

Subject: Hackney Wick Station – Public Underpass
Meeting date: 29/01/2018
Report to: EMT
Report of: Janet Townsend, Director of Development

FOR DECISION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. The improvement works to Hackney Wick Station are scheduled to complete in May 2018 at which point the new ground floor ticket hall will open. There is an expectation from stakeholders that the public underpass beneath the railway will also open at this time. The underpass will eventually connect to Wallis Road in the north via a new north-south pedestrian route (see attached sketch at Appendix 1). The north-south route is to be constructed by the developer of an adjacent development site, Telford Homes, under the terms of their S106 Agreement.
- 1.2. Given the unknown delivery programme at the time planning consent was obtained for the station works, the planning approval requires the construction of a temporary pedestrian route running east-west to Wallis Road, as shown on the sketch plan in Appendix 2. The scope of these temporary works is included in the Implementation Agreement with Network Rail (NR).
- 1.3. Telford Homes have now started demolition on their site and, following discussions with them, it is anticipated that the north-south route will now be open in late 2019; c.18 months after the station works are due to complete. There is therefore much greater certainty on the timing of delivery.
- 1.4. In addition, further review of the access and safety arrangements of the temporary east-west route has been undertaken. It is considered that the temporary route provides very limited passenger benefits, even when accessing the station from the north, as the station gate-line is in the south. Furthermore, there is concern that with limited footfall in the early days the temporary route may pose public safety and vandalism risks. This paper therefore seeks approval to obtain wider stakeholder's views on deferring the opening of the underpass until the north-south route is available and not opening the temporary east-west route to the public. An amendment to the planning consent would be required if the recommendation was supported.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. EMT members are invited to:
 - 2.1.1. **APPROVE** that, subject to stakeholder support, LLDC defers the opening of the public underpass until the north-south route is available, which is estimated to be late 2019.
 - 2.1.2. **APPROVE** that the temporary east-west route is not opened to the public, subject to an amendment to the planning consent.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The new ground floor ticket hall at Hackney Wick Station includes an underpass for use by both the public and station users. The two user groups are physically separated by a glass wall. The intention is that the public side of the underpass will form a key part of a new permanent north-south route, improving connectivity from Fish Island in the south through to Wallis Road in the north.
- 3.2. When the planning consent was granted for the station works it was uncertain when the north-south route could be delivered, as it passed across third party owned development land. For this reason, a temporary east-west access route across LLDC land, running to the north of, and parallel to, the railway embankment was proposed.
- 3.3. The station site at Hackney Wick is surrounded by development plots with the site to the north of the station, previously owned by Groveworld, now being developed by Telford Homes. Telford Homes are required to provide the permanent north-south route as part of their planning obligations. Now that Telford have commenced demolition, they have indicated that they expect to open the route in late 2019, giving a much clearer delivery programme.
- 3.4. To meet the above dates, Telford Homes are seeking access to LLDC's northern construction compound in early 2018 (refer to the attached sketch in Appendix 1). As part of these works, it is intended that ducting is laid to facilitate future installation of the district heating network, to serve the wider masterplan area. Joining the north-south route utilities to those ducts already laid beneath the underpass will involve working immediately adjacent to the north portal of the underpass, thereby disrupting or totally blocking pedestrian access.
- 3.5. The site immediately north of the railway line, but south of the Telford Homes site, is shortly to be tendered by LLDC with the intention of appointing a development partner in early 2019. The temporary east-west route sits within this development plot and leaving it in place may impede the development works, necessitating its premature closure before the permanent north-south route is available.
- 3.6. It is now almost four years since planning consent was granted for the station, and there is concern that the temporary east-west route may be problematic with regard to the personal well-being of users. When the temporary east-west route was designed there was awareness that this route would require features to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour. As a result, open mesh fencing, good levels of lighting, and a convex mirror at the entrance to the underpass were specified. However, it is anticipated that LLDC's developer will wish to erect close-board hoarding along the northern edge of the route to separate it from the development works, but also consequently creating a long and un-overlooked alleyway.
- 3.7. This concern has been supported by LLDC's Head of Security and Park Safety Officer, based on his knowledge of the crime and anti-social behaviour data for the area. In his opinion, risk applies even during daylight hours and if CCTV is installed. As designed and budgeted, the route has no CCTV.
- 3.8. In addition, temporary utilities have been installed beneath the temporary east-west route by Network Rail, and these require a wayleave for maintenance, raising the risk that the route could be disrupted by trenching for repairs. The utilities will be relocated when the north-south utility route is in place
- 3.9. The walking time from the Wallis Road end of the temporary east-west route to the gate-line in the new (southern) station ticket hall is assessed to be very similar whether using the temporary east-west route or the current route via Hepscott Road and White Post Lane. The routes are shown on the sketch in Appendix 2.

- 3.10. In consideration of the above, LLDC would like to pursue the option of modifying the temporary east-west route by closing it and the underpass to the public until the permanent north-south route is completed.
- 3.11. Modifying the temporary east-west route could also potentially save the project a non-trivial amount of money (refer to Section 5 below). CCTV would be difficult (and therefore expensive) to install on the temporary east-west route since it needs to be a stand-alone LLDC system and therefore can't be routed via the station system. It would require an enclosure with independent power supply, enhanced lighting, and other infrastructure. All this infrastructure and equipment would be redundant when the permanent north-south route opens and is not currently in scope.
- 3.12. Given current behaviours in the vicinity of the station, there is also concern that damage and graffiti will occur very quickly to the feature glass wall and the fair face concrete surfaces in the underpass unless there is a critical mass of people passing through or living and working in the vicinity. LLDC is responsible for the cleaning of the public side.
- 3.13. Initial views have been sought from GLA, LB Hackney, LB Tower Hamlets and TfL, all of whom support the principle. More formal consultation is proposed before a final decision is made, and views can be provided to EMT.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The following proposal is recommended, subject to further consultation with key stakeholders:
 - 4.1.1 Undertake the works to construct the east-west route, but do not open it to the public. This route is already included within the scope of works and budget for the station improvement works, and will be used to provide access to the drainage underneath it, and act as an emergency access for Network Rail to the north of the underpass.
 - 4.1.2 Close the public side of the underpass until the north-south route is open and there is a critical mass of people working or resident in the area, to protect it from damage and ensure a safe environment for users of the new station access. It is anticipated that this will be late 2019.
 - 4.1.3 Direct station users from Wallis Road to access the station via Hepscott Road and White Post Lane.
 - 4.1.4 Work with the stakeholders to identify meanwhile uses for the underpass, which would enable it to be opened and used as a covered space e.g. a temporary café space (but would not provide public access to the north until the north-south route is completed).
 - 4.1.5 Allow Telford Homes access to the northern compound, from the date of completion of the station project, to facilitate their development and to extend the underpass utilities northwards. This will potentially reduce construction congestion for residents and businesses in the area. Terms to be agreed.
- 4.2 Subject to EMT approval the next steps are to:
 - 4.2.1 Consult with the following stakeholders on the practicalities of not providing a public access route to the north of the underpass until the north-south route is open, to secure formal agreement to this proposal:
 - GLA (as part funder)
 - LB Hackney (as part funder)
 - LB Tower Hamlets (as part funder)
 - Network Rail
 - TfL (ARL)

- PPDT
 - Here East (key stakeholder and part funder through S106)
- 4.2.2 Formally approach the Local Planning Authority for consent to amend the planning approval, removing the requirement to provide a temporary east-west public access route to the north of the underpass.
- 4.2.3 Inform Network Rail of any changes required to the scope of the station works as a result of this proposal.
- 4.2.4 Work with stakeholders to identify meanwhile uses for the underpass.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1 The financial impact of the option recommended by this paper compared with the option to open the underpass as originally planned comprises those works that were not in the original project scope, but are now expected to be required were the underpass to open immediately.
- 5.2 The estimated cost to construct the east-west route is £60k. This is included within the current funding envelope as part of the original scope of works.
- 5.3 To improve the safety of the east-west route would require an independent LLDC CCTV system linked to Park Operations HQ, improved lighting, the delivery of security patrols, and FM services to clean and repair the route. A quote from Engie for the subway alone **Reg 12(5)(e)**. This excludes the capital works such as CCTV.
- 5.4 **Reg 12(5)(e)**

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPACT

- 6.1 If the temporary east-west route opens and then closes a short while later due to utilities or other developer works, the public and stakeholder response would be shaped in terms of losing a facility. If the route does not open, the stakeholder perception will be that construction works are continuing and that it will open in due course. On-site messaging will protect the LLDC's reputation, and help to communicate this intention to passers-by. Nevertheless, there may be negative reputational impacts from informed stakeholders such as Here-East.

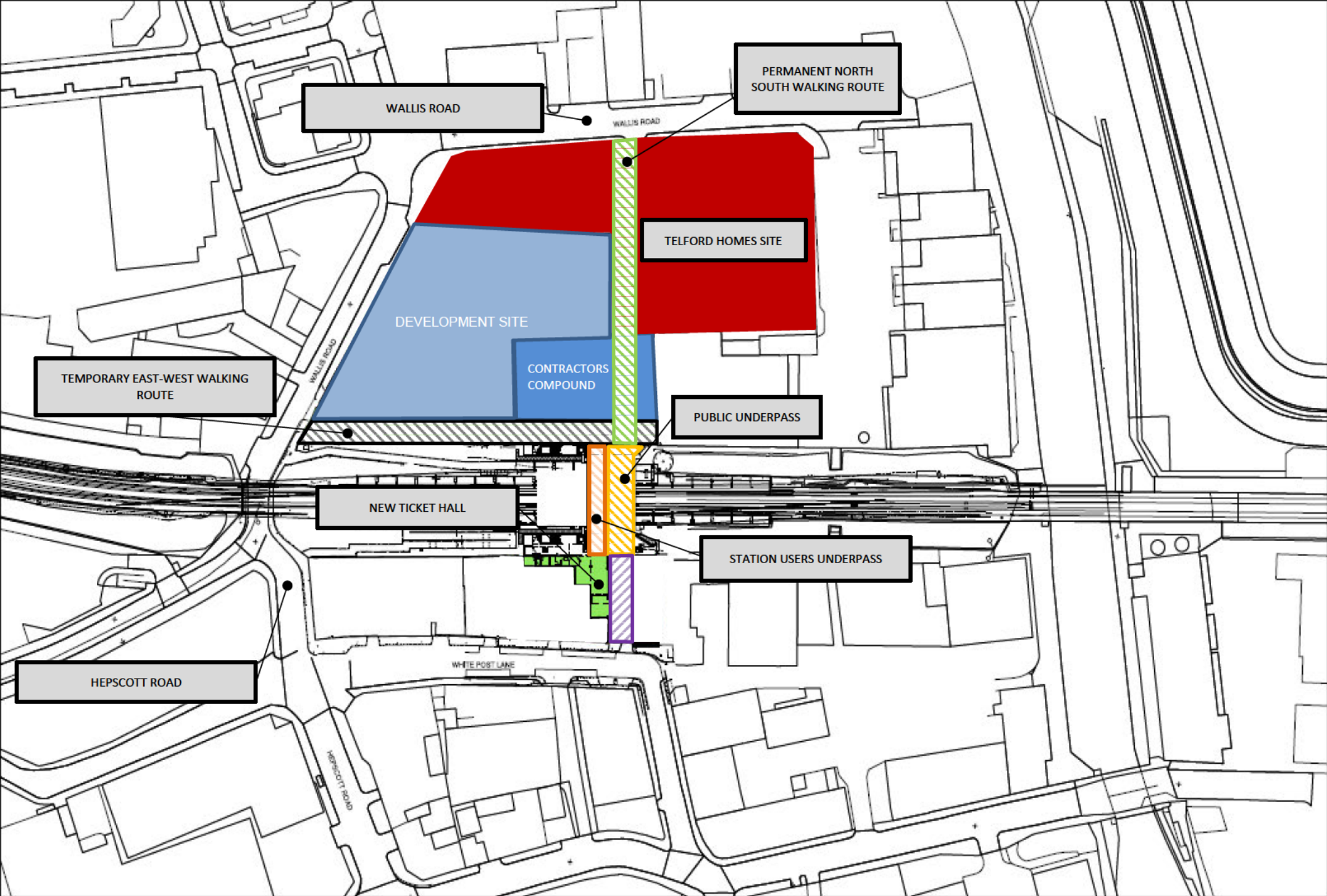
7. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Hackney Wick Station Site Plan

Appendix 2 - Hackney Wick Station Alternative Walking Routes

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Appendix 1 – Hackney Wick Station Site Plan



Appendix 2 – Hackney Wick Station Alternative Walking Routes

