

Strategic Stewardship Report

Summer 2025

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reflects the position of Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (“HGGT”) as of March 2024, when the draft was first issued. While HGGT activity has progressed in the intervening period, the strategic framework and principles of long-term stewardship remain consistent with the original analysis. The HGGT Joint Committee considered the work at its July 2025 meeting and endorsed the approach to concluding the report on this basis.

This report establishes a **strategic case** and a **proposed way forward** for establishing a “**Strategic Stewardship**” function at HGGT. This report has been prepared and authored by Montagu Evans (“ME”) with support from Augarde & Partners (“A&P”) who have provided advice in relation to the potential responsibilities that a HGGT *Strategic Stewardship* function could undertake, as well as undertaking stakeholder engagement. **Strategic Stewardship** has been coined as a term for the purpose of this exploration to describe how the five HGGT partner authorities might collaboratively assume further responsibility for stewardship issues across the Garden Town

As explored through the early chapters of this report, **HGGT is a complex and unique development**, with a range of factors which has affected the type of stewardship which can feasibly be delivered. The report introduces important background context – at both a national and local level – which is pertinent to understanding how emerging strategies have been developed, as well as the constraints on any future strategic intervention in stewardship planning across the Garden Town.

With five Partner Local Authorities, and a dispersed development area, the stakeholder landscape at HGGT is significantly more complex than in most other major development areas. As a **Modern Garden Town**, HGGT is a consortium of individual development sites, being united through a single vision and place identity. The HGGT Board has had responsibility to date for developing and holding the vision for HGGT, whilst the Garden Town project is being driven forward by a dedicated HGGT team. Together, this group has been responsible for ‘stewarding in’ ‘good’ planning applications that represent the HGGT ambition. The emerging Joint Committee will replace the governance of the HGGT Board and Team and represents continued investment from the Partner Authorities in realising the HGGT Vision.

Navigating this context, HGGT Partners have progressed with several **strategies and guidance** towards supporting different stakeholders bringing forward development to establish positive long-term stewardship arrangements across the garden town, including Stewardship specific policy across planning guidance and a **Stewardship Charter (Forthcoming)**. HGGT Partners are looking to now understand **how and why they may decide to further intervene in shaping stewardship activities across the garden town**, at a more strategic level considering the unique context of HGGT.

There are a **range of risks**, however, associated with these emerging local approaches to stewardship which will need to be addressed to support the successful delivery of the Garden Town which are explored in this report and support in making the case for Strategic Stewardship. These risks are categorised as **operational risks** associated with the emerging local stewardship arrangements such as those seen at Gilston and expected elsewhere across HGGT (consistency, resilience, value for money, liable or complex assets) as well as **strategic risks** associated with delivery of the garden town vision (securing modal shift, economic development, cross-boundary agendas such as sustainable transport).

Addressing these risks in a way that is financially responsible and legally/technically deliverable is the key objective for HGGT. This report reviews **four potential functions** that a Strategic Stewardship body could undertake, ranging from low intervention roles (such as providing oversight of local stewardship bodies and facilitating joint procurement) through to more intensive roles (such as enforcing the principles of stewardship across the garden town, delivering some non-statutory placemaking services and potentially holding strategic assets).

A summary of the intellectual concept of each role is described in the table below:

Advisory	Attempting to minimise the operational risks associated with emerging stewardship arrangements through a more hands-on approach to working with developers and partners to develop robust stewardship strategies.
Enforcement and coordination	Attempting to minimise the operational risks through a more hands-on approach to enforcing developer-led stewardship strategies through providing a hands-on approach to monitoring how stewardship strategies evolve and integrate into new communities, either through formal enforcement of performance, or through a softer influencing and negotiating role. This role seeks to provide contingency to any emerging 'failing' arrangements and support the resilience of local arrangements through increasing economies of scale through coordination.
Non-Statutory Delivery Role	Attempting to minimise the strategic risks through providing dedicated resource to advancing of garden-wide principles of sustainable development in relation to stewardship matters, for example influencing the curation of employment and commercial sites, green spaces, and modal shift related infrastructure and programmes.
Asset Holding Role	Attempting to minimise the strategic risks through taking assets into a centralised Strategic Stewardship Body and providing direct asset management capabilities.

The four key roles identified when combined have the potential to reduce the risks identified in chapter 3 significantly. The report introduces an options appraisal which reviews the extent to which these roles could realistically be deployed at HGGT by reviewing the roles qualitatively against a set of critical success factors, and by confirming that stakeholder support exists for their potential introduction. Based on this, a proposed outline model has been defined, the potential implementation of which is discussed in further detail in future chapters.

The outcome of the options appraisal suggests that **strengthening the emerging stewardship** policy, strategy, and arrangements through advisory, coordination, and enforcement roles **addresses several risks identified in the case for intervention**. The report concludes that these roles **could** be immediately delivered through the **proposed Joint Committee**, which already holds delegated responsibility concerning stewardship. As planning applications continue to come forward, time is of the essence to shape how stewardship strategies evolve including monitoring how Gilston continues to progress and moves towards delivery. For the Joint Committee to develop into this strategic stewardship advisory role, **additional dedicated resources will be required**.

In the future, there may be merit in delivering this role through a more independent organisation, such as a **Community Interest Company (CIC)** or a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)**, to achieve further impartiality, identity, and remit, as well as to diversify funding streams which may not be available to the Joint Committee governance structure.

However, as identified in the options appraisal, without direct involvement in further non-statutory service delivery and asset management, it will be challenging to address more strategic risks associated with the delivery of the HGGT vision. Therefore, direct involvement in service delivery and asset management will likely be essential in the medium to long term to effectively address these gaps.

Establishing these roles now presents **significant risk and resourcing pressures to HGGT**. They will require incorporation of a specialist stewardship vehicle with a clearly defined remit and funding model. In addition, it will require significant further political buy-in at a local, regional, and even potentially national level, as seen in examples

such as the Creative Estuary and Locate in Kent examples, which have **regional and central government backing**.

Therefore, it is advised that, as an **intermediate measure, HGGT progresses with incorporating the advisory and enforcement/coordination roles promptly**, while also ensuring that resource – in the form of full-time employee or consultant time – is in place to provide a **future proofing function as planning applications are received, and delivered**, and statutory stewardship strategies are refined. This role will have a remit of working closely with the advisory and enforcement/coordination resources **to monitor the risk and potential opportunities for a further management / enforcement role as seen in Ebbsfleet, or a non-statutory or asset-holding role as seen in the Creative Estuary**.

Given the **significant risk associated with incorporating a new asset-holding stewardship body**, it is not advisable to progress this without a **full** business case and as the evolution and delivery of HGGT becomes more clearly defined. However, it should be retained as a clear option that HGGT partners could progress.

In the medium to long-term, the Strategic Stewardship function provided by HGGT should evolve to provide investment direct stewardship activities. Outgrowing the opportunities of the Joint Committee, an Independent Strategic Stewardship body would be incorporated which is committed to driving sustainable growth, fostering community engagement, and ensuring the long-term success of the Garden Town.

Within this organisation, the Stewardship functions and roles already being delivered through the Joint Committee would either be transferred to this independent vehicle, or winded-down should they no-long be required (such as through an advisory role at a post planning period). Our vision is that a body akin to a 'Harlow and Gilston Community and Investment Agency' is established with a remit of coordination and delivery of local stewardship, to ensure effective implementation of the HGGT vision.

The recommendations and strategic direction set out in this report were considered by the HGGT Joint Committee at its meeting in July 2025. At that meeting, the Committee noted the conclusions of the work and endorsed the intention to finalise the report without reopening the substantive analytical work undertaken in 2024. The Committee's decision provided the formal basis for concluding the documentation and assurance process, in order to move forward with the next stages of stewardship planning across the partner authorities.

1) INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report was originally drafted in early 2024 and reflects the position of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) and approach to stewardship as of March 2024. Since then, HGGT programme stages have progressed, but the report has not been substantively updated during the intervening period to reflect subsequent operational progress.
- 1.2 Over the course of 2024-2025, several aspects of the Garden Town's governance, delivery activity, and partner coordination have continued to develop. These developments sit alongside, but do not alter, the strategic intent or long-term stewardship model set out in this report. The purpose of this document is to set out this strategic framework as originally prepared, while acknowledging that programme elements will have advanced in parallel.
- 1.3 This report establishes a **strategic case** and a **proposed way forward** for establishing a “**Strategic Stewardship**” function at HGGT. This report has been prepared by Montagu Evans (“ME”) with support from Augarde & Partners (“A&P”) who have provided advice in relation to the potential responsibilities that a HGGT Strategic Stewardship function could undertake, as well undertaking stakeholder engagement.

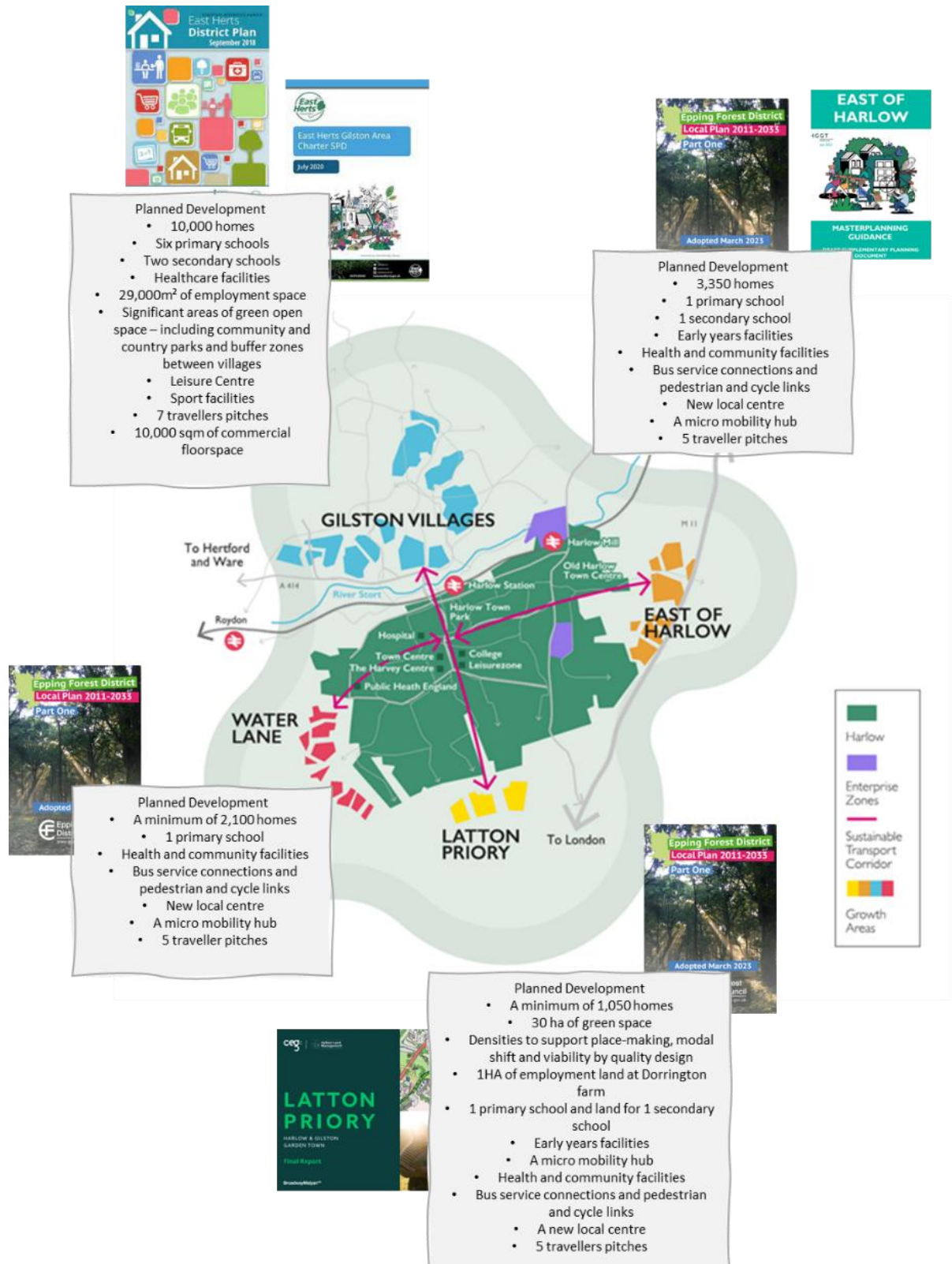
ABOUT HGGT

- 1.4 HGGT is one of the UK's most exciting development opportunities, enabling the sustainable future expansion of Harlow with over 23,000 new homes and supporting infrastructure planned for delivery over the next 40 years. The Garden Town will also support regeneration of Harlow Town Centre.
- 1.5 HGGT will be delivered in accordance with Garden City Principles and is guided by the HGGT Vision.¹ Major investments will be made in transport infrastructure, new education, health, and community facilities, as well as significant new areas of public green space. In addition, HGGT will provide ecological benefits, for example through enhancement of the 'Green Wedges'.
- 1.6 The Garden Town comprises four key development areas on the edges of Harlow, in addition to the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre itself – supported by the establishment of new Sustainable Transport Corridors.
- 1.7 As shown in the diagram on page 6, the four key Growth Areas are:
 - **Gilston Villages**, to the north of Harlow, which will deliver a total of 10,000 new homes (including 3,000 by 2033) and supporting infrastructure on land within East Herts District. Outline planning consent was granted in 2023.
 - **East of Harlow**, which will deliver 3,350 new homes by 2033 on land within Harlow and Epping Forest Districts. East of Harlow is also the proposed location for the new Princess Alexandra Hospital and associated Health Campus.
 - **Latton Priory**, to the south of Harlow, which will deliver 1,050 new homes and supporting community infrastructure on land within Harlow and Epping Forest districts. It is anticipated that the development will be completed by 2033, but
 - **Water Lane**, to the east of Harlow, which will deliver 2,100 new homes on land within Epping Forest District. Again, it is anticipated that the development will be completed by the mid-2030s.

¹ HGGT, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town – Vision, November 2018, available at: https://cdn-eastherts.onwebcurl.com/s3fs-public/documents/Garden_Town_Vision.pdf [accessed 23/02/2024]

1.8 The spatial distribution, **scale and range of assets** expected to be brought forward through development is identified in the diagram overleaf.

Figure 1 Planned development pipeline across the Garden Town



Source: HGGT Design Guidance 2019

DRIVING FORWARD THE GARDEN TOWN VISION

- 1.9** There are **five Partner Local Authorities** working collaboratively to unlock and deliver the Garden Town vision: East Herts District Council East Herts; District Council (EHDC); Epping Forest District Council (EFDC); Harlow District Council (HDC); Essex County Council (ECC); and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).
- 1.10** The Garden Town project is being driven forward by **a dedicated HGGT team**. Together, this group has been responsible for ‘stewarding in’ ‘good’ planning applications - through engagement landholders, developers, and land promoters - that represent the HGGT ambition, as well as working closely with the Partner Authorities to progress relevant spatial policy and strategy. The Garden Town team members are based **across the five partner Councils** but come together to work together with the Garden Town Director to develop and deliver the regeneration and growth proposals.
- 1.11** Supporting and overseeing the decisions of the HGGT delivery team is the **HGGT Board**, which holds responsibility and authority for the overall delivery of the project and provides strategic leadership and oversight to the Garden Town.
- 1.12** To progress the leadership and governance supporting HGGT, **a Joint Committee** for HGGT is currently in the process of being constituted and approved by the Partner Authorities. The Joint Committee will replace the existing governance of the HGGT Board and Team and will be funded on a three-year rolling basis. The Joint Committee aspires to provide **unified leadership to deliver the ambitious spatial growth proposals** set out in the Local Plans of HDC, EHDC and EFDC supported by ECC and HCC. This progress represents a further investment from the HGGT Partner authorities in driving forward the HGGT Vision.

INTRODUCTION TO STEWARDSHIP

- 1.13** HGGT defines **stewardship** as the “inclusive, proactive and responsive planning, placemaking and **care of public assets** alongside **ambitious community development practices** to ensure that the environmental, social, and economic benefits of the Garden Town can be enjoyed by present and future generations, equally.”²
- 1.14** Supporting HGGT’s definition, the **Town and County Planning Association (TCPA)** defines **long-term stewardship** as ensuring that assets are properly looked after throughout its life cycle. ‘Assets’ in this context refers to the **infrastructure** in new developments which is created to support community development **but not always supported by state funds such as educational or health budgets** – everything from parks and community centres to community energy and community-led housing.³
- 1.15** Under the **Garden City principles**, which HGGT is subscribed to, stewardship is undertaken for the **benefit of the community** that lives in and/or uses the development for work or recreation. **There are many ways to achieve ‘good stewardship’ in line with Garden City Principles, depending on the place, the team delivering the development, and, most importantly, the people who live in the new community**⁴.
- 1.16** The HGGT Vision recognises the importance of stewardship as a **central concept** tying together the key ambitions associated to Placemaking and Homes; Landscape and Green Infrastructure; Sustainable Movement; and Economy and Regeneration.⁵ **Stewardship at the heart of the vision** diagram, illustrated overleaf, arguably representing HGGT’s commitment to achieving these four key themes of the Garden Town Vision – **not just through a short-term focus on design or construction, but in perpetuity**.

² <https://hgggt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Stewardship-Charter-FINAL.pdf>

³ https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/GC_Guide_2017_LT_Stewardship.pdf

⁴ file:///P:/Jasmine%20Ceccarelli-Drewry/theheartofthematter_report_16.03.22_v1.pdf

⁵ HGGT, Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision, p.7

Figure 2 Stewardship at the heart of the HGGT Vision

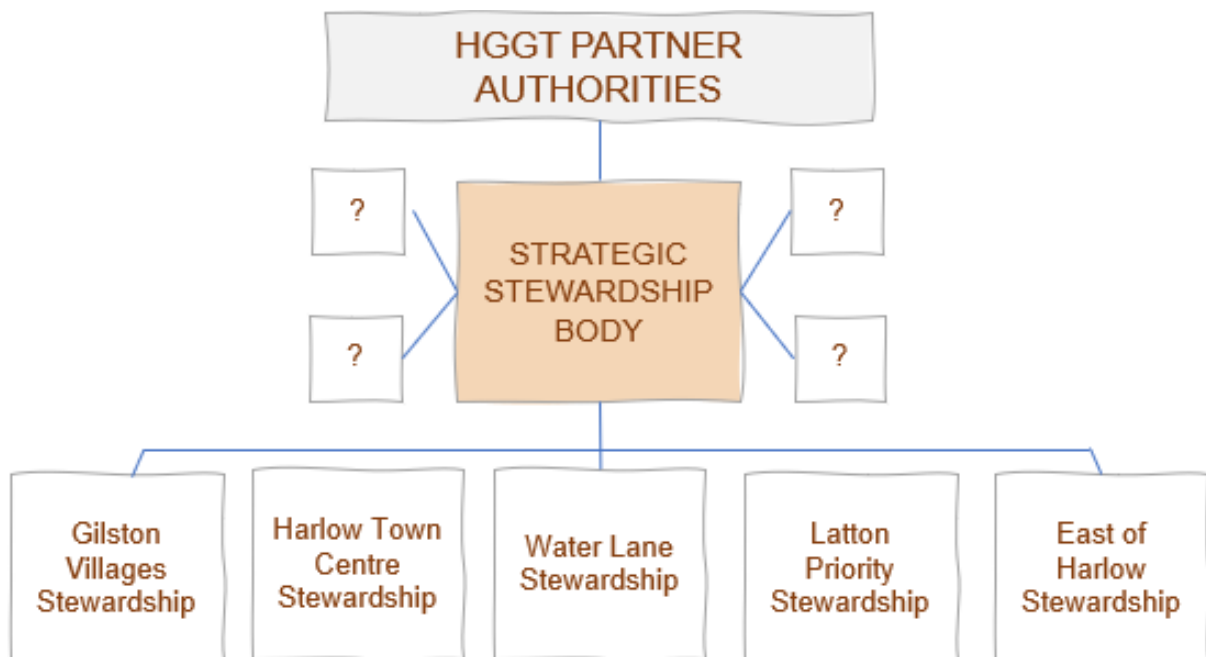


THE HGGT STEWARDSHIP CHALLENGE

- 1.17** Local authorities, including the HGGT Partner Authorities, are currently and increasingly under severe financial strain due to limited funding and capacity and as a result are less able to take on responsibility for new community assets that are established as part of new development projects. HGGT Partners will not, therefore, be able to take a substantial role in long-term stewardship and community development practices across HGGT.
- 1.18** At the same time however, the HGGT partners have recognised that stewardship models across HGGT **cannot simply default to the establishment of Private Management Companies** (Mancos) operating in isolation, which in recent years have become the **default stewardship model for developers**. The challenges and limitations of Mancos have been the subject of discussion in recent years, especially concerning the financial stress which can be placed on new residents, and their limited potential to achieve ambitions of sustainable growth, such as those detailed by the Garden Town principles. For example, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has recently investigated the practice as part of housebuilding market review, concluding the following:
- “The CMA found a growing trend by developers to build estates with privately managed public amenities – with 80% of new homes sold by the eleven biggest builders in 2021 to 2022 subject to estate management charges. These charges are often high and unclear to homeowners. Whilst the average charge was £350 – **one-off, unplanned charges for significant repair work can cost thousands of pounds and cause considerable stress to homeowners.**”⁶ (our emphasis)*
- 1.19** Navigating this context, HGGT Partners have progressed with several **strategies and guidance** towards supporting different stakeholders bringing forward development to establish positive long-term stewardship arrangements across the garden town, including Stewardship specific policy across planning guidance and a **Stewardship Charter (Forthcoming)**. HGGT is an ambitious and complex development, with many stakeholders – including established local communities in Harlow and surrounding settlements. Delivering a Garden Town with a coherent and **consistent identity across such a complex landscape** is therefore a challenge – and good, **consistent standards to stewardship** will be essential to realising this ambition.
- 1.20** HGGT Partners are looking to now understand **how and why they may decide to further intervene in shaping stewardship activities across the Garden Town**, at a **more strategic level** considering the unique context of HGGT. As such, **Strategic Stewardship** has been coined as a term to describe how the five HGGT partner authorities might collaboratively assume responsibility for stewardship issues across the Garden Town, potentially through incorporating a dedicated legal entity, described in this report as a **Strategic Stewardship body**.

⁶ CMA, 2024, 'CMA finds fundamental concerns in housebuilding market', available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cma-finds-fundamental-concerns-in-housebuilding-market> [retrieved 05/03/2024]

Figure 3 The opportunity for a potential Strategic Stewardship body in relation to local stewardship arrangements.



2) EMERGING STEWARDSHIP CONTEXT AT HGGT

Summary

- **HGGT is a complex and unique case**, with a range of factors which affect the type of stewardship which can feasibly be delivered. This chapter of the business case establishes important background context – at both a national and local level - pertinent to the selection of a preferred way forward.
- **As a Modern Garden Town, HGGT is a consortium of individual development sites**, being united through a single vision and place identity.
- The **HGGT Board** has had responsibility to date for developing and holding the vision for HGGT, whilst the Garden Town project is being driven forward by a dedicated HGGT team. Together, this group has been responsible for ‘stewarding in’ ‘good’ planning applications that represent the HGGT ambition. The **existing Harlow Town Centre will serve HGGT as a whole** – and will play a crucial role in making the Garden Town an integrated, coherent settlement.
- With **five Partner Local Authorities**, and a dispersed development area, the **stakeholder landscape** at HGGT is significantly more complex than in most other major development areas. There is a degree of variation in current approaches to management of social and community infrastructure across the HGGT geographical area.

INTRODUCTION

2.1 HGGT is a complex and unique development opportunity, with a range of factors which affects how stewardship arrangements have been developed to date, and why a Strategic Stewardship body may be required.

A 'MODERN GARDEN TOWN'

2.2 Garden Cities established in the 20th Century prioritised long-term, community-led stewardship planning to ensure that community assets would be looked after in perpetuity, in a coordinated, **whole-place approach**. This provided an opportunity for residents to be the main beneficiaries of the increase in land values associated with development – implementing an effective land value capture mechanism to financially support long-term stewardship.

2.3 Under these traditional models, revenue-generating assets (such as commercial property) developed on land within the control of the master developer (which in traditional models typically encompassed the entire site) were placed into a trust, ensuring that a long-term income stream would be available to fund the management and maintenance of the Garden City estate in the future, as well as helping to preserve the notion of a Garden City identity.

2.4 Today however, **as seen at HGGT, land ownership patterns are generally more fragmented** than was the case in the early 20th Century, with land often controlled by for-profit Strategic Land promoters and developers, and this means that opportunities to capture land value on a large scale in the traditional way (i.e. to deliver

public benefit) are much more limited, as is the opportunity to retain land in single ownership in the form a charitable trust or organisations to look after the development and its residents.⁷

- 2.5** Following this trend, HGGT is very different from the traditional garden town model whereby the public sector would leverage land value uplift to realise wider community value. Instead, like many modern Garden Towns, **HGGT is a consortium of individual development sites**, being united through a single vision and place identity.
- 2.6** Uniquely, however, the HGGT vision spans **across three Local District authorities**, and **two County Authorities**. There is a critical challenge of achieving a single HGGT identity, which itself is foundational to the prospect of the new settlements being successful and viable. The objective is that the Garden Town is integrated, coherent settlement rather than a series of discrete towns and villages.
- 2.7** The dispersal of developments means that **HGGT developments are subject to different policy, public sector stakeholders and politics**. In relation to stewardship, there is a critical risk that the design, delivery, and management of forthcoming community infrastructure is more likely to be managed in an insular and local fashion, without strategic consideration for the other forthcoming parts of the garden town.

LAND OWNERSHIP LANDSCAPE

- 2.8** Outside of Harlow Town Centre, **public sector land/asset holdings** are currently limited. The diagram overleaf shows the red-line boundaries of the allocated HGGT development sites, as well as the area of Harlow Town Centre where a regeneration strategy is currently focused. Within the diagram, orange indicates private land ownership, whilst red outlines public sector ownership. In terms of the potential for stewardship, this has two significant bearings to consider.
- 2.9** Firstly, opportunities to capture land value on a large scale in the traditional garden town development manor (i.e. to deliver public benefit) are much more limited, as is the opportunity to retain land in single ownership in the form of a charitable trust or organisations to look after the development and its residents. **Any assets to be held by a stewardship body needs to be transferred in from developers, requiring negotiation** and clear stewardship planning **through Section 106 (s106) processes**.
- 2.10** The second aspect for consideration is in recognising that the proposed development land does not currently require significant public sector services as privately owned agricultural and green-belt land, as opposed to existing settlements. New urban development will inevitably, therefore, place a **burden on the District and Country Councils resources** in the delivery of statutory services and any new stewardship responsibilities of assets.

⁷ https://tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TCPA_Guide_-_Understanding_Garden_Villages_Jan_2018.pdf

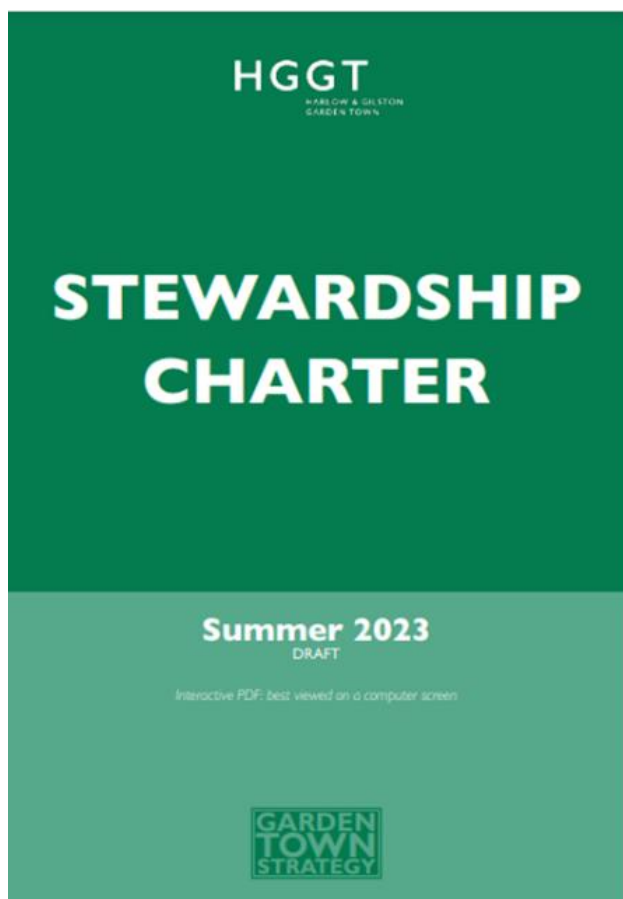
Figure 4 Public (Red) and Private (Orange) land ownership across the redline boundaries of HGGT development areas.



EMERGING STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY AT HGGT

- 2.11** Given these development characteristics of HGGT, the existing HGGT position on stewardship places **emphasis** on the responsibility of **private sector developers, promoters, and landholders** that make up the garden town development sites to develop **individual approaches** to robust local stewardship arrangements for any community, green or strategic infrastructure being brought forward.
- 2.12** As already referenced, HGGT has developed a **Stewardship Charter** (currently subject to consultation and adoption) which outlines these expectations. The Charter establishes key principles of best practice for planning applicants and developers to abide by, to embed stewardship within new developments being brought forward within the Garden Town successfully and **for the benefit off the community**.
- 2.13** Through the development of the Stewardship Charter, HGGT’s position on stewardship is currently leading to stewardship planning at the local, rather than garden-wide level. A key issue for any additional more strategic approach to Stewardship progressed by HGGT will be in how it can **enhance localised arrangements – rather than duplicate or them or undermine emerging strategies**.

Figure 5 HGGT Stewardship Charter, Forthcoming



CHECKLIST:	
WHAT	BY WHEN
Engagement Strategy	Early engagement, pre-application or Strategic Master Planning stage
Delivery Programme	Early engagement, pre-application or Strategic Master Planning stage
Draft Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Draft Ecological and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Draft Monitoring Strategy	Outline planning application stage
Final Community Development and Social Value Strategy	Full or Reserved Matters planning application stage
Final Ecological and Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Construction/Implementation stage
Final Monitoring Strategy	Occupation stage

2.14 Reference to Stewardship is also referenced across the following **HGGT-led policy, strategy, and consultation documents**:

- **2018:** HGGT How to Guide for Planning Obligations, Land Value Capture and Development Viability
- **2020:** Gilston Area Charter SPD
- **2022:** Latton Priory Masterplan Framework, SPD
- **2023:** Quality of Life Community Feedback Report

EXAMPLES OF EMERGING DEVELOPER-LED ARRANGEMENTS

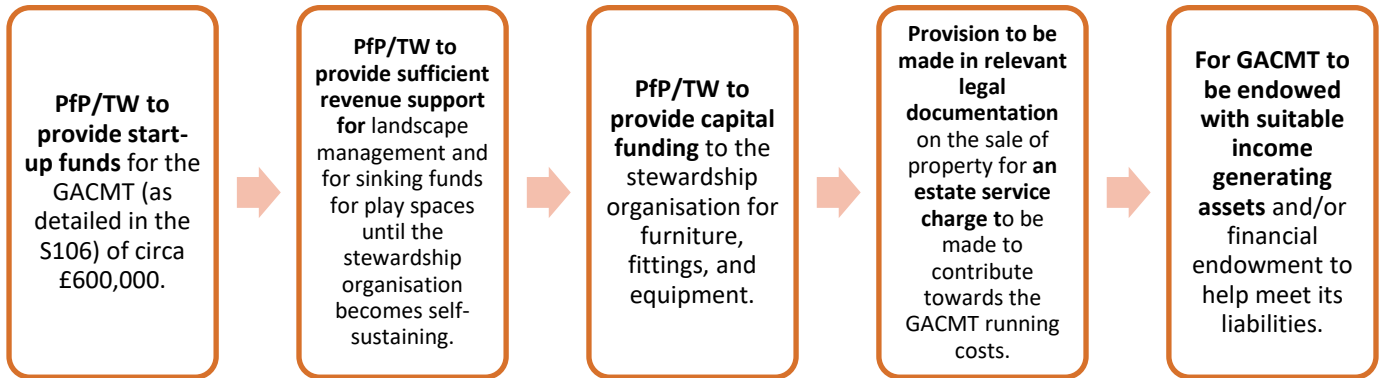
GILSTON VILLAGES

- 2.15** The **Gilston Villages**, to the North of Harlow, secured Outline Planning consent in February and March 2023. The development represents **50% of the proposed housing growth** planned for HGGT, and as such the planning consent represents a significant **milestone** in the HGGT vision realisation. At Gilston Villages, Places for People owns most of the allocated land, which will accommodate 8,500 new homes (Villages 1-6). Taylor Wimpey owns the south-western area of the allocated land (Village 7), which will accommodate 1,500 new homes.
- 2.16** The Outline Planning consent is significant in the development of stewardship strategies across HGGT, in that it **puts into practice the academic and policy matters set by HGGT** and sets a precedent in planning expectations for what can be expected, as a process and an outcome, for stewardship arrangements across other HGGT Developments.
- 2.17** The Stewardship arrangements for Gilston Villages are detailed in Places for People's 2019 Stewardship Strategy and confirmed in the negotiated s106 Heads of Terms. Together, these documents details how a new asset-holding Community Management Trust (The Gilston Area Community Management Trust (GACMT)) will deliver **localised stewardship and governance for the Gilston Villages**.
- 2.18** The document details how the GACMT would operate in partnership with the Local Authority, County Council and Parish Councils to provide ongoing stewardship. While some aspects of the estate – such as housing – are due for commercial disposal GACMT will oversee community infrastructure and community development services and manage a range of assets as detailed below:

'Strategic Assets '	'Village Assets'	'Community Wellbeing'
Country Parks	Public Realm	Community events
Community Parks	Local Parks	Arts & Culture
Green Corridors	Green Corridors	Community Development
Sports Pitches	Buffers	Community Cohesion
Community Centre	Local Play Areas	Security
Youth Facility	Allotments	Enforcement
Community Orchard	SUDS / drainage	
Strategic Play Areas	Village sports / facilities	
Heritage Assets		

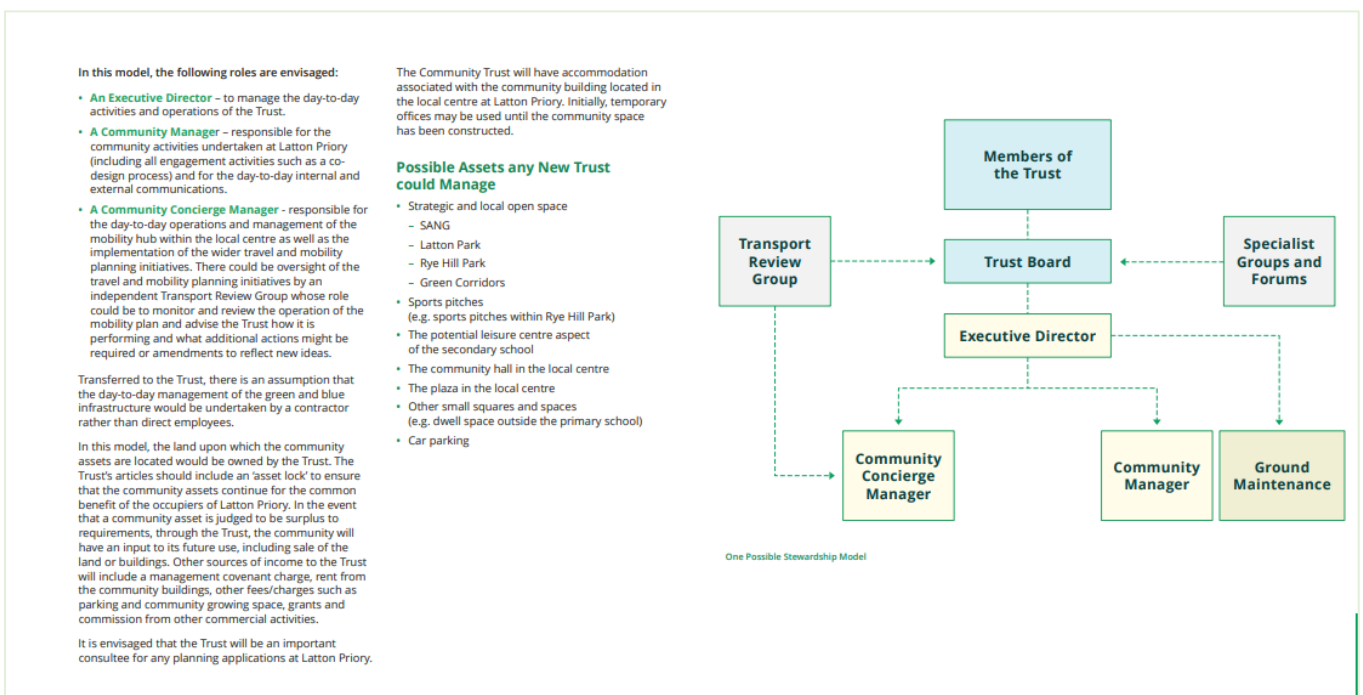
2.19 The Gilston Stewardship Strategy recognises that roads are not appropriate to be owned / managed by the proposed Trust, however leisure, sport, and other items could be adopted into the body if there was local and political will to do so.

2.20 The GACMT intends to hold a range of income-generating and resource intensive assets (liabilities). In the short to medium term, whilst the development is under construction, the required levels of revenue shortfall funding, especially to support management of the liable assets will be drawn down from Places for People and Taylor Wimpy, to support the GACMT's establishment. The full funding model is as follows:



LATTON PRIORY

2.21 The following snapshot from the Latton Priory SPD demonstrates how stewardship is currently referenced and the level of detail planned across other less far-advanced HGGT development areas. The suggested approach at Latton Priory draws many **parallels to the emerging approach at Gilston Villages** with the suggested formation of a community-led stewardship body in the form of a Trust.



OTHER STEWARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

2.22 Supporting the development of emerging a localised approaches to stewardship across HGGT will be **other existing public and private stewardship bodies**.

Public Sector Entities

- **County Councils:** The County Councils of Essex and Hertfordshire have statutory responsibility for adult care and children's services, environment & transport and sustainable growth, public health, and community protection.
- **District / Borough Councils:** The District Councils of East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Harlow have statutory responsibility for rubbish collections, planning, council tax, housing, parking, licensing, pest control, environmental health, and leisure services.
- **Town & Parish Councils:** Some town and parish councils also play a role in delivering and managing assets such as allotments, play areas, village halls, public toilets, and control of litter. The 2020 Arup report found that there had been limited interest by Parish Councils in the HGGT area in taking on new stewardship responsibilities, and furthermore Parish Councils can only use their powers within the designated administrative boundaries which do not align with those emerging in HGGT, which together may restrict their function and impact for stewardship of certain assets. However, embedding collaboration and partnership working between organisations is a key commitment of HGGT.
- **National Education and health budgets:** Other public sector entities, such as the NHS and Department of Education will be involved in stewardship of health and educational assets.

Stewardship Bodies

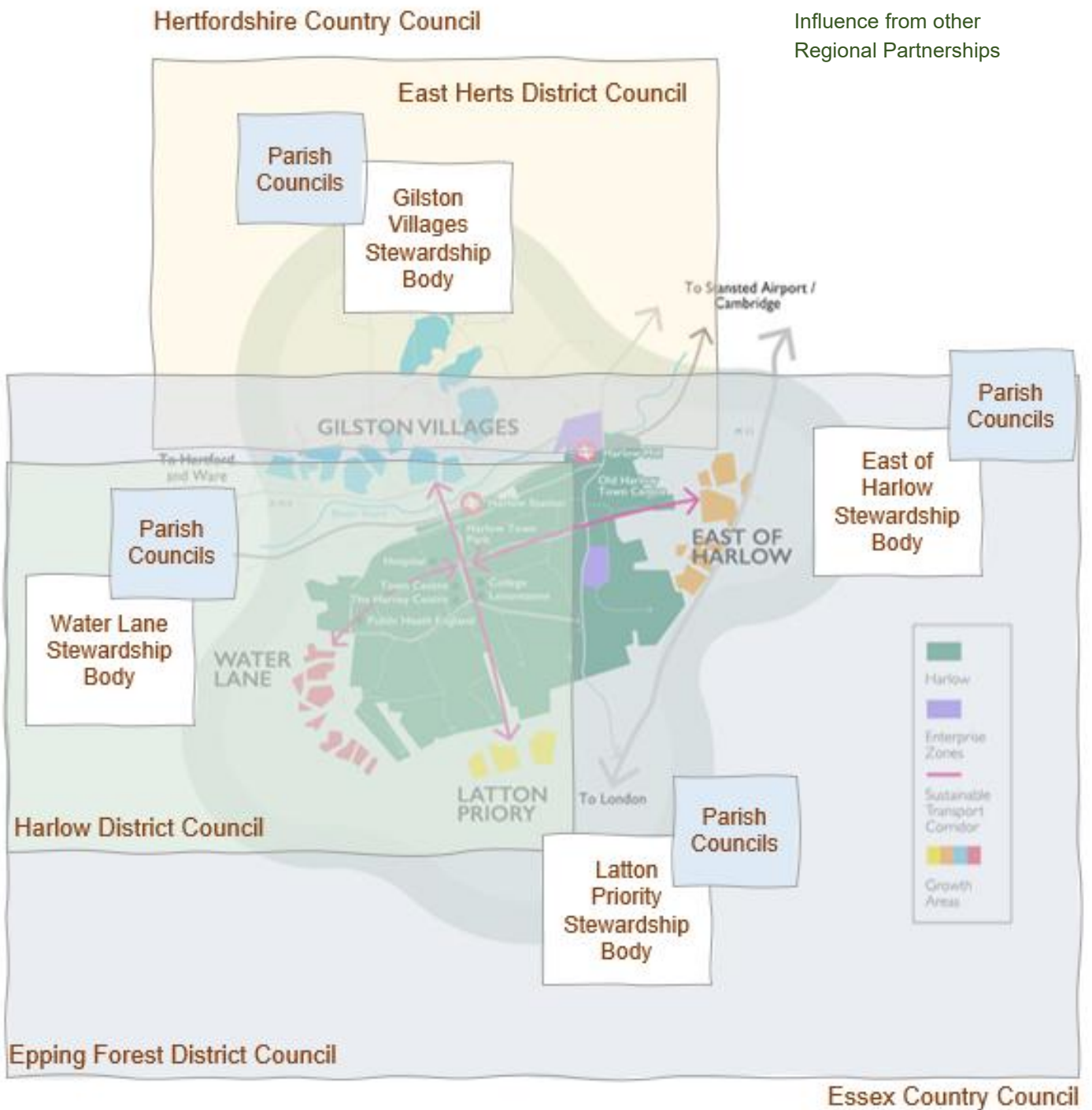
- There are a range of **further bodies involved in the stewardship of other assets**, such as flood defences, leisure centres/sports areas, community hubs and amenity green spaces, such as the Environment Agency, Harlow Sports Trust/Places for People Leisure, community centre associations and wildlife trusts respectively.
- Across some developments in East Herts and Harlow, stewardship bodies have been established. For example, at Stortford Fields, East Hertfordshire - where planning permission was granted for 2,200 new homes and community facilities at Stortford Fields in 2015 – the land promoter agreed with the council that a Community Trust would be established to oversee the stewardship of the community assets.

Regional Partnerships

- There are several **regional partnership organisations which carry stewardship responsibility, despite not holding assets**, through influencing place-keeping and how assets are managed. For example, the South East (SELEP) and Hertfordshire (Herts LEP) Local Enterprise Partnerships work in partnership with central government and its key agencies to pursue and attract major investment into the South East and Hertfordshire to deliver significant economic growth. LEPs identify and support local strategic growth priorities, encourages business investment, and promotes economic development.

2.23 The diagram overleaf provides a visual representation of the complex stewardship landscape which is emerging across HGGT.

Influence from other Regional Partnerships



Other stewardship bodies such as Wildlife Trust

EMERGING APPROACHES TO STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

2.24 Whilst not currently recognised formally as such, there are already emerging approaches that the HGGT team are pioneering towards **providing strategic coordination of stewardship**.

THE POTENTIAL ROLE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE IN STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

2.25 As referenced in the first chapter, **HGGT is in the process of constituting a Joint Committee** to progress and enhance the governance supporting the implementation of the garden town, as the complexity of projects progress and developments moves towards delivery.

2.26 With regards to Stewardship, the draft Inter-Authority Agreement currently identifies the Joint committee having the following responsibilities:

- To develop and approve a **Stewardship Strategy** for the HGGT Area to create legacy arrangements for the management of infrastructure for those communities within the HGGT (the “Stewardship Strategy”).
- To implement the **Stewardship Strategy** providing leadership across the HGGT Area.
- To be consulted on relevant strategies and policies and initiatives of the Partner Authorities in relations to stewardship where it affects the HGGT Area.

2.27 It is clear therefore, that as currently planned, the Joint Committee will have a **continued significant role in strategically coordinating stewardship** by both ‘stewarding in’ good planning applications, as well as working in collaboration and consultation with each of the authority to consider the delivery and statutory stewardship of strategic infrastructure.

THE ROLLING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

2.28 Through the Garden Town status, the authorities have been able to obtain external funding from Homes England to support work to deliver the significant planned growth. This includes contributions to the **HGGT Rolling Infrastructure Fund (RIF)**, which will be sustained through certain developer contributions received by the HGGT Authority partners through planning obligations.

2.29 Developer contributions such as those for delivery of the Strategic Transport Infrastructure network will also be pooled in the Rolling Infrastructure Fund. **The HGGT Authority partners will manage the RIF in accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Authorities**. Should the authorities agree through formal decisions to enter a Joint Committee, this will have oversight of the formal management and accounting arrangements for the RIF.

2.30 Strategic Stewardship arrangements must therefore consider not only the new assets coming forward directly on a site-by-site basis across the Garden, but also the newly delivered public sector assets such as schools, transport corridors and health facilities which will be built by the public sector with developer contributions.

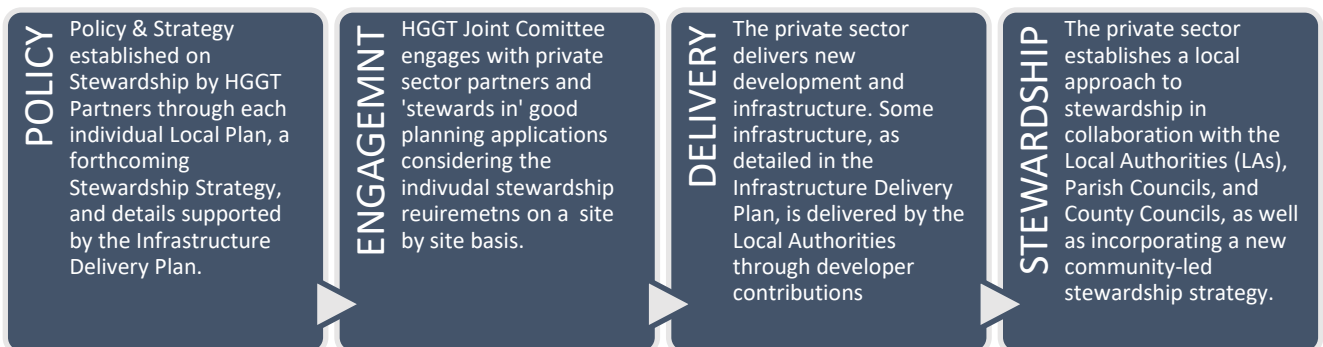
3) THE CASE FOR STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

SUMMARY

- This chapter explores the range of risks associated with emerging local approaches to stewardship which will need to be addressed to support the successful delivery of the Garden Town.
- These risks can be categorised as risks associated with the emerging local stewardship arrangements such as those seen at Gilston and expected elsewhere across HGGT (consistency, resilience, value for money, liable or complex assets) as well as the risks associated with delivery of the garden town vision (securing modal shift, economic development, cross-boundary agendas such as sustainable transport).
- Addressing these risks in a way that is financially responsible and legally/technically deliverable is the key objective for HGGT – and a strategic approach to stewardship could/would help to achieve this.

INTRODUCTION

3.1 Should no further exploration into Strategic Stewardship be made, the following flow chart represents the status quo for the **high-level process by which stewardship arrangements will come to fruition**, should no further investment be made with regards to Strategic Stewardship.



THE CASE FOR STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP – RISKS OF THE STATUS QUO

- 3.2** To frame the case for intervention, it is necessary to first understand the risks associated to delivery of the 'status quo'. In this context, 'risks' consider the shortfalls in how emerging to how stewardship arrangements will be able to succeed in achieving the desired long-term stewardship outcomes across HGGT in line with the HGGT Vision. Risks have been considered in two core categories:
- **Operational Risks:** Short-, medium- and long-term risks relating to the deliverability and resilience of the emerging stewardship approaches being driven on a development-by-development basis, shaped by the Stewardship Charter. Risks for example relate to deliverability, execution, processes, and sufficient ongoing funding.
 - **Strategic Risks:** Risks associating with the long-term opportunities and direction of stewardship planning across HGGT, including fundamentally the question of if arrangements (such as those being implemented at Gilston) will be sufficient to effectively drive progress towards the HGGT Vision.
- 3.3** To illustrate and contextualise the nature of these risks and challenges, where relevant, cases studies from new developments across the Country have been drawn from.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

SHORT TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.4 Executing Stewardship Charter expectations:** As evidenced by the 'stewardship checklist' presented in the HGGT Stewardship Charter, there is a clear expectation on the planning applicant to develop a robust and coherent approach to Stewardship. Whilst this is important in ensuring that high quality stewardship proposals are presented - and represents a significant milestone in the development of a Stewardship Strategy for HGGT - it is possible that where there is multiple land ownership or smaller developers across the Garden Town, private partners involved in the delivery at HGGT may not have the specialist skills or capacity to deliver the aspirations and ambitions of the HGGT Stewardship Charter without third party support, coordination or oversight.
- 3.5 HGGT capacity and oversight:** Should the HGGT step in to provide this support, managing and supporting developer stewardship proposals will take time and resources from the HGGT Team - 'Stewarding in 'good planning applications' across the whole Garden Town will require the HGGT team to work closely with partners and as stakeholders as development prepositions emerge and develop. As currently resourced, the HGGT team may not have the capacity to ensure that stewardship strategies are robust and appropriate across each site coming forward across HGGT or monitor how stewardship strategies start being implemented and evolve once developments start on site.
- 3.6 Funding resilience:** As evident in the stewardship strategy for the Gilston area, several of the assets due to be transferred to the GACMT will not bring in an income to the stewardship body and will require significant investment to maintain. These include the significant green spaces due to be brought forward. These assets are therefore liabilities and could pose a longer-term threat to the financial sustainability of emerging localised stewardship bodies. As such, until the trust can generate returns on investments from commercial or community assets, the trust will be dependent on service charges and grants from the developer endowments secured through s106.
- 3.7 Contingency:** As seen outlined in the s106 agreement for the Gilston Villages, the new community-led stewardship body proposed by Places for People, will be required to **agree for the transfer of each asset** from the developer. There is a potential scenario whereby neither the private sector, the newly formed stewardship body, nor the local authority is willing absorb liable assets, such as new green infrastructure. Therefore, these

assets are currently risk of not being planned for in long term stewardship planning. As currently stands in the HGGT Stewardship context, there is no current contingency for these asset classes, which may require a troubleshooting / hands-on approach to designing stewardship arrangements from a dedicated team.

Wellesley Woodlands

Key Learnings

- Grainger required third party advice in the stewardship planning, delivery, and management of new green space as part of a housing development.
- Supporting developers and land promoters across HGGT currently falls fully to the HGGT team to provide this support which is resource intensive.
- Third party stewardship organisations could have a role in supporting developers develop robust arrangements, as could a HGGT – focused strategic stewardship body.

Wellesley Woodlands is a 110-hectare community woodland at the heart of Grainger’s Aldershot Urban Extension project. As part of this development, Grainger created 3,850 new homes, two new primary schools and additional leisure and community facilities. Grainger sought the expertise of the Land Trust to help identify solutions for long term management of the green open space. Grainger involved the Land Trust (read more about the Land Trust on page X in this report), to help them secure planning consent for the whole development.

The Land Trust is delivering all Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANGS) related obligations linked to the Section 106 agreement, allowing Grainger to focus on the built environment. This is an example of where a developer has required additional support to develop appropriate stewardship plans in place. Whilst third party entities exist, such as the Land Trust, advice to developers on the specific Harlow Context currently falls fully to the HGGT team to provide this support.



MEDIUM – LONGER TERM CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.8 **Agility:** Recent years have seen numerous examples emerging in new town development, where stewardship arrangements have not been agile and adaptable to changing community needs, or proactive and agile to respond to the realities of actual commercial management considerations when on site.
- 3.9 In some cases, this has inevitably led to the demise of those assets an overall perception of those places, affecting future phasing viability of the schemes and attractiveness of new town developments to new residents. A significant risk of any phased development is it provides the chance for prospective newcomers to have insight into the success projections of the place, how it is functioning 2, 5 or 10 years after construction. If stewardship principles are not realised or withheld, this can affect land value of future phases, and therefore the development prospects of achieving planned housing growth.

Northstowe

Key Learnings

- The discrepancy between the initial vision outlined in strategic plans, such as the Northstowe Area Action Plan, and the actual implementation of the development underscores the importance of aligning short-term actions with long-term strategic goals to achieve desired outcomes effectively.
- The evolving nature of community needs over time necessitates adaptability and flexibility in long-term stewardship. Plans should be responsive to changing circumstances and feedback from residents to ensure that the community remains vibrant and functional.
- The case study makes the case for dedicated resource in new communities whose role in part is to get new residents to become active in stewardship decision making from an early stage - and then involved in the future shaping so it remains a relevant stewardship model into the future.

The new town of Northstowe will be the UK's biggest since the development of Milton Keynes in the 1960s. The handover of stewardship from the developer to the planned managing entity was planned by the council, who have invested in dedicated council liaison officers based on site to oversee the public realm and space issues. The handover of information from the developer to the management entity was reportedly robust and consistent, as within the Section 106 there is a management and maintenance specification and embedded 'user manuals' for public open space, including landscape plans/SUD facilities.⁸

However, six years after the first residents moved in, the development was reported to not deliver upon the community infrastructure promised through the planning process, and in recent years, Northstowe has been the subject of negative press.

Whilst it is unclear exactly where the stewardship planning 'failed' it could be suggested that Northstowe required a proactive and hands-on approach to realising community activity, attracting inwards investment and service provision, and delivering placemaking and community wealth building activities as well as more proactive ongoing stewardship of the community assets.⁹

⁸ <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/resources/stewardship-case-studies/>

⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-66156561>

- 3.10 **Economies of scale:** Emerging local community-led stewardship bodies, such as the Trusts planned at Latton Priory and Gilston may be unable to find economies of scale in the delivery of asset management activities, and contract and procurement management, further impacting their longer-term financial efficiency. Roles and resources may end up being duplicated across smaller developments throughout the Garden Town, creating a financial burden.

The Creative Land Trust

Key learnings

- CLT buys properties on the open market or through S106 deals, or assets gifted by the public sector.
- Clear remit to secure affordable workspace and promote the creative sector.
- The CLT makes a narrow margin (circa £2 psf) as it lacks economies of scale to achieve a portfolio approach and needs a large quantum of space and to fundraise to continue to exist.

The Creative Land Trust is an independent charity established by the GLA, Bloomberg and the Arts Council. It was granted circa £5m endowment and a mission to secure affordable workspace in London for the creative sector. The model is to act as a middleman.

CLT buys properties on the open market or through S106 deals. It can also receive gifted buildings from the public sector (although this is harder to achieve because of constraints on best value). The CLT does not operate the buildings. It acts as the landlord and finds an operator to operate the buildings. The rents are capped at £19 psf, enabling the CLT to achieve its charitable mission of driving and supporting creative economies, but makes the financial model very challenging. **The CLT makes a narrow margin (circa £2 psf), it needs a large quantum of space and to fundraise to continue to exist.**

“ We are calling on as many developers, local authorities, funders and investors as possible to get involved and help us keep our city the cultural powerhouse it is today. ”

Sadiq Khan Mayor of London

3.11 Private sector dependency: Holding developers to account in the long term on stewardship activities and planning currently relies on detailed negotiations captured in s106 obligations. However, ensuring that these commitments are delivered and sustained is often complex and challenging. In some cases, developer-led grants, and commitment to establishing stewardship arrangements can fall away leaving the public sector with **limited leverage to ensure that promised stewardship planning is seen through in perpetuity**. This can be a result of the contractor or developer falling into administration, and in other cases, if stewardship plans promised at planning prove too ambitious for the delivery partner to see through or are not monitored closely following completion of the scheme, eventually leading to failed arrangements.

A14 Tree Planting

Key Learnings

- A lack of stewardship planning regarding the care for the environmental contributions of the scheme led to the overall demise of the environmental quality along the A14.
- The scheme's failure was only reported once the newly planted trees were found dead. It could be suggested that ongoing monitoring against clear KPIS could have been used to prevent this situation.
- There may be a case for an overarching contingency fund for stewardship matters, should funding allow.

The A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon was the subject of a £1.5-billion upgrade, which opened in 2020. National Highways planned for a way to offset the loss of 400,000 trees and shrubs that were removed in the first place, as well as to mitigate against the carbon emissions from the road. This involved the planting of some 850,000 saplings alongside the carriageway.

However, three-quarters of the planted saplings have subsequently died, with cited reasons including poor stewardship planning in place - poor species choice, poor soil, dry conditions, and poor aftercare. Whilst National highways has re-promised to deliver the trees, this has required pressure from local members and officers to realise and oversee this commitment.



3.12 Cross boundary assets: Some cross-boundary assets may, in some cases, also have governance implications, where they fall across authority boundaries, such as the green wedges, and the responsibility management boundaries are not clearly defined. Whilst this can be managed through mechanisms such as Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) management schedules, without further strategic support or oversight this may make it challenging to put in place. Furthermore, this may cause complication for residents regarding **understanding the stewardship responsibilities** of different assets, resulting in complications in resident's ability to report issues and maintenance over assets, as well as efficiently being able to engage with stewardship matters.

3.13 Stewardship Patchwork: The current approaches to stewardship development across HGGT could risk **leading to a patchwork stewardship** landscape which may challenge the cohesive functioning of the entire area over the long term. This approach could lead to varying standards of service across a development, depending on approaches committed to by different developers. In some cases, certain residents may continue to incur higher service charges indefinitely due to the estate plan originally devised by the developer. This may create tensions between different resident communities. Furthermore, this could risk affecting the wider HGGT identity and cohesion of the new developments with existing communities and Harlow Town Centre. Community engagement, cultural participation, and wealth-building activities that occur at a Garden Town level are more likely to support the cohesiveness of new communities.

Ebbsfleet (Prior to Intervention)

Key Learnings

- One of the key challenges is securing a more consistent approach to estate management across the development.
- A risk for the future of the estate is that standards of service may start to fall as the developers exit the site on completion.

In 2021, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation established the Ebbsfleet Garden City Trust (EGCT) to adopt a comprehensive, strategic approach in line with the Garden City Principles for long-term stewardship. However, the corporation encountered challenges as most planning permissions had already been granted, Section 106 agreements were in effect, and the land was predominantly owned by developers. The establishment of multiple management companies (ManCos), funded through resident service charges, further complicated matters, leading to a fragmented estate management approach across the development.

A critical issue faced by the EGCT is the risk of declining service standards as developers complete their involvement, transferring ManCo directorship* to residents. This transition exposes vulnerabilities, including resident reluctance to assume control or eventual disengagement from management responsibilities, potentially resulting in service deterioration.

STRATEGIC RISKS

- 3.14** As already established, the concept of stewardship (especially in a garden town context) does not just refer to the management of assets, but instead **how assets and community development initiatives** can be positioned to realise wider community and place objectives. Therefore, in the HGGT context, there is a critical question of **if emerging local stewardship arrangements (such as those being implemented at Gilston) will not only be successful against basic operational metrics**, such as financial resilience, but also in terms of **ambition, strategy, and coordination in delivering the HGGT Vision**.
- 3.15** The following section draws attention to a few areas of **identified strategic stewardship risk** in more detail, considering three aspects of the HGGT vision – economic development, modal shift and greening - which may be impeded by stewardship practices as they currently stand.

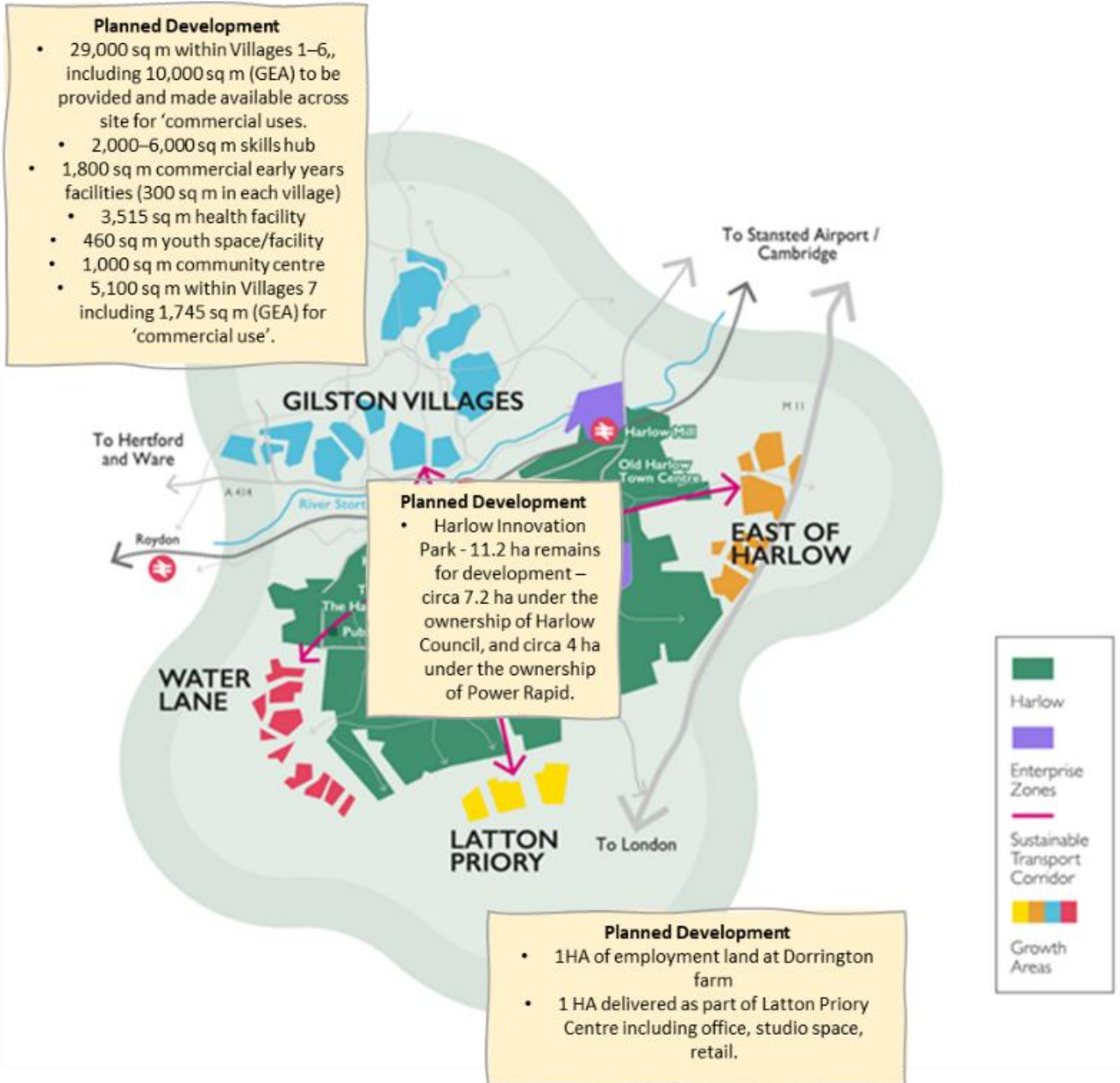
JOB GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- 3.16** Guiding HGGT's economic growth strategy is the **Strategic Economic Framework (Forthcoming) (SEF)**, which sets out the required economic growth trajectory or 'road map' for HGGT and provides an action-focused strategic economic framework to coordinate economic development action across stakeholders. This has been prepared to complement the Harlow Economic Development Strategy (EDS) 2023-28, to address actions that are required at the Garden Town level.
- 3.17** The SEF recognises that to support the **viability of 20 years of viable housing growth**, over the next five years the Garden Town will need to achieve job growth to the same scale that has been achieved in the last 20 years across Harlow, equivalent to **23,000 jobs across HGGT over 23 years**. This represents around a 50% increase on current levels, which will require a **step-change in the size of the local economy**.
- 3.18** In **relation to stewardship**, the document recognises the critical need for **coordination of commercial and employment assets** from their **initial design and delivery**, through to an ongoing use and occupation of assets.

Infrastructure delivery

- 3.19** **The SEF comments on need for delivery certainty on the pipeline of commercial and employment space across the HGGT new developments** - a key ambition outlined in the framework is the need to accommodate sufficient sites and premises of the right type to facilitate the growth ambitions and effective placemaking across HGGT. The diagram overleaf illustrates the spatial distribution and quantum of employment space due to come forward across the HGGT allocated sites. In addition to the allocated sites, the new planned relocation of Princess Alexandra Trust Hospital to East of Harlow will also create significant employment opportunities for HGGT.

Figure 6 Pipeline of commercial and employment land across HGGT



- 3.20** A challenge in new phased development is in ensuring that developers see through the delivery of any committed community, commercial and employment infrastructure. Developers are more likely to do this in a timely manner if they know that these spaces will be well utilised and managed upon completion and drive further land value.
- 3.21** In the short to medium term, the SEF identifies that HGGT team, together with the HGGT Partners, and regional partnerships will together deliver several actions towards implementing the strategy, however with no dedicated resource allocated to this workstream. The stakeholders identified to lead continued action in the long term remain un-identified, and this could be **seen as a critical risk by developers** and could lead to stalling of the delivery of employment and commercial assets, including the delivery of some community infrastructure.

Risk Summary: The delivery of commercial and employment land, including community infrastructure and town centre assets, will require developer confidence in user demand, and planned and resilient stewardship strategies in place from day one.

Ongoing influence

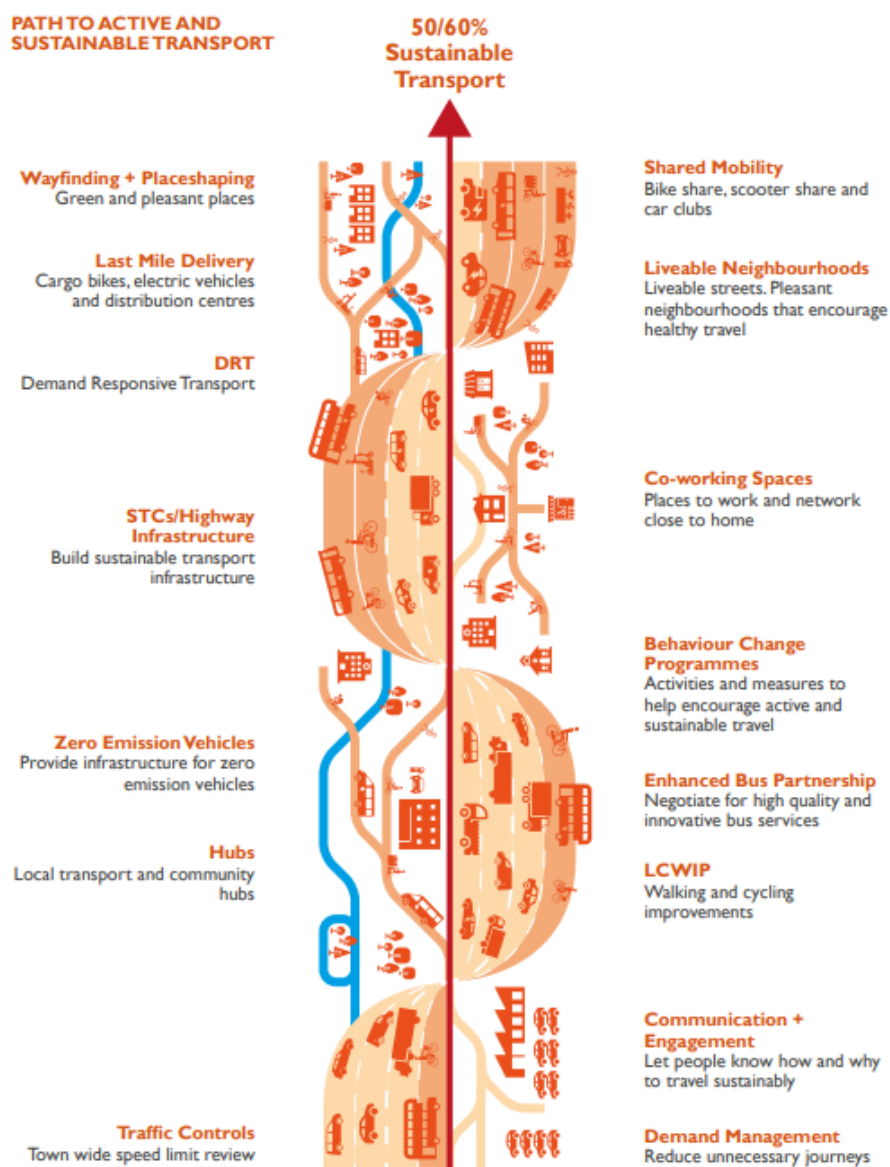
- 3.22** It is also clearly identified in the SEF that **supporting the consistent proposition, brand, and messaging to promote the HGGT area effectively** will be critical to the ongoing success of the area from an economic development standpoint. This will involve overcoming the potential barriers of local authority and county boundaries to deliver **coordinated and aligned activity** to achieve inwards investment through a clear employment identity. A key challenge will be to attract **new investments from outside the area** and growth in the local business base. A coordinated effort will also be required to progress and roll-out of apprenticeship and training programmes.
- 3.23** This could be achieved in the form of softer influencing and coordination of the positioning of opportunities, or alternatively could be a more hands-on asset holding or management role to directly curate the type and nature of commercial and employment space usage across HGGT to promote economic development.
- 3.24** There are currently no coordinated ongoing stewardship plans in place for this ongoing coordination and promotion of employment or commercial land to achieve the ambitious HGGT targets, however. Instead, the SEF identifies that an options appraisal of **strategic delivery and leadership approaches is needed**, with options including the **strengthening of existing organisational capacity; identifying theme leads; or exploring the potential for a new delivery body/vehicle with a focus on economic development.**

Risk Summary: Identified resource is required for the strategic delivery and leadership to achieve inwards investment through a clear employment identity.

MODAL SHIFT AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

3.25 To support the delivery of 23,000 new homes, **60% of all journeys within the new Garden Town Communities must be undertaken by sustainable modes.** This will require not just the delivery of **strategic infrastructure** but assurance that this investment is shaped by consumers, and that behaviour change, and modal shift happens at the same time as development. This too, will not be delivered by infrastructure delivery alone, and requires careful oversight and ongoing investment to ensure a **strategic joined up approach to stewardship.**

3.26 The graphical illustration below demonstrates the various measures already identified through the HGGT Transport Strategy required to achieve the mode share targets. Achieving these actions will require ongoing coordination of **resource, funding, and stewardship,** across public sector partners as well as with contributions from developers.



3.27 The **HGGT Transport programme appended to the Transport Strategy** illustrates the current funding position on several strategic projects. There are several **actions which will require the strategic and careful positioning of assets and enhanced stewardship planning.**

3.28 Many of these actions, which although are **fundamental to the HGGT vision** are currently identified ‘**at risk**’ in the Transport Strategy. This is due to either a lack of confirmed funding, being subject to S106 agreements or to be delivered through stewardship planning, which is currently not in place. These are identified below:

Enabling Choice	School Streets	Quality Public Transport	A Network that Works	Maximising opportunities
Develop co-working spaces and bring forward superfast fibre broadband. Multi-modal transport interchanges hosting local services and amenities.	School Streets Harlow Cycling Action Plan/regional active travel connections. Provide secure cycle parking, changing facilities and charging. Improve Green Infrastructure (GI) on streets.	Develop a single platform for use with all public transport options. Shared mobility - bike share and car clubs Ambition To be confirmed Demand Responsive. Transport/Digital Demand Responsive Transport. Park and Ride.	Local Hubs Consolidation Centres Local Wayfinding Demand management interventions.	Trial of autonomous and connected vehicles.

3.29 Many of the actions identified in the table are associate to the the delivery, curation and management of mobility hubs which would become the ‘home’ of many of these initiatives. The diagram displayed overleaf is taken from the Mobility Hub livery Models guidance written by CoMoUK, and illustrates the stewardship considerations required to realise these mobility hubs¹⁰.

Risk Summary: Cementing the funding route, delivery, project development and ongoing stewardship of these fundamental aspects of the Strategic Transport plan is a significant risk to HGGT.

3.30 A Strategic Stewardship body, could have a role in for example in:

- Attracting / applying for grant funding / investment funding and coordinating applications.
- Influencing developer contributions and asset management / stewardship planning at S106, through providing confidence as to how the modal shift components will contribute to overall value and placemaking and be manged / stewarded well upon delivery.
- Working with local stakeholders (such as a local management company) to deliver services / projects and community stewardship elements.
- Taking a more fundamental asset holding or curation role to provide consistency and oversight of local management of mobility hubs at a HGGT level.

¹⁰ https://assets-global.website-files.com/6102564995f71c83fba14d54/618d298e5bbdb615db2f25da_CoMoUK%20Mobility%20hub%20delivery%20models_Oct%202021.pdf

3. A new residential development hub

Location and ownership:
Urban extension site owned by residential developer.

Customers:
Residents of the development and neighbouring residents.

Value proposition:
Provision of a choice of quality transport services, alongside convenience of practical and leisure services. Designed to reduce the dominance of the private car using space gained to improved shared space for residents.

Collaboration:
The hub management is partially integrated and run by the management company appointed by the developer in discussion with the local authority. The components are a mix of:

- Those operated funded by the management company through resident charges, e.g., transport services, infrastructure, practical facilities
- Those operated commercially by the private sector e.g., the crèche

Minimum standard set by the local authority as part of supplementary planning documents for new developments.

SUGGESTED COMPONENTS:

Public transport



DDRT
(Digital Demand Responsive Transport)

Shared transport



Car club



Bike share



E-scooter

Practical facilities



Lockable cycle shelter with tools



Information point



Lighting



Co-working space



Crèche



Wi-Fi

Visual environmental & community



Shared garden



Benches

3. A new residential development hub

Components	Who specifies /controls	Who operates / manages	Who funds capital costs	Who funds revenue costs
The hub and its infrastructure, (buildings, road changes, signage, information)	Direct control: The developer under guidance from the local authority Supplementary Planning Guidance.	Lead body: Management company controlled by the developer.	The developer.	Monthly resident service charges plus rent from crèche.
DDRT	Procured operator: The local authority.	Third party: The DDRT operator.	The bus operator provides the vehicle and software.	Service revenue with local authority subsidy and contribution from the developer.
Car club, bike and e-scooter share	Service contracts: Fully specified and contracted service by management company.	Third party: Run by two separate operators (car club and micromobility) to specification set by the management company.	The service providers fund the capital in exchange for guaranteed monthly service fee.	Monthly resident fees pay for package of minutes of use with options to buy additional hires.
Lockable cycle shelter with tools, information board Wi-Fi and lighting	Direct control: The management company.	Lead body: Management company.	The developer.	Monthly resident fees plus rent from crèche.
Co-working space	Direct control: The management company.	Lead body: Management company.	The developer.	Revenue from services.
Crèche	Permission to operate: A service provider.	Third party: Delivery company.	The developer.	Revenue from services.
Shared garden and benches	Direct control: The management company.	Lead body: Management company.	The developer.	Monthly resident fees.

(NB: options are illustrative options for how a hub can be managed)

Greening and biodiversity

- 3.31** The Harlow Green Wedge Network is expected to aid the creation of a strong, connected, and inclusive economy, tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and create more sustainable places. Extensive green spaces, including village buffers and green corridors, will provide separation from the existing residential communities whilst incorporating footpaths and cycleways to provide easy and safe access to the new community assets for both new and existing residents.
- 3.32** Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and biodiversity enhancements are a key aspect of the expected deliverables. Delivering BNG over 30 years is a significant responsibility, and for net gain to be successful the designated areas must be appropriately funded and managed by a competent body with suitable safeguards.¹¹
- 3.33** Feedback from stakeholders have shown that there is clear political consensus to **retain green wedges and infrastructure in more local – rather than strategic – stewardship arrangements**, such as proposed at Gilston. Stewardship of green spaces delivered through local community-led stewardship bodies **can** be successful in delivering long term spatial management, especially when it is informed by technical expertise and is responsive to local changes in need and cultivates community participation.
- 3.34** **However**, as clearly identified in the Green Infrastructure Framework, **significant and ongoing public sector support and engagement with landowners and local stewardship bodies will be needed** to enable successful delivery of dynamic land management in the long-term.¹² There is a risk that within the current public sector funding crisis, this support will not be available and localised arrangements may be burdened and exposed financially to deliver ambitious stewardship visions.

Risk Summary: Dedicated and sufficient resource will be required to **support** local stewardship bodies in delivering ambitious green commitments.

CONCLUSION

- 3.35** This chapter has evidenced that there are a range of risks associated with emerging local approaches to stewardship which will need to be addressed to support the successful delivery of the Garden Town. These risks can be categorised as risks associated with emerging local stewardship arrangements (consistency, resilience, value for money), and risks associated with delivery of the garden town vision (securing modal shift, economic development, and high-quality environmental management).
- 3.36** Underpinning these risks is the ambition to create a **cohesive garden town settlement** across the whole of HGGT. Growth must be inclusive for the 90,000 people who already live in and around Harlow. Equally, it is critical that HGGT's new growth does not create a doughnut effect of commuter towns surrounding Harlow that don't interact with the Town Centre. Instead, the vision for HGGT includes a thriving, inclusive, and sustainable economic future for the Garden Town area with Harlow at its heart. A core risk of the current model of locally led stewardship bodies being developed without strategic coordination is that each stewardship body learns to exist in isolation, creating a string of isolated communities that are not connected to one another through governance, assets, or place identity.
- 3.37** The analysis of risks conducted in this section reveals a **compelling case for intervention**, setting the stage for the subsequent discussions within this report which will explore how a Strategic Stewardship body could **mitigate the risks identified**.

¹¹ <https://thelandtrust.org.uk/management-companies-and-biodiversity-net-gain-bng/>

¹² <https://hgggt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/GI-Framework.pdf>

4) POTENTIAL ROLES FOR STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP

SUMMARY

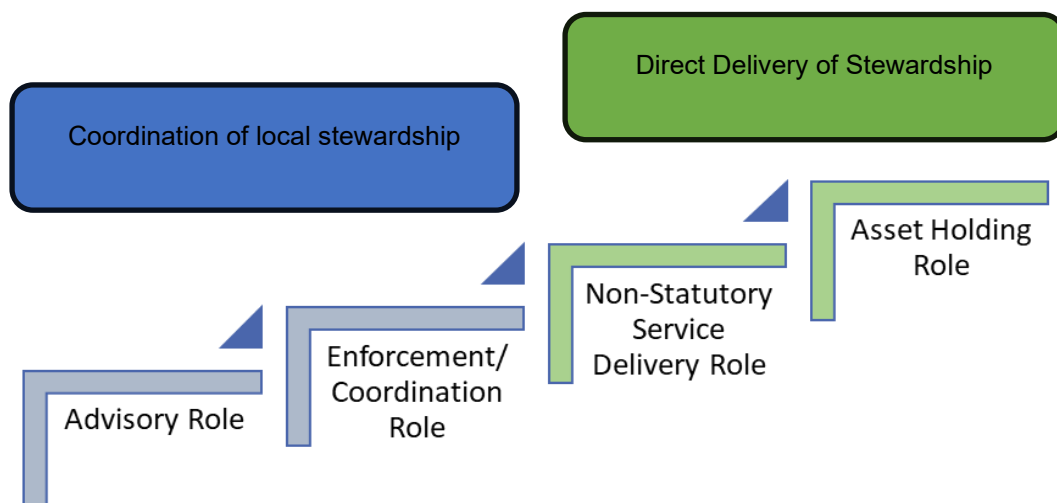
- The objectives for strategic stewardship set out in the previous chapter can be met through a dedicated body taking on one or more strategic stewardship roles, ranging from low intervention roles (such as providing oversight of local stewardship bodies and facilitating joint procurement) through to more intensive roles (such as enforcing the principles of stewardship across the garden town, delivering some non-statutory placemaking services and potentially holding strategic assets).

INTRODCUTION

- 4.1 In considering the case for intervention outlined above, the following roles which could be carried by a potential Strategic Stewardship Body to address the case for intervention at HGGT have been explored. We have concluded that there are **four Strategic Stewardship roles which the HGGT partners could consider**.

OVERVIEW OF POTENTIAL STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP ROLES

- 4.2 Two of these options consider how to strengthen the existing and emerging proposals for stewardship across HGGT with minimal further intervention. These are outlined in the diagram below in blue. There are however also more intensive options for consideration, which would include the **direct delivery of stewardship activities**, either in an asset holding or non-asset holding role, outlined below in green.



4.3 A summary of the intellectual concept of each role is described in the table below:

Advisory	Attempting to minimise the operational risks associated with emerging stewardship arrangements through a more hands-on approach to working with developers and partners to develop robust stewardship strategies.
Enforcement and coordination	Attempting to minimise the operational risks through a more hands-on approach to enforcing developer-led stewardship strategies through providing a hands-on approach to monitoring how stewardship strategies evolve and integrate into new communities, either through formal enforcement of performance, or through a softer influencing and negotiating role. This role seeks to provide contingency to any emerging 'failing' arrangements and support the resilience of local arrangements through increasing economies of scale through coordination.
Non-Statutory Delivery Role	Attempting to minimise the strategic risks through providing dedicated resource to advancing of garden-wide principles of sustainable development in relation to stewardship matters, for example influencing the curation of employment and commercial sites, green spaces, and modal shift related infrastructure and programmes.
Asset Holding Role	Attempting to minimise the strategic risks through taking assets into a centralised Strategic Stewardship Body and providing direct asset management capabilities.

DETAILED EPXLORATION OF ROLES

4.4 In the following section, we explore these potential Strategic Stewardship roles in more detail. Case studies have been drawn from across the UK and Europe to support in illustrating the opportunities and challenges of each role.

COMMON CONSIDERATIONS ACROSS EACH ROLE

4.5 The following points draw attention to common considerations from legal, governance and political standpoint which have contributed the following section, and relevant across each of the possible roles identified above and expanded upon in the section below.

S106 & Existing Progress

- It is understood that the **S106 agreement at Gilston** is at Heads of Terms stage but not yet completed. Once it has been entered into and the associated planning application decided, the LPA may only vary a S106 agreement by agreement with the developer/landowners. The LPA's bargaining position in such a renegotiation, however, is likely to be limited. The limitation on section 106 planning obligations is that they may only be imposed where they are: (i) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms; (ii) directly related to the development being permitted; and (iii) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

Governance

- The **Joint Committee is a governance body** rather than a legal entity. Unless an independent legal entity - often referred to as a "special purpose vehicle" (SPV) - was set up to hold funds for the Joint Committee, then it would not be able to hold funds and so it would be one or more of the Councils which would hold

these. Depending on how the funding/fees are intended to be used, the Councils (on behalf of the Joint Committee) could receive external funding through grants, voluntary cost-recovery consultancy agreements such as Planning Performance Agreements, Section 106 Agreements (post-implementation of the permission and charging fees tied to specific services which meet the relevant legal tests), or CIL (see below). In each case, each Council would need to act in accordance with its constitution and legal requirements when generating and holding the monies.

- If the Joint Committee wishes to make a profit through the provision of discretionary services, then the Councils would need to set up an independent legal entity. Even where the Councils can generate and hold the monies for the Joint Committee there may be other reasons why it is preferable to establish an independent stewardship body which is an independent legal entity. These could include tax efficiencies or limitations on liability.

Opportunities of CIL

- **On CIL**, the use of these monies would need to be in accordance with the relevant legislation. CIL may only be used to fund "the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area" (this can include funding infrastructure in another authority's boundary). The charging authority may pass the CIL to another person to use.
- Infrastructure includes roads and other transport facilities; flood defences; schools and other educational facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities, and open spaces. Unless the local council (generally the parish council) waives the right, a proportion of any CIL must be passed to them. The CIL can be used to reimburse expenditure already incurred. It can be used to repay loans (and interest) taken out for the provision of infrastructure. The CIL can be used to cover the administrative expenses involved in collecting CIL.

STRENGTHENING THE EXISTING STEWARDSHIP ARRANGEMENTS - COORDINATION OF EMERGING LOCAL STEWARDSHIP

ADVISORY ROLE

Summary

- 4.7** The Advisory Role provides the opportunity to **maximise the chances of positive stewardship outcomes arising at the local level** through **engagement in the pre-planning and development period**. The Strategic Stewardship Body operating in an Advisory Role would be responsible for influencing how different local developments progress stewardship arrangements.
- 4.8** This may also involve considering **additional third-party stewardship models** that may be suitable for a development-by-development basis and broker relationships with third party stewardship bodies.
- 4.9** The following table establishes the intervention timeline for when this role would be deployed.

VISION SETTING	PLANNING STAGES	DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY INTERGRATION	LONG TERM LEGACY
✓	✓			

Relationship to existing policy / strategy

- 4.10** In relation to the forthcoming Stewardship Charter, the Advisory Role could provide more guidance and hands-on support to developers and promoters the Charter principles through the planning system.
- 4.11** This could be achieved through further development of the Stewardship Charter – for example to include an **accreditation programme, formal recognition of the Charter in planning policy** across the Garden Town and requiring developers to sign-up to the charter. Within this model, developers could be expected to work with Strategic Stewardship Body in **progressing planning applications**.

Resource and governance

- 4.12** The Advisory Role would **require full-time employee resource**. It should be noted that the HGGT Board/Team are already on a trajectory towards achieving this through the constitution of the Joint Committee, but currently do not have set aside funding to hire directly into a stewardship advisory resource.

Key risks and limitations

- 4.13** A key risk of the Advisory Role is that localised stewardship bodies would be left to operate in isolation once planning consent is achieved, leaving significant placemaking responsibility, such as in achieving job creation, modal shift, social cohesion, and sustainability to revert to respective Partner Authorities and emerging localised stewardship bodies.
- 4.14** This role also leaves little to no power to influence ongoing stewardship, by not preparing the HGGT authorities with contingency planning, should local stewardship bodies require additional support.

ADVISORY ROLE CASE STUDIES

The Land Trust

Key Learnings

- The Land Trust looks to achieve good stewardship through acting as facilitators of community engagement in the development process, to ensure the local community are involved in future designs of their new park or green space, and that emerging stewardship practices are robust.

Whilst the full model of the Land Trust includes the acquisition and third-party management of assets, a relevant aspect of the Land Trust model includes **acting as facilitators of community engagement in the development process**, to ensure the local community are involved in future designs of their new park or green space. This ensures it serves their needs. As a neutral organisation, the Land Trust provide the assurance that once the park or green space is under management, it will be secured and managed in perpetuity (or as agreed).

The organisation also provides **specialist advice and consulting services, pioneering best practice in the industry to help guide clients in the design and development of the open space**, ensuring it meets the needs of all stakeholders. The Land Trust is a charity governed by a Board with Trustees and have eight influential organisations as Members.

The Land Trust has three full time employees in their Business Development Team, which in addition to consultancy services, has responsibility for acquiring new sites and bringing them under the Trust's long-term ownership and management.



Building with Nature

➤ Key Learnings

- As a stewardship body, Building with Nature has a role in advising Councils and developers on best practice, but in addition to that, set clear standards and accreditation for stewardship standards.
- The body works both with planners, as well as with developers to share best practice.
- Building with Nature has a Board of Trustees with a range of relevant specialisms.

Using Building with Nature Standards and supported by best-practice guidance, planning authorities, professional experts, and developers are delivering high quality green infrastructure. The Building with Nature Standards show what good looks like at each stage of the development process. Standards are underpinned by evidence and good practice, having been co-developed with local authorities, private sector developers, people and communities.

Planning authorities use BwN to develop and test new planning policy. Planners benefit from a clear picture of what good looks like, a shared framework of principles, and the ability to draw on supporting specialist knowledge they might not have in-house. BwN also offers a bespoke training programme for planners to help build their capabilities.

Professional experts – ecologists, landscape architects, and planning consultants – use the standards to engage with clients and improve physical development. Many go through training to become Approved Assessors, to enable schemes to get the Building with Nature Accreditation.

Developers who want to do great schemes find that getting Accredited by Building with Nature can reduce planning uncertainty, help to engage local communities, and attract consumers who value the benefits of living with nature.



Building with Nature is a values and **mission-led company**, wholly owned by a registered charity - the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust. Building with Nature has a Board of Trustees, whose professional specialisms span strategic planning, local authority management, regeneration, social housing, strategic development, charitable organisational management, natural environment, and sustainability.

Building with Nature has an expert Standards Board, with representatives from industry and government across the UK, whose role is to be guardians of the standards and review and update them in response to any changes in planning legislation and in the development sector to ensure that the Standards are robust and fit for purpose. **Building with Nature has 4 full time employees.**

ENFORCEMENT / COORDINATION ROLE

Summary

- 4.15** The Enforcement & Coordination Role unlocks a more intensive level of activity, taking on a coordination role to oversee the development of stewardship proposals at a local level across the new communities. A critical aspect of this role is in protecting future residents and **holding developers to account on promises associated with stewardship including the development of community infrastructure; the development of stewardship bodies; ongoing stewardship practices.**
- 4.16** The concept of this role is in ensuring that individual arrangements across the Garden Town steward the HGGT vision to the same standard over a longer period. This would include influencing ongoing stewardship delivery, delivering cost savings across localised arrangements increasing the **resilience of emerging arrangements** and **maximising the chances for successful stewardship.**
- 4.17** The following table establishes the intervention timeline for when this role would be deployed.

VISION SETTING	PLANNING STAGES	DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY INTERGRATION	LONG TERM LEGACY
	✓	✓	✓	

Relationship to existing policy / strategy

- 4.18** The Enforcement & Coordination Role could be involved in **setting and enforcing stewardship standards** (potentially through a series of KPIs) – for example by setting minimum frequencies for certain **maintenance / placemaking activities.**
- 4.19** Given the complexity of stewardship activities and the likely need for reciprocal commitments from the local planning authority, the strongest enforcement mechanism would be through S106 planning obligations. The relevant agreement can set out the **required governance and monitoring arrangements** and create **bespoke monitoring, governance, and enforcement mechanisms** for a site, through the imposition of KPIs and contingent liabilities where a KPI is not met, and this results in an undesirable impact.
- 4.20** The legal mechanism for enforcement of the s.106 obligations are: **(i) contractual enforcement; and (ii) injunction** proceedings under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA). The Strategic Stewardship Body could have a role in supporting the LPA in **oversight and management of S106 stewardship agreements.**
- 4.21** Legal advice informing this project has suggested that the **LPA's bargaining position in such a renegotiation is likely to be limited.** Therefore, the development of enforceable KPIS through S106 would be **limited to the emerging Stewardship arrangements across the other developments across the Garden Town, given the progress made already at Gilston.**

4.22 Other tasks outside of the drafting of enforcement mechanisms through S106, and therefore more appropriate to the development at Gilston, could include:

- Enforcing emerging local stewardship arrangements and standards already promised through S106 through **working closely with the three Local Planning Authorities** and the Clerk of Works (LPA) to monitor developments and the evolution of community infrastructure and localised stewardship arrangements.
- **Leading** developer engagement on stewardship matters, provide notices and reminders and advise the LAs on legal action may be needed.
- **Communicating** across stakeholders to address issues / concerns relating to stewardship.
- **Developing** and managing **informal** (outside of S106) stewardship related performance agreements, KPIS, or guarantees from the developer.
- **Intercepting** in localised stewardship arrangements should they 'fail' to deliver the HGGT ambitions. This could involve negotiating with the developer or local stewardship body to take more formal governance or oversight over stewardship arrangements (see Ebbsfleet Case Study overleaf).

4.23 In the longer term, an Enforcement & Coordination Role could also **work closely with emerging localised stewardship bodies**, for example helping to respond to emerging challenges, **providing advice and guidance** to residents and community-led stewardship bodies to help them operate them as effectively as possible coordinating procurement across different organisations to **achieve economies of scale**, and managing contracts with suppliers working across the whole Garden Town.

Resource and governance

4.24 Whilst full time employee/s would be required to deliver this role, this option could **create potential cost savings** achieved through addressing otherwise 'double handled' issues, such as around S106 management and monitoring, as well as minimising the chances of the HGGT Partners being required to intervene within 'failing' arrangements.

4.25 Whilst initially this role could initially be achieved through the **Joint Committee**, should more formal governance and management responsibility evolve, an independent legal entity may be required.

4.26 This role will therefore be most critical whilst schemes are being integrated through the development process. Whilst there is a theoretical case for this type of stewardship role in perpetuity, its effectiveness can be reviewed on a cyclical basis.

Key risks and limitations

4.27 A key challenge to consider is whether there are opportunities to **diversify funding to sustain the additional specialist staff** that would be required to perform these duties.

4.28 For example, there may be opportunities to diversify a limited amount of revenue funding through contract **management services** supporting localised bodies. To develop an income stream, a specialist legal body would be required, as opposed to simply extending the responsibility of the Joint Committee.

ALPARC

Key learnings


- ALPARC is a stewardship body which takes a coordination role between localised bodies, without owning or managing assets directly.
- This exchange allows for parks to take part in and carry out projects that they may not have been able to do on their own.
- The body delivers actions under three main topics: Biodiversity and Ecological Connectivity, Regional Development and Quality of Life, and Education for Sustainable Development.

ALPARC, the Alpine Network of Protected Areas, was founded in 1995 to support the implementation of the Alpine Convention, in particular the Protocol on "Nature protection and landscape conservation."

The association's main goal is to promote the exchange of expertise, techniques, and methods among the managers of all the large, protected areas in the Alps such as national parks, regional nature parks, nature reserves, biosphere reserves, tranquillity zones, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, geological reserves, and sites granted a special protection status. **This exchange allows for parks to take part in and carry out projects that they may not have been able to do on their own.**

ALPARC carries out its actions under three main topics: Biodiversity and Ecological Connectivity, Regional Development and Quality of Life, and Education for Sustainable Development in the Alps. These three topics allow for ALPARC to take a **regional approach to global issues** such as climate change, nature conservation and sustainable development. Moreover, ALPARC aims to raise awareness among the general public and in particular, Alpine youth on environmental challenges.


OUR PROJECTS



YOUTH AT THE TOP

Among younger generations, there is little awareness of the values and opportunities offered by the natural and cultural heritage...


→



BE PART OF THE MOUNTAIN

The idea For snow sport enthusiasts, the Alps are getting more and more attractive beyond ski resorts. The current leisure trends in ski mou...


→



BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE / 2021-2024

BackgroundProtected areas are subject to increasing pressures on their biodiversity. This is mainly due to conflicts of use and partly insu...


→



PLANTOCONNECT / 2022-2025

PlanToConnect Promoting ecological connectivity is an important option to enable dynamic adaptation processes in ecosystems, and thus to c...

→



ALPINE PARKS 2030

Consult project outputs A New Generation of Alpine Protected Areas Protected area management policy in the Alpine arc is over 100 years ...

→

Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, (As referenced in the TCPA retrofitting stewardship report¹³.)

Key learnings

- The **EGCT is seeking agreement from developers to be offered 'first refusal'** of the responsibility for the ManCos.
- Where the residents have maintained control over the ManCos, the EGCT will **provide advice and guidance to residents to help them operate them as effectively as possible in a coordination type role.**
- in future, the EGCT has worked with developers and the local authorities to secure an **arrangement through Section 106 agreements where the Trust would be offered governance control of ManCos on development completion.**
- In practice, if the Trust takes over governance of the ManCos, **there may be a need to set up a Community Interest Company (CIC) as an umbrella organisation.**

In 2021 the Ebbsfleet Garden Community Trust (EGCT) was set up as an independent charity with its own board of trustees, made up of residents and key stakeholders. From 2022 onwards, EGCT planned to adopt community allotments, buildings, and large parks to be managed and maintained, along with income generating assets to meet any net costs and liabilities. However, currently EGCT has only taken on responsibility for community allotments and the distribution of a community fund.

In the future, EGCT also intends to work with the residents, house builders and managing agents, to ensure consistent high maintenance standards across the Garden City, at affordable rates for residents.

Furthermore, to mitigate the risks associated to existing Mancos identified on page X, (EGCT) has a remit of **negotiating with developers to secure 'first refusal' rights over the existing Mancos if residents decline directorship, ensuring governance control and consistent service standards.**

While initial developer responses have been promising, actual transfers have yet to occur as negotiations are ongoing. For ManCos where residents retain control, the **EGCT will offer guidance to optimise operations and facilitate any desired changes, such as switching managing agents.**

To pre-empt similar challenges in the future, the EGCT has collaborated with developers and local authorities to incorporate governance control provisions for Mancos into Section 106 agreements upon development completion.

This arrangement envisages the EGCT assuming governance, potentially through a Community Interest Company (CIC), to **oversee estate management functions independently from the Trust.** Under this structure, ManCos would operate as **subsidiaries or under the umbrella of the CIC, ensuring service charges are managed within the organisation.** This integration aims to enhance service consistency and align with the EGCT's charitable stewardship objectives.

¹³ <https://www.tcpa.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Retrofitting-Stewardship-Report-FINAL-for-website-2.pdf>

DIRECT DELIVERY OF STEWARDSHIP

NON-STATUTORY SERVICE DELIVERY ROLE

Summary

4.29 The Non-Statutory Service Delivery Role would see the Strategic Stewardship Body take on similar responsibilities to those of the 'Creative Estuary'. This role would move beyond traditional stewardship and instead see the strategic stewardship body become more directly involved in coordinating the delivery of cross-boundary policy matters of relevance to the HGGT Vision.

4.30 The following table establishes the intervention timeline for when this role would be deployed.

VISION SETTING	PLANNING STAGES	DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY INTERGRATION	LONG TERM LEGACY
		✓	✓	✓

Relationship to existing policy / strategy

4.31 It is expected that this role could potentially including **economic development/inward investment** (to support job creation aspirations), **transport (particularly on the issue of driving community infrastructure that supports modal shift** at risk of not being funded / delivered) and **community / cultural development** as well as supporting **biodiversity** net gain and high standards of **environmental management, in line with the risks identified in the case for intervention.**

4.32 This role would be concerned with **working collaboratively with local and external stakeholders** to drive projects relating to biodiversity, tourism, culture and the physical and mental wellbeing of residents and visitors through **non-asset holding activities.**

4.33 This would provide a **critical mass of dedicated resource** to ensure that the Garden Town Vision is fully integrated into all aspect's stewardship activities. The role could also create potential efficiencies compared with roles being undertaken by multiple District Council officers on a part time basis; flexibility to add/remove responsibilities over time.

Resource and governance

4.34 Activities could be delivered in a Creative Estuary-type model (which is understood to operate on a budget of c. **£400,000** per annum), which is driven by a team including specialisms from inward investment, placemaking and wellbeing, events and culture and communication.

4.35 Alternatively, a model could follow the model of the significantly larger LLDC Regeneration and Community Partnerships team (which includes workstreams sustainable travel) which operates on a budget of c. **£2.5m** per annum. This team drives projects associated with innovation, jobs, skills and businesses, for example through management of an apprenticeship programme, construction skills training, and youth work, as well as driving and delivering decarbonisation projects. This team also runs events, which generate revenue to help support ongoing stewardship activities.

4.36 Total budget required would depend on the scope of services offered plus budget for initiating / commissioning programmes. The body may seek to run activities and events across the garden town and therefore seek to utilise assets coming forward.

Key risks and limitations

- 4.37** There is no obvious long-term solution for role to be fully self-funding, however some revenue may be able to be diversified through the development of revenue producing services (e.g. cultural events), or business rates mechanisms.
- 4.38** It may be possible for a private sector endowment to be drawn through S106, however, to achieve this would require re-negotiation of the S106 achieved at Gilston. Additional funding may be secured through government and other sector-led grants; however, this cannot represent a secured or determined income.
- 4.39** To operate beyond the development phase, a sustainable long-term funding model would be required, and this would be challenging to achieve without holding income-generating assets or a long-term financial commitment from the Partner Authorities. Careful consideration would also need to be given to the governance arrangements to bring this role forward, especially to demarcate responsibilities of the stewardship body vs. responsibilities retained by Local Authority officers.

Creative Estuary, Thames Estuary

➤ **KEY LEARNINGS:**

- Example of a novel body operating across administrative boundaries focusing on delivery of stewardship activities which underpin placemaking only – holding no assets and taking on no responsibilities for estate management or infrastructure.
- Delivers important non-statutory services which the Local Authorities lack budget scope to implement independently in current conditions.
- Delivers capital projects, cultural events, partnership building.
- Attracts external grant funding which is a core part of the funding model.
- Understood to operate on an annual operational budget of c. £400,000 per annum.

Creative Estuary, established in 2019, is a consortium of public sector, private sector and cultural organisations, working together to support the Thames Estuary Production Corridor in North Kent and South Essex.



Creative Estuary curates a culture and economic programme aimed at transforming the visibility, identity and future of the area’s creative production infrastructure, supporting more than 400 new jobs, and delivering new skills, qualifications, and apprenticeships across an area of 1.5million people. It funds initiatives to promote the area; commissions to showcase and attract inward investment; it builds partnerships between the private, third and public sector for the long-term benefit of creative production. Creative Estuary is understood to operate on an annual operational budget of c. £400,000 per annum.

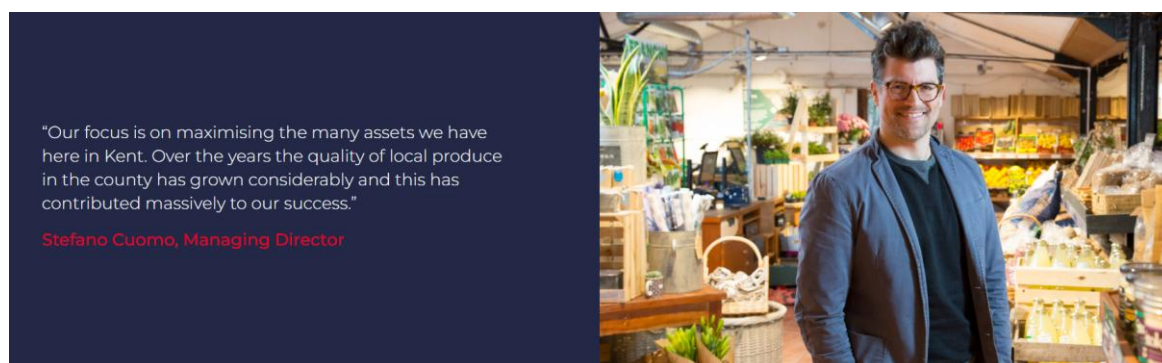
Creative Estuary is not incorporated and holds no assets, though does have a strong and detailed governance structure. The organisation’s initial 4-year phase was funded by the DCMS Cultural Development Fund and delivered a wide-range of different impacts across the Estuary including capital projects (such as Chatham’s Docking Station); large scale cultural events (such as the Estuary festival); Town Centre Regeneration (such as repurposing vacant units); thought leadership, and management of working groups with the public and private sector. In April 2024 Creative Estuary was awarded new investment of £1.15m from Arts Council England to continue its work for a further 3 years.

Locate in Kent

- Key Learnings
- A stewardship body with a clear and narrow remit to drive economic development and inwards investment opportunities across Kent.
- Endorsed by public sector partners. In contract with Kent Country Council for the provision of inward Investment Services, with match funding from local, national, and international government.
- Responsibilities ranging from partnership building to seeking and promoting commercial properties onto their commercial property database.

Locate in Kent is funded and supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, local councils, the Kent Developers Group, Kent Housing and Development Group and partners from the private sector to promote Kent and Medway as a prime location for business and support the creation of new jobs. Locate in Kent provides free, confidential support to employers setting up, expanding, or relocating as well as for international enterprise coming to the UK.

As Kent's inward investment agency, Locate in Kent aims to encourage and support more businesses to set up and expand in Kent. They achieve this by providing information, helping businesses and investors find the right locations, and connecting the right people with each other.



Run by a team of 6, the org's business advice services are confidential, impartial, and free of charge. Their key responsibilities are finding and securing commercial property, connecting organisations into local business networks, identifying local partners and suppliers, and providing advice on financial support.

Since forming, Locate in Kent has helped 1,130 companies move to, set-up or expand in Kent, creating or retaining 70,165 jobs.

Locate in Kent is funded through a blended funding model. It is in contract with Kent County Council for the provision of inward Investment Services. The service has also been funded by the European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) and administered by the Ministry for Homes, Communities and Local Government, (MHCLG), with match funding from Kent County Council and Medway Council.

Case Study 3 – EuroVelo, Europe

- Key Learnings
- A stewardship body with a clear remit around supporting the consistent management and promotion of active transport network across multiple countries and administrative boundaries.
- The body ensures that the cycle pathways are not just maintained but enjoyed and positioned to attract tourism and a range of users.
- Supports ensure a single point of contact for pathway users regarding stewardship concerns.
- Run by a team of 8 full time employees who have remits across strategy, coordination, communication, fundraising and route partnerships.

EuroVelo, the European cycle route network, is an initiative of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) in cooperation with national and regional partners. EuroVelo consists of over 90,000 km of cycling routes, of which well over 45,000 km are using developed cycle paths and low-traffic roads. The international status of the routes helps with garnering funds and political support for their continuing construction.

EuroVelo incorporates existing and planned national and regional cycle routes into a single European network. Ownership of these infrastructure elements typically rests with the relevant governmental bodies responsible for transportation, tourism, or environmental management. The ECF works with national and regional partners to develop and maintain the EuroVelo routes, ensuring consistent signage, route planning, and promotion of cycling tourism. While ownership of the physical infrastructure remains with the respective authorities along the route, the EuroVelo project provides a framework for collaboration and coordination to enhance the cycling experience for users across national boundaries.

The ECF EuroVelo Management Team is responsible for communicating EuroVelo throughout Europe and globally. It provides overview information (in electronic and printed form) on EuroVelo routes and on services such as international cycle transport, guidebooks, and bookable offers, as well as on national cycle routes in European countries. The Management Team also refers to detailed information at a local level on sections of EuroVelo routes and on national and regional routes. Finally, it informs its project partners on the key requirements for the implementation of EuroVelo and transfers expertise and good practice between partners.

The highest decision-making body is the ECF Board. In 2007, the ECF Board created the EuroVelo Council to act as an advisory body for ECF in the implementation and operation of EuroVelo. The EuroVelo Council currently meets four times a year and has eight members who are appointed for terms of three years.



Wandle Regional Park

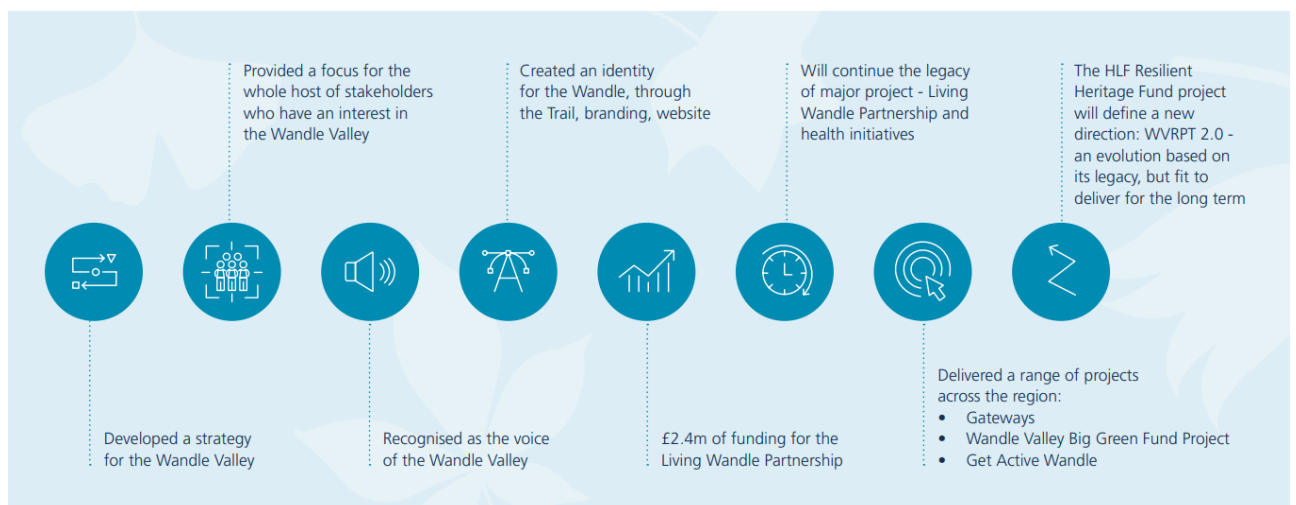
- Key Learnings
- A stewardship body which does not hold assets, aiming to improve the leadership and coordination of an effective sub regional partnership.

Wandle Regional Park was created to address several key strategic challenges in the Wandle Valley. Chief among these was the sheer size and scope of the valley and its multiple landowners (that integrates and contributes to the regeneration of the Wandle Valley Development Corridor, comprising parts of the Boroughs of Croydon, Merton, Sutton, and Wandsworth), with no single body that had a remit for the entire valley, leading to a fragmentation of strategic purpose.

The Trust was set up in 2013 with these challenges in mind to provide the leadership and coordination needed to develop the strategic coherence needed for a successful Regional Park. The Strategic Aims of the Trust are described below, with an overarching Mission to **‘to provide the leadership and coordination of an effective sub regional partnership that will improve the effectiveness, coherence, resilience and quality of the Wandle Valley’**.

The Trust’s ambitions detailed in their 2021 strategy is to:

- Become more entrepreneurial and able to make quick decisions.
- Increase its staff capacity.
- Invest in marketing, promotion, business, and project development.
- Develop and implement a delivery plan for the regional park.
- Attract, pool, channel, and manage large scale investment and funding from new and innovative sources, to act as a funding body.
- Assess the benefits and risks of holding and managing land and building assets.
- Take risks – pilot and incubate enterprising ideas and projects.



ASSET-HOLDING ROLE

Summary

- 4.40** The previous roles described are primarily service driven, with employee resource providing time and expertise to drive forward beneficial outcomes for the Garden Town as a whole. Though a framework for localised stewardship delivery is emerging via the Stewardship Charter and agreements already entered in relation to Gilston, opportunities may emerge for certain assets (or classes of asset) to be taken into centralised stewardship, with the agreement of local partners.
- 4.41** A key opportunity of the Asset-Holding Role is the opportunity to have direct control and leverage how assets are managed, curated, and positioned in perpetuity to achieve the garden town ambitions of sustainable growth.
- 4.42** The following table establishes the intervention timeline for when this role would be deployed.

VISION SETTING	PLANNING STAGES	DEVELPPMENT & CONSTRUCTION	COMMUNITY INTERGRATION	LONG TERM LEGACY
		✓	✓	✓

Relationship to existing policy / strategy

- 4.43** In one extreme, a Strategic Stewardship Body could aim to acquire all the community infrastructure associated with the new HGGT development. This would be more in line with the traditional Garden Town developments whereby land remained in single ownership, and a charitable trust or organisation was established to look after the development and its residents, funded through a service charge or income from leaseholds. Stewardship would include physical maintenance and improvement of the public realm, managing the public realm, and organising community activities.
- 4.44** There is **no existing case study** to show how this could function given the unique circumstances of HGGT including the disparate land ownership, scale, and phasing of development across multiple LPAs. However, there are multiple models of community-led stewardship which have the potential to be used for 'whole-place' management, but these examples are usually confined to smaller sites. This context, alongside the advanced strategies at Gilston, means that a scaled-up Strategic Stewardship body taking an asset-holding, whole-place approach to community-led stewardship would be a **project of significant risk and undertaking for the HGGT Partners**.
- 4.45** Furthermore, there are arguably several assets which are arguably better suited to stewardship at a local level. For example, empowering people to have a say on how their neighbourhoods are created and managed, is arguably easier at a local neighbourhood level.
- 4.46** Therefore, it is more likely that a HGGT Strategic Stewardship Body may look to **acquire specific groups of asset classes of strategic relevance for the HGGT stewardship vision which are currently at risk due to existing arrangements**. The reasons why specific asset classes across the garden town may be acquired to a Strategic Stewardship body are explored in the paragraphs below.
- 4.47** To support the **curation of placemaking and inward investment and the delivery of the HGGT Vision**, HGGT may look to acquire assets such as **employment or commercial space, modal hubs, co-working or affordable workspace**. While these assets may produce income once fully let, in the initial years, the purpose of holding these assets would be to **drive inward investment and attract anchor tenants**. While cultural and community assets are likely to be politically preferred to be stewarded at the local level, there is currently no

outline stewardship model presented for strategic **employment and commercial space or modal hubs**, potentially making the case to acquire these into a strategic body easier.

- 4.48** There may also be rationale to **support the asset management of assets at particular risk of stewardship failure without strategic intervention**, for example, assets associated to the Strategic Transport Corridors.
- 4.49** It is assumed that at present, the stewardship of the planned HGGT strategic transport will fall to each county authority in which they are located, but there may be strategic rationale to centralise some assets to a Strategic Stewardship Body whilst recognising that these assets represent significant liabilities. Should the Strategic Stewardship Body absorb the Strategic Transport infrastructure, this would need to be subject to a full business case per strategic asset, including a full financial model which considers the role of subsidy, grants, or other income-generating assets that would support the overall strategic management of these asset.
- 4.50** Finally, a HGGT Strategic Stewardship Vehicle may look to acquire **Income Generating Assets to support the overall running of the organisation, to cross subsidise other community development activities**, or to provide match funding for public sector grants. These assets may include newly developed Utilities, ICT Packages, Energy centres, Car Parking, or Leisure Assets. The Asset-Holding Role could acquire existing assets, or assets even outside of the development red-line by the partner authority to enable the ongoing running of the vehicle. This would have to be negotiated with the Partner Authorities.

Resource and governance

- 4.51** As outlined, for a Strategic Stewardship body to take on assets, it would be necessary to ensure that a sustainable balance of income and non-income assets to fund upkeep in perpetuity. Even alongside **the acquisition of income-generating assets**, such as commercial or employment space (or leisure, parking, and utilities assets, subject to review), it will be challenging to create balanced income model, especially in the early stages of the organisation's establishment. Where there are funding gaps, a business case would be required to access funds needed to take on liable assets.
- 4.52** The total cost of maintaining non-income-generating community assets and infrastructure at HGGT is not yet known; as a guide, the London Legacy Development Corporation (incorporating c. 33,000 new homes plus the QEII Olympic Park) has an annual budget of **c.£9.7m for park stewardship operations**, which is funded through an **estate charge and supplemented through events income, car parking and commercial property (Here East)**.
- 4.53** There are opportunities for **diversifying funding streams** that could be explored however, including: developer endowments negotiated through S106; incorporated service models such as identified in the previous option; and business rates and levies. The progress with the Gilston Villages Planning application however is likely to limit the opportunity to realise s106 opportunities.

Key risks and limitations

- 4.54** Given the **progress of stewardship arrangements at Gilston**, to progress an asset holding model which is fully extensive across the garden town would require re-negotiation of the S106 already at outline consent stage. Therefore, where the transfer of the assets has not been previously negotiated/secured through a section 106 agreement or other agreement, the Strategic Stewardship Body would need to enter into a commercial agreement with the developer/landowner for the acquisition of these assets. This is likely to be at market value and the landowner may not be willing to sell.
- 4.55** Were such commercial negotiations to fail, then **there may be circumstances where compulsory purchase powers are available**. However, these are likely to be fact specific as different powers apply to different types of authority and enable acquisitions for different functions. Even where an appropriate power has been

identified, its use must be justified by compelling reasons. If the purpose for which the acquisition is proposed can be achieved by other means (e.g. if the owner proposes to manage the asset itself or through a private management company) then it is unlikely that the order will be confirmed by the Secretary of State. The process for obtaining a compulsory purchase order (CPO) is time consuming and can be very costly if an inquiry needs to be held due to objections being made and not withdrawn. Therefore, unless detailed analysis is undertaken of the justifications available in advance in respect of all types of assets, compulsory purchase could not be relied upon to enable the later acquisition of assets.

4.56 Whilst a Strategic Stewardship Body with an asset holding function could progress **excluding consideration of the assets at Gilston**, political sensitivity must be navigated in terms of:

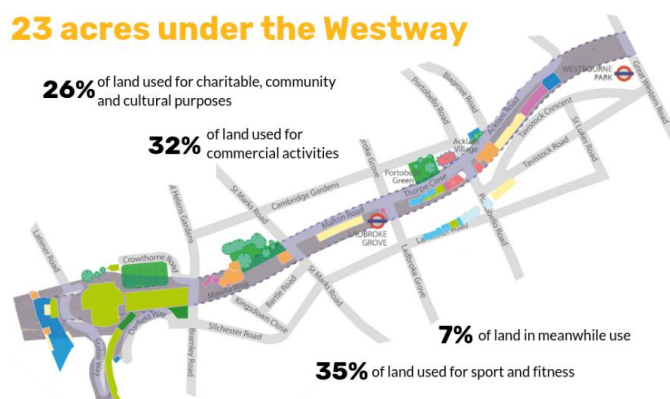
- The different asset contributions which may be made by each HGGT Partner authority;
- Any estate charge made by residents which goes towards supporting Garden-Wide assets;
- Negotiating power on future S106 agreements on future development applications given the precedent made at Gilston.

4.57 Another clear key issue with holding assets would be the extent to which **income-generating assets are outnumbered by liabilities**. Whilst there are options to diversify funding streams, these options are not currently planned for in emerging stewardship policy and will have associated risk in achieving.

The Westway Trust

- **Key learnings**
- Stewards 23 acres of land, 180 tenants and circa 500,000 sqf of space in North Kensington.
- Owns land on a long lease from the public sector with a clear remit of supporting the local community and economy.
- The board model has enabled the local public sector authority to be directly involved in the shaping of the organisation.

The West Way Trust is a community development trust formed in the 1970's that stewards 23 acres of land, 180 tenants and circa 500,000 sqf of space in North Kensington. It has a long-lease circa 150 years from TfL via Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The model is to own and operate a range of spaces to support the local economy and community. There is a sports centre, workspace, a market, public realm and creative spaces.



Its approach is the blend commercial and charitable lettings in return for social impact. The commercial portfolio raises enough to provide grant funding for community initiatives.

It is a charity but has RBKC influence. RBKC sits on the Board (up until recently, RBKC has been seen as controlling the Westway Trust, which caused concern to local people). The Westway Trust has throughout its history had challenges about the governance structure given the politics of the area (Conservative Councillors sitting on a community Board in a Labour ward).

5) TOWARDS A PREFERRED ROUTE

SUMMARY

- The four key roles identified in the previous chapter when combined have the potential to reduce the risks identified in chapter 3 significantly. The options appraisal set out in this chapter reviews the extent to which these roles could realistically be deployed at HGGT by reviewing the roles qualitatively against a set of critical success factors, and by confirming that stakeholder support exists for their potential introduction. Based on this, a proposed outline model has been defined, the potential implementation of which is discussed in further detail in future chapters.

INTRODUCTION

- 5.1** Whilst there may be a theoretical 'case' for a Strategic Stewardship organisation that delivers any of the 4 strategic stewardship roles described, it is now necessary to **evaluate the opportunities and limitations** of each role to determine a **preferred Strategic Stewardship model** for HGGT to be taken forward.
- 5.2** The critical success factors (CSF) outlined below have been devised with **input from the HGGT Board Members, Chief Executives of the local authorities and the HGGT team**. CSFs support the development of a project proposal by identifying key factors critical to success and a framework to evaluate possible options towards a preferred route forward. In this instance, the CSFs aim to provide clarity on the extent to which HGGT Partners will be **willing and able to invest and deliver the possible Strategic Stewardship roles**.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Commitment to the HGGT Vision

- HGGT Partners are committed to **collectively realising the HGGT Vision**, not just through the stewarding of good planning applications, but **into the future** to ensure that the HGGT Vision is upheld in perpetuity.

2. Adopting sensible risk

- HGGT Partners are conceptually open to being involved in the direct delivery of stewardship responsibilities, be that through placemaking or asset holding responsibilities, but do not want to absorb unnecessary risk. It is paramount that there is a **clear rationale for any intervention**.
- For example, assets should not be centralised to a Strategic Stewardship body where it is not necessary to do so which will disrupt the 'status quo'. For example, should assets be at risk of being failed by local stewardship, there may be a case for strategic intervention by a Strategic Stewardship Body, but other assets, such as allotments and community spaces, may be found to be better suited to local stewardship arrangements, and therefore left to be stewarded on a site-by-site basis.

3. Respecting delivery progress across the garden town

- Partners recognise that Gilston has secured outline planning consent, and therefore more interventionist strategic stewardship responsibilities involving Gilston are limited. It is paramount **not to undo the progress achieved at Gilston**, however the opportunities to act around this limitation is still to be explored.

4. Achievable and representing value for money.

- Partners want to ensure that the proposed approach to Strategic Stewardship is deliverable, achievable and represents value for money for residents across the five local authorities. This includes protecting residents from **unnecessary estate and service charges**, which can create financial burden on new communities.

5. Politically sensitive

- With five Partner Local Authorities, and a dispersed development area, the stakeholder landscape at HGGT is significantly more complex than in most other major development areas, and stewardship proposals which would result in transfers of powers, assets and/or funding to as stewardship body need to take these potential complications into account. Partners want to ensure that any forthcoming Strategic Stewardship arrangements navigates political sensitivities.

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.3** In the following options appraisal, the four roles described in the previous chapter are appraised against the CSFs. A summary table is presented below, with the full matrix document appended to this report.

	Mitigate the risks identified in emerging localised arrangements	Commitment to the HGGT Vision	Adopt Sensible Risk	Respecting delivery progress across the garden town	Achievable and representing value for money	Politically sensitive	
Possible Stewardship Roles	Advisory	An advisory only role lacks direct oversight and enforcement power to ensure adherence to the vision in perpetuity. would not For example, it will not enable HGGT to intercept in under-performing stewardship arrangements post-planning application. Therefore whilst an advisory role can mitigate some risks around weak stewardship arrangements coming forward, without longer term strategic involvement, development-by development stewardship strategies would be exposed and vulnerable to a wide range of factors.	An advisory-only role would risk not achieving the HGGT ambition, due to a lack of collaborative ambition secured post planning to continue to support issues such as placemaking, inwards investment, biodiversity, and modal shift.	There is limited risk associated with this role. Should a KPI / accreditation system be developed, it must be monitored how private sector partners willing interact with the model.	The advisory role does not disrupt emerging stewardship arrangements, and furthermore could maximise the success potential of emerging stewardship arrangements through a more hands-on role of working with emerging stewardship proposals across the Garden Town as planning applications are developed.	Requires relatively little resource, however would require more dedicated HGGT resource (such as 1 additional FTE) to focus on stewardship activity. Dedicated resource could sit within the existing Joint Committee Structure, presenting a cost effective solution. The JC does not however currently have dedicated funding for hiring directly into stewardship advisory roles. This role could be paid for through a fee placed on the developer to access accreditation or support services. It must also be recognised however that by not addressing some of the identified risks in the case for intervention, the possible failure of not sustaining the HGGT vision in perpetuity will present longer term cost challenges for the HGGT partners, and in tern, HGGT residents.	This role presents limited political risk in implementation terms. It does not however provide support to new stewardship bodies to navigate politics between new and existing residents across administrative borders.
	Enforcement / Coordination	The key opportunity of this role is in supporting the efficient and robust delivery of localised stewardship arrangements at a development-by-development basis by providing more robust levers to intercept and enforce good stewardship practices, beyond the pre-planning application period. To be effective, this role should be delivered hand-in-hand with the advisory role to provide support through the development and delivery time periods. The second opportunity of this role is to support the coordination of local stewardship arrangements across the Garden town, as well as supporting smaller stewardship bodies to find economies of scale through centralising procurement of services.	Ongoing coordination of how stewardship activates are deployed across the Garden Town gives more chance to sustaining the HGGT vision in perpetuity. However, without any known legal mechanisms to enforce local stewardship bodies to deliver activities such as community engagement and community wealth building, this outcome is not a secured reality under this role.	There is limited risk associated with this role.	The Coordination / Enforcement role does not disrupt emerging stewardship arrangements, and furthermore could maximise the success potential of emerging stewardship arrangements through a more hands-on role of working with emerging stewardship proposals across the Garden Town as stewardship bodies integrate, develop and mature.	Requires relatively little resource, however would require more dedicated HGGT resource (such as 1 additional FTE) to focus on stewardship activity. Dedicated resource could sit within the existing Joint Committee Structure, presenting a cost effective solution. The JC does not currently have dedicated funding for hiring directly into stewardship advisory roles. This role could be paid for through a levee placed on the developer to access on-going coordination services, for example through a membership basis.	This role may navigate political sensitivities by working closely with partner authorities and local planning authorities to enforce and coordinate stewardship standards. Strong governance arrangements must be in place to address potential political complexities associated with delegating powers or influencing local arrangements.
	Non-statutory Service delivery	This role could work closely alongside localised stewardship arrangements to support the delivery of services, potentially enhancing the management of assets without directly holding them. For example, working closely with commercial portfolio holders, the body could attract sufficient inwards investment to maximise the possible success of the assets. Through this role as a stand-alone solution however does not address risks associated to the robustness and ability of localised bodies coming forward.	The Non-Statutory Service Delivery Role aims to integrate the garden town vision into various aspects of development and ongoing placemaking activities. By coordinating the delivery of cross-boundary policy matters, it could contribute to upholding the HGGT vision by ensuring alignment with economic development, transport, community/cultural development, and environmental management goals.	The main risk of this role lies in ensuring a sustainable long-term funding model without relying solely on public funding or holding income-generating assets.	The Non-Statutory Service Delivery Role acknowledges the need for collaborative working with local and external stakeholders to drive projects relevant to the garden town vision. However, it's crucial to ensure that it complements and supports existing local initiatives rather than undermining or duplicating efforts.	The feasibility of this role depends on the scope of services offered and the budget required for initiating/commissioning programs. While models like the Creative Estuary or LLDC Regeneration and Community Partnerships team provide examples, careful consideration is needed to ensure value for money and efficiency in service delivery. It is likely that this role could become self funding over time through third party grants, as well as through developing income generating services. To achieve this role, it is likely that a newly incorporated body would be required which is suitably to attract third party fundign and act independently to the current Joint Committee. It must also be recognised that through placemaking, and improving the quality of HGGT as a place, destination and economy, this role likely offers long term cost savings to the public sector.	This role may involve navigating political sensitivities, especially in terms of funding sources and governance arrangements. Ensuring clear demarcation of responsibilities between the stewardship body and local authority officers is essential to address potential governance challenges.
	Asset holding role	The Asset-Holding Role aims to directly control and leverage assets to achieve the garden town ambitions of beautiful, sustainable growth. Through this role as a stand-alone solution however does not address risks associated to the robustness and ability of localised bodies coming forward, however could support them by relieving them of labile asset classes.	By acquiring assets such as employment or commercial space and supporting asset management, it aligns with the vision by curating placemaking and supporting economic development, community/cultural development, and environmental management goals.	There are many risks associated with this role and cornering the development of a new asset holding body. These risks involve: The risk associated with establishing a fledgling CIC to hold assets. The risk of including / excluding the assets at Gilston which creates either planning risk or political risk respectively. The risk of ensuring a sustainable balance of income and non-income assets to fund upkeep in perpetuity.	To respect the delivery progress across the Garden Town, the Asset-Holding Role must acknowledge the progress made at Gilston and the emerging stewardship arrangements. To achieve this, it is advisable to focus on acquiring specific asset classes of strategic relevance for the garden town stewardship vision, recognising that not all assets may be suitable for central stewardship and may be better suited to local stewardship arrangements.	The feasibility of this role depends on exploring opportunities for funding streams to support both establishing and sustaining a suitable asset holding organisation. These funding solutions could include developer endowments negotiated through S106, business rates, and CIL, as well as income generating assets. However, it poses challenges in achieving a sustainable income model and may require re-negotiation of S106 agreement at Gilston, which could impact value for money. To achieve this role, a newly incorporated body would be required which is suitable to hold assets	The Asset-Holding Role involves navigating political sensitivities, especially regarding the contributions made by each HGGT partner, estate charges by residents, and negotiating power on future S106 agreements. Clear communication and collaboration with stakeholders will be essential to address these sensitivities and ensure successful implementation.

CONCLUSION

- 5.4 The outcome of the options appraisal suggests that **strengthening the emerging stewardship** policy, strategy, and arrangements through advisory, coordination, and enforcement roles **addresses several of the operational risks identified in the case for intervention**. This would be implementable in the short-term and represents less risk than direct stewardship activities, such as non-statutory service delivery and asset management roles, by building on existing structures and policies.
- 5.5 Furthermore, these roles **could** be immediately delivered through the **proposed Joint Committee**, which already holds delegated responsibility concerning stewardship. As planning applications continue to come forward, **time is of the essence** to shape how stewardship strategies evolve including monitoring how Gilston continues to progress and moves towards delivery. For the Joint Committee to develop into this strategic stewardship advisory role, **additional dedicated resources will be required**.
- 5.6 In the future, however, there may be merit in delivering this role through a more independent organisation, such as a **Community Interest Company (CIC)** or a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)**, to achieve further impartiality, identity, and remit, as well as to diversify funding streams which may not be available to the Joint Committee governance structure.
- 5.7 As identified in the options appraisal, **without direct involvement in further non-statutory service delivery and asset management, it will be challenging to address the strategic risks associated with the delivery of the HGGT vision**. Therefore, direct involvement in service delivery and asset management will likely be essential in the **medium to long term to effectively address these gaps**.
- 5.8 Establishing these roles **now** would present **significant risk and resourcing pressures to HGGT**. They will require incorporation of a specialist stewardship vehicle with a clearly defined remit and funding model, and significant further political buy-in at a local, regional, and even potentially national level, as seen in examples such as the Creative Estuary and Locate in Kent examples, which have **regional and central government backing**.
- 5.9 Therefore, it is advised that, as an **intermediate measure, HGGT progresses with incorporating the advisory and enforcement/coordination roles promptly**, while also ensuring that resource – in the form of full-time employee or consultant time – is in place to provide a **future proofing function as planning applications are received, and delivered**, and statutory **stewardship strategies are refined**. This role will have a remit of working closely with the advisory and enforcement/coordination roles **to monitor the risk and potential opportunities for further intervention**, either in the form of further management responsibility as seen in Ebbsfleet, or a non-statutory or asset-holding role as seen in the Creative Estuary.
- 5.10 Given the **significant risk associated with incorporating a new asset-holding stewardship body**, it is not advisable to progress this without a **full** business case and as the evolution and delivery of HGGT becomes more clearly defined. However, it should be retained as a clear option that HGGT partners could progress.
- 5.11 The next section of this report will **consider how these recommendations could be implemented**.

6) OUTLINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

SUMMARY

- This report has set out the process taken in determining the optimal role for a strategic stewardship body at HGGT. The outline implementation plan identifies key arrangements which will need to be made and areas of immediate focus, as well as a suggested funding model to support delivery of the strategic stewardship body.

INTRODUCTION

- 6.1** In the previous chapter, we have outlined the recommended role of a HGGT Strategic Stewardship function extension of the Joint Committee should take in the short term, and anticipated requirements / opportunities over the medium /long term.
- 6.2** This chapter presents a blueprint for the delivery of Strategic Stewardship in both the short-, and longer-term planning periods, including the structure, roles and responsibilities, governance arrangements and possible funding sources.

STRATEGIC STEWARDSHIP ROLE - SHORT TERM

- 6.3** The key Strategic Stewardship objectives of the HGGT Partners over the **next 18 months** is to:
- **Influence, improve and collaborate** with emerging stewardship arrangements. Work with the LPAs to develop KPI based policy arrangements.
 - **Provide oversight and guidance** as the delivery of stewardship strategies are prepared and development starts at Gilston. Engage in explorative negotiations with Places for People and Taylor Wimpy to consider the introduction of more robust S106 enforcement mechanisms, without risking the overall progress made at Gilston.
 - **Provide coordination of services and support as multiple stewardship bodies evolve**, at an appropriate point in time.
 - **Future proof stewardship arrangements** to ensure that additional support and approaches are in place to support emerging stewardship HGGT arrangements across the garden town as they evolve, as needed.
- 6.4** These priorities are advised to be delivered through the **proposed Joint Committee**, which already holds delegated responsibility concerning stewardship. It is anticipated that **2 full time additional employee resources** will be required to deliver this role. The table overleaf draws attention to the Strategic Stewardship responsibilities, and projects which these additional resources of the Joint Committee would assume, and the immediate projects which it is expected that this resource will lead on.

6.5 Given the limitations of funding opportunities at this point in time, it is advised that these roles are jointly funded by the Partner Authorities.

Advisory	
Critical responsibilities	Immediate projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as the primary liaison with external stakeholders, including developers, local authorities, investors, and community groups in the consideration of stewardship responsibility in planning applications. • Lead the development of stewardship models in collaboration with developers and stakeholders. • Represent HGGT in public forums, conferences, and media engagements to promote stewardship principles. • Advise on how to integrate asset holdings into placemaking initiatives and investment strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from a policy perspective in emerging policy across the Local Plans and individual masterplan, such as Latton Priory. • Liaise between land promoters and developers to consider best stewardship arrangements for Latton Priory. • Initiate engagement with other land promoters and developers in Water Lane and East of Harlow to consider best stewardship arrangements for emerging developments. This may include engaging third parties who could support in stewardship activities such as local wildlife Trusts

Enforcement / Coordination	
Critical responsibilities	Immediate projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and hold a stewardship related accreditation to support the planning process. • Establish mechanisms for transparent reporting and performance tracking of stewardship outcomes. • Investigate complaints or concerns raised by stakeholders regarding stewardship practices. • Mediate disputes between developers, local authorities, and community groups related to stewardship issues. • Provide regular updates to the HGGT Partners on the progress of stewardship arrangements and any compliance issues. • Work with the Clerk of Works in the LPA to provide oversight of emerging S106 commitments related to stewardship and strategic infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support LPAs in the drafting of future S106 agreements to ensure that legal agreements are robust and rigorous. • Enter to informal negotiations with Places for People to introduce further monitoring / evaluation / contingency capability into the S106 or as a voluntary agreement. • Closely monitoring and working alongside Places for People as the Gilston Villages GACMT is established. • Establishing coordination methods and procurement strategies to support emerging stewardship arrangements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement contractual management schemes for cross boundary matters relating to the running of the land in line with HGGT priorities. • Engage between community-led stewardship arrangements to achieve economies of scale, for example procuring management contracts and materials. 	
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Future Proofing	
Critical responsibilities	Immediate projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with the partner local authorities, developers, and other stakeholders to identify strategic assets at planning stage such as land, infrastructure, or community facilities that are potentially at risk and suitable to Strategic stewardship direct management / delivery. • Work closely with emerging stewardship bodies to review necessary intervention take on more direct governance or management of emerging localised stewardship responsibility, for example through establishing a more formal umbrella body such as seen in Ebbsfleet which takes on the governance and management of localised solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD

FUNDING

- 6.6** Funding opportunities is limited if the Strategic Stewardship functions are operated from the Joint Committee which prevents the commercialisation of stewardship services.
- 6.7** Seed funding will be required from the Partner Authorities to fund the salaries of additional resource.
- 6.8** The Joint Committee can seek grants and additional funding opportunities to fund ongoing resource, however this cannot be confirmed at this stage.
- 6.9** The Joint Committee may choose to develop an independent legal entity to enable the recovery of commercial fees for supporting local stewardship bodies.

GOVERNANCE

- 6.10** The Strategic Stewardship Function can continue to operate from the Joint Committee until a point in time in which the future proofing function has determined that:
- More direct management or control over localised stewardship bodies is required.

- The Joint Committee governance structure is restraining fundraising opportunities.
- Direct stewardship activities are required to addressing strategic risks (see section overleaf).

A SNAPSHOT INTO THE FUTURE THE HARLOW AND GILSTON COMMUNITY AND INVESTMENT AGENCY

- 6.11** In the medium to long-term, the Strategic Stewardship function provided by HGGT should evolve to provide investment direct stewardship activities. Outgrowing the opportunities of the Joint Committee, an Independent Strategic Stewardship body would be incorporated which is committed to driving sustainable growth, fostering community engagement, and ensuring the long-term success of the Garden Town.
- 6.12** Within this organisation, the Stewardship functions and roles already being delivered through the Joint Committee would either be transferred to this independent vehicle, or winded-down should they no-long be required (such as through an advisory role at a post planning period).
- 6.13** Our vision is that a body akin to a 'Harlow and Gilston Community and Investment Agency' is established with a remit of coordination and delivery of local stewardship, to ensure effective implementation of the HGGT vision. It would include the following functions:
- **Accountability & Coordination:** Responsible for monitoring evolving stewardship arrangements, this department ensures accountability and efficiency by managing contracts with local stewardship bodies to support procurement and contractual responsibilities.
 - **Placemaking, Environmental Quality & Investment:** Leads community engagement efforts, promotes HGGT as a commercial opportunity, promotes environmental best practices, and spearheads investment programs to enhance the quality of life within the HGGT. Establishes partnerships and secures funding and resources for placemaking and positive initiatives. Identify opportunities for collaborative initiatives.
 - **Asset Curation:** With a focus on long-term sustainability, oversees the acquisition and management of assets to the Strategic Stewardship Vehicle. Considers strategic acquisition of commercial and employment land to promote economic development of the HGGT area, as well as potentially cross boundary liable assets subject to further consideration from the partner authorities on the cost-benefit analysis of this model. Upon the acquisition of assets, the department ensures that the HGGT's assets are effectively curated and managed for future generations working closely with Placemaking, Environmental Quality & Investment.

INDICATION OF ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

- 6.14** A Community Interest Company (CIC), Community Land Trust or a Special Purpose Vehicle are likely to be the most appropriate legal entities for such a purpose.
- 6.15** The most suitable organisational structure will be dependent on whether it is expected that the organisation is required to own property, land, equipment, intellectual property, investments, and other assets necessary for carrying out its activities and achieving its social objectives. It will be appropriate for this body to take an independent operation from the Council, offering autonomy and legal clarity, enabling the organisation to pursue its objectives with independence and focus.
- 6.16** The organisational design for the Harlow and Gilston Community and Investment Agency' would be expected to have an executive Leadership Team will lead the organisation. It will be critical to have a strong leadership governance to provide oversight, guidance, and strategic direction of the organisation, comprising of individuals with expertise in urban development, sustainability, governance, finance, and community engagement. The

Board of directors can be designed to represent the broad interest of the HGGT partner authorities and stakeholders, for example by having direct public sector and developer representation.

- 6.17 HGGT partners will need to maintain responsibility and oversight of the vehicle and the assets for a period until the vehicle is self-sustaining. There are inherent risks of setting up an organisation and providing very little resources. The likelihood is it will fail unless it has the support and ongoing assurance of institutions in the eco-system i.e. the HGGT Joint Committee, partner authorities, developers, other institutions in the area.
- 6.18 There is also an opportunity to involve stakeholders and ensure their support (and possibly resources) in the establishment and initial running of the organisation. Involving the HGGT Partner Authorities in governance presents an opportunity to create a structure where they play an influencing role in exchange for investment in the set-up period of the organisation.

INDICATED FUTURE FUNDING ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.19 The section below demonstrates the blended funding model which would support the running of the organisation.

Seed and operational funding

- **Partner Authorities** provide financial support to cover operational costs, staffing, and basic services provision.

Income generation and self-sustaining financing methods

- **Commercial Funding Avenues from Placemaking Activities:** The Place department focuses on generating revenue through commercial activities such as leasing out community spaces, hosting events, or providing consultancy services to external organizations. The revenue generated from these activities is allocated to support the operational costs and projects undertaken by other departments.
- **Income Generating Assets:** Income-generating assets such as rental properties, parking facilities, or recreational amenities can create revenue which is generated and then supports the rest of the organisation activities. However, income can only be expected to be achieved once the vehicle is established and running.

Alternative funding streams

- **Grants and third-party income sources:** It will likely be necessary to seek grants and funding from various sources, including government programs, private foundations, and nonprofit organisations. These grants and funding opportunities are utilised to support specific projects, initiatives, or specific liabilities such as the strategic transport infrastructure, should it be decided to take on these assets.

7) CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

- 7.1** The recommendations and strategic direction set out in this report were considered by the HGGT Joint Committee at its meeting in July 2025. At that meeting, the Committee noted the conclusions of the work and endorsed the intention to finalise the report without reopening the substantive analytical work undertaken in 2024. The Committee's decision provided the formal basis for concluding the documentation and assurance process, in order to move forward with the next stages of stewardship planning across the partner authorities.

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WE REQUEST THAT THESE BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.