

HARLOW & GILSTON GARDEN TOWN

Annual Review
(April 2018 to March 2019)

Image courtesy of Places for People
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Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town by the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government in January 2017 and provides one of the most exciting growth opportunities of any place in the UK. It will comprise new and existing communities in and around Harlow. Set in attractive countryside, with transformative investment in transport and community infrastructure, new neighbourhoods to the east, west and south and new villages to the north will be established over the next 15 years and beyond.

Strong foundations have been established for the success of the Garden Town with a shared, robust vision and strong leadership.

Cambridge

Bedford

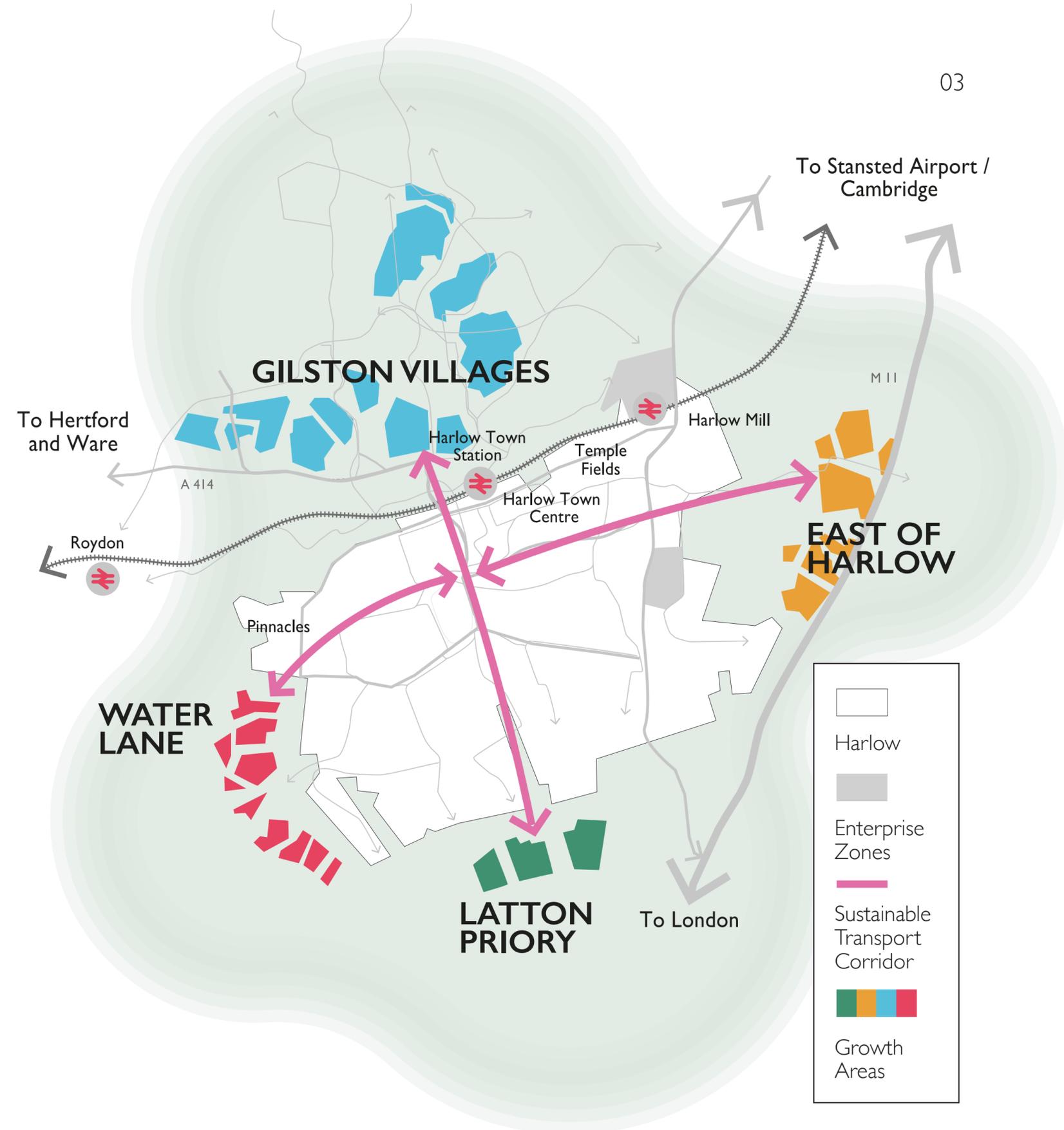
SUFFOLK

The Garden Town sits in the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor



The Garden Town will unify town and rural areas with well-integrated, carefully considered, green and open spaces that provide opportunities for people of all ages to come together in a safe and healthy environment. Central to the Garden Town is the creation of connected communities in every sense; connecting people with each other, employers, health providers, education, transport provision and the town centre.

Creating a high-quality place with a clear focus on sustainable living means a prosperous and thriving future.



Welcome to this the first Annual Review of the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town project and the first for myself as the recently appointed Independent Chair for the Garden Town.

The five Councils East Herts, Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, have been working to establish an ambitious plan for the Garden Town. This is set out in the Garden Town Vision that was formally adopted and published by the Councils over the course of this first year.

My task as the Independent Chair is to support and help the delivery of the Garden Town and to support a multi-talented delivery team to work alongside the Councils and the communities that make up the Garden Town.

The Garden Town Delivery Team has been growing over the course of the year and is preparing itself to meet the delivery challenges of the next phase. The team will set out to assist the Councils and ensure that new development meets the ambitions of the Vision document and that communities both existing and new, are supported by the right type of community infrastructure.

As the Garden Town begins to take physical shape it will be important that we all build relationships across communities to promote a collective ownership and understanding of the process and the realisation of what I believe can, and will be, the UK's people led Garden Town regeneration project, embracing environmental and cultural values that will enable communities to grow and prosper alongside a thriving local economy, where new homes are built and community services provided.

It is important that the Garden Town embraces the New Town, its heritage and the neighbourhoods and communities it has nurtured over the years, it must celebrate the best of this legacy by embracing Arts and Culture and placing them at the centre of our ambitions to ensure that we create a lasting social legacy alongside a great physical legacy capable of supporting generations to come.

Looking back over the last year gives us the opportunity to recognise the achievements and hard work that has gone into establishing the Garden Town and getting all of us to the start of year 2, but regeneration is about the future - year 2 and beyond. The team is growing and, as new colleagues join the team, our conversations and relationships are expanding and reaching out across our communities.

In the year ahead we will be making sure that we are having conversations across Harlow about the Garden Town and how you can be part of an exciting future. I look forward to meeting you.

Guy Nicholson, Chair, HGGT



What have we achieved in the last year?



HGGT Vision complete and published

We have published our exciting Vision for the future of the Garden Town. This document sets out the vision and the principles which will inform its growth and management. It will help support the delivery of the locally-led Garden Town, furthering the joint-work that is supported by Government. The vision and principles for the Garden Town are informed by the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Garden City Principles and have had input from our stakeholders and the local community.

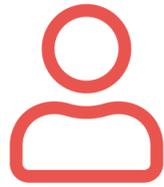
It has been formally adopted by all the partners and a launch is planned in 2019.



HGGT Design Guide complete and published

We have completed and published a comprehensive Design Guide that will influence the quality of design throughout the whole of the Garden Town. It will guide developers and their architects towards high quality exemplars of best practice. The Design Guide is aimed at those involved in the delivery of homes and neighbourhoods within the Garden Town. Specific users will include: Land Owners, Developers, Designers, Architects, Landscape Architects, Engineers, Garden Town and Local Authority Officers and the Garden Town Quality Review Panel (QRP). The Vision and Design Guide will be used as a material consideration when proposals for growth and regeneration are presented to the Garden Town QRP and submitted for Planning approval.

It has been formally adopted by all the partners and a launch is planned in 2019.



An Independent Chair, Guy Nicholson, has been appointed.

The HGGT Board has met regularly through the year to oversee the delivery of the project and to maintain progress. In the spring Board members took the decision to appoint an Independent Chair to support their collaborative working and to act as an ambassador for the Garden Town project.

After an independent recruitment process, which attracted significant interest and a high number of applications, Guy Nicholson was appointed as the Independent Chair and took up his role in November 2018.

Guy has 20 years of experience providing the strategic leadership, governance and delivery of a number of socio-economic and regeneration initiatives, connecting the public and private sectors to deliver urban regeneration across Hackney, east London, the Thames Gateway initiative, London's City Fringe, the UK Innovation Corridor and the London 2012 project and its Legacy. He is a Councillor in the London Borough of Hackney where he is the cabinet member for urban, economic and cultural regeneration; prior to this he worked in the international Theatre industry for over 15 years.

He also has a number of other non-executive director and trustee roles in various sectors which include the visual & performing arts, the contemporary photography sector and he currently Chair's the Group Board of the UK's leading provider of responsible finance; providing finance, advice and spaces for the UK's smaller businesses that are at the heart of our economy.





Infrastructure Delivery Plan & Viability Study complete and published

We have put in place a clear and comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that sets out all the infrastructure needed to support the new homes in the Garden Town. The IDP also demonstrates how it will be delivered. This will ensure that the planned growth is facilitated in a co-ordinated way and that the necessary infrastructure is provided.

The IDP has been developed in full collaboration with all the partner Councils. Developers have also been consulted on its contents. The IDP will form the basis of the planning obligations required of the developers.

The viability of each element of infrastructure has also been tested by independent experts to assist developers in formulating and costing their proposals.





Sustainable Transport Corridor Study complete and published and draft Transport Strategy prepared and circulated

A key element of the Garden Town proposals is the requirement for new and existing residents to adopt sustainable travel behaviours. The new infrastructure is designed to facilitate a modal shift so that 60% of journeys across the Garden Town will be undertaken by sustainable means – walking, cycling and public transport. To this aim, the Transport Strategy promotes a network of sustainable transport corridors and a rapid bus transport system which will help people travel quickly and sustainably in and around the Garden Town.

The new corridors will serve new developments and existing communities so that residents and visitors can travel around Harlow in safe and sustainable transport modes. To facilitate access to the network, “hubs” will be created to give users access to high quality cycle, rapid bus transport and pedestrian routes alongside community facilities, and services, such as shops and cafes.

The Transport Strategy has been approved by the Board for consultation later in 2019.





Active Quality Review Panel

The Quality Review Panel was established in April 2018 and is made up of a group of expert advisers who comment and advise on development proposals and HGGT plans and strategies across a range of disciplines.

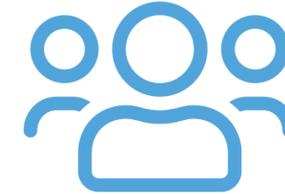
During the last year there have been 11 Quality Review Panel sessions and four design case study visits.



Councils Section 106 lawyers agreed and appointed

In order to ensure that the planning obligations levied on developers are dealt with consistently across the Garden Town developments, the partner Councils have appointed a single legal firm, Weightmans, to represent them.

The negotiation and enforcement of the planning obligations will assist the partners to deliver the necessary infrastructure which is set out in the Garden Town IDP.



Land Assembly Advisors appointed

To make sure that the land required for the infrastructure projects is in the appropriate ownership at the right time, we have appointed Cushman and Wakefield to advise the Councils on all matters regarding land acquisition. Weightmans Lawyers are also providing Legal advice on the land assembly process to the Garden Town partners.



Centrally located Core Team established

Close collaboration and joint working will be the key to success in the Garden Town project. Officers from Harlow, Epping Forest and East Herts District Councils are working closely together with colleagues from Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils to take forward the Garden Town project.

Meeting and working together for 1-2 days per week in Harlow has increased collaboration and output significantly. Each authority has committed staff and financial resources to the project.

The Project Team has been enhanced by the appointment of an Urban Design Officer and a successful recruitment campaign was run early this year to appoint additional officers to the core HGGT team.



Clear workstreams established

As part of our project management structure we have divided the work into clear workstreams to channel and focus our efforts. These Workstreams have been established to harness their expertise and to manage all the strands of this complex project. They are attended by officers from all partners and some also have external stakeholders on them.

Project assurance arrangements are in place, progress is reported on a monthly basis and an overarching programme and risk register is updated regularly and reported to the Board.

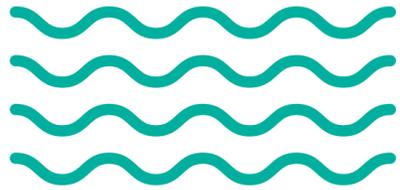


Capacity funding received from Homes England (£715k)

Homes England has grant funded £715,000 to assist the progress of the project and to help facilitate the planned housing growth.

This level of funding is an acknowledgement of the challenge facing the five Councils in providing infrastructure and facilities for the new and existing communities.





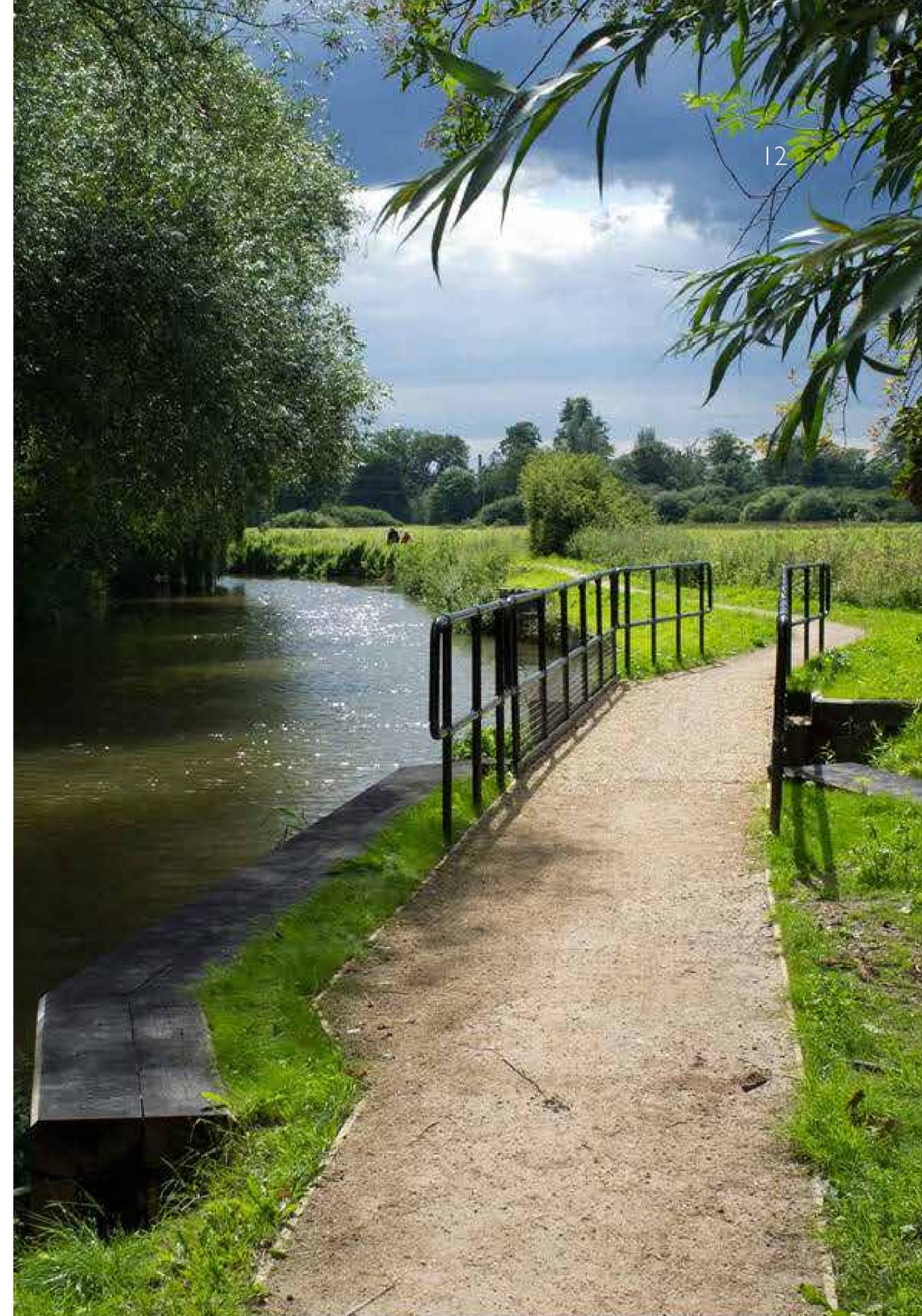
HIF Bid submitted for River Stort crossings

To facilitate the major growth area of Gilston, transport capacity needs to be improved from Gilston into the north of Harlow. This is complicated by the need to traverse the River Stort and the main line railway into London.

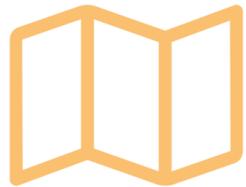
Hertfordshire County Council has worked closely with the HGGT partners, and the Gilston developers to submit a bid for £171 million to the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme.

It is hoped that the HIF funding will provide early finance for improvements to the existing A414 route into Harlow, (known as the central Stort Crossing), and the construction of a new transport corridor route, across the River Stort, into the north east of Harlow (known as the Eastern Stort Crossing).

The outcome of this bid is expected in the autumn of 2019.



Associated Achievements by Partners

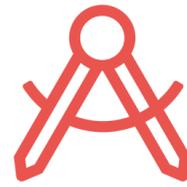


Harlow and Epping Forest District Local Plans submitted

Epping Forest District's Local Plan was submitted for examination in September 2018 and the Independent Examination hearings started in February 2019 and concluded in June. The Inspector's report is expected at the end of 2019.

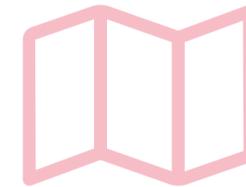
Harlow District's Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in October 2018.

Examination hearings were undertaken in March and April 2019 and it is hoped that the Plan will be adopted later this year.



East Herts District Plan adopted

The Local Plan was adopted in October 2018.



Harlow Area Action Plan

The Area Action Plan is being finalised by Harlow Council's consultants, Allies and Morrison, and is due to be considered by Harlow's Cabinet in July before going out to public consultation.

What's coming up?



HGGT Housing Plan

HGGT Employment study

Stort Valley Design Competition

HGGT School Planning Strategy

Sustainable school design

Land Assembly Strategy

Digital Plan

Sustainability Guidance and Checklist

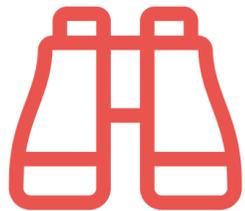
**Sustainable Transport Corridor
development and branding**

**HGGT Website and Engagement
strategy**

**HGGT Local Cycling and Walking
Infrastructure Plan**



What's coming up?



Innovative transport study

Stewardship Strategy

HIF bid announcement – autumn

Energy Strategy

Landscape Strategy

Arts and Culture Strategy

Food production/open space plan

Innovative household waste collection

**Community and Voluntary
Sector provision**

Planning the health estate

HGGT Delivery model

Town centre redevelopment



We want you to be involved in shaping the vision for the Garden Town.

Over the coming months we will be consulting you in a range of ways about the Garden Town project and we will post details on our websites and via social media.

You can also find further information about the project on our websites.

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk | www.eastherts.gov.uk | www.harlow.gov.uk

