

Grays Town Board

16th May 2022. Notes of Meeting / Key Action Points

ATTENDANCE

Board Members

Justin Thomas, New River; Chair
 Cllr Mark Coxshall, Thurrock Council
 Lucy Harris, Creative People and Places Partnership
 Adam Bryan, SELEP
 Teresa O'Keeffe, Love Grays Partnership
 Jayne Sheehan, South Essex College

Board Advisor

Clifford Read

Council

Henry Kennedy-Skipton, Strategic Lead – Regeneration
 Bernice Lim, Capital Programme Manager
 Yomi Shodimu – Senior Project Officer

DLUHC

Iain McNab
 Margaret Kalaugher

Multi-Disciplinary Design Team

Riccardo Bobisse, AR Urbanism
 Catherine Healy, Tonkin Liu
 Graham Gathergood, Beckett Rankin

Apologies

Jackie Doyle-Price, MP; Vice-Chair
 Cllr Jane Potheary, Thurrock Council
 Brian Priestley, Thurrock Council
 Rebecca Horne, Thurrock Council

		Action
1.	Welcome	
	Justin welcomed All Iain McNab was introduced to the Board as the new Towns Fund representative from DHULC. Iain has taken over from Nigel Stewardson.	
2.	Programme Update	
	BL was seeking a steer from the Board on projects prioritisation. BL highlighted the constraints and opportunities for each of the projects; this was shared with the Board via a presentation. BL highlighted that TC was hoping to secure an agreement from the Board on the prioritisation of projects the following week if it was possible.	

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	<p>BL explained that as well as the deliverability of the projects, the Board should also consider the following when making any decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Deliverability - Demonstration of value for money - to be presented in the business case in terms of Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) - Deliverability within the Grant Timescales <p>If more time is required for the Board to prioritise the projects, TC would request an extension for the Business Case submission, this would have an impact on the implementation timescales.</p> <p>BL reported on the feedback from the Design Council at a recent consultation workshop. The Design Council highlighted that the Town Deal offers a rare opportunity for significant public realm works funding and emphasised the need to maximise this opportunity and create 'something special'.</p> <p>In essence, whilst the Town Deal funding is significant, some prioritisation and phasing may be needed to make the most of the opportunity. A vibrant river front might do this. An activity centre or the jetty say, might be things that could be done later with greater funding if the aim was to maximise impact of the £19.9m</p> <p>BL advised of possible funding opportunities for projects that do not proceed within the Town's deal but can be carried out in later phases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Levelling Up 2 - Sport England - London Resort - Thames Clippers <p>Destination Consultants (Colliers and Knight, Kavanagh & Page) have been working alongside the Design Team to develop the masterplan. A destination report has been produced on Grays Riverside which identifies leisure destination attraction elements to consider.</p> <p>Action: TC to share consultant's report with Board once it has been finalised.</p> <p>BL briefly recapped with the Board on the vision for Grays by 2030. The TIP objectives were also recapped upon.</p>	TC
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3.	Update from Design Consultant Team - AR Urbanism	
	<p>RB presented a summary of the design work his team has completed to date.</p> <p>Jetty Location - The proximity to the town Wharf is probably the best possible location due to visibility, access and a sense of belonging to the town centre. As well as for the level of impact on the activities of the Yacht Club.</p>	

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	<p>The Design Team has considered the relationship with the Yacht Club especially access to the safe sailing zone. RB noted that his team has carried out different studies to understand the impact of different types of pontoons and structures.</p> <p>RB noted that something special could be achieved with the jetty, however whether it happens now or at a later stage is something that would need to be considered and that there is still the option to go for a basic approach, where a pier with a basic pontoon and waiting area can be delivered. Battersea Power Station Pier and Wandsworth Riverside Quarter Pier were shared with the Board as examples.</p> <p>RB, noted that the team have also been working with the Quantity Surveyor to ensure that the work is costed to best fit the budget available.</p> <p><u>Action:</u> Design Team's presentation to be circulated to the Board.</p> <p>GG (re: pontoons) addressed the following with the Board in response to their questions:</p> <p><i>Jetty length</i> – Determined based to limit the amount of dredging and to avoid navigation risk. Making the jetty shorter increases the volume of dredging required – dredging can be costly, represents an ongoing maintenance cost, and will generate resistance to the scheme from an environmental and ecological point of view. The jetty is currently aligned with outside of Yacht Club Moorings to limit navigational risk to river users.</p> <p><i>Jetty location</i> – location has been picked based on the location assessment. The previous preferred location was located off pier wharf, but land ownership concerns have suggested the corner of Kilverts field (directly adjacent) is a better location. The Yacht club has expressed support for this location over the others considered as it has a lesser impact on their moorings.</p> <p>The pier cuts off access between the Yacht club and their safe sail space. There were two options considered with how to allow the yacht club to maintain their access. One of these allowed for their dinghies to be moved along the jetty topside and launched into the river on the other side, but this was viewed as disruptive to the use of the jetty. The second option was to allow access beneath one of the fixed jetty spans hence why a level analysis was looked at to determine the access provided at different heights of the structure.</p> <p><i>Jetty price</i> significantly higher than original due to large increase in price of steel (jetty is primarily made of steel) as well as 25% inflation (BCIS TPI).</p> <p>GG noted that his team have a further meeting with PLA the following week. The current proposal meets PLA's comments raised on the previous design iteration in 2020.</p> <p><u>Activity Centre</u> The Board agreed that 500sqm should be the sufficient for an Activity Centre.</p> <p><u>Lightship café</u></p>	<p>TC</p>
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	<p>RB presented the concept design for the Lightship café if this was to proceed and noted that the plan was for the café to be an asset that will improve the security, diversify the offer and cater for different type of clientele, e.g., families and commuters.</p> <p>A design of a two-storey structure with a potential accessible viewing deck was presented. The change of location for the café is to provide direct access to the re-enhanced River walk which would be beneficial for potential evening performances as it is in closer proximity to the potential open air venue. There will still be a strong connection with the kids play area but will provide a better access to the riverside.</p> <p>Action: JT requested further details on the cost implications for all projects.</p> <p>Riverfront</p> <p>RB presented the overall intention to create a range of spaces along the riverside, gently mediating the different levels, therefore increasing accessibility for different users over time. The transition and visual connection with the park and riverfront will reinforced.</p> <p>RB noted that from the previous discussions with the Board, the design team have created a design that has the provision of places not just for nature but also for people to be able to access the water. There is also a range of different activities that can take place along the land of the park.</p> <p>RB noted that the Board had previously highlighted that the space should not just be for nature but for people and this has been incorporated in the design concept update. The Board's recommendations from the last meeting have been implemented into the updated design proposals.</p> <p>RB noted that his team have worked closely with the Quantity Surveyor to ensure that the projects are in line with the costings.</p> <p>CH addressed the following with the Board in response to their questions:</p> <p>Sand - As outlined in the ARUP report, a sand beach in this location is not feasible. The team are proposing a vegetated shingle beach as it is a naturally occurring habitat in the area and is proven to be suitable to stay in-situ despite the tides and currents. If including sand on that side of the flood wall is required by the Board, the design team can then designate a zone for sand at the highest point along the flood wall.</p> <p>Boardwalk Materiality</p> <p>Reasons for using precast concrete instead of timber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beach is exposed to the reality of harsh weather and flooding due to its waterfront location. • This would increase the likelihood of the timber boardwalk planks twisting and warping over time as well as creating slip risks. 	TC
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A precast concrete boardwalk is better suited to a waterfront location and provides an overall longer-term solution, requiring significantly less maintenance than a wooden boardwalk.• The precast concrete boardwalk would also include a cast-in form liner finish that would provide a long-term, anti-slip solution. <p>Levels</p> <p>The team have created a concept and language for a landmark destination landscape. The no. of mounding, height of mounding, etc can be reduced if required due to costs. The team are considering an on-site cut and fill approach along the south of the sandpit to reduce the volume of soil required to create the mounding.</p> <p>MC noted that the brief for the Riverfront has been implemented well.</p> <p>Action: MC requested detailed drawings of the riverfront and the levels.</p> <p>TOK noted that she had recently spoke to the local nursery near the riverfront and asked the design team if they could possibly look at providing the nursery with garden space as part of the works. TOK noted that she is happy to provide the design team with the contact details for the nursery.</p>	TC						
4.	Project options							
	<p>BL presented the following project options to the Board with an Objective Analysis of the prioritised project options.</p> <p>BL noted that the original costings for the projects have more than doubled due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Previous cost price inflation and provision of inflation in the lead up to construction- Increased contingency cost allocation- Council costs (legal fees, statutory fees marine work licence) <p>High impact and animated riverfront package for the local community.</p> <table><tr><th>Option A</th><th>Preliminary Estimate</th></tr><tr><td><u>Project 3:</u> Grays Riverfront and Beach <i>Riverfront massing, planters and seating, boardwalk, vegetated shingle beach, rock pools, viewing deck, culvert opened and naturalised. Multi-use structures to support events.</i></td><td>£ 14,500,000</td></tr><tr><td><u>Project 4:</u> Grays Beach Riverside Park & Kilverts Field (Destination Attraction)</td><td>£ 6,900,000</td></tr></table>	Option A	Preliminary Estimate	<u>Project 3:</u> Grays Riverfront and Beach <i>Riverfront massing, planters and seating, boardwalk, vegetated shingle beach, rock pools, viewing deck, culvert opened and naturalised. Multi-use structures to support events.</i>	£ 14,500,000	<u>Project 4:</u> Grays Beach Riverside Park & Kilverts Field (Destination Attraction)	£ 6,900,000	
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New pedestrian and cycle paths, planted mounding from Kilverts Field to flood wall, relocated boat yard, culvert cleared and re-planted, Lightship Café redevelopment.

Total (VE to £19.9 million)

£ 21,400,000

Contribute towards making the Thames Estuary a more significant economic driver.

Option B

Project 6: Grays Town Jetty

Project 3: Grays Riverfront and Beach
Reduced scope beach.

BL noted that both options have deliverability challenges and further risks associated with them. Towns Fund Delivery Partner Advisor (ARUP) have recommended increasing the contingency allocation to 50-60% for the marine works. Both options have Benefit Cost-Ratio (BCR) challenges.

MC noted his concerns of the length of the jetty, noting it was too long. MC was also concerned whether the plans for the jetty will receive planning permission. MC also noted that PLA will also be concerned with the design of the jetty.

LH noted that she liked the designs presented for the Riverfront, however noted that the planters and seating aspect should not be within the Towns Fund works and would be interested in discussing this with IM for his views. LH noted that she liked the designs around the ecology along the riverfront, however there must be more areas of sand along the riverfront, placed in areas where it will not get washed away.

JS noted that she was interested in who will be using the jetty and where the relocated boat yard will be going. Marine engineering is taught at the college but currently based in Basildon. JS would like to move this to Thurrock. The boatyard may be a potential space that the college can use for their marine engineering course.

JS noted that Option A would be beneficial for skills and employment especially if a marine workshop ends up being in the area. However, the sustainability of the skills and employment opportunities may be an issue, but the college may be able to assist with this.

TOK noted that the Boat Yard was relocated to allow Kilverts Fields to be reinstated. Kilverts Field is a very important community space for the residents that live in the area, particularly Seabrook Rise residents.

TOK noted her preference to Option A and noted that there has to be sand in the area.

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	<p>JT advised that the Board would like further detail on the discussions that have been had with the Yacht Club. JT is concerned that the concept designs have been over engineered and that cheaper alternative design have not been explored for the projects before the board were presented with the 2 options to decide upon. (Option A & B).</p> <p>HS noted that although options have been presented for priority projects, it is intended whichever approach is taken, all projects will be carried out but just through a phased approach as part of the TIP or future programme.</p> <p>RB noted that costing exercises have been carried out. RB noted that his team have created alternative options for all the projects which will be shared with the Board.</p> <p>JT suggested that the jetty should be designed to fit within the £6 million allocated budget. Discussions may be made with the Yacht Club on changes.</p> <p>BL highlighted that extensive consultation has been carried out in terms of the jetty location. BL also explained the technical difficulties in integrating the Yacht Club with the activity centre. If integrated, the Yacht Club building will be sitting on the 'wrong side' of the flood defence. The activity centre cannot sit on the wet side, it has to sit on the dry side of the flood defence.</p> <p>BL also advised that after extensive conversations with the Yacht Club, they would not be able to provide a decision on their club building within the Town Deal programme timescales, thus a decision was taken for the Yacht Club to redevelop the club's building themselves.</p> <p>The activity centre is now significantly reduced, it is now proposed to be 500 square metres rather than 1200 square meter as proposed in the TIP bid.</p> <p>BL advised that the Council had a meeting with Thames Clipper and was advised that they are looking to establish a schedule route into London over the next three years and recommended that the jetty includes provision to enable double-decker passenger loading facility to be provided at a later date.</p> <p>MK reassured the Board that due to cost price inflation, other towns in the Towns Fund programme are also struggling and had to undertake descopeing, value engineering and even withdrawing of projects. It's not just a challenge for Grays Towns Fund but an issue for TIP Boards across the country.</p> <p>Project extension</p> <p>IM from DHULC noted that project submission extension can be requested as it is best to get it right rather than press ahead with the wrong scheme. The Towns Fund can be flexible and provide more time if needed but there will be pressure to ensure that progress is being achieved.</p> <p>Action: BL to attend meeting with IM and JT to discuss the extension of Business Cases submission.</p>	BL/IM/JT
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5.	Board member nomination	
	The Board agreed that due to the stage the programme is currently at, now would not be the best time to recruit additional Board members. However, JT advised that should members have any suggestions on perspective Boards Member that can be engaged in the future, they should let him know.	
5.	AOB	
	<u>Action:</u> Terms of Reference needs to be updated and approved by Board.	TC