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GRAYS TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN:

APPENDICES

GRAYS TOWN DEAL BOARD

References and notes

1. Towns Fund Prospectus (November 2019). MHCLG. (paras 2.14-2.25) and Towns Fund Guidance (June 2020). MHCLG (paras 4.5-4.14)
2. Thurrock Council - Thurrock Economic Growth Strategy, 2016 to 2021
3. Grays Built-up area sub division in East (GSS code E35001454)
4. Grays Future High Street Fund decision announced on 26/12/2020
5. Grays Future High Street Fund Business Case – July 2019
6. Dealers in corn
7. <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/history-on-river-thames/grays-wharf>
8. Grays Town Centre Evaluation (2018); Hatch Regeneris Analysis
9. Average London house price exceeds £500,000 for first time – Guardian 21/01/2021
10. Planning application was received by the Planning Inspectorate on 4 January 2021 the notification decision to accept the application for Examination for an order granting development consent was made public on 28 January 2021. If granted, works will start in 2022, with a view to the London Resort opening in 2024
11. A 'gate' is a term used to describe an autonomous theme park, of which large resorts usually have more than one
12. London Resort presentation to Grays Towns Fund Board Meeting on 13/11/2020
13. This was executed in November 2020
14. Association of South Essex Local Authorities – Growth and Recovery Prospectus (2020)
15. Grays Town Centre Evaluation (2018)
16. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-43964341>; <https://www.yourthurrock.com/2019/12/12/thurrock-named-one-polluted-areas-country/>
17. 2020-07-27: Grays train station: One of Essex's most dangerous crossings set to be transformed (<https://www.essexlive.news/news/essex-news/grays-train-station-high-street-4366921>)
18. On 20 November 2020, Highways England withdrew their application for a Development Consent Order based on early feedback received from the Planning Inspectorate. They are anticipated to resubmit their application in 2021
19. Forth Ports Group and DP World announced a partnership which will submit a joint Freeport bid incorporating the Port of Tilbury and DP World London Gateway (<https://www.forthports.co.uk/latest-news/forth-ports-and-dp-world-announce-joint-bid-for-a-freeport-on-the-thames/>)
20. Source: 2018 Population as reported in the Towns Fund Dashboard
21. Grays Town Partnership which is promoting the town centre through 'Love Grays' - members of whom are also represented on the Town Deal Board
22. Thurrock Economic Growth Strategy
23. Towns Fund Dashboard (2020)
24. Business Register and Employment Survey 2018 as reported in Towns Fund Dashboard (2020)
25. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation
26. The colours on the maps indicate the deprivation decile of each Lower Layer Super Output Area (LSOA). The most deprived are shown in blue
27. The three drivers of the employment economy are in retail, transport & storage, business administration & support services as detailed previously
28. A Thurrock Council service focussed on working with young people 11-17 years. Aims to support the personal and social development of young people accessing the service via a range of free youth work projects and programmes
29. ONS (2018) as reported in Towns Fund Dashboard (2020)
30. The borough of Thurrock is rated joint third in the UK with air pollution levels recorded at 14 micrograms per cubic metre. Grays is shown at 12 micrograms
31. See Active Design by Sport England here (<https://www.sportengland.org/activedesign>)
32. Thurrock Local Development Framework, Core Strategy 2015
33. Grays Future High Street Fund Business Case – July 2019
34. Grays Town Centre Evaluation (2018); Hatch Regeneris Analysis
35. A purpose built ferry terminal is being proposed to facilitate Thames Clippers' aspiration to extend river bus services to Tilbury as part of the Tilbury Towns Fund Bid
36. See Appendix 4
37. Planning application was received by the Planning Inspectorate on 4 January 2021 the notification decision to accept the application for Examination for an order granting development consent was made public on 28 January 2021. If granted, works will start in 2022, with a view to the London Resort opening in 2024
38. The Green Book Central Government Guidance On Appraisal And Evaluation (2020) found here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938046/The_Green_Book_2020.pdf

Appendix 1: Grays: Historical Spatial Context

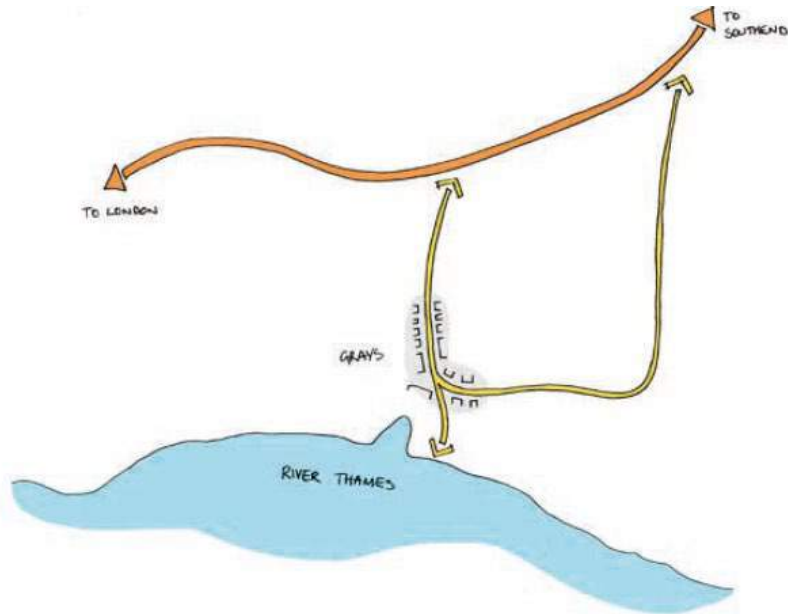


1. GRAYS HISTORICAL SPATIAL CONTEXT

Historical Spatial Development - The Riverside

- 1.1 Grays owes much of its early development to its position on a creek of the Thames, which was navigable by small vessels. Grays was formerly a small port, with chalk quarries, brickworks, and a brewery. As early as 1637, there were regular boat services between Grays and London. In 1838 travellers to London could use the Gravesend river steamers. Grays pier was built in circa 1841, Steamers called here, and by 1848, there were services five times a day.
- 1.2 Grays distinctive sense of place is underpinned by the landscape setting, historic fabric, and the River Thames. The maritime heritage defines the landscape of the riverside. In the 19th Century, boats for passage of goods and people docked at Grays and thriving establishments brought work and prosperity to Grays. These included, amongst others, barge building (Goldsmiths), corn factors (Cole and Lequire), timber importers (Bruce's Wharf), ship breakers (Wards Wharf), coal (Grays Co-operative) wharf and drum manufacturers (Kilvert's Oil, Lard factory and Drums Oil) .
- 1.3 Through the 19th Century Grays supported a fishing village and the largest fleet of sailing barges in Britain. These barges served up the east coast to Yorkshire and along the south coast to Cornwall and in to London and the industry included maintenance and repair of Thames Barges
- 1.4 The riverside area historically has been a key point of connectivity and with substantial naval heritage. In fact, 'The Joseph Hertz', built in 1920 as the steam yacht 'Cutty Sark', came to Grays in 1947 as a training ship for Jewish orphans, some of whom had been in a German concentration camp¹. During the war effort, Mulberry Units (concrete landing pontoons used in Second World War landings) were assembled here.

Figure 1: Historic Growth of Grays



Source: NewRiver REIT Charette Output (2020)

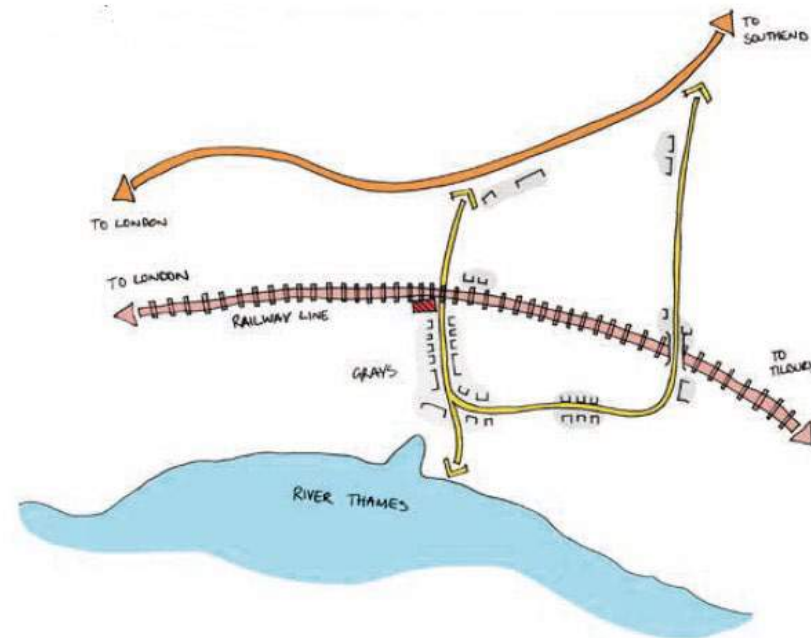
Historical Spatial Development - The Railway

- 1.5 Growth inland was stimulated by the coming of the railway. The London, Tilbury, and Southend railway was opened in 1854 as far as Tilbury, with a station at Grays, and was extended to Southend in 1856. The

¹ British History Online: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

line passed through Grays immediately north of the town, with a level crossing in the High Street. The branch from Grays to Romford was opened as far as Upminster in 1892 and in 1893 was extended to Romford, where it linked with the main line of the Great Eastern railway. Grays railway station was badly damaged by bombing during the Second World War, and the south side was rebuilt in 1954.

Figure 2: Influence of Railway on Historic Growth of Grays

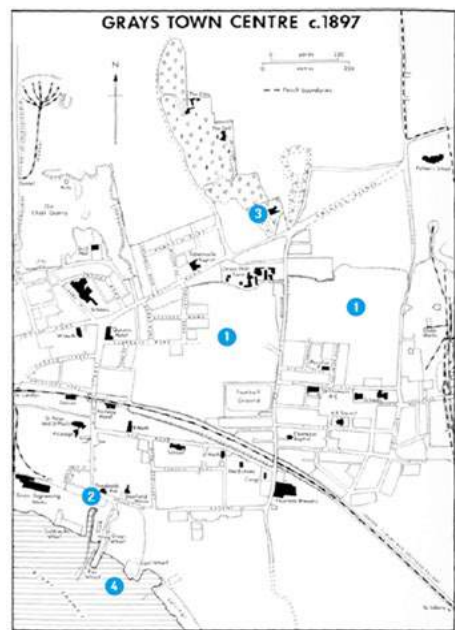


Source: NewRiver REIT Charette Output (2020)

Historical Spatial Development – The Settlement

- 1.6 Early settlements were positioned on a creek of the Thames. The area originally formed part of the 'Hundred of Chafford', an administrative collection of 15 ancient parishes with a dispersed pattern of settlement and agriculture.
- 1.7 The town began to expand beyond its Medieval shell between 1871 and 1901. This was in part due to the establishment of the railway, the development of local quarries and the opening of nearby Tilbury docks. Extensive quarrying, mainly in the 19th century, altered the natural landscape, as well as influencing the pattern of settlement.

Figure 3: Grays Town Centre c. 1897



Key:
1 – Open Brick Fields
2- Site of Ancient Market
3 – Site of Grays Hall
4 – River Wharfs
Source: <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/>

1.8 By 1895, the whole of the High Street as well as adjoining areas of Orsett Road and London Road had been built up. Development soon spread onto redundant brick fields to the east as resources became exhausted. By 1929, the Grays Chalk Quarries Co. covered 250 acres with 32km of railway and a 91m jetty on the Thames, constituting much of the town's trade. The company was dissolved in 1954 with all chalk pits ceasing production by 1976.

Figure 4: Grays c. 1904



Source: Steer Consulting

1.9 The contemporary shift in importance of the High Street, from its original focus to the south of the railway towards the north, was due to the extensive redevelopment which took place in the 1960s. Grays Thurrock Urban District Council (GUDC), in association with Ravenscroft Properties Ltd, redeveloped the large ancient

area of Grays bounded by New Road, Bridge Road, Argent Street and High Street with construction completed by 1973.

- 1.10 The town centre changed in the 1970s with a modernisation programme. Further redevelopment occurred north of the railway line, with the construction of Grays Shopping Centre which removed York Road, which used to run north-south through the site. This construction also included the new Derby Road Bridge, which provided access south of the railway.
- 1.11 The northward shift from the riverside crystallised in this period. The centre was the principal retail, civic and cultural hub for the Borough and remained a vital and viable centre for its resident community until the 1990's, when its gradual decline commenced after the opening of Lakeside Shopping Centre.



Appendix 2: Stakeholder Engagement Plan & Analysis

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1. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN: APPROACH & OUTPUTS

- 1.1 The preparation and development of the Grays TIP has been founded on wide-ranging engagement and consultation with key stakeholders in Grays who have a vested interest in the future of the Town. This engagement has been carried out in accordance with the MHCLG’s guidance on the development of effective and robust TIPs¹. Stakeholders have been provided with the opportunity to voice their opinions on a wide range of town-centre related issues, including:
- the strengths and weaknesses of the town as a place to live, work, shop, play and visit for different activities and uses;
 - the potential opportunities to improve, transform and grow the town in the future;
 - the likely threats/challenges that could dampen, delay or prevent future growth;
 - their aspirations and vision for the town centre over the next 5-10 years and beyond; and
 - the key projects and interventions they would like to see delivered as part of the Grays TIP.
- 1.2 In identifying specific needs and interventions, local communities within Grays have been on a journey through several community focussed consultations as illustrated below:

Figure 1: Community Consultation and Intervention Selection Journey



- 1.3 The scope and type of engagement we could effectively carry out during 2020 was inevitably constrained by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result we necessarily used and adapted different channels of engagement and communication throughout the preparation of the TIP to ensure as wide a coverage as possible, including:
- Workshop via digital platforms with a cross-section of individuals and groups to help inform the SWOT analysis, visioning and project prioritisation.
 - The development of a dedicated Grays Towns Fund website.

¹ Towns Fund Guidance (June 2020). MHCLG. Refer specifically to paragraphs 4.15-4.21.

- Newsletters and the use of other social media channels / groups to help build awareness, gather opinion and build support.
- 1.4 The engagement carried out to inform the preparation of the TIP has helped to shape the structure and process for future engagement and consultation, including capacity-building and identifying potential development/funding partners and “champions” who can help delivery the Towns Fund. Critical to this function the Town Board has formed the Grays Town Fund Communications Group (GTFCG) with membership from the Board, supported by the Council’s Regeneration and Communications teams. The GTFCG has established its own website (<http://graystownsfund.co.uk/>) which also includes a live survey and ‘comments’ facility to enable comments, opinions and suggestions to be provided directly to the Board and feed into the on-going development of the town’s vision, SWOTS and projects. We describe the website and responses to the survey in more detail later in this Appendix.
- 1.5 To ensure stakeholder engagement post the submission of the TIP at the end of January 2021, the Board has in place a robust approach that ensures the continued involvement of the local community and key stakeholders as the vision, strategy, business case for each project is progressed over the lifetime of the Towns Fund and beyond.

2. ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

Town Deal Board

- 2.1 Following the announcement of the Towns Fund Deal in 2019, the Grays Town Deal Board (GTDB) was formed in January 2020 in accordance with MHCLG’s Towns Fund Prospectus² and subsequent Guidance³.
- 2.2 The GTDB comprises of nine key members. It is chaired by Justin Thomas, Director of Development at New River REIT. The membership of the board reflects the diversity of the town and surrounding area. It includes senior representatives from a range of local businesses and community/voluntary organisations in Grays, including: Love Grays, The Riverside Community (a ‘Big Local’ project supported by The National Lottery Fund), South Essex College, Creative People and Places Partnership and Thurrock CVS (Community Voluntary Services). The Board also includes the Member of Parliament for Thurrock, Jackie Doyle-Price, Councillors, Council Officers and the Chief Executive Officer of the South Essex Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). This diverse membership has a long-standing and vested interest in the future of Grays Town Centre. Together they have provided a robust and balanced input to the development and preparation of the Town Investment Plan, from visioning through to project prioritisation.
- 2.3 Since the Board was formed it has met 8 times till January 2021 (including during COVID-19 lockdown period) to fulfil its role and will continue for the successful delivery of this TIP. The board is the vehicle through which the vision and strategy for the town is defined in collaboration with the local community. The vision is to drive the economic regeneration of the town to deliver long term economic and productivity growth.

Grays Advisory Group

- 2.4 The Grays Advisory Group (AG) is a further forum or contribution to the TIP. It includes some 26 representatives from most of Grays key community/voluntary organisations and local businesses, along with local ward Councillors and third-party stakeholders. The table below shows all the AG members.

² Towns Fund Prospectus (November 2019). Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (pages 18-21)

³ Towns Fund Guidance (June 2020). Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (pages 16-18))

	Group Name	Representative
1	Ensign Bus Company Ltd	Paul Dickson
2	Job Centre Plus	Lindsey Moore
3	Thameside Theatre	Dianna Ferry
4	Riverside Community Big Local	Andrew Blakey
5	Grays Community Forum(s); Orchards & Thameside	Jim Graham
6	Thames Clipper	Geoff Symonds
7	Public Health	Sue Bradish
8	Environment Agency	Phillip Spearman/ Pat Abbott
9	Sikh Gurudwara	Inderpal Singh
10	St Peter and St Pauls Church	Reverend Darren Barlow
11	Grays Riverside Ward Councillor	Councillor Tony Fish
12	Grays Thurrock Ward Councillor	Councillor John Kent
13	Grays Thurrock Ward Councillor	Councillor Lynn Worrall
14	Grays Riverside Ward Councillor	Councillor Jane Potheary
15	C2C	Ben Martin
16	Local Police - Secure by Design	Michael Armstrong
17	Nepalese Community	Sundar Limbu
18	Active Thurrock	Lee Monk
19	Taxi licensing	Paula Parrott
20	Yacht Club	Tim Baker
21	Adult Community College	Jacqueline Bradley
22	Smart Thurrock	Andy Best
23	Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions	Neil Woodbridge
24	Designing out Crime Officer	Alan Twine
25	Environment Agency	Catherine Robaldo
26	Friends of Grays	Tina Holland

3. Consultation Outputs

- 3.1 As seen from **Figure 1**, throughout the engagement process we sought to ensure that all of Grays residents and businesses, and the stakeholders that represent them, were provided with opportunities to set out their aspirations for the town centre, and influence the direction of the TIP at critical stages in its preparation, rather than just responding to plans once they had been fully developed. This was critical to our approach, as the overarching aim was to develop a shared vision and commitment on the TIP, and generate active support (and, where possible, identify other potential partners and funding streams) to help ensure the delivery and long-term success of a number of the identified town centre projects.
- 3.2 The consultations have signified that it is critical to create more reasons to be in Grays; to increase the number of people there, and to re-establish the vibrancy that Grays enjoyed in the past especially with its connections with its riverside. They further indicate the desire for a mix of uses including green spaces, shopping, eating, leisure, cultural, housing and places to work.
- 3.3 The town centre lacks greenery. Residents wanted a greener and more natural environment in the town centre linked to the Thames and the wider town, for their well-being, biodiversity, air quality improvement,

carbon reduction and shelter. The use of such space for intergenerational activity and participation has come through strongly especially during the current pandemic.

- 3.4 The communities want to have more things happening in the evening. Grays town centre is more than just a place to go to the station and commute into London. It has to function beyond a commuter hub and where there is an ecosystem of communities and local businesses thrive on and develop.
- 3.5 Grays town centre seems that it has been “left behind” and there is a need to renew the town’s confidence, built heritage and develop buildings and spaces to raise perception and take Grays into the future.
- 3.6 Our future vision⁴ for Grays is as follows:

“Building on its history as Chartered Market town and its connection to the River, the ambition is to transform Grays and deliver a high quality destination to live, work, learn and play.

The future of Grays will see it reconnected with its Riverside and maritime heritage. The Riverside will be both a transport and a recreational gateway. By improving access and visibility the River will unlock transformative green space to be enjoyed by the whole community. This will make Grays a happier and healthier place to live.

The reanimated Riverside and improved links with the Town will stimulate greater integration between the resident, student and business communities and foster growth in both the day and night-time economy. Cafes, bars, restaurants, shops and markets will combine with the potential for culture, entertainment and events in new indoor and outdoor venues which will provide attractive spaces for people to meet and socialise.

The interconnected town and Riverside will support jobs, learning and entrepreneurship and boost the prosperity of this historic town.”

- 3.7 Our vision is underpinned by a desire to:
- access and connectivity to the riverside and maritime heritage;
 - have a thriving, inclusive and diverse economy;
 - a healthier place for resident's; and
 - access to green spaces.
- 3.8 These will drive positive change locally. Connecting the town centre to river and back with green public spaces, walks and cycleways will raise the image of Grays as a desirable, healthier and connected place to be.

Our Consultation Journey

- 3.9 The following details the key outputs from the various consultations. This is important as it:
- presents an overview of current and future community needs; and
 - sets out a set of principles from past and ongoing public engagement.

⁴ Developed through testing the extant (2013) vision and our more recent consultations – as described later in this Section.

2013: Grays Town Centre Regeneration - Stakeholder Vision Workshops

- 3.10 Our Community Regeneration Strategy and Local Development Framework identified Grays as one of the five ‘growth hubs’ where regeneration was to be concentrated. This was on the back off a concern of an increasing dominant impact of the nearby Lakeside Shopping Centre and its potential future expansion and other centres.
- 3.11 The Council’s vision was to involve communities in shaping where they live and that Grays should be a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence where individuals, communities and businesses flourish. Residents, community groups and businesses were consulted. Resident surveys were based on a statistically significant sample based on age, sex and ethnicity of all the wards that make up Grays and Chafford Hundred. Over 1,500 respondents who were then invited to join workshops to go deeper. The draft vision was circulated to all attendants at workshops for agreement before it was reported to the Council’s Cabinet.
- 3.12 The key messages from this consultation were:

Beach and Riverfront	"Make better use of the beach and riverfront" "Improve the facilities on offer in this area"
Accessibility	"To make Grays more accessible through better and cheaper public transport" "Improve road and path ways in and around Grays supported by better parking"
Food/Drink/Cafe Culture	"More choice of food and drink places to meet all different groups of people" "location of food and drink outlets is important"
Shops/Market	"More choice in shops and markets" "Utilise the market/shops to support other areas of the town"
Entertainment/Leisure/ Events/Nightlife	"More different facilities to meet the needs of different groups and make them accessible" "Use the town’s heritage to develop leisure facilities"
Appearance/Environment/ Welcoming	"Improve the appearance and environment that people see and experience when in and around Grays" "Maximise on the history and facilities already in the town1 and look at ways to improve and increase them"
Safety/Security	"Increase Police and Security presence around the town" "Regenerate community spirit and accountability" "Address the perception of crime that exists"
Business support / processes and systems	"The Council to support and improve the business environment" "Develop facilities and offerings to support the town in attracting new business staff and customers"
Communication/Marketing/Pro motion	"Promote, market & communicate"
Finance/Funding	"look at ways to secure funding and ensure it is effectively spent to support local events and businesses"
Whole community/Meeting the needs of different groups/Future proofing Grays	"It is a whole system approach" "Once changes are underway - tell people"

- 3.13 In July 2013, the extensive public engagement with over 1,500 respondents and 12 workshops and discussion groups, formulated the original vision for Grays. The 2013 vision stated:

Building on its strengths as a Chartered Market Town, Grays will be an exciting, high quality destination for people to live, work, learn, shop and socialise. Reconnected to the River Thames, Grays will support growing resident, student and business communities throughout the day and entertain a diverse and vibrant population through the evening.

Cafés, bars, restaurants, shops and markets will combine with culture, entertainment and events in unique venues to provide a safe and attractive place for communities to meet and businesses to thrive.

3.14 The vision sought to revitalise the town centre by:

- Building a local economy based on retail and leisure, entertainment, residential and commercial development;
- Making it easier to travel in to and move around the town centre;
- Enhancing the quality of the public realm; and
- Supporting communities.

3.15 This vision has been reflected in subsequent policy documents such as the 2016 Gays Town Centre Framework where strong support was shown for the initiatives suggested. This was tested again in 2020 as part of the TIP engagement to see whether it still resonated. The vision outlined earlier updates this based on the contemporary requirements of the local community.

3.16 Since the adoption of the 2013 vision, Grays has seen a number of significant developments including the opening of the South Essex College campus in the town centre, new housing and a new community centre nearing completion on Seabrooke Rise, the refurbishment of the former Magistrates Court to create small business accommodation, a package of schemes to improve accessibility in to and around the town centre, dedicated town centre management and changes to licenses that allow more frequent and more varied market.

3.17 These projects have been encapsulated in a development framework which provided the context for their delivery (see below). Importantly, the interventions defined in this TIP also align with this document in terms enhancing economic diversity and to define an alternative offer in Grays that is based on better connectivity with the community actively benefiting from a green and riverside setting.

2017: Grays Town Centre Framework (Refresh)

3.18 The framework identifies a range of opportunities to increase the prosperity and attractiveness of the town centre. The consultation consisted of:

- 300 respondents to the 2013 consultation (on the Grays vision) were contacted to check whether the principles and the adopted vision for Grays remained relevant;
- Online information and questionnaire using the Council's consultation portal some 8,000 registered users;
- A roving exhibition located at Grays Library, Civic Offices, Grays Shopping Centre and South Essex College;
- Discussion with the Grays Town Partnership⁵, Grays Programme Board, Network Rail, C2C and South Essex College; and
- A workshop with a range of key stakeholders.

3.19 Respondents confirmed that the broad principles of the framework remained valid and appropriate, but they did take the opportunity to raise a number of specific issues including the view that there is a need to address car parking, safety, cleanliness, the need to clean up and make better use of the **riverfront** including provision of moorings and providing access to the then proposed 'Paramount Studios⁶' on the Swanscombe Peninsula in Kent.

3.20 Respondents were asked about their level of support for key projects proposed in the Framework. Support was strong for:

- **Aspirations for a pier:** 75% supported or strongly supported the proposal;

⁵ Grass roots community interest and support group formed from existing local businesses.

⁶ Now known as the 'London Resort' <https://londonresort.info/>

- Re-provision of the theatre at the **riverfront**: 65% support or strongly supported the proposal;
- **Removal of the one way system**: 69% support or strongly supported this; and,
- **Underpass**: 72% support or strongly supported the proposals.

3.21 Responses to the survey showed strong support for the overall approach set out in the framework. This was also reflected in the feedback received at the stakeholder workshop. Key points raised included:

- Design of the **riverside** needs to properly reflect the needs of the yacht club for car parking, land area, access for crane to move large boats. A pier could reduce the number of moorings available to the club. These are detailed issues that will need to be fully addressed as the ideas for the riverside area are developed in more detail;
- Need to **improve the bus station** and the link between the bus station and the rail station; and
- Need to ensure sufficient accessible parking.

3.22 The interventions defined in this TIP reflect the local community's desire to rebuild Grays connection with its riverside and more permeability across the centre.

2019: Thurrock's Local Plan Consultation Issues & Options (Stage 2) Consultation

3.23 This consultation ran from December 2018 to March 2019 as part of the preparation for the Council's new Local Plan (setting out the amount and location of new development across the Borough in the period up to 2037/38). The consultation sought views on how Thurrock should develop and grow in the future and where, in broad terms, new development should be located to meet identified needs.



Source: Thurrock's Local Plan Consultation Issues & Options (Stage 2) Consultation

3.24 On Grays, the responses from the 'Your Place, Your Voice' (YPYV) sessions highlighted, inter alia, the following:

- Opportunity for **river taxis**;
- Incubator spaces for start-ups needed;
- Empty shops are an issue;

- 3.27 Hosted by the Council between February and March 2020, the Council invited residents that live, visit, work and learn in Grays as well as local businesses and community groups, to share their views on potential projects. The consultation was advertised via leaflets, posters and social media.
- 3.28 There were 20 projects published via the online consultation portal, including the initial design concepts for Grays underpass. The key projects relevant to this submission were:
- Grays High Street and Shopping Centre;
 - Grays Beach and park and Kilverts Field; and
 - Grays Bus Station.
- 3.29 On these, the respondents suggested the following improvements:

Grays High Street and Shopping Centre	Grays Beach and park and Kilverts Field	Grays Bus Station
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• create a better offer that caters for needs of everyone,• create a social area with bars, restaurants and cafes and family friendly places in the town centre e.g. soft play,• better utilise the old cinema building, as e.g. a leisure complex or a youth hub which would bring better social value rather than a pub,• provide 'mini parks' where people can sit, take a break, have a chat, drink a cup of coffee, read a book,• introduce more greenery; trees and flowers.• cycle access and cycle storage in the town centre, especially at the station,• more policing in the town, security in the centre is the priority,• a credible night time economy plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• by involving Thurrock yacht club,• by expanding Grays Marina,• creation of a heritage trail,• food and drink offer on the river,• outdoor exercise area in the summer, like yoga or boot camp,• better lighting along the river walk,• introduce better cycling routes,• adding CCTV to ensure safety,• integration and acknowledgement of the natural environment and wildlife.• this project would attract more visitors and therefore more parking would be required,• wheelchair / accessible access,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• wide pavements to ensure those walking and those waiting for buses are able to do so without issues,• better signage or wayfinding information,• improved shelters DDA accessible, better CCTV• focus not only on buses in Thurrock but also cycling,• all train stations in Thurrock should have a huge amount of secure and safe cycle storage to encourage commuters to cycle to stations.

- 3.30 The consultation reaffirmed the need for green and socialising space; boosting the leisure economy and better connectivity and security.
- 2020: NewRiver REIT Charette**
- 3.31 NewRiver REIT, the owners of Grays shopping centre, in early 2020 facilitated a 'Community Planning Weekend' with existing retailers and the local community to help shape the future of the shopping centre and its relationship with the wider town. As mentioned earlier, their Development Director was appointed as Chair of the Grays Towns Fund Board.
- 3.32 The issues identified were:
- Grays sits with its back to the Thames, but it is the centre's greatest asset;
 - Grays cannot compete with Lakeside;
 - Physical barriers to the river edge which inhibit a positive connection; and
 - Grays consists of three distinctive, separated zones: the centre, council offices/college and the coast.
- 3.33 The key messages from the consultation included:

“We need to attract people back to the town centre.”

“We are not Lakeside, we are not Basildon... we are Grays.”

“It would be nice for communities to talk to each other.”

“The cultural mix is really exciting.”

“Grays is a no-go zone at night.”

“The town centre needs to find a new purpose.”

“What we need is for the community to take back the centre of town, we need to reclaim it for everyone in Grays.”

“We want more from our town centre than just shops.”

“We want to see colour and trends and make it much more family friendly for all ages.”

“Look outside, Grays IS grey, it matches the name and we want it to be green!”

“There’s a strong community, but where can we come together?”

“We need somewhere for people to feel they’ve got ownership of the place – try and get a multi-generational thing going so that everyone feels welcome.”

“Make it better, but leave no one behind.”

“What we create needs to be accessible for everyone.”

“It’s a fine location – 30 minutes to London and 30 minutes to the beach!”

“It has to be good for the environment – we’re thinking about the future and this is about our kids too.”

“I want to be able to walk through the town and down to the water to enjoy the restaurants and whatever else is down there.”

- 3.34 The output of the consultation identified the following future strategy for Grays:
- Working hand-in-hand - stimulating growth on the **riverside**;
 - Reclaiming the centre and putting the heart back into the town;
 - Creating something **uniquely Grays**;
 - A **public space** and new focus for the town;
 - Bringing new life - space to shop, work and play;
 - **Sustainable life** in the centre;
 - Reinforcing the identity of Grays; and
 - **Connecting the community**.
- 2020: Advisory Group Workshop**
- 3.35 Despite the constraints posed by the Covid-19 lockdown, we have also carried out a workshop with local businesses and community groups that form part of the Advisory Group (AG). As stated earlier, this is an additional sounding board and a forum for on-going engagement. This forum will also be used to test the intervention ideas moving forward and will bring Advisory Group members to be part of the panel leading individual projects.
- 3.36 The key Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT's) identified by the AG during the workshop were:

Connectivity

“Grays riverfront: Pier in this location close to the High Street is important”

“link culture and heritage”

“include superfast 5G”

“Grays represents opportunity to holistically counter local health challenges”

“lots of opportunity to get people active”

“active by design”

- 3.38 The AG workshop confirmed the support for a reanimated riverside; enhancing green spaces; socialising space; enhancing perception; connectivity from the town centre and riverfront; learning and enterprise; encouraging active travel / healthy lifestyle; digital connectivity; community accessibility and signposting green space.
- 3.39 The extant (2013) vision for Grays was tested with the Advisory Group and the Board to see whether it still resonated. The additional themes suggested for inclusion in the current context were:

Adult learning skills	Skills & jobs	Superfast 5G	Learning skills hub
Green transport / Electric Charging	Culture & Heritage	Intergenerational Activity	Pride
‘Bumping’ / Socialising space	Entrepreneurship	Happier	Connectivity
Accessibility	Environmental improvements	Creativity	Diverse multi-use town centre

- 3.40 These themes have influenced the vision set out earlier. Our current vision, is of a vibrant centre that reconnects to its riverside heritage, great access to quality public realm and open space for intergenerational use; supporting communities; culture; diverse economy; training; where pedestrians have priority; and a strong evening economy.
- 3.41 The Advisory Group met on the 27th January 2021 to consider the emerging TIP and restated their support for the projects proposed in the draft. The Advisory Group also stated the importance of ongoing engagement with the wider community in developing and implementing the projects.

2020 -2021: Graystownsfund.co.uk and #MyTown inputs

- 3.42 We have also engaged through the regional press and social media to take feedback and direct the interventions for this TIP. Ongoing feedback has been drawn from the Graystownsfund.co.uk and #MyTown Campaign.
- 3.43 A dedicated website - (<http://graystownsfund.co.uk/>) - was launched in November 2020. Members of the Town Board actively participated and were responsible for the design and content of the website. This website describes the main aims and objectives of the Town Deal Fund, the structure of the Board and a list of the proposed projects/interventions. The website will be a forum for continued engagement as part of this submission and for the future as business cases evolve for individual interventions.



Introduction

The Grays Town Board recognise the central role of engagement with people, business, and other organisations that live, work and play in Grays town centre in defining the priorities of the Grays Town Investment Plan.

The Board therefore sort to build on the extensive engagement activity that has been undertaken over the last eight years (Detailed in the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy) and to engage further with stakeholders in the best ways it could in light of challenges presented by Covid-19.

This report is set in the context of the Grays Town Boards commitment to ongoing engagement throughout the production of the TIP and project development and delivery set out in the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy. It summarises the approaches to engagement and the main conclusions that can be drawn to inform the approach set out in the TIP.

Approach to Engagement

The approach was limited by necessary adaptation to Covid-19. The main strands of the engagement were;

- Grays Town Board Web site <http://graystownsfund.co.uk/about/> which also included an opinion survey
- Social media
- Workshops via MS Teams with members of the Town Boards Advisory Group.

Summary of Main Findings

1. Role of the Town Centre
 - a. Grays Town Centre continues to have an important role to play in people's lives. Almost 40% of respondents visit the town centre at least several times a week, with nearly 14% visiting every day. 35% visit once a week or a few times a month.
 - b. The main reasons identified for those visits were for the shops, and particularly specific outlets, and banks. These score highly amongst the ‘Best things about Grays’. Work and public transport were also important reasons, the latter presumably reflecting the use of the train station to get to London and the role of the bus terminus acting as an interchange between routes. Respondents also identify a range of different social and leisure activities. These include for example restaurant/cafe/public house, Thameside complex, which also score relatively highly as the “Best things about Grays”. Socialising, recreation and leisure such as walks, cycles and the gym were also relatively important. Individually many of these socialising, leisure and recreation activities received relatively low scores but cumulatively they add up to a significant proportion of reasons given for visits by respondents and feature high in the “Best things about Grays, with food and drink outlets third, the riverfront fourth and the Thameside complex with the Theatre, Library and museum fifth.
 - c. While shopping is the main reason for visiting the town centre, the majority of respondents consider what’s available to be average with a large proportion identifying this as poor or very poor.
 - d. Leisure activities are considered to be poor or very poor by a large majority of respondents and the selection of leisure facilities is consider average or poor by most respondents.

- e. The range of public events is considered by a large majority to be poor or very poor. The quality of events that do take place are also rated as poor or very poor by the majority, although a larger proportion of respondents rate this as average.
- f. A notable response to Question 6 in the online survey where respondents were asked to list the three best things about Grays, 32 respondents skipped the question and 35 stated 'nothing' and a further 7 identified the best thing as being it has potential. In combination these were the second most common response.
- g. When asked about the improvements needed in the town centre, the online survey shows a strong opinion that the town centre should be a place for events and activities, arts, culture and entertainment, places to eat and drink and to socialise. Where additional comment is added it normally emphasises the need for quality and variety. There is also a clear strand in this that emphasises the importance of family activities, and activities for children and young people. These opinions are also clear in the responses via #MyTowns and the social media responses.
- h. When asked about the things that would improve Grays Town Centre, 'Making better use of the riverfront' is specifically mentioned by relatively few respondents to the online survey survey (maximum of 22 in any of the samples). This is in marked contrast with the high levels of support for improvements to the riverside in response to question 2 as a means of encouraging more visits referred to at 4a below. One explanation maybe in the high level response relating to events and activities; the Grays Beach area is the only space of sufficient size to accommodate many of these.
- i. During the day time, responses to question 7 of the online survey, what to put in place to improve the town centre, improved quality and choice of shops, restaurants and cafes were favoured in most responses. There was a clear emphasis on quality and variety. Some respondents wanted to see High Street names' return and some respondents emphasised the importance of affordability.

2. The Town Centre Environment

- a. There were positive comments about the town centre environment; that it is accessible, convenient and compact.
- b. However when asked about the improvements needed in the town centre the main issues identified were about addressing anti-social behaviour, the need for more policing, and the need to improve the sense of safety. Many responses also refer to the need for improved lighting. The importance of these issues is also very clear in the responses received in #MyTowns and social media responses.

3. Getting to the town centre and travelling around it

- a. Most people visit by car and a third walk in to the town centre. Traffic congestion has in the past been a problem but most respondents rated 'getting to and around the town centre' as average to good. Public transport is rated by a large majority as average to good.
- b. Facilities for people with impaired mobility are considered to be average by the majority of respondents and a large proportion consider facilities to be poor.
- c. There was a mixed response on parking. Generally the level of responses on this were relatively low in number but ranged from being amongst the 'Three best Things about Grays to a need for better or cheaper or free parking.

4. What would encourage more visits/use of the town centre?

- a. Grays Riverside and public open spaces; In the online survey, improvements to Grays Beach and Riverside had the highest proportion respondents identifying improvements here as being very likely (47%) to encourage with a further 39% saying that this is likely to do so. General improvements to open space provision also received high proportions of respondents identifying this a way to increase the likely hood of visits.
- b. In the online survey facilities for community groups, events in and around the town centre, and facilities for young people all received high proportions of responses identifying these as likely or very likely to encourage more visitors to the town centre.

Conclusions

1. There is a clear response identifying antisocial behaviour, and the need for more policing and the need to address safety issues. The experience of crime and the perception of crime and that a place is unsafe are clearly critical issues to address to enable people to feel safe when visiting the town centre. Much of this is beyond the scope of the Towns Fund but the Board will have a role in supporting initiatives by other organisations to address these issues and ensuring design of its own projects takes account of Secure by Design principles.

2. There is a strong sense that people do see unrealised potential for Grays town centre based particularly around the following roles
 - a. A place to relax and have fun: Events, activities, places to eat, drink and be entertained with an emphasis on families, children and young people.
 - b. A place for the community to meet up
 - c. A shopping experience based on variety and quality. While high street brands are mentioned there is an emphasis on local and specialist outlets.
3. Make better use of the open spaces. The riverfront in particular is seen as an underused and ignored asset with a great deal of potential for a variety of activities.

Website Visits	Numbers
Towns Fund Unique Page Views	1463
Page Views	1769
Users	843
Sessions	908
Website views via Facebook	712 (378 via Christmas promotion)
Direct Website views	87
Website views via google	31
Website views via Facebook referrals	85
Website views via Instagram	3
Bing	1
Other social media	4

Graystownsfund.co.uk: Top 3 Suggested Improvements:

Daytime	Evening	Weekend & Bank Holiday
Tackling antisocial behaviour, Police, Security (39%)	Tackling antisocial behaviour, Police, Security (36%)	Events and activities (33%)
Better Quality / Variety Shops (20%)	Quality Food & Drink Offer Particularly for Families (20%)	Tackling antisocial behaviour, Police, Security (16%)
Quality of Food & Drink Offer, Cater for Family Provision (9%)	Arts, culture and entertainment (11%)	Provision of Leisure Facilities (9%)

Graystownsfund.co.uk: Social Media Engagement: Frequently Suggested Improvements

Tackling Antisocial Behaviour, Police, Security (23%) Better Use and Provision at Riverfront (14%) Better connectivity, pedestrian and cycle access (14%) Keep centre clean and tidy (14%) <small>2020-21: Grays Towns Fund: Response to Social Media Campaign</small>
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Grays #MyTown Campaign

- 3.44 The government launched the online #MyTown campaign when the Town Deal Fund was formally launched for all 101 centres selected across England. As at 23rd February 2021 the Grays #MyTown page (<https://mytown.communities.gov.uk/town/grays/>) had received 32 suggestions and 47 additional comments about Grays. The messages from the site included:

“I would like proper cycle infrastructure and secure (indoor) cycle storage to encourage use of cycling to visit the town centre.”

“We need to bring in the right sort of people to spend money... A restaurant by the yacht club. A clipper boat to London. A victorian cafe at beach like the original.....”

“Riverside Facilities.. Due to our fantastic location investment in this area would give a boost to the area... A couple of restaurants would bring in people and income. Its a tough call but the area by the yacht club and the wharf is a suggestion.”

“Would be nice a centre designed for children where the little one could practice gymnastics, or learn how to play an instrument under qualified instructors..”

“The town centre needs more spaces to socialise. Restaurants, bars and coffee shops would attract more people. More activity spaces especially for young families. Use of the water front and other end of the town centre down towards the wharf area..”

“Increase footfall.”

“Invest In community centres.”

“Better facilities more shops and more things to do for the community.”

“More greenery on Grays High Street; replacing paving... It's part of the reason Grays is looking a bit tired.”

“Local cultural centre development - investing in a more exciting local cultural offer (gallery and/or theatre) could help bring people into the town centre and drive local growth. Whilst London is easily accessible by train, I don't feel the current local provision is adequate. It could help build a sense of local cohesive community, which I feel is in need of development.”

“there isn't anywhere in grays for mothers and babies, there are a few parks in Grays but more suitable for older children..”

“Regeneration led by Creativity & Culture.”

“Thurrock and Grays has changed and is still changing. The Town Centre has not kept up with the times. Relying on retail to bring people in to the town centre is not going to work and we need to think out side the box”

“People want to more than a cloned high street found anywhere else in the U.K. ... People want experiences and memories, so yeh high street needs to be a place for celebrating and exploring creativity, culture and heritage with festivals, events and a night time economy - no one of which are happening right now”

“Use colour, light and art to make a statement, allow residents to take ownership and to be proud of where they live!”

Summary of responses to Grays #MyTown Campaign as at 23rd of February 2021

1) Make more of the riverfront

- 3.45 The riverfront is perceived as a particularly important but poorly utilised part of the town centre. 16 respondents specifically refer to the importance of the riverfront and Grays Beach Park and the need to improve connections between the town centre and its riverfront. Specific suggestions included;

- A range of outdoor sports and leisure facilities
- Need for facilities such as public toilets and staffed car parking (links to perceptions of crime)
- Attractions and facilities for families, children and teenagers
- Restaurants and cafes
- A clipper boat to London
- Public transport to the area

2) Provide more and better facilities

- 3.46 The town centre is perceived as lacking attractions and facilities and choices of shops and things to do, and being out-dated. Some 51 responses refer specifically to new or improved facilities that are considered necessary. It should be noted that while these responses did not specifically refer to the riverfront that some would apply to the riverfront. Responses including:

- Community facilities;
 - Youth groups
 - Centre for children to learn things like a musical instrument or gymnastics and play
 - Spaces for the elderly
 - Community based training and mentoring
 - Community Centre
 - Peer support for families
 - Community cafe
- Retail and places to eat and drink
 - Local and specialist shops.
 - Opportunities for youth enterprise and for independent traders.
 - Need to bring back branded high street shops such as M&S
 - More and better markets
 - More places to eat out, serving good quality food
- Culture and entertainment
 - Improve the theatre
 - Cinema
 - Music and arts
 - Places to go out in the evening
 - Public and community arts projects
 - Cultural Centre
- Health and sports
 - Expanded NHS services to support growing population
 - Walk in GP services
 - A range of sports facilities (suggestions included football pitches, gyms, ice rink, yoga studio, climbing wall)
- Green spaces
 - Improve green spaces
 - Improve accessibility of green spaces
 - Facilities e.g. community café in Grays town park
- Other
 - Toilets
 - Drinking fountains

- Dew facility to cool off in the summer
- Free parking
- Cycle lanes and parking facilities
- Improve public realm

3) Tidy the town up and make it more inviting

3.47 The town centre is perceived as being uninviting. In part this is due to a lack of attractions but 29 respondents refer specifically to the quality and appearance of the town centre, comments included;

- Remove eyesores
- Tidy back alley areas
- Rebuild shopping centre
- Do something with vacant buildings
- Renew and improve hard and soft landscaping
- Repair pot holes and improve pedestrian crossings of roads
- More soft landscaping and natural areas
- Reduce traffic congestion and air pollution
- Stop continuous roadworks

4) Make the town a safe place to be.

3.48 A further issue that causes the town to be perceived as uninviting is the perception of crime; 18 respondents specifically refer to this including:

- Threat from others in the town centre
- Poor lighting
- Need more and better CCTV
- Crime
- Lack of police presence
- Need to deal with antisocial behaviour arising due to alcohol and drug consumption
- Need programmes for drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

5) General comments and suggestions

3.49 Some 13 responses included general comments including:

- Need another board for individuals that live and work in the area.
- Keep old buildings
- Get decent shops
- You keep ask, get on with it
- Jobs for local people
- Affordable housing

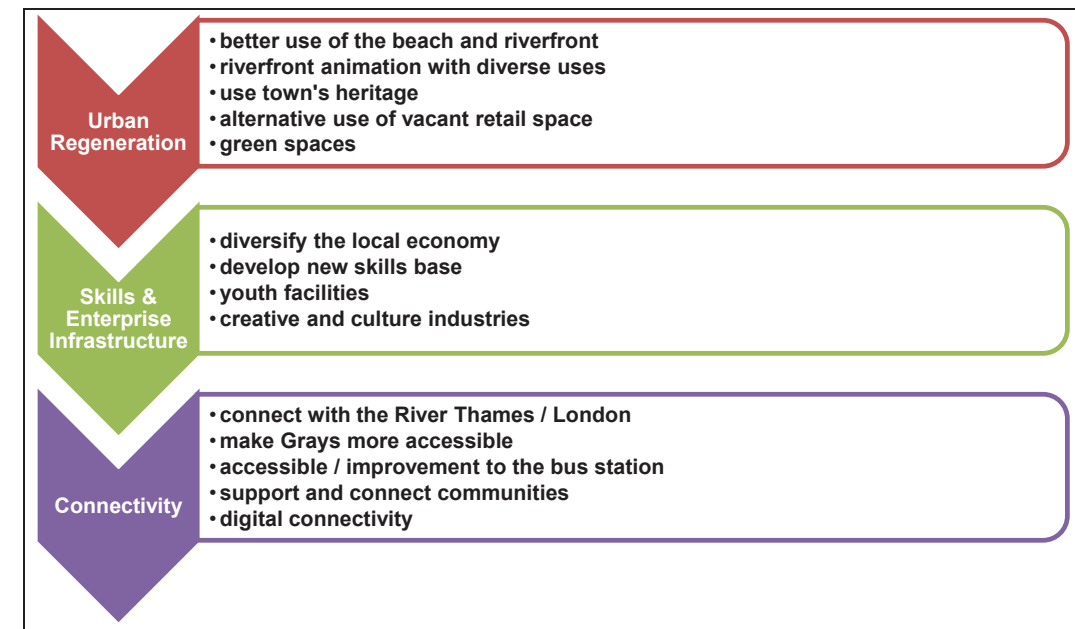
- Need more schools and hospitals
- Stop building houses, it causes congestion
- Need funding for schools and for children with insufficient food to eat.
- Overnight parking for motorhomes

6) Comments relating to other locations.

3.50 There were 9 responses included comments that related to areas outside of the Town Funds area of focus.

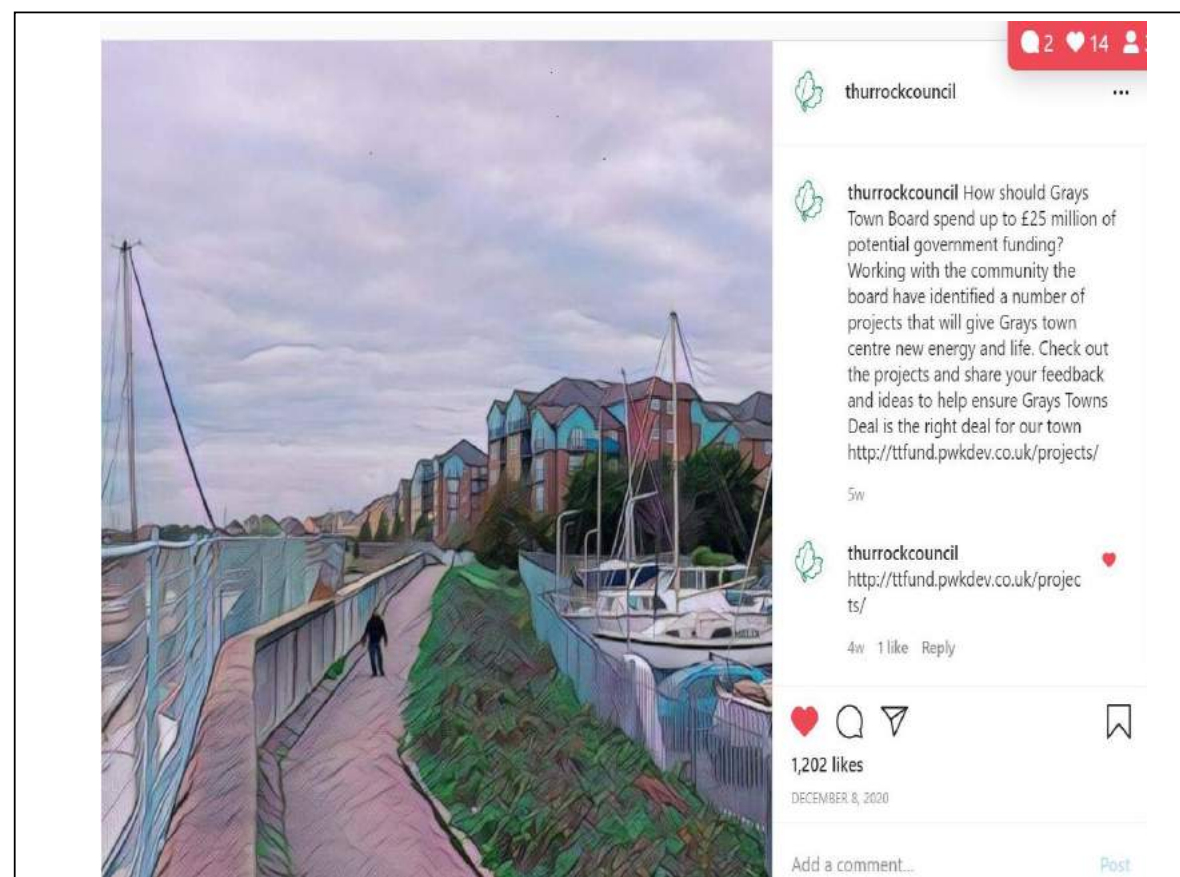
Summary

3.51 The common actions/interventions raised again and again by the different engagement exercises have highlighted a number of common needs which can be organised under the Towns Fund themes as follows:

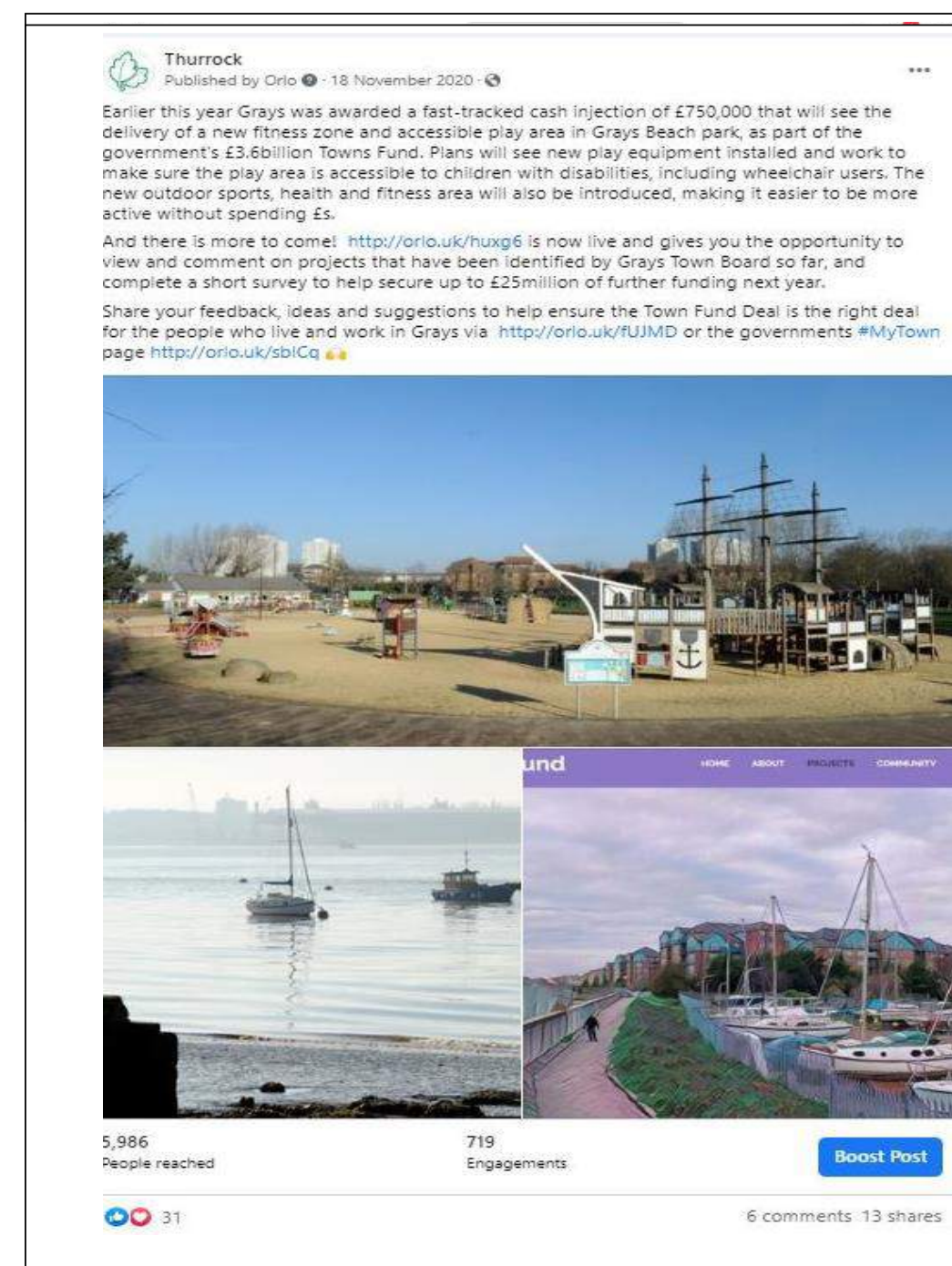


Other Social Media Promotion

3.52 Thurrock Council and the Grays Town Deal Board promoted the Towns Fund through numerous media channels including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, press releases and other local media on promotion pages shown below:



20



21

Local Press Promotion

- 3.53 Press releases have been issued by the Council since the Towns Fund was announced:
- Grays Town Board meet to progress plans to secure up to £25million (March 2020) <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/news/grays-growth/grays-town-board-meet-to-progress-plans-to-secure-up-to-£25million>
 - Funds for Grays accessible play area and bus terminal improvements (November 2020) <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/news/grays-growth/funds-for-grays-accessible-play-area-and-bus-terminal-improvements>
 - Chance for residents to help secure funding for Grays (November 2020) <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/news/grays-growth/chance-for-residents-to-help-secure-funding-for-grays>
 - Time-lapse camera captures the transformation of Grays (November 2020) <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/news/grays-growth/time-lapse-camera-captures-transformation-of-grays>
- 3.54 The Towns Fund has also been promoted on local digital news media such as Thurrock Nub News:
- Board that will help to shape Grays is convened (2 March 2020) <https://thurrock.nub.news/n/board-that-will-help-to-shape-grays-is-convened>
 - £750,000 boost for Grays Beach and town (2 November 2020) <https://thurrock.nub.news/n/750000-boost-for-grays-beach>
 - Have a say on how £25 million might be spent in Grays (18 November 2020) <https://thurrock.nub.news/n/have-a-say-on-how-25-million-might-be-spent-in-grays>
 - Residents can keep a close eye on new council offices building (20 November 2020) <https://thurrock.nub.news/n/residents-can-keep-a-close-eye-on-new-council-offices-building>
- 3.55 This level of promotion will continue as the projects in the Town Investment Plan develop and as part of the wider Communications Plan (sub-Appendix 1)
- Grays Towns Fund: Promotion by Newsletter**
- 3.56 The fund has also been mentioned in all relevant regeneration and engagement led press releases issued by the Council to reach a wider audience and continue the conversation. The towns fund has featured in the following internal newsletters:
- staff newsletter
 - staff notices/web articles on the intranet
 - the CEO’s blog emailed directly to all staff
- 3.57 The Towns Fund newsletter was shared on 22 October 2020 following the latest accelerated funds update and achieved a 45 per cent open rate. The newsletter was shared with the board and advisory group, who were encourage to forward it to their contacts.
- 3.58 The towns fund was also included within the following newsletters on various occasions:
- Thurrock News (87,368 subscribers)
 - Business Buzz (2,807 subscribers)
 - #TeamThurrock 2 (2,154 subscribers)
 - Housing News (1,635 subscribers)
 - #TeamThurrock (2,154 subscribers)

Internal Scrutiny

- 3.59 A report on the Grays Towns Fund was presented to the Planning Transport and Regeneration (PTR) Scrutiny Committee on the 8th December 2020⁸, detailing the projects that were to be included in the TIP. The report was introduced and a presentation was given by the Chair of the Grays Towns Fund Board, Justin Thomas, to support the report.
- 3.60 It was resolved at this Committee to:
- note the work of the Town Board in progressing the Town Investment Plan.
 - note the intention to submit a Town Investment Plan, based on the ongoing stakeholder engagement and indicative projects described in this report.
 - note that further reports will be submitted at a later date with details of projects prior to completion of a Town Deal with Government.
 - provide a letter of support to the work of the Town Board and that this support will be submitted as evidence for the Town Investment Plan when it is submitted in January 2021, included with supporting information.

Business and Organisation Engagement

- 3.61 The Grays Towns Fund Board members have met and engaged with several businesses and organisations throughout the process to TIP development including:

Business Engagement	Organisation Engagement
Yacht Club	Thurrock Business Board
Creative Blast	Tilbury on the Thames Trust
Dotty About Fitness	English Heritage
Arts Thurrock	Historic England
Bizfit	Gateway Learning Community Board of Directors
Thurrock Lifestyle Services	Creative and Cultural Industries - Kinetika,
	Creative Blast, Metal
	Arts Council
	Lower Thames Crossing
	London Resorts
	CLLD Board
	High House Production Park
	Sea Cadets
	South Essex College

Future Engagement

- 3.62 Future engagement to support delivery of the Grays Towns Fund projects will be managed by the Board through its Grays Town Fund Communications Group (GTFCG) supported by the Council's Regeneration and Communications teams that will develop a 'Communication Plan' (see Sub-Appendix A below) for each project based on the outcome of the Town Deal agreement. It will also involve members of the

⁸ Website Link: https://thurrock.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/533833)

Advisory Group so as to have a cohesive voice in the delivery and ensure that there is a programme of continual community engagement.

Sub-Appendix A: Future Engagement – Our Communications Plan

Brief background

This communications campaign has been developed to support the Grays Town Fund Investment Plan. The Grays Town Board was formed in early 2020 and includes by representatives of the local business and community sectors. The Town Board will help produce a Town Investment Plan to secure funding of up to £25million. A joint communications work stream between all key partners will be implemented to ensure effective communication across project teams and key stakeholders. The work stream will see the preparation of communication material and consultation / engagement with partners, residents, stakeholders and members. Conversation is key. Each member of the board has a unique and direct reach within different pockets of the local community and will engage in meaningful conversation to understand and feedback on what the residents who live, learn, work and play in Grays really feel will truly bring long term prosperity to the town. This approach will ensure that residents and key stakeholders is consistent, co-ordinated and implemented at a local level. In addition to Grays, Tilbury has also been identified by the government to submit a Town Investment Plan. Although Tilbury and Grays Town boards will submit independent TIPs, the communications work stream have links to clearly demonstrate how both will compliments each other and share the wider benefits both projects will bring to the wider borough and local economy.

Strategy

The ‘conversation led’ campaign will be supported with already well established networks and digital channels including Thurrock Council’s social media channels, digital newsletters, press releases and direct contact with stakeholders through existing partnerships and their existing channels. All communications will drive the user to the Grays Town Fund website and / or the government’s #MyTown Grays webpage. Public communication will primarily be digital, in line with the council’s digital strategy and in reaction to the current government guidelines (to be review regularly). A digital approach, although not solely ideal, will create sharable content that board members, partners, the council and most importantly residents can share across multiple channels to reach a wider audience but also very specifically targeted audience through paid advertising or freely between local community groups on Facebook. Localised marketing collateral, such as hoarding and posters, will be installed in close proximity to key activity and community hot spots but again, will be influenced by social distancing measures and potential reach. Sites will primarily include projects set to benefit from the accelerated funds. Outdoor advertising options such as billboards and lamppost banners, can be used to coincide with project milestones to drive excitement and inform the local community in key areas such as transport hubs, community centres (libraries, halls, local shops) and areas that attract high footfall.

Our Approach

How	When	Where, what, why	Who
Press releases	Key milestones	Press releases will be issued around key milestones although communications will focus on using mediums such as Facebook to directly target residents through multiple accounts and groups.	Local residents and businesses. Important to note that the current media in Thurrock is diminished. The only print publication is now pick up only from public sites with reach much smaller during national and local lockdowns.
Enewsletters	Key milestones / regular updates	The council has a number of regular internal and external e-newsletters which can be used to provide relevant updates to specific groups who are already engaged in conversation with the council. Articles and banners can be produced to share the latest news and/or direct people to the Town Fund website. A dedicated Town Fund newsletter will be shared	Thurrock business community - Business Buzz Residents newsletter - Thurrock News Council leaseholders and tenants - Housing News

		with the board who will then be able to forward this to their database of contacts and so on.	Young people and their parents - Head teachers bulletin Community groups – via Thurrock Council’s Community Engagement Team who have a database of contacts and permission to contact them.
Social media	Ongoing	Regular posts across the council’s social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and when appropriate Instagram. In addition, targeted paid-for social media posts will be used to specifically target those who live or work in the town, and have been identified as priority groups. People who have not or do not typically engage with the council or local organisations and groups will also be a key group to engage. Posts could include interactive content such polls, Q&As, live streams and information led posts sharing key updates, feedback, celebrating milestones and statements to initiate positive debate. This should be led by board members and invested community leaders. All social media content will be concise and engaging and where appropriate partners, groups and local influencers will be tagged or mentioned to improve engagement and make them sharable. Content will be created to share with selected stakeholders to use and adapt across their channels, reaching a wider audience and encouraging community led conversation to ensure content is valuable, worthwhile and contains information people want/need.	Existing social media followers Facebook groups Business community via LinkedIn and direct engagement by tagging business pages/accounts in to posts on other social media channels Younger demographic via Instagram Specific residents who live in Thurrock but do not follow the council’s social media accounts or represent a profile group who do not typically engage in conversation with the council based on previous campaign results.
Stakeholder engagement	On-going	Covid-19 restrictions depending digital or face-to-face workshops will directly target specific community groups with a focus on hard to reach or groups who haven’t previously engaged with either the council or local community groups/organisations. Workshops will be interactive where possible and conversation led. A digital survey will be developed and widely shared. It will consist of largely closed or multiple choice questions and will capture age group and postcode information only to avoid a lengthy sign up or login process that may impact survey numbers. The survey will be hosted on the project website and data will be collated by the website owners before being reported back to the board. A worksheet version of the any surveys produced could be developed and shared digitally with local schools and children’s groups. A simple worksheet focusing on one or two themes will be developed for primary school aged children and a similar version for secondary pupils. Specific groups will be reach through direct engagement. This includes groups such as the Youth Council, Thurrock Business Board, sports teams, schools, colleges, clubs etc.	Businesses Young people Residents Clubs/groups/community hubs
Internal communication	Ad hoc	The council employs a significant number of people who live in the borough. The Civic Office is also based in Grays. #TeamThurrock are our greatest advocates. At the end of each day, they go home to the families, friends and neighbourhoods. It is important we keep the team updated about all council news but especially exciting projects such as the town funds so they can continue the conversation at home but more importantly that our colleagues feel invested, informed and a valued member of the team who is helping the council ‘Transform Thurrock’. Assets include the staff newsletter, staff notices on the intranet, the CEO’s blog, posters and emails.	Thurrock Council employees
Website	Updated regularly	A website will be the central source of information and key platform to direct people to. It will provide regular news updates and introduce potential project	All

		<p>areas that can be discussed. The website will also feature a survey function allowing the board to collate key feedback, information and data to inform the investment plan.</p> <p>The board will look to produce at least one guest blog to feature on the townsfund.org.uk and will look to engage with the platform regularly.</p> <p>The board will also continue to monitor, promote and engage with the government's #MyTown website and social media campaign.</p>	
Posters/outdoor	Key milestones primarily around accelerated fund projects	The council can accommodate posters in libraries, children's centres, some bus stops and bus shelters. The appropriateness of this tactic will be regularly assessed in line with government advice and guidance. If enough residents aren't using the service, an alternative method will be adopted.	Hyper local community
Video/visual content	On-going, accelerated funds projects	Video could be utilised to create eye-catching content, to clearly demonstrate the board is engaging with the whole community and encourage conversation. Key stakeholders including residents will be invited to talk about 'their town' and outline what they feel would benefit the town. This could be supported with pre-recorded content and live Q&As with other key stakeholders and possible live streaming of advisory board meetings if/when appropriate. The board could also host webinars to help explain the Towns Investment Plan process and the vision for improvement. Content should be provided by the board as the TIP is developed to share their vision and how it has been developed in partnership with residents.	All



south essex college

THURROCK CAMPUS

Appendix 3: Project Prioritisation

Appendix 3: Project Prioritisation

OCTOBER 2020: GRAYS TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN PROJECT PRIORITISATION MATRIX

			Prioritisation Criteria				AVERAGE RANKING BY TOWN BOARD MEMBERS (Low Ranking - 0; High Ranking 10)	
			Available / Deliverable	Achievability	Affordable	Stakeholder Support (Consultations / #MyTowns / Town Board)		
PROJECTS		DESCRIPTION / RATIONALE	Project Name [THURROCK REFERENCE]					
1	Redevelopment of the Orsett Road/war memorial area including shop fronts improvements to create an identity in a key area of town	Identify entry points, make Grays welcoming and attractive to residents and visitors. Improving entry points – Hogg Lane and London Road, Orsett Road, Lodge Lane	Gateway and legibility projects	Potentially	Potentially	Y	Y	4
2	Regeneration around the Thameside theatre area to encourage the development of a Cultural zone, including equipment for lighting/projection	1) To create an identity for the area focussed on cultural activity, improve the wellbeing of residents, creating more pleasant and liveable places.	Public realm around Thameside Complex – encouraging cultural activity into the public realm (revenue)	Y	Y	Y	N	3
		2) Explore whether Council assets in the vicinity of Thameside complex can be repurposed to provide accommodation to support the cultural sector/cultural zone	Accommodation for cultural activity	N	Y	N	N	0
		3) To create a sense of place and encourage evening economy. Curated programme of activity to recognise impact of significant construction on footfall and encourage people to return post development.	Events programme and lighting/projection	Y	Y	Y	N	0
3	Adult Education provision (which might be funded under FHSF funding)	To provide a fit for purpose space to enable adults to learn new skills, supports the evening economy in Grays.	Adult Education provision	N	N	Y	Y	5
4	Increasing connectivity to the river frontages, noting the importance of creating a route North/South through the town to the river front	To provide a higher quality environment that improves dwell time and creates a clear link from Town Centre to the River Front. Utilisation of modern technology to improve efficiency, reduce parking, encourage active walking.	Improvement to High Street public realm and extension to riverfront – public realm treatment and modern technology	Y	Y	Y	Y	8
5	Improved connectivity with the Bus Terminus	Early phase included in Accelerated Funding Projects. Improvements to passenger waiting areas, signage, reusing former bus office unit and possible reconfiguration of stands to maximise efficiencies. Deliverable within timescale	Improving Bus Terminus & Connectivity	Y	Potentially	Y	Y	4
6	The Jetty and River bus service	Providing alternative route of travel to London and maximising use of riverfront	Jetty/River Bus service	Y	Y	Y	Y	8
7	Enhancements to the Riverside beach Park	Early phase included in Accelerated Funding Projects. Making Grays beach a go to destination by providing activities for the whole family	Grays Beach Enhancements	Y	Y	Y	Y	7
8	Improvements to the river front, creating more of a destination	To activate the riverfront possibly creating a riverfront park, engage with water and yacht club, limit obstacles and connect to the river	Activating Riverfront westwards from Grays Beach to Wouldham Road (c.1.5km)	Y	Y	Y	Y	10

TOWNS FUND KEY REQUIREMENTS				TOWNS FUND INTERVENTION THEMES						
CAPITAL	GEOGRAPHY	ASK	VISION & STRATEGY	LOCAL TRANSPORT	DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY	REGENERATION, PLANNING & LAND USE	ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE	SKILLS INFRASTRUCTURE	ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE	PROJECT MEETS AT LEAST ONE INTERVENTION THEME
Is the project capital? If the project is revenue could it form 10% or less of the overall revenue ask in your Towns Fund ask?	Does the project fit within the Towns Fund town boundary?	Is the project Ask within the Towns Fund financial limit (cost of all projects proposed within £25m or £50m through MHCLG route)	Does the project broadly fit with the town's vision and strategy?							
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y
Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y

OTHER PROJECTS

9	Cycle Lanes, Foot Paths, walkways	N/A	N/A	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
10	Signage/wayfinding around Grays	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
11	Topps tiles (potential residential development)	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
12	Petrol station, Hogg Lane (potential residential development)	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
13	Maidstone road (potential residential development)	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
14	85 London Road (potential residential development)	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
15	Hogg Lane South and Roundabout (potential residential development)	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
16	New River Reit Sub Station	N/A	N/A	N	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
17	Redevelopment of Grays Shopping Centre	N/A	N/A	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked
18	Acquisition of Opportunity Sites around Grays Shopping Centre (Medical Centre; HSBC Bank; Boots; Moneyshop units)	N/A	N/A	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Ranked

JANUARY 2021: ADDENDUM TO GRAYS TOWN INVESTMENT PLAN PROJECT PRIORITISATION MATRIX: INCORPORATING PROJECT FROM UNSUCCESSFUL FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND BID

	DESCRIPTION / RATIONALE	Prioritisation Criteria			
		Available / Deliverable	Achievability	Affordable	Stakeholder Support (Consultations / #MyTowns / Town Board)
1	With the eventual removal of the railway level crossing and the creation of a new barrier-free connection between the north and south side of the town centre, the continuity of the High Street will be re-established. As part of this project a series of buildings will be demolished and replaced by new structures: station house, a small two-storey free-standing building opposite the station forecourt and a group of buildings currently on the north-west corner of the junction between Station Approach and the High Street. The new buildings will offer two key opportunities: 1. Supporting the spatial definition of the new public space 2. Creating and activating the south of the underpass by providing active frontages on the plaza.	Y	Y	Y	Y

TOWNS FUND KEY REQUIREMENTS				TOWNS FUND INTERVENTION THEMES						
CAPITAL	GEOGRAPHY	ASK	VISION & STRATEGY	LOCAL TRANSPORT	DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY	REGENERATION, PLANNING & LAND USE	ARTS, CULTURE & HERITAGE	SKILLS INFRASTRUCTURE	ENTERPRISE INFRASTRUCTURE	PROJECT MEETS AT LEAST ONE INTERVENTION THEME
Is the project capital? If the project is revenue could it form 10% or less of the overall revenue ask in your Towns Fund ask?	Does the project fit within the Towns Fund town boundary?	Is the project Ask within the Towns Fund financial limit (cost of all projects proposed within £25m or £50m through MHCLG route)	Does the project broadly fit with the town's vision and strategy?	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y



Appendix 4: Letters of Support

Appendix 4: Letters of Support

Justin Thomas
Chair
Grays Town Fund Board
c/o Thurrock Council,
Civic Offices, New Road,
Grays, Essex RM17 6SL

18th January 2021

27th January 2020

Dear Justin

Grays Town Fund & The London Resort

It was good to meet with you and your colleagues during the second half of 2020, and we are very pleased to have had the opportunity to present to the Grays Town Fund Board. We look forward to liaising closely with the Board again in the future.

We are delighted to have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to collaborate on matters associated with the potential new jetty at Grays, which forms a key part of the significant changes being proposed for the area in your Town Investment Plan. Whilst it isn't formally part of the London Resort proposals, we do recognise that it will be an important enhancement to the river infrastructure in the area, and can see the benefits this would bring – both through improving access for construction employment and students to the skills training available through the South Essex College, as well as bringing additional footfall and passenger traffic from the Jetty proposed in your Town Investment Plan.

We are impressed by the momentum being generated around Grays and the Board's strategic planning in identifying projects and their delivery. The proposals to develop the land alongside the river, and access to the waterfront and river transport can be transformative, improving the links between the town and the rail station.

The London Resort team were delighted to extend our project footprint into Thurrock through the proposals at Tilbury, which we know will lead to significant opportunities for residents in the Borough. We are happy to add our support to the Grays Town Investment Plan and look forward to continuing to work with you to develop the next stage of the exciting emerging proposals for Grays.

Yours sincerely



Andy Martin
Director of Strategy and Communications

London Resort Company Holdings Ltd
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Email: info@londonresortcompany.co.uk
Website: www.londonresort.info

TOWN CENTRE FUND SUBMISSION - SUPPORT FOR A RIVER BUS PIER AT GRAYS

To whom it may concern,

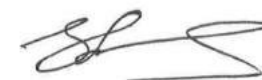
Uber Boat Thames Clippers (UBTC) has been operating on the River Thames for over 20 years and has progressively extended its route and patronage and now covers 25km of route from Putney in the West, to Woolwich in the East. In October 2021 this will extend further East to Barking Riverside. UBTC has further plans to extend to the Grays, Port of Tilbury and Gravesend that will provide commuters and local residents direct access to central London within 60 minutes with stops including Canary Wharf, Greenwich, London Bridge, Tower of London and Westminster on its route. Services could be developed further should London Resort reach fruition with cross river services to the park and enhanced connections to London being a ticketing option for visitors.

The new pier is only a short walk from the high street, coupled with the promotion of the riverside as a leisure destination, will unlock river frontage at Grays and encourage people to travel by River Bus. The service is proposed to commence during the commuter peaks and aim to commence off peak services to align with the delivery of the new waterfront. The pier will support and meet the objectives within the Mayor's Transport Strategy, TfL's Piers strategy and the Port of London's Thames Vision 2035.

Thames Clippers already has its dry docking maintenance facility within the Port of Tilbury and wish to expand this further with the construction of new vessels to operate the new service; representing an investment of up to £18m. It is hoped that this will create new highly skill employment opportunities and apprenticeships for Thurrock within the marine and engineering sector.

UBTC is in full support of this bid and believes the River Bus will be important next enhancement to riverside living, leisure and working environment in this part of the Eastern Thames corridor.

Yours Faithfully



Geoff Symonds
Chief Operating Officer
Uber Boat by Thames Clippers



c/o 12, Woodlands Close,
Gray's, Essex.
RM16 2GB

23rd February 2021.

Gray's Town's Fund Board.

Dear Sir,

Many thanks for taking time out to telephone me and give me an update on the development plans at Gray's Beach area. I will be giving the management team at the Sea Cadets an update on your proposals for the Gray's Towns Fund.

This opportunity could not have come at a better time. As you are aware the unit currently meets at the TRAAC building, Tilbury Riverside and although we are incredibly grateful to the Port of Tilbury for offering us a home, it is in totally the wrong position. During the dark winter months, it is not the best place for any young person to be and there is no public transport. The opportunity to move back into Gray's would be wonderful and allow us to grow as an organisation allowing for greater numbers of future Sea Cadets in a more accessible location.

The Thurrock Sea Cadets are part of a national organisation with Queen Elizabeth as its patron. As the title indicates we focus on maritime activities, having access to the river via the new jetty would be a real asset.

One of the unique functions of the Sea Cadets is that we emulate the Royal Navy, discipline plays a major part of our organisation. For many Cadets, this officer/cadet relationship can have a big impact on their development.

This potential new location will enable us to increase the intake of young people, both male and female in Gray's and the surrounding area. During the time, a Cadet is with the unit the training they receive includes qualifications from BTEC, Royal Yachting Association and British Canoeing Union. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme is also offered to the Cadets. It is envisaged that the discipline and qualification will help these young people to develop into a valuable member of society.

You mentioned about working with other groups; we are always keen to develop relationships with other organisations within Thurrock. One organisation we support is the Rotary Club of Gray's Thurrock at Christmas when the Cadets are out supporting the Rotarians as they take their Christmas Sleigh around the borough.

As a group we support your future plans for Gray's under this Towns Fund proposal, Town Investment Plan.

On behalf of the unit, I would like to thank you for considering us in the plans and we look forward to launching our boats in the river, manned by the young people from Thurrock.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nicholas Wilkinson
Treasurer. T/S Dragon Thurrock Sea Cadet Corps

24th February 2021

To Whom this may Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

Letter of Support – Grays Town Investment Plan

Opportunity South Essex (OSE) is a private-public partnership whose vision is for South Essex to have one of the fastest growing and most sustainable economies in the UK, providing opportunities for businesses, attractive for inward investors and benefit local communities. We are also one of the sub-regional boards that form the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

We are hugely supportive of the proposals being brought forward for Grays. This follows a far-reaching engagement with the community to develop a plan that will bring about the transformation of Grays. This plan responds to a number of challenges experienced by residents and will deliver a range of projects that will bring much needed new facilities. These will make a significant impact in the lives of its residents.

We believe that the Town investment Plan for Grays presents a compelling plan to address the long terms issues faced by the town and deliver something that residents will feel rightly proud of. We commend this plan to you.

Yours Sincerely,

Perry Glading
Chair
Opportunity South Essex



Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road,
Grays Thurrock, Essex RM17 6SL
www.thurrock.gov.uk

Members Secretariat 01375 366322
Councillor John Allen
Tilbury St Chads Ward

26 January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Letter of Support for GraysTown Investment Plan

I am the Chair of Thurrock Council's Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and am writing to express our Committee's full support for the Grays Town Investment Plan (TIP).

We received a presentation from the Chair of the GraysTown Fund Board at our meeting on December 8th 2020, and agreed to provide a letter of support for the proposals being submitted in Grays TIP.

Grays has benefitted from investment in recent years from South Essex College creating an FE/HE college in the town centre and the conversion of the former magistrate's court in to a successful business centre. But challenges persist. The town centre has suffered from changes in retail and more recently from the impact of Covid-19. We believe that the Town Investment Plan will complement other initiatives to address these challenges and to secure the long term vitality and viability of the town centre.

We believe that the Grays Town Investment Plan will help to address the long-term issues that we have faced in Grays, and will deliver a set of projects to help local residents feel pride in our town again. We whole-heartedly commend the Grays Town Investment Plan to you.

Yours sincerely

Cllr J Allen
Chair, Planning, Transport and Scrutiny Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Thurrock Council

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