

**Appendix B – Mid Suffolk – CIL Bids under the Strategic Infrastructure Fund, Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund (Botesdale ) and the Local Infrastructure Fund.**

**Technical Assessment of Bid – Project M22–02 Botesdale Recreation Ground – Entrance Infrastructure and picnic tables – from the Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund (Botesdale)**

**ASSESSMENT**

**Validation**

<b>VALIDATION</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Need /Justification	<p>This project aims to improve Botesdale Recreation Ground which currently is not being used to its full advantage/potential with little provision for all age ranges or disabilities.</p> <p>At present the Botesdale Recreation Ground provides recreation opportunities for toddlers, children, and youths via very limited range of play equipment which also does not utilise the space available. The provision at present also does not address the requirements of children and adults with disabilities.</p> <p>The COVID pandemic has created change within people’s work/life balance and the requirement for outdoor space for health, well-being and fitness facilities and raised a demand for such space.</p> <p>This project wants to address the requirements and differing needs of all residents from Toddlers through to Senior Citizens to provide the community with this improved space.</p> <p>A CIL bid for the play equipment on site has already received Cabinet approval. The costings for this bid however have come under budget and so the parish will not be drawing down 100% of the funding approved. They have therefore submitted this new bid to help fund another aspect of the project which was not included in the original bid.</p>

Delivery /timescales	Project aims to start asap once funding is approved through CIL. Due to be complete by November 2022
Necessary other approvals	Planning permission granted – DC/21/05377 granted on 10/12/2021
Public or private land	Land held Freehold by the parish who are Sole Trustee of the Botesdale Recreation Ground Charity
State aid details if any	There are no state aid concerns relating to this bid for CIL funding.
Details of future funding maintenance	Maintenance and safety inspections will be funded by Botesdale Parish Council and the Botesdale Recreation Ground Charity. A maintenance plan will be developed and will be budgeted for within the budget setting exercise.

**SCREENED (for possible s106 expenditure with the opportunity being taken to secure other funding if available)**

<b>BIDS SCREENED</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Must follow the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Infrastructure List)	Yes - Provision of infrastructure by the community.
Can the infrastructure be provided using s106 funds	No S106 funds available.
Is Bid complete	Yes
Has information been verified	Yes

Is this infrastructure linked to a major housing project which has priority?	There has been development within Botesdale, but this proposal for the Botesdale Recreation Ground is not classed as essential infrastructure in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which has priority.
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**PRIORITISATION (Using criteria from the CIL Expenditure)**

<b>PRIORITISATION CRITERIA</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Infrastructure necessary for an approved growth project (those with planning permission) in order that development carried out is sustainable.	No.
Positively scores against provisions /objectives of Joint Corporate Plan and/or Joint Local Plan and/ or Infrastructure Strategies or other Babergh and Mid Suffolk strategies or external strategies Babergh and Mid Suffolk support and/or input into	<p>Yes – Community Provision. The aim is to provide an area of outdoor space for all ages to enjoy and benefit from.</p> <p>These new facilities will help in supporting the health and wellbeing of all ages. The Neighbourhood Plan for Botesdale and Rickinghall calls for dedicated child and youth facilities.</p>
It represents key infrastructure (essential)	No.
Value for money	<p>Yes – The Infrastructure team has worked with the applicant to ensure that the CIL bid is covering expenditure which has not been covered by the previous CIL bid and that it falls within the CIL Expenditure Framework. The amount of CIL funding is £9,757.50 and represents 75% of the total project costs. It lies within the community infrastructure thresholds of not exceeding £100,000 and 75% of the total costs.</p> <p>This project would be considered under the Community Infrastructure section within the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Infrastructure List) for Mid Suffolk.</p>

Clear community benefits	This project aims to provide benefit to all ages of the community not just a specific age group. It will also provide inclusivity for those with disabilities. The project will also provide amenities and facilities to support the growth within the Botesdale and Rickinghall area as set out in the Botesdale and Rickinghall Neighbourhood Plan.
Community support (including results of Consultation exercise.)	<p>The project has the written support of Cllr Jessica Fleming. It also has written support from the Botesdale Health Centre Social Prescriber for the area who writes that this regenerated site will offer a fantastic resource for social prescribing and other services which could transform the health and wellbeing of the local people.</p> <p>The Parish Council carried out a Community Survey in early 2019 to identify what residents would like from their Recreation Ground. Many questions were asked; question 8 asks 'Would you like to see more items in the park for the following groups' which ranged from toddlers to older adults 65+ and there was a very positive high percentage in all age ranges in response to this question.</p>
Deliverability ("oven ready" schemes)	Yes
Affordability (from CIL Funds)	Yes
Timeliness	Project aims to start asap once funding is received. Due to be complete by November 2022
By releasing CIL money can we achieve infrastructure provision through collaborative spend? (i.e. Infrastructure providers, Parish/Town Councils, Babergh and Mid Suffolk infrastructure provision, or LEP/Government funding)	<p>The total cost of the project - £13,010.00</p> <p>Botesdale Parish Council - £3,252.50</p> <p><b>CIL Funding required - £9,757.50</b></p>

Community Bid – Funding percentage of project	<b>CIL Funding 75% of the total project costs - £13,010.00</b>
Supports housing and employment growth	N/A
Have a package of measures been proposed and submitted which allow for ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure such that its longevity can be assured	Yes – Botesdale Parish Council will budget for maintenance and inspection costs
Must be based on the developing Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless circumstances dictate otherwise	This project meets the CIL Expenditure Framework criteria and has been developed under the Community Infrastructure section under the Infrastructure Funding Statement (infrastructure List) for Mid Suffolk.
How does the proposal affect green infrastructure principles?	One of the core aims of the project is to improve the ecology and biodiversity of the Recreation Ground. The parish have had carried out an ecology appraisal and a comprehensive tree survey as part of the design of the grounds.
How does the project address green/sustainability principles/infrastructure?	By providing these facilities locally the community will benefit from accessing the site by foot or cycle reducing the need for travel by less sustainable methods. It will also provide a cycle friendly site with cycle stand facilities.
How does the project affect state aid implications?	State aid implications do not apply.
How does the project affect security and safety in the community?	By making the site more attractive to more people the usage of the site should improve the safety and security of the site.

## CONCLUSIONS

- This project aims to regenerate the Botesdale Recreation Ground so that it provides facilities for the whole of the community so that everyone can benefit from this open space for Health and Wellbeing. The community have been consulted and this project has full support from the District Member and Health Centre.

- This CIL bid will provide funding for the entrance infrastructure and picnic tables for the site.
- The whole project will provide Health and Fitness Area's, Accessible routes, Eco route and Disability parking.
- This project will provide an area for all age groups to enjoy and benefit from. The new facilities will help to help to support the health and wellbeing of ages within the community.
- The amount of CIL funding is regarded as acceptable under the terms of the CIL Expenditure Framework as the CIL Bid of £9,757.50 represents 75% of the total project costs. It lies within the community infrastructure thresholds of not exceeding £100,000 and 75% of the total costs. This project has been delivered under the Community Infrastructure section within the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Infrastructure List) for Mid Suffolk.

## RECOMMENDATION

- Recommendation to Cabinet to note the delegated decision for CIL Bid for £9,757.50 which is 75% of the total project costs from the Ringfenced Fund (Botesdale).

## Technical Assessment of Bid – Project M22–13 – Ringshall Play Area – from Local Infrastructure Fund

### ASSESSMENT

#### Validation

VALIDATION	ASSESSMENT
Need /Justification	This project is to address a lack of play area within Ringshall for the residents, local primary school, and neighbouring villages. Ringshall has never had a play area for its residents and so the parish council are embarking on this project to provide play equipment for toddlers, children, and young teenagers. The aim of the project to provide this space for families to meet up, enjoy the outdoors,

	support the active and healthy lifestyle, and enhance the wellbeing of the residents of this village. There is a local primary school opposite who have played a key role in the consultation process for this project. This site will provide safe space for the children to play and families to meet. The nearest play area is over 2 miles away and so this will provide the local residents facilities which they can walk to, to enjoy without the need for car travel.
Delivery /timescales	The project aims to start in October 2022 and to be completed by Spring 2023
Necessary other approvals	Planning permission is not required for this project
Public or private land	This is private land and leased to the Parish Council. Permission has been granted by the Landowner for this new play area. Lease held is for over 25 years which meets the CIL Expenditure Framework criteria.
State aid details if any	N/A
Details of future funding maintenance	The Parish Council will fund all future regular inspections, maintenance and repair by including the play area in their annual budget.

**SCREENED (for possible s106 expenditure with the opportunity being taken to secure other funding if available)**

<b>BIDS SCREENED</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Must follow the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Infrastructure List)	Yes – Provision of leisure and community facilities
Can the infrastructure be provided using s106 funds	No

Is Bid complete	Yes
Has information been verified	Yes
Is this infrastructure linked to a major housing project which has priority?	No

**PRIORITISATION (Using criteria from the CIL Expenditure)**

<b>PRIORITISATION CRITERIA</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Infrastructure necessary for an approved growth project (those with planning permission) in order that development carried out is sustainable.	No
Positively scores against provisions /objectives of Joint Corporate Plan and/or Joint Local Plan and/ or Infrastructure Strategies or other Babergh and Mid Suffolk strategies or external strategies Babergh and Mid Suffolk support and/or input into	Yes – contributes to the promotion of community activities within the locality.
It represents key infrastructure (essential)	No
Value for money	Yes
Clear community benefits	Yes



Community support (including results of Consultation exercise.)	The need was highlighted within the Ringshall Residents Survey in early 2020 followed by a specific community questionnaire on the interest in Play Area provision which was overwhelmingly positive in support of this project. The local Primary School was consulted with 70% of the pupils taking part.
Deliverability (“oven ready” schemes)	Yes
Affordability (from CIL Funds)	Yes
Timeliness	Yes – the project is aimed to be delivered by Spring 2023
By releasing CIL money can we achieve infrastructure provision through collaborative spend? (i.e. Infrastructure providers, Parish/Town Councils, Babergh and Mid Suffolk infrastructure provision, or LEP/Government funding)	<p>The total cost of the project - £54,856.08 Net Cost (Parish can reclaim VAT)</p> <p>Parish Council Neighbourhood CIL Reserves - £16,000.00</p> <p>Donation - £1,000.00</p> <p>Fundraising Event - £350.00</p> <p>MSDC Community Grant - £16,939.73</p> <p><b>CIL Funding required - £20,566.35</b></p>
Community Bid – Funding percentage of project	37.5%

Supports housing and employment growth	Yes – contributes to the promotion of community activities within the locality and encourages active play for the children.
Have a package of measures been proposed and submitted which allow for ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure such that its longevity can be assured	Yes – Ringshall Parish Council will fund the maintenance, regular inspections and repair by including the Play Area in the Parish annual budget.
Must be based on the developing Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless circumstances dictate otherwise	Project not listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan; however, the project would be of benefit to existing and new residents and ensure increased usage of outdoor play facilities for the community of Ringshall.
How does the proposal affect green infrastructure principles?	Working with providers who are committed to ensuring the use of sustainable materials as choice.
How does the project address green/sustainability principles/infrastructure?	By having a local play area in the parish, it means that people will no longer have to drive to the nearby play area so a reduction on car usage. The play area will be adjacent to a bus stop so people could access the play area by bus.
How does the project affect state aid implications?	N/A
How does the project affect security and safety in the community?	Perimeter fencing is being installed for security

## CONCLUSIONS

- This proposal represents an “oven ready” scheme with evidence of wide community support that would provide additional leisure and community facilities for the community and encourages active outdoor play for the children. The project will be funded through collaborative spend, with the CIL fund portion being 37.5% of the costs funded from the Local Infrastructure Fund, together with funding contributions from the Ringshall Parish Council Neighbourhood CIL Reserves, donation, fundraising event and MSDC community grant.

- The amount of CIL funding is regarded as acceptable under the terms of the CIL Expenditure Framework as the CIL Bid of £20,566.35 represents 37.5% of the total project costs. It lies within the community infrastructure thresholds of not exceeding £100,000 and 75% of the total costs. This project has been delivered under the Community Infrastructure section within the Infrastructure Funding Statement (Infrastructure List) for Mid Suffolk..

## RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation to Cabinet to approve CIL Bid for £20,566.35 as per bid application from the Local Infrastructure Fund.

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**Technical Assessment of Bid – Project M22-07 – Thurston Rail Station Level Crossing, Closure and Diversion Feasibility Study, from the Strategic Infrastructure Fund**

## ASSESSMENT

### Validation

VALIDATION	ASSESSMENT
Need /Justification	<p><b>The objective of this infrastructure project is to provide safer and improved access to the westbound Platform 1 at Thurston rail station to allow the current station level crossing to be closed and removed and for a safer means of crossing.</b></p> <p><b>This bid is for a continuation of funds for the completion of a Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Project (GRIP) Stage 3 Feasibility study, for a rail related infrastructure project. This feasibility study for Thurston is underway and significant progress has been made but outstanding work still requires completion around highway matters and the parking and cycling elements. The allocation of funds from the Thurston Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund for this feasibility study was originally made by MSDC Cabinet in September 2020. The 2 year offer letter was sent out on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b></p>

**with the offer being accepted by Network Rail. These awarded funds for the completion of the feasibility study expire on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and this new CIL Bid has been submitted to allow the completion of the feasibility study so that it can continue to be paid for and a rail project can continue to be developed once the results are known.**

All level crossings are considered a safety risk by Network Rail. Level crossings used for access to stations are considered high risk owing to the behaviour of people rushing for a train. Not all trains call at Thurston station, and this presents an additional risk. Thurston Station level crossing is provided with miniature stop lights but there is no physical barrier to prevent people stepping into the path of a train. No further improvements to safety are considered feasible without the conclusion of this feasibility study.

The purpose of the feasibility study is to evaluate options and recommend the most appropriate option that delivers the stakeholders' requirements, together with confirmation that the outputs can be economically delivered.

**The scope of the feasibility study (revised 29/07/2020) is to evaluate options and recommend a single preferred option to encompass the following:**

1. In the light of the cumulative impact of residential developments in Thurston on the usage of the station, close and divert the existing station pedestrian level crossing, and provide safer and more convenient alternative facilities for rail users wishing to access the westbound Platform 1 at the station.
2. Close and remove the existing station level crossing and extinguish the existing right of way.
3. Review the previous Thurston Level Crossing Closure Feasibility Study and to re-evaluate the potential options included in that report; including provision of a pedestrian bridge, the reinstatement of the closed station subway, construction of a new pedestrian underpass and modification of the existing underpass to accommodate a wider footpath.
4. Construct a pedestrian ramp to connect the footpath along Beyton Road to Platform 1.

	<p>5. In consultation with the train operator Greater Anglia, review the current parking provision adjacent to the station in the light of the cumulative impact of residential developments in Thurston, and identify potential options to manage and enhance parking arrangements for all rail users in accordance with sustainable transport good practice.</p> <p>6. Provide a drop off and limited waiting layby for vehicles on Beyton Road adjacent to the station; and</p> <p>7. Provide enhanced sustainable transport facilities for cyclists wishing to use the railway station, including secure cycle parking, cycle lanes and signage. Consider parking opportunities</p> <p>8. Undertake a road safety audit as required.</p> <p><b>Estimated budget for the feasibility study: £90,000 plus £10,000 for road safety audit, total <u>£100,000</u></b></p>
Delivery /timescales	<p>The feasibility study project is readily deliverable jointly by Network Rail as landowner for the railway related works and SCC as Highway Authority for highways works.</p> <p>The feasibility Study started after the September 2020 decision by Cabinet to award £100,000 for the study. Since that time there has been changes to the project team and the impact of another rail freight project between Ely and Ipswich had to be considered in the context of this study. The results of this work have helped to inform the current work- in- progress feasibility study report; the latter of which is as yet incomplete. It is understood that the impact of any option must be considered fully in relation to highway impacts and cycling and parking opportunities are also being reviewed under the agreed scope of the feasibility study.</p>
Necessary other approvals	<p>Not applicable for this feasibility study stage, however planning permissions from SCC (Highways) and MSDC will be required at implementation stage (if any particular option dictates this is necessary /required).</p>

Public or private land	Network Rail has freehold ownership of the railway land and area for the station and car park. The majority of the land where works would be carried out for this project is part of the public highway and some land is unregistered, requiring investigation of ownership. The unregistered land is believed, historically, to have been part of the highway.
State aid details if any	N/A
Details of future funding maintenance	Any new infrastructure providing access to the station on private land will be owned by Network Rail and maintained as part of the station by the train operator or Network Rail as appropriate.  Any altered highways and footpaths outside railway land will be maintained by the highway authority, Suffolk County Council - Highways.

**SCREENED (for possible s106 expenditure with the opportunity being taken to secure other funding if available)**

<b>BIDS SCREENED</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Must follow the Infrastructure Funding Statement - Infrastructure list	Yes - Provision of passenger transport improvements.
Can the infrastructure be provided using s106 funds	No
Is Bid complete	Yes
Has information be verified	Yes
Is this infrastructure linked to a major housing project which has priority?	Yes – This project is required for the sustainable growth of planned and committed residential development.

### PRIORITISATION (Using criteria from the CIL Expenditure)

PRIORITISATION CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
<p>Infrastructure necessary for an approved growth project (those with planning permission) in order that development carried out is sustainable.</p>	<p>Yes – Committed and planned growth for Thurston.</p> <p>The project is listed in the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2020) and the current Infrastructure List forming part of the Mid Suffolk Infrastructure Funding Statement (20/21)</p> <p>The railway line through Thurston is part of the nationally significant Felixstowe to Nuneaton freight route, serving to take freight off the A14. If the crossing remains open, it is also a potential constraint on running more (or longer) passenger or freight services.</p>
<p>Positively scores against provisions /objectives of Joint Strategic Plan and/or Joint Local Plan and/ or Infrastructure Strategies or other BMSDC Strategies or external strategies BMSDC support and/or input into</p>	<p>Yes - The project scores positively against the objectives of the Joint Strategic Plan and Joint Local Plan as it contributes to facilitating sustainable development in Thurston and encourages use of rail as an alternative to the private car. The project directly contributes to the objectives of emerging Joint Local Plan: -</p> <p>Policy LP30 – Safe, Sustainable and Active Transport, as it enables developments to maximise the uptake in sustainable and active modes of transport, and</p> <p>Policy LP31 – Managing Infrastructure Provision, as all new development must be supported by, and have good access to, all necessary infrastructure.</p>
<p>It represents key infrastructure (essential)</p>	<p>Yes – This project is identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as ‘Critical’ for the delivery of sustainable growth within the area of Thurston.</p>
<p>Value for money</p>	<p>Yes - The project will be designed to optimise the benefits as well as the whole life costs (capital cost plus maintenance and renewal costs). Once installed, operating costs of the new infrastructure are expected to be significantly lower than the existing level crossing.</p>

Clear community benefits	Yes - The aim of this infrastructure project is to improve pedestrian safety and to improve access to a key sustainable transport mode (rail) for the growing community of Thurston.
Community support (including results of Consultation exercise.)	<p>Network Rail is working closely with MSDC as well as with Suffolk County Council (SCC), Suffolk Highways (SH), and Thurston Parish Council to progress the project.</p> <p>It is understood that Thurston Parish Council continues to be supportive of the closure of the existing station level crossing and the provision of safer and more convenient access to Platform 1.</p> <p>In 2015, Network Rail produced a preliminary feasibility (GRIP 2) report for the local stakeholders which recommended closure of the station level crossing and provision of alternative access for station users through means of constructing a new pedestrian ramp on railway land connecting Platform 1 to Beyton Road. The proposal also included a drop off point / layby for vehicles along Beyton Road; and, due to the physical characteristics of the rail bridge in situ, an improved road layout and traffic light control system to accommodate more safely and conveniently traffic and pedestrians using the underbridge.</p> <p>Since 2019 Network Rail has been part of stakeholder meetings at the invitation of MSDC; these meetings have included discussions with Suffolk Highways and Thurston Parish Council and MSDC Ward and SCC Members to obtain their views on the options for closing the level crossing and making improvements. Network Rail has also presented proposals to the relevant committees of MSDC and as a witness for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the CIL Expenditure Framework review (by O and S) of 2019.</p> <p>In May 2020, Network Rail presented the Narrative Risk Assessment (December 2019) to the local stakeholders including MSDC, SCC Highways and Thurston Parish Council. This assessment took account of recent increased usage of the station level crossing and noted that the safety risk of the crossing will increase with the anticipated population growth from new housing developments in Thurston in the coming years.</p>



Deliverability (“oven ready” schemes)	The feasibility Study started after the initial decision to award £100,000 towards a feasibility study in September 2020. Since that time substantive progress has been made by Network rail but the document cannot be released until the outstanding highway and cycling and parking elements have been completed
Affordability (from CIL Funds)	Feasibility costs reasonable given it involves works to a station and Rail. Feasibility study affordable from Ringfenced and Strategic/Local Infrastructure funds.
Timeliness	The project is timely and is urgently needed as a result of committed and proposed housing developments in Thurston.
By releasing CIL money can we achieve infrastructure provision through collaborative spend? (i.e. Infrastructure providers, Parish/Town Councils, BMSDC infrastructure provision, or LEP/Government funding)	<p>The total cost of the project (feasibility study) is £100,000.</p> <p>No collaborative spend proposed.</p> <p><b>This CIL Bid application is for £100,000 from the Strategic Infrastructure Fund.</b></p> <p>Once the feasibility study is completed and clear mitigation and costs are identified, then collaborative spend from other funding sources will be considered</p> <p>The works to improve the highway and footpath under the existing underbridge will need to be developed collaboratively with SCC Highways and the respective developers.</p>
Supports housing and employment growth	Yes – As per above mentioned planned and committed growth identified for Thurston.
Have a package of measures been proposed and submitted which allow for ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure such that its longevity can be assured	<p>Any new infrastructure providing access to the station on private land will be owned by Network Rail and maintained as part of the station by the train operator or Network Rail as appropriate.</p> <p>Any altered highways and footpaths outside railway land will be maintained by the highway authority, Suffolk County Council – Highways.</p>

Must be based on the developing Infrastructure Delivery Plan unless circumstances dictate otherwise	Yes – This project is identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as ‘Critical’ for the delivery of sustainable growth within the area of Thurston. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan also states that due to the safety issues raised by Network Rail, this project will be prioritised against other infrastructure needs for the area.
How does the proposal affect green infrastructure principles?	Improvements at this rail station would allow more sustainable travel to occur more safely.
How does the project address green/sustainability principles/infrastructure?	This project would enable increased use of the railway station in Thurston, in a safe manner for all users.
How does the project affect state aid implications?	N/A
How does the project affect security and safety in the community?	This project is directly related to safety improvements for the rail users and will contribute to improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists as a whole within the community of Thurston.

## CONCLUSIONS

- This project is to complete a feasibility study to establish what mitigation is best suited, in the light of the cumulative growth; both recently constructed and committed for the area of Thurston. The project is to provide a safer and more convenient access to Platform 1. It is a key infrastructure project to accommodate the housing development both recently carried out and committed for Thurston and is included in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as essential infrastructure. The scope of the feasibility study has been expanded to consider cycling opportunities as well as considering the impact upon parking as set above.
- This bid is for a continuation of funds for the completion of a Network Rail Governance for Railway Investment Project (GRIP) Stage 3 Feasibility study, for a rail related infrastructure project. This feasibility study for Thurston is underway by Network Rail and significant progress has been made but outstanding work still requires completion around highway matters and the parking and cycling elements. The allocation of funds from the Thurston Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund for this feasibility study was originally made by MSDC Cabinet in September 2020. The 2 year offer letter was sent out on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2020 with the offer being accepted by Network Rail. These

awarded funds for the completion of the feasibility study expire on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022. and this new CIL Bid has been submitted to allow the completion of the feasibility study so that it can continue to be paid for and a rail project can continue to be developed once the results are known.

- The current and committed growth identified for Thurston and the surrounding area would in combination increase potential usage. Safety risks are important considerations. Network Rail are obligated by the Regulator (the Office of Road and Rail) to mitigate the safety risk and a project group exists (including Network Rail representatives, Highway representatives, Parish Council and District and County Members together with Suffolk County Council and BMSDC Council officers) to steer this project forward in line with the CIL Expenditure Framework requirements. In May 2020, Network Rail presented the latest Narrative Risk Assessment (December 2019) to the local stakeholders including SCC, SH, BMSDC and Thurston Parish Council. This assessment took account of recent increased usage of the station level crossing and noted that the safety risk of the crossing will increase with the anticipated population growth from new housing developments in Thurston in the next few years. The Feasibility Study started in September 2020 and substantive progress has been made but it is not yet complete and the next meeting of the working group will take place in August 2022.
- This is important infrastructure and the feasibility study is a necessary part of the process to realise the required infrastructure. Carrying out a feasibility study is necessary to comply with the rail companies established and procedural way of working. For rail infrastructure, the CIL Expenditure Framework developed by the cross-party, cross-Council, Member working group has specifically included feasibility studies (as CIL eligible) for rail projects as it would be impossible to deliver a rail infrastructure project without such a feasibility study. There was an earlier feasibility study carried out by Network Rail at Thurston rail station crossing (2015). However this predates the current one by several years. This earlier feasibility study was initiated by the rail companies themselves and District CIL was not used to pay for it. The current feasibility study is following an agreed scope for the project which our Infrastructure officers, the Highway Authority, Network Rail, Thurston Parish, Ward Members and the County Councillor have all agreed to. and we await the completion of the study in due course.
- The key benefits of the project would be:
  - Improved safety for all pedestrians.
  - Improved interchange facilities and access to rail services for all users.
  - Removal of the crossing would also remove a constraint on running more (or longer) passenger or freight services along this section of railway.

- On this basis this CIL Bid for the continuation of funds for this Rail Feasibility Study should be supported. However following the changes to the CIL Expenditure Framework (fourth review) it is recommended in this instance that the earlier funds of £100,000 which were agreed and which remain unspent should be returned to the Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund (from where they came ) when the previous 2 year CIL Bid offer letter expires) and the costs of the completion of this Feasibility Study should be taken from the Strategic Infrastructure Fund (as the definition of Strategic Infrastructure in the CIL Expenditure Framework includes rail).

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- Recommendation to Cabinet to approve CIL Bid for £100,000 as per bid application from the Strategic Infrastructure Fund (with the awarded unspent funds (£100,000) under the previously approved CIL Bid M20-07 for Thurston Rail station feasibility study being returned to the Ringfenced Infrastructure Fund (Thurston) after the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022 when the 2 year CIL Bid offer letter expires).
-