

<b>9 September 2015</b>		<b>ITEM: 12</b> <b>01104410</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>		
<b>Grays Town Centre Traffic Management</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Oliver Gerrish, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation		
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Ann Osola, Head of Transportation and Highways		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation		
<b>This report is public</b>		

### **Executive Summary**

Following the Cabinet decision in December 2014, Thurrock Council undertook a consultation on Grays Town Centre Traffic Management Changes between February and April 2015. The changes to the Town Centre traffic management included a range of options that would improve access and the viability of the Town Centre; these included changing Orsett Road to two-way traffic and opening Crown Road to through traffic.

This report sets out the results of the public consultation and appraises the proposed changes to the Town Centre. Following the consultation, further options were also developed to address the issues raised; this report also considers these alternative options. The report recommendations propose implementing phase 1 of the changes to the Town Centre traffic management. This would route through traffic away from the Town Centre and include changes to allow multi-storey car park traffic to enter and leave in both directions on Crown Road. The report recommends these changes would be monitored prior to proceeding with phase 2, which would change Orsett Road to two-way traffic.

#### **1. Recommendation(s)**

##### **1.1 It is recommended that Phase 1 is implemented; including the design and construction of:**

- **Signalising the existing width restriction Bridge Road, to encourage Grays south traffic to avoid Orsett Road. Reviewing the capacity of the bridge to accommodate buses.**

- **Allowing all turning movement at the Stanley Road/Clarence Road junction.**
- **A 12 month suspension of the east bound bus lane on Crown Road to allow the multi-storey traffic to legally turn left and leave in an easterly direction.**
- **Better cycle links**
- **Banning HGV's from turning left from Derby Road to London Road at the Theatre**
- **“Kiss and Ride” facility to drop off at the Rail Station**
- **Additional cycle parking**
- **Improvements to the public realm at the northern end of the High Street**
- **Gateway/Welcome schemes at the main entry points**

**1.2 It is also recommended that as part of the Phase 1 works the following options are developed and implemented, subject to further discussions with stakeholders:**

- **Providing a Bus gate at Argent Street/Wouldham Road to allow bus services to pass from Bridge Road, along Argent Street and onto London Road.**
- **Exploring an alternative access to Town Centre car parking via Hogg Lane and Titan Quarry**
- **Closing the Morrison's Hogg Lane egress in favour of a roundabout at Seally Road/Eastern Way junction. (Subject to further consultation with Morrisons supermarket).**

**1.3 It is recommended that the phase 2 works are designed and implemented following monitoring of the impact of the phase 1 works, to determine whether the new traffic flows can be successfully managed. The phase 2 works will include changing Orsett Road to two-way between Derby Road and Stanley Road. The monitoring of the phase 1 works will be reviewed and phase 2 will proceed in consultation with the leader of the Council and portfolio holder.**

**1.4 It is recommended that the proposed removal of the Orsett Road laybys in favour of a cycle lane does not proceed at this stage and that there are further discussions with businesses to agree a cycling scheme that does not prejudice parking as part of the phase 2 works.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

**2.1 Grays is one of 6 growth hubs where the Council's regeneration activity is to be concentrated. In July 2013 Cabinet agreed a vision for Grays that was based on the issues raised during the public engagement. A key element of the vision was to make it easier to travel in to and move around the town centre by:**

- Enhancing the rail crossing-providing a high quality underpass;
- Re-establishing the connection between the town centre and the River Thames;
- Improving road, bus, cycle and pedestrian links in to and around the town centre; and
- Enhancing the transport interchange around the rail station

Implementation of the Grays projects included South Essex College, refurbishments at the Magistrates Court and the Market, all of which contribute to the viability of the area, but also encourage traffic movements.

In December 2014 Cabinet approved a public consultation on highways and transportation proposals as a first stage in addressing concerns raised by residents and businesses about accessibility into and around the town centre. Cabinet also agreed the next steps for the Underpass project including a Memorandum of Understanding which set out the terms of a partnership to deliver the underpass.

2.2 The December 2014 Cabinet voted in favour of recommendations concerning the Grays Town Centre Transport Study. These recommendations were

- That the package of measures which have been developed through the Grays Town Centre Transport Study and additional supporting documents be endorsed.
- That the development and implementation of the focused package of experimental measures that will address key access issues in Grays while enabling the Council to test proposals and discuss them with relevant users and stakeholders, be approved.
- That authority be delegated to the Director for Planning & Transportation in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to initiate a consultation and review process that will be reported to Planning & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny and make local changes to the proposed measures taking into account local views and priorities.

2.3 This report sets out the proposed alterations to the Grays Town Centre transport network, the results of the recent public consultation and some recommended actions. The report does not deal expressly with proposals to change the rail level crossing to an underpass, which is dealt with in a separate report.

2.4 In 2001/2002 the road layout in Grays was significantly changed. The main driver behind these changes was the regeneration of the George Street site with the new Morrison's supermarket and additionally a desire to discourage the traffic that was simply passing through Grays. At the time surveys showed that 40% of traffic on Orsett Road and Crown Road passed through Grays and a strategy was developed to make less traffic travel through Grays in favour of using Lodge Lane and the A1306.

- 2.5 Firstly, in conjunction with the Morrison's supermarket development, George Street was closed to through traffic, London Road was severed to join two parts of the Morrison's car park and Eastern Way became two-way, which made a more circuitous route for through traffic. The Bus Station was moved on-street at the junction of Crown Road and Maidstone Road. Following this the Council implemented further changes to London Road/Orsett Road one-way system, making a section of it two-way and diverting west bound traffic via Stanley Road, Clarence Road and Derby Road. The latter was again designed to make a more circuitous loop to discourage through traffic; this has resulted in ongoing problems with queues on Derby Road. Additionally in conjunction with these changes Crown Road was closed to through traffic, (except for buses and taxis). This arrangement has a rather complicated traffic management arrangement, which allows traffic to enter the multi-storey from the east and west, but only leave to the east.
- 2.6 To some extent the 2001/2002 changes were successful; in particular Morrison's car park provides a convenient and easily accessible western car park for the Town Centre. Similarly the closure of Crown Road, (except for buses) has significantly improved bus reliability, with easy access to the bus station from the east and west. However there have been ongoing issues with queues on the Clarence Road/Derby Road loop, problems with accessing the multi-storey, difficulty for non-car users getting to the Rail Station/College and general confusion for drivers accessing key locations. Additionally there is the very severe constraint of the High Street Level crossing, which is has featured highly in the press recently concerning safety issues, but which is also a significant barrier to sustainable movement and access to the regeneration opportunities to the south of the rail line.
- 2.7 Detailed studies have been undertaken with the objective to deliver an overall sustainable transport vision for Grays, that supports regeneration plans as well as access to, and permeability of, the High Street and surrounding town centre areas, with a specific focus on movements from the new South Essex College Campus, the Rail / Bus Station Interchange and the proposed new underpass and public squares.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 There are two main issues of principle, firstly whether opening Orsett Road up to two-way traffic will result in an increase in traffic through the town and consequently impact on air quality, congestion and safety. Secondly, whether to open Crown Road to through traffic and weighing that against the potential impacts on bus reliability and safety in the Bus Station. Prior to the 2001/2002 network changes when the road network was effectively working as a one-way loop, surveys at the time showed that approximately 40% of traffic in the Town Centre was passing through.

- 3.2 The most recent 2014 survey showed that on a Saturday between 11:00-12:00 was the busiest time, with nearly 2800 vehicles recorded in the peak hour. Of these vehicles, 31% were using the town centre as a through route, rather than a destination. The percentage of through traffic increased significantly during the weekday peak period with 58% of 2400 survey vehicles in the town centre being through traffic during the period 17:00-18:00 on the Thursday surveyed. Whilst it does not provide a thorough quantitative analysis, it does appear reasonable to assume that the circuitous route via Stanley Road, Clarence Road, Derby Road that was implemented in 2002 has not been particularly effective in discouraging traffic passing through the Town.
- 3.3 Therefore it would be reasonable to assume that switching Orsett Road to two-way could be implemented without attracting more traffic to use the town centre as a through route, especially if there is no increase in traffic capacity at the signalised junctions. Though there would still be significant queuing problems at the replacement signalised junction at Stanley Road/Orsett Road, unless Crown Road is available as an alternative for west bound traffic.
- 3.4 Turning to the issue of opening Crown Road to through traffic. Allowing traffic to circulate west bound via Crown Road would be a key requirement in managing those Orsett Road west bound queues past the Mazda Garage at a reasonably level. This additional Crown Road traffic will have an impact on the Bus Station and on queues at the Maidstone Road/London Road junction. Similarly allowing traffic to circulate east bound along Crown Road will impact on the Bus Station and queues at Stanley Road/Clarence Road and Stanley Road/Orsett Road junctions. The removal of the bus lane will also allow traffic leaving the multi-storey to travel east along Crown Road which will increase traffic queues at Stanley Road/Clarence Road and Stanley Road/Orsett Road junction, which further interfere with scheduled bus services in this area. Conversely this new multi storey access arrangement may reduce the level of multi-storey traffic that currently exits west through the bus station.
- 3.5 The proposed traffic distribution suggests that on a Saturday peak hour, (11:00hrs – 12:00hrs) there would be an increase of 366 two way vehicle movements through the Bus Station and on a weekday afternoon peak hour (17:00 – 18:00) there would be an increase of 254 two-way vehicle movements. So there will undoubtedly be significant impacts in this area, however the detailed traffic modelling undertaken to date has focussed on the signalised junctions at Orsett Road/Stanley Road, Stanley Road/Clarence Road and Derby Road/Orsett Road junctions. The modelling does not provide a detailed assessment of the impacts along Crown Road and does not quantify delays to bus services.
- 3.6 The Town Centre proposals added a further option of altering the Morrison's access on Maidstone Road to allow vehicles to exit as well as enter. This is likely to increase the traffic leaving Morrison via Maidstone Road to head east on Crown Road, thus potentially reducing traffic on Orsett Road. However this

may result in traffic cutting through Morrison's car park to access Crown Road and therefore is unlikely to be supported.

- 3.7 The other remaining contentious issue is the removal of Orsett Road layby in favour of constructing a cycleway. This layby provides up to 8 parking spaces and a loading area for the commercial uses between Derby Road and Stanley Road and is very well used. It is possible the proposals can be reviewed to determine whether the private forecourt of the commercial units could be used to allow formation of a cycleway without affecting the layby, however given the number of commercial units, it is ambitious to expect that all of them will agree.

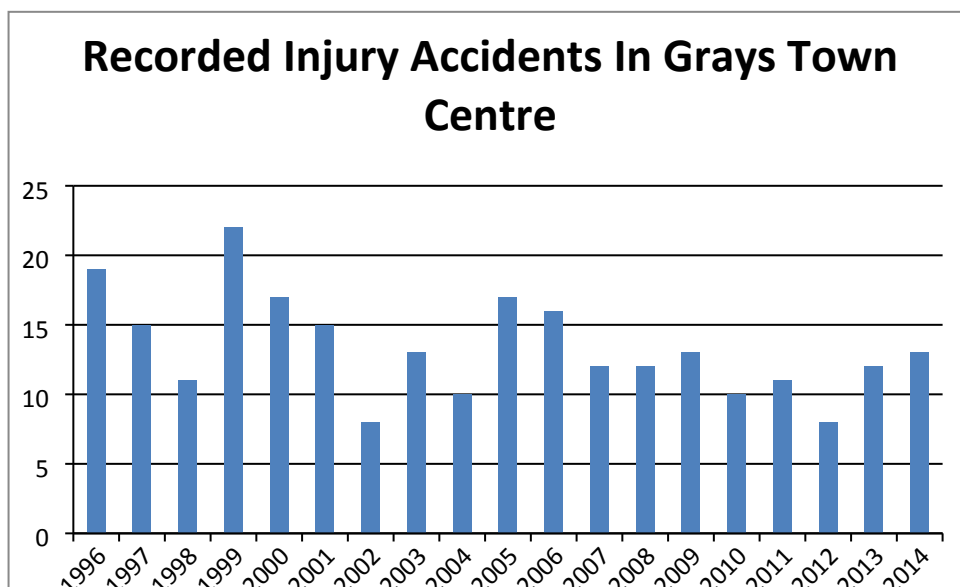
### **Alternative Options**

- 3.7 Alternative options to fully opening Crown Road have been considered. It should be noted that these options have not been subject to public consultation and would require further stakeholder engagement. The multi-storey exit could be modified to allow movements in all directions, but a bus-only lane could be maintained westbound, which would reduce some of the projected traffic through the Bus Station. However this is unlikely to redirect enough traffic to allow the replacement Orsett Road signals to operate without significant queuing.
- 3.8 Improving vehicle access to Grays south by replacing the width restriction arrangement on Bridge Road rail bridge with a contemporary two-way bridge could allow a significant proportion of Grays south traffic to travel to and from the east without entering the Town Centre. This would significantly reduce traffic pressure in the Town Centre and enable two-way traffic on Orsett Road without opening Crown Road to through traffic. However a replacement bridge facility is likely to be prohibitively expensive, especially if any available capital funding is likely to be directed at the underpass replacement of the High Street level crossing. However signalling the Bridge Road width restriction would provide a safe and manageable solution that would encourage some drivers to use that route to and from Grays south, rather than using the Town Centre roads. Additionally, subject to Network Rail agreeing the bridge is adequate for this purpose, it is conceivable that this signalised arrangement may allow bus operators to pass through Argent Street to a bus only access at the Wouldham Road/Argent Street junction. The existing HGV ban could be enforced using a camera. A consultation would be required concerning changes to the traffic regulation order, but otherwise there are unlikely to be implications for local residents and businesses arising from this scheme.
- 3.9 Consideration could be given to closing the Morrison's egress onto Hogg Lane and reconfiguring the Seally Road/Eastern Way access to a roundabout to allow all vehicle movements. This may discourage eastbound traffic leaving Morrison's along Orsett Road in favour of travelling north to the Treacle Mine roundabout and then eastward via Lodge Lane. This would be subject to further consultation with Morrisons.

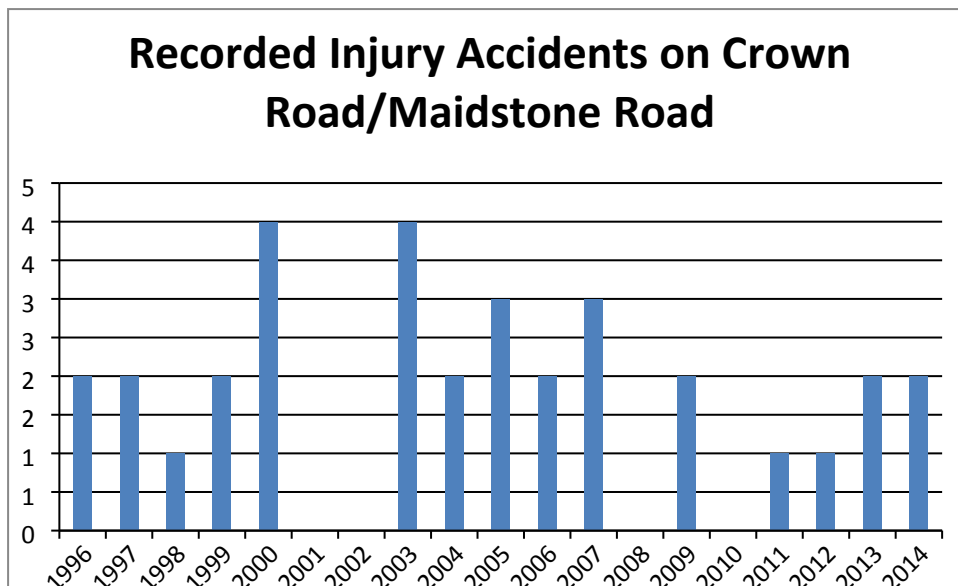
3.10 Lastly the development of the Titan Quarry is likely to afford an opportunity for an alternative to vehicle access between Hogg Lane and the rear of the Theatre. Subject to negotiation with the developer, this could provide access to Brooke Road Surgery, the Library, Cromwell Road car park and possibly other mixed uses and additional Town Centre car parking. This could allow a significant amount of Town Centre traffic to access the Town Centre from Hogg Lane, without travelling through the Town Centre. The development of a masterplan for this site is currently proceeding and further public consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning process.

**Road Safety**

3.11 The recorded injury accident pattern in Grays Town was reviewed to determine whether the historic changes to the road network had a significant impact on road safety, in particular whether the 2002 closure of Crown Road to through traffic had improved safety.



3.12 It can be seen that there is a slight trend of reduction in overall accidents and in particular a significant reduction in 2002 at the time of the implementation of the changes to the network. However there is no clear indication that the 2002 changes significantly improved road safety by removing through traffic on Crown Road. Turning to the Crown Road/Maidstone Road link itself, the recorded injury accident profile is reproduced below. Again there was a reduction in accidents at the time of the changes to road network, however otherwise there is no clear reduction in accidents, despite this link being closed to through traffic.



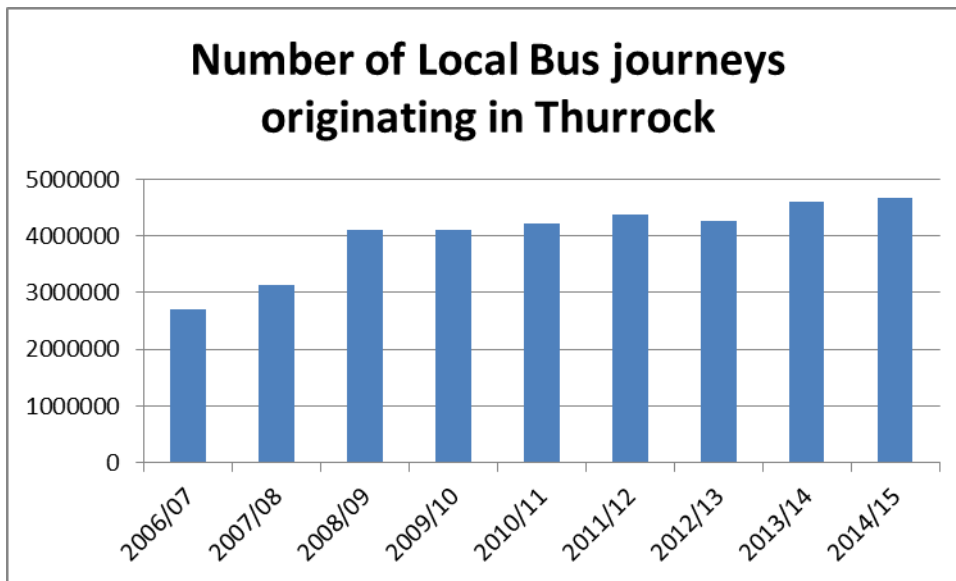
3.13 A closer analysis of the Crown Road and Maidstone Road data highlights that there have only been 4 recorded injury accidents in the Bus Station since it opened in 2001. Three of these being rear end shunts and 1 being a pedestrian falling in front of a bus. Therefore it is clear that the Bus Station is relatively safe, but there is a risk that the increase in through traffic could directly result in an increase in accidents. The accident pattern does highlight a very significant problem at the signalised pedestrian crossing of Crown Road adjacent to the rail level crossing, this shows that since 2002 there have been 8 recorded pedestrian injury accidents. This is a very high rate of pedestrian injury accidents; which has worsened since Crown Road has been closed to general through traffic. The cause of this is unclear, however it is likely to be due to the relatively low levels of traffic and that consequently pedestrian have a lack of expectation of encountering traffic at this crossing and that is contributing to high level of accidents.

#### **Traffic Capacity**

- 3.14 The Grays study included a LINSIG traffic model of the proposed changes to Orsett Road. In particular it modelled 4 traffic signals installations:
- 1) Orsett Road/Stanley Road signal controlled junction (with Orsett Road two-way)
  - 2) Clarence Road/Stanley Road junction (allowing all vehicle movements)
  - 3) Clarence Road/Derby Road pelican crossing
  - 4) Orsett Road/Derby Road signal controlled junction (with Orsett Road two-way)



- 3.15 The overall network results indicate that the proposals will result in improved network capacity and reduced total delay during the Thursday p.m. peak period. However, although total delay will reduce, they will be slightly detrimental to the network capacity during the Saturday a.m. peak period. The traffic study finds that on a weekday evening peak hour, with Crown Road open to two-way traffic, all the above signals works relatively well, except for the Orsett Road/Stanley Road junction. This junction will operate with significant queues in an easterly direction, predominantly due to the need to accommodate vehicles turning right into Stanley Road.
- 3.15 Orsett Road eastbound approach is over capacity with an estimated queue of 49 vehicles (approximately 294m) which will extend back through the Orsett Road / Derby Road junction and as far as the Quarry Hill junction. Orsett Road westbound approach is over capacity to a lesser degree with estimated queues of 30 vehicles (approximately 180m) which will extend back beyond the Dell Road junction. Stanley Road is over capacity with an estimated queue of 23 vehicles (approximately 156m) which will extend back to the exit from the Clarence Road / Stanley Road junction.
- 3.16 These queues are undesirable, but they are not dissimilar to the delays that occur as a result of the current arrangement, with west bound vehicles queuing around Stanley Road, Clarence Road and Derby Road, or indeed east bound vehicles queuing from the Theatre back past Morrison's. The proposed arrangement does provide a more obvious route for traffic through the Town Centre, but that would be at the expense of an adverse impact on the Bus Station and additional queuing at the Maidstone Road/London Road and Stanley Road/Clarence Road junction.
- 3.17 Bus patronage figures for local bus services originating in Thurrock have shown very positive trends as can be seen below. Delays on bus services are likely to reduce these levels of patronage, particularly if the delays impact on services between Grays and Lakeside. Whilst there is significant pressure to make Orsett Road two-way and to resolve the constraints on the multi-storey car park access, the increase in traffic on Crown Road may impact on bus patronage. As referenced above in the Ensign consultation response, this could lead to an increase in car travel, adding to the problems already experienced.



#### 4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The public consultation highlights the local communities' general support for changing Orsett Road to two-way traffic and opening Crown Road to through traffic. The recommendations in this report include a step change towards meeting these community objectives, whilst managing the less obvious potential impacts on bus services.

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

- 5.1 The proposed changes are relatively extensive and potentially be implemented in a phase manner; the following are the key elements:
- Changing Orsett Road to two-way between the Theatre and Stanley Road
  - Removing the Bus Lane from Crown Road and allowing all vehicle movements
  - Better cycle links
  - Banning HGV's from turning left from Derby Road to London Road at the Theatre
  - Allowing all turning movements at Clarence Road/Stanley Road junction
  - "Kiss and Drop" facility to drop off at the Rail Station
  - Additional cycle parking
  - Improvements to the public realm at the northern end of the High Street
  - Gateway/Welcome schemes at the main entry points
  - Removing Orsett Road laybys in favour of a cycle lane
- 5.2 Thurrock Council undertook the consultation on the Grays Town Centre proposals in December 2014. As part of the consultation, a letter was sent out to all addresses in Grays Town centre and the riverside area, with the consultation leaflet and an invitation to our open events. An online

consultation was available for 21 days. A one day open event was held in Grays shopping centre and an evening event was held at the Civic Offices. There was a press release and notification with the Enquirer newspaper. Hard copies of the consultation were available the Civic Offices reception.

Additionally consultations were sent to:

- The Road haulage Association
- All emergency services
- Thurrock disability network
- Freight Transport Association
- All Bus operators
- All elected members
- Grays Board members

5.3 Responses were received through the online consultation, face-to-face interviews, letter responses and from a petition objecting to the removal of Orsett Road layby in favour of a cycleway. The comments received have been summarised from each channel and detailed below.

5.4 The online comments gave rise to 78 responses. Of these comments, 30 were generally in favour of the principle of opening Crown Road and making Orsett Road two-way, nine were against the proposals the remainder were unclear or made other observations. A full summary of the online responses is shown below.

Table 1

Theme	No. of Responses	Selection of Comments
Support to bring back the one way system	7	<p>“Bring back old system;it worked and was easier”</p> <p>“Have a proper one-way system in Grays”</p> <p>“Revert back to the pre Morrison’s days when the traffic flowed significantly better”</p>
Two-way access(Orsett Road)	<p>14 in favour of two way traffic</p> <p>3 against two way traffic</p> <p>3 unclear or mixed views</p>	<p>“They should never have stopped two way flow along Orsett Road”</p> <p>“The proposals to open up Orsett Road and Crown Road to two way traffic are particularly welcome”</p> <p>“Change Orsett Road back to 2-way traffic”</p> <p>“Do not agree with making Orsett Road two way”</p>
Two-way access (Crown Road)	<p>10 in favour of two way traffic</p> <p>1 against two way traffic</p> <p>3 unclear or mixed views</p>	<p>“I think this is a great idea to re-introduce a two way system at Crown Road”</p> <p>“Open up Crown Road”</p> <p>“A return to two way traffic is just common sense and long overdue”</p> <p>“It might be nice to drive along Crown Road both ways but what are the forecast advantages on doing this?”</p>
Access to Argent Street	3 in favour of opening up the end of Argent Street	<p>“Consideration should be given to opening Argent Street to ease the flow of traffic coming into the town centre.”</p>

Access for Cyclists	11	<p>"Cycle routes should be physically segregated to ensure that they will be used"</p> <p>"I don't think cycle lanes are extensive enough"</p> <p>"Totally against shared use of pavements for pedestrians and bicycles"</p> <p>"The pedestrian and cycle routes in town are another very good idea"</p>
Underpass at train station	4 against and 4 in favour of underpass	<p>"Underpass at level crossing seems unnecessary"</p> <p>"I would really like to see an underpass built!"</p> <p>"Totally against the idea of an underpass."</p>
Turning out of the multi-storey car park	7 against plans for just a right turn when exiting car park	<p>"Having the option to turn left as you exit out of Gray's multi storey car park would reduce the amount of traffic"</p> <p>"Seems logical to allow cars to turn both left and right out of the multi-storey car park"</p> <p>"Being able to turn left from the multi storey car park would improve journey times"</p>
Traffic Lights	7 comments for reconfigure lights to include a left turn filter at Derby Road/Orsett Road 3 comments stating there are too many traffic lights	<p>"The traffic lights at the library should have a left turn filter. Ridiculous queuing for no reason"</p> <p>"Stop the constant gridlocks caused by the traffic lights outside the theatre"</p> <p>"Why can't the left hand lane that goes from derby road into Orsett road be continuous flow, which only stop for the pedestrian crossing"</p>
Poor road conditions	6	<p>"Have never seen the roads in such a sorry state"</p> <p>"Serious potholes putting vehicle safety at risk"</p>
Generally in favour of proposals	30	<p>"Can't wait for it to happen"</p>
Change unnecessary	6	<p>"I see nothing wrong with the current system"</p>
Other	23	Various

5.5 Additional face to face surveys were undertaken in Grays Town Centre which generated 38 responses. The majority (79%) of these were from residents including 8% who also work in the area. The remaining 21% of responses were from workers. The dominant modes of travel into Grays on the survey day were car (37%) and walking (42%). A further 3% drove and walked. 16% of respondents travelled by bus and 3% by other modes. Of those who drove to Grays, 40% parked at Morrison's Car park. A further 27% parked at the Multi Storey.

5.6 The vast majority of respondents (81%) supported the proposal for two way traffic in Crown Road. 8% didn't support the proposal. 5% were unaffected by the proposal therefore didn't provide a response. 3% were undecided and 3% provided no response. Similarly the vast majority (84%) of respondents supported proposals for two way traffic in Orsett Road, 8% did not support the proposal and 8% were undecided. Again, the vast majority (82%) agreed that improvements to the existing network and one way system is needed. 5%

think improvements are not needed. 3% are undecided and 11% provided no comment. Finally, the majority (68%) think Grays needs more and improved cycle links. 18% disagree and 13% provided no comment.

- 5.7 Further comments were provided by 22 respondents; including letters. The nature of these comments were varied. Six stated support and positivity towards the proposals. Five comments had concerns relating to traffic including the loss of parking and congestion. Three comments received emphasised the need for greater enforcement for both vehicles and cyclists. Four comments stated more support was needed for pedestrians, for example keeping cyclists off pavements and a further two indicated more should be done for cyclists (e.g. more cycle links). Nine other comments were received. A full summary of the responses is shown below.

Table 2

Theme	No. of Response	Selection of Comments
Positive comments about proposals	6	<p>"I think it is a good idea for [the] town"</p> <p>"Generally proposed changes would seem to be a definite improvement"</p> <p>"Cycle links and cycle hub great idea for students"</p>
Traffic Concerns	5	<p>"Concerns with vehicle parking in Cromwell side streets due to no parking on Orsett Road"</p> <p>"Concerns with traffic build up on Orsett Road"</p>
More support pedestrians	4	<p>"We need to take cyclists and vehicles off the pavements and out of pedestrian areas"</p> <p>"More needs to be done to make it easier for pedestrians to cross"</p>
More support for cyclists	3	<p>"More cycle links"</p>
Greater Enforcement Required	3	<p>"Bluebell Court banned turn needs enforcement"</p>
Other	9	<p>"Concerns regarding the new underpass"</p> <p>"An integrated bus/train/cycle would be a good move"</p> <p>"Would be useful to have toilets and café at bus station"</p>

		"Waste of my tax payers money"
--	--	--------------------------------

5.7 A further 40 individual responses were received from the petition in opposition to the removal of the Orsett Road layby in favour of a cycleway. In addition, comments were collated from discussions between Council officers and members of the public. Therefore this section comprises a total of 49 responses. The two most prominent themes within these responses were related to parking. 84% of respondents (41 out of 49) indicated either a need for more parking within the proposals and/or that insufficient parking/loading spaces within the proposals would lead to a disruption and/or loss of businesses. A full summary of the responses is shown below.

Table 3

Theme	No. of Responses	Selection of Comments
Insufficient parking within proposals	29	"Parking is needed" "Parking Essential" "Keep the parking"
Insufficient parking/loading spaces within proposals will cause a disruption and/or loss of business	29	"We would reiterate that to remove this parking area would be a disaster for all the shops within the vicinity" "Parking is needed or local businesses will suffer" "Many of my disabled patients need parking close to the practice – I will lose business"
Insufficient cyclist to warrant the proposals	2	"There are hardly any cyclists in Grays"
Bridge Road is not included within the study area and suffers from long queues and motorist not obeying the priority route	2	"There are long queues and impatient people ignoring the fact that they don't have priority on Bridge Road"
Crown Road/High Street crossing is currently dangerous for pedestrians	3	"The crossing on Crown Road that links the High Street is dangerous"
Existing speeding/rat running issues not addressed by proposals	2	"Existing speeding issues and rat runs are not being addressed in the proposals"
Positive comments regarding improvement to cycle routes within proposals	2	"Very much liked the proposal of improved cycle routes"
Positive comments regarding cycle hub within proposals	2	"The introduction of a cycle hub...would certainly be an asset"
Proposals will cause disruption and congestion around the bus station	1	"Opening Crown Road to two way traffic for the full length will encourage a lot more traffic trying to bypass any congestion along Orsett Road even though this means

		a diversion in distance, the potential to save time and emerge in London Road will be tempting and thus impact on the bus station.
--	--	--

- 5.8 The public transport operators were also consulted concerning the changes. It should be noted that Ensign Bus are opposed to opening of Crown Road to through traffic and given Ensign Bus play a key role in the delivery of Thurrock's public transport services, these views have been given significant weight in this report. Ensign commented that current layout prevents vehicles travelling east to west along Crown Road through the bus station and only allows west to east traffic as far as the multi storey car park. Ensign is of the view that opening Crown Road to two-way traffic for the full length will encourage a lot more traffic trying to bypass any congestion along Orsett Road.
- 5.9 Ensign are concerned that even though using Crown Road means a diversion, the potential to save time and emerge in London Road will be tempting and thus impact on the bus station. It is Ensign's view that the road at the moment is lightly used apart from service vehicles and buses allowing passengers to cross freely between bays on either side of the road. An increase in traffic levels could jeopardise pedestrians attempting to cross the road. Ensign have noticed a greater increase in vehicle numbers around the bus station since the college opened, as students are being dropped off near to the level crossing rather than drive round to the College entrance.
- 5.10 Ensign also have concern about the provision of dropping off bays for the Rail Station located at the access road by Morrison's car park. They feel this will encourage a lot more cars into the area, which having found the spaces taken will attempt to stop anywhere whilst waiting and in the absence of robust parking enforcement this will lead to severe congestion.
- 5.11 Ensign explained that problems that on-street bus stations such as Grays have is the interaction with other vehicles when entering and exiting the stop. Given that there are traffic signals located at the Maidstone Road junction with London Road; buses may well be stuck at the stop trying to pull out while a stream of traffic passes. Any loss of service reliability could impact passenger numbers and lead to an increase in car travel, adding to the problems already experienced.
- 5.12 Ensign suggested that other options be considered before allowing this section to be implemented. Since the original consultation, Ensign and confirmed they have no objections to temporarily revoking the east bound bus lane to allow for a 12 month monitoring, to determine whether it has an adverse effect on their services. This revocation would allow multi-storey traffic to enter and leave in both directions on Crown Road.

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

6.1 This report supports Thurrock's Corporate Priorities, which includes encouraging and promoting job creation and economic prosperity.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**  
**Finance Officer (Capital)**

The funding required for delivering the Grays Town Centre access improvements was agreed by Cabinet in December 2014 and is included within a number of budgets in the current capital programme.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**  
**Planning Lawyer**

Public feedback on the monitoring of any implemented changes to Town Centre traffic management should be targeted to affected groups and future consultation on further options which have arisen since the original consultation should satisfy the Public Sector Equality Duty within s149 of the Equality Act 2012 and comply with the Government's consultation principles

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

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

An initial public consultation exercise was completed between February-March 2015 gathering the views of local residents and visitors to Grays Town Centre when presented with a plan containing options to modify roads and transport infrastructure in Grays.

Data concerning the impact of these proposals on protected groups is not presently available therefore the recommendations contained in this report will be the subject of a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) before implementation with the involvement of relevant community and voluntary sector groups and individuals to ensure adequate provision is made for such protected groups.



Any contractor appointed to complete the works outlined in this report (or as amended subject to CEIA) will provide evidence of their standards and adherence to the Equality Act 2010 through the administration and implementation of works and practices.

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

Not applicable.

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:**

Nathan Drover

Principal Engineer

Strategic Transportation