

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **13 September 2016**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Barbara Rice (Chair), Peter Smith (Vice-Chair), John Allen, Oliver Gerrish, Tom Kelly, and Terry Piccolo

Substitutes:

Councillors Tim Aker, Sue MacPherson, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell and Gerard Rice

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	5 - 8
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 July 2016.	
3. Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Jessica Feeney, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **5 September 2016**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Vision: Thurrock: A place of **opportunity**, **enterprise** and **excellence**, where **individuals**, **communities** and **businesses** flourish.

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 July 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Barbara Rice (Chair), Peter Smith (Vice-Chair), John Allen, Oliver Gerrish and Terry Piccolo

Apologies: Councillors Tom Kelly

In attendance: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration and Assets
Julie Nelder, Principal Traffic Engineer
Ann Osola, Head of Highways & Transportation
Peter Wright, Principal Highways Engineer
Jessica Feeney, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 7 June were approved as a correct record subject to Councillor Smith being marked as leaving the meeting at 8.30pm when he stayed until the close of the meeting.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

4. c2c service - update

Members were informed that at the 2 March 2016 meeting the Planning, Transport, Regeneration (PTR) Overview & Scrutiny Committee were informed about the actions that c2c were taking in order to improve the service provision. Members were informed that the Committee asked for further updates to be provided in relation to current and future c2c train service provision therefore the report offered a brief update.

Members were disappointed that a representative from c2c did not attend the Committee.

The Head of Highways and Transportation provided a power point presentation for members which outlined what train services had decreased in the number of people standing during the duration of their journey during peak

hours. The figure was compared from March to June 2016 showing that 6 trains had decreased numbers of passengers standing.

The Chair of the Committee requested that an update report was filtered back to the Committee in November 2016 and March 2017.

The Committee requested that a letter was sent from the Chair of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to c2c raising the following concerns.

- Clarity on which services were going to favour from the additional carriages.
- Were the expected carriages in 2020 expected to be brought forward to a nearer date.
- c2c and their current method of consulting with customers.
- Customer satisfaction results.

The Chair of the Committee requested that officers created a robust tool for the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to use to scrutinise the c2c service.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the c2c update and responded thereto.

5. Local Growth Fund Round 3

Members were updated on the latest call for project proposals under Local Growth Fund Round Three (LGF3). The report identified the process adopted by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for the preparation of its LGF3 submission. It outlined the criteria which will be used to assess proposals and identified the Thurrock projects which had been submitted to SELEP.

Members were informed that the two projects for Thurrock submitted was the Grays South Project and the Lakeside Transport Hub.

Members congratulated the Regeneration team on their hard work.

Councillor John Allen asked for assurance regarding the Grays South Project by questioning if flooding pumps and CCTV was incorporated into the Grays Rail underpass plan. The Head of Regeneration confirmed that this had been incorporated and agreed to circulate the bid documentation which included all planning details and expenditure for the Grays South Project to the Committee.

Councillor Gerrish stated there was not much interest for regeneration shown in Tilbury and declared that Tilbury should be made a priority for the future plans.

Councillor Smith questioned when the council would be made aware if the LGF3 had been successful. Members were informed that the outcome would be released in the autumn statement. Councillor Smith requested that congestion and air pollution was considered in all growth hubs when planning future regeneration projects.

The Chair of the Committee requested that the Thameside Towns Portfolio aspiration was made a priority for Thurrock and its regeneration journey, the Chair of the Committee stated that Schools and Health Provisions were a fundamental need in the community.

Councillor Piccolo questioned if SELEP reviewed previous funding and performance when looking to grant new applications. The Head of Regeneration confirmed that this was taken into account when allocating funding.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the current LGF3 process, to support submission of the two Thurrock projects and commented on the aspirational projects included in the project pipeline.

6. Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme - Asset Management and Recommendations for Improvement

Members were updated on the latest call for project proposals under Local Growth Fund Round Three (LGF3). The report identified the process adopted by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for the preparation of its LGF3 submission. It outlined the criteria which will be used to assess proposals and identified the Thurrock projects which had been submitted to SELEP.

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RESOLVED:

Members noted the current LGF3 process, to support submission of the two Thurrock projects and commented on the aspirational projects included in the project pipeline.

7. Work Programme

The Democratic Services Officer informed members that an updated copy of the work programme would be circulated.

The meeting finished at 9.10 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

13 September 2016	ITEM: 5
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Purfleet Regeneration Update	
Wards and communities affected: West Thurrock and South Stifford	Key Decision: No
Report of: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration and Assets	
Accountable Head of Service: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration and Assets	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director Environment & Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Purfleet Centre project is the largest regeneration programme that the Council is directly responsible for delivering. The high profile scheme will ultimately create more than 2,300 new homes and a state-of-the-art film, television and media studio complex around a new town centre featuring primary and secondary schools, a health centre and local shops, leisure and community facilities whilst opening up riverfront access alongside 1km of the Thames. It is critical to the delivery of the Council's Regeneration and Economic Growth strategies.

The implementation of these longstanding proposals took a massive step forward when, building upon approvals provided by Cabinet in October 2015, the Council entered into contract with its chosen development partner (Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited (PCRL)) in January 2016 with those agreements going unconditional in March 2016. These agreements secured the funds necessary to deliver the first phase of the project which is anticipated to include several hundred new homes and much of the community infrastructure (schools, health centre, shops and local facilities) that the area currently lacks.

Since entering into contract, the Council and PCRL have been working together to review the initial proposals for the scheme with a view to developing a new masterplan which will support the submission of the necessary planning applications in late 2016 to enable a start on site in Summer 2017.

Within the contract between the Council and PCRL, the Council must approve the new masterplan and confirm that it is content that the scheme remains in line with the vision which was set out by PCRL through the procurement process. This paper

accompanies a presentation from PCRL which will be given to members of the committee on the night as part of the wider consideration process with a view to the Council ultimately granting the necessary approvals.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Committee welcome the progress made on the Purfleet Centre project, review and comment upon the emerging masterplan proposals and identify any areas which they consider require further development.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Purfleet is one of six Growth Hubs in the Borough identified within the Council's Economic Growth and Regeneration Strategies and the Local Development Framework. Whilst the majority of the Borough's growth is private sector led; the Purfleet Centre proposal is the largest regeneration programme which the Council is responsible for directly delivering through maximising the value of its significant land holding in the area. The Council has set out a vision to create a new town centre in Purfleet to support the development of more homes but also address existing deficiencies in services and facilities as well as maximising the benefit of Purfleet's riverside location.

2.2 In February 2014 the Council closed the OJEU Competitive Dialogue process which sought to identify and select a development partner who would be responsible for delivering the proposals for Purfleet. In March 2014 Cabinet approved the selection of PCRL and delegated authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Highways and Transportation to negotiate the remaining terms of the Development Agreement and associated documentation.

2.3 Following a lengthy period of negotiation, within which PCRL sought and secured a funding partner to support the delivery of the project, Cabinet was presented with a report in October 2015 which outlined the final commercial terms which had been reached and sought approval, duly given, to enter into the relevant contractual agreements. The Council entered into the various agreements in January 2016 which went unconditional in March 2016 thereby committing PCRL to the delivery of the first phase of the project with the remaining phases subject to viability.

2.4 PCRL's initial submission in response to the procurement process contained a high level masterplan that set a vision for the scheme. This has been presented to members of the Committee and other forums in the past. The proposals, at the time, included:

- A film and television studio complex of approximately 500,000 square feet
- A redeveloped station
- More than 2,300 homes
- A new primary school; and

- Local facilities including a health centre, community hall, retail units and spaces for cafes and bars
- 2.5 Since the parties entered into contract, the initial masterplan has been the subject of intense review to reflect changes in market conditions and the development of the team's thinking in respect of the size and location of the film and television studios (now almost 700,000sqft), the broader commercial opportunities which exist linked to the studios and the potential to create a real destination around the riverfront. In addition, further proposals have emerged to include a Secondary School within the scheme and space for a new model of health delivery; an Integrated Healthy Living Centre combining primary and community healthcare.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Members of the committee will receive a presentation from PCRL at the meeting on the work completed to date to review the masterplan and the emerging proposals. This will outline the drivers for any changes and the remaining issues still to be resolved.
- 3.2 Under the terms of the contracts between the Council and PCRL, the Council's express consent is required to any amendments to the original masterplan. However, given that it was always anticipated that the masterplan would have to change once detailed design work commenced, the major consideration is whether any revisions remain consistent with the original vision and intent which PCRL committed to deliver through the procurement process. The presentation to members of the Committee and any comments received form part of that approval process.
- 3.3 Alongside the drivers identified above (housing market conditions, film and television studios, secondary school and health centre etc) the masterplan has also been revised to reflect the input of a broad range of public and private stakeholders, including local residents. PCRL has led an effort to engage local agencies and people in the definition and refinement of the proposals which has included:
- The establishment of a community chaired, 20 strong Design Panel which has supported the process of reviewing the masterplan and acted as a sounding board for particular elements of the scheme;
 - Engagement of more than 300 people in various workshops exploring personal visions for Purfleet, identifying strengths and weaknesses and considering what the scheme should be providing; and
 - Establishment of the 'Our Purfleet' website (www.ourpurfleet.com) which has already attracted more than 10,000 hits and has seen more than 120 images submitted by members of the public to an 'inspiration board' showcasing buildings, designs and facilities that they would like to see in Purfleet.

PCRL's efforts have generated a great deal of positive support for the project with a tangible excitement about the scheme among local people. It is anticipated that, as the masterplan develops, it will be presented back to people who have taken part in the process to date and be made available for broader public consideration and comment.

- 3.4 Assuming that the Council ultimately signs off the revised masterplan, PCRL are working to a programme which sees a new outline application for the whole masterplan being submitted alongside a full application for the first phase in late 2016. This would conceivably see planning consent granted in Spring 2017, allowing a start on site in Summer 2017. There is a great deal of infrastructure work required as part of the first phase of the scheme, but there is the potential for the first homes to come forward in late 2018/early 2019. To hit this programme, PCRL and their design team need to freeze the design in September/October 2016 to allow sufficient time to work up the applications.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Under the terms of the agreements between the Council and PCRL the Council's approval is required to any changes to the masterplan. In considering whether to provide this consent, the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to provide their views on the emerging proposals.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 Members have been updated on the progress of the Purfleet Centre project through a series of reports to Cabinet and the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Specific briefings have been offered to each of the Groups in the run up to the committee meeting. As noted within the report, local stakeholders including residents have been engaged through a Community Design Panel, Workshops and a bespoke website. Further consultation will take place as the project progresses

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 Securing the delivery of the Purfleet Centre project is a key priority within the Council's Economic Growth and Regeneration Strategies together with the Local Development Framework. It is anticipated that, as well as local housing and employment opportunities, the nature of the development will serve to greatly increase the profile of the Borough and raise aspirations among developers and communities in terms of the benefits that new development can bring.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this paper. There is an approved capital budget of £16.848m included in the capital programme in respect of this project with spend to date of £2.961m. The MTFs allows for an anticipated loss of income due to the loss of income generating assets within 2017/18 and 2018/19, however, the scheme is expected to deliver a significant return on investment over the longer term. Additional locally generated income, such as council tax, is projected, however, there will also be additional costs to the authority due to an increased demand for services, such as the collection of waste. Capital allocations for the provision of the Integrated Healthy Living Centre will require further approval.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Planning and Regeneration Solicitor

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

Whilst there are no direct implications from this report, the proposed regeneration of Purfleet has the potential to support residents access to improved housing, healthcare, employment opportunities and access around the area. Public consultation has helped shape the emerging master plan which will be subject to a Community and Equality Impact Assessment.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other significant implications of this report.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. Appendices to the report

None.

Report Author:

Matthew Essex

Head of Regeneration and Assets

Environment and Place

13 September 2016	ITEM: 6
Planning Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Thurrock Local Plan: Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Mark Coxshall, Portfolio of Regeneration	
Accountable Head of Service: Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Director of Environment and Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 12th February 2014 Cabinet gave authorisation for the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the future development of Thurrock.

As part of the formal plan-making process the Council is required to consult the local community, business and stakeholders on the content of the Local Plan. On the 24th February the Council authorised a 6 week public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Thurrock Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy.

This Report provides a summary of the representations made in response to the Issues and Options (Stage1) Public Consultation Document which will be reported to Council on 28th September 2016 with a recommendation seeking authorisation to publish the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Public Consultation.

1. Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- 1.1 Notes progress on the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan.**
- 1.2 Consider the attached Report and the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage1) Report of Consultation and provide comments for final documents for submission to September Council.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council has an adopted Local Plan in the shape of the Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development DPD (December 2011). However, on the 12th February 2014 Cabinet gave approval to undertake a review of the Core Strategy and begin the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the development of the Borough over the period to 2035.

2.2 A key principle underpinning the operation of the planning system is the requirement that local authorities must have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area. The February 2014 Cabinet resolution recognised that a review of the Core Strategy of economic was required in order to address the impact of economic change and a number of significant changes to the planning system at the national, regional and local levels. These include:

- The need to for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to coordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock;
- The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs;
- A requirement for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support long term economic growth;
- Legislative changes that fundamentally affect the form, content and process for preparing a Local Plan; and
- A need to plan for a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and its potential economic, transport, and environmental impact on the Borough.

2.3 Government policy requires that in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. Although the adopted Core Strategy both reflects and responds to many of these requirements in a positive way, it does not wholly reflect the significant progress that is being achieved by the Council in driving forward an ambitious growth agenda and long term vision for the Borough. The new Local Plan will have a key role to play in accelerating the development of new town centres at Purfleet and Lakeside, the regeneration of Grays Town Centre and the wider Tilbury area, together with implementation and delivery of strategic employment opportunities at London Gateway and the adjoining Thames Enterprise Park. Crucially, the Local Plan will also need to identify and bring forward land to meet the Boroughs future housing needs and to ensure the

delivery of over 20,000 new homes and supporting community and transport infrastructure over the plan period to 2036.

- 2.4 The process for preparing and adopting Local Plans is set out in the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Any failure to comply with or follow the Regulations could lead to the plan being found unsound with the significant risk that the Government could step in and impose a new plan or development on the Borough. When preparing a new Local Plan, Regulation 18 of the above directs that a local planning authority should both invite and consider representations from specific consultation bodies, local residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area about what a local plan ought to contain. In order to comply with these requirements and provide the community with an opportunity to shape the scope and direction of the Local Plan, the Council at its meeting on 24th February 2016 authorised a 6 week public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Thurrock Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy.
- 2.5 This report summarises the representations and public comments received by the Council to that consultation process, which will be used to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan. Further details on the representations received in response to the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy will be set out in a separate report to Council later this year. That report will also seek approval for the formal adoption of Thurrock Design Strategy.

*Local Plan (Regulation 18) Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation
February – March 2016)*

- 2.6 The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views of stakeholders, local businesses and the community on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address and the potential range of options for meeting Thurrock's future development needs while at the same time protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment of the Borough. In order to stimulate discussion the Consultation Document set out 40 questions covering a wide range of thematic issues related to the key challenges and opportunities facing the Borough. A full list of the questions set out in the Consultation Document is provided as Appendix 1 to this Report.
- 2.7 All the consultation documents were made available to view at **thurrock.gov.uk/localplan** with comments being encouraged through the Council's consultation portal or on Comment Forms which were available on request at the Civic Offices and in libraries across the Borough.
- 2.8 In addition to attending Community Forum meetings the Council also organised a series of drop-in 'Road Show' events across Thurrock designed to allow people to learn more about the Local Plan and to provide them with an opportunity to highlight local issues of particular importance to their neighbourhood or community.

- 2.9 In order to establish effective cross-boundary working relationships with neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies (as required under the Duty to Cooperate), the Council organised a Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Workshop on 21st March 2016. The purpose of the workshop was to advise representatives from local authorities drawn from across Essex, London and North Kent together with statutory consultees such as Natural England on the programme and timescales for preparing the Local Plan and to ascertain their initial views on the scope and nature of the cross-boundary issues which will need to be addressed as part of the plan-making process.
- 2.10 As part of the public consultation process the Council also launched a further formal 'Call for Sites' whereby landowners, stakeholders and the local community are invited to identify sites or broad areas of land for development and/or for protection. Any sites or broad locations identified through this exercise will then be assessed and considered further for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 2.11 By the close of the consultation period on 11th April, a total of 70 organisations and individuals had responded with 548 separate comments having been received in response to the questions set out in the Consultation Document and a further 25 sites put forward by landowners and developers for consideration and allocation for development in the Local Plan in response to the 'Call for Sites' process.
- 2.12 A full record of the comments received and the Officers response to these representations is set out in the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Public Consultation, copies of which are available to view in the Members Rooms. The Report of Consultation is submitted for approval alongside this Report. Subject to Council's approval of the Report of Public Consultation, it is intended a copy of the Report will be uploaded onto the Thurrock Local Plan website.

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 2.13 A summary of the key consultation responses on the main issues, opportunities and challenges which the Council will need to consider in preparing the Local Plan is set out in the following sections of this report.
- 2.14 The key issues raised by landowners, developers and the business community related to the need for the Local Plan process to:
- Recognise that a failure to identify additional land for housing and employment development would threaten the future economic prosperity and growth of the Borough.
 - Consider the development of a new spatial strategy which goes beyond the current approach of focusing investment and development within the

existing urban area and the established Economic Growth Hubs in order to meet Thurrock's future development needs.

- Undertake a full review of the Green Belt to identify additional land to meet Thurrock's future housing and employment needs consistent with the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Consider the allocation of land to meet the future housing needs of London and neighbouring South Essex local authorities in addition to meeting Thurrock's own Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) in full.
- Ensure that the Council actively engages with the neighbouring South Essex Local Authorities through the Duty to Cooperate process to meet London's future housing needs.
- Consider reviewing the Borough's retail hierarchy and the relative roles of Lakeside and Grays Town Centre in accommodating future strategic retail needs over the plan period.
- Establish a 'town centres first' policy approach to the location of town centre uses with a policy to resist further significant out of centre retail development in order to support the retail led regeneration of Grays Town Centre.
- Plan positively for growth by supporting the transformation of the Lakeside Basin into a new regional town centre with Intu Lakeside providing the best location for new retail and leisure development in the Borough for comparison retailing and leisure development.
- Ensure that existing centres including Grays and Intu Lakeside can provide for the future shopping needs of Thurrock. Further development outside these centres is not required and identified needs should be focused on maintaining and enhancing existing centres.
- Plan positively to maximise the economic benefits that will arise following the development of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.
- Support the future commercial viability and expansion of the Ports through continued investment in new infrastructure, housing, education and skills development.
- Identify additional sites for dedicated truck parks in order to meet future demand and reduce the environmental and transport impact of logistics related traffic growth on the Borough.
- Recognise the importance of protecting the role played by the River Thames in supporting economic growth.

- Allocate land for the development of new waste and renewable energy facilities which recognises Thurrock's strategic location and the current availability of sites for new development.
- Recognise the importance and value of Thurrock's green infrastructure and heritage assets in supporting the delivery of wider economic, environmental, health, and community and transport objectives should be recognised.

2.15 In addition to the consultation responses received from landowners, developers and the business community, further representations were also submitted by Community Organisations and neighbouring Local Authorities. These included the South Essex authorities, Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, the Greater London Authority, North London Waste Plan Authorities, Barking and Dagenham LB, Dartford BC, Gravesham BC and Medway BC. The key issues raised by these bodies related to the need for the Local Plan to:

- Consider through the Duty To Cooperate process the need for Thurrock to contribute towards meeting any unmet future housing needs from adjoining authorities including London and Southend in particular.
- Ensure that future residential developments should be supported by health facilities, in order to combat the existing health inequalities experienced at a local level.
- Consider the requirement for Thurrock to make additional provision to meet Basildon's unmet Gypsy and Traveller needs.
- Support the delivery of the Thames Vision which promotes the retention of riverside industry and employment locations, and the protection and enhancement of the distinctive riverscape in terms of its water quality, wildlife and attractiveness as an open space.
- Consider the impacts of any planned expansion or change to port facilities along the Thames within Thurrock on Medway's port infrastructure.
- Safeguard wharfs in Thurrock for the importation of marine dredged and other minerals resources into the region.
- Consider the future role of Lakeside and the need to manage the scale and nature of its future development in order to safeguard the viability and vitality of other strategic centres in South Essex, North Kent and East London.
- Recognise Thurrock's future role in meeting London and the wider South East's waste needs.

- Consider the future implications of strategic transport improvements including the Lower Thames Crossing and Cross Rail 2.
- Support the delivery of an enhanced public rights of way network accessible to all users – walkers, cyclist, equestrians and the disabled, including increased access to the Borough’s open spaces.

2.16 Representations were also received from Heritage England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Highways England. In the main the responses submitted by these organisations were general in nature and welcoming of the opportunity to work with the Council in preparing the Local Plan. A series of follow up meetings are now being arranged with each of these statutory consultees to further strengthen and develop the working relationship between the parties as progress on the plan moves forward.

Local Plan Roadshow Consultation Responses

2.17 To ensure that everybody attending the Local Plan Road Show events had an opportunity to have their say on the big issues facing the Borough the Council set up a ‘Burning Issues’ board at each of Roadshow Events. With over 500 comments received the most frequently voiced concerns related to the issues set out below.

- The lack of affordable housing available to local people.
- The need for new homes to be built near transport hubs and existing community facilities and services like schools and doctors.
- The need for new homes to be built in areas where they can support the delivery of better community facilities and services.
- The preferred location for new homes should be on brownfield sites.
- Better health, education and community facilities are required to meet local needs.
- More activities should be provided for young people.
- The adverse impact of lorry movements in residential areas should be addressed.
- Industrial and residential areas should be segregated in order to minimise the impact of bad neighbour uses on local communities.
- There is a need for better parking provision in town and local centres.
- There is a need for improved standards of road maintenance and investment in Thurrock’s roads.

- There is a need to tackle the poor quality of the environment and poorly maintained public open spaces.
- There is a need to provide new public open spaces and sports and leisure facilities.
- The provision of improved walking and cycling facilities should be promoted.
- The health impacts of poor air quality on local residents should be considered and addressed.
- There is a need for improved standards of design.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Report of Consultation sets out in full the representations submitted by the 70 organisations or individuals who responded to publication of the consultation document. The report also sets out the Council's recommended response to those representations which, in the main, is to note the concerns and views of the respondents and to invite them to meet with officers to discuss their submissions further and, where appropriate, agree the 'next steps' in developing the Local Plan evidence base.
- 3.2 Many of the issues flagged up in the various consultation responses are already in the process of being addressed through the technical work currently underway to support the development of a robust and deliverable Local Plan. This includes a range of housing, employment, retail, transport and infrastructure studies which will identify the scale and nature of future development needs which the Local Plan must plan for over the period to 2036.
- 3.3 Crucially the technical work currently underway will also consider the capacity of the Borough to sustain and support different levels of growth together with the viability and deliverability of new development in different locations across the Borough. The outcome of this work will be used to inform the development of a range of alternative spatial strategies which will set out a range of options for accommodating the Borough's future development needs. This will include more detail on the future scale, mix and distribution of development across Thurrock and associated future infrastructure needs and costs. The emerging Spatial Development Options will form the focus of the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Public Consultation which will commence in March 2017.
- 3.4 At this stage of the plan-making process it is important to note that although many of the representations submitted are asking for the Council to make provision to meet the housing needs of neighbouring areas including London and adjoining South Essex authorities, it remains the case that no surrounding authority has formally approached the Council with a request that Thurrock should through the Duty to Cooperate process consider the allocation of

additional land to meet any unmet needs in their own administrative area. Neither is it the case that any evidence has been produced by any party to justify why Thurrock should meet the needs of adjoining authorities. This relates both to the respondent local authority being able to evidence their own inability or lack of capacity to meet identified growth targets or why it is appropriate for Thurrock to contribute towards meeting their unmet development needs. These issues will need to be further explored through the Duty To Cooperate mechanisms including the recently established South Essex Members Board.

3.5 A further issue that needs to be addressed is that progress on getting the Local Plan adopted by 2020, as set out the Thurrock Local Development Scheme (the project plan that guides the delivery of the Local Plan), will be largely dependent on there being an early decision and resolution of the issues associated with the Lower Thames Crossing.

3.6 Due to the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of that process and the uncertain timescales for its resolution, it is not possible for the Council to consult on the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation in October/November 2016, as was originally proposed in the current Local Development Scheme which was approved by Cabinet in 2016. As a result it will therefore be necessary for the Council to amend the Local Development Scheme to reflect any revised timescales for preparing the Local Plan once a decision has been made in connection with the Lower Thames Crossing proposals. Reflecting these considerations, it is therefore proposed that Council grant delegated authority to the Head of Planning and Growth in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to amend the Thurrock Local Development Scheme at an appropriate future stage.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To comply with the requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Localism Act 2012 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

4.2 The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan is required to ensure that the significant progress being made in securing the future growth and regeneration of the Borough is not stalled by the lack of an up-to-date development plan. This is particularly important given that national planning policy guidance states that where the development plan is out-of-date, permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits of doing so. The implications of this point are clear: if an authority fails to plan properly for its own area, then the opportunity to do so will be lost through planning appeals determined by Planning Inspectors or by the Secretary of State. Similarly a failure on the part of the Council to prepare and adopt a Local Plan within the timescales set out in the

Local Development Scheme could leave it vulnerable to intervention by the Secretary of State.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Thurrock Local Plan will be the subject of extensive public consultation at each stage of the plan-making process in accordance with the approach set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted by the Council in November 2015 and the Local Plan Engagement Strategy (Phase 1) approved by Cabinet on 9th December 2015.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The documents cited within this report support the production of the Council's new Local Plan. The Local Plan will guide new development within the borough over the period to 2036 consistent with the delivery of wider corporate policies, priorities and objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Finance Officer – Management
Accounts

The major costs associated with the preparation of the Local Plan will be incurred during the financial years, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Subject to the decision of the Council in agreeing the recommendations set out in this report, it is proposed to re-align existing revenue budgets towards the preparation of the new Local Plan in line with the plan-making programme and timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme.

The ongoing delay by the Government in coming to a decision on the Lower Thames Crossing has also led to an increase in costs associated with the preparation of the Local Plan. This could increase further depending on the outcome of any future decision by Government and any additional costs would need to be met by the Council or the Government if progress on preparing the Local Plan is to remain within budget and in accordance with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**

Planning & Regeneration Solicitor

The preparation of a new Local Plan will be carried out in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

A failure to undertake the preparation of a new Local Plan would be contrary to the requirement set out in the NPPF that plans should be kept up-to-date and proactively drive and support sustainable economic development.

Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Section 111 of the Localism Act 2011) requires that a Local Planning Authority must prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme. The scheme must specify the documents which form the Local Plan and include a timetable for their production.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equality
Manager

The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment opportunities. An Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) will be conducted as part of the process of preparing the Local Plan as an integral element of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal. This is a statutory requirement and obligation placed on the Council. The approach to public consultation set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (November 2015) will ensure that the consultation process provides an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other implications associated with the report

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 - Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document Questions

Report Author:

Sean Nethercott
Growth and Strategy Manager
Planning and Growth

Appendix 1 – List of Questions from the Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation document.

Q 1	What other evidence documents do you think the Council will need to commission or produce to ensure that the Plan is sound?
Q2	Do you feel that all the key cross boundary issues have been identified? If not, then please state any other issues that we should be working with our partners to address.
Q3	What would you like Thurrock to be like in the future and what do you think should be the key economic, housing, environmental, social, community and health outcomes that the Local Plan should help to deliver?
Q4	Do you believe that the vision and approach set out in the Core Strategy of focusing development within Thurrock's urban area and major growth hubs remains the most appropriate option for meeting the Borough's future development needs?
Q5	Do you think that the plan period of 2015-2035 is appropriate? If not please suggest a more suitable plan period.
Q6	What would you change in your local neighbourhood to make it a better place to live?
Q7	How would you make the best use of the River Thames and its foreshore?
Q8	Have you ever experienced any difficulty in trying to find a suitable property in the Borough? If yes what were your biggest challenge?
Q9	What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites to meet its housing need?
Q10	What types of housing do you think will be most needed in the Borough over the coming years?
Q11	Should the Council explore the potential for variable affordable housing targets and approaches so that difficult higher risk sites can be developed?
Q12	What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites for new pitches?
Q13	What are the main barriers to growth that need to be addressed in the Local Plan to ensure that all sections of the community have access to the benefits of future employment creation in Thurrock?
Q14	Do you think there is a need to identify additional land for employment and what other employment uses outside of the port, logistics and retail sectors should the Local Plan support and promote?
Q15	What do you think are the key challenges facing Thurrock's retail centres and how can the Local Plan maintain and enhance their role?
Q16	What improvements would you like to see in those centres that you visit regularly and what would make you visit them more often? Please state the

	name of the centre in your response.
Q17	What are the best locations for new retail and leisure development in the Borough and how can future development be harnessed to support the delivery of wider regeneration and economic growth needs and objectives?
Q18	Is there a need for the development of retail, leisure and other town centres uses in locations outside the existing established retail centres and if so where?
Q19	What new sport and leisure facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?
Q20	Are there any open spaces that are special to your local community which should be designated? If yes, please provide details of the open space, its location and the reason why it is special to you and your community.
Q21	What new educational facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?
Q22	What new health and community facilities do you think are needed in the Borough to support both new and existing communities?
Q23	What kind of things could the Local Plan do to protect these valuable community assets?
Q24	What approach could the Local Plan take to ensure that issues relating to pollution and air quality are minimised?
Q25	What kind of things could the Plan do to help you make more sustainable transport choices?
Q26	Are there any specific sustainable transport projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail about the project.
Q27	Are there any specific road transportation projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail on the project, its location and the reason why you believe it is necessary.
Q28	What kind of things can the plan do to reduce the adverse impacts of freight movements?
Q29	What things could the plan do to protect and enhance the Borough's listed building and conservation areas?
Q30	Are there any buildings of significance in your local community which should be included on a local heritage list? If yes, please provide details including its location and the reason why it is special to your community.
Q31	What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's landscape, seascape and its key features are protected and where possible enhanced?
Q32	How should the Local Plan use the information from the landscape and seascape capacity and sensitivity study?

Q33	What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's natural assets are protected and where possible enhanced?
Q34	In planning for new development, how much weight should the Local Plan give to flood risk relative to other objectives (including sustainability, regeneration, local need and the local economy)?
Q35	Should the Plan seek to promote higher water efficiency standards by adopting the Government's Optional Technical Housing Standards?
Q36	How should the Local Plan take account of and encourage community owned renewable energy schemes?
Q37	Which renewable technologies do you think are most suitable for large scale proposals in the Borough? Please provide additional information as to why you deem these to be suitable.
Q38	How can the Plan ensure that enough minerals are available for development and also protect resources for the future?
Q39	What should the Local Plan do to ensure that waste management facilities are located, designed and operated to minimise impacts on climate change, local amenity for residents, and the natural and built environment?
Q40	Are there any matters you think also need to be considered at this stage and why?

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13 September 2016	ITEM: 7
Planning Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Parking Strategy 2016	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Transportation & Highways	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Director of Environment and Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report introduces a new version of Parking Strategy which aims to replace Parking Strategy 2007. The update presents a significant step in delivering the Council's commitment of value for money services and the creation of a safe and inclusive environment for Thurrock residents and businesses. This report brings revised document contained in appendix 1 for Committee's consideration and comment which will inform the final version for Cabinet approvals in October 2016.

1. Recommendation(s)

That the Committee:

- 1.1 Considers the attached Parking Strategy 2016 and provide comments for final documents for submission to October Cabinet.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1. From the 1st April 2005 Thurrock Council took over the responsibility for enforcing parking, loading and waiting restrictions in the Borough from Essex Police.
- 2.2. Parking offences then become 'contraventions' and are no longer classified as criminal offences. Consequently there is no recourse to the Magistrate Court System, but to Independent Adjudicators. Any unpaid debts can be pursued through a streamlined County Court system culminating in bailiff action.

- 2.3. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE), by enabling the Council to control and manage parking, benefits town centre needs by supporting improvements to the general environment. It enables measures to encourage commuters and other drivers to use long stay car parks thus freeing up short stay spaces. It also allows buses and service vehicles to operate more effectively. The DPE compliments and supports Thurrock Council's vision for a safe and integrated transport system that is accessible to all.

The council can, using the DPE powers, set up controlled parking zones which allow the space to be managed to benefit residents.

- 2.4. The adoption of DPE was followed by the implementation of Parking Strategy 2007 which enabled the Council to:
- Implement of residential parking schemes in Stanford-le-Hope, South Ockendon, Badgers Dene Grays and Seabrooke Rise;
 - Introduce the Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) in Stanford, South Ockendon and the extension of the CPZ within Grays (including Commuter Zones); and
 - Introduce collaborative working with strategic partners to deliver the service.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1. Since 2007 there were number of internal and external factors that changed:
- New Civil Enforcement Officer's equipment, including "hand helds", and an interface to the DVLA were introduced;
 - A new process and procedures in line with the statutory process were implemented;
 - Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) replaced the Excess Charge Notices (ECNs);
 - Photographic evidence was introduced to accompany PCNs;
 - Additional Parking Attendants and one Parking Coordinator were recruited;
 - New uniforms for Civil Enforcement Officers were introduced;
 - Car park pay & display machines were upgraded;
 - Car parking charges were reviewed; and
 - Due to an increase in HGVs inappropriate parking causing community and traffic safety problems the evening shifts to prioritise HGV illegal parking was introduced.
- 3.2. These changes created a need to update the 2007 Parking Strategy. Parking is a contentious issue, and therefore clarity and transparency are vital.

- 3.3. Parking Strategy 2016 incorporates the necessary changes to operations and aims to set clear and innovative policies which would further improve safety and delivery of the service.
- 3.4. The Parking Strategy is a sub-strategy of the Thurrock Local Transport Plan, and contributes to the Council objectives of delivering a Safer Environment for residents in the Borough through its impact upon mode choice for journeys and obstruction to flow of traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. The Parking Strategy 2016 is an updated replacement to the Parking Strategy 2007. Its adoption will lead to a more customer focused, transparent and efficient operation for the management and enforcement of parking regulations.
- 4.2. The comments obtained from the Committee will inform the final documents for submission to October Cabinet.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1. The current report seeks input from Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee to inform the process for the final Parking Strategy 2016 to be submitted to October Cabinet.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1. This report is consistent with all corporate priorities:
 - **Create** a great place for learning and opportunity
 - **Encourage** and promote job creation and economic prosperity
 - **Build** pride, responsibility and respect
 - **Improve** health and well-being
 - **Promote** and protect our clean and green environment

7. Implications

7.1. Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
**Senior Finance Officer – Management
Accounts**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7.2. Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Planning & Regeneration Solicitor

There are no legal implication arising from this report

7.3. **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

Whilst there are no direct implications from this report, the parking review will be subject to a Community Equality Impact Assessment in order to take full account of equality implications

7.4. **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Parking Strategy 2007
- Traffic Management Act 2004

9. **Appendices to the report**

- **Appendix 1:** Parking Strategy 2016

Report Author:

Tracey Ashwell
Highways and Transportation Services Manager
Transportation & Highways

Parking Strategy

2016 - 2021

DRAFT

Document Control

Author/ title	Tracey Ashwell – Highways and Transportation Services Manager
Authorised/title by	Ann Osola – Head of Transportation & Highways
Date Authorised	
Signature	

Version	Status (Draft/Approved)	Date	Author/Editor	Details of changes
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1.2	Draft	25/08/16	Ayesha Basit	Colouring and Footer changed
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FOREWORD

by **Clr Brian Little**
Cabinet Member for
Transport & Highways



I am pleased to introduce this new Parking Strategy for Thurrock. It represents a significant step in delivering the Council's commitment of value for money services and the creation of a safe and inclusive environment for Thurrock residents and businesses.

This new strategy represents a refresh of policies and practices for the operation and enforcement of parking regulations. Parking is a contentious issue, and therefore clarity and transparency are vital.

1. Introduction

The Thurrock Parking Strategy sets out the Council's policies and strategies for parking within the borough over the next five years.

The strategy is set out in a clear format.

This **Introduction** focuses on the achievements since the previous Parking Strategy was published in 2007. This document also relates to the wider corporate objectives of the Council and its Aims, Visions and Priorities.

A representation of public **Parking Capacity** in Thurrock and the Council's **Parking Service Operation** is set out.

The main section of the document is the **Parking Policies**, with accompanying explanatory text.

The policies are thereafter distilled into an **Action Plan**, which the Council and its partners will implement over the next five years, subject to regular review.

2. Aims, Vision & Priorities

Council priorities

Our vision

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish.

Our aim

Our aim is to become a confident, well managed and influential council regarded by residents, peers and partners as ambitious for the people of Thurrock and totally focused on meeting their current and future aspirations.

Five strategic priorities to achieve our vision:

- **Create** a great place for learning and opportunity;
- **Encourage** and promote job creation and economic prosperity;
- **Build** pride, responsibility and respect;
- **Improve** health and well-being;
- **Promote** and protect our clean and green environment.

3. Achievements since 2007

The following achievements have been implemented:

- Implementation of residential parking schemes in Stanford-le-Hope, South Ockendon, Badgers Dene Grays and Seabrooke Rise;
- Introduction of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) in Stanford, South Ockendon and the extension of the CPZ within Grays (including Commuter Zones);
- Introducing new Civil Enforcement Officer's equipment (hand helds);
- The continuation of enforcement of Morrison's Car Park. Morrisons currently contract the enforcement of this car park to the Council;
- Implementation of upgrading car park pay & display machines;
- Annual review of car parking charges;
- Implementation of new staff for evening shifts to prioritise HGV illegal parking.

4. Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE)

From the 1 April 2005 Thurrock Council took over the responsibility for enforcing parking, loading and waiting restrictions in the Borough from Essex Police.

Parking offences then become 'contraventions' and are no longer classified as criminal offences. Consequently there is no recourse to the Magistrate Court System, but to Independent Adjudicators. Any unpaid debts can be pursued through a streamlined County Court system culminating in bailiff action.

DPE has benefited the community by:

- Enabling the police to concentrate on other crimes and endorsable traffic offences;
- Improved enforcement as resources are allocated for the sole purpose of parking contraventions;
- Improved congestion and safety;
- Encouraging sensible and safer parking;
- Enhancing efficiency in the use of on-street car parking (by increasing turnover and maximising use of facilities);
- Single responsibility for parking means greater clarity and simpler perception to the general public.

Decriminalisation has supported town centre needs by encouraging commuters and other drivers to use long stay car parks freeing up short stay spaces. It also allows buses and service vehicles to operate more effectively, improves the general environment and enables the Council to control and manage parking as part of its integrated transport strategy.

DPE compliments and supports Thurrock Council's vision for a safe and integrated transport system that is accessible to all.

Statutory process for the issuing and resolution of Penalty Charge Notices

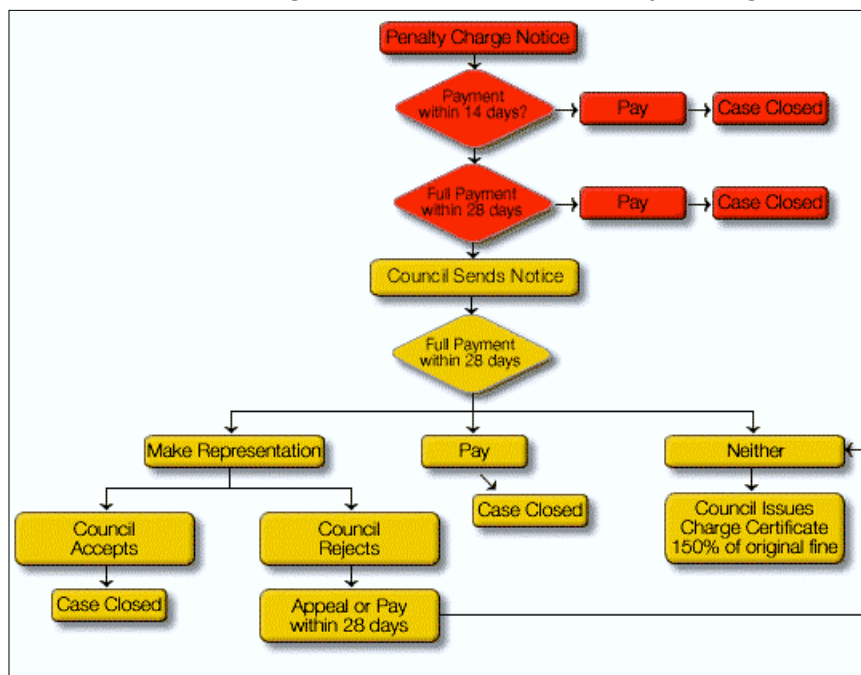


Figure 1. Statutory Process for issuing & resolution of PCNs

4.1. Implementation of DPE

A number of key actions were required prior to implementation as detailed below.

- Full review of Traffic orders, signs and lines including a review of all existing parking schemes and borough wide waiting restrictions;
- Introduction of working with the strategic partner to deliver the service;
- Successful transfer of staff from Essex Police;
- Implementation of new IT including the introduction of new hand held equipment for Civil Enforcement Officers and an interface to the DVLA;
- Implementation of new process and procedures in line with the statutory process (Figure 1 above);
- Issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) instead of Excess Charge Notices (ECNs);
- Introduction of photographic evidence;
- Recruitment of additional Parking Attendants and one Parking Co-ordinator;
- Full training for all staff;
- New uniforms for Civil Enforcement Officers;
- The hire of two vehicles to allow adequate coverage of the Borough and also to respond to customer requests;
- Extend working hours including out of hours enforcement when required.

There is a further overriding priority of

- Delivering excellence and achieving value for money.

The Parking Strategy is a sub-strategy to the Thurrock Local Transport Plan, and contributes to the Council objectives of delivering a Safer Environment for residents in the Borough through its impact upon mode choice for journeys and obstruction to flow of traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.

5. Thurrock Local Transport Plan 2013-2026

The Thurrock Transport Strategy describes Thurrock Council's transport strategy for the period 2013 to 2026. Based on a robust evidence base and feedback from residents and key stakeholders, it sets out the aims, objectives and a series of policies for delivering transport improvements in Thurrock. As such, this document comprises the required strategy element of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Thurrock. In addition to a transport strategy, local highway authorities are also required to develop and submit any implementation plans alongside their strategy, and these implementation plans support the delivery of this strategy.

Thurrock Transport Strategy 2013-2026 can be found at:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/travel-strategies/travel-and-transport-strategies>

6. Freight Quality Partnership and Freight Strategy

6.1. Freight Quality Partnership

Due to the significant importance of the logistics industry to the borough, the Council has sought to actively engage with the industry. Following an award of funding from central government, Thurrock Council, alongside their appointment consultants TTR, has established the Thurrock Freight Quality Partnership. A Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) is a roundtable forum which enables meaningful two-way engagement between stakeholders in the freight industry, business and the local authority. Having been established in 2010, the FQP hosts at least one engagement meeting scheduled each year.

Actions and issues discussed at previous FQP

- Impact on air quality by freight vehicles;
- Publicising routes suitable for freight vehicles around Thurrock;
- Current availability and future plans for freight vehicle parking;
- Informing partners of future changes/improvements to the road network;
- Feedback and engagement with the freight industry;
- Promoting driver training and best industry practice.

6.2. Freight Strategy

Thurrock Council is planning to issue further details of freight issues in a new Freight Strategy, due for publication in early 2017. The strategy will discuss in further details issues regarding all aspects of freight within Thurrock, including issues and opportunities, as well as publication of an updated freight route map.

The Freight Strategy and Transport Plan will be inter-linked to improve and maintain the free-flow of traffic in the borough.

7. Traffic Management Act 2004

Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act enables the consolidation, by making regulations, of civil traffic enforcement legislation covering parking, bus stands and school keep clears.

The Act extends the scope for local authorities to take over enforcement of traffic contraventions from the police, and be granted civil enforcement powers to cover a number of parking offences.

The Act enables extension to authorities outside London of the ability to issue parking penalty charge notices by post, use of cameras to detect parking contraventions, and issue penalty charges for parking within the area of a pedestrian crossing. The Act also creates specific offences to deal with double parking and parking at dropped footways within a local authority civil enforcement area.

Regulations to be made under the Act enable authorities to challenge the validity of statutory declarations so they cannot be used as a way of avoiding payment of parking penalty charges.

Section 87 of the Act enables the Secretary of State and the National Assembly for Wales to publish statutory guidance to local authorities about any matter relating to their civil traffic enforcement functions, which may be conferred on them under Part 6 of the Act. In exercising those functions authorities must have regard to any such guidance. This is particularly important to ensure that enforcement is carried out in a fair and reasonable manner.

To reduce abuse of the Blue Badge scheme, which gives parking concessions to disabled people, Section 94 of the Act gives local authority Civil Enforcement Officers the power to inspect Blue Badges. The inspection Powers were introduced in September 2006 and updated in 2014 whereby the badges can be confiscated if deemed to be used fraudulently.

Section 95 of the Act gives local authorities the additional freedom to spend surpluses from the on street parking account on local environmental improvements as well as parking facilities, road improvements and provision of public passenger transport services. This came into effect in October 2004.

8. Parking Stock & Operations

8.1. Public parking capacity

The council enforces both on and off street parking places throughout the Borough. The table 1 below detail the council's off-street car parks within the borough. The table 2 below details the locations of the on-street pay and display areas within Grays town centre.

Table 1. Off-street car parks

Name and Location	No. Of Spaces	Type	Category
Crown Road	96	Pay and Display	Long Stay
Cromwell Road	60		Long Stay
Argent Street	42		Long Stay
Darnley Road	30		Short Stay
Lodge Lane	56	Free	-
Cornwall House	100	Pay and Display	Long Stay
Thames Road Grays Beach	162	Pay and Display	Long Stay
Canterbury Parade	100	Pay and Display	Long Stay
Gordon Road (Police St)	53	Free	-
Gordon Road (Petrol St)	112	Free	-
Giffords Cross	78	Free	-

Table 2. On-street car pay and display areas

Name and Location	Category
Brooke Road (West) Clarence Road (North West) Cromwell Road (East) Dell Road High Street	Quick Stop (Maximum stay 1 hour)
Bedford Road Bradbourne Road Brooke Road Clarence Road Cromwell Road Derby Road Grange Road London Road Milton Road Orsett Road Quarry Hill	Short stay (Maximum stay 4 hours)
Thames Road	Long Stay (Maximum stay 9 hours)

These car parks and areas all include a number of disabled bays and the Council also offers residential, visitors and business permits. All of these details can be found in the Annual Parking Report at:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/parking-enforcement/parking-documents-reports-and-auditing>

8.2. Parking Service Operations

There are currently ten Civil Enforcement Officers enforcing within the borough. This provision is reviewed annually.

Grays is enforced on daily basis (excluding Sundays) with other town centres and commuter areas being enforced on a 2 – 3 times on a weekly basis. Other areas are visited on a rota basis or following feedback from the public. The Council aims to enforce a different school every day in term time.

Two vehicles are used to visit areas outside of Grays and for visiting schools. This enables quick responses to feedback.

The Council has no jurisdiction to enforce the following:

- Roads not covered by a restriction;
- Private land;
- Obstructions (enforced by the Police);
- Moving traffic offences (enforced by the Police).

9. Parking Policies

9.1. Parking Provision

The Council's priorities for parking provision are regularly reviewed for relevance and efficiency.

9.2. Parking at Railway Stations

Parking at railway stations is a contentious issue. The use of rail for journeys that might otherwise be undertaken by car is encouraged.

Insufficient car parking can lead to inappropriate parking in the vicinity of stations. However increasing station car parking capacity can discourage the use of sustainable modes for the initial journey. The ease of access and facilities for public transport, cycling and walking can assist these sustainable modes..

The Council will consider parking provision at stations on a case-by-case basis, taking into account local circumstances and the promotion of travel using public transport, walking and cycling.

9.3. Cycle and Motorcycle Parking

The Council will review the overall parking provision within the Borough at appropriate intervals including the provision for cycles and motorcycles.

9.4. Restrictions

The Council regularly receives requests from residents, Members and local organisations for changes to parking restrictions. Restrictions are also considered for the efficient operation of the highway network and to manage the effect of changes such as new developments.

These changes are considered in a fair and transparent way taking into consideration the sometimes conflicting needs of residents, commerce, road users and the environment before decisions are taken.

The Council's Traffic Section will maintain a list of parking-related requests and prioritise these in order of importance in accordance with the policy set out in table 3 below.

Table 3. Parking Requests Priorities Rating

PRIORITY	In the interest of, or to address:
A	Child safety or proven accident problem
B	Disabled bay requests
C	Improving the needs of local businesses
D	Improving traffic flows and visibility
E	Changes to highway network
F	Perceived danger to road users and requests

9.5. Parking Restriction Criteria

The provision standards below will be used for new restrictions and also as a guide for the design and renewal standard for existing restrictions.

Junction Protection (A, D & F)

Double yellow lines will be provided around junctions with visibility problems as defined by Traffic Regulations.

Junction protection will be provided in situations where there is either a proven accident problem or where vehicles are parking and causing a problem at junctions joining a main route.

Resident Permit Bays or Controlled Parking Zones (F)

Permit schemes or Parking Zones will be considered where parking from commuters and town centre's cause persistent problems for resident parking. The permit schemes should cover a sufficiently large area to warrant the implementation of the scheme.

The Council will investigate the need implementation for further restrictions to control the parking of vehicles over 3.5 tonne.

School Keep Clears (A)

'Keep Clear' markings will be provided outside all school entrances/exits.

Limited Waiting/Pay & Display (C)

Restrictions will be implemented where parking is taking place throughout the day that prevents a regular turnover of vehicles.

Disabled Bay Requests (B)

Residential areas - Bays will be implemented subject to approval by the Social Service Occupational Therapy Department, and where the applicant does not have rear vehicular access or sufficient depth to the front of the property to allow parking off the highway (subject to the necessary consents).

Town centre/car parks - Appropriate provision will be made in all town centres and car parks.

Double Yellow Line Requests (A, D, E & F)

Double lines will be implemented where there is a demonstrable safety issue or where there is a need to improve flow of traffic and visibility.

Careful consideration will be given to whether the location of the restriction and its importance warrants the level of enforcement that would ensure a reasonable level of compliance.

Single Yellow Line Requests (A, C, D, E & F)

A single line will be implemented where there is a demonstrable safety issue or where there is a need to improve flow of traffic and visibility, where it is required at certain times.

Careful consideration will be given to whether the location of the restriction and its importance warrants the level of enforcement that would ensure a reasonable level of compliance.

Loading/Unloading Requests (C)

This type of restriction will be implemented where there is demonstrable need to provide a loading and unloading facility and where the existing provision of yellow lines is not sufficient.

Additionally, the loading and unloading facility must not unreasonably prejudice the provision of other higher priority restrictions or compromise road safety.

Loading/Unloading Bans (A, D & E)

Bans will be implemented on the main road network where no parking at any time is required and where flows of traffic must be maintained.

9.6. Loading Bays

All existing loading bays within the borough are signed and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are in place.

Evidence suggests that disabled drivers are increasingly using loading bays. Disabled drivers are afforded alternative parking provision provided they have a blue badge. This does not include parking within loading bays at any time.

The Council receives ad-hoc requests for additional loading bays to be considered. These requests will be considered in accordance with the instructions below.

The Council will use their discretion for commercial vehicles seen to be loading or unloading however if the vehicle is vacant with no activity then a penalty charge notice will be issued.

Disabled drivers parked in loading bays will be issued with a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). An initial PCN will be waived under the consideration guidelines as a first offence, upon written notification being received by the Parking Team by the offender. The offender will be reminded of the rules of the Blue badge Scheme which are highlighted in the booklet issued with their badge.

9.7. HGV Parking

An overnight HGV ban has already been introduced in some areas of the borough.

HGV parking is currently causing considerable community and traffic safety problems in the Borough and this is increasing due to the regeneration of the area. Thurrock has a higher than average ratio of HGVs due to its further industrial base, including the accessibility to the strategic road network (M25 and A13).

Developments such as DP World to the east of the borough and a logistics park at the Shell Haven site will add further impetus for resolving issues in accommodating large flows of HGVs and overnight provision.

A joint approach to problems of HGV parking will be introduced in partnership with Essex Police. Civil Enforcement Officers on evening shifts will enforce HGV 'hotspots' in response to any increase in HGV illegal parking.

HGV and general enforcement for parking is linked to the Thurrock Transport Strategy 2013-2026 (available at: <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/travel-strategies/travel-and-transport-strategies>) and will also be included as part of the Council's Freight Quality Partnership (FQP) and the future Freight Strategy to be implemented in 2017.

9.8. Disabled Parking Provision

The Council currently provides a number of on-street disabled bays within the Borough. The policy for the provision of bays remains unchanged as follows:

The provision of disabled bays is assessed against requests.

A number of criteria have to be met before a disabled person's parking bay is implemented. These are as follows:

- An application in writing has to be made to the Social Services Department for their approval and support.
- If the bay falls on the Public Highway then an application is made to the Traffic section via the Occupational Therapy Team for consideration.
- Should funds be available, a bay will be provided only if;
 - a) The client is in possession of a valid disabled person Blue Badge.
 - b) The client resides in a dwelling that cannot facilitate off-street parking.
 - c) The on-street parking conditions have been observed to be severe on a regular basis.

Should the above criteria be met, the council's Traffic Section will consider the road safety implications of the proposal.

At present a vehicle displaying a valid European Blue Disabled Person Badge is allowed to park on single or double yellow lines for up to 3 hours provided no loading restrictions are in place. This is in line with the Blue badge guidance booklet. However, Thurrock Council currently offers a dispensation on this criterion to allow unrestricted time for Blue badges on street and within council car parks. This is subject to annual review and a change will require a full consultation process.

All vehicles that receive a Penalty Charge Notice whilst parked in contravention will have the PCN cancelled as a 1st offence providing that they have challenged the PCN in writing to the Parking Section. The Parking Section will provide a full and concise response and include the relevant extract of the European Blue Badge Scheme policy with all cancellations.

9.9. Verges

It is clear that there are a number of problem areas where parking spaces are at a premium and people maximise these by using grass verges. This causes damage to the verge and makes the area look unsightly.

Hardening the verges reduces the damage but it does mean that there is a loss of green areas in residential areas. Grass verges will not be hardened to provide parking areas if off-street parking can be provided within residents curtilage.

Where residents require additional parking then subject to planning considerations, the council therefore prefers that residents to create off-street parking areas in their own property. This can either be through the creation of a parking space in the front garden or rear garden via a rear access road. In this instance it is for the resident to meet the cost of the works required – including those in the highway.

Grass verges should not be hardened where parking restrictions are in force. They should also not be hardened where the parking of a vehicle would mean that vehicles park in such a manner as to cause an obstruction to either cars or pedestrians.

Grass verges will not be hardened where this will encourage people to park in contravention of a Traffic Regulation Order or where it will encourage people to park in such a manner as to obstruct either vehicles or pedestrians.

The views of affected residents will be obtained on any proposal to convert grassed areas to parking places.

Consideration will be given to materials used to harden verges, such as 'grasscrete', and opportunities for tree pits or similar landscaping features.

Requests will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Views of Frontages & Ward Members;
- Road safety implications;
- Environmental impact of the scheme;
- Cost effectiveness of the scheme (cost per parking place).

This will be developed into a priority list to be agreed by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport each year.

It is important to note that where off street parking is provided this is exclusive to the resident. If verges are hardened then these will be available for general parking as they cannot be reserved for a particular person.

10. Permits

10.1. CPZ Residents Permits

Residents are able to apply for a permit for each vehicle they own, upon proof that their main residence is within the parking scheme boundary. The permit does not guarantee space availability at the time required, nor does it guarantee a space outside their residence.

The current cost of resident's permits are reviewed annually and published in the Council's fees and charges document as per the link mentioned previously.

Resident permits will be limited to 3 per residence.

10.2. CPZ Visitors

Visitor's permits are currently available for purchase by those living in the residential permit areas. Residents are currently permitted to purchase the permits (five strips of 20 visits in any one month. The current costs are listed in the fees and charges document.

10.3. CPZ Business Permits

Business users are allowed to purchase business permits within resident bays in CPZs at a cost which is reviewed annually. Purchase of business permits to be limited to 5 per business.

10.4. Operational

Operational permits allow Council employees to carry out essential duties where it is imperative to park close to a particular site. Internal charges are reviewed annually as part of the fees and charges.

10.5. Health

Health permits enable essential health workers to park in resident bays. They have an annual expiry date. The health workers are only eligible to stay up to a maximum of three hours. The costs of these permits are reviewed annually and are in the fees and charges booklet.

11. Civil Enforcement Officers

11.1. Enforcement Hours and Days of Operation

Seven of the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers currently operates a two week rota system of working Monday to Thursday 8.00am to 16.30pm and 8.00am to 16.00pm on a Friday and the following week Tuesday to Friday 9.30am to

18.00pm and 8.00am to 16.00pm on a Saturday. An evening shift which is primarily aimed at the HGV issues work Mondays to Thursdays 13.30pm to 22.00pm and 13.30pm to 21.30 on a Friday.

Out of hours enforcement is carried out to target issues in specific areas as required.

The current hours of operation address the key times that enforcement is needed within the Borough. A review will be undertaken to ascertain any benefit from more regular enforcement on Sundays and or Bank Holidays.

Regular review will also be undertaken to ensure that the capacity within the enforcement team is adequate to meet the objectives of the Council and in particular this strategy.

11.2. Observation Times

Council Civil Enforcement Officers are generally to give each vehicle a five minute observation period before enforcement action unless there is a safety or congestion problem arising from the contravention.

The Council issues instant Penalty Charge Notices if a vehicle is parked where loading/unloading is restricted, pay and display ticket (ten minute observations under guidance from government) has expired and also in some special circumstances such as areas with acknowledged safety problems.

The five-minute observation period will not apply to vehicles parked on double yellow lines. It is clear in the Highway Code that vehicles throughout Great Britain are not allowed to park on double yellow lines. Penalty Charge Notices are therefore issued instantly.

The five-minute observation time for other contraventions will continue to be observed. The observation period will be reviewed on a regular basis, as it is occasionally open to abuse.

Meter feeding, when a motorist prolongs the initial stay by inserting further monies/or makes a further payment, will be an offence resulting in a PCN being issued.

12. Enforcement

12.1. Bus Lanes / Taxi Ranks

The council does not have a full Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in place for enforcing restrictions in bus lanes.

TROs are in place for taxi ranks.

The council will consider the need for TROs for any bus lanes, and investigate camera enforcement of bus lanes.

12.2. School Parking

Enforcement is instant for any vehicle parked on a keep clear crossing. A 5 minute observation period is used on single yellow lines. This is reviewed annually and could be altered to instant PCNs being issued if required.

12.3. Footways

The Police presently enforce footway parking as obstruction, unless there are restrictions in the road which can be dealt with by the Civil Enforcement Officers.

13. Parking Charges

13.1. Fees & Charges

The fees and charges are updated on the Council's website annually. The information can be found at:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/council-finances-and-accounts/fees-and-charges>

The charges are reviewed annually. Any changes to permit charges will be subject to consultation with residents affected.

13.2. Funerals

There is an informal policy that the enforcement team use under their discretionary powers. With advance notice, Civil Enforcement Officers can adopt a more flexible approach to reasonable requests. No charge is made for this service.

14. New innovations

14.1. Car Park Ticket Machines

Thurrock's car park ticket machines have become obsolete and unreliable. A programme is in place to prioritise their replacement with more reliable and dependable solar powered machines.

14.2. Cashless Payments

The implementation of the use of both cash and over the phone/credit card payments for car parking charges will be investigated as an option when we consider future ticket machine replacement.

14.3. New Permits

The possibility of introducing season tickets for users, including commuters and staff has been requested. These will also be a part of a future parking payment review.

14.4. Equipment

Civil Enforcement Officers currently use hand held computers (HHC) to issue Penalty Charge Notices. Further improvements to their technology could simplify the procedure of issuing a notice. Real time download of the information will enable office staff to be able to discuss the PCN with the user. Currently the equipment has to be downloaded at the end of the shift.

14.5. Resurfacing of Car Parks

The Car Parks as council assets require maintenance to maintain safety and service provision. An asset management programme of the works required is under preparation.

15. Action Plan

The action plan below details those projects that are required to be implemented or considered as detailed within this document. It also details key activities that will be undertaken over the next 2 years. This is all subject to funding provision.

Project	How	Who	Timing
Review provision of new Car Parking Zones, Parking Permit areas, signs and lines	Investigate each request on merit and implement subject to funding	Traffic Section/Parking Services	Subject to requests
Review the provision of on and off street disabled bays	Conduct a survey when requests are received to see if viable.	Traffic Section / Parking Services	Annually subject to requests
Review the need for Sunday enforcement	Monitor the number of requests for out of hours enforcement. Conduct a survey of key areas to see if viable.	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	Annually subject to requests
Have an input in the new Freight Strategy	Strategy discussions ongoing	All of Highways & Transportation Teams	Ongoing and to be finalised 2017/2018
Review car park upgrades and replacement of equipment such as car park machines, lighting etc.	Conduct investigations on a regular basis	Traffic Section/Parking Services	Ongoing

Project	How	Who	Timing
Review parking charges annually and Permits	Review charges in line with inflation and costs Investigate possibility of introducing season tickets for residents and staff	Finance / Parking Services	Annually
Cashless Pay	Investigation into the possibility of implementing new car parking machines which accept both cash and pay by phone/credit card payments	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	2017/2018
Review capacity of enforcement team to ensure adequacy	Investigation of operations against service aims and objectives	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	Annually in time for budgeting
Implement changes to permits	Make required changes to documentation including in fees & charges	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	Reviewed Annually
Introduce charges to Health Permits	Investigate possibility of charging for health permits	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	2017/18
To improve collection rates by continuing use of Bailiff companies	Work with Debt Recovery Team and continue using foreign recovery debts	Parking Services Team/Debt Recovery Team	Annually
Review private arrangements (such as Morrison's supermarket) with a view to enforce private areas	Work with private companies to see if Service Level Agreements can be achieved	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	As and when requested
Training for Civil Enforcement Officers	Implementation of training subject to new legislation and guidelines in line with government regulations	Parking Services	As and when required
Review new equipment to improve service	Review current services via procurement process to see if issuing of penalty charge notices can be carried out via phone application	Highways & Transportation Services/Parking Co-ordinator	2017/2018

16. Glossary

CPZ Controlled Parking Zone

DPE Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

ECN Excess Charge Notice

HGV Heavy Goods Vehicle

IT Information Technology

LTP Local Transport Plan

PCN Penalty Charge Notice

SPA Special Parking Area

TMA Traffic Management Act (2004)

TPS Thurrock Parking Strategy

TRO Traffic Regulation Order

DRAFT

13 September 2016	ITEM: 8
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Grays South: Delivering the pedestrian underpass	
Wards and communities affected: Grays Riverside	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Matthew Essex Head of Regeneration and Assets	
Accountable Head of Service: Matthew Essex Head of Regeneration and Assets	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox Director of Environment and Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Grays South Project, seeking to create public squares and an underpass to replace the pedestrian level crossing in Grays High Street, together with the development of modern retail and residential units has been a long standing priority for the Council. The level crossing is a barrier to pedestrian movements between Grays south and the town centre and Network Rail have identified it as one of the most dangerous in its Anglian Region. The frequency and length of gate closures will increase significantly as commercial rail freight from DP World increases. This will increase the barrier effect of the crossing and is likely to increase the incidents of unsafe crossings as people become frustrated with waiting at the closed gates.

The Council has been working with Network Rail to develop the proposals for the underpass over the past four years. To date, the actions required for delivery have been divided between the partners with Network Rail leading design and construction and the Council leading land acquisition, urban design and the ultimate development of plots around the completed underpass.

It was anticipated that Network Rail would provide up to £4million of funding, with circa £3 million from the Department for transport Access for All Fund. However, Network Rail has now changed the status of the project to a 'Third Party scheme' and its funding will be limited to a maximum of £700,000. In order to progress, the Council will have to meet the costs of the project and a funding strategy has been developed drawing upon the existing commitments within the MTFs, available s106

funds and anticipated receipts from future developments matched against an application to the Local Growth Fund through SELEP.

Recognising the change in responsibility for funding the scheme, and the significant delays which have been encountered to date in the work led by Network Rail, this report considers the potential benefits of the Council taking on leadership of the delivery of the scheme.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to comment on the approach to managing the delivery of the underpass, public squares and development plots described in this report and to provide their view of the best way in which to progress the future management and delivery of the pedestrian underpass.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 As one of six Growth Hubs in the Borough, Grays has been a focus for investment in recent years as the Council seeks to deliver the vision for the town agreed through a major public consultation exercise in 2013:

“Building on its strengths as a Chartered Market Town, Grays will be an exciting, high quality destination for people to live, work, learn, shop and socialise. Reconnected to the River Thames, Grays will support growing resident, student and business communities throughout the day and entertain a diverse and vibrant population through the evening.

Cafés, bars, restaurants, shops and markets will combine with culture, entertainment and events in unique venues to provide a safe and attractive place for communities to meet and businesses to thrive.”

2.2 Through the Grays Regeneration Programme the Council has, among other things, supported the relocation of South Essex College’s Thurrock Campus onto the High Street, completed the refurbishment of the former Magistrates Court for business use, developed 53 new homes and developed a new purpose built community house on the Seabrooke Rise estate and has commenced work to address the longstanding congestion caused by the existing one way system.

- 2.3 The Grays Town Partnership has been formally re-established and they have formed a number of working groups;
- a) 'Safe and Welcome'
 - b) Community Engagement and Integration
 - c) 18 hour economy
 - d) Improved Street Scene
 - e) Marketing and Communications
- 2.4 The benefits of these schemes are now starting to be seen with activity in the High Street increasing together with a commensurate increase in interest among potential business occupiers and private sector led housing schemes being brought forward. There remains work to be done however to address the longstanding issues of accessibility, image, and north-south connectivity arising from the barrier formed by the level crossing.
- 2.5 The level crossing has been recognised as one of the most dangerous crossings in the Network Rail Anglian Region. Network Rail continues to support the completion of the underpass before closing the crossing. Notwithstanding the risks of closure, the increased commercial rail traffic arising from DP World will cause more frequent and longer gate closures - creating a stronger barrier to movement and increasing the likelihood of accidents as more people are frustrated with waiting. Consequently progress on providing an alternative to the level crossing is critical.
- 2.6 In July 2013 Cabinet agreed an option for an underpass as the preferred approach to providing an alternative to the level crossing. This approach was agreed with Network Rail who funded a further stage of design to develop the approach in more detail. The output of this work is attached in appendix 1. In March 2014 Cabinet agreed further progress on the project including the procurement of a professional team and commencing discussions with land owners about a land acquisition strategy. In December 2014 Cabinet agreed the terms of working with Network Rail and the appointment of consultants to develop the land acquisition strategy.
- 2.7 Since then both parties have worked on their respective elements of the programme. The Council commissioned Montague Evans to develop the land acquisition strategy and approach and in March 2016 Cabinet agreed a development framework for Grays which included the underpass and linked developments, an extract from the framework that illustrates how the underpass could be integrated in to the wider town centre is in appendix 2.

- 2.8 Network Rail appointed a design team to complete the initial design stage of the underpass itself and links from the underpass to the existing public realm. The design team completed their report in June 2015 and since then Network Rail have been 'signing off' the report and developing a Route Requirement Document to set out the requirements for the more detailed design stage. Network Rail has also moved away from the original approach of joint funding and delivery. Their funding contribution has reduced to a maximum of £700,000 and the status of the project within Network Rail has changed to a 'Third Party Project'.
- 2.9 The process has taken much longer than anticipated and, in addition, it has become apparent that the Council will be expected to fund the vast majority of the costs of detailed design and construction. In light of these changed circumstances it is appropriate that the approach to delivery is reviewed and consideration given to the Council taking the lead.
- 2.10 In March 2014 Cabinet agreed that the Council enter in to discussions with land owners to develop the approach to land acquisition and in December 2014 approved the appointment of consultants to produce a land acquisition strategy. Land owners have been contacted and discussions will continue with a view to acquiring land by agreement.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There are a number of reasons why the Council would seek to take on leadership of the project. The simplification of governance arrangements and areas of responsibility, the funding sources of the scheme and the ability to reduce some of the bureaucracy and time taken to complete the scheme are all important considerations.
- 3.2 Under the present arrangements for delivering the project Network Rail would lead the technical design and construction of the underpass and the access ramps/steps. The Council would manage land assembly, the design of the finishes for the underpass and the approach to the public squares and the development plots created by the scheme. It is essential to successfully delivering a high quality public realm that these are coordinated and current arrangements clearly make it more difficult to achieve this than if the scheme was managed by one party.
- 3.3 Through the work completed at GRIP2 and associated TC led studies, the total cost of the project is considered to be some £27.5m. This is broken down within the table below.

Underpass and access steps and ramps	£12,295,499
Public Squares	£2,520,745
Relocation of Crown Road	£4,841,000
Lifts from rail station platforms	£2,391,932
Land acquisition (assuming CPO)	£5,387,805
Total	£27,436,981

It is acknowledged that these figures contain contingencies and account for a range of unknowns which may not be required. They are, however, the best guide currently available.

In considering how to meet these costs in the absence of any significant Network Rail funding, the Council has explored the potential to generate revenue by bringing forward developments on land either currently within its ownership or which will need to be acquired to deliver the underpass. Sitting alongside the Council's existing £9m capital commitment (contained within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy), this development receipt strategy has formed the basis of the Council's application to the Local Growth Fund through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) as part of a funding package broken down as follows:

Thurrock Borough Council Capital Programme	£9,000,000
S106 funds held by Thurrock Council	£1,000,000
Network Rail ₁	£700,000
Development Receipts (plots within project boundary)	£2,896,707
Development receipts (plots outside of project boundary)	£3,000,000
Local Growth Fund	£10,840,274
Total	£27,436,981

- 3.4 Under the current approach, the Council will therefore provide most of the funding to deliver the underpass and the public squares. Whilst the Council is insulated from any cost increases once the budget is set (these would fall to Network Rail to manage) it is clearly a long way removed from the application of the funds. Assuming that the Local Growth Fund bid is successful, the Council will receive the funding from Government in the form of a grant and will be held responsible for its use and the delivery of the underpass by 2022. Through this strategy the Council will be responsible for providing all bar £700k of the c.£27.5m funding and will be liable for all capital costs and any

censure (including claw back) in the event that the scheme is not delivered or fails to be delivered to programme.

- 3.5 The project is complex and as a consequence requires a lengthy process for design, land acquisition, consents and construction. Experience to date with Network Rail suggests lengthy procurement stages between each design stage. On this basis construction is expected to start in July 2019, be completed in December 2020 with checks and handover in February 2021. The Council could shorten this timeframe through efficient procurement, carrying out the procurement of future stages before earlier ones are completed. It is estimated that this could reduce the programme by at least 12 months. Network rail approvals and support would still be required, but approvals of a third party scheme are less complex than the process required for a scheme designed and delivered directly by Network Rail.
- 3.6 Future management of the project therefore comes down to a choice between two approaches; Network Rail led or Thurrock Council led. Network Rail clearly have a great deal of experience in delivering this type of project and would take on much of the risk in delivery if they continued to lead. But experience to date demonstrates that they have lengthy processes for managing and procuring each stage. The Council would also lose any real control over the significant funding it is providing for the project and cannot be assured that Network Rail would seek to reduce the costs of the scheme in the same manner that the Council would.
- 3.7 It is proposed that, in a change to the anticipated delivery route within the agreements with Network Rail, consideration be given to the Council adding the design and construction of the underpass to its existing responsibilities and leads all elements of the project liaising with Network Rail as required as an outside party through the Asset Protection arrangements.
- 3.8 Under this arrangement, the Council would lead on the procurement, briefing and management of a professional team and the ultimate procurement and management of contractors. This would sit alongside the existing and incoming professional teams which the Council has already enlisted in respect of overall project management (currently out to tender), land and property acquisitions (Montague Evans) and Public Realm (currently out to tender).
- 3.9 Clearly, any professional team (likely to be engineering led) would have to be able to evidence sufficient relevant, contemporary experience in working on rail related projects under an Asset Protection Agreement and would have to be able to guarantee the availability of sufficiently skilled individuals to lead the project on the Council's behalf.

3.10 The underpass works would be managed through the Council’s existing project board, reporting into the Grays Programme Board which is chaired by the Council’s Executive Director of Environment and Place. The table below summarises the main issues associated with this approach:

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has direct control of application of its funding • Council has the ability to consider all opportunities to reduce the cost of the scheme • Council can control all aspects of the programme • Simpler coordination between all project strands • Council can draw upon its experience of managing large scale capital programmes 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach still requires Network Rail approvals and support. • As a third party project, there is the potential that the project will be a reduced priority for NR • Whilst the Council has experience of capital projects it has no direct experience of delivering rail projects • The success of the approach will be largely dependent on the Council’s ability to secure appropriate professional team
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council can procure own professional team with experience of delivering this type of project • Council can directly influence design and delivery timescale. • Council can seek to maximise the benefits of the scheme through local employment and labour 	<p>THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All project risk falls to the Council • Escalating cost due to unforeseen design constraints or land conditions • Network Rail approvals could still impact delivery

3.11 On balance Thurrock Council leading the project would reduce the complexity of management, coordination and delivery. The Council does have experience of delivering large capital projects. The lack of experience with this type of project can be addressed by procuring an appropriately experienced professional team, much of which would be required anyway. Strong project management would be required to mitigate project risk. Discussions have been held with Network Rail who would support the Council taking over management and delivery of the project. Network Rail would continue to be closely involved in providing support, consents and access necessary for delivery.

3.12 With resolution of the delivery approach the Council would need to start acquiring the land required. Initial contact has been made with all landowners

and occupiers; it is proposed to contact land owners to identify those that might wish to enter in to negotiations.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The underpass is identified as a priority in the Council's Economic Growth Strategy, the Development Framework for Grays and in the Vision for Grays. It is a key project in support of regeneration of Grays town centre and consultation demonstrates strong stakeholder support.
- 4.2 Management of delivery by a single organisation would improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of delivery and enable better coordination between the many elements of the project (design, delivery, land acquisition, linked highways schemes)

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The project has been the subject of several approvals from Cabinet in 2013, 2014 and 2015. In March 2016 Cabinet agreed a Development Framework for Grays which includes the underpass and associated plot developments.
- 5.2 The development framework included public consultation; there was strong public support with 72% of respondents either supporting or strongly supporting the underpass and 85% of respondents supporting the overall approach proposed for the town centre and rail station area.
- 5.3 The project has also been the subject of discussions with land owners and occupiers. All owners and occupiers have been provided with details of the project. The Grays Town Management Partnership has also been provided with a series of presentations.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The Council's Economic Growth Strategy and LDF Core Strategy identify Grays as one of the Growth Hubs where regeneration activity will be focussed. A vision for the town centre including this project was approved by Cabinet in July 2013 following extensive public consultation. In March 2016 Cabinet agreed a development framework to guide the Council's regeneration activities, the framework includes this project.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

The Council will be the main funder for the project with £9 million provision in the Capital Programme, £1 million of Section 106 funds allocated to the project and funds from development returns to be used to support the scheme. Development appraisals provided by Montagu Evans show that development of Council sites would generate the returns detailed in the report. The Council will also be the accountable body for funding from the Local Growth Fund.

Direct management of the project would result in the council taking on additional financial risk such as escalating costs. It will also enable the Council to closely manage its funding contribution and delivery of the project. The Council would be required by Network Rail to enter in to an Asset Protection Agreement which will include insurances against the works disrupting the operation of the rail line.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Planning and Regeneration Solicitor

The Council would have to enter in to a joint delivery partnership in some form regardless of which organisation leads the delivery. The approach recommended in this report would provide the Council with stronger control of funds and delivery. Joint working arrangements would still be required with Network Rail to ensure that designs meet their operational requirements and to secure access to Network Rail land for delivery.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Communities Development and Equalities
Manager**

By leading design and delivery the Council are in a stronger position to ensure that the equalities expectations of the Council and Thurrock's communities are properly addressed as well as legislative requirements are met.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Plan view of preferred option underpass design
- Extract from Grays development Framework

Report Author:

Brian Priestley

Regeneration Programme Manager

Regeneration and Assets Service

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- Key building
- Priority intervention area
- Site with longer term development potential
- Town centre pedestrian space
- Proposed railway underpass
- Main path
- Public open space
- Cemetery
- Railway station
- Bus station
- Listed building
- Key route / enhanced pedestrian environment
- Existing active ground floor
- Proposed new active ground floor
- Gateway into the town centre
- Proposed / enhanced pedestrian connection

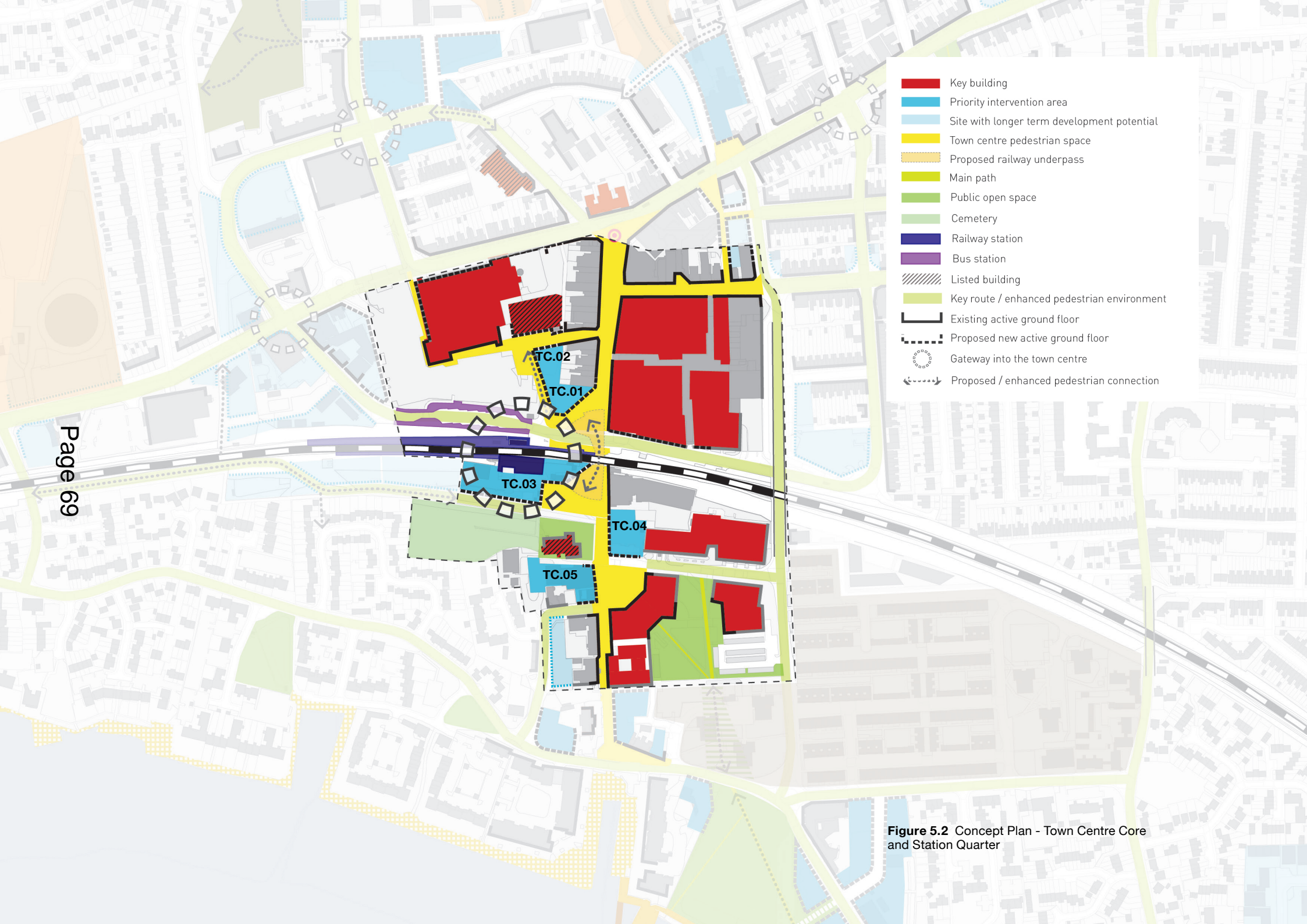


Figure 5.2 Concept Plan - Town Centre Core and Station Quarter

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