

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-033-2019/20**  
**Date of meeting: 26 March 2020**



**Portfolio: Planning – Cllr Philip**

**Subject: Harlow and Gilston Garden Draft Healthy Town Framework**

**Responsible Officer: Simone Williams (01992 564035)**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**To agree that the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Healthy Town Framework is published for a six-week period of public consultation; and following consultation the document will be updated. The final Healthy Town Framework will be brought back to a subsequent meeting to be agreed as a material planning consideration for the preparation of masterplans, pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes**

### **Introduction and Executive Summary:**

Harlow and Gilston was designated as a Garden Town by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government in January 2017 and will comprise new and existing communities in and around Harlow. The District Councils, Harlow, East Herts and Epping Forest are working together with Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils to ensure plans for the Garden Town support sustainable living and a healthy economy; provide a good quality of life for existing and future residents; and respond to local landscape and character.

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Vision sets out, as one of the objectives, that the Garden Town will be a healthy place to live. To ascertain the features that make a healthy town, the HGGT Team commissioned Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to prepare a Healthy Town Framework (draft Framework). A number of key stakeholders were involved in the preparation, including the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Trusts (including Princess Alexandra Hospital), Public Health England and the Harlow Health Centres Trust.

The document provides a framework for realising the HGGT Vision and will provide guidance for development proposals to ensure the HGGT becomes a healthy place to live and supports the wellbeing of existing and future residents.

The draft Framework was agreed by the HGGT Member Board in July 2019 and the next stage is to seek agreement from this Council to publish for consultation.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Following consultation and any subsequent revisions to the document, including the preparation of an accompanying Health Framework Action Plan, it is intended to give planning weight to the Framework by endorsing it as a material planning consideration. This status will ensure that development proposals will achieve garden town ambitions, and that clear parameters are established for future master planning pre-application advice, assessing planning applications and any other development management purposes within the HGGT.

## **Other Options for Action:**

Not to agree the draft Framework for consultation would mean that there would be no agreed approach to ensure that development proposals will achieve the HGGT ambitions to improve health and wellbeing.

## **Report:**

1. As part of the work for the HGGT, Epping Forest District Council has been working in partnership with Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Harlow and East Herts District Councils to prepare a Healthy Town Framework (draft Framework) for the HGGT. Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) were commissioned to prepare the draft Framework to cover a range of issues that have an impact on health and sets out who should be involved and what should be considered at each stage, from master planning onwards.
2. The draft Framework is informed by an understanding that the way places are designed and built has a significant impact on people's health and the importance of having health care facilities and infrastructure to support wellbeing. It is set in the context of the adopted East Herts Local Plan (2018) and emerging Local Plans for Harlow and Epping Forest Districts; the Hertfordshire and West Essex sustainability and transformation plan; and Essex Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
3. The draft Framework should be read alongside the approved HGGT Vision and Design Guide. Its purpose is to inform and guide the local authorities, developers, landowners and health care providers to achieve a Garden Town designed to support the health and wellbeing of its population. A copy of the draft Framework is attached as Appendix A.

## **Why does Harlow and Gilston Garden Town need a Healthy Town Framework**

4. Whether or not people are healthy depends on a large extent on the places and conditions in which they live. There is a strong national policy context for planning healthier places. The NHS Long Term Plan emphasises the need for preventing ill health and so reducing the demand on NHS services. The National Planning Policy Framework supports planning policies and decisions to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe place which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and wellbeing needs.
5. Planning has an important role in shaping the built and natural environment and the draft Framework will help to guide the planning process to help ensure that HGGT becomes a place in which it is easier for people to live healthy lives.
6. In common with the rest of the country, the current populations of Harlow, East Herts and Epping Forest District Councils include significant proportions of the adult population who are not physically active enough; are overweight; or have diabetes. In all three districts,

populations are ageing and the numbers of people living with dementia are increasing.

### **Healthy Town Framework**

7. The draft Framework is complimentary to the HGGT Vision and Design Guide, and in alignment with Local Plan policies and planning for health guidance from Essex and Hertfordshire. It has undergone scrutiny during its preparation to ensure that it is fit for purpose. In particular, Draft Framework was reviewed by the Quality Review Panel (QRP) on 3 May 2019. The Draft Framework has been revised and updated taking account of the output from the review. The Panel's report is attached for reference at Appendix B.
8. The draft Framework is structured around nine elements listed below, that are aligned to the Healthy New Town principles developed by NHS England with Public Health England and the TCPA.
  - Plan ahead collectively
  - Integrated health and community services
  - People and communities
  - Compact neighbourhoods
  - Active travel
  - Healthy eating and food
  - Homes and buildings
  - Play and leisure
  - Natural environment.
9. Each of the elements sets out a range of indicators against which policies being developed and development proposals coming forward can be assessed against. The elements seek to help achieve specific health and wellbeing outcomes. Achieving these is dependent on a wide range of partners, including local authorities, developers and landowners, collaborating from the outset and as the creation of the HGGT progresses, and each delivering their respective elements.
10. To deliver and implement the Draft Framework, the document sets out a series of actions for the Councils, developers and health consultees. In order to ensure that further progress is made, it is proposed that a draft Health Framework Action Plan is formulated to support implementation. The Action Plan will take into account feedback from the consultation exercise and will be reported back alongside the Framework to a later meeting for approval.

### **Consultation**

11. It is proposed that the Draft Framework is published for a six-week period of public consultation.
12. Because of the range of partners that have been involved in the formulation of the draft Framework, consultation will comprise engagement with the landowners and developers of the Garden Town sites and other development sites in Harlow.

13. There will also be wider community engagement through the consultation exercise. Consultation arrangements will be put in place over the coming months and will be advertised ahead of the consultation.
14. Following public consultation, the final Framework will be presented to a Garden Town Board meeting in autumn 2020 and it will then be reported to the partner local planning authorities' decision making processes for approval.

#### **Resource Implications:**

The successful delivery of the Garden Town sites within Epping Forest District requires resources of EFDC. The approval of the recommendations contained within this report will not give rise to additional resource implications but will help to facilitate healthy places to live.

#### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The Draft Framework has been developed in the context of Government Policy (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance.

#### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The Draft Framework seeks to take forward Local Plan policy designed to promote the notion of making good places to live, work and visit. This will include safer by design principles, sustainable development, and active travel. Strategic Masterplans and Concept Frameworks will be the mechanism for these place-making measures to be delivered in identified Masterplan Areas.

#### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Draft Framework has been developed in partnership with other local authorities in the HGGT. The next stage is to undertake more widespread consultation with local communities and site promoters.

#### **Background Papers:**

Report to Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board on 19 July 2019

#### **Risk Management:**

The consultation on the Draft Framework will support the Council's objectives of achieving sustainable development in the District and improve health and wellbeing.