# Harrow approves large-scale transformation of Civic Centre site into Poets Corner



Plans to transform the site of the former Harrow Civic Centre into a vibrant new neighbourhood named Poets Corner have recently been approved, marking a significant milestone in North London’s evolving urban landscape. The ambitious scheme, led by Harrow Council in partnership with property developer Wates Residential, promises over 1,000 new homes, extensive green spaces, and commercial areas designed to foster community life. Construction is anticipated to start next year and could be completed by 2032.

The development entails the demolition of the old Civic Centre and surrounding buildings to make way for a mixed-use neighbourhood. The southern part of the site will feature eight three-storey townhouses, two apartment blocks reaching up to 12 storeys with a total of 530 residential units, and commercial spaces. Meanwhile, the northern section plans include residential blocks ranging from six to 15 storeys, accommodating an additional 528 homes. Among these 1,058 homes, around 20% are designated as affordable housing—an increase from the initial 15% proposal but still falling short of the council’s 50% target for affordable units on public developments. Council officers explained the limitation arose after viability assessments, concluding that this was the maximum feasible allocation.

Despite the momentum, the project has sparked concern among local residents and some council members. Critics highlight the strain a large influx of new residents could place on already stretched NHS services, particularly GP and dental care. One resident voiced her distress at the planning committee, sharing heartfelt worries about the limited consultation notice and the ongoing challenges in accessing health care, underscoring anxieties over how the development might exacerbate these pressures. In response, council officers noted that the NHS has been offered first refusal on some commercial spaces within the development to potentially provide new facilities. Furthermore, funds from the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) might be deployed to support additional local services as the project progresses, though these assurances do not guarantee NHS involvement.

The regeneration goes beyond housing, promising a substantial public square, a new park complete with children’s play areas, and a pedestrian route linking Station Road directly to Harrow and Wealdstone station. Remarkably, Poets Corner will be a largely car-free development, with dedicated disabled parking and ‘pay and display’ spaces nearby, reflecting an emphasis on sustainable transport and greener living. The scheme aligns with broader council priorities aiming to create a well-connected, inclusive, and environmentally conscious community.

This development forms part of a wider regeneration strategy across Harrow, which includes projects like Byron Quarter, focused on delivering low-rise homes with ample green spaces and cycling links, further enhancing the borough’s appeal and infrastructure. Wates Residential has framed Poets Corner as a transformative opportunity for Harrow and London more broadly, pledging high-quality homes, community amenities, and improved public spaces geared to future needs.

While council leaders express optimism about the positive impact of Poets Corner, emphasising its potential to offer homes people can afford alongside enhanced local services and green areas, the tension between development ambitions and community capacity remains a vital part of the ongoing dialogue. This project illustrates the complex balancing act faced by urban planners tackling housing shortages, sustainability, and infrastructure limitations within rapidly changing metropolitan environments.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858), [[2]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/residential-development/residential/planning-green-light-for-poets-corner-in-harrow/), [[5]](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/11404/poets-in-motion-plans-submitted-for-a-new-neighbourhood-in-the-heart-of-harrow), [[7]](https://harrowonline.org/2024/01/26/harrows-regeneration-plans-approved-featuring-transformation-of-former-civic-centre/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858), [[4]](https://www.constructionenquirer.com/2025/03/25/wates-submits-plan-for-1000-homes-harrow-council-scheme/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858), [[4]](https://www.constructionenquirer.com/2025/03/25/wates-submits-plan-for-1000-homes-harrow-council-scheme/), [[7]](https://harrowonline.org/2024/01/26/harrows-regeneration-plans-approved-featuring-transformation-of-former-civic-centre/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858), [[2]](https://www.wates.co.uk/news/residential-development/residential/planning-green-light-for-poets-corner-in-harrow/), [[5]](https://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/11404/poets-in-motion-plans-submitted-for-a-new-neighbourhood-in-the-heart-of-harrow), [[7]](https://harrowonline.org/2024/01/26/harrows-regeneration-plans-approved-featuring-transformation-of-former-civic-centre/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://harrowonline.org/2025/01/10/the-big-changes-coming-to-harrow-in-2025-including-new-residential-and-social-homes/), [[7]](https://harrowonline.org/2024/01/26/harrows-regeneration-plans-approved-featuring-transformation-of-former-civic-centre/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/north-london-site-demolished-1000-32679858> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.wates.co.uk/news/residential-development/residential/planning-green-light-for-poets-corner-in-harrow/> - Wates Residential, in partnership with the London Borough of Harrow, has secured planning permission for Poets Corner, a major regeneration of the former Harrow Civic Centre site. The development will deliver over 1,000 new homes, including affordable housing, and features a large public space called Poets Garden, blending homes, shops, and community spaces with new walking routes and a pedestrian link to Harrow & Wealdstone Station via a community square. The project aims to create a vibrant, inclusive neighbourhood with green spaces and active streets.
3. <https://harrowonline.org/2025/03/20/plans-submitted-for-new-harrow-neighbourhood-with-large-park-public-event-on-saturday/> - Harrow Council and Wates Residential have submitted plans for Poets’ Corner, a new neighbourhood in the heart of Harrow. The development includes over 1,000 new apartments, including council homes, a large new park with green-flag status, and a central community square. A public engagement event is scheduled for 22 March at Katie’s Statue on Station Road, allowing residents to view designs and learn more about the plans. The project aims to transform the former council civic centre headquarters into a thriving, sustainable community.
4. <https://www.constructionenquirer.com/2025/03/25/wates-submits-plan-for-1000-homes-harrow-council-scheme/> - Wates Residential has submitted a hybrid planning application for the Poets’ Corner scheme in Harrow, including detailed proposals for phase one consisting of around 530 new build-to-rent homes spread over blocks rising from 5 to 12 storeys. The remaining homes will be delivered over two subsequent phases at a total construction cost of around £360 million. After viability tests, the whole scheme will deliver around 13% affordable homes. Wates aims to start construction in 2026, with phases 2 and 3 following later.
5. <https://www.harrow.gov.uk/news/article/11404/poets-in-motion-plans-submitted-for-a-new-neighbourhood-in-the-heart-of-harrow> - Plans for Poets’ Corner have been submitted, aiming to deliver more than 1,000 thoughtfully designed apartments, including new council homes. The development features a new large green-flag park and community square at its heart, creating spaces for new and existing communities to enjoy. A public engagement event is scheduled for 22 March at Katie’s Statue, Station Road, allowing residents to view the designs and ask questions of the project team. The project aims to transform the former council headquarters on Station Road into a thriving, sustainable community.
6. <https://harrowonline.org/2025/01/10/the-big-changes-coming-to-harrow-in-2025-including-new-residential-and-social-homes/> - Harrow Council and developers Wates have submitted plans for Byron Quarter, a development aimed at regenerating council-owned sites in the borough. Plans have been submitted for 149 new homes on a disused site adjacent to the leisure centre. The proposed low-rise development includes 71 three-bedroom houses, with two and three-storey homes positioned along the site’s boundary to enhance privacy and align with the neighbourhood’s character. A new green space featuring seating areas, play spaces, and walking and cycling links to the Belmont Trail and Byron Park is also part of the plans.
7. <https://harrowonline.org/2024/01/26/harrows-regeneration-plans-approved-featuring-transformation-of-former-civic-centre/> - Harrow’s regeneration plans have been approved, featuring the transformation of the former Civic Centre. The partnership between the council and Wates Residential will see an era of growth and community development in the borough’s Opportunity Area. The plans will transform the Council’s old headquarters at the Civic Centre on Station Road, known as Poets Corner, and redevelop an old driving school left empty for the last twenty years, adjacent to the Leisure Centre, known as Byron Quarter. These proposals prioritise community needs and environmental considerations, contributing to sustainable development and an inclusive community in Harrow.