

# Gilston Park Estate



## Stort Crossings Members' Briefing



## What are the Stort Valley crossings?

The Government designated the Harlow & Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) in January 2017 as a suitable location to accommodate significant growth and facilitate the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre.

HGGT is due to grow over the coming years, with 16,000 additional homes, employment areas and community facilities to be created by 2033, including 3,000 in the Gilston Area (with a further 7,000 to come forward post 2033).

Places for People has submitted an outline planning application for Gilston Park Estate which made up of 8,500 homes in 6 of the 7 villages which form the Gilston Area.

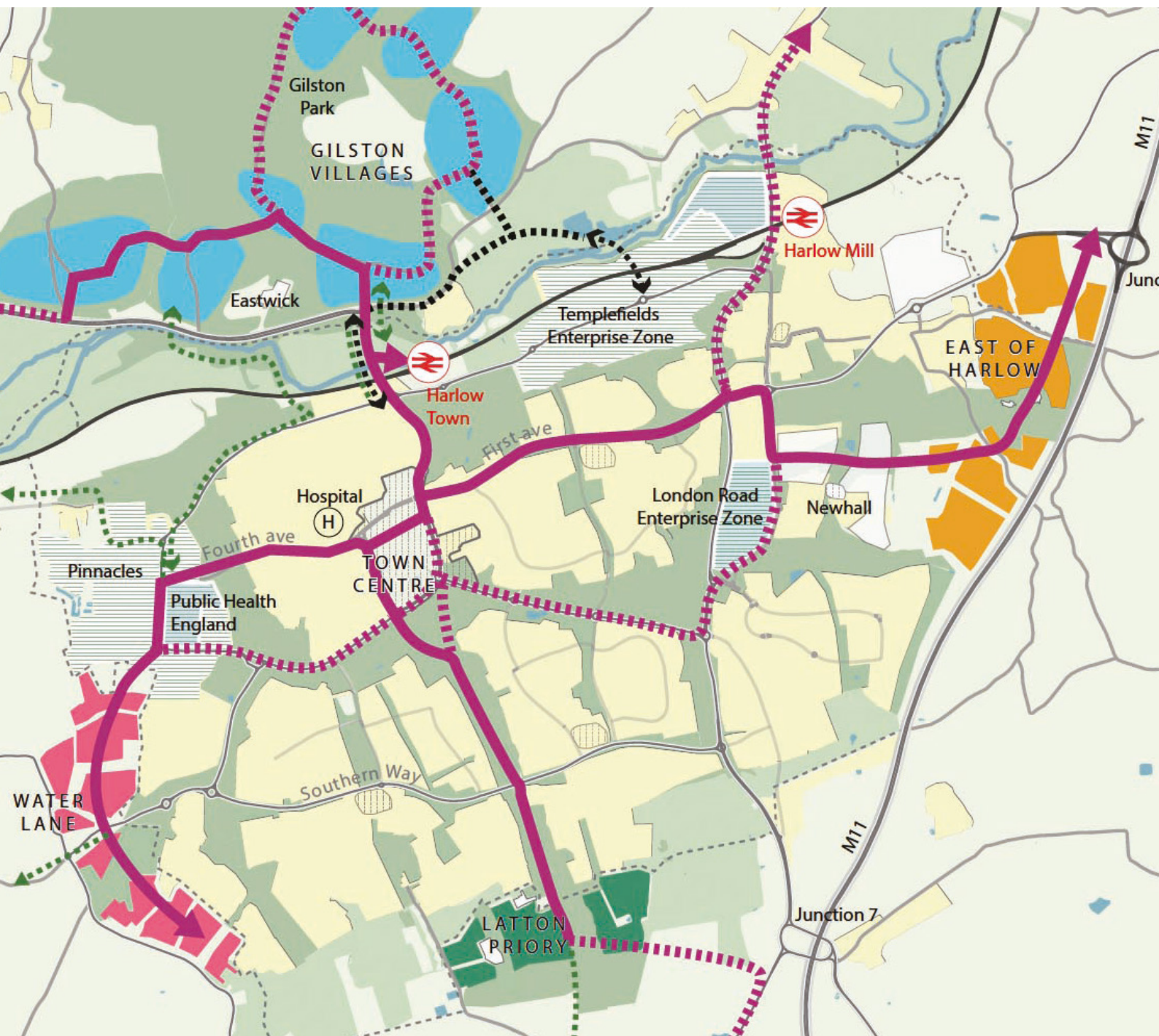
As part of the network of transport proposals, Places for People has submitted full planning applications for enhancements to the existing crossing at Fifth Avenue (which is called the Central Stort Crossing below), and the creation of a new Stort Valley Crossing in line with East Herts District Council, Harlow Council and HGGT policy.

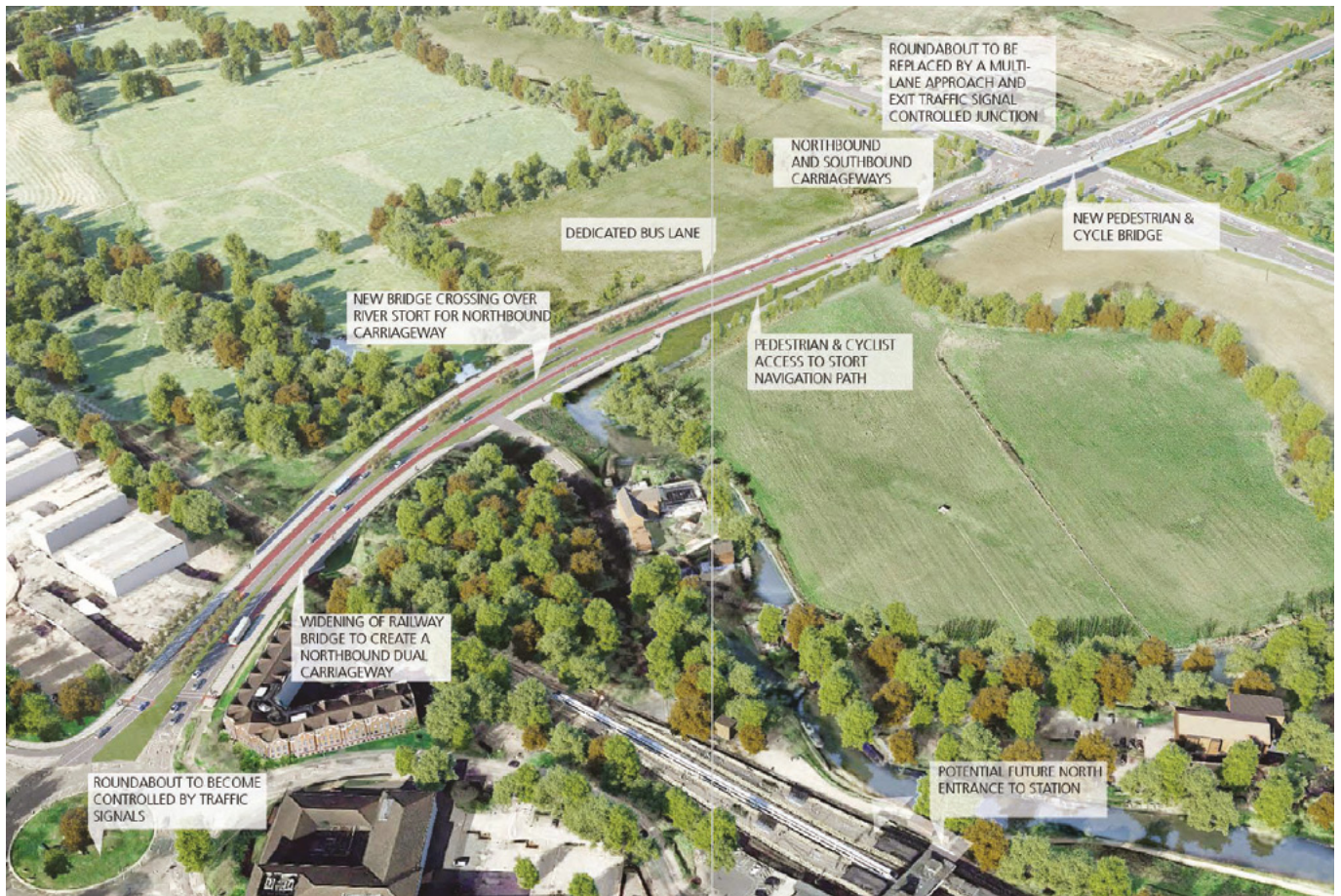
## Why are the crossings needed?

The A414 corridor is already under pressure. In order to provide capacity to meet the wider needs of the existing residents and businesses, and future growth, the connectivity over the River Stort needs to be improved. In addition, the HGGT ambition is that 60% of trips are to be made by sustainable modes of transport in new communities and 50% in established areas. The crossings of the River Stort play a critical role in facilitating this vision and provide for a more sustainable future.

## The crossings:

1. Help to to enable the delivery of HGGT's Transport Vision
2. Create new sustainable transport connections
3. Enable the creation of an integrated network of Sustainable Transport Corridors
4. Provide safer routes for pedestrians and cyclists
5. Create a new public transport route to Harlow employment areas and Junction 7A M11, avoiding the Harlow Town Centre
6. Assist in addressing air quality issues in Harlow





## Central Stort Crossing

The Central Stort Crossing proposals will widen the existing Fifth Avenue Crossing with two additional lanes dedicated to public transport only, a 5m wide pedestrian and cycle path on the eastern side and a 2m footpath on the western side. In addition, there will be a new footway/cycleway bridge over Eastwick Road into Village 1 which can be seen on the right (east) side of the Fifth Avenue Crossing shown in the image above.

Places for People will build the route from the Village 1 Access in the north to Burnt Mill Roundabout in the south (Essex County Council will be undertaking the works to Burnt Mill Roundabout), where there will be priority signals for buses - these will only operate when buses arrive allowing other traffic to flow. Essex County Council will deliver the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) stretching from Burnt Mill Roundabout, southwards to Sainsbury's and beyond.

The Eastwick Road/Fifth Avenue roundabout will be modified to a signal-controlled junction to create maximum capacity. The northern arm of the junction into Village 1 will be open to sustainable transport only, with an all vehicle access junction provided to the east. As part of the plans, there will be improvements to Burnt Mill Lane which will benefit from a new shared surface, reduced speeds and lighting. The crossing proposals also deliver significant landscape and biodiversity enhancements. The new traffic signal-controlled junction replacing the roundabout to the north of Fifth Avenue will be constructed in a phased manner, maintaining existing traffic movements whilst the new junction is built. Much of the new construction will be put in place adjacent to the existing carriageway, with changes to traffic routes through the junction undertaken during night-time periods, minimising impact on traffic.

## Eastern Stort Crossing

The Eastern Stort Crossing will create a new vehicle crossing, with priority for sustainable transport, over the Stort to support the growth of HGGT and to enable the delivery of 10,000 homes in the Gilston Area. The Eastern Stort Crossing will take traffic away from central Harlow and provide for a new sustainable transport route to link the Gilston Area, Enterprise Zone and other employment areas in Harlow via sustainable means.

It will also provide a new route for traffic, additional to Fifth Avenue, towards the new Junction 7A of the M11.

A series of options and alignments were analysed both as part of the East Herts District Plan, as well as the application process. The proposals were modified post submission in November 2020 to respond to consultation comments. The alterations to the alignment from that originally submitted moved the route further away from existing residential properties at Terlings Park and provides the necessary noise attenuation features alongside enhanced landscaping areas, as well as continuing to deliver substantial public realm improvements to the heart of Gilston Village.



The proposals, which promote sustainable and active travel, comprise of three elements:

### Road 1:

- Links the new junction at the north end of the Central Stort Crossing to a roundabout which takes traffic into Gilston in one direction and into Harlow in other
- Retains Eastwick Road as an access to Terlings Park only
- The provision of acoustic barriers and landscaping buffering creates improved noise conditions for many Terlings Park residents
- Creates landscape enhancements north of Terlings Park and delivers improvements to the Grade II listed footbridge.

### Road 2:

- Will link from the central roundabout north to Eastwick Road, east of Pye Corner and onwards into Gilston Area Village 2 and will provide significant landscaping and planting
- Will prevent vehicular access along Eastwick Road into Pye Corner which will significantly reduce traffic in Gilston Village
- Will include a 5m wide pedestrian/cycle route on the western side and 2m wide footway on the eastern side
- Will provide bus priority and straight across pedestrian crossings at the junction to the north between Eastwick Road and the access to Village 2

### Road 3:

- Includes replacement of River Way bridge over the railway, with enhanced pedestrian and cycling facilities.
- Will be partially built on embankment/culverts and a bridge structure where it passes over the Stort Navigation
- Does not cross Latton Island.
- Will include a 5m pedestrian/cycle route to the south and a 2-metre footway to the north
- A new junction will be built and operational between River Way and Cambridge Road primarily for vehicular access to premises north of River Way bridge during construction
- A temporary pedestrian footbridge will also be provided over the railway, throughout construction to prevent long diversions



## Biodiversity and flood mitigation

A series of surveys and studies have been undertaken to understand the nature and features of the areas where the new bridges are proposed. One set of studies reviewed existing habitats and wildlife and a second surveyed waterflow and flood storage capacity. This has informed the design of the crossings which will allow for the retention of recreation or wildlife habitats with, for example, more trees planted than will be removed.

Places for People's studies have not shown any sign of otters in the area. However, we are aware of local otter sightings and the plans have been developed on the basis that there are actually otters on site, with mitigation measures adopted accordingly.

In order to deliver highway scheme improvements such as the Central and Eastern Stort Crossings communication will be paramount to ensure disruption is limited as far as practical during construction. To achieve this, discussions will be held with both Hertfordshire and Essex Highway departments, utility companies and other stake holders to manage the works affectively.

The works to Fifth avenue and Eastwick Road will be split into two phases with the later commencing in Winter 2022. PfP will commit to traffic management measures to ensure the highway impacts during the constructions works are minimised.

Overall, the crossing proposals deliver significant landscape and biodiversity enhancements.

## Summary

The proposed crossings enable HGGT's Transport Vision to be delivered and will help to create new sustainable transport connections across and around Harlow. These will support overall environmental goals of:

- 60% of trips in new HGGT communities by sustainable modes
- 50% of trips from existing communities by sustainable modes

## The new crossings:

- Promote sustainable and active travel
- Are consistent with Planning Policy in Harlow, EHDC and HGGT and critical to achieving the planned local and employment growth
- Have been comprehensively consulted on – including route options
- Increase network capacity
- Secure a biodiversity net gain
- Mitigate landscape impacts
- Will seek to minimise construction related carbon footprint through best practice construction techniques, materials, etc

Further information about the consultation process can be found in the **Statement of Community Involvement** submitted as part of the application (dated 19 November 2019).

For further information, please visit our website [here](#) or check out HGGT's FAQs [here](#).