



Supporting our Community

Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan

2020-2033

SUBMISSION DRAFT (June 2020)



HUNSDON EASTWICK AND GILSTON
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GROUP

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A. Introduction to the Neighbourhood Plan

Why have a Neighbourhood Plan?

1. The Green Belt around Gilston and Eastwick was released when the East Hertfordshire District Plan was adopted October 2018 in order to accommodate the strategic allocation known as the Gilston Area (GA1). The allocation is for 10,000 homes, jobs and services and forms a part of the wider Harlow and Gilston Garden Town government initiative, which is intended to deliver comprehensive infrastructure upgrades in the area and regenerate Harlow, with the support of government funding and substantial housing development.
2. People living in the area are concerned about the impacts of change of this scale on their communities and are determined to influence the character and quality of the new development to ensure that it respects the nature and integrity of the local area, takes place in a way that minimises impacts on landscape, local heritage and existing communities and upholds the essential quality of life of the area. The community wants to ensure that the release of land from the Green Belt genuinely leads to a development of 'exceptional quality' and creates distinctive villages each with their own individual identity set within an attractive rural landscape, whilst at the same time protecting and enhancing existing settlements and delivering benefits for existing and new communities.
3. The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan provides a very important instrument to help shape the future of the area and will serve to further refine the policy context set out in the District Plan against which all development proposals coming forward will be considered. Whilst it cannot alter the site allocation made in the District Plan, it is able to set out more detailed planning policies to guide how development takes place and how existing settlements and new villages will be shaped in the future. Crucially, the Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan¹ (or simply 'the Plan' hereafter) has been prepared by the local community, through the Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan Group which represents the Parish Councils and is made up of people living within the Parishes². A referendum will be held on the final Plan and if more than half of those voting vote in favour, the Neighbourhood Plan will come into force as part of the statutory Development Plan alongside the District Plan (see Plan Preparation process below). Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will thereafter form part of the planning policy framework for the determination of all planning applications in the Neighbourhood Plan area: this means that developers will be required to take account of its policies when putting forward development proposals to the local planning authority for approval.
4. Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan enables the community to be an effective part of the decision-making process and is an important way to influence the future of the area.

¹ The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan refers to the Eastwick, Gilston and part of Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan designated area – See Fig. 1 - Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary

² The Hunsdon Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Group was constituted in 2017 and has been working hard in trying to influence the future of the area. It meets regularly and is open to all local residents wishing to join and take an active role - www.hegnp.org.uk

This builds on other related initiatives in the area which the community continues to be involved in including but not limited to:

- Participating proactively in such matters as the strategy for the A414 and the preparation of guidance documents for the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town such as the Garden Town Vision and Sustainable Transport Strategy.
 - Maintaining collaboration and dialogue with the local planning authority, the developers and their technical teams so that they can understand and take account of local perspectives. This includes providing technical responses to outline planning applications and Supplementary Planning Documents such as the Gilston Area Charter SPD.
5. Critically, between summer 2017 and spring 2018, the local community worked closely with the developers, landowners and East Hertfordshire Council in the preparation of the Gilston Area Concept Framework³ which was finalised by the developers and endorsed by the Council in July 2018 as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This document sets out a vision and key development principles, which emerged from engagement of the community through workshops in September 2017 and January 2018 and has been jointly agreed by all parties. It was referenced in a statement of common ground prepared by the Council and the developers which was submitted to the Inspector at the District Plan Examination in Public⁴. The Inspector's Report highlights the importance she placed on ensuring adherence to Garden City principles and the role of the Concept Framework as a benchmark for development in the Gilston Area in supporting the allocation and the release of Green Belt land.
6. The Parish Councils believe the Concept Framework sets appropriate foundations for respectful development in the Gilston Area but whilst it has been endorsed by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, it does not have the status of formally adopted planning policy. For this reason, the Parish Councils agreed to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan which is primarily based on the agreement reached by the Council, developers and community through the Concept Framework and to elevate it to formal policy status so that, together with the District Plan, it will provide the planning policy framework for the determination of all planning applications in the Gilston Area. This is of significant importance to local people who want to ensure that the principles set out in the District Plan and the Concept Framework are carried forward in the design and development of the proposed new villages.
7. Following extensive consultation in September-October 2019 (Reg. 14 Consultation) and a formal review by the Quality Review Panel of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (February 2020) the Neighbourhood Plan was revised and further integrated to strengthen the policies on landscape, local character and the improvement of existing settlements.

³ See - <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/article/36592/Other-Material-Considerations>

⁴ [Statement of Common Ground between East Herts Council and Places for People and City & Provincial regarding GA1 \(the Gilston Area\) Ref: ED160 https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/district-plan-examination-documents/statements-common-ground](https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/district-plan-examination-documents/statements-common-ground)

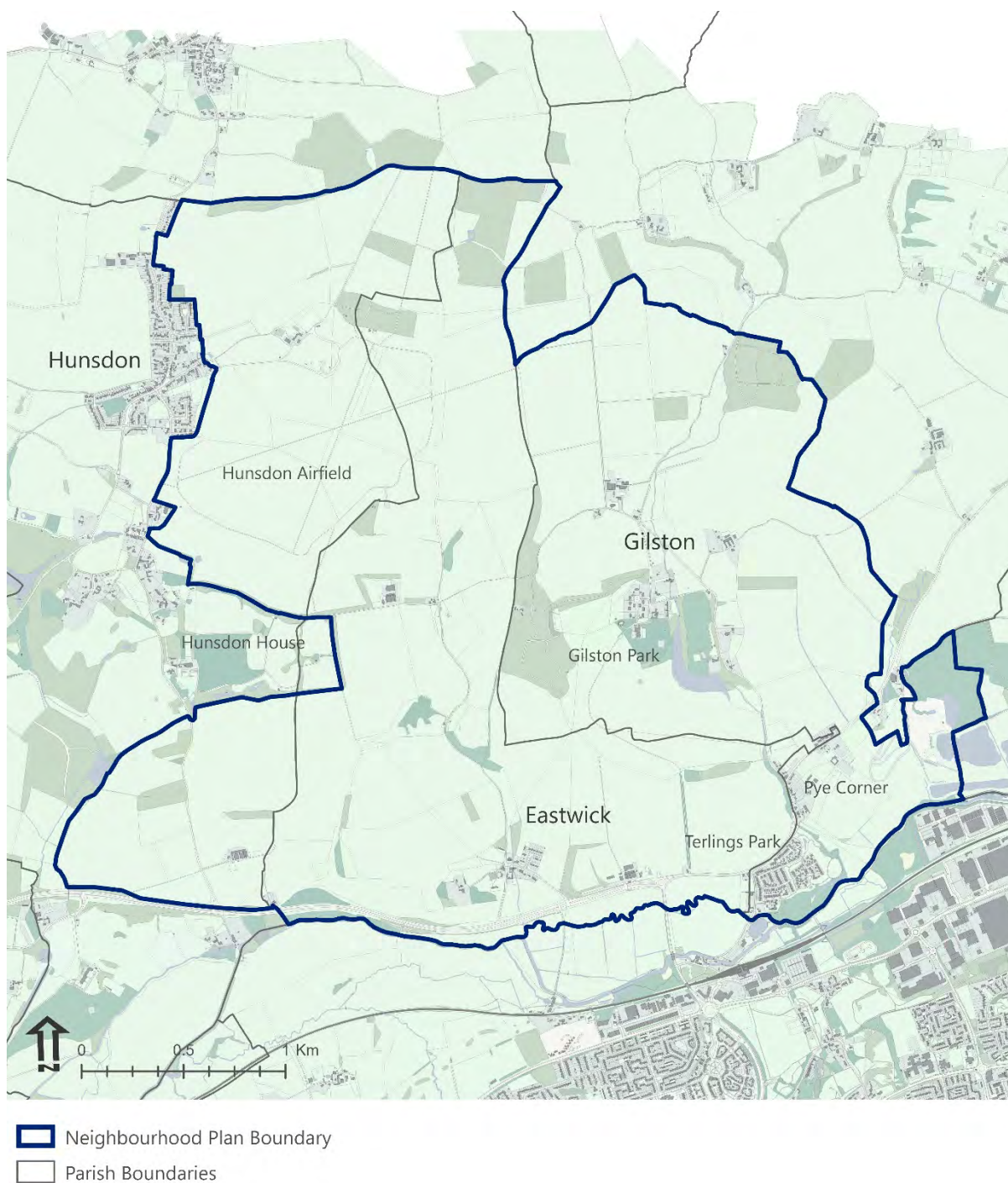
8. This Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan sets out in policy terms what matters to the community and reflects the essential aspects of what has been agreed with the Council and developers since September 2017. In developing a Neighbourhood Plan based on the extensive discussions and consultations which have taken place over the past couple of years, the Neighbourhood Planning Group and local communities aim to give the strongest possible weight to their views and priorities whilst respecting the Policy GA1 allocation and the aspirations of the Council and developers. With this in mind, the Plan sets out:
- **A shared vision** for the Neighbourhood Area
 - **Key development principles** for comprehensive and integrated development, respectful of the character of local villages and maximising benefits for the existing and new communities;
 - **Planning policies for determining future planning applications**, with a particular focus on the importance of a comprehensive landscape masterplan covering the whole area (including the existing settlements) which will provide the framework for the creation of individual new villages. Preparation of the landscape masterplan and village masterplans will be undertaken in consultation with the local community;
 - **Other controls** needed to protect existing communities **and actions** required to deliver improvements;
 - **Priority projects** as identified by the local community in consultation (where appropriate) with statutory bodies for future funding and implementation
 - A framework for **partnership working** between the Council, developers and the local community.
9. The Neighbourhood Plan will be subject to review to ensure that it responds to changes over time and if necessary, policies and development guidelines will be revised for future phases of development.

Designation of the Neighbourhood Area

10. The Neighbourhood Plan covers the entirety of Gilston Parish, Eastwick Parish and that part of Hunsdon Parish which lies within the proposed Gilston Area (Policy GA1) as outlined in the East Hertfordshire District Plan and constitutes the rural portion of the Parish of Hunsdon east of Hunsdon village, from the outer boundaries of Hunsdon House (excluded) and the land to the south of it to the A414 (see Fig. 1).
11. The application for designation of the Neighbourhood Area was approved by East Hertfordshire Council on 28 November 2017.
12. The remainder of the Parish of Hunsdon (including the village, the SSSI and part of the Stort Valley and Briggens House) forms a separately designated Neighbourhood Plan Area, for which a Neighbourhood Plan is currently in preparation⁵.

⁵ Hunsdon Area Neighbourhood Plan - <http://hunsdonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/>

Fig. 1 - Neighbourhood Plan Area Boundary



Plan Preparation Process

13. Neighbourhood Plans must be prepared in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)⁶. As a result, preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan is required to satisfy a number of basic conditions. The Plan has had regard to and is in general conformity with strategic policies contained in the following documents:
 - National Planning Policy Framework (as amended March 2019)
 - East Hertfordshire District Plan (adopted March 2019).
14. A more detailed explanation of how this draft plan conforms with national and local planning policies is provided in the accompanying Basic Conditions Statement.
15. The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared in accordance with the policies in the District Plan and is founded on the extensive public consultation which took place with the local community during development of the Concept Framework between September 2017 and January 2018, and subsequent meetings and discussions within local communities and with the Neighbourhood Plan Group and Parish Councils.
16. It has been prepared in close collaboration with East Herts Council, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and the landowners. It includes policies to guide landscape development, village structure and design, infrastructure delivery and the relationship of new development with the existing villages.
17. Regulation 14 Consultation was undertaken for a 6-week period between September and October 2019. Responses received from the local community, statutory consultees and other stakeholders have been fully reviewed and changes have been made to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan where considered appropriate to address these. The community has confirmed through this consultation that there is general support for the vision and objectives set out in the Plan and the scope and purpose of the policies for development in the Gilston Area. The responses to consultation and the changes made to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan in response to these are summarised in the accompanying Consultation Statement.
18. Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan has also taken account of the outcomes of Gilston Steering Group Meetings formally hosted by East Herts Council, and attended by the developers, the County Council and the Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Plan Group and an extra round of consultations held with planning officers of East Herts District Council and the two landowners /developers of the Gilston Area which took place between February and March 2020. The Draft Neighbourhood Plan was also reviewed by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Quality Review Panel (QRP) in February 2020.

⁶ Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

19. The Neighbourhood Plan will attain the same legal status as the East Hertfordshire District Plan once it has been agreed at a local referendum⁷. On adoption, the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the statutory Development Plan against which relevant planning applications will be determined including the Gilston Area masterplans⁸.

Scope of the Plan

20. The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan Area is located on the southern facing lower slopes of the Hertfordshire uplands reaching the Stort Valley to the south. It is in large part rural and the landscape includes arable fields, clusters of veteran trees and woodland, and the parkland of Gilston Park. Notable is the vast Hunsdon Plateau, which during WWII was cleared of trees and hedges and transformed into an airfield, the footprint of which is clearly identifiable even if today it comprises just open arable fields.
21. The southern edge of the Area, in part reaching the county boundary at the River Stort, extends into the valley (the remaining designated Green Belt) that separates Gilston from Harlow and provides links to significant areas of protected biodiversity within the Stort Valley and the Lee Valley Regional Park, a major Natural Green Space within the catchment set by Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). Further afield, but still relevant for their size and importance, are Epping Forest and Hatfield Forest.
22. Arable fields and grassland surround the compact village of Eastwick to the south, and the scattered village community of Gilston, which comprises several building groups around St Mary's Church, at Gilston Park, along Gilston Lane and at Pye Corner and Terlings Park. Isolated farms, often including Listed Buildings, are situated among the fields.
23. The Neighbourhood Plan Area is entirely within East Hertfordshire District (Hertfordshire) bordering Harlow (Essex) and encloses the major development Policy Area GA1 of East Herts District Council (EHDC) Development Plan. All key boundaries are illustrated in Fig. 2.

⁷ Currently it is assumed that the referendum for the Neighbourhood Plan will not take place until May 2021 as a result of regulations made under the Local Government and Police Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 although that date may be subject to review. Accompanying Planning Guidance states that where the local planning authority has issued a decision statement (as set out under Regulation 18 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) detailing its intention to send a plan to referendum, that plan can be given significant weight in decision making, so far as the plan is material to the application (Neighbourhood Planning Guidance para 107, MHCLG, Revised May 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

⁸ See section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 - http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/pdfs/ukpga_20040005_en.pdf

Evidence Base

24. Preparation of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has drawn on the extensive evidence base that supports the East Hertfordshire District Plan, the Gilston Area Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town documents. This includes landscape assessment, environmental assessment and housing need studies. The evidence base which has been drawn in respect of each Policy is referred to in the supporting text.
25. This has been supplemented by direct inputs from the community, either in the form of comments or through their knowledge of local history, character, landscape and environmental sensitivities.
26. A list of the key evidence base is included in Appendix 5.

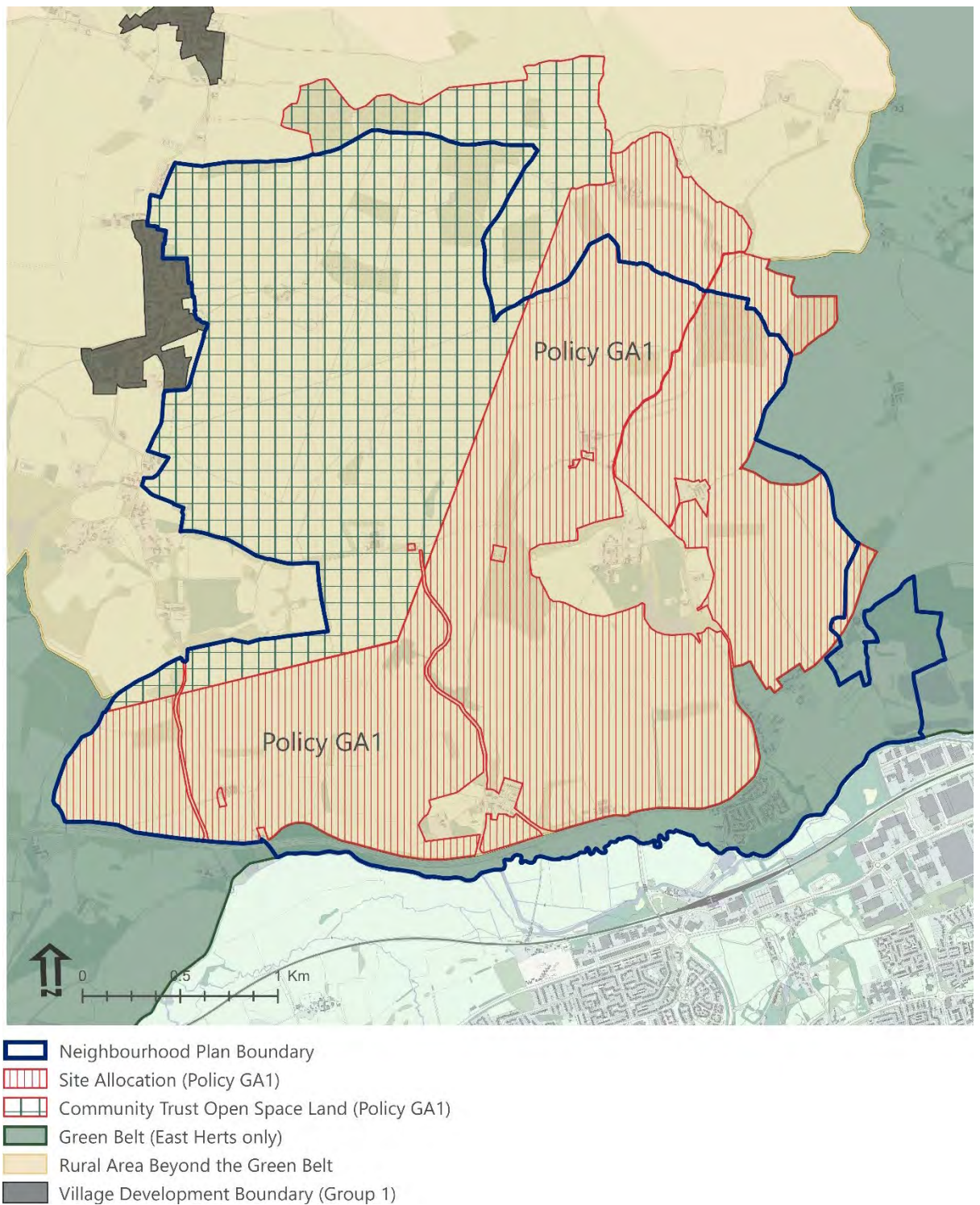
Key Issues Highlighted by the Community

27. Consultation with the local community during the past three years has highlighted:
 - A strong, cohesive community with a clear sense of identity and pride in their local area.
 - Support for the preparation and enforcement of specific planning policy guidance to ensure high quality development and protection of landscape character, heritage assets and existing settlements.
 - The need to ensure that the provision of necessary infrastructure is phased to meet the needs arising from new development and to ensure that adequate capacity is available to meet the comprehensive needs of the area.
 - The need to protect the countryside setting, heritage assets and the general character of the area.
 - The desire to enhance the landscape, green spaces and areas of importance for nature conservation and to protect areas of ancient woodland.
 - Aspirations for on-going constructive engagement with the community in the development of proposals and planning decisions affecting the area and the future stewardship and management of community assets.
28. The community, through the Parish Councils, the Neighbourhood Plan Group, groups like Stop Harlow North and through individual representations, objected to the release of the area from the Green Belt and its allocation for development in the District Plan. Since the allocation of Policy GA1 in the adopted East Herts District Plan, the community's focus has shifted towards ensuring that development takes place in the most appropriate way for the benefit of the area and its current and future residents.
29. The community has, through on-going dialogue with the Council, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board and the developers/landowners and through the planning process, particularly through engagement on the Gilston Area Concept Framework (see Paragraph 77), highlighted a number of issues which have informed preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan:
 - Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon have a different identity and history from Harlow, and – although part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town initiative – development in the area should emphasise this distinctiveness and sense of place. Harlow was planned from the outset as a New Town and therefore has a very different development model which is not considered appropriate to the Gilston Area.

- However, it is recognised that Harlow shares many of the same aims, including preserving the landscape when developing (a landscape-led approach), and this was also one of Frederick Gibberd's aims when he planned Harlow. In addition, the creation and preservation of green infrastructure and ensuring that residents have easy access to community facilities, employment sources, shops and other services is recognised as a benefit for all residents of the Gilston Area.
- Development in the Gilston area should take the form of individual villages set in a rural landscape which take their inspiration from local Hertfordshire villages, rather than that of urban neighbourhoods separated by green fingers; this perspective is widely shared and has had the support of the Leader of East Herts Council and is reflected in the strategic plan for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (Fig. 16)⁹. Great importance is placed by the community on using the existing landscape and local characteristics to create an attractive place and landscape setting for people to enjoy.
- The community would like to ensure that the release of Green Belt in this area genuinely leads to development of exceptional quality, that will create a strong and distinctive community and eventually mature into attractive villages for the future.
- The development will lead to complete transformation of the Gilston area, and this should be accompanied by improvements such as better connectivity and better services for the whole area, including existing communities, in line with Garden City principles – rather than simply mitigation of development impacts.
- The importance of upholding the provisions in the District Plan to preserve and protect from development the open spaces in the northern section of the Gilston Area and to transfer them to the community to ensure their long-term stewardship and governance for the benefit of the existing and new communities.

⁹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)

Fig. 2 - District Plan Policy GA1 and the Neighbourhood Plan Area



B. Planning Policy Framework

The Neighbourhood Plan is set within and complies with the framework set by national, strategic and District Plan policies and expands upon and tailors this to the local area.

30. This section sets out the national, strategic and local planning policy context which is relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan, and to which the Plan must conform, as part of the Local Development Plan. Further details of the planning policy context are provided in the Basic Conditions Statement which accompanies the Neighbourhood Plan.
31. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to promote sustainable development in conformity with national, strategic and local planning policy objectives and provides the opportunity to promote environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change. It does not duplicate other existing policies but rather seeks to tailor and reinforce their application at the Neighbourhood Area level. It provides an additional level of detail and/or a distinct local approach to that set out in the strategic policies without undermining those policies and promotes the opportunity to increase the resilience of both existing and future communities including habitats and wildlife.

What is Sustainable Development?

32. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):
 - Moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature
 - Replacing poor design with better design, more appropriate to the location
 - Improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure
 - Widening the choice of high-quality homes
 - Making it easier for jobs to be created where appropriate within settlements.
33. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives which need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019)¹⁰:
 - **An economic objective** –to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
 - **A social objective** –to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

¹⁰ National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (February 2019)

- **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment including making effective use of land, helping not to harm and to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
34. These roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.
35. The Neighbourhood Plan has taken local circumstances into account and has responded to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development.

National Planning Policy Framework

36. The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan promotes sustainable development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) together with improvements to the environment, economy and wellbeing of people (existing and new communities) in the Neighbourhood Area. It has been prepared having regard to national policies and advice.
37. The NPPF is the key document setting out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Critically, it established a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ unless there are policies which provide a specific reason for refusing development. However, *the NPPF makes it clear that in guiding development to sustainable solutions, the planning system must take into account local circumstances to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.*
38. Paragraph 29 of the NPPF states that Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Paragraph 30 stipulates that once a neighbourhood plan has been brought into force, the policies it contains *take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in a local plan* covering the neighbourhood area, where they are in conflict, unless they are superseded by subsequent policies.
39. Of particular importance is the emphasis placed on good design: the NPPF makes it clear that design quality must be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals and that early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Early, proactive and effective engagement with the community is expected.

Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission

40. The Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission¹¹ is an independent body which has been established to advise government on how to promote and increase high-quality design for new build homes and neighbourhoods. It will be responsible for developing practical measures to ensure new housing developments meet the needs and expectations of existing communities, making them more likely to be welcomed, rather than resisted.
41. The commission has 3 primary aims:
 1. To promote better design and style of homes, villages, towns and high streets, to reflect what communities want, building on the knowledge and tradition of what they know works for their area.
 2. To explore how new settlements can be developed with greater community consent.
 3. To make the planning system work in support of better design and style.
42. The commission published its final report – Living with Beauty – on 30 January 2020¹². This sets out the Commission’s recommendations to government and proposes a new development and planning framework which will ask for beauty; refuse ugliness and promote stewardship.

Ask for Beauty

The report sees beauty as the benchmark that all new developments should meet. This includes everything that promotes a healthy and happy life, everything that makes a collection of buildings into a place, everything that turns anywhere into somewhere, and nowhere into home. So understood, beauty should be an essential condition for the grant of planning permission.

Refuse Ugliness

The report sees ugliness as buildings that are unadaptable, unhealthy and unsightly, and which violate the context in which they are placed. Such buildings destroy the sense of place, undermine the spirit of community, and ensure that we are not at home in our world.

Promote Stewardship

The report maintains that the built and natural environment belong together. Both should be protected and enhanced for the long-term benefit of the communities that depend on them. New developments should be regenerative, enhancing their environment and adding to the health, sustainability and biodiversity of their context. The report finds that for too long now development has been exploiting and spoiling the country and concludes that the time has come to enhance and care for it instead. The recommendations are designed to ensure that this generation passes on to future generations an inheritance at least as good as the one received.

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

¹² Living with Beauty: report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (January, 2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/living-with-beauty-report-of-the-building-better-building-beautiful-commission>

43. The Commission advocate an integrated approach, in which all matters relevant to placemaking are considered from the outset and subjected to a democratic or co-design process. The proposals set out in the report aim for long-term investment in which the values that matter to people – beauty, community, history, landscape – are safeguarded. ‘Hence places, not units; high streets, not glass bottles; local design codes, not faceless architecture that could be anywhere’. The Commission argues for a stronger and more predictable planning system, for greater democratic involvement in planning decisions, and for a new model of long-term stewardship as the precondition for large developments. It advocates a radical programme for the greening of towns and cities, for achieving environmental targets, and for regenerating abandoned places. The emerging environmental goals – durability, adaptability, biodiversity – are continuous with the pursuit of beauty, and the advocacy of beauty is seen as the clearest and most efficient way forward for the planning system as a whole.
44. The Gilston Area and its Neighbourhood Plan seeks to provide an exemplary showcase of the principles set out by the Commission, through the commitment to high quality design, placemaking and long-term stewardship.

East Hertfordshire District Plan

45. The East Hertfordshire District Plan was adopted in October 2018. The plan allocates the Gilston Area to accommodate 10,000 new homes in distinct villages with at least 3,000 homes to be delivered by 2033 along with significant supporting infrastructure including roads and sustainable transport provision, schools, health centres and public open space. The plan also requires the equivalent of 5ha of employment land, either as a business park or planned within its village centres. This would account for a large proportion of the District’s housing and employment needs and in addition, is intended to support the regeneration of Harlow.
46. In order to meet its housing requirements within the District, it has been concluded that *exceptional* circumstances existed to justify the release of land from the Green Belt, amounting to the single largest release of land from the Green Belt in the country, of around 590 hectares (areas marked as Policy GA1 in Fig. 2). The boundary leaves a relatively narrow strip of Green Belt between the built form of Harlow and the Gilston Area corresponding to the Stort Valley corridor. This remaining Green Belt corridor will perform an important function, preventing Harlow from expanding northwards into Gilston, and allowing development at Gilston to take a different form: that of villages rather than urban districts.
47. The Inspector at the District Plan Examination in Public (EiP) stressed the importance of a well-defined physical and visual boundary to the Green Belt to mitigate the impacts of development in accordance with the NPPF.
48. Development in the Gilston Area will be required to complement, and have regard to, ongoing work in relation to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (see Paragraphs 57-66).

49. The District Plan strategic policies with which the Neighbourhood Plan must comply are the ones that relate to the development at Gilston (Policy GA1 and GA2). Other plan policies will apply unless replaced by equivalent policies in the Neighbourhood Plan, which will then take precedence. The key elements of the strategic policies are outlined below.

Policy GA1 – The Gilston Area

50. Policy GA1 and the supporting text of Chapter 11 of the EHDC District Plan provide the most important strategic planning policy context for this Neighbourhood Plan. Following the EiP, Policy GA1 was modified to give greater emphasis on community involvement in the preparation of a vision for the area and how the Garden City principles would be applied.
51. The main components of the development strategy for the Gilston Area established in Policy GA1 are as follows:

Single allocation: *intended to accommodate 10,000 homes, to be delivered within this Plan period and beyond as part of a comprehensive green infrastructure network and developed according to Garden City principles.*

Housing: *development in this location will provide a mixture of house sizes and tenures across seven distinct villages, including affordable housing and homes for older people. The site will make provision for self-build and/or custom build opportunities and respond to other housing needs.*

Education: *the site will deliver land for twenty forms of entry for both primary and secondary education in order to fully cater for the needs arising from the development. Early Years Education will also be provided for.*

Transport: *a wide range of small and large scale interventions and sustainable transport measures will be required to ensure that development in the wider Harlow area, including the Gilston Area, is able to proceed without causing unacceptable congestion in Harlow, the surrounding towns and villages, as well as the wider strategic transport network. Sustainable transport measures will also be required including new bus services, connecting to Harlow and the wider area, as well as provision for walking and cycling¹³.*

Community Facilities: *the Gilston Area will provide new community facilities based around a network of village centres.*

Employment: *the development will provide local employment, including small scale office space. This will be in the form of either a business park of 5ha or distributed across the village centres having regard to Garden City principles. Residents will also be able to access more substantial employment opportunities within Harlow, including the Enterprise Zone.*

Open Space: *only the south and south eastern sections of the site will be developed. In addition to development, this part of the site will deliver new green spaces including sports*

¹³ A subsequent target of 60% of all trips from new development through sustainable transport modes (buses, shared mobility, cycling and walking) has been set by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

pitches, parks and recreation areas. Within the north and north western sections of the site, a substantial amount of public open space as part of wider managed parklands including continuing farming will be provided. This area will therefore remain undeveloped, with the exception of a small number of buildings associated with its recreational use. A community land trust, or other governance mechanism as appropriate, will be established in order to deliver local ownership and management of these assets. The District Plan states that this should take place early in the overall development programme. In addition, the environment of the Stort Valley will be enhanced through the provision of new green infrastructure links, and woodland areas to the north of the site will be enhanced by planting and management schemes.

Character: *The development will be of high-quality design, with careful consideration given to layout, architecture, building heights and materials. It will also be sensitively integrated visually in the wider context of the surrounding landscape. Landscape buffers will be provided in order to maintain the distinct identities of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon within the context of the overall development.*

Heritage: *The site contains multiple heritage assets, including listed buildings and Scheduled Monuments. The development will be designed in order to ensure that these assets and their settings are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced within the context of the overall development.*

Ecology and Environment: *The development will retain and protect important hedgerows, Local Wildlife sites and ancient woodlands. New habitats will be created in order to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity. A Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) network will be integrated to provide additional planting and biodiversity.*

52. Policy GA1 (II) indicates that a Concept Framework was being jointly prepared by the landowners, the Council and the local community, identifying the design principles, potential land uses, infrastructure requirements and phasing and that the Concept Framework is to be used as a benchmark in reviewing proposals for development.
53. Policy GA1 (IV) requires the preparation of a community engagement strategy, working with the two local Parishes, which will include consideration of managing the effects on local residents, and opportunities for them to participate in the emerging new community. The policy states that engagement with the local communities and other relevant stakeholders shall take place through the planning application process and through the development of Village Masterplans.
54. Policy GA1 (V(u)) states there should be new landscaping and planting, both within the site and on the periphery, which responds to the existing landscape and complements development, as appropriate, and the establishment of a defined, recognisable boundary to the Green Belt.
55. Policy GA1 is reproduced in full in Appendix 1.

Policy GA2 – Stort Crossings

56. The District Plan promotes transport improvements in the form of two improved crossings of the River Stort to accommodate housing and employment growth. Policy GA2 states that the Council aims to facilitate the delivery of the following transport improvements to crossings of the River Stort:
- A widening of the existing A414 crossing (Central Crossing / Fifth Avenue);
 - A new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian crossing either to the east of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to the River Way), or to the west of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to Elizabeth Way).
57. Policy GA2 requires development proposals for both Stort Crossings to protect and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings through appropriate mitigation measures, having regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

58. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town project is an initiative born out of the common aspiration of five partner Councils, East Herts, Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils with Essex and Hertfordshire County Councils, working together to deliver housing, economic growth and the regeneration of Harlow. Their common vision is set out in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision.
59. In January 2017, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town was awarded formal Garden Town status by the Government. A Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board (the Garden Town Board) has been established since late 2017, which comprises senior elected representatives of the five partner Councils and their Chief Executives/Executive Directors. The Board is supported by an Officer Core Group.
60. The Garden Town comprises the whole of the existing Harlow District and the strategic development sites within the boundary of the Neighbourhood Plan and three other sites, two in the Epping Forest District Council area and one which spans the boundary between Epping Forest and Harlow District Council areas. It is an expectation of the Garden Town Board that these sites will collectively deliver transformational growth in and around Harlow and that their future operation will be inextricably linked to the economy and function of the town. As such, the proposals for the Gilston Area will be required to complement, and have regard to, ongoing work relating to the Garden Town.
61. The Garden Town Board is clear that the strategic sites must not be developed in isolation but should strongly connect to the existing and future fabric of Harlow to create a coherent and sustainable Garden Town.
62. The Garden Town Vision was published in November 2018 and has been informed by the Town and Country Planning Association's (TCPA) Garden City Principles. The overarching Vision is that the Garden Town will be adaptable, healthy, sustainable and innovative. It incorporates the concept of the 7 distinctive villages in the Gilston Area established in Policy GA1 and the Concept Framework.

63. The Garden Town themes (see Appendix 2) are interpreted further in the **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide** (Nov 2018). For each of the themes, the Design Guide provides further guidance and some detailed examples as to how development could fulfil the expectations set out in the Vision. In particular the Design Guide identifies a clear distinction in development form between Harlow (neighbourhoods separated by green wedges or corridors) and Gilston, where individual villages in the countryside landscape are to be provided (see Fig. 16 - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide Structural Plan (2018)).
64. Both the Vision and Design Guide have been formally endorsed by the Garden Town Board and the three Districts have also approved the documents as material considerations in relation to all HGGT planning applications. The documents were approved as a Material Planning Consideration by East Herts Council on 19 December 2018.
65. The **Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy** has been prepared in line with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4)¹⁴. The Draft for Consultation was published in January 2020¹⁵. It sets out three headline objectives. These are to:
- Achieve a target of 60% of all journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes within the new Garden Town communities (and 50% in existing areas of Harlow).
 - To deliver mobility options on a hierarchy that prioritises (in this order): reducing the need to travel, walking, cycling and public transport.
 - To support a culture of active and sustainable travel within the HGGT.
66. The **Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)**, **Strategic Viability Assessment (SVA)** and **How to Guide for Planning Obligations and Viability** were jointly produced by all five Garden Town partner Councils and were developed in consultation with the main developer stakeholders. These documents were published in April 2019 and have been considered through the Independent Examinations for the Harlow and Epping Forest Local Plans.
67. The IDP sets out the range of infrastructure that will be required in order to support the development of the Garden Town sites and is an evidence base document. A key expectation is that a Statement of Delivery will be produced in line with the requirements set out in these documents.

¹⁴ Hertfordshire County Council Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4) (July 2018)

¹⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

The Gilston Area Concept Framework

68. The Concept Framework¹⁶ was produced in parallel to the District Plan by landowners Places for People and City and Provincial Properties (now operating as Briggens Estate 1 for the purpose of this site) in collaboration with East Herts District Council and following intensive collective input by the local communities between September 2017 and January 2018. It was endorsed by East Hertfordshire District Council as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in July 2018. It is referenced in Policy GA1 (II) and also in the Statement of Common Ground submitted by the Council and developers/ landowners to the East Herts District Plan Examination in Public¹⁷. It represents an agreed approach which has been developed through collaboration between all main parties. It identifies high quality design and placemaking principles, potential land uses, landscaping and public realm, transport and infrastructure requirements and phasing.
69. The Concept Framework was the subject of formal consultation between 24 July 2017 and 8 September 2017 and comments were received from a wide range of stakeholders including statutory bodies, interest groups, community representatives and the general public. Following on from that consultation, revisions were incorporated in the Concept Framework in December 2017. These were informed by further engagement undertaken with the community and facilitated through the Neighbourhood Plan Group. Revisions sought to strengthen the concept of delivering development in the Gilston Area as a series of distinct villages inspired by local character.
70. Revisions to the Gilston Area Concept Framework were agreed by East Herts Council Executive on 12 June 2018¹⁸. A revised version together with the accompanying officer report (Gilston Area Concept Framework and Planning Process, East Herts Council Executive, 12 June 2018) was presented to the Council on 25 July 2018 when it was agreed as a material consideration for Development Management purposes¹⁹. In accordance with Policy GA1, the Council has resolved to use it as the benchmark against which future development proposals in the Gilston Area will be assessed.
71. The framework identifies design principles, land uses, infrastructure requirements and phasing and used surveys, assessments, conceptual Masterplans and consultation input from key stakeholders and the community to support and demonstrate the deliverability of Policy GA1 as seven distinct villages separated by meaningful landscape with shared infrastructure and a clear collective identity. It also established key principles to underpin and shape the content of any future masterplanning work, including 'strong vision, leadership and community engagement in accordance with Garden City principles' and informed by the landscape, topographical and built features of the area.

¹⁶ Gilston Area Concept Framework (2018)

¹⁷ Statement of Common Ground between East Herts Council and Places for People and City & Provincial regarding GA1 (the Gilston Area) Ref: ED160 <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/planning-policy/district-plan-examination-documents/statements-common-ground>

¹⁸ Gilston Area Concept Framework- Executive Report (East Herts Council 12 June 2018)

¹⁹ Gilston Area Concept Framework- Council Report (East Herts Council 25 July 2018)

East Herts Gilston Area Charter SPD

72. The Gilston Area Charter SPD has been produced by East Herts through engagement with landowners, key stakeholders and representatives from the local community to help guide the process of planning and delivery of high quality and coordinated development and infrastructure within the Gilston Area, informed by the Garden City Principles and the vision for the Garden Town. A draft version of the Charter was agreed by the East Herts Council Executive on 11 February 2020 and was the subject of consultation between 12 February 2020 and 12 March 2020. Changes were made to the draft SPD to address matters raised during consultation and the final document was approved by the Council's Executive on 2 June 2020²⁰.
73. The Charter is a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which seeks to support the implementation of District Plan Policy DES1 in producing robust masterplans that deliver the overarching ambitions and aspirations for the Gilston Area as set out in District Plan Policy GA1 and other relevant policy/guidance. As an SPD, the Charter is a Local Development Document that builds upon and provides more detailed advice or guidance on the policies in the District Plan and has weight as a material consideration in planning decision making.
74. The guidance establishes a consistent approach to the production of Masterplans in the Gilston Area to ensure that development comes forward in a comprehensive and cohesive manner that contributes to the creation of successful and sustainable places that embody the Garden City Principles. This is seen as being particularly important to the Gilston Area because of the strategic scale of development and the multiple parties with an interest in its delivery. It requires the masterplanning process to appropriately consider how development in the Gilston Area will sensitively respond to its setting through the preparation of a Strategic Landscape Masterplan in advance of agreeing the Village Masterplans.
75. The Charter SPD also seeks to embed the important role of collaborative engagement between the applicant and the Council, key stakeholders and statutory bodies in the preparation of the Masterplans, as well as the local community in accordance with the emerging Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy.

²⁰ Gilston Area Charter SPD- Executive Report (East Herts Council 2 June 2020)

Summary

76. National, strategic and local planning policies set a clear context for preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and the overriding importance placed on a number of key planning principles: the promotion of sustainable development; high quality design and placemaking that is appropriate to the local context; protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment; promotion of sustainable transport modes and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Above all, national, strategic and local policies actively endorse and promote the engagement of local communities in shaping the environment they live in.
77. The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan complies with national and strategic policy and reflects the aspirations of the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission. It has been developed in accordance with the East Hertfordshire District Plan and makes provision for the allocation of 10,000 homes in the Gilston Area established in Policy GA1.
78. The Gilston Area Concept Framework for the Gilston Area, prepared by the developers with substantial inputs from the community and endorsed by the EHDC in June 2018, has provided the basis for this Neighbourhood Plan. In addition to the Concept Framework, the Neighbourhood Plan is aligned with the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide as well as the Garden City principles as set out in Policy GA1.

C. Local Context

Understanding the local context is essential in promoting sustainable development in the Gilston Area. It is important to understand local character and the aspirations of the local community in accordance with national guidance and strategic policy objectives.

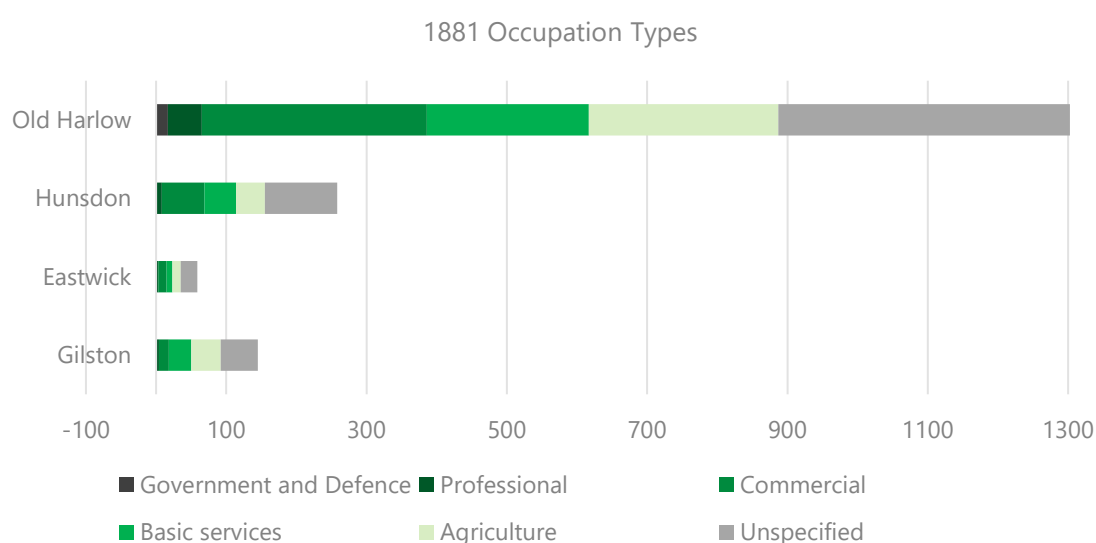
A Brief History of the Parishes and Villages

79. The Neighbourhood Plan Area contained small settlements dating back to before pre-Roman times and has been continuously inhabited around Eastwick and Hunsdon ever since. Both villages are mentioned in the Domesday Book: both had a priest (and therefore a church or chapel), around 50 people and farms with arable land, pasture and livestock. Both were important royal landholdings in Tudor times.
80. Since the 14th-15th centuries the area was the site of three churches and manor houses, all located outside the main working settlements:
 - St Botolph's in Eastwick (Grade II* Listed Building), founded around the 13th century but largely rebuilt in 1872-73, and accompanied by Eastwick Manor (former rectory built in the 17th century). Eastwick Hall, built by the Norman landlords to the north of the current village, is no longer there.
 - St Mary's in Gilston (Grade I Listed Building) surrounded by wealthy farms and the manors of Overall and Netherall, which then became New Place, the hall which preceded Gilston Park.
 - St Dunstan's, built as part of the complex of Hunsdon House (both Grade I Listed Buildings, located just to the west of the Area).
81. All three settlements share a common history: royal connections and common rural economies. Hunsdon House (a Grade I Listed Building) is one of the most important medieval houses in the country, evidencing a long history of Royal association: so much so that the landlords of Hunsdon House acquired Eastwick from Elizabeth I, and then sold it to Sir John Gore of Gilston in 1637. The extensive countryside setting of Hunsdon House that was part of the designed landscape remains substantially undeveloped and allows an understanding of the role of agriculture and woodland in the operation and enjoyment of this nationally important historic house²¹.
82. Gilston Park House is a Grade II* listed country house in Gilston, Hertfordshire, England. It was designed by Philip Hardwick for John Hodgson around 1852 as an imposing residence, replacing the previous decaying manor houses. Hodgson also built several model farmhouses and community buildings, in rich red brick, with black detailing, tall 'Tudor' chimneys, decorative wooden gables, ornate porches, diamond-paned windows, and solid oak doors. Many of these (listed) still exist today.
83. Connections with Harlow were limited, as the villages were all outside the main routes connecting London to Cambridge which helped Old Harlow grow into a small market town even before the time of the railways.

²¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1347687>

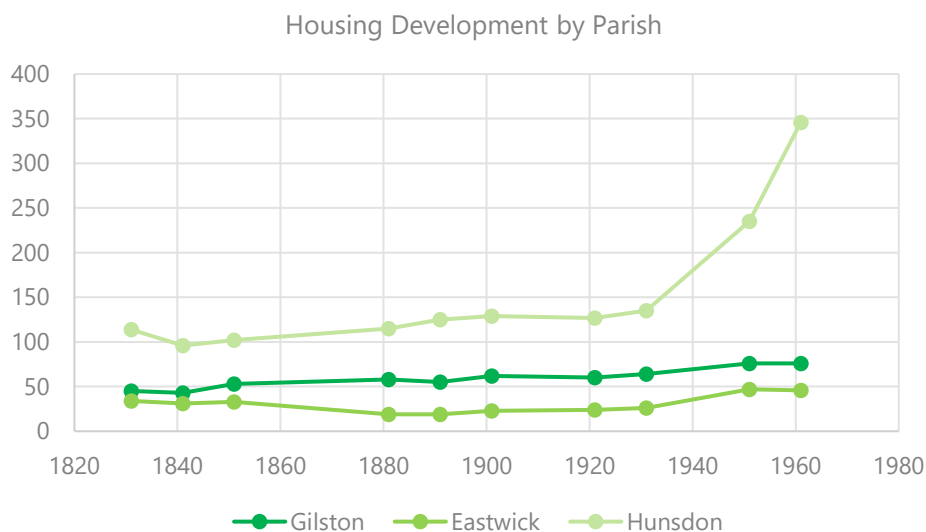
84. Throughout the great periods of urban expansion (late Victorian times with the railways and in the post-war period) Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon retained their small size and character of rural settlements, despite major changes in nearby Harlow, which developed into a sizeable market town in the 1870s and then a major new town in the post war period. Fig. 3 shows the variety of jobs in the 4 parishes in 1881 – clearly indicating the difference in size and employment structure between Old Harlow and this area, where employment was limited to commercial and agricultural activity, and basic services within the manor houses. By 1881 Old Harlow, however, already had the scale and variety of an urban settlement.

Fig. 3 - Range and number of jobs in Late Victorian period as identified by the 1881 Census
(Source: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census)



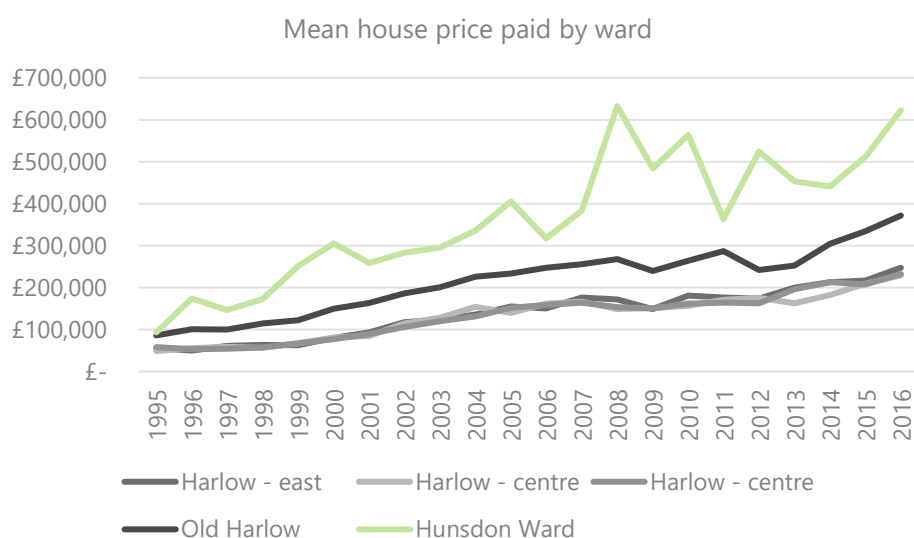
85. During both periods, physical growth in the settlements of the Area was very limited (Fig. 4 – number of houses until 1961), even if large changes took place:
- In the second half of the 19th century the new owner of Gilston Park, John Hodgson made massive investments in his estate, with a new manor house, cottages, farmhouses and ancillary buildings.
 - Between 1941 and 1945 the RAF built and operated the airfield at Hunsdon, by altering fields and removing woodlands at a time of national emergency. The site at peak had around 2,000 personnel, mostly living in the village.
 - Terlings Park, formerly a manor house to the south of Netherhall, became a medical research facility before being redeveloped for around 200 houses in 2017.

Fig. 4 - Housing development remained slow in Gilston and Eastwick throughout the Victorian and post-war periods (Source: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census)



86. Small size, access to the countryside and slow growth appear to have served the area well, as the price of local properties increased substantially, especially when compared with nearby Harlow (Fig. 5).

Fig. 5 - House prices in Hunsdon Ward (including the three Parishes) have been significantly and increasingly higher than those in Harlow – although with higher volatility (Source: ONS Housing Statistics)

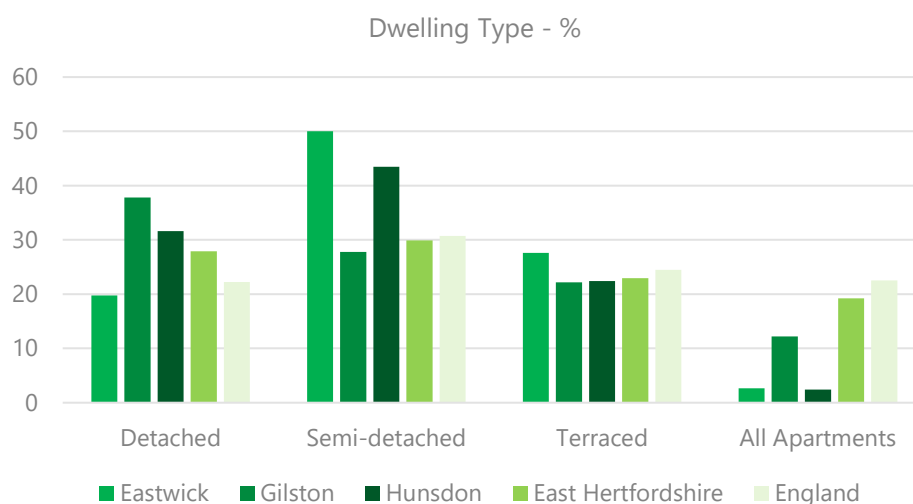


Population and Socio-Economic Overview

87. Census data of 2011 do not fully represent the current population of the Area, particularly in Gilston, where the development of Terlings Park has brought 200 new households to the settlements and increased variety of age, ethnicity, and economic profile.
88. Bearing this in mind, the 2011 Census still paints a picture of the Area as an affluent established family area, with high employment and proportion of people in managerial and professional occupation. Overall Eastwick appears to have smaller houses and middle range of employment, while Hunsdon has older population and a slightly lower proportion of people in high-level occupation (see Fig. 7). The socio-economic profile of the three Parishes is clearly different from the ward of Old Harlow, which has the profile of a decidedly more urban area: higher proportion of flats, many singles, higher proportion of elderly and lower skills.
89. Below is a summary of key census data:
- The Area had extremely low density of population: 0.5 and 0.6 persons per hectare in Eastwick and Gilston respectively, and 1.1 in Hunsdon (including the Parish as a whole) compared to an average in East Herts of 2.9 and 11.6 in Old Harlow.
 - In 2011 around 200 people lived in each of the Parishes of Eastwick and Gilston (now probably around 600 in Gilston). 1,080 people (449 households) lived in Hunsdon Parish.
 - The three Parishes of the Area provided a place of residence mainly for established families. All three had above average proportions of family households of mature working age (30-74) compared to the rest of East Herts, and especially Harlow. This is probably a reflection of the high price of houses in the areas.
 - Older population was significantly lower in Eastwick and Gilston (4.6% and 2.6% respectively) compared to the East Herts average of 7.3 %. Hunsdon had a higher proportion of older population at 9.4%.
 - Detached and semi-detached houses prevailed in 2011 – with a predominance of semi and terraced properties in Eastwick and detached properties in Gilston (See Fig. 6).

Fig. 6 - Prevailing dwelling typologies in the three Parishes

(Source: NOMIS, Local Area Profiles Census 2011)



- The three Parishes had higher than average availability of cars in the household: 1.7 in Hunsdon, 1.9 in Eastwick and a very high 2.3 in Gilston – well above Old Harlow (1.35) and East Herts (1.5). In Gilston 18% of households had 4 or more cars or vans (3.5% in East Herts).
- Eastwick and Gilston had both a ratio of around 0.6 active people to total population (national average 0.51), with Gilston having a much higher than average proportion of active people with higher qualifications and in higher professional occupation (See Fig. 7).

Fig. 7 - Key economic and occupation indicators for the three Parishes

(Source: NOMIS, Local Area Profiles Census 2011)

| | Eastwick | Gilston | Hunsdon | Old Harlow | East Herts | England |
|---|----------|---------|---------|------------|------------|---------|
| Economically Active People | 116 | 133 | 572 | 3817 | | |
| Employment ratio (of tot. population) | 0.60 | 0.58 | 0.53 | 0.55 | 0.73 | 0.51 |
| Unemployment | 2.1% | 3.8% | 3.6% | 3.5% | 2.8% | 4.4% |
| Higher qualifications (level 4 and above) | 24.8% | 34.0% | 28.7% | 23.6% | 33.5% | 27.4% |
| No qualification | 17.0% | 13.6% | 23.7% | 22.4% | 17.2% | 22.5% |
| Managerial and professional occupations | 31.0% | 36.5% | 33.1% | 28.4% | 35.0% | 28.4% |
| Sales, customer service, process plant or elementary occupations | 20.4% | 14.3% | 22.6% | 22.8% | 18.7% | 26.7% |

Landscape Setting and Relationship of Villages and Countryside

90. The overall landscape is characterised by the southward facing slopes from the Hertfordshire uplands to the north, furrowed by relatively steep streams feeding into the River Stort to the south. The soil of the area is characterised by poor drainage, which has led over the centuries to the creation of a network of field ditches and holloways, which are now characteristic of the area.
91. The 2007 Landscape Character Appraisal SPD identifies three main zones²²:
- The southern Eastwick Slopes (part of Area 81) characterised by parklands linked to the many manor houses and arable farmland on gently undulating slopes. This is a cultural landscape, shaped during centuries by the interplay between large residences with parks, grasslands and hunting woods and the agricultural enclosures of medium sized fields. Blocks of woodland of elm, ash, willow and hornbeam remain in between the fields. Typical of this area are the sunken winding lanes bordered by hedgerows, the groupings of cottages and the large farmhouses, many of which are of heritage value.
 - The River Stort (Area 82), a valley running from the southern edge of Bishop's Stortford to Rye Meads Nature Reserve where it meets the River Lea and the Lee Valley Regional Park. The river is fed by a number of streams from the Eastwick Slope and Harlow and in part has been "canalised" by the Navigation Canal and its accompanying towpath. The valley contains a mix of floodplains, discontinuous pasture, biodiversity-rich water meadows (SSSI and other wildlife areas), wetlands and mineral extraction sites, and 19th century water related industrial buildings (maltings and mills). The railway added another layer of historic influences to the valley. The noise of the A414 to the north and the presence of Harlow to the south have not been overly detrimental to the otherwise tranquil setting of the valley.
 - The Hunsdon Plateau (Area 83) is characterised by the large scale open arable farmland on the flat upland plateau south of the village of Hunsdon. Part of the plateau has been transformed by the creation of the WWII Airfield, which led to the removal of all trees and hedgerows, and is now in intensive arable production. To the north-east large blocks of ancient woodland linked by sunken hedgerows are still in place. Elm is prominent, with willow along the ditches. The area is crossed by several footpaths and Rights of Way but has poor vehicular access.
92. Pockets of woodland and many veteran trees are distributed throughout the area, in between large arable fields. These have been identified by the District Plan as Wildlife Sites (see Fig. 9), which could potentially connect the water landscapes of the Stort Valley and Lee Valley to the south and west (Floodplain marshes, water bodies and important SSSI/ RAMSAR sites) to the upper plateau woodland to the north.
93. Within the Neighbourhood Plan Area there is Gilston Park: the designed parkland of the eponymous manor house. The park is not formally designated but still important for its landscape design and groupings of mature trees. The park of Hunsdon House is adjacent

²² https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Landscape_Character_Assessment_SPD.pdf

to the Area, while two listed Ancient Gardens are located just to the south: at Briggens House and Parndon.

94. Dramatic change in the landscape occurred when field and woodland were cleared in 1939 to create the Hunsdon Airfield. This has created a vast nearly flat upland area at the edge of Hunsdon village.
95. Areas of parkland were retained as part of the redevelopment of Terlings Park in 2017 together with a large number of mature trees including significant specimens such as Giant Redwood and a Cedar of Lebanon. This parkland contributes to the character and landscape setting of Gilston.
96. Numerous paths and Rights of Way cross the area and intersect farmhouses and other dwellings.
97. The overlay of urban development over time – when comparing to the 1886 map of the area – has not dramatically transformed the area: the patterns of most lanes, woodland and fields remain the same, with the notable exceptions of the construction of the A414, the 5th Avenue bridge over the Stort and railways and the Hunsdon Airfield. Settlements and farms have obviously grown with time, but they never altered the patterns that were there before. Because of this, still today, local settlements have a close relationship with the countryside: open views over the field, trees, hedgerows and planting of a rural nature and simple access lanes rather than streets.

Settlement Character

98. The existing communities comprise the villages of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon and scattered or non-contiguous buildings. Of these, Hunsdon is a Group 1 Village and the others are Group 3. Only Hunsdon has a Village Boundary defined in the District Plan maps. The existing settlements are characterised by a loose built up form and scattered clusters of buildings. Gilston, in particular is formed by a loose grouping of buildings (including Terlings Park) rather than a compact settlement.
99. Whilst the settlements are all unique, the villages within and nearby the Gilston Area (including the larger Hunsdon, Much Hadham, Puckeridge, Widford, and High Wych) display some common layout characteristics:
 - They are all linear settlements, compact along the main street/ lane that crosses the countryside (historic settlement) and only as deep as a small group of houses (5-20 units). The older and more compact part of the villages are typically along a bend in the road at the junction between country lanes: this is the case in Gilston, Pye Corner, and in Eastwick before the A414 created a bypass.
 - Historically village development was driven by the investments of the manor houses (Hunsdon, Gilston, Eastwick, Briggens, etc. - see sections above), which often funded the construction of a church near the main house and clusters of cottage houses for the workers, located nearby but at a separate location.
 - Because of this origin, the villages do not have well defined centres or focal points where main buildings and services are co-located around a market space or green: shops and workshops are located all along the main linear spine, with the school (developed later in time) towards the edge of the settlement and the church well

outside. The manor house, if still in existence, is located outside the village and screened from view.

- Agricultural modernisation of the 19th century led to the creation of model farms under the leadership of John Hodgson, who took over Gilston Manor. These historic farm buildings, sometimes including imposing family houses, are now among the Listed Buildings of the area, dispersed among the fields and located on quiet country lanes. The Briggens Estate is another example, comprising the outlying houses serving the Manor House of Lord Aldenham which are also now listed.
- This development structure leads to a multitude of small settlements, all served by narrow lanes and too small to sustain services, but all with close relationship with the countryside: always visible at the end of the road or across the picket fences.
- Most village lanes have no street lighting and no pavements, or a narrow one to one side only. Development of the past 50 years adopted wider similar approaches, for example the 1960s houses of Eastwick have narrow pavements and central green spaces, the Daintrees in Widford provide access through a shared surface (although wider than the main road that serve the development) and Terlings Park have a mix of roads with one sided pavement and shared surface access.
- Most settlements occupy an area with a well-defined perimeter. However, the built frontage and building orientation typically varies significantly along the edge, often with tall trees and mixed hedging providing a very soft edge and transition between the built area and the countryside.

100. More detail about settlement characteristics is provided in Appendix 4.

Transport and Mobility Patterns

101. At present, the existing settlements are served by the A414 and Eastwick Road, with a network of narrow roads and lanes linking the villages and outlying settlements. As there are very limited public transport services to either Harlow, Bishops Stortford or Hertford, most journeys have to be undertaken by car. This includes most school trips and commuting patterns to work in Harlow or London.
102. Harlow Station is on the London-Stansted-Cambridge rail link and services are heavily used particularly during peak hours. Residents in the Gilston Area have reported problems of lack of capacity and overcrowding on existing services.
103. Cycling trips to Harlow Station are undertaken by some local residents, but this is made difficult by the lack of safe crossing at the A414 and Eastwick Roundabout. The cycle parking facilities at Harlow Station are also poor and have inadequate capacity to accommodate any increase in demand. Harlow Mill, further east, and Roydon have fewer and slower train services and are therefore less used.
104. Most residents are aware of the impacts of through movements using, for example, Church Lane and the main village street in Hunsdon to go to Bishops Stortford or Eastwick Road serving Sawbridgeworth. These movements are particularly intense when there is congestion on the M11, spilling over onto the A10. Often in these occurrences, the Eastwick Roundabout causes severe delays, and Church Lane and Eastwick Road are observed by local residents to become dangerously busy.

Fig. 8 - Character of Eastwick and Gilston



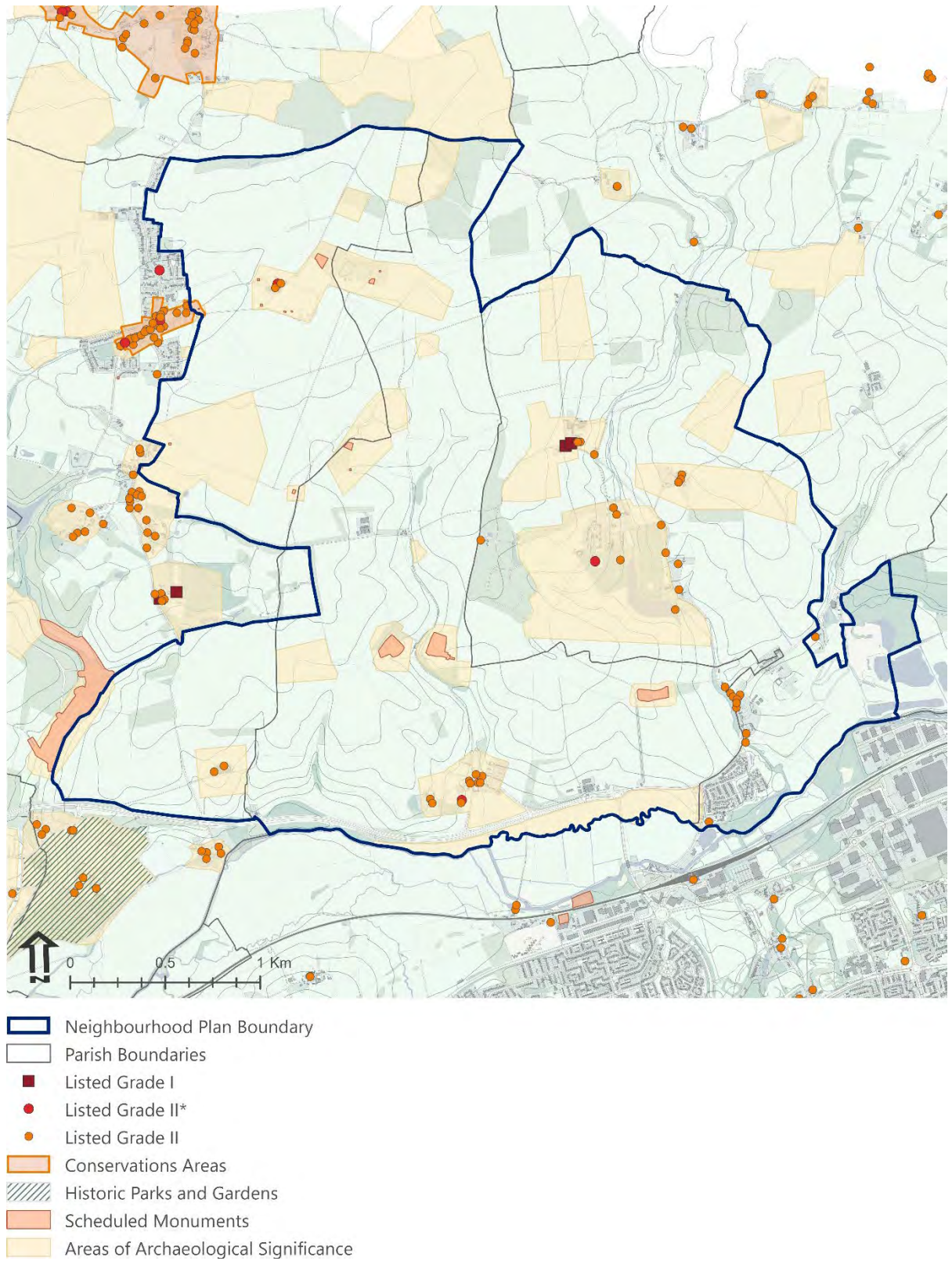
A. Attractive village front garden (Eastwick Hall Lane); B. Views over the open countryside from within the village (Eastwick); C. Deep front garden with large trees (Gilston Lane); D. Green access roads (Gilston); E. Churches typically set in landscape at the village edge (St. Botolph's, Eastwick); F. Typical narrow green front garden (Pye Corner, Gilston)

Fig. 9 - Protected Landscape Designations
 (Source: District Plan and Natural England)



- | | |
|---|---|
| Neighbourhood Plan Boundary | Priority Habitats (Natural England) |
| Parish Boundaries | Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh |
| Paths and Bridleways | Deciduous woodland |
| Bridleway | Good quality semi-improved grassland |
| Byway open to all traffic | Lowland fens |
| Footpath | Lowland meadows |
| Restricted Byway | Additional habitat |
| Woodland and Wildlife | Traditional orchard |
| Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland | |
| Ancient Replanted Woodland | |
| SSSI | |
| Wildlife Sites | |
| Local Nature Reserve | |

Fig. 10 - Protected Heritage Designations
(Source: District Plan, Historic England)



D. Vision and Objectives

The Vision and Objectives for the Area are the result of collaborative joint work between the community, the local authority and the promoters of development in the Gilston Area during preparation of the Concept Framework and on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Overview

105. The Concept Framework (see Paragraph 69) provides a robust foundation for preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Concept Framework also states: ‘There is significant further work to be done in consultation with the parishes and local communities to develop the principles in this document , and to evolve them into a definitive masterplan for the Gilston Area and to realise the homes that are so urgently needed in the local area’²³. The Neighbourhood Plan will assist in realising this shared objective.
106. The Vision and Objectives established in the Concept Framework amplify and are consistent with Policy GA1. These have been:
- Subject to modification in response to several rounds of public consultation between August 2017 and June 2018.
 - Agreed by representatives of the Parish Councils and the Neighbourhood Plan Group following consultation with hundreds of residents.
 - Approved by the Council as a material consideration for Development Management purposes in July 2018.
 - Endorsed by the promoters of the site, as main authors of the Concept Framework.
107. The overall vision for the Gilston Area is to develop seven new villages set around the historic landscape of Gilston Park, each village having its own distinct character and identity within one overall landscape vision. This is consistent with the approach set out in Policy GA1 of the District Plan and further developed in the Concept Framework, which also adopts a landscape led approach, with much of the existing landscape preserved to create an attractive place and setting for people to enjoy. The document states that the Gilston Area ‘should have a singular and coherent identity as a whole, while accommodating a wide range of diversity and character within. This concept also makes possible the potential to incorporate two existing settlements Gilston and Eastwick while retaining their individual form and identity’²⁴.
108. The Neighbourhood Plan adopts the shared vision set out in the Concept Framework²⁵, which had been developed through extensive public consultation at the time and then again through consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. Some minor changes have been made to strengthen references to an enhanced countryside landscape, to enrich habitats, biodiversity and the natural environment, increase resilience to climate change and promote sustainable mobility in response to comments received from the

²³ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) Next Steps (pp. 172-173)

²⁴ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018), Placemaking Framework Design Principles (p.74)

²⁵ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018), Gilston Area Vision (p.10)

Environment Agency and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town following consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Vision

109. The vision for the Gilston Area is as follows:

- I. To deliver new housing in the Gilston Area within several distinct villages each of individual character, that are informed by the landscape, topographical and built features of the area and establish a positive relationship with the existing settlements.
- II. Each village will be clearly separated by meaningful and high-quality landscape. The villages will have a compact centre, with softer edges facing onto green space. The centres will be designed to be individually distinctive and to become natural meeting places, providing a good range of day to day services and facilities alongside housing for groups who will benefit from close location to village services.
- III. Every village will be designed using a palette of appropriate materials and features which respond to existing local context and architecture. The villages will be planned to support healthy community lifestyles, including a range of housing types and tenures, reducing car dependency, encouraging participation in community life, active mobility, sport and enjoyment of the countryside.
- IV. The housing mix will include typologies and tenures suitable for all ages, will support home working and learning and offer a range of accessible tenures including genuinely affordable housing and homes for those with care and support needs. Particular care will be taken to ensure that homes front the streets and lanes and car parking is carefully designed into the new villages so as not to dominate the street scene.
- V. The achievement of a modal shift to reduce the dependence on car borne traffic will be strongly promoted through sustainable transport choices, new technologies and the creation of walkable neighbourhoods.
- VI. A cohesive and enhanced rural landscape will bind all the new and existing settlements together and measures will be taken to enhance habitats and biodiversity, the natural environment and resilience to climate change. Community ownership and management of these areas will ensure an attractive and permanent green setting, offering substantially increased access to open spaces and amenity for all. Existing villages and communities / clusters of houses will be physically respected but functionally integrated to form a unified wider community.
- VII. The Gilston Area development will draw on the strategic thinking of the original 'Garden City' values of equality, good health, quality of life, a sense of community and access to employment, facilities and the countryside.
- VIII. The landowners and East Hertfordshire District Council have committed to the principle of land value capture and the funding and delivery of services and infrastructure needed to support the Gilston Area, alongside the long-term

community stewardship of community assets and land. New infrastructure will be phased to mitigate the impacts of the development (including on existing communities).

IX. Development of the Gilston Area will be delivered in conjunction with initiatives to further develop and regenerate Harlow through the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town initiative and the Harlow Town Centre Action Plan. This will relate in particular to the delivery of strategic infrastructure to remedy current deficiencies, coordination of the infrastructure delivery to service the growth areas surrounding the town and seeking potential funding/investment to support its delivery.

110. In accordance with Policy GA1, development in the Gilston Area will also embrace Garden City principles as follows:

- Strong vision, leadership and community engagement.
- Land value capture to deliver the essential social and physical infrastructure for the benefit of the community.
- Long-term community ownership of land and stewardship of assets.
- Mixed-tenure homes and housing types including those that are genuinely affordable.
- A wide range of local jobs within easy commuting distance of homes.
- Beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with access to open space, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food.
- Development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience.
- Strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable communities. and
- Integrated and accessible transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport.

Objectives

111. The vision is underpinned by a number of interrelated objectives and development principles which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to achieve through a range of policies, actions and projects. These are consistent with the objectives and placemaking design principles set out in the Concept Framework and Policy GA1 but some minor changes have been made following consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATING DISTINCTIVE AND BALANCED COMMUNITIES

- Seven separate and distinctive new villages, each informed by Garden City principles, with a wide range of homes, employment, local retail, education and community facilities well connected by pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes and three existing villages and other groups of houses each with a distinctive character and identity.
- The location and extent of village development to be influenced by the existing landscape character, topography, heritage assets and respond sympathetically to existing settlements and communities.
- New villages to be separated by natural green corridors of sufficient width to ensure the villages are separate and distinctive whilst also performing a green space role and function.
- The boundaries to each village will generally have softer edges and lower density development to reinforce separation, with most developments fronting directly and overlooking the green spaces.
- There will be a defined centre to each village of an appropriate size and scale which will provide the heart of community life.
- The village centres will generally be higher in density with a mix of uses including retail, community and education facilities and will be distinct from other parts of the village (middle and edge).
- The new villages will be designed around a network of streets, walking and cycling routes and green spaces. The streets will be easily navigable and permeable with streets treated as vibrant and active spaces to promote inclusive communities.

OBJECTIVE 2: MAINTAINING DISTINCTIVENESS AND MANAGING THE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT ON EXISTING VILLAGES

- Protect the distinctive character of existing villages / settlements in the Gilston Area and carefully manage the impacts of the development and construction of the new villages on existing communities through protective green landscape and the timely provision of improved infrastructure (roads, public transport, etc.). Existing communities will be connected to new villages, and have easy access to green spaces and community facilities through an extended network of pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes.
- The setting of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon and other clusters of existing buildings will be protected through the creation of natural green corridors of sufficient width which will separate them from new villages and ensure they remain distinctive. The green corridors will contain walking and cycling routes to connect the existing settlements with new villages in the Gilston Area and to the wider area including Harlow.

- The provision of necessary infrastructure will be phased and delivered in a timely fashion to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the needs arising from the new development and that existing communities are equally and adequately served.
- The extended network of pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes will connect existing communities to the new villages, and the facilities contained within them.
- It will be important to deliver early landscape improvements to strengthen the green buffers around the existing settlements.
- Construction and traffic impacts on existing communities will be minimised and mitigated.

OBJECTIVE 3: DELIVERING A WIDE CHOICE OF QUALITY HOMES

- A wide range of different housing typologies and tenures (including market and affordable housing) will be provided in each village to create mixed and balanced communities and meet the housing needs of East Hertfordshire.
- New homes will be designed and constructed to a high-quality standard. They will be flexible and adaptable to different and changing lifestyles, providing for a variety of needs.
- New homes will meet high standards of sustainability and internal space.
- A range of specialist housing will be provided including assisted living for older residents, and opportunities will be created for self-build and custom building.

OBJECTIVE 4: WELL CONNECTED TO, BUT DISTINCTIVE FROM, HARLOW

- The villages will be well connected to the infrastructure, facilities and employment of Harlow, but will be physically separated and distinctive in their spatial form and design. The development will respect the strategy and vision for the Garden Town initiative which covers parts of Epping, Harlow and the Gilston Area, and through this it will contribute to the wider aspiration for the sustained economic regeneration and growth of Harlow.
- Development in the Gilston Area will be physically separated from Harlow (save for the river crossings) by the open landscape of the Stort Valley, an amenity to be preserved for its natural and water-related character and shared by all communities subject to protection of the sensitive natural and wildlife environment.
- The character and feel of the new villages will be clearly distinct from the predominantly urban development of the wider Harlow area south of the Stort Valley and adjoining Green Belt.
- Land uses, streets and public spaces will be in line with the character of a village and not be inspired by urban places. Green landscape should be natural and characteristic of the countryside.
- Both existing and new communities will be well connected to Harlow, particularly through public transport, walking and cycling.

OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Each new village will be supported by an appropriate range of social infrastructure, reflecting the scale of each village, including education, health, faith, open space, leisure, retail and community facilities alongside excellent links to the undeveloped open countryside especially that in community ownership and management.
- The design of new development will create safe and accessible living environments with clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes and high-quality public spaces. The development will encourage active lifestyles and social integration through everyday use of public areas.
- Each village will provide community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services as relevant to the scale and size of that village.
- Access will be provided for all residents to high quality open spaces and the wider countryside.
- Opportunities for sport and recreation will be available for all age groups. Sport pitches will be provided in a variety of accessible locations, but should be designed to reflect the setting of their location, e.g. floodlighting and large car parks will not be permitted in historic settings or locations with long distance views.
- Accessible homes and neighbourhoods, and housing with care and support, will be integrated into the villages to enable people to live independently within their community.

OBJECTIVE 6: PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- New development will promote sustainable transport choices, anticipate foreseeable changes in transport technology and mitigate the traffic impact of the development on existing communities and the wider transport network across the locality.
- The development will prioritise active travel and support smart mobility services, reducing the need to own a car.
- All streets and connecting roads within the villages will be designed to limit speeds and car use, will be pedestrian friendly and in character with the village concept. Streetlighting should be minimal and sensitive to the darkness of the countryside.
- New development will provide an extensive network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes linking new and existing villages / communities and be well integrated with existing Public Rights of Way and routes within and beyond the site.
- Each village will be developed around a legible street hierarchy which connects new housing to the village centres and other facilities.
- New efficient and frequent public transport connectivity will link new and existing villages in the Gilston Area with surrounding areas, in particular Harlow Town Station and the town centre.
- Development in the Gilston Area will be integrated with sustainable travel initiatives in the wider Harlow area including the creation of sustainable transport corridors.
- Safe and direct cycle and pedestrian routes will be provided to Harlow Town station including convenient crossing facilities across the A414. Smart cycle schemes and cycle parking facilities will be provided at Harlow Town station.

- The presence of the car within the villages will be carefully managed to minimise the visual impact on the street scene and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- All villages and facilities will be well connected and easily accessible by sustainable travel modes by all Gilston communities (new and existing).
- Electric charging facilities will be provided in all developments to encourage the use of low carbon emission vehicles.
- Car parking (on and off road, including visitor parking) will be well integrated into the street design.

OBJECTIVE 7: CREATING WALKABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS

- New development will be designed on active design principles. New homes will be located within short walking distance of open space, community facilities, shops, and schools to promote a healthy and active community. This will help to create vibrant, inclusive and healthy communities with a distinctive sense of place. Within neighbourhoods walking and cycling will be prioritised.
- A balance of land uses will be provided in each village (relative to the scale, size and role of the village) to encourage people to minimise journeys for shopping, leisure, education and other activities. Key facilities such as primary schools and local shops will be located within walking distance of most properties.
- Safe and secure layouts will be created which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians and avoid street clutter.

OBJECTIVE 8: PROMOTING HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- The development should create a strong sense of place and local character, appropriate to the local area, drawing inspiration from the morphology and character of existing settlements in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire.
- Durable and high-quality buildings and public spaces will positively respond to local landscape character and history and reflect the identity of the local area. Clear and detailed design guidance will be developed for each village.
- Frontages should be interesting, attractive and designed to be part of a street or landscape space.
- The design of buildings and materials used will provide a balance and rich variety of material treatment in building design which draws on local materials and character, from traditional to contemporary and reflecting individual village character.
- New development will be appropriately scaled in relation to a village location and heritage and landscape elements.
- Buildings will be designed to front onto spaces to provide activation, security and surveillance. Back fences onto green areas for public use should be avoided.
- The potential to create open layouts with variable building lines integrated with landscaping should be explored. Development should follow natural contours and minimise cut and fill wherever possible.
- Smart Technologies for the home should be anticipated.

OBJECTIVE 9: A PROTECTED AND ENHANCED LANDSCAPE AND NETWORK OF GREEN SPACES

- The landscape setting of new and existing villages / communities will be protected and enhanced through the creation of an extended network of accessible green spaces, with the retention of existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features and enhancement of the water environment where possible. The network of green spaces will be linked by a series of environmentally viable green corridors between new and existing villages and the River Stort and its towpath which will provide walking routes and promote rich biodiversity appropriate to the area. The landowners will transfer the undeveloped parklands into community ownership, supported by a comprehensive long-term management strategy.
- The villages (new and existing) will have a positive relationship with the surrounding landscape and an attractive countryside landscape setting.
- The revised Green Belt will be protected and opportunities will be taken to improve access to the countryside.
- Outdoor sport and leisure will be promoted, protecting visual amenity and located, where possible, within the enhanced existing landscape.
- The designs for each village will identify long and short-range views to create visual connections with notable heritage and landscape features.
- The new villages will be designed to maximise access to open spaces and the wider countryside with a network of green spaces and walking and cycling routes. The existing network of parks, views and paths will be integrated with new connections to form a rich and permeable network.
- Connectivity between all the different landscapes will be promoted both in terms of greater open access as well as the creation of connected green corridors for flora and fauna.
- Each village will have a range of multi-functional open spaces, local play areas, landscaping and SUDS carefully designed to be safe and pleasant, forming an essential part of the experience of living in the Gilston Area.
- Long term maintenance will be considered as part of the governance strategy, including measures to enable long term management by the community.

OBJECTIVE 10: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING NATURAL ASSETS

- Existing natural assets, especially woodlands and the water environment, will be retained and enhanced and incorporated as part of the integrated network of green and blue spaces. The topography of the site and existing landscape features will inform the configuration of the village layouts and assist in the sustainable management of surface water drainage.
- Key habitat features will be preserved and enhanced as a priority and new habitats created to improve biodiversity.
- Development will be designed to minimise impacts on areas of ecological importance through the creation of adequate separation distances and buffer zones. This should contribute to restoring the health of local rivers and their associated habitats.
- Early restoration and management of woodlands will be required. Existing woodlands will be enhanced and management plans developed at an early stage of the development process.

OBJECTIVE 11: PROTECTING AND ENHANCING HERITAGE ASSETS

- Existing heritage assets will be respected, protected and, in some instances, enhanced. This includes the historic Gilston Park, the setting of Hunsdon House, Hunsdon Airfield, St Mary's and St Botolph's Churches, the local War Memorials, all Scheduled Monuments and the settings of other Listed Buildings. The proposed development layout and setbacks will incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on the settings of local heritage assets alongside celebrating such assets for the qualities they will bring to the new communities as places of quality.
- Development in the Gilston Area will respect and have a positive relationship with its heritage assets. Historic boundaries, such as the former deer park pale and ditch will be respected, preserved and enhanced.
- The layout and design of new development will respond sensitively to the form, proportion, scale and character of heritage assets. Open spaces will be strategically positioned to preserve the setting of heritage assets.
- Development will be positioned and landscape designed to respect, protect, and in some instances, enhance, the setting and views to/ from heritage assets.
- Long term conservation and management plans will be developed for all heritage assets, in consultation with the local community as part of the planning process.
- Opportunities will be promoted to increase public appreciation and understanding of heritage through village design and the incorporation of appropriate references.

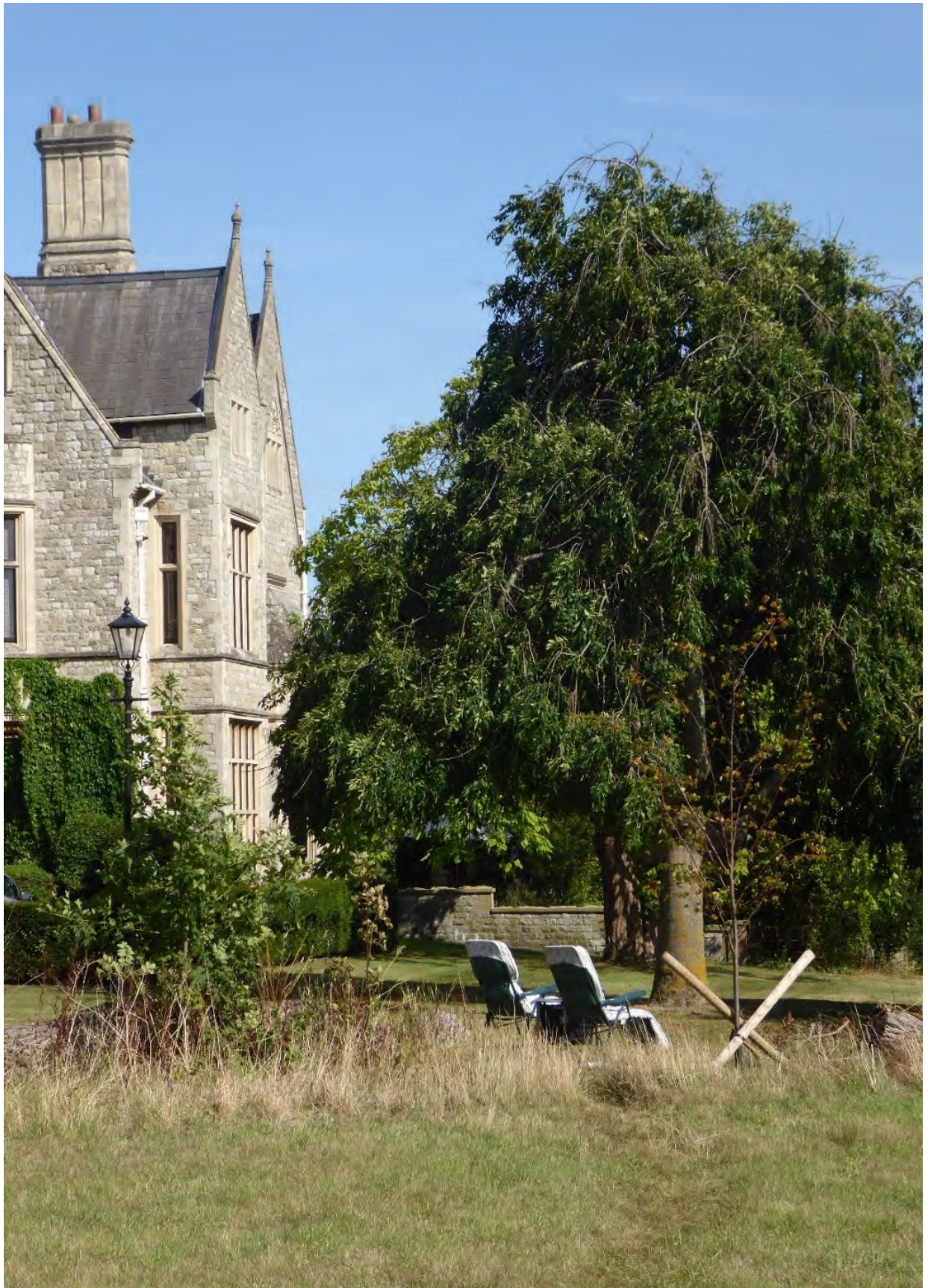
OBJECTIVE 12: ENGAGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- Establish early on the framework for governance arrangements for the long-term stewardship of the Gilston Area that will bring together the new and existing communities whilst ensuring the long-term protection of the green spaces and their high quality management by the community.
- Local communities (existing and new) will be fully, meaningfully and collaboratively engaged with each stage of the development process.
- The undeveloped land to the northwest of the Gilston Area will be transferred at an early stage into community ownership via a community land trust or similar governance mechanism, supported by a comprehensive long-term management strategy.
- Through the Governance Strategy, measures will be put in place to ensure that the community will have the necessary means to secure the long-term operation and maintenance of community assets.

OBJECTIVE 13: ENSURING THE PHASED DELIVERY OF NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET THE NEEDS ARISING FROM THE DEVELOPMENT

- New infrastructure will be designed to meet the comprehensive needs of the Gilston Area and will be phased to minimise and manage the impacts of the development on the local area. The provision of necessary infrastructure will be phased in relation to development to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities.
 - Infrastructure requirements and the timescale for provision will be determined as part of the approval of future planning applications.
 - Construction traffic will be managed to minimise impact on existing and new communities, with stringent operational management plans agreed prior to the commencement of development in a village.
112. The Neighbourhood Plan policies in subsequent Sections address these objectives and contribute individually and collectively to the over-arching objective of delivering sustainable development in accordance with Policy GA1 and the Concept Framework.

Fig. 11 - Historic Gilston Park



Neighbourhood Plan Policies

The Neighbourhood Plan policies address the Vision and Objectives for the Gilston Area and contribute individually and collectively to the over-arching objective of delivering sustainable development in accordance with the District Plan and Concept Framework

Overview

113. The policies of the Neighbourhood Plan have their foundation in the East Hertfordshire District Plan (in particular, Policies GA1 and GA2) and the Gilston Area Concept Framework and support the Vision and Objectives set out in Section D of this Neighbourhood Plan. The policies relate to the development area allocated under Policy GA1 unless otherwise stated. The policies are arranged under the following key headings:

1. Accommodating Growth

These policies address the theme of comprehensive development as a single strategic allocation, relationship with wider landscape and built context, and essential infrastructure.

Policy AG1 Promoting Sustainable Development in the Gilston Area

Policy AG2 Creating a Connected Green Infrastructure Network

Policy AG3 Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside Setting of New and Existing Villages

Policy AG4 Maintaining the Individuality and Separation of All Villages

Policy AG5 Protecting Areas of Local Significance

Policy AG6 Creating New Villages with a Distinct and Locally Inspired Character

Policy AG7 Creating New Countryside Parks at Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Woodlands

Policy AG8 Minimising the Impact of Traffic and New Transport Infrastructure

Policy AG9 Phasing of Infrastructure Delivery

2. Delivering Quality Places

These policies address and aim to inform the shape of future development and provide appropriate design for landscape and built-up areas, heritage, community assets and mobility.

Policy LA1 Landscape within the New Villages

Policy BU1 Housing and Residential Neighbourhoods

Policy BU2 Village Cores/Centres

Policy BU3 Employment Areas

Policy BU4 Village Streets and Lanes

Policy H1 Celebrating Existing Heritage Assets

Policy C1 Community Facility Provision

Policy EX1 Improving Existing Settlements

Policy TRA1 Sustainable Mobility

Policy TRA2 Access to the Countryside

3. Implementation and Delivery

These policies set out the role and responsibilities of the community during implementation and delivery.

Policy D1 Community Partnership

Policy D2 Community Ownership and Stewardship

114. The thread between the Neighbourhood Plan policies, the adopted District Plan and the Vision and Objectives which underpin the Concept Framework is set out in Appendix 3.

1. Accommodating Growth

Proposals should find their foundation in the landscape, topographical and built features of the area, to accommodate new housing within a comprehensive plan for distinct villages of individual character, establishing a positive relationship with the existing settlements.

115. This group of policies address the strategic aspects of future change and of comprehensive development: the meaning of sustainable development for the Gilston Area, the relationship with landscape and countryside, the character of villages and the relationships between new and existing settlements and the wider area.

1.1 - Promoting Sustainable Development

Rationale and Justification

116. Policy AG1 is a general policy which supplements existing guidance and Policy GA1 to ensure that local character and distinctiveness are informed by the understanding of the local community and will be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. It also sets out the main principles of sustainable development and the measures needed to respond to a changing climate.
117. The area must be comprehensively studied and planned as a single allocation. This approach to the promotion of sustainable development is consistent with the NPPF, guidance documents for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, Policy GA1 of East Hertfordshire District Plan, and the Gilston Area Concept Framework.
118. Policy AG1 will enable planning applications to be determined in the context of the overall objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan and avoid proposals being considered in isolation. It will also ensure that the vision for development in the Gilston Area embodied in the Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide will be delivered.
119. East Herts Council and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities have established a joint Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) supported by a sister Design Guide (November 2018), through a process of consultation. The Vision establishes a set of objectives and a common approach to delivering growth across the Garden Town and the Design Guide identifies opportunities and considerations relating to the individual sites.
120. The HGGT Vision makes a clear distinction between the Gilston Villages and the wider Garden Town, defining a village as ‘a residential community with local community facilities, shops and work spaces, which is set in rural countryside and is physically and visually distinct but in this context, will maintain strong links with surrounding villages and the Garden Town’²⁶. This is reinforced in the Development Principles of the Concept Framework (‘Well Connected but Distinctive from Harlow’). This distinction is also very explicit in the illustrations and diagrams in the Garden Town Design Guide (see Fig. 16 -

²⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Harlow_and_Gilston_Garden_Town_Vision.pdf

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide Structural Plan (2018) which indicate that development in the Gilston area should be distinctive in its form from the wider Garden Town and take the form of villages set in the countryside and protect the existing landscape character²⁷, while in the rest of Harlow growth comprises interlocking districts separated by green wedges. This not only indicates a clear overall distinction of built form, but also the importance of the rural landscape setting and village character in the Gilston area.

121. In accordance with Policy GA1, development in the Gilston Area is required to take the form of a series of villages set around the historic landscape of Gilston Park. Each village should have its own distinct character and identity which responds to local landscape, character and history and be set within one overall dominant countryside landscape character.
122. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Policy GA1 highlight the importance of a unified landscape-led approach to secure cohesive and comprehensive development where the existing landscape is enhanced and managed to create an attractive rural setting for people to enjoy. There should be a singular and coherent identity as a whole, primarily expressed in the landscape and scale of the villages, each providing the diversity and character typical of Hertfordshire. The countryside landscape will also allow the integration of the existing settlements whilst retaining their individual form, character and identity.
123. The Gilston Area Charter SPD (approved by East Herts Executive in June 2020) states that a Strategic Landscape Masterplan will be produced and approved before approval of the first Village Masterplan. It will establish a spatial strategy for comprehensive development of the entire Gilston Area site allocation in one overarching plan that draws together and expands upon the principles established in the parameter plans approved at the outline application stage, and the work already undertaken in the Gilston Area Concept Framework²⁸. The Strategic Landscape Masterplan will also address the appropriate strategic elements of the development and the important network of open spaces that will play a key role in knitting the area together and integrating it into the wider context²⁹. Village Masterplans will be required to take account of and demonstrate how they will successfully integrate with the Strategic Landscape Masterplan. The Charter SPD makes it clear that the content of each Masterplan must align with the statutory Development Plan documents which will include the adopted Neighbourhood Plan³⁰.
124. The Charter SPD states that the Strategic Landscape Masterplan will focus on establishing the key components and Character Areas that will form the comprehensive green infrastructure network across the site that will surround and sit alongside the new villages, existing settlements and the wider landscape. In establishing this, the Masterplan will look to address and plan for strategic matters including: how movement

²⁷ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) pp. 39-41 https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Harlow_and_Gilston_Garden_Town_Design_Guide.pdf

²⁸ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 4.1

²⁹ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 4.6

³⁰ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 4.9

will be accommodated to prioritise active and sustainable modes of travel and the achievement of the 60% mode share target; how the development will successfully integrate with adjacent settlements and landscaping including the Stort Valley; how the new villages will have sufficient landscape buffers but function successfully together as one new settlement, making efficient use of the land through coordinating measures such as the approach to drainage and flood risk and any potential net gains for biodiversity; and how the community open space land allocated in the Gilston Area will be planned and landscaped to help facilitate its long term maintenance³¹.

125. The Charter SPD states that the extent of the Masterplan should be established having regard to how and where it will interface and respond to the Gilston Area Villages and the wider landscaping/ development beyond the site allocation boundary³². The broad location of strategic infrastructure that will influence movement both within the Gilston Area Villages and beyond the masterplan boundary, such as sustainable transport hubs, village centres, schools, public spaces and access points should also be considered and inform the Strategic Landscape Masterplan³³.
126. The Charter SPD establishes that production of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan, Village Masterplans and Design Codes will be developer led with key stakeholder and community engagement as an integrated and ongoing part of the process³⁴.
127. More broadly, the NPPF requires plans to take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures³⁵. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts. Development in the Gilston Area should therefore:
 - Protect areas of ecological, wildlife and landscape value and create an integrated green infrastructure network to support biodiversity.
 - Ensure that the necessary physical infrastructure is in place at each stage of the development to support the comprehensive needs of the area without placing additional pressures on existing infrastructure and services.
 - Promote the conservation of resources and protect existing and future communities from the impacts of flood risk and climate change.
128. According to the Environment Agency, Hertfordshire is experiencing a water drought due to a combination of a drier than average years, high water consumption and climate change³⁶. This can place pressure on rivers as much of the water for urban use is from groundwater aquifers and rivers. The Thames River Basin Management Plan indicates that abstraction for public water supply is impacting on 20% of the Environment

³¹ Gilston Area Charter SPD (February 2020) para 4.11.

³² Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 5.2 Step 4

³³ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 5.2 Step 5

³⁴ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) Figure 6

³⁵ National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

³⁶ <https://environmentagency.blog.gov.uk/2019/10/01/environmental-drought-in-hertfordshire-and-north-london/>

Agency's Water Framework Directive (WFD) for designated water bodies in Hertfordshire and North London³⁷.

129. The Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018)³⁸ highlights the restrictions on water availability indicated in the Abstraction Licence Strategy and that the area is classified as being under serious water stress. Affinity Water's draft Water Resource Management Plan (WRMP) demonstrates the pressures on their supply zone. The study indicates, however, that there should be sufficient time to address water supply/demand issues in the next WRMP³⁹.
130. The majority of the Gilston area is located in Flood Zone 1 (land with a low probability of flooding from rivers) with the southern boundary of the site adjacent to the Stort Valley touching Flood Zone 2 and 3 (land with a medium and high probability of flooding from rivers)⁴⁰. To manage storm water and avoid downstream flooding, the development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems and have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development and, where possible, provide multifunctional benefits in accordance with the NPPF.

Community Perspective

131. The community places great value on living in the Hertfordshire countryside and on the identity of the Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon area. Local residents recognise that there is a functional interrelation with Harlow, but would like to ensure that the aspects of village character, community spirit and lifestyle of the area that they love and enjoy are extended to the future communities.
132. Whilst it is acknowledged that development allocated in the Gilston Area under Policy GA1 will impact on the rural setting of the area and existing settlements, the community is concerned that development on the scale proposed could result in a new urban or suburban character, which would be inappropriate to the character of the area and could erode its distinctiveness from Harlow - a matter on which they place great importance. They are also concerned about the impact of development on existing infrastructure which is already operating at capacity and would wish to ensure that the provision of necessary infrastructure is effectively phased to accommodate the additional demand associated with any new development.
133. A comprehensive framework of proposals for the whole of the Gilston Area, considering landscape, development and infrastructure as an integral whole (including the existing settlements), is seen as key to preventing piecemeal development and controlling the form and character of new development and impacts on the local area. This is supported by the Concept Framework which provides an overall framework for development and

³⁷ Thames River Basin Management Plan (Updated December 2015)

³⁸ Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018) and Garden Town Water Cycle Study Addendum (2018) – see www.harlow.gov.uk/evidence

³⁹ Draft Final Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2080 (Affinity Water, June 2019) https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/docs/corporate/plans/water-resources/latest/Draft_Final_Water_Resources_Management_Plan_2019_Published_June_2019.pdf

⁴⁰ East Hertfordshire Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) and Addendum (2017) – see www.eastherts.gov.uk/planning-building/east-herts-districtplan/evidence-base

states that “The Gilston Area promotes a sustainable and efficient model of development to minimise the overall footprint and to preserve and protect the countryside and existing landscape attributes, as far as possible”⁴¹.

Key Evidence Base

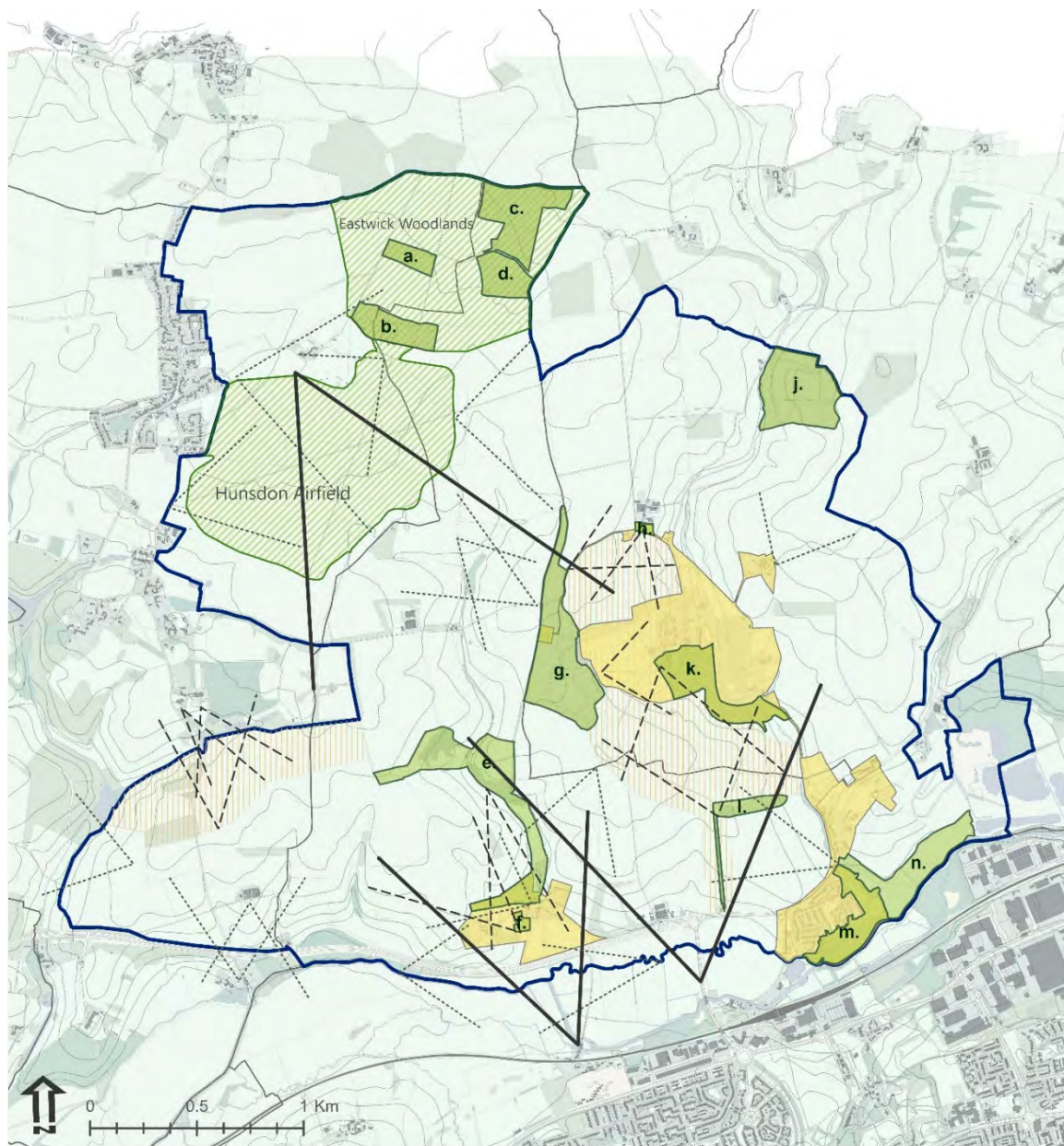
1. Sustainability Appraisal of Pre-Submission District Plan, 2016
2. Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum, Main Modifications to District Plan, 2018
3. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
6. East Hertfordshire Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) and Addendum (2017))
7. The Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018)
8. Draft Final Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2080 (Affinity Water, June 2019)
9. Gilston Area Charter SPD (approved June 2020)

⁴¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.80

POLICY AG1 - Promoting Sustainable Development in the Gilston Area

1. Major development in the Gilston Area will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria have been satisfied:
 - i. Development proposals have considered the context of the overall development of the Gilston Area and can demonstrate that they have not been considered in isolation.
 - ii. Development proposals have positively considered the existing settlements of Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon in respect to their character, heritage, environment and landscape setting and where possible have sought to enhance their access to services and facilities.
 - iii. Proposals are landscape-led and have sought to achieve a balanced approach between village development and preservation of the countryside setting.
 - iv. The new villages are visually and physically separated from Harlow by the natural greenspace of the Stort Valley and distinct from it in terms of character and built form.
2. The preparation, in collaboration with the local community, of a Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the entire Gilston Area (including the existing settlements) will be necessary to define development boundaries and ensure the integrity of the landscape and Green Infrastructure Network. A Strategic Landscape Masterplan would provide the context and inform the preparation of Village Masterplans in accordance with Policy GA1 (IV).
3. In order to assist the delivery of sustainable development across the Gilston Area, new development should:
 - i. Draw inspiration from the morphology and character of existing settlements in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire.
 - ii. Create seven separate and distinctive new villages, each with an individual identity which complement the existing settlements and are informed by Garden City principles and provide living and working environments of exceptional quality, with a wide range of homes, employment, local retail, education and community facilities well connected by pedestrian, cycle and public transport.
 - iii. Make provision for the phased delivery of necessary social and physical infrastructure to meet the comprehensive infrastructure needs of the area in line with Garden City principles and, where possible, promote advanced infrastructure provision to ensure that adequate capacity is available.
 - iv. Maintain the countryside character of the landscape setting and create an integrated network of green spaces.
 - v. Protect and enhance existing rural landscape assets including areas of ecological, wildlife and landscape value.
 - vi. Incorporate measures to conserve water resources and protect existing and new communities from the impacts of flood risk and climate change.
 - vii. Respect and reinforce the integrity of the revised Green Belt boundary and minimise impacts on the Stort Valley, its landscape and biodiversity.
 - viii. Protect and where possible enhance, heritage assets including the historic Gilston Park, Hunsdon House, Hunsdon Airfield, St Mary's and St Botolph's Churches, the local War Memorials, all Scheduled Monuments and the settings of other Listed Buildings.
 - ix. Explore fully the potential for infrastructure and environmental improvements within the existing settlements.
 - x. Proactively engage local communities in the preparation of development proposals.
 - xi. Establish early-on the framework for governance arrangements for the long-term stewardship of the Gilston Area that will bring together new and existing communities whilst ensuring the long-term protection and management of the green spaces and community open land in accordance with Garden City principles and Policy GA1 (V(h)).

Fig. 12 - Strategic Plan of Designations and Protected Areas



- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Parish Boundaries
- Designated Local Green Space
- Countryside Park
- Sensitive Historic Setting
- Community Boundaries
- Important Views**
 - Long Distance View
 - View to / from Key Heritage Assets
 - View of Open Countryside

- Designated Local Green Space
- a. Eastwick Wood
 - b. Black Hut Wood
 - c. Lawns Wood and Moat
 - d. Queens Wood
 - e. Eastwick Valley and Eastwick Hall Corridor
 - f. St. Botolph's Churchyard
 - g. Home Wood
 - h. St. Mary's Churchyard
 - j. Golden Grove
 - k. Gilston House Parkland and Lake
 - l. Avenue and Chase
 - m. Terlings Parkland
 - n. Fiddlers Brook / Lowland Fens

1.2 - Creating a Connected Green Infrastructure Network

Rationale and Justification

134. Neighbourhood Plan Policy AG2 seeks to promote the creation of a network of green natural spaces and to protect and incorporate the water environment in the Gilston Area to achieve multiple purposes:
- Ensure the protection of existing landscape features, wildlife sites and establishment of wildlife corridors of sufficient width to retain wildlife and biodiversity habitats and connectivity across the area.
 - Establish and maintain a natural landscape setting of rural character that provides individuality between new and existing settlements/ communities.
 - Create an extended network of accessible natural green spaces, through existing trees, hedgerows and landscape features to provide enjoyment of the countryside, walking routes and biodiversity appropriate to the area.
135. The Neighbourhood Plan reflects the definition of 'Natural Greenspace' provided by Natural England (ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace) as:
- Sites with mixtures of planted and spontaneous assemblages of plants and animals.
 - Tracts of countryside (woodland, scrub, heathland, meadows and marshes) which through appropriate management support essentially wild plants and animal assemblages.
 - Ponds, ditches, lakes and reservoirs.
 - Agricultural areas of biodiversity value.
 - Less intensively managed parts of parks, sport pitches, churchyards and cemeteries.
 - Incidental plots within urbanised areas which are spontaneously colonised by plants and animals.
136. The District Plan states that the site allocation developed area (as shown on the Key Diagram for the Gilston Area) will deliver new green spaces and within the north and north western sections of the site, a substantial amount of public open space as part of wider managed parklands including continuing farming will be provided. In addition, the environment of the Stort Valley will be enhanced through the provision of new green infrastructure links, and woodland areas to the north of the site will be enhanced by planting and management schemes. environment of the Stort Valley will be enhanced through the provision of new green infrastructure links, and woodland areas to the north of the site will be enhanced by planting and management schemes⁴². The District Plan also states that the development will retain and protect important hedgerows, Local Wildlife sites and ancient woodlands. New habitats will be created in order to achieve an overall net gain in biodiversity. A Sustainable Drainage (SuD's) network will be integrated to provide additional planting and biodiversity and to facilitate drainage and water retention having regard to the objectives of the River Stort Catchment Management Plan⁴³. Policy GA1 V(g) states that the development should make provision for quality local green infrastructure throughout the site including

⁴² East Herts District Plan (October 2018) para 11.3.7 p.150

⁴³ East Herts District Plan (October 2018) para 11.3.10 p.150

opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhancing biodiversity.

137. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2019) highlights the importance of landscape-led masterplanning which responds to natural character and function and the creation of an outstanding green and blue infrastructure network of open spaces and waterways, providing multiple benefits for residents' physical and mental health; rich habitats for wildlife, flora and fauna; and important noise and air pollution buffers. The Vision states that the open space network will support active lifestyles and good health through excellent walking and cycling routes, connecting all parts of the Garden Town and the wider countryside.
138. The Concept Framework established the principle of connectivity between all the different landscapes in terms of greater open access as well as the creation of green corridors for flora and fauna. The existing network of parks, views and paths will be integrated with new connections to form a rich and permeable network⁴⁴. It states that where possible significant heritage, landscape and areas of ecological significance or potential will be integrated into the development through the creation of landscape features, such as woodland parks, playing fields, central parkland and Riverside Park. These spaces will enforce the connectivity between the proposed development and its immediate natural surroundings. It states:

'Connectivity between all the different landscapes will be promoted both in terms of greater open access as well as the creation of green corridors for flora and fauna. The existing network of parks, views and paths will be integrated with new connections to form a rich and permeable network'.
139. The Garden Town Design Guide highlights the need to ensure that areas of new development should minimise the visual presence of built form both on views towards Harlow and on outward views on skylines. It identifies a number of key landmarks and views across the Garden Town that will be important to retain and enhance. These include the strategic views from Hunsdon Airfield and across the Stort Valley from Harlow and the views of St Mary's Church and St Dunstan's Church which are identified as distinctive local assets⁴⁵.
140. The setting of villages within a predominant landscape and associated water environment is a key feature of the area. The countryside character of the area has remained broadly unchanged since Tudor times (see Section C), and substantially unaltered in the post-war period, when Harlow and many villages and towns around Hertfordshire grew and changed in both size and character.
141. The slopes and plateaus of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon comprise agricultural fields, semi-natural parkland (Gilston Park and nearby Hunsdon House), veteran trees and established hedgerows and ditches and pockets of ancient or replanted woodland (see Fig. 9). Important wildlife areas exist nearby at the Lee Valley Park, Stort Valley marshlands and SSSI, and the Forests of Epping and Hatfield.
142. The Gilston Area lies within the River Stort catchment, one of the tributaries of the River Lea. The Stort Catchment Partnership is working to improve the River Stort and

⁴⁴ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.80

⁴⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.22

Stort Navigation. The partnership was formed in 2012 and is hosted by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. The River Stort Catchment Management Plan⁴⁶ sets out the objectives and main projects to improve these watercourses and associated habitats. The rivers within the boundary include Eastwick Brook, Fiddler's/Golden Brook, Pole Hole Brook and the area is bounded by the River Stort and Stort Navigation to the south. The Fiddler's/Golden Brook and Stort and Navigation are designated as Water Framework Directives waterbodies. They are both currently at moderate status. The aim for all waterbodies is to reach good ecological status by 2027.

143. The creation of buffer zones adjacent to rivers performs a vital role in preserving and enhancing the health of rivers in terms of water quality, floodplain storage and habitats. In particular, river corridors are used by migrating and foraging species such as bats and thus allow the movement of species between areas. Networks of these buffer zones will help wildlife adapt to climate change and provide the opportunity to gain access to restore or repair sections of watercourse. It will be important to protect existing wildlife sites and biodiversity and retain connectivity for wildlife across the wider area, as the area gets developed.
144. The government is to introduce a mandatory requirement for development in England to deliver 'biodiversity net gain' of 10% at least. Biodiversity net gain requires developers to ensure habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development. They must assess the type of habitat and its condition before submitting plans, and then demonstrate how they are improving biodiversity, through the creation of green corridors, planting more trees, or forming local nature spaces. In the Gilston Area biodiversity net gain could be achieved in a number of ways, for example through the creation of biodiversity corridors between villages, species rich planted areas and woodland, restoration and enhancement of rivers and their corridors (e.g. Fiddlers Brook and projects within the Stort Valley).
145. The creation of a network of green spaces is consistent with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4) aspirations of permeability, as need for integration of footpaths and cycleways with green space and landscape corridors between villages as well as within villages themselves is recognised. This will support the objectives of promoting sustainable mobility and achieving the objectives for modal share set out in the Garden Town Sustainable Transport Strategy.
146. Natural England has developed the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt)⁴⁷ to assist in planning for accessible natural greenspace. The standards recommend that everyone should have accessible natural greenspace:
 - Of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (five minutes' walk) from home.
 - At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home.
 - One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home.
 - One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home.

⁴⁶ River Stort Catchment Management Plan www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/river-stort-home

⁴⁷ 'Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance, Natural England, March 2010 http://www.ukmaburbanforum.co.uk/documents/other/nature_nearby.pdf

- A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.
147. The creation of a Green Infrastructure Network also provides the potential for betterment of land drainage through appropriately designed sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) which can assist in addressing historic flood problems. SuDS should be integrated into the landscape, green corridors and movement routes between the villages and used proactively, contributing to the liveability of the development from an urban design perspective. Appropriate stewardship arrangements are essential to ensure that any blue/green infrastructure is appropriately managed and maintained in the future.
 148. Development should deliver effective sustainable drainage systems in accordance with District Plan Policy WAT5 Sustainable Drainage which requires that the most sustainable measures are selected from the SuDS hierarchy to deliver benefits for biodiversity and water quality and also that they are resilient to adverse weather conditions (e.g. climate change) and are maintained for the long-term.
 149. This policy is complemented by Policy AG3 which guides the protection and enhancement of the rural setting of the area.

Community Perspective

150. The community places great value on the countryside setting of their villages, the proximity of wildlife and access to natural green space. Consultation on the Concept Framework (September 2017) highlighted local concerns about the impact of development on the relationship between countryside and new and existing villages and the need to protect and expand existing wildlife habitats and achieve a net biodiversity gain for the area.

Key Evidence Base

1. East Herts District Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007
2. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2019)
4. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4)
5. Wildlife Sites Inventory, Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre, 2013
6. Habitat Regulations Assessment, AECOM, 2016
7. River Stort Catchment Management Plan
8. Natural England - ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace
9. Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards

POLICY AG2– Creating a Connected Green Infrastructure Network

1. The design of new development should:
 - i. Minimise direct and indirect impacts on natural landscape assets both on and off-site, including nature conservation areas, areas of ecological importance, woodlands and water bodies and create, retain and manage appropriate separation distances and buffer zones in accordance with, or where possible, exceeding best practice.
 - ii. Retain and, where possible, enhance areas of ecological importance including local wildlife sites and existing waterbodies to achieve excellent levels of net biodiversity gain.
 - iii. Retain, enhance and, where possible, extend existing woodlands with the preparation and implementation of woodland management plans at an early stage of the development process.
2. Development proposals should take into account the Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the Gilston Area (see Policy AG1 (2)) to ensure the integrity of the landscape and countryside setting whilst creating an integrated Green Infrastructure Network connected with the network of green spaces beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area (Fig. 13) comprising:
 - i. Existing parks, woodlands, designated green spaces and wildlife sites, rivers and other water bodies including the River Stort and Navigation and connections into it.
 - ii. Interconnected green corridors of adequate width to safeguard biodiversity and natural assets and establish suitable wildlife corridor connections with the wider green infrastructure network including the Stort Valley, the Green Belt and Green Wedges in Harlow which abut the River Stort, the Lee Valley Park, Epping Forest and Hatfield Forest.
 - iii. Open areas separating the villages that contribute to the goal of creating distinct villages (see Policy AG4).
 - iv. New green spaces and habitats to promote a net gain in biodiversity.
 - v. Walking and cycling access to the countryside in accordance with best practice such as Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst).
 - vi. Areas of open space retaining important local views over the open countryside and from the River Stort (see Fig. 14)
 - vii. Land set aside as required for an effective sustainable drainage system in accordance with District Plan Policy WAT5, taking account of historic flood problems, protecting the Stort water systems and taking inspiration from traditional ditch and pond features.
3. The Green Infrastructure Network will be retained in perpetuity and subject to management and maintenance plans which will be a requirement of planning consent being granted and secured through appropriate legal agreements.

Fig. 13 - Indicative Green Infrastructure Network

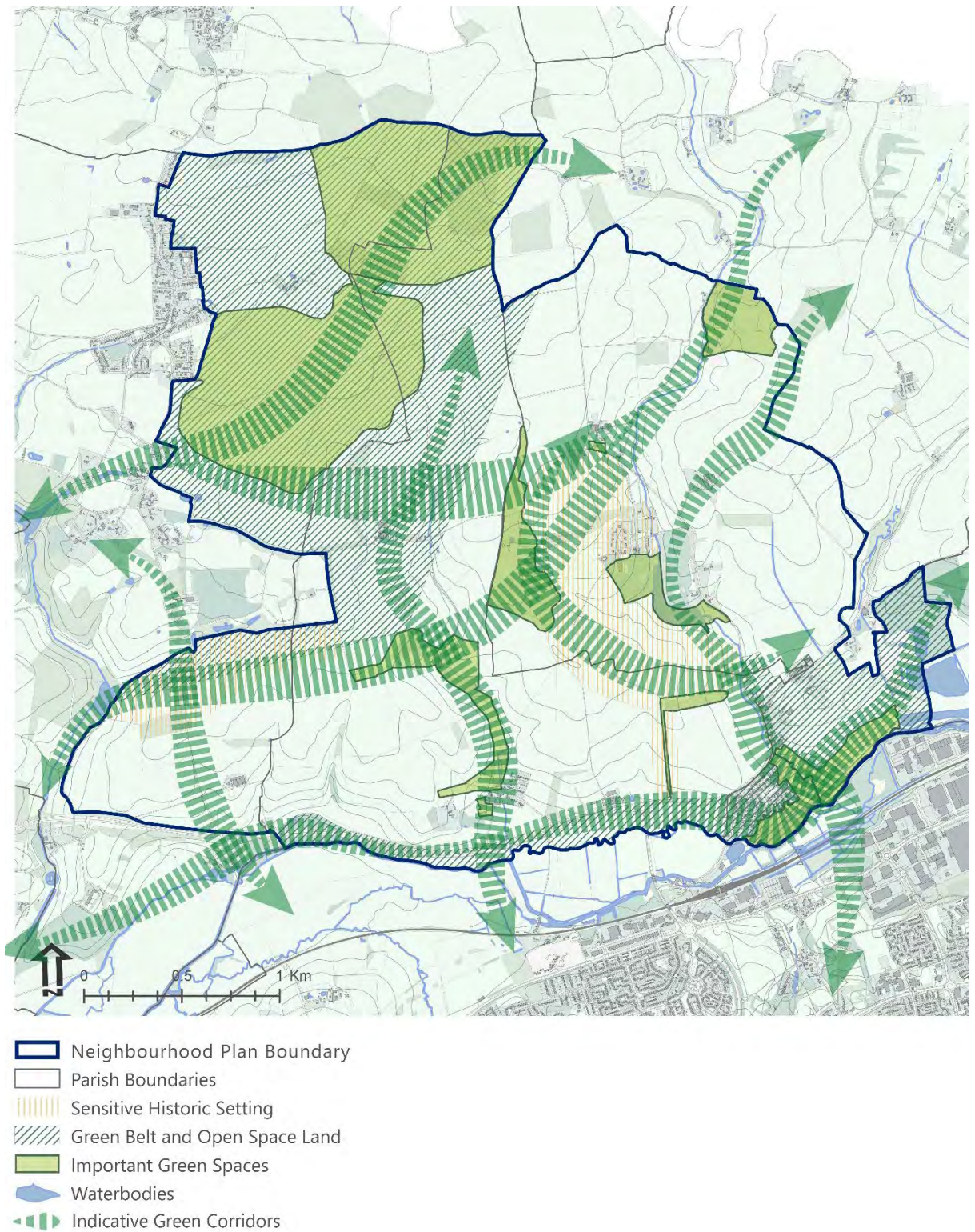


Fig. 14 - The landscape and environment of the Stort Valley



A. Tranquil semi-natural part of the river looking towards Eastwick and A414; B. Pollarded trees and narrow towpath looking towards open fields and Hunsdon Mead; C. Housing overlooking the river opposite Church Lane; D. and E. Lock and basin by the houses, part of a quiet fluvial landscape.

1.3 - Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside Setting of New and Existing Villages

Rationale and Justification

151. Whilst the Gilston Area has been allocated for major development, measures will be required to mitigate the impacts of development and to define and protect the countryside setting of villages (existing and new) if the vision for the Gilston area is to be realised. Rural and natural open space is required to retain the character of the area and reinforce its distinctiveness from Harlow and its network of open spaces and Green Wedges.
152. In the UK, countryside is the common term that indicates the open space outside cities and urban areas, made up of agricultural and natural land as defined by Natural England (ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace). Natural land includes tracts of countryside (woodland, scrub, heathland, meadows and marshes) which through appropriate management support essentially wild plants and animal assemblages, and the less intensively managed parts of parks, sport pitches, churchyards and cemeteries.
153. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision provides a very clear indication of the interrelationship between village and countryside. It defines *a village as being set in rural countryside and physically and visually distinct but which in this context maintains strong links with surrounding villages and the Garden Town*⁴⁸. The Garden Town Vision states that ‘Green Wedges between villages will be rural in character using farmland and woodland to reinforce the separation of development and maintain existing village ways of life’⁴⁹. The place specific guidance for the Gilston Area in the Garden Town Design Guide states that gaps with rural character should be retained between villages to protect the existing landscape character and protect the countryside setting of villages. It states that existing trees, hedges and rights of way should be retained where appropriate as part of an open space network⁵⁰.
154. The importance of the preserving and protecting the landscape attributes of the Gilston Area as far as possible whilst accommodating the scale of development proposed in the District Plan has also been established in the Concept Framework. The Concept Framework sets out the following guidelines to identify and develop the unique landscape signature for the Gilston Area⁵¹:
- The location of the villages has emerged from an analysis and understanding of the wider strategic landscape character.
 - Development in the Gilston Area will respect and have a positive relationship with its landscape and heritage assets.
 - Where appropriate landscape buffers are proposed to create a landscaped area of transition between existing places or features and new development. Places or features might include existing communities and built form or ecological, wildlife, landscape and heritage assets. Buffers may be used for a range of reasons including,

⁴⁸ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) glossary

⁴⁹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p. 12, Point 7

⁵⁰ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)

⁵¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.80

to enable places and features to be appreciated as distinct and/or to mitigate impacts from or to new development and/or in order for an appropriate setting or view to be preserved and/or to create or preserve ecological areas and habitats. They will be created through a mixture of new planting and management of existing vegetation and will generally be connected through green corridors. The location, size and form of landscape buffers will be defined through the detailed Village Masterplans based upon a detailed consideration of each new village masterplan area and its surroundings.

155. The Gilston Area Charter SPD requires the masterplanning process to appropriately consider how development in the Gilston Area will sensitively respond to its setting including for example protecting and enhancing ecological and heritage assets of the site, the wider landscape and Stort Valley and the relationship with existing settlements, Harlow and the wider Garden Town. In addition to a Masterplan for each village, the Charter SPD states that an overarching Strategic Landscape Masterplan is required to address the strategic elements of the development including the setting and network of green spaces that will play a key role in knitting the development together. It will focus on establishing the key components and Character Areas that will form the comprehensive green infrastructure network across the site that will surround and sit alongside the new villages and existing settlements and connect to and complement the wider landscape including the Stort Valley. It will serve to establish principles that inform the relationship between new villages and their adjacent landscape setting and ensure that the area as a whole integrates seamlessly into the wider landscaping and access routes beyond the site boundary⁵².
156. Landscape features and areas of ecological significance within village boundaries should be retained and integrated into the development to retain the countryside setting which is an essential feature of village character. This will be reinforced by the retention and protection from development of landscape corridors of adequate width between villages which will reinforce the distinctiveness of individual villages and their relationship to the countryside and create rich areas for wildlife habitats and informal recreation.
157. It is important that the landscape between the villages retains an open rural countryside character and appearance of common land rather than that of a formal parkland: most local villages are set in between trees and appear in the wider landscape not too dissimilar from blocks of woodland. They are typically richer in plants and biodiversity than the surrounding countryside (See Appendix 4, Section 4.6).
158. It will be important to ensure that the countryside setting of development is subject to effective management. Uses which would have a negative impact on the natural and tranquil character of the countryside or require substantial new buildings or infrastructure, such as some forms of commercial leisure activities, will not be supported.

⁵² Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) paras 4.10-4.11

Community Perspective

159. The community places great importance on the countryside setting of the villages and the character of the area, where the countryside is a place of peaceful enjoyment. They would like that future residents chose this area because they also appreciate these distinctive characteristics and living near the countryside.
160. The proposed development will impact on existing character, and these impacts must be managed and mitigated to retain the natural green setting and separation of new and existing settlements and to enhance biodiversity and wildlife in the area.

Key Evidence Base

1. East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007
2. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
4. Natural England ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace

POLICY AG3– Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside Setting of New and Existing Villages

1. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria have been satisfied:
 - i. Measures have been taken which seek to contain and mitigate the visual impacts of development on the open character of the landscape setting of new and existing villages.
 - ii. Natural features such as fields and woodland blocks have been utilised to maintain the individuality and separation of new and existing villages (see Policy AG4).
 - iii. The Green Infrastructure Network (see Policy AG2) and Community Trust Open Space Land (see Policy AG7) have generally been maintained as Natural Greenspace (as defined by Natural England) with clear references and inspiration from the local countryside setting comprising areas of woodland, common land, hedgerows, fields and grassland, large trees and wetland by the brooks and ditches.
 - iv. Proposed plant species are typical of the local countryside and maximise opportunities for enhanced biodiversity, spontaneous colonisation and habitat creation and are adaptable to changing climate conditions.
 - v. Paths and bridleways are well integrated with the landscape and where provided, walls and gates should take inspiration from the features of the local countryside.
2. Sport pitches and formal recreational facilities within the Green Infrastructure Network and outside of Village Boundaries should respect the countryside setting by:
 - i. Not requiring significant alteration of contours or the removal of substantial areas of existing vegetation.
 - ii. Ensuring that the setting of heritage assets or wildlife habitats are not adversely affected.
 - iii. Proposing a form of surfacing and enclosure in keeping with the rural setting.
 - iv. Providing only small-scale ancillary facilities, appropriately sited and of sensitive design, which do not encroach on sensitive open views (Fig. 13 and Fig. 21).
 - v. Avoiding floodlighting or night use where this would have an unacceptable impact on the environment, wildlife, the maintenance of dark skies or amenity as a result of noise and light pollution.
 - vi. Avoiding adverse impacts on the amenity of existing residents and new communities.
3. Development in the Gilston Area will be physically separated from Harlow by the Stort Valley (with the exception of the River Crossings). The rural landscape, wetland environment and open views of the Stort Valley should be protected from encroachment and appropriate measures should be implemented to mitigate the impacts of development proposals on the Stort Valley including noise and light pollution.
4. Measures will be implemented to minimise and mitigate the impacts of spill-over light and noise pollution from development on the countryside.

Fig. 15 - The countryside setting of local villages



A. Rural setting of Hunsdon (Widford Rise) from the plateau of Eastwick Wood; B. Setting of agricultural fields of Eastwick from the east; C. View of Gilston Park House across semi-natural open land; D. View of St Mary's and cottages in Gilston

1.4 - Maintaining the Individuality and Separation of all Villages

Rationale and Justification

161. The principle of avoiding coalescence between settlements is very well established in planning policy and is recognised in the Gilston Area Concept Framework, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide and in good practice. The boundaries and character of each new village should be designed to emphasise the individuality and separation of each settlement, including the existing ones.
162. Within the context of this policy, Village Boundary is intended as the extent of the built-up area as defined and used in the District Plan. This Boundary should provide clear and meaningful separation. It should not necessarily coincide with the red-line development boundary of the Parameter Plans of a planning application
163. The Gilston Area should have a singular and coherent identity as a group of villages within the landscape, while accommodating diversity of character within. This approach makes possible the potential to incorporate the two existing settlements Gilston and Eastwick while retaining their individual form and identity.
164. All planning policy and guidance documents consistently refer to Gilston as an individual place separate from Harlow. District Plan Policy GA1 states 'development in this location will provide a mixture of house sizes and tenures across seven distinct villages' (Policy GA1 (III)) and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision refers to a 'series of distinctive neighbourhoods and villages' (Vision Placemaking A) and to connecting 'out to the wider countryside and Stort Valley' (Landscape & Green Infrastructure A).
165. The District Plan, in Policy VILL1 (on development in the largest villages, Group 1) and in Policy HOU2 (Housing Density) sets out some fundamental design principles applying to development in a village location:
 - It should be of a design and density appropriate to the location and context.
 - It should not represent a loss of significant open space and gap in the setting of a building.
 - It should not block important views or vistas or detract from the openness of the countryside.
166. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision includes a Strategic Plan (reproduced as Fig. 16) which illustrates clearly in diagrammatic form the difference in the balance between green and built areas between the Gilston area as opposed to wider Garden Town⁵³. In Gilston there will be individual and distinctive villages with clearly defined boundaries set within the landscape, while Harlow (although its original design was landscape-led) has an urban layout of interrelating neighbourhoods separated by green wedges. The Garden Town Vision states that the existing landscape should shape the pattern of new development and the character of open spaces, using existing woodlands, hedges, trees, meadows and waterways as natural cues.

⁵³ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) pp.4-5

167. The Garden Town Design Guide acknowledges that the new villages will sit between the existing villages of Eastwick and Gilston, Hunsdon, Widford and High Wych in the Hertfordshire countryside. The guidance clearly states that each village should be designed to have an individual identity and character and that development should respond positively to the landscape and topography to avoid being too visually prominent from the existing villages, Stort Valley, Rye Hill, the town centre and Churchgate Street area⁵⁴. In addition, the Design Guide states that development should be set back from distinct existing villages to protect their character and should respond sensitively to existing buildings and settlements, with careful consideration given to sensitive integration where appropriate. The guidance also states that new villages should be integrated into the wider, network of roads and lanes, to avoid these becoming isolated and to ensure a village character informed by a classic village structure⁵⁵ and that characteristics of typical or nearby villages will be taken as design cues, with materials, colour palette, form and structure showing how they might respond to these.⁵⁶
168. The placemaking principles which underpin the Gilston Area Concept Framework state that the location and extent of village development will be influenced by the existing landscape character, topography, heritage assets and respond sympathetically to existing villages and communities. Furthermore, that the new villages will be separated by green corridors of sufficient width to ensure the villages are separate and distinctive, whilst also performing a green space role and function⁵⁷. The Gilston Area Charter SPD provides detailed guidance on the preparation of Village Masterplans and the need to have regard to how it will interface and respond to its immediate surrounding landscape in the context of the approved Strategic Landscape Masterplan⁵⁸.
169. The Concept Framework establishes that the new villages will have a positive relationship with the surrounding landscape and an attractive rural landscape setting and that the designs for each village will draw from a deep understanding of the site's existing landscape and heritage assets to create seven distinctive and individual village characters⁵⁹. The Concept Framework also provides a description of the existing site features that inform the location, extent and relationship of each village to the site and to each other and how these unique characteristics might inform the design and character of each.
170. Even before the development of Harlow as a New Town, the Gilston Area has always been different from Harlow, with its own distinctive history and pattern of development (see Section C). Today, it still remains separated from Harlow by the Green Belt and the configuration of the Stort Valley with watercourses, wildlife and floodplains. The lack of crossings between Gilston and Harlow is both a result of separate histories and a source of individuality today.

⁵⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.40

⁵⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.41

⁵⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.8

⁵⁷ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.74

⁵⁸ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 5.3 step 4

⁵⁹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) pp.81-87

171. Within Hertfordshire, villages are typically isolated and surrounded by a rural landscape of fields and woodlands. In some cases, villages along a road corridor are separated by smaller fields of 100-200m width and clear discontinuity in the built form that maintains identity and prevents coalescence. This is the case of Hunsdon and Widford, or High Wych and Sawbridgeworth.
172. The form of development will be determined by an in-depth understanding of the structure of local settlements, landscape, topographical and built features of the area in order to accommodate new housing within a comprehensive plan for distinct villages of individual character and establish a positive relationship with the existing settlements.
173. The distinctiveness and identity of each of the new villages will need to be reflected in discrete built areas, clear detachment, separation of frontages over rural fields or woodland with a clear perception of distance, sufficient to ensure that the villages are not to be perceived as neighbourhoods of a single settlement but as genuinely distinct and individual villages.
174. Boundaries for the new villages and the communities of Eastwick and Gilston (Gilston being formed by a loose grouping of buildings rather than a compact settlement) should be defined through a landscape-led approach to ensure that an adequate separation distance and corridor of natural landscape is provided between individual settlements. This will be required in conjunction with Policies AG2 and AG3 above.
175. The villages should be well connected to the infrastructure, facilities and employment of Harlow, but will be physically separated by the River Stort and Green Belt and distinctive in their spatial form and design. The development will respect the strategy and vision for the Garden Town initiative and through this it will contribute to the wider aspiration for the sustained economic regeneration and growth of Harlow.
176. It is recognised that significant emphasis has been placed on walking and cycling, which must be embraced in the planning of the villages, the landscape and the green corridors. However, it will be necessary to ensure these are well designed and integrated with the landscape so as not to impact on other policy objectives including the effectiveness of creating an attractive landscape setting and separation distance between the villages and minimising the impact of development on existing residents. It is therefore considered to be critical that these matters are considered as an integral part of the Strategic Landscape and Village Masterplans.

Fig. 16 - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide Structural Plan (Source: Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)



Community Perspective

177. The community has expressed concerns about the potential urbanising effect of new development. Furthermore, whilst it is recognised that the Gilston Area is separated from Harlow by the retained Green Belt and the River Stort, the community is concerned that there is a risk of visually merging the new built form into the urban area of Harlow if buildings dominate the landscape.
178. Local residents support the sentiment of the diagram of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (Fig. 16 above) and have a strong desire to ensure that new development respects the character of existing settlements, minimises and mitigates impacts on the existing community and creates new contained villages which are sympathetic to the character of the Gilston Area and have a distinctive individual character.

Key Evidence Base

1. East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007
2. Village Hierarchy Study, East Herts Council 2016
3. District Plan Policies VILL1 and HOU2 (2018)
4. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
6. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
7. Gilston Area Charter SPD (approved June 2020)

POLICY AG4 – Maintaining the Individuality and Separation of all Villages

1. Development in the Gilston Area should seek to create distinctive villages of individual character set within a rural landscape. The location and extent of new village development should be informed by existing landscape character, topography and heritage assets and respond sympathetically to the built form and setting of existing settlements and communities:
 - i. A landscape-led approach should be adopted to define the extent of meaningful separation and green corridors between villages and to establish a boundary to the built-up area of each village. This should be defined in a Strategic Landscape Masterplan (Policy AG1).
 - ii. The green corridors separating villages should form part of the Green Infrastructure Network (Policy AG3) and should be retained in perpetuity and be subject to management and maintenance plans.
2. Measures should be incorporated to protect the setting and distinctiveness of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon and other clusters of existing buildings, including the establishment of landscape buffers and the retention of sensitive views and existing landscape features. The landscape buffers will be connected to the green corridors and should comprise natural greenspace and a mixture of new planting and management of existing vegetation.
3. The new villages should have a defined Village Boundary within which built development should be contained in order to create a distinct identity and to protect the countryside setting of new and existing villages (Policy AG2)
4. The green corridors separating villages should:
 - i. Be of sufficient width and biodiversity value to support wildlife habitats and protect areas of ecological value from environmental impacts such as noise and light pollution.
 - ii. Accommodate paths and cycle connections provided these can be accommodated without compromising the physical and visual separation between villages, the amenity of existing and new communities and the ecological value of the corridors.
 - iii. Include provision for early planting and landscape improvements to form a meaningful separation between emerging built-up areas and existing settlements.
5. The definition, detailed design and treatment of the natural green corridors and landscape buffers around villages including rights of way and cycle connections will be established in a Strategic Landscape Masterplan and Village Masterplans in consultation with the local community.

Fig. 17 - Example of the gap between Hunsdon and Widford, typical of the area



A. Gap between Widford and Hunsdon looking west towards Gilston (power lines in the distance)
B. Visual gap between Widford and Hunsdon looking east

1.5 – Protecting Areas of Local Significance

Rationale and Justification

179. Protecting the integrity of the existing settlements, existing heritage assets and the most significant biodiversity and landscape features of the area is essential to respect local context and protect the character and distinctiveness of the Gilston Area. Policy AG5 seeks to assist this process by identifying:
- Local Green Spaces, corresponding to landscape and biodiversity assets meaningful to the community.
 - Community Boundaries, identifying the extent of village communities, whose integrity should be protected, as this is not otherwise clear, particularly in the case of the dispersed settlement of Gilston.
 - Important local views over the open countryside and sensitive fields contributing to the heritage setting of the most significant landmarks.
180. Policy GA1 (V(g) and V(o)) of the District Plan emphasises the need to include opportunities to enhance on-site assets, enhance biodiversity and protect Local Wildlife Sites and other assets of environmental value. It also requires enhancement of existing bridleways and footpaths and the protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, both on-site and in the wider area.
181. The Gilston Area Concept Framework states that development in the Gilston Area will have a positive relationship with its landscape and heritage assets and preserve and protect the countryside and existing landscape attributes as far as possible. The landscape-led approach promoted by the Concept Framework establishes that the design of new villages should be informed by local scenery, wildlife habitats and historical heritage and that where possible, significant heritage, landscape and areas of ecological significance or potential will be integrated into the development⁶⁰. Key placemaking principles underpinning the Concept Framework relate to the protection and enhancement, where possible, of existing areas of ecological, wildlife and landscape value and the enhancement of existing woodlands. It is also stated that the designs of each village will identify long and short-range views to create visual connections with notable existing built and landscape features⁶¹. The Concept Framework also highlights the need to maintain the distinctiveness and to manage the impacts of development on the existing villages of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon and other clusters of existing buildings⁶².
182. The importance of protecting the character of existing settlements and landscape and heritage assets is also established in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. The Vision (D Maximising Visibility and Appreciation of our Heritage) states that views of the natural and built landscape will be retained, with views towards heritage assets framed and enhanced and that new development should integrate sensitively with heritage assets⁶³. The Vision (B Landscape-led Masterplanning:

⁶⁰ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.80

⁶¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p. 77

⁶² Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p. 74

⁶³ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p11

Responding to Natural Character and Function) reaffirms that the existing landscape should shape the pattern of new development and the character of open spaces⁶⁴.

183. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide provides place specific guidance for the Gilston Area. This guidance states that:
- New development should respond sensitively to existing buildings and settlements, with careful consideration given to sensitive integration where appropriate.
 - Gaps with rural character should be retained between villages to protect the existing landscape character and establish a setting for villages.
 - Existing trees, hedges and rights of way should be retained where appropriate as part of an open space network.
 - The setting of the historic park and garden at Gilston Park and other heritage assets should be carefully taken into account in masterplans.
184. The Garden Town Design Guide identifies key landmarks and views across the Garden Town that will be important to retain and enhance. These include the strategic views from Hunsdon Airfield, St Mary's Church and St Dunstan's Church which are specifically identified as distinctive local assets⁶⁵.
185. The NPPF introduces the concept of a Local Green Space designation⁶⁶. This is a discretionary designation to be made by inclusion within a local development plan or neighbourhood development plan. The designation should be used where the land is not extensive, is local in character and reasonably close to the community it serves; and, where it is demonstrably special, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife. The NPPF states that policies within the local development plan or neighbourhood development plan for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with the policies protecting green belts⁶⁷.
186. A number of areas are identified as Local Green Spaces to reflect their special qualities and because their protection and enhancement is considered to be critical to meeting the objectives set out in the Neighbourhood Plan. These are areas of local significance which are highly valued by the community. A full assessment has been undertaken of the proposed designations which demonstrates that they meet the criteria set out in the NPPF, summarised in Table 1, below.

⁶⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p13

⁶⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.22

⁶⁶ Paragraph 99, National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (June 2019)

⁶⁷ Paragraphs 100-101, National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (June 2019)

Table 1 - Proposed Local Green Space Designations⁶⁸

| Proposed Local Green Space | Description | Character | Proximity to Community | Special Qualities |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| a. Eastwick Wood b. Black Hut Wood c. Lawns Wood and Moat d. Queens Wood | Four blocks of Ancient Woodland (Natural England) and designated Wildlife Site (District Plan) and World War II Airfield Defences (Scheduled Ancient Monument). | Local coppiced woodlands, in need of enhancement and conservation. | Extensive network of footpaths and bridleway connecting to Hunsdon, Widford, Eastwick and High Wych used by local communities for informal recreation. | Tranquil area of woodland in between arable farmland with buzzard, red kite, owl, deer, hare, orchids; important for wildlife in the open setting of the Hunsdon Plateau. |
| e. Eastwick Valley and Eastwick Hall Corridor | Pastures and fields of Eastwick Hall, Wildlife Sites and 2 Moated sites - Scheduled Ancient Monuments. | Local semi-natural valley in between undulating fields. | Close to Eastwick, linking the village green to the countryside to the north and Hunsdon Airfield. | Historically significant: ancient lane linking to former location of Eastwick Hall and two moated sites. |
| f. St. Botolph's Churchyard | Listed church building (Grade II*) and Listed tombs. Mature trees. Identified as a distinctive local asset in the Garden Town Design Guide. | Local semi-natural tranquil greenspace. | Close to Eastwick, and an important place of identity for the local community. | Historically significant, attractive image for the village. Tranquil and contemplative place. |
| g. Home Wood | Block of Ancient Woodland (Natural England) and designated Wildlife Site (District Plan). | Local natural greenspace. | Interface between the Hunsdon and Gilston communities, in close proximity to both. | Tranquil, wooded, bats, buzzards, red kite, owl, hare and other wildlife habitat with wild animals, bluebells and orchids. Essential setting of St Mary's Church and Church Cottages. |
| h. St Mary's Churchyard | Wildlife Site Grade 1 Listed church and monuments. Identified as a distinctive local asset in the Garden Town Design Guide. | Local semi-natural greenspace and part of the heritage of the area. | At the core of Gilston community, history and identity. It contains old tombstones and ancient yew trees. | Historically significant, and part of the image of the Gilston community. Heritage interior of St Mary's Church valued locally. Tranquil space. Wildlife. |

⁶⁸ NB. No Site i. is identified for reasons of cartographic clarity

| Proposed Local Green Space | Description | Character | Proximity to Community | Special Qualities |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| j. Golden Grove | Ancient Woodland and designated Wildlife Site. | Local natural greenspace. | Close to existing community of Gilston and separating it from High Wych. | Wildlife habitat. Tranquil. Easily reached from Gilston and High Wyche via quiet lanes. |
| k. Gilston House Parkland and Lake | Historically significant landscaped area (not listed) Site of Netherhall one of the original three farmsteads established by Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1135. | Local in character and part of heritage of area. | Privately owned. Part of the heritage setting and identity of Gilston. | Historically significant, landscaped and wooded area providing an essential setting to Grade 2* Gilston Park House, wildlife habitat. |
| l. The Avenue and Chase | The Mount is a Scheduled Ancient Monument surrounded by a dry moat and the original site of Giffards Manor one of the three farmsteads established by Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1135. | Local in character and part of heritage of area. | Planted and wildlife habitat at the core of the Gilston area and in need of enhancement and valorisation. | Historically significant, strong local feature in need of enhancement. Wooded area and wildlife habitat. |
| m. Terlings Parkland | Original site of Terlings Manor House. Development was permitted only on the footprint of previous building to protect the surrounding historic green spaces that adjoin the Stort. Green space serving local community. | Local parkland with playground, seating places and mature trees. | Used by residents of Terlings Park and wider Gilston community. Footpath through the site linking to Burnt Mill Lane. | Mature trees, wildlife and tranquil recreational space for community. |
| n. Fiddlers Brook and Lowland Fens | A designated Wildlife Site and partly designated Fen Habitat (Natural England), including a woodland strip. | Local natural greenspace. | Close to existing settlement of Gilston Lane, Pye Corner and Terlings Park with footpaths linking to the Stort Valley. | Provides habitat for wildlife and biodiversity. Tree planted buffer between roads and open green spaces. |

187. The existing communities comprise the villages of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon and scattered or non-contiguous buildings. Of these, Hunsdon is a Group 1 Village and the others are Group 3. Only Hunsdon has a Village Boundary defined in the District Plan maps.
188. In order to protect the character of existing communities, and to assist in the protection of their integrity and setting, Community Boundary designations are proposed to identify the extent of the existing settlement and community (Fig. 19). The Community Boundaries indicate a community unit, which should be protected to retain its cohesion. They are not equivalent to a Village Boundary, as they do not define areas where intensification and infill will be permitted. The existing settlements are characterised by a loose built up form and scattered buildings and any future development in the Gilston Area should ensure that the character remains that of a settlement made of groupings of buildings dispersed in open space. Any planning applications within the Community Boundaries would need to respond to adopted policies relevant to Group 3 Villages as well as the Neighbourhood Plan.
189. Views across the fields towards heritage landmarks and long-distance views towards the villages are cherished by local residents, as they create strong ties between settlements and countryside. These have been recorded by the local community and should be recognised and protected from significant visual encroachment by new urbanisation.
190. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies three types of views:
 - Long Distance Views, relating to the entire Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and already identified in the Garden Town Design Guide⁶⁹.
 - Views to and from recognised heritage assets, forming the heritage setting of distinctive features such as the Churches, the Manor Houses and some key war memorials.
 - Key open views across the countryside and open fields important for the identity of existing settlements.

Community Perspective

191. One of the principal concerns expressed by the local community relates to the impact of development on the character of existing communities and views across local landscape and heritage assets.
192. The Local Green Spaces have been identified as being special by the local community and to hold a particular local significance, because of their beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of their biodiversity and wildlife (see Fig. 18).
193. Views across the fields towards heritage landmarks and long-distance views towards the villages are cherished by local residents. These have been recorded by the local community and should be recognised and protected from significant visual encroachment by new urbanisation and development (see Fig. 21 and Fig. 22).

⁶⁹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018), p.21

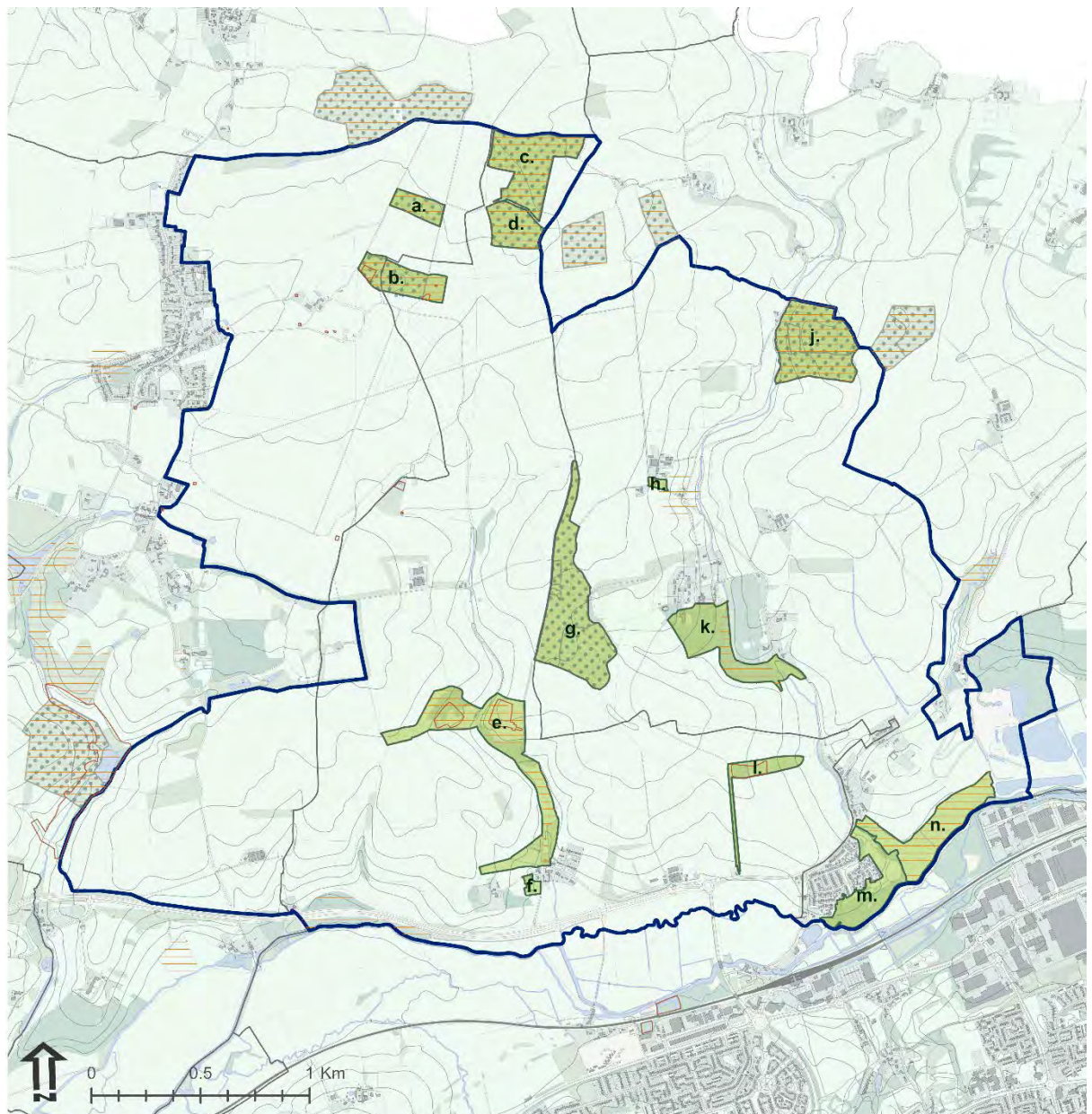
Key Evidence Base

1. East Hertfordshire District Plan (2018), Wildlife Sites and Village Policies
2. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
5. East Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007
6. Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England (Hertfordshire) 2012
7. Historic England National Heritage List for England
8. Wildlife Sites Inventory for East Herts, Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre 2013

POLICY AG5 –Protecting Areas of Local Significance

1. The following sites are locally significant and are designated as Local Green Space in accordance with the NPPF and District Plan Policy CFLR2. These sites should form part of the Green Infrastructure Network and are subject to the provisions of Policy AG3. Planting and activities within these areas should be consistent with the function, character and use of the Local Green Space (see Fig. 18):
 - a. Eastwick Wood
 - b. Black Hut Wood
 - c. Lawns Wood and Moat
 - d. Queens Wood
 - e. Eastwick Valley and Eastwick Hall Corridor
 - f. St. Botolph's Churchyard
 - g. Home Wood
 - h. St. Mary's Churchyard
 - j. Golden Grove
 - k. Gilston House Parkland and Lake
 - l. Avenue and Chase
 - m. Terlings Parkland
 - n. Fiddlers Brook / Lowland Fens
2. Community Boundary designations (as defined in Fig. 20) identify the extent of the existing settlements of Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon, including clusters of scattered buildings which form part of these communities. Development proposals will be required to protect the integrity of the community within these areas, maintaining their setting and distinctiveness. Proposals should demonstrate how impacts on existing communities will be managed.
3. Important views across open fields and from other vantage points should be protected, with land retained in agricultural use or presenting an appropriate natural greenspace setting (Fig. 21), to ensure that the image of villages within the countryside is retained. Key views include:
 - A. Long distance view from the Hunsdon Plateau / Hunsdon Lodge Farm looking south
 - B. Long distance view from Harlow, marking the transition from urban to village setting
 - C. Long distance view from Parndon Mill across the Stort Valley
 - D. Views to and from the Churches of St. Mary's, St. Botolph's and St. Dunstan and churchyards
 - E. Views to and from the Listed Gilston Park House and Hunsdon House and their gardens
 - F. Open view over Hunsdon Airfield from Acorn Street and Drury Lane and from the airfield towards St Mary's
 - G. Open views across the airfield from the Airfield Memorial and hangars
 - H. Open views out from Eastwick Road towards the Memorial
 - J. Open views towards Eastwick from the Stort Valley and from the lower part of Gilston Park
 - K. Rural views to and from Hunsdon Pond towards Brickhouse Farm House
 - L. Open views towards Hunsdon Brook Fishponds
 - M. Open views towards and from Home Wood and Hunsdon / Cock Robin Lane
 - N. Open view from the exit of Terlings Park and Fiddlers Brook
 - P. Open view from the path by Channock Farm towards Golden Grove and High Wych.

Fig. 18 - Designation of Local Green Spaces



- Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- Parish Boundaries
- Designated Local Green Space
- Wildlife Sites
- Ancient Woodland
- Scheduled Monuments

- Designated Local Green Space
- a. Eastwick Wood
 - b. Black Hut Wood
 - c. Lawns Wood and Moat
 - d. Queens Wood
 - e. Eastwick Valley and Eastwick Hall Corridor
 - f. St. Botolph's Churchyard
 - g. Home Wood
 - h. St. Mary's Churchyard
 - j. Golden Grove
 - k. Gilston House Parkland and Lake
 - l. Avenue and Chase
 - m. Terlings Parkland
 - n. Fiddlers Brook / Lowland Fens

Fig. 19 - Impressions from the Local Green Spaces



A. Eastwick Wood; B. Parkland at Gilston Park House; C. Giant cedar of Lebanon in Terlings parkland; D. Edge of Home Wood with a deer; E. Early purple orchids in Hunsdon; F. Home Wood.

Fig. 20 - Community Boundaries

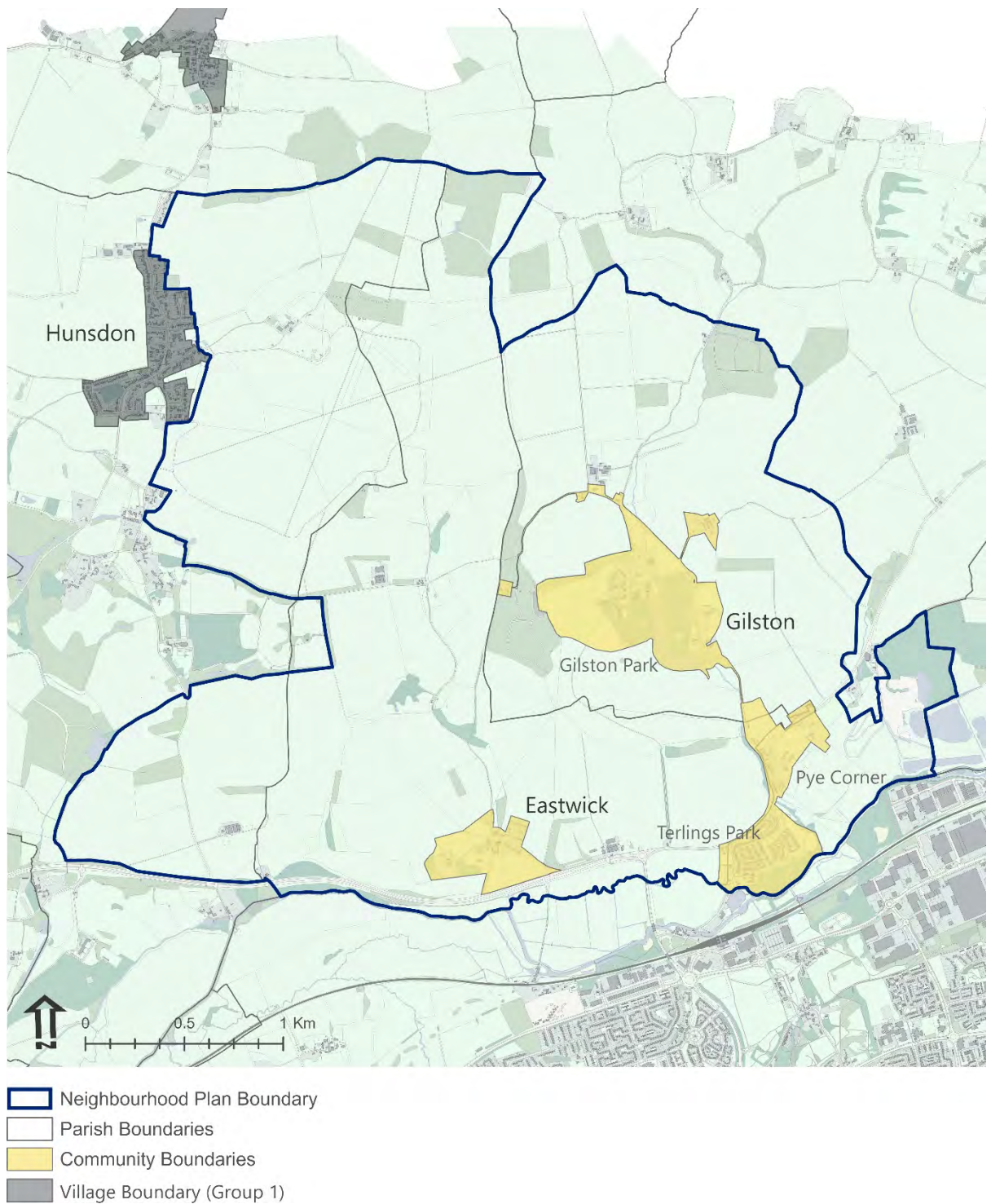
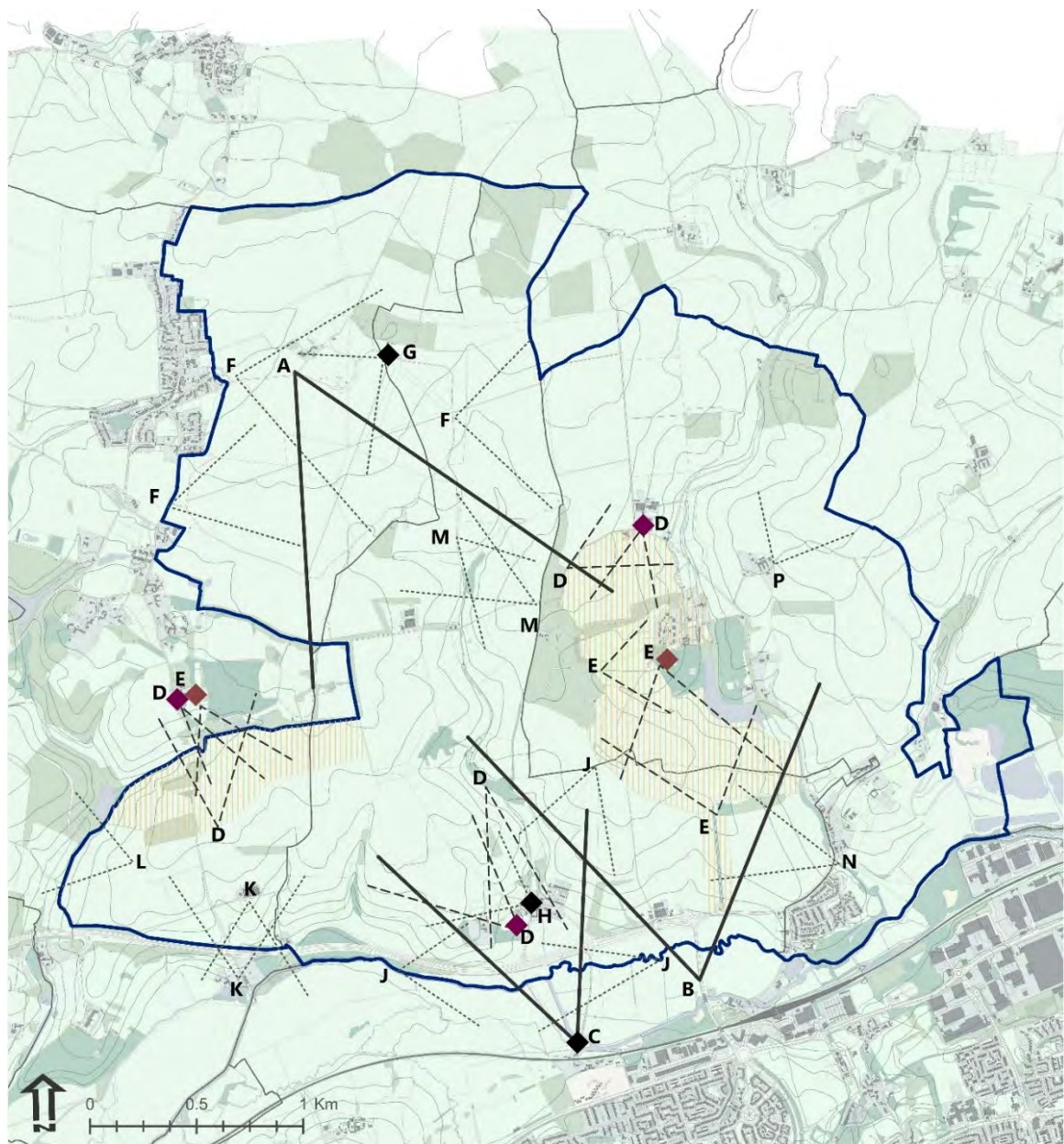


Fig. 21 - Important Local Views over the Open Countryside and Sensitive Heritage Settings



- ▬ Neighbourhood Plan Boundary
- ▬ Parish Boundaries
- ▬ Long Distance View
- - - View Towards and from Distinctive Landmarks
- View of Open Countryside
- ◆ Church
- ◆ Manor House
- ◆ Other Asset
- Sensitive Historic Setting

- Important Views**
- A. Long distance view from the Hunsdon Plateau
 - B. Long distance view from Harlow
 - C. Long distance view from Parndon Mill
 - D. Views to and from the churches and churchyards
 - E. Views to and from the Gilston Park House and Hunsdon House
 - F. Open view over Hunsdon Airfield
 - G. Open views from the Airfield Memorial and hangars
 - H. Open views out from Eastwick Road and Memorial
 - J. Open views towards Eastwick from south
 - K. Rural views to and from Hunsdon Pond
 - L. Open views towards Hunsdon Brook Fishponds
 - M. Open views towards and from Home Wood and Hunsdon
 - N. Open view from Terlings Park and Fiddlers Brook
 - P. Open view from the path by Channock Farm

Fig. 22 - A few key views over the open countryside



A. View looking south from Widford Road towards Hunsdon Lodge Farm; B. Across the fields south of Eastwick Wood towards Gilston with St Mary's in the distance; C. Looking south across the airfield; D. Looking north from the edge of the airfield towards Black Hut Wood and the hangars; E. View towards Home Wood, past St Mary's Church; F. From the edge of Home Wood towards Eastwick Hall Farm; G. From Eastwick Hall Lane looking south-west towards Eastwick.

Fig. 23 - Key views from or towards distinctive local landmarks



A. The green setting of fields and trees looking south from St. Mary's Church; B. Sensitive view towards Gilston Park House from Home Wood; C. Views towards Gilston Park House from the south; D. View of St Dunstan's from the south; E. View of Hunsdon House and St Dunstan's from the south

1.6 - Creating New Villages with a Distinct and Locally Inspired Character

Rationale and Justification

194. The principle of accommodating development in the Gilston Area in seven distinct villages of individual character was established in Policy GA1 and has been further amplified in the Gilston Area Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. Whilst it is recognised that the new villages will be required to accommodate the strategic priorities established in the District Plan and to meet current design and sustainability standards, the new villages should each have a distinct character and to achieve this strategic objective, they should be appropriate to context and take inspiration from the Hertfordshire countryside and the typical characteristics of existing settlements. The design of each village should draw from an appreciation of the existing landscape, topography, local village form and heritage assets. The objective should be to achieve the best possible balance between landscape, height and density, and where trade-offs may be required, the local community should be engaged in the choices made through the collaborative Masterplanning process.
195. The report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (Living with Beauty, January 2020) sees ugliness as buildings that violate the context in which they are placed. Such buildings would destroy the sense of place and undermine the spirit of community.
196. The District Plan (2018) makes numerous references to design in context, and respecting context in its policies on design, villages and housing.
197. The Concept Framework provides design principles for the new villages, including the importance of drawing from the character of local villages and the wider East Hertfordshire context. The Concept Framework states that the scale and massing of development within the new villages has been carefully considered in order to sensitively integrate the villages with the wider and immediate context and create a high quality and distinctive living environment. This is established through application of the following principles⁷⁰:
- Appropriate to village character drawing from the local character of Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon and the wider context of East Hertfordshire.
 - Be variable in scale and height to create distinctiveness.
 - Buildings to contribute positively to the street or space and be in scale and proportion to each other and their function.
 - Buildings to provide frontage to the surrounding landscape.
 - Follow natural contours and establish visual links to wider reference assets and neighbouring villages.
 - Within village centres to create a sense of enclosure maximising frontage wherever possible.
 - Optimise orientation for sustainability benefits.
 - Be appropriately scaled and sensitive to existing built and landscape heritage assets.

⁷⁰ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.102

- Be appropriately scaled in relation to existing villages.
198. The Concept Framework confirms that the height of buildings will be defined at the Village Masterplan and/or detailed application stage based upon its context and character with suitable parameters established across the site through the outline application stage in order for the application to be assessed in relation to its potential environmental impacts. The Concept Framework states that overall, it is considered likely that buildings may be between 2 to 4 storeys in height and that the overall development will have an average net density of 33 dwellings per hectare⁷¹. Taller buildings are considered to be acceptable on a case by case basis.
199. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision defines a village as ‘a residential community with local community facilities, shops and work spaces, which is set in rural countryside and is physically and visually distinct but in this context, will maintain strong links with surrounding villages and the Garden Town’⁷². The Vision states that ‘the characteristics of typical or nearby villages will be taken as design cues, with materials, colour palette, form and structure showing how they might respond to these’⁷³. The Vision also states that housing densities across the Garden Town will be broadly between 25 homes and 55 homes a hectare and that densities will typically increase towards local centres and transport hubs, around a local high street or small green space and villages should fragment at their edges. In addition, villages centres will be located at the meeting point of local routes and villages will be integrated with the wider network of surrounding settlements⁷⁴.
200. This guidance is further developed in the Garden Town Design Guide which defines development in the Gilston Area as ‘a series of villages of a distinctive character set within the context of historic settlements and landscape character’ with direct connections into the Stort Valley and Harlow Town station, and sustainable transport links with each other and the wider Garden Town. Village centres will have a mix of uses, and so could accommodate a broader range of typologies and the Design Guide also recognises that as the southern central village will be located close to Harlow Town rail station and to the town centre, it could accommodate higher densities⁷⁵.
201. The Garden Town Design Guide also provides place specific guidelines for village development in the Gilston Area which state:
- Each village should be designed to have an individual identity and character. The palette and materials from existing villages could be used as a design cue.
 - The organic historic pattern of lanes could be retained and used as a cue for the structure of new villages.
 - Density levels could vary more than for the urban neighbourhoods, typically with intensity in the centre and greater fragmentation at the edge, to respond to the landscape setting. Density should typically be higher in the village centre and in accessible locations well served by sustainable transport.

⁷¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (2018), pages 104-109

⁷² Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.29

⁷³ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) A3 p.8

⁷⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) A4-6 p.8

⁷⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.17

- Rooflines should be varied in terms of building heights and may have predominantly pitched roofs, to reflect the character of surrounding villages.
 - Development should respond positively to the landscape and topography to avoid being too visually prominent from the existing villages, Stort Valley, Rye Hill, the town centre and Churchgate Street area.
 - Development should be set back from distinct existing villages to protect their character.
 - New development should respond sensitively to existing buildings and settlements, with careful consideration given to sensitive integration where appropriate.
 - Gaps with rural character should be retained between villages to protect the existing landscape character and establish a setting for villages.
 - 'Green Fingers' running through villages, such as village greens, should have active frontages to define these as social spaces.
 - Existing trees, hedges and rights of way should be retained where appropriate as part of an open space network.
 - A comprehensive understanding of the landscape should be referenced to inform proposals.
202. The new villages should also reflect contemporary design criteria, which incorporate the highest standards of sustainability and make the best use of innovation and technology. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide, for instance, encourages innovative design that is flexible, adaptable and incorporate cutting-edge technology in the fields of low carbon, low energy consumption, low water demand and water conservation⁷⁶.
203. In their response to consultation on the Draft Gilston Area Charter SPD, Historic England highlighted the important role that the historic environment plays in place-making and reiterated their advice that development should draw on local vernacular/building materials and village forms, allowing a development to have a clear and distinctive character⁷⁷.
204. Whilst each new village should have a distinct and individual character, policy and guidance documents make it clear that the design of the new villages should respond to and take a design cue from existing villages and landscape features. Consideration should therefore be given to the typical characteristics of local villages in the design of the new villages, for example:
- Local villages are typically linear and organised around a central spine. As villages grow, the linear structure becomes more articulated with forks and secondary short streets within neighbourhoods. Because villages developed by addition, they do not normally display comprehensive grids, which are common in planned settlements and some market towns.
 - Streets and lanes generally have an informal layout with low engineering definition, slow speed and rich mixed landscape including thick hedgerows, tall bushes and magnificent trees.

⁷⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.9

⁷⁷ Gilston Area Charter Executive Report (East Herts Council 2 June 2020) p.95

- Within the village, the central spine is the focal point of active land uses and community facilities. Despite narrow pavements, it is pedestrian friendly allowing safe informal crossing and shared use of spaces.
 - Secondary streets are typically very short and informal. Pavements are replaced by an informal green verge towards the outer edges of the village, with the carriageway shared safely by all users.
 - Often blocks of natural / semi-natural landscape with big countryside trees or fields are enclosed within the settlement area and bring the rural landscape right within the village. This is a great source of biodiversity value directly within the built-up area.
 - Countryside fields and woodland are never very far away from the central spine of the village, and often views over open rural landscape open up from crossroads from within the core of the village.
 - Views from the countryside towards the village are normally dominated by big trees and landscape and not by buildings.
 - Local villages display 'soft' and informal edges, without continuous frontages or repetitive rooflines and with built volumes partly hidden by tall trees and thick bushes.
 - Arrival into the village does not present a built 'gateway': typically, arrival is through a transition area with buildings partially hidden by deep green open space at the front.
 - Historically, landmark buildings, like the manor houses or the churches, were isolated from the village. They create attractive views from the countryside and fields, but no focal point within the built-up area.
 - Heights are typically two-storeys, with the occasional three-storey building in a discreet location. Roof ridges are typically lower than the crown of the surrounding mature trees.
 - There is considerable variety in built form and massing: from compact and continuous frontages in the core of the village (such as Hunsdon, Much Hadham, High Wych) to deeply set back isolated buildings (such as Gilston Lane, Eastwick fringes, and the outer parts of Hunsdon).
205. Further details and photographic illustration of the key characteristics of the local area that can be used as inspiration is provided in Appendix 4. The images and text are intended to describe the local villages and help designers and decision-makers understand what the community values and considers the essence of the morphology and character that makes their villages special. The Appendix therefore is to be used as a source of design cues, which will need to be creatively reinterpreted in the masterplanning proposals, rather than copied or literally replicated. By choice, the Appendix makes no prescriptive recommendation and does not endorse any specific architectural style.

Community Perspective

206. The community is of the view that new development should respond sensitively to existing buildings and settlements. The need to reflect local village character in the design of the new villages was a recurring theme during consultation on the Concept Framework, which was subsequently revised prior to its adoption in July 2018 to remove images and built form which were pointing towards urban and suburban character. It is recognised that:
- The new villages will be larger than the majority of local ones and will need more articulation in their structure, taking inspiration from settlements like Puckeridge (see Appendix 4) or possibly Buntingford.
 - There may be a need for trade-off between landscape separation and density. These trade-offs will need to be explored as options in collaboration with the local community through the preparation of Village Masterplans.
 - Contemporary and innovative design will be encouraged subject to development being of an appropriate form and scale with views and connections to the surrounding countryside. Importance is placed on the variety of building design, informality of village layout and use of appropriate detailing and materials. Pastiche design is not advocated.
207. The community expects to be actively engaged in the preparation of Village Masterplans to ensure that development reflects village character drawing inspiration from Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon and the wider context of East Hertfordshire.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area: Heritage Impact Assessment (Montagu Evans, October 2017)
2. Gilson Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
5. Appendix 4, containing a more detailed description of local villages
6. For reference on village design more generally: South Cambridge District Council Village Design Guides (2020)

POLICY AG6 – Creating New Villages with a Distinct and Locally Inspired Character

1. Proposals for the new villages should clearly demonstrate that the best possible balance has been achieved between landscape, village separation, mass, density and the overall delivery of the aims of Policy GA1 of the District Plan. This should be demonstrated in the Village Masterplan prepared in collaboration with the local community, which should:
 - i. Respect local topography and settlement morphology.
 - ii. Create a village of distinct and individual character.
 - iii. Incorporate significant existing landscape features and an integrated Green Infrastructure Network which connects with the wider Gilston Area (Policy AG2).
 - iv. Provide a range of densities and building heights which are appropriately scaled in relation to location, heritage assets, landscape features and topography.
2. The Village Masterplan should demonstrate the extent to which it has been informed by its relationship with the landscape and heritage assets and has drawn inspiration from the character and morphology of existing villages in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire to create a distinct and individual village character. Consideration should be given to the following typical local village characteristics in the preparation of Village Masterplans:
 - i. Informal layout of streets and lanes which should include street planting and connect with the Green Infrastructure Network.
 - ii. Clear visual integration with the countryside, with direct views over the rural landscape and the retention of pockets of natural greenspace and existing landscape features within the village boundary.
 - iii. Softer outer village edges (with a fragmented building line and varied frontages dispersed among trees), with no visually prominent buildings or built frontages at the edges.
 - iv. Building heights and massing which do not visually dominate views and landscape from key viewpoints and are appropriately scaled in relation to village location and heritage and landscape elements.
 - v. Diversity of building typologies and design.
 - vi. The potential to creatively reflect in the village design other local characteristics identified in Appendix 4.
3. Contemporary and innovative design will be encouraged, provided this is appropriate to its context in terms of landscape, topography, built form, scale and materials.
4. The character, built form and morphology of the new villages should be clearly distinguishable from the character and built form of Harlow.

Fig. 24 - Examples of local soft edges to development boundaries in Hunsdon and Gilston



A. Typical village soft edge (Gilston Park new development); B. Soft edge of Widford looking towards Hunsdon; C. New housing edge at Hunsdon seen from the Airfield; D. Older house edge at Gilston Lane

1.7 - Creating New Countryside Parks at Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Woodlands

Rationale and Justification

208. The land north of the powerlines including Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Woodlands is allocated on the Key Diagram for the Gilston Area (Figure 11.2 in the District Plan) as community trust open space land, and forms an important part of the wider Green Infrastructure Network (Policy AG2). Policy GA1 (V(h)) states that development in the Gilston Area is expected to address the provision of significant managed open space and parklands, and a limited number of buildings associated with that use, on this northern section of the site, the ownership of which will be transferred to a community trust or other mechanism that ensures long term stewardship and governance for the benefit of the community. This area will therefore remain permanently undeveloped, with the exception of a small number of buildings associated with its recreational use. The District Plan indicates that the establishment of the community land trust, or other governance mechanism, should take place early in the overall development programme to deliver local ownership and management of these assets⁷⁸.
209. In addition, the District Plan states that woodland areas to the north of the site will be enhanced by planting and management schemes.
210. The creation of new countryside parks at Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Wood is in keeping with the overall vision and objectives green infrastructure strategy and parkland character set out in the Concept Framework.
211. The creation of countryside parks also reflects the aspirations for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. The Garden Town Vision states that open land on the edge of the Garden Town will be improved with investment in public access, landscape and biodiversity enhancements, and the creation of country parks where appropriate. It also highlights the need to ensure that appropriate governance and stewardship arrangements are in place to secure the long-term management and maintenance of open spaces.
212. The combined size of the Airfield and Eastwick Woodlands offer significant potential for the creation of natural open spaces which can provide significant ecological and recreational and leisure benefits to the community (both new and existing residents), making a positive contribution to the natural environment and the countryside setting of the villages (see Policy AG3). Access to a major area of open space is particularly important given the comparative greater ecological sensitivity of the land close to the river Stort south of the Gilston area site.
213. The airfield also has great historic significance to the Gilston Area. The site was requisitioned in 1939 and the airfield opened in March 1941 as a night fighter station within No.11 Group of Fighter Command and played host to over 20 squadrons. The protection and enhancement of heritage assets is a key underlying principle of the Concept Framework which states that opportunities will be promoted to increase

⁷⁸ East Herts District Plan (October 2018) para 11.3.7 p.150

appreciation and understanding of heritage assets through the incorporation of appropriate references⁷⁹

- 214. There is an opportunity to consider wider betterment in relation to drainage and water management for Hunsdon within the proposed countryside park. They mainly relate to legacy drainage issues associated with the old airfield area to the north of the site. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is of the view that this could represent the only opportunity to achieve essential betterment in a planned and managed way.
- 215. There are Groundwater Source Protection Zones 2 and 3 in the vicinity of Hunsdon Airfield. Groundwater Source Protection Zones surround an abstraction point for public water supply and indicate the travel time water or pollutants would take from a location within the zone to the abstraction point⁸⁰. The Environment Agency advises that the airfield could contain potential land contamination from its previous activities and recommends the area is investigated for potential land contamination, remediated as appropriate so that any future works or drainage proposals that may disturb the ground do not risk contamination of the groundwater.
- 216. Appropriate connections to new and existing settlements through a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways should be created in preference to motorised access.

Community Perspective

- 217. The local communities of Hunsdon and Gilston would wish to see the Airfield used as a natural greenspace in accordance with Policy AG3 for the enjoyment of walking, cycling, horse riding and the countryside and for enhanced biodiversity.
- 218. The Airfield has been an essential part of the modern history of Hunsdon. Hunsdon Airfield and the area of Eastwick Woodlands are important areas of open space for the enjoyment of the countryside for Hunsdon residents, and it is essential to the setting of the village. The Airfield has a strong local historical legacy, which is recognised and celebrated by the local community who are concerned that this cultural link should not be lost. For these reasons this area cannot be considered a resource to be planned only for the benefit of the new communities – they already are very important for the communities of today.
- 219. The local community is supportive of the creation of a community trust and would wish to ensure that the existing community is fully involved in its establishment and future operation. The Concept Framework states that the area north of the powerlines is to be placed in a locked trust prior to the commencement of development, and the community strongly supports this approach. There is an expectation that the community trust open space land to the north of the powerlines will be transferred to local ownership and management and delivered at an early stage of the development programme and that the community will be fully engaged in its design and implementation.
- 220. Concerns have been expressed about existing non-conforming uses which detract from the rural character of the area and generate noise and heavy traffic within Hunsdon.

⁷⁹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.77

⁸⁰ www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs

There is an expectation that non-conforming uses and activities with negative local impacts will be removed at the earliest opportunity, as part of the mitigation measures for existing communities which will be implemented to address the impacts of construction. Concern has also been expressed that some of the present agricultural practices are incompatible with the longer term objective of enhancing biodiversity and should be replaced over time with grassland and pasture which will benefit wildlife.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. East Hertfordshire Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) and Addendum (2017)
5. Groundwater SPZs - www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs

Fig. 25 - The open views across Hunsdon Airfield from Church Lane



POLICY AG7 – Creating New Countryside Parks at Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Woodlands

1. In accordance with Policy GA1, development in the Gilston Area will be required to include provision of Community Trust Open Space Land on the northern section of the site identified in figure 11.2 of the District Plan which includes Hunsdon Airfield and the area around Eastwick Wood. This area will include new countryside parks designed and managed as natural greenspaces (in accordance with Policy AG3) and will address the following requirements:
 - i. Retention of the area as Community Trust Open Space Land in perpetuity and the transfer of the site to a community land trust, or other suitable mechanism that ensures long term stewardship and governance for the benefit of the community (see Policy D2), to deliver local ownership and management of these assets early in the overall development programme in accordance with District Plan Policy GA1.
 - ii. Funding and design support secured through a legal agreement prior to the transfer of the land and made available at the early stages of the development to enable community involvement in the design of the countryside parks and preparation of a management and maintenance plan (see also Policies D1 and D2).
 - iii. Provision for early planting and woodland restoration and the strict control and consideration of relocation of existing incompatible land uses and the introduction of agricultural practices with greater biodiversity value.
 - iv. Prior to the commencement of works in the area, investigation for potential land contamination and remediation as appropriate, to ensure the long-term safety of any future works or drainage proposals that may disturb the ground.
2. The design of the countryside parks will be developed in consultation with the local community and other stakeholder groups. The design should be in accordance with Policy AG2 and AG3 and include:
 - i. Substantial increase in biodiversity value, including woodland planting and natural grassland.
 - ii. Protection of the legacy and appreciation of the Airfield footprint.
 - iii. Protection of key views, and the sensitive landscape gap before entering Hunsdon village (Fig. 21).
 - iv. Restoration of existing heritage buildings to provide a visitor centre with interpretation facilities relating to the history and natural environment of the Airfield and small-scale ancillary uses such as a café.
 - v. No formal recreation or commercial uses where the scale and nature of these uses would impact on the countryside setting and open character of the parkland or local amenity or be in conflict with other policy objectives.
 - vi. New buildings only if in keeping with local character and provided these are ancillary to the recreational use of the area, of a compatible scale and architectural design, and discreetly located.
 - vii. Car parking provision in accordance with Policy TRA1 and where required, located in small groups on the edge of the parkland and well-integrated with the landscape.
 - viii. Establishment of appropriate footpath, cycleway and bridleway connections to existing and new villages, and onwards to Harlow Town Station and Harlow and the wider countryside.
 - ix. Integration of flood water retention in the landscape to remedy, if necessary, surface water flood risk within Hunsdon village in consultation with the lead local flood authority (LLFA).

Fig. 26 - The proposed countryside parks

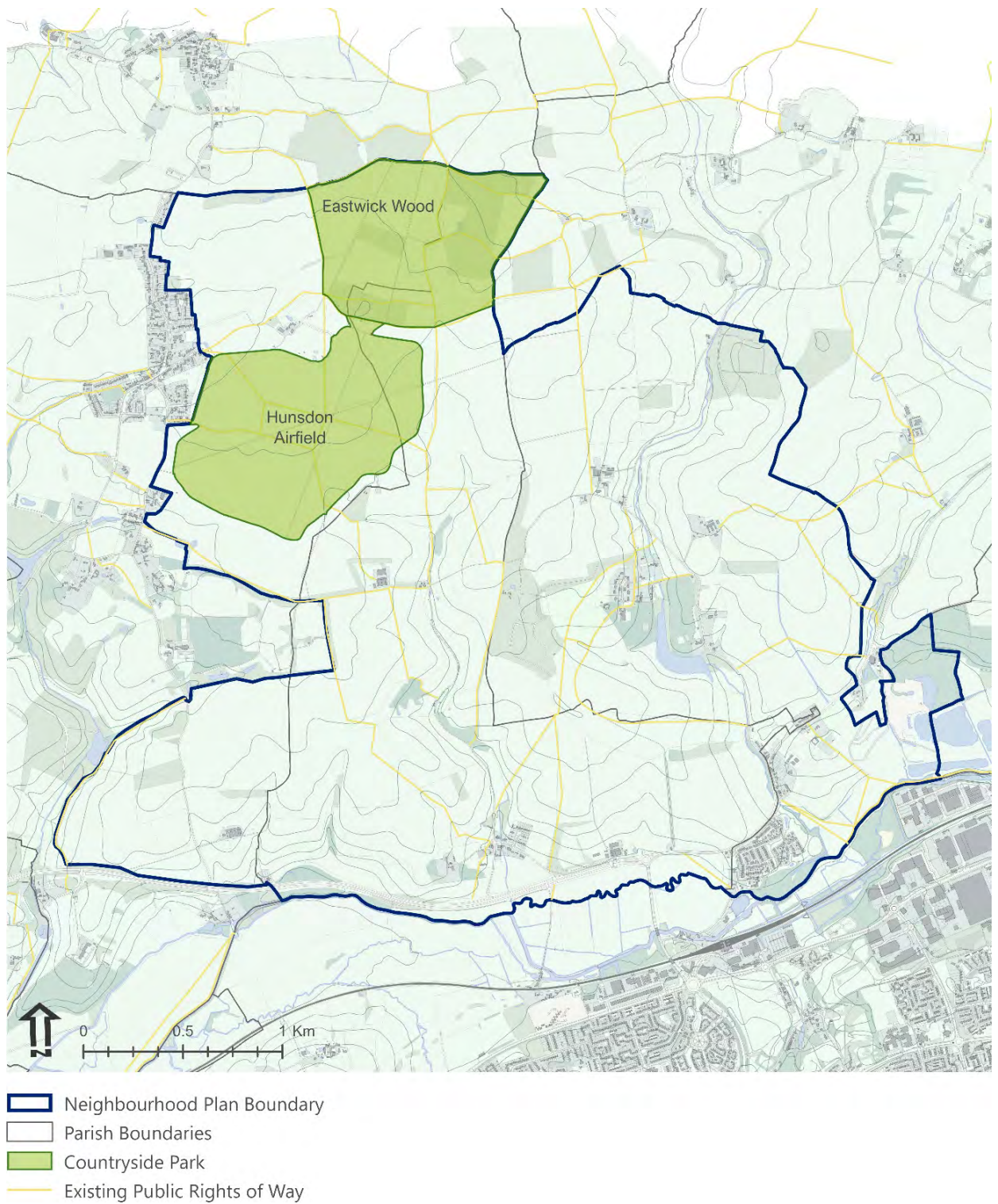


Fig. 27 - Key views of the area of Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Wood



A. Airfield memorial and base hangars; B. Micro-lighting activities; C. Open view across the airfield looking towards Hunsdon (at the horizon); D. Looking south from the airfield plateau; E. From the northern edge of Hunsdon towards Marshland and Eastwick Woods; F. Marshland Wood natural environment.

1.8- Minimising the Impact of Traffic and New Transport Infrastructure on Existing Communities

Rationale and Justification

- 221. The Gilston Area is to be planned and- delivered in accordance with Garden City Principles, including being designed such that walking, cycling and public transport are the most attractive forms of local transport.
- 222. District Plan Policy GA1 (V(l)) requires the setting of objectives and targets for the use of sustainable transport modes. The policy requires that walking, cycling and public transport are designed to be the most attractive travel choice and this establishes a clear mode hierarchy that is consistent with the draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy and the HCC Local Transport Plan (LTP 4).
- 223. An underlying principle of the Concept Framework is to ensure that the provision of necessary infrastructure will be phased in relation to development to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities. A key objective is to carefully manage the impacts of the development and construction of the new villages on existing communities through the timely provision of improved infrastructure (roads, public transport, etc.) and to ensure that existing communities will be connected to new villages, and have easy access to green spaces and community facilities through an extended network of pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes⁸¹. Policy AG8 therefore seeks to ensure that measures should be taken to ensure that adverse impacts from traffic and road infrastructure on the existing communities will be minimised in terms of safety, speed, pollution and local character and that appropriate mitigation measures are secured through the planning process
- 224. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainable Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) was published in January 2020. This reinforces the point that it is futile to build more road capacity to accommodate future growth and that a change in travel behaviour is the only option to facilitate sustainable growth, based on reducing the needs to travel and focusing travel on active travel modes. It establishes a target mode share of 60% for sustainable and active transport modes for the new Garden Communities, including the Gilston Area. A clear commitment to this mode hierarchy is required in the planning of development in the Gilston Area. Development proposals should identify opportunities for walking, cycling and public transport in order to achieve the overall target mode share and include measures to secure this approach together with an explicit commitment to the target and the mode hierarchy. New road infrastructure should be designed in accordance with this mode hierarchy and mode share target and include provision for walking, cycling and public transport. It is important that the provision of new transport infrastructure also considers the placemaking impacts.
- 225. The District Plan (Chapter 11) anticipates that a wide range of large scale and small interventions, including sustainable transport measures, will be required to ensure that the Garden Town development is able to proceed without causing unacceptable congestion in Harlow and the surrounding towns and villages, as well as the wider

⁸¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.12

strategic transport network. The proposed interventions include a new Junction 7a and upgrades to Junctions 7 & 8 on the M11, a second River Stort crossing, widening of the existing crossing, and upgrades to the Amwell Roundabout.

226. The District Plan promotes transport improvements in the form of two improved crossings of the River Stort to accommodate housing and employment growth. Policy GA2 states that the Council aims to facilitate the delivery of the following transport improvements to crossings of the River Stort, including:
- A widening of the existing A414 crossing (Central Crossing / Fifth Avenue);
 - A new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian crossing either to the east of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to the River Way), or to the west of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to Elizabeth Way).
227. The District Plan highlights that new crossings to both the east and the west of the existing crossing are feasible but deliver different benefits and widening of the existing River Stort Crossing will help facilitate the provision of a sustainable transport corridor which will connect the Gilston Area to the urban area of Harlow⁸². Policy GA2 states that development proposals for both Stort Crossings should include pedestrian and cycle facilities and protect and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings through appropriate mitigation measures, having regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment. The approach to the river crossings infrastructure design should include a clear commitment to the sustainable transport mode hierarchy and mode share targets. The District Plan also makes it clear that any application proposals will need to address environmental factors such as visual impact, ecology and flooding.
228. The Central Crossing is required to be delivered at an early stage in the development programme to provide critical infrastructure provisions for active and sustainable journeys to enable the Gilston Area to achieve the mode share target and mitigate its impacts on the local and strategic transport network. Whilst the new Stort Crossing will be required to provide additional highway capacity, it should not be a heavily engineered high speed vehicular route given the overall sustainable mobility strategy for the area. The design of the new Stort Crossing must consider the surrounding landscape and ecology and the experience of pedestrians and cyclists. Consideration must also be given to the potential impacts of construction of the new crossing on community cohesion and the impact of noise, air quality, severance and disturbance on existing residents within the Gilston Community Boundary (including Terlings Park and Pye Corner). In addition, measures will be required to establish an improved traffic environment on the A414 given the importance of north-south permeability to link the Gilston Area to the wider Garden Town and Stort Valley by walking and cycling.
229. The Concept Framework acknowledges that careful consideration will need to be given to minimising any adverse impacts from existing, new or amended transport infrastructure, and that in particular, consideration will be given to understanding and addressing severance issues both within and between existing and new communities⁸³. The placemaking design principles underpinning the Concept Framework make it clear that construction traffic will be managed to minimise impact on existing and new

⁸² East Herts District Plan (October 2018) para 11.4.2-11.4.4

⁸³ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.154

communities, with stringent operational management plans agreed prior to the commencement of development in a village⁸⁴. A monitoring and management regime will be also be implemented so that restrictions can be introduced if any issues arise during the construction or operation of the development.

- 230. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision states that opportunities should be identified to enhance the character of existing roads. Furthermore, it reinforces the principle that existing villages should all benefit from the enhanced public transport services being delivered as a part of the Garden Town's integrated travel network.
- 231. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy highlights the importance of key actions including the creation of Sustainable Transport Corridors, improvements to bus services and investment in infrastructure for road based travel including a second River Stort crossing as part of the sustainable transport strategy supporting Gilston⁸⁵. It also requires that all streets and connecting roads in the Neighbourhood Plan Area, within and between the new and existing settlements, should be designed to limit through traffic, contain road speeds, and should be pedestrian friendly and in character with the village concept.
- 232. The design of the primary vehicular corridor connecting the villages should be established at the masterplanning stage. Given the requirement to deliver a significant mode shift that would encourage walking, cycling and public transport it will be necessary to consider how provisions for these modes can be given advantage; and provisions for private motor vehicles can be disadvantaged in the design of new road infrastructure to encourage behavioural change.
- 233. The likely increase in the volume of heavy vehicle movements and deliveries, particularly during the construction period, but also to serve the future population, should be adequately managed to minimise impacts on existing and emerging communities. The interrelationship with the A414 and any subsequent A414 East West strategy will also need to be carefully considered in the context of the Garden Town Board's sustainable mobility strategy.
- 234. The Environment Agency advises that the potential impact of polluted runoff from roads entering rivers needs to be taken into account and refer to evidence which suggests the River Stort is not achieving good standards of water quality partly due to diffuse urban runoff which can also come from roads (due to oils, grits and leaked fuel). The Garden Town Water Cycle Study⁸⁶ also identifies there is limited capacity available within the surface water sewer systems, highlighting the need to use sustainable drainage measures to manage surface water.
- 235. The introduction of new road infrastructure, its potential growth in usage and the impact of climate change with intense heavy rainfall are likely to increase pressure on receiving watercourses. There should be no risk of deterioration to the water quality of the River Stort or any of the other watercourses as a result of surface water run-off from

⁸⁴ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.74

⁸⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (January 2020)

⁸⁶ Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018) and Garden Town Water Cycle Study Addendum (2018) – see www.harlow.gov.uk/evidence

new transport infrastructure and appropriate measures should be in place, sufficiently resilient for the lifetime of the infrastructure and for a changing climate.

Community Perspective

236. The local community is extremely concerned about the impact of major new road infrastructure (which may have a strategic function) on the character of the Gilston Area and the ease of movement and amenity of existing residents.
237. Great concern has been expressed about the potential impacts on the existing community of Gilston which may arise as a result of new road construction, notably the final route of the second River Stort Crossing. This relates in particular to the possibility of through traffic being routed via Pye Corner/ Terlings Park leading to severance and noise within the Gilston Community Boundary (Policy AG5) (in particular the severance of Terlings Park from the rest of Gilston) and additional traffic volumes on the narrow Church Lane towards Hunsdon. Local residents of Gilston Lane are anxious to retain the low volume of traffic in their lane but would not want to be 'cut off' from accessing facilities and services.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainable Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation, January 2020)
5. Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018) and Garden Town Water Cycle Study Addendum (2018)

POLICY AG8 – Minimising the Impact of Traffic and New Transport Infrastructure on Existing Communities

1. Infrastructure design proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. The design of new road infrastructure minimises impacts on existing communities and avoids severance of or within existing settlements.
 - ii. Impacts from traffic and road infrastructure on existing communities in terms of safety, traffic speed, pollution, environmental and visual impacts are adequately controlled and mitigated.
 - iii. Measures have been taken to protect the environment of the Stort Valley and to mitigate visual and noise impacts on landscape character and the setting of local heritage assets.
 - iv. Measures have been put in place to minimise the risk of potential pollutants entering the River Stort or any of the other watercourses (main river or ordinary) as a result of surface water run-off from new transport infrastructure or increase in traffic volumes resulting from the development.
 - v. New vehicular access arrangements are designed to limit any increase in traffic on existing roads and lanes and to retain convenient access for existing communities.
 - vi. There will be no significant additional heavy vehicle movements through the existing communities as a result of the development or of new highway and access arrangements associated with the development.
 - vii. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be prepared to limit the impact of construction traffic in agreement with the community.
 - viii. A monitoring and management regime will be implemented to ensure appropriate measures will be introduced to address any issues which may arise during the construction or operation of the development.

1.9 – Phasing of Infrastructure Delivery

Rationale and Justification

238. The provision of necessary infrastructure is critical to the delivery of growth in the Gilston Area. However, of greater importance is the need to ensure that infrastructure provision is phased to ensure that there is adequate capacity to meet the needs of new and existing communities.
239. Policy GA1 (V(v)) states that development in the Gilston Area is expected to assist in the delivery of all necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure. It also requires development to be in accordance with Garden City principles including land value capture to deliver the essential social and physical infrastructure for the benefit of the community.
240. This is further amplified in the Gilston Area Concept Framework, which identifies in its vision and as a key principle the phased delivery of necessary infrastructure to meet the needs arising from development in the Gilston Area, to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities⁸⁷.
241. The objectives of the Garden Town are to deliver sustainable growth and infrastructure of considerable scale and significance, which will meet housing and employment needs, deliver regeneration objectives and create a high-quality environment. By definition, the Garden Town comprises new and existing communities and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision highlights the importance of treating the Garden Town as a whole. It states that ‘The Garden Town will have a clear overall identity, marked by good design and a sustainable approach, but will comprise a series of distinctive neighbourhoods and villages, each with their own character and identity’.
242. East Herts Council has been working with the other Councils involved in the Garden Town initiative (Hertfordshire County Council, Essex County Council, Harlow District Council and Epping Forest District Council) to identify the infrastructure requirements associated with regeneration and growth. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan⁸⁸ sets out the infrastructure that will be required. Prepared in accordance with Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)⁸⁹, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan has assessed the quality and capacity of infrastructure, and its ability to meet forecast demands and how identified deficiencies will be addressed.
243. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan, along with the Strategic Viability Assessment⁹⁰ will be used as a basis for subsequent strategic masterplanning and planning application discussions for the Gilston Area.
244. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the infrastructure requirements associated with the new villages and the apportionment of costs. It also establishes the principle of comprehensive infrastructure upgrades, to serve the needs of the new communities, assist the regeneration of Harlow and address local deficiencies as part of a comprehensive plan. It is a live document which will be updated over time. It may be

⁸⁷ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p. 78

⁸⁸ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan (April 2019)

⁸⁹ Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (Paragraph: 059; Reference ID: 61-059- 20190315)

⁹⁰ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Strategic Viability Assessment (April 2019)

subject to change and will not necessarily identify every site specific requirement which might be identified in response to specific planning applications.

245. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations sets out 'how the Councils intend to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted to support growth and deliver the necessary infrastructure to ensure the sustainability and long term stewardship of the Garden Town *as a whole* in line with the Garden City Principles and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision'.⁹¹ The guidance also requires the preparation of a Statement of Delivery to support applications to confirm the viability and deliverability of the development and to demonstrate that the application is committed to achieving land value capture for the benefit of the community.
246. The definition of infrastructure within the District Plan and the IDP covers:
- Transportation (roads, walking and cycling and transport services: buses and other forms of mobility services).
 - Utilities (water, sewerage, energy, etc).
 - Social infrastructure (education, healthcare, social care, community facilities and sport and leisure facilities).
247. The critical infrastructure required to mitigate the impact of the development, as well as that required to assist with place-making, will be provided such that it is operational at the appropriate point to mitigate the impact of development. The timing for the delivery of the main physical or social infrastructure items will be identified through specific and robust development triggers, linked to a certain quantum of development or a specific event. Details of the infrastructure triggers to control the delivery of key infrastructure must be provided as part of the outline planning applications.
248. Water and sewerage form a critical element of infrastructure provision⁹². As previously stated, phosphate loading due to permitted discharges from sewage treatment works and intermittent discharges from combined sewage overflows is having an impact on the River Stort. Fiddlers Brook is also being impacted by leaking utility sewers. Therefore, it is important that there is sufficient capacity in the foul water network to accommodate both the existing and future needs of the communities within the Gilston Area without further deterioration of water quality. There is also the opportunity to explore with the Environment Agency and Water Companies how the current network can be improved in association with new development. Sufficient capacity appears to be available within the Rye Meads Wastewater Treatment Works.
249. The updated Water Cycle Study found that there are some restrictions in capacity in the surface water and wastewater sewerage infrastructure and upgrades to the foul sewer infrastructure may be needed to support the expected growth.
250. Each new village will be supported by an appropriate range of social infrastructure, reflecting the scale of each village, including education, health, faith, open space, leisure,

⁹¹ Harlow & Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417).

⁹² Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018) and Garden Town Water Cycle Study Addendum (2018) – see www.harlow.gov.uk/evidence

retail and alongside excellent links to the undeveloped open countryside especially that in community ownership and management.

251. Infrastructure requirements need to be considered in the light of the Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan and trigger points directly related to actual arising needs, rather than standard requirements, which are not appropriate to a development of this scale and impact. Phasing will need to ensure its timely delivery through appropriate clauses within the legal agreements associated with planning permissions to ensure there is sufficient capacity (taking into account existing demand) to accommodate the needs of new development. The identification of Heads of Terms and triggers associated with the delivery of infrastructure all need to be carefully considered as part of engagement with key infrastructure providers and the community as the planning and design process progresses.
252. A key element of the planning application and masterplanning process will be to establish in more detail how the specific infrastructure required for each development allocation will be delivered.

Community Perspective

253. The community has made clear its concerns about the capacity of existing infrastructure and its ability to accommodate demand arising from new development in the Gilston Area, including the capacity of road infrastructure, the current absence of bus and cycle facilities, the poor capacity of Harlow rail stations, the weakness or absence of the sewage network and the absence of good quality broadband and telecom services. The community sees in the development of the Gilston Area an opportunity for a step change in infrastructure provision and would like to ensure that development should not take place in advance of necessary infrastructure provision, as this would place unacceptable additional strain on existing infrastructure capacity. There is a clear expectation that the existing community will benefit from new and improved infrastructure to help mitigate the impacts of development in the Gilston Area.
254. The community would wish to see phased improvements to necessary transport and utility infrastructure and the provision of social infrastructure at the time of occupation of any of the development to ensure that necessary capacity is available to meet the comprehensive needs of the Gilston Area without placing further pressure on the existing community and the already overloaded infrastructure.
255. The community welcomes the commitments made in the Concept Framework to minimise impacts on existing communities through the phased provision of necessary infrastructure in relation to development. The timely provision of necessary physical and social infrastructure to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of both new and existing communities is seen as critical to achieving this objective.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Infrastructure Delivery Plan (April 2019)

5. Harlow and Gilston Strategic Viability Assessment Report and Appendices (April 2019)
6. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Guide for Planning Obligations and Viability
7. Delivery Study for Harlow and Surrounding Area: Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018)
8. East Herts Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2017)

POLICY AG9– Phasing of Infrastructure Delivery

1. The early delivery of infrastructure will be encouraged, and development proposals will be supported where the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. A comprehensive assessment of needs arising from the area and from the development has been undertaken in line with the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Infrastructure Delivery Plan
 - ii. An Infrastructure Delivery Strategy has been prepared which demonstrates how the delivery of infrastructure will be phased to ensure that social and physical infrastructure is provided at the time of need for the benefit of the entire community according to Garden City Principles and ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities.
2. Infrastructure requirements and the timescale for provision will be subject to public consultation through the planning application process and determined as part of the approval of future planning applications.

2. Delivering Quality Places

This set of policies address the development choices related to the delivery of appropriate design for the area, leading to the creation of beautiful places, within the framework of the general and strategic policies above.

256. Appropriate design and development are considered under the following policy themes:
- Landscape design within new villages
 - Built environment
 - Heritage setting
 - Community facilities
 - Improvement of existing settlements
 - Sustainable transport

2.1 - Landscape within the New Villages

Rationale and Justification

257. The overall structure of villages set within the countryside will be reflected within the villages themselves, which should draw inspiration from the landscape of existing settlements in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire (see Appendix 4). The Gilston Area Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision indicate that each village should have a strong landscape framework, incorporating new and existing landscape features and maximising access to open spaces and healthy lifestyles.
258. In addition to the countryside setting and structural landscape of the Gilston Area (see Policies AG1-AG7), the landscape design and green infrastructure network within the new villages should also reflect the aspiration to create a strong sense of place and local character, appropriate to a village in Hertfordshire. The new villages should be designed to maximise the continuity of the Green Infrastructure Network (Policy AG2) through the village and provide walking and cycling access to open spaces and the wider countryside.
259. High quality public spaces should positively respond to local landscape character and history and reflect the identity of the local area, using plant species and trees that are typical of the area, restoring and integrating the hedgerows and planting new hedgerows as features to delimit spaces, and adopting local patterns for lane verges and front gardens.
260. Landscape will also play a key role in defining the individual village character which will make the villages distinctive.
261. The Concept Framework sets out a number of placemaking principles relating to landscape design and green spaces within the new villages. Crucially these should form part of the wider Green Infrastructure Network for the Gilston Area and the wider Garden Town. The Concept Framework states that new villages will be designed to maximise access to open spaces and the wider countryside with a network of green

spaces and walking and cycling routes and that the existing network of parks, views and paths will be integrated with new connections to form a rich and permeable network⁹³.

262. The Concept Framework states that each village should have a range of multi-functional open spaces, local play areas, landscaping and SuDS carefully designed to be safe and pleasant, forming an essential part of the experience of living in the Gilston Area⁹⁴. Existing landscape features should be retained in the design of new villages such as the existing holloways and historic tree planting to create distinctive green links and tree lined pedestrian walks.
263. These placemaking principles are further reinforced in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. The Garden Town Vision states that the open space network will support active lifestyles and good health through excellent walking and cycling routes, connecting all parts of the Garden Town and the wider countryside and that new development should identify appropriate locations for playing fields, adventure spaces, play areas, running trails and bridleways to support new and existing residents.
264. Furthermore, the Vision establishes that green fingers running through residential areas should be multi-functional spaces, accommodating play areas, a local park or village green and that new development will face onto public green spaces where appropriate⁹⁵. The Vision also envisages that green infrastructure including planting and drainage should happen early in the development process, so it matures as places are established. The Design Guide includes specific guidance for landscape running through villages, such as village greens having active frontages to define these as social spaces and retention of existing trees, hedges and rights of way as part of an open space network⁹⁶.

Community Perspective

265. During consultation on the Concept Framework, the community highlighted the need to ensure that development in the Gilston Area would reflect the character of local villages of Hertfordshire, rather than the urban character of Harlow and deliver a series of distinctive villages set in the countryside. Landscape design appropriate to the local context is critical to establishing village character and the local community would wish to ensure that each village has an individual character informed by local rural features and rich-biodiversity.
266. Particular concern has been expressed about retaining the open aspect of important heritage assets, including St Mary's Church, Gilston, St Dustan's and Hunsdon House. Concern has also been expressed about the location of play areas in ancient woodlands where these would disturb existing wildlife habitats.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Gilston Area Charter SPD (approved June 2020)

⁹³ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.77

⁹⁴ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) pp. 126-128

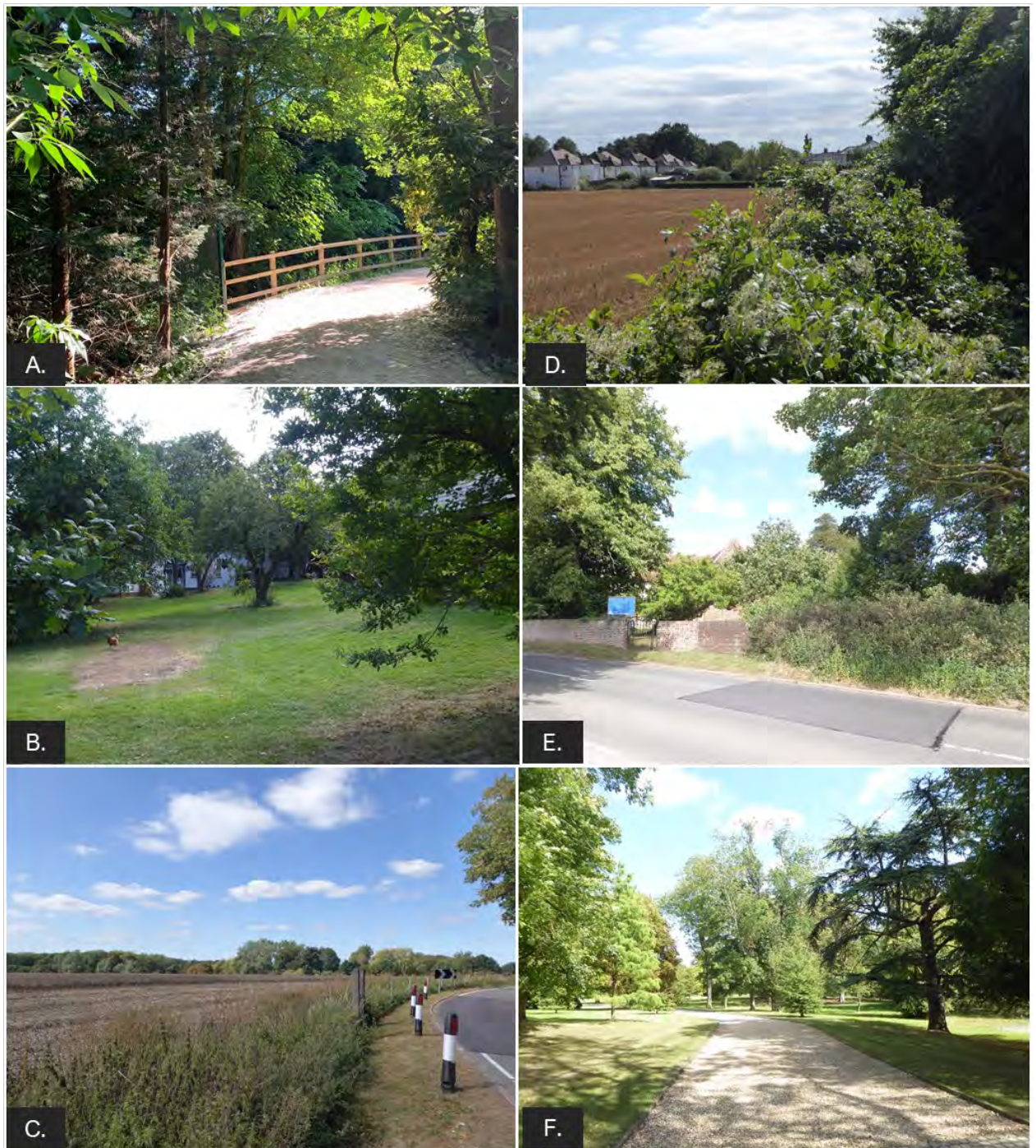
⁹⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2019) p.12

⁹⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2019) p.40

POLICY LA1 – Landscape within the New Village Boundaries

1. Village Masterplans (prepared in conformity with Policy GA1 of the District Plan) should incorporate a comprehensive landscape framework for each individual village which should:
 - i. Take inspiration from Hertfordshire villages in the countryside (see Policy AG6 and Appendix 4) and demonstrate a positive relationship with the surrounding landscape in accordance with District Plan Policy DES1.
 - ii. Seek to optimise the visual relationship of the village with the surrounding countryside. The landscape within the boundary of each village should incorporate existing and new landscape features, and green spaces should be in preference integrated into the Green Infrastructure Network (see Policy AG2) to maximise its continuity and contribute to the wider network of paths and cycle routes.
 - iii. Retain existing trees and significant hedgerows wherever possible and seek to enhance existing landscape features, such as woodland blocks, hedgerows, mature trees and tree lines.
 - iv. Provide appropriate new planting characteristic of the local countryside and ensure a net gain in biodiversity on site.
 - v. Preserve and enhance important views and connections and the setting of existing heritage assets (see Policy AG3 and AG5).
 - vi. Integrate existing heritage assets, SuDS and other features in a comprehensive landscape design.
 - vii. Make suitable provision for outdoor recreation and leisure facilities, including sports pitches with artificial surfaces and floodlighting provided that it can be demonstrated there would be no adverse impacts on the environment and residential amenity of existing and new communities.
2. Where possible, provision should be made, for the implementation of landscape proposals at an early stage in the development programme.
3. Provision should be secured for the long-term management and maintenance of landscape and green spaces within the village boundary through a legal agreement as part of an overall governance strategy (Policy D2).

Fig. 28 - The natural landscape character of the existing settlements and manor house parks



A. Semi-natural parkland (Terlings Park); B. Rural gardens of Gilston Park houses by the Golden Brook
C. Green road verge with open views over the landscape (Church Lane); D. Hedgerows and trees at the edge of Hunsdon; E. Rural natural landscape opposite St. Dunstan's Church; F. Parkland of Hunsdon House

2.2 – Housing and Residential Neighbourhoods

Rationale and Justification

267. The design of the villages, their layout, buildings and materials should take inspiration from villages of the local area, drawing on their typical settlement structure, character of the local area and materials in contemporary and creative ways (see Policy AG6 and Appendix 4). Each village should provide a balance of land uses (relative to the scale, size and role of the village) to encourage community life and minimise travel for shopping, leisure, education and other activities.
268. The height and density of development should be appropriate to village character drawing from the local character of Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon and the wider context of East Hertfordshire, as required by Policy GA1 and by other District Plan policies (HOU2). It is expected that density will vary across each village with higher density near more accessible locations which are well connected by public transport, walking and cycling (generally the village centres) and reducing to the village edge, where ‘soft edges’ should define the boundary of the village.
269. The development is required to provide for up to 10,000 homes distributed across the new villages and to offer a range of housing types and tenures to create sustainable and inclusive communities. In order to assist in meeting local needs, a mix of market and affordable housing will be provided, as well as a range of specialist housing including assisted living for older residents and opportunities for self-build and custom building.
270. Appendix 4 is intended provide guidance on local character in terms of height, massing and diversity typical of the local area to be used as inspiration for the Village Master Plans and Design Codes.
271. The Gilston Area Charter SPD Consultation Draft expects a consistent approach to the production of Masterplans in the Gilston Area to ensure that development comes forward in a comprehensive and cohesive manner that contributes to the creation of successful and sustainable places that embody the Garden City Principles. Village Masterplans will be required for each of the Gilston Area villages. These will provide a framework within which designers and developers can bring forward more detailed proposals for individual development plots in a planned and comprehensive way, whilst still allowing for design flexibility and innovation at the detailed design stage⁹⁷. Each Village Masterplan will establish its own Character Areas, informed by special/memorable places such as heritage or ecological assets, key views, the location of proposed key buildings and features, nodal points, and green spaces. Each Village Masterplan will be supported by a Design Code which will establish the components of high quality placemaking, starting from the most strategic elements working through to more focused detailed elements.

⁹⁷ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020)

272. The Concept Framework states that the scale and massing of the allocated development can sensitively integrate the new villages with their wider and immediate context, creating a high quality and distinctive living environment through application of the following principles⁹⁸.
- Appropriate to village character drawing from the local character of Gilston, Eastwick and Hunsdon and the wider context of East Hertfordshire.
 - Be variable in scale and height to create distinctiveness.
 - Buildings should contribute positively to the street or space and be in scale and proportion to each other and their function.
 - Buildings should provide frontage to the surrounding landscape.
 - Follow natural contours and establish visual links to wider reference assets and neighbouring villages.
 - Within village centres create a sense of enclosure maximising frontage wherever possible.
 - Optimise orientation for sustainability benefits.
 - Be appropriately scaled and sensitive to existing built and landscape heritage assets.
 - Be appropriately scaled in relation to existing villages.
273. The Concept Framework also sets out key placemaking principles to be applied in delivering a wide choice of quality homes:
- A wide range of different housing typologies and tenures (including market and affordable housing) in each village to create mixed and balanced communities and meet the housing needs of East Hertfordshire.
 - New homes to be designed and constructed to high-quality standards, flexible and adaptable to different and changing lifestyles, providing for a variety of needs.
 - High standards of sustainability and internal space for all buildings.
 - A range of specialist housing to be provided including assisted living for older residents, and opportunities for self-build and custom building.
274. The Concept Framework states that the height of buildings will be defined at the Village Masterplan and/or detailed application stage based upon its context and character⁹⁹.
275. The Concept Framework also includes a development structure which promotes a sustainable and efficient model of development to minimise the overall footprint and to preserve and protect the countryside and existing landscape attributes. The structure indicates that the future villages should occupy an approximate area corresponding to roughly 34% of the overall area allocated by Policy GA1 and 60% of the overall developable land, with the remaining land made available as accessible landscape. This would achieve the following development densities, which will be a material consideration in the preparation of Village Masterplans¹⁰⁰:
- An overall gross density of 15dph (dwellings per hectare) which includes incidental and strategic open space provision but excludes the wider open space provided within Eastwick Wood and Airfield; and

⁹⁸ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.102

⁹⁹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.102

¹⁰⁰ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.106

- A net average density of 33dph, which includes incidental open space and uses associated with the villages, with the exception of schools and their playing fields.
276. In establishing these density parameters, the Concept Framework has given due consideration to national, regional and local policy guidance to accommodate a range of housing typologies suitable to a village context, reflecting best practice precedents, providing sufficient density to support vibrant village centres with a full range of community facilities, healthcare, education and leisure and public transport strategy¹⁰¹.
277. The placemaking principles are further amplified in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. The Vision states that development should be responsive and distinctive, sitting comfortably in its context stating that¹⁰²:
- Characteristics of typical or nearby villages should be taken as design cues, with proposals showing how buildings might respond to local materials, colour palette, form and structure.
 - Villages centres should be located at the meeting point of local routes. Both villages and neighbourhoods will be integrated with the wider network of surrounding settlements.
 - Roofscapes will be varied with terraced rooflines avoided on higher ground, so that the horizon remains green and natural. The site-specific guidance in the Design Guide states that rooflines should be varied in terms of building heights and may have predominantly pitched roofs, to reflect the character of surrounding villages¹⁰³.
 - Best practice and design guidance to inform Masterplans and Design Codes will be developed with the local community, establishing parameters for achieving excellent design.
 - The Garden Town will provide a range of homes and typologies to cater for the needs of residents at all stages of life and all abilities. These homes will be integrated to support balanced communities.
 - New buildings shall be designed to adapt to changing needs and lifestyles, for example capacity to accommodate growing households or the needs of an ageing society.
 - Building materials and detailing, landscape and design will be of a consistently high quality throughout the new settlement and will be informed by design review at the Quality Review Panel.
 - Innovative designs will be encouraged that are flexible, adaptable and incorporate cutting-edge technology in the fields of low carbon, low energy consumption, low water demand and water conservation. New homes will be at the forefront of modern living.
 - As large new areas come forward for development, a phased approach will be encouraged for infrastructure and new local centres to be delivered early, to establish sustainable communities.
278. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision states that new housing development densities across the Garden Town will be broadly between 25 homes and 55 homes per hectare (presumably towards the lower end of density in the villages and towards the

¹⁰¹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.104

¹⁰² Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.8

¹⁰³ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.40

upper end for the new urban neighbourhoods). In addition, new development will respond to its landscape and built context, and particularly to local topography, so that it sits comfortably in terms of its scale, massing, density and orientation.

279. The Garden Town Vision also establishes that densities will typically increase towards local centres and transport hubs, around a local high street or small green space and villages should fragment at their edges¹⁰⁴. The site specific guidance in the Garden Town Design Guide states that density levels could vary more in the villages than for the urban neighbourhoods of the Garden Town, to respond to the landscape setting¹⁰⁵. The Design Guide reiterates that existing local settlement densities, structures and edge conditions can be used as a starting point to provide cues for new development, helping to make existing and new relate to one another and that the masterplanning process will decide appropriate densities and other detailed elements¹⁰⁶.
280. The Garden Town Design Vision seeks to future proof infrastructure. The placemaking principles state that Masterplans should demonstrate how driveway and/or street parking spaces can be adapted to open/green space, should demand for car use fall over time¹⁰⁷. This objective is reflected in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy which seeks to work with residential developers to design and deliver flexible residential car parking to enable later conversion to other uses to benefit the community¹⁰⁸.
281. In accordance with national and local planning policies and the Garden Town Transport Strategy, development proposals should promote sustainable transport modes, shared mobility services and the need to reduce car parking provision. Parking standards are subject to on-going review and it is likely that later phases of development would be subject to more restrictive standards. The Gilston Area Charter SPD Consultation Draft further requires that villages are designed to support a 60% target in sustainable travel. Further consideration could be given to this issue in the development in locations closest to the transport hubs and Harlow Town Station where transport mode shift has significant opportunity.
282. The use of wood and recycled materials sourced locally and sustainably and other sustainable construction measures with embodied energy reduction properties and a long-life span should be encouraged together with other energy and water efficiency measures for new buildings. Measures to reduce the carbon footprint of construction for developers and help to reduce utility bills for those using the building will be welcome.

¹⁰⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.8

¹⁰⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.40

¹⁰⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.12

¹⁰⁷ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.21

¹⁰⁸ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

Community Perspective

- 283. During preparation of the Concept Framework, the community expressed concern about inappropriate forms of development resulting in suburban or urban character and the need to have well developed understanding of the character of local villages before proposing design solutions.
- 284. The community constructively participated in the definition of important views (Fig. 21), identification of Local Green Spaces (Fig. 18) and the definition of the key components of local character (Appendix 4), contributing statements, collecting photos and generally helping shaping the policies.
- 285. There is support for high quality development which is respectful of village and landscape character but a strong view that the density and height of development needs to be controlled to avoid urbanisation of the area and to respect the scale of existing villages.

Key Evidence Base

- 1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
- 2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
- 3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
- 4. Gilston Area Charter SPD (Consultation Draft) (February 2020)
- 5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainable Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

POLICY BU1 – Housing and Residential Neighbourhoods

1. Development proposals will be supported where they are in accordance with a Village Masterplan developed in collaboration with the local community and where it can be demonstrated that the criteria below are satisfied.
2. The proposals should clearly define the character and individuality of each village and adopt a layout appropriate to context and the existing landscape, topography and built-form, also adopting a palette of locally inspired details and materials.
3. The height and density of development should demonstrably achieve an appropriate balance between landscape and village character in accordance with Policy AG6, through:
 - i. Creation of character areas within each village, each adopting a range of built-form, scale and height, drawing inspiration from the diversity local villages.
 - ii. Location of more compact development and higher densities, subject to high-quality design, in village centres and locations with access to sustainable transport provision.
 - iii. Height of buildings appropriate to village character, with taller buildings located in village centres and away from prominent locations, sensitive heritage, natural assets and village edges.
 - iv. Lower heights and densities adjacent to sensitive landscape edges, village boundaries, within proximity to the existing settlements and in areas that fall within sensitive views of landscape and heritage assets from Hunsdon, the Stort Valley and High Wych (Fig. 21).
 - v. Development is appropriately scaled and sensitive to the setting of existing settlements and landscape and heritage assets.
4. The design of new residential development should be landscape-led and demonstrate adoption of outstanding sustainability principles by:
 - i. Contributing positively to the overall landscape structure of the village, the streets or green spaces and with buildings being in scale and proportion to each other and to their function.
 - ii. Providing direct frontages to community open spaces and amenities and establishing soft edges towards the open countryside.
 - iii. Following natural contours and including visual links to wider heritage and natural assets.
 - iv. Optimising orientation for sustainability benefits.
 - v. Delivering high-quality low carbon homes, using, where appropriate, wood or recycled materials in construction and measures for energy and water efficiency.
 - vi. Ensuring every home is within walking distance of a green space.
5. Provision should be made for a wide range of different housing typologies and tenures (including market and affordable housing) in each village to create mixed and balanced communities in accordance with District Plan Policy HOU1.
6. Car parking provision reflects the objective of encouraging sustainable transport modes and shared mobility services. Lower levels of car parking provision are encouraged in locations closest to transport facilities. Car parking reduction will be encouraged in the longer term to reflect increased provision of sustainable transport choices.
7. An appropriate level of cycle storage and cycle parking should be provided to encourage a high proportion of cycling trips as part of a Sustainable Mobility Strategy (District Plan Policy TRA1).

2.3 - Village Cores / Centres

Rationale and Justification

286. The creation of mixed-use village centres with a range of services and community facilities is critical to the promotion of sustainable development and the creation of distinct villages. Whilst the typology, mix and forms of these centres will vary, the village centres will form the hearts of each of the villages, serving as a meeting space critical to the creation of a strong community. Village centres should accommodate a range of different facilities and the community infrastructure required to support a growing settlement including schools, transport hub of varying scales, shops, cafes and restaurants, leisure facilities, health centres, community spaces, faith buildings and civic buildings. These local facilities will complement the more strategic retail provision within Harlow Town Centre.
287. Village centres will be located to optimise walking distances from home to local amenities and services. While each village centre primarily serves its local community, it is anticipated that each will provide a slightly different and complementary offer to promote their distinctive character and to provide variety and a viable catchment area.
288. Village centres will also be the preferred location for employment uses (see Policy BU3).
289. The location of primary schools should be in preference within the heart of the villages to maximise their accessibility on foot and by other sustainable means and provide a community meeting place. The potential for community use of the school sites when not required for education purposes will assist in building strong communities. East Herts Council and the County Education Authority have articulated the desire that all of the new villages have a primary school and that provision within each village would help achieve the movement hierarchy and mode share target as well as support the vibrancy of the village centres and sense of community.
290. The design of village centres should take inspiration from local villages. These centres typically have a compact, varied and human scale and provide a focal point for pedestrian movement and social interaction.
291. The Gilston Area Concept Framework sets out a number of placemaking principles to create distinctive, healthy and balanced communities. This includes a defined centre to each village to provide the heart of the future community, of an appropriate size and generally higher in density with a mix of uses including retail, community and education facilities¹⁰⁹.
292. The importance of the village centre is reinforced in the Garden Town Vision and Design Guide. The Garden Town Vision states that village centres will have a primary school including early years facilities, places for food and/or drink, convenience shopping, community spaces including small scale workspace, as well as good access to public transport¹¹⁰. The site-specific guidance in the Design Guide reinforces that schools should be co-located with the local centre, to help support shops and services¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.74

¹¹⁰ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.10

¹¹¹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.41

293. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy encourages the development of vibrant centres offering a wide range of services to reduce the need to travel. It encourages the creation of transport hubs to facilitate modal interchange¹¹². The Garden Town Vision establishes the principle of a series of ‘micro-hubs’ at key points on the Sustainable Transport Corridors (to be identified in Masterplans), to provide interchange between Bus Rapid Transit and cycle facilities¹¹³. The Garden Town Transport Strategy also supports Masterplans which demonstrate flexibility in anticipation of future mobility scenarios, including adaptable parking, drop off and pick up arrangements and electric vehicle charging points to ensure that communities can readily respond¹¹⁴.
294. Given the environmental drought experienced in Hertfordshire, developers should explore with the Council, Affinity Water and the community how to capture further water efficiency measures as part of the development of the Gilston Area. The Neighbourhood Plan suggests that new non-residential buildings achieve a standard equivalent to that of Policy WAT 4 of the District Plan for residential development or a BREEAM ‘excellent’ rating for water efficiency.

Community Perspective

295. The local community places great importance on access to new local services and community infrastructure and the role that village centres can play in creating a cohesive community.
296. There is an expectation that new facilities should benefit new and existing residents and that the new centres are designed to reflect the character of the local areas, where an active village centre with a mix of uses and meeting places is the heart of each community.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

¹¹² Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020) p.17

¹¹³ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.18

¹¹⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020) p.21

POLICY BU2 – Village Cores / Centres

1. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. The village centre has been designed to provide a clear identity to the village and located along an active pedestrian friendly street or appropriate village green and well connected to housing areas through a network of walking and cycling routes.
 - ii. The village centre provides a mix of uses to serve the new community with active frontages and ground floor uses comprising retail, workspaces, community and leisure uses in addition to residential to support the functions of the village centre and encourage sustainable transport modes.
 - iii. Consideration has been given to the location of nursery and primary schools in the village centre.
 - iv. Measures have been incorporated to maximise energy and water efficiency. Non-residential buildings should seek to achieve the same standards of efficient use of water resources as residential buildings or a BREEAM 'excellent' rating for water efficiency.
 - v. The village centre well connected by public transport services.
 - vi. Village Masterplans will identify the location of 'micro-hubs' at key points on the Sustainable Transport Corridors to provide interchange between bus services and cycle facilities.
 - vii. The Masterplan for the village centre should demonstrate flexibility in anticipation of future mobility scenarios, including adaptable parking, drop off and pick up arrangements and electric vehicle charging points.

2.4 - Employment Areas

Rationale and Justification

297. The provision of employment space within the Gilston Area is an essential component of providing sustainable and mixed communities, as long as employment uses are designed and integrated in a way that makes a contribution to the character and life of the villages. Historically, employment within villages was located in the high street (shops, small offices and other customer facing businesses), or dispersed within the residential area and in farms. In the Gilston Area, the historic model of small-scale multiple employment opportunities could have its focus in village centres as the locations most accessible by walking, cycling and public transport and therefore the most appropriate places for employment development. The location of employment uses in village centres alongside both residential and other non-residential uses will be beneficial to the vibrancy and overall viability and sustainability of the villages.
298. Development in the Gilston Area could integrate smaller scale office accommodation distributed across the villages, catering for smaller companies (SMEs) across a combination of small private offices and flexible workspace. This is more likely to attract employment for local residents and therefore reduce the need to travel.
299. District Plan Policy GA1 (V(q)) identifies a requirement for employment area/s (of around 5ha), within visible and accessible location/s, which provides appropriate opportunities to promote self-containment and sustainability. The supporting text states that this will take the form of either a business park of 5ha or distributed across the village centres having regard to Garden City principles. District Plan Policy ED1 states that the provision of new employment uses will be supported in principle where they are in a suitable location where access can be achieved by a choice of sustainable transport and do not conflict with other policies. The policy states that new employment floorspace should be of a flexible design, able to respond to the changing needs of small and growing enterprises, be energy efficient in construction and operation (in accordance with the Design and Landscape, and Climate Change policies in the District Plan) and have fully integrated communications technology, in line with Policy ED3.
300. The District Plan recognises that residents will also be able to access more substantial employment opportunities within Harlow, including the Enterprise Zone. In addition, the proximity of the site to Harlow Town station will enable sustainable access to employment opportunities further afield, including Stansted Airport, Cambridge, Bishop's Stortford and London.
301. The Neighbourhood Plan strategic policies on sustainability, countryside setting and local character (Policies AG1 to AG8) indicate that delivery of employment as a large self-contained business park is not appropriate for the Gilston Area as this type and scale of development would have better synergies as part of the Harlow Enterprise Zones which are a focus for regeneration and investment by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town and Harlow District Council¹¹⁵. A conventional business park at the fringes of the villages and served by the A414 will inevitably be a car-based development, undermining efforts to reduce the need to travel. It will also present a suburban frontage to the

¹¹⁵ Gilston Area Village 7 Employment Land Review (Savills, October 2019)

villages and make limited contributions to community life. If employment development is proposed outside village centres, this would need to be located close to existing and proposed strategic infrastructure and satisfy the criteria set out in other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

302. The Concept Framework makes provision for employment uses in village centres.
303. The Garden Town Vision states that local centres could include small enterprise spaces to create a mix of businesses, shops and community facilities. The focus for the Garden Town in terms of economy and regeneration is primarily on growth and investment in the Harlow Enterprise Zones (at London Road and Templefields)¹¹⁶.
304. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide includes a plan which shows the principal locations for employment development at Templefields Enterprise Zone, London Road Enterprise Zone, Harlow Town Centre, the new Public Health England Campus, the Pinnacles and Parndon Mill (creative industries). In the Gilston Area, the village centres are identified as the locations for investment and innovation with the potential for new employment typology mixes¹¹⁷.
305. The five Garden Town Council partners have jointly commissioned work which will provide an assessment of the opportunities for sustainable job generation across the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town in relation to the known housing trajectory growth. The study considers which employment sectors/industries are likely to create employment growth and set out the appropriate quantum and type of employment/business accommodation and employment land required to accommodate the economic and employment growth within the Garden Town overall. There will be an expectation that provision of employment land and premises within the Gilston Area will respond to the outcomes of the study, which will ultimately become a material consideration for the determination of planning applications. A Draft Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Employment Commission has recently been produced which supports a level of provision of 34,000 sqm of employment floorspace across the Gilston Area and sets out further information in respect of the considerations for its location, primarily focussed around village centres and in locations with better access to the sustainable transport network and strategic transport infrastructure. The Commission also identifies the importance of early delivery of employment space with at least 20,000 sqm by 2033¹¹⁸.
306. The TCPA publication Understanding Garden Villages: an Introductory Guide (January 2018) highlights the importance of ensuring homes are located a short distance from a range of employment opportunities and local facilities¹¹⁹.
307. It is acknowledged that a sensitive and innovative approach to integrating employment within the villages will be possible, supported by a step change in travel modes as part of the transport approach to the Garden Town and models of employment development designed to accord with other policies in this Plan.

¹¹⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.22

¹¹⁷ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) pp.26-27

¹¹⁸ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Employment Commission Draft Report, February 2020

¹¹⁹ Understanding Garden Villages p16 (TCPA January 2018)

Community Perspective

308. The community is concerned about the impact of large-scale free standing business parks on achieving the shared vision and objectives for the Gilston Area and the creation of sustainable communities with a vibrant social life and active village centres. The community is of the view that this type of development is likely to give rise to increases in traffic generation with limited contribution to the image and life of the villages and would create visual and functional coalescence with Harlow, potentially presenting a long ribbon of employment development stretching seamlessly from Edinburgh Way in Harlow into Gilston and Eastwick.
309. The community has suggested that any business parks would be more appropriately located in the Enterprise Zones and other employment areas as defined in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision.
310. However, the community supports the concept that new development should not result in 'dormitory villages' and that a range of smaller scale employment development could enrich the life of village centres, assisting in meeting local needs and complementing residential development. This could include a mix of market and affordable employment spaces such as small workshops, offices and other facilities to serve the local community and provide opportunities for businesses to locate in the area. The provision of a sufficient supply of business space of different types, uses and sizes will ensure that workspace is available for occupation by SMEs and businesses wishing to start -up or expand. It will also help to ensure that workspace is available at an appropriate range of rents.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2020)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)
5. Gilston Area Village 7 Employment Land Review (Savills, October 2019)
6. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Employment Commission Draft Report, (February 2020)

POLICY BU3– Employment Areas

1. Employment uses will be encouraged in village centres as part of mixed-use areas where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. Employment uses are well integrated within the village structure and respectful of the overall character and landscape-led approach to development.
 - ii. A range of workspace of different types and sizes are provided including workspace suitable for SMEs and start-up businesses.
 - iii. Measures have been taken to encourage access to employment uses by walking, cycling and public transport including the adoption of an appropriate strategy to reduce the need for car parking. Parking and other operational areas associated with new employment spaces should be suitably designed to minimise their visual impact and located away from the main public spaces.
2. Proposals for employment development outside village centres will be required to demonstrate compliance with the following criteria:
 - i. Location within a defined Village Boundary and detailed as part of the Village Masterplans.
 - ii. High-quality of design appropriate to the village character and design characteristics of its specific location.
 - iii. Respectful of context and landscape setting.
 - iv. Well-integrated within the built fabric of the village.
 - v. Consistent with and complementary to the overall employment strategy for the Garden Town.
 - vi. Pedestrian oriented and accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.
 - vii. Compliant with other policies in the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.5 - Village Streets and Lanes

Rationale and Justification

- 311. Village streets and lanes are essential elements defining villages character and should be primarily designed as spaces and not as transport corridors. Their treatment should include features typical of the countryside: big trees, hedgerows, mixed shrubs and verges with a clearly defined relationship with adjoining buildings and open views onto the landscape where possible (see also Appendix 4). The network of roads should reflect topography and function, adopting standards as close as possible to characteristic village street patterns. Boulevards and formal avenues are urban street types which should be avoided in a village context. Informal layouts, with short cross-roads and no formal grid patterns are typical of the area and should be reflected in the Village Masterplans.
- 312. New streets and lanes will create safe and accessible living environments with clear and legible pedestrian and cycle routes and high-quality public spaces. The development should encourage active lifestyles and social integration by limiting car dominance and maximising opportunities for rich planting, biodiversity and safe informal use. The quality and character of the primary street network linking the villages should be defined in the Strategic Landscape Masterplan. Village streets and lanes should be defined in the Village Masterplans.
- 313. The Concept Framework proposes that the street network typology should be in line with and enhance the overall character of the place¹²⁰.
- 314. The Garden Town Vision stresses the importance of changing the character of roads into streets. It states that villages should be largely based on tree lined, local street layouts creating sociable places with a human scale. New development should have front doors and windows to the streets, to create safe, friendly streets and open spaces with informal overlooking¹²¹.
- 315. The site-specific guidance in the Garden Town Design Guide indicates that the organic pattern of lanes could be used as a cue for the structure of new villages¹²²

Community Perspective

- 316. The community has expressed concerns about the urbanising effect of wide over-engineered roads and the introduction of alien design such as formal boulevards. They emphasise the need to ensure that the design of streets reflects the informality of villages and landscape character and becomes an element of identity and distinctiveness and that existing lanes such as Gilston Lane should retain their existing character and heritage assets such as trees and ancient hedgerows.

¹²⁰ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.147

¹²¹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.19

¹²² Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.40

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation, January 2020)

POLICY BU4 –Design of Village Streets and Lanes

1. The quality and character of the primary street network linking the villages should be defined comprehensively for the whole area, in preference as part of a Strategic Landscape Masterplan. Streets and lanes within the Village Boundaries should be defined in the relevant Village Masterplan.
2. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. The design of all streets and lanes makes a clear positive contribution to the character, individuality and setting of the village.
 - ii. The design of all streets, including the primary street network will encourage walking and cycling in safety, discourage unnecessary car trips and heavy vehicle traffic through villages and control traffic speed.
 - iii. Each village layout incorporates a legible street network connecting new housing to the village centre and other facilities.
 - iv. The provision and design of streetlighting is appropriate to its location and purpose. Streetlighting should provide a safe environment for pedestrians but the level of lighting should be sensitive to the landscape setting and minimise light pollution and impacts on biodiversity.
 - v. Street planting is generous and includes trees and hedgerows characteristic of the local area and appropriate to village character.
 - vi. Car parking (on and off road) should be well integrated into the street design and in line with the Sustainable Mobility strategy for the area.

Fig. 29 - Typical informality and landscape of the streets and lanes of the villages of the area to be used as cues for future streetscape



A. Street landscape in Widford Rise (Hunsdon Road); B. Green verges and tree screening of houses on Church Lane in Hunsdon; C. Informal access lane to houses on Eastwick Hall Lane; D. Planted road verges on Eastwick Road by the Dusty Miller

2.6 - Celebrating the Existing Heritage Assets

Rationale and Justification

317. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and intrinsic to the character of the Gilston Area. They should be protected and where possible, enhanced and become an inspiration for the design of new villages. The proposed development layout and landscape buffers will incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to minimise impacts on local heritage assets and their settings, retain key views but also safeguard their role and significance and celebrate them for the qualities they will bring to new and existing communities.
318. Heritage Assets are defined by Historic England and in the NPPF (February 2019) as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’¹²³.
319. There are around 50 designated heritage assets within the wider site area including St Mary’s Church in Gilston, Gilston Park and its associated Listed Buildings, such as the schools and farmhouses built by Hodgson and the locally listed parkland; Hunsdon Airfield; St Botolph’s Church and the Scheduled Monuments at the Mount and Eastwick Hall. There are also many heritage assets just outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, including at Hunsdon, Hunsdonbury, Hunsdon Pound and Little Parndon and in Harlow. Other assets include the War Memorials at Pye Corner and Eastwick. All these currently have a rural setting, location and use that make a positive contribution to the area and give it clear significance as independent meaningful rural communities.
320. The Concept Framework identifies a number of measures which seek to mitigate and minimise impact on local heritage assets. It includes the following principles which describe the broad approach and commitments to all heritage assets¹²⁴:
- Promote opportunities to increase public appreciation and understanding of heritage assets.
 - Explore the potential to create open layouts with variable building lines integrated with landscaping.
 - Consider options for strategic positioning of open spaces to preserve the setting of heritage assets.
 - Respect, preserve and enhance where possible historic boundaries, such as the former deer park pale and ditch.
 - Consider where appropriate set back distances and appropriate buffers to preserve and enhance the setting of key heritage assets.
 - Design layouts that respond sensitively to the form, proportion, scale and character of heritage assets.
 - Consider views to/ from heritage assets in order to preserve or enhance setting.
 - Develop long term conservation and plans management for all heritage assets.

¹²³ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/hpr-definitions/>

¹²⁴ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.90

321. The placemaking principles in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision seek to maximise the visibility and appreciation of local heritage. This states that:
- New development should integrate sensitively with existing heritage assets through careful consideration of scale, massing, materials and aspect.
 - Space will be given to significant assets where appropriate, with their setting protected through buffer zones and landscape design.
 - Improved access to, interpretation of and education on heritage assets and places value on more traditional rural vernacular¹²⁵ is encouraged.
 - The site-specific guidance in the Garden Town Design Guide highlights the need to carefully take into account the historic park and garden at Gilston Park and other heritage assets in masterplans¹²⁶.
322. As highlighted in their representations on the Draft Concept Framework, Historic England place great importance on protection of the rural setting of heritage assets in the Gilston Area and would like to see meaningful integration going well beyond the simple safeguarding and protection of the buildings. This is reflected in the approach of the National Planning Policy Framework¹²⁷.

Community Perspective

323. The community places great importance on the protection of heritage assets and landmarks which are critical to the character of the area. They wish to ensure that development in the Gilston Area will respect and have a positive relationship with local heritage assets, so that their history and significance to the area can still be appreciated by existing and new communities after the changes brought about by new development.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area: Heritage Impact Assessment (Montagu Evans, October 2017)
2. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
5. National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

¹²⁵ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.11

¹²⁶ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.40

¹²⁷ National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

POLICY H1 – Celebrating the Existing Heritage Assets

1. A comprehensive assessment of the area should be undertaken to identify all heritage assets within and in proximity to the development and set out a clear approach for their protection and where possible, enhancement.
2. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. The layout and design of the development respond sensitively to the form, proportion, scale and character of heritage assets, including, where appropriate, set back distances and buffers to preserve and enhance their rural countryside setting.
 - ii. Retaining the open, edge of settlement setting of the Churches of St. Mary's, St. Botolph's and St. Dunstan's.
 - iii. Open spaces have been strategically positioned to preserve the setting of heritage assets and key views.
 - iv. The significance and historic role of heritage assets in the area have been respected and integrated in the new development so that their local importance will not be lost.
3. Proposals should also include measures to celebrate and give prominence to heritage assets by:
 - i. Promoting opportunities to increase public appreciation and understanding of heritage assets by integrating them in an appropriate layout and incorporation of appropriate references in the design of new development.
 - ii. Preserving and where possible enhancing heritage assets and key views as informing elements of the new development.
 - iii. Respecting, preserving and where possible enhancing historic boundaries, such as the former deer park pale and ditch.
 - iv. Protecting from visual encroachment or pollution (noise or light) and enhancing the parkland setting of Gilston Park and Hunsdon House.
 - v. Ensuring that the 19th century legacy of John Hodgson's Gilston Park Estate improvement (cottages, farm and community buildings, etc.) is recognised and highlighted in design proposals.
4. Where the proposed development affects heritage assets, a long-term heritage conservation and, where appropriate, management plan should be developed in consultation with the local community as part of the planning process and included where appropriate in the governance agreement (see Policy D1).

2.7 - Community Facility Provision

Rationale and Justification

324. The development of strong and sustainable communities is dependent on the provision of necessary community facilities within close proximity to home which will meet the needs of new and existing residents over the lifetime of the development.
325. Community facilities are an essential and indispensable feature of any successful place. Services such as education, health, social services, libraries, the Police, Fire and Ambulance services all help to support the quality of life in a community. The development of 10,000 homes will need to be supported by an appropriate level and quality of community facilities and services. An overall strategy is required to guide the location of new facilities, so that they are easily accessible.
326. A balanced mix of land uses should be provided in each village (relative to the scale, size and role of the village) in accordance with Policy GA1 of the District Plan and the Concept Framework. This will facilitate social interaction and the development of community life as well as encourage people to minimise journey lengths for shopping, leisure, education and other activities. Key facilities such as primary schools and local shops should be located within walking distance of most properties.
327. District Plan Policy GA1 (V) sets out the expectations for new community facilities. One of the challenges will be appropriately locating the secondary schools. These schools will need to meet the site specification requirements of Hertfordshire County Council, but the potential role of the schools' playing fields to the wider community is also a very important consideration. The location of the secondary schools must take into account other policies in this Plan, especially relating to reducing noise, visual impact and light pollution on the open countryside setting of the new and existing villages and clusters of scattered buildings which form part of existing communities, in relation to the overall Strategic Landscape Masterplan and green infrastructure strategy. Understanding the trigger for provision of secondary education on site is also important to achieving the sustainable transport mode share target given the scale of peak time journeys that are linked to education.
328. East Herts Council and the County Education Authority have articulated the desire that all of the new villages have a primary school and that, generally, the schools should be of a 'village' scale which was considered as ideally 2 form-entry in size and no larger than 3. Provision within each village is considered to help achieve the movement hierarchy and mode share target as well as support the vibrancy of the village centres and sense of community.
329. The Concept Framework states that in order to promote healthy communities, each new village will be supported by an appropriate range of social infrastructure reflecting the scale of each village, including education, health, faith, open space, leisure, retail and community facilities¹²⁸. A key principle underpinning the Concept Framework is the phasing of infrastructure provision in relation to development to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities.

¹²⁸ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.12

330. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Infrastructure Development Plan clearly indicates that new infrastructure (including community facilities) will be required to meet the comprehensive requirements of the Gilston Area¹²⁹.
331. Facility provision must be phased so that it becomes operational in time to ensure there is adequate capacity to meet the cumulative needs of new and existing communities (see also Policy AG9). This should be clearly articulated in an Infrastructure Delivery Strategy for the development as requested by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Community Perspective

332. The local community is concerned about the lack of capacity of existing social infrastructure and the impacts of large-scale new development in the area unless community facilities are provided on time to meet the current needs and future demands arising from new residents in the area. Trigger points for the delivery of facilities should reflect actual capacity and need for a development of this scale.
333. There is a clear expectation that the existing communities will benefit from new and improved facility provision. However, the community is concerned that convenient and easy access to local facilities will not be extended to existing residents and nearby villages.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Infrastructure Delivery Plan, East Herts Council 2017
4. Hertfordshire Infrastructure & Funding Prospectus 2018-2031
5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Infrastructure Delivery Plan (April 2019)
6. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417 – Nov 2018)

POLICY C1 – Community Facility Provision

1. Development proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. Community facilities will be provided in line with Policy AG9 for the benefit of the whole community.
 - ii. The distribution, availability and access to community facilities across all villages is clearly set out, especially during the initial phases of development and where facilities are provided in a neighbouring village to serve more than one community.
 - iii. Community facilities are provided in locations which are easily accessible by walking, cycling or public transport. The location of community facilities in Village Centres is encouraged.
 - iv. Where appropriate, measures are in place for the transfer of key community facilities into the ownership and stewardship of the local community, as part of an agreed governance agreement (see Policy D2).

¹²⁹ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Delivery Plan (April 2019)

2.8 – Improving the Existing Settlements

Rationale and Justification

- 334. The scale of the proposed development will have a significant impact on existing settlements, and it will be important to ensure these impacts are mitigated and existing residents may benefit in terms of access to improved infrastructure and facilities.
- 335. The existing settlements will be significantly affected by the proposed development and it is important from the outset to consider how impacts can be compensated during the extended construction programme. A comprehensive approach to development in the Gilston Area is therefore required to ensure that the existing settlements in the Eastwick and Gilston and Hunsdon Parishes are positively considered as part of the overall scheme: respected in their integrity, supported to flourish in a time of great change and placed at the foundation of the future community.
- 336. It will be important to ensure that measures are incorporated to enhance early-on and integrate the character of the landscape and public spaces within and surrounding the existing settlements and in considering development proposals, off-site enhancements may be required to mitigate against the impacts of development. The Strategic Landscape Masterplan should include provision for the safeguarding and enhancement of landscape features within and adjacent to the Community Boundaries around existing settlements and clusters of existing buildings (as defined in Policy AG5). This should include any tree and hedgerow retention and maintenance along streets and lanes or around the churches and war memorials.
- 337. Existing communities should be provided with easy access to the new leisure and community facilities in the villages through an extended network of pedestrian, cycle and public transport routes. Access to key destinations within Harlow from the existing settlements should be protected and improved.
- 338. Policy EX1 seeks to address the ways in which the existing settlements can be enhanced, either through collaboration and direct investment by the developers of the new villages, or through a range of priority improvements commissioned directly by the Parish Councils and funded through a share of S106 funding or an equivalent mechanism.
- 339. These measures will be essential to ensure a comprehensive and integrated development as advocated by the District Plan and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision and Design Guide, which state that new development should support and encourage the regeneration and enhancement of existing areas.
- 340. The Concept Framework sets out that a key objective is to protect the character and amenity of existing settlements in the Gilston Area and to carefully manage the impacts of the development and construction of the new villages through the timely provision of improved infrastructure (including roads, public transport and social infrastructure) to serve the needs of existing and future communities¹³⁰.

¹³⁰ Concept Framework (2018), Vision p.10, key objectives p.12 and placemaking principles p.74 and p. 78

341. Section 106 funds should be made available to improve the existing settlements in order to mitigate the impacts of development. Planning Practice Guidance confirms that planning obligations can assist in mitigating the impacts of unacceptable development to make it acceptable in planning terms.
342. The aspirations that existing settlements benefit from enhanced access from a pedestrian and movement perspective are consistent with LTP4, and there is potential for new SuDS networks at Gilston to offer benefits by addressing historic problems with surface water runoff. It is recognised that any other infrastructure requirements would need to pass the tests set out in NPPF policy. However, it is considered that given the significant impacts of development in the Gilston Area on existing communities and the massive investment which is to take place (including public funding) in infrastructure provision to support the new development, it would be reasonable to expect existing communities in the area to also benefit from that provision. Consideration should therefore be given to upgrading infrastructure provision in the existing settlements: this would be particularly important in respect of utilities, telecoms and access to public transport. Enhancement projects will be identified in consultation with the local community.
343. In view of the environmental drought in Hertfordshire and the need to capture further water efficiency measures in new development, the retrofitting of existing buildings (which are often the least efficient) should be encouraged where opportunities arise through refurbishments and changes of use.

Community Perspective

344. The local community has expressed great concern about the impact of development on existing settlements and their quality of life. There is an expectation that effective measures will be taken to minimise impacts and to ensure that existing residents share in the benefits of development in line with Garden City principles.
345. The community wish to ensure that measures are implemented to mitigate these impacts and improve the existing settlements, including landscape maintenance, integration of green buffers around existing settlements and enhancement of existing green spaces. The community would also wish to ensure the integration of an extended network of green spaces and walking and cycle routes linking the new and existing communities to the countryside, while respecting the privacy of existing properties (see Policy TRA1).
346. There is a clear expectation that the existing community will benefit from new and improved infrastructure provision. The community is concerned that the comprehensive vision for infrastructure upgrades outlined in the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations¹³¹ will not materialise within their smaller scale settlements and would wish to ensure that major change in the area will also result in an improvement to infrastructure within Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon to help mitigate the impacts of development and ensure the benefits of improved infrastructure are shared by existing communities. This should include better access to utilities (including

¹³¹ Harlow & Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417).

high speed broadband), access to public transport and cycle network, and convenient and easy access to local facilities.

347. Priority projects which have been identified by the local community include:
1. Comprehensive improvement of Pye Corner to create a safer and welcoming pedestrian space.
 2. New design and landscape setting for the Gilston War Memorial.
 3. Enhanced churchyard and setting for St Mary's Church, Gilston; St Botolph's Church, Eastwick and St Dunston's Church, Hunsdon; provision of faith and community facilities.
 4. Improvement to the village halls.
 5. Shared surface / public space design in Eastwick Road between the Red Lion Pub and the War Memorial.
 6. Creation of green / play spaces in the existing communities and an all-weather multi-use play area in Hunsdon.
 7. New planting and maintenance of the existing lanes including Gilston Lane, Church Lane and Eastwick Hall Lane.
 8. Restoration and maintenance of holloways including hedgerows in Cock Robin Lane.
 9. Safety improvements to Church Lane and Acorn Street from the A414 to the centre of Hunsdon
 10. Enhancement of the facility called the Dell in Hunsdon
 11. Improvements to Burnt Mill Lane including provision of appropriate lighting, footpath improvements and prioritisation measures for pedestrians and cyclists to provide a safe route to Harlow Station.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417 – Nov 2018)

POLICY EX1 – Improving the Existing Settlements

1. Development proposals in the Gilston Area will be required to:
 - i. Demonstrate how the impact of development on existing settlements and outlying properties which form part of these communities will be mitigated as part of the overall development scheme.
 - ii. Protect the landscape character of lanes, streets and open spaces within existing settlements such as Church Lane, Gilston Lane and Eastwick Hall Lane.
 - iii. Make provision for early landscape works and planting of indigenous species with high biodiversity value and species characteristic of the local countryside to strengthen the green buffers around existing settlements and along the existing lanes.
 - iv. Provide suitable and convenient access to new and existing community facilities and destinations.
 - v. Incorporate appropriate measures to mitigate the impacts of the construction phase on existing communities.
2. Development proposals within the settlements (outside the GA1 allocation) will be required to mitigate the impacts of development in accordance with policies in this Plan and the District Plan.
3. The retrofitting of existing buildings to improve water and energy efficiency will be encouraged where opportunities arise through refurbishments or change of use.
4. Long-term maintenance of green and public spaces within the existing communities will be considered through the planning process and as part of the wider maintenance agreements for the Gilston Area (Policy D2).
5. Funding will be made available through legal agreements or through the future application of CIL payments to undertake improvements to the existing settlements in order to mitigate the impacts of new development. Priority projects will be identified in consultation with the local community.

Fig. 30 - Local lanes: characterful, but in need of maintenance and valorisation (Gilston Lane)



2.9 - Sustainable Mobility

Rationale and Justification

348. Development in the Gilston Area will be required to make an essential contribution to achieve the significant modal shift towards sustainable transport choices advocated for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town through the provision of a comprehensive sustainable mobility strategy for the new villages and the existing communities.
349. Development in the Gilston Area must promote sustainable transport choices, anticipate foreseeable changes in transport technology and reduce the dominance of cars and traffic within existing and new communities and on the wider transport network across the locality.
350. Policy TRA1 sets out an approach which is consistent with both that of the East Herts District Plan and the ongoing Garden Town work in relation to sustainable mobility. The policy seeks to support sustainable transport choices, including integration with sustainable transport initiatives in the wider Harlow area, such as provision for frequent and extended public transport services, and supporting changes in transport technology and smart mobility services. It is also consistent with Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)¹³² and the importance attached to achieving sustainable development which is identified as the fundamental purpose of the planning system in the NPPF.
351. Promotion of sustainable transport choices requires an extensive network of safe and convenient routes linking new and existing settlements and providing access to their facilities, open space and the countryside. Attractive village character and prioritisation of walking and cycling will be essential.
352. A key objective underpinning the Concept Framework is to promote sustainable transport choices, anticipate foreseeable changes in transport technology and mitigate the traffic impact of the development on existing communities and the wider transport network across the locality. It states that development in the Gilston Area will provide an extensive network of safe and convenient pedestrian and cycle routes linking new and existing villages / communities and will be well integrated with existing Public Rights of Way and routes within and beyond the site. Each village will be developed around a legible street hierarchy which connects new housing to the village centres and other facilities. New efficient and frequent public transport connectivity will link new and existing villages in the Gilston Area with surrounding areas, in particular Harlow Town Station and the town centre. The presence of the car within the villages will be carefully managed to minimise the visual impact on the street scene and to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport¹³³.
353. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town has set itself a very ambitious target of 60% of all movement in new areas to be by sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling, shared mobility services or public transport), and 50% in existing areas of Harlow. This is a very significant shift, and one which will not happen unless a comprehensive strategy for mobility is developed and adopted for the site and for the wider area, which also take

¹³² Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4) Hertfordshire County Council (May 2018)

¹³³ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.12

account of progressive changes in travel habits and technology changes. The Garden Town Transport Strategy also seeks to deliver mobility options on a hierarchy that prioritises reducing the need to travel, walking, cycling and public transport and to support a culture of active and sustainable travel within the Garden Town¹³⁴. The importance attached to active travel, and the opportunities to improve connections between and through the villages, to the existing settlements and transport nodes beyond, needs to be achieved in pursuit of achieving the ambitious modal share targets of the Garden Town.

354. The objective of seeking better connectivity for the whole area is consistent with the support enshrined in Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) to achieve better connectivity and improvements to existing, and provision of new footpaths and cycleways.
355. New villages, therefore, should be designed on active design principles, which has been shown, through multiple links and outstanding connectivity, to help creating vibrant, inclusive and healthy communities with a distinctive sense of place. New homes should be located within short walking distance of open space, community facilities, shops, and schools to promote a healthy and active community. It is acknowledged that this was one of Gibberd's aims for Harlow in his original New Town Masterplan and it is essential that this approach is adopted in the Gilston Area to achieve the vision and objectives set out in this Plan.
356. Notwithstanding the indeterminate future of transport technology, any policy promoting sustainable mobility should consider at least:
 - Order of priority which gives precedence to reduce the need to travel, walking, cycling, public transport, mobility as a service vehicles, freight and delivery vehicles and private cars - in this order.
 - Village layouts that are open and permeable, to shorten distances for sustainable modes and offer multiple safe routes, while at the same time discouraging car use.
 - Enhanced and safe cycling and pedestrian access to Harlow Town, Harlow Mill and Roydon stations.
 - New efficient and frequent public transport connectivity to link new and existing settlements in the Gilston Area with surrounding areas, in particular Harlow Town Station and the town centre.
 - Avoidance of road layouts that give priorities to cars or encourage speed.
 - Reduced provision for the car (including parking) and minimised visual presence.

¹³⁴ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

Community Perspective

357. The local community is very concerned about the existing capacity of the local highway network, the poor public transport services and the capacity and accessibility of Harlow Town station. They are aware that, without a robust and comprehensive approach, there will be significant impacts on local communities caused by growth and major new development. The local community would wish to see an increased focus on sustainable and achievable transport modes and the provision of improved public transport facilities and services.
358. The community would like to see substantial change in the transport and mobility patterns of the area, leading to:
- Reliable and frequent bus services providing an attractive alternative to using the car for journeys to Harlow, Bishops Stortford, Hertford and Ware including the creation of sustainable transport corridors.
 - Safe and convenient cycling provision across the Gilston Area, extending into existing settlements beyond and to main local destinations.
 - Measures to control, reduce and slow down through traffic movement.
 - Restrictions to freight movement through Hunsdon, Gilston and High Wych.
 - Improved facilities and services at Harlow Town Station as a priority, including improved access and cycle facilities and potentially also at Harlow Mill and Roydon and increased train capacity in peak hours.
 - Improved pedestrian routes extending the existing network of Rights of Way.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

POLICY TRA1 – Sustainable Mobility

1. Development should be designed to achieve the sustainable mobility targets set by the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy and any subsequent update to it.
2. Development should demonstrate that clear targets are in place and that they can be realistically monitored and achieved through a comprehensive Sustainable Mobility Strategy including the identification of clear objectives, targets and a range of practical and achievable solutions.
3. Development proposals should:
 - i. Promote sustainable transport choices with a clear order of priority: reduce the need to travel, walking, cycling, public transport, shared transport and private transport.
 - ii. Be integrated with sustainable travel initiatives in the wider Garden Town area including the creation of sustainable transport corridors and micro-hubs (Policy BU2).
 - iii. Provide a well-connected network of attractive, safe, convenient and where possible separated pedestrian and cycle routes within each village and between villages, including the existing communities as part of appropriate street design (Policy BU4).
 - iv. Integrate with the wider area and network of paths, bridleways and cycle routes in accordance with other policies in this Plan.
 - v. Make provision for sustainable transport links which serve journeys outside the Neighbourhood Plan area to nearby urban centres (as well as Harlow).
 - vi. Provide multiple safe, direct and where possible separated cycle and pedestrian routes to Harlow Town Station including improved crossing facilities on the A414, smart cycle schemes and cycle parking facilities and give consideration to a northern entrance to the station dedicated to active mobility.
 - vii. Improve sustainable access to Roydon Station, Harlow Mill Station, Harlow's key shopping and employment destinations and provide safe and where possible separated walking and cycling access to the wider network of greenspaces including the Stort Valley and Lee Valley Park.
 - viii. Make early provision for frequent and extended public transport services to serve new and existing settlements with bus stops within walking distance of most new and existing houses to encourage the use of public transport from the outset of the development.
 - ix. Anticipate changes in transport technology and support smart mobility services, reducing the need to own a car.
 - x. Make provision for cycle parking and electric charging facilities to encourage the use of low carbon emission vehicles.
 - xi. Seek to minimise car parking provision in relation to adopted standards and make allowance for possible reductions in parking standards over time.

2.10 - Access to the Countryside

Rationale and Justification

- 359. Living in close proximity to the countryside is a key part of the vision for the Gilston Area. It will therefore be necessary to ensure that new development delivers an extended network of footpaths, rights of way, cycleways and bridleways which will link existing and new villages to each other and the wider countryside.
- 360. A key principle underpinning the Concept Framework is that the new villages will be designed to maximise access to open spaces and the wider countryside with a network of green spaces providing walking and cycling routes and integrating the existing network of parks, views and paths with new connections to form a rich and permeable network¹³⁵.
- 361. The design of new pedestrian and cycle facilities included in the new crossings over the River Stort (as proposed in District Plan Policy GA2) should minimise impacts on the character of the River Stort and provide good pedestrian connections to the Stort towpath, including wayfinding.
- 362. The walking and cycling network should be well-integrated with existing Public Rights of Way and routes within and beyond the site.
- 363. The enhancement to the Rights of Way network via improved and new, safe and where possible separated footpath and cycle connections should be considered in the Strategic Landscape Masterplan and Village Masterplans in consultation with the community.

Community Perspective

- 364. The community places value on access to the countryside and the opportunities for integration and expansion of the existing network of footpaths presented by development in the Gilston area.
- 365. The local community currently enjoys a village setting in which meeting people along streets and lanes is a common occurrence. They believe that this is essential for community cohesion, enjoyment of the countryside and encouragement of walking and cycling for need or leisure. They would like to see that the new development creates comparable or better opportunities for a healthy community lifestyle. They would also wish to see improved safe and where possible separated pedestrian and cycle connections throughout the Gilston Area.
- 366. There is a concern, however, that existing rights of way, which in some cases pass through sensitive areas and very close to houses, will need to be protected from the potential impacts of a significant increase in use, as the population of the area increases and appropriate mitigation will be required. Furthermore, the community is concerned that new cycle routes and play areas could affect ancient woodland, disturbing important wildlife habitats and leading to the loss of important woodlands.

¹³⁵ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.77

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation) (January 2020)

POLICY TRA2 – Access to the Countryside

1. Development proposals should establish a comprehensive plan for the network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways in the Gilston Area in collaboration with the community and preferably as part of a Strategic Landscape Masterplan including the design of the Green Infrastructure Network (Policy AG2).
2. Proposals will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the following criteria are satisfied:
 - i. The development provides an extended network of safe and where possible separated footpaths, cycleways and bridleways integrated with the existing wider network of Rights of Way to ensure that residents of existing and new villages have access to the countryside for informal leisure activities and enjoyment.
 - ii. The network is extended to provide access to the major areas of natural greenspace in and around the area (including connections to the Stort Valley, Lee Valley Park, and further away to Epping Forest and Hatfield Forest).
 - iii. The design of the routes should consider the tranquillity of the Green Infrastructure Network and other natural greenspaces and the need to minimise environmental impacts such as noise and light pollution.
 - iv. The impact on residential amenity and privacy of Rights of Way in proximity to existing properties is respected.
 - v. The design of the new bridge crossings over the River Stort should minimise impacts on the character and environment of the river and provide good connections for walking and cycling, including provision for wayfinding.

3.Implementation and Delivery

367. The Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared to sit alongside national and local planning policies and other planning guidance to provide a policy framework for the determination of planning applications in the Gilston Area. Through this process, it seeks to provide a positive and proactive planning tool to assist in the delivery of Policy GA1 and the vision and objectives set out in this Plan. The planning process involved in delivering development on the scale proposed in the Gilston Area is complex and the policies in this Plan should be applied at each stage of this process to ensure positive outcomes.
368. The Neighbourhood Plan sets out how the community intends to work with the local planning authority, developers and other stakeholders in bringing forward development in the Gilston Area.

3.1 – The Process

Planning Process

369. The key stages in the planning process are set out in the Concept Framework¹³⁶ and also in the Gilston Area Charter SPD, which sets out in detail the requirements and steps for the various stages¹³⁷.

Stage 1: Outline Planning Applications

The outline planning applications will demonstrate how the policy requirements have been incorporated into the development. It will set a spatial framework for the detailed masterplanning of the villages, establishing parameters for the location of built development, protection of open space and heritage assets, provision of infrastructure, etc. The application will also be supported by a set of design guidelines to inform future design work and ensure a high-quality development is delivered.

Stage 2: Strategic Landscape Masterplan and Village Masterplans

Adhering to the principles in the outline planning application, a Strategic Landscape Masterplan for the whole area and Masterplans for each Village will be prepared which will fix the location of key village components such as the primary road network, key open spaces, the location of primary and secondary schools, key cycling and pedestrian links etc. Building on the design guidelines each masterplan will also provide a specific design guide/code which will inform Stage 3 detailed design. The local communities will be fully engaged in the preparation of this masterplanning work.

Stage 3: Reserved Matters Applications/Detailed planning applications

The reserved matters and/or detailed planning applications process is the mechanism for submitting detailed designs for individual buildings or types of building for approval. The applications will be required to accord with the relevant approved Village Masterplan and Landscape Masterplan.

¹³⁶ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) Delivery and Implementation and Next Steps sections, p.168 onwards and diagram p.173.

¹³⁷ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) Fig.4

Community Engagement and Governance Strategy

370. The developers will be required to agree a Community Engagement Strategy, setting out the expectations for engagement with the local community and stakeholders across Harlow and East Herts at each stage of the planning and development process. Full engagement will be undertaken at each stage of the process, including with the two local parishes and the Neighbourhood Plan Group, and that will include consideration of managing the effects on local residents and opportunities for them to meaningfully participate in the emerging new community.
371. A Governance Strategy will be required to satisfy District Plan Policy GA1 (V(h)). It is also set out in the Concept Framework as a strategy for committed, long-term governance securing a lasting legacy of area-wide green infrastructure, village community amenities and open spaces, and everyday communal facilities¹³⁸. It will establish the arrangements for the planning, development and long-term stewardship of the Gilston Area that will put local people at the heart of the decision making.
372. The Governance Strategy is therefore expected to be a comprehensive strategy which relates to all villages to ensure that the overall area will be managed effectively, coherently and in the interest of all current and future residents.

¹³⁸ Concept Framework, p.159 and p.140

3.2 – Establishing a Partnership with the Community

Rationale and Justification

373. The community has a key role to play in taking forward growth in the Gilston Area and ensure that development is appropriate to the location and distinctive. Community engagement lies at the heart of delivering growth in the Gilston Area in accordance with Garden City principles. According to these, the community must be fully engaged at each stage of the planning and development and in future governance arrangements.
374. The Council is committed to community engagement and this is a key principle underpinning Policies GA1 and DES1 of the East Herts District Plan.
375. The Garden City principles highlight the importance of strong vision, leadership and community engagement and long-term community ownership of land and community assets. This is reflected in the District Plan: Policy GA1 IV requires the preparation of a Community Engagement Strategy, working with the local parishes, which will include consideration of managing the interrelationship between new and existing settlements, and opportunities for local residents to participate in shaping the future of the area through the planning application process and through participatory preparation of Village Masterplans.
376. The commitment to community engagement in the development of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan, Village Masterplans and Design Codes is amplified in the Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020). The Charter SPD makes it clear that all Masterplans and their associated Design Codes shall be prepared in liaison with the local community from the pre-submission stage¹³⁹. Amendments to Design Codes details approved through the discharge of condition would require the approval of the Local Planning Authority following consultation with the local community¹⁴⁰. The Charter SPD also confirms that the production of each Masterplan for the Gilston Area will be led by an applicant team of professionals with suitable experience of collaborative landscape led masterplanning who will work together with the community and other stakeholders¹⁴¹.
377. The Community Engagement Strategy will set out the required approach to stakeholder engagement and consultation for all planning matters associated with the Gilston Area. This should reflect the progressive change which will take place as the existing community grows to include new residents, as the new villages become occupied. It will also set out how applicants should support community representatives so they can effectively inform the masterplanning process¹⁴².
378. The framework for governance arrangements for the long term stewardship of the Gilston Area which will bring together the new and existing communities should be established at an early stage in the planning process whilst ensuring the long term protection of the green spaces and their high quality management by or on behalf of the community..

¹³⁹ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 8.1

¹⁴⁰ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 4.19

¹⁴¹ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020)

¹⁴² Gilston Area Charter SPD Executive Report (East Herts Council 2 June 2020)

Community Perspective

379. The existing community has engaged proactively in the development of the Concept Framework and has worked hard at creating a climate of collaboration with the local planning authority, the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board and developers in the interest of achieving development that is of exceptional quality and appropriate to the Gilston Area. The Neighbourhood Plan Group has also worked with the District Council and the developers in the preparation of the Gilston Area Charter. The community (existing and new) will expect to be fully engaged in the development of proposals for the new villages and future governance agreements and stewardship of open space and community assets in accordance with Garden City principles and as envisaged by planning policy.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2019)
3. Harlow and Gilston Design Guide (November 2018)
4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/2019-04/17 – Nov 2018)
5. Gilston Area Charter SPD (approved June 2020)

POLICY D1 – Establishing a Partnership with the Community

1. Development proposals will be supported which have been developed in partnership with the community and meet the following criteria:
 - i. Local communities (existing and new) have been fully, meaningfully and collaboratively engaged with at each stage of the development process ; this will include evidence that community views have been taken account in the development proposals.
 - ii. Involvement of the community in briefing the design teams appointed for the preparation of Masterplans about the local area and community views.
 - iii. Collaborative Design Charrettes / Co-Design workshops will be held to provide for the active engagement of the community at each stage in the preparation of the Strategic Landscape Masterplan and individual Village Masterplans and to ensure they reflect local aspirations, and are grounded in an understanding and evaluation of the area's defining characteristics.
2. Funding will be made available through legal agreements to support financially the local community in order to enable full engagement and participation, including professional support where required.

3.3 - Community Ownership and Stewardship

Rationale and Justification

380. The framework for governance arrangements for the long term stewardship of the Gilston Area which brings together the new and existing communities should be established at an early stage in the planning process whilst ensuring the long-term protection of the green spaces and their high quality management by the community. District Plan Policy GA1 (VII) states:

The delivery of the Gilston Area will include a mechanism for:

- Securing the long-term stewardship, protection and maintenance of the parkland, open spaces, play areas and community assets.
- Managing the construction process to address potential impacts on existing and future communities.
- Encouraging a successful and active community, including an innovative approach to create the conditions for local resident participation in the design and stewardship of their new communities.

381. The site allocation developed area (as shown on the Key Diagram for the Gilston Area)¹⁴³ will deliver new green spaces including sports pitches, parks and recreation areas, whilst, a substantial amount of public open space will be provided as part of wider managed parklands within the north and north western sections of the site. Policy GA1 V(h) states that the ownership of the managed open space and parklands on the northern section of the site will be transferred to a community trust or other mechanism that ensures long term stewardship and governance for the benefit of the community. The District Plan indicates that this should take place early in the overall development programme ¹⁴⁴.
382. Long-term stewardship is one of the key Garden City principles identified in the District Plan, Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision. However, as the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has highlighted, delivering a successful new community requires a clear understanding of how assets generated by the development process will be managed in perpetuity on behalf of the community. The stewardship task goes beyond the management of green space to cover the broadest range of community assets, including the active and positive management of everything from arts provision to commercial estates and utility companies. Putting local people at the heart of this process can generate increased local support, creativity and entrepreneurialism. Appropriate models have been designed to meet these requirements such as the creation of a community land trust. The TCPA has published further guidance on long-term stewardship¹⁴⁵.
383. The Concept Framework states that the Principal Landowners will establish arrangements for the planning, development and long-term stewardship of the Gilston

¹⁴³ East Herts District Plan (October 2018) Figure 11.1 p.151

¹⁴⁴ East Herts District Plan (October 2018) para 11.3.7 p.150.

¹⁴⁵ Guide 9: Long-Term Stewardship. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century. Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities (TCPA, December 2017)
<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/tcpa-pgs-guide-9-stewardship>

Area that will put local people at the heart of the decision-making process. This will include two main parts:

1. Management arrangements for the whole development which ensure that:
 - Funding for maintenance and re-investment is in place.
 - Uplift in land values is re-invested.
 - Residents and other stakeholders can be part of decision-making.
 2. Land ownership and management arrangements which guarantee independent control of the undeveloped parkland at Gilston Park Estate¹⁴⁶.
384. The Garden Town Design Guide states: ‘New facilities will not be sustainable without well organised management structures supported by consistent revenue streams. As such, the capture of land value from the uplift in granting planning permission and the stewardship of community and natural assets is central to the original Garden City principles, and to the TCPA’s contemporary vision for Garden Towns. The District Councils will, therefore, review the most appropriate framework required to establish an effective system of land value capture and long-term stewardship for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town’¹⁴⁷. The Garden Town Vision and Design Guide also recognise the importance of putting local people at the heart of the process of long-term stewardship¹⁴⁸.
385. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town ‘How To’ Guide for Planning Obligations sets out “how the Councils intend to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted to support growth and deliver the necessary infrastructure to ensure the sustainability and long term stewardship of the Garden Town as a whole in line with the Garden City Principles and Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision. This will include the capture of development land value through the use of planning obligations.¹⁴⁹” The guidance also requires the preparation of a Statement of Delivery to support applications to confirm the viability and deliverability of the development and to demonstrate that the application is committed to achieving land value capture for the benefit of the community.
386. As part of the planning process, land owners/developers will be required to fund and/or deliver the necessary infrastructure to support the whole Gilston Area and will be required to establish arrangements for the planning, development and long-term stewardship of the area so that local people will be at the heart of the decision-making process. This will include provision for management, funding for long-term maintenance, capture of uplift in land values and residents’ decision-making. Land ownership, funding and management arrangements should also guarantee independent control of the community trust open space land and other green spaces according to the principles set out in Policy GA1 (see also Policies AG2, AG4 and AG7) together with robust investment models to ensure that community assets can be maintained in the long term.

¹⁴⁶ Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018) p.140

¹⁴⁷ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018) p.4

¹⁴⁸ Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018) p.29

¹⁴⁹ Harlow & Gilston Garden Town ‘How To’ Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417).

387. Long-term management and maintenance should be secured as part of the planning process and legal agreements via a Governance Strategy, which should be in place before the start of the development and include long-term stewardship and funding arrangements.
388. Policy and legal agreements should be designed to meet a common level of investment and standard of maintenance for each village and for site-wide infrastructure which serves the development as a whole. This includes, for example, parklands, leisure facilities and secondary schools.
389. A legal agreement in respect of the Community Trust Open Space Land (District Plan Policy GA1) should also include funding and design support to the community prior to the transfer of this land to enable community involvement in the design of the countryside parks and preparation of a management and maintenance plan (see Policy AG7).
390. The landowners or developers should establish these arrangements at the outset, through consultation and involvement of the local community and other local stakeholders. Existing residents and residents moving into the development should have a right to be involved in the governance structures.

Community Perspective

391. The local community has made clear its desire to be fully engaged from the outset in future governance arrangements and are supportive of the delivery and transfer of the Community Trust Open Space Land north of the powerlines into community ownership and control early in the development programme to help mitigate the impacts of development and provide a community asset for existing and new residents in the Gilston Area.
392. There is also an expectation that measures will be agreed and put in place at an early stage in the development programme to secure the long term stewardship, protection and maintenance of other areas of parkland, open spaces, play areas and community assets and that local residents (existing and new) will be fully engaged in the design and stewardship of their new communities.

Key Evidence Base

1. Gilston Area Concept Framework (approved June 2018)
2. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
3. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board Stewardship Principles (July 2019)
4. Guide 9: Long-Term Stewardship. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century. Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities (TCPA, December 2017)
5. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/2019 0417 – Nov 2018)

POLICY D2 – Community Ownership and Stewardship

1. Arrangements for future governance and long-term stewardship of the Gilston Area will be agreed between the principal landowners/developers, the local planning authority and the local community and will be secured as part of the planning process.
2. An agreed governance structure should be in place at the outset of development to ensure the delivery and management of community assets is undertaken in a timely manner and in the interest of the community in accordance with Garden City principles.
3. The arrangements for future governance and long-term stewardship will apply to all development within the Policy GA1 allocation and should include provision for the following:
 - i. An integrated approach to development and necessary infrastructure provision, and the delivery and long-term stewardship of green spaces and other community assets.
 - ii. The establishment of a community land trust or other governance mechanism early in the overall development programme in order to deliver community ownership and the long-term stewardship, protection and maintenance of the Community Trust Open Space Land (see Policy AG7).
 - iii. The establishment of governance and stewardship mechanisms early in the overall development programme for the funding, timely delivery and transfer into community ownership of other green spaces, parklands, sports and recreation areas and community assets.
 - iv. The active involvement of residents from the outset and the long-term interest and continued representation of existing communities in future governance arrangements and stewardship of the Gilston Area.
 - v. Funding and re-investment opportunities to ensure the long-term operation and maintenance of the Community Trust Open Space Land, green spaces, parklands, sports and recreation areas and other community assets.

4. Monitoring and Review

393. The Neighbourhood Plan provides a policy framework for the preparation and determination of planning applications in the Gilston Area. The community is not responsible for delivery of development in the Gilston Area and will work with the Council, developers, infrastructure providers and other stakeholders to ensure development takes place in accordance with the vision, objectives and policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.
394. Regular monitoring of actual development outcomes against the plan is an essential part of ensuring that the plan is effective. Monitoring can indicate areas where interventions may be needed to achieve the objectives of the plan; it may also demonstrate the need for a review or partial review of the plan.
395. Given the size and complexity of the Gilston Area development and the fact that the District Plan expects it to make a significant contribution towards housing needs within the Plan period, the Council recognises the importance of closely monitoring its implementation. In accordance with District Plan Policy DEL4 (Monitoring of the Gilston Area), the Council will draw up an action plan setting out key milestones for the delivery of the site, including masterplanning, phasing of infrastructure and submission of planning applications and monitor its progress on an annual basis. The annual rate of housing completions in the Gilston Area will be reviewed by the Council as part of its District wide monitoring in accordance with Policy DEL3 (Monitoring Framework).
396. The Neighbourhood Plan will be kept under review by the Neighbourhood Plan Group and this will be undertaken in collaboration with East Herts Council who will be responsible for monitoring development in the Gilston Area in accordance with Policy GA1 and other policies in the District Plan. Working closely with East Herts Council, it will be possible to determine the progress being made in relation to the objectives and policies set out in the Neighbourhood Plan and the delivery of necessary infrastructure.
397. The Gilston Area Charter SPD reinforces this collaborative approach to monitoring. It states that the Garden Town Authorities will seek to provide information on an ongoing basis to keep the public informed about the planning process for the Gilston Area and subsequent development as it comes forward. In accordance with District Plan Policy DEL4, the Council will use a Monitoring Framework to review progress and outcomes throughout the planning, construction and post construction stages through the identification of a series of measurable. Opportunities to link these to indicators established through the Masterplans and Design Codes will be explored, as well as in relation to other approvals and any new policy/guidance relevant to the Gilston Area¹⁵⁰. The Design Quality Questions set out in Figure 7 in the Charter SPD will be applied to monitor development to ensure it comes forward having regard to Garden City principles and incorporates high quality design solutions.
398. The Monitoring Framework to be provided by East Herts will be a live web-based platform that is updated on an ongoing basis to keep the public informed about the progress of development in the Gilston Area. In addition to sign posting the public to planning applications, the Monitoring Framework will also include a record of what has

¹⁵⁰ Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020) para 9.3

been delivered and a means for quality checking development post construction¹⁵¹. This Monitoring Framework will assist in keeping the Neighbourhood Plan under review.

399. If necessary, a formal review of the Neighbourhood Plan or parts of the Plan will be undertaken to reflect changes in national, strategic or local policies affecting the Neighbourhood Plan area.

¹⁵¹ Gilston Area Charter SPD Executive Report (East Herts Council 2 June 2020)para 3.6 p.22

Appendix 1 - Policy GA1

Policy GA1 The Gilston Area

- I. In accordance with Policy DPS₃ (Housing Supply 2011-2033), land at the Gilston Area is allocated for development to accommodate 10,000 homes, to be delivered within this Plan period and beyond. It is anticipated that at least 3,000 homes will be delivered by 2033.
- II. A Concept Framework is being jointly prepared by the landowners, the Council and the local community. The Concept Framework identifies design principles, potential land uses, infrastructure requirements and phasing, and will be used as a benchmark in reviewing proposals for development. Prior to the submission of any planning application(s) further design work through the pre-application engagement process will be required in order to agree, among other things, the quantum and distribution of land uses, access and layout principles.
- III. The Gilston Area will provide for 10,000 homes across distinct villages, each based on Garden City principles respecting the following:
 - strong vision, leadership and community engagement;
 - land value capture to deliver the social and physical infrastructure for the benefit of the community;
 - long-term community ownership of land and stewardship of assets mixed-tenure homes and housing types including those that are genuinely affordable;
 - a wide range of local jobs within easy commuting distance of homes;
 - beautifully and imaginatively designed homes with access to open space, combining the best of town and country to create healthy communities, and including opportunities to grow food;
 - development that enhances the natural environment, providing a comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains, and that uses energy-positive technology to ensure climate resilience;
 - strong cultural, recreational and shopping facilities in walkable, vibrant, sociable communities; and
 - integrated and accessible sustainable transport systems, with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of local transport for new residents to travel within the Gilston Area and to key local destinations.
- IV. A community engagement strategy will be prepared, working with the two local parishes, which will include consideration of managing the effects on local residents, and opportunities for them to participate in the emerging new community. Engagement with the local communities and other relevant stakeholders shall take place through the planning application process and through the development of village Masterplans.
- V. The development is expected to address the following provisions and issues:
 - (a) a range of dwelling type and mix, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU₁ (Type and Mix of Housing);
 - (b) Affordable Housing in accordance with Policy HOU₃ (Affordable Housing);
 - (c) a care home/ flexi-care or sheltered properties in accordance with the provisions of Policy HOU₆ (Homes for Older and Vulnerable People);

- (d) Self-Build and Custom Build Housing in accordance with Policy HOU8 (Self-Build and Custom Build Housing);
- (e) the provision of a serviced site for Gypsy and Travellers, in accordance with Policy HOU9 (Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) which should deliver 15 pitches for longer term needs beyond the Plan period;
- (f) the provision of a serviced site for Travelling Showpeople in accordance with Policy HOU9 (Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople) which should deliver 8 plots for longer term needs beyond the Plan period; (each of sufficient size to allow for the provision of accommodation and equipment plus storage/maintenance);
- (g) quality local green infrastructure throughout the site including opportunities for preserving and enhancing on-site assets, maximising opportunities to link into existing assets and enhancing biodiversity. This will include the protection of Local Wildlife Sites and other assets of environmental value;
- (h) the provision of significant managed open space and parklands, and a limited number of buildings associated with that use, on the northern section of the site as identified in Figure 11.2, the ownership of which will be transferred to a community trust or other mechanism that ensures long term stewardship and governance for the benefit of the community;
- (i) a variety of public green spaces across the site, including the provision of play areas and opportunities for outdoor health and fitness activities, as well as space for wildlife;
- (j) access arrangements and local highways measures and commensurate financial contributions to addressing impacts on the wider strategic highways network, including the provision of additional crossings to the River Stort;
- (k) land for twenty forms of entry for both primary and secondary education, including Early Years facilities, subject to more detailed modelling. All schools should provide for the dual use of facilities for community purposes;
- (l) sustainable transport measures which encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport including:
 - the provision of cycleways and footways that provide links throughout the site and into Harlow;
 - enhancement of existing bridleways and footpaths;
 - enhanced passenger transport services including the creation of a sustainable transport route through the site which will link into a sustainable transport corridor which links the Gilston Area to the urban area of Harlow; and
 - the setting of objectives and targets for the use of sustainable transport modes.
- (m) consideration of the potential of the site to facilitate the delivery of a re-located Princess Alexandra Hospital;
- (n) the use of appropriate landscape buffers in order to protect the individual character and integrity of Eastwick and Gilston villages within the context of the development;
- (o) the protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, both on-site and in the wider area through appropriate mitigation measures, having regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment. Gilston Church and the Johnston Monument (both grade

I listed), the moated site Scheduled Monuments at Eastwick, the Mount Scheduled Monument, and Gilston Park house (grade II*) are of particular significance and sensitivity and any planning application should seek to ensure that these assets and their settings are conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced, through careful design; landscaping; open space; buffer zones; protection of key views; and, better management and interpretation of assets, where appropriate;

- (p) neighbourhood centres in accessible locations, providing local retail and community uses, including healthcare facilities to meet the day-to-day retail and health needs of new residents;
- (q) employment area/s (of around 5ha), within visible and accessible location/s, which provides appropriate opportunities to promote self-containment and sustainability;
- (r) consideration of opportunities for local supply chains as well as opportunities for local employment and training including apprenticeships and improving skills base for local people;
- (s) indoor and outdoor sports facilities (which may be shared use) taking into account the Council's evidence on sports and open space needs;
- (t) consideration of need for cemetery provision;
- (u) landscaping and planting, both within the site and peripheral, which responds to the existing landscape and complements development, as appropriate, and a defined recognisable boundary to the Green Belt;
- (v) assisting the delivery of all other necessary on-site and appropriate off-site infrastructure;
- (w) necessary new utilities, including integrated communications infrastructure to facilitate home working;
- (x) satisfactory water supply, including acceptable water pressure for occupants;
- (y) sustainable drainage and provision for flood mitigation;
- (z) other policy provisions of the District Plan and relevant matters, as appropriate.

VI. Any application for development will include an indicative phasing plan for the delivery of infrastructure and utilities across the villages.

VII. The delivery of the Gilston Area will include a mechanism for:

- securing the long term stewardship, protection and maintenance of the parkland, open spaces, play areas and community assets;
- managing the construction process to address potential impacts on existing and future communities;
- encouraging a successful and active community, including an innovative approach to create the conditions for local resident participation in the design and stewardship of their new communities.

VIII. Proposals for the Gilston Area should complement, and have regard to, ongoing work in relation to the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Summary of Policy GA2 – Stort Crossings

The District Plan promotes transport improvements in the form of two improved crossings of the River Stort to accommodate housing and employment growth. Para 11.4.2 of the District Plan states that additional crossing options are being reviewed both to the east and west of the existing crossing and that any proposals will need to address environmental factors such as visual amenity, ecology and flooding.

Policy GA2 requires development proposals for both Stort Crossings to protect and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings through appropriate mitigation measures, having regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment

Policy GA2 The River Stort Crossings – Full Policy

- I. I. The Council will work with key stakeholders including Hertfordshire County Council, Essex County Council, Harlow Council, Hertfordshire LEP, and others as appropriate, to facilitate the delivery of the following transport improvements to crossings of the River Stort:
 - A widening of the existing A414 crossing to enable a dualling of the northbound and Southbound carriageways and provision of a new footway/cycleway, which will form Part of a north-south sustainable transport corridor through Harlow; and
 - A new vehicular, cycle and pedestrian crossing either to the east of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to the River Way), or to the west of the existing crossing (connecting the A414 to Elizabeth Way).
- II. Development proposals for both Stort Crossings should protect and, where appropriate, enhance heritage assets and their settings through appropriate mitigation measures, having regard to the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Other Relevant Policies

The following policies are also of relevance to this Neighbourhood Plan:

- DPS4 Infrastructure Requirements
- DES1 Masterplanning
- TRA1 Sustainable Transport
- CFLR2 Local Green Space
- DEL1 Infrastructure and Service Delivery
- DEL3 Planning Obligations

Appendix 2 - Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town - Vision

The Garden Town Vision was published in November 2018. It incorporates the concept of the 7 distinctive villages in the Gilston Area established in Policy GA1 and the Concept Framework and sets out a vision for the Garden Town that is adaptable, healthy, sustainable and innovative based on the following key principles:

Placemaking and Homes

A Responsive and distinctive - sitting comfortably in its context- distinctive neighbourhoods and villages

B Balanced, diverse and functional communities - the right kind of homes and densities- a series of self sufficient neighbourhoods and villages with local centres

C Healthy, safe and connected neighbourhoods and villages - good access to services and public transport

D Maximising visibility and appreciation of our heritage- engagement with communities in participative design

Landscape and Green Infrastructure

A Enhancing the Green Belt and expanding the Green Wedge Network – Green Wedges between villages will be rural in character

B Landscape-led masterplanning - responding to natural character and function- existing landscape to shape the pattern of new development

C Designing in biodiversity, climate resilience and food security - robust governance and maintenance strategies and a community led approach

D Making best use of technology in energy generation and conservation - best practice in low carbon design

Sustainable Movement

A Revitalising the walking and cycling network - the Green Wedge network as movement corridors

B The value of place: changing the character of roads to streets - a clear street hierarchy and creating healthy and sociable places

C Integrated transport; a viable and preferred alternative to cars to achieve a modal shift - 60% of all trips within the new Garden Town communities and 50% of trips across Harlow to be undertaken by sustainable active transport modes

D Anticipating change and future proofing infrastructure - support the implementation of new travel technology

Economy and Regeneration

A The heart of the UK Innovation Corridor - growth and investment in the Harlow Enterprise Zone and enhancement of Harlow Town Station

B The right workspaces, homes and community facilities - variety of homes, offices, studios and accessible workspace in local centres

C A diverse employment base and skilled labour supply - including community based learning schemes

D A vibrant and resilient Town Centre for all the Garden Town - accessible by foot, bicycle and public transport and sustainable transport corridors

Appendix 3 – Policy Relationship

Relationship between Neighbourhood Plan Policies, East Hertfordshire District Plan Policies and Gilston Area Concept Framework

Thread between Neighbourhood Plan policies, Adopted District Plan Policies and Concept Framework Vision and Objectives

| NP Policy | Adopted District Plan Policies GA1 / GA2 | Endorsed Concept Framework (2018) Vision | Endorsed Concept Framework (2018) Objectives |
|--|---|--|--|
| 1. Accommodating Growth | | | |
| General Principles | | | |
| POLICY AG1 - Promoting Sustainable Development in the Gilston Area | GA1/ all | I – Several distinct villages informed by the features of the area Garden City Principles - all | 10 – Protecting and enhancing natural assets, with topography and landscape informing village layouts |
| Rural Natural Landscape Setting | | | |
| POLICY AG2 – Creating a Connected Green Infrastructure Network | GA1/III - Garden City Principles – comprehensive green infrastructure network and net biodiversity gains GA1/V – Quality green infrastructure (g); significant open space (h); a recognisable boundary to the Green Belt (u) | II - Clearly separated VIII – Cohesive and enhanced rural landscape | 9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green spaces, with a series of environmentally viable green corridors 10 – Protecting and enhancing natural assets with early restoration of woodland |
| POLICY AG3 – Protecting and Enhancing the Countryside Setting of | | II – Meaningful high-quality landscape | 9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| New and Existing Villages | | VIII – Cohesive and enhanced rural landscape | spaces, with retention of existing landscape features |
| Individuality of the villages | | | |
| POLICY AG4 Maintaining the Individuality and Separation of All Villages | GA1/V – appropriate landscape buffers to protect the individual character (n) | I - Distinct villages of individual character | 2 – Maintaining distinctiveness 4 – Well connected to but distinctive from Harlow |
| POLICY AG5 Protecting Areas of Local Significance | | II – Meaningful high-quality landscape VIII – Cohesive and enhanced rural landscape | 2 – Maintaining distinctiveness 9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green spaces, with retention of existing landscape features 10 – Protecting and enhancing natural assets with early restoration of woodland |
| POLICY AG6 – Creating New Villages with a Distinct and Locally Inspired Character | | I – Positive relationship with existing settlements IV – respond to existing local context | 8 – High quality design, appropriate to a Hertfordshire village |
| POLICY AG7 - Creating New Countryside Parks at Hunsdon Airfield and Eastwick Wood | GA1/ policy map | II – Development only south of the electric power lines | 9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green spaces, transferring parkland into community ownership |

| Appropriate infrastructure | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| POLICY AG8 - Minimising the Impact of Traffic and New Transport Infrastructure | GA2/II – the crossings should protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings | IV – Locally inspired features V – Reducing car dependency; active mobility VII – Parking not to dominate the street | 6 – Promoting sustainable travel, with presence of the car carefully managed to reduce visual impact and encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport 7 – Creating walkable neighbourhoods, with a distinctive sense of place |
| POLICY AG9 - Phasing of Infrastructure Delivery | GA1/V – all necessary on site and off site infrastructure (v-z) GA1/VI – Phasing plan for delivery | X – Funding and delivery of needed services and infrastructure XII – Delivery of infrastructure to remedy current deficiencies | 13 - Ensuring the phased delivery of necessary infrastructure to meet the needs arising from the development |
| 2. Delivering Quality Places | | | |
| Appropriate Design – Landscape in the new settlements | | | |
| POLICY LA1 – Landscape within the New Villages | GA1/V – Quality green infrastructure (g); significant open space (h); variety of green spaces (i); landscaping and planting and a recognisable boundary to the Green Belt (u) | II – meaningful high quality landscape | 9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green spaces, with viable green corridors and rich biodiversity |
| Appropriate Design – New built up areas | | | |
| POLICY BU1 – Housing and Residential Neighbourhoods | GA1/V - A range of dwellings (a to f) | V – range of housing types and tenures VI – Housing mix, genuinely affordable | 3 – Delivering a wide choice of quality homes 8 – High quality design, appropriate to a |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | | Hertfordshire village |
| POLICY BU2 – Village Cores / Centres | GA1/V – Neighbourhood centres in accessible locations (p) | III – natural meeting places; range of services | 8 – High quality design, appropriate to a Hertfordshire village |
| POLICY BU3– Employment Areas | GA1/V – Employment areas and opportunities for local employment (q and r) | IX – Access to employment | 8 – High quality design, appropriate to a Hertfordshire village |
| POLICY BU4 – Village Streets and Lanes | | V – healthy community lifestyle, active mobility VII – Homes to front streets and lanes | 7 – Creating walkable neighbourhoods, with a distinctive sense of place 8 – High quality design, appropriate to a Hertfordshire village |
| Heritage and Culture | | | |
| POLICY H1 – Celebration of the Existing Heritage Assets | GA1/V – Protection and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting (o) GA2/II – the crossings should protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings – Heritage Impact Assessment | I – Positive relationship with existing settlements | 11 – protecting and enhancing heritage assets, including protection and celebration of all assets |
| Community Assets | | | |
| POLICY C1 – Community Facility Provision | GA1/V – Land for education (k); indoor and outdoor sports facilities (s); cemeteries (t) | III – A good range of day to day services and facilities | 1 - Creating distinctive and balanced community 5 – Promoting healthy communities |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| POLICY EX ₁ - Improving Existing Settlements | | <p>IX – Garden City values of equality and access to employment, facilities and the countryside</p> <p>I – Positive relationship with existing settlements</p> <p>VIII – Existing villages physically respected but functionally integrated to form a unified community</p> | <p>2 – Managing the impacts of development on existing settlements</p> <p>13 - Ensuring the phased delivery of necessary infrastructure to benefit existing and new communities</p> |
| Transport and Mobility | | | |
| POLICY TRA ₁ – Sustainable Mobility | <p>GA₁/V – Sustainable transport measures, including setting objectives and targets</p> <p>GA₁/III - Garden City Principles – Integrated and accessible transport systems</p> <p>GA₁/V – Access arrangements addressing the wider network (j)</p> <p>GA₂/I – existing crossing to include footways / cycleways to form part of a north-south sustainable transport corridor</p> | <p>VII – Sustainable transport choices, new technologies, walkable neighbourhoods</p> <p>Garden City Principles – Integrated and accessible transport systems</p> | <p>4 – Well connected to but distinctive from Harlow</p> <p>6 – Promoting sustainable travel, particularly to Harlow Town Station</p> <p>7 – Creating walkable neighbourhoods, where walking and cycling is prioritised</p> |
| POLICY TRA ₂ – Access to the Countryside | GA ₁ /V – Sustainable transport measures and enhancement of existing bridleways and footpaths | <p>V – Active mobility and enjoyment of the countryside</p> <p>VIII – Substantially increased access to open spaces for all</p> | |

| Implementation and Delivery | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| POLICY D1 – Community Partnership | <p>GA1/II - Prior to the submission of any planning application(s) pre-application engagement process will be required</p> <p>GA1/III - Garden City Principles of strong vision, leadership and community engagement</p> <p>GA1/IV – Community engagement strategy with engagement through the planning application process and village Masterplans</p> <p>GA1/VII - Participation in the design and stewardship of their community</p> | Garden City Principles of strong vision, leadership and community engagement | 12 – Engaging local communities, with an early framework for governance |
| POLICY D2 – Community Ownership and Stewardship | <p>GA1/III - Garden City Principles – Long-term community ownership and stewardship of assets</p> <p>GA1/VII – Long term stewardship, protection and maintenance of parkland and community assets, including participation in the design and stewardship of their community</p> | <p>X – Long term community stewardship of community assets and land</p> <p>Garden City Principles – Long-term community ownership and stewardship of assets</p> | <p>9 – A protected and enhanced landscape and network of green spaces, transferring parkland into community ownership</p> <p>12 – Engaging local communities, ensuring high quality management of open spaces by the community</p> |

Appendix 4 - Defining Village Character

A4.1 - Locally Inspired Village Character

The purpose of this Appendix is to support Policy AG6 and provide details and photographic illustration of the key characteristics of the local area that can be used as inspiration. The Appendix is to be used as a source of design cues, which will need to be creatively reinterpreted in the masterplanning proposals, rather than copied or literally replicated. By choice, the Appendix makes no prescriptive recommendation and does not endorse any specific architectural style.

This Appendix provides an organised collection of ‘design cues’, articulated in the following sections:

- The typical structure of local villages
- The character of streets and lanes
- How views out towards the countryside are present within villages
- The character of the landscape within the village boundaries
- How local villages are seen and impact views from the countryside
- The importance of soft edges
- The sense of arrival and transition from countryside to village
- The character of local landmark buildings
- Typical height and massing
- Variety of alignment and built form.

The images and text are intended to describe the local villages and help designers and decision-makers understand what the community values and considers the essence of the morphology and character that makes their villages special. Use of local materials and building detailing is encouraged (see Policy BU1), but in itself this is not considered the principal element of local character, and no specific ‘palette’ is proposed.

The Appendix is to be used as a source of design cues, which will need to be creatively reinterpreted in the masterplanning proposals, rather than copied or literally replicated. Nevertheless, Policy AG6 requires that proposals demonstrate the extent to which the various components of character identified in this Appendix have been considered in the design.

Each section includes a text box intended to exemplify of how local characteristics can be used as design inspiration, which is relevant and appropriate to new contemporary villages in accordance with the aims of Policy GA1, other guidance for the site and the Neighbourhood Plan. They are not to be interpreted as prescriptive guidance.



1. Much Hadham High Street



2. Hodgson cottages, Gilston



3. View of Eastwick

Respecting Morphology and Character

The District Plan and Concept Framework require new development at Gilston to be in the form of distinct villages, respecting local character and village morphology. Policy AG6 of the Neighbourhood Plan expects proposals to demonstrate that the best possible balance has been achieved between landscape, village separation, mass, density and the overall delivery of the aims of Policy GA1 of the District Plan.

This Appendix explores some of the aspects that the local community considers typical of local villages and which could be used as inspiration in future designs.

In the interest of retaining flexibility of development, the Neighbourhood Plan does not specify fixed development parameters, but expects this flexibility to nevertheless respond to local character. In the spirit of Policy AG6, where trade-offs are to be made (for example between green separation and height of buildings), these should be explored and agreed with the local community, as part of the Village Masterplan process.

Guidance on Density

The Neighbourhood Plan does not specify density parameters, which are expected to conform to guidance offered elsewhere:

- Policy HOU2 of the District Plan requires housing development to make efficient use of land. Proposals are required to demonstrate how the density of new development has been informed by the character of the local area.
- The Gilston Area Concept Framework (pg. 109) specifies an average density of 33 dwellings per hectare.
- The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (pg. 8) indicates densities between 20 and 55 dwellings per hectare. Density could vary, typically with intensity in the centre and greater fragmentation at the edge, to respond to the landscape setting.

Examples from the Local Area

The villages used as reference in this Appendix have already been referenced in the Concept Framework and are drawn exclusively from the local area for the purpose of guiding 'local character', rather than generic good design principles, or generic 'villages'. The selection is drawn from:

- Group 1 Villages (the largest category of the District Plan) nearby: Hunsdon, Much Hadham and Puckeridge.
- Group 2 Villages in the immediate vicinity: High Wych and Widford.
- The local settlements of Eastwick and Gilston within the area itself.

A4.2 - Village Structure

Most local villages developed organically along a central countryside lane. Typically, development has been by progressive addition over time, without any significant visual focal point such as a market square, church or manor house. This has created an intricate structure of different neighbourhoods within each village: a characteristic that could be mimicked in new development.

Description of Local Character

Most local villages have a linear development structure, along a country lane turned into High Street linking a chain of settlements. The secondary street system is typically organic and originating from country lanes, while local streets are shorter and developed over time through infill and small additions, with a characteristic open structure, often terminating with views over the countryside. Larger villages, like Puckeridge, evolved to form a composite structure articulated along 2-3 organic linear spines. Large central places (like a market square or even a large central green) and rectilinear grid plans are absent in all local villages.



Hunsdon

- A central spine hosting most communal activities.
- An organically shaped green at a 4-way cross-roads along the main local route.
- Short local streets opening towards the countryside.
- Groups of houses connected by an organic / irregular grid.
- Landmark buildings set in landscape outside the village.



Much Hadham

- A central compact high street, with continuous frontages of varied architectural styles.
- Landmark buildings not creating local focal points, set back from the main spine.
- Very short secondary streets perpendicular to High Street.
- Semi-rural lanes parallel to the main spine at the outer edges.



Puckeridge

- Composite structure with multiple forks linked to successive expansions.
- No green or other public space.
- Local organic grid by addition of clusters of houses.
- Outer local streets opening towards the countryside.
- 1960s schools and leisure facilities at the edge of the village.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Village Structure

Most local villages are smaller, after 500 years of development, than the new ones will be after 20-30 years. It is therefore reasonable to expect that the structure of the new villages will be more articulated. Nevertheless, cues could be appropriately taken from the local area, for example by:

1. Adopting a main spine as the principal alignment connecting across multiple villages through rural landscape: this could be an important organising element of the structure of each village and function as a 'high street' and central reference place, where the majority of community activities are located.
2. Retaining, as far as possible, the alignment of the existing country lanes to form a secondary street network linked to the countryside or creating additional secondary links, following topography and natural or rural features as cues for the alignment.
3. Expanding into the local street network as if it were 'by addition', forming connected pockets (future distinctive neighbourhoods), rather than large formal grids, which are more typical of urban development.
4. Avoiding long straight avenues and formal piazzas with focal views on landmark buildings, as this is more typical of market towns.



Much Hadham High Street

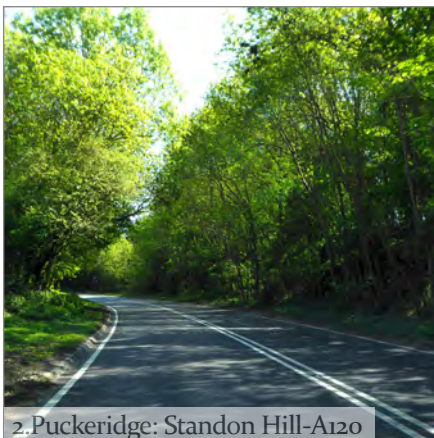
A4.3 - Street Character

Description of Local Character

Local streets and lanes are rich in landscape at the edges of the villages and attractively curving in the centres. They were built before the advent of highway codes and engineering standards: as a result, driving is constrained and needs to adapt to the location. Limited segregation of cycling and walking results in 'shared space' arrangements for most of the local streets.



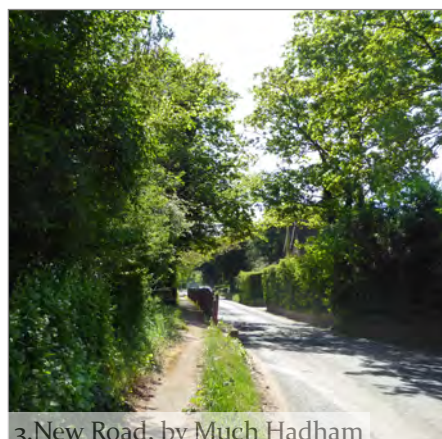
1. Gilson: Eastwick Road-C161



2. Puckeridge: Standon Hill-A120

Main roads outside villages

- Single carriageway with one wide lane per direction.
- Occasional walking path / cycle route in the verge and layby for buses.
- Minimal guardrails, street lighting and signage.
- Green semi-natural verges.
- Open views over countryside fields or enclosed in woodland.



3. New Road, by Much Hadham



4. Church Lane, Hunsdon

Main lanes at the village edges

- Single carriageway with one narrow lane per direction.
- Occasional walking path in the verge and passing point.
- No street lighting. Minimal road marking.
- Green verges.
- Direct access to properties, mainly behind tall hedges or boundary walls.



5. Hunsdon High Street



6. Puckeridge High Street

High streets

- Single carriageway with one lane per direction and side parking (encroaching in the road lane)
- Narrow footpath.
- No lighting posts.
- No verges or trees.
- Continuous frontages with narrow or no front garden space.



7. Church Cottages, Gilston



8. Cunningham Grove, Hunsdon

Other secondary streets / lanes

- Single carriageway / shared surface.
- No street lighting.
- Side footpath occasional and part of a green verge.
- Informal edge of carriageway with a green verge of trees or hedgerow planting.
- Informal landscaped front gardens.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Streets and Lanes

With current highways standards, it will not be possible to replicate the appearance of the most attractive country lanes of the Gilston Area. Yet, inspiration can be usefully taken from local character, by:

1. Adopting informal layouts, with low speeds and reduced 'engineering' driven design in favour of locally adapted design that respects topography and landscape and encourage drivers to adapt their driving style to respond to the location.
2. Ensuring that there is abundant space for green verges, hedgerows and woodland-style planting at the edges or outside the villages, designing streets and frontages so that they are greener towards the edges (for example with deeper front gardens with trees and hedges) and more compact towards the centre.
3. Integrating cycle lanes and footways within the verges outside the villages and at the edges, while maximising opportunities for shared space arrangements in most local streets and neighbourhoods.
4. Minimising the visual impact of road signage, lighting and other street clutter.

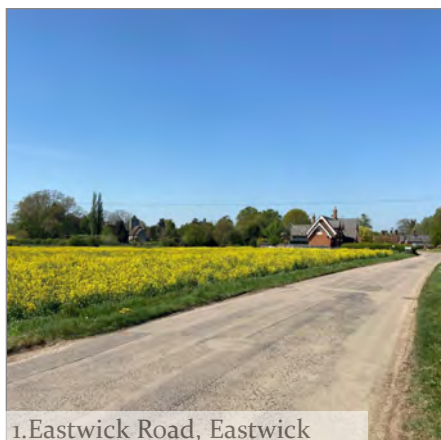


Standon Hill Road - A120

A4.4 - Views out towards the countryside

Description of Local Character

Views out over fields and woodland are common from the village edges and occasionally from within the built-up area, creating a strong visual connection between the two.



1. Eastwick Road, Eastwick



2. Road from Widford, Hunsdon

Foreground of fields on arrival

Outer access roads and lanes typically open up onto the outer fields as soon as the edge of the built area is reached, creating long distance views and visual connection with the countryside, with:

- Open views over fields.
- Grassed edge.
- No or see-through boundary fencing.

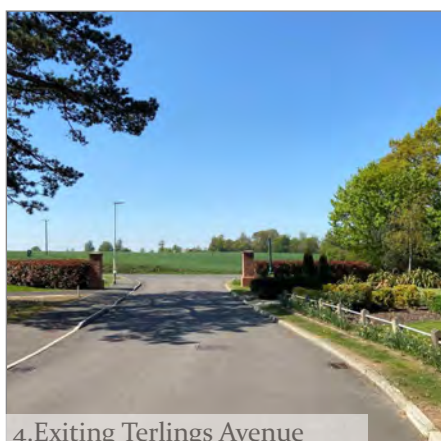


3. Eastwick Green and Memorial

View of the countryside from the heart of the village

In many cases, there are visual openings onto the countryside from within the village itself, either onto fields, like in Eastwick or onto woodland or mature hedgerow planting like in High Wych, through:

- Gaps in the building alignment.
- Inviting the countryside into the village.



4. Exiting Terlings Avenue



5. Roseley Cottages, Eastwick

No transition between houses and countryside

The countryside typically stops at the road edge and housing boundary, with no semi-urban transition zones. Often, only a green interface of grass, trees or hedge planting delimits the property boundary.

Agricultural fields typically come close to the houses, without any recreational parkland as transition.



6. Holland's Croft, Hunsdon



7. Terlings Park, Gilston

Green at the end of the street

Secondary streets often adopt an open structure, opening views of the countryside or woodland at the end of many of the streets, sometimes even visible from the high street (Hunsdon, High Wych, Much Hadham), with:

- Open street end, without perimeter buildings.
- Semi-natural planting transition and / or see-through fencing.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Views out Towards the Countryside

Future villages will be larger than most local ones, and seeking opportunities for visual interaction between countryside and the built areas will be very important to retain the visual interaction between village and countryside. A range of opportunities could be explored:

1. Maximising open views across the countryside, whenever there is a foreground of fields (for example towards the powerlines) or a wider gap between villages.
2. Identifying and highlighting key viewpoints from inside the village out towards fields and creating visual gaps, penetrating as deep as possible into the village.
3. Bringing the feel of the countryside as close as possible to the built area, by retaining agricultural activity where practical or recreating the countryside through species-rich grassland and hedgerows.
4. Adopting in preference open street layouts at the edges, with views out over the fields at the end of the street.



New houses in Hunsdon

A4.5 - Landscape within the village

Description of Local Character

All local villages have rich biodiversity and are characterised by semi-natural landscape, many tall trees, mixed species hedges and flowering front gardens.



1. Within Widford



2. Gilston Park access lane

Enclosed woodland

Blocks of woodland or semi-natural wooded parkland are often enclosed within the perimeter of each village, enriching biodiversity and creating opportunities for wildlife.

- Retained older woodland within the built-up area.
- Establishment of new woodland or parkland; sometimes associated with larger properties (Gilston Park).



3. Church Lane, Hunsdon

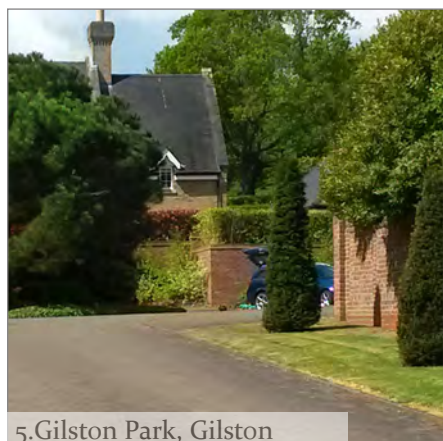


4. High Street, Much Hadham

Countryside trees

Inside the villages, trees crowns and foliage dominate the built form, screening or framing the buildings through:

- Presence of many mature tall trees in green spaces, gardens, verges and hedges.
- Species are typical of the countryside, with few ornamental trees.



5. Gilston Park, Gilston



6. High Wych Road

Richness and variety

Within and around private properties, many species of trees are planted often close together to create a dense and rich mix of foliage and biodiversity, through:

- Use of mixed species, shape and colour.
- Dense semi-natural planting.
- Low intensity maintenance to promote naturalisation.



7. Pye Corner, Gilston



8. Eastwick Hall Ln., Eastwick

Green frontages

Front garden flowers, shrubs and climbers are typical of villages, and the local area is no exception:

- Soft landscape frontages with mixed species and flowers.
- Low boundary edge within the village and hedge planting towards the edges.
- Concealed car parking.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Landscape within the Village

Landscape within local villages is very distinctive and derived by a combination of legacy countryside planting (woodland and hedgerows) and semi-natural, biodiversity rich planting within the village itself.

Inspiration should be drawn by local landscape, by:

1. Maximising opportunity to increase biodiversity (and contributing towards net gain) within the villages by adopting species rich planting elements along boundaries, verges, ditches and SuDS.
2. Retaining and enriching the planting of blocks of woodland or landscape corridors running through the village, optimising semi-natural planting mixes and low maintenance plant assemblages.
3. Planting as early as possible, as tall as possible, structural groups of trees typical of the countryside within key areas of the new villages.
4. Establishing early in the development process some richly planted front gardens, with flowers, shrubs and climbers, along key axis or at key locations.
5. Encouraging new owners to contribute to the character of the village through their front gardens, for example by establishing on site plant nurseries and providing practical advice.

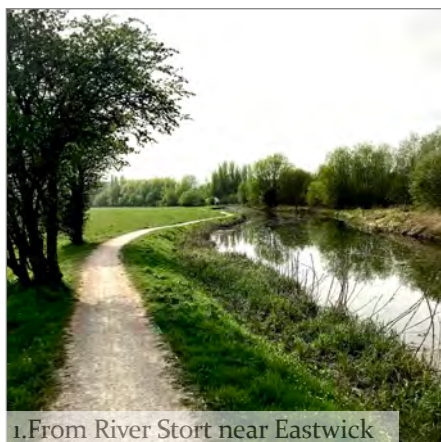


Landscape in Terlings Park

A4.6 - Views from the countryside towards the villages

Description of Local Character

Most villages are set among trees and richer in plants and biodiversity than most of the agricultural fields. From a distance they are barely distinguishable from the blocks of woodland.



1.From River Stort near Eastwick



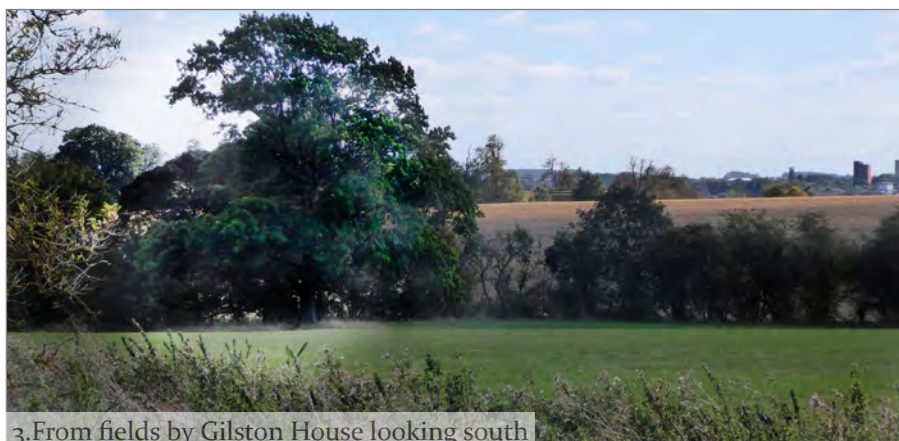
2.Hunsdon from the Airfield

Wider area

The slopes and tree belts typically hide the villages from each other and from other key locations.

From the towpath along the River Stort, less than 200m away, the buildings of Eastwick are invisible.

From the Airfield Memorial, the roofs of Hunsdon are barely discernible, as they are mostly lower than the crown of the trees.



3.From fields by Gilston House looking south

Gilston

The settlement of Gilston completely merges within the landscape. Even views from the fields of Gilston House do not reveal the roofs of Terlings Park: only the towers and facilities of Harlow beyond give indication of buildings being not so far away.



4.Long-distance view from the east



5.Short-distance from the north

Eastwick

Eastwick appears as a settlement among trees, with roofs and frontages barely appearing in between the trees and tall hedgerows, and more tree crowns rising above the rooflines behind the houses.



6.Long-distance looking north



7.Short-distance from the Airfield

Hunsdon

Hunsdon has a fragmented perimeter: entirely green in places and more built-up in others. In all cases, the built form is horizontal and interspersed with trees, either in front or beyond the houses or farm buildings.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Views from the Countryside towards the Villages

Future villages will be larger and closer together than existing ones, and it will be more of a challenge to achieve the effect of 'village set amongs trees'. Nevertheless, opportunities could be explored to:

1. Strategically locate (and plant as early as possible) blocks of woodland or seminatural trees within the green corridors and buffer area to mimic the appearance of existing villages.
2. Carefully design the landscape from key points and Important Views to optimise the impact of the landscape over the built form.
3. Avoid prominent buildings or highly visible uses at the fringes of villages, especially towards open land and countryside footpath.
4. Distribute height and massing in a way that assists a soft transition between built-up areas and countryside, adopting fragmented perimeters with tall trees interspersed between the houses.



View of Eastwick

A4.7 - Soft edges

Description of Local Character

Village edges are typically green and informal, with abundant planting and a diverse roofline creating a soft transition between village and countryside.



1. Southern edge of Widford



2. Western edge of Eastwick

The importance of soft edges

Soft edges are a characteristic of villages, creating a narrow transition buffer from the built-up area of the village and the countryside.

Towards the edge, villages tend to become informal and open, with irregular rooflines and a belt of trees and tall shrubs interspersed between the buildings and along the boundaries.

This characteristic is not just a historic feature of the older parts of villages. The better and more appropriate designs for infill and new development adopted principles such as:

- Avoiding development all around the perimeter, leaving gaps and open views towards the countryside beyond.
- Informal building alignment and varied rooflines, so that a compact frontage is not formed towards the outside.
- Planting of tall trees in between buildings at the edge.
- Planting of shrubs and trees to create a leafy transition between the property boundary and the countryside land beyond.



3. New houses at the edge of Hunsdon



4. New houses, Gilston Park



5. Terlings from the air, Gilston

Inappropriate urban edges

Hard frontages, aligned buildings and formal sequences of buildings or terraces are uncommon and unsuitable to village location, as they create an urbanised frontage that dominates the landscape and countryside.



6. Edge of a South Cambridgeshire village

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Soft Edges

Soft edges are a well established design principle in rural setting, and a key differentiator between rural development and the more urban / suburban styles at the edges of urban areas. Soft edges can be created through a range of design principles:

1. Adoption of informal and open building alignments at the edges of the villages, presenting diverse orientation of frontages, gables and rooflines towards the edge.
2. Avoidance of perimeter blocks or regular compact frontages towards the open countryside and key views, as these create an urbanised frontage dominating the countryside.
3. Planting of tall trees in between buildings at the edges and plants and shrubs to create a leafy, fragmented transition from village to countryside.

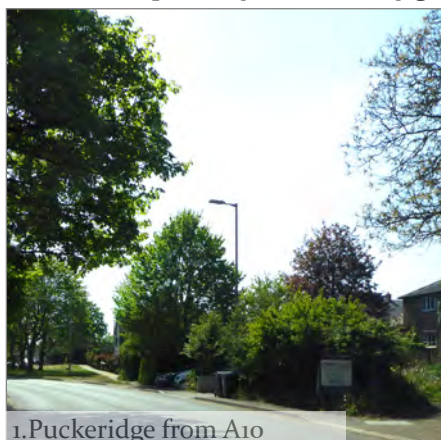


Southern edge of Widford

A4.8 - Sense of arrival / Gateways

Description of Local Character

Arrival into local villages is generally understated: the side of the first houses appear in between trees and edges almost unexpectedly, without any gateway buildings.



1. Puckeridge from A10

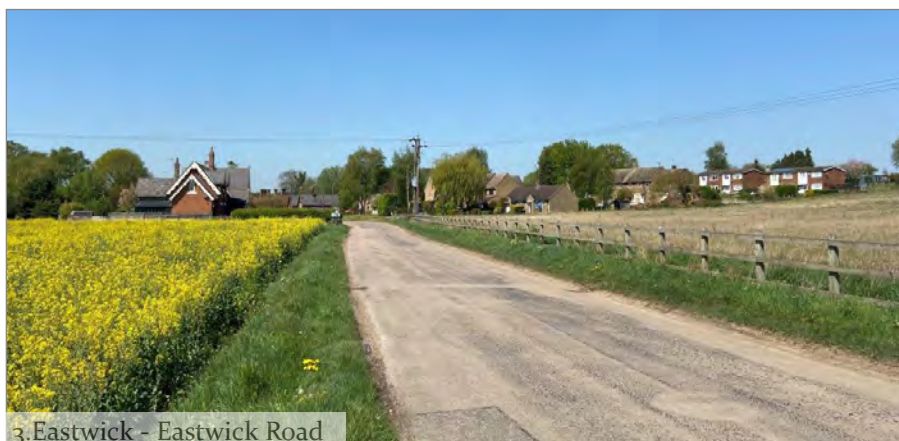


2. Much Hadham from north

Main characteristics

Arrival into a village, even from a main road, such the arrival from the A10 into Puckeridge, is never marked by the built form:

- Trees and hedges increase in variety and colour.
- The road narrows and loses its formal definition. Road markings and signage are less prominent.
- Buildings appear sideways, without creating a focal point.



3. Eastwick - Eastwick Road

Eastwick

Arrival into Eastwick from the A414 is through an informal lane and fields, the village appearing in between trees in the distance.

No single building dominates the view. The Victorian Old School building on the left appears sideways with its decorated eaves and interlocked roofs.



4. Gilston - Eastwick Road



5. Gilston - from Home Wood

Gilston

Gilston does not have a compact village form, and no clear arrival point either. Arriving from Harlow via Eastwick Road, the village is announced by buildings isolated by landscape gaps: the Dusty Miller pub, the trees and entrance to Terlings Park and the first houses of Pye Corner.

From Home Wood, St Mary's Church spire blends between the trees.



6. Hunsdon - B180 from Stanstead Abbots

Hunsdon

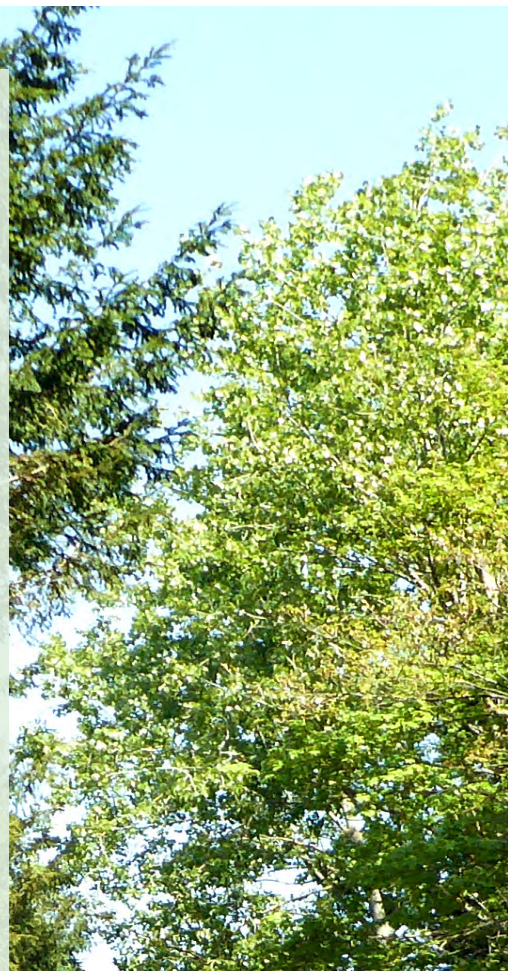
Arrival along Hunsdon Road, from either north or south, is marked by trees and buildings replacing the open views of the fields, without any significant gateway point or building.

Arrival from Church Lane is gradual, with Hunsdon House barely noticeable, and St Dunstan just appearing in between trees. Fields and scattered housing follow, before reaching the core of the village.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Sense of Arrival / Gateways

Gateways and landmark buildings at the entrance of a site are typical of 'estate' development, and alien in villages that developed organically over time. The design of a transition through landscape into the new villages could consider:

1. Gradual increase in the variety and colour of trees and planting, creating a diverse and visually rich landscaped 'gateway', rather than a built one.
2. Sideways orientation of the first buildings along the main spine, preferably set back behind planting and hedges, so that buildings and houses start to appear in between the foliage, rather than assert themselves.
3. Delicate and fine detailing in the first buildings at the edges, as a way to replicate the subtle uniqueness of key buildings like the Old School House in Eastwick or the pubs of the villages.
4. Changes to the access road upon arrival, as it turns into an attractive local street, where slow and attentive driving and streetscape quality are even more important.

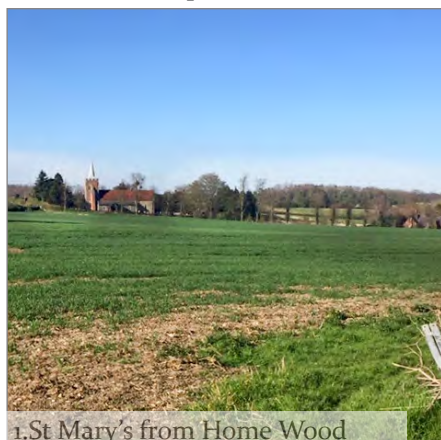


Arrival in High Wych

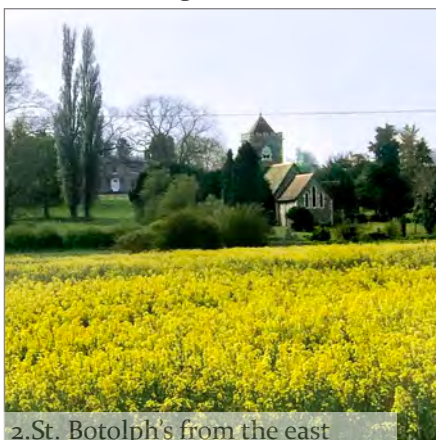
A4.9 - Landmark buildings

Description of Local Character

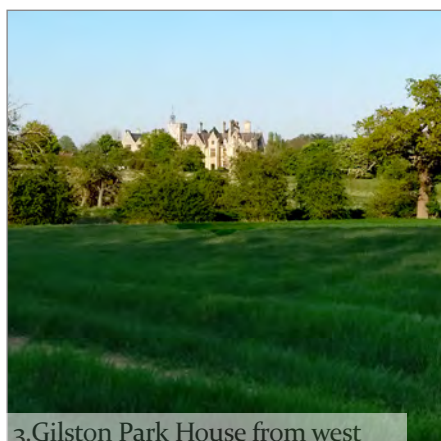
The historic development of the area is marked by the large country houses set in woodland and hunting grounds: this relationship has not been lost and should be safeguarded for the future.



1. St Mary's from Home Wood



2. St. Botolph's from the east



3. Gilston Park House from west



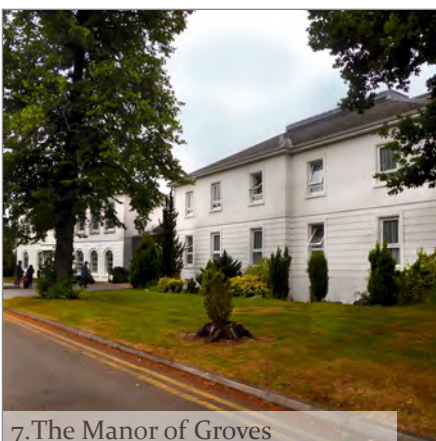
4. View from the park



5. View of St. Dustan's and Hundson House from Lords Wood



6. Much Hadham's big houses



7. The Manor of Groves

The character of local landmarks

Unlike the settlements grown around a central market or a manor house, local villages have no landmark buildings in a prominent focal position within the built area.

The houses of the gentry gave origin to the villages, but these developed at some distance and out of sight, so that the main house could retain its connection with the landscape and with the hunting grounds. Large churches were built near the main house, and therefore outside the village.

- The imposing scale and proportions of Gilston Park House and Hunsdon House are the most conspicuous of the area.
- They are set in landscape and hidden from public view, only visible in the distance from the countryside.
- The churches are mostly part of the landscape scenery, just emerging in between the trees, visible through fields and countryside, but discreetly positioned when travelling by road.
- Other large houses, built by wealthy owners as seasonal country residences, mostly sought a private and secluded position.
- Where located within the village, landmark buildings are simply part of the street scene, without pronounced gateways or features.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Landmark Buildings

The design of future villages should respect and retain the significance of the existing landmark buildings, and take inspiration from the distinctive way local landmarks relate to the landscape. Design suggestions could include:

1. Ensuring that prominent major landmarks are significant in the village for their function as well, and are designed to excellent standards of architectural quality, innovation and exemplary sustainability.
2. Establishing very strong integration between major built landmarks and landscape, safeguarding the predominance of landscape over built form from a distance, and without compromising the role, setting and presence of the historic manor houses (Gilston Park House and Hunsdon House).
3. Avoiding introducing major 'urban' landmarks, forming formal gateways, urban vistas or frontal focal points in a piazza.
4. Introduce local landmarks as element of 'surprise' within the organic layouts of the villages to include schools, village halls and other community or special buildings.



Gilston Park House

A4.10 - Height and massing

Description of Local Character

The villages are typically formed by two storey houses with a steeply pitched roof, lower than the trees. Larger buildings are mostly articulated in multiple volumes.



1. High Street, Puckeridge



2. Eastwick Hall Ln, Eastwick

Along the main spine

The high street is often the most compact street of the village, with buildings, forming a continuous but varied 2-storey frontage with no front gardens.

Larger buildings are mostly set back by a landscaped front space and have vertically proportioned gables, often on the main frontage.



3. Pye Corner, Gilston

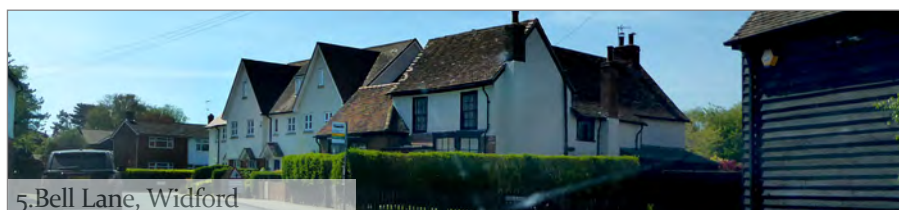


4. Gilston Lane, Gilston

Individual houses

Single or semi-detached houses are:

- Typically 2-storey high, with a steep pitched roof set low on the upper floor.
- Volumes are articulated, reducing the visual mass of the frontage.
- Tall decorative chimneys and gables with windows and decorative features are common.



5. Bell Lane, Widford

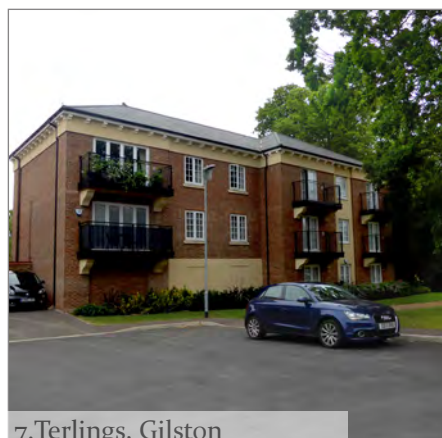


6. Hunsdon Lodge Farm

Larger blocks

Larger blocks are not common, unless they are farm buildings. Where present, they are generally:

- Informally arranged.
- Formed by a horizontal bar interrupted by front triangular gables.
- Set back from the roads and interspersed with trees.



7. Terlings, Gilston



8. Gilston Lane, Gilston

Three floor buildings

Three-storey buildings are uncommon and generally:

- Are located on secondary streets and / or well set back from the roads.
- The third floor is often part of the roof space, or other devices have been used to reduce the visual impact of height and bulk.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Heights and Massing

Exploration of the distribution of heights and massing in future villages will need to be very carefully undertaken, to retain 'human scale' and visual presence of trees above and in between the roofs. Local character prompts a range of design choices:

1. Compact village centres and high streets with a variety of buildings of modest height, with diverse frontages and rooflines.
2. Larger buildings positioned to minimise visual impact, set back from the street or located on secondary streets, so that their presence is blended in between buildings of prevalent modest height.
3. Common features include visual devices to de-emphasise the bulk and massing of larger buildings: front triangular gables, interlocked volumes and roofs, informal clustering around a private or semi-private yard (as in farm buildings).
4. Avoiding linear arrangements of bulkier buildings, taller gateway buildings and any other layout that gives prominence to mass and height.



Hodgson Cottages, Gilston

A4.11 - Variety of alignment and built form

Description of Local Character

As the villages were built over time and by successive addition, they display a great variety of buildings, and only small groups of similar houses.



1. Hunsdon High Street



2. Hunsdon, Drury Lane corner

Similar buildings - variety of details

In places, like the centre of Hunsdon, the buildings have similar colours and materials. In this case, diversity is shown in the irregular alignment, the different roof shapes and the details: doors, windows, eaves.



3. Station Road, Puckeridge



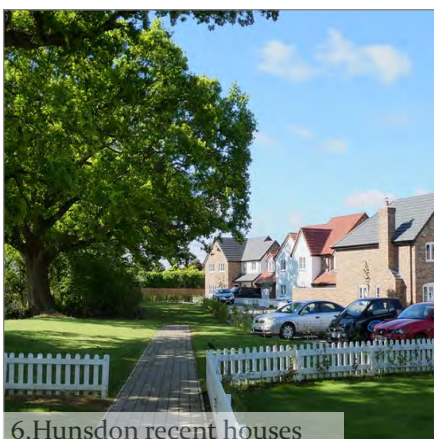
4. High Road, High Wych

Varied alignment and form

In most part of local villages, buildings of different times and form are mixed together. Within the variety there has been a consistent use of materials and forms.



5. Gilston Park new extension



6. Hunsdon recent houses

New buildings with local references and variety

Successful new additions to the villages typically present:

- Richly planted frontages, including trees.
- Simplicity of forms.
- Height and massing comparable to those of the local area.
- Range of locally inspired building materials.



7. Beaulieu Park, Chelmsford



8. Barking Riverside

Inappropriate formal or repetitive units

Certain building formats, even at appropriate densities, can create an urban or suburban character, inappropriate in the Gilston Area. Inappropriate features include:

- Rows of repeated units.
- Formal alignments.
- Hard front gardens.
- Flat roofs.

Drawing Inspiration from Local Character: Variety of Alignment and Built Form

Future villages will not have the benefit of successive additions over centuries of development, and history as a source of variety and architectural interest. Nevertheless, uniformity of layout and repetition of building 'templates' is typical of suburban extensions and out of character in a village environment. Future designs should attempt to build-in variety through:

1. Informal layouts (see also A4.2: Village Structure) with only small-scale clusters of buildings of a similar design, even if overall character is consistent across each village. Rows of repeated units and formal alignments should be avoided.
2. Creating opportunities for 'customisation' from the outset, encouraging residents and owners to adopt variations in the palette of details, in frontages and front gardens.
3. Adopting simplicity of forms that can be enriched through planting and local detailing, with a range of locally inspired building materials.
4. Avoiding hard front gardens, flat roofs and cladding panels that are commonly associated with urban character and architecture.



High Wych

Appendix 5 – Key Evidence

The Neighbourhood Plan draws from extensive evidence base prepared for the East Herts District Plan and preparation of the Concept Framework. It also draws from national and regional guidance. The list below summarises the key evidence documents that have informed the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan

1. National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (June 2019)
2. East Herts District Plan (October 2018)
3. East Herts District Landscape Character Assessment SPD 2007
4. Affordable Housing SPD, East Herts Council (Draft for Consultation, January 2020)
5. Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD (Draft for Consultation), East Herts Council (October 2019)
6. Gilston Area Charter SPD, East Herts Council, East Herts Council (June 2020)
7. Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2018-2031 (LTP4, July 2018)
8. Hertfordshire Infrastructure & Funding Prospectus 2018-2031, Hertfordshire County Council 2018
9. Statement of Common Ground between East Herts Council and Places for People and City & Provincial regarding GA1 (the Gilston Area) Ref: ED160 (November 2017)
10. Gilston Area Concept Framework (July 2018)
11. Gilston Area Concept Framework- Executive Report (East Herts Council, 12 June 2018)
12. Gilston Area Concept Framework- Council Report (East Herts Council, 25 July 2018)
13. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision (November 2018)
14. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Design Guide (November 2018)
15. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Sustainable Transport Strategy (Draft for Consultation, January 2020)
16. Harlow and Gilston Infrastructure Delivery Plan (April 2019)
17. Harlow and Gilston Strategic Viability Assessment Report and Appendices (April 2019)
18. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town 'How To' Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability (Guidance Note: 01/20190417, Nov 2018)
19. Harlow-Gilston Garden Town Water Cycle Study Update (2018) and Garden Town Water Cycle Study Addendum (2018)
20. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board Stewardship Principles (July 2019)
21. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Employment Commission Draft Report, (February 2020)
22. Sustainability Appraisal of Pre-Submission District Plan, AECOM (September 2016)
23. Sustainability Appraisal Report Addendum, Main Modifications to District Plan, AECOM (January 2018)
24. Sustainability Appraisal of Strategic Spatial Options for West Essex and East Herts, AECOM (September 2016)
25. East Herts Green Belt Review, Peter Brett Associates (September 2015)
26. Updating the Overall Housing Need- Based on 2014 based projections for West Essex and East Herts, ORS, (August 2016)

27. The Gilston Area Settlement Appraisal, East Herts Council 2016
28. East Herts Strategic Sites Delivery Strategy, PBA (September 2015)
29. Village Hierarchy Study, East Herts Council (August 2016)
30. Gilston Area: Heritage Impact Assessment (Montagu Evans, October 2017)
31. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) ORS (September 2015)
32. Housing Needs Survey, DCA 2014
33. Delivery Study for Harlow and Surrounding Area: Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018)
34. East Herts Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2017)
35. Gilston Area Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, Places for People (May 2014)
36. East Hertfordshire Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2016) and Addendum, JBA Consulting (March 2017)
37. Draft Final Water Resources Management Plan 2020-2080, Affinity Water (June 2019)
38. Wildlife Sites Inventory for East Herts, Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre, 2013
39. Habitat Regulations Assessment, AECOM (September 2016)
40. River Stort Catchment Management Plan
www.riverleacatchment.org.uk/index.php/river-stort-home
41. Natural England - ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace
42. Nature Nearby' Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance, Natural England (March 2010)
43. Biodiversity Strategy for Development, Places for People & Provincial Properties (December 2016)
44. Open Spaces and Sports Facilities Assessment Technical Study- Background and Context, Nortoft 2017
45. East Herts Assessment of Sports Facilities, East Herts Council 2011
46. Air Quality Planning Guidance Document, East Herts Council 2016
47. Green Infrastructure Plan, Land Use Consultants (March 2011)
48. Living with Beauty: report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission (January, 2020)
49. South Cambridgeshire District Council Village Design Guides (2020)
50. Pevsner Architectural Guides: Buildings of England (Hertfordshire) 2012
51. Historic England National Heritage List for England
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>
52. Gilston Area Heritage Desk Based Assessment, Places for People and City & Provincial Properties (December 2016)
53. Gilston Area Village 7 Employment Land Review (Savills, October 2019)
54. Guide 9: Long-Term Stewardship. Garden City Standards for the 21st Century. Practical Guide for Creating Successful New Communities, TCPA (December 2017)
55. Hunsdon Neighbourhood Plan - <http://hunsdonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/>
56. Historic Census Data - Vision of Britain www.visionofbritain.org.uk/census
57. ONS Housing Statistics / NOMIS, Local Area Profiles Census 2011
58. Groundwater www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-source-protection-zones-spzs
59. Geographical spatial data:
District Plan designations – East Herts District Council
Landscape and environmental designations – Natural England (magic.defra.gov.uk)
Heritage – Historic England, National Heritage List
Public Rights of Way – Government Datastore (data.gov.uk)

Appendix 6 - Glossary

The terminology used in the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the terminology used in the East Herts District Plan, the Gilston Area Concept Framework and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision.

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Accessible Natural Green Space | Natural England's 'Nature Nearby: Accessible Natural Greenspace, March 2010' includes the following definitions: Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG) Accessible greenspace – places that are available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions (although some sites may be closed to the public overnight and there may be fees for parking a vehicle). The places are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995). An accessible place will also be known to the target users, including potential users who live within the site catchment area. Natural greenspace – Places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate. Natural and semi-natural greenspace exists as a distinct typology but also as discrete areas within the majority of other greenspace typologies. |
| Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGst) | ANGst recommends that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home; • at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; • one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus • a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population. |
| Affordable Housing | Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house Affordable Housing prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. Social rented: housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008), for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency. |

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| | <p>Affordable rented: housing is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).</p> <p>Intermediate housing: homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.</p> <p>Starter Homes: new homes only available for purchase by qualifying first-time buyers. Such homes will be made available for sale at a price which is at least 20% less than its market value, subject to a maximum price cap of £250,000.</p> <p>Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as “low cost market” housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.</p> |
| Allocated Site | To deliver the development strategy and meet its housing requirement, for example, the Council allocates land for particular types of land use, such as housing, as part of its planned approach to managing development and shaping the future of the district’s towns and villages. Infrastructure providers can then take the planned growth of a settlement into account when delivering their services to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place to support growth. |
| Ancient Woodland | An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD |
| Area Action Plan | A statutory development plan document prepared by local planning authorities which is aimed at establishing a set of proposals and policies for the development of a specific area (such as a town centre or area of new development). |
| Biodiversity | The whole variety of life encompassing all genetics, species and ecosystem variations, including plants and animals. |
| Biodiversity Net Gain | Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before, by which developers are encouraged to bring forward schemes that provide an overall increase in natural habitat and ecological features. Biodiversity Net Gain is part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Para 170(d) and Para 175(d)) without specification of a number/percentage for the gain. The draft Environment Bill (2020) includes a requirement to deliver a mandatory 10 % biodiversity net gain to be maintained for a period of at least 30 years. |
| Bus Rapid Transit | A fast and efficient priority bus service, located along the Sustainable Transport Corridors, making use of the latest transport technology. The Bus Rapid Transit will have its own lanes or priority at junctions and provide a comfortable and affordable alternative to private vehicles. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Central Stort Crossing | This connects the A414 Eastwick Road with the A414 Edinburgh Way via Fifth Avenue. The crossing will be located to the immediate west of the existing crossing. |
| Character | A term relating to the appearance of any rural or urban location in terms of its Character landscape or the layout of streets and open spaces, often giving places their own distinct identity. |
| Climate Change | Long-term changes in temperature, precipitation, wind and all other aspects of the Earth's climate. Often regarded as a result of human activity and fossil fuel consumption. |
| Climate Change Adaptation | Adjustments to natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic factors or their effects, including from changes in rainfall and rising temperatures, which moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. |
| Climate Change Mitigation | This involves taking action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions. |
| Community Boundary | Definition of boundary to identify extent of existing community to include separate groups of buildings outside settlement boundary. Applies to existing village communities, whose integrity should be protected, particularly the dispersed settlement of Gilston. It does not imply that development within its boundary is typically acceptable (unlike a Village Boundary). |
| Community Trust Open Space Land | The area allocated in the key Diagram for the Gilston Area in the District Plan as public open space as part of wider managed parklands including continuing farming. This area will remain undeveloped, with the exception of a small number of buildings associated with its recreational use. Policy GA1 states that a community land trust, or other governance mechanism as appropriate, will be established in order to deliver local ownership and management of these assets and that this should take place early in the overall development programme. |
| Community Sport | A mix of formal and informal sports areas, including; playing fields, cricket club, bowls club, tennis club, trim trail, climbing walls, sports courts, etc. Some community sports facilities are to be shared with schools |
| Concept Framework | Concept Framework provides a benchmark for future development in accordance with Policy GA1. |
| Countryside | Common term that indicates the open space outside cities and urban areas, made up of agricultural and natural land as defined by Natural England (ENRR526 Accessible Natural Greenspace). Natural land includes tracts of countryside (woodland, scrub, heathland, meadows and marshes) which through appropriate management support essentially wild plants and animal assemblages, and the less intensively managed parts of parks, sport pitches, churchyards and cemeteries. |
| Density | Density is a calculation of the number of houses that may be built on a particular piece of land. It is usually expressed as the number of dwellings per hectare (dph). Density Net density includes those sites which will be developed including directly associated uses, |

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| | such as access roads within the site, private garden space, car parking areas, incidental open space, landscaping and children's play areas, where they are provided. Gross density includes large-scale open space, roads, schools, hospitals, and other major supporting infrastructure. |
| Eastern Stort Crossing | This connects the Eastern Access to the Site, and Eastwick Road (at Pye Corner), to the A414 Edinburgh Way (eastern end) via River Way. |
| Enterprise Zone | A designated geographical area in which state incentives such as tax concessions and simplified local authority planning procedures are offered in order to encourage business investment. |
| Flood Plain | Generally low-lying areas adjacent to a watercourse, tidal lengths of a river or the sea, where water flows in times of flood or would flow but for the presence of flood defences. |
| Garden City | Concept of urban design and planning developed by Ebenezer Howard and his contemporaries that sought to create settlements that combined the positive aspects of both the town and countryside |
| Gilston Area | Gilston Parish, Eastwick Parish and that part of Hunsdon Parish which lies within the proposed Gilston Area (Policy GA1) as defined in the East Hertfordshire District Plan |
| Green Belt | A designated band of land around urban areas, designed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas • To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another • To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment • To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns • To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land |
| Green Corridors | The landscape separating villages which will reinforce the distinctiveness of individual villages and their relationship to the countryside and create rich areas for wildlife habitats and informal recreation. |
| Green Infrastructure Network | Green Infrastructure is a strategic network of multi-functional green space, both new and existing, rural and urban, which supports natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life in sustainable communities. It provides habitats for and aids migration of wildlife, flood water storage, urban cooling and local access to shady outdoor space as well as creating attractive spaces for recreation. |
| Green Wedges | Green wedges comprise the open areas around and between parts of settlements, which maintain the distinction between the countryside Green Wedges and built up areas, prevent the coalescence (merging) of adjacent places and can also provide recreational opportunities. |
| Group 1,2 and 3 Village | The District Plan identifies three types of village: Group 1 Villages: villages where development for housing, employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted, in order to help sustain vital and viable rural communities. |

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| | <p>Group 2 Villages: villages where limited infill development, together with small-scale employment, leisure, recreation and community facilities will be permitted. In addition, small-scale development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted.</p> <p>Group 3 Villages: villages where limited infill development identified in an adopted Neighbourhood Plan will be permitted</p> |
| Heritage Asset | A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). |
| Historic Parks and Gardens | A park or garden of special historic interest. Graded I (highest quality), II* or II. Designated by Historic England |
| Infrastructure | Providing the necessary supporting ‘infrastructure’ of utility services, transport, schools, open space, community, health and leisure services. See also Green Infrastructure. |
| Infrastructure Delivery Plan | The Infrastructure Delivery Plan establishes a framework for private and public investment. It identifies as far as possible the infrastructure needs of new development, and the associated costs, phasing, funding sources and responsibilities for delivery. |
| Listed Building | A building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building, and any buildings or permanent structures (e.g. walls) within its curtilage. Listing highlights what is significant about a building or site, and helps to ensure that any future changes to it do not result in the loss of its significance. Historic England is responsible for designating buildings for listing in England. |
| International, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity | All international sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites |
| Land Value Capture | Mechanisms that enable the recovery and reinvestment of a percentage of the uplift in the value of land associated with granting planning permission. Current methods focus on linking the delivery of infrastructure to the contribution of funds from landowners/developers. The best model will be explored through the Garden Town Infrastructure and Delivery workstreams. |
| Landscape Buffer | Areas surrounding existing settlements and other clusters of buildings comprising natural greenspace and a mixture of new planting and management of existing vegetation which protect the setting of existing settlements and retain sensitive views and existing landscape features. |
| Local Green Space Designation | The Local Green Space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities. |

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| Local Nature Reserve | Non-statutory habitats of local significance designated by local authorities where protection and public understanding of nature conservation is encouraged. (See also Site of Nature Conservation Importance or Site of Biological Interest). |
| Local Transport Plan (LTP) | A statutory document which sets out the strategy for the management, maintenance and development of the area's transport system. This five-year integrated transport strategy is prepared by local authorities in partnership with the community, seeking funding to help provide local transport projects. The Plan also sets out the resources predicted for delivery of the targets identified in the strategy. |
| Locally Important Biodiversity Sites | Normally smaller, isolated sites, including trees, hedgerows or ponds that may not be designated but make a contribution to local or wider ecological networks. |
| Long-term Stewardship | East Herts Council and the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Board accept that new facilities will not be sustainable without well organised management structures supported by consistent revenue streams. Community assets must be actively managed and properly looked after in perpetuity through the creation of Community Trusts or other governance mechanisms. Putting local people at the heart of the process can help to generate increased local support. |
| Masterplan | A plan that shows an overall development concept that includes urban design, landscaping, infrastructure, service provision, circulation, present and future land use and built form. |
| Micro-hub | An interchange point within new neighbourhoods between the Bus Rapid Transit and the cycling and walking routes of the Super Greenways. Often found at local centres, small local centres and other intersections, it will provide facilities such as cycle hire, repair and parking and live updates for the Bus Rapid Transit service |
| Mitigation | The term can be used to refer to measures to reduce the incidence or creation of negative impacts. |
| Mixed Use Development | A development which contains a variety of uses such as businesses, housing, leisure and recreation. Such developments contribute towards building sustainable communities by increasing accessibility to a range of activities and promoting non-car modes of travel. |
| Modal Shift | A change of transport mode (for example, car, bus, train, bicycle, walking). In planning terms this usually implies a shift away from the private car to more sustainable transport modes, whether passenger transport or walking and cycling. |
| Neighbourhood Green | Smaller strategic public open space providing focal points for individual 'neighbourhoods' and valuable outdoor space for informal recreation, socialising & play. |
| Open Space | All space of public value, including public landscaped areas, playing fields, parks and play areas, and also including not just |

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| | land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs, which can offer opportunities for sport and recreation or can also act as a visual amenity and a haven for wildlife. |
| Permeability | The extent to which an environment allows for a choice of routes both through and within it, and allows opportunities for movement. |
| Planning Condition | A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order. |
| Planning Obligation | A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal. |
| Plateau | A landscape of fairly level high ground, which in rural areas tends to be a prominent landscape feature, often supporting a unique biodiversity. |
| Primary Road | A publicly maintained road, together with footways and verges that connects all villages. |
| Public Open Space | Open space, including not just land, but also inland bodies of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and can also act as a visual amenity. In some instances, Public Open Space can be designated by a council, where public access may or may not be formally established, but which fulfils or has the potential to fulfil a recreational or non-recreational role (for example, amenity, ecological, educational, social or cultural usages). |
| Public Realm | Those parts of a village or town (whether publicly or privately owned) available, for everyone to use. This includes streets, squares, parks, etc. |
| Rights of Way | A strip of land occupied or intended to be occupied by particular transportation types and public use facilities, like roads, railroads, and utility lines. |
| Rural | The term used to describe the landscape setting of villages where farmland and woodland is used to reinforce the separation of development and maintain village character and to highlight the distinction from urban areas. Used interchangeably with countryside to describe landscape character. |
| Rural Area beyond the Green Belt | This East Herts specific policy operates a similar level of restraint to Green Belt. The Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt covers two-thirds of the District not covered by Green Belt, outside designated settlement boundaries. |
| Secondary Streets | Secondary streets are considered support streets for the primary ones, meant to provide access between residential development. |
| Section 106 Agreement | A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken. |

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| Setting of a Heritage Asset | The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral. |
| SMEs | Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are non-subsidary, independent firms which employ fewer than 250 employees. |
| Strategic Green Corridors | Semi-natural open space generally associated with existing landscape/ ecological features |
| Strategic Landscape Masterplan | The requirement for a Strategic Landscape Masterplan to be produced and approved before the first Village Masterplan is established in the Gilston Area Charter SPD (June 2020). This will establish a spatial strategy for comprehensive development of the entire Gilston Area site allocation in one overarching plan that draws together and expands upon the principles established in the parameter plans approved at the outline application stage, and the work already undertaken in the Gilston Area Concept Framework. |
| Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) | Documents which add further detail to the policies in the Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents are capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. |
| Sustainable Development | A widely used definition drawn up by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987: "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." |
| Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) | An alternative solution to the direct channelling of water. SuDs are designed to control the run-off from a development; to improve the quality of the run-off; and to enhance the nature conservation, landscape and amenity value of the site and its surroundings. |
| Sustainable Transport Modes | Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport. |
| Sustainable Transport Corridors | A series of strategic corridors in the Garden Town providing high quality public and active travel options, connecting neighbourhoods quickly with key destinations such as the town centre and rail station. |
| Transport Assessment | A comprehensive and systematic process that sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport and what measures will need to be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development. |

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| Utilities | Utilities include services provision such as electricity, gas, water, cable and telephone. |
| Village | A residential community with local community facilities, shops and workspaces, which is set in rural countryside and is physically and visually distinct but in this context, will maintain strong links with surrounding villages and the Garden Town. |
| Village Boundary | A boundary drawn as part of the District Plan process, usually quite tightly, around the main built up area of a village, within which development may be allowed in principle. |
| Village Buffers | Natural & semi-natural green space creating recreational opportunities in a more naturalistic setting, as well as valuable habitat provision and screening/buffer to neighbouring villages and the wider countryside |
| Village Centre | A predominantly hard space that provides a meeting/focal point for the village close to key amenities such as the school, shops, etc. |
| Wildlife Sites | Designated land of local and regional importance defined as discrete areas of land considered to be of significance for their wildlife features. They are the most important places for wildlife outside legally protected land such as SSSIs |