



HUNSDON PARISH COUNCIL

INVITATION TO RESPOND TO THE OUTLINE AND DETAILED PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AT GILSTON

The Joint Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG), which represents the Parish Councils of Eastwick and Gilston and Hunsdon, encourages everyone to respond to the planning applications for the Gilston Estate Area preferably by 9th August.

The scale of the application is so significant that it is likely that representations will be considered even after the deadline, but East Herts District Council (EHDC) will start considering all points of view in August, and therefore give more weight to representations within the stated deadline.

There are three applications under consideration:

Outline Planning Application ref. 3/19/1045/OUT - covering the area of the 6 new villages for 8,500 homes and not the whole of Policy GA1 area. You can view and comment by clicking on the Make Comments button on the right of the webpage or by writing to the council. When making your comments on-line you can select either objection, support or neutral.

<https://publicaccess.eastherts.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PRSRKCGL00V00&activeTab=summary>

The key documents to review are the Development Specification, Drawings, the Design Specifications and the Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Impact Assessment. All available at the link above.

Hunsdon Parish Council has a full set of the documents and these will be available for viewing in the meeting room at the Village Hall by arrangement with the Clerk, Carole Page 01920 870809 clerk@hunsdonparishcouncil.org

Application 3/19/1046/FUL is for full consent for widening and improving the existing A414 Fifth Avenue into Harlow between Eastwick Farm roundabout and Burnt Mill roundabout. This application (along with that detailed below) has been made jointly to both East Herts and Harlow Council. You can view and comment through the East Herts website using the application reference to search or by writing to the council.

Application 3/19/1051/FUL is for full consent for a new eastern crossing of the Stort between Pye Corner/Tarlings Park and River Way Harlow utilising the existing rail bridge on River Way. Again, you can view and comment through the East Herts website using the application reference to search or by writing to the council.

It is anticipated that Briggens Estate 1 will be making an outline application for Village 7 in August. This village lies within that part of the allocated area straddling Church Lane in the south of Hunsdon Parish and will be for the balance of 1,500 dwellings.

The material submitted is complex and will take several weeks to assess in detail. The joint NPG are studying all the material carefully and will be making detailed representations on behalf of both parishes. The NPG will remain in discussions with the applicants to clarify and refine issues that we have identified right through to the formulation of the detailed proposals before the East Herts Council for decision. However, we will welcome your direct involvement by making comments to the applications above.

Below are some of the issues we have identified for you to consider:

Our Overarching Aspiration

The Gilston Area development unfortunately required the removal of the Green Belt designation, contrary to the government approach to planning in the country. Removal of the designation is only granted under specific circumstances and for exceptional development.



The community would like to see that the removal of Green Belt status in this area genuinely leads to the development of 7 distinct villages of exceptional quality, providing outstanding places to live, engendering strong and vibrant communities and integrating to mutual benefit with our existing village communities.

If you agree with this approach, please make a statement in your comments to the applications.

Outline Planning Application for the Whole Site - ref. 3/19/1045/OUT

The Outline Planning Application is for 8,500 homes on part of the site and a second separate application will be placed by different applicants for the remaining 1,500 homes (the so-called Village 7). This is in contradiction with previous assurances and the assumption in the District Plan that the whole of Policy Area GA1 will be comprehensively studied and designed to provide a unified vision, landscape structure and governance vehicle. While it is not illegal to submit for planning for part of the site only, the community should demand that the promise of a unified vision is delivered. Uncoupling the applications makes it difficult to assess impact on the road network and how the supporting infrastructure such as schools and medical facilities across the whole 7 villages can be co-ordinated.

Do you consider that a unified vision and landscape framework for the area is necessary?

The Statement of Community Engagement lists a number of occasions on which the community has been met over the years. Do you feel that those meetings represented true engagement and active response to the community? EHDC Policy GA1 places great emphasis on collaborative working with the community and the applicant supports the Garden City principles of strong vision, leadership and community engagement (GA1/III first bullet point)

Do you feel that this requirement has been fulfilled by Places for People and their advisors?

The District Plan and the Concept Development Framework adopted as a benchmark by EHDC describe the development as separate and distinct villages. The Gilston and Harlow Garden Town Design Guide describe the development at Gilston as individual villages set within the rural Hertfordshire landscape – as opposed to the urban districts of Harlow.

Development Specification – Parameter Plans (legally binding). Do you think that the proposed plans, where separation between villages is 10-40m, adequately represent the requirement of the policy? Are wildlife corridors 10-40m wide with access roads either side adequate to guarantee the countryside setting of the area?

Development Specification – The Parameter Plan of the proposed development leaves a lot of flexibility for the height of buildings – restricted to 18m (5 storey plus roof) in the cores of the villages, but typically 12-15m (3-4 storeys). There is also no density restriction being proposed. While the developers assured us verbally that they have no intention to build out at such height, we would welcome firmer assurances.

Do you believe that it is necessary to leave such flexibility, if the agreed intention is to create settlements inspired by the character of existing Hertfordshire Villages?

The designers propose direct frontages onto the landscape, so that the owners will enjoy views over the countryside and make the green spaces safer. While this is a good idea, it has the potential risk of presenting very urban street facades at the edge of the villages, with outer access roads and sometimes very directly opposite existing properties.

Would you like to have more detail of the design intentions for the edges of the villages already at this stage? Do you think that reassurances are needed that the new village edges will not be too close to existing houses?

The transport consultants assume that 60% of new trips will be done by bus, walking or cycling. However, they do not provide any detail and carry out no assessment of the requirements in terms of buses, cycle routes and pedestrian crossings.



Do you think that it is essential at this stage to demonstrate that it is possible to achieve the 60% target and what the implications will be?

In previous documents (the Concept Framework) access to Harlow Town station was considered a key driver for the development and a new cycle access and entrance was planned to be provided from the northern side of the station, considerably shortening the route and providing new facilities including cycle parking. This has now been removed from the proposals.

How important is it for you that a northern access to the station with improved cycle parking is provided?

In the Concept Framework, the developers had proposed to create a park in the Stort Valley, where they own approximately 30% of the land. They were thinking that it would be important to strengthen the separation from Harlow and secure permanent green space. This offer is no longer included and has been replaced by offering a contribution towards the creation of the park, should anyone else take the lead.

Do you believe that the creation of the Stort Valley Park is an essential element of the development at Gilston and that the developers should take responsibility for it?

The Hunsdon Airfield is owned by the developers and forms part of the same application, where it is proposed as a Country Park to be managed by the community in the future. It is also an important green space for Hunsdon over many years.

Do you believe that the Airfield Country Park should be created early on based on the inputs from the existing communities rather than wait until later on, when more of new residents can be involved?

The new villages will have excellent sewers, water, broadband, bus services. The developers have indicated that the new services will be extended to the existing communities but have made no firm commitment apart from indicating early provision of improved broadband.

Do you support the aspiration that infrastructure services in the existing settlements particularly public transport and cycling routes should be on a par with those of the new communities?

Detailed Applications for the Central and Eastern Crossings

Eastern Crossing has been designed to pave the way for the realignment of the A414 but it severs Terlings Park from Pye Corner and the rest of Gilston village and safeguards for future dualling and a High Load Route designation. The question is whether this eventual new dual carriageway is required because of traffic generated by the Gilston development or because of growth in Harlow and strategic growth on the A414 particularly in the light of the improved connectivity to the M11 through the proposed junction 7A. This is not set out in the submission.

The submission does not make any assessment of alternative options or quantify the impacts on Terlings Park residential properties and the rest of Gilston which are severe.

Should the **Detailed Application** be integrated with a proper assessment of what is necessary to accommodate the Gilston Area development and what is required to facilitate strategic growth on the A414, encompassing the design choices and the associated impacts?

The A414 Fifth Avenue Eastwick Roundabout will be changed into a junction with traffic lights as a way to reduce congestion. The Stort and railway bridges will be widened and an elevated pedestrian and cycle bridge will climb over the road to allow these users to cross. This bridge is proposed to be designed via an architectural competition, but it will be long and with a relatively steep climb from the Harlow side.

Are you concerned that providing a bridge (rather than pedestrian and cycle crossing at street level) will be visually intrusive and will not at all encourage walking and cycling?

Issues that are positive contributions



There are aspects of the Planning Application that are well above the standards of normal development – these should be openly supported. The **Development Specification** sets out the applicant’s commitments. These include: -

High proportion of affordable homes, tenure arrangements, etc.

Statements about the quality of homes, generous space standards, adaptability / flexibility

Proximity of active open space from the new villages

Concept of mixed-use community centres

Early wins including Hunsdon Airfield Park