

21 February 2024		ITEM: 7
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Tilbury and Grays Towns Fund Update		
Wards and communities affected: Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, Tilbury and St Chads - Grays Riverside and Grays Thurrock		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Helen McCabe, Head of Tilbury Town Fund / George McCullough Head of Regeneration		
Accountable Assistant Director: N/A		
Accountable Director: Mark Bradbury, Director of Place		
This report is Public		
Version: Final		

Executive Summary

This report is provided to update Members on progress on the delivery of the Tilbury Town Fund (TTF) and Grays Town Fund (GTF) programmes since the confirmation of funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Homes & Communities (DLUHC) in March 2023.

Commissioner Comment:

N/A

1. Recommendation(s)

That the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the proposed changes to the original programmes and the progress on delivering the Tilbury & Grays Towns Fund programmes.**

2. Introduction and Background

Tilbury

- 2.1** Tilbury Town Investment Plan (TIP) has been developed as part of a wider strategic plan to revitalise Tilbury. The Plan focuses on creating a new Heart for Tilbury through the provision of a consolidated and inclusive Community Hub, new Education Zone and Youth Centre to provide first class facilities to address long standing calls for support for Thurrock's residents, especially the younger population. The Station arrival experience and river frontage heritage

assets will also be emphasised through improved connectivity through new signage, infrastructure, cycle ways and a new jetty is planned to open up new ferry passenger options. The Tilbury Towns Fund Board has been awarded a grant of £22.8m.

Grays Town Centre

- 2.2 Grays Town Investment Plan (TIP) was developed as part of a wider strategic plan to realise the vision for Grays as an exciting, high-quality destination for communities to take pride, live, work, learn, shop and socialise. In essence, the Grays TIP aimed to create a high quality cultural and recreational amenity that reconnects the Thames riverfront with the town centre. The Grays Towns Fund Board has been awarded a grant of £19.9m.

3.0 Programme Updates

- 3.1 Details of the each of the Town Fund project programmes have been subject of Cabinet approval and previous reports to the PTR OS Committee.
- 3.2 Business case summaries were submitted to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in August 2022 (Tilbury) and October 2022 (Grays). There has been a significant delay in the confirmation of the business cases due for the need for further reassurance and assessment work on governance by the DLUHC and the Commissioners. Final approval was granted in March 2023.
- 3.3 DLUHC released 5% of the respective funding allocations to allow Town Fund Boards to instruct the commencement of design work needed to bring forward the projects in both Town Fund Programmes. Projects are at varying stages of design which has been used to inform the production of business cases needed to secure the approval of the remaining funds from DLUHC.
- 3.4 There has been significant cost price inflation since the submission of original Towns Fund applications for both Tilbury and Grays. The respective Town Boards have had to review the original programmes and where necessary make changes to ensure that projects can be delivered within the overall programme budget and not result in any financial liability falling to the Council as the Accountable Body.

Tilbury

- 3.5 The Tilbury Towns Fund programme is making steady progress in delivery across a number of the projects, A summary of the main changes and milestones is provided below and a more detailed update of recent progress and future actions for the Tilbury Programme is set out in Appendix 1.
- Following a community resource audit the Board agreed that the original proposal to build a new community building and skills centre was not realistic given the availability of surplus community buildings in the area. Therefore, a decision was agreed by the Board to adopt a strategy of refurbishment of existing buildings, which would also allow the reallocation of funds to other projects experiencing cost pressures. Plans are advanced to refurbish both Brennan Road and 15a Civic Square for the new skills centre and community resource centre. Meetings and liaison with stakeholders is ongoing.

- Strategic Property Board agreed the terms for letting the lease on 15a Civic Square on 25 January 2024. Subject to the issuing of a lease on 15a Civic Square, the tender for the refurbishment work will commence shortly.
- Planning Permission for the Thurrock Youth Zone has been approved by the Planning Committee subject to the signing of a S106 regarding the lease and traffic contribution. Work is progressing on agreeing the contractual and lease terms to allow for the development of the site and delivery of the new youth facility.
- Strategic Property Board report was agreed on 20 November 2023, providing approval for work to commence on a grant agreement with the Youth Zone provider. A cabinet report will be presented on 13 March 2024. It is anticipated that tendering for the main building contract will commence by May 2024 and work on site will follow the selection of a main contractor.
- The detailed design work on the new pontoon for additional passenger services at the Tilbury Landing Stage has been completed. A planning application will be submitted before the end of the financial year subject to further discussion on the transport assessment. Work on the implementation/grant agreement and potential lease is progressing with the Port of Tilbury Limited, who will be procuring the Pontoon and managing the delivery.
- Plans for the Connectivity projects, improving links from the riverfront to the rail station and Civic Square, have been developed to RIBA Stage 2 (Outline Design). Consultants Austin Smith Lord (ASL) are leading the design team and will continue design works onwards to RIBA stage 4 (technical design) construction package for costing and implementation. Public consultation was held in January 2024 with implementation of the schemes commencing Autumn 2024.
- Design work is continuing on the refurbishment of the public realm around Civic Square. The emerging design concepts are set out in Appendix 1, and they were presented at public consultation events in January 2024 to gain further comments.
- Works with regards to the Tilbury Pier approach project are also progressing, the Council are working with the Port of Tilbury, incorporating into a Heritage Lottery Fund bid (HLF) which includes the refurbishment of the cruise station buildings. This will provide a co-ordinated design solution to the riverfront works and support the wider HLF bid.

Grays Town Centre

- 3.6 The Grays Town Fund Programme had been placed on hold pending grant confirmation and internal review as part of the development of the Council's Improvement and Recovery Plan. The review highlighted concerns around the viability of the projects and any consequent long-term financial risk exposure to the Council, particularly with regards to the proposed Riverside Activities Centre and the proposed new Lightship Café development in the Grays Beach Riverside Park.

- 3.7 In December 2023, the Grays Town Board considered the review and decided to explore simpler proposals for Cafe and Riverfront Activities Centre. Accordingly, further feasibility work is currently underway to develop alternative options; ensuring that they are value for money, financially self-sustainable in the longer-term and deliver the ambitions set out in the Town Investment Plan.
- 3.8 The Board is supportive of the Grays Riverfront and Beach project which includes improvement of the flood defence. Following consultation with the Environment Agency the Council, the Council has been informed of potential changes to the upgrade height of flood defences required. The increase in height will affect the viability of the project and the team is currently assessing the impact whilst seeking further clarity from the Environment Agency
- 3.9 It is important to note that despite the challenges, the Board is keen to maintain the original intent of the Grays Town Investment Plan, ensuring that the area is made more visually permeable, the river more accessible and the existing amenities more desirable; ultimately to transform Grays Beach Riverside Park and Kilverts Field into a destination attraction. Key stakeholders in achieving these objectives include both the Yacht Club and the Sea Cadets. The team has met both organisations recently to help inform the design phase.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the Tilbury and Grays Towns Fund projects and progress made.

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

- 5.1 The Tilbury and Grays Town Boards comprise business and council representatives, who have jointly developed proposals. Further consultation will be undertaken as individual proposals progress and as part of the planning process. Key decisions on spend and development proposals will need to be approved by the respective Towns Board, Cabinet and Commissioners.

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

- 6.1 Tilbury and Grays have been identified as a Growth Hubs where economic regeneration and housing growth are to be focussed in both the Thurrock Local Plan and Economic Growth Strategy. The Town Deal proposals are listed within one of the five economic growth 'priority projects' for the Council for 2021/22, to: "deliver major regeneration and infrastructure projects contributing to growth, including the government-funded Towns Fund proposals"
- 6.2 The Refreshed Grays Town Centre Framework adopted by Cabinet in 2017 provides a more detailed context for regeneration activity in Grays. The Framework seeks to enhance the role of the riverfront, improving linkages between the Riverfront and the Town Centre. The Grays TIP also supports these aspirations as clear priorities for the funding.
- 6.3 The GTF supports the Council's Place priority of:
- Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and place.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Senior Financial Accountant
13 February 2024

It is noted the financial risk associated with the delivery of the proposed projects attaches to the Council (as the Accountable Body) and, consequently, must and will be managed by the Council as part of the capital programme. Current project expenditure is in line with budget allocations and will be subject to further gateway approval including Cabinet approval of implementation/funding agreements and associated leases.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Principal Lawyer Contracts & Procurement Team
14 February 2024

There are no new legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer
8 February 2024

There are no direct implications arising specifically from this update report. Community Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out as required throughout the decision making and planning processes.

7.4 Risks

The key issues and risks to project delivery and benefit realisation, together with mitigating strategies to minimise their impact are outlined in the table below:

Key Risks	Risk Management Activity and Migrating strategies	Accountability & Monitoring
Insufficient capital committed to complete the projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify risks early• Pro-actively manage these risks• Inform the design and delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reports and discussion at the Tilbury and Grays Towns Fund Board (6 weekly)• Project meetings between the Council and various consultants to monitor project progress, manage

	<p>process accordingly to mitigate risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase certainty • Avoid additional cost • Inform timely change control; and • Ensure sufficient contingency management • Experience of previous related projects, programme and spend 	<p>key risks on the risk register and to ensure action is taken in good time to mitigate risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relevant project team and consultants will be collectively charged with identifying and managing risk throughout the project, so that it is avoided, mitigated and/or minimised. • Council governance (e.g. Strategic Property Board and Cabinet) consider next steps at key gateway points for example once a grant decision is confirmed, at the end of RIBA 3 and on receipt of main construction contract tenders • Communications to stakeholders and the community
Planning / local authority liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify risks early • Pro-actively manage these risks • Inform the design and delivery process accordingly to mitigate risk • Increase certainty • Avoid additional cost • Inform timely change control; and • Ensure sufficient contingency management • Experience of previous related projects programme and spend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team and consultants will work alongside e.g. the appointed quantity surveyors (to quantify costs associated with each risk) and project managers to maintain development of the risk register • Mitigating actions will be assigned to the individual Project Team members to discharge, with regular review undertaken to monitor progress • Each project will ensure it has its own risk register template presenting an initial identification of risks/events, attributing a gross risk score which reflects the likelihood and impact of the said risk • Actions/mitigation measures required to control the risk will be identified and attributed • to named personnel in the project team. Further net risk is also considered alongside further action to be taken as and when required. • Reports and discussion at the Tilbury and Grays Towns Fund Board (6 weekly) • Project meetings between the Council and relevant consultants to
Design		
Commercial		
Highways and public realm		
Services		
Ground risks		
Programme		

		monitor project progress, manage key risks on the risk register and to ensure action is taken in good time to mitigate risks
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7.5 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children

N/A

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**

Appendix 1 – Tilbury Towns Fund presentation December 2023.

Report Author:

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 Head of Tilbury Towns Funds / Head of Regeneration and Place
 Place