

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: April 2024

Subject: Place Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Bedford

Recommending:

That the report of the Place Portfolio Holder be noted.

1. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT)

EFDC officers continue to liaise with key stakeholders across the five Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) authorities and relevant site promoters. This is undertaken in the context of wider Garden Town activities. Key updates in terms of the Garden Town are:

- Inter Authority Agreement for a Joint Committee has been agreed by all parties and is in the process of being implemented.
- The Latton Priory Design Code public consultation has concluded and is being updated in response. It is being brought to the March 2024 Cabinet for endorsement as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- The East of Harlow masterplanning guidance Supplementary Planning Document consultation has concluded and the document updated in response. The final Supplementary Planning Document is programmed to be brought to Cabinet in May or June 2024 for endorsement as a material consideration in planning decisions.

A newly appointed EFDC HGGT lead liaison officer, Adeola Pilgrim, will start with the Council on 2nd April to fill the vacant post last occupied by Lone Braddick before she left last year.

2. Other Strategic Masterplans

The public consultation on the North Weald Bassett Strategic Masterplan Framework concluded on 16th January 2024. Feedback has been reviewed and amendments made to the masterplan. The final Strategic Masterplan Framework is being brought to March 2024 Cabinet for endorsement as a material consideration in planning decisions. An outline planning application for 780 of the homes provided for in the masterplan has now been received and is under consideration by officers. Discussions are underway with key technical stakeholders on the application including Essex County Council highways and National Highways in relation to capacity improvements to J7 of the M11. Determination of this application will have due regard to the final endorsed Strategic Masterplan Framework.

The site promoters of the South Epping masterplan are engaged with Council officers on the development of a Strategic Masterplan for the site. It is currently anticipated that consultation on a draft masterplan will take place in summer 2024.

Masterplan discussions have commenced with the two promoters of the West Ongar Concept Framework. The programme for this is under review but it will be subject to a public consultation exercise prior to an endorsement by the Council.

The South Nazeing Concept Framework is under development, including a review by the Quality Review Panel. A parallel planning application has been received for the site, but its determination will be dependent on the finalisation and endorsement of the Concept Framework.

The developers of the Waltham Abbey North masterplan are engaged with officers and receipt of a draft Strategic Masterplan Framework document is currently awaited.

3. Climate Change

The developers of the Waltham Abbey North masterplan are engaged with officers and receipt of a draft Strategic Masterplan Framework document is currently awaited.

EFDC have supported Essex County Council in their development of Net Zero planning policies. This approach to building standards achieves energy efficient, net zero buildings, while also reducing energy costs for future residents. With the approach backed by legal advice, viability, and technical studies.

A [Written Ministerial Statement](#) (WMS) published on 13 December 2023 looks to restrict the ability of local authorities to set more ambitious energy standards. The Town and Country Planning Authority (TCPA), industry leaders and local authorities, are concerned about the impact of this WMS on the ability of local authorities to require emissions reductions from new development. Along with other Essex planning authorities, we are supporting the TCPA, who have drafted a letter to the secretary of state asking for clarity on the policy in the WMS and make clear that local planning authorities can adopt standards in local plans which go beyond building regulations if it is robust and viable.

4. Sustainable Travel

- A 1.5 FTE HGGT resource has been secured from Sustrans using UKSPF allocations for community/business engagement on sustainable travel, starting in April for one year.
- The new Sport England Place Partnership Expansion in Harlow will include a major focus on active and sustainable travel and large-scale funding opportunities via Active Essex (details tbc).
- Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (CWIP) for Waltham Abbey initial report will be launched at the annual Ninefields Stakeholder Conference on 20th March – aims include better access to employment to the west along with leisure and wellbeing access to Lea Valley Regional Park/National Cycle Route 1 via Lea Valley etc.
- Rapid EV charger base has more than doubled in the district in a year, due largely to our partnership with Instavolt (14 chargers across 5 car parks) – continued growth in usage and additional car parking revenues.
- Working with ECC on their county-wide Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund bid for a network of lower cost ‘fast’ chargers which will meet the needs of those with no off-street parking, fleets, lower income areas.