



Epping Forest District Council

**On behalf of Harlow and Gilston
Garden Town (working jointly with
East Herts District Council and
Harlow District Council)**



INVITATION TO TENDER

FOR

**Brief for preparation of a spatial vision and
design charter for the Harlow and Gilston
Garden Town**

Issued By:

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Summary

1. The Harlow and Gilston Garden Town Project (Epping Forest District Council, East Herts District Council and Harlow District Council) has been awarded funding through the Government's locally – led Garden Towns project and is now seeking consultancy support to develop a spatial vision and design charter for the Garden Town.
2. Epping Forest District is acting as the lead authority and this commission will be procured through that authority.

Background Information

3. Harlow Council (HC), East Hertfordshire District Council (EHDC), Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Essex County Council (ECC) ('the Councils') are working in partnership together with Hertfordshire LEP (HLEP), South East LEP, and site promoters to bring forward transformational growth at Harlow. The Councils share a bold vision and set of objectives, recognising that areas in and around Harlow present a number of opportunities to deliver growth of considerable scale and significance. Such growth is key not only to meet growing pressures of housing need locally, but also delivering broader regeneration and change for Harlow.

Harlow & Gilston Garden Town

4. On 2 January 2017 the Government announced its support for the Expression of Interest submitted to the Government's locally – led Garden Towns prospectus on behalf of East Herts Council, Epping Forest District Council and Harlow Council. A link to the EOI can be found in the Appendix. This details the level of ambition and work is underway to develop a full work programme of which the spatial visioning and design charter will form an important first step. The successful bidder will need to work alongside the project and programme management support to synthesise existing and emerging thinking across a range of workstreams.

5. Harlow & Gilston lies in the core area of the 'London Stansted Cambridge Corridor' (LSCC) - one of the most important and fastest growing economic regions in the country. The local level of ambition is high, and there is a strong desire and commitment to achieve far more than the norm in terms of delivering growth. Strategic growth in and around Harlow is still at the stage where proposals can be guided and influenced to achieve true garden town ambitions, yet still achieve development in an efficient and timely manner.

Local Plan Preparation

6. East Hertfordshire District Council, Epping Forest District Council and Harlow District Council are at different stages in the preparation of their respective new Local Plans but have been working jointly through the structures set up to facilitate joint working through the Duty to Cooperate which has enabled the Councils to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to consider strategic cross boundary matters affecting the area. This has been administered through the Co-operation for Sustainable Development Board, a joint member body established in October 2014 and a parallel officer group. Both groups meet regularly. The Chair of the Board is rotated and the Leader of East Herts District Council is the current Chair. The Board has seconded a senior planner to support its work, part time, and this post is filled by an officer from EFDC. The corresponding officer group is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive
7. The three authorities together with Uttlesford District Council have jointly undertaken evidence based work including the Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2015 and an update in 2016. Other evidence based work to understand economic growth across the Functional Economic Area has also been undertaken and is ongoing. The four authorities have sought to align local plan policies as far as possible and have agreed three Memorandums of Understanding.

Harlow Council

8. The Council is looking to prepare a new Local Plan for consultation in late 2017 which will show a clear commitment to growth and regeneration in and around Harlow, working together with the Duty to Cooperate authorities to align Local Plan policies and timetables. The Plan will identify capacity for up to 9,200 dwellings in Harlow itself.
9. Harlow Council's 2014 Emerging Strategy document and Further Options consultation document identified the regeneration benefits of a number of growth scenarios around Harlow supported by evidence undertaken by Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners. It recommended between 12,000 and 15,000 new homes at Harlow would meet the town's housing need and provide a positive platform to deliver regeneration objectives. The document also showed a clear commitment to bringing forward substantial development in and around Harlow including Green Belt land to the east within Harlow District boundaries.

Epping Forest District Council

10. The Council recently completed consultation on its Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) which started at the end of October 2016 and shows the proposed allocation of sites to meet the District's share of the Objectively Assessed Housing Need as defined by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Housing Market Area (HMA).
11. The Local Development Scheme agreed by the Council in March 2017 shows that the Publication stage (Regulation 19) will take place in January/February 2018, followed by submission to the Planning Inspectorate in mid 2018.

East Hertfordshire District Council

12. The Gilston Area is identified as an allocation for 10,000 new homes in the publication version of the Local Plan (Regulation 19). This includes 3,000 to be delivered in this plan period and the remainder beyond. The publication of the Presubmission Local Plan seeking representations concluded in December 2016 and

the Council submitted the Plan for examination to the Planning Inspectorate at the end of March 2017.

Scope and objectives of the work

13. It is envisaged that the work will involve the following key stages. The appointed consultant will be expected to work collaboratively alongside officers & members across all stages of the work to develop the outputs through a combination of working sessions and presentations.

Stage 1: Project inception and mapping existing design policies & background design material

14. A wide range of background evidence base studies have been undertaken to support the preparation of the authorities Local Plans and will be made available to the appointed consultants where these are not publically available. The range of available work is set out in draft at Appendix 1 of this brief. In addition the consultants will be expected to work alongside officers to map out relevant emerging policies at the start of the commission to better understand the emphasis set out in those emerging policies and consistency in relation to those which are relevant to the Garden Town.

Stage 2: Develop a strategic narrative and spatial visioning (including engagement in a workshop format with officers and members)

15. The strategic narrative should set the wider context for the development of a compelling vision for the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. It should clearly show how new growth complements and enhances its location within the London, Stanstead, Cambridge Corridor, the network of existing places and its potential to contribute to the regeneration of Harlow town centre as a key regional centre but which currently underperforms significantly, in order to seize this once in a generation opportunity. The narrative should seek to address:
 - What should Harlow and Gilston contribute to the **wider region**?
 - How does it relate to London, Cambridge, and the M11 growth corridor?
 - What is its unique role – what is the area's **unique growth potential** and what are the barriers to that potential which the Garden Town must seek to address?

- What contribution could Harlow and Gilston make to the regional green grid, including links to the Lee Valley, Green Belt and the Green Wedge network that shaped Harlow?

16. The outputs will be mainly diagrammatic and should include the following:

- A strategic (written) narrative describing the strategic potential of Harlow and Gilston
- Illustrative maps and diagrams which illustrate Harlow and Gilston's economic, environmental, social and cultural connections within its regional and sub-regional context
- A strategic **vision** for Harlow and Gilston which provides the 'picture on the box'.

The consultant will be expected to draw upon the themes identified in Stages 1 and 2 to explore the spatial characteristics of successful places. It is envisaged these will be short, graphic-based 'think pieces' which look beyond the current local plan periods that will feed into the final stage of the commission.

17. The following key themes should be given prominence and detailed consideration:

- **Green Infrastructure and housing visioning.** Green Infrastructure and the creation of integrated, inclusive, healthy communities should figure strongly in any approach, and consideration will need to be given to the opportunities presented by existing environmental assets, most notably the Green Wedges, Green Belt, Stort Valley, Epping Forest and the Lee Valley, alongside scope to enhance provision to manage pressures on those environmental assets and set a strong basis to place making. Consideration should be given to the extent of opportunity for community ownership and long term stewardship and the implications this may have generally and for individual sites. In addition, consideration will need to be given to the potential neighbourhood qualities and characteristics of each growth direction identifying approaches to the form of development including housing typologies that meet the needs of changing demographic patterns and trends in order to ensure the achievement of mixed and balanced communities, and which support Garden Town principles.
- **Economic and town centre visioning.** Consideration should be given to the economic and employment role of potential new growth to create an enhanced sub-regional role. This should include a short desktop analysis of the spatial characteristics of successful tech regions explored in the LSCC Growth Commission. This should also draw upon emerging work about what level of employment growth should be considered to create sustainable, mixed use

places, and incorporate both an assessment of general economic impacts and contributions to local economies, but also of wider future visioning to consider growth sectors/niches/changes in future working behaviours/ requirements which should be being considered and planned for now. This can include aspects relating to technology, innovation and practical application of relevant and achievable aspects of 'smart cities'. It also includes the need to reflect on the role and relationship with other existing or planned employment opportunities within Harlow itself, particularly the Enterprise Zone. This theme should also help to define the longer-term ambition for Harlow town centre and establish its role and function in attracting 25,000 new residents to it as a sub-regional centre of choice. The theme should help identify the key placemaking elements that will help new residents feel an affinity to Harlow.

- **Sustainable transport & healthy town visioning.** Sufficient consideration will be needed from the outset in relation to delivering a step-change in sustainable transport in Harlow and Gilston. The approach should be aligned to the very latest thinking in maximising trips by modes other than the car, including the potential for new hard infrastructure such as mass rapid transit systems, making best use of public transport including rail where appropriate alongside smarter interventions and policies. This should build upon best national and international experience and evolving practical and achievable measures, policies, targets and technological innovations to achieve high modal-shift for both short internal trips and longer external trips. The work should begin to identify and generate the high-level spatial characteristics of a Health, Education and Social Care Campus drawing on examples from the UK and abroad. Innovative thinking should be developed around wider approaches to health and well-being building on the opportunities afforded by the planned relocation of Public Health England and a potential new health care campus in or around Harlow.

Stage 3: Development of a Design Charter including a clear set of design principles that establishes clear parameters for future masterplanning and consideration of planning applications

18. The final stage should bring together stages 1-3 into a delivery focussed Design Charter document. The charter should include illustrations that help convey a coherent longer-term spatial vision for Harlow and Gilston pulling together the visioning themes explored in stage 3.
19. The charter should also identify a clear set of high-level design principles capable of being implemented and secured through emerging masterplans and subsequent planning applications. A key part of this stage will involve a wider consideration of

the modern day interpretation of the Garden City concept, drawing together thinking around key principles advocated by the Town and Country Planning Association with their local appropriateness and application. This stage of work will need to draw heavily upon emerging Local Plan design policies and proposals for design review at key stages in the process by the respective authorities. Emerging developer plans should also be taken into account but should be reviewed critically. The successful consultant will be expected to present an **integrated approach** to growth which draws together themes about housing delivery and the creation of sustainable communities including, open space provision, sustainable transport, regeneration aims and employment growth.

20. Having identified the illustrative vision, design principles and objectives the consultant will be expected to draw together a delivery chapter for the Charter that identifies the following:
- Approach to the use of PPAs and resource recovery
 - How design policies will be applied
 - Approach to design review across the Garden Town
 - Relationship to external organisations and private sector partnerships
 - Any other mechanisms required to secure delivery of the overarching vision

Approach to commission and engagement/consultation

21. This commission will involve the appointed consultant working collaboratively alongside key partners to build consensus around a long-term spatial vision. Bidders will be required to demonstrate experience of effective facilitation, brokerage and collaborative working in addition to excellent urban design skills and innovative thinking.

Bidders will be required to demonstrate:

- excellent urban design, spatial visioning and place-making knowledge;
 - understanding of project planning complex large scale residential led growth projects and the various positions/drivers of stakeholders involved;
 - an understanding of the Garden Towns and Villages agenda;
 - experience of effective facilitation and collaborative working;
 - resources capable of working with senior level stakeholders, building consensus and achieving effective collaboration
 - knowledge of different models of design review processes
22. This study is primarily a technical, design and visioning study but the outputs will need to have high production values capable of being used for engagement. The success of the study is dependent on partnership working and the appointed

consultant will be expected to involve and engage with a wide range of stakeholders. Key partners and stakeholders that will be essential in delivering the project include:

- The three Councils that form part of the client group (Garden Town Steering Group);
- All organisations that have a vested interest in the Council areas (e.g. health, education, transport, statutory agencies, utility companies etc).
- Developer forum(s) as identified by the client
- Existing local communities

Consultants will need to set out their proposed approach to collaborative working and engagement, and embed this within the overall process.

23. As part of the work, engagement will be required with the four district authorities, two county councils, and other organisations and expert bodies. Details of the relevant contacts will be provided. These will commence with an inception meeting with further regular officer meetings arranged as and when required.
24. The work may require attendance at the Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Officer Group and Member Board or a sub group. The consultants will be expected to work closely with the consultants appointed to develop the project plan and oversee the work for the Garden Town as well as Senior officers from each of the three authorities

DELIVERABLES and REQUIREMENTS

25. The following outputs are required from the study:
 - a) A written summary of existing and emerging design policies with an impact on the Garden Town area, identification of any inconsistencies and areas of strong emphasis; identification of key 'threads'
 - b) A spatial visioning document to include:
 - a slidepack and clear description of the strategic narrative including illustrative diagrams (diagrams to be agreed following inception and mapping stage);
 - a visioning summary document and slidepack describing the outcomes of the spatial visioning exercises along the themes identified ensuring that the potential to achieve local distinctiveness for different parts of

the Garden Town is considered so that it does not result in an amorphous development

c) Garden Town Design Charter

- This should provide a summary overview of the level of intent/ambition relating to the creation of new Garden Communities in the area (north, south, east and west), illustrating the concepts being promoted, their qualities and contribution to the future of the areas concerned.
- A clear set of design principles that integrate emerging themes and are capable of being delivered through masterplans and subsequently planning applications. The principles may include, but should not be limited to key characteristics

26. As part of preparing outputs from this commission, the successful consultant must ensure that the following requirements are met:

- Findings must be presented clearly within written reports with supporting tables, including graphics, where appropriate. All report sections, tables, maps and graphs should be clearly cross-referenced and sources quoted. Any maps, graphics and tables reproduced must have the appropriate licence in place to enable their publication in the final report. All work should be produced in plain English to a standard that can be clearly understood by non-specialist audiences. The Councils must be given a draft report for comment, prior to a final report.
- The final charter and visioning report should describe the objectives of the study, methodology, main findings, recommendations and key points arising from the study, along with a statement of the consultation undertaken.
- The copyright and intellectual rights of the documents produced will rest with the Councils, although the research shall be attributed to the successful bidder.
- A minimum of 10 copies of the final Design Charter report and 10 copies of the agreed Visioning Summary should be made available to each of the three Councils, together with five copies of all of the final documents, including appendices, on CD-ROM in 'pdf' format.
- The Consultants will be required to undertake 3 presentations of their findings, along with questions and answers, to groups of the Councils' choosing. These

will be outside of normal office hours. The cost of this requirement should be included in the tender submission. All presentations and materials are to be provided to the Council.

Possible additional stage (subject to tender response and market testing)

27. Bidders are asked to identify experience of designing and delivering community engagement activities and the formulation of community engagement strategies in particular. Bidders are asked to provide examples of appropriate and similar experience elsewhere, to identify the value added and outline relevant approaches to community engagement across the Garden Town project area. Bidders are asked to give a separate cost for this element of work.
28. The approach should accommodate the following features:
 - Mapping existing stakeholder activity and processes
 - Suggest interactive methods and forums for discussing strategic issues that cut across the whole Garden Town project area
 - Identify methods and approaches for engaging 'hard-to-reach' or under-represented groups, and of achieving input and 'buy-in' from existing communities within the area.