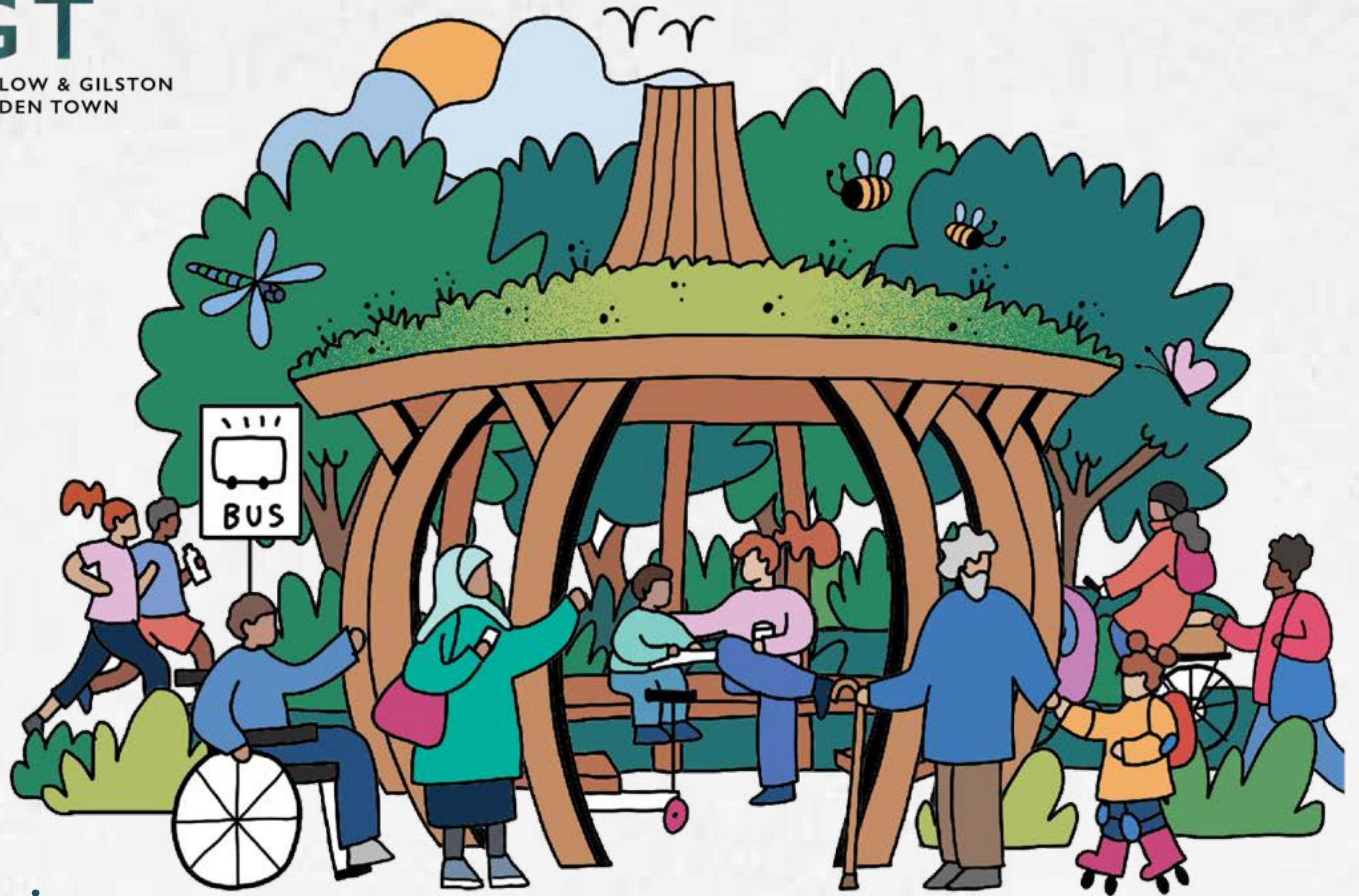
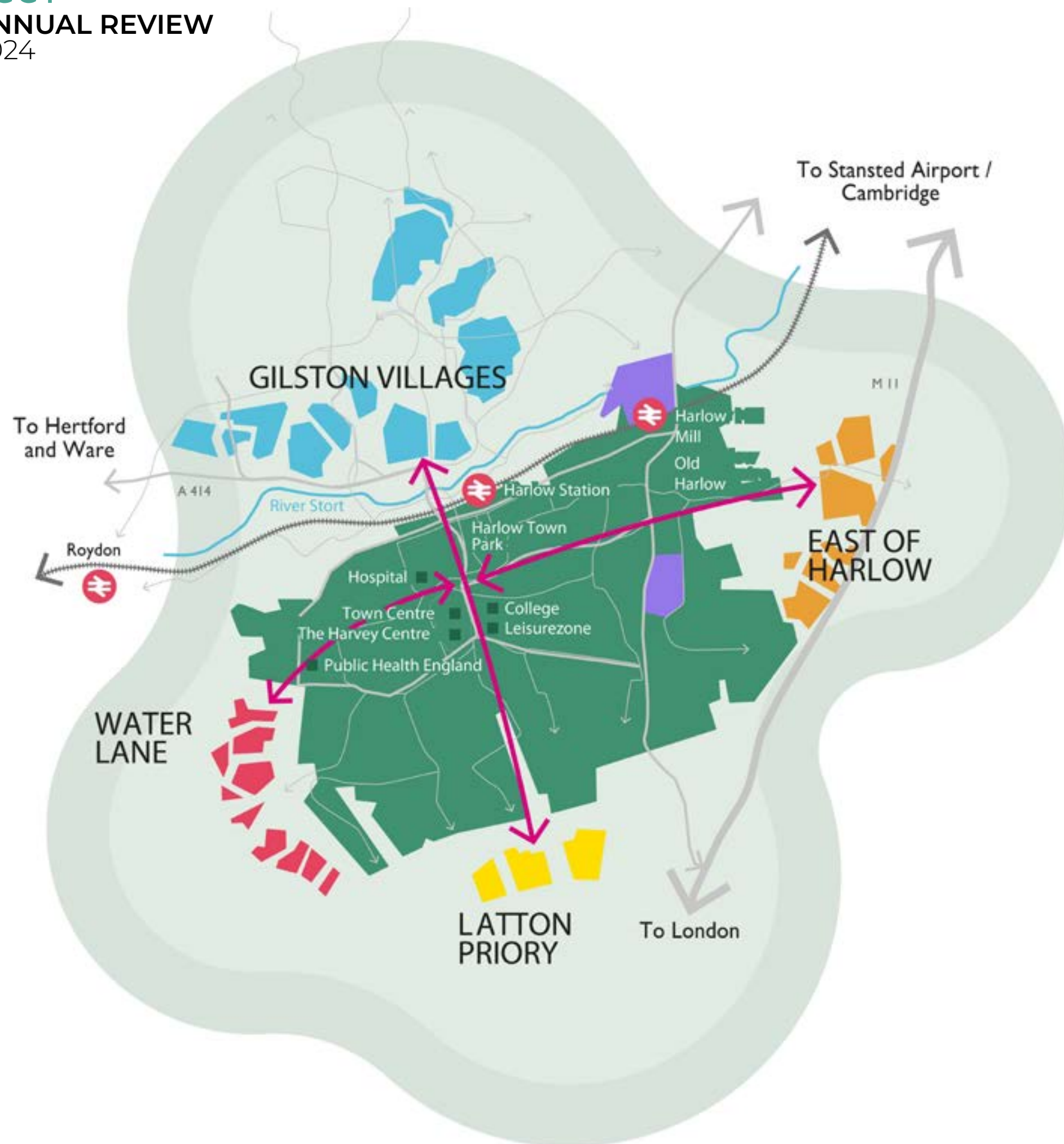


HGGT

HARLOW & GILSTON
GARDEN TOWN



Annual Review
April 2023 to March 2024



About

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) is a cross boundary, five Council led initiative to deliver Garden Town led growth and regeneration for new and existing communities in and around Harlow.

The initiative is managing the delivery of 16,000 new homes over the next nine years in four new Garden Town neighbourhoods in Water Lane, Latton Priory and East of Harlow with the fourth made up of seven new Garden villages in Gilston.

It will also see regeneration of Harlow's Town Centre, with ambitious plans that will bring forward a new Arts & Cultural Quarter alongside a redeveloped Broad Walk area and upgraded bus station.

HGGT was formally designated by Government in 2017 and is led by a unique public sector partnership of five Local Authorities – East Hertfordshire District Council, Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council, Harlow District Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

It captures the New Town principles of bringing together the best of urban and rural, integrating green and open spaces with neighbourhoods creating high-quality places that embrace and enable sustainable and healthy living.

HGGT works with communities, land-owners and developers to put the Garden Town principles at its heart.

From environmental stewardship to new homes, to connected communities and neighbourhoods where economy, learning, caring, health, wellbeing, culture and a thriving energised Harlow town centre all contribute to transformative, connected and sustainable opportunities for a growing community.



CHAIR'S INTRO

This is the sixth annual report for the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town project, delivering sustainable regeneration and growth in and around Harlow. This report represents the last under the governance of the HGGT Board as the project transitions from an informal partnership based on the principles of 'duty to co-operate' to a formal, constituted five-Council Joint Committee.

Establishing the Joint Committee enables local elected and accountable leadership to have meaningful and accountable project oversight.

It ensures all five Councils have an equal share in the risk associated with a project, already realising on the ground, the first tranche of investment in the order of £240million into Harlow's transport infrastructure.

This substantial investment demonstrates the credibility and can do reputation of the five Councils with their focus on delivering sustainable regeneration.

Work has begun on the first of the four planned 'Sustainable Transport Corridors' that are designed to reduce congestion for residents and prioritise rapid bus transit, walking and cycling.

The HGGT partnership has demonstrated the very best of civic leadership since its inception in 2017 and the vision and direction established by the five Councils has now over the last two years transitioned into action and delivery with the clear objective of bringing forward growth of the highest quality for Harlow and the wider area.

Over the last 12 months, HGGT's council partners have continued to make substantial progress in building credibility with third party stakeholders and investors and you can read about the focus on delivery throughout this report.

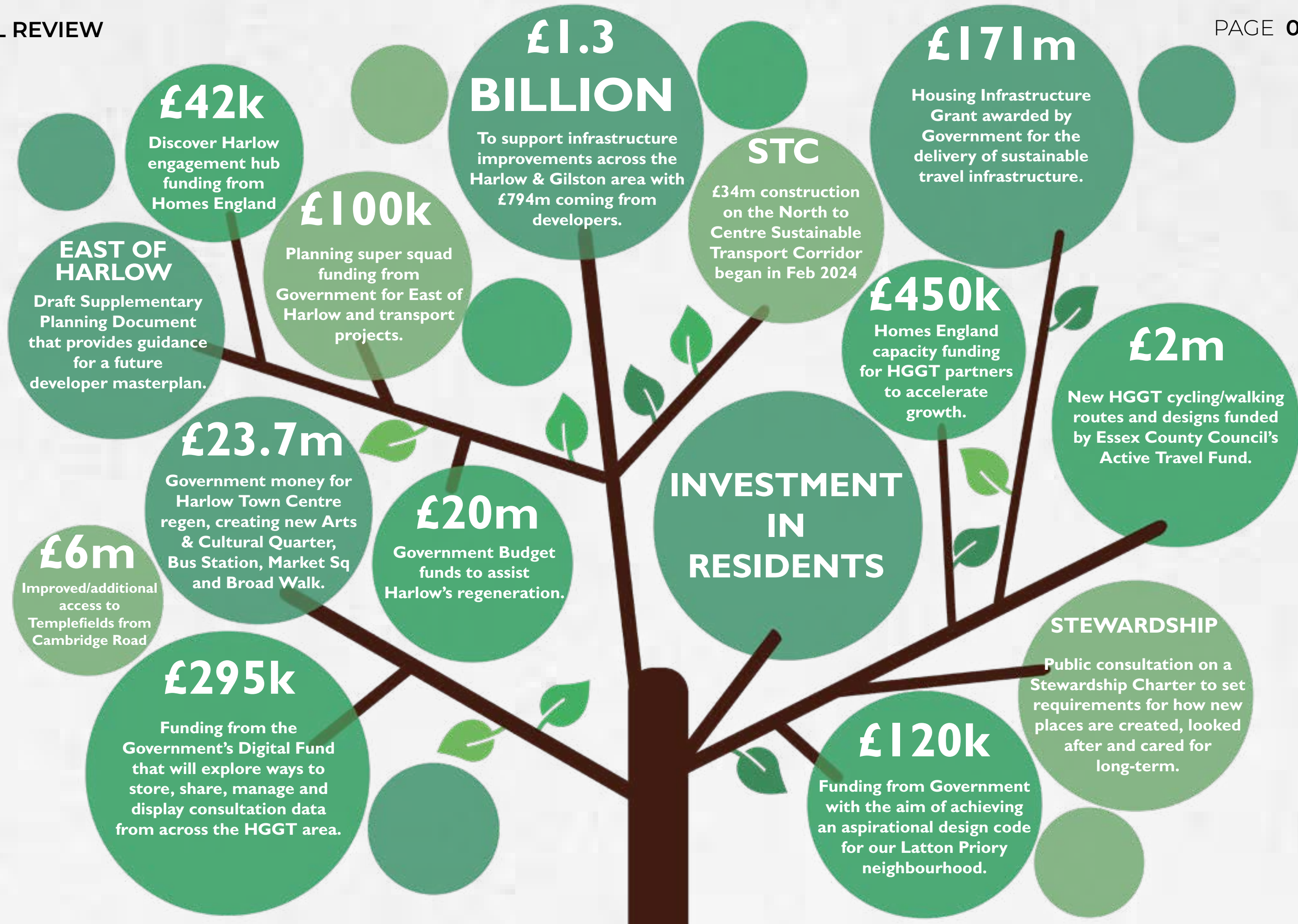
Other highlights have included the Latton Priory Design Code and draft masterplan guidance for East of Harlow to planning for the seven Garden Town villages in Gilston while Hertfordshire County Council continue to manage the £171m Housing Infrastructure Grant from Government that's so key to delivery.

And at the heart of any sustainable and lasting town led regeneration is a thriving town centre.

Harlow is now delivering it's biggest investment into Sir Frederick Gibberd's designed Town Centre since it was built nearly 80 years ago, an investment that demonstrates that Harlow is embracing its future, challenging perceptions and establishing a thriving and prospering community for the 21st century.

Guy Nicholson

Independent Chair, HGGT





PARTNER ACHIEVEMENTS

NEW COMMUNITIES AT GILSTON

All **10,000 homes across seven Gilston villages** planned for the Garden Town received an agreement for approval from East Herts Council in Feb/March 2023.

Once finalised the planning permissions will be with Places for People for six of the villages and Taylor Wimpey for the seventh.

Over the last 12 months, East Herts Council have been **working with both developers** on the Section 106 agreements which will finalise details of the following infrastructure in the new seven villages and the wider HGGT locale as follows:

- Seven primary schools
- Two secondary schools
- Healthcare facilities
- Up to 34,100m² of employment space
- Over 500ha of accessible green open space
- New transport infrastructure
- Improvements to Harlow Town Train Station
- Additional Bus services to Harlow
- A range of affordable housing types
- Sport facilities including a football hub & Leisure Centre
- Improvements to Harlow Playhouse Square

The developers **commenced work on a Strategic Landscape Masterplan** for the Gilston Area and Masterplans for Villages One and Seven.

Places for People also **began ground investigation works** adjacent to the Eastwick roundabout in preparation for the delivery of the enhanced Central Stort Crossing and new Eastern Stort Crossing while local residents were able to attend new and ongoing community forum meetings on Gilston, which commenced in February 2024.



LATTON PRIORY



Residents helped shape the design of Harlow & Gilston Garden Town's proposed Latton Priory neighbourhood by taking part in an online survey and attending local events.

With Latton Priory set to feature a minimum of **1,050 new homes** as well as two schools, a local centre and travel infrastructure, comments from the survey informed the Strategic Design Code for the proposed new community, **endorsed by Epping Forest District Council in March 2024**.

Epping Forest District Council were given **£125,000** by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver the Design Code that ensures both Council and community aspirations are embedded into the plans from the very start.

Well attended workshop events took place over October and November 2023 at the Latton Bush Centre and Thornwood Village Hall while over **700 people** clicked through to the online survey to have their say.

The Latton Priory Strategic Masterplan Framework was endorsed by Epping Forest District Council last year and the completed Design Code will sit alongside this.

It will need to be **referenced by developers** when seeking planning permission at Latton Priory in the future.

STRATEGIC SITES

EAST HARLOW

July 2023 saw Harlow Council launch their consultation for the draft East of Harlow Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

With **3,350 new homes** proposed (**2,600 in Harlow, 750 in Epping Forest**), the document provides guidance to assist the future site developer in **producing a masterplan for the area**, acknowledging all 'high-level' matters that will need to be considered while aligning to the district-wide Local Plans of the two local authorities, Harlow and Epping Forest.

Based on the responses from the public and stakeholders, a revised SPD has been produced and will be proposed for adoption by both Councils in early Summer.

The masterplan, once produced by the developer, will set out the detailed framework for the site – based on the guidance in the SPD – and **will be used for subsequent planning applications for the site**.

The masterplan will need to be consulted upon by the developer and approved by both the two councils.

When producing the masterplan, the developer would have to demonstrate that all views received have been considered.

WATER LANE

The Water Lane Masterplan area contains one Epping Forest DC allocation site for **2,100 new homes**, but is made up of several parcels of land owned and promoted by separate promoters.

The largest of these sites are **West Sumners and West Katherines**, where a consortium of housebuilders, including Persimmon, Taylor Wimpey and Martin Grant Homes (West Katherines), and Manor Oak Homes (West Sumners), are preparing plans for the sites.

There is also a **collection of smaller allocated sites collectively referred to as Tylers Cross**.

An agreed Planning Performance Agreement is in place in order to progress a strategic masterplan framework for the site.



STRATEGIC SITES

REGENERATION UNDERWAY



Garden Town partner Harlow Council began a major rebuild of the Town Centre in August 2023 with the demolition of derelict site, Occasio House.

The works are part of a phased programme to enable delivery of a **£20m Arts and Cultural Quarter** project that will serve existing residents and the new Garden Town communities across Playhouse Square and College Square.

Other Town Centre works planned include a **new Transport Hub & Interchange** replacing the bus station, a **regenerated Broad Walk** and a **makeover for Market Square**.

The **£15m** major regeneration of the Town Centre's bus station and Terminus Street was approved last year and, starting in Spring/Summer 2024, will include:

The entire redevelopment of the bus station and Terminus Street

A new single-storey transport hub to the north of the site, with green space and a canopy covered waiting area

A cycle hub to the south with storage space for up to 80 cycles

Link to the North to Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor

The development will support both existing public transport routes and proposed sustainable transport corridor routes, which will promote walking and cycling, as part of the development of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

Green areas and an events space will also help to transform the area.

The rebuilding of Market Square will be unlike previous investments into the area and will be a major rebuild alongside further development coming forward to the buildings surrounding the square.

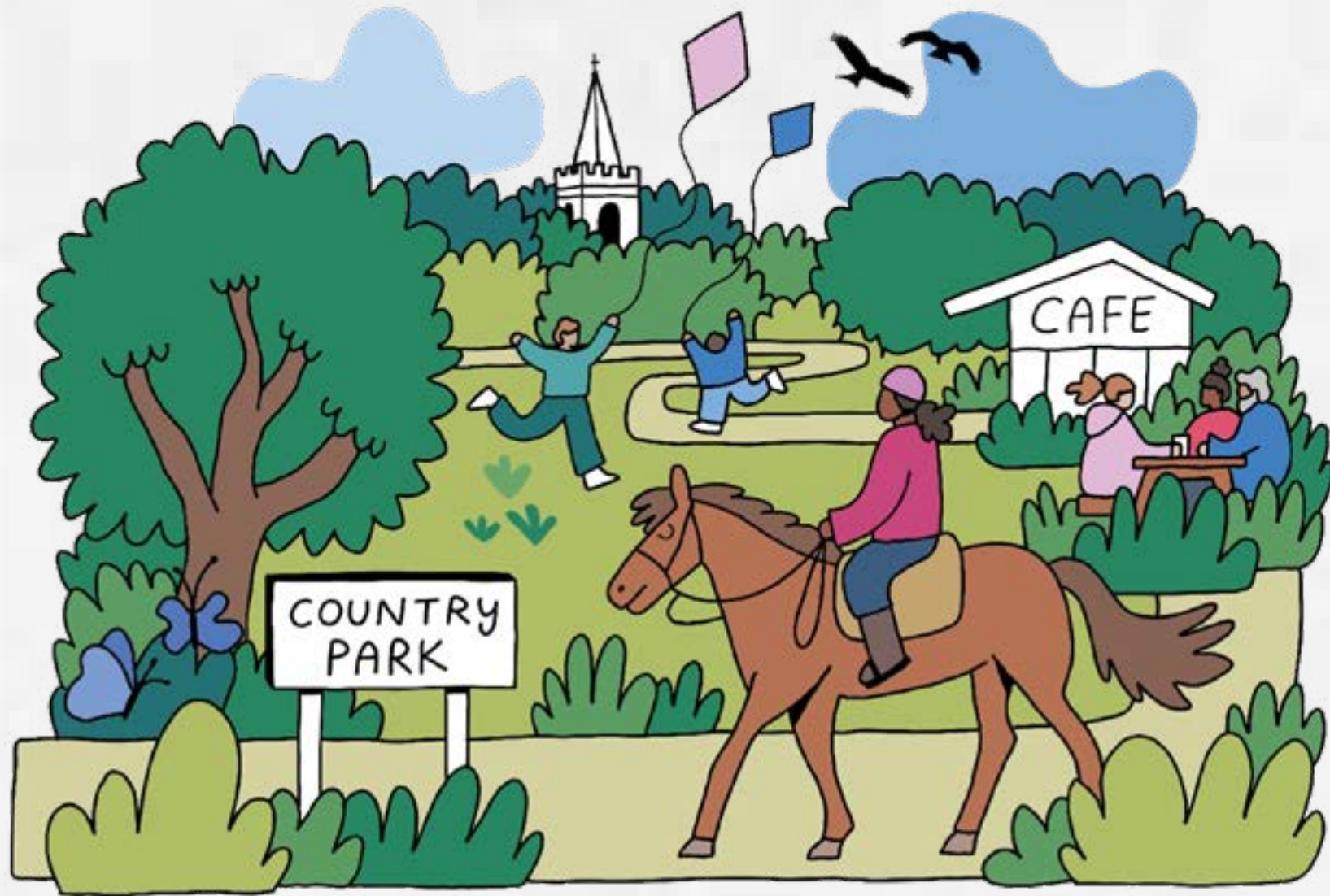
It has been identified as the Town Centre's new hub for leisure and hospitality with a vision of new bars, restaurants, nightlife and other such offerings set to complement the plans.

Works across Broad Walk will see the **complete transformation of the high street and provide high-quality public spaces**.

TOWN CENTRE



TRANSPORT FOR THE FUTURE



HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT

As part of the Garden Town delivery programme, Hertfordshire County Council is overseeing **delivery of £171m** of Homes England Housing Investment Grant (HIG) **funding to deliver transport infrastructure** that mitigates the impact of the Gilston Garden Town villages development on Harlow and the surrounding areas.

This funding **will help deliver two new river crossings across the River Stort**, the first of a series of **Sustainable Transport Corridors** (STC's) to enhance provision for buses, walking and cycling and the first primary school in the new development.

It is all being delivered ahead of the housing coming forward to ensure the impacts are mitigated at the right time.

The **first HIG funded project has been completed** which was to create an additional entry and exit point into the Templefields industrial area, more info on page 16.

This has two purposes, creating an alternative route for HGV traffic away from the main Templefields shopping areas and eventually linking up with one of the new river crossings diverting traffic on to the A414.

The **next project in the programme is already up and running** and is creating the first north to centre section of a wider STC network.

It will go from the town and **connect to both the train station and wider Gilston development**, with an aim to be completed over the next three years.

FUTURE TRAVEL

NEW PUBLIC TRAVEL ROUTE

Work supporting **new Sustainable Transport Corridor infrastructure** in Harlow & Gilston Garden Town began in February 2024.

Construction on the transformational North to Centre public travel route formally started following the appointment of Bouygues UK Ltd as lead contractor.

Running from a redesigned junction at Burnt Mill along the A1019 to the town centre, the corridor will provide upgraded rapid bus services.

It also includes **walking and cycling links, new public realm, trees, signage and lighting.**

Funded through the £171 million Housing Investment Grant, provided by Homes England and managed by Garden Town partner Hertfordshire County Council, the corridor is an important part of the new Garden Town's transport infrastructure.

It will help to ensure the **development links to the train station and town centre** through good quality walking, cycling and bus rapid transit services.

With more connections to follow in the future, it will **allow easier movement** across the town from key places like Pinnacles and the Enterprise Zone in the east plus the new hospital, proposed near the new 7a junction of the M11.

And at the heart of these journeys will be the new Transport Hub and Interchange in Harlow which will be an upgraded version of the current bus station, part of Harlow Council's commitment to redeveloping the town centre.



FUTURE TRAVEL

NEW WALKING & CYCLING ROUTES

Two new walking and cycling routes for Harlow & Gilston Garden Town featured in Essex County Council's **£5m Active Travel Fund award** from Government in May 2023.

The routes are part of HGGT's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the funding will finance the **construction of a dedicated route** for cyclists, pedestrians, and other non-car users from Elizabeth Way to Fifth Avenue.

The money will also be used to **design a walking and cycling path** connecting Post Office Road to Sheering Road.

Construction on the Elizabeth Way route will start in Spring 2024 and the proposals, which will connect to the Garden Town's planned Sustainable Transport Corridor along Fifth Avenue, include:

- **New surfacing**
- **Improved signage and lighting**
- **Upgraded crossing points**

Cycling paths in Harlow were a major theme across HGGT's Your Quality of Life project in 2022 with residents commenting "they're great but need more maintenance."

Essex County Council were in the Haydens Road area of Harlow in May 2023 for a **few weeks of pathway resurfacing work**.



FUTURE TRAVEL



CAMBRIDGE ROAD

The Cambridge Road scheme, **funded through the £171 million Housing Investment Grant** provided by Homes England and managed by HGGT partner Hertfordshire County Council and the Towns Fund, is the first phase of the new Harlow & Gilston Garden Town led transport infrastructure.

It is expected that Cambridge Road will become open to traffic in spring/summer 2024.

Traffic had only been able to enter and leave the Templefields Industrial Estate and Enterprise Zone area at its western end via Edinburgh Way and River Way.

To provide improved, **quicker access to the recently completed M11 J7a**, a new entrance and exit on the A1184 Cambridge Road has been developed.

It will provide additional access to and from the eastern end of the industrial estate.

Additional **pedestrian facilities are also being provided**, promoting safer, greener and healthier travel in the area.

With Templefields being an **important part of Harlow**, providing significant manufacturing space, the long-term aim is to **improve access to this key location**.

Better journey times and easing congestion for residents and local businesses will help **unlock future economic growth and development opportunities**.

FUTURE TRAVEL

DELIVERING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT



Autumn 2022 saw HGGT publish an **award winning Transport Strategy** which sets out an overall approach for delivering sustainable transport and associated infrastructure with the aim of getting more residents travelling via **walking, cycling and rapid bus transit**.

One of the recommendations was a **programme for delivery** and last year saw sustainability advisors Arup appointed to take this forward with Garden Town partners.

Examples of good practice from around the UK and Europe informed the approach taken with **six themes** in the spotlight:

- Roads, streets and neighbourhoods**
- Increasing bus use**
- Increasing shared mobility and active travel**
- Targeted engagement programmes**
- Rebalancing the cost of travel**
- Sustainable freight and deliveries**

The work, which **highlights improvements to cycling infrastructure**, complements the existing Infrastructure Development Plans, when completed will form an important evidence base for Local Plans.

It will also be **essential context for Highway Authorities** as they produce Local Transport Plans, which set out the statutory framework for transport interventions in HGGT.

The document will also help inform **bids for funding** alongside other documentation.

A final version of the document will be presented for approval in July 2024.

FUTURE TRAVEL

NEWHALL SHELTER



“We want existing residents to see the roots of progress, however small. The new rest stop is something that we hope can become a well-known place locally.”

Naisha Polaine, Director, HGGT

A new onion shaped rest stop where Newhall Way meets London Road was unveiled last summer by Harlow Council and HGGT.

The structure will be part of the Garden Town’s proposed public travel route in the area, focusing on cycling, walking and rapid bus transit.



Known as a Sustainable Transport Corridor, the route would enable residents to travel from the proposed East of Harlow community to the regenerated Town Centre and the new Travel Hub and Interchange, allowing connections to other Garden Town communities in Latton Priory, Water Lane, Gilston and beyond.

And joining the rest stop structure is a new Garden Town branded walking and cycling way that links Harlow Innovation Park with Kao Park, allowing for quicker movement between the two sites with plans for an onsite café to follow in 2024.

Also located at Harlow Innovation Park will be a jointly branded Harlow Council/ HGGT bus stop for use on the future Sustainable Transport Corridor network.

FUTURE TRAVEL

FOUNDATIONS FOR DELIVERY



1. *Harlow and the wider Garden Town area is one of the fastest growing towns in the country, only Norwich and Lincoln are growing at a faster rate.*

2. *HGGT will be comparable to today's Cambridge, Exeter, Norwich and Guildford when completed.*



3. *Future housing opportunities in Harlow & Gilston Garden Town means the local area will be growing twice as fast as Oxford and Coventry over the next decade.*

INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

A new version of the Garden Town's Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) detailing **£1.3 billion in improvements and upgrades** was endorsed by the HGGT Board in September 2023.

The IDP is a **'snapshot in time'** as projects, development proposals and costs evolve.

Commissioned by the Garden Town's five council partnership, this IDP is a formal document that sets out what infrastructure is required to support the delivery of the three local plans' allocated housing and employment growth specifically in the HGGT area, based on the time of the assessment.

The IDP has been drafted in **collaboration with key stakeholders** and seeks to ensure proposals are in place, or will be put in place, to deliver that infrastructure.

If there are potential gaps in provision, a strategy can be identified.

It enables partners to **negotiate with developers** to ensure relevant contributions, with appropriate phasing, are delivered alongside and as part of new development.

Infrastructure needs can range from a requirement for **additional sports pitches, to new primary schools to improvements to cycleways.**

INFRASTRUCTURE



STRATEGIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

September 2023 saw the HGGT Board approve the Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) for the Garden Town, outlining a comprehensive plan for economic growth over the next 20 plus years.

Looking to achieve balanced communities, inclusive growth, and sustainability through various themes and actions, the SEF highlights short, medium, and long-term actions including **support for small and medium enterprises**, sector-specific skills awareness, and capacity audits.

Identifying a need for **23,000 additional jobs** in the coming decades, priority sectors identified include **Health, Technology, Arts, Construction, and Green Industries**.

Delivering this level of growth will require **proactive engagement that attracts investment**, promotes an enterprise led culture, and offers suitable connected premises for businesses to locate and scale up.

STEWARDSHIP

A significant part of creating a thriving Garden Town and a **great quality of life for residents** is ensuring that **long-term community led management** is in place for the new buildings and neighbourhoods.

August 2023 saw HGGT consult on a **draft Stewardship Charter**, identifying six principles that are essential to enable effective and enduring stewardship.

As well as looking after the management of the new garden neighbourhoods, the stewardship arrangements are proposed to **support both new and current residents** with key stakeholders signing up to the agreed principles.

ENABLING COMMUNITIES

DISCOVER HARLOW



Residents can find out more about the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town and Harlow town centre regeneration projects at a **brand new drop in community space** in the Harvey Centre.

Officially opened by Harlow Council's Cllr Dan Swords, Cllr Michael Hardware and HGGT's Naisha Polaine in November 2023, the Discover Harlow community space gives residents a chance to speak with both the Council and Garden Town teams about Harlow's future.

The Discover Harlow hub launch follows Harlow Council's recent decision to endorse the Garden Town's Infrastructure Development Plan which will see **£1.3 billion** invested into enhancing the town and the infrastructure that supports the community.

Funded by Government and the Garden Town partnership, Discover Harlow will host consultation events about the town centre and Garden Town plans.

The new hub was requested by residents during HGGT's Government funded Your Quality of Life engagement project that took place across Summer 2022.

Residents will be able to learn more about specific projects such as the new town centre arts and cultural quarter and the new transport interchange hub that will upgrade the town's current bus station.

"Residents wanted a place to visit and learn about the investment coming into Harlow."

Guy Nicholson, Independent Chair, HGGT

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



July 2023 saw the Garden Town host a **Community Celebration Day** in Harlow's Harvey Centre.

The event gave residents a chance to meet the HGGT Team, talk about Garden Town plans and **submit ideas for the future**.

Activities included **arts & crafts, face painting, kids play area** and an interactive smoothie-making cycling challenge.

And to celebrate the soon-to-be-delivered Arts & Cultural Quarter, there was a **dance performance from Playhouse regulars, Hip Hop Pop**.

“The investment coming into Harlow is a very exciting prospect.”

Jen Bater-Sinclair, Director, Hip Hop Pop



JOINT COMMITTEE



December 2023 saw the five HGGT council partners agree to evolve the informal board model of collective decision-making to **form a unique Joint Committee**, providing a fit-for-purpose governance structure that will **oversee the project's transition from policy making to initiative delivery**.

The new governance model is not only a first for the local area but is setting a foundation and **blueprint for similar cross-boundary growth projects across the UK** in the future.

The Joint Committee will provide unified leadership from the five councils to **deliver the ambitious spatial growth proposals** that feature across the local plans of the council partners, maximising the opportunities that **will propel HGGT into a future go to destination for housing, education, employment, leisure and retail**.

The Joint Committee will comprise **five voting members**, being one representative from each of the partner Councils.

The Joint Committee will appoint a Chair and a Vice-Chair while the quorum of the meeting will be all five members.

Meetings of the Joint Committee will be **open to the public** in the normal way in relation to Council committee meetings making the workings of the Garden Town transparent and accountable.

DEVELOPER FORUM

HGGT continued hosting regular Developer Forums with events taking place in both the Harlow Playhouse and the new Discover Harlow engagement hub.

Topics of discussion that will help shape the future Garden Town included:

Modal Transition
Lattin Priory Design Code
Bike Share
Stewardship
Town Centre Regeneration

DIGITAL DATA

HGGT **secured investment from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)** via the Local Digital Fund Round 6 and PropTech Innovation Fund Round 3, to undertake a data discovery and digital solutions project.

Stantec, a global leader in sustainable design and engineering services, is supporting HGGT in making **better use of the community insight** that the project gathers during consultation activities across district and county boundaries.

This will enable storing, sharing and visualising of consultation data across boundaries, to **maximise the value of the information gained**.

The Garden Town is **investing in a range of innovative, digital community engagement activities** so decision-makers can better understand the current and future needs of residents.



QUALITY REVIEW PANEL

The Quality Review Panel is a **critical friend** to the Garden Town project.

Run by Frame Projects and chaired by Peter Maxwell, the panel **provides professional advice across a wide range of sectors**, from architecture, urban design and landscape, to transport, sustainability and stewardship.

During 2023-24, the HGGT Quality Review Panel **held 20 panels** in the past year, nine for the first time and eleven follow ups.

Over the reporting period, several significant sites within the Garden Town have been to the panel for review, including **Gilston Villages 1 and 7**, and the **Strategic Landscape Masterplan** for the whole Gilston area.

A number of policy and design codes, including the **Garden Town's Draft Stewardship Charter and Latton Priory Design Code work**, developed by Epping Forest District Council, have also been reviewed.

Given the increase in the type and scale of schemes coming forward, the councils have identified a need for additional first-hand masterplanning experience, with a preference for those who've worked with volume housebuilders.

Frame Projects have announced two new QRP members who will be joining in the next few months.





The Harlow & Garden Town Partners have planned a busy year ahead, here are some of the highlights:

- Explore the feasibility of a bike hire scheme for the HGGT area
- Continue to plan for Modal Transition across HGGT
- Planning application to be submitted for Latton Priory
- Recommend adoption of Masterplanning Framework for East of Harlow
- Completion of the Section 106 Agreement for the seven Garden Town villages in Gilston and continuation of Masterplanning
- Construction/Design of new cycling routes in Harlow as part of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Delivery of the North to Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor
- Recommend adoption of the HGGT Stewardship Charter and further consideration of future stewardship options
- Harlow Transport Hub & Interchange construction
- Redevelopment of the Broad Walk in Harlow town centre and design of the new Arts & Cultural Quarter
- HGGT Joint Committee will host first public meetings

NEXT STEPS

We want you to be involved in shaping the Garden Town.

Over the coming months we will be consulting with residents on a variety of topics as part of the Harlow & Gilston initiative and you can also visit us in the Discover Harlow hub, every Thursday, inside the town's Harvey Centre.

For more information, news updates and details of upcoming consultation and engagement activities, please visit our website and social media channels.

Website:
hgg.co.uk

Facebook and Instagram :
[@HGGTOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/HGGTOfficial)

LinkedIn :
[Harlow & Gilston Garden Town](https://www.linkedin.com/company/harlow-gilston-garden-town)

