



GRAYS TOWN BOARD MEETING

Notes of Grays Town Board meeting held on Thursday, 05th December 2024 at 13:00 in Committee Room 2, Thurrock Council Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL and via Microsoft Teams.

Present:

Jennifer Craft	JC	MP for Thurrock
Cllr John Kent	JK	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Strategic Relationships, Reputation, and Influence, and Grays Thurrock Ward Councillor.
Cllr Lee Watson	LW	Cabinet Member for Good Growth
Cllr Valerie Morris-Cook	VMC	Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships & Grays Riverside Ward Councillor.
Jayne Sheehan	JS	Vice Principal, South Essex College
Neil Woodbridge	NW	CEO of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions

In Attendance:

Gregory Wilkinson	GW	Area Lead for Essex, Kent, Hertfordshire, and Thames Estuary Growth Board, MHCLG
Emma Taylor	ET	Deputy Area Lead for Essex, MHCLG

Thurrock Council

Claire Demmel	CD	Executive Director of Place
Louise Neilan	LN	Assistant Director of Communications and Engagement
Gloria Ighodaro	GI	Chief Officer of Housing, Economic Development & Skills, Regeneration
Gregory McCullough	GM	Head of Regeneration & Place Delivery
Bernice Lim	BL	Regeneration Programme Manager
Olanrewaju Sunmola	OS	Senior Project Officer, Regeneration
Kevin Howlett	KH	Head of Communications

Apologies:

Cllr Tony Fish	TF	Representing Grays Riverside Ward
Wendy Townsend	WT	Representative of Seabrooke Rise Community Association & Riverside Community Big Local
Abdul Bashir	AB	Director of Desi Indian Dining Club
Cebrail Kolbukn	CK	Manager of Izgara Meze Restaurant

MEETING NOTES

1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	
	<p>LW welcomed Board members and other attendees to the meeting, and introduced new members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Valerie Morris-Cook, Cabinet Member for Community Partnerships & Grays Riverside Ward Councillor • Neil Woodbridge, CEO of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions <p>Apologies were noted from Cllr TF.</p> <p>BL informed the Board that Lucy Emma-Harris, Creative Places and People Partnership has resigned as the Chair at the last meeting and has since resigned from the Grays Town Board.</p> <p><u>Nomination of New Chairperson</u></p> <p>Whilst Neil Woodbridge, CEO of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions was elected to be Chairperson of Grays Town Board at the last meeting, it is thought that the new members should part take in this election process thus Board Members were invited to put forward nomination of a New Chairperson for consideration at the next meeting. Meanwhile, Neil Woodbridge would act as interim Chair.</p>	
2.	Previous Minutes and Matters Arising	
	Minutes of the previous meeting held on the 26 th Sept 2024 were agreed and accepted as a correct record.	
3.	Declaration of Interest	
	Board members were reminded to declare interests that may affect any board decisions. Register of Interest Form along with Managing Conflicts of Interest Procedure were circulated in advance of meeting. The form is to be completed and returned to the Council.	
4.	Terms of Reference	
	<p>The updated Terms of Reference was ratified by the Board.</p> <p><u>Action(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TC to update Terms of Reference to include new board members. 	OS/BL

MEETING NOTES

5. Programme Update

BL presented the Highlight (Progress) Reports for all projects, noting that the delivery programmes are being refined.

Project 3: Grays Riverfront

- a. Planning application was submitted on the 26th September 2024 and is expected to be presented to the 3rd April 2025 Planning Committee. The extended determination period is to allow time to address matters raised by the Environment Agency.
- b. Ground investigation works are completed.
- c. Preparation of Tender Documentation for a Design & Build Contractor is in progress. Works would be tendered in early 2025.
- d. Projected Completion Oct 2026.

Grays Town Deal Projects

JC suggested a 'pause', placing the Town Deal projects on hold, to review if they are best value for money and to explore options which could have greater community benefit.

GW highlighted the risk of missing funding deadlines if changes are pursued at this stage of the programme. He advised the Board to engage with MHCLG as soon as possible to understand the implications of complete change in projects at this late stage as it is unprecedented.

BL informed the Board that an extensive community consultation on Project 3 was held in August 2024 and there is strong support for the project. The proposal for Project 4: Grays Beach Riverside and Kilvert's Field and Project 5: Riverfront Activities Centre was presented at the community consultation drop-in sessions and the response was positive.

BL highlighted that £1.3 million has been spent to develop the Town Deal projects and should the projects be aborted, there is a risk of grant clawback from MHCLG.

The Board agreed to place all projects on hold for them to be reviewed and alternative options explored. It was noted that the alternative projects will need to be aligned with the vision and objectives of Grays Town Investment Plan.

MEETING NOTES

	<p>The Board agreed to seek guidance from MHCLG on scope to restructure projects within the Grays Town Deal programme.</p> <p>GM and LN highlighted the need to be transparent with the community about the changes which may be take place regarding the projects.</p> <p><u>Action(s):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP, Leader, and Chair to write to MHCLG the following week. • BL to circulate the Grays Town Investment Plan and details of previous consultations. 	<p>JC/JK/NW</p> <p>BL</p>
6.	Comms Update	
	Deferred to the next meeting.	
7.	Date of Next Meeting	
	The Board agreed to reconvene on Thursday, 9 th January at 13:00.	