

East Herts Council Non-Key Decision Report

Date: 7 January 2026

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

Report title: Gilston Area Annual Monitoring Report – January 2026

Ward(s) affected: Hunsdon, Sawbridgeworth

Summary

- To seek approval for the publication of a report pertaining to the annual monitoring of the Gilston Area project as required by the approved Gilston Area Monitoring Framework July 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECISION: That:

- The contents of the Gilston Area Annual Monitoring – January 2026 Report be noted; and**
- The Gilston Area Annual Monitoring Report – January 2026 be published to the Council's website.**

1.0 Proposal(s)

- 1.1 That the Council publish an Annual Monitoring Report for the Gilston Area project relating to planning milestones and s106 legal agreement obligations occurring during the twelve months following the grant of planning permission for the two Gilston Area outline applications (9th January 2025).

2.0 Background

- 2.1 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. Planning permission was granted for the Gilston Area Outline applications by the Development Management Committee in February and March

2023 subject to the completion of a S106 legal agreement. 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.” In February 2024 officers reported verbally to the committee advising that as preparation of the legal agreement was ongoing there was nothing to update on subsequent monitoring and reiterated the commitment to produce a Monitoring Framework in accordance with Policy DEL4 of the East Herts District Plan 2018, which requires that the Council produces an action plan in relation to the monitoring of the Gilston Area development, and to accord with the Council’s resolution.

- 2.2 Following the completion of a S106 legal agreement covering both planning applications in a single document, the Council granted planning permission on 9 January 2025 for the two planning applications comprising a total of 10,000 homes and supporting community infrastructure, which includes two major new roads and bridges.
- 2.3 Officers subsequently developed a Monitoring Framework to set out what will be monitored and how. The Framework was agreed by the Council in July 2025 and informs the content of this Annual Monitoring Report.

3.0 Reason

- 3.1 The Council is committed to preparing an annual report to monitor the progress of the Gilston Area development and achievement of key planning process milestones and legal obligations.

4.0 Options

- 4.1 To not produce an annual report. Despite the additional resource implications of officer time on undertaking regular monitoring and preparing reports, the scale of the development is unprecedented in East Herts and is subject to considerable scrutiny by the community and objectors of the development. To fail to comply with the terms of the resolutions to grant planning permission would leave the Council open to legal challenges. This is therefore NOT RECOMMENDED.

4.2 To produce an annual monitoring report is RECOMMENDED for the reasons given in this report.

5.0 Risks

5.1 Minimal risks as the Council is complying with the above obligations.

6.0 Implications/Consultations

6.1 As listed below.

Community Safety

No

Data Protection

No

Equalities

No

Environmental Sustainability

This report relates to the monitoring of a major development, the environmental considerations of which have been thoroughly considered through the planning consideration process and in Officer Reports provided under planning applications 3/19/1045/OUT and 3/19/2124/OUT.

Financial

Yes – The Council will receive financial contributions towards the cost of monitoring the development under the terms of the S106 legal agreement for planning applications 3/19/1045/OUT and 3/19/2124/OUT.

Health and Safety

No

Human Resources

No

Human Rights

No

Legal

Yes – The Council is a signatory to the S106 legal agreement for planning applications 3/19/1045/OUT and 3/19/2124/OUT.

Specific Wards

Yes – Hunsdon and Sawbridgeworth

7.0 Background papers, appendices and other relevant material

7.1 Gilston Area Annual Monitoring Report – January 2026

Contact Member

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