

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 **12 November 2014**

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

Membership:

Councillors Sue Gray (Chair), Tom Kelly (Vice-Chair), Roy Jones, Martin Kerin, Gerard Rice and Simon Wootton

Substitutes:

Councillors Robert Ray, Garry Hague, James Halden and Michael Stone

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 30 July 2014.	
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.	
4. Declaration of Interests	

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members are asked to consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **4 November 2014**

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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.

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 aspirations and attainment so that local residents can take advantage of job opportunities in the local area
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity
- Support local businesses and develop the skilled workforce they will require
- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock’s physical environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities

- Create safer welcoming communities who value diversity and respect cultural heritage
- Involve communities in shaping where they live and their quality of life
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and safeguard the vulnerable

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
- Empower communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

5. Protect and promote our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock’s river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock’s natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock’s streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 30 July 2014 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Sue Gray (Chair), Tom Kelly (Vice-Chair), Roy Jones, Martin Kerin, Gerard Rice and Simon Wootton

In attendance: Mrs A White – Member of Transvol
D. Bull –Director of Planning and Transportation
A. Osola – Head of Highways
M. Essex – Head of Regeneration
K. Martin – 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 Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 4 March 2014, were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business, however the Chair informed Members that one question from a member of the public had been received in relation to Item 5 'Budget Update and Savings Proposals' and advised that the question would be taken directly before the agenda item to which it was related.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no such declarations.

4. Budget Update and Savings Proposals

At the request of the Chair, Mrs Anne White, a Member of Transvol presented her question to the Committee, which was as follows:

"My name is Anne White and I am a local disabled resident who has lived in Thurrock for over 50 years. I have been a member of TRANSVOL since 1994. We understand that the Council has very little money; however taking all of the budget given to TRANSVOL will have a massive impact on the most vulnerable people in the Thurrock community. TRANSVOL do fifteen thousand door to door trips per year.

We have had our budget cut over the years from three hundred thousand pounds to currently one hundred thousand pounds. The service now spends two hundred thousand pounds per year. In other words, we add another pound of service for each pound the Council spends – so you get double your money’s worth. Most people who use TRANSVOL cannot use the free bus pass you provide due to their impairment or even afford the limited accessible taxis. They use TRANSVOL to get shopping, visit doctors or to have a social life.

How do you justify such a harsh decision to take our service away and its negative effect on the wellbeing of your vulnerable citizens?

The Chair thanked Mrs White for her attendance at the Committee and provided the following response which had been provided by officers:

The Council recognises how important mobility is to the quality of life of Thurrock’s disabled residents. In recent years, there have been changes in the way government provides support for disabled people, which has focussed more on individual choices and less on dedicated transport subsidies.

In view of these changes, Thurrock Council realised last year that the time would come when pressure on the Transportation and Highways budget would require a review of the grant to Transvol and began discussions as to how alternative ways of funding the Service could be explored.

In allocating the 2014/15 grant funding, the Director of Planning and Transportation wrote to Transvol, saying that, given shrinking budgets, grant funding was secure for 2014/15 but may not be available for 2015/16. Similar services across the country have succeeded in finding ways of operating without total reliance on local authority grants.

Transport Officers have offered to support Transvol in exploring options for following a similar path and it is hoped that arrangements could be in place by April 2015.

Mrs White then presented her supplementary question to the Committee which was:

“Have you thought about the impact on everyone; there is a greater need and support for these people. Not everyone gets mobility allowance or can use the free bus pass.

Have you looked at the impact?”

The Director of Planning and Transportation provided a response, explaining that it was up to him as Director for this department to propose suggested savings; it was the responsibility of the Members to make the final decisions. He continued to inform those present that different areas and communities impacted had been looked at and the impacts would be considered within the

decision. Officers explained that there were services that were statutory which by law are saved first then Officers had to look at funding and grants after.

It was suggested and agreed by the Committee to suspend standing orders, to enable Members to have an open discussion with members and users of Transvol, the following points were raised:

- That should funding to Transvol be cut, then the people who use it will become isolated within their own homes,
- There are no taxis on the taxi rank at Lakeside shopping centre which were equipped for disabled passengers,
- That by cutting funding to Transvol would make a change to its members lifestyles
- Transvol provided two return trips a week

Officers informed the Committee and members of Transvol that Thurrock Council had to find £37.7million worth of savings over the next three years, Transvol currently received £97,000 in funding from the council. The Director of Planning and Transportation continued to explain that he had written to Transvol and had informed them of the savings which needed to be achieved. The Committee were advised that there were other community transport charities around the country who did not receive funding from their local Council.

All Members of the Committee agreed that a Task and Finish Group be established to look at community transport. Senior Officers then provided a detailed introduction to the report which outlined the significant reductions in the money received from the Government and other pressures on services as the Council was required to make £37.7million of savings over the next three financial years.

The Director of Planning and Transportation notified the Committee that staff of the Council had currently been offered voluntary redundancy and that it was inevitable that there would also be compulsory redundancies made to assist with making the savings needed.

Members were informed by the Head of Regeneration, that there were statutory and non-statutory functions. With statutory functions largely protected, greater pressure would need to be applied to non-statutory functions to meet the savings. He continued to explain that the majority, although not all, of the functions undertaken within the Chief Executives Delivery Unit (CEDU) were non-statutory and the £700,000 reduction in funding to the Department reflected a significant cut in General Fund support. Within this the Regeneration Service accounted for £500,000 of the savings target.

The Committee queried as to whether it was possible to use section 106 monies to support Transvol, Officers responded to Members queries

explaining that Transvol was an independent charity, who had expert help and made all of the day to day decisions themselves. The Director of Planning and Transportation further explained that through writing to the charity two years ago, he had pre-warned them that saving proposals were a possibility. Members were notified that Section 106 monies had to relate to mitigating the impacts of the particular development that they were generated from.

Members were updated that implementing low energy lighting around the borough was moving forward and that income was being generated by the Planning and Transportation directorate selling and sharing services with neighbouring authorities.

It was enquired by some Members of the Committee, what was meant by selling and sharing services. Senior Officers explained that in some areas the Council had excellent systems in place whereas neighbouring Councils needed support, therefore officers were going to these Councils to help develop good practice and that through providing that support they were generating an income.

The Committee questioned as to whether there was a risk of making Lakeside Shopping Centre more attractive to the detriment of Grays should car parking charges within the borough be raised as suggested within appendix 2c. The Head of Regeneration clarified to Members that recent work within Grays, including the development of the new College, was to differentiate the roles of Grays and Lakeside and avoid competition between the two. Whilst the perception remained that there was not enough car parking places available within Grays and that the cost of the available parking was high, the Council's own research had found that there was a surfeit of parking spaces and that the car parking charges were below those of neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the comments detailed above with regard to the savings proposals within Planning & Transportation and Regeneration be noted.**
 - 2. That a Task and Finish Group be established to examine Community Transport.**
 - 3. That an update report on parking within Grays be taken back to Committee at a later date.**
- 5. Local Highways Infrastructure (including public transport)**

The Director of Planning and Transportation introduced the report to Members explain that the vice-chair of Committee last year requested that a report be brought back to the Committee in relation to public transport and bus subsidies.

Members were notified that Officers were planning to invite Members of the Committee to be involved in a Local Government Association Strategic review of Highways Maintenance within Thurrock.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee supports ongoing work to improve value for money in relation to local highways infrastructure maintenance and support for local bus services.**
- 2. That the Committee agrees to participate in the stakeholder activities which will be organised during the autumn to agree a way forward on how we make the best use of the resources we have for the benefit of communities in Thurrock.**

6. SELEP Single Local Growth Fund Update

The Head of Regeneration introduced the report and explained that Thurrock was within the South East Local Economic Partnership (SELEP); the second largest LEP in the country which spanned East Sussex, Kent, Essex, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. Officers had been working hard to get the needs of Thurrock heard across this area in developing the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan which is the mechanism through which Government funding in support of Regeneration, Economic Development, Highways and Housing would be secured. Members were notified that Thurrock had been particularly successful in securing funding allocations in support of the widening of the A13, local cycle improvements and the creation of a public transport hub at Stanford-le-Hope to secure greater access to London Gateway. In total Thurrock's share of the £442 million funding allocated to SELEP was £92.5million, which equated to nearly 25% of all of the new funding (as opposed to those which had previously been awarded), awarded to SELEP.

In addition to the Borough's own projects, officers had taken a leading role in developing and presenting the Thames Gateway South Essex case which had also secured impressive £63.3m allocations for a range of projects including capacity enhancements to the A127 and transport investment in Basildon and Southend. It was noted that, given existing travel to work patterns, this investment was likely to have a benefit to Thurrock's residents as well as those within the neighbouring authorities.

The Committee queried the £5million allocation for the development of the A13 widening. Officers explained that the Council was given funding of £1million to complete the plan, £5million to develop the scheme and then, depending on discussions on the Lower Thames Crossing, the Council would receive the remaining £75 million to deliver the scheme.

Members congratulated the Director and his team for their hard work and the fantastic income they were bring into the Council, which demonstrated different ways of working.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the report and welcome the success that Thurrock has had in attracting Government funding as part of the Growth Deal.

The Chair proposed to suspend standing ordering this was agreed by all Members.

7. Purfleet Regeneration Update

Members of the Committee were shown a short video on the Purfleet Centre Regeneration project. Following the video the Head of Regeneration took the Committee through a presentation on the project, explaining that the Council owned 55% of the land required to complete the project.

It was further explained that the idea for the project was to redevelop the of 140acre site to provide a 500,000sqft film, television and media complex and up to 2,500 new homes within a new town centre featuring a primary school, GP surgery, supermarket and retail/leisure facilities.

The Committee were informed that, following a three stage procurement exercise, Cabinet had selected Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited as the Council's Development Partner in March 2014. Since then officers had been working with the developer to develop the detail of the proposals on from the initial bidding stage. Members were informed that the media complex would be the first purpose built studios developed in the UK for 50 years and, once complete, would boast some of the best facilities in Europe capable of hosting the largest productions in the world. The housing offer was expected to be mixed with different housing types being used in different areas. Overall it was expected that 60% of the 2,500 new homes would be houses.

Officers reported to Members that it was possible to be on site as early as next year with the school and Studio to be open in 2017.

Members enquired as to whether the Council had the money or the investors to be able to complete the project. The Head of Regeneration replied to Members questions explaining that the developers were procured for their skill and experience in attracting and securing the necessary investment to deliver the scheme and that it is not the Council's role to secure the funding itself although it is working in partnership with the developer. There are currently a number of positive discussions underway with potential funders and an announcement is expected in the coming months.

Members enquired as to whether the scheme presented was likely to be delivered or whether the developer could make their own changes. The Head of Regeneration explained that, under the terms of an agreement between the

Council and the developer, the Council had to be consulted on all amendments to the proposals and that in most cases the Council's specific approval would be required to any changes

Following further questions from Members it was identified that the primary school would ultimately have be three form entry and Education colleagues had confirmed that there was no requirement for secondary provision in the area as there is sufficient capacity in existing schools.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee welcome the progress made on the Purfleet Centre regeneration project.

8. Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme for the municipal year and the following reports were agreed:

- Review on Planning Standard – 17 September 2014
- Report on funding from the European Union and other non UK Government streams

The meeting finished at 9.50pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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12 November 2014	ITEM: 5
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Call-in to Cabinet Decision 01104315 Investment in Highways Lighting	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal & Democratic Services	
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Service Transportation & Highways	
Accountable Director: David Bull, Director of Planning & Transportation	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report outlines the call-in made to the above Cabinet decision, highlighting the reasons why the call-in was made and the alternative proposals being put forward.

This report offers advice to the committee on how to manage the call-in through the committee process and should be used as a summary document to help understand the overview of this particular call-in.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Committee can either:

- 1.1 **If it is concerned about the original decision in light of the call-in, refer the recommendation (Decision: 01104315 Investment in Highways Lighting) to Cabinet for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.**
- 1.2 **If it considers the decision is contrary to the Budget or Policy Framework, refer the matter to the Council.**
- 1.3 **Reject the call-in stating the reasons why.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 On Friday 5 September 2014, Councillors Sue Little, seconded by Councillor Robert Gledhill and Brian Little called in Cabinet Decision 01104315, in their capacity as three non-executive Members.
- 2.2 The reason for making the call in (in accordance with Chapter 4, Part 3, Rule 10.4 of the Constitution) has been cited as a failure of the decision maker to take the decision in accordance with the following decision-making principles:
- a. *Due regard for individuals and communities served by Thurrock.*
 - c. *Due consultation*

For clarification there was no "b." listed on the call in form.

- 2.3 The call-in was agreed as a valid call-in in accordance with the rules set out within Chapter 4, Part 3 of the Councils Constitution
- 2.4 The alternative proposal stated on the call in form is:
- 1.1 *Officers present details of a project to change all street lighting to L.E.D or other low energy solutions to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee for discussion to ensure value for money and maximising benefits for Thurrock.*
 - 1.2 *Officers borrow sufficient monies to enable the implementation of the project once agreed.*

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 When considering the call-in, the Committee is recommended to adhere to the following schedule:
- The person who made the call-in to briefly introduce the reasons for the call-in and their alternative proposal(s).
 - The portfolio holder and officers to respond to the call-in and advise the Committee of any points that may be relevant.
 - If applicable, the Committee should receive comments from third parties that may be directly involved in the original cabinet decision.
 - The person who made the call-in to summarise.
 - The Committee should then weigh up evidence and ask any relevant questions to those in attendance.
 - The Committee should decide to do one of the following:

- a) if it is concerned about the original decision in light of the call-in, refer it to the decision maker (Cabinet) for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns; or
- b) reject the call-in stating the reasons why.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee are requested to manage the call-in in accordance with the provisions set out in Chapter 4, Part 3 of the Constitution.

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

- 5.1 Not applicable.

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

- 6.1 The call-in has a positive impact on corporate policies as it allows for the proper exercise of the democratic function, namely for Members to call-in a Cabinet decision based on valid arguments.
- 6.2 The role of Overview and Scrutiny in this function will allow for issues to be discussed in a public arena with cross party involvement and will give the opportunity for interested parties to join the debate and make representations

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

The Council faces significant financial difficulties in both the current year and the remainder of the medium term financial strategy – 2015/16-2017/18. The approach is to bring forward savings at the earliest opportunity although ensuring that all required consultation takes place. Any delays to the approval of budget proposals puts their timely delivery at risk adding further pressure to 2015/16.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart**
Principal Solicitor, Housing & Regeneration

There are no specific legal implications directly arising from the recommendations beyond the procedural matters cited at the start of this report. The Council Constitution provides for Call-In of Cabinet decisions in Chapter 4, Part 3, Rule 10.

The process for setting the budget as outlined in Chapter 3, Part 3 of the Council Constitution.

Cabinet shall prepare a draft Budget for the authority and shall submit it to the Chief Executive for report to Council for approval.

Cabinet shall refer the draft Budget to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Members to consider and prepare a recommendation to Cabinet.

The Council is required to set a balanced budget at the February Council meeting.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**
Community Development Officer

There are no direct equality implications arising from this call in. Any alternative proposals would need to be reviewed and any equality implications arising from them would be stated as part of the proposals.

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

- Appendix 1: Report from Cabinet August 2014

- Appendix 2: Excerpt from the minutes of the Cabinet meeting 13 August 2014 (reconvened on 27 August 2014)
- Appendix 3: Call-In from Councillor S Little

Report Author:

Kenna-Victoria Martin

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Legal & Democratic Services

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13 August 2014		ITEM: 14 01104315
Cabinet		
Investment in Highways Lighting		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Andy Smith, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Highways & Transportation		
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Transportation & Highways		
Accountable Director: David Bull, Director for Planning & Transportation		
This report is Public		
Purpose of Report: To approve £6million of prudential borrowing to convert Thurrock's illuminated street furniture to Low Emission Diode (LED) operation.		

Executive Summary

Thurrock currently has around 17,000 street lights which currently cost the Council over £800K per year in electricity bills. By converting the street lighting stock to Low Emission Diode operation, the Council could cut this bill by half, reduce street lighting maintenance costs and significantly reduce Thurrock's carbon footprint. The resultant saving would allow the capital investment to be repaid, whilst still achieving the target £250K revenue saving from 2017 onwards. This report seeks Cabinet approval to undertake prudential borrowing to undertake this action.

1. Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve a programme of work to replace the current conventional street lighting lanterns with energy saving Light Emitting Diode (LED) units.**
- 1.2 Give authority for the Head of Corporate Finance to seek £6m of prudential borrowing to cover the cost of the LED Conversion Programme.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 There are currently 17,330 street lamps in Thurrock operating with traditional high energy sodium lanterns. These lanterns cost the Council over £800,000 per year to illuminate and this cost has been rising at approximately 10% per year. In addition to the electricity costs, traditional lanterns need to be replaced approximately every 3 – 4 years, incurring additional costs to the Highways budget.
- 2.2 In the 2007 Energy White Paper, Government announced a Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC), which undertook to reduce the UK's carbon emissions by introducing mechanisms whereby major private and public sector organisations would incur charges if they failed to reduce their carbon footprints. In 2010, the SRS Energy Efficiency Order came into being, paving the way for a mechanism whereby local authorities would effectively have to 'buy' the right to generate carbon emissions. The detail of this charging mechanism is still being developed, but there is a clear incentive for the Council to take measures to reduce its future carbon footprint to minimise the impact of any future charge.
- 2.3 Conversion of Thurrock's street lighting to LED operation would require a capital investment of £6 million, against an asset life of 20 years, resulting in an annual saving of £680,000 per year in reduced electricity bills and maintenance costs. This would be offset against a repayment cost of £430K per year, leaving a net budget saving of £250K from 2017/18 onwards.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 LED technology is widely used and well established. LEDs produce a high quality white light, which compares favourably with the more yellow light produced by sodium lanterns. Thurrock has already begun a small scale programme to convert other street furniture such as illuminated bollards and Belisha beacons to LED operation. However, conversion of the street lighting stock requires significant 'up front' capital investment.
- 3.2 Alternative options for saving electricity costs, including the removal of street lights and switching street lights off between midnight and 5 am, have been considered but rejected as unnecessary at this stage.
- 3.2 Various mechanisms have been considered to fund this investment.

Salix Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme

Salix provides zero interest loans to public bodies to fund initiatives to reduce carbon emissions. The eligibility criteria for loans are such that less than half of Thurrock's street lighting stock would be eligible for conversion, and the loan would need to be paid back within 5 years, putting an unnecessary strain on the Council's cash flow.

Green Investment Bank

The Green Investment Bank provides loans to Local Authorities to fund initiatives to reduce their carbon footprint. However, the interest charges offered compare unfavourably with the cost of Prudential Borrowing and significant arrangement fees would be incurred for any loan.

Prudential Borrowing

This option would provide a low interest solution, and give the Council maximum flexibility in optimising its debt portfolio.

Preferred Option

Having considered the above options, it is recommended that Prudential Borrowing Option is the preferred method of securing the required capital funding.

Implementation

In terms of implementation, a lead time of 9 months would be required to procure contractors to undertake the work, in compliance with European procurement legislation. The conversion programme would be delivered over 2 years, with energy savings being realised from the end of year 1.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Council secure £6m of Prudential Borrowing to convert street lights in Thurrock from sodium to LED operation, in order to:
- Give savings against current revenue budgets
 - Reduce Council exposure to risk of energy price rises and CRC tax
 - Improve the quality and reliability of street lighting for local communities

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

- 5.1 This proposal does not require consultation as the work required will be only to re-lamp existing street light columns.

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

- 6.1 This proposal will assist the Council in delivering budget targets and improve street lighting provision across the Borough.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clarke**
Head of Corporate Finance

This is within the budget framework for Cabinet to approve as invest to save capital projects were delegated to Cabinet as part of the budget reports. The financial implications of the proposal are set out in Appendix A.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart**
Principal Solicitor

There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

Street lighting is part of the built environment and experienced by all users of the public highway, both residents and visitors to the area. The LED installation programme will increase night-time visibility benefitting all users by producing a high quality white light greater than the yellow light currently produced. Further, a reduction in carbon emissions will indirectly benefit the whole community by contributing towards mitigation of climate change.

Contractors commissioned to complete these upgrades will be expected to undertake works with due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and therefore mitigate adverse impact on users of the public highway, residents and visitors.

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

This initiative would support the Council's commitment to sustainability and carbon reduction.

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):

N/A

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Financial Implications

Report Author:

Ann Osola
Head of Transportation & Highways
Email: AOsola@thurrock.gov.uk
Tel: 07803 202044

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Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 August 2014 at 7.00pm

The deadline for call-in is Friday 5 September at 5.00pm

(Please note that the deadline for call-in reflects the fact that the meeting was reconvened until 27 August 2014).

Present: Councillors John Kent (Chair), Barbara Rice (Vice-Chair), Phil Smith and Lynn Worrall.

Apologies: Councillors Tony Fish, Victoria Holloway, Bukky Okunade and Richard Speight.

In attendance: G. Farrant – Chief Executive
A. Lever – Senior Media Officer
F. Taylor – Head of Legal and Democratic Services
S. Cox – Senior Democratic Services Officer

The Leader of the Council made the following statement:

“If I can welcome Members and Officers present to the meeting this evening’s Thurrock Council Cabinet meeting, we meet in a sad mood as we reflect on the death yesterday of Councillor Andy Smith, the Portfolio Holder of Regeneration, Highways and Transportation.

Andy was the longest serving Member of Thurrock Council and was a dear friend to many of us. Many Portfolio Holders feel unable to attend this evening; they are not just in the right frame of mind to attend a meeting such as this, so we therefore have apologies from Councillors Speight, Holloway, Fish and Okunade.

There will be time at the next Council meeting to pay proper tributes to Andy, but for the record this evening I would just like to set out that Andy was a member of the Council for very nearly 30 years.

In the old Committee system he served as the Chair of the Housing Committee, he led the Council for 10 years during which time he led the campaign for Thurrock to become a Unitary Authority, which will no doubt go down as Andy’s greatest achievement of that time.

Since 2010 he has served as a Portfolio Holder, at one point for Housing alongside his current functions. What I propose this evening is that we just take a moment’s silent reflection, and then I will formally move that we adjourn the meeting for a period of 2 weeks, to reconvene on 27th August, so now if I just ask people to sit in silence for a moment.”

A minutes silence was held in respect of Councillor Andy Smith.

Following which the Leader thanked those in attendance and formally moved to adjourn the meeting until 7.00pm on 27 August 2014.

Councillor B. Rice seconded the move to adjourn the meeting and all Members indicated their agreement.

The Leader thanked all those in attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.05pm on 13 August 2014 and reconvened at 7.00pm on 27 August 2014.

The following were in attendance:

Present: Councillors John Kent (Chair), Barbara Rice (Vice-Chair), Tony Fish, Victoria Holloway, Bukky Okunade, Phil Smith, Richard Speight and Lynn Worrall.

In attendance: K. Jackson – Chief Executive of Thurrock CVS
G. Farrant – Chief Executive
S. Cox – Assistant Chief Executive
D. Bull – Director of Planning and Transportation
C. Littleton – Director of Children’s Services
R. Harris – Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning
S. Clark – Head of Corporate Finance
J. Hinchliffe – Head of HR, OD and Customer Strategy
K. Adedeji – Head of Head of Housing, Investment and Development
R. Parkin – Head of Housing
M. Heath – Head of Environment
M. Essex – Head of Regeneration
A. Lever – Senior Media Officer
L. McPherson – Senior Democratic Services Officer
D. Lawson – Deputy Head of Legal and Democratic Services
S. Cox – 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.

19. Minutes

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting, held on 2 July 2014, were approved as a correct record.

20. Items of Urgent Business

The Leader advised that one item of urgent business had been received in relation to ‘Waste Disposal Arrangements – Opportunity for Savings’ and stated that it would be taken after item 14 in the printed agenda. A copy of the

report had been circulated to Cabinet Members and published online prior to the meeting, and printed copies were made available in the public gallery.

21. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Fish declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 as he was on the board of Thurrock CVS, a Council appointee to Open Door, a Cabinet appointee to Impulse Leisure and was the Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Transvol. As no decisions were being made in relation to the above organisations at the meeting, he advised that he would remain in the room during the item.

Councillor Fish also declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 11, as he was a member of the Management Committee for Chadwell Community Hub, and advised that he would leave the meeting room during the item.

Councillor Fish declared a further non-pecuniary interest in relation to Agenda Item 12, as he was on the Board of Trustees for Transvol, which was one of the organisations based within the Thameside Complex.

Councillor Speight declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10, as he was a Council appointed representative of the Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau. He also declared a further non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 12, as he was a Council appointee of Thurrock Arts Council.

Councillor Okunade declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 and 12 as she was a board member of TRUST, which was located inside the Thameside Complex.

30. Investment in Highways Lighting (Decision: 01104315)

Councillor J Kent, the Leader of the Council, first asked Democratic Services to read the questions that had been submitted by Councillor Tolson and Councillor Gledhill and the following responses was received:

- Democratic Services asked the question on behalf of Councillor Tolson, as to what level and type of lighting would be provided from the project.

The Cabinet Member explained that the lighting lamps on the street lighting would be replaced with lower energy Light Emitting Diode (LED) lamps which produced a high quality white light which compared favourably with the more yellow light produced by the current sodium lanterns.

- Democratic Services asked the question on behalf of Councillor Gledhill, as to whether there were any plans to work with other

departments, such as housing, to implement LED lighting in order to maximise Thurrock's carbon footprint reduction and savings.

The Cabinet Member explained that yes the Highways and Housing were working together to replace all lighting across the borough, whether on the highway or on housing land with LED lighting.

The Leader then introduced the report, and remarked that this was one of the last projects that Councillor A. Smith did for Thurrock Council, working with the transportation team in order to replace the expensive and inefficient street lighting. Members were advised that the project would take 2 years to complete following the appointment of the contractor, which would provide Thurrock's residents and drivers with improved white light and a saving to Thurrock taxpayers. He commended the work of Councillor A. Smith, who was keen to keep street lights on in Thurrock at a time when Essex County Council were turning lights off in other parts of Essex.

The Leader advised how savings were being realised, and outlined that it cost £800,000 in electricity bills to light 17,000 street lights in Thurrock. It was reported that this was an expensive system as sodium lights needed to be replaced every 4-5 years, and that the interest repayment costs of £430,000 on the capital investment of £6 million required for the project would be offset by the net saving of £680,000 per year in reduced electricity bills.

Councillor Okunade asked whether it was just old street lamps that were being replaced or whether new areas of street lighting were being considered under the project in order to reduce anti-social behaviour. In response the Leader explained that it was sensible that these two areas were examined in parallel.

Councillor B. Rice felt that this was a positive scheme and commended the good work of Councillor A. Smith. She felt it was prudent to spend to save whilst also working to reduce Thurrock's carbon foot print.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That a programme of work to replace the current conventional street lighting lanterns with energy saving Light Emitting Diode (LED) units be approved.**
- 2. That the Head of Corporate Finance to seek £6m of prudential borrowing to cover the cost of the LED Conversion Programme.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

The meeting finished at 8.07pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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THURROCK COUNCIL

Decision No: 01104315

Decision Title: Investment in Highways lighting

Reason for making the Call-in*:
a) due regard for the individuals and communities served by Thurrock
c) due consultation has not taken place with overview and scrutiny.

The Alternative Proposal is:
1. Officers present details of a project to change all street lighting to LED or other low energy solutions to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee for discussion to ensure value for money and maximising benefits for Thurrock.
2. Officers borrow sufficient monies to enable the implementation of the project once agreed.
*Please continue on separate sheet if required.

I am/ We are:

- An individual Member whose ward is particularly affected by the decision,
- The Chair of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee,
- Any two members of the relevant overview and scrutiny committee,
- Any three non-executive members of the Council,
- A voluntary group with interest in the Thurrock Council area,
- A local business situated in the Thurrock Council area (except in relation to decisions relating to procurement of goods and services)
- 10 Members of the public, working or studying within the Thurrock Council area.

THURROCK COUNCIL

Name: Cllr Sue Little

Daytime Telephone No: 07831 609664

Email Address: s.little@thurrock.gov.uk

Address: THURROCK COUNCIL

Would you like to make a statement or representation in respect of your objection?

Yes No

Date of Request: 5/9/2014

32

	Signature of Objector	Name (in Block Capitals)	Address (in Block Capitals)
1		<u>ROBERT GLEDHILL</u>	<u>Thurrock Council Office</u>
2		<u>SUE LITTLE</u>	<u>THURROCK COUNCIL OFFICES</u>
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

12 November 2014	ITEM: 6
Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Community Transport Review	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Tom Kelly, Chair of the Community Transport Review Panel	
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Service for Transportation	
Accountable Director: David Bull, Director of Planning & Transportation	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 30 July 2014 to look into TransVol funding and the use of this Grant from Thurrock Council. It looks at the implications of financially supporting community transport in Thurrock and issues around efficiency and value for money.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 To note the Community Transport Review Panel report attached at appendix 1.**
- 1.2 To agree the recommendations contained within the report at appendix 1, following which a report will be referred to Cabinet.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 30 July 2014 agreed to establish a Task & Finish Group to explore the implications of various levels of financial funding to Trans Vol to provide community transport in Thurrock.
- 2.2 The Community Transport review panel undertook an investigation into community transport provided by TransVo and explored as to whether the same service could be provided to residents within budgetary constraints.

- 2.3 At the meeting of the Community Transport Review Panel on 29 October 2014 the panel were particularly interested in seeking as to whether there was an option to carry on providing funding to the charity.
- 2.4 The panel engaged with officers across the Council and TransVol to evaluate the current funding provided and whether this was value for money to Thurrock Council.
- 2.5 The full background, methods and activities of the Community Transport Review Panel are attached at appendix 1.
- 2.6 In the special Council meeting on Monday 27 October 2014 of the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny-Voluntary Sector groups a proposal was offered. The Voluntary Sector suggested that they would be willing to accept a £10k reduction of the budget from 2014/2015 to £87,400 for 2015/2016.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 All issues and options are considered within the report and attached at appendix 1.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Community Transport Review Panel was established by the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 30 July 2014. The panel has a duty to report back to Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee with its findings.

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

- 5.1 A survey is being undertaken by Trans Vol with its members relating to future funding and is included within appendix 1.

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

- 6.1 Support for community transport meets the Council's priority to promote health and well-being and will enable residents to maintain an independent lifestyle. Making journeys to access services such as shopping, and healthcare facilities such as doctors, dentists and optician's reduces the needs to provide services to people at home.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

The Council has identified savings within its Medium Term financial strategy in relation to the reduction of Trans Vol grant. Deviation from this will need to be considered as part of the Council's budget setting strategy to identify alternative cost reductions.

7.2 Legal

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

Legal Implications are contained within the report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

The removal of funding to Trans Vol will potentially have a negative impact on people from different protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010) notably disabled people, older people and gender. It will be important to explore actions which will mitigate this impact.

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

- Appendix 1: DRAFT Community Transport Review Report (October 2014)

Report Author:

Kenna-Victoria Martin

Senior Democratic Services Officer

Democratic Services



Community Transport Review

October 2014

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Chair's Introduction

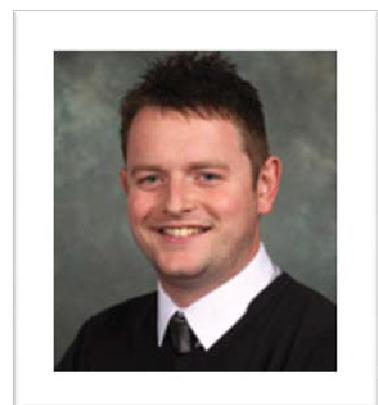
This Community Transport Review Task & Finish Group was setup under recommendations of the Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This was done over the concerns raised by residents and users of TransVol over the removal of funding to their service.

It was a pleasure to be nominated Chair for the evening with three recommendations put on the table. After liaising with TransVol, officers and members of the public who had observed the meeting from the public gallery we established that all 3 recommendations had difficult consequences on TransVol and its users or a direct consequence on the councils funding levels. We also established that the removal of funding could impact the council with higher costs being incurred if the service by TransVol was not provided for Thurrock residents.

After around one hour of debate an additional recommendation of 1.4 was put on the table by Officer David Bull which was to approve the 50k funding (recommendation 1.3) and that the Director of Planning & Transportation meets with the Directors of Children's and of Adult Services to consider invest-to-save funding to bring the total up to the present level.

The three Members of the Task & Finish Group being myself (Cllr Tom Kelly), Cllr Sue Gray and Cllr Graham Snell sought the approval of TransVol on this recommendation (1.4) in which they were for the moment, happy with the additional recommendation.

As such this was approved by all three Members and the meeting was closed with thanks to TranVol, the officers in attendance and the helpful participation from residents in the public gallery.



Councillor Tom Kelly
Chair of Community Transport Review

Introduction

The topic of Community Transport was brought to the fore by the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which wanted to explore and investigate TransVol funding and the use of this Grant from the Council, following concern from Members and users of TranVol to the service they were providing, should their funding be withdrawn.

At the July 2014 meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was agreed “that a Community Transport Task and Finish group be established in order to help identify whether this suggested proposal to cease grant funding to TransVol will impact the charity and residents and whether there are any viable alternative funding stream options available”

Membership of the Review Panel

Councillor Tom Kelly (Chair) – Conservative
Councillor Martin Kerin – Labour
Councillor Roy Jones – UKIP

Substitutes

Councillor Graham Snell – UKIP
Councillor Sue Gray – Labour
1 Vacancy – Conservative

Terms of Reference

We agreed that our key aim was:

1. To investigate and report on the value of funding streams for community transport

Activity Timeline

The group undertook the following activities to reach their recommendations:

August 2014	Receive an information pack from Officers on the current funding, budget costs and proposed savings for Transvol
August 2014	Seek information from other comparative Councils and Charities to see how they operate Community Transport and examine what if any funding they receive, in order to determine best practice.
September 2014	Receive a summary report on the purpose of Transvol and its impact on the local community, including any key data to examine the realities of community transport in Thurrock.

<p>September 2014</p>	<p>To undertake a survey in order to capture the views from Transvol members and users and also other users in the Borough who may use alternative means of transportation. (To be included within the summary report from Transvol)</p>
<p>Mid-September 2014</p>	<p>Receive from Transvol information on, potential challenges, and spend of the charity during its work.</p>
<p>29th October 2014</p>	<p>Held meeting of Review Panel to discuss and look at the implications of financially supporting community transport in Thurrock and issues around efficiency and value for money</p>

The activities undertaken were prepared and presented to the group at their meeting to enable all parties to participate in discussions and agreed to a way forward.

Community Transport and Thurrock

The role of TransVol is to develop a safe, affordable, accessible, caring, demand responsive and integrated Community Transport Scheme within the borough of Thurrock, whilst working in partnership with Thurrock Council and the wider community.

Local Transport Authorities must have regards to the transport needs of disabled persons and of persons who are elderly or who have mobility problems (Transport Act 2000 section 112 amended by the Local Transport Act 2008).

Community Transport is provided for those who cannot access passenger transport either because of their geographical isolation or the unsuitability of the conventional transport provided.

TransVol was launched in 1994 and became an independent charity in 2000. The charity is administered by a Board of Directors who act as Directors of the Company and are also charity trustees. Employees undertake the day to day management and operation of the scheme that also have volunteers who assist with transport provision. In the last year 15,038 passenger journeys have been undertaken.

Thurrock Council has provided TransVol with financial aid in recent years; in 2006/2007 grant funding was £261k, which rose to £267k in 2007/2008 and 2008/2009. A grant of £197k was provided for the following four years and £97,400 was made available for 2013/2014.

Following representations the level of grant was provided for 2014/2015 however it was made clear by the Director of Planning & Transportation, on the 15 January 2014, that the Council had to make some significant savings over the next few years. The Council would go through a very difficult period and as such the Director was unable commit to any future funding after March 2015 (**Appendix one pages x**).

Efficiencies had been made by TransVol to cope with this reduced grant and Thurrock Council covered the additional cost of the advice sought from two other community transport providers (**Appendices Two and Three pages x-x**).

Nationally, community transport schemes often depend upon financial support to meet the needs of its members, which is met by local authorities. Despite this, schemes are unable to meet all requests for transport.

It is clear that transport schemes do not solely rely on local authority grants. In addition a number of community transport schemes receive benefits in kind such as office accommodation and not having to meet utility costs (**Appendix one pages x**).

The unique advantage of community transport is that it provides a journey at greater cost than the financial support given by the local authority. The current figures per passenger journey equates to some £6.49. This in relation to other similar community transport providers was felt to be a high subsidy.

The Results from the Task and Finish Group

We held a meeting in order to evaluate the current financial aid given to TransVol from Thurrock Council in to provide community transport for the boroughs elderly and vulnerable residents.

Participants included representatives from TransVol, senior officers and Members. It was explained at the meeting that the council had a number options to consider and these were presented to Members within the information pack.

An open conversation took place on community transport and whether the funding currently granted to TransVol provided value for money for the Council. Representatives from TransVol explained that without the funding provided the charity would be unable to supply the current service for their clientele. Officers informed the Review Panel that they wanted to assist where possible and had even suggested ways for the charity to bring in external income.

During the discussion the following key points were identified:

- That Members of the Review Panel agreed with Officers that community transport was required within the borough for its elderly and vulnerable residents;
- The service provided by TransVol was valued by its Members;
- The Council statutory priority was to users who had little or no public transport or those who had disabilities and required medical appointments or to use shopping facilities.
- TransVol were proactive in admitting that with only this amount of funding it would be almost inevitable that the charity would have to close.

The Review Panel following questions to both officers and Trans Vol recommended that an additional recommendation (1.4) be considered **“The Task & Finish Group has considered four options in relation to the grant funding for Trans Vol and recommend an additional alternative, Option Four, which was agreed on the night of the meeting, which is to provide ‘one off’ financial support of £50k on provision of a business development plan for the future that is agreed with the Council and for the Director of Adults, Health & Commissioning and the Director of Children’s Services to consider further funding for 2015/16”**

Recommendation 1.4 was agreed and seconded by Members on Review Panel, it was then confirmed that TransVol and officers were happy with the proposed suggestion.

Summary & Recommendations

The aim of this review was to look at ways other local authorities' provide if any provided funding for community transport and to see if there were any other ways to grant continued financial aid to Trans Vol.

It was clear that there is a need for community transport within the borough; discussions moved on to whether the service provided was value for money. Officers suggested that a business case be submitted to the Council to enable officers to see how the funding was being spent.

The Review Panel considered the following recommendations:

Recommendation One

It was identified that this would clearly put at risk some provision of community transport within Thurrock that met some of the needs of the users of TransVol. This has the possibility to adversely impact the most vulnerable residents within the community.

Recommendation 1:
To withdraw the funding

Recommendation Two

Recommendation 2:
To maintain the current level or reduced level of funding (but the Task and Finish Group would have to find alternative savings from other services)

Members acknowledged that this allowed the level of support provided in the last two financial years to be maintained and ensured TransVol could continue with the current level of service to its members. However, Thurrock Council faced with declining funding had made it clear to TransVol over recent years that they would need to operate with less financial support and operate more efficiently with advice from other operators.

Recommendation Three

This would have ensured that TransVol could continue supporting its users and members immediate transport requirements but could also explore alternative sources of funding pending the reduction in Thurrock Council financial support.

It was explained that TransVol would need to produce a business and development plan to show future viability and show that in time they could become self-sufficient.

Recommendation 3:

Provide a 'one off' financial support of £50k to TransVol on provision of a business development plan for the future that is agreed with the Council. This support could be tailored to purchase a new vehicle thus saving on servicing and maintenance revenue costs.

Recommendation Four

Members of the Review Panel suggested this recommendation at the meeting, which would ensure that TransVol would maintain its current level of community support.

It would also give TransVol the opportunity to seek alternative sources of funding and prioritise journeys to those residents who have little or no public transport.

They will however, have to take a pro-active role in ensuring that they seek alternative sources of funding during 2015/16.

Recommendation 4:

The Task & Finish Group has considered four options in relation to the grant funding for TransVol and recommend an additional alternative, Option Four, which was agreed on the night of the meeting, which is to provide 'one off' financial support of £50k on provision of a business development plan for the future that is agreed with the Council and for the Director of Adults, Health & Commissioning and the Director of Children's Services to consider further funding for 2015/16

Next Steps

Officers agreed to investigate value for money versus cost per trip subsidy which it was felt needed to be reduced by TransVol through efficiencies. Although the responsibility of effective working is TransVols, officers will work with Trans Vol to achieve this.

Specifically the Council will need to know, as well how, investment into TransVol supports older people and children with disabilities and how this is of value to Adults and Children's Services. This would mean that investment in TransVol could reduce the costs that would otherwise fall on Adults and Children's Services.

Trans Vol
Attn Neil Woodbridge and John Paddick
Thameside Theatre
Orsett Road
Grays
Essex
RM17 5DX

Wednesday 15th January 2014

**Trans Vol
Community Transport Scheme**

Dear Neil and John,

Thank you for coming to visit me last week in relation to Trans Vol to discuss the Scheme's future.

I am aware that you have made some major changes to your policy and procedures including staff changes and your report clearly defines where the service currently lies. Further to our discussion I find that your necessary alterations have operated quite smoothly without an adverse affect on your members. In fact you should be commended for your commitment to modernise and update procedures to ensure that future operation of this vital service to some of our more needy residents is recognised and encouraged.

It has become apparent that your reserves are not as healthy as originally thought and this will affect the service especially in the next financial year. In order to maintain a managed level of service you have requested that the Council considers options in assisting a continuation of financial support. I understand that other sources have funding has already been identified but approval of such monies has only been agreed if the Council also contributes towards the scheme.

I understand the importance and necessity of a community transport scheme and therefore in principal I am willing to secure a further year's grant of £97,400 for 2014/15. This will be subject to Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council's approval.

Moving forward to 2015/16 and onwards it has been publicly highlighted that the Council has to make some significant savings over the next few years which sees us moving through a very difficult period and as such I will be unable commit to any future funding after March 2015 at this time.

Yours Sincerely

David Bull
Director of Planning & Transportation

FOLLOW UP REPORT TRANS-VOL, THURROCK

For John Pope, Passenger Transport, Thurrock Unitary
Authority.

D. Rotchell
Harwich Connexions Transport
Cooperative Ltd.

Trans-Vol

Introduction:

TUA had several concerns over the cost effectiveness and Management of Trans-Vol and their reliance on high levels of funding. A report was commissioned by TUA in June 2012, which

was conducted by Tina Tickner, CEO for Brentwood Community Transport. This report highlighted several areas of concern.

Following a change in operational management at Trans-Vol, in April 2013, TUA requested support from Harwich Connexions Transport Cooperative for a period of 3 months. This report is based on the actions taken during those 3-4 months.

Trustees and Governance:

Since April 2013 the Board of Trustees has reduced from 12 to 6. This has come about due to automatic retirement at 80 years of age and resignations of some trustees who were also volunteer drivers. (More details under the Volunteer section of this report).

The remaining 6 trustees are however, fully committed and pro active and are taking a very positive interest in the restructuring and future development of Trans-Vol.

The trustees are now kept fully informed of ALL operational details and the statistics prepared by the Operational Manager, are now based on fact with supporting evidence, which sadly, did not appear to have been the case over previous years.

Trustees are supportive of the Operations Manager in most instances; however they do not appear to be taking her knowledge and experience into account when vital decisions are made.

Culture and Environment:

There has been an enormous change in both culture and operations at Trans-Vol since April 2013.

The new Operational Manager (Denise Cheeseman) has settled in remarkably well and has got to grips with the day to day running of the business, despite having no clear idea or instructions from the previous Manager. A lot of time was initially spent in just "clearing the decks" and finding where important and relevant information was kept.

Denise operates with a very 'open door' style and is very keen that all Trans-Vol activities are robust, comply with legislation and are transparent.

There has been a decrease in the Office staff; however they appear to be content and very motivated.

A part time consultant has been employed for 6 months to help with Business development and fundraising and is working with the Trustees and the Operational Manager, although to date, has not secured any additional funding or grants.

Massive changes have taken place around the area of charges and revenue, vehicle stock and staff costs. (These are fully explained further in the report)

Housekeeping Audit:

A very comprehensive review of all costs was undertaken and it was found that an awful lot of funds had been used to pay for very unnecessary contracts, office machinery, and stationary, printing etc and were immediately cancelled or renegotiated. As a result of this audit £4,000 per month worth of savings were immediately identified.

Fares and Revenue:

From the earlier report and the reduction in funding from TUA it was very apparent that revenue from fares needed to be increased. Following very lengthy internal discussions and

customer consultations, the new fare structure as detailed below was introduced from 1st June 2013.

Zoned Fares:

Due to the large geographical area covered by Trans-Vol it was agreed to introduce zoned fares.

Zone 1 (under 4 miles)	£3.00 each way
Zone 2 (over 4 miles)	£4.50 each way
Escorts are still charged at	£2.00 each way regardless of the Zone.

The distances of each trip is calculated by the CATTs booking system and charged accordingly.

The very successful day trip programme has been reduced to offer only the most popular and the charge has been increased significantly, without any apparent fall in bookings.

The Sunday lunch trips have also been restricted to a set distance to make these cost effective.

Revenue is also being boosted by utilising vehicles for Evening meal trips during the holidays, and using drivers geographically to cut costs as well as dead miles.

Membership Fee

It was also agreed that a membership fee would be implemented. Several concerns were raised by both staff and trustees regarding this, but as this was standard practice for most CT schemes, it was eventually agreed and again on June 1st an annual membership fee of £10.00 was introduced. For members who only use the service for an occasional day trip or members who did not want to pay the full annual membership, a booking levy of £2.50 each trip was introduced. As would be expected most customers have opted for the annual fee. The database of members was showing approx 3500 members, however only about 700 of them were active, so the database will be reduced to active members. This simple task will generate a huge cost saving, as the whole database was used for every mail shot, which was printed in full colour, in liveried envelopes and took between 50 and 65 days to complete as opposed to 10 days for the reduced database.

Trans-Vol has very large number of wheelchair users (272) amongst its members, who can only travel in the mini buses at a far higher cost to the company than a car, and I think that this very important fact needs to be taken into consideration regarding cost per passenger.

Volunteers:

It was apparent that the previous manner in which volunteer car drivers were reimbursed was contentious and after discussions with other CT schemes and the Trustees, a new, open and transparent system was introduced. This created some concerns for several of the volunteers, who actually left. Some of these were also trustees and consequently resigned their posts. However since April, the Operations Manager has recruited 9 new volunteers, which is an exceptional feat and as they are now being recruited on days and in areas to suit the business, rather than the volunteer, a big reduction in dead miles and operating costs is predicted.

One of the volunteers is also keen on driving a mini bus, which will obviously reduce the operating costs.

Staff:

The staff costs have been reduced with the departure of the previous Manager and one part time member of staff leaving: Staffing levels as follows:

- 1 x Full time Operational Manager
- 1 x Full time Administrator
- 1 x Part time Administrator
- 4 x Full time drivers.

Vehicle Stock:

The shop mobility vehicle mentioned in last years report was sold prior to April 2013.

The fleet has been reduced from 9 mini buses to 6 and within the next month or so another will be offered for sale, thereby nearly halving the fleet, which will bring huge savings in running costs.

Budgets and Finance:

It has become clear that previous managements figures were very vague and did not really relate to any paperwork or information held in the office.

The Operations Manager has now produced correct data and a realistic budget has been set. The Business Development Officer has been encouraged to work with this budget and to operate a cash flow record.

The working budget is programmed to give a monthly performance against budget which will highlight any concerns before they become problems.

The company has changed to on line banking which again gives greater control over the day to day accounts.

Some financial decisions are being made by the Trustees (without the Operations Manager being involved) that are very costly and in my opinion unnecessary. I.e. commissioning an audit from their accountants to see how cost effective the operation has been since April, all the information that the accountants supplied to the Trustees was given to them by the Ops Manager, and could have been given directly.

New Funding Opportunities:

The Operations Manager has instigated a vigorous campaign to promote their MiDAS training to other organisations and schools etc within the Borough, using their fully qualified trainer. This is proving to be very popular and should be a good income stream.

They are very keen to explore the possibility of operating any local bus routes using the S22 permits available to CT schemes, and will discuss this with TUA.

Applications for grants are actively being researched and to date 3 applications, to different grant giving bodies have been applied for.

Marketing:

The very out dated web site has been redesigned in house and re-launched.

They now have a Facebook and Twitter account.

Had a stall at the recent Big Lunch in Grays Park and the Grays Beach Party.

All of the above activities are helping to raise the profile of Trans-Vol within the Borough.

Collaboration:

The team have been working very closely with Ngage a local volunteer bureau that have been actively sending people keen on driving to Trans-Vol.

The Operations Manager has forged good pro active links with passenger transport at TUA and worked closely with Gavin Bennett who helped her to produce their MiDAS brochure.

The Ops Manager is also working on including the local mobility shop within their next mail shot for a nominal charge. They are also looking at sponsorship ideas.

Conclusions:

The changes in both culture and operational procedures at Trans-Vol since April have, in my opinion, been enormous, and much has been achieved in a very short time. The Operations Manager has had an extremely difficult task in taking over the management of Trans-Vol, but has proved to be very well placed and will I am sure, with the support of the Trustees and TUA, continue to develop and grow both the staff and the business in the coming months,.

There are, as with all CT schemes a few areas still to be tackled.

- The Trustees need to include the Operations Manager fully in ALL operational matters.
- Continue to monitor and cut operating costs.
- Vigorous fundraising needs to be implemented, such as donation boxes on the buses, so that tips go to the company and not the driver.
- Recruit a volunteer to steer and target fundraising, in place of the Business Development consultant. The cost to Trans-Vol for this service has been huge, with as yet no return on investment. The Operations Manager is perfectly capable of producing budgets, forecasts and analysis details.
- Prepare a detailed 3 year strategy and business plan, as a priority, to demonstrate the need for continuing local authority grant funding.
- Actively grow the passenger numbers to decrease the subsidy per head
- Recruit more mini bus volunteers
- Increase their group hire business especially at evenings and weekends.
- Ensure that all relevant councillors, portfolio holders are aware of the big changes that Trans-Vol has made.
- Register with TUA procurement for transport contracts.
- Actively investigate any current or potential S22 routes that will generate good income from concessionary travel passes.

The Operations Manager, will be producing a review for TUA, including the reports that are forming the basis for sound financial management at Trans-Vol.

From these, it is apparent that to continue to transport the most vulnerable and socially isolated residents of the Borough, Trans-Vol will need to have substantial financial assistance from TUA, for the foreseeable future, and it is in my opinion, totally unrealistic to expect this operation to become self sustaining.

Report on

Trans-VolThurrock

**T.Tickner C.E.O. Brentwood
Community Transport**

A review of Trans-VolThurrock 18th June 2012

TRANS-VOL

Methodology

Information for this report was obtained from David Mehegan Transport Director, March 2011 Annual Report and Accounts and a visit to Trans-Vol office Thameside Complex Thurrock.

Introduction

Tina Tickner CEO Brentwood Community Transport was asked as a neighbouring Community Transport scheme to review Trans-Vol on its set up and services offered to the residents of Thurrock

Governance and the role of Trustees

Trans-Vol has a board of 12 Director/Trustees made up of volunteer drivers, users of the service, local councillors, and people with strong financial experience. They meet 4 times per year

Sources of Funding

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) was issued to Trans-Vol by Thurrock Unitary Authority for £276,000 which ceased in 2007. No services were cut with the reduction of funding. Trans-Vol management committee released current reserves.

A 12 month Grant Agreement is now in place with Tran-Vol and Thurrock Unitary Authority for £197,000. Quarterly payments to be made until March 2013.

Expenditure

Trans-Vol fuel cost is reflected on the number of miles the vehicles cover
Trans-Vol has high vehicle maintenance cost due to ageing vehicles.
The vehicle insurance premium is also high due to pending outstanding claims in dispute. Tran-Vol pay for payroll and HR services, IT Support, stationery and printing.
Trans-Vol offer pensions and healthcare to employed staff.
2010-2011 Trans-vol incurred high legal and professional costs along with bank charges.

Vehicles in service and replacement policy

Trans-Vol currently has 10 vehicles
7 Iveco's
1 VW Crafter
1 Mercedes Sprinter
1 Shop mobility unit 6.5 ton HGV

The VW Crafter and one of the Iveco vehicles are new to the fleet.
A decision was made by the board of Trustees to release £90,000 of the
minibus reserve to purchase the vehicles.

Level of service provided to the Community

Trans-Vol offer a very good service to the residents of Thurrock, a very good range of

transport helping to reduce social isolation, better quality of life and assisting with independent living.

Trans-Vol achieved 39,972 passenger journeys in 2010-2011

They have a good selection of services enabling members to utilise either the social car scheme or accessible minibuses giving members transport options 7 days a week.

The summer and Winter Day Excursions are excellent for giving members the option to travel outside of the area and to have a day of social interaction with other members.

Pricing Structure

The cost per passenger journey was increased in Jan 2011 by 10% A further 5% increase from 1st April 2012

The current charge for travel on minibus services for each single journey

Any distance within Thurrock

Member £2.40 per

person Escort £2.00 per
person

Visits to Basildon

Member £3.10 per person

Escort £2.60 per person

Social Car journeys 45p per mile No min charge

Booking system

Trans-Vol invested into a new software booking system CATSS.

This system used to its full capability will assist with enabling the scheme to work more cost effectively by reducing scheduler time and vehicle dead miles. It also provides correct statistics without the need to keep endless amounts of excel spread sheets.

The data is backed up to CATSS main data base in the event of Trans-Vol having a server problem the data can be recovered.

Unmet Demand

Trans-Vol cannot always fulfil demand on the service due to buses being out of service

due to maintenance work.

Deployment of Staff

Community Transport Review

Trans-volcurrently have 11 paid staff

This is made up of 4 full time drivers, 2 full time Admin, 1 part time driver, 2 part time admin and 2 as and when drivers. They have 7 volunteers who drive for their social car scheme.

Training

In 2010-2011 Trans-Vol trained 29 candidates in Midas Training. MIDAS is a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers.

Trans-Vol is fortunate to have both a qualified DAT (Driver Assessor/Trainer) and PATS (Passenger Assistant Trainer)trainer on its staff.

The current charge for this service is £65 per candidate

Key performance indicators and management information

The key performance indicators required by Thurrock Unitary Authority are submitted quarterly.

The data requested is:

Total Number of members

Total Number of Volunteers working for Trans-Vol

Average net cost per passenger journey

Number of miles undertaken by Trans-Vol (split into mileage with passengers and mileage without passengers)

Total number of journeys not carried out

Number of single journeys undertaken by Trans-Vol

Number of passengers transported to hospital appointments/clinics

Number of passengers transported for social purposes

Maximising opportunities

Trans-Vol was successful in receiving funding to set up the Rural and Urban bus along with the shop mobility unit.

Value to the community

Trans-Volis very valued to the community who access their services provided. They offer a large range of services enabling transport options, by providing transport solutions for the vulnerable adults of Thurrock

Challenges faced to continue offering the services they currently provide

Bus Services Operators Grant – 20% reduction from April 2012

Reduced funding from Thurrock Council compared to previous years

Lack of a robust volunteer network

Ageing vehicles

It must be noted along with challenges comes opportunities of which Trans-Vol must investigate.

Comparison of Services

Trans-Vol

Charges per service

1st April 2012

Single Journey

Within Thurrock (member) £2.40

Single Journey to Basildon £3.10

above Reduced rate for escort

Brentwood CT

Single Journey

Within Brentwood £3.00 min. charge

Then 50p per mile over 6 miles

Journey outside Borough - As

Passenger pays all the dead miles

No charge to escort only membership fee.

Number of Passenger Journeys April 10 – March 11

Social Car Service 12,805

Mini Bus (Dial A Ride) 5,677

Group Hire 15,743

Urban Bus 1,208

Rural Bus 525

Shopping Trips 1,544

Day Trips 2,414

Orsett Hospital Bus 56

TOTAL 39,972

Cost per passenger journey £4.93

Social Car Service 8,965

Accessible Vehicle
(Dial A Ride) 3,108

Group Hire 10,61

ECC School Contract 2,68

South West Essex

Care Trust Contract 27,28

TOTAL 52,646

Cost per passenger journey £1.83

Funding April 10 – March 11

£197,000 Thurrock Unitary Authority

£69,712 Essex County Council

£26,536 Brentwood Borough Council

Brentwood LSP 12 month funding

SWE PCT Contract

ECC Tendered School Contract

Donations/fundraising

Number of Paid Staff 12

7 full time, 2 part/time, 3 as & when.

Number of Paid Staff 11

2 full- time, 6 part/time for contract work

3 part time for

CT

Number of Volunteers 7

Number of Vehicles 7 & Shop M

Fuel Cost £29,121.00

Vehicle Maintenance Cost £30,701.00

£15,912.85

Vehicle Insurance £8,180.00

Vehicle Hire £9,734.00

Total number of vehicle miles 100,449

Vehicle cost per mile £1.29

Community Transport Review

Number of Volunteers 40

Number of Vehicles 7

Fuel Cost £13,895.00

Vehicle Maintenance Cost

Vehicle Insurance £ 6,063.75

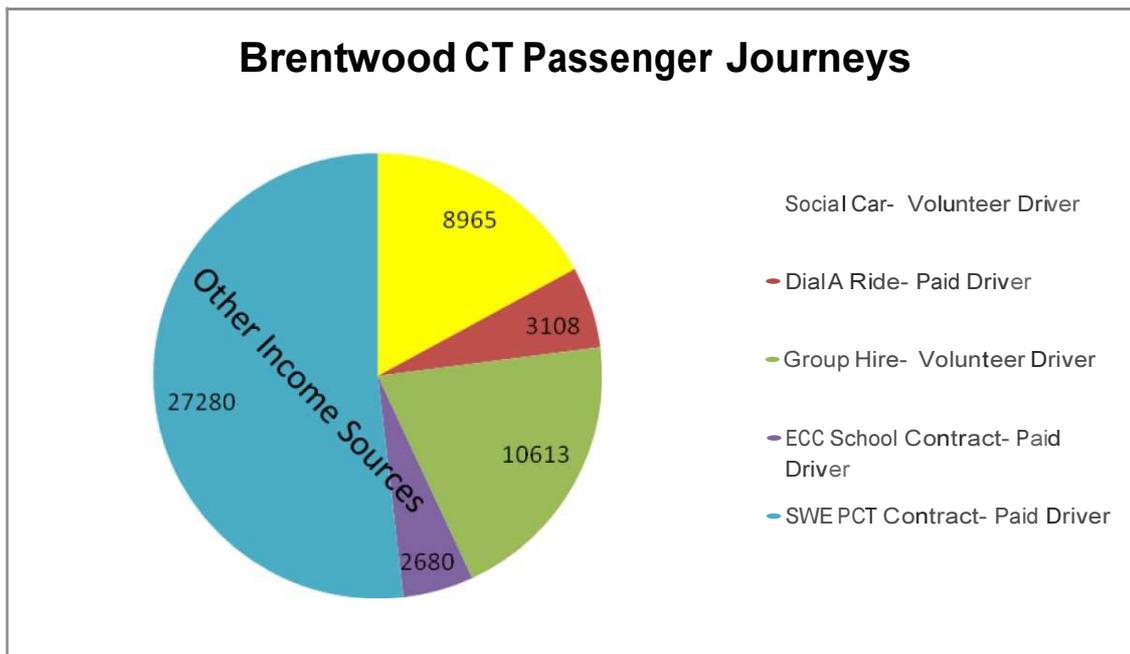
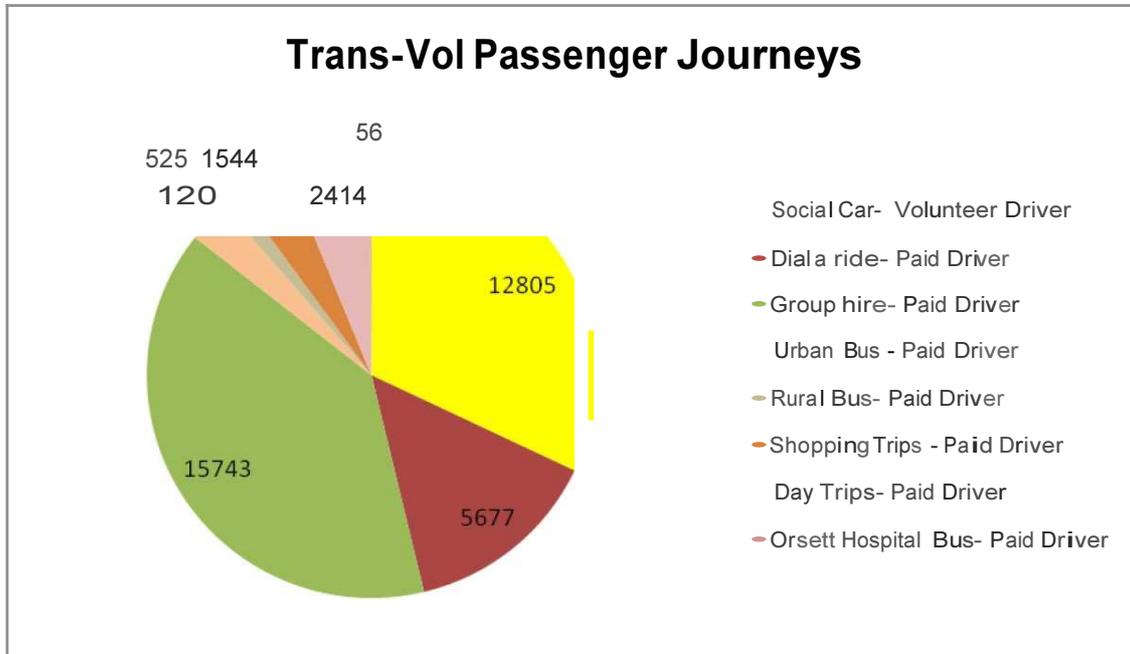
Vehicle hire £9,542.00

Total number of vehicle miles 64,917

Vehicle cost per mile £1.43

Vehicle hired to support fleet during maintenance work
Vehicle hired for contract work

Trans-Volis totally reliant on Thurrock Unitary Authority funding.
 68% of passenger journeys are completed with Paid drivers.
 32% of passenger journeys are completed with Volunteer drivers.



14% of passenger journeys are completed with Paid drivers.
 86% of passenger journeys are completed with Volunteer drivers.

Brentwood Community Transport income is not solely reliant on Essex County Council

/Brentwood Borough Council.

57% of passenger journeys result from other income sources

Current Fleets

Trans-Vol Vehicles

Y567 TKR
OV09 FWG
EY04 BYS
EY04 BYT
EX51 XCM
EU03 RXC
KE04 MVA
EY04 BYX
GN11 DZK

LK09 EHB Shop mobility Unit

Both schemes have ageing vehicles, which are in need of replacing and have high maintenance costs.

Brentwood CT Vehicles

Y527 LPU
EO52ECD
GN55TUV
GN09 HBH
LV03 EUZ
YX60 CKF

Marketing

Trans-Vol office is based 2nd Floor Thameside Complex Orsett Road Grays Essex

On the ground floor is the Library and Theatre booking office with a café, there is no evidence of any advertising of Trans-Vol services

The name Trans-Vol does not give an indication of its services.

Trans-Vol website is out of date and very misleading on cost of service

Recommendations

1. Visibility to the community

- i. A display banner in the foyer of the office building to advertise the service.
- ii. Re brand the name Trans-vol to incorporate Community Transport.

2. Improving the financial position

- i. Generate funding from other sources.
- ii. Better utilisation of a volunteer workforce.
- iii. Introduce a membership charge of £10 per year for individual users and £20 per year group membership in line with all other Community Transport schemes working in Essex.

31st March 2011 Trans-Vol had 4,223 registered users.
- iv. A 3 year Service Level Agreement in place with incentives for Trans-Vol to source other income funding.
This would provide stability and assist decision making to secure the long term future, with only a 12 month agreement in place Trans-Vol is in an unpredictable and uncertain situation. .
- v. Trans-Vol management committee to release funding to purchase new vehicles.

3. Future Strategy

- i. At present due to staffing levels the shop mobility unit is not being utilised and not providing the service to the residents for the purpose it was funded. This needs to be addressed immediately. This vehicle is a wasted opportunity in marketing the services of Trans-Vols.
It may become a financial drain on the scheme.

- ii. Pricing structure needs to be reviewed
Trans-Vol reimburses volunteer dead mileage on social car a minimum charge of £3 to be applied to this service.
Cost of excursions with a paid driver to be increased to ensure all costs are covered.

- iii. Analyse all services offered to ensure they are cost effective.
The Rural Bus Club and the Urban Bus Club were set up with challenge funding; this funding has now come to completion. For the continuation of these services is additional core funding essential

- iv. Daily excursions with a paid driver do not appear to be cost effective and require further investigation.

- v. To follow the ECC example of reporting monthly statistics giving a break- down of service passengers and miles – copy attached

- vi. Make better use of the opportunity to generate income from MIDAS/PATS training. Source of income can generate £3,000+ per annum.

- vii. A recruitment drive for volunteers

- viii. Investigate further streams of income Tender Contracts/Section 22
Bus routes utilising the 2008 Transport Act – A good example of
this in the Thurrock area is a Community Interest Company has
taken over route
374

- ix. Actively investigate other 3rd sector non for profit organisations to
build up vehicle brokerage
A pool of vehicles available from other organisations would
reduce the need to keep ageing fleet.

- x. Investigate working together with Thurrock passenger transport on
sharing resources

- xi. Trans-Vol needs to make better use of charitable status and
investigate the options of becoming a social enterprise.
I have seen no evidence of general fundraising in place, such
as quiz nights, charity tins etc. This is an area a volunteer
could take ownership

- xii. Trans-Vol website is very out of date and misleading
Trans-Vol could investigate Thurrock College IT students who
may volunteer to do this as a project for their course work.

- xiii. Thurrock Council funding to be related to performance.

Passenger Journey Numbers Financial year 2011/12												
Service Description	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Dial A Ride												
Group hire/Brokerage												
Social Car												
Shopper Buses (section 19)			0								0	
Section 22 Routes												
Total passenger journey numbers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Journeys Unable to fulfill												
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Potential Journey Numbers		0									0	0
												0
Mileage by service Type												
Service Description	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Dial A Ride												
Group hire/Brokerage												
Social Car												
Shopper Buses (section 19)												
Section 22 Routes												
Maintenance & Administration												
Total Mileage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Volunteer Numbers												
Volunteer Description	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Volunteers on Book												
Active Volunteers												
CO2 Emmissions - Own Fleet												
Litres of diesel		0	0									
Litres of Petrol		0	0		0	0						
Kg of Co2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guidance												
Passenger Journey Numbers	For services that you do not provide please enter 0 in the appropriate cell, contracted journeys should be entered under Group hire/Brokerage. Please include social car returns received by the 5th of each Month, returns received after this date should be included in next months figures and this indicated in the emailed submission											
Refused/Unable to Fulfil	Please count Group hire/brokerage that you were unable to fulfil as 1 potential Journey											
Mileage by Service Type	Should you not have social car returns by the 5th, please include the totals you have. Should additional Mileage appear in the following month please add this to that months figures. Please use Miles as your unit of measure											
CO2 Emmissions (Own Fleet)	please enter litres of fuel by type for your own vehicles, if renting vehicles please estimate based on mileage											

Example of ECC Monthly Reporting Template for all Community Transport Schemes

Conclusion

n

Trans-Vol is vulnerable being reliant on one source of Grant Funding. To rectify this situation one of Trans-Vols primary objectives must be to make their business structure wider, more diverse, and more robust.

This can be achieved by investment of resources in establishing new funding streams.

Trans-Vol must look at opportunities for smarter working practices and to investigate options of sharing back office functions.

A number of community transport schemes in Essex have compatible booking systems which could be investigated.

Trans-Vol must also invest time and resources within the community to source additional volunteer workforce for the scheme. This investment works in a partnership, working together with the community recruiting volunteers develops a greater awareness of Trans-vol and its services; it will improve the marketing of Trans-Vol to the community as a whole.

To bring about this, a major culture change in Trans-Vol is necessary. A documented plan must be put into place detailing clear performance objectives over the next three years.

Using the Brentwood Community Transport model as a template a reduction of funding from Thurrock Unitary Authority over three years of 50% should be achievable.

However taking into consideration the demographics of the area Trans-Vol service comparison to the area Brentwood Community Transport service a reduction of 30% of funding over three years would be a more realistic target.

Community Transport Schemes supported by Essex County Council

Scheme	ECC Grant	Third party grants	Other income	Budget	ECC % of income	ROI Return on Investment	FTE	Volunteers	Group members	vehicles owned	vehicles available	Year End Accounts used
Basildon	120,770	100,000	137,612	358,382	34%	2.97	5.70	18	20	5	1	31/03/13
Braintree	105,541	47,000	137,459	290,000	36%	2.75	7.00	154	173	6	-	2011-12
Brentwood	69,930	55,704	155,962	281,596	25%	4.03	6.90	46	47	6	2	31/03/13
Castle Point	61,093		24,940	86,033	71%	1.41	3.00	2	52	4	-	31/03/12
Chelmsford	111,626	90,314	66,401	268,341	42%	2.40	6.00	27	70	6	1	email
Colchester	128,257		124,743	253,000	51%	1.97	6.20	40	10	5	4	31/03/13
Epping	82,539	16,000	88,705	187,244	44%	2.27	4.24	24	217	6	1	
Harlow	121,427	7,570	228,407	357,404	34%	2.94	6.16	13	190	9	2	31/03/12
Harwich	71,493		139,982	211,475	34%	2.96	4.00	7	55	10	-	
Maldon	70,085		79,793	149,878	47%	2.14	2.90	41	80	3	-	31/03/12
Rochford	71,181		24,940	96,121	74%	1.35	4.20	14	53	4	-	31/03/13
Tendring	150,392		273,949	424,341	35%	2.82	10.00	32	250	12	3	
Uttlesford	108,539		204,644	313,183	35%	2.89	2.20	32	77	7	-	31/03/13
	1,272,873	316,588	1,687,536	3,276,997	39%	£ 2.57	68.50	450	1,294	83	14	
<i>Average</i>	<i>97,913</i>	<i>52,765</i>	<i>129,810</i>	<i>252,077</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>2.53</i>	<i>5.27</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1</i>	

Notes:

ECC Grant Consideration should be given to CT's that manage local schemes and limited alternative transport options

Third Party Grant Consideration should be given to CT schemes terms of reference and purpose

Other income Consideration should be given to CT scheme function

Budget Consideration should be given to Management structure

% of income Consideration should be given to CT schemes terms of reference and purpose

ROI Consideration should be given to CT scheme function

FTE Consideration should be given to Management structure

Volunteers Consideration should be given to CT location, purpose and function

Group members Consideration should be given to CT purpose and function

Vehicles Consideration should be given to CT Structure and purpose

Available Consideration should be given to CT terms of reference and function

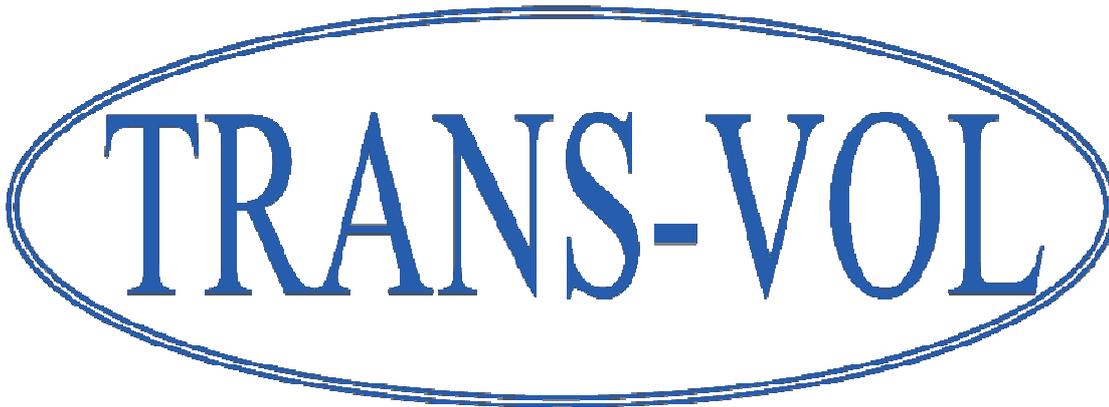


Thurrock's Community Transport

A Report by The Board of Directors on
Questions raised by the Task & Finish
Group

STATUS REPORT & WAY FORWARD

Update for Thurrock Council
Task and Finish Group October 2014



Thurrock's Community Transport

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Purpose of Report

- This Report is designed to answer the specific questions raised by the Council's Task & Finish Group in respect of the withdrawal of all funding from Transvol, the community transport service for the vulnerable people of Thurrock.

Much of the content of this report was extracted (and updated) from a report prepared for the Directors and the Council in 2013, to evaluate the reductions already made that year to the Company's costs and the necessary changes to the Company's operating model needed for the future given the historical and then proposed reduction in Council funding.

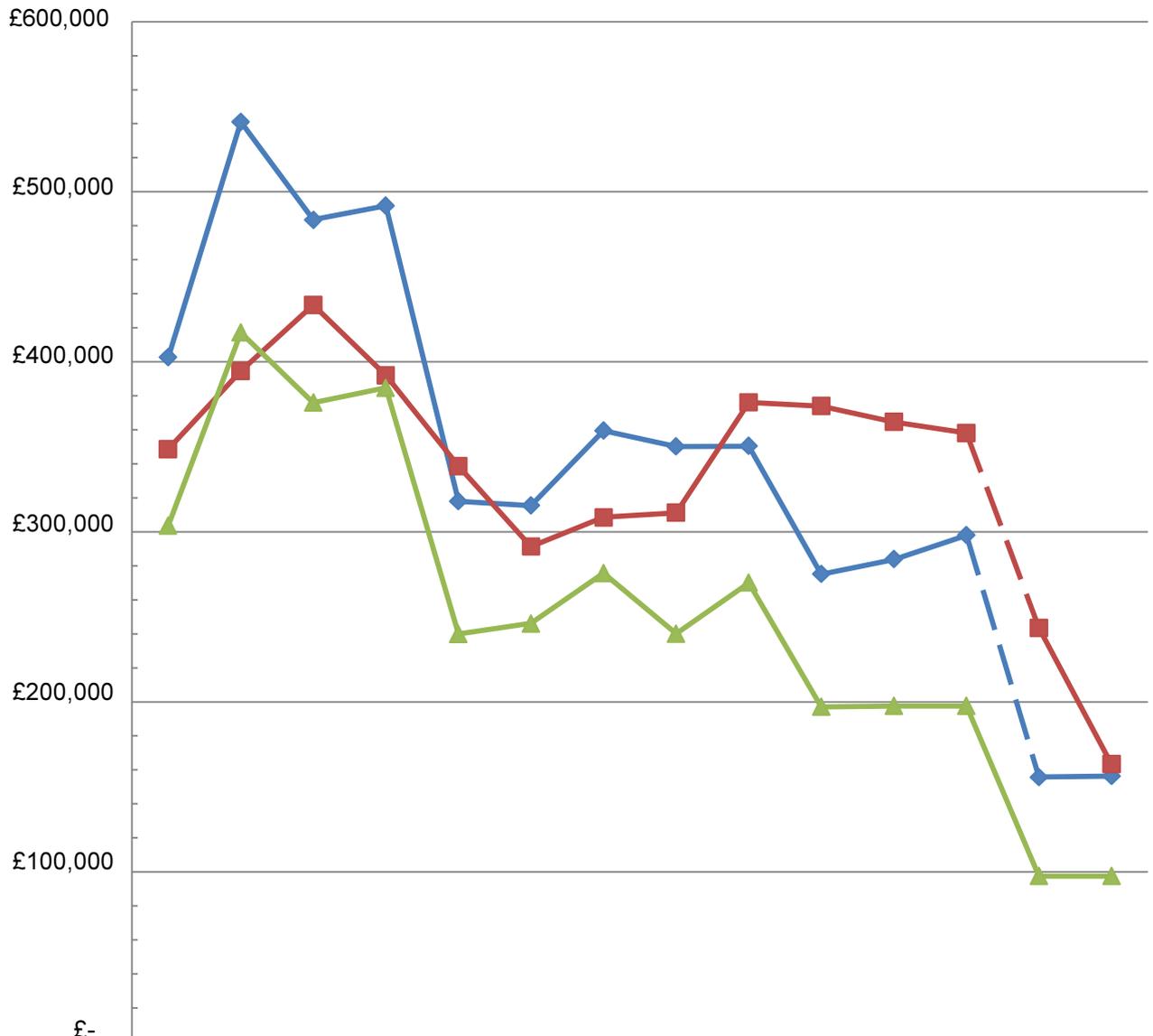
The radical changes proposed in that report have been vigorously pursued and implemented, as is evidenced by the changes to Company's costs.

- Specific Council Questions:
 1. Since being originally advised that funding will be reduced what has TransVol achieved on becoming self-funding?
 2. What your actual annual costs are?
 3. What does TransVol deliver?
 4. What the consequences of removing the grant would be?
 5. What the consequences of reducing the grant would be?
 6. What personal allowances disabled people receive and what these are meant to pay for?

Executive Summary

- Transvol believes it provides a critical service to vulnerable people in Thurrock.
- It believes the benefits of that service are far reaching in wellbeing and financial terms; saving the Council from additional demands for Social care support by maintaining people's independence and preventing social isolation.
- Transvol has demonstrated a willingness and ability to restructure its operations, governance and costs over the last 2 years at a rate far more aggressive than elsewhere in the sector or indeed the Council. This little advertised fact has been done without fanfare or plaudits, and with only marginal impact on services.
- The Directors believe that in delivering the transformation they have, they have demonstrated that Transvol is a service provider worth investing in, and an example to both the Council and other Service providers in showing a willingness and determination to transform.

Trans-Vol Income vs Expenditure



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 Actual	2015 Est.
Total Income	£-	£402,155,6	£541,156,2	£483,4	£491,6	£317,9	£315,4	£359,4	£350,1	£350,3	£275,1	£283,7	£297,9	
Total Expenditure		£348,5	£394,4	£433,3	£391,9	£338,5	£291,3	£308,3	£311,1	£376,0	£373,8	£364,5	£357,9	
Council Core Grant		£243,4	£163,3											

Council Core Grant £303, £417, £375,9 £384,5 £239,7 £246,0 £275,6 £240,0 £270,0 £197,0 £197,4 £197,4
£97,40 £97,4

1. Since being originally advised that funding will be reduced what has TransVol achieved on becoming self-funding?

and

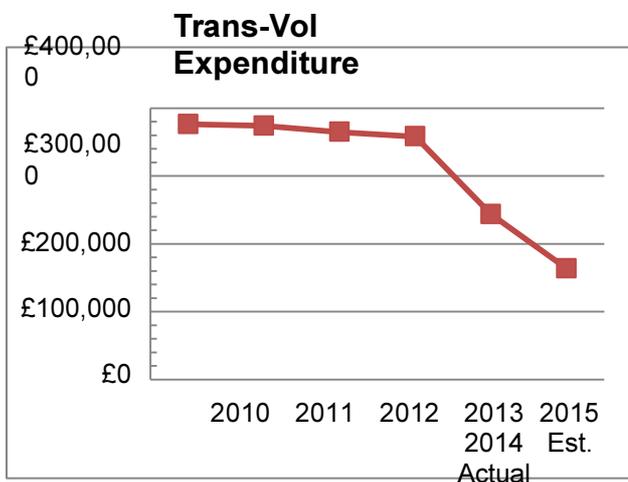
2. What your actual annual costs are?

The Board of Directors and management of the Company have undertaken a number of step changes since early 2013 to bring the Company's governance, operation and overheads under control and stabilised, and to develop a new business model going forward.

These included obtaining (with the Council's support), a review of its operations by the head of a community transport organisation from outside the borough, the appointment of temporary business development officer to investigate fund raising and overview the operational practices, and the commissioning of an investigatory report into the Companies financial and management information by the Company's auditors.

In October 2013, the Company prepared a report for the Board (shared with the Council at the time) outlining the steps already taken, and additional ones planned to move the Company to a new operating model (see Appendix 1).

The recommendation was that to achieve this re-engineered service would require Council core funding of £150,000 in year 1, reducing to £100,000 in years 2 and 3, with a prospect of reducing costs further thereafter. For comparison, the Company's total costs in the prior year had been £357,979.



As a consequence of this and other measures, operating costs for the year ended March 2015 are forecast to reduce year on year by a further 33% to £165,683 (making a total reduction of 54% over the 2 year period).

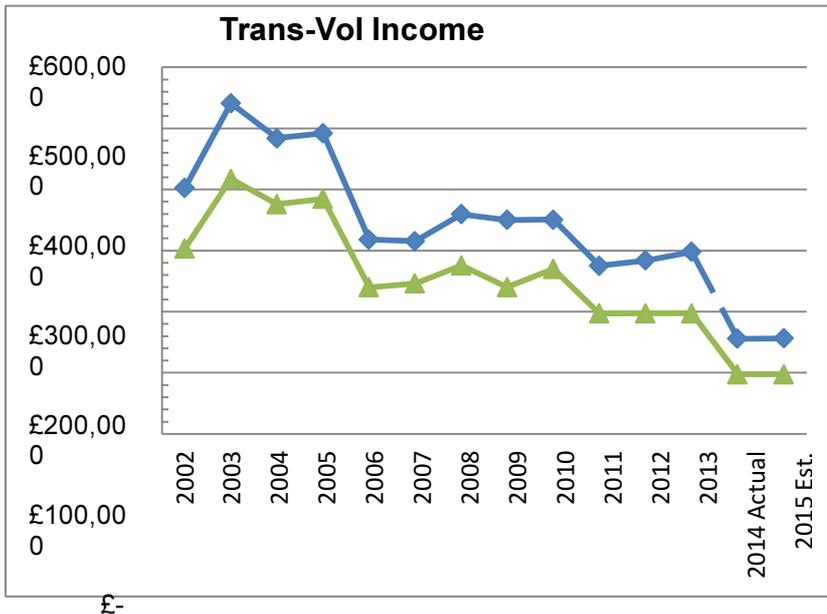
Conversely, non-grant income has risen by 20% (forecast), up 35% compared with the year ended March 2013, largely on the back of raising fares and membership fees.

The net of these changes is that the Company anticipates it's operating shortfall will approximately equal this year's grant funding of £97,400, leaving a

broadly breakeven or marginally positive financial position for the year (for the first time since 2009). However, accumulated years of trading deficits have resulted in minimal reserves.

The Company continues to examine and implement other restructuring opportunities, including establishing contact with other transport organisations. Attempts to contact with more tangential organisations (e.g. TNT who were believed to have shown interest in large metropolitan schemes previously) have proved unsuccessful but we would be keen to explore this option.

Thurrock Council funding over the last 10 years has fallen to 23% of its peak level.



Additionally, in each of the past 4 years, the Company has had to wait past the financial year end to know what funding it would receive, and then each offer was for that financial year. This has made planning and fundraising very difficult; leaving the Company little time to react.

The changes reported to the Council in 2013 concluded that to achieve the re-engineered service would require Council core funding of £150,000 in year 1, reducing to £100,000 in years 2 and 3, with a prospect of reducing costs further thereafter. For comparison, the Company's total costs in the prior year had been £357,979.

Thurrock Council subsequently agreed a one year payment of £97,400 for the year ended April 2015.

In August 2014 we were told there would be no more funding.

3. What does TransVol deliver?

Trans-Vol is Thurrock's only Community Transport Scheme. Formed in 1999, it has charitable status, and offers a critically important transport service to the vulnerable people of Thurrock; helping to reduce social isolation, improving quality of life and assisting with independent living. Its contribution to the prevention of escalating social care need (and associated costs) into substantial and/or critical is self-evident, but almost impossible to measure in monetary terms.

Trans-Vol is well known amongst its target audience, and remains a popular service with a data base of approx. 1,613 passengers and a core frequent user base of 472 –producing some 15,000 plus journeys per year, many of which are for wheelchair and mobility scooter dependent individuals who have little alternative and no public transport option.

Services include enabling members to utilise either the social car service or accessible mini buses to various appointments in the borough – including accessing health related appointments and day activity centres and clubs in the day or evening (e.g. accessing the Stroke Club), shopping for essential sustenance (not everyone can access on-line delivery services).

Summer and winter day excursions are very popular; members' are able to enjoy social interactions they would not otherwise be able to access, or travel beyond the borough to nearby notable locations. Many members find accessing alternative public transport impracticable or impossible, and restriction or withdrawal of services would undoubtedly increase social isolation and erode ability to sustain independence and self-care; increasing the cost of direct support from both the authority and health.

Trans-Vol staff are trained to identify signs of potential care need and/or health problems and are able to raise concerns to the central office in case of need (for onward transmission as appropriate).

Transvol currently undertakes approximately 15,000 journeys a year.

See Appendix 2 for results of the 2013 Customer Satisfaction Survey.

1. What the consequences of removing the grant would be?

and

5. What the consequences of reducing the grant would be?

Operationally, removal of the entire grant would immediately impact services. Firstly the Directors would be advised of their obligations and personal liability under the law in respect of trading whilst insolvent. In addition, the Annual report and Accounts would need to be qualified to the effect that the Company should not be regarded as a going concern (by law, this statement has to cover a period 12 months from the signing of the Accounts).

These issues would undoubtedly begin to impact the Company's ability to trade (e.g. having vehicles serviced and repaired on normal trade credit terms, ability to use and service Fuel Card accounts).

The Directors would be obliged to consider the timing of winding up the charity appropriately, meeting all its outstanding trade and HMRC obligations, and its statutory redundancy payments.

Within this context, the Directors would then assess whether there were existing reserves sufficient to contemplate moving to an unfunded service, and whether that option were sustainable.

The Company has 4 key areas of operations and costs:

- a. Operations (e.g. drivers, insurance, van related maintenance and running costs etc.)
- b. Booking service (e.g. IT system, staff, phone system)
- c. Overheads (e.g. management of staff and assets, premises)
- d. Governance (e.g. auditors, accountancy, payroll, company insurance etc.)

It is likely that the normal van based transport services would have to cease; with all paid drivers (5) made redundant and the vehicles sold. This would also remove all capability to transport wheelchair and mobility scooter passengers.

The remaining 2 staff involved with booking would also need to be made redundant, and an investigation begun to establishing a more limited availability booking service to manage the volunteer driver fleet, based on volunteers with potentially 1 paid, part-time manager.

What Services Could Be Provided?

No funding

With a volunteer only service utilising private vehicles the services would only be able to provide day-time only journeys for non-wheel chair dependent individuals. No clubs or group outings would be available unless appropriately qualified drivers could be sourced on a volunteer basis. In any event, our experience is that such an arrangement is hard to set-up and difficult to sustain with the hours volunteer drivers are willing to donate and their commitment to regular participation, and would require vehicles being hired for specific occasions.

Despite a recent recruitment drive to increase the volunteer driver base, currently only 15% to 20% of journeys utilise the volunteer driver service, accounting for only some 2,500/3,000 trips out of the current 15,000.

At this level of service it is questionable as to whether the service is worth continuing.

Partial Funding

The outcome here is of course entirely dependent upon what funding is available. However, assuming say funding at £50,000, guaranteed for say three years, it is feasible to contemplate reducing the service in different ways, illustratively:

- Moving the booking service to a volunteer only basis
- Relocating premises and down-sizing
- Moving the Company into a larger company structure, finding synergies in administrative costs, reducing and removing governance costs (e.g. avoiding a solus audit fee)
- Using existing reserves to fund transition to a new model
- Downsizing the fleet to smaller vehicles
- Sharing vehicles and drivers within a larger company pool of resource
- Increasing income by leveraging the remaining fleet to secure commercial transport contracts by restricting availability during peak times.

Full costings and forecasts would need to be prepared and the timetable for moving to a newer model worked. Fundamentally, the existing Directors would have to agree to the proposal, which would likely remove them from post.

The change in service would be much less dramatic than the no funding route, but there will inevitably be some loss in service, with the consequential impact on the vulnerable customer base.

6. What personal allowances disabled people receive and what these are meant to pay for?

Please see attached Appendix 3, a briefing paper on the new Personal Independence Payment benefit, prepared by Thurrock Coalition.

Appendix 1 – Copy of original 2013 Report & Recommendations

Since the beginning of 2013, Trans-Vol has been in a process of a fundamental review and re-engineering of its governance, operational, financial systems and processes. As a consequence there have been a number of significant changes within the organisation, all designed to bring the organisation back under control, to install a new, more efficient and appropriate business model, and to move towards a more commercially sustainable business based on information and knowledge.

During this review process, a number of policies and practices have come to light which have required significant investigation and remediation, covering operations management, management information reporting, financial management, and governance. The Board of Directors now believe that it has completed this investigatory and remediation stage, and can now focus on delivering a new operating model, appropriate to the current environmental circumstance.

In summary, the major changes have been:

1. Strengthening business acumen and decision making
2. Recruiting immediate new skills and improving efficiency
3. Improving business checks and controls
4. Improving governance and adherence to best practice
5. Bringing financial and management information and analysis under control
6. Development of strategic options and target operating models

1. *Strengthening business acumen and decision making*

There appeared to be some weakness in the current staff structures and board membership.

Action:

By mutual agreement, the Chief Executive position was disestablished in March 2013, and the incumbent made redundant. The Board of Directors was strengthened by the recruitment of additional resource, experienced in business and financial management, governance.

The Operations Committee structure was disbanded, with monthly meetings of the full Board undertaken with appropriate record keeping.

Decision making lines were shortened with the departure of the Chief Executive; the Operations manager is now reporting directly to the Board and attending all meetings.

In order to keep decision making fast and responsive, the Directors resigning from the Board (see 3. below) have not been replaced.

2. *Recruiting immediate new skills into the business/improving efficiency*

Following early discussions with officers of the Council and in the context of the report compiled by Brentwood Community Transport in 2012, it was apparent that there was an immediate need to identify a series of “quick wins” in improving the operational and financial position of the Company.

Action:

To manage through these changes, a part-time business development consultant was retained who could assist in defining a new membership and travel tariff structure, work with the Operations Manager to identify operational and other efficiencies, and begin a search for additional funding outside of the Council.

This work has been completed with a new pricing structure established and made operational in July 2013. Annual membership can now be purchased for £10, with non-members still allowed to travel, but levied an additional £2.50 for each trip (on top of the fare).

Fares have been increased to £3 for trips less than 4 miles, and £4.50 over 4 miles. Escorts/carers are charged a flat £2 per trip.

In addition, excursions and day trips are now costed and charged appropriately, but with an emphasis on keeping journey times/distance reasonable/close (to reduce costs).

A re-launch of the MIDAS training and associated charging was undertaken to maximise the opportunity for additional income. Now achieving some £5K per year.

In terms of raising external financing, using their network of business contacts and other leads, the contracted business development manager has gained in principle agreements for one-off charitable funding of between £20,000 and £30,000.

However, every potential sponsor has confirmed that no formal and binding agreement for monies will be forthcoming without first receiving written confirmation of the Council's funding for next year. So we feel in a catch 22 situation. We need some funding commitment beyond the current financial year in order to prove sustainability and so attract external finance..

The mini-bus fleet has been reduced from 9 to 6 (currently), and the paid driver pool allowed to reduce to 2 FTE by agreed compromise agreements with a reduction in the cost of the drivers terms and conditions.

3. Improving business checks and controls

It has been evident that a number of practices and inadequate control processes have been allowed to develop over time. Illustratively, contracts for services (e.g. vehicle tracker) have been maintained, but the information and indeed need for the system has never been reviewed.

Whilst vehicle checks and certification of the mini-bus fleet has been fastidious, management of the volunteer driver service has been less considered. It was realised that a greater use of these volunteers was efficient and a successful recruitment campaign was undertaken via Ngage.

Action:

All income is reconciled back to the journey commissioning system to account for income. Scheduling of drivers is done to minimise "dead" mileage to collections, and incurring of subsistence for meal breaks. Drivers collected fares are immediately paid to the company, and then they only claim their mileage.

Following the new recruitment campaign, a new panel of volunteer drivers is operational and although modest in absolute terms, accounted income has increased markedly.

A forensic audit by the Company's auditors has provided invaluable information on the Company's actual activity, and its reconciliation to the financial drivers within the current operating model.

A number of contracts for example - the supply of IT support - have been reviewed and either cancelled or fees negotiated downwards.

4. Improving governance and adherence to best practice

There was some anxiety around the governance of the organisation and this was reviewed.

Action:

It is in the context of the Charities Commission guidelines and Company's own constitution that Directors were advised that their position as both Directors and volunteer drivers was seen as untenable and as a consequence they decided to resign their directorships.

Transvol is thus currently quorate with 6 Directors – three of whom use the service.

5. Bringing financial and management information and analysis under control

Not uncommon amongst companies that have historically had an initial period substantial positive cash-flows and surplus cash balances (as TransVol did), is the absence of development of sufficient financial information and forecasts.

Action:

The Company's Auditors were commissioned to undertake a forensic examination of the financial records that do exist, and thereafter to construct an accurate picture of the current position, current expenditure rates, and forecast for the remainder of the year 2013.

They were also asked to examine the source data of management information, to compare and validate this information against all manual logs and records kept for every driver and van, and then to produce robust information on the relative costs associated with the core operations of the business; namely volunteer drivers, mini-bus services, and overheads and booking service.

This information has been invaluable; enabling the Board and Operations Manager to fully understand the scale and nature of the Company's position. As a result, the Board has been able to create a clear plan for the next 2/3 years (see later), as well as build a robust and detailed financial budget going forward.

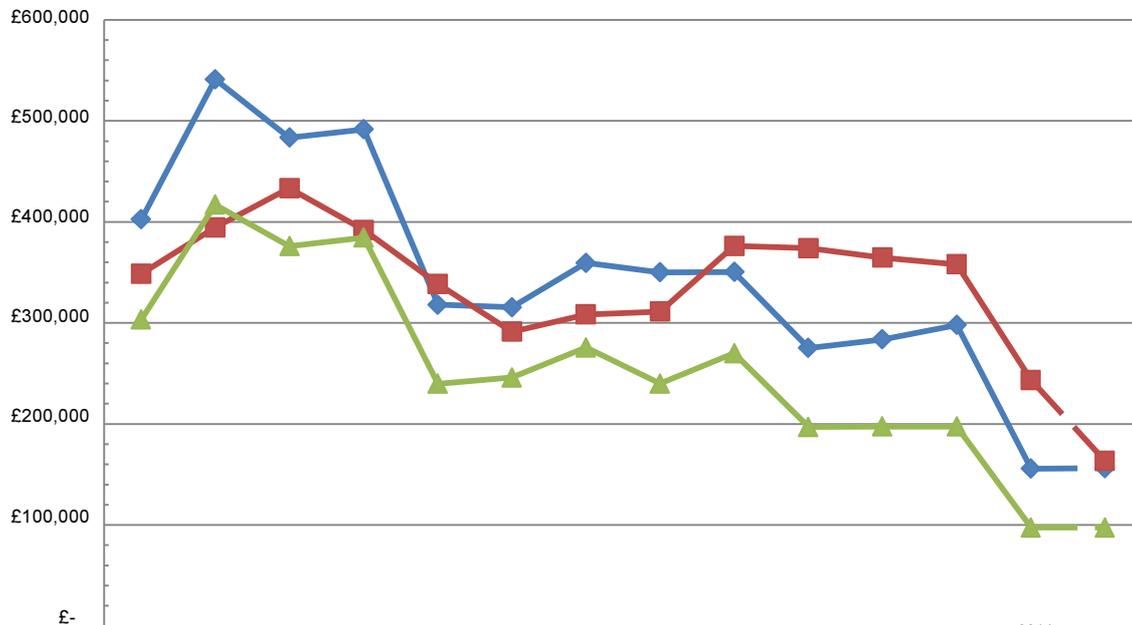
6. Development of strategic options and target operating models

Trans-Vol had operated a material operating deficit for the 6 years up to 2014.

As the following chart illustrates, in the period from 2010 until the year ended March 2013, the core grant received from Thurrock Council dropped by £72,600 p.a. (27%) from £270,000 to £197,400.

However, even in the face of these reductions in funding, total operating costs over the same 4 year period were relatively stagnant, reducing by only £18,967 (5%).

Trans-Vol Income vs Expenditure



	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 Actual	2015 Est.
Total Income	£402,439	£541,069	£483,419	£491,689	£317,942	£155,659	£315,453	£359,442	£350,113	£350,336	£275,105	£283,771	£297,937	£97,400
Total Expenditure	£348,587	£394,454	£433,339	£391,912	£338,588	£291,315	£308,375	£311,162	£376,092	£373,885	£364,582	£357,979	£357,979	£97,400
	£303,389	£417,097	£375,913	£384,517	£239,741	£246,000	£275,600	£240,000	£270,000	£197,000	£197,000	£197,400	£197,400	£97,400

The result has been the draining of accumulated reserves by £264,535, to leave only a modest balance attributable to members at the beginning of the current financial year. At the same time, the current fleet of vehicles has aged with no programme for replacement, leaving a high maintenance cost and poor reliability. This aspect further drove previous management to retain “spare” vehicles to act as contingency for breakdowns, but so increasing vehicle overheads in tax, insurance, safety certification and of course basic non-age related maintenance.

Action:

The accumulated actions outlined above have reduced the total expenditure for the financial year ended March 2014 by £114,496; i.e. by 32% of the previous year’s expenditure.

However, core funding from Thurrock Council for the year fell dramatically to £97,400; just over half the prior year’s funding. As a consequence, there was a further diminution of reserves by some £85,000.

It was clear to the Board in 2013 that it could no longer allow the negative cash-flow to continue and that a fundamental change was needed to both the cost structures and operating model for the business. It has vigorously pursued and delivered those changes. However, notwithstanding this, it is clear that operating the service for the vulnerable people of Thurrock is providing a valuable and substantial improvement in the wellbeing of those residents using the service, whom without it might well accelerate their need of additional support from Adult Social Care and other services at substantial cost.

Thus as the Company re-examines how to deliver best value, so the Council will need to re-consider its own budgetary constraints and opportunities to support the service at a realistic level, particularly with a view to accessing monies lying outside the traditional “transport” budgets, and look also to opportunities from otherwise prescribed as “prevention” monies in other directorates.

Current Financial & Operating Model

As mentioned previously, the Company's Accountants were commissioned by the Board to undertake a forensic level examination of both financial and other management information.

With this grounding, the Board has undertaken its own analysis of cost drivers and service provided, the results of which are contained in an 8 page report which was presented to the Board in October 2013.

Synopses of the major findings in that report are presented below:

- By the end of this financial year, the Company will have cash reserves in the order of £75,000. However, some £30,000 is retained for redundancies, leaving only £45,000 of free reserves.
- Given the current expenditure rate, the Board is only able to consider continuing to trade beyond March 2014 if it can be comfortable that the financial budget for the year was at least break-even.
- If expenditure was constrained to the current run-rate (i.e. down nearly 1/3 on the year ended March 2013), and assuming the undertakings obtained by the Business Development Consultant are delivered and the income derived by the company from its members and customers is maintained, the net operating deficit needing to be covered by Thurrock Council for the financial year 2014/2015 would total approximately £150,000.

The Board recognises the scale of requirement of the Council in ever challenging financial circumstances, and with this in mind, proposes further changes to its operating model going forward:

The business and cost-base of the Company can be divided into 3 basic components;

1. The mini-van service (sometimes denoted "dial-a-ride"), including day trips and excursions.
2. The volunteer-driver car service.
3. The overheads and booking operation.

Comparison of the first two areas of service reveals some stark (if obvious) contrasts in the fully absorbed costs of each area. The following table was constructed on the figures covering the months of April to August. They do not include the passenger figures for day-trips.

Prepared by JHP 14/09/2013		<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mileage	Minibus	6,729	6,586	5,150	6,455	5,300	30,221
	Car	1,812	2,006	1,500	1,750	641	7,708
Net Cost per mile	Minibus	1.25	1.12	1.09	1.24	1.19	
	Car	0.24	0.22	0.10	0.09	0.06	
No of journeys	Minibus	1,192	1,174	957	1,155	1,000	5,478
	Car	201	239	184	228	73	925
Net Cost per journey	Minibus	7.03	6.28	5.86	6.92	6.31	
	Car	2.18	1.87	0.82	0.69	0.50	
No of Net Cost per passenger	Car	212	249	188	229	73	951
	Minibus	6.61	5.71	5.60	6.51	5.65	
	Car	2.07	1.80	0.81	0.69	0.50	

The conclusions are clear:

- The costs of transporting people by mini-bus are 9 to 10 times more expensive than by volunteer-driver. Invariably the paid driver and cost of maintenance, depreciation and running costs are higher, but passenger load/utilisation per trip is woefully low.
- The mini-bus service is typified by fixed costs, whereas volunteer drivers are fully variable.
- The number of journey's being taken by mini-bus is a factor of having the vans in place plus an insufficient number of volunteer drivers, rather than the actual demand for this size and capability of vehicle (i.e. wheelchair accessible).

There are of course other factors which need to be accommodated; illustratively a recent recruitment drive for new volunteer drivers has increased the pool of resource, however the reliability of that resource is sometimes challenging. Additionally, whilst the use of mini-buses for short haul work is expensive, their utility and contribution when used to run the day-trips and occasional evening club runs is indispensable.

The Board have therefore agreed further actions to take forward (subject to securing the funding outlined above) as follows:

Proposed Way Forward

1. Recruit a volunteer fund raiser to further enhance the Company derived income. The focus will be not just on sponsorship monies but also in generating social activities for members which can also assist in generating funds for the service.
2. Undertake a "full-bore" recruitment drive for volunteer drivers through local media with an appropriate budget (say up to £10k); illustrating the terms and contribution such a service provides.

We will also recruit volunteer drivers for accessible transport.

3. Reduce the number of paid drivers. Dependent upon 1. above, this may have to be a gradual process to maintain capacity (and so income).

The target operating model may retain some paid driver hours to facilitate day-trips and unsocial hours driving, but this will be assessed going forward according to need.

In order to maximise the reduced driver hours, the roles will need to be 4 x part-time roles of 18.5 hours per week each, combined into a shift pattern.

4. Replace all current mini-buses with small/medium wheelchair accessible vehicles (as opposed to the current up to 18 seat models). Typically these will be styled more like an accessible taxi, having capacity of say one wheelchair or scooter and 2/3 ambulant passengers/carers.

These replacement vehicles will be acquired on lease-hire basis. Current enquiries show a substantial potential saving in all areas of cost when compared to the current fleet, including terms which include replacement vehicles are supplied as and when needed (e.g. to cover maintenance).

5. The changes mentioned above do impact on the very popular and valuable weekend and evening excursions. However, the Board has negotiated in principle agreements to have non-peak hour/day access to appropriate larger fully accessible mini-buses owned by another company serving the disabled people sector on a highly competitive day rate basis, and so retain the service.

6. Having re-designed the operating model for the service delivery, the next area or re-engineering must be the booking service. Currently bookings are taken by paid staff and on occasion also by the Operations Manager.

Whilst a new booking system has been used for some time, its productivity is unclear.

The Board will commission further investigations of the booking process (including its hours of availability) with a view to reducing the cost of this vital element of the service (which together with overheads accounts for some £80/90k of cost per year).

7. Lastly, in driving down the costs and paid resources of Trans-Vol, and particularly the removal of position of Chief Executive, so new challenges have arisen in terms of day to day leadership, oversight and control. Whilst the current Operations Manager is fully engaged in the day-to-day running of the service, there is no resource dedicated to managing either the corporate entity or its further development, other than the time volunteered by the Directors.

Given the current financial position of the Company, the Board believes that a full-time Chief Executive is neither affordable nor necessary. The degree of managerial supervision required, and the limited opportunities for corporate development suggest a part-time post may be sufficient, although recruitment of a suitable individual on such terms may be problematic.

Longer term therefore, the Board will look to an alternate governance model, potentially merging the company into another body corporate with complementary aims and values. Such a body should operate within Thurrock, ideally serve a similar constituency of vulnerable people, and have the financial and operational capability and capacity to offer synergistic savings in areas such as book-keeping, Human Resources, Health & Safety, and Audit etc. In addition, the current operational structure could then be managed from existing resource, avoiding the need for a Chief Executive position entirely.

Governance would pass to the structure already existing within the receiving entity, with the existing Board (with its user representation) potentially becoming an advisory board.

The Board believe that the net result of these changes should produce additional savings in the order of £50,000 minimum.

Appendix 2

Trans-Vol

Passenger Survey 2013 – Key Findings

Conducted in March and April 2013, the passenger satisfaction survey was conducted amongst the top 250 frequent users of the service.

Most respondents were contacted by phone by an independent charity to preserve the anonymity of the member.

Q1. Describe briefly what is it you like about Trans-vol ?

1. Overwhelmingly, comments continually refer to the great service drivers give, particularly polite, helpful, safe, pleasant, friendly, considerate and cheerful.
2. Door to door service remains a critical service, frequent comments received.
3. The only form of getting around and would not get out regularly otherwise.
4. Price and reliability are frequent comments.
5. Ability to use wheelchairs and walking aids often mentioned.
6. The ONLY service that really cares for disabled and excluded people in Thurrock

Q2. How often do you use Trans-Vol?

- 60% of our returns said they use the service once a week.
- 30% of our returns said they use the service twice a week
- 10% replied saying occasional or as and when.
- There were many comments stating they would use more if there were no restrictions.

Q3. What do you use Trans-Vol for?

A large range of answers received; most frequent were.

1. shopping
2. visiting clubs
3. day trips
4. visiting doctor/dentist

Q4. How satisfied are you with the service?

Average Score 8

76% of our total returns rated us at 10 which is excellent service

92% of our frequent users who were phoned rated our service at 10 excellent.

Passengers who gave us lower scores appear generally to be happy with the trip however stated other reasons. Namely,

1. Not being able to book more than 7 days in advance.
2. Restrictions on the number of trips they can have.
3. Restrictions on day trip opportunities i.e. more places to go
4. Delay in waiting for picking up passengers en route.

Q5. What would you like to change?

Numerous suggestions were put forward. However 76% of our returns have either not commented on this question or have actually stated they would not change a thing. Of the returns where passengers have commented, top suggestions would be,

1. more vehicles so more availability
2. more drivers so more availability
3. longer lead time for booking
4. Reinstate hospital visits.
5. Would like a Sunday service other than pub lunches/day trips
6. More evening services particularly in the summer months.

Q6. Value for Money

78% of our returns state that they consider the service's value for money as being satisfied or better. 60% rank us 8 out of 10 or higher.

Q7. Are you able to book on your travel choice?

This is a poorly answered question with 40% not answering. Our average score is 6. Whilst difficult to draw conclusions it would suggest some passenger dissatisfaction.

Q8. Would you recommend Trans-Vol to friends?

92% of our survey have answered yes they would recommend our service.

Q9. What is the most convenient way of booking?

86% of our survey said they use the telephone to make bookings, 7% said they call at the office the remainder used email or did not answer.

Q10. What times would you like Trans-Vol to operate?

Very inconclusive given that passengers tended to tick multiple boxes The all times box is regularly ticked along with weekdays 9 till 5 .The only deduction we can safely conclude is that passengers would like as many working hours as possible 7 days a week.

Q11. What would you be willing to pay for a fare increase this year?

Passengers appear to be well informed of reduced funding and have answered this question candidly. 91% of passengers supported a price increase .

Asked for a willingness to pay between £2.50 up to £3.00.

- 55% said they were willing to pay £3.00 for a fare
- 25% prepared to pay £2.70.
- 12% did not answer the question.
- the remainder gave other amounts..

Q12. Would you consider paying an annual membership?

- 77% of those who replied said they would be prepared to pay an annual membership.

The survey asked for a fee suggestion.

- The two top answers were £5 or £10 although there were extremities of up to £50.

Many of the replies stated comments or further questions. Of the comments it was reasonable to conclude:

- Would pay if it kept/improved the service
- What would I get in return?
- Can I get more bookings if I pay the membership?
-

Given it was a straight forward question with no real detail; it would suggest support at this stage.

Appendix 3 - Thurrock Coalition Paper on PIP



Thurrock Coalition

Briefing Paper on Personal Independence Payment & Implications for Transport in Thurrock

Introduction

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) replaces working age Disability Living Allowance (DLA) from April 2013. To get the personal independence payment (PIP) you must be aged 16-64.

PIP is an added-costs benefit, (i.e. providing Disabled people with the means to meet the added costs of living with an impairment each and every day of their lives), be that the additional costs arising from (but not limited to) transport, housing, education, employment, diet, heating, energy, water.

PIP is not means tested and is payable to Disabled people who are in or out of work. In fact, it enables a lot of people to travel and to access the communities in which they live - be that through use of the cash payment to use as needed to book appropriate accessible transport services which offer greater flexibility, accessibility, freedom, choice and control than public transport and taxis, which are often much more costly.

The Eligibility Rules for PIP

- Satisfy the daily living and/or mobility activities test (see the Appendices to this paper) for 3 months prior to claiming and be likely to continue to satisfy this test for a period of at least 9 months after claiming. You will not necessarily have to wait 3 months from your date of claim before getting PIP as the qualifying period starts from when your eligible needs arise and not from when you make a claim.
- Pass the residence and presence tests - You will not be able to claim PIP once you are 65 years old but you will be able to stay on PIP if you claimed or received it before you reached the age of 65. (If you are over 65 you can claim attendance allowance)

- You can receive PIP whether you are in or out of work.
- The weekly amounts of PIP are as follows:

Daily Living Component:

standard rate	If you have a limited ability to carry out daily living activities - £53.00
enhanced rate	If you have a severely limited ability to carry out daily living activities - £79.15

Mobility Component:

standard rate	If you have a limited mobility - £21.00
enhanced rate	If you have a severely limited mobility - £55.25

- If you have a terminal illness (that is if you are suffering from a progressive disease where death can be expected within 6 months) you will automatically receive the daily living component enhanced rate. You will also be able to apply for the mobility component and receive it immediately if you qualify.
- If you are in a care home you will be entitled to the mobility component so long as you satisfy the qualifying conditions.
- If you are paid PIP you are free to spend the money in the way that suits you best.

PIP and Transport

The new PIP thresholds are much stricter than DLA, meaning that thousands of people who currently receive DLA are unlikely to be entitled to PIP, leading to increased isolation, decreased mobility, lack of social inclusion, interaction and

participation increased risk of poor health, mental health conditions, reduced well-being, morbidity, mortality.

Under DLA, a disabled person is usually entitled to the higher rate if they are unable to walk more than 50 metres. Under PIP, the relevant distance is reduced to 20 metres.

Personal Independence Payment, as with DLA, is a vital source of independence for Disabled people. The Enhanced Rate is much more difficult to obtain than the current "Higher Rate" equivalent of DLA.

The positive impact of entitlement to the Enhanced Rate of PIP will be multi-faceted in improving full enjoyment of civil, social, economic and cultural rights of Disabled people, particularly given the effect of "passporting" to other schemes such as (but not limited to) Motability, Disabled Persons Railcard and Disabled Persons Buss Pass. The strict eligibility criteria means that vast numbers of Disabled People will suddenly become ineligible and have to seek support from statutory services and other sectors.

The new 20 metre distance threshold under PIP is very low and serves only to constrain the independence of Disabled people rather than to champion and support disabled people to exercise full choice and control over their daily lives. The new 20 metre threshold will have a disproportionate impact upon disabled people who can move between 20 metres and 50 metres.

20 metres is an insufficient walking distance for a person to carry out out-of doors daily moving activities for example, getting to a bus stop, walking to a shop or even from a parked car and using a shop, even if they can rest before returning to the car. This in turn means that the demand for an accessible door-to-door transport service for disabled people, older people and people with limited mobility will increase. People who currently qualify for a Motability car, who can walk more than 20 metres but no more than 50 metres would then lose their support, car or scooter, and potentially their job. They would then present an immediate need for alternative accessible transport solutions such as Trans-Vol. Often, bus stops/stations or other transport hubs are not close enough to people's home to allow them to catch a bus or train for all journeys to the shops, hospital, G.P. or to visit friends.

Many Disabled people only use public transport as a last resort as the journeys are often long ordeals filled with apprehension, which in turn lead to extensive exhaustion and pain. Door to door, accessible transport services are much better suited to offer this key and vital service to people with restricted mobility and wheelchair-users, young and old alike, who would otherwise have no choice but to be trapped in their homes with no prospect of a good quality of life and well-being. PIP is a vital lifeline to enable Disabled people to live independently. If they were to lose this benefit, this would lead to social isolation, not being able to move far enough to get to public transport, not being able to access social networks, friends, families and in turn resulting in reduced choice and control around how and when to

try and leave the house. Wider consequences are also likely to include severely reduced inclusion, participation and involvement and even the potential onset of mental health problems and a need for costly intervention from social care, health and other statutory services, leading to a greater need for more frequent journeys to the G.P. and/or hospital for the individual and also greater cost implications for national and local authorities in the long term.

Thurrock Coalition – August 2014

Appendices

The Eligibility Tests relating to Personal Independence Payment

The Activities Tests:

In order to qualify for PIP you will have score a certain number of points in relation to 12 activities. These are:

- Preparing food.
- Taking nutrition.
- Managing therapy or monitoring a health condition.
- Washing and bathing.
- Managing toilet needs or incontinence.
- Dressing and undressing
- Communicating verbally.
- Reading and understanding signs, symbols and words.
- Engaging with other people face to face.
- Making budgeting decisions.
- Planning and following journeys. (used in the test for the mobility component)
- Moving around. (used in the test for the mobility component)

The assessment model is deficit-based (i.e. focussing upon things that individuals are unable to do):

- Each activity has a set of descriptors. Points are awarded for each activity that you cannot do based on whether you fit a descriptor within those activities. If you can show that a descriptor applies to you for 6 months within a 12 month period you will be awarded the appropriate points. If more than one descriptor applies you will be awarded whichever descriptor gives you the most points.
- For a descriptor to apply you must be able to reliably complete the activity as described in the descriptor. 'Reliably' means whether they can do so:
- **Safely** –the activity must be unlikely to cause harm to you or to another person.
- **To a necessary and appropriate standard** – given the nature of the activity.
- **Repeatedly** – as often as is reasonably required.
- **In a timely manner** – in a reasonable time period.
- If you have a fluctuating condition the most appropriate descriptor will be the one which is likely to apply for the greatest proportion of that time.
- If you are waiting for further treatment, the descriptor that applies to you will be based on your existing situation rather than based on assumptions about any future improvement in your health.

Entitlement Thresholds:

- The entitlement thresholds (pass mark) for the rates and components of the PIP are:
- Daily Living component (activities 1 to 10)
Standard rate: 8 points
Enhanced rate: 12 points
- Mobility component (activities 11 to 12)
Standard rate: 8 points
Enhanced rate: 12 points

How will the Activities Tests be applied?

- An independent healthcare professional will look at your claim and any medical evidence from your GP or consultant, if you have one.

- You may have to attend a face-to-face consultation with the independent healthcare professional. If so you will be able to take someone with you such as a family member or carer.
- The independent healthcare professional will then advise a benefit decision maker at the Department for Work and Pensions who will be the one who actually decides if you are entitled to PIP and which component applies.
- The decision maker will also decide the length of your award and the date when it will be reviewed, based on the likelihood of your health condition or impairment changing.
- Depending on your circumstances you may get a short award of up to 2 years or a longer award lasting up to 5 or 10 years. If you are given a longer award you may still be contacted, during this time, to see if your needs have changed.

PIP and DLA

- If you are currently receiving disability living allowance (DLA) and you are between the ages of 16 and 64 you will be sent a written invitation to claim PIP to see if you satisfy the rules for the new benefit.
- If you pass the PIP test you will be awarded it straight away. You will not have to meet the PIP 3 month qualifying period but you will have to satisfy the 9 month test.
- There are currently no proposals to migrate you onto PIP if you are a child under 16 or an adult on attendance allowance or over 65 and claiming DLA.

PIP and 16 year olds

- If you are receiving DLA as a child, from October 2013 your parent/guardian will be sent a letter once you are 15 years and 7 months old telling you about claiming PIP.
- If your 16th birthday is before October you will be asked to complete a DLA renewal form instead and be reassessed for PIP at a later date, after October 2013.

PIP and Carer's Allowance

- The Government intends that both the daily living components of PIP will act as a passport to carer's allowance in the same way as the middle and higher rate care component of disability living allowance.

PIP and Motability

- It is intended that you will be able to qualify for Motability Scheme help if you are receiving the enhanced mobility component of PIP.

PIP and "Passporting"

- The DWP will be working with the Department for Transport (DfT) and the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales to decide how people on PIP will be "passporting" to help with transport needs and costs. Currently the higher rate mobility component of DLA is a passport to: automatic qualification for a Blue Badge, eligibility for concessionary travel (free off-peak travel on local buses), exemption from Vehicle Excise Duty, the age at which a driver licence can be issued (16 instead of 17) exemption from payment for a medical examination for the purpose of obtaining an exemption from wearing seat belts

Timetable for the Introduction of PIP

- April 2013 – An initial pilot of a few thousand new PIP claims in the North West and parts of the North East of England.
- June 2013 – All new claims will be for PIP.
- October 2013 - Reassessment/migration of anyone whose DLA award is due to end or who report a change in condition and young people who reach the age of 16.
- October 2015 - Full reassessment/migration as part of rolling schedule using a random national selection, including those with a lifetime or indefinite award of DLA .

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12 November 2014		ITEM: 7
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
European Union Funding Programmes		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key	
Report of: Stephen Taylor, Projects and Programmes Manager		
Accountable Head of Service: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The Member States of the European Union have agreed a new regional policy for the period 2014-20 which focuses on economic growth. The funds which support the delivery of regional policy are now being revised to reflect the new focus and, in the UK, the Government has delegated some responsibility for developing programme priorities and overseeing delivery to Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has been allocated £179.5m over the funding period which will need to be matched with resources from elsewhere to deliver support for businesses and for people seeking to access jobs. SELEP partners have been developing programme priorities together with appropriate governance arrangements.

This paper sets out the process adopted to develop the programme, the timetable for completing negotiations and the emerging priorities for support

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Members are invited to review progress and comment on the priorities identified for the new European Growth Programme.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The European Union Structural and Investment Funds exist to support European Union Regional Policy which seeks to reduce disparities in terms of income and wealth across Europe. Although poorer regions receive most of the support there is funding available for projects that support businesses and

help people into work across the whole of the European Union. Current projects in Thurrock include: -

- Low Carbon Business Programme - has worked with over 500 businesses to make cost savings by making cheap and sometimes free energy efficiency measures.
- The Royal Opera House costume store and educational facility on High House Production Park in Purfleet. The funds are being used to support the construction of the building and to offer business support to creative and cultural industries in the East of England.

2.2 Regional policy is usually set for a period of years. The current programme is drawing to a close and, recently, a new set of goals have been agreed for the next programme period 2014-2020 which focus on creating growth and jobs, tackling climate change and energy dependence and reducing poverty and social exclusion. These changes in regional policy are accompanied by changes to the objectives and operation of the accompanying European Funds: -

- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) – to invest in EU growth
- European Social Fund (ESF) – to invest in people
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)
- European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

Changes are negotiated between the European Commission and the Member States including the UK Government. The UK Government has announced that in England the ERDF, ESF and part of the EAFRD funds will be combined into the European Growth Programme with the large majority of funding allocated to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) which covers Thurrock, Southend and Medway Unitary Authorities and Essex, Kent and East Sussex County Councils.

2.4 Each LEP has been allocated funds and asked to set out a programme prioritising activities to be supported through the new programme to be agreed with Government. SELEP has been allocated £179.5m for the 2014-2020 period; £82.5m ESF, £82.5m ERDF and £14.5m from EAFRD. This funding has to be matched with money from other public and private sector sources. Once the programme is agreed the LEP will oversee ongoing development and delivery, while the UK Government will undertake the management and administration of the programme.

2.5 In a separate but related programme the European Council has announced the creation of a new Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) to tackle unemployment among young people in areas with the highest rates. In the UK the Government has allocated the funding to particular areas including approximately £1.5m to be spent in Thurrock on projects which work with

young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) or who are at risk of becoming NEET. The Government has decided that the fund will form part of the European Growth Programme and will need to be matched with investment from ESF which, in turn, will need to be matched with funding from a third party, creating a programme worth a total of £4.5m.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Development of the E-SIF and Operational Programme

3.1 Over the past year SELEP, along with the other LEPs in England, has been developing its strategy for use of the funds. The European Structural and Investment Fund strategy (the E-SIF) sets out how the funding allocated to SELEP will be used as part of a wider strategy to help businesses to compete and grow and people to gain the skills they require for employment. Through the strategy SELEP has agreed a number of objectives for the programme that reflect the issues and opportunities in the area. Notional allocations of funding have also been identified for each objective:

- Innovation and smart specialisation (£16.5m)
- Small and medium sized business competitiveness (£49.5m)
- Supporting the shift to the low carbon economy (£16.5m)
- Supporting economic growth in rural areas (£14.5m)
- Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility (£33.8m)
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (£16.5m)
- Education, skills and lifelong learning (£32.2m)

3.2 The funding has to be matched with funds from other public and private sector sources on a 50/50 basis. This match funding can be found at a local level or through 'opt-in' arrangements with certain organisations who provide match funding from their own budgets, oversee procurement exercises to appoint delivery organisations for projects and use their own contract management systems to monitor delivery. SELEP is negotiating with a number of 'opt-in' agencies to match fund particular priorities in the programme. The Council already has a relationship with each of these opt-in organisations and the funding can be used to secure more relevant responses to local need than would otherwise be the case. The opt-in organisations for each objective, their main interest in the new programme and the potential value of each opt-in is listed below:

Objective	Opt-in agency and their interest in the new programme	Value of opt-in
Innovation and smart specialisation	Manufacturing Advisory Service – enhancing business support services targeting manufacturing companies	£5m
Small and medium sized business competitiveness	Growth Accelerator – enhancing business support services targeting companies with high growth potential	£9.4m

	UKTI – enhancing business support for companies seeking to export and / or attracting overseas investment	£5.4m
Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility	Department for Work and Pensions – enhancing skills and employment support for workless adults	£10m
	Skills Funding Agency – enhancing training for young people and adults	£20m
Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty	Big Lottery Fund – addressing barriers to employment for those furthest away from the labour market	£8m
Education, skills and lifelong learning	Skills Funding Agency – enhancing training for young people and adults	£23m

Negotiations will continue with each to agree priorities to be funded, the value of the opt-in and how much European funding will still be available for organisations to bid for directly and match themselves.

- 3.3 Now that the E-SIF strategy has been drafted the LEP has been asked to produce an operational plan, called the Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which will briefly describe how the programme will operate and set out the types of projects to be supported and the estimated spend and output profile for the first years of the programme. The first draft of the LIP has been submitted.
- 3.4 There will now be a concentrated period of negotiation with the Government leading to final agreement of the programme and the first investment in new projects. Key milestones include:
- Agree governance arrangements for the programme – December 2014
 - LIP agreed – December 2014
 - First call for project proposals – anticipated in March 2015
 - First investment in new projects – anticipated to be summer 2015

Priorities for Support

- 3.5 Partners across SELEP have been working together to develop more specific priorities for support under each objective of the programme. The Council has been working with partners to ensure that issues and opportunities in Thurrock and across Thames Gateway South Essex are reflected in and can be addressed by these emerging priorities. The emerging priorities are: -
- Innovation and smart specialisation
 - Research to identify issues and opportunities
 - Provision of new business workspace

- Business support events and training programmes
 - Tailored business support for manufacturing companies
 - Projects to improve collaboration between companies
 - Promoting local supply chain development
- Small and medium sized business competitiveness
 - Business support activity
 - Tailored business support for companies with high growth potential
 - Tailored business support for companies seeking to export
 - Attracting inward investment
 - Access to finance including 0% loans and grants for businesses
- Supporting the shift to a low carbon economy
 - Business support package to help companies reduce their carbon footprint and to support innovation in green technology
- Promoting economic growth in rural areas
 - Proposals to be developed that will targeting the most rural communities in SELEP
- Promoting employment and supporting labour market mobility
 - Enhanced support for young unemployed people including those not in employment, education and training (NEET)
 - Job brokerage services
 - Apprenticeships
 - Wage subsidy scheme
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty
 - Addressing gaps in mainstream skills and employment provision
 - Supporting community led local development – a ‘bottom up’ approach to address economic and social cohesion
 - Targeting socially excluded groups to help them access and remain in employment
- Education, skills and lifelong learning
 - Working with employers to develop higher level skills in the workforce
- 3.6 Negotiations on priorities to be supported will continue over the next few months until a final version of the LIP, including proposals for the types of projects to be supported, have been agreed.
- 3.7 As the priorities of the new programme are developed the Council and other stakeholders across Thurrock and SELEP can begin to develop partnerships and project ideas ready for the first call for proposals which is expected in March 2015.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The new European Funding Programme is an opportunity to address some of the issues and opportunities identified through the development of the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan. Funding from the programme can, if used effectively, support the delivery of the Council's growth agenda.

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

- 5.1 Partners across SELEP have been consulted on the development of the new European Programme including the objectives, notional funding allocations and priorities to be addressed. Formal and informal consultation will continue as the programme develops.
- 5.2 The Council has played a leading role in discussions at the Thames Gateway South Essex level, working with partners to help identify local priorities that reflect the Thurrock Growth Story and the SELEP Strategic Economic Plan.

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

- 6.1 The new European Programme is a mechanism for securing the delivery of the Council's regeneration and growth ambitions detailed in the Corporate Plan, Local Development Framework, Regeneration Strategy and Economic Development Strategy.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Account

The report provides an update on the process, and as such there are not direct financial implications associated with this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Toohey**
Principal Corporate Solicitor

There are no specific legal implications to note in this report, save to be aware that there may be match-funding obligations arising from the proposals, which the Council will need to ensure are met.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

The new European Programmes seek to promote greater economic growth and address barriers to employment, particularly for individuals that are most marginalised and furthest away from the labour market. The programme includes a specific objective that seeks to promote social inclusion and combat poverty. Through the implementation of the new programme projects will be supported that help address equality and diversity issues.

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

The programme could have a positive impact on the Council's priorities and on delivery of the Council's sustainability agenda

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:

Stephen Taylor
Programmes and Projects Manager
Regeneration

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12 November 2014	ITEM: 8
Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Grays South and Rail Station Regeneration	
Wards and communities affected: Grays Riverside	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Brian Priestley, Regeneration Programme Manager, Regeneration	
Accountable Head of Service: Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

In July 2013 Cabinet acknowledged the importance of enhancing the area around Grays Rail Station as an arrival and meeting point and reducing the barrier effect of the rail lines to support the delivery of the Council’s vision for Grays. Cabinet supported continued discussion with Network Rail and others to secure the implementation of measures to upgrade the rail station and rail crossing. Following Cabinet a number of coordinated activities took place to develop the project further including:

- a) Engagement with key stakeholders including Network Rail, C2C and the Grays Town Partnership to establish the level of support for the proposals;
- b) Detailed discussions with Network Rail to establish an approach to delivery;
- c) Completion of a development capacity study, to understand the scale of potential development which could be generated by the sites created around the new public realm;
- d) Completion of initial development valuations, to understand the potential development costs and returns for development plots identified in the plans at appendix A; and
- e) Further design work including investigation of opportunities to address Network Rail’s requirement for the underpass to provide level access between rail platforms. This work helped secure Grays as one of 42 Stations that would benefit from the Department for Transport Secure Access for All Fund.

These activities established that there is a feasible scheme that, with the support of Network Rail, could be viable and deliverable within the next four years. In March 2014 Cabinet agreed a series of further steps:

- a) Establishing a formal partnership with Network Rail and the rail service operator to outline roles and responsibilities in securing the delivery of the project.
- b) Procuring a coordinated professional team to develop the proposals further and develop a detailed cost estimate.
- c) Entering into direct discussions with affected land owners and occupiers to develop a partnership or acquisition strategy.
- d) Continuing to develop the funding strategy for the project based upon the delivery strategy which is outlined within this report.

A memorandum of understanding has been drafted with Network Rail and will be reported to Cabinet in December. An initial design workshop has been held with the team that Network Rail proposes to appoint. Network Rail aim to secure approval and funding for the appointment through their governance processes later this year. All known land owners and occupiers have been contacted and informed about the proposals. Funding is potentially available from a number of sources discussed in the report to Cabinet in March 2014. Opportunities have also been identified for improving the design for the 'end users' of the underpass and reducing costs of construction.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the progress in developing the project and to comment on the next steps for progressing the project detailed in section 3 of this report.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In July 2013 Cabinet agreed a vision for Grays and a number of key, early projects that were considered central to delivering that vision. Enhancing and improving Grays rail station and the surrounding area, improving safety and removing the barrier effect of the level crossing were recognised as vital elements of the regeneration of the town centre, particularly in light of the development of South Essex College's new Thurrock Campus and the separation caused by the level crossing to be exacerbated by the increase in commercial freight traffic generated by the opening of London Gateway.
- 2.2 Accordingly, the report outlined proposals to introduce a broad (8m wide) 'boulevard underpass' beneath the railway line to replace the existing level crossing. The underpass would be accessed via high quality, landscaped public squares at either end with the potential for a redeveloped rail station to

provide a significantly enhanced arrival point into the town centre linking directly to the College, High Street and all points beyond. New development sites created around the public squares would provide high quality frontages to include street cafes and new retail floorspace whilst allowing sufficient space for street entertainment, markets and events. The plans considered and approved by Cabinet in July 2013 are included at Appendix A.

2.3 Cabinet acknowledged the work completed up to July 2013 and supported continued discussions with Network Rail and others to secure the implementation of measures to upgrade the rail station and rail crossing as detailed within the report. Since July good progress had been made with the basic concept fixed by the approvals given by Cabinet, with a number of coordinated activities to develop the project further including:

- a) Engagement with key stakeholders including Network Rail, C2C and the Grays Town Partnership;
- b) Detailed discussions with Network Rail to establish an approach to delivery;
- c) A development capacity study, to understand the scale of potential development which could be generated by the sites created around the new public realm;
- d) Development valuations, to understand the potential costs and returns for development plots identified in the plans at appendix A; and
- e) Completion of a Level Access Study, to address Network Rail's requirement for the underpass to provide level access between rail platforms.

2.4 In March 2014 Cabinet acknowledged the further work that had been progressed and approved a number of further activities including:

- a) Developing the partnership arrangements with Network Rail and the rail service operator for consideration by Cabinet at a later meeting;
- b) Procuring a professional team to develop the designs for the underpass, station and public realm proposals; and
- c) Entering into direct discussions with affected land owners and occupiers to develop a partnership or acquisition strategy for consideration by Cabinet at a later meeting.

3. DEVELOPING THE APPROACH

3.1 With the general scheme largely settled through the approvals given in July 2013 and March 2014 the main focus of activity since has been to broker discussions with Network Rail and establish a general approach to securing

the delivery of the project. Network Rail has identified the Grays level crossing as one of the most hazardous and frequently abused within the region. Their concerns are amplified by the increase in users generated through the opening of the new College and the expectation that the crossing will be closed more frequently through increased freight movements to/from London Gateway.

- 3.2 Network Rail's response to the risk presented by the crossing had been to replace it with an upgraded pedestrian bridge. Funds had already been allocated to this proposal which needed to be spent by 2019. However, acknowledging that an underpass could provide a better solution than a bridge and a solution which also has the potential for redeveloping the existing station, Network Rail is content to work with the Council to develop the proposals considered by Cabinet. In March it was reported to Cabinet that Network Rail expected the Council to develop a delivery strategy and obtain consents by first quarter of 2015. Agreement has now been reached that Network Rail would manage design development and construction of the underpass and public squares to enable delivery of these by 2019. The broad programme for delivery is discussed in more detail later in this report.

Establishing the Formal Partnership

- 3.3 A draft memorandum of understanding sets out the framework for joint working and funding of the project between the Council and Network Rail and this will be report to Cabinet in December. The rail service operator C2C will have responsibility for the rail station and its car park. While these areas will not be directly affected by the proposals for the underpass, they would be an essential part of realising the broader objective of providing a high quality public realm. The MOU will formalise the working relationship and commitment to delivering the scheme and will commit the parties to the delivery strategy. It will provide a framework for the further formal agreements necessary to implement the project. Among other things the draft of the agreement covers:

- Broad parameters of the proposals;
- Delivery strategy including phasing;
- Roles and responsibilities in securing delivery;
- Timescales for actions;
- Funding commitments;
- Project management arrangements;
- Decision making arrangements; and
- Dispute resolution/termination.

Delivery Programme

- 3.4 Due to the implications for rail infrastructure the design process will be carried out in accordance with the Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) Policy. Broadly the project timetable is expected to be;
- a) Design and Costing to 'Approval in Principle'. It is anticipated that this stage will start in November/December 2014 and will require 7 months. At the end of the stage the Council and Network Rail will have a more detailed understanding of the feasibility of the project.
 - b) Detailed Design and Consents. A range of consents will be required including planning, highways, and Network Rail internal consents for works affecting rail infrastructure. It is anticipated that this will require 12 months.
 - c) Detailed construction design and implementation: It is anticipated that this would require 24 months with completion in 2018.
- 3.5 Prior to construction starting all the necessary land would need to be acquired and so discussions and negotiations with land owners and occupiers would be progressed alongside this programme for design and implementation.

Design

- 3.6 Network Rail has agreed that the approach to designing the underpass will be based on the plans agreed by the Council's Cabinet in March 2014. Network Rail has considerable experience and expertise in designing and implementing this type of infrastructure and have agreed to procure one of their framework contractors to develop the design, secure consents, and construct the underpass. An initial design workshop was held in July and Network Rail has been provided with details of the Council's design expectations based on the plans previously agreed by Cabinet. Network Rail now aims to secure approval for the appointment of these contractors through their Governance procedures in October/November of this year with a view to starting work in December.

The funding strategy

- 3.7 The approach to funding the project is split into two distinct elements; funding for land acquisitions and funding for the works. The approach to funding is set out in the report to Cabinet in March 2014. Development valuations by Savills indicated potential for the Council to acquire land and dispose of development plots created around the project area using the proceeds to support the costs of borrowing incurred to take the project forward. The approach to funding the works to construct the underpass has been the primary area of discussion between the Council and Network Rail as both have a part to play.
- 3.8 Ramboll's study set a headline cost estimate for the underpass and associated public squares of £7.9m. Network Rail has indicated that they could support the project with up to up to £4 million of funding. This includes funds originally

identified for a bridge. Following on from the design work commissioned by the Council the Department for Transport announced that Grays was one of 42 stations that could benefit from the Secure Access for All Fund, there would be up to £3 million available from the fund subject to detailed design to enhance accessibility. Separate funds may also be available for redevelopment of the rail station subject to discussion with the rail service operator C2C and Network Rail.

- 3.9 The Council's work in Grays – including Grays South – had been included as a high priority within the South East Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan (SEP); the document through which Central Government distributes the Local Growth Fund monies. Grays was not included in the first round allocation of funds, which would need to be spent before implementation of this project. However further allocations will become available that are more closely aligned to the delivery programme.
- 3.10 Feedback from Government on the SEP has made it clear that for the Council to secure any funds it will need to commit its own land and funds towards delivery together with securing match funding from third parties. Accordingly, provision has been made in the Council's Capital Programme to support the costs of the project through prudential borrowing.
- 3.11 Development of the full funding strategy continues with work to investigate ways to optimise the likely return from the development plots, explore the potential for grant and third party funding and explore the potential for match funding from the Council, Network Rail and C2C. Work will also continue to consider how the design of the underpass could be improved to reduce cost of construction while meeting the Council's expectations of quality.

Engagement with Businesses, landowners and occupiers

- 3.12 The plans in Appendix A considered by Cabinet have been presented to the Grays Town Partnership who have supported the proposals. Following the resolution of Cabinet in March 2014, letters have been sent to all known land owners and occupiers within and immediately adjacent to the area illustrated on the plans to inform them about the proposals. To date 6 individuals have responded seeking further information and all have received a response.
- 3.13 The valuation work undertaken by Savills on the Council's behalf has been at a high level to date and it will be necessary to undertake much more detailed assessment in discussion with land owners and occupiers. A detailed acquisition strategy will be produced to set out the approach and phasing for land acquisition to enable the implementation of the project. Appropriate expertise will be procured to support the Council's role in land acquisition to deliver the project.

4 Reason for Recommendation

- 4.1 The development of an underpass and enhancements to the public realm around the rail station and to the new college are key elements of the Council's priorities for regeneration of Grays town centre. The project is complex and requires a robust approach with key stakeholders to ensure that it is properly implemented. The delivery strategy outlined in section 3 is considered to be the Council's best route through which to secure delivery of the scheme with key stakeholders.

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

- 5.1 The project was supported by Cabinet in July 2013 and March 2014 and by Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2014. It has been subject to consultation with key stakeholders including the Grays Town Partnership, Network Rail, and C2C.

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

- 6.1 The Council's Adopted Community Regeneration Strategy and LDF Core Strategy identify Grays as one of the Growth Hubs in the Borough where regeneration activity is to be focussed. A vision for the town and early projects were approved by Cabinet in July 2013, including the regeneration of Grays South and Rail Station. Further development of the project was supported by Cabinet in March 2014.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

The cost of constructing the underpass and the associated public squares will be in excess of £8million. This is expected to be funded from several sources detailed in the report. Funding arrangements will need to be confirmed and will be the subject of future reports to cabinet.

Provision for the costs of developing the project and for land acquisition has been included in the Council's Capital Programme.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Alison Stewart**
Principal Housing and Regeneration Solicitor

Formation of the delivery partnership and arrangements for joint delivery, funding, procurement and returns will need to be properly addressed in an agreement between the parties and will be the subject of further reports to Cabinet.

The project will require a range of statutory processes including land assembly and appropriations of unregistered land and open spaces, planning and highway consents.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

The project has been the subject of engagement with a number of stakeholders including businesses, landowners and occupiers - as summarised in the report.

Further engagement activity will take place as the designs are developed to consider issues affecting equality of access. Specific requirements to enable equal access have already been considered including the scale of access ramps and the land area required to upgrade the rail station and rail crossing.

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

None at present, relevant issues will be identified as design and the approach to delivery are developed.

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):

- 10th July 2013 Cabinet report 'Grays town centre Regeneration Vision'
- 19th March 2014 Cabinet Report 'Grays South and Rail Station Regeneration'

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix A: Extracts from Ramboll module 3 study: Plans for an underpass and public square

Report Author:

Brian Priestley
Regeneration Programme Manager
Regeneration

Option A - Maximum demolition to form larger North High Street Square

- 1A Redevelopment to North High Street (larger square)
- 2 Redeveloped Station to North
- 3 Redeveloped Station and Network Rail buildings to South
- 4 Redevelopment of Network Rail buildings - south facing
- 5 Redevelopment of Station House site and surrounding area
- 6 New mixed-use accommodation overlooking square and church
- 7 Mulberry Square proposed development plot - north
- 8 Mulberry Square proposed development plot - south
- 9 Redeveloped private ownership plot - splayed to proposed college
- 10 New development in car park - north
- 11 New development in car park - south
- 12 Reorientated new station square
- 13 New town square
- 14 Relocated taxi rank
- 15 Shared surface
- 16 Enhanced streetscape
- 17 New link garden squares
- 18 Underpass with ramps, steps and lifts for access
- 19 Footbridge and area reserved for underpass



Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE	Scale	1:1000 @ A3
Sketch No	178-MOD3-SK-006_01	Date	30.05.2013
		Drawn	JdB/JC



Title: **General Arrangement Plan - Option A**



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Option B - Alternative with minimum demolition to form smaller North High Street Square

- 1B** Redevelopment to North High Street (smaller square)
- 2** Redeveloped Station to North
- 3** Redeveloped Station and Network Rail buildings to South
- 4** Redevelopment of Network Rail buildings - south facing
- 5** Redevelopment of Station House site and surrounding area
- 6** New mixed-use accommodation overlooking square and church
- 7** Mulberry Square proposed development plot - north
- 8** Mulberry Square proposed development plot - south
- 9** Redeveloped private ownership plot - splayed to proposed college
- 10** New development in car park - north
- 11** New development in car park - south
- 12** Reorientated new station square
- 13** New town square
- 14** Relocated taxi rank
- 15** Shared surface
- 16** Enhanced streetscape
- 17** New link garden squares
- 18** Underpass with ramps, steps and lifts for access
- 18** Footbridge and area reserved for underpass



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Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE	Scale	1:1000 @ A3
Sketch No	178-MOD3-SK-007_01	Date	30.05.2013
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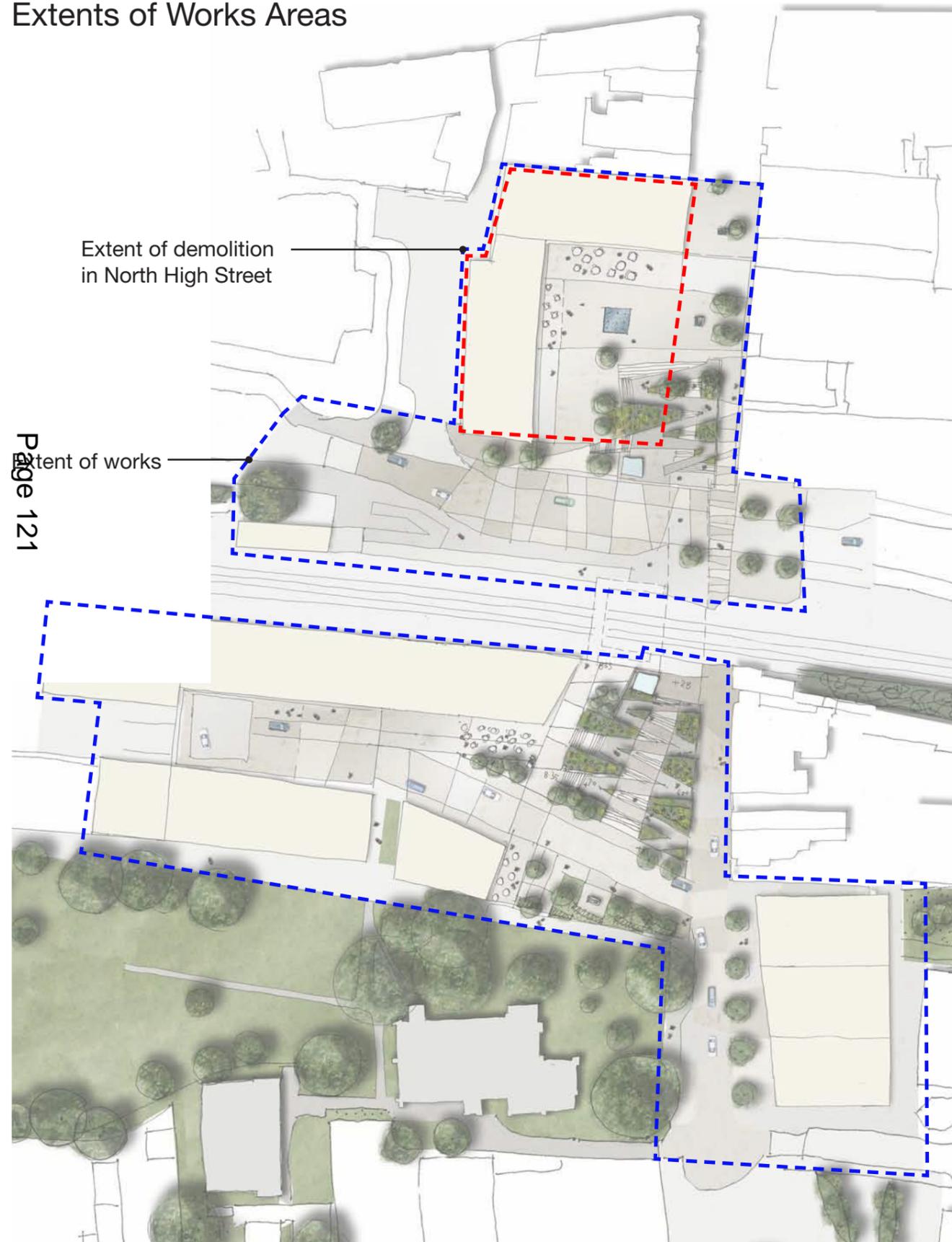


Title: **General Arrangement Plan - Option B (alternative)**

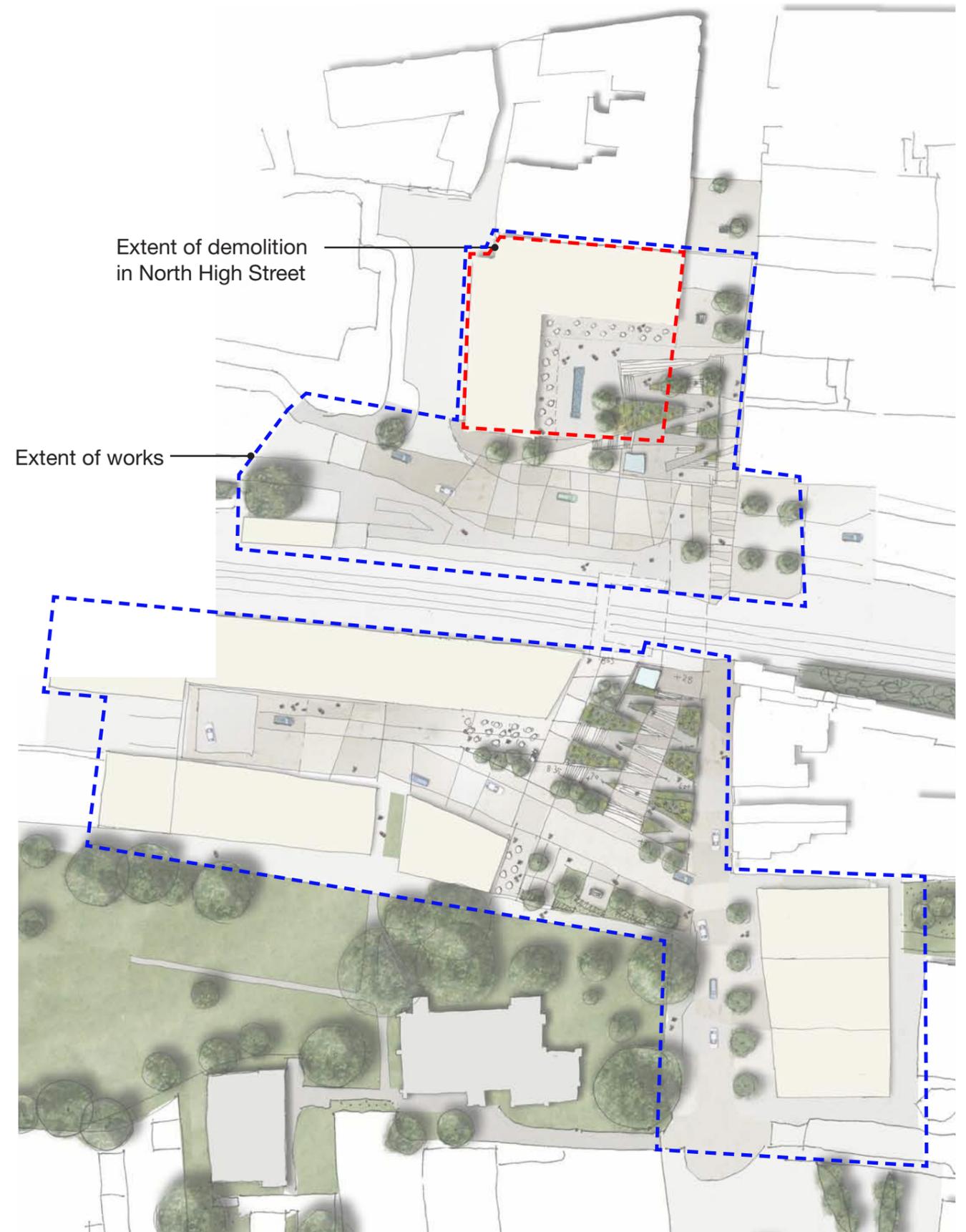


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Extents of Works Areas



Option A - Maximum demolition to form larger North High Street Square



Option B - Alternative with minimum demolition to form smaller North High Street Square

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Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE	Scale	1:1000 @ A3
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Title:
Extents of Works Plans



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North High Street Development Area

Option A - Maximum demolition to form larger North High Street Square

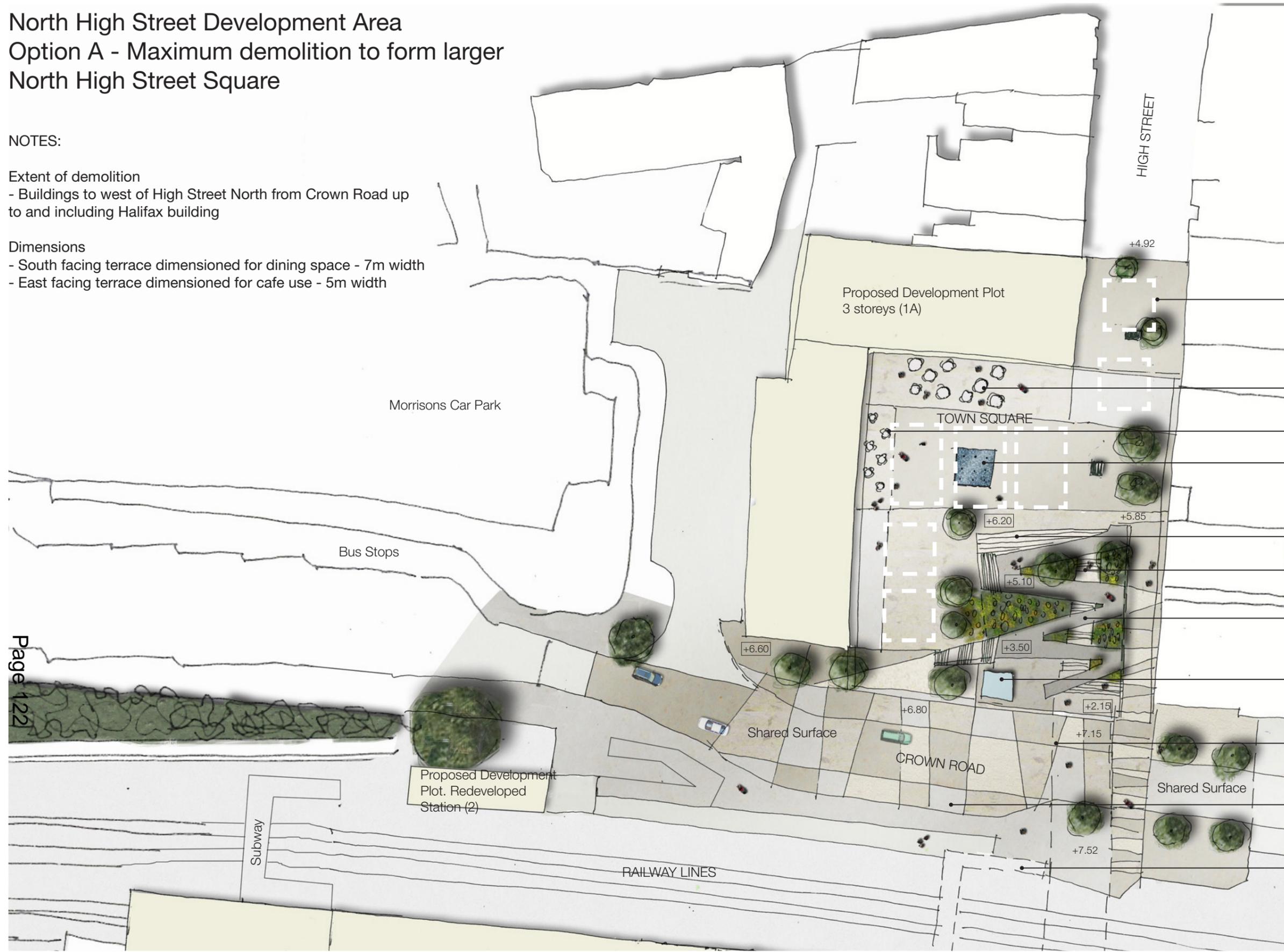
NOTES:

Extent of demolition

- Buildings to west of High Street North from Crown Road up to and including Halifax building

Dimensions

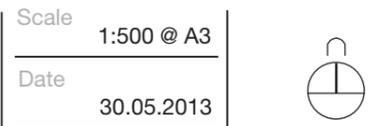
- South facing terrace dimensioned for dining space - 7m width
- East facing terrace dimensioned for cafe use - 5m width



- Notional Market Stall Locations
- Dining Terrace
- Cafe Terrace
- Water Feature
- Steps to square
- Steps through terraces
- Sloped access through terrace park space max. 1:21 gradient
- Lifts between North High Street, Town Square and the underpass
- Underpass - 8m width with 3m clear storey and 2m structural zone beneath road
- Relocated taxi rank
- Existing bridge to be removed after construction

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Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE
Scale	1:500 @ A3
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Sketch No	178-MOD3-SK-010_01
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Title. **Detailed Area Plan - North High Street**



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South High Street Development Area



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Sketch No	178-MOD3-SK-011_01
Drawn	JdB/JC

Scale 1:500 @ A3

Date 30.05.2013

Drawn JdB/JC



Title.

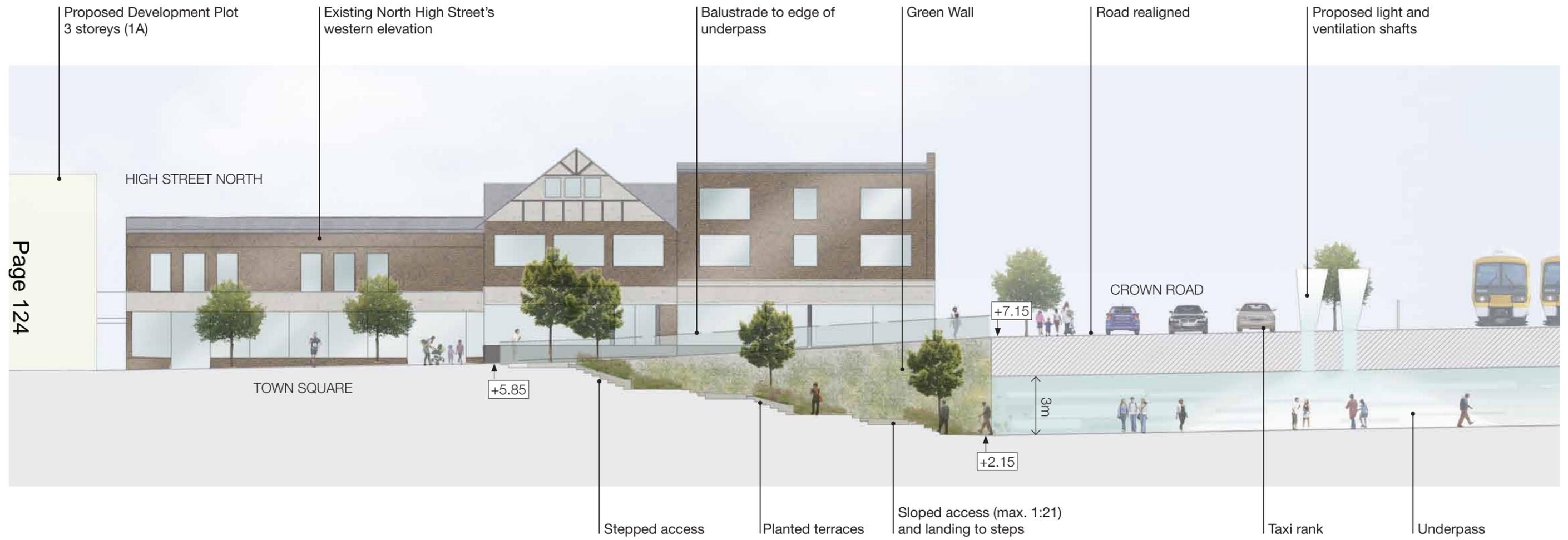
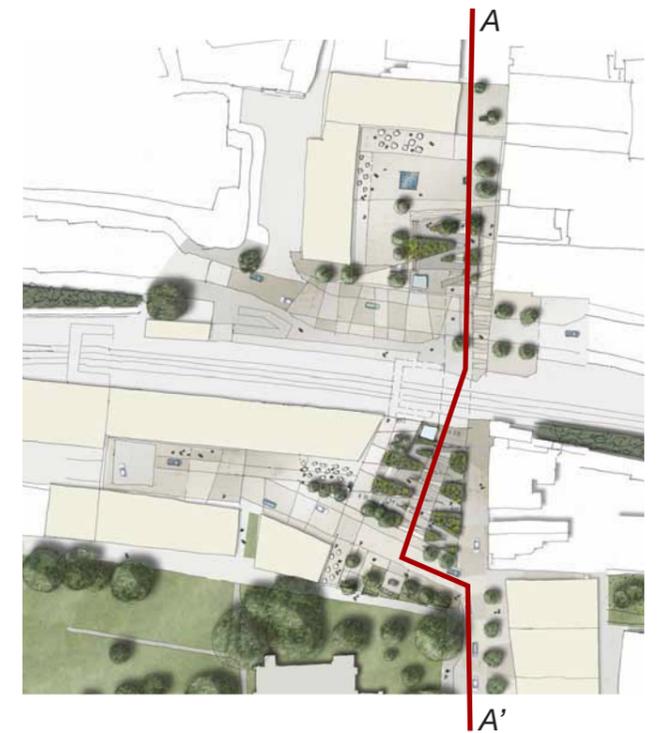
Detail Area Plan - South High Street




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Section A-A'
North-South Section facing East (North Underpass)



Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE	Scale	1:200 @ A3
Sketch No	178-MOD3-SK-012_01	Date	30.05.2013
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Title.
Section A-A' - North

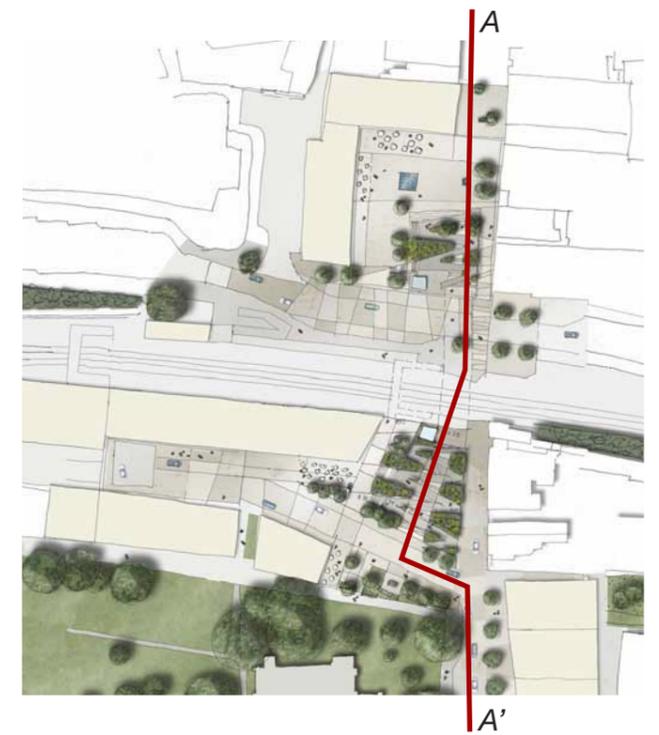


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Section A-A'
North-South Section facing East (South Underpass)

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Title.
Section A-A' - South

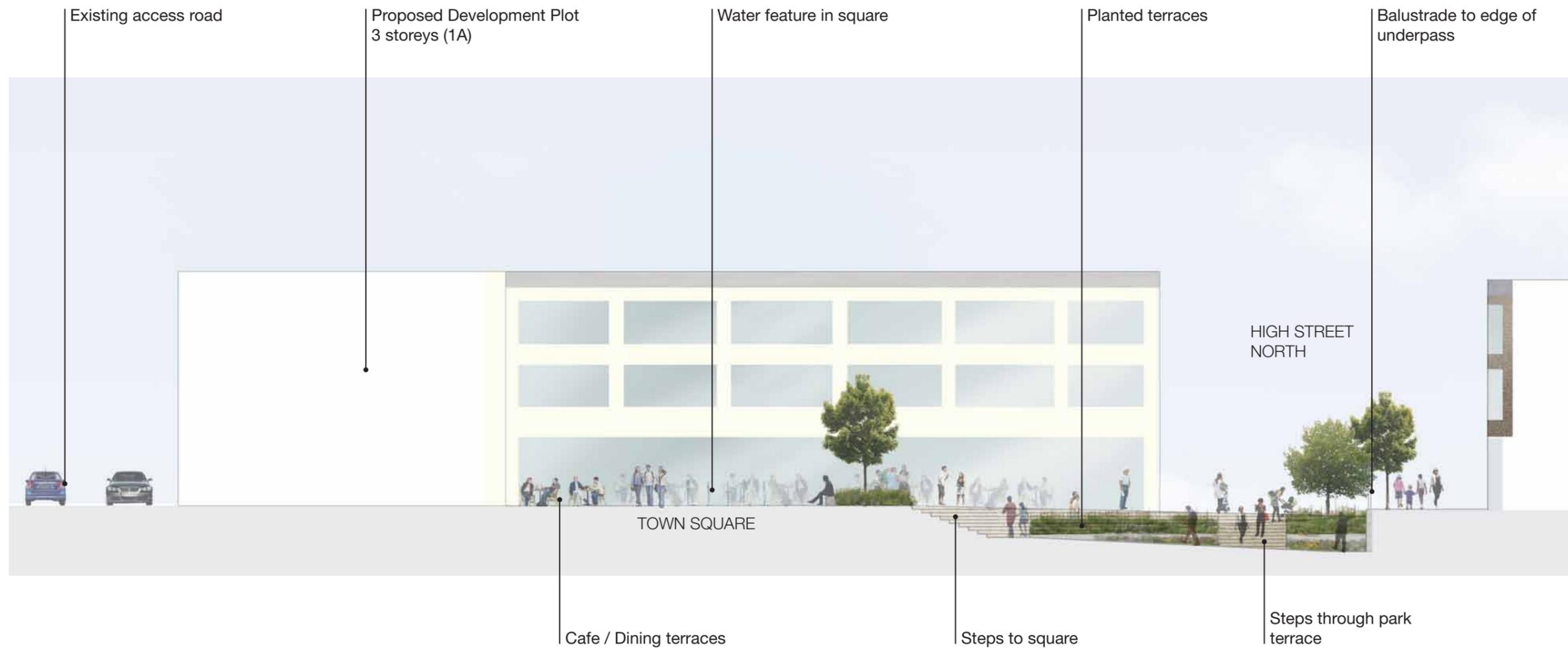


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Section B-B'
 East-West Section facing North (North Underpass)



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Project

GRAYS TOWN CENTRE

Sketch No

178-MOD3-SK-014_01

Scale

1:200 @ A3

Date

30.05.2013

Drawn

JdB/JC



Title

Section B-B'

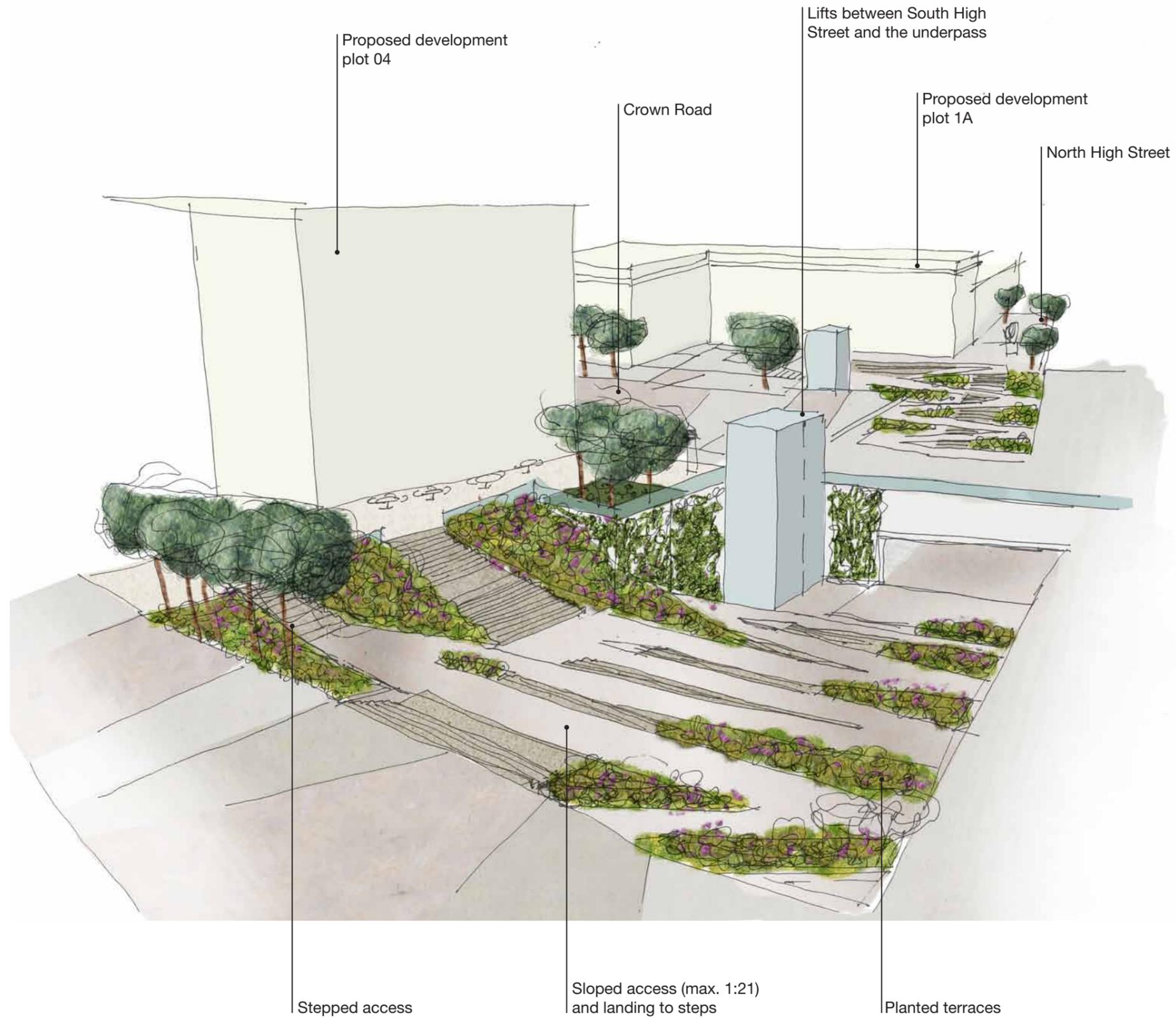


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View North from top of South Underpass

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Project

GRAYS TOWN CENTRE

Scale

nts @ A3

Date

30.05.2013

Drawn

JdB/JC



Title.

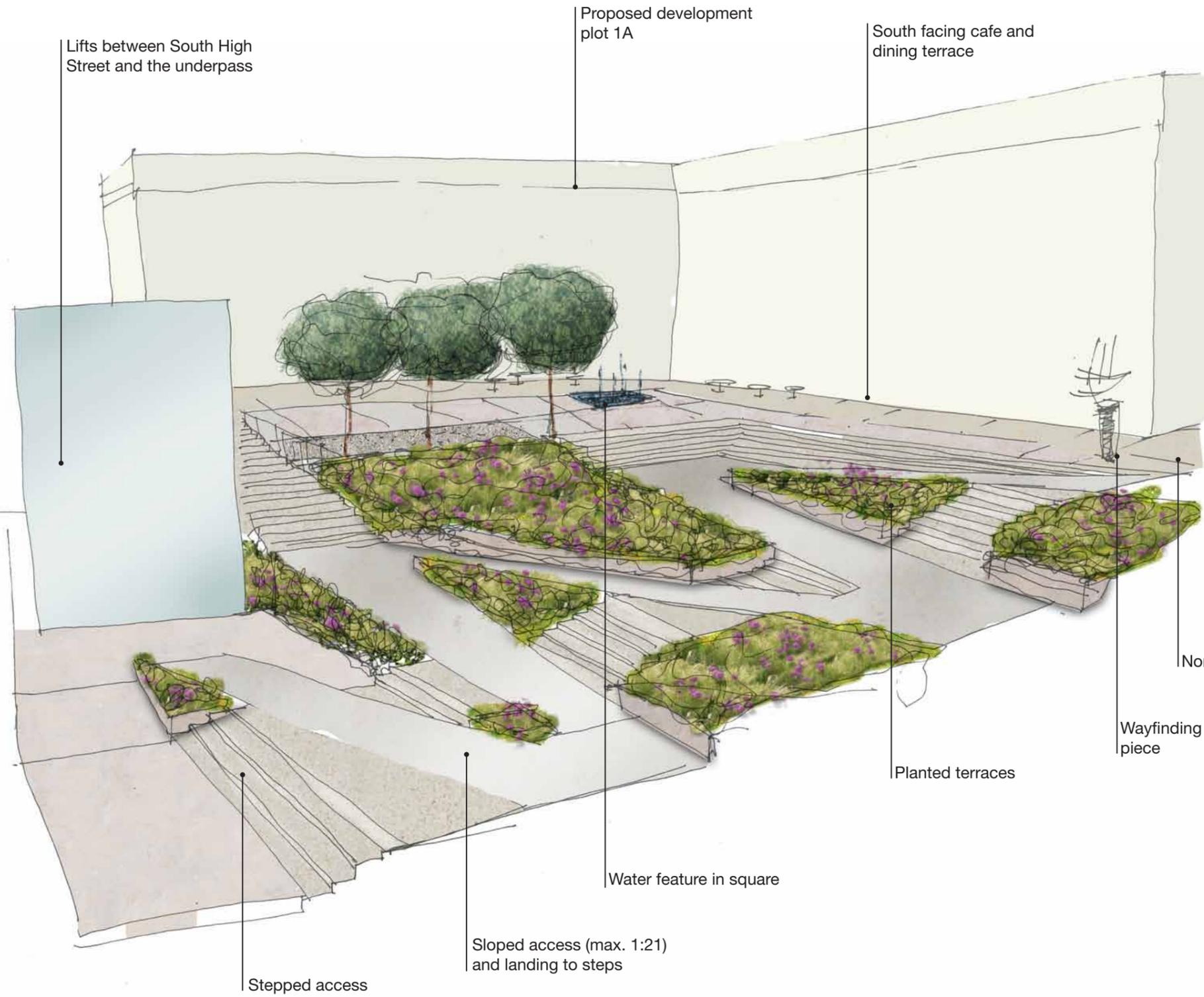
Sketch View 1



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View of Town Square and North Underpass



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Project	GRAYS TOWN CENTRE
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Title.
Sketch View 2



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Design Precedents

Exhibition Road, London, UK



Rope Walks, Liverpool, UK



Grounds of Hargreaves Mall, Australia



Ravensbourne College / 02, London, UK



shared space

square

shared space

use of water

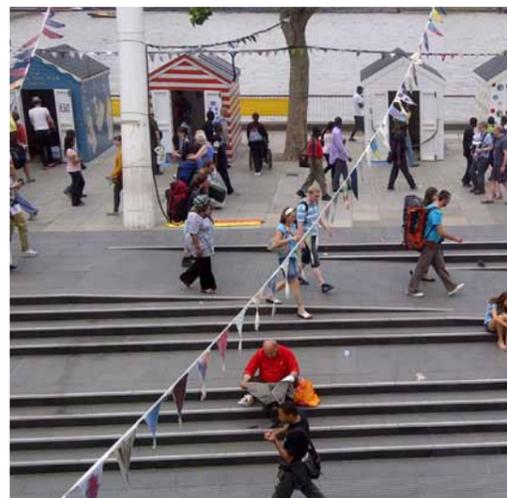
public realm on steps

square

use of water

markets and events

green wall to underpass edge



Southbank, London, UK



New Road, Brighton, UK



Brewery Square, Dorchester UK



Thames Barrier Park, London, UK

Project

GRAYS TOWN CENTRE

Sketch No

178-MOD3-SK-017_00

Scale

nts @ A3

Date

30.05.2013

Drawn

JdB/JC



Title.

Design Precedents



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Work Programme

Committee: Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny

Year: 2014/2015

Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Progress / Update required
30 July 2014				
Budget Savings	April 2014	Members/Officers	Sean Clark, David Bull & Steve Cox	Members noted the report and asked that a Task and Finish Group be established to examine Community Transport
Local Highways Infrastructure (including public transport)	April 2014	Officers	Ann Osola	Members noted the report
SELEP Single Local Growth Fund Update	April 2014	Officers	David Bull & Steve Cox	Members noted the report
Purfleet Regeneration Update	April 2014	Officers	Matthew Essex	Members noted the report
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	Members agreed to include reports on Planning Standards and European Funding programmes to the work programme.
17 September 2014				
SELEP Single Local Growth Fund	April 2014	Officers	David Bull & Steve Cox	This was removed from the agenda after consultation with the Chair of Committee <i>This meeting was cancelled due to the council being in a pre-election period.</i>
Grays South and Rail Station Regeneration	April 2014	Officers	Matthew Essex	<i>This meeting was cancelled due to the council being in a pre-election period.</i>
European Union Funding Programme	July 2014	Members	Matthew Essex	<i>This meeting was cancelled due to the council being in a pre-</i>

Work Programme

Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Progress / Update required
				<i>election period.</i>
Parking in Grays Centre	July 2014	Members	Andy Millard	<i>This meeting was cancelled due to the council being in a pre-election period.</i>
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	<i>This meeting was cancelled due to the council being in a pre-election period.</i>
12 November 2014 (Budget)				
Lakeside Update	April 2014	Officers	Andy Millard	
Economic Development	April 2014	Officers	Matthew Essex	
Grays South and Rail Station Regeneration	September 2014	Officers	Matthew Essex	
European Union Funding Programme	September 2014	Members	Matthew Essex	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
21 January 2015 (Budget)				
Budget Savings	April 2014	Members/Officers	David Bull & Steve Cox	
Thames Enterprise Park Update	April 2014	Officers	Andy Millard	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
2 March 2015				
Local Plan Update	April 2014		Andrew Millard	
Purfleet Regeneration Update	April 2014		Matthew Essex	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	

To Be Allocated				
Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Committee Date
Lower Thames Crossing			David Bull, Andrew Millard & Ann Osola	

Work Programme

Comprehensive report on DP World			Andrew Millard	
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Full details of Member's decisions can be viewed in the Minutes on the Council's Committee Management Information System - <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/>

FOR CONSIDERATION

There are currently no items for consideration.

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