

Report to: HARLOW AND GILSTON GARDEN TOWN JOINT COMMITTEE

Title: HGGT Director Recruitment and Appointment

Report Reference: JC-014-2024/25

Date: 01 April 2025

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Enclosures: Appendix A – Job Description and Person Specification

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

The HGGT Joint Committee is asked to:

- A. Note the progress for recruitment of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Director as set out within this report**
- B. Endorse any final steps of recruitment which remain at the time of Joint Committee sitting**

Executive Summary:

Following the departure of Naisha Polaine in December 2024 as HGGT Director, the partnership are in the process of recruiting into this position on a 2 Year Fixed Term basis. The intention is complete recruitment subject to finding a suitable candidate and onboard by June 2025.

As per the partnership's Inter-Authority Agreement Epping Forest District Council are the Accountable Body and employing authority of the HGGT Director on behalf of the partnership.

Reasons for proposed Decision:

The role of HGGT Director is pivotal to the successful coordination and delivery of a significant housing and infrastructure programme across five Council partners. The Director will oversee the delivery of 23,000 new homes along with transport, community, and environmental infrastructure.

Other Options for Action:

1. Proceed without appointing a Director – however this will create a leadership void for the HGGT programme.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the departure of Naisha Polaine as HGGT Director in December 2024, the partnership is progressing with recruitment for a two-year fixed-term appointment.
- 1.2 Epping Forest District Council, as the Accountable Body, serves as the employing authority for the HGGT Director on behalf of the partnership under the Inter-Authority Agreement.

2. Background

- 2.1 The appointment of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Director has a pivotal role. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is a once in a generation programme being delivered across five Council partners to co-ordinate and enable the delivery of 23,000 new homes along with associated transport, community, and environmental infrastructure. The programme has commenced delivery of new transport infrastructure and the first significant planning application of 10,000 homes has been approved.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 The Recruitment Brief is as per below:

“Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is once in a generation programme being delivered across five Council partners to co-ordinate and enable the delivery of 23,000 new homes along with associated transport, community, and environmental infrastructure. The programme has commenced delivery of new transport infrastructure and the first significant planning application of 10,000 homes has been approved. The individual should:

- *Be a natural leader who can be both inward and outward facing with council and political stakeholders, site developers, communities and businesses*
- *Bring experience of working collaboratively across council organisations on major initiatives in a rapidly moving environment*
- *Bring proven experience of delivering similar scale housing growth and associated transport, community environmental infrastructure projects*
- *Be able to inform how the programme governance should evolve over time and lead the team into a potential new delivery vehicle*
- *Possess a good understanding of central Government structures and processes and funding programme*
- *Bring experience of interpreting relevant policies including an understanding of what amendments or additional work may be required to deliver sustainable growth”*

- 3.2 The supporting detailed Job Description is included in Appendix A

3.3 The partnership have appointed a recruitment specialist to provide specialist search and selection support for this role.

3.4 Recruitment timeline:

Date	Action	Status
December 2024	Partnership agree 2 year fixed term appointment for HGGT Director	Complete
January 2025	Partnership agree specialist search and selection support	Complete
WC 3 rd February 2025	Accountable Body (EFDC) appoint specialist search and selection support	Complete
WC 18 th February 2025	Recruiter finalises candidate welcome pack for advertising coverage across online marketplace. Direct outreach has also commenced via search specialist.	Complete
WC 16 th March 2025	Closing date	
WC 16 th March 2025	Longlist meeting held to review specialist recommendations of candidates to take forward to interview. Interview scheduled.	
WC 24 th March 2025	Interviews held over course of one day (pre booked). Candidates attend two sessions on the day: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st session - Executive Officer stakeholder panel (interview 1) • 2nd session – Joint Committee Member Panel (interview 2) • Post interview sessions the Executive Officer stakeholder panel and JC Member Panel come together to agree preferred candidate. 	
WC 1 st April 2025	Offer made by Accountable Body to agreed candidate on 2 year fixed term employment	
June 2025	HGGT Director in post	

Implications:

Resource Implications

There are no additional financial implications. The role of the HGGT Director Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is captured within the existing budget.

Equalities and Diversity

Equality Impact Assessment

The recruitment process is being carried out in line with the fair and legal recruitment processes.

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?	Yes
Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy or decision	To ensure the Council's compliance with its duty under the Localism Act 2011.
What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?	Update the Pay Policy Statement which is a statement of fact.
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? 	Employees, however the Pay Policy Statement is not a mechanism to change remuneration or policy. It is a document which sets out what the pay and terms and conditions are for employees.
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:	N/A
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	The Pay Policy Statement is a statement of fact and there is no impact on any protected groups. Any proposed changes to remuneration will be subject to further assessment	
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Does the EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high	No	See comment above
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HGGT Vision Assurance

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

Supporting the Councils to deliver against the Garden Town Vision and core principles, to achieve high-quality places to live, work and visit.

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

Progress meetings held with the chair, panel members and Council representatives to regularly update on recruitment process to ensure any appointment of an individual aligns with the HGGT Vision.

Appendix A – Job Description and Detailed Person Specification

Director - Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Job Description and Person Specification

Purpose

1. To lead the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Partnership to maximise the delivery of the allocated spatial growth initiative, in 4 new neighbourhoods and within the existing town of Harlow, of 23,000 new homes with 16,000 by 2033.
2. To co-ordinate, negotiate and broker relationships between the 5 Council Partners¹ of HGGT, elected Members and officers, to ensure that agreement on a shared HGGT Partnership position is reached on the strategic direction and implementation of the growth initiative in line with the HGGT Vision and policies.
3. To be the Senior Responsible Officer for the HGGT Joint Committee including support and briefings for the HGGT Chair.
4. To work with the HGGT Joint Committee to take the HGGT governance to its next iteration including an options study for future delivery models.
5. To ensure a rolling Business Plan for HGGT is in place to provide co-ordination and enabling activity to facilitate the HGGT spatial growth. To secure agreement for the Business Plan by the HGGT Joint Committee, and to implement its proposals.
6. To lead the HGGT Core Team and the 'in-kind' HGGT officers employed by the partner authorities to deliver the HGGT Business Plan and ensure appropriate governance and oversight arrangements are in place including PMO structures.
7. To work closely with Government agencies, Local Authorities and stakeholders, including local communities and businesses, infrastructure providers, landowners and/or site promoters, developers and potential investors to maximise the delivery of the HGGT initiative as set out in the HGGT Vision and policies.

Key Accountabilities

Governance

1. Be the SRO for the HGGT Joint Committee ensuring delegations are implemented and support and briefings provided for the HGGT Chair.

¹ East Herts District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow Council, Essex County Council and Hertfordshire County Council

2. Be the principal contact for the HGGT Accountable Body (currently EFDC) and ensure legal, procurement, regulatory, reporting and governance standards are met including the terms of the HGGT Partnership Agreement, the 'Inter Authority Agreement'.
3. Maintain a HGGT Master Programme and Risk Register for the HGGT Initiative presented to the HGGT Joint Committee for oversight and mitigation.
4. Provide the leadership and strategic advice to the HGGT Partnership, both elected Members and Officers, to maximise delivery of housing, economic growth, environmental, strategic infrastructure, regeneration initiatives and community engagement in line with the HGGT Vision.
5. Implement further governance reviews of the HGGT Partnership including any technical studies required to progress governance into alternative delivery models.

Finance

1. Noting the HGGT model is an annualized commissioned-service model, to identify and secure funding to support the project each year and ensure that any funding gaps are identified and addressed well in advance of task/activity initiation.
2. Manage the HGGT operational budget and provide regular updates to the HGGT Joint Committee.
3. Seek opportunities for external funding for the HGGT initiative, developing and submitting funding bids as required.

Delivery

1. Ensure that there is an annual Co-ordination and Delivery Workplan which anticipates priority interventions required to deliver the overall Master Programme of the HGGT Initiative.
2. Ensure that the range of required HGGT plans and strategies are co-ordinated and implemented across the HGGT Partnership, (i.e. the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Transport Strategy, Modal Shift Implementation Plan)
3. Provide leadership for the HGGT Partnership to influence and respond to masterplans and formal planning responses.
4. Provide senior level support to the LPA's in s106 negotiations and planning applications, to ensure that contributions towards required HGGT infrastructure are maximized and a partnership position agreed with developers.
5. Co-ordinate and lead the HGGT Partnership to deliver essential infrastructure, at the right time, for the new settlements and the existing town of Harlow including provision

of the network of Sustainable Transport Corridors, essential to delivering modal shift in the Garden Town.

6. Oversee all legal land assembly arrangements to ensure delivery of the project including CPOs where required.

Communications and Engagement

1. Provide an externally visible profile of HGGT locally, regionally and nationally to attract funding, investment and awareness. Public speaking will be required.
2. Influence and enthuse Government, community and key stakeholders about the scale, purpose, ambition and benefits of HGGT to build active engagement and support.
3. Maintain and implement the Annual HGGT Communications and Engagement Plan.
4. Ensure that the HGGT website is informative, accessible and updated and HGGT's social media presence is further developed and expanded.
5. Develop and implement community engagement programmes working collaboratively with the HGGT Partnership, developers, Voluntary sector, Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Planning Groups and including the Your Quality-of-Life benchmarking studies.
6. Deliver focused behaviour change programmes to support the sustainable travel mode shift objective to support the planned HGGT growth.
7. Establish effective and coordinated stewardship and endowment arrangements and processes for the Garden Town neighbourhood sites and their future communities.

Leadership and collaborative working

1. To Lead the HGGT Partnership and drive collaborative working across all 5 Council partners of HGGT, the developers of the strategic sites and the private and voluntary sector delivering for the community.
2. To lead and Chair the HGGT Executive Officer Groups to ensure there is effective cross-boundary joined up working between the 5 Council Partners of HGGT and support partners to resolve issues collaboratively.
3. Ensure that there are regular informal briefings for Officers and elected Members on key matters relating to the HGGT.
4. To lead the HGGT Core Team and the 'in-kind' HGGT officers employed by the partner authorities delivering the annual HGGT workplan and ensure effective and inspirational team building and development activities across the HGGT partnership.
5. To lead the PMO structure ensuring that effective programme governance is in place to deliver work to time and on budget.

6. To provide the intelligent client role for externally commissioned studies and report to further the work of HGGT.
7. Ensure effective arrangements are in place for joint working with developers and their teams through the HGGT Developer Forum.

Person Specification

Skills/Knowledge/Attributes

Education	<p>Graduate or demonstrable equivalent work experience.</p> <p>Formal management or project or programme management training or demonstrable equivalent work experience.</p> <p>Professional qualification.</p>
Experience	<p>Successful strategic leadership in an organisation of comparable scale and complexity.</p> <p>A demonstrable track record of leading, motivating and inspiring large multi-disciplinary teams to achieve strategic objectives.</p> <p>Experience of community-based placeshaping, the delivery of inclusive growth, economic development and regeneration projects.</p> <p>Experience of delivering significant housing and infrastructure projects including establishing delivery vehicles.</p> <p>Demonstrable experience of working successfully with partners to achieve objectives.</p> <p>A track record of working to manage conflicting national and local priorities.</p> <p>Evidence of building and maintaining organisational reputation and profile.</p>

Knowledge & Skills	<p>Ability to establish positive relationships with key stakeholders at all levels, including Elected Members, Partners, Staff, Developers, Residents and Local Businesses that generate confidence and respect.</p> <p>A thorough knowledge and understanding of the current issues facing local government.</p> <p>Possess a high degree of political sensitivity and commercial understanding.</p> <p>A good understanding of the strategic use of technology for consultation and engagement purposes.</p> <p>Good understanding of the Local Plan process and planning policy and development management fields as well as sustainable transport.</p> <p>Strong negotiation and influencing skills.</p> <p>Strong problem solving skills with the ability to make sound and rational judgments based on evidence, creating solutions that are sustainable, inclusive and future focused</p> <p>Strong inter-personal and communication skills, including the ability to consult, negotiate, persuade and influence others.</p> <p>Outward looking perspective and strong advocacy skills.</p> <p>Strategic thinker who has the ability to roll sleeves up to get the job done.</p>
Behaviours	
Trust	<p>Able to demonstrate personal conduct, integrity and credibility that inspires confidence in members, employees, customers, partners and others.</p> <p>The ability to act as an inspirational role model, lead, manage, empower, nurture talent, and motivate employees.</p>

	Self aware and understands how own style and behaviour impacts on the performance of others.
One Team	<p>The ability to communicate and gain ownership of a clear vision and direction.</p> <p>Enthusiastic, energetic and inspirational leadership. Strong emotional intelligence and resilience.</p> <p>Successfully lead teams and achieving performance and results through them.</p>
Performance	<p>Strong focus on outcomes.</p> <p>Proactive and tenacious in approach.</p> <p>Be commercially astute, identifying business opportunities, showing financial awareness and cost control.</p>
Innovation	<p>Good judgement, strong analytical skills and the ability to use data and information intelligently and innovatively.</p> <p>Keep abreast of good practice, trends, innovative ideas across the public and private sectors.</p>
Customer	<p>Demonstrate a strong customer focus.</p> <p>Demonstrate a strong personal commitment to quality and cost effective public services, informed by customer and community involvement.</p>
Other Requirements	<p>Ability to attend meetings outside normal working hours on a regular basis.</p> <p>Able to attend meetings at partner organisations and across the district where public transport does not exist or is limited.</p>

End