

East Herts Council Report

Leadership Team

Date of meeting: 17 June 2025

Report by: Councillor Vicky Glover-Ward – Executive Member for Planning and Growth

Report title: Gilston Area Monitoring framework

Ward(s) affected: Hunsdon, Sawbridgeworth;

Summary –

Policy DEL4 of the East Herts District Plan 2018 requires that the Council produces an action plan in relation to the monitoring of the Gilston Area development. Officers have therefore developed a Monitoring Framework to set out what will be monitored and how, and this paper summarises the purpose of the Framework.

The Framework will be used in the production of an annual Gilston Area Monitoring Report, the first of which will be due in January 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE to recommend to Council that:

a) The Gilston Area Monitoring Framework, attached at Appendix A, be endorsed.

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of the Gilston Area Monitoring Framework as a basis upon which annual monitoring reports will be produced on the progress of the Gilston Area development.
- 1.2 To seek endorsement for the creation of a new review group comprising representatives from East Herts and Hertfordshire County Council, in addition to those required in the S106

agreement, to ensure the coordination and oversight of the various monitoring activities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Policy DEL4 of the District Plan requires the preparation of an action plan against which annual monitoring will be prepared.
- 2.2 Planning permission was granted for the Gilston Area outline applications by the Development Management Committee in February and March 2023. In resolving to grant planning permission, members expressed a desire for the Council to have a responsibility in overseeing progress of the development and added to the resolutions that "Officers report back to the Committee in 12 months' time in relation to the subsequent monitoring of the development unless there was a constitutional reason why this was not possible."
- 2.3 This report describes how officers intend to take this forward.

3.0 Reasons

- 3.1 The Council granted planning permission on 9 January 2025 for 10,000 homes and supporting community infrastructure, which includes two major new roads and bridges. The Gilston Area development is of a scale and nature previously unseen in East Herts and the monitoring of this development is therefore important for many reasons.
- 3.2 The site will take over thirty years to construct and will eventually be home to over twenty thousand new residents. The impact of construction will be felt by current residents in the vicinity of the site and beyond, particularly when construction starts on the major road and bridge infrastructure. The current community are

therefore predominantly concerned with understanding what will be delivered and when, and how their daily lives will be affected by construction activities.

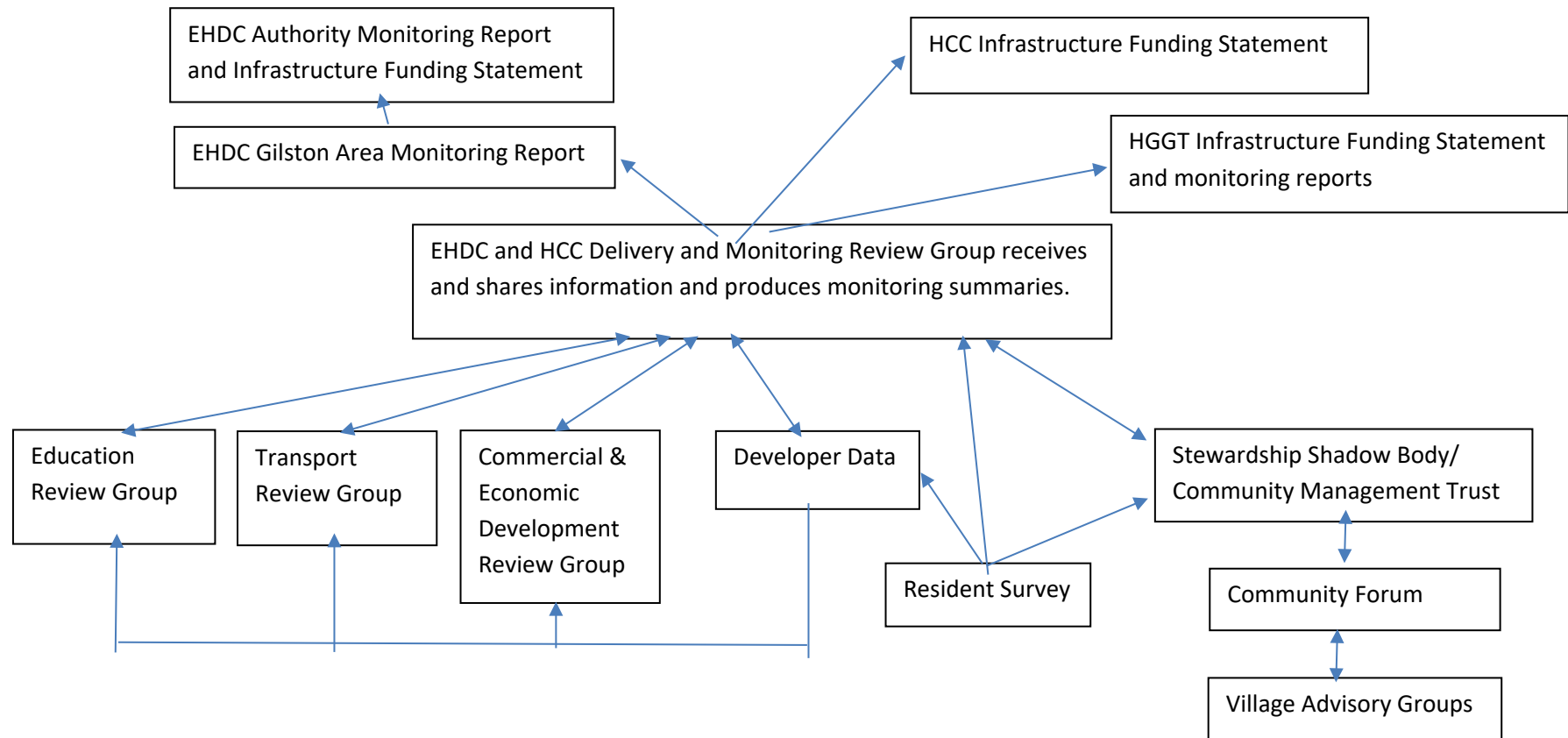
- 3.3 As local planning authority we have a policy obligation to meet. The Council is a party to the S106 Agreement along with Hertfordshire County Council and the two developers Places for People and Taylor Wimpey. The S106 Agreement contains significant monitoring obligations for the regular provision of data and information to assist in decision-making relating primarily to education provision, transport and travel planning and economic development. There are also many triggers and milestones associated with the delivery of on-site infrastructure and the payment of financial contributions towards the provision of off-site infrastructure.
- 3.4 The S106 places obligations on East Herts Council to undertake monitoring and maintain a record of costs associated with the monitoring and administration of the S106 Agreement. This obligation extends to Hertfordshire County Council in their role as authority for transport, education, adult and children's services and library service areas.
- 3.5 Monitoring information will be gathered from various sources. Primarily data will be provided by the developers, but over time the number of delivery bodies will increase, each generating information that will require collation and sharing with necessary stakeholders. At least three Review groups will be established with a focus on transport, education and economic development.
- 3.6 Close collaboration will continue between officers at East Herts and Hertfordshire County Councils through a wider Delivery and Monitoring Review Group. This group will enable regular liaison across East Herts and Hertfordshire County Council for other specialisms not covered by the S106 Review Groups, such as affordable housing, construction management and delivery programmes. Given the timescales of the development the

monitoring will span several district plan-making periods and will need to respond to changes in governance at the County and District levels. The group will therefore provide a means for liaising on changes to plans and policies, regulations and guidance relevant to the development and any updates that may be required to the monitoring baseline as a result.

- 3.7 The Shadow Stewardship Body has been established comprising representees from existing parishes, the developers and the Councils. This will evolve into a Community Management Trust, which over time will comprise more community representation. As the new community grows, residents will also contribute valuable information relating to the quality of places through the Village Advisory Groups (under the Stewardship trust) and resident questionnaires. Figure 1 below, sets out the roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders in monitoring the Gilston Area development.
- 3.8 It is therefore important that there is a mechanism for the collation of information to assist in understanding and reporting of relevant information to stakeholders involved in managing the delivery of the development over time. The first step is to produce a framework to provide a basis for regular reporting. The objectives of the Monitoring Framework are as follows:
- To provide a mechanism for tracking the progress of the development throughout the planning processes and build out period to help ensure delivery of homes, infrastructure and mitigations in accordance with the required development milestones and triggers
 - To set out the objectives, targets and indicators against which the development outcomes, will be monitored, measured and evaluated
 - To provide a record of delivery

- To provide clarity on how the development will be monitored, what methods will be used, which organisations/ stakeholders will be involved in the process and who will be responsible for what
- To set out the Councils' approach to how information about the progress of the development will be publicised and shared with local communities and other key stakeholders.

Figure 1 - The roles and responsibilities of partners and stakeholders in monitoring the Gilston Area development



- 3.9 Once the Monitoring Framework has been agreed an annual monitoring report will be produced. It had originally been anticipated that key information would be also included in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report; however, it is not currently clear what format this document will take in the future. This is because the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 has set out a requirement for a clearer, more focused approach to monitoring, including the use of a template to standardise the way in which this data is prepared and presented. The specific details and requirements will be set out in new regulations which are yet to be published. Once these have been published the Council will need to review how future monitoring information is presented, including on the Gilston Area. In the meantime, a separate report on the Gilston Area will be produced and reported to Members on an annual basis.
- 3.10 The annual Gilston Area Monitoring Reports will be published on the Council's website so the information is readily available to interested parties.
- 3.11 A copy of the Gilston Area Monitoring Framework is attached at **Appendix A.**

4.0 Options

- 4.1 The Council could choose not to create a monitoring framework. Regardless of whether a Monitoring Framework is produced and agreed, Officers are legally obliged to carry out monitoring under the legal obligations of the S106 Agreement. The terms of the planning permissions require annual reporting of progress of the development, but the resulting monitoring exercises would likely be disjointed and harder to administer moving forward.

5.0 Risks

- 5.1 To not produce a monitoring framework or action plan would mean non-compliance with the District Plan policy DEL4.

5.2 A disjointed or uncoordinated approach to monitoring may have resource and officer time implications, or risk missing important information.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 The Monitoring Framework and subsequent monitoring reports will be made available on the Council's website and the Gilston Area Team Leader will continue to meet with the Leader, Portfolio Holder and ward members on a regular basis to provide regular updates on progress in addition to the annual reporting.

Community Safety

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

Data Protection

There are no data protection implications arising from this report. Subsequent monitoring activities undertaken under the remit of the Framework will adhere to necessary data protection rules or will be anonymised.

Equalities

There are no direct equality, diversity, or inclusion implications in this report.

Environmental Sustainability

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, including the provision of homes, commercial development and infrastructure in a sustainable manner. The framework will be a means for the Council to monitor the achievement of these objectives through the Gilston Area development.

Financial

The S106 Agreement makes provision for the payment of an annual financial contribution towards the monitoring of the S106. The monitoring of matters outside the S106 obligations will require Officer time and resource.

Health and Safety

There are no health and safety implications arising from this report.

Human Resources

There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Human Rights

There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Specific Wards

Hunsdon, Sawbridgeworth

7.0 Background papers, appendices, and other relevant material

7.1 Appendix A – Gilston Area Monitoring Framework

Contact Member

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