

Harlow Local Plan Examination

Matter 3 – Overall Strategy; Harlow & Gilston Garden Town – General Principles & Infrastructure

- 1 Question 3.2 - Is Policy HGT1 to guide the overall development and delivery of the new Garden Town communities justified and would it be effective? Does Policy HGT1 inappropriately seek to set policy for areas beyond the plan boundary? If so how should comprehensive policies for the overall Garden Town be established?**
 - 1.1 Places for People support the joint working between Harlow, Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire District Councils, alongside the County Councils and other land owners and promoters, to enable the delivery of transformational growth at the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.
 - 1.2 To facilitate the delivery of 16,000 homes by 2033 and new employment opportunities the Councils have prepared a Spatial Vision and Design Charter to provide an overarching spatial vision across the Garden Town as a whole as well as each Garden Community.
 - 1.3 The Councils have also prepared a Sustainable Transport Corridor Study for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and have established an independent Quality Review Panel to guide development proposals.
 - 1.4 This framework of guidance documents, alongside site specific development plan policies for each Garden Community within the relevant Local Plan, provide the foundation for the consideration and determination of planning applications for each Garden Community.
 - 1.5 However, despite this context, Policy HGT1 intends to provide a framework to ensure a consistent approach to the consideration of development proposals in Harlow, as well as those development proposals within the Garden Town in East Hertfordshire and Epping Forest District Councils.
 - 1.6 Paragraph 5.25 acknowledges that *“Harlow District Council cannot include specific policies for sites outside its boundaries”*. However it is suggested that as the Garden Communities will be accessed through Harlow and use Harlow’s facilities, such developments have a direct interest to Harlow’s residents, in particular to maintain the connection of Harlow’s existing Green Infrastructure, footpaths, cycleways and bridleways to the countryside. As a result it is considered *“appropriate for Harlow Council to support the specific site requirements for these strategic developments in the Epping Forest and East Hertfordshire Local Plans.”*
 - 1.7 Planning applications for the residential development at Gilston Park Estate will fall within the administrative boundary of East Hertfordshire District Council, and will not therefore be determined by Harlow or under Policy HGT1. Instead decisions by East Hertfordshire will be guided by the adopted East Herts District Plan, having regard to relevant material considerations including the jointly endorsed Harlow and Gilston Garden Town
 - 1.8 Spatial Vision and Design Charter. It is these jointly endorsed material considerations that should ensure a framework is in place to deliver a consistent approach to the consideration of planning applications across the Garden Town and act to ‘support the specific site requirements for these strategic developments’.

- 1.9 Policy HGT1 should therefore be amended to make clear that the requirements of the policy only apply to planning applications that fall (in whole or part) within the administrative boundary of Harlow. It is not appropriate to include criteria within Policy HGT1 that cannot be enforced and will fail to meet the soundness test of ‘Effectiveness’.
- 1.10 Places for People support the objectives outlined in Policy HGT1, but that they should instead be delivered through co-operation under the Garden Town governance arrangements, and through planning decisions in each of the three Districts having regard to the adopted Spatial Vision and Design Charter.

2 Question 3.8 - Are the infrastructure requirements listed in Policy SIR1 necessary and justified? How would they be delivered? Would there be any adverse impacts?

- 1. North-South Sustainable Transport Corridor and River Stort Crossing to Eastwick Roundabout**
- 2. East-West Sustainable Transport Corridor**
- 3. Second River Stort Crossing at River Way**
- 4. Access Route for Strategic Housing Site East of Harlow – covered in Matter 4**
- 5. Cemetery Extension**
- 6. New Allotment Provision**

Consistency Across IDPs and Cost Apportionment

- 2.1 Policy SIR1 explains that the Council will work with infrastructure and service providers, other statutory bodies and neighbouring local authorities to deliver the timely provision of infrastructure necessary to support development in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) has been prepared which identifies and prioritises infrastructure projects required in the Local Plan period and sets out funding mechanisms for their delivery.
- 2.2 Places for People is aware that the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town authorities are also jointly preparing an alternative IDP which seeks to coordinate infrastructure delivery across the Garden Town. Places for People is concerned to ensure there is consistency across all IDPs to avoid any uncertainty in the delivery of critical infrastructure.
- 2.3 Places for People support the principle that the costs of strategic infrastructure should be shared (as proposed by Policy HGT1(2.n)). The mechanism for doing so should be specified and it should be noted that the share of the costs of the listed infrastructure to be borne by each development will need to be carefully assessed taking account of the extent to which the infrastructure is required to meet both existing need and, potentially, need arising as a consequence of development after the plan period.

West Anglia Mainline Four Tracking

- 2.4 Places for People are concerned that the draft Local Plan refers to the requirement for four-tracking of the West Anglia Mainline. There has been no publication of evidence that supports the necessity of such provision within the plan period, even though it may be desirable. Given the uncertainties over deliverability it would not be appropriate to make such provision a requirement of the Local Plan and it should therefore be removed.
- 2.5 The relevant supporting text can, if necessary, still refer to the desirability of such provision and that Harlow, along with other stakeholders, will work with the rail network to assist its delivery.

- 2.6 The Local Plan should however make reference to the capacity enhancements that will be delivered as a result of new trains being introduced within the current franchise, and a more positive framework should be set for improvements around Harlow station.

Forward Funding Infrastructure

- 2.7 Places for People will be sponsoring the applications for the Central and Eastern Stort Crossings and, alongside City and Provincial Properties, they will if necessary be providing the funding to ensure their delivery in line with the agreed development triggers for the Gilston Area. This is set out at paragraph 7.8 of the Statement of Common Ground between East Hertfordshire, Places for People and City and Provincial Properties (November 2017) prepared for the East Herts District Plan.
- 2.8 The Crossings are required to meet existing demand and to accommodate the planned growth across Harlow and the wider area. In particular, the Central Crossing is required to meet existing need, and the Eastern Crossing is required to meet the need of future growth in the Harlow area as a whole. The Harlow IDP and the Garden Town IDP will need to be clear that the Crossings serve a strategic transport purpose and contributions are required from all new development, even if forward funded by Places for People (and City and Provincial Properties).
- 2.9 In addition, the Policy GA2 of the adopted EHDC District Plan notes that whilst the Eastern Crossing is the highway authorities preferred option for a new river crossing, a western option remains a possibility, and this should be clearly acknowledged within the Harlow Local plan.