

Forward Plan reference number: FP/190/10/21

Report title: Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy	
Report to: Councillor Lee Scott - Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	
Report author: Mark Doran – Director for Sustainable Growth	
Date: 17/05/2022	For: Decision
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County Divisions affected: Harlow North, Harlow South East, Harlow West, North Weald and Nazeing, Epping Forest	

1. Everyone's Essex

- 1.1. Everyone's Essex, our new organisation strategy, sets out four strategic aims and 20 commitments. Within the strategic aim of Strong, inclusive and Sustainable Economy, it includes a commitment to deliver and maintain high quality infrastructure and support a growing economy, delivery of new homes and support people to live healthy and active lifestyles. Everyone's Essex also makes a commitment to support people to switch to more sustainable travel options so that we can achieve our targets for net zero carbon emissions.
- 1.2. Consistent with achieving these commitments, this paper sets out a proposal to agree the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Transport Strategy. The proposed Transport Strategy has objectives and principles which promote the greater use of sustainable and active travel. This Transport Strategy also supports the change to lower carbon emitting vehicles. The Transport Strategy provides positive support for the County Council's climate change objectives. The Transport Strategy will also be used to seek investment into infrastructure in the area. With a mix of programmes and measures it has the potential to change travel behaviour over a period.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Agree the HGGT Transport Strategy in Appendix A of this Report.

3. Background and Proposal

- 3.1. Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town by the Department for Homes, Communities and Local Government in January 2017 and will comprise of new and existing communities in and around Harlow. The HGGT is a growth and regeneration project. The Garden Town itself encompasses Harlow together with new strategic development sites to the north, east, south and west of Harlow, including seven new villages to the north of Harlow. The

Local Plans for the area promote a total of 16,000 homes which are planned to be delivered by 2033 and a further 7,000 homes following 2033.

- 3.2. ECC is working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council and East Hertfordshire District Council HGGT Partnership to deliver HGGT. Each of the local authorities has a representative on the HGGT Board (Board) that provides strategic oversight and direction for the delivery of HGGT. ECC's representative is Councillor Lesley Wagland, Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning.
- 3.3. The HGGT Vision is for an adaptable, healthy, sustainable and innovative development and this includes sustainable transport. The HGGT Partnership have developed the HGGT Transport Strategy to complement the HGGT Vision and sets out ambitions for sustainable movement. Following a public consultation led by HGGT, the Board approved the HGGT Transport Strategy on 12th October 2021 and seeks approval of it from each local authority in the Partnership.
- 3.4. The Transport Strategy sets out the aims and ambitions of ECC and the other HGGT Partnership members for transport for the HGGT. The objectives of the Transport Strategy are for 50% of all journeys starting and/or ending in Harlow Town and 60% of trips starting and/or ending in the new Garden Communities of HGGT to be by sustainable means. It aims to create a culture of active and sustainable travel by reducing unnecessary travel and promoting walking, cycling and public transport. It aims to create choice for residents, quality public transport and providing a reliable, high quality network of alternatives to private vehicles.
- 3.5. The Transport Strategy is intended to be used as guidance by each of the Local Authorities in the Partnership. The Local Planning Authorities have approved the document to be a material planning consideration when preparing and discussing masterplans, for pre-application proposals, determining planning applications and considering section 106 obligations. ECC is not the determining body for planning applications for HGGT however it makes recommendations to East Herts District Council, Harlow District Council and Epping Forest District Council as the relevant local planning authorities and seeks mitigation of the impact of the proposed development through influencing design and recommending proposed conditions and legal agreements.
- 3.6. ECC is the Local Highways and Transportation Authority for those parts of HGGT that are in Essex. It is responsible for maintaining the safe operation of the local public highway network and expediting the efficient movement of people and goods.
- 3.7. As local highway authority, there is a statutory requirement for ECC to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP). The current LTP has been in place since 2011 and it confirms priorities for the Harlow area such as tackling congestion and improving public transport, which are also key objectives of the HGGT

Transport Strategy. The proposed HGGT Transport Strategy will sit alongside the LTP but the county wide LTP and ECC's role will remain unaffected by the HGGT Transport Strategy.

- 3.8. Adopting the HGGT Transport Strategy will ensure a consistent and integrated application of the key sustainable transport principles, objectives and priorities by the HGGT Partnership at the initial stages of all schemes and masterplans across the HGGT and therefore will help to mitigate the overall transport impacts of the HGGT development on Harlow and the wider strategic road network.
- 3.9. Approval of the Transport Strategy will demonstrate ECC's commitment to improving people's health, supporting good air quality and minimising carbon emissions arising from traffic generation around the HGGT area, in line with our response to the Essex Climate Action Commission.

4. Links to ECC Vision and Strategic Ambitions

- 4.1. This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Strengthen communities through participation
- Develop our County sustainably
- Connect us to each other and the world
- Share prosperity with everyone

- 4.2. Approving the recommendations in this report will have the following impact on the Council's ambition to be net carbon neutral by 2030:

- The HGGT Transport Strategy objective is to promote a high modal share for active and sustainable travel from the new and existing communities. These modes such as walking, cycling and public transport are recognised as emitting lower levels of carbon. Emissions from public transport can be improved further through engine specifications, which can be sought through enhanced bus partnerships.

- The key principle to support this objective is to reduce the need to travel and give priority to walking, cycling and public transport. The strategy supports the electrification of the vehicle fleet but recognises that this will not help manage congestion.

- 4.3. The HGGT strategy is specifically targeted to the local circumstances in this area and the development of strategies for other Garden Towns in Essex will be considered on their own merit and be subject to further governance arrangements.

5. Everyone's Essex

- 5.1. This report links to the following strategic priorities in the Organisational Strategy 'Everyone's Essex':

Everyone's commitment	Essex	How the HGGT Transport Strategy fulfils Everyone's Essex
Everyone's Economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Future Growth and Investment • Levelling Up the Economy 		<p>The Transport Strategy sets out a range of transport infrastructure to support growth. This includes, subject to relevant funding:</p> <p>Sustainable Transport Corridors (STCs) to give greater, priority for walking, cycling and public transport.</p>
Everyone's Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Zero • Transport and Built Environment • Green Communities 		<p>The HGGT Transport Strategy sets an ambitious target to achieve 60% active and sustainable transport in the new communities and 50% in the existing community. This is supported by the principle to give priority to measures to reduce the need to travel, promote walking, cycling and public transport where appropriate.</p> <p>The Transport Strategy gives priority to modes that produce lower levels of carbon emissions. It seeks investment in electric vehicle charging to promote greater use of electric vehicles to reduce carbon emissions</p>
Everyone's Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy Lifestyles 		<p>Healthy Lifestyles are supported by the principle to give priority and promote walking, cycling and public transport where appropriate.</p>
Service Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborating with Partners 		<p>HGGT is a partnership of five local authorities to deliver sustainable healthy growth. It is working with major organisations, institutions and developers in the area to deliver that growth.</p>
Equalities and Levelling Up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is levelling up • It is long-term • It is a shared endeavour • It builds sustainable change • It requires a diversity of approach 		<p>Harlow is a priority one area for Levelling Up. Being part of the HGGT is to ensure that Harlow benefits from the growth and not just the impact of growth. The Transport Strategy will help ensure that existing residents have improved connectivity to employment by means of sustainable active travel.</p>

6. Options

Option One – Approve the Transport Strategy (Recommended)

- 6.1. Endorsing the Transport Strategy provides clarification on its status. An endorsed Transport Strategy will provide clear consistent guidance to developers in the area when the local authorities are seeking planning contributions.
- 6.2. ECC have assisted HGGT in setting up the Sustainable Transport Partnership Forum (STPF) as part of the HGGT governance review. Having the Transport Strategy that ECC supports will provide guidance for the STPF and support recommendations it makes.
- 6.3. The HGGT Transport Strategy is consistent with the Essex Climate Action Change report. The Transport Strategy is a statement of common values and an objective to increase mode share and principles to enable and ensure a reduction in the need to travel and create opportunities for modal shift which is consistent with those in the Essex Climate Action Change report.
- 6.4. This approach to development has emerged since the ECC LTP was published in 2011 and is supported by ECC for major strategic development. The HGGT Transport Strategy encompasses the new approach and strategies and will sit alongside the LTP to support the approach to garden community development.
- 6.5. There is a risk that by adopting the HGGT Transport Strategy that planning decisions made by the local planning authorities will impact on transport and there will be an expectation that ECC will resolve transportation issues, especially if mitigation through the planning process is not adequately secured. Also, approval of the Transport Strategy may be wrongly construed as an indication that ECC will be delivering and/or funding the transport infrastructure and services referred to in the Transport Strategy. This risk is mitigated by the arrangements in place for HGGT Boards and governance for approvals processes.
- 6.6. **Option Two – not to approve the Transport Strategy (Not Recommended)**
- 6.7. While there is no statutory requirement to have a local strategy and the LTP is the only statutory transportation document that ECC is required to follow, by not adopting the Transport Strategy, ECC miss an opportunity to provide clarity of the status and consistency in developments across Essex.

7. Issues for consideration

Financial implications

- 7.1. The HGGT Transport Strategy is a strategy document which sets out the direction of the travel for the area. Agreeing the strategy does not commit ECC to fund the strategy. It relies on the partners to secure the funding to enable delivery. The IDP for the HGGT (to be developed by the two Local Planning Authorities) should demonstrably fund necessary infrastructure over the lifetime of the HGGT development.

- 7.2. Additional funding opportunities may present themselves, for example Government Grants such as the HIG, the Active Travel Fund, the Towns Fund. Should these or other opportunities arise, ECC will bid for further funding to achieve the STC network or other infrastructure.
- 7.3. The HIG allows for the creation of a Rolling Infrastructure Fund to invest in future transport measures. The creation of the RIF has been agreed and a memorandum of understanding set up with partners.
- 7.4. HGGT bids into Homes England on an annual basis for Garden Community Capacity funding and although this funding is limited it has been used to help develop strategies to inform scheme development such as investment in an LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans), Understanding the Mode Share and Access study for Latton Priory.
- 7.5. The biggest investment being made by ECC in support of the HGGT Transport Strategy is the design and development of the Sustainable Transport Corridors. The routes are at various stages of design with the North to Centre section being part of the HIG award. The design fees are recoverable through the HIG, with the design of future sections being funded through the Advanced Scheme Design budget, however, they will not enter design stage 3 until clarity on delivery and funding is provided. Parts of the network are expected to be delivered by developers.

Legal implications

- 7.6. ECC is the Local Highway Authority and Local Transport Authority covering the Essex parts of the HGGT area. Currently HGGT is an informal partnership of 5 local authority partners and therefore delivery, responsibility and risk on Highways and Transportation matters remains with ECC. The LTP remains the primary statutory transport document in the Essex part of the HGGT. Endorsement of the HGGT Transport Strategy does not change this and ECC is not duty bound to use all the powers that are available to it as the local highway authority.

8. Equality and Diversity Considerations

- 8.1. An EQIA has been undertaken by HGGT and is attached to this report (Appendix 4).
- 8.2. The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
 - (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

- 8.3. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 8.4. The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.
- 8.5. The consultation highlighted the need to include a principle on accessibility and inclusion. This positive change and others were taken into consideration in the final Transport Strategy now being presented and as detailed in the EQIA assessment.
- 8.6. The design and format of the Strategy has been reviewed against Shawtrust accreditation to ensure legibility and accessibility for online viewing

9. List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – HGGT Transport Strategy
 Appendix 2 – HGGT High Level Transport Programme
 Appendix 3 - HGGT Transport Strategy consultation report
 Appendix 4 - HGGT Transport Strategy EQIA

10. List of Background papers

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Lee Scott , Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport	25.08.22

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Councillor Lesley Wagland , Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning.	25.08.22
Executive Director, Corporate Services (\$151 Officer) Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood	12.08.2022
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer) Laura Edwards on behalf of Paul Turner	17.05.2021