

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-037-2021/22
Date of meeting: 25 January 2022



Portfolio: Planning and Sustainability

Subject: Noting of HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

Responsible Officer: Ione Braddick (01992 564205).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) To note the HGGT LCWIP, as approved by the HGGT Board and submitted to the relevant portfolio holder of Essex CC for noting and endorsement; to Herts CC Exec Members and to the appropriate portfolio holders and Cabinets at Herts CC, East Herts DC, Epping Forest DC; and Harlow DC for noting;
- (2) To note that the HGGT LCWIP document will be reviewed every three years coordinated by the HGGT Partnership;

Executive Summary:

This report is for noting the HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The HGGT LCWIP is the HGGT partnership's response to the Government's call to develop a local LCWIP. The LCWIP will assist Highway and Planning Authorities in obtaining funding from Government, Local Enterprise Partnerships, sub national transport bodies and developers. The HGGT LCWIP along with other plans, also informs the delivery of sustainable zero emission movement as set out in the HGGT Vision and HGGT Transport Strategy

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure that EFDC Cabinet and relevant Portfolio Holders are aware and updated on the content and purpose of the HGGT LCWIP, and the HGGT Board's decision to approve the LCWIP and commitment to review.

Other Options for Action:

Not to note the HGGT LCWIP would be contrary to the agreed recommendations of the 14 December HGGT Board report.

Report:

Introduction

1. Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town by the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in January 2017 and will comprise new and existing communities in and around Harlow.
2. 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 (collectively referred to as the new Garden Communities) will be established and integrated with the existing Harlow town. The new communities in the Garden Town which are within Epping Forest District are seeking to deliver 3900 homes by 2033, which is over a third of the allocated housing in the District.
3. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Partnership describes the cross boundary joint working arrangements between East Herts District Council (EHDC), Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) and Harlow District Council (HDC) working together with Essex County Council (ECC) and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to ensure plans for the Garden Town deliver on their agreed HGGT Vision.
4. The full HGGT Board report of the HGGT Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) can be found at Appendix A. The HGGT LCWIP document can be found at Appendix B. The HGGT LCWIP walking and cycling maps can be found at Appendix C.
5. In 2017 the Government set out the need for a “standard” approach to assess and prioritise walking and cycling schemes to ensure the schemes that were allocated funding were representing value for money and supporting the Government’s aspiration of doubling the number of journeys undertaken by walking or cycling. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) process is the response to this need.
6. An LCWIP is an investment plan, subject to resources being made available, that identifies investment priorities (in accordance with the guidance) for new infrastructure which is designed to support a greater number of people making journeys on foot or on cycle. This is the first time the LCWIP approach has been applied in the Garden Town area. It needs to be seen as a document open to review but principally a mechanism to secure funding within the Government’s framework.
7. The LCWIP has considered both the existing urban area of Harlow and the proposed new Garden Communities. It has also taken into account the emerging Harlow town centre master plan, which calls for a step change in the quality of the public realm in the town centre.
8. The LCWIP links to other strategic transport planning documents, such as the HGGT Vision, HGGT Design Guide, HGGT Transport Strategy, Harlow Cycling Action Plan, Harlow town centre master plan (draft), development proposals and other local initiatives, to ensure its compatibility with other local transport priorities that tackle congestion and enable growth.
9. The HGGT Transport Strategy sets out the Mode Share Objective, which states that: *“50% of all trips starting and/or ending in the existing settlement area of Harlow Town*

should be by active and sustainable travel modes and 60% of all trips starting and/or ending in the new Garden Communities of Harlow & Gilston Garden Town should be by active and sustainable travel modes.”. A key principle to deliver on this is to give greater priority across the network and where appropriate to walking, cycling and public transport.

LCWIP Process

10. An LCWIP, as set out by the Department for Transport (DfT), follows a very prescriptive and evidence-led approach to creating the plan. This aids the DfT in standardising and comparing schemes across the country and within different contexts. The DfT are increasingly relying on LCWIPs to allocate active travel funding, with some funds only available to bidders that have completed an LCWIP. The evidence from the LCWIP can be used to ensure schemes meet a high cost to benefit ratio which the DfT require. Essentially, a LCWIP highlights strategic improvements that will get the most people travelling actively and be the best value for money for the Government.
11. The goal of an LCWIP is to enable the increase in the use of cycling and walking as the mode of travel and identifying the routes and areas where more residents would choose these modes in preference to other means of travel. The LCWIP considers total travel demand regardless of mode, it does not focus alone on existing walking and cycling trips. Cycling and walking networks should be an integral component of a transport system that considers the needs of all users, and connects people with people, places, goods and services.
12. An LCWIP follows a prescribed process set by DfT which includes: determining the scope of the study, gathering the necessary information and data, planning the cycling and walking elements, prioritising the outputs, and integration into the wider strategic transport programme.

Next Steps

13. Endorsement is sought from ECC for the HGGT LCWIP as ECC is the lead Local Highway Authority for the majority of the walking and cycling routes identified within the LCWIP.
14. Following approval from the HGGT Board and endorsement from ECC, it is intended that the LCWIP will be published and be publicly accessible in spring 2022.
15. The approved and endorsed LCWIP will be used to:
 - Identify short, medium, and long-term investment projects in the cycling and walking infrastructure network.
 - Support and or inform the development of Local Plans, HGGT strategies and the HGGT IDP as evidence base.
 - Support bids for investment to fund the delivery of the schemes identified.
 - Support the negotiation of Section 106 financial contributions or other forms of infrastructure tariffs e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy.
 - Support and inform the development of master plans and or Planning applications.
16. Formal feedback will be provided to DfT on the prescribed approach set out in the LCWIP guidance to state that greater flexibility and localism is required.

17. The LCWIP will be reviewed every three years co-ordinated by the HGGT partnership. Particular attention will be given to any significant changes in local circumstances, such as the publication of new policies or strategies, major new development sites, and as walking and cycling networks mature and expand.

Resource Implications

The noting of the contents of this report do not give rise to additional resource implications currently. However the successful delivery of the Garden Town and its associated infrastructure, in particular the Strategic Sites within Epping Forest District, will require considerable commitment of officer time from EFDC. Future review of the HGGT LCWIP by the HGGT Partnership may also require EFDC officer time.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The HGGT LCWIP provides evidence for funding of walking and cycling infrastructure which supports the HGGT Transport Strategy objective of modal shift towards sustainable and active travel. The LCWIP also supports emerging EFDC Local Plan policies designed to promote the notion of encouraging and enabling active and sustainable travel choices, and through doing so improving health, wellbeing, air quality, placeshaping, economic and social mobility. This will contribute to safer, cleaner, greener objectives by planning for sustainable development.

Consultation Undertaken:

A summary of the engagement and consultation process is set out within the HGGT Board Report (Appendix A, paragraphs 7.1-8.7).

Background Papers:

- Cabinet Report C-034-2021-22 Endorsement of Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy 25 January 2022

Risk Management:

The use of the HGGT LCWIP to provide evidence to secure investment from funding partners and investment, in the manner and methodology as set out by Central Government via Department for Transport will increase opportunities to apply for and be allocated funding. To not note and/or endorse the HGGT LCWIP would reduce the opportunity for investment, and could lead to a disjointed and deteriorating walking and cycling network across the Garden Town.