

8 January 2019		ITEM: 7
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Grays Town Centre Traffic Flow Update		
Wards and communities affected: Grays Thurrock & Grays Riverside		Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Ayesha Basit, Principal Projects Engineer		
Accountable Assistant Director: Detlev Munster, Assistant Director of Property and Development		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report summarises the progress to date in delivering changes to traffic management at Grays Town Centre and in particular, the reintroduction of two-way traffic working at Orsett Road.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Committee notes the update on the project progress.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1. Grays is an important economic hub supporting a wide range of services for residents across the borough. It is anticipated that direct growth in Grays will equate to 2,600 homes and 1,600 jobs by 2026, although the wider catchment area for Grays as the potential to support more growth.
- 2.2. In 2013, the Council developed an integrated multi-modal transport strategy for Grays Town Centre to support forecasted growth. The Strategy therefore included planned regeneration initiatives at the time, including new development such as the South Essex College Thurrock Campus, Grays Magistrates Court, Hogg Lane South and the proposed rail station/underpass development in Grays South.
- 2.3. This resulted in the development of the Grays Town Centre Access Study (August 2014) which identified a comprehensive package of access and amenity measures to facilitate Grays regeneration. The measures were endorsed by Cabinet in December 2014.

- 2.4. In 2015, local residents and businesses were consulted about proposed traffic management changes at Grays Town Centre. The vast majority of respondents (84%) supported the proposal for reintroducing two-way working on Orsett Road.
- 2.5. In September 2015, Cabinet considered the results of the consultation and approved the implementation of the proposed measures in two phases.
- 2.6. The phase 1 works involved the improvement of traffic movements on Stanley Road and Clarence Road junction, exit from multi-storey car park on Crown Road and signalling of width restriction on Bridge Road Bridge. The works delivered by the end of March 2016 improved the junction and exit from the multi storey car park. However, the signalling of the width restriction at Bridge Road bridge was delayed, due to technical approvals required from third parties but was subsequently delivered in December 2018.
- 2.7. The phase 2 works involve the implementation of two-way movement on Orsett Road between Derby Road and Stanley Road. The preliminary design was commissioned in October 2017 and the initial traffic modelling results were obtained in February 2018.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1. The February 2018 traffic modelling study of the Town Centre considered five junctions, namely Orsett Road / Derby Road, Orsett Road / Cromwell Road, Orsett Road / Stanley Road, Stanley Road / Clarence Road and Clarence Road / Derby Road (see Appendix A: Key Junctions).
- 3.2. This model with the proposed two-way system on Orsett Road / Stanley Road predicts that traffic flows through the Orsett Road / Cromwell Road, Orsett Road / Derby Road, Clarence Road / Derby Road and Stanley Road / Clarence Road junctions would improve. However, it also predicts that queue lengths would be longer and there would be more congestion at the Orsett Road / Stanley Road junction, particularly at peak times. This model noted that the net effect of having a two-way system on Orsett Road would worsen traffic flows through the Town Centre.
- 3.3. Given the limited technical nature of the model used in February 2018, further (and more sophisticated) traffic modelling was commissioned. This modelling study covered a larger area from the London Road / Worth Road junction, including Hogg Lane and Crown Road to Hathaway Road / Orsett Road junction (see Appendix B: Study areas).
- 3.4. The findings from this modelling exercise indicated that making Orsett Road two-way would improve network performance, but only if Crown Road is opened to two-way traffic too.

- 3.5. With the agreement of the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Highways, detailed design work was therefore commissioned in November 2018 to implement the two way working on Orsett Road. Subject to technical approvals, road space availability and consideration of any comments and objections received from the statutory consultation undertaken in December 2018, it is planned to undertake the works at Crown Road by the end of March 2019 and to undertake the works at Orsett Road by March 2020.
- 3.6. Before site works commence, the Contractor will apply for a permit for the road space required and submit traffic management plans for the approval of the Council's Network Manager. These plans haven't been prepared yet but are likely to involve a temporary lane/junction closure for the removal of the kerb build-out east of the Orsett Road/Derby Road junction and the traffic islands and associated street furniture at the Orsett Road/Stanley junction. Traffic and pedestrian management will also be required to install new ducting and upgrade the traffic signals. Where possible, work will be undertaken outside of peak times to minimise disruption to local residents, businesses and road users.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. Further investigations were required to determine the ability to reintroduce two-way traffic at the Orsett Road/Stanley Road, and as such, the previously approved project will now proceed subject to the outcome of the statutory consultation that was undertaken in December.
- 4.2. This report therefore only provides an update to PTR O&S Committee about changes to traffic management at Grays Town Centre, in particular, the reintroduction of two-way working at Orsett Road.

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

- 5.1. Statutory notices advertising the Council's intention to revoke the traffic order for one-way working at the Orsett Road / Stanley Road junction and on Crown Road were published on 22 October 2018. These notices were displayed on site and in local newspapers. At the time of preparing this report, the results of this consultation exercise were unknown.

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

- 6.1 The improvements to Grays Town Centre support Thurrock Council's corporate vision and priorities, particularly those within the "Place" priority.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Senior Financial Accountant

The estimated high level implementation cost of two-way system on Orsett Road and Crown Road could be circa £500k.

The identified funding sources are:

- Local Growth Fund (LGF) - £257k
- Underspend on previous years capital programme - £133k
- Integrated Transport fund annual allocation - £110k

In order to meet the terms of the LGF grant, this funding will be used first to finance works undertaken.

If this scheme was not to proceed, the LGF grant funding would need to be returned to the awarding body.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Benita Edwards**
Interim Deputy Head of Law

This report notes that Cabinet has authorised implementation of the highways works carried out and those yet to be implemented. Any works that do not come within the ambit of previous decisions of Cabinet will require consideration and approval by Cabinet in the usual way.

Under the Traffic Management Act 2004, it is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives:

- (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and
- (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

The action which the authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing:

- (a) the more efficient use of their road network; or

- (b) the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority...

The changes to traffic flows proposed will be secured by the making of Traffic Regulation Orders under s. 1 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 sets out the general duty of the Council as Highway Authority and requires that when exercising functions under the Act, the Council must do so so as to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. The framework for the making of Traffic Regulation Orders is governed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, in particular sections 1 to 4 and Schedule 9. The procedures to be followed are contained in Regulations made under the Act.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Strategic Lead: Community Development & Equalities

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act;
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.

Any diversity and equality issues identified by the traffic order consultation in section 5.1 above will be addressed during the detailed design Any diversity and equality issues identified through the traffic order consultation will be addressed in the detailed design and considered through a Community Equality Impact Assessment.

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

N/A

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

- Grays Town Centre Transport Study (Cabinet Report December 2014)
- Grays Town Centre Traffic Management (Cabinet Report September 2015)

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A: Key Junctions
- Appendix B: Study areas

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Highways Major Projects

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