

Gilston Park Estate



Social impact statement

March 2024

Changing lives by creating, managing and supporting thriving communities

Gilston Park Estate Social impact statement

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Social impact overview





When we deliver interventions and environments that improve the daily lives of local communities, we can see an uplift in wellbeing, opportunities for employment and increased cohesion.

The outcome of the good work that we do can be presented as the social impact. This allows Places for People to demonstrate and measure how the work they do on site has a meaningful impact on the people in Harlow, East Hertfordshire and incoming residents for Gilston Park Estate.

It explores how the 8,500 home development will usher in widespread benefits: economically, socially and environmentally.

Produced by Meeting Place, a specialist built environment social impact and communications agency, this document outlines Gilston Park Estate's social impact for local communities.



Gilston Park Estate is a once in a generation opportunity to deliver six distinct new villages bound together by landscape and community to the north of Harlow.

In all, the 8,500 homes and associated community infrastructure - in addition to the 1,500 at Gilston Village 7 - will generate significant health and wellbeing, economic and social benefits to the region and its inhabitants.

Through the lifetime of the development of Gilston Park Estate, from the masterplanning process to future stewardship, Places for People is committed to maximising the social impact created from the new community and this is the first Social Impact Statement to take account of the significant benefits that can be accurately calculated at present. Decision makers at parish, district, garden town and county level need the tools to demonstrate to stakeholders that the development will deliver on the needs of the region. This social impact statement seeks to set out in detail each of the central aims of the Garden Town and how Gilston Park Estate is delivering on them through the planning and development processes.

Places for People's Placemaking Strategy for Gilston Park Estate

"Just as the original Garden Cities were planned to combine the best of town and country, we have a unique opportunity at Gilston Park Estate to marry the two once more; six new villages in the Hertfordshire countryside, with the convenience and opportunity of proximity to Harlow's economic opportunities and infrastructure plus accessibility by road and rail to elsewhere. Yet creating a cluster of authentic new villages presents challenges as well as many opportunities.

"Understanding what makes 'village life' so special sits at the heart of everything we are planning for Gilston Park Estate."



Original garden city design, 1898

When Ebenezer Howard developed the Garden City principles, he was looking at a radical new way of living. Now we understand that communities work best when they are focused around green spaces, ensure co-location of services and facilities, and include spacious and well-designed homes. At Gilston Park Estate we are still looking back to Howard's vision of 'mutual help and friendly co-operation' in order to deliver places that improve the health and wellbeing of all local people.

Gilston Park Estate

Places for People will deliver an exciting vibrant new community within the Gilston area, around 50% of the new homes proposed as part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, and which will benefit both existing and future residents.



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<u>Good health,</u> <u>quality of life and</u> <u>a sense of</u> <u>communal identity</u>

The vision for Gilston Park Estate embodies a set of crucial values: equality, good health, quality of life, sense of communal identity and access to the countryside. These draw upon a wealth of successful strategies borne out of the Garden City movement.

Central Stort Crossing

Alterations to the existing Fifth Avenue bridge and road/rail bridge widening to west of the existing structure, to create the Central Stort Crossing. The works will provide sustainable connectivity between the new community and existing town, with improvements ncluding embankment works, new bus lanes, pedestrian and cycle facilities, a pedestrian and cycle bridge over Eastwick Road, lighting and landscaping works.

Eastern Stort Crossing

Linking into the wider sustainable transport network and amenities, work will include the erection of a new road, pedestrian and cycle crossing connecting East Herts and Harlow, including alterations to an existing rail bridge at River Way, alterations to the existing local highway network, lighting and landscaping work, and alterations to Fiddlers Brook Bridge.



Social impact is at the heart of why Places for People exists.

We are Places for People, the UK's leading Social Enterprise. We change lives by creating and supporting thriving communities.

Our business consists of complementary companies that are market leaders in placemaking, regeneration and development, investment management, property management and leisure. Working together, we have the expertise and reach to create and manage entire communities, providing homes, services support and infrastructure that enable our customers and their communities to thrive. We own or manage more than 240,000 properties that are the homes to around 500,000 customers right across the UK.

We operate 100 leisure facilities that support the health and wellbeing of our customers with an average of 1.9m visits a month.

Using the power of partnership and working collaboratively, almost 10,500 colleagues in more than 20 specialist companies create communities and provide people with opportunities and choice in a way that few organisations can match. What sets us apart from other organisations, is that beyond providing housing or leisure opportunities, we have a genuine commitment to improving people's lives and communities as a whole. Through our social impact work, we use our precious resources to make a real and lasting difference through schemes that offer support with employment, health and wellbeing, finances, homelessness prevention and more. In 2022, our social impact work delivered £272 million in wellbeing value to communities and we are on track to reach £300 million in 2023.

Places for People

- Owns or manages more than 240,000 homes
- Employs over 10,500 colleagues
- Has assets of 5.3bn
- Will deliver 7000 new homes over next ten years through Homes England Partnership

Because community matters

These are the words that enshrine Places for People's purpose; we know we exist because of our customers and by managing, helping and supporting the communities in which they live and work - enabling those communities, and our customers, to thrive - we can, and will, change lives for the better.

Across the Group, we deliver a wide range of social impact activity through our core work in creating thriving communities as well as through the Places Impact Group function and Places Foundation Group charity.

The Places Impact Group function works with all our businesses to help measure, multiply and maximise social impact. This includes delivering social impact by providing grants, volunteering opportunities and fundraising to make a positive difference to people's lives

The Group charity the Places Foundation is an independent charitable organisation which provides grants and social investment to 'improve the lives of people and communities that have experienced disadvantage and are furthest from the labour market'.

Our impact



Building sustainable and resilient communities



Supporting better health and wellbeing



Strengthening financial and digital inclusion



Economic and social opportunities



Generated by regulated business

£131m

Generated by our leisure business

3,796

People (not just young) helped into education, employment or training 1059 people helped to get online

10,539

People helped at risk of being homeless

£750k

Delivered through our cost of living fund (newly designed for 2022/23)



Social impact in East Hertfordshire and Harlow

The focus of the needs and opportunities set out in this strategy centre on the Gilston Area, which is located within the district of East Hertfordshire and borders Harlow.

The populations of East Hertfordshire and Harlow have increased by 13.9% and 9% respectively since 2011, representing a higher average rate of growth than the wider Eastern region, which grew by 8.3%.

The combined population is 243,400 according to the 2021 census. By the nature of its administrative boundaries, Harlow is much more densely populated than East Hertfordshire.

Even more so, the civil parishes surrounding Gilston in the East Hertfordshire District are sparsely populated in comparison to the rest of the area and in distinct contrast to the southern edge of the Gilston Area within Harlow. Harlow has seen significant growth in recent years, particularly in the provision of new homes and commercial hubs on the edges of the town (Church Langley, Newhall, Pinnacles, Harlow Enterprise Zone etc).

This growth has supported inward investment in Harlow Town, including from significant employers such as UKHSA, Raytheon, Arrow and more, as well as providing residential dwellings for commuters making use of Harlow Town and Harlow Mill rail stations. East Hertfordshire's villages around the Gilston Area have remained much the same for hundreds of years with only limited infill and minor developments built in an area constrained by Harlow's green belt. Geographically speaking, these parishes tend to rely on services in Harlow rather than the East Hertfordshire towns of Bishops Stortford or Ware.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is an overall relative measure of deprivation constructed by combining seven domains of deprivation according to their respective weights.

The seven domains of deprivation are as follows:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Whilst East Hertfordshire is ranked the 307th most deprived local authority in England (of 317), or conversely the 10th most affluent area by the same measure, Harlow ranks markedly poorer at the 100th most deprived.



This data also categorises deprivation, denoting the most notable deprivation across both areas as follows:

Most deprived local authority in England Harlow: 35th of 317 Barriers to Housing **East Hertfordshire:** & Services 42nd of 317 201st of 317 **Education**. Skills Barriers to Housing & Services and Training 62nd of 317 221st of 317 Income Crime 100th of 317 307th of 317 Deprived local **Deprived local** authority in England authority in England Least deprived local authority in England

The Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) covering Gilston village 1-6 vary greatly in terms of rank, with the lowest rank being 9,505 out of 32,844 LSOAs in England (where 1 is the most deprived local authority area.).



East Hertfordshire District Council Local Plan 2018

Adopted in October 2018, East Hertfordshire District Council's Local Plan "sets out the Council's planning framework for the District".

"It identifies how East Herts will grow and develop to become an even more desirable and prosperous place to live, work and visit." (EHDC Local Plan, P8).

"In line with the requirements of the NPPF, the East Herts District Plan seeks to create sustainable communities which embrace the principles of sustainable development using a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of homes, jobs and infrastructure." (EHDC Local Plan, P10)

Residents in East Herts enjoy one of the highest qualities of life in rural Britain. In particular residents in East Herts enjoy a good level of health and life expectancy. Educational attainment is also high with students performing better in East Herts than the wider region.

EHDC Local Plan, P15



No specific mention is made of social value in the Council's Local Plan, notwithstanding the broader commitments to embrace the principles of sustainable development as set out in national planning policy.

A number of social, economic and environmental ambitions are set out in the relevant sections of the plan that feed directly into the delivery of social value in both new and existing communities across the authority, even if not explicitly stated.

Strategic objectives

- 1. To mitigate the effects of climate change by reducing carbon dioxide emissions, supporting decentralised, low carbon and renewable energy and reducing the risk of flooding.
- 2. To encourage safe and vibrant mixed communities that provide for the needs of all East Herts residents including the young, the elderly and vulnerable people.
- **3.** To balance the housing market by delivering a mix of market, low cost, and affordable homes and accommodating the housing needs of an ageing population.
- **4.** To protect the countryside from inappropriate development and to protect and enhance the historic environment of East Herts, promoting good design that creates a distinctive sense of place.
- **5.** To foster entrepreneurial endeavour through educational attainment and encourage small and medium enterprises through maximising existing employment opportunities and clusters and supporting rural diversification.

Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan 2021

The Gilston Area Neighbourhood Plan (GANP) has been prepared by the local community, and now forms part of the development plan for the area. The GANP covers a large proportion of the land associated with the Gilston Park Estate.



- 6. To improve access opportunities, minimise the need to travel, and encourage necessary journeys to be made by sustainable means to ease congestion and help reduce East Herts' carbon footprint.
- 7. To meet the needs of all of East Herts' communities by maintaining and improving existing facilities and providing new facilities including for arts, culture, community, leisure, entertainment, recreation, faith and health.
- **8.** To improve the health and wellbeing of all East Herts' communities and to reduce health inequalities.
- **9.** To reduce water consumption, increase biodiversity and protect and enhance the quality of existing environmental assets by, inter alia, creating new green spaces and networks of high quality green space for both recreation and wildlife.
- **10.** To ensure that development occurs in parallel with provision of the necessary infrastructure, including enhancement and provision of green infrastructure.

EHDC Local Plan, Strategic Objectives, P19

The GANP contains a range of policies on accommodating growth and delivering quality places with the objectives of respecting local landscape and heritage, protecting and enhancing existing settlements, providing a development of exceptional quality and minimising impacts on existing communities.

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town is a government designated garden town committed to delivering sustainable growth through the delivery of housing, good access to social, leisure, community and health facilities, education and jobs, that meet the needs of local people.

The HGGT Vision Document 2018

It summarises the key components for development in Gilston which include:



Housing

A mixture of house types and tenures across the 7 villages including affordable and homes for the elderly, travelling show people and self-build provisions.

Education

The development will deliver up to twenty forms of entry for both primary and secondary education in addition to early years education.



Transport

Both small and large scale interventions to help improve transport and infrastructure.

Community facilities



The development will provide new community facilities which include libraries, sport and recreation spaces. A range of local shops will also be delivered alongside a healthcare centre which will accommodate both family doctors and other health care professionals such as



Employment

dentists and pharmacies.

Local employment will be offered on the development in the form of mixed use zones. The proximity of the development to the Harlow Enterprise Zone and Harlow Station will enable sustainable access to employment.



Open space

Villages 1-7 will provide substantial new open space for new and existing residents to enjoy including sports pitches, parks and recreational areas. This will be managed by a stewardship trust as set out in the District Plan.



Character



High quality design with careful consideration to layout, building heights and materials. The development must sensitively integrate with other developments and existing neighbourhoods in the surrounding area.

Heritage



There are a number of heritage assets located across the site. and therefore this needs to be accommodated for in the design to ensure that no adverse impact will be created.

Ecology and environment

It is important to recognise that whilst the development will create open space and enhance biodiversity, the site protects and enhances existing biodiversity and incorporates a sustainable drainage system.

East Hertfordshire's Gilston Area Charter SPD 2020

The Gilston Area Charter SPD was adopted in July 2020 and was produced by East Herts through engagement with landowners, stakeholders, and representatives of the local community to help guide the planning delivery of the development.

The Charter also seeks to embed the role of collaborative engagement between the applicants, the Council, key stakeholders, and statutory bodies as well as the local community. It focuses on the Strategic Landscape Masterplan (SLMP) and Village Masterplan stages of the planning process and what engagement should be undertaken.

In terms of engagement on the Strategic Landscape Masterplan (SLMP) and Village Masterplans, the charter and the Gilston Area Community Engagement Strategy (March 2021) states that an Engagement Plan must be produced to establish who will be involved, how and when and will inform the submission.







The Gilston Area Charter in the context of relevant policy/ guidance and the planning process for the Gilston Area

The vision for the Garden Town

Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town (HGGT) Partnership is made up of the three local authorities around Harlow, namely East Hertfordshire, Epping Forest and Harlow District Councils, alongside Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils. These authorities work together to deliver four new Garden Neighbourhoods in and around Harlow and the regeneration of Harlow Town Centre, supporting the building of 16,000 new homes by 2033 and 7,000 in the years that follow.



Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Vision, November 2018:

The pioneering New Town of Gibberd and Kao will grow into a Garden Town of enterprise, health and sculpture at the heart of the UK Innovation Corridor.

Harlow and Gilston will be a joyful place to live with sociable streets and green spaces; high quality homes connected to fibre optic broadband; local centres accessible by walking and cycling; and innovative, affordable public transport. It will set the agenda for sustainable living. It will be:

- Adaptable
- Healthy
- Sustainable
- Innovative



© Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

HGGT's principles for healthy growth are intrinsically linked to social value and impact.



Gilston Park Estate is at the heart of the vision for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. It will deliver on each of the Principles of Healthy Growth in a way that generates tangible social value outcomes for new and existing residents alike.

Placemaking and homes

HGGT vision for placemaking and homes

- Responsive and distinctive design.
- Balanced and diverse functional communities.
- Healthy, safe, and connected neighbourhoods.
- Maximising visibility and appreciation of heritage.

The six proposed villages at Gilston Park Estate will have a collective identity while having distinct individual characters and a recognisable range of treatment from centres to middle and to edges. They will be easily navigable and with a clear sense of orientation, and puts emphasis on sustainable modes of transport through active design.

The design of each neighbourhood is in direct response to existing landscape, heritage and topographical features. There will be a clear transition between villages by means of landscape and views, as well as a relationship and respect for the existing villages and communities at Eastwick, Gilston and Hunsdon. Gilston Park Estate will respect and have positive relationships with local heritage assets. New development will be appropriately scaled in relation to adjacent heritage elements, preserving and enhancing them.

A wide range of accommodation types will be provided, to a high standard of quality design and construction. Around 2,000 affordable homes are proposed on a tenure blind basis, with all homes meeting or exceeding national space standards and a proportion of adaptable or adapted units. In addition to the vast public open space and communal elements, each home will have private external space. Self custom build homes will be provided to enable more people to build or commission their own home.

The design of the buildings will draw inspiration from the morphology and character of existing villages in the Gilston Area and elsewhere in Hertfordshire and Essex. Innovative building design, materials and construction will be encouraged, with varied roofscapes across the proposed development. The village masterplans will provide further guidance, including the appropriate amount of commonality, for each village.

Through a landscape led approach, village layouts should contribute to sustainability by exploiting proximity to amenities and open space, retaining existing and creating new landscape features, utilising SuDs, and enabling mode share targets to be met. Buildings will meet high standards of energy and water efficiency, and will incorporate low carbon design and passive design principles.



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Homes should be light, airy and well proportioned, and designed with good digital connectivity to allow for flexibility and adaptability and to support flexible working practices.

- **8,500 homes** built across six distinct new villages
- **1955+ new affordable homes** for local people to get a foot on the property ladder
- **6 new village centres** with community spaces, education space, health, retail and commercial
- Primary healthcare GP facility
- £170m+ Contributions towards education including 2 new secondary schools and up to 6 new primary schools
- Up to 1000m² community centre
- Up to 300m² Crèche in each neighbourhood
- Up to 460m² Youth Health facility
- New **high quality Leisure Centre** including 25m swimming pool, teaching pool, fitness studio, six court sports hall and associated facilities
- New Cricket Clubhouse and pitches
- £5.122m for a new football hub
- New 8 court Tennis Club
- New Bowls Club
- £886k public art funding

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Landscape and green infrastructure

HGGT vision for landscape and green infrastructure

- Enhancing the green belt as well as expanding the green wedge network.
- Landscape led masterplanning.
- Focus on biodiversity, climate resilience and food security.
- Using technology in energy regeneration and conservation.

Gilston Park Estate will be designed to value and maximise access to landscape and open spaces.

The design of parkland, strategic green corridors and landscape areas will be developed in consultation with local communities and take into account the opportunity for ecological protection and enhancement. Tree and plant selection will support indigenous species, promote diversity and be responsive to local climate and geological conditions, towards the biodiversity net gain target set out in the development specification.

Gilston Park Estate will deliver:

- 1.2ha of advance planting to date
- 5 major new parks
- 7km new hedgerow connections
- 16ha species rich grassland
- 88ha proposed and enhanced habitats
- 7.5ha new woodland pasture
- 10ha new plantation of broadleaved woodland
- **6.35ha** new allotments and community orchards
- **£3m** Contribution to Stort Valley Improvements
- **10%** minimum biodiversity net gain across the site as a whole

Economy and regeneration

HGGT vision for economy and regeneration

- A vibrant and resilient Town Centre for all the Garden town.
- A diverse employment base and skilled labour supply.
- The right work spaces, homes and community facilities.
- The heart of the LSCC UK Innovation Corridor.

Spanning up to 29,000 sqm of employment space, Gilston Park Estate will directly create thousands of construction jobs and apprenticeships, alongside opportunities for businesses.

Across these developments, Gilston Park Estate is expected to support up to 1,500 permanent jobs. The villages will play an important role in supporting this ambition, by hosting shops and food and drink outlets which provide jobs and spaces that bring people together. Health, educational and community facilities will also create employment in professional occupations.



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Gilston Park Estate will deliver:

- **29,000sqm** business and commercial uses
- **3,000sqm** leisure floorspace associated with sport and recreation use
- **25,000sqm** retail and related uses and leisure floorspace
- 74,200sqm Education and community floorspace

A thriving economy must be supported with training and education to nurture the talent and skills that enables this success. That's why learning is at the heart of our plans for Gilston Park Estate, supported with quality education and training facilities across the six proposed villages. In this, the new community will be supporting Harlow's economic growth by providing high quality homes close to major employers such as Public Health England, the Enterprise Zone and Princess Alexandra Hospital.

Places for People will set up a stewardship body that will robustly and effectively manage the long term ownership, operation and management of the community assets that are not adopted by public bodies - this will ensure that assets are looked after in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.



© Harlow and Gilston Garden Town

Sustainable movement

HGGT vision for sustainable movement

- Revitalising the cycle and walking routes and networks.
- Changing the character of roads and streets.
- Integrated transport which creates a viable and preferred alternative to cars.
- Anticipating change and future proofing infrastructure that is delivered.

Sustainable, reliable travel is at the heart of our ambition for Gilston Park Estate. For those who are travelling, investment in local bus services will provide links with Gilston Park Estate, Harlow Town Centre, future growth areas and Harlow Train Station, connecting the development with regional and national transport networks.

Locally, we will invest in a new sustainable network of cycling and walking trails, feeding into the existing network of Public Rights of Way, Stort Valley Tow Path and wider area.

Significant highway infrastructure improvements are proposed, including at the A414 Central Stort Crossing alongside an entirely new second crossing. This links into the proposed new Sustainable Transport Corridor, a route providing frequent public transport between Gilston and Harlow Town Station and the town centre, and the rest of the garden town.



Gilston Park Estate will deliver:

- **17km** of new pedestrian, cycle and road infrastructure
- **5 minutes** between each bus along the Sustainable Transport Corridor (STC) at peak times
- **£129m** Housing Infrastructure Grant secured to assist delivery of the Central and East Stort Crossings
- **£42m** Housing Infrastructure Grant secured by Essex County Council for the North-South STC
- £275m towards offsite highways infrastructure*
- **£10.4m** Sustainable Transport and Innovation Fund
- **£5.2m** to improve Harlow Town station
- £75k contribution for Cycle Storage Improvements at Harlow Town Station
- £1m contribution for improvements to London Road, Sawbridgeworth
- £2.3m for the Amwell Roundabout
- £5.6m bus subsidy proposed
- £5.5m Travel Plan and Monitoring funding
- **0.6ha of land** reserved for new Blue Light Facility
- 6 new Transport hubs
- **Early delivery** of Pedestrian/Cycle link from Hunsdon Village 1
- Early upgrades to Burnt Mill Lane
- Electric Vehicle Charging to all new Houses

*Across villages 1-7



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Social impact focuses on understanding and delivering benefits for local communities through design, construction and operation of places.

The social impact process combines human centred stories alongside financial values, which can be attributed to actions that impact people's lives.

To deliver meaningful social impact we need to develop a full understanding of the communities, facilities and spaces that surround the site and impact peoples day to day lives.

Social value measurement as a principle has been explored since the 1930s when governments started to acknowledge the physical and social effects of urbanisation, resulting in poverty, inequality, and pollution.

We have used financial proxies carefully in this report in order to demonstrate social impacts in a variety of tangible ways. Our approach is based on a wellbeing weighting and proxy values, which provide rigorously tested financial sums in relation to specific social actions.

These calculations are used alongside drop-off and future discounting methods, taking into account the context, longevity of the outcome and reduction of the social impact over time. By monitoring and analysing the data, Places for People can more easily understand their contribution to the local communities.

We believe that the focus should be on qualitative, human-centric responses. This means that we only use measurement where necessary to support wider stories and listening to experiences and understanding of how decisions have affected people.

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For more information, please contact gilston@meeting-place.uk