGT Data Dashboard and Insights (Local Digital Fund)		Testing Digital Dashboard Solution			Implementation					Supplier Procurement		Consultantion & Guide	
	Citizenlab Engagement Platform		Continued Monitoring and Evaluation of the Citizenlab Platform and Adjusting Where Needed											
	QRP		Ongoing drumbeat of QRPs											
	East of Harlow			SPD EFDC & HDC Adopt										
	Latton Priory		Publish Design Code											
Governance	HGGT Joint Committee		Establish Joint Committee			Operationalise Joint Committee								
	PMO & Master Programme		Scope Milestones			Maintain								