

Subject: Hackney Wick Station – Public Underpass Update
Meeting date: 25 February 2019
Report to: EMT
Report of: Janet Townsend, Director of Development

FOR DECISION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This paper is an update to the EMT decision made on 18 April 2018, to defer opening the Hackney Wick Station Underpass until the permanent north-south route connecting the station to Wallis Road in the north is completed. This route is to be constructed by the developer of the adjacent site, Telford Homes, under the terms of their S106 Agreement. Please see Appendix 1 for a plan of the station underpass and routes.
- 1.2. The improvement works to Hackney Wick Station are complete, and the new ticket office and lifts opened to the public in May 2018. At the time of the EMT decision it was expected that the north-south route would be completed in late 2019.
- 1.3. LLDC shared the proposal to defer opening with its Project Board Stakeholders (NR, TfL, GLA, LB Hackney and LB Tower Hamlets) who all endorsed the decision. Messaging was added to LLDC Park News, which is circulated to over 22,000 registered addresses. This ensured that the conversations around the Hackney Wick Station works were framed in a positive way and emphasised that the opening of the permanent north-south route forms a key part of the station works and the long-term vision for the wider developments in the Hackney Wick area.
- 1.4. The decision also followed discussions between members of Development, Park Operations and Venues, Regeneration and Community Partnerships, and Communication, Marketing and Strategy teams.
- 1.5. Since the station opening, the Telford Homes scheme has been delayed, primarily because of contamination/pollution issues, and local communities have become concerned about the poor pedestrian access to the station, especially from the south along White Post Lane. The roads and pavement here are narrow and in a very poor state of repair, which makes mobility impaired access especially difficult.
- 1.6. Telford now suggest the earliest opening date of the north-south route would be December 2020, but they expect it to be longer as they have still not agreed their remediation strategy. Given the much longer timeframe, this paper revisits and reconsiders the previous rationale.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 EMT members are asked to agree that, subject to suitable security measures being possible at a reasonable cost, LLDC now brings forward the opening of the public underpass, linking to the temporary east-west until the permanent north-south route is available.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. When the planning consent was granted for the station works in 2014, 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 included in the scope of works. The installation, surfacing and lighting of this route was completed before the decision was made to defer opening.
- 3.2. Since the station works were completed, the route has largely remained vacant, but now provides a temporary pedestrian access route for Telford Homes' contractors to reach their construction compound. These rights are not exclusive, and the possibility of shared public access was considered at the time the licence was granted. In addition, Network Rail have temporary rights of emergency egress from the station along this route.
- 3.3. The principal reasons for deferring opening of the underpass were:
- 3.3.1. Concerns that the temporary east-west route may be problematic with regard to the personal wellbeing 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, consequently creating a long, secluded alleyway.
 - 3.3.2. 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.
 - 3.3.3. There was also concern that damage and graffiti would 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, in exchange for being granted rights of public access.
- 3.4. The paper discussed by EMT on 18 April 2018 is attached as Appendix 2 for information on the context within which the decision was made.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1. The reasons for deferred opening and their current position are considered below.

Personal Safety and Security

- 4.2. Concerns around personal safety and anti-social behaviour remain. LLDC's Head of Security and Safety has been consulted on the potential earlier opening of the route and still has concerns. The walkway is only 1.5-1.8 meters wide with a site boundary on one side to a currently vacant site, and an inaccessible embankment on the other - effectively a very long pedestrian tunnel. As the route

it is not part of the station infrastructure, it is not linked to the station CCTV system. Whilst there are quite a few stations across the network which are not dissimilar to Hackney Wick at these locations Network Rail or TfL Rail have the responsibility for security and safety.

4.3. Specific points of concern include:

- Inadequate Lighting - The lighting in this area is classed as bulkhead lighting and would need to be assessed on LUX levels (if lighter than exit or platforms this could be a conflict; equally if it's darker or throws shadows it could affect safety of people) we also need clarity on who is responsible for the lighting.
- Narrow passage – The current mesh fence gives an appearance of not being so closed in, but this may change when the adjacent compound is let and/or developed.
- No CCTV – this is a key factor – as there is a lack of people overlooking the area, there is no natural surveillance from buildings etc (not now anyway) – there needs to be a form of electronic surveillance (if only for forensic analysis) but this will reduce the fear of crime and aid as a deterrent. This could be linked back to PHQ but would need costing.
- No security or station patrols – other stations have a patrol which goes out every so often to provide a presence – without this there is a possibility of criminality seeping in. W could seek to gain agreement from LOROL to patrol down to the end of the ramp which would be a favoured option.
- Persons of no fixed abode bedding in a sheltered area – especially true in the underpass, and the point above would impact this.
- Wider exit would mean having anti vehicle measures at the bottom - but this could be low rated, given angle of impact and likely speed achievable (being very low). Street furniture would suffice.

4.4. Without mitigation, many of these concerns are likely to lead to an increase in crime.

4.5. If LLDC do agree to open the route, solutions to mitigate these concerns will need detailed consideration and costing first. LB Hackney are investigating whether they could link a CCTV system to their network. Also, the fact that Telford's contractors are now using the route means that it will have a greater pedestrian flow. However, the convex mirror was not included in the implemented scope of works and the requirement for its installation would therefore need to be reviewed.

Walking Times

4.6. Although the walking time along the temporary east-west route is very similar to the current route via Hepscoth Road and White Post Lane, the accessibility is not. This was not fully considered at the time the decision was made.

4.7. With growing community concerns in the wider area around construction traffic and routes to and from schools, the poor condition of the pavement and road along White Post Lane has been highlighted. With a number of yard entrances along the route there were raised kerbs to navigate. LB Tower Hamlets have undertaken some short-term remedial measures to assist wheelchair users and pedestrians with buggies, but it has also become evident that the Hepscoth Road pavement beneath the railway bridge is actually too narrow for wheelchairs and therefore users need to travel along the road.

4.8. Furthermore, whilst it was anticipated that all station users travelling to or from the north of the station to walk along Hepscoth Road and White Post Lane, many are in fact travelling directly to the Park, Here East etc via Queens Yard to the

east. This is causing concerns to many of the businesses in Main Yard to the north, who no longer benefit from the passing trade.

- 4.9. These issues have been raised at the last few Community and Cultural Interest Group meetings in Hackney Wick and Fish Island, and it is understood that community members are lobbying the Mayor of Hackney to address their concerns with LLDC. An extract from the December community meeting in Hackney Town hall is attached at Appendix 3.
- 4.10. Opening the temporary east-west route and the underpass would provide a level access route to the station entrance, making it fully accessible, which was one of the key objectives of the project. In addition, it would provide a pedestrian route for those parents/children en route to school from the Fish Island area, taking them away from some of the busy construction traffic issues. Here East and the CBA are also likely to welcome it being open.

Cleaning and Maintenance

- 4.11. Concerns around damage and graffiti are well founded, evidenced by the extent of damage and graffiti to the southern public realm, the station and the hoardings since the station opened.
- 4.12. LLDC's Park Services Manager has obtained a quote from Engie for the additional cleaning and graffiti removal of the underpass and east-west route. The annual cost would be Reg 12(5)(e) as at April 2018 (subject to annual indexation). In addition, there would be the associated EFM costs of administering the contract and insurance costs.

Conclusion

- 4.13. Overall, the original reasons for deferral still exist. However, the context has now changed, with the permanent north-south route being significantly delayed, and more pedestrians using other routes to access the Park and schools, alongside the conflicts of construction traffic. Therefore, on balance, the recommendation is to assess the cost of opening the route as early as possible, subject to suitable safety and security measures. Detailed proposals and costs will be prepared, should EMT agree.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. The full financial impact of opening the underpass and east-route now has not been fully assessed yet, but LLDC would incur additional cleaning and maintenance cost Reg 12(5)(e) plus additional security costs. LLDC may also be expected to make ad hoc payments for on-demand graffiti cleaning and lamp replacement when they fail.
- 5.2. To improve the safety of the east-west route would require a CCTV system, improved lighting and other safety measures, and the delivery of security patrols. These have not yet been costed but will be should EMT be minded to agree to early opening. It may be possible to mitigate the costs somewhat by linking up to LB Hackney's CCTV system, but this would need to be explored further.

- 5.3. Reg 12(5)(e)

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPACT

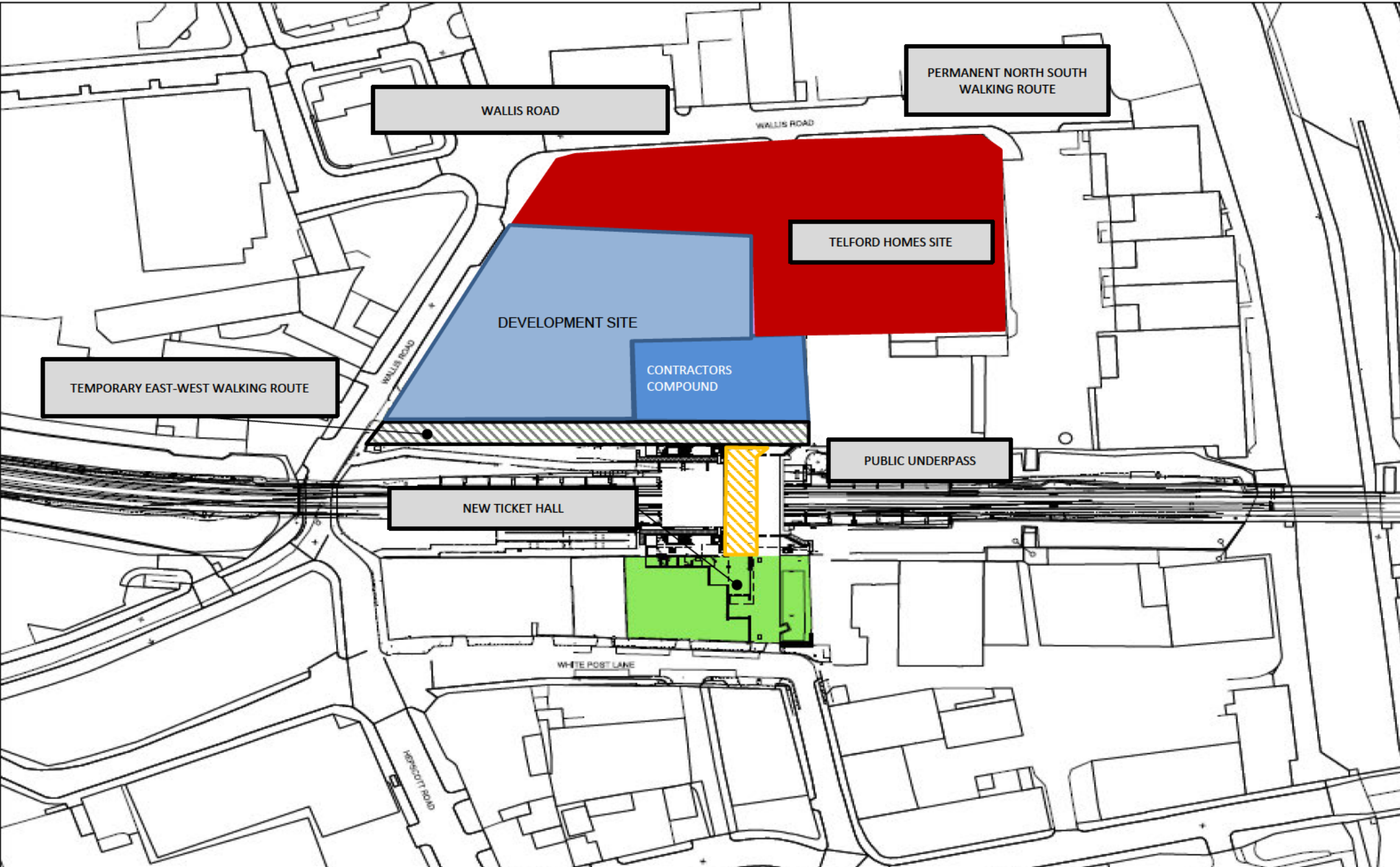
- 6.1. There has been a lot of noise from the local community regarding the ongoing constructions works and activities around Hackney Wick Station. The opening of the underpass would provide better accessibility and open up the area and is a

good news story. However, communications would caveat that it would need to be managed and maintained properly and does incur additional costs. This would be a quick win, subject to suitable security measures being put in place at a reasonable cost. We can then demonstrate that LLDC has listened and can now bring forward the opening of the public underpass, linking to the temporary east-west until the permanent north south route is available. Main risk is in terms of security/cost.

7. APPENDICES

- **Appendix 1 – Plan**
- **Appendix 2 – Copy of Previous Paper to EMT on 18 April 2018**
- **Appendix 3 – Extract from Hackney Town Hall Meeting in December 2018**

Appendix 1 – Plan



Appendix 2 – 18 April 2018 Paper

(attached separately)

Subject: Hackney Wick Station – Public Underpass
Meeting date: 30 April 2018
Report to: EMT
Report of: Janet Townsend, Director of Development

FOR DECISION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This paper is an update on the paper discussed by EMT on 29 January 2018.
- 1.2. 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.
- 1.3. 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. This north-south route is to be constructed by the developer of an adjacent site, Telford Homes, under the terms of their S106 Agreement.
- 1.4. The paper from 29 January proposed the deferral of the opening of the public underpass until the north-south route is available (currently estimated to be late 2019), and that the associated temporary east-west route is not opened to the public, subject to an amendment to the planning consent. This was agreed by EMT, subject to wider stakeholder consultation.
- 1.5. Following discussions between members of the Development, Regeneration and Community Partnerships, and Communication, Marketing and Strategy teams, LLDC has shared the next steps via its Project Board stakeholders and through its wider messaging.
- 1.6. Messaging has also been added to LLDC Park News, which is circulated to over 22,000 registered addresses. This has ensured that the conversations around the Hackney Wick Station works were framed in a positive way and emphasised that the opening of the permanent north-south route in 2019 forms a key part of the station works and the long-term vision for the wider developments in the Hackney Wick area.
- 1.7. The recommended consultations have now been completed, and no concerns or objections to the delayed opening of the underpass have been received. A sample of the letter issued to stakeholders is attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 EMT members are invited to:
 - 2.1.1 **AGREE** that, subject to suitable wayfinding and communications, 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 **AGREE** that LLDC 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.

- 2.1.3 **AGREE** that LLDC inform Network Rail of any changes required to the scope of the station works as a result of this proposal.
- 2.1.4 **AGREE** to work with Network Rail and stakeholders to identify meanwhile uses for the underpass.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. The paper discussed by EMT on 29 January 2018 has been attached as Appendix 2 for information.
- 3.2. 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.
- 3.3. 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.
- 3.4. 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 wellbeing 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, secluded alleyway.
- 3.5. 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 even if CCTV is installed. As designed and budgeted, the route has no CCTV.
- 3.6. 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 Hescott Road and White Post Lane.
- 3.7. 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, in exchange for being granted rights of public access.
- 3.8. The following stakeholders were consulted on the practicalities of not providing a public access route to the north of the underpass until the north-south route is open, and 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 (representing the operator, ARL)
 - Here East (key stakeholder and part funder through S106)

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1. The following proposal is recommended, following stakeholder consultation.
- 4.2. 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 therefore within the budget, for the station improvement works. The route will be used to provide access to the drainage underneath it, and to act as an emergency access for Network Rail to the north of the underpass. This also means that the underpass could be opened if the north-south route is significantly delayed.
- 4.3. 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 provide a safe environment for users of the new station access. It is anticipated that this will be late 2019.
- 4.4. Direct station users from Wallis Road to access the station via Hepscott Road and White Post Lane.
- 4.5. Work with Network Rail and 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).
- 4.6. We are working with stakeholders to design appropriate hoarding graphics for the underpass portals and, in addition, TfL has agreed to provide Reg 12(5)(e) of funding to secure the underpass.
- 4.7. Allow Telford Homes access to the northern compound, to extend the underpass utilities northwards. This will potentially reduce construction congestion for residents and businesses in the area. Terms to be agreed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 5.1. The financial impact of opening the underpass as originally planned would be that LLDC incurs the related facilities management cost of Reg 12(5)(e) LLDC would also be required to incur the cost of additional security which is quoted as Reg 12(5)(e) LLDC may also be expected to make ad hoc payments for on-demand graffiti cleaning.
- 5.2. The majority of these costs will be saved if the underpass is closed temporarily as proposed. If the proposed approach to this matter is approved LLDC would incur only minor additional FM costs.
- 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. We already understood that the cost and disruption of this would be prohibitive, and so did not incur the design cost of obtaining a formal quotation. For the period that the underpass is expected to be temporarily closed, we do not anticipate any maintenance costs in relation to the east-west route.
- 5.4. Reg 12(5)(e)

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPACT

- 6.1. On-site messaging will protect the LLDC's reputation, and help to communicate the access routes for the station. TfL's wayfinding team are engaging with LLDC to develop the necessary materials for locations around the station and at the underpass itself.

7. APPENDICES

• Appendix 1 – Sample Consultation Letter

Dear ...

I am writing to you with regards to Hackney Wick Overground Station. As you may know, the improvement works to the station are well advanced and are now scheduled to complete in May 2018, at which point the new ground floor ticket hall will open to the public. We believe that the works to deliver improved transport and access facilities will greatly benefit commuters, as well as the area's local residents and workers.

A key objective of the project is the new permanent north-south route which will connect Wallis Road with White Post Lane, providing improved connectivity within the area, as well as access to and from the station. This route is made up of three parts:

- The southern station access, which will be completed with temporary surfacing as part of this project, with the permanent finishes being put in place as part of the future development of the LLDC adjacent land;
- The underpass beneath the railway, which is now in place and separated from the main station area by a feature glass wall;
- A link from the north of the station to Wallis Road, which crosses through the Telford Homes owned development site. This part of the route is to be constructed by Telford Homes under the terms of their S106 Agreement. They have now started on site and we understand that the anticipated date of completion for this route will be late 2019.

Previous discussions around the establishment of this permanent north-south route has anticipated a temporary pedestrian route running from the north of the station, east-west to Wallis Road, parallel with the railway. However, following an access and safety review, it is considered that a temporary east-west route would provide limited passenger benefits, and there is further concern that with limited footfall the temporary route may pose public safety and vandalism risks.

As we have much more certainty around the delivery date for the permanent north-south route, coupled with the access and safety concerns, we are now proposing to defer opening of the underpass to pedestrians at this time. If the temporary east-west route is opened, then the underpass leading into this route (see attached diagram) would essentially become a dead-end, and therefore vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and damage.

This decision will be kept under review, but it is possible that it will remain closed until the north-south route has been sufficiently completed next year. We may look to establish some interim use within this space in the meantime, although this will be subject to Network Rail approval.

I'd be grateful if you could share this note with any interested parties in your organisation. If you wish to discuss any details of the permanent north-south route and the background and rationale for not opening the underpass at this stage, please contact Paul Woolford on the email address above. Given the project timescales, I would appreciate any views by no later than 20 April 2018.

Kind regards

Janet Townsend MRICS
Director of Development
Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

- **Appendix 2 – Copy of Previous Paper to EMT on 29 January 2018**

Not attached

Appendix 3 – Extract from Hackney Town Hall Meeting in December 2018

Before the station was refurbished, the ramp from the station came down by the bridge, and people would head either North or South of the railway. Since it has reopened, only the South side has an entrance/exit.

The North side entrance is still closed, and there is infrastructure there to open up. Businesses on the North side of the railway are finding it hard - rising rents combined with low footfall results in unprofitable business. Businesses in Here East for example are subsidised on rents.

As they come out of the station, people tend to follow the South side exit towards Queens Yard and Fish Island, rather than travel around, under the bridge and along to Main Yard. Some cut through would make it so much easier, and encourage people to walk round. The entrances have been closed for too long.

The pavement along (White Post Lane) is difficult to navigate, as it is broken and holds water which makes it harder to walk along when there are many people. Most people walk in the road, to avoid the pavement, and now that the road is open again it is hazardous.

Actions:

- *A list of local businesses need to write a letter to the Council to get the North side opened.*
- *Bring this up at the next Cultural Interest Group Meeting at Hub 67 on 14th December at 9.30am.*