



**Cabinet**  
19 May 2025

**Report from the Corporate Director  
Neighbourhoods and Regeneration**

**Lead Member - Cabinet Member for  
Regeneration, Planning & Property  
(Councillor Teo Benea)**

## **Alperton Station Step Free Access Funding Request**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Alperton
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	Key
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	None
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None
<b>Contact Officer(s):</b> (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Tim Martin, Transportation Planning Manager Spatial Planning 020 8937 6134 Email: <a href="mailto:tim.martin@brent.gov.uk">tim.martin@brent.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Paul Lewin, Spatial and Transportation Planning Manager, Spatial Planning 020 8937 6710 Email: <a href="mailto:paul.lewin@brent.gov.uk">paul.lewin@brent.gov.uk</a></p>

### **1.0 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates on proposals for step free and other access improvements at Alperton underground station, including details of a concept design produced by Transport for London (TfL), and seeks agreement for the Council to contribute up to 50% of the costs (capped at £5 million) through Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) towards the cost of delivering these improvements.

### **2.0 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 That Cabinet:
- (a) Notes the current position and next steps regarding the development of proposals for step free and other access improvements at Alperton station.

- (b) Agrees that the Council makes a contribution of up to 50% of the costs, capped at £5 million of SCIL towards the cost of these improvements.

### 3.0 Detail

#### 3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 The Council is committed to an ambitious growth agenda to support the borough's regeneration to meet a growing population's housing, employment, social and environmental needs. This will also require improvements to infrastructure. The Alperton Growth Area is one of the main areas for Brent's renewal and growth. Alperton station is a key piece of infrastructure that needs to be improved. It acts as a gateway for many people to the area. Currently it suffers from congestion at the barriers at peak times, only has access to platforms via stairs, has poor public toilet facilities and aesthetically, needs some refreshment/ updates.
- 3.1.2 Investment in step free access and other improvements to the station will address the Brent Borough Plan's strategic priorities including: 'Prosperity and Stability in Brent', through supporting confidence in/ desirability of the area for housing and business development; 'A Cleaner and Greener Future' through supporting more sustainable transportation options, reducing at the point of delivery emissions and supporting the move towards improving air quality; 'Thriving Communities' by enabling more vulnerable parts of the community, e.g. mobility impaired/ disabled, the elderly or those with young children to more easily and safely travel; and a 'Healthier Brent' through encouraging more active travel/ movement.
- 3.1.3 The proposals also link to and align with the priorities and ambitions of several key Council plans and policies including:
- **Inclusive Growth Strategy:** Identifies the need for a range of important infrastructure improvements and supporting measures to be made including improved access to public transport.
  - **Brent Local Plan:** With a focus on achieving 'good growth', the Plan requires new development to have good access to public transport and to reduce reliance on private cars.
  - **Brent Long Term Transport Strategy:** Provides the strategic direction for investment in transport in Brent, with the overarching aim of improving transport options for all. Among the key priorities include improving access to the public transport network.
  - **Brent Active Travel Implementation Plan:** Sets out our vision to make active travel the natural first choice for everyday journeys through improving infrastructure.
  - **Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy:** A key theme is sustainable transport, supporting and encouraging active travel and the use of public transport, to reduce emissions and pollution to help resolve the climate emergency and make Brent a healthier borough.

- **Air Quality Action Plan:** with a focus on improving air quality in the borough, tackling health inequalities, and reducing pollution from road transport in the borough, encouraging more active travel and the use of public transport.

## 3.2 Background

### Alperton Station Step Free Access Context and Need

- 3.2.1 There are 22 underground stations in Brent but only six of these have some form of step free access. Twelve of these stations are owned and managed by London Underground (LU), with the remainder owned by Network Rail (NR), but operated by LU. Securing step free station access improvements, as a means of making as many of the borough's stations and interchanges as possible accessible to all, is an important Council priority towards supporting inclusion and equalities.
- 3.2.2 Alperton station is within Alperton Growth Area. It is expected to provide over 6,000 additional homes and to become an enterprise hub accommodating new business and employment floorspace. This growth will require local infrastructure improvements. All new homes in the area are designed to be accessible, with 10% wheelchair accessible or adaptable. Not having a step-free station earlier on in the Growth Area's development will reduce public transport options for people who have specifically sought accessible dwellings that are not available elsewhere in the borough, including a number in Social or London Affordable Rented homes.
- 3.2.3 The station is used by over 3 million passengers each year. Its upgrade to provide step free access, increase passenger capacity and improve the traveller experience is important for its users and the area. The nearest station with some form of step free access is over 1.5 km away at Wembley Central. Due to the anticipated growth in population, Alperton is considered one of the most strategically important stations in Brent to be made step-free by the Council and TfL. The upgrade will ensure that residents, workers and visitors can access public transport more safely and conveniently.
- 3.2.4 In May 2024, and following discussions with TfL and consideration by the Capital Programme Board, the Council gave an in-principle agreement to fund up to 50% of the cost, capped at £5 million, through Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) for Alperton station's step-free access improvements. TfL will fund the other 50%. This agreement gave TfL sufficient confidence to progress with concept design work. This has shown that technically the scheme is deliverable at a cost which is currently within the parameters of what TfL considers acceptable for it to continue with the project. Following the completion of this work, more formal approval for this funding contribution from the Council is now being sought. This will allow TfL to proceed with detailed design and costings, and should there be no significant issues arising, to subsequently deliver the scheme.
- 3.2.5 Within the scheme's delivery stage, TfL has indicated it will bear any additional risk should the cost of the improvements rise above £10 million. The Council's contribution will be capped at £5 million. Indicative cost estimates from TfL at this stage are between £10-16 million.

## **Concept Designs**

- 3.2.6 The station constructed in 1931 was designed by Charles Holden, and although not statutorily listed, its historic merit is acknowledged by TfL and it is a local heritage asset on Brent's local list. TfL have sought to be as sympathetic as possible to the existing structure and character in what is proposed, both in terms of limiting the extent of physical change and the style and materials used. As with any operational station with limited adjacent landownership, that consequently necessitates more extensive changes to existing premises, significant new features such as lifts are complicated, challenging and expensive to deliver.
- 3.2.7 The station has a disused escalator currently hidden from view which accesses the main ticket hall and formerly served the east bound platform. TfL is proposing to use this space to provide one of the platform lifts. Additional space made available on the east bound platform will include some updated waiting facilities.
- 3.2.8 Delivery of the lift for the west bound platform is more complicated, due to the limited public access only currently provided from the main ticket hall under the underground lines. This, which provides access to the stairs, cannot be modified to incorporate access to a lift. Creating an additional adjacent tunnel under the lines will be prohibitively expensive due to the made ground nature of the structure above. It would also be very disruptive possibly requiring line or station closure. So, TfL will instead use a tunnel structure that currently is made inaccessible on the eastern side by the commercial unit (barbers) currently visible on the station frontage. This commercial unit will need to be removed, and access provided through it from the main ticket hall to a lift. TfL will conduct appropriate negotiations with the current tenant. The shopfront feature will be retained.
- 3.2.9 In addition to these changes, to address current passenger flow capacity issues at peak times, the number of barrier gates will also be increased. Off the main ticket hall three toilets will also be provided, one of which will be of accessible design, and all of which will incorporate baby changing facilities.
- 3.2.10 When being implemented, it is anticipated that the station will be able to remain open, with the most disruptive works likely to be taken out of hours, albeit access to parts might be more limited than usual sometimes.
- 3.2.11 TfL has identified Alpertton station as a priority station in its step free access programme. However, their ability to deliver this project would be contingent to the provision of a significant amount of funding directed from sources supported by the Council. Other funding options were considered, including a straight 50/50 split with no cap, or no contribution from SCIL and reliance on TfL funding and future S106 contributions. These options were not pursued based on the risk of a rising and unknown financial commitment from the Council in the face of many other pressures, and the anticipated inability of TfL to deliver without significant partnership funding plus the length of time it would take to secure sufficient funding via nearby future developments.

## **Timescales**

3.2.12 The projected project timelines are as follows:

- **May 2025 to Summer 2026** – TfL to undertake detailed design and procurement.
- **Summer 2026** – Funding agreement agreed and Brent to provide SCIL funding to TfL.
- **Summer 2026 to Summer 2027** - Construction.
- **Summer 2027** – lifts in use.

#### **4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement**

- 4.1 The Leader and the Cabinet Member Regeneration, Planning & Property and Cabinet Member Public Realm and Enforcement have been briefed on the project before PCG approved the initial in principle agreement to support the scheme with SCIL funds and since the concept design was received from TfL. It is anticipated that once the scheme starts to progress TfL will give it greater publicity, undertake some engagement processes with station users, and be able to provide additional advice to the ward members on the scheme.

#### **5.0 Financial Considerations**

- 5.1 The current estimated cost of the station access improvements is between £10 million and £16 million. The financial ask from TfL is for £5m of SCIL as Brent's contribution to the capital cost of the works. There are sufficient unallocated funds in the SCIL pot to cover this. Brent's contribution via SCIL is fixed at £5m with the remainder of costs, including any potential increases, to be met by TfL. The SCIL funding ask is in addition to circa. £1 million of S106 money already collected on behalf of TfL for various station improvements.
- 5.2 In addition to capital costs, there will be some officer time required throughout the progress of the project and on drafting the funding agreement, to be met from 'business as usual' costs.

#### **6.0 Legal Considerations**

- 6.1 CIL is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. It can be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as transport facilities, play areas, open spaces, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, healthcare facilities, academies and free schools, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This flexibility gives local areas the opportunity to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their relevant plan.
- 6.2 Local authorities must spend the levy on infrastructure needed to support the development of their area, and they will decide what infrastructure is needed, as set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Brent's Infrastructure Delivery Plan includes transport facilities.
- 6.3 The levy can be used to increase the capacity of existing infrastructure or to repair failing existing infrastructure, if that is necessary to support development.

It is considered that the proposed works meet the regulations for spending SCIL in accordance with Section 216(2) of the Planning Act 2008 (As amended).

## **7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations**

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 Overall, the proposals are expected to have a positive impact on residents from diverse backgrounds, which are in higher concentration in this ward than the national average, by promoting sustainable travel options, and making improvements to community well-being. The proposals will particularly benefit older residents, those with disabilities and maternity/people with young children who often rely on lifts to access station platforms or have a greater likelihood of requiring public toilet facilities. The spaces created will be subject to safety audits and seek to reduce crime or the fear of crime for more vulnerable people with protected characteristics.

## **8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations**

- 8.1 Supporting and encouraging sustainable travel – in particular greater use of public transport, is seen as key to helping resolve the climate emergency and addressing poor air quality. Amongst the key priorities identified in the Brent Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and the Brent Air Quality Action Plan include improving accessibility to public transport.

## **9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)**

- 9.1 None.

## **10.0 Communication Considerations**

- 10.1 Any consultation undertaken as part of the planning, design and delivery of the proposals will be communicated to residents and stakeholders via appropriate channels. TfL will lead on communications, but the Council will seek assurance that any communications cite the step free access works as a project jointly funded by Brent Council.

**Report sign off:**

**Alice Lester**

Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration