

GRAYS TOWN CENTRE FRAMEWORK REFRESH



OCTOBER 2017



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01 INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This report sets a framework for the physical and social regeneration of Grays Town Centre. Its purpose is to provide a spatial concept for the town centre that will guide development and enhancement in the future.

This document is an update of the Council's 2013 **'Vision for Grays'** and 2016 **'Grays Development Framework'**. Over the years positive progress has been made to revitalise the town centre. Several exciting and potentially transformational projects have been delivered or progressed.

The key achievements are summarised below:

- The Council has successfully secured £10.8 million of funding from the Local Growth Fund to progress a new pedestrian rail crossing at High Street;
- South Essex College's distinctive and attractive new building opened in 2014 - this important facility sits in the heart of the town on one of the town's most prominent sites and is centred around a new public space (College Campus Fields);
- The former Magistrates Court (now known as the Old Court House) has been converted into small business units;
- Grays Town Partnership has been formed which has launched the **'Love Grays' Campaign** (<http://www.lovegrays.co.uk>) to support and promote businesses and events in the town centre;
- The Council has appointed a Town Centre Coordinator to work closely with the Grays Town Partnership and with other stakeholders to drive improvements in the town centre and promote Grays to local residents;
- The potential to provide river boat services from Town Wharf;
- Work has started to implement the removal of the one-way road system on Orsett Road to improve access to and around the town centre;

- The market has a new operator in place and now offers a wider range of markets, better quality products and town centre WiFi; and
- A well known leisure operator has acquired The State cinema building and the council is working with them to see this attractive building brought back in to use.

The Grays Town Centre Framework Refresh has been prepared to build upon what has been achieved so far and progress other key priorities for the regeneration of the town. The Council will prioritise the following projects to support the Framework;

- The detailed design and delivery of the pedestrian underpass, associated public spaces and transport interchange;
- The reconfiguration of the Civic Offices to deliver enhanced customer services;
- The development of enhanced theatre and cultural services through the redevelopment of the Thameside Complex either on its existing site, as part of a redevelopment of the Civic Offices or on the Riverside - the existing complex must remain up and running until a new facility opens.

- The continued improvement of the movement network to facilitate enhanced access in to and around the town centre;
- Support the delivery of Connected Thurrock - the Council's digital and information technology strategy; and
- A town centre public realm strategy.

This framework alone will not achieve all of the aspiration set out in the vision and objectives for Grays. Other complementary plans and strategies will be developed as required.



Logo from the Grays Town Partnership's **'Love Grays' Campaign**



The Council has been progressing improvements to the town's market



Exterior shot of the Old Courthouse - small business spaces within the former Magistrates Court



Interior shot of the Old Courthouse



02 OUR VISION

In July 2013 the Council, through an extensive public and stakeholder consultation exercise, developed the following vision for Grays. This vision (below) remains relevant and shall continue to shape development in the town centre.

To achieve this vision four key objectives have been set. These are listed on Page 5 of this document.

OUR VISION:

"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.



BUILDING A LOCAL ECONOMY BASED ON:

- Markets, convenience and specialist retail, cafés, leisure and events during the day;
- Entertainment, culture and places to eat and drink during the evening;
- Maximising the benefit to the town centre from opportunities to develop high quality housing and commercial buildings; and
- Creating space for businesses to grow.

IMPROVE MOVEMENT AND ACCESS TO THE TOWN BY:

- Delivering a high quality pedestrian underpass to facilitate easy pedestrian and cycle movement across the railway connecting the town centre and the River Thames;
- Enhancing the transport interchange around the rail station; and
- Improving road, bus, cycle and pedestrian links into and around the town centre.

SUPPORTING THURROCK'S COMMUNITIES BY:

- Improving Council owned assets such as the Thameside Complex and Civic Offices to provide a better facilities - whilst maintaining continuity of cultural and community services;
- Creating opportunities for community activities and Pop up uses;
- By ensuring that regeneration activity meets the needs of local communities;
- Supporting existing businesses; and
- Building upon the existing character of the town and making the most of its assets.

ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM BY:

- Creating public squares and greener spaces;
- Creating active spaces for markets, street cafés, and events;
- Taking advantage of the river frontage; and
- Identifying priority areas for landscape improvements in conjunction with improvements to road, bus, cycle and pedestrian links.



LINK TO THE RIVER



NEW CORE RETAIL



ATTRACTIVE SPACES



A NEW UNDERPASS

03 THE FRAMEWORK

THE DESIGN CONCEPT

As described in Section 01 the process of regenerating Grays has already begun. However, there is still a significant way to go before the full potential of the town can be realised. The updated Framework Plan includes several important projects that are critical to the long term success of Grays. These are summarised below and reflected in the Concept Plan (Figure 3.1).

A comprehensive public realm strategy for the town centre should be produced to accompany this framework. This should set out a strategy that delivers a cohesive landscape across all key routes and spaces and ensures the seamless integration of the new underpass underpass and the other priority projects into the wider townscape (see Section 06).

A DELIVER GRAYS GATEWAY / TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

One of the most important ambitions of this framework is to create an attractive gateway for the town around the train and bus station. This should:

- Provide an underpass that brings the town centre and riverside closer together and helps overcome the historic segregation caused by the railway line;
- Enable the comprehensive remodelling of the built environment around the station to create a better arrival experience and improved bus and rail interchange;
- Create new public spaces to the north and south of the tracks; and
- Provide new mixed use buildings with new retail floorspace to enliven and define the Grays Station Gateway.

B ENHANCE THE TOWN CENTRE

The High Street to the north of the railway and its side streets form the commercial heart of Grays town centre and is key to the identity of the town. The framework proposes to:

- Significantly enhance the public realm to create an attractive pedestrian space as the focus for civic life, markets and events;
- Expand the retail and convenience offer in the

town centre including cafés and restaurants;

- Redevelop the Thameside Complex to provide improved theatre and civic facilities on its existing site or at the Civic Offices or by on the riverside- the existing complex must remain up and running until a new facility opens;
- Support for the redevelopment of the State Cinema; and
- Shopfront improvements.

C DEVELOPMENT AROUND THE CIVIC OFFICES AND HIGH STREET SOUTH

The momentum generated with the building of the South Essex College should support further the growth of the town centre along the High Street towards the riverside.

One of the greatest opportunity sites in this area is Mulberry Square to the west of the Civic Offices. Development here could create a new frontage on to the High Street and animate the route to the River. The Council is currently looking at options for this site - which could include an extension of the Council's own premises to create improved public services in the very heart of the town centre.

Other development in the area should:

- Provide a high quality public realm, linking with the Grays Town Wharf to the south and the town centre to the north;
- Deliver new mixed use buildings with active uses to help enliven the southern High Street; and
- Enhance the setting of the local heritage such as Grays Parish Church and historic public houses.

D IMPROVE THE MOVEMENT NETWORK - ORSETT ROAD

The framework proposes to strengthen Orsett Road as an affordable location for smaller, independent shops and businesses. The reintroduction of two way traffic and improved service access will help support these businesses. Public realm improvements will enhance the environment and the historic high street character. The provision of short term parking will attract passing trade and support the continuing vitality of this street.

E IMPROVE THE MOVEMENT NETWORK - DERBY ROAD

Derby Road bridge is an important pedestrian connection between the town centre and the riverside. It is proposed to:

- Enhance the public realm on Derby Road and Sheffield Road and provide better pedestrian and cycling facilities;
- Bring forward new development on opportunity sites that help animate and define the street space; and
- Consider options for a vertical pedestrian connection between Crown Road and Derby Road Bridge.

F IMPROVE THE MOVEMENT NETWORK - WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTES

The framework aims to improve the walking and cycling connections with the residential hinterland to make access to the town centre more attractive, convenient and safe.

G DELIVER AN ATTRACTIVE RIVERSIDE

South-facing, with long views up and down the river, Grays riverfront is an underused asset of the town centre with the potential to become a new destination for leisure and recreation.

To unlock the riverfront it is proposed to:

- Deliver improved pedestrian connections from the riverfront to the town centre;
- Establish an attractive riverfront promenade along the river from Town Wharf to Grays Beach;
- Consolidate existing open spaces at Kilverts Field and Grays Beach to form a single waterside park;
- Investigate the potential of a pier to enable ferry access to Grays;
- Explore the potential to create leisure destinations along the riverfront to animate the riverside; and
- Deliver new residential development on opportunity sites to bring vitality to the area, overlook the new park and enhance the image of Grays.

Figure 3.1: The concept plan

H ENHANCE SEABROOK RISE ESTATE

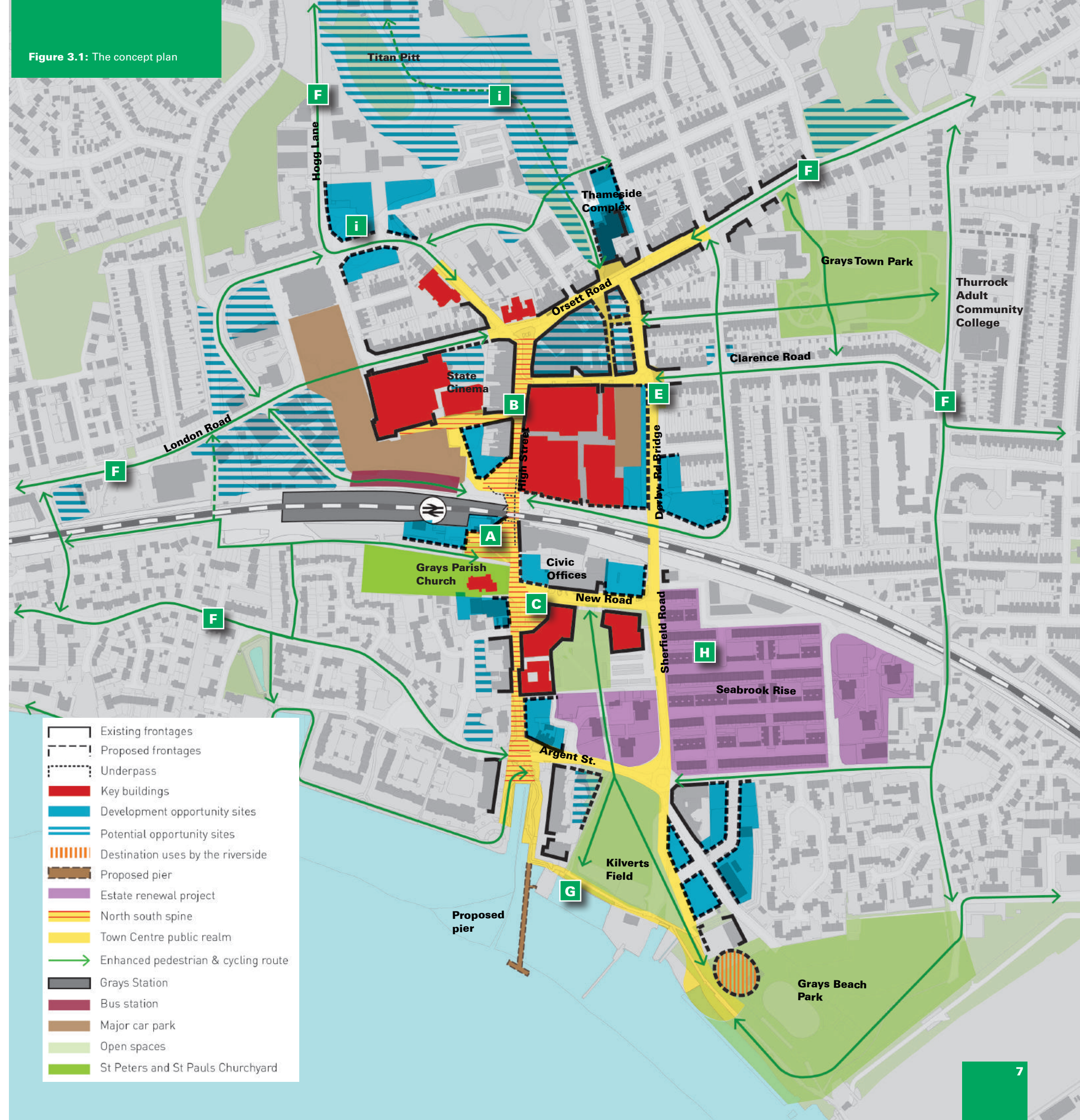
The Council is considering plans for environmental improvements in the Seabrook Rise Estate. These will also aim to improve wayfinding around the estate and improve connections between the town centre and the river.

I PROVIDE FOR TOWN CENTRE LIVING

Grays town centre offers significant opportunities for residential growth. This will support the vitality of the town centre, provide animation outside business hours, support local businesses and concentrate housing where it is well served by public transport and facilities. Opportunity sites, including on infill and intensification sites within the town centre, at Hogg Lane and at the London Road gyratory and support the longer term delivery of new residential development on the Titan Pit site.

THE CONCEPT PLAN

The concept plan for Grays town centre (Figure 3.1) establishes a coherent spatial strategy that delivers the objectives described above. The detail of the overarching strategy is set out by topic in the sections that follow.





RETAIL CORE



SECONDARY RETAIL



WATERSIDE LEISURE



NEW HOUSING

04 USES AND ACTIVITIES

A CHANGING TOWN CENTRE

The success of Grays town centre, as with many similar sized towns, will depend on its ability to see beyond its retail function and to strengthen its role as the social and cultural meeting place for the community, as well as the place for businesses, employment and enterprise.

'Town centre/high street plans must encompass a complete community hub solution incorporating; health, housing, education, arts, entertainment, business/office space, manufacturing and leisure, whilst developing day time, evening time and night time cultures where shops are just a part of the total plan.' The Grimsey Review: an Alternative Future for the High Street', September 2013

The Framework aims to strengthen the town centre by concentrating mixed use activities in established parts of the town centre and promote the intensification of residential accommodation in and around the centre. This will establish a larger, more densely populated area in short walking distance from the station, and will help support the vitality of Grays town centre and its provision of shops and facilities for the local community.

The framework further aims to enhance Grays' appeal as a visitor destination by:

- Improving Council owned assets such as the Thameside Complex and Civic offices;
- Improving the quality of the environment and public realm through out the centre (see Section 07 of this document);
- Establishing an attractive waterfront and pier;
- Continuing to improve the market; and
- Hosting festivals and events.

COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND LEISURE USES

The Council-owned Thameside Complex accommodates a theatre, museum, library and registry office. The Council is currently considering options for the future of this building. These options could include:

- A** The redevelopment or refurbishment of the building on its existing site/car park; or
- B** The construction of a brand new facility for the theatre, library and registry office as part of the redevelopment of the Civic Offices; or

- C** The construction of a brand new theatre facility at the riverside.

As part of the envisaged Grays riverside regeneration a new waterfront destination should be developed. Footfall and associated activities will enliven the riverside, provide overlooking to open spaces and make it feel a safer and attractive place.

With any of the the above options the existing Thameside Complex will remain open until a new service is up and running.

- D** The former 'State Cinema' on George Street is an iconic Art-deco building and important landmark for Grays. The Council will support the owners in bringing this building back in to use.

- E** New development around the station could provide a critical mass of prominent units to attract further national food and drink retailers to the town. This could include a small cluster of restaurants overlooking the new station square and Grays Parish Church.

Other Leisure and Community uses

Other leisure and community uses should be encouraged through out the town centre. These could include a range of facilities such as an independent gym, dance studio or yoga club, but also community spaces and faith based institutions. These could make use of vacant or underused buildings or be located in spaces above shops. This will help re-enforce the role of the town centre as the meeting place for the local community.

- F** Leisure uses should be encouraged by the river to help create an anchor destination to animate the riverfront - this could include the new theatre

Health and social care institutions should be retained and concentrated in the town centre where they can be easily reached by the local community.

In recent years branded A3 –A5 uses have opened in the town. Brands such as Costa and Burger King have introduced a greater range of mid market uses to the town and helped to attract a wider customer base.

South Essex College and Thurrock Adult Community College are valuable assets that should be retained within the town/

OFFICES AND EMPLOYMENT USES

The largest occupier of office space in the town centre is the public sector. Thurrock Council, South Essex College and Thurrock Police Station all occupy premises in the town centre.

- G** The Council is currently considering changes to way in which it provides services from the Civic Offices. This could see the development of a new public service hub and main entrance to the Local Authority on the High Street, as well as development of any surplus assets for a mix of residential and retail use.

Most of the remaining office provision is small scale, often in converted housing stock. These provide Low Threshold Enterprise Space (LTES) that serve as valuable stepping stones for start-ups and small businesses at low cost (but often poor quality space).

The Old Court House which provides small, managed business space has recently opened. It has experienced a successful level of the take up and the Council would support further provision of this type of use or other office uses within the town centre.

- H** Along Orsett Road and London Road the conversion or net-loss of existing retail or office space should be resisted to retain the capacity of these areas as employment source for the town centre.

RETAIL

The framework identifies two distinctive retail areas in the town centre.

- I** A retail core located in the area of the greatest footfall along the High Street to the north and south of the railway line; and
- J** A secondary mixed use area focussed along Orsett Road and the southern tip of the high street - this is characterised by smaller independent business use at ground floor level.

The framework estimates a capacity of between 1,500 and 2,500 sqm of retail floor space. This has been placed in the core retail area on sites facing the High Street, around the Station and South Essex College, where the footfall will

Figure 4.1: Proposed land uses

help to attract new retailers. The expectation is that the development of new retail spaces will act as a catalyst for investment into existing premises, including shop front improvements that will enhance the image of the town centre.

HOUSING

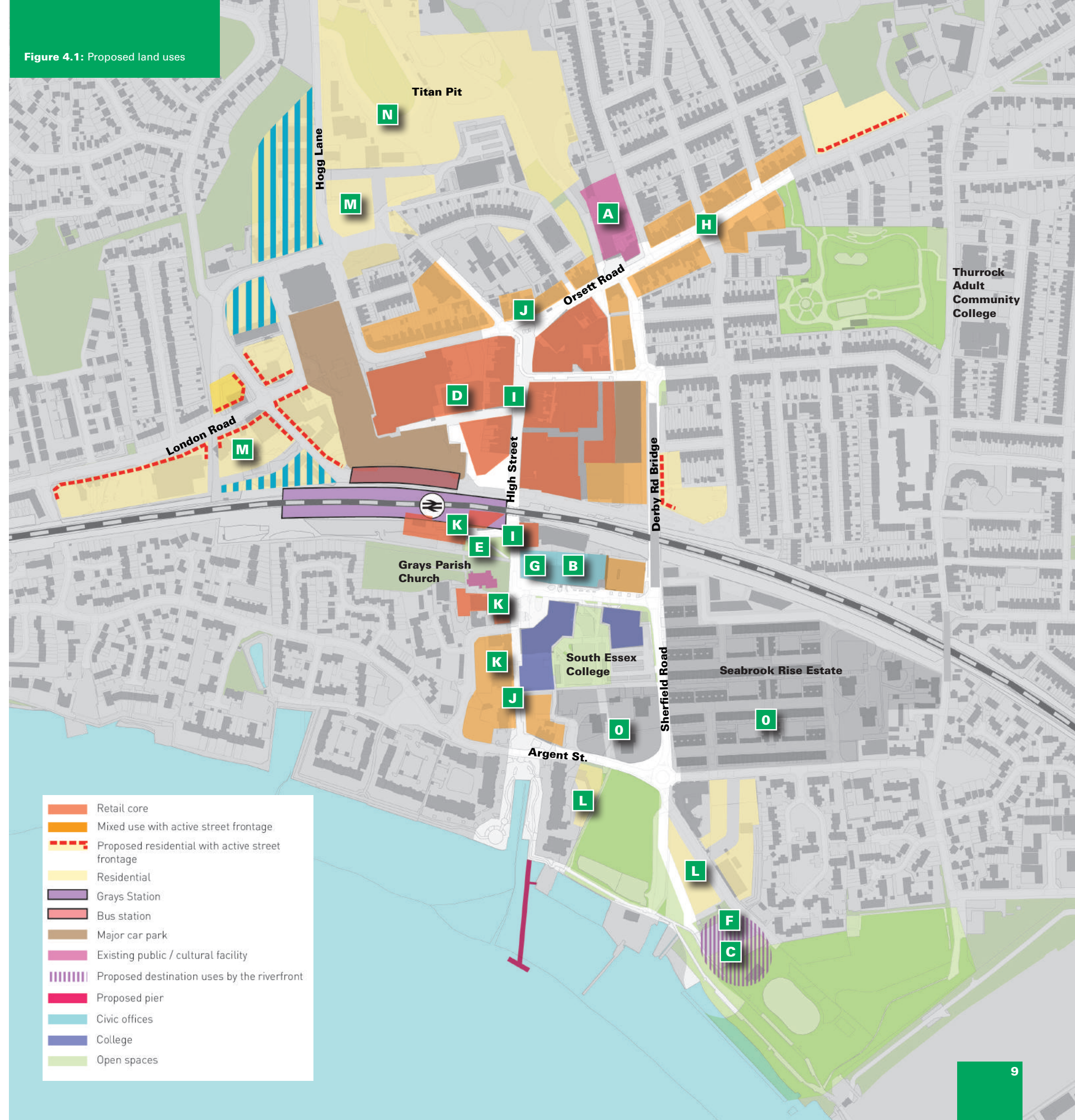
The town centre offers significant opportunities for residential intensification in an area well served by public transport and facilities. An increase in the residential population will support the vitality of the centre and local businesses. New residential uses or conversions will be encouraged at upper floors in both the core secondary retail areas.

The framework identifies several opportunity sites for mixed use or residential development in the town centre, at Hogg Lane and London Road, and at the riverside. A majority of the new homes should be apartments to maximise the amount of people living within walking distance of shops, services and transport links. More peripheral sites, such as the northern end of the Titan Pit site can be lower density.

The framework plan estimates that Grays town centre has the potential to accommodate a total of 566 new homes. These can be broken down:

- K** Town Centre mixed use area: 297 homes (excluding Civic Centre site);
- L** Riverside: 269 homes;
- M** Hogg Lane and London Road: 96 homes;
- N** Titan Pit: (number to be established); and
- O** The Seabrook Rise Estate will be improved

The Grays Town Management Partnership, led by a new dedicated resource, from the Council has developed a portfolio of activity with the aim of making the town centre a more attractive and vibrant place. This activity is designed and implemented by town centre traders who have come together to make a positive difference. This partnership will be key to delivering many of the non-physical elements of this framework.



05 HERITAGE, CHARACTER AND BUILT FORM

HERITAGE

Grays history goes back over 900 years, however few remnants of its illustrious past remain today. Poor quality design and planning in the immediate post war period has seen the destruction of many of the older buildings and the fragmentation of the town centre.

The regeneration of the town centre offers the opportunity to repair the urban fabric, and to re-establish an urban realm with well defined, enclosed and animated streets in the town centre.

The remaining historic fabric should be integrated, preserved and enhanced. This includes the listed Grays Parish Church, the State Cinema, the former Bingo Hall and the War Memorial, but also historic public houses, the fine grain shop frontage on the High Street and Orsett Road, as well as open spaces such as Grays Town Park, Grays Beach and Town Wharf. These buildings and spaces provide an important source of local identity and significantly contribute to the character and appeal of Grays. New development should respond sensitively to the historic fabric, enhance views to special landmarks and feature and provide an appropriate setting.

CHARACTER

The framework identifies five character areas in Grays. These are:

- Town Centre Core;
- Town Centre North;
- Grays Riverside;
- London Road and Hogg Lane Fringe; and
- The Seabrook Rise Estate*.

A description and key recommendations for development and built form are given across these pages.

E *The physical environment around the post war Seabrook Rise Estate will be improved to facilitate better way finding around the estate and stronger links between the town centre and riverfront

BUILT FORM AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

A TOWN CENTRE CORE AND STATION QUARTER



Description: This vibrant area is the heart and focus of the town centre. It is characterised by a range of town centre activities, the station gateway, an attractive pedestrianised shopping area, quality new spaces and an interplay of older and newer development that offer strong sense of history and identity.

Heritage and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Grade II listed State Cinema should be refurbished and brought back in to use• Respond sensitively to listed buildings and their setting, most notably Grays Parish Church, the State Cinema, the War Memorial, as well as non-listed historic buildings• De-clutter and enhance the historic fine grain High Street frontages
Frontages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New development should generally front onto the street, respond to the historic building line and establish a continuous street frontage and a strong and legible townscape especially around the new public spaces at the Station Gateway• Active ground floor uses should be provided throughout the centre, and blank walls and inactive street corners or gable ends avoided• Shop front improvements should be encouraged
Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically 4-5 storeys• Height may need to step down to respond to local heritage and its setting• Potential for buildings of up to 7 storeys with exceptional design quality, where they do not impact adversely on the existing townscape, historic character, and amenity of existing uses;• Generally the last floor of new development should be within the roof structure of the building or provide a clearly articulated set-back behind the parapet line

B TOWN CENTRE NORTH



Description: This area is centred around Orsett Road - the town's secondary high street. It is characterised by its traditional shopfronts. Public realm and shop front improvements will enhance the image of the street, encourage street activity and strengthen it as an attractive location for smaller, independent businesses.

Heritage and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The traditional fine grain high street pattern should be preserved• Shop front improvements should enhance the consistency and character of the street• Views to the war memorial and Magistrates Court should be safeguarded• Pocket spaces outside the Thameside and on Cart Lane should be retained and designed as places to rest, meet and observe street activities
Frontages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New development should generally front onto the street and respond to the historic building line (except at pocket spaces)• Pocket spaces should be better defined and animated by development• Active ground floor uses should be provided along Orsett Road and blank walls and inactive street corners or gable ends avoided
Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically 2-3 storeys in keeping with the existing height on Orsett Road• Potential development on the Thameside site could increase heights up to 5 storeys, where it is set back from the street front and does not undermine the intricate scale of the street• Generally the last floor of new development should be within the roof structure of the building or provide a clearly articulated set-back behind the parapet line

C GRAYS RIVERSIDE



Description: Grays Riverside offers a major opportunity to establish an attractive and lively river front for Grays. Contemporary new development will overlook and animate the enhanced Riverside Park and promenade. A new destination use will attract people to the river and become a proud new landmark for the town.

Heritage and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance and sensitively respond to the historic open spaces of Grays Beach and Town Wharf• Enhance the setting and prominence of the light mast of the 'The Gull'• Maximise views to the river and its activities, as well as the green shore opposite• Create a distinct riverfront by delivering lively new development and attractive open spaces• Create a more attractive setting for the historic public houses (The Theobald Arms and White Hart) at the southern end of the High Street
Frontages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a strong urban frontage onto the Riverside Park and the river with development that provides overlooking and passive surveillance• Provide a visitor destination in a widely visible location from approaching routes and the river, with a distinct form and architecture that becomes a prominent landmark for Grays• Buildings should establish an active interface with the street space and avoid blank walls or exposed car parking areas.
Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically 4-6 storeys with height stepping down towards historic buildings• Potential for slightly taller buildings of exceptional quality overlooking the Riverside• Generally the last floor of new development should be within the roof structure of the building or provide a clearly articulated set-back behind the parapet line

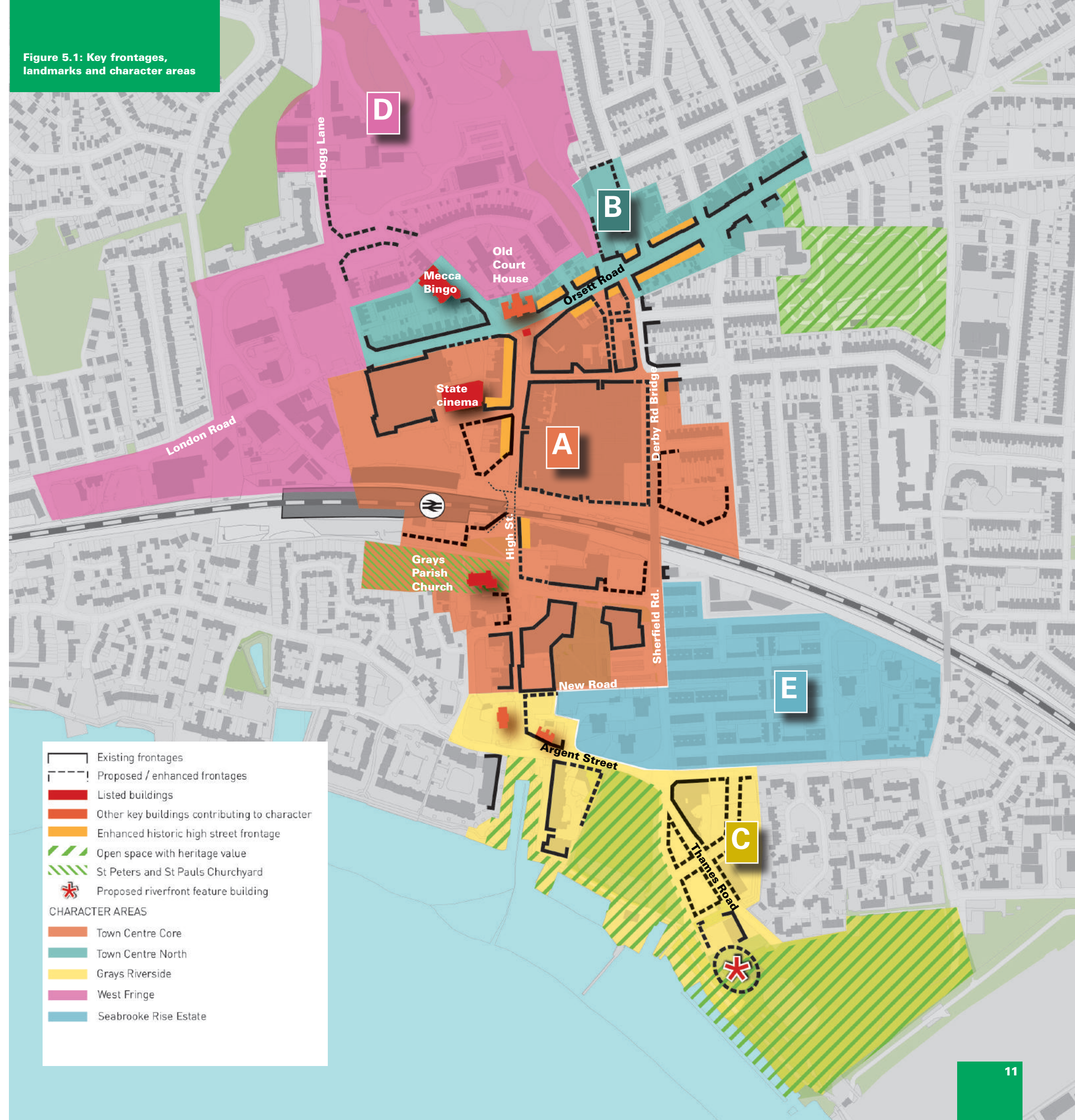
D LONDON ROAD / HOGG LANE FRINGE



Description: This area offers the opportunity to develop the immediate hinterland of the town centre and create a lively urban quarter. This will be characterised by street blocks with well enclosed and defined streets, with active frontages onto main streets, and enhanced public realm and a mix of housing.

Heritage and Townscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development to establish an attractive setting and overlooking to two new town centre gateways - at London Road and Hogg Lane Integrate Historic development on London Road and Maidstone Road should be integrated by new development and contribute to the character New development to be brought forward comprehensively and not in piecemeal fashion Development to be of a high quality and contribute to a strong character
Frontages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Buildings to front onto the street space and follow a consistent building line Residential buildings should establish a well defined privacy strip to ensure the amenity of ground floor units Blank walls and gables should be avoided
Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically 2-4 storeys Key corners could be emphasised by increasing the height by one floor Generally the last floor of new development should be within the roof structure of the building or provide a clearly articulated set-back behind the parapet line

Figure 5.1: Key frontages, landmarks and character areas





A NEW UNDERPASS



BETTER BUS STOPS



IMPROVED STATION



BETTER STREETS

06 TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT

MOVEMENT OBJECTIVES

Building on what has been achieved so far this framework proposes a number of interventions across the town centre to balance the competing uses of street space across the town. These are described on the following pages and aim to:

- Enhance the quality of the streetscape to support walking and cycling and enhance accessibility in to the town for all users;
- Enhance the quality and reliability of bus service provide and improve the interchange at the bus/ train station;
- Improve way finding across the town centre and links to the riverside;
- Discourage through traffic on town centre roads whilst facilitating direct and legible access to town centre car parks; and
- To apply a holistic approach to infrastructure that considers the wider role of street space, its relationship to adjacent development and the regenerative impact.

STREET NETWORK

To achieve these objectives the Framework proposes the following changes to the street network:

A Orsett Road

- Reintroduce two way working between Derby Road and Stanley Road to increase the legibility of the town, reduce journey time and lessen the traffic impact of vehicles on adjacent development;
- Provide formal pedestrian facilities at key junctions and a street design that encourages low travel speed and enables safe informal crossing;
- Create single surface areas at key junctions to slow traffic and improved public realm along Orsett Road ; and

- Provide parking and loading bays on both Orsett Road and adjacent side streets to support local businesses.

The Council is in the process of developing these proposals. If feasible they will be consulted on for inclusion in the 2018 / 2019 Highways Capital Programme.

B Crown Road

Since 2016 the Council has removed the bus lane in Crown road to allow general traffic in both directions to reduce traffic flow on Orsett Road, open up access to the town centre car parks and animate Crown Road. Further improvements to as part of this framework include:

- The realignment of the Crown Road carriageway as part of the delivery of the pedestrian underpass; and
- The delivery of a segregated east-west cycle route (after the road is re-aligned).

C London Road Gateway

- A review of the one-way system at Maidstone Road/London Road - to free up land for development to the north of the junction to create a better first impression of the town; and
- The removal of the gyratory system with a signalised crossroad junction or similar.

D Hogg Lane Gateway

- Consider highway improvements that could facilitate the release land to the north east of the junction for development; and
- Facilitate a new walking connection from Hogg Lane, Eastern Way with Quarry Hill.

E Grays Park Lane

- Deliver a new connection linking Thames Road and Manor Way to help local circulation, provide better access to the riverfront and create an edge to the proposed park.

CAR PARKING

Any future car parking strategy for the Borough should consider the following points for Grays town centre:

- The operation and pricing of car parks should favour short term tariffs to encourage town centre visitors to spend more time in the town centre and combine trips;
- Consider a coordinated tariff structure for the town centre that respects location, time of day and length of stay to achieve efficient use of available spaces;
- Provide clear signage to car parks and real time parking information;
- Provide pay and display parking on surplus road space;
- Redevelop any surplus peripheral car parks for residential to help repair the urban fabric and support the vitality of the town centre;
- A dedicated car park at the Riverside Park; and
- Set realistic car parking standards for new development to reflect levels of access to public transport and the commercial need for development to provide car parking.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The proposed new underpass offer a major opportunity to improve the transport interchange at the Bus Station on Crown Road and Grays Train Station. The framework suggests the following priorities in each area.

F The train station

- Provide a Kiss and ride facility in proximity to the entrances on either side of the tracks;

- Accessibility around the station should be improved to handle peak flows more effectively; and

- The relocation of the taxi rank to a directly accessible and visible location.

Figure 6.1: Movement Network

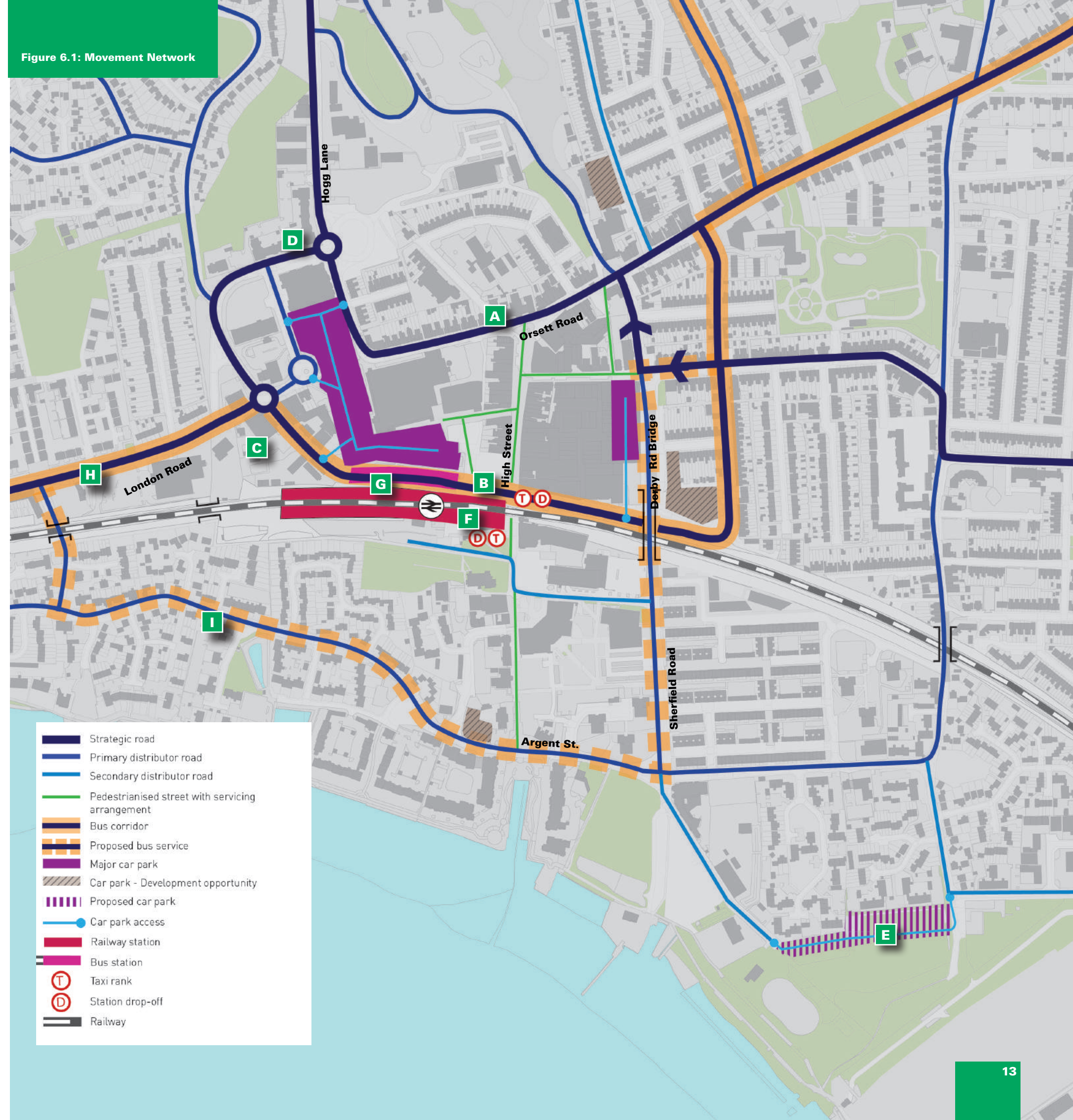
The bus station and bus routes

- H** The improvement of the public realm, bus shelters and better signage / information displays;
- I** The creation of high quality bus corridors along the towns main bus route – this should give buses priority to help improve the reliability of the town's bus service; and
- The provision of a new bus route linking the town centre, Civic Centre and the Riverside – potentially along Derby Bridge Road and Argent Road.

CYCLING NETWORK

To encourage the further use of bikes across the town the framework makes the following suggestions:

- The creation of continuous, direct and well signed cycle routes from surrounding residential areas in to the town centre - these should be segregated where possible;
- The existing cycle lane at Hoggs Lane should be continued from the high street to the south along Derby Road linking to Cycle Route 13;
- The provision of well designed and overlooked cycle parking at key entry points in to the centre; and
- The completion of Cycle Route 13 connecting Tilbury and Grays - this will link create a continuous cycle link from Tilbury to London Bridge.





PUBLIC SPACES



THE PROMENADE



IMPROVED HIGH ST.



PEDESTRIAN ZONE

07 PUBLIC REALM AND OPEN SPACES

PUBLIC REALM

To ensure a consistent and high quality public realm throughout Grays the Council should prepare a detailed public realm strategy. This should include:

- Concept design and principles for the public realm in the town centre core;
- Provision of a coherent palette of materials and consistent suite of public realm furniture and lighting; and
- Design codes for specific streets and typical street types in both Grays town centre and its hinterland.

This should support the following priority interventions.

A HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Although the public realm on the High Street and the wider pedestrianised area is of a high quality it is dated and could benefit from a makeover. This could include:

- The reduction of street clutter such as guard rail and bollards;
- The provision of a consistent set of modern street furniture including benches, bins and cycle stands, new planting and resurfacing of tired areas;
- Making the environment fully accessible for people with disabilities; and
- A lighting strategy for the pedestrianised area, the underpasses and public spaces.

B ORSETT ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

With the re-introduction of two-way working on Orsett Road the public realm along this street should be improved. These could include:

- The implementation of a shared space to create greater awareness from drivers and a safer environment for pedestrian;
- The narrowing of the road carriageway to create wider footways and support informal crossing of the street;
- Formal pedestrian crossing facilities on key

junctions and on desire lines;

- The provision of clearly marked parking and loading bays at that could function as an extension of the footway when not in use; and
- The de-cluttering the street by reducing road signs and markings to the statutory minimum.

C DERBY ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

Derby Road Bridge is a well used connection between the town centre and the riverside and alternative to the High Street. The quality of this route is poor and should be enhanced. This should include

- Development fronting onto the bridge and enclosing the street space;
- Improved public realm including cycling facilities;
- Better pedestrian crossings, especially at the junction with Argent Street;
- A vertical connection with Crown Road to enhance connectivity in the town centre.

D CORRIDOR PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENTS

To encourage a greater share of walking and cycling the public realm and facilities along major corridors into the town centre should be improved. This could include:

- The narrowing of the carriageway, widening of footways and provision of cycle lanes;
- The improvement of the public realm quality and provision of crossing facilities; and
- Tree-planting and greening of the street.

PUBLIC SPACES

The framework includes recommendations for the design of both new and existing public spaces. These include:

E GRAYS GATEWAY SPACES

Theses spaces should be established as part of the underpass project and accommodate the ramps and

stairs leading into the underpass as an integral part and feature of the public space design. The new spaces will radically change the experience for passengers arriving by train or bus .

The northern space should

- Be animated by active ground floor uses from new development at its northern edge; and
- Help to guide people from the rail and bus stations into the High Street.

The southern space should

- Enhance the setting of Grays Parish Church;
- Support pedestrian routes from the underpass to the College and riverfront and to the station entrance; and
- Possibly become the focus of a new concentration of restaurant and café uses with south facing sitting out terraces.

F MEMORIAL SQUARE

Any redesign of this area should:

- Integrate existing tree planting; and
- Provide modern seating and lighting.

G CART LANE POCKET SPACE

This under-used leftover area on Orsett Road could be transformed by:

- Establishing active frontages animating space; and
- Delivering a shared street space, connecting with the proposed with Grays Town Park.

H OUTSIDE THE THAMESIDE

The public space outside the Thameside should be retained as far as possible in any future development. The space should:

- Be animated by active ground floor uses ; and
- Be flexibly designed for a range of activities.

Figure 7.1: Public realm and open spaces

I COLLEGE SQUARE

- New development on the northern and western side of the space should help to animate the space and provide overlooking.

J TOWN WHARF SQUARE

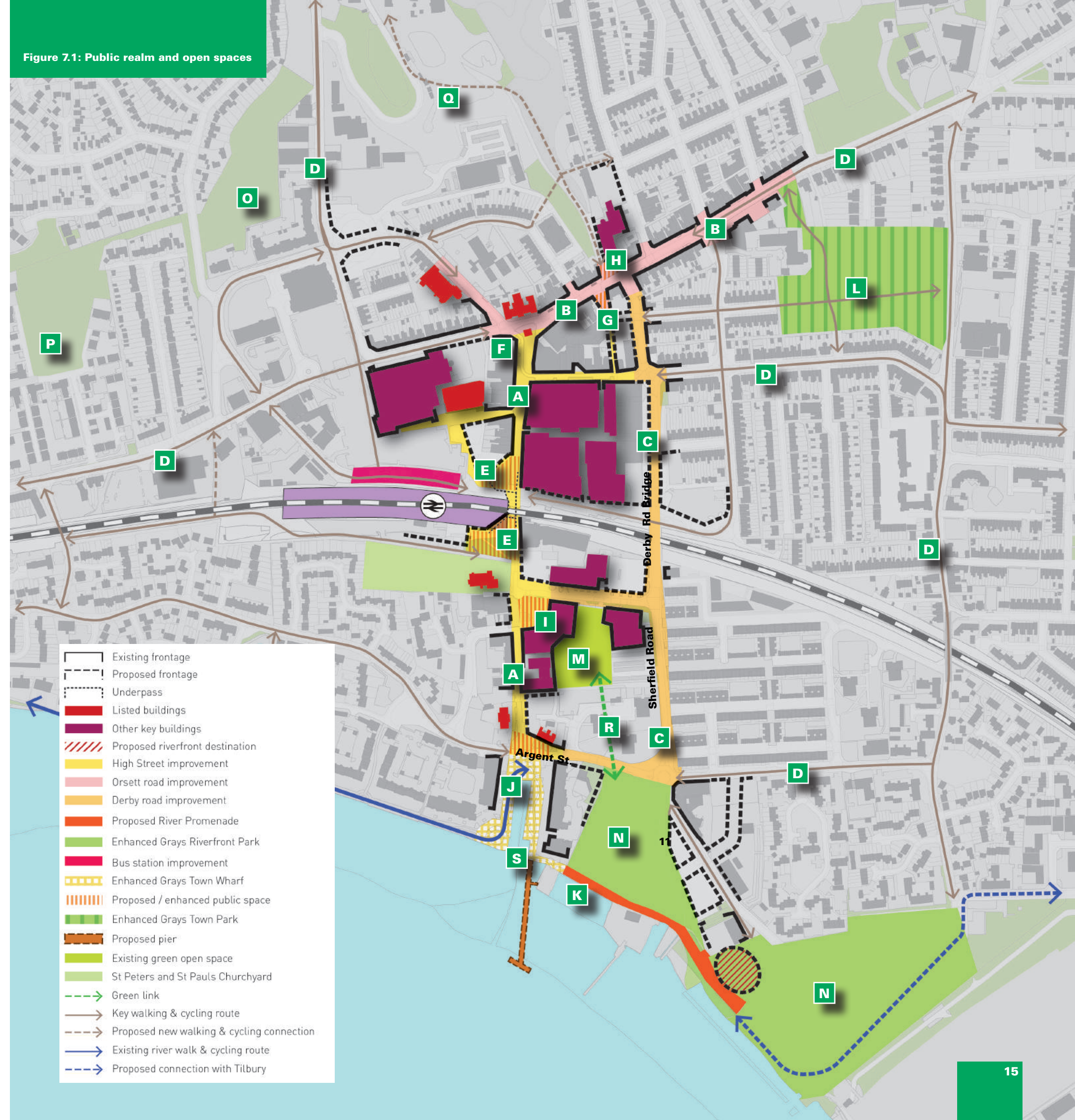
The public space at the southern end of the High Street on Argent Street should be enhanced. Its design should:

- Enhances physical and visual links between Grays Town Wharf and the River Thames;
- Integrate existing trees; and
- Enhance the setting of The White Hart and The Theobald Arms public houses and provide external seating and spill out space.

K GRAYS RIVERFRONT PROMENADE

Grays should have a quality promenade that celebrates its waterfront and brings people down to the Thames to enjoy the openness and views. The promenade should be carefully designed to:

- Creatively respond to and integrate the flood defences;
- Provide high quality spaces for sitting out, strolling and play;
- Enable unobstructed views to the river;
- Integrate cycle route 13 from London Bridge to Tilbury; and
- Connect to other open spaces, the proposed Grays pier and the town centre.





GRAYS BEACH



AN ACTIVE RIVER



RIVERSIDE PARK



CYCLE ROUTES

OPEN SPACES

Grays benefits from a number of open spaces that provide valuable amenity spaces for town centre users. The Framework proposes the following enhancement to open spaces:

L GRAYS TOWN PARK

This is the oldest park in Grays town centre but it is hidden away behind development. Improvements to the park should focus on enhancing access and legibility of routes into the park from the town centre. A new entrance from Park View Gardens should be considered. The park should establish a positive relation with Bridge Road, providing additional entrances and a better visual relationship with the park.

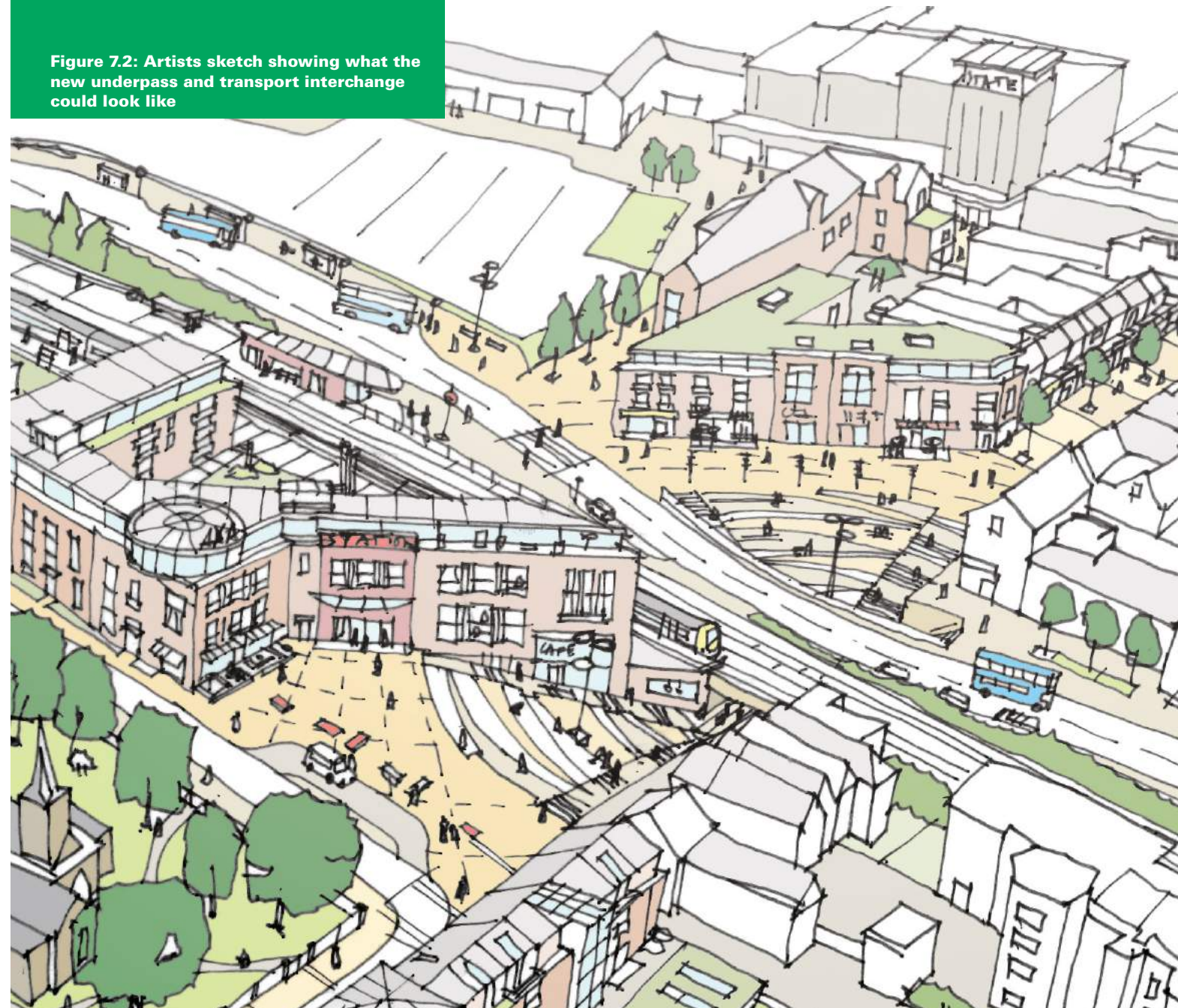
M COLLEGE CAMPUS FIELDS

An attractive new green space has been created in the heart of the College Campus. Its primary purpose is to provide outside space to college students and staff, but it also serves as a visual amenity from the right of way that passes through the open space from the Civic Centre to its southern boundary (see College River link).

N GRAYS RIVERSIDE PARK

It is proposed to combine the existing open spaces of Kilverts Field and Grays Beach into single community park covering 6.5 hectares. The park should integrate the flood defences and the proposed new promenade. A network of new paths is proposed to connect the park internally and to extend the College River link from Argent Street to the proposed Waterfront Square at Grays Beach. The park should enhance the current playground and provide facilities and different landscape characters that are attractive to the community including children, teenagers, college students and older people.

Figure 7.2: Artists sketch showing what the new underpass and transport interchange could look like



OTHER GREEN SPACE IMPROVEMENTS

If development comes forward on the Titan Pit or on the former gasholder site on London Road, it should contribute to improved access to existing open spaces for both new and existing residents in the area. This could include:

- O** Establishing better access and an internal route network to the natural landscape area to the west of Hogg Lane, its connections with Badgers Dene and the residential development in the Titan Pit and linking up with Grays Chalk Quarry Nature Reserve to the north and to Cromwell Road to the east;
- P** The opening up of the woodland to the back of the former gas holders site and its integration with a public space for the development; and
- Q** The creation of a new public green space as part of the Titan Pit development.

R GREEN LINK

A new pedestrian connection and landscaped green link should be established between the College Campus Fields and Kilverts Fields / Grays Riverside Park. The route should be direct and straight, and offer views to the park and the river front. A pedestrian crossing should be provided on Argent Street at the desire-line.

S GRAYS TOWN WHARF AND PIER

Grays Town Wharf should be well connected with the proposed promenade and the Town Wharf Square. Opportunities for a use of the water space in the Wharfs should be explored. Grays pier should be more than only a landing stage for boats, but have the qualities of a public space, that invites people to wander out to the end and to view back to Grays and the shore. It should become a destination in its own right.

08 NEXT STEPS

THE WAY FORWARD

The Grays Town Centre Framework Review will be used guide new development and renew interest in the town.

It provides a clear and up to date context for the Council’s ongoing planning and regeneration activities. A more detailed review would follow as part of the process required for the new Local Plan and to ensure compliance with planning policy and regulations relating to the formulation of Local Plans.

The Council will prioritise the following projects to support this framework:

- The detailed design and delivery of the pedestrian underpass, associated public spaces and transport interchange;
- The continued improvement of the movement network to facilitate enhanced access in to and around the town centre;
- The reconfiguration of the Civic Offices to deliver enhanced customer services;
- The development of enhanced theatre and cultural services through the redevelopment of the Thameside Complex either on its existing site, as part of a redevelopment of the Civic Offices at the eastern end, or on the Riverside - the existing complex must remain up and running until a new facility opens;
- Support the delivery of Connected Thurrock - the Council’s digital and information technology strategy;
- A town centre public realm strategy: and
- Work with the Grays Town Management Partnership to deliver the non-physical elements of this strategy.

The Grays Delivery Programme sets out the programme for the planning, design and delivery of the Grays Town Centre Framework.

GRAYS DELIVERY PROGRAMME

	PROJECT	2017				2018				2019				2020				2021				2022			
1	Underpass																								
	a) Delivery structures, design, stakeholder engagement, and consents phases																								
	b) Construction phases																								
2	One-way System																								
	a) Phase 1a																								
	b) Phase 1b: Bridge Road priority working upgrades including traffic signal control and changes to new Road access																								
	c) Phase 2: Stanley Road/Orsett Road junction																								
	d) Consultation on change to two way operation: For inclusion in the 2018/19 Highways Capital programme.																								
3	Civic Offices: Programme to be included in a future report to Cabinet																								
4	Thameside: Programme to be included in a future report to Cabinet																								
5	Public Realm Strategy																								
	a) Procure design team																								
	b) Consultation, production of guidance and adoption Summer 2018																								
6	Feasibility appraisal and project development for other schemes in the masterplan																								
7	Stage 2 review to integrate the master plan in to the new Local Plan”																								

