

Planning Officers Society

Annual Conference: June 2025

New Towns of Tomorrow

HGGT

HARLOW & GILSTON
GARDEN TOWN

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East Herts District Council Lead
Officer

JUNE 2025



Designated in March 1947

Designed to be self-contained
and relieve over crowding in
NE London after the war

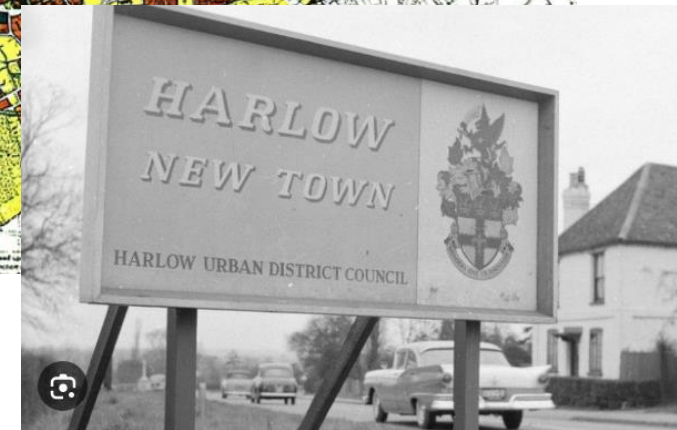
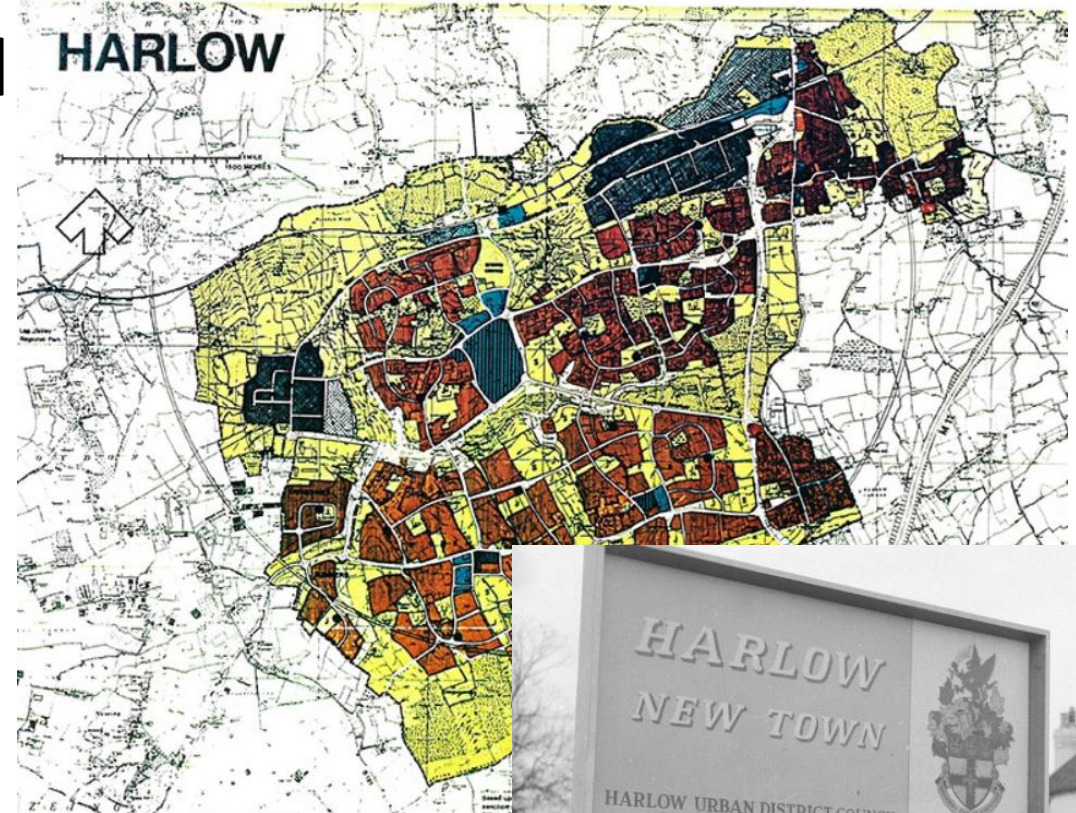
Sustainable neighbourhoods

Residential and commercial

Balanced and vibrant
community

Designed by Sir Frederick
Gibberd

Harlow New Town



Harlow New Town – nearly 80 years on

What are the issues now

No longer self contained

Strength of economy

Congestion

Health and social equality

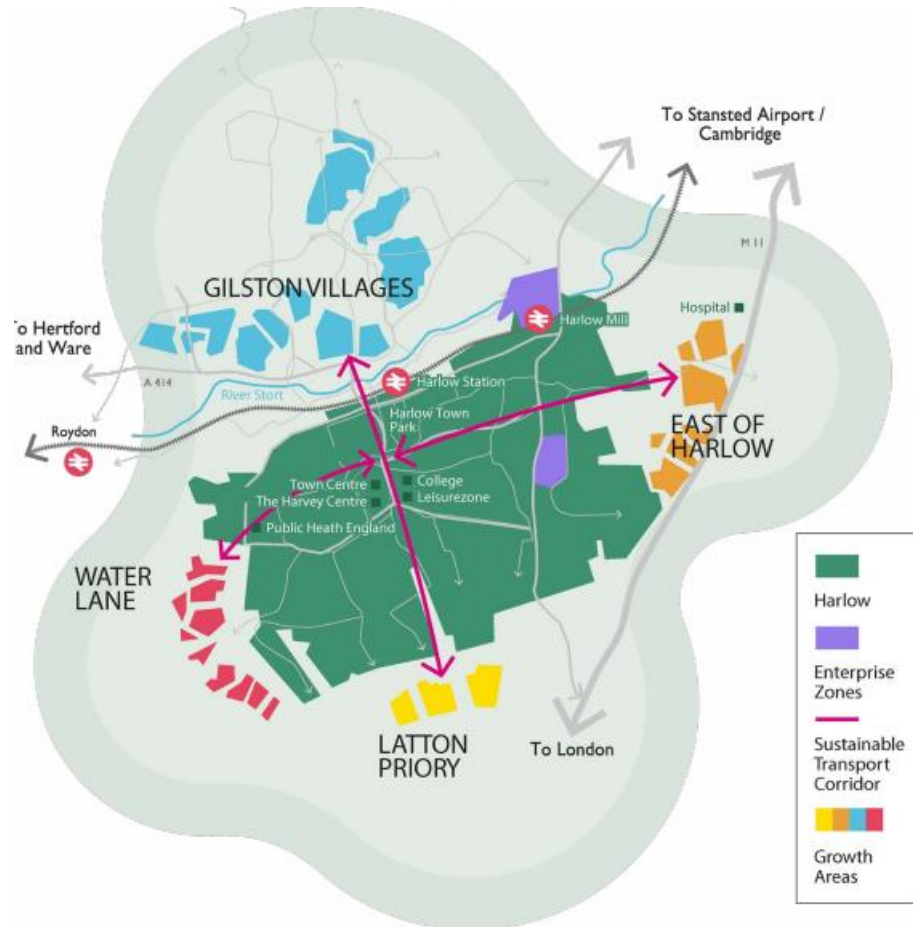
Community cohesion

Transient population



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- What is HGGT?
- Five Local Authority partners;
- Focussed on the existing new town of Harlow;
- Supporting and enabling transformational housing growth and infrastructure delivery – 23,000 new homes

The challenges – and the future

Governance

Economic vibrancy

Health

Quality of places –
stewardship

Housing – quality and
range

Transport

Infrastructure

Climate Change

Sustainability

Ecology and Biodiversity

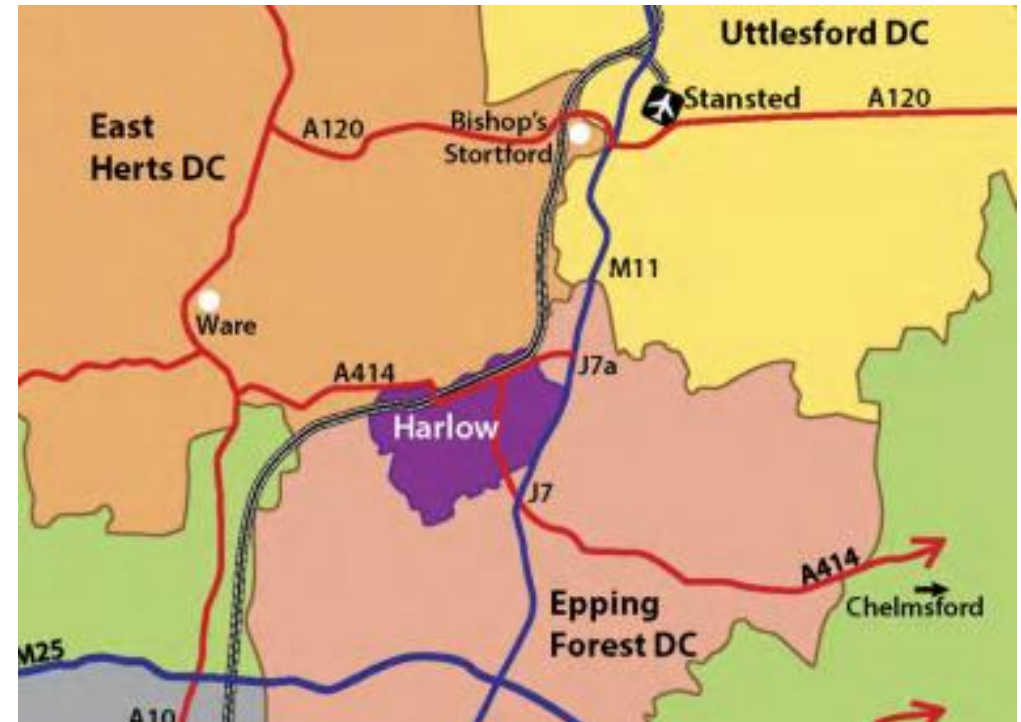
Governance

Harlow – tightly bounded

Five authorities – 3 x LPA and
2 x highway authority

Limited resources – funding
and land

Local Government
reorganisation





Economy

Location

Low job densities –
warehousing and logistics

Balanced commuting – but
higher value jobs outside

Loss of office roles

UKHSA

Hospital programme

Town centre retail offer

Health

Quality of place

Open space provision

Health and leisure
facilities

Housing – quality and
type

Sculpture town



Quality of Place - centre



Attractiveness of the centre – anchor to the new town

Previous lack of ownership – Programme of change and investment

Transport interchange

Cultural quarter

Stewardship

Housing

Uniformity of type and tenure

PD conversions

Private sector delivery

Quality and mix – but viability issues



Congestion and gridlock –
despite being built for the
car

Health impacts and air
quality/ pollution

Lack of local control – trains
and buses

Micromobility solutions

Design solutions for new
build and retrofitting

Transport



More Infrastructure



Schools – ability to
delivery and timing

Open spaces

Community

Employment

Water and drainage

Climate Change, Sustainability and Biodiversity

Climate resilience
Sustainable construction
Biodiversity net gain



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Thank You