

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Standards and Audit Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **9 September 2021**

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

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Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch the meeting live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

Membership:

Councillors Cathy Kent (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter, Gary Collins, Augustine Ononaji and Kairen Raper

Lisa Laybourn
Vani Thuvaragan

Substitutes:

Councillors John Kent, Shane Ralph, Sue Sammons and David Van Day

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 12
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards and Audit Committee meeting held on 8 July 2021.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be	

considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4	Declaration of Interests	
5	External Audit - Verbal Update	
6	Annual Complaints & Enquiries Report - 2020/2021	13 - 62
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **1 September 2021**

Information for members of the public and councillors

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 8 July 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Cathy Kent (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter, Gary Collins, Augustine Ononaji and Kairen Raper

In attendance: Sean Clark, Corporate Director Resources and Place Delivery
Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor
Lee Henley, Strategic Lead, Information Management
David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud & Investigations
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's online webcast channel.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 11 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

4. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 - 2020/21 Activity Report

The Strategic Lead for Information Management introduced the report and stated that it was formed of three parts. He explained that the first part of the report outlined RIPA activity for the 2020/21 year, and point 3.11 of the agenda included how many requests had been received. He stated that numbers of RIPA requests had decreased in 2020/21, which showed that Thurrock were using other means of investigation, such as collaboration with the police and overt surveillance. He described how the second part of the report, at point 3.2 of the agenda, gave Members a summary of the recent RIPA inspection. He commented that the inspection had been positive, with inspectors commenting that Thurrock took RIPA powers seriously, ethically, and had remained compliant. He summarised and stated that the third part of the report, outlined on page 18 of the agenda, summarised Thurrock's new RIPA policy based on findings from the inspection.

Councillor Collins opened the debated and questioned the fifth paragraph on page 36, which described RIPA requests for communications data, and asked

if RIPA covered offences by gangs, as well as 'white collar' crime. The Strategic Lead for Information Management responded that point 3.1.3 on page 16 of the report outlined RIPA requests for communications data, and these types of requests could include phone owner's data. The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigations added that only RIPA requests for communications data could only be allowed for serious crime, such as organised crime, and for specific offences. The Strategic Lead for Information Management added that for a RIPA communications request to be allowed, the crime had to carry a custodial sentence of over twelve months, compared to standard RIPA offences that only required a custodial sentence of over six months.

Councillor Ononaji asked how the Council monitored and enforced RIPA powers. The Strategic Lead for Information Management replied that any RIPA requests received had to go be authorised by one of four authorised RIPA officers in the Council, and the requests had to pass the necessity test, which ensured the RIPA powers were used as a last resort, and the proportionality test. He explained that if the RIPA request met these criteria, it was then passed to the Senior Responsible Officer for approval before being passed to the courts. He explained that he was the RIPA point of contact, the four authorizing RIPA officers were directors within the council, and the Senior Responsible Officer was the Assistant Director for Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Collins then highlighted the second paragraph on page 25 of the agenda and queried if RIPA powers could be used to monitor riots or other civil disorder. The Strategic Lead for Information Management responded that RIPA's main use for cases of fraud or trading standards breaches. The Assistant Director for Counter-Fraud and Investigations added that the word 'disorder' had been included in RIPA legislation, but this was mainly used by the police rather than local authorities. The Corporate Director of Resource and Place Delivery added that a RIPA report was brought before the Standards and Audit Committee twice a year, even if no RIPA applications were made, to ensure Members were aware of requests and ensure the Council was not abusing its RIPA powers. He added that although Members could discuss general RIPA powers, they could not discuss specific cases, as the Committee's remit was to consider governance and approve RIPA policies. He explained that feedback from the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO) had shown that Council's should include all RIPA requests, including those that had been refused, in Member reports to ensure Members could build up a knowledge of the process and how the Council was using its powers.

The Vice-Chair thanked officers for the level of detail in the report and questioned if RIPA powers could be used for test purchasing. He queried that if these types of RIPA requests were refused, it could have an impact on the investigatory process. The Strategic Lead for Information Management responded that RIPA powers could be used for test purchasing, but that this also fell under the Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) area. He stated that RIPA powers have to be in place before an investigation would be

allowed to progress. The Corporate Director of Resource and Place Delivery added that all RIPA authorising officers had to go through detailed training before they could be appointed. He explained that authorising officers could not copy and paste answers, and up until recently, all had to be hand written. He explained that this was because RIPA authorisations were considered in court, and had to stand up to high levels of scrutiny from the defence, to ensure the court case was not put into jeopardy.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Standards and Audit Committee noted the statistical information relating to the use of RIPA for the period 2020/21.**
- 2. That the Standards and Audit Committee noted the findings of the RIPA inspection.**
- 3. That the Standards and Audit Committee agreed the revised RIPA policy.**

5. Annual Information Governance Report

The Strategic Lead for Information Governance introduced the report and stated that it provided a high level summary of information governance in 2020/21. He commented that it was a positive report as the Council were processing 99% of data requests and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the legal timeframe. He stated that the data protection work programmes looked healthy, and officers across the council worked hard to meet data protection standards. He added that a summary of changes made since the introduction of new legislation had been included on pages 57 and 58 of the agenda.

Councillor Collins thanked officers for the good report and highlighted page 57 of the agenda. He queried if the policy changes had been made on a Thurrock or national level. The Strategic Lead for Information Management responded that the policy changes had been brought in based on changes to the GDPR legislation. Councillor Carter highlighted page 50 of the agenda and queried why FOI requests had decreased by 20% in 2020/21. The Strategic Lead for Information Management responded that the service had seen a dip in both FOI requests and data protection requests in the first half of the year due to COVID, but these requests had recently started to rise. He clarified that 84 requests was still a large number, and 99% had been responded too within target time. Ms. Laybourn queried if the Council was a data controller or data processor under GDPR legislation, and if the Council retained any special category data. The Strategic Lead for Information Management replied that Thurrock Council was a data controller for personal data, as many services contained data sets relating to residents. He explained that some of these datasets would include special category data.

The Vice-Chair highlighted page 55 of the agenda and queried why some FOI

requests had been refused. He queried what the cost threshold was for FOI requests. The Strategic Lead for Information Management explained that if Thurrock Council deemed an FOI response to take longer than 18 hours to gather all of the necessary information, then it could be refused due to the cost threshold. The Vice-Chair queried if people could choose to pay the fee, if the request was above the cost threshold. The Strategic Lead for Information Management confirmed that this had been the case, but the policy had changed as no one had ever offered to pay the fee.

Ms. Laybourn queried page 59 of the agenda, and asked if the physical records contained offsite were regularly disposed of when out of retention. The Strategic Lead for Information Management replied that a piece of work was currently ongoing to monitor, call-back and destroy physical data when out of retention.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Standards and Audit Committee noted the information governance and records management activity and performance.

6. Counter Fraud & Investigation Annual Report & Strategy

The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigation introduced the report and stated that it provided a rear view look on the service in 2020/21 and outlined how the strategy had been delivered, as well as including future plans at appendix 1. He explained that the service had moved to emergency management mode at the beginning of the COVID pandemic, which had changed how the service operated due to COVID restrictions. He stated that the team had identified approximately £2.2bn of fraud across the council, and had undertaken lots of preventative work, including fraud targeted at government COVID grants. He stated that appendix 1 outlined work planned in the future, including the continuation of work to protect government COVID grants against fraud. He summarised and stated that the value for money test was also outlined on page 71 of the agenda.

Councillor Collins congratulated officers for their good work during difficult circumstances, and questioned if backlogs in the court system were still slowing the teams progress. The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigations responded that Thurrock Council were part of a working group that included HM Courts and the police to try and resolve the issue of court backlog. He explained that the backlog was easing slowly and the Council were trying to retrieve monies that had been lost due to the slow system. He mentioned that Thurrock were also working with banks to ensure that Thurrock Council's bank accounts were protected against fraud, and so far this project had helped prevent £600,000 of fraud. Councillor Collins then highlighted page 69 of the agenda and asked if the CFI inspection was taking place in July 2021. The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigations answered that the inspection was currently taking place and outcomes had been good so far. He added that it was a remote inspection into powers relating to proceeds of crime, and would continue until the end of

the month. Councillor Collins then queried if the forensic laboratory had been built in the Council offices. The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigations responded that work had been undertaken to build the lab last year, and was currently in the process of becoming an accredited lab. Ms. Laybourn queried page 62 of the agenda and queried what the star symbol next to money laundering meant. The Assistant Director of Counter-Fraud and Investigations clarified that the star symbol meant that the team undertook work on behalf of other teams in regards to money laundering, and in this case the work was undertaken on the behalf of the trading standards team.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Standards and Audit Committee noted the performance of the Counter-Fraud and Investigation team over the last year.

2. That the Standards and Audit Committee approved the Counter-Fraud and Investigation strategy and work programme for 2021/22.

7. Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report - Year ended 31 March 2021

The Chief Internal Auditor introduced the report and stated that updates had been made to internal audit legislation in 2014 and 2015, and therefore the Chief Internal Auditor now had to present regularly to the Standards and Audit Committee and provide Members with his professional opinion. He stated that although he could give reasonable assurances on the financial state of the Council, these could never be absolute guarantees. He added that regular progress reports on the work of the internal audit team would also be brought back before the Committee throughout the year. He explained that this year had been a difficult year due to COVID and this had been taken into account throughout the report. He added that the internal audit team had also struggled as some team members had left. The Chief Internal Auditor then highlighted point 3.1 on page 86 of the agenda and explained that the team had produced 11 assurance reports throughout the year, which had all received a green or amber-green rating, and 4 advisory reports, as well as looking into a variety of other complaints. He stated that the team had also been busy as they had needed to sign off numerous government COVID grants.

The Chief Internal Auditor moved on and highlighted point 3.2 on page 86 of the agenda which explained that specialist consultants had also been hired in March and April to review two major projects and improve related governance. He stated that the Committee would receive regular updates on these projects throughout the year, and a new project management process had now been implemented. He summarised and stated that his overall opinion was currently amber, which had not changed since 2019/20, but his risk management opinion was currently green. He stated that 3.4 of the report highlighted recommendations to managers to improve the amber rating. He added that page 97 of the report showed there had been good progress made in previous recommendations, and no conflicts of interest had been found within the team.

Ms. Laybourn queried page 95 of the agenda and asked what the difference between risk enabled and risk managed was in terms of the risk register. She felt that there had been some 'red' risks last year that had not been able to be mitigated. The Chief Internal Auditor responded that the risk maturity model ranged from naïve to aware to managed to enabled. He clarified risk enabled meant that on both a strategic and operational level risk management had been embedded in decisions. He added that risk managed meant that on a strategic level risk management had been embedded, but not on an operational level.

Councillor Collins thanked officers for their hard work throughout the year, particularly when dealing with staff shortages. He highlighted the last paragraph on page 98 of the agenda and asked if any there had been any problems with COVID specific funding. The Chief Internal Auditor responded that although no additional challenges had presented themselves due to COVID, the workload had increased dramatically due to the number of government grants being submitted. He explained that government grants ranged from thousands to millions of pounds, and ranged from areas such as COVID enforcement, to education, to one-way high street signage. The Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery added that each government grant received a different risk rating, for example some grants were directly linked to business rates and could be paid directly to the Council, but others were grants being given to businesses based on their type and rateable value. He stated that Thurrock had received approximately £14.8m in general grants from the government to support itself, plus grants to cover lost fees and charges. He stated that government grants had also been received to manage the test and trace system, food parcel delivery, town centre management, and transport. He stated that these grants would be pulled together and presented to the Committee as part of the finance accounts.

The Chair questioned if the internal audit team had sufficient staff and resources to carry out their role. The Chief Internal Auditor responded that as well as himself there was currently 1 senior auditor and 2 internal auditors, with one of these set to become a senior auditor shortly. He stated that he would be putting together a business case for two additional auditors, as workloads continued to increase for example the increased use of digital signatures which needed assurances. The Chair then questioned if the team would give recommendations on how to improve the risk enabled and risk managed statuses. The Chief Internal Auditor answered that work had started on this in 2018 with the risk management officer, but this would require additional resources and therefore increase costs. The Chair stated that two amber rating areas were the fostering service and DBS checks, and queried if this could potentially include risk related to vulnerable residents. The Chief Internal Auditor responded that the team had only audited payments of foster carers to ensure payments were following the correct processes and foster carers were getting paid the correct amount. He stated that the DBS audit also focussed on processes and checks to ensure people were not starting work before their DBS clearances or right to work in the UK documents had

arrived. He stated that this did not relate to vulnerable families or individuals.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Standards and Audit Committee considered and commented on the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report – Year ended 31 March 2021.

8. Work Programme

The Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery stated that two key reports would be coming to the Committee later in the year, which included the financial statement and audit reports. He added that reports would also come before Committee in September outlining work on the major A13 and Stanford-le-Hope projects. He explained that the Committee's role on these projects would be to look into governance, management and cost overruns, rather than general project updates which would be provided to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee.

The meeting finished at 8.04 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

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9 September 2021	ITEM: 6
Standards and Audit Committee	
Annual Complaints & Enquiries Report – 2020/2021	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Lee Henley - Strategic Lead Information Management	
Accountable Strategic Lead: Lee Henley – Strategic Lead Information Management	
Accountable Directors: Jackie Hinchliffe – Director of HR, OD & Transformation Ian Hunt – Assistant Director Legal and Monitoring Officer	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

- The number of complaints received for the reporting period is 1227. For the same period last year the figure was 1393, therefore the reporting period represents a reduction in complaints received.
- Details of the top 10 complaint areas are detailed within Appendix 1.
- A summary for Adult Social Care complaints is attached as Appendix 2.
- A summary for Children Social Care complaints is attached as Appendix 3.
- During the reporting period, 33% of complaints have been upheld. This is an improvement compared with the same period last year which identified 40% of complaints as being upheld. The target was 38% so this is positive.
- For the reporting period, 88% of complaints were responded to within timeframe. This is below the 90% target however it represents an improvement in performance from last year, where 86% were responded to within timeframe and is an excellent achievement in the context of the pandemic.
- A total of 374 MP enquiries were received, of which 84% were responded to within the timeframe. This is below the 90% target, and represents a dip in performance compared to last year's figures of 87% on time (from 287 received).

- A total of 3948 member enquiries were received, with 95% responded to within timeframe. This exceeds the target of 90% however it represents a dip in performance compared to last year's figures of 3580 received with 96% responded to within timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 4 days. Member enquiries continue to require significant capacity and resources, therefore we need to continue to drive the use of the appropriate digital methods for reporting issues. Member enquiries should operate as an escalation where normal processes have failed.
- The council received 1545 external compliments within the reporting period compared to 989 during last year.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note the statistics and performance for the reporting period.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report sets out the council's complaints statistics for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

2.2 Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) have separate statutory complaints procedures.

2.3 Top 10 complaint themes have been produced and are attached as Appendix 1. The Corporate Complaints Team work with services to establish the root cause for complaints received, to identify reasons for complaint escalation and to establish the reasons why complaints are upheld.

2.4 Ombudsman Enquiries

2.4.1 The table below provides a summary of enquiries where the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and/or the Housing Ombudsman (HO) have reached a final decision on cases within the reporting period. Findings and recommendations from all enquiries are shared with respective Directors and Assistant Directors.

Area	Issue Nature	Ombudsman Findings	Financial Remedy	Learning where relevant	Did the council respond to the LGSCO or HO timeframes
Housing – Homeless Team	Lack of support provided to a resident following them becoming homeless	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£400 Split between Housing and Children	Training undertaken to ensure staff better understand their responsibilities to care leavers.	Yes

			Services (After Care Team)	<p>A new joint Housing protocol for care leavers has been developed.</p> <p>Aftercare Team to be represented at Housing's homelessness panel and Personalised Housing plans will be completed jointly by the Housing and After Care Teams.</p>	
Place – Development Control	Failure to take action to control development in the greenbelt	Maladministration No Injustice	N/A	The LGSCO finding was disputed by the council due to the complexities of this case.	Yes
Housing – Repairs Team	Handling of reports of condensation in property	Maladministration No Injustice	£250	<p>Whilst the process relating to the management of damp and mould is established and remains in place, there is no longer a dedicated damp and mould team/Surveyor.</p> <p>Training has since been provided to other members of the Technical Team which allows for the workload to be shared during busy times to avoid delays in responding to issues of this nature.</p>	Yes
Housing – Voids	Complaint regarding the	Maladministration No Injustice	£350	The record keeping process	Yes

	condition of the property that was let			for void works has been reviewed to ensure that Landlords can evidence what void works are completed and when.	
Complaints Team	Handling of formal complaint – Lack of response to the complainant at stage 3	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£100	<p>This stage 3 was not recorded on the complaints system and the team member who was aware of the complaint was not in the office.</p> <p>Processes must be followed to ensure all stage 3's are logged so that other team members have visibility of these on the system.</p>	Yes
Children's Services - Disabled Children	This complaint relates to the council's needs assessment of a child, not getting provision and communication.	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£1000	<p>Staff reminded of the importance of being punctual when attending meetings and having all relevant documentation to hand for meetings.</p> <p>Staff also reminded to maintain a professional tone in all communication with residents.</p> <p>A reassessment for the child's needs has also been arranged to review the package of support needed.</p>	Yes

Education – Admissions	Complaint that the council delayed a child going back into education	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£250	Procedures reviewed to ensure that, when the council receives a school application and has information about allegations involving the child, it considers from the outset whether it needs to conduct a risk assessment or first obtain further information	Yes
Finance – Council Tax	Complaint about handling of a council tax account and council tax support claim	No Maladministration	N/A	N/A	Yes
Waste – Assisted Collections	Complaint that council has failed to provide the agreed assisted waste collection service	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£300	The service will need to improve its communication with residents when it comes to any potential disruptions with assisted waste collections services	Yes
Children’s Services - Aftercare	Suitability of accommodation	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£300	Staff reminded of the importance of recording details of any mental health condition, including concerns young people and representatives raise, in their pathway plan	No
Children’s Services – Children & Family Assessment Team	Complaint relating to children social care, including interaction with Social Workers when fleeing Domestic Violence	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£750	Staff training carried out Discussions taken place via team meetings Supervision meetings undertaken with	Yes

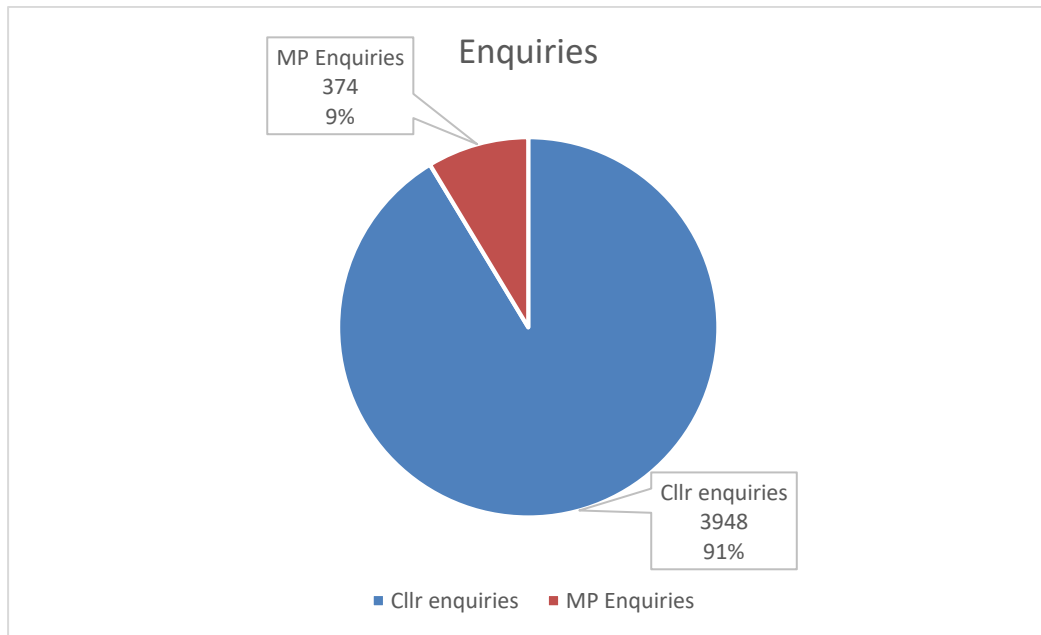
				member of staff regarding data incident	
Place – Development Control	Complaint relating to sewage from travellers site being in breach of conditions	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£250	Updates made to Discharge of Condition process to ensure any outstanding matters are followed up	Yes
Place – Development Control	Complaint relating to approval of neighbouring planning application	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£1750	Officers reminded of the importance of demonstrating consideration of impact of new developments	Yes
Education – Home to School Transport	Delays in processing refund and concerns raised in relation to an investigation	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A	A clear policy put in place which outlines what parents can claim for when the Council is refunding school transport fees	Yes
Education – Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	Delays in relation to EHCP	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£250	New measures put in place to facilitate accurate recording and monitoring of all children with Special Educational Care and Health plan, who are not in receipt of education. This is overseen in weekly meetings.	Yes
Environment- Parking Enforcement	Actions of parking enforcement team and/or enforcement agents resulting in a vehicle being sold	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£1300	The enforcement agent has confirmed that all notices left with a customer will be hand dated at the point of delivery by the enforcement agent. No notices are to be left undated.	Yes

Place – Development Control	Complaint relating to approval of neighbouring planning application	Maladministration No Injustice	N/A	N/A	Yes
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2.5 MP and Members Enquiries

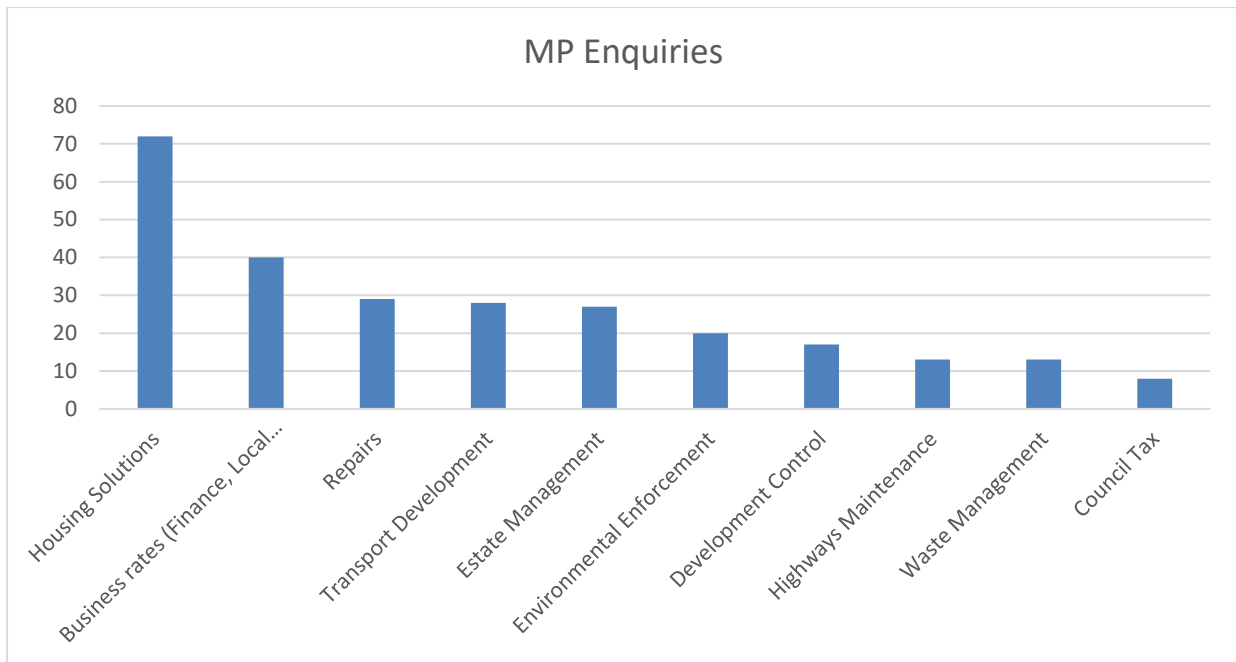
2.5.1 During the reporting period enquiries were received as follows:

- 3948 member enquiries were received, with 95% responded to within timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 4 days.

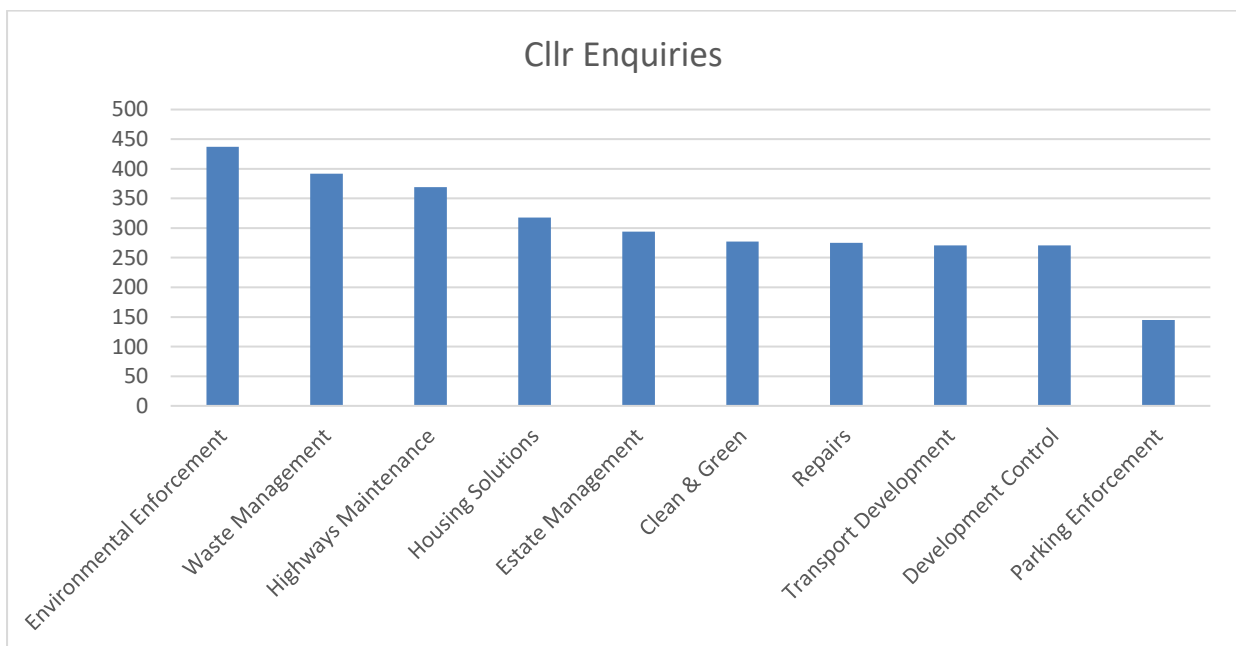


- A total of 374 MP enquiries were received, of which 84% were responded to within the timeframe.

2.5.2 MP enquiry trends and common themes are outlined below:



2.5.3 Councillor enquiry trends and common themes are outlined below:



2.6 Learning lessons from complaints

2.6.1 The most important aspect of any complaints management framework is the ability to demonstrate that the council can show evidence that it is learning from complaints received. Appendix 1 shows the top 10 complaint themes and a summary of high level learning from upheld complaints which has been identified for each area.

2.7 Complaint investigation costs

Complaints which escalate through the complaints procedure can result in additional costs to the council in terms of officer time. Based on analysis it has been estimated that a stage 1 complaint costs £46, a stage 2 complaint costs £81 and a stage 3 complaint costs £130. As such complaint investigation costs for the reporting period are as follows:

Note – This is based on complaints closed (so will be different to the complaints received figure in the Executive Summary)

Complaint stage	No of complaints	Associated cost
Stage 1	853	£39,238
Stage 2	308	£24,948
Stage 3	33	£4290

2.8 Alternate Dispute Resolution

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) has been embedded within the corporate complaints process for several years and is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team and appropriate recommendations being made. It can also include mediation with the complainant, the service or advising of onward referral to the appropriate Ombudsman.

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint.

Costs for independent investigations for both children and adult social care services differ depending upon complexity of the case, length of the investigation and in particular the need for independent persons in addition to an independent investigating officer for children's services. However, initial data analysis has shown that on average these costs are:

Adult Social Care	£3000 per complaint investigation
Children's Social Care	£1800 per stage 2
		...	£1000 per stage 3

Within the reporting period there were 0 ADR's undertaken.

2.9 Compensation

2.9.1 Records confirm that within the reporting period financial compensation payments have been made by the council as outlined below:

Area	Complaint Stage	Financial Remedy	Learning
Housing – Homeless Team	Ombudsman	£400 Split between Housing and Children Services (After Care Team)	Detailed in 2.4 above
Housing – Repairs Team	Ombudsman	£250	Detailed in 2.4 above
Housing – Voids	Ombudsman	£350	Detailed in 2.4 above
HR – Complaints Team	Ombudsman	£100	Detailed in 2.4 above
Education – Admissions Team	Ombudsman	£250	Detailed in 2.4 above
Children’s Services – Disabled Children	Ombudsman	£1000	Detailed in 2.4 above
Waste – Assisted Collections	Ombudsman	£300	Detailed in 2.4 above
Children’s Services - Aftercare	Ombudsman	£300	Detailed in 2.4 above
Children’s Services – Children & Family Assessment Team	Ombudsman	£750	Detailed in 2.4 above
Place – Development Control	Ombudsman	£250	Detailed in 2.4 above
Place – Development Control	Ombudsman	£1750	Detailed in 2.4 above
Education - Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	Ombudsman	£250	Detailed in 2.4 above
Environment- Parking Enforcement	Ombudsman	£1300	Detailed in 2.4 above
Total		£7250	

2.10 Social Care Annual Complaints & Representations

- Appendix 2 provides a summary dashboard for Adult Social Care.
- Appendix 3 provides a summary dashboard for Children’s Social Care.

2.11 Complaint channels

2.11.1 There are various means for complainants to register expressions of dissatisfaction. The top themes for the reporting period are shown below:

Digital channel (email, social media, website)	93%
Complaints Form	3%
Telephone	3%
Letter	1%

2.12 Compliments

2.12.1 The council received 1545 external compliments within the reporting period compared to 989 from last year. A breakdown is shown below:

Area	Volume
Housing	74
Environment & Highways	126
Finance & IT	5
Strategy, Communications & Customer Service	1138
HR, OD & Transformation	5
Legal	1
Place	19
Children's	25
ASC	122
CSC	29
Libraries	1
Total	1545

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options associated with this paper.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 This report is for noting purposes. There are no recommendations requiring approval.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 This report was sent to Customer and Demand Board and Director's Board.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 Complaints impact on the council's priority of delivering excellence and achieving value for money.

6.2 The complaints process seeks to create a culture of corporate learning from best practice from listening to our customers and by acting on complaints. All

complaints received must have learning applied if the complaint outcome is upheld.

- 6.3 The complaints process aims to improve customers' and users' experience of accessing council services. This will support our customer services strategy.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director Finance

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Given that this is an update report for noting there are no legal implications directly arising from it. The following points should be noted by way of background information:

- Both the Courts and the Local Government Ombudsman expect complainants to show that they have exhausted local complaints / appeal procedures before commencing external action.
- The implementation of our learning from complaints and listening to our residents should lead to a reduction of complaints received and a reduction in those going to the Ombudsman or the Courts.
- Social Care for Adult and Children are required to follow a separate procedure stipulated by the Department of Health (DOH) and Department for Education & Skills (DFES).

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead Community Development and Equalities

The Information Management Team will ensure that the Community Development and Equalities Manager are aware of all complaints that have an equality related expression of dissatisfaction.

7.4 Other implications

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

- Information has been obtained from the council's complaints system.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Top 10 complaint themes
- Appendix 2 – ASC complaint dashboard
- Appendix 3 – CSC complaint dashboard

Report Authors:

Lee Henley

Strategic Lead Information Management

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Appendix 1

High level summary:

2020/21 – Annual Complaints Report

Top Ten Complaints Areas

The areas receiving the highest number of complaints are outlined below together with the individual learning for each area grouped by Directorate. Figures in brackets below represent 2019/20 data.

Directorate & Area	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
Housing –Repairs	194 (206)	39% (38%)	24 (17)	26 (28)	31% (21%)	38% (11%)	3 (2)	3 (2)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
E&H -Waste Management	151 (177)	58% (58%)	28 (14)	54 (46)	63% (61%)	26% (2%)	3 (1)	3 (1)	67% (100%)	0% (0%)
Housing – Estates Management	80 (54)	14% (20%)	16 (8)	30 (32)	20% (16%)	33% (0%)	2 (6)	2 (6)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Housing – Housing Solutions	75 (95)	21% (37%)	8 (13)	18 (31)	28% (42%)	0% (3%)	3 (3)	3 (3)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Place – Development Control	35 (51)	9% (14%)	9 (12)	11 (20)	0% (20%)	0% (0%)	3 (11)	3 (11)	67% (0%)	100% (0%)

E&H– Clean & Green	27 (32)	30% (47%)	2 (2)	10 (4)	30% (100%)	0% (50%)	2 (0)	2 (0)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
E&H - Environmental Enforcement	14 (4)	36% (25%)	0 (0)	23 (5)	13% (20%)	0% (0%)	2 (1)	2 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0)
Finance – Council Tax	30 (68)	20% (18%)	3 (9)	5 (10)	20% (10%)	0% (0%)	0 (2)	0 (2)	0% 0%	0% 0%
E&H - Civil Enforcement (Parking)	11 (28)	18% (29%)	2 (0)	15 (10)	13% (0%)	0% (0%)	0 (1)	0 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Housing – Transforming Homes	21 (24)	38% (50%)	0 (4)	0 (11)	0% (55%)	0% (0%)	0 (1)	0 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)

High Level Learning for Top 10 Areas:

Directorate and Area	High Level learning identified from complaints
Housing - Repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Mears staff have been reminded that when raising works orders, the job description must be clear and jargon free. • All Mears staff have been reminded of ensuring that where there are issues with access, the case is referred to the council for further support. • All Mears staff will be undergoing training in 2021 relating to: Communications, Housekeeping & Customer Service. • Aaron Services have reviewed their internal process to ensure automatic escalation to a Supervisor where there have been 3 attendances to a property within a 3 month period. • Discussions held between Aaron Services and their suppliers with regards to stock availability to prevent any incidents of last minute appointment cancellations.
Environment -Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that residents are contacted following receipt of service requests to avoid escalation to formal complaint. • Ensure information logged on Bartec is logged accurately. • Processes for reallocating work from to crew to crew in the event of a missed collection have been reinforced. • Ensure that the Council Website is kept updated regarding any issues that may result in missed collections. • Crews have been reminded that any issues preventing collection must be reported to the Team Manager

	<p>immediately in order to ensure future collections remain on schedule.</p>
Housing – Estates Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all emails received are actioned before being marked as completed. • ASB staff reminded of providing residents with timely responses to communication and providing residents with updates on their case following any changes, such as a change of case officer. • ASB staff instructed to ensure that they do not request that residents email them directly, but that they instead signpost them to the generic ASB email. This will allow emails to be actioned in the event of staff absence. • The process regarding successions has been reviewed by a project team and all the necessary documentation has been covered within this review. Meetings to take place regarding possible changes and Tenancy Management Officers to be trained on any changes.
Housing – Housing Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the event that prevention duty for any resident comes to an end, this will be clearly communicated to the resident. • Online systems for mutual exchange applications must hold correct and up to date information. • Performance targets have been set for year 2021-22 to ensure any emails/contact slips received are monitored and actioned within timeframe. • Private Rented Sector Officers have been reminded of the importance of ensuring checks are carried out with the Private Housing Team regarding any properties they are procuring. • Ensure that whenever a resident makes contact to advise they are unable to access the customer portal, a

	<p>member of staff makes contact with them to take them through the process.</p>
Place – Development Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a two stage process so all comments on an application are checked by more than one officer prior to comments being available on-line. Process notes have also been updated and all staff have been re-trained on this new process. • Case officers to check all relevant consultees have been consulted when an application is allocated to them. • Emails will be acknowledged upon receipt and regular feedback provided until issues are resolved. • Officers to ensure that they check whether a site notice is needed at the beginning of the application process. • Case officers to ensure they contact applicants at an early stage of the process, if there is likely to be a delay in determining an application.
Environment – Clean & Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and Green team's Technical Support are now providing additional support to the Tree Officer to assist in managing and actioning service requests. • Crew have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that the area is clear after completion of their work. • Staff have been reminded to ensure that they follow all correct procedures when carrying out maintenance works at burial sites, so that full care is given to the area
Environment - Environmental Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure residents are kept updated on the progress of their service request. • Training has been provided to staff in order to ensure that they are aware of the guidance that should be

	provided to residents regarding any interim measures relating to the removal of damaged vehicles.
Finance – Council Tax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been reminded to ensure bills for empty properties are sent to the right person. • Staff have been reminded to avoid dealing with cases single-handedly to provide impartiality to outcomes. • Staff have been reminded to ensure that full quality checks are carried out on any printed letters before posting.
Environment – Parking Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff reminded of the importance of ensuring that any information used to log a penalty charge notice is correct. • To ensure the application of discretion is consistent across appeals. Ensure thorough investigations are carried out and all information checked for accuracy.
Housing – Transforming Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions have taken place with the scaffolding contractor to request they revise their procedures for carrying out works and improve their communication when speaking to residents. • Wates have been reminded that all communications must be done in an appropriate way and must be thorough and accurate. • Wates have been reminded to ensure that all works are carried out to the expected standard.

High Level Learning for other Housing Areas that fall within the Housing Ombudsman Jurisdiction:

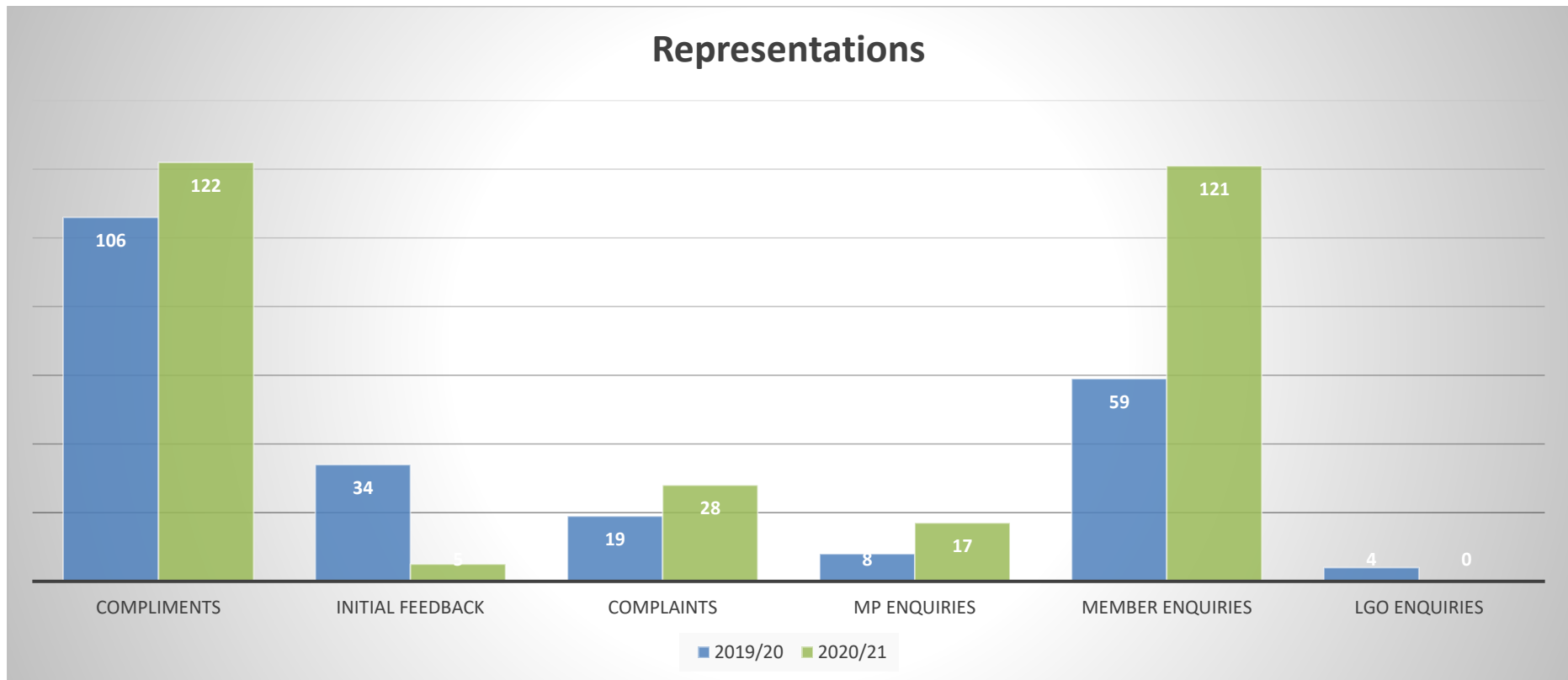
Note – It is a Housing Ombudsman requirement to report learning outcomes that fall within the Housing Ombudsman jurisdiction.

Area	High Level learning identified from complaints
Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff reminded to ensure that residents receive a response to any queries, regardless if this relates to a matter than has already been actioned• Staff have been reminded that the resident should be advised if their enquiry is being dealt with by a different team• Further training for staff regarding Universal Credit Housing Costs will be provided, to ensure accurate guidance can be provided to residents
Voids	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wates staff reminded of the importance of ensuring that any measurements taken for suggested works are accurate and checked carefully to avoid any errors when installation works commence• Staff reminded of the importance of ensuring prompt responses are sent for enquiries from residents• Additional training provided to staff in regards to identifying and processing recharges with additional information, so that recipients are able to clearly determine the exact costs deemed as rechargeable to them, what they are for and the reasons for this
Lease holding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff reminded to ensure that all information is forwarded to the relevant departments on time to prevent any unnecessary delays• In the event of delays in resolving an issue, all relevant parties should be provided with an update

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Volume of Representations 2020/21 vs 2019/20

Below is a comparison of representations received for both years. During 2020/21, **293** representations were received, compared with **230** for 2019/20.



Complaints – 2020/21 vs 2019/20

Below is the comparison between the two years broken down into more specific detail including those complaints involving both internal and external providers.

Feedback:	Initial Feedback	Low Intervention	Medium Intervention	High Intervention	No. withdrawn / Cancelled	Total to be investigated	Cases closed in period*	% of complaints upheld in period	% timeliness of response for those due in period*
2020/21	5	27	1	0	0	28	28	57%	81%
2019/20	34	17	2	0	2	17	18	61%	79%
Difference	-29	+10	-1	0	-2	+11	+10	-4%	-2%

* For 2020/21, of the 28 closed complaints, 27 relate to the period 2020/21 and 1 relates to 2021/22 (but this was closed in 2020/21).

* For 2020/21 16 of 28 closed complaints were upheld

* 2020/21 timeliness is based on 27 complaints being due in the period (22 from 27 within timeframe).

Root cause analysis and associated learning:

Complaints are analysed and the top themes are identified below. Learning from upheld complaints is recognised by the service as part of complaint resolution.

Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints:	Root Cause 1 and associated learning	Root Cause 2 and associated learning	Root Cause 3 and associated learning
2020/21 Learning	<p>Quality of Care</p> <p>Complaints 1 and 2 – Conduct of staff (Homecare).</p> <p>Learning - Carers reminded of the professional standards that must be followed during all visits.</p> <p>Complaint 3 – Use of recreational drugs by a service user (AK Supported Living).</p> <p>Learning – Staff will provide support to residents in this area along with written notices being issued to residents.</p> <p>Complaint 4 – Conduct of staff relating to the issuing of antibiotics (Commissioning)</p> <p>Learning – All staff involved were reminded of the standards that are expected of them. The matter was also dealt with in-line with council process.</p>	<p>Homecare maintenance</p> <p>Complaint 5 – Decking area rotting and garden/grounds had not been maintained (Collins House).</p> <p>Learning – Actions were taken to ensure that grounds are maintained going forward and that the decking area is repaired.</p>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Complaint 6 – Complaint regarding a lack of contact and updates (Community Led Support Team 4)</p> <p>Learning – Staff reminded of importance of ensuring residents are kept updated on any ongoing enquiries</p> <p>Complaint 7 – Complaint relating to family members visiting (Carolyne House)</p> <p>Learning – Ensure there is consistent communication with the family</p> <p>Complaint 11 – Complaint regarding lack of contact from care worker (Thurrock Care at Home)</p> <p>Learning - Coordinators to ensure they return telephone calls. If they are unable to</p>

	<p>Complaint 8 – Handling of care assessment (Community Led Support Team 3)</p> <p>Learning – Reassessment from a new Social Worker was arranged for care user to ensure the best care placement is provided</p> <p>Complaint 9 – Handling of care call (Thurrock Care at Home)</p> <p>Learning - All care calls/visits are now two care worker assisted with equipment. Previously only morning and evening calls had 2 care workers present (not the lunch and tea call/visit)</p> <p>Complaint 10 – Carers attending home when service user was in hospital (Thurrock Care at Home)</p> <p>Learning – Staff reminded to use correct system when logging updates to care call system.</p> <p>Complaint 12 – Carer not following care plan (Thurrock Care at Home)</p> <p>Learning - Care workers involved reminded during supervision to read the care plan.</p>		<p>complete this themselves, then they must ask a colleague to complete this.</p> <p>Complaint 15 – Complaint regarding the contents of a voice mail left by member of staff. (Homecare)</p> <p>Learning - Additional training provided to staff to ensure that when leaving voice messages the correct details are taken and reiterated correctly</p>
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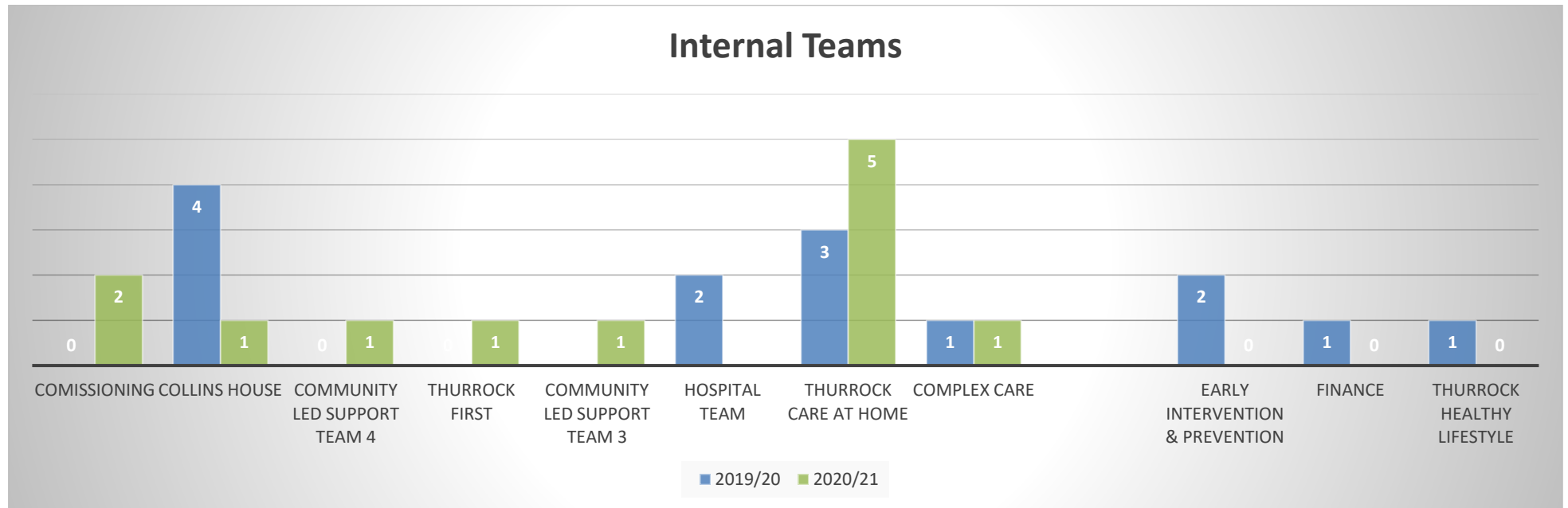
	<p>Complain 13 – Carer spilling hot drink on service user (Homecare)</p> <p>Learning – Service user’s support plan was updated to avoid reoccurrence of this issue and further staff were allocated to the emergency on call. Additional training provided to staff involved.</p> <p>Complaint 14 – Carer not following care plan (Thurrock Care at Home)</p> <p>Learning – All careworkers reminded of importance of following the care plan</p> <p>Complaint 16 – Items of clothing missing from care users room (Leatherland Lodge)</p> <p>Learning – Training provided to staff</p>		
2019/20	Quality of Care	Assessment	Communication
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medication Audits changed from weekly to daily and Senior Carers will be undertaking further medication administration training • Staff member (carer) reminded of professional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the admission of a resident, ensure all information regarding potential safeguarding issues is gathered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure documentation is fully recorded and the family are notified regarding changes in a resident’s condition. • Ensure the family are always informed when an injury occurs to a resident.

	<p>standards required during all visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff reminded to provide additional support during meal times and ensure rooms are regularly cleaned• Staff reminded of the importance of the correct use of protected personal equipment• Staff reminded to dress service users appropriately• To ensure residents security by allowing them to lock doors• Ensure recording of information is accurate and ensuring medication is always provided		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff reminded to ensure questions from the family are directed to the duty manager to formally respond to.• Communication between staff for handovers to be improved and if delays occur these are communicated to all affected parties.
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Complaints regarding internal teams and staff:

12 of 28 complaints responded to within this period are for internal teams/services. This compares with **14 of 18** during 2019/20.

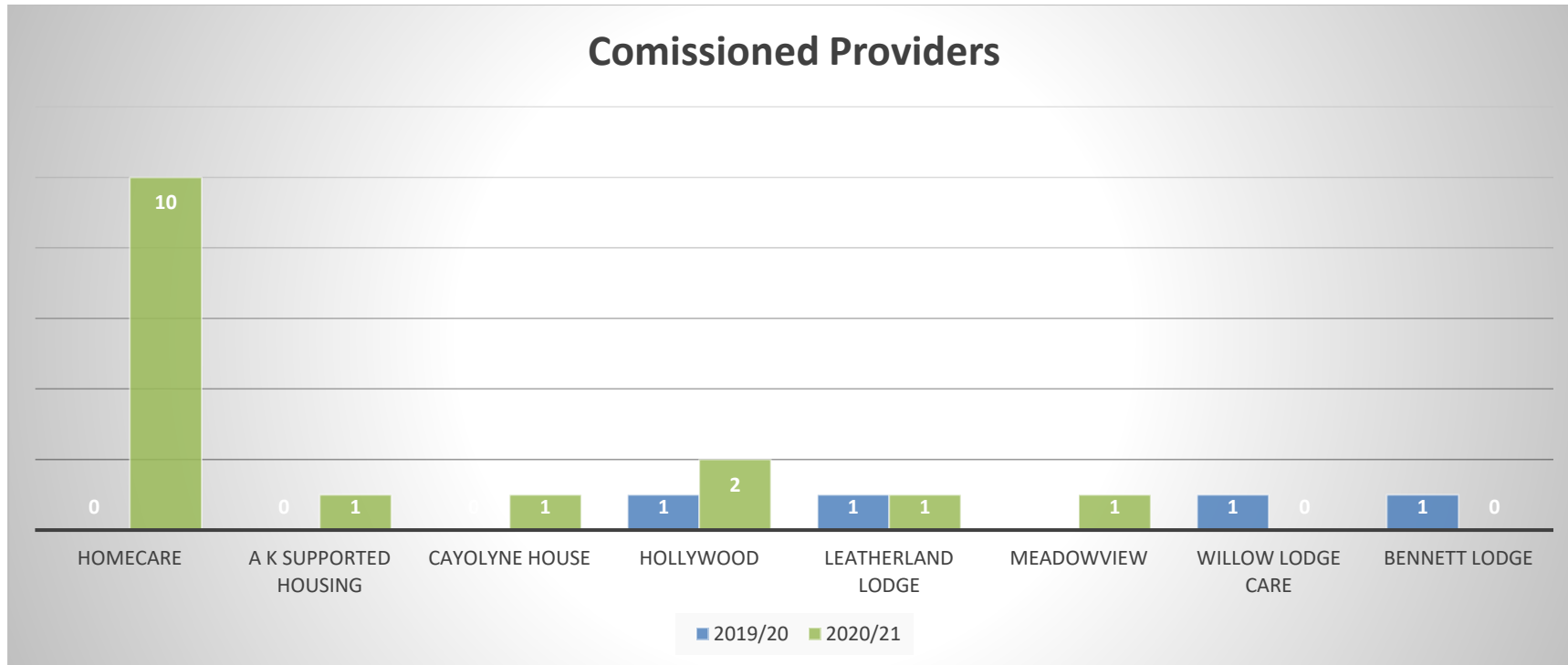
Note – From 1 April 2020, complaints data is also captured and reported upon for the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, for those areas where services are jointly managed with the council.



Commissioned Providers:

16 of 28 complaints responded to within this period are for commissioned providers. This compares with **4 of 18** during 2019/20.

Comissioned Providers



Upheld Complaints:

Percentages for upheld complaints for the services below appears high. This is due to the low volume of complaints that are in-scope of this report. Figures in brackets below represent the numbers of upheld complaints for those received and closed in period.

Complaint Area	Volume 2020/21	% Upheld	Volume 2019/20	% Upheld
Homecare	10	40% (4)	0	N/A
Thurrock Care at Home	5	100% (5)	3	100% (3)
Contracts & Commissioning	2	50%(1)	0	N/A
Hollywood Rest Home	2	0%	1	0%
Collins House	1	100%(1)	4	100% (4)
Leatherland Lodge	1	100%(1)	1	100% (1)
Complex Care	1	0%	1	100% (1)
Community Led Support Team 4	1	100%(1)	0	N/A
Community Led Support Team 3	1	100%(1)	0	N/A
Thurrock First	1	0%	0	N/A
AK Supported Housing	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
Carolyne House	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
Meadowview House	1	0%	0	N/A
Hospital Team	0	N/A	2	0%

Willow Lodge Care Home	0	N/A	1	0%
Thurrock Healthy Lifestyle	0	N/A	1	0%
Bennett Lodge	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Finance	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Early Intervention & Prevention	0	N/A	2	0%

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints:

There were no enquiries from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), where they reached a final decision on any cases within the reporting period. This is positive and shows that the council are effective at dealing with complaints at the first point of contact.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint. ADR is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team. It can also include mediation with the complainant and the service area.

There have been no ADR cases in the reporting period.

Enquiries:

In the reporting period the following was received:

- 17 MP Enquiries
- 121 Member Enquiries

MP Enquiries	Total
Community Development	5
Public Health	3
Catering	1
Collins House	1
Local Area Coordination	1
Merrie Loots Farm	1
Older People Mental Health	1
Preparing for Adulthood	1
Thurrock Care at Home	1
Thurrock First	1
Willow Lodge Care	1

Members Enquiries	Total
Public Health	54
Thurrock First	16
Community Development	12
Blue Badges	7
Local Area Coordination	6
Safeguarding	6
Collis House	2
Community Led Support Team 1	2
Contract Compliance	2
Early Intervention & Prevention (East)	2
Thurrock Care at Home	2
Willow Lodge Care	2
Bluebell Court	1
Early Intervention & Prevention (West)	1
Finance	1
Hospital Team	1
Joint Reablement Team	1
Leatherland Lodge	1
Oak House	1
Preparing for Adulthood	1

External Compliments:

A total of **122** compliments have been received during this period compared to **106** within the same period last year. A breakdown of the areas that these relate to is shown below.

Note – These relate to compliments that have been sent to the Complaints Team to record on the complaints system.

Service Area 2019/20	Number of Compliments
Joint Reablement Team	34
Thurrock Care at Home	10
Hospital Team	10
Collins House	8
Disabled Facilities Grant	8
Older People Mental Health	6
Extra Care	6
Rapid Response Assessment Service	5
Local Area Coordination	5
Early Intervention & Prevention (East)	4
Safeguarding	3
Blue badges	2
Careline	2
Day Care	1
Complex Care	1
Preparing for Adulthood	1

Service Area 2020/21	Number of Compliments
Disabled Facilities Grant	30
Thurrock First	24
Hospital Team	7
Joint Reablement Team	7
Community Led Support Team 1	6
Barn & Coach House	5
Blue Badges	5
Day Care	5
Extra Care	5
Local Area Coordination	5
Collins House	3
Rapid Response Assessment Service	3
Careline	2
Catering	2
Community Development	2
Older People Mental Health	2

Safeguarding	2
Bennett Lodge	1
Commissioning	1
Community Led Support Team 2	1
Complex Care	1
Grays Court Care Home	1
Hollywood	1
Public Health	1

A small sample of compliments received for 2020/21 are captured below:

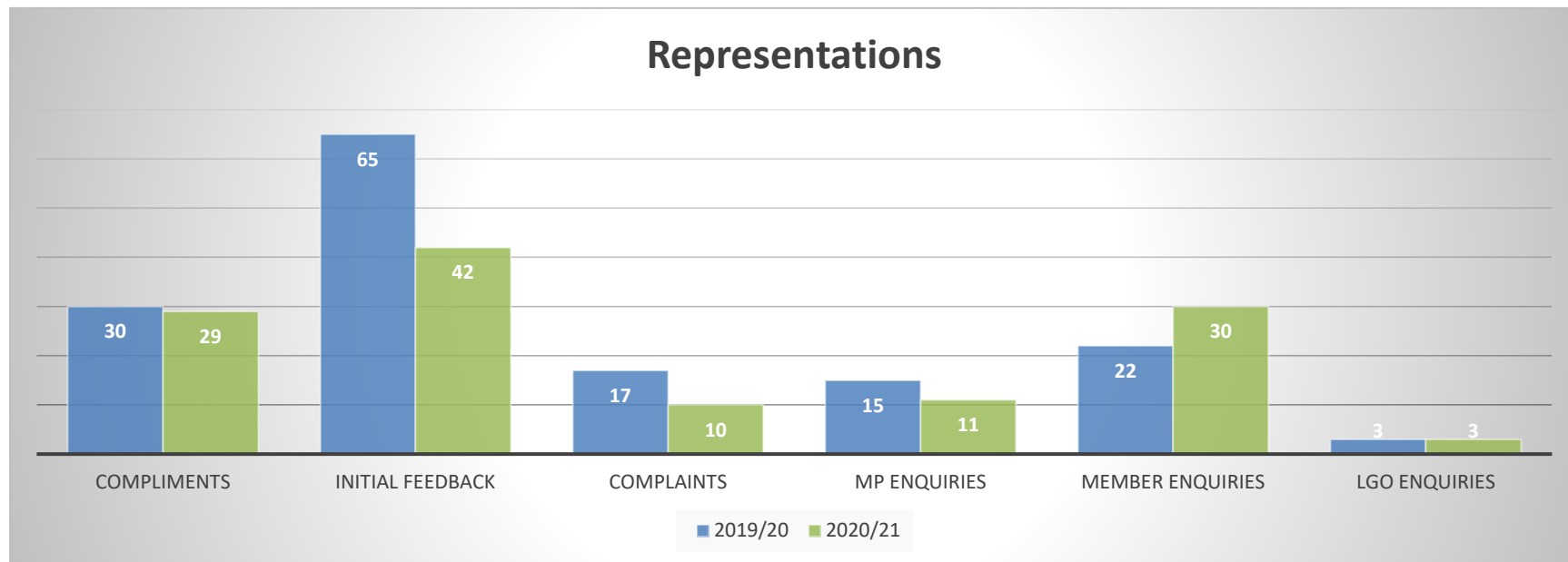
- Hollywood Care Home** - I just want to add how amazing Hollywood Care Home have been with Mr B. They were firstly, the only care home that would consider him on discharge from hospital. They managed his aggressive outbursts and basically took care of him. They are always helpful when I or the Dementia Crisis Team or Memory Assessment Service were going in.
- Thurrock First** - I emailed requesting a referral for my parents. My family and I cannot thank you enough for your speedy and helpful response. We would like to thank the member of staff who contacted me the same day. Today I attended whilst the rails were fitted. My sister and I were contacted prior to any visit so that one of us could be there. We really appreciate all of the support and help - especially in these times of the pandemic. Could you please pass on our sincere thanks to all that have assisted our parents, also to everyone at Thurrock First who do an outstanding job pointing people in the right direction.

- **Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)** - It's not too much to say that my new shower has changed my life. Before I had to rely upon a family member to pick me up once or twice a week to take me to her house to use her adapted shower and now I can have a shower whenever I want to. The builders fitted everything to suit my needs and I can't fault it. The DFG Service also helped me to seek advice to apply for disability benefits which has really helped. Very impressed, the service is superb!
- **Careline** – Mrs B called and at the end of our conversation she said she has used Care Line so much in the last 2 weeks that she is extremely grateful that you “always come up trumps”. She expressed her gratitude for your help saying she couldn't have done without it.
- **Joint Reablement Team** - I visited Mrs B today to see how she has been managing. Mrs B said that when we first started care she was very anxious and nervous, but since having the support she is feeling more confident and feels that she can manage independently. She wanted to thank everyone for their help and that they were all lovely and kind, and supportive.
- **Community Led Support Team 2** - I'd just like to let you know how fantastic the staff have been in supporting me. I have worked in depth professionally with social workers through Thurrock and I want say through my experience they are a credit to the system. My case or rather my parents' case has been complicated and tiresome for all parties but the staff have always been supportive of our plight. Social workers like this encourage me to finish my social worker degree. I'm sure you are always made aware of the negative so wanted to let you know of some positives.
- **Thurrock First** - I had a conversation with a service users wife this evening, she would like me to pass on her appreciation to the whole team who have helped her husband, telling me he has been treated 'wonderfully' that everyone is 'Brilliant' and she is 'very grateful'. The lady informed me the help they have received has been life changing and has given her husband some independence back

Appendix 3 - 2020/21 - Children's Social Care – Complaints & Representations

Volume of Representations – 2019/20 vs 2020/21:

Below is a comparison of all representations received during both years. A total of **125** representations were received in 2020/21 compared to **152** in the same period of 2019/20.



Complaints – 2019/20 vs 2020/21:

Below is the comparison between the two years with additional details provided. There were no escalations beyond stage 1 for both periods :

Feedback:	Initial Feedback	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases	Cases closed in period*	Cases Cancelled	% of complaints upheld in period	% timeliness of response for those due in period
2020/21	42	8	0	0	0	9	0	44%	75%
2019/20	65	17	0	0	2	14	4	50%	47%
Difference	-23	-7	0	0	-2	-5	-4	-6%	+28%

*For 2020/21:

- Of 9 complaints closed 8 relate to the reporting period of 2020/21 and 1 relates to the reporting period of 2021/22. Of these 9 closed complaints 4 were upheld
- 8 complaints were due a response in the period and 6 were responded to within timeframe

*For 2019/20, of the 14 closed complaints, 13 relate to the period 2019/20 and 1 relate to 2018/19 (but was closed during 2019/20)

Root cause analysis and associated learning:

Key learning themes are identified below for the reporting period. Learning from upheld complaints is recognised by the service as part of complaint resolution.

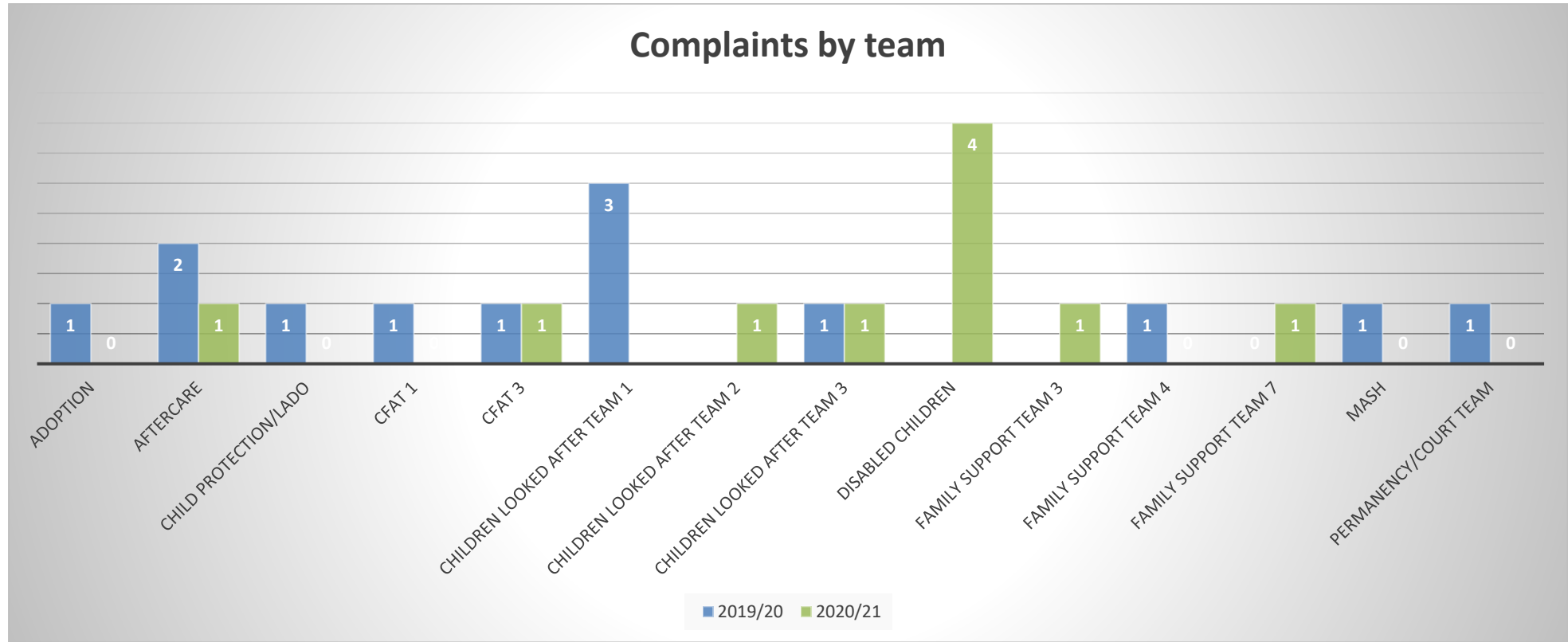
Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints:	Root Cause 1 and associated learning	Root Cause 2 and associated learning	Root Cause 3 and associated learning
<p>Learning for 2020/21</p>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Complaint 1 – Lack of support and communication since lockdown began in March (Disabled Children).</p> <p>Learning - Ensuring that any communication from parents is responded to within timeframe to avoid unnecessary delays.</p> <p>Complaint 2 – Parents were not contacted on agreed contact date (Disabled Children)</p> <p>Learning - If there are any delays in handling a case the relevant contacts should be advised of the delay.</p> <p>Complaint 3 – Contact was not arranged between Parents and child (Disabled Children)</p> <p>Learning – There was a delay in arranging contact due to an outstanding Risk Assessment. This should not have impacted any contact</p>	<p>Decision Making</p> <p>Complaint 4 – Lack of clarity around decisions made to care plan. (Children Looked After Team 3)</p> <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that any amendments to care plans are shared with the looked after children (LAC) and all professionals involved in the LAC review. • Any decisions relating to placement move should be discussed as a part of the LAC review process. 	

	between the child and the parent and this has been addressed with staff for future reference.		
Learning for 2019/20	<p>Communication</p> <p>Discussions have taken place within the service in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of sharing plans across the service on a need to know basis (Children Looked After Team 1) • The need to ensure that information given to children about their care plans is accurate and up to date (Children Looked After Team 1) • Change over arrangements to be improved with joint visits to be conducted with both the new and outgoing social workers (Children Looked After Team 1) • Share all reports and communicate with families to prevent any disruption in education during placement moves (Children Looked After Team 1) • Staff reminded of expected customer service standards during visits (Courts Team) 	<p>Savings</p> <p>The team have developed a new process to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address inconsistencies in savings for looked after children (Aftercare) • Ensure all young people receive regular savings going forward (Aftercare) • To review allowance payments annually and to ensure the system in place does not cause any disruption and/or inconvenience to the carer (Adoptions Team) 	<p>Assessment</p> <p>A formal review to be conducted to ensure standards are maintained in all cases involving unaccompanied asylum seekers (Children Looked After Team 1)</p>

Breakdown of complaints received:

This may be different to figures within the upheld complaints section as this is based on closed complaints (not complaints received). The figures below will also exclude cancelled complaints.

Complaints by team



Upheld Complaints:

Percentages for upheld complaints (based on complaints received and closed during the reporting period) across some areas are high as volumes of complaints are relatively low. Figures in brackets below represent the numbers of upheld complaints.

Complaint Area	Volume 2019/20	% Upheld	Volume 2020/21	% Upheld
Adoption	1	100% (1)	0	NA
Aftercare	2	50% (1)	0	NA
Child Protection/LADO	1	0%	0	NA
CFAT 1	1	0%	0	NA
CFAT 3	1	0%	1	0%
Children Looked After Team 1	3	100% (3)	0	NA
Children Looked After Team 2	0	0	1	0%
Children Looked After Team 3/UAS	1	0%	1	100%(1)

Disabled Children	0	N/A	4	75% (3)
Family Support Team 3	0	N/A	1	0%
Family Support Team 4	1	0%	0	NA
Family Support Team 7	0	N/A	1	0%
MASH	1	0%	0	NA
Permanency / Court Team	1	100% (1)	0	NA

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints:

The table below provides a summary of enquiries where the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) have reached a final decision on cases within the reporting period. Findings and recommendations from all enquiries are shared with respective Directors and Assistant Directors.

Area	Issue Nature	LGO Findings	Financial Remedy	Learning where relevant	Did the council respond to the LGSCO or HO timeframes
Disabled Children	This complaint relates to the Council's needs assessment of a child, not getting provision and communication.	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£1000	Staff reminded of the importance of being punctual when attending meetings and having all relevant documentation to hand for meetings. Staff also reminded to keep a professional tone in all communication with residents. A reassessment for the child's needs has also been arranged to review the package of support needed.	Yes
Children's Services - Aftercare	Suitability of accommodation	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£300	Staff reminded of importance of recording details of any mental health condition, including concerns young people and representatives raise, in their pathway plan	No
Children's Services – Children & Family Assessment Team	Complaint relating to children social care, including interaction with Social Workers when fleeing Domestic Violence	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£750	Staff training carried out Discussions taken place via team meetings Supervision meetings undertaken with member of staff regarding data incident	Yes

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Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Cases:

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint. ADR is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team. It can also include mediation with the complainant and the service area. For the reporting period, there have been 0 cases of successful ADR.

Initial Feedback:

The Council receives feedback which following assessment does not constitute a formal complaint but still requires addressing. Those within scope of an 'Initial Feedback' are sent to the service with a request that swift action takes place to resolve the issue. This should negate the need for a formal complaint taking place. For the reporting period a total of **42** 'Initial Feedback' have been recorded:

Team	Feedback total
Permanency/Court Team	7
Family Support Team 4	5
Family Support Team 2	4
Children and family assessment team 4	3
Children looked after team 3	3
Children and family assessment team 3	2
Children looked after team 1	2
Children looked after team 2	2
Family Support Team 7	2
Prevention/ Support Service	2
Children and family assessment team 2	1
Children and family assessment team 1	1
Disabled Children	1
Family Support Team 6	1
Family Support Team 3	1

MASH	1
Oaktree	1
Child Protection/LADO	1
Families First	1
Aftercare	1

Enquiries

During the reporting period the following enquiries were received:

- 30 Member/Cllr Enquiries
- 11 MP Enquiries

Member/Cllr Enquiries	Feedback Total
All Services (Youth services)	4
Permanency/Court Team	3
Child Protection/LADO	2
Children Looked After Team 1	2
Fostering Team	2
Children Looked After Team 3	2
Disabled Children	2
Children & Family Assessment Team 1	2
Family Support Team 2	2
Family Support Team 4	1
Family Support Team 6	1
Family Support Team 1	1
MASH	1
Children Looked After Team 2	1
Prevention/Support Service	1
Registration	1
Support For Childminders	1
Adoption Team	1

MP Enquiries	Feedback Total
Children and Family Assessment Team 1	4
Assessment	1
Child Protection/LADO	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 2	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 3	1
MASH	1
Permanency/Court Team	1
Aftercare	1

External Compliments:

29 compliments have been received during this period compared to 30 in the same period last year, breakdown of teams is below.

Service Area (20/19/20)	Total Received
Families Together	9
Prevention/Support Service	5
CFAT 4	2
Disabled children	2
Family Support Team 4	1
Family Support Team 2	1
Child Protection/LADO	1
Children Looked After Team 2	1
Family Support Team 3	1
Family Support Team 6	1
Children Looked After Team 1	1
Fostering Team	1
CFAT 1	1
Permanency / Court Team	1
Aftercare	1
Family Support Team 1	1

Service Area (2020/21)	Total Received
Families Together	12
Family Support Team 6	7
Children and Family Assessment Team 1	2
Family Support Team 1	2
Disabled Children	2
Family Placement Service	1
Children Looked After Team 1	1
Children Looked After Team 2	1
Family Support Team 4	1

9 September 2021	ITEM: 7
Standards and Audit Committee	
Counter Fraud & Investigation Quarterly Update (Q1)	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Michael Dineen, Strategic Lead, Counter Fraud & Investigation	
Accountable Assistant Director: David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Investigation & Enforcement	
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director of Public Realm	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Counter Fraud & Investigation service is responsible for the prevention, detection and deterrence of all instances of alleged economic crime affecting the authority including: allegations of fraud, theft, corruption, bribery and money laundering.

This report outlines the performance of the CFI team over the last quarter (Q1) for Thurrock Council as well as the work the team have delivered nationally for other public bodies.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 The Standard and Audit Committee comments on the performance of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Department.

2. Introduction & Background

2.1 The council's Counter Fraud team is responsible for delivering the corporate counter fraud programme which includes proactive work to enhance the council's controls as well as respond to intelligence from that proactive work and information from other sources.

3. Performance

3.1 CFI receives reports about suspected fraud from the public, government and law enforcement partners, internal referral mechanisms and proactive operations. The figures show the performance of the department for Quarter 1 (Q1) of 2021/22.

- 57 reports of suspected fraud have been received
- 9 Investigations have been closed as 'no fraud'
- 6 sanctions have been delivered in cases of proven fraud
- 3 Social housing property have been recovered
- 177 active investigations are currently being conducted
- Value of Detected Fraud in this first Quarter is £158,662

3.2 The ring-fenced National Investigation Service (NATIS) function continues to support both central and local government bodies, with over 144 public bodies supported so far in tackling serious and organised crime across the country.

4. Work Plan for 2021/22

4.1 CFI has a programme of proactive work to ensure the council's controls against fraud are robust and effective. That plan was presented and accepted by the Standards and Audit Committee in July 2021. **Appendix 1** sets out the progress made in delivering the Counter Fraud & Investigation Work Plan 2020/21.

4.2 The work programme is a working document and if during the year changes or additions to the plan are proposed between the CFI and the Section 151 Officer, these will be brought back to the Committee for approval.

4.3 The proactive work by the service continues with a core focus on the Covid-19 schemes administered by the council. In the grants space the majority of the time committed by the service is post-assurance work, where the council is required to use national intelligence from partners in the Cabinet Office to identify fraud. This work uses data analytics to wash grant payments and their recipients with wider-public sector data. The performance on that workstream will be further reported throughout the year.

4.4 The council has already realised the benefits of installing a analytics tool at the applications stage of the grants schemes. That tool immediately prevented fraudulent payments using financial data and data from Companies House in a similar way to the anti-fraud measures seen in the banking industry. It is clear from the post-assurance work that Thurrock's controls have stopped a significant amount of fraud in comparison to other councils who have been negatively affected across the country.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 This report provides a detailed update to the Committee on the counter-fraud measures for the Council and how it is reducing fraud under the council's counter-fraud strategy.

6. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

6.1 All Directors and Heads of Service were consulted with the current strategy to be taken by the Council in its counter-fraud approach.

7. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

7.1 Work undertaken by CFI to reduce fraud and enhance the Council's anti-fraud and corruption culture contributes to the delivery of all its aims and priorities supporting good corporate governance.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant, Finance

There are no financial implications arising from this report

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Deirdre Collins**
Senior Barrister, Legal Services

There are no legal implication.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health**

There are no social or community issues surrounding this report. There are also no Diversity or Equality issues.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None.

9. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

Counter Fraud & Investigation Policy & Strategy – thurrock.gov.uk/fraud
Counter Money Laundering Policy & Strategy – thurrock.gov.uk/fraud
CroweClarkWhitehill Annual Fraud Indicator – crowe.co.uk

10. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Counter Fraud Work Plan 2021/22

Report Author:

Michael Dineen

Strategic Lead for Counter Fraud & Investigation

Counter Fraud & Investigation



See it. Report it. Stop it.

Counter Fraud Strategy & Work Plan 2021/22



Our Fraud Control Strategy

CF&I uses a Control Strategy to focus its work in the right areas for Thurrock. That approach ensures that we are able to identify at the earliest stage intelligence relating to the key priorities below, particularly those affecting the most vulnerable of society.

Who are We?

A specialist function to protect public finance from fraud and serious crime, using our legal framework as a local authority service

What is Our Purpose?

- 1 Protect the public purse from crime
- 2 Support the wider-public sector with shared, advanced capabilities

What are Our Priorities?

Crimes affecting a vulnerable adult or child

Insider threats in local government

Organised crime targeting local government

Improving local government's resilience to cyber crime

How do we Succeed?

Always acting Ethically in everything that we do, working to our values, attitudes and principles

Consider opportunities to work collaboratively with others for the benefit of our purpose, sharing our knowledge, experience and expertise

Apply the 4 'P' Strategy to Prevent, Protect and Prepare local government for economic crime, pursuing offenders where necessary

Ensure our teams are fully equipped to respond to the threats faced from economic crime

Proactive Work Plan 2020/21

Risk Area	Activity	When	Current Status	Responsible Officer	Date Complete
Council-wide	<p>Training of high risk areas in counter fraud measures</p> <p>Ensure understanding of the threats posed to those areas. To be tailored to the areas and ongoing support offered via a Single Point of Contact with CFI</p>	06/21 To 05/22	Targeted Virtual Training Sessions have been delivered to teams across the council, particularly those services seeing high volumes of work.	Phil Butt	
Council-wide	<p>Review all relevant policies concerning fraud aspects</p> <p>Ensuring that all hold the most up to date legislative information as well as ensuring best practice is always adhered to.</p>	01/22		Michael Dineen	
Revenues & Treasury	<p>COVID-19 Business Grants Counter Fraud Programme</p> <p>The council has awarded £19m of government grants to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team will be using the Counter Fraud tools provided by the Cabinet Office and commercial sector to assure the payment already made and prevent future frauds.</p> <p><i>(Continued from 2020/21 due to ongoing grants)</i></p>	06/21 To 05/22	<p>The Post-Assurance work on Grants already awarded is continuing as part of the national programme with the team at the Cabinet Office.</p> <p>The current grant schemes continue to be monitored between the Revenues & CF&I teams to prevent fraud and respond to identified incidents.</p>	David Nash	
Council-wide	<p>Renewed Education & Marketing Campaign for Countering Fraud, Housing Fraud, Insider Threats and Corruption</p>	12/21		Nicholas Coker	
Council-wide	<p>Targeting POCA and Civil Legislation to maximise effect on criminal behaviour</p> <p>Ensure that CFI utilise the appropriate legislation to maximise the effects on criminals and ensure that our vision of protecting the public purse is adhered to by promoting this work.</p>	06/21 To 05/22		Roger Noakes	

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9 September 2021	ITEM: 8
Standards and Audit Committee	
Internal Audit Charter 2021	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor	
Accountable Assistant Director: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director of Law & Governance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

The Internal Audit Charter is a formal document that defines the Internal Audit Services' purpose, authority and responsibility. The Internal Audit Charter establishes the internal audit's position within the Council, including the nature of the Head of Internal Audit's functional reporting relationship with the Standards & Audit Committee; authorises access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defines the scope of internal audit activities. Final approval of the Internal Audit Charter lays with the Standards & Audit Committee.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee approve the internal Audit Charter 2021 and the Chair of the Standards & Audit Committee signs the Charter on behalf of the Committee.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The foundation of an effective internal audit service is compliance with standards and proper practices.
- 2.2 A professional, independent and objective internal audit service is one of the key elements of good governance, as recognised throughout the UK public sector.
- 2.3 An effective internal audit service should:

- Understand the whole organisation, its needs and objectives;
- Understand its position with respect to the organisation's other sources of assurance and plan its work accordingly;
- Be seen as a catalyst for improvement at the heart of the organisation;
- Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives; and
- Be forward looking – knowing where the organisation wishes to be and aware of the national agenda and its impact.

2.4 This Charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Thurrock Council.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The Charter has been prepared in order to help to support the provision of an effective internal audit service and to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To provide the Council with assurance that the internal audit service is working towards compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 The Internal Audit Charter has been presented to Directors Board and agreed with the Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery as the responsible officer.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 There is no direct impact on the policies, priorities, performance or on the Community although an effective internal audit service may impact indirectly on all areas of the Council's business.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Joanne Freeman**
Finance Manager

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law & Governance

The contents of this report and appendixes form part of the council's responsibility to comply with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including to at least annually undertake an effective internal audit to, amongst other things, evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance. The council has delegated responsibility for ensuring this is taking place to the Standards & Audit Committee. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health**

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no significant other implications arising from this report.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).
- CIPFA – PSIAS Local Government Application Note (February 2019)
- Internal Audit Charter 2019

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Charter 2021.

Report Author:

Gary Clifford

Chief Internal Auditor, Thurrock Council Internal Audit Service, Resources & Place Delivery

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Thurrock Council

Internal Audit Charter 2021

September 2021

To be presented to Standards and Audit Committee on the 9th
September 2021

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Consultation

This Audit Charter will be circulated to the members of Directors Board, the Standards & Audit Committee and Section 151 Officer as part of the consultation process.

Distribution

Copies of this Audit Charter will be provided to all members of the Standards & Audit Committee, Section 151 Officer and all staff by being made available on the council's internet site.

Who to contact to find out more:

Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor

Email: gclifford@thurrock.gov.uk

Telephone: (01375) 652702

Version – 1 - Next review date September 2023 or as required by changes to working practices or legislation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Internal Auditing is an independent and objective assurance and consulting activity that is guided by a philosophy of adding value to improve the operations of Thurrock Council. It assists the Council in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, internal control.
- 1.2 This Charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Thurrock Council.
- 1.3 The internal audit service is provided by Thurrock Council's Internal Audit team. Your key internal audit contact is:

	Chief Internal Auditor
Name	Gary Clifford
Email address	gclifford@thurrock.gov.uk

- 1.4 This Charter has been prepared in order to support the Council in ensuring it has in place an effective Internal Audit Service that meets the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS) which came into effect from 1st April 2013. This Standards were updated in February 2019.
- 1.5 This Charter will be reviewed, updated as required and reported to the Standards & Audit Committee for consideration on a bi-annual basis.
- 1.6 For the purposes of this Charter, the Chief Internal Auditor fulfils the role of the council's Head of Internal Audit (HoIA) and is referred to as such throughout most of the document.
- 1.7 Within Thurrock Council, the HoIA does not have any responsibility for other operational areas within the council.

2 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

- 2.1 Internal Audit is defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as:

“An independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by introducing a systematic, disciplined approach in order to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.”

- 2.2 Internal Audit is a key part of the assurance cycle for the council and provides senior management with assurance on whether the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes are adequate and operating effectively.

- 2.3 To clarify and align this Charter with the PSIAS, senior management are defined as Directors' Board, the Leadership Group and elected Members of the Council.

3 PROFESSIONALISM

- 3.1 The internal audit activity will govern itself by adherence to The Institute of Internal Auditors' mandatory guidance including the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards)*. This mandatory guidance constitutes principles of the fundamental requirements for the professional practice of internal auditing and for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal audit activity's performance.
- 3.2 The Institute of Internal Auditors' Practice Advisories, Practice Guides, and Position Papers will also be adhered to as applicable to guide operations. In addition, the internal audit activity will adhere to the council's relevant policies and procedures and the internal audit activity's standard operating procedures manual.

4 AUTHORITY

- 4.1 In accordance with Chapter 9, Part 3, Section 1, Paragraph 1.9 of the Council Constitution covering the Finance Procedure Rules, to enable the HoIA and internal audit staff to fulfil their responsibilities, they have the right to automatic and full access to all records (however held) relating to any transaction carried out or on behalf of the Council and to any of the Council's premises or land. They may seek and obtain any explanations they need to conduct their work, or require any employee to produce Council assets under their control, wherever located.
- 4.2 The HoIA and internal audit staff are not authorised to perform any operational duties associated with the organisation which may conflict with their independence.

5 ORGANISATION

- 5.1 The HoIA will report functionally to the Standards & Audit Committee and administratively (i.e. day to day operations) to the Assistant Director of Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer).
- 5.2 The Standards & Audit Committee will:
- Approve the internal audit charter.
 - Approve the risk based internal audit plan.
 - Receive communications from the HoIA on the internal audit activity's performance relative to its plan and other matters.
 - Make appropriate inquiries of management and the HoIA to determine whether there is inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

6 INDEPENDENCE AND OBJECTIVITY

- 6.1 The internal audit activity will remain free from interference by any element in the organisation, including matters of audit selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing, or report content to permit maintenance of a necessary independent and objective mental attitude.
- 6.2 Internal auditors will have no direct operational responsibility or authority over any of the activities audited. Accordingly, they will not implement internal controls, develop procedures, install systems, prepare records, or engage in any other activity that may impair their judgment.
- 6.3 Internal auditors will exhibit the highest level of professional integrity and objectivity in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information about the activity or process being examined. Internal auditors will make a balanced assessment of all the relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests, or by others, in forming judgments.
- 6.4 The HoIA will confirm to the Standards & Audit Committee, at least annually through the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report, the organisational independence of the internal audit activity.
- 6.5 To enhance the independence of Internal Audit, its personnel report direct to the HoIA. The HoIA has the right of independent access to the Chief Executive, as well as reporting lines and direct access to the Section 151 Officer, Assistant Director of Law & Governance and the Chair and members of the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 6.6 The HoIA will hold one to one meetings with the Chair of the Standards & Audit Committee, to whom all significant concerns relating to the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management activities, internal control and governance will be reported.
- 6.7 The HoIA and team of auditors are required to sign a declaration of interest form on an annual basis. Copies of the signed declarations will be retained by the HoIA.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 One of the main responsibilities of Internal Audit is to support the Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery in the discharge of their duties as Section 151 Officer, by providing an effective internal audit of the Council's systems of internal control, risk management and corporate governance in accordance with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. Internal Audit do this by providing a high quality, independent service to the Council which evaluates and reports, through the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report, on the effectiveness of the risk management, internal control and governance processes. This is presented to the Standards & Audit Committee at their first meeting of the municipal year and is used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

7.2 The scope of internal auditing encompasses, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, and internal controls as well as the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the organisation's stated goals and objectives. This includes:

- Evaluating risk exposure relating to the achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives.
- Evaluating the reliability and integrity of information and the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information.
- Evaluating the systems established to ensure compliance with those policies, plans, procedures, laws, and regulations which could have a significant impact on the organisation.
- Evaluating the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verifying the existence of such assets.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency with which resources are employed.
- Evaluating operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established objectives and goals and whether the operations or programs are being carried out as planned.
- Monitoring and evaluating governance processes.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management processes.
- Performing consulting and advisory services related to governance, risk management and control as appropriate for the organisation. Where consulting or advisory activities are undertaken, the HoIA will not issue an assurance report. An advisory report will be issued.
- Reporting periodically on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, responsibility, and performance relative to its plan.
- Reporting significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters needed or requested by the Standards & Audit Committee.
- Evaluating specific operations at the request of the Standards & Audit Committee or management, as appropriate.

7.3 The HoIA also has a responsibility to:

- Develop a flexible, risk based 3 year internal audit strategy and detailed annual audit plan. The plan will usually be submitted to the Standards & Audit Committee for review and approval each year at its March meeting, prior to work commencing to deliver the plan.
- Include any additional tasks requested by management and the Standards & Audit Committee following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery and/or Assistant Director of Law & Governance.
- Ensure the internal audit team consists of professional and suitably skilled audit staff with sufficient knowledge and experience.

- Establish a Quality Assurance and Improvement Program to ensure the quality and effective operation of internal audit activities and compliance with the PSIAS.
- As part of the audit planning cycle, evaluate and assess significant merging or consolidating functions and new or changing services, processes or operations within the organisation.
- Highlight risks and weaknesses in control and make recommendations for improvements to management based on an acceptable and practicable timeframe.
- Carry out follow up reviews to ensure management has implemented agreed internal control improvements within specified and agreed timeframes.
- Liaise with the external auditor to provide maximum audit coverage to the organisation whilst minimising duplication of work.

8 REPORTING

- 8.1 A written report will be prepared and issued by the HoIA or designee following the conclusion of each internal audit engagement and will be distributed as appropriate. Internal audit results will also be communicated to the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 8.2 The HoIA will issue progress reports to the Standards & Audit Committee and management summarising outcomes of audit activities, including follow up reviews. These will be presented in line with the agreed work programme of the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 8.2 The HoIA is required to provide the Section 151 Officer with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving this opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide to the Council is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the risk management, governance and control processes. This assurance is provided through the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report which is presented to the Standards & Audit Committee following the financial year end.

9 DATA PROTECTION

- 9.1 Internal audit files need to include sufficient, reliable, relevant and useful evidence in order to support our findings and conclusions. The majority of these files are stored electronically on the Council's document management system.
- 9.2 Personal data is not shared outside of Thurrock Council. The only exception would be where there is information on an internal audit file that external auditors have access to as part of their review of internal audit work or where there is a legal or ethical obligation to do so (such as providing information to support a fraud investigation based on internal audit findings).

- 9.3 Thurrock Council has a Data Protection Policy in place that requires compliance by all of their employees. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

10 FRAUD

- 10.1 The Standards & Audit Committee recognises that management is responsible for controls to reasonably prevent and detect fraud. Furthermore, the Standards & Audit Committee recognises that internal audit is not responsible for identifying fraud. However, it will assess the risk of fraud and be aware of the risk of fraud when planning and undertaking any internal audit work. Any instances of potential fraud or corruption identified during the course of an internal audit review will be immediately communicated in the first instance to the HoIA who will determine the short-term action to be taken. It will then be discussed with the Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery, Assistant Director of Law & Governance and the Assistant Director of Fraud & Investigation to determine any further action required.

Signature _____
Councillor Cathy Kent
Chair of the Standards & Audit Committee

Date: 9th Sept 2021

Signature _____
Gary Clifford
Chief Internal Auditor

Date: 9th Sept 2021

Signature _____
Sean Clark
Corporate Director of Resources & Place Delivery - Section 151 Officer

Date: 9th Sept 2021

9 September 2021	ITEM: 9
Standards and Audit Committee	
In Quarter 2 Refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non key
Report of: Andy Owen, Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director of Finance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
This report is a public report	

Executive Summary

One of the functions of the Standards and Audit Committee under the Terms of Reference of the Constitution is to provide independent assurance that the authority's risk management arrangements are adequate and effective.

To enable the Standards and Audit Committee to consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk and opportunity management arrangements the report on the refresh of the register is presented on an annual basis and provides details of how the key risks and opportunities facing the authority are identified and managed.

The Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board during July to August to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

This report provides Standards and Audit Committee with the key risks and opportunities identified by the review and the revised Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

A number of the risks and opportunities or management response arrangements have been impacted by the pandemic situation and the effects on the items are reflected in the report.

- 1. Recommendation(s)**
- 1.1 That Standards and Audit Committee note the items and details contained in the Dashboard (Appendix 1).**
- 1.2 That Standards and Audit Committee note the 'In Focus' report (Appendix 2), which highlights the higher priority items identified by the review.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Risk and Opportunity Management (ROM) describes the planned and systematic approach used to identify, evaluate and manage the risks to and the opportunities for the achievement of the Council's objectives.
- 2.2 ROM makes a significant contribution to the sound Corporate Governance arrangements to meet the requirements set out in the Account and Audit Regulations and is an important part of the Council's overall Performance Management Framework.
- 2.3 In accordance with the ROM Policy Strategy and Framework regular reviews of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity register were undertaken during 2020/21 and reported to Performance Board, Directors Board and Standards & Audit Committee.
- 2.4 The annual review of the council's ROM arrangements was undertaken in the last quarter of 2020/21. As part of the review the ROM Policy, Strategy and Framework were updated and reported to Standards and Audit Committee 11 March 2021, via Directors Board 15 February 2021 and Performance Board 05 February 2021.
- 2.5 The refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is the first exercise under the updated ROM Framework. The Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams and Performance Board during July to August to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.
- 2.6 The refresh is normally undertaken in the first quarter during April to June but with the continued impact of the Covid-19 situation and the Council reconsidering the priorities and financial position it was decided to defer the review to the second quarter.
- 2.7 The review has resulted in some changes to the register (e.g. items refreshed, added or removed).

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The outcome of the review is shown in the Dashboard (Appendix 1), In Focus report (Appendix 2) and the following tables.

3.2 Appendix 1 – Dashboard

The refreshed and new items are included in the dashboard table. The dashboard provides a summary of the items in the register mapped against the council's priorities, shows the significance of the risks and opportunities, along with the developments to date and the management time frames.

3.3 Appendix 2 – Risks and Opportunities In Focus report

This document highlights the higher priority items identified by the review.

The rationale for items being in focus is based on the numeric value of the rating. Any risks/opportunities which are currently rated 16 or 12 automatically become in focus and any which are currently rated 9 or 8 would be considered on a case by case basis for the in focus report.

A summary of the position for each in focus item is included below

Risk - In priority (rating) and then reference number order.

Adult Social Care, Stability and Market Failure - Risk 2 (Rating: 16 Critical/Very Likely)

Adult Social Care has received additional funding in recent years – through a precept as part of the Council Tax and also through the Improved Better Care Fund. A significant proportion of this money has been used to stabilise the market place and deliver sustainability for care providers. This has included increasing the capacity of the contract and brokerage team to ensure contract compliance visits and monitoring to take place in a timely manner – reducing or aiding early identification of risks. The introduction of a Brokerage function has also meant that more realistic costs and fees are negotiated. In addition uplifts have been provided (as described in the risk description) to improve stability and domiciliary care has been retendered. Through the Better Care Fund, we have also been able to enhance capacity through investment in a Bridging Service and through enhancing existing services to ensure that people can come out of hospital when medically fit to do so – even when they are unable to return home. This has helped to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care and Waiting Lists.

The current Covid-19 Pandemic has significantly increased the strain on providers and the system as a whole. A number of residential care providers have had to close temporarily due to Covid-19 outbreaks and this has significantly reduced available capacity and also the ability of providers to fill vacancies. The situation is likely to continue throughout the pandemic. Staffing is also a major issue, with increasing staff absence across both residential and domiciliary care sectors. This is having a direct impact on the number of people admitted to care homes and the number of hours available to provide care within the domiciliary care sector. This has led to hard decisions having to be made about how and where hours are distributed, which whilst risk assessed, is leading to some people having less care. This has been compounded by an increase in demand for care services during the period of the pandemic. It is unclear as to whether the demand will be limited to the lifecycle of the pandemic or continue beyond its end. There is also a direct impact on family carers who are being relied upon more and are at increased risk of being unable to cope. The pausing of services such as Day Care will contribute to this situation. The Council has asked for volunteers who are prepared to assist – including with the delivery of care.

The Council has provided additional funding to recognise the financial impact placed on providers. This included a 10% financial resilience payment which was made available to all providers for the first 16 weeks of the last financial year (20-21). The Council also enabled payments to providers to be monthly in advance to help with cash flow. The Government also made funding available to support care homes with infection control subject to the homes meeting certain conditions. Whether the vacancies will continue following Covid cannot be foretold.

At the same time as the pandemic, capacity issues across the system will be compounded by the usual winter pressures. Capacity depends upon the ability to be able to staff facilities and to cope with the additional demand placed on the system by Covid. Delayed Discharges remain low, which is a reflection of how well Thurrock works with its partners and providers, but the ability to maintain this position is extremely tenuous.

Transformation work is however progressing to attempt to overcome and control current challenges – although some elements of the work will take time to be realised. This includes developing a new model of care for domiciliary care and a regional Workforce Development strategy focusing on external provision. At the beginning of 2018, the new domiciliary care contract started with providers now well established within the Borough, although one of the organisations who were successful in the tender process have failed to deliver the capacity contracted for; this is further evidence of the fragility of this market. Work has also taking place on alternative approaches to traditional domiciliary care, with two Wellbeing Teams now in place. Wellbeing Teams will enable us to identify the model required and will focus on enhancing Wellbeing and not just on meeting needs. It will also look at how to encourage people in to the

care industry and to professionalise a caring role.

Despite the work taking place, the risk of market failure remains extremely high. The sheer number of challenges faced by the care market at the current time has led to the risk level being kept at 16.

Impact of Coronavirus - Risk 11

(Rating: 16 Critical/Very Likely)

Recognised that this is not a short term crisis and there is no easy or quick solution to the situation as the position/challenges faced change regularly. Regular monitoring of the position, issues, planned response and recovery undertaken through gold/silver command structure. Member Oversight and Engagement Board meet weekly as of the end of October in order to monitor the data frequently and respond to the processes now in place since the introduction of the three tier local COVID alert levels. Ongoing regular reports from June 2020 to boards and committees with regard to the response, recovery and the implications of pandemic. The Council continues to strive to meet the challenge of keeping up with and responding to the latest position and government guidance. Focus is shifting to recovery and how we support residents and businesses as the economy is opened up more. The council and our partners are also looking at how we live with COVID and in the short and medium term. As more restrictions are lifted the infection rate is likely to go up, therefore this will continue to be monitored very closely. Vaccination levels are high in the borough, however the situation is still of great concern and we are yet to fully understand the impact on the wider local economy. Forecast rating of 9 put forward but subject to change as the year unfolds and the situation changes.

CSC, Service Standards & Inspection Outcome - Risk 6

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

This risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children's social care quality of service and provision. The pressures outlined throughout previous years remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity and ongoing activity to review high cost placements. The implementation of the early help service model and the Thurrock multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been successful. The service continues to maximize the external investment and opportunities presented through the Troubled Families Programme and continuously measures impact of the MASH.

The service is demand led and cannot fail to respond to the needs of a child due to budget or resource constraints. Changes on a local, regional and national level can have a significant impact on the demand for services. War and international factors can result in an unplanned increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children or families with no recourse to public funds. Geographical movement of families across the Eastern Region and London can see a rise in families needing services, including large sibling groups. Areas for improvement were identified in the Ofsted (ILAC) 2019 and a Development Plan has been created to address this.

As a consequence of Covid19 since March 2020 there has been a significant impact on the way in which we deliver services within children's social care. There has been an impact on the budget which is subject to continuous scrutiny. The Service has recently had a focused visit in June 2021 with a key focus on the local authority's arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial risk. A letter will be published by Ofsted on 09th August and the service will update the Development Plan to address any identified learning/improvements. The service is now preparing for the next Ofsted visit which in all likelihood will be a full ILACS inspection. Key focus on Criminal Exploitation.

The level and complexity of some children and young people's needs and the lack of available national resources (specialist placements) to meet those needs is driving up cost pressures. As the Council continues to improve practice regarding the identification and tackling of Child Exploitation there is an increase in demand for service provision in terms of intervention; prevention and victim support. Current and new duties in terms of radicalization also place pressures on the service in terms of workforce capacity. Trends can be predicted based on previous levels of demand but these are subject to variance and there has been an increase in youth violence locally.

The pressures outlined above will not be alleviated in the short term and the risk rating will remain at the higher (red) level for the period covered. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in volumes of contacts into the service, including court delays regarding management of cases. The lack of available of foster placements and residential placements for children with complex needs

is a national issue.

CSC, Safeguarding & Protecting Children & YP - Risk 7 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The nature of the work in terms of safeguarding and supporting children at risk of harm means that this will always be a high risk area although through the application of the S.E.T (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Child Protection procedures the department actively works to mitigate this risk and reduce the likelihood.

The risk of children and young people coming to harm cannot be completely eliminated and the risk level needs to remain high and ensure clear vigilance across the council and partner agencies. New and emerging risk factors will arise and there is always a potential for agencies 'not knowing, what they don't know' that needs to be guarded against.

Embedding the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help has supported earlier identification of risk through a multi-agency approach enabling the department to work to intervene at an earlier stage and reduce the risk of harm in some cases. The development and implementation of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements is further improving the inter-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people living in Thurrock.

The impact for individual children and families, particularly in cases of child death is significant and whilst actions to reduce the likelihood are implemented the impact will remain as critical. There is also a critical impact score in terms of reputational damage if a child is not safeguarded or should a child death or serious injury occur.

The ongoing nature of risk in child protection and safeguarding is such that despite effective mitigation the acknowledgement of the risk needs to remain high and will not reduce. This is not to say that the risks are unmanageable but for effective management the gravity and complexity of the risk needs to be acknowledged.

Managing this risk places inherent pressures on the Children's Social Care budget as a demand led budget. Effective demand and resource management remain a priority for the service within an overriding context of keeping children safe.

Risk will remain constant throughout the period covered. The emergence of Covid19 resulted in a number of changes to service delivery. An Operational Procedures document during the Coronavirus outbreak was implemented for some time and is still being reviewed on a regular basis. This document ensures business continuity is maintained following appropriate risk assessments and government guidelines.

Property Ownership Liability - Risk 14 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Council properties (except for HRA and parks) moved to corporate function for repair, maintenance planning and budgets transferred. There has been a significant increase of number of properties moving to the Corporate Landlord Function which has resulted in a sharp increase in work streams. Condition and compliance surveys completed and loaded on Concerto database. The Estates Module remains outstanding on Concerto. This is a significant module which will assist with the management of leases and other property related matters, it is resource intensive and currently does not have adequate resources allocated to be able to progress. Resource has been identified to move this module on however it is unclear if this should progress given the proposed change of IT systems to Microsoft 365. The Management module of Concerto is now live and although the implementation has been and remains labour intensive its use is generally a success. A draft Corporate Landlord Policy and a draft Corporate Landlord Procedure have been drafted, but can only be finalised once the resourcing requirements of the Corporate Property Team are agreed. The Facilities management function was brought back in house in April 2020 and Corporate Property Team restructure needs to be finalised to strengthen the capacity of the service. There is particular concern that vital roles are being undertaken by contract staff with no contingency or succession planning possible. In addition there is a lack of resource where posts remain vacant and where new resource is required to undertake a greater workload both within the Corporate Property and FM teams. A lack of resource in the Facilities Management (FM) Team with much increased work load particularly within the security team is a major risk with additional shifts having to be covered by on call agency. FM Team would be further impacted in event of COVID outbreak within the teams, security at Civic Offices and Wardens at Thameside

would be covered by contractor. Mailroom and reprographics would be major impact but would need to reduce service initially and call on wider team for assistance.

Proposals to refresh governance arrangements for property matters was submitted in March 2020, this included a revised TOR for Property Board, a new reporting structure and an itemised forward plan to support property management, governance and enhance visibility of Corporate Landlord matters. The constitution has been changed limiting requiring consent for all disposal from the Leader or Cabinet which has resulted in all disposals requiring a ED2 and increased workload. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the rapid and unplanned closure of buildings for an unknown period of time and plans/protocols were established and arrangements put in place to ensure the safety of buildings and for critical staff that needed to work at the Civic Centre. The recommissioning of buildings was carefully planned to ensure health and safety hazards are managed thereby ensuring buildings were safe for re-occupation. Additional national lockdowns and changes to protocols result in the reversal of that process and add additional resource demand for decommissioning and re commissioning buildings and managing changing Covid Requirements, Additionally, the pandemic has necessitated social distancing measures and new working practices to protect staff, visitors and customers from the virus. Risk Assessments and re-occupation plans in accordance with PHE and government guidance are drafted for the Civic Centre and further guidance for other corporate buildings and satellite sites are to be developed and rolled out as appropriate. Due to restriction of staff within Civic Offices no fire marshal system in place, signing in/out procedure, risk if staff do not adhere to system in event of fire evacuation. The Corporate Property Team has been asked to undertake a wider ranging Asset Review with a view to identifying buildings that can be re-tasked or disposed of to generate capital receipts in order to support the overall Council budget. The asset review is progressing and this is a significant piece of work requiring substantial input from an already under resourced team and as it progresses results in significantly more work once assets are identified to dispose of. Workloads generally remain an issue within the Estates and Assets teams which would be significant risk of being highly impacted by long term staff sickness or staff leaving post, this is further exacerbated by key functions within the assets team being covered by agency staff with no other internal options. The current reduction in Capital spend is having a detrimental effect on the day to day management and maintenance of the Council's assets both Operational and Non-Operational as items requiring capital expenditure are potentially deteriorating which will result in additional future cost should the asset remain in the Council's owner ship or potential Health and Safety issues if remedial work is not undertaken. The continuing impact of Covid is having a detrimental effect on our Commercial occupiers and will likely impact on the potential expected rental income for this year and next with the number of void properties also likely to increase. Risk to be reviewed in the next review (Quarter 3 2021/22).

Delivery of the MTFs 2021/22 - 2023/24 - Risk 16

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Regular financial reports presented to members throughout the current financial year.

Budget for 2020/21 has been delivered and a balanced budget for 2021/22 was set, with a remaining gap of £25.349m for the subsequent 2 years (2022/23 and 2023/24) as reported to Cabinet and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee January 2021, prior to full approval by Council in February 2021.

This includes funding announcements in December 2020 but this only covers 1 year. Hence there is uncertainty over the funding for the next 2 years. Additional Covid funding supported the position in 2020/21 and continues to address some pressures in 2021/22. Further progress on delivery of the savings target will continue in 2021/22 and will be reviewed by Cabinet. Further clarity on funding for 2022/23 is expected by December 2021.

A13 Widening Project - Risk 18

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The A13 corridor is a vital part of the transport network in Thurrock and the south Essex area, enabling the economy to grow through expanding businesses, new housing and more jobs.

Major economic growth

Thurrock and the south Essex area has seen major investment in recent years, including the opening of DP World London Gateway Port and Logistics facility, and the continued development of Lakeside retail and entertainment complex. This is part of a planned £20 billion investment in jobs, homes and infrastructure in Thurrock, including developments led by the private companies at Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside Basin and the Port of Tilbury. A widened A13 will help support these developments, and also the significant investment planned for other parts of south

Essex, including £272 million at Airport Business Park in Southend.

Excellent transport links: Thurrock and the South Essex area already has many excellent transport links with London, the rest of the UK and Europe, by road, river and air. The London Gateway Harbour Empowerment Order 2008 gave legal backing for further improvements to the surrounding road network, including widening the A13. This will be a benefit to traffic flow as currently around 77,000 vehicles each day use the A13 between the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) and the A1014 (The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope).

Funding and partners: DP World London Gateway have contributed to the costs and the rest from government funding, directed through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), and Thurrock Council.

There has been an ongoing review and monitoring of the project and implementation of planned actions to manage identified issues, areas for improvement and potential risks. Good progress has been made in 2021 to date with a target completion date of Jan 2022. The high risk elements of the project including earthworks and demolition have progressed well, helped by a period of relatively good weather. The project budget remains a significant risk and is being closely monitored alongside the revised delivery timeline and the remaining project risks. Covid does remain a threat although this has had minimal impact to the programme over the Spring/Summer.

Waste Strategy for Thurrock - Risk 22

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The Waste Strategy for Thurrock has been adopted and preparations for its implementation have begun. National Strategy and Policy are still being consulted upon and decisions are still being finalised. This has the potential to leave the councils strategy for waste at risk of non-compliance in some areas, however as the Strategy is considered a living document, adjustments and amendments are anticipated. If the national strategy becomes such that decisions taken at the start of writing the local strategy may result in service-delivery choices requiring rethinking or changing. The risk is that such choices around vehicle-design etc. are difficult and potentially costly to change once made. Political influence via leadership changes continue to remain a possibility particularly given the program of local elections within the borough.

External consultation has been sourced in order to sense-check the strategy against current national policy and a temporary pause placed on part of the new vehicle procurement process, however this remains time-critical and action may be required imminently if considered necessary from the sense-checking.

Fraud - Risk 25

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The Counter Fraud & Investigation service has an organisational-wide strategy and proactive work plan to monitor and manage the identified risks. A persistent training and education regime is in place, where experts from the service work with staff, contractors, Members and in the council's supply chain to identify and mitigate the risks, and increase awareness.

The council has current and effective policies on Counter Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and Money Laundering which are kept under constant review, with relevant updates being added or removed where appropriate. These policies acknowledge the threats and install an action plan in identified incidents including, civil & criminal litigation and redress to recover any identified losses. Any control weaknesses identified in investigations are rectified in collaboration with the affected services and Internal Audit through SMART Action Plans.

In the last year the council has come under pressure from COVID-19 and the situation has reduced the traditional work that CFI would complete during a year, however that has not meant the CFI team haven't assisted in the fight against fraud. Due to the pandemic the government announced a number of grants that were to be administered by local authorities, these were collectively known as Business Support Grants (BSG). The CFI team have worked closely with the Revenues team (those responsible for administering the grants) to complete pre & post assurance checks on all applications that were received. This preventative counter fraud work saw 61 grant applications investigated and stopped, saving over £600,000 of potential losses of public funds.

These risks have sat alongside the 'normal' fraud risks that the council faces every day, namely Single Person Discount fraud, Tenancy Fraud, Right To Buy fraud as well as other forms of fraud such as Procurement/Contract fraud. The fraud awareness programmes that were put to all staff will assist with identifying this risk and early intervention is always key to an organisation combating the risk it faces. These have continued and working alongside our alert system, staff

are made aware of fraud trends and or known risks.

Covid 19 has also enabled an easier avenue for 'mandate fraud' which has been highlighted to staff, as we are not in the office spaces we once shared, communication is largely placed within the email systems. This can create the opportunity for criminals to compromise email accounts and facilitate a fraud. Where staff would normally be able to speak directly to a colleague, this now does not happen and must be brought into the risk faced by the council. CFI have been approached by various council who have fallen victim to £1m+ mandate frauds.

CFI has a programme of proactive work proposed to ensure the council's posture against fraud is robust and effective. Details of the proactive work programme are included in the management action plan for the risk.

The risk remains at 12, as new risks have emerged alongside old risks, the new risks have mitigated measures taken, however it is clear that those measures do not affect the 'attempts' we come across and thus it is felt that the risk to the council remains likely and critical. The council can ill afford a substantial loss of funds at this very critical time.

Local Plan - Risk 27

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Any failure on the part of the Council to prepare a Local Plan in accordance with the timescale and programme set out the Council's Local Development Scheme will put it at risk of possible intervention by the Secretary of State. Should this occur the Council could lose the ability to plan for future development of Thurrock with its plan-making powers being taken away by the Secretary of State who has the option of directing another body to take over responsibility for preparing the Local Plan.

Further sanctions could also come in the form of the loss of the Council's New Homes Bonus and a reduced ability to bid for national funding support for new infrastructure.

A failure on the part of the Council to provide a rolling five year land supply would also increase the possibility that land owners and developers would be able to obtain planning permission upon appeal to the Secretary of State for speculative, uncoordinated and piece-meal development in the Green Belt.

Finally the reputational damage and harm to the Council could be substantial as would the abortive costs involved in promoting a Local Plan which will be found unsound at examination.

Despite the problems caused by lockdown and the pandemic situation, significant progress has been made in moving the Plan forward with a particular focus being on the development of the Local Plan evidence base. Further progress has also been made in rolling out Local Plan Planning Performance Agreements with landowners and developers promoting sites and in building up towards the launch of the Community Design Charrettes which will now start in September.

Regular updates on the development of the Local Plan and next steps provided to the Local Development Plan Task Force (a cross party Members working group) and the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the project and the plan to be considered throughout the process.

Major Projects (Place Delivery) - Risk 19

(Rating: 12 Substantial/Very Likely)

The Thurrock growth programme crosses many disciplines within the Council. It requires significant programme management capacity from the Regeneration team to lead the programme alongside a joined up approach with other areas of the authority to ensure that relevant specialisms are brought in as required and programmes and strategies are complementary. Investment needs to be committed to project development stages before outputs and benefits are realised, significant levels of funding are committed at risk to prove feasibility and investment then needs to continue to secure the benefits from the initial funding. External funding is committed to numerous projects, whilst this reduces the financial burden to the Council, compliance with funding agreements must be achieved to ensure the Council is not exposed financially via claw back mechanisms. Projects span numerous financial years and have to be able to respond to changing market, policy and financial conditions. Strong project and programme managers are essential to ensuring that delivery stays on track and investment secures value for money outputs. Increasing resource capacity in the team via Matrix has provided some additional support and approval has been received to secure 1 additional FTE. The project portfolio could benefit from significant external funding which will put additional pressure on the existing staff resource as more projects are developed. Momentum needs to be maintained in the ongoing restructure to

improve working approaches and secure additional resource.

Opportunity - In priority (rating) and then reference number order.

Investment in Growth - Opportunity 12

(Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

The Council has successfully secured significant amounts of Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and other funds to directly deliver projects and programmes that benefit local residents and businesses directly or through investment infrastructure. This year there has already been opportunity to secure investment from the Community Renewal Fund. The Shared Prosperity Fund is expected to be announced in the Autumn and the Council is also expected to apply for Levelling Up Fund later in the year.

The results of the Towns Fund applications submitted in early 2021 have been announced this week and have secured, in principal, around £40m investment in Thurrock subject to business cases and due diligence.

Treasury Management/Investment Strategy - Opportunity 15a (Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

Investments identified as having the greater ability to make significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision. Investment Strategy established. Review undertaken and position reported to Council Feb 2021. Ongoing review, monitoring and presentation of investment briefings to Standards & Audit Committee, Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee; MTFS Update & Revenue Budget Monitoring report to be presented to Cabinet Sept; MTFS Update & General Fund Budget Implications due Cabinet Oct; Financial Update report to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee due Nov. Cross party Shadow Investment Committee established in 2020 and meetings commenced in quarter 3 2021.

The Council's investment strategy has been paused for new activity following changes to central government lending conditions associated with PWLB borrowing. Existing investments continue to deliver significant income to support service delivery. The pause in new activity will reduce the overall projected level of forecast in the MTFS which will be reflected in the associated future budgets.

- 3.4 For members information the Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood levels are included under Appendix 3 to show the guidelines used to rate and prioritise the items.
- 3.5 Some items have been removed as a result of the exercise and the details are summarised in the following table:

Items in alphabetical order

Delivery of MTFS 2020/21 - 2021/22 - Risk

Item for 2020/21 managed, removed from register and replaced by new item Delivery of MTFS 2021/22 - 2023/24, Risk 16.

Impact of UK Withdrawal from the EU - Risk

The key risk for Thurrock was in relation to network disruption around the Dartford Crossing, M25, J31 and at Purfleet Port, however the government plans include a 3 phased approach to border controls and it was anticipated that this, alongside other mitigations put in place as part of the government's Border Operating Model, including the Kent Permit Scheme and inland border facilities would reduce the worst case scenario assumptions. As at 31 March there had been no significant issues on the highways network as a result of post Brexit activity at our ports. The emergency planning risks have now dissipated and therefore the ERF has stood down all plans and the council's EU Exit Planning group has reduced and refocussed on longer term impacts of Brexit, plus a monitoring role in relation to EU Settlement Status. Services have returned to business as usual in regards to Brexit. Risk managed and removed from the register.

Political Environment - Risk

The local election in May 2021, delayed from 2020 due to the coronavirus outbreak, where a third of the seats were available, led to the current political makeup being Conservatives 29, Labour 16, Thurrock Independents 3 and Independent 1. The financial pressure that the council is facing due to COVID costs and other pressures will mean some difficult decisions will need to be made over

the next few months therefore gaining support from all members will be crucial to the medium future of council services. From September 2020 to May 2021 a full calendar of committee meetings continued albeit hybrid or virtual. Since May, most committee meetings have been conducted in person in line with government guidance. All Overview and Scrutiny Committees are operating as normal. The decision has been taken to remove this risk from the corporate risk register and will be kept under review at a service level. Working within a political environment is considered to be ongoing 'business as usual'.

Raising Thurrock's Profile & Image - Opportunity

Under the banner People, Place, Prosperity we have developed targeted marketing for potential inward investors, with the central communications team working with the Place Directorate and linking in with South Essex 2050. Following successful trips to MIPIM in March 2018 and March 2019 ASELA councils are working closely to develop a joint vision and strategic plan and have recently launched an area wide engagement exercise. The joint presence at MIPIM in March 2020 did not go ahead due to the COVID outbreak and this may have slowed momentum with investors and developers, who themselves will have been disrupted by COVID, although some new contacts have still been made. We are reviewing the situation for our investors very carefully.

The council has also won or been finalists in a number of national awards over the last couple of years, including for planning, housing regeneration, housing, commercial strategy, community engagement, environment, social care, Councillor of the Year awards as well as MJ Senior Leadership Team and Local Authority of the Year.

There is lots of work going on with partners, particularly around the Thames Freeport and ASELA. This opportunity therefore has been subsumed into two other Opportunities around Backing Thurrock Strategy (Opportunity 13) and Investing in Growth (Opportunity 12) and the item is therefore removed from the register.

Thurrock Growth Programme - Opportunity

In recent years there has been significant investment in the borough - particularly around the Port of Tilbury and London Gateway Logistics Park. However the pandemic has had a significant impact on the Business Community.

In 2020/21 the Council has produced a new Economic Strategy - Backing Thurrock. Backing Thurrock reflects a different approach to recovering from the pandemic, resilience and a return to growth. It includes a number of projects and programmes and is subject of a new Corporate Opportunity on the register.

Existing Thurrock Growth Programme opportunity removed from register and replaced by new item for Backing Thurrock Strategy. See Opportunity 13 for details.

Waste Strategy for Thurrock (2020/21) - Risk

Risk item for 2020/21, which focussed on the development and agreement of the waste strategy managed and removed from register. Item replaced by new Waste Strategy for Thurrock risk, which picks up the significant issues facing the delivery of the waste strategy. See Risk 22 for details.

3.6 The whole register has been filed on Objective under the shared file for Risk and Opportunity Management

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 One of the functions of the Standards and Audit Committee under the Terms of Reference of the Constitution is to provide independent assurance that the authority's risk management arrangements are adequate and effective

4.2 To enable the Standards and Audit Committee to consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk and opportunity management arrangements the report on the refresh of the register is presented on an annual basis and provides details of how the key risks and opportunities facing the authority are identified and managed.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.
- 5.2 The refreshed Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register was presented to Directors Board 16 August 2021, via Performance Board representatives 12 August 2021.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 ROM is recognised as a good management practice and how successful the council is in managing the risks and opportunities it faces will have a major impact on the achievement of the council's priorities and objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Rosie Hurst**
Interim Senior Management Accountant

Effective risk and opportunity management and the processes underpinning it will provide a more robust means to identify, manage and reduce the likelihood of financial claims and/or loss faced by the council.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Effective risk and opportunity management and the processes underpinning it will provide a more robust means to identify, manage and reduce the likelihood of legal claims or regulatory challenges against the council

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health

The management of risk and opportunities provides an effective mechanism for monitoring key equality and human right risks associated with a range of service and business activities undertaken by the council. It also provides a method for reducing the likelihood of breaching our statutory equality duties.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Risk and opportunity management contributes towards the council meeting the requirements of Corporate Governance and the Account & Audit Regulations.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register, July 2021. The document can be accessed via the following shared Risk and Opportunity Management file on Objective: <https://edrms.thurrock.gov.uk:443/id:fA1213633>

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Dashboard
- Appendix 2 - In Focus report
- Appendix 3 - Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood

Report Author:

Andy Owen

Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager

Dashboard Table - Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register July 2021

Risks									
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / AD or Strategic Lead	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Forecast	
			In Qtr 2 (2020/21)	In Qtr 3 (2020/21)	In Qtr 4 (2020/21)	In Qtr 2 (2021/22)		Rating	Date
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay									
• High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time									
4	Fire Safety Housing Stock	Ewelina Sorbjan	8	8	8	8	➔	8	*31/03/22
9	Pay Review Phase 2 (Allowances)	Mykela Pratt	-	-	9	9	➔	6	01/09/21
10	Cyber Security	Andy Best	6	6	6	6	➔	6	*31/03/22
16	Delivery of MTFs 21/22 - 23/24 (New)	Sean Clark	-	-	-	12	N/A	8	28/02/22
22	Waste Strategy for Thurrock (New)	Julie Rogers	-	-	-	12	N/A	8	31/08/22
23	Emergency Planning	Cheryl Wells	6	6	6	6	➔	6	*31/03/22
24	Business Continuity Planning	Performance Board	9	9	9	9	➔	6	*31/03/22
25	Fraud	David Kleinberg	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/22
• Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing									
2	ASC Stability and Market Failure	Les Billingham	12	16	16	16	➔	12	*31/03/22
3	Housing Needs and Homelessness	Ewelina Sorbjan	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/22
5	Welfare Reforms	Peter Doherty	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/22
6	CSC Service Standards & Inspection Outcome	Janet Simon	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/22
7	CSC Safeguarding & Protecting Children & Young People	Janet Simon	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/22
26	Failure to Comply With the Prevent Duty 2015	Michelle Cunningham	8	8	8	8	➔	8	*31/03/22
Place - A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future									
• Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places									
17	Lower Thames Crossing	Colin Black	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/22
18	A13 Widening Project	Colin Black	16	16	16	12	⬇️	8	31/03/22
21	Highway Funding and Standard	Julie Nelder	6	6	6	9	⬆️	9	*31/03/22
• Fewer public buildings with better services									
14	Property Ownership Liability	Sean Clark	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/22
Prosperity - A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations									
• Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy									
19	Major Projects (Place Delivery)	Sean Clark	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/22
27	Local Plan	Andy Millard	9	9	16	12	⬇️	12	*31/03/22
• Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services									
15b	Treasury Management & Investment Strategy	Sean Clark	8	8	8	8	➔	8	*31/03/22
All Priorities - People, Place & Prosperity									
11	Impact of Coronavirus	Directors Board	16	16	16	16	➔	9	*31/03/22

Footnote: Forecast Date: Retained = The risk is managed to the required level (risk appetite) but ongoing monitoring/review required via the S/C R&O Register.
 Removed = The risk is removed from the S/C R&O Register (e.g. risk realised or managed to the required level - risk appetite). For items managed to the required level any ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Dept., if needed.
 * = The date applies to when the risk/management action plan documentation will be refreshed (e.g. used for medium/long term risks, where the risk circumstances are expected to change over a period of time).
 Priority: **Red** = High, **Amber** = Medium, **Green** = Low. Ratings: Lower is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (➔ Static, ⬆️ Increased, ⬇️ Decreased)

Opportunities									
Opp Ref / Priority	Opportunity Heading	Director / AD or Strategic Lead	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Forecast	
			In Qtr 2 (2020/21)	In Qtr 3 (2020/21)	In Qtr 4 (2020/21)	In Qtr 2 (2021/22)		Rating	Date
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay									
• High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time									
8	Digital Council Programme	Jackie Hinchliffe	9	9	9	9	→	9	*31/03/22
• Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing									
1	Health & Social Care Transformation	Les Billingham	6	6	6	6	→	9	31/03/22
Place - A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future									
• Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places									
20	Thurrock Regeneration Ltd	Helen McCabe	6	6	6	9	↑	9	*31/03/22
Prosperity - A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations									
• Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy									
12	Investment in Growth	Gerard McCleave	12	12	12	12	→	16	31/03/22
13	Backing Thurrock Strategy (New)	Gerard McCleave	-	-	-	8	N/A	16	31/03/22
• Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services									
15a	Treasury Management & Investment Strategy	Sean Clark	12	12	12	12	→	12	*31/03/22

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Footnote: Forecast Date: Retained = The opportunity is managed to the required level but ongoing monitoring/review required via the S/C R&O Register.
 Removed = The opportunity is removed from the S/C R&O Register (e.g. opportunity realised or managed to the required level). For items managed to the required level any ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Dept., if needed.
 * = The date applies to when the opportunity/management action plan documentation will be refreshed (e.g. used for medium/long term opportunities, where the opportunity circumstances are expected to change over a period of time).
 Priority: **Gold** = High, **Silver** = Medium, **Bronze** = Low. Ratings: Higher is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (→ Static, ↑ Increased, ↓ Decreased)

Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register July 2021

In Focus Report

The Items are Split Between Risk & Opportunity and Listed in Priority (Rating) and then Reference Number Order.

Risks In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner	
<p>The risk is that a combination of on-going pressures will result in lack of stability in the care market place resulting ultimately in market failure. Whilst the Council has given additional resource in the form of uplifts, they fall short of what is requested. The domiciliary care rate has been increased with the retender of the domiciliary care contract – this has resulted in greater stability, but difficulties remain. For example, issues concerning recruitment and retention. Hospital capacity is still an issue, but our ability to move people on more quickly has increased as a result of increased investment arising from additional adult social care monies – e.g. improved better care fund and social care precept. The additional funding is however limited which is likely to be an additional risk to stability. There is also a risk that additional capacity is used inappropriately as a backstop due to lack of capacity in domiciliary care. The recent and ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the pressures on the adult social care market and the extent to which local authorities and the nation are dependent upon the market to provide care for the some of the Country’s most vulnerable people. Covid-19 has also seen a significant increase in demand for care which is pushing provider capacity further still. For providers, fees and rates are still an issue and as a result – compounded by the National Living Wage, and despite activity over the last 18 months, the risk of failure is still very real.</p>		Les Billingham	
Link to Corporate Priority			
<p>People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.</p>			
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	29/07/2021	Impact: Critical (4)
			Likelihood: Very Likely (4)
			Rating: 16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 29/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 29/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022

Comments

Adult Social Care has received additional funding in recent years – through a precept as part of the Council Tax and also through the Improved Better Care Fund. A significant proportion of this money has been used to stabilise the market place and deliver sustainability for care providers. This has included increasing the capacity of the contract and brokerage team to ensure contract compliance visits and monitoring to take place in a timely manner – reducing or aiding early identification of risks. The introduction of a Brokerage function has also meant that more realistic costs and fees are negotiated. In addition uplifts have been provided (as described in the risk description) to improve stability and domiciliary care has been retendered. Through the Better Care Fund, we have also been able to enhance capacity through investment in a Bridging Service and through enhancing existing services to ensure that people can come out of hospital when medically fit to do so – even when they are unable to return home. This has helped to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care and Waiting Lists.

The current Covid-19 Pandemic has significantly increased the strain on providers and the system as a whole. A number of residential care providers have had to close temporarily due to Covid-19 outbreaks and this has significantly reduced available capacity and also the ability of providers to fill vacancies. The situation is likely to continue throughout the pandemic. Staffing is also a major issue, with increasing staff absence across both residential and domiciliary care sectors. This is having a direct impact on the number of people admitted to care homes and the number of hours available to provide care within the domiciliary care sector. This has led to hard decisions having to be made about how and where hours are distributed, which whilst risk assessed, is leading to some people having less care. This has been compounded by an increase in demand for care services during the period of the pandemic. It is unclear as to whether the demand will be limited to the lifecycle of the pandemic or continue beyond its end. There is also a direct impact on family carers who are being relied upon more and are at increased risk of being unable to cope. The pausing of services such as Day Care will contribute to this situation. The Council has asked for volunteers who are prepared to assist – including with the delivery of care.

The Council has provided additional funding to recognise the financial impact placed on providers. This included a 10% financial resilience payment which was made available to all providers for the first 16 weeks of the last financial year (20-21). The Council also enabled payments to providers to be monthly in advance to help with cash flow. The Government also made funding available to support care homes with infection control subject to the homes meeting certain conditions. Whether the vacancies will continue following Covid cannot be foretold.

At the same time as the pandemic, capacity issues across the system will be compounded by the usual winter pressures. Capacity depends upon the ability to be able to staff facilities and to cope with the additional demand placed on the system by Covid. Delayed Discharges remain low, which is a reflection of how well Thurrock works with its partners and providers, but the ability to maintain this position is extremely tenuous.

Transformation work is however progressing to attempt to overcome and control current challenges – although some elements of the work will take time to be realised. This includes developing a new model of care for domiciliary care and a regional Workforce Development strategy focusing on external provision. At the beginning of 2018, the new domiciliary care contract started with providers now well established within the Borough, although one of the organisations who were successful in the tender process have failed to deliver the capacity contracted for; this is further evidence of the fragility of this market. Work has also taking place on alternative approaches to traditional domiciliary care, with two Wellbeing Teams now in place. Wellbeing Teams will enable us to identify the model required and will focus on enhancing Wellbeing and not just on meeting needs. It will also look at how to encourage people in to the care industry and to professionalise a caring role.

Despite the work taking place, the risk of market failure remains extremely high. The sheer number of challenges faced by the care market at the current time has led to the risk level being kept at 16.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Domiciliary Care Contract 2. Uplifts for providers 3. Development of New Model of Care – Wellbeing Teams 4. Prevention agenda – e.g. Stronger Together, identification and management of Long Term Conditions, Enhanced Primary Care 5. Market Development Strategy 6. Market Diversification – e.g. through Micro Enterprises, Shared Lives 7. Better Care Together Health and Social Care Transformation Programme 8. Implementation and evaluation of Wellbeing Teams pilot 	<p>Implemented or on-going</p>

9. Review use of Better Care Fund for 2019-23. Programme for 2020/21 refreshed, submitted and approved 10. Review of Winter Planning (Refreshed as part of BCF review) 11. Market place diversification 12. Workforce Development Strategy – establishment and implementation of regional strategy 13. Additional Funding – Temporary resilience payments, arrangements to assist with cash flow and additional infection control allocated to providers 14. Government funding for providers to help with the impact of Covid 15. Implementation of the appropriate additional capacity in to the system to help maintain flow from Hospital to the Community (e.g. block booking, bridging facility, mutual aid agreement with Essex CC) 16. Review and risk assessment of existing domiciliary care packages to free up additional hours in order to meet increased Covid demand								
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	29/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
17. Continuation and review of management action 1-16 18. Development of a transformation plan for commissioning – including working with providers to develop an alternative approach to the delivery of support within the home		From July 2021 December 2021						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	31/03/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
The Council working with other agencies and the community have a critical role to play in the response to the crisis, shaping the transition and recovery for the borough, local residents and businesses. Failure to maintain plans and resources to deal with the situation will lead to uncoordinated, delayed or an ineffective response and recovery to the crisis and the Council not complying with the requirements of the Coronavirus and Civil Contingencies Acts and missed opportunities to support residents and businesses out of the pandemic								Directors Board	
Link to Corporate Priority									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All priorities - People, Place & Prosperity 									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022

Comments

Recognised that this is not a short term crisis and there is no easy or quick solution to the situation as the position/challenges faced change regularly. Regular monitoring of the position, issues, planned response and recovery undertaken through gold/silver command structure. Member Oversight and Engagement Board meet weekly as of the end of October in order to monitor the data frequently and respond to the processes now in place since the introduction of the three tier local COVID alert levels. Ongoing regular reports from June 2020 to boards and committees with regard to the response, recovery and the implications of pandemic. The Council continues to strive to meet the challenge of keeping up with and responding to the latest position and government guidance. Focus is shifting to recovery and how we support residents and businesses as the economy is opened up more. The council and our partners are also looking at how we live with COVID and in the short and medium term. As more restrictions are lifted the infection rate is likely to go up, therefore this will continue to be monitored very closely. Vaccination levels are high in the borough, however the situation is still of great concern and we are yet to fully understand the impact on the wider local economy. Forecast rating of 9 put forward but subject to change as the year unfolds and the situation changes.

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EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Command structure established and regular meetings of gold and silver (Tactical Coordination Group) commands to monitor and review position, issues, plans, response and recovery.	From Mar 2020
2. Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group established (includes Thurrock Council) and meeting regularly to coordinate the plans and response for Essex.	March 2020
3. Working from home arrangements introduced and all staff advised that they will be required to work from home except for those who have been identified as delivering front line services or are required to be in Council buildings.	19 March 2020
4. Work undertaken with educational establishments to provide provision for priority group of children and young people (e.g. children who have a parent who is a critical worker, vulnerable children and young people).	March 2020
5. Internet Coronavirus information hub established covering latest Government and Health Information; Thurrock Council Services; Financial Support; Government advice for businesses & services; Fraud, Scams & staying safe online and Bereavement support.	April 2020
6. Intranet Coronavirus information hub established covering latest Government Information and Advice; Working Arrangements; Self-Isolation & Absences; Looking After Your Health & Wellbeing; FAQs and How To Help Prevent The Spread Of The Virus.	April 2020
7. COVID19 Working arrangements policy created as a direct response to the pandemic to support working arrangements and to ensure critical Council services continue during these unprecedented times.	23 Apr 2020
8. Community support network established with partners to provide help for the shielded group and other residents in most need during the outbreak	April 2020
9. Government initiatives and funding support provided to the Council, Businesses and the Community, including:- Funding to the CCG to enable the Council to support the hospital discharge process; Funding for care homes to cover the costs of implementing infection control measures to reduce transmission; Funds to develop tailored outbreak control plans; Hardship funds for those receiving Council Tax Support; Funds to support the re-opening of High Streets; Funding to address rough sleeping; Upfront payment of Business Rate Grant; Deferral of business rate payments to government; Payment of Social Care Grant and further direct support to Businesses (e.g. Business rate relief; Grant support to Rural and Small Businesses, Hospitality and Leisure sectors; Financial support to those businesses with ongoing premises costs but are not on the rating list).	From March
10. Regular monitoring and reporting of financial and budget implications (e.g. expenditure, income, council tax, business rates, housing revenue account and capital programme) to Boards and Committees, including regular engagement with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).	From June
11. Development and implementation of guidance/risk assessments for Display Screen Equipment and Making the Workplace Safe.	June 2020
12. Commence transition recovery phase in line with government plans and guidance, including introduction of contract tracing scheme; opening of schools, town and shopping centres; improvements to cycling/walking corridors. Including establishment of Recovery Sub Groups of Tactical Coordination Group established to focus on recovery (e.g. People, Assets and H&S; Children & YP; Business, Finance & Economy and Transport)	From May 2020
13. Establishment of ERF level Recovery Co-ordinating Group	From 03 Jul 20
14. Development, release and ongoing review of Thurrock Covid-19 Outbreak Control Plan	From June 20
15. Health Protection Board established.	From 14 Jul 20

16. Public Health contact tracer team and surveillance cell established.								Mid Jul 2020
17. Member Oversight and Engagement Board monitoring of data and response/recovery situation following introduction of the three tier local COVID alert levels								October 2020
18. Continue to respond to latest situation and guidance, including national restrictions, testing and vaccination programmes in place, with weekly briefings to all members & twice weekly minimum public communications								Ongoing
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date		Progress			
19. Ongoing implementation of actions 1 - 18 above			From 01/07/2021					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	9
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
Failure to manage the increases in demand and budget/resource pressures for Children’s Social Care could lead to a breakdown in the quality or performance of the service provided to vulnerable children and results in less favourable outcomes from inspection and damage to reputation of the service does meet the required standards								Janet Simon	
Link to Corporate Priority									
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022																																																																																																
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Comments

This risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children’s social care quality of service and provision. The pressures outlined throughout previous years remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity and ongoing activity to review high cost placements. The implementation of the early help service model and the Thurrock multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been successful. The service continues to maximize the external investment and opportunities presented through the Troubled Families Programme and continuously measures impact of the MASH.

The service is demand led and cannot fail to respond to the needs of a child due to budget or resource constraints. Changes on a local, regional and national level can have a significant impact on the demand for services. War and international factors can result in an unplanned increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children or families with no recourse to public funds. Geographical movement of families across the Eastern Region and London can see a rise in families needing services, including large sibling groups. Areas for improvement were identified in the Ofsted (ILAC) 2019 and a Development Plan has been created to address this.

As a consequence of Covid19 since March 2020 there has been a significant impact on the way in which we deliver services within children’s social care. There has been an impact on the budget which is subject to continuous scrutiny. The Service has recently had a focused visit in June 2021 with a key focus on the local authority’s arrangements for the protection of vulnerable children from extra-familial risk. A letter will be published by Ofsted on 09th August and the service will update the Development Plan to address any identified learning/improvements. The service is now preparing for the next Ofsted visit which in all likelihood will be a full ILACS inspection. Key focus on Criminal Exploitation.

The level and complexity of some children and young people’s needs and the lack of available national resources (specialist placements) to meet those needs is driving up cost pressures. As the Council continues to improve practice regarding the identification and tackling of Child Exploitation there is an increase in demand for service provision

in terms of intervention; prevention and victim support. Current and new duties in terms of radicalization also place pressures on the service in terms of workforce capacity. Trends can be predicted based on previous levels of demand but these are subject to variance and there has been an increase in youth violence locally.

The pressures outlined above will not be alleviated in the short term and the risk rating will remain at the higher (red) level for the period covered. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in volumes of contacts into the service, including court delays regarding management of cases. The lack of available of foster placements and residential placements for children with complex needs is a national issue.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding functions are in place and robustly applied and a Development Board has been implemented and takes place on a monthly basis.								Ongoing
2. Trix Policies and Procedures have been introduced across Children's Social care. All procedures are subject to review and updating.								Ongoing
3. Joint delivery of the 'Early Offer of Help Strategy' and associated services are now embedded to meet the new the duty placed on Council's to coordinate an early offer of help to families who do not meet the criteria for social care services and ensure that the 'step down and step up' processes are robustly managed.								Ongoing
4. Internal quality assurance audits to evidence appropriate application of thresholds.								Ongoing
5. Ongoing data analysis to enable us to benchmark and target areas for improvement; complete redesign of KPI and trends analysis.								Ongoing
6. Ofsted inspections and action plans to address recommendations included in inspection report and subsequent visits or inspections are continually reviewed and updated.								Ongoing
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
7. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 1 - 6 above as appropriate			From July 2021					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner/	
Failure to ensure that all children and young people in need of help or protection are safeguarded and supported could result in them not achieving their full potential and increasing the risk of a child death or serious injury.								Janet Simon	
Link to Corporate Priority									
People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>

Comments

The nature of the work in terms of safeguarding and supporting children at risk of harm means that this will always be a high risk area although through the application of the S.E.T (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Child Protection procedures the department actively works to mitigate this risk and reduce the likelihood.

The risk of children and young people coming to harm cannot be completely eliminated and the risk level needs to remain high and ensure clear vigilance across the council and partner agencies. New and emerging risk factors will arise and there is always a potential for agencies ‘not knowing, what they don’t know’ that needs to be guarded against.

Embedding the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help has supported earlier identification of risk through a multi-agency approach enabling the department to work to intervene at an earlier stage and reduce the risk of harm in some cases. The development and implementation of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements is further improving the inter-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people living in Thurrock.

The impact for individual children and families, particularly in cases of child death is significant and whilst actions to reduce the likelihood are implemented the impact will remain as critical. There is also a critical impact score in terms of reputational damage if a child is not safeguarded or should a child death or serious injury occur.

The ongoing nature of risk in child protection and safeguarding is such that despite effective mitigation the acknowledgement of the risk needs to remain high and will not reduce. This is not to say that the risks are unmanageable but for effective management the gravity and complexity of the risk needs to be acknowledged.

Managing this risk places inherent pressures on the Children's Social Care budget as a demand led budget. Effective demand and resource management remain a priority for the service within an overriding context of keeping children safe.

Risk will remain constant throughout the period covered. The emergence of Covid19 resulted in a number of changes to service delivery. An Operational Procedures document during the Coronavirus outbreak was implemented for some time and is still being reviewed on a regular basis. This document ensures business continuity is maintained following appropriate risk assessments and government guidelines.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Plan in line with Ofsted inspection in 2019 and will be updated following Focused Visit in June 2021								Nov 2019
2. Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements established. This has now been completed with action plan in place. This will be reviewed regularly.								July 2020
3. Application of the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Child Protection procedures								Ongoing
4. Quality assurance and safeguarding function of Children's Social Care.								Ongoing
5. Legal framework and court action								Ongoing
6. Continue to strengthen the Thurrock Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help								Ongoing
7. Case Audits								Ongoing
8. Quality assurance framework								Ongoing
9. Continuous Development plan in line with Ofsted inspection 2019, and most recent Ofsted Inspection which is regularly reviewed in the monthly Development Reports								Apr 2020
10. Development of safeguarding arrangements to meet statutory requirements								From July 2020
11. Review of Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.								From July 2020
12. Covid19 protocol implemented and is under constant review								From Apr 2020
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
13. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 1-12 above as appropriate			From July 2021					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
The Council is a significant owner and user of operational property and ensuring that buildings comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory and corporate standards is a significant challenge. In addition to the direct consequences of any incident arising from buildings non-compliance, the Council could be faced with damage to its reputation, financial loss, and individual officers facing legal proceedings and in the worst case, the loss of lives of building users. It is therefore imperative that systems are in place to ensure compliance and manage these risks.								Sean Clark	
Link to Corporate Priority									
Place – A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future. Fewer public buildings with better services People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022

Comments
<p>Council properties (except for HRA and parks) moved to corporate function for repair, maintenance planning and budgets transferred. There has been a significant increase of number of properties moving to the Corporate Landlord Function which has resulted in a sharp increase in work streams. Condition and compliance surveys completed and loaded on Concerto database. The Estates Module remains outstanding on Concerto. This is a significant module which will assist with the management of leases and other property related matters, it is resource intensive and currently does not have adequate resources allocated to be able to progress. Resource has been identified to move this module on however it is unclear if this should progress given the proposed change of IT systems to Microsoft 365. The Management module of Concerto is now live and although the implementation has been and remains labour intensive its use is generally a success. A draft Corporate Landlord Policy and a draft Corporate Landlord Procedure have been drafted, but can only be finalised once the resourcing requirements of the Corporate Property Team are agreed. The Facilities management function was brought back in house in April 2020 and Corporate Property Team restructure needs to be finalised to strengthen the capacity of the service. There is particular concern that vital roles are being undertaken by contract staff with no contingency or succession planning possible. In addition there is a lack of resource where posts remain vacant and where new resource is required to undertake a greater workload both within the Corporate Property and FM teams. A lack of resource in the FM Team with much increased work load particularly within the security team is a major risk with additional shifts having to be covered by on call agency. FM Team would be further impacted in event of COVID outbreak within the teams, security at Civic Offices and Wardens at Thameside would be covered by contractor. Mailroom and reprographics would be major impact but would need to reduce service initially and call on wider team for assistance.</p>

Proposals to refresh governance arrangements for property matters was submitted in March 2020, this included a revised TOR for Property Board, a new reporting structure and an itemised forward plan to support property management, governance and enhance visibility of Corporate Landlord matters. The constitution has been changed limiting requiring consent for all disposal from the Leader or Cabinet which has resulted in all disposals requiring a ED2 and increased workload. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the rapid and unplanned closure of buildings for an unknown period of time and plans/protocols were established and arrangements put in place to ensure the safety of buildings and for critical staff that needed to work at the Civic Centre. The recommissioning of buildings was carefully planned to ensure health and safety hazards are managed thereby ensuring buildings were safe for re-occupation. Additional national lockdowns and changes to protocols result in the reversal of that process and add additional resource demand for decommissioning and re commissioning buildings and managing changing Covid Requirements, Additionally, the pandemic has necessitated social distancing measures and new working practices to protect staff, visitors and customers from the virus. Risk Assessments and re-occupation plans in accordance with PHE and government guidance are drafted for the Civic Centre and further guidance for other corporate buildings and satellite sites are to be developed and rolled out as appropriate. Due to restriction of staff within Civic Offices no fire marshal system in place, signing in/out procedure, risk if staff do not adhere to system in event of fire evacuation. The Corporate Property Team has been asked to undertake a wider ranging Asset Review with a view to identifying buildings that can be re-tasked or disposed of to generate capital receipts in order to support the overall Council budget. The asset review is progressing and this is a significant piece of work requiring substantial input from an already under resourced team and as it progresses results in significantly more work once assets are identified to dispose of. Workloads generally remain an issue within the Estates and Assets teams which would be significant risk of being highly impacted by long term staff sickness or staff leaving post, this is further exacerbated by key functions within the assets team being covered by agency staff with no other internal options. The current reduction in Capital spend is having a detrimental effect on the day to day management and maintenance of the Council's assets both Operational and Non-Operational as items requiring capital expenditure are potentially deteriorating which will result in additional future cost should the asset remain in the Council's ownership or potential Health and Safety issues if remedial work is not undertaken. The continuing impact of Covid is having a detrimental effect on our Commercial occupiers and will likely impact on the potential expected rental income for this year and next with the number of void properties also likely to increase. Risk to be reviewed in the next review (Quarter 3 2021/22).

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Corporate Health and Safety Committee established.	Ongoing
2. Asset Management Strategy drafted, consultation with officers undertaken and final draft awaiting DB approval	2018 & ongoing
3. Comprehensive Asbestos Register in place – review being undertaken to ensure accurate building information in place	2018 & ongoing
4. Property Procedure Rules (PPRs) prepared, consulted with officers and key members, awaiting DB approval. Additional Disposals Procedure prepared and submitted for approval in March 2020.	Ongoing
5. Scheme of Delegations reviewed, amended and implemented.	Ongoing
6. Restructure of Regeneration and Assets Service completed in September 2019 and Corporate Property Team transferred to Finance. Apleona FM staff TUPE'd in April 2020.	Mar 2019 to Apr 2020
7. Transfer of all phases and budgets completed	From Jun 2018
8. Compliance and condition surveys for Corporate Landlord Buildings completed April 2020 and new stock condition baseline established and entered into Concerto (new asset management database system), in June 2020.	Jun 2018 to Jun 2020
9. Regular updates on progress and compliance presented to Property Board	From July 2018
10. Retain, Release, Reuse programme for assets implemented	From June 2018
11. Corporate Landlord Working Group developed and work undertaken until Aug 2019	2018 to Aug 2019
12. New Planned & Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme and compliance module developed and proposal submitted in March 2020 to refresh Property Board with key reporting milestones set against a clearly defined annual forward plan.	Mar 2020
13. Closure of Corporate Buildings due to Covid-19 - Risk assessment, closure protocols & inspection regimes implemented and measures introduced for partial use of Civic Centre and Oliver Road Depot.	March 2020

14. Development of plans in accordance with government guidance for the recommissioning of corporate buildings due to Covid19	Dec 2020
15. An urgent review and restructure of the FM team to cover capacity, skills, technical knowledge and capability constraints.	From August 2020
16. Corporate Landlord Policy and Procedure approved following finalisation of resourcing and governance issue associated with PPRs and restructure approved.	From Oct 2020
17. Finalisation of Concerto Estates Management Module and training for staff	From Oct 2020
18. Review and restructure of the Corporate Property Team	From Dec 2020
Residual Risk Rating	Date: 01/07/2021 Impact: Critical (4) Likelihood: Likely (3) Rating: 12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress
19. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 1 - 18 above, as appropriate.	From July 2021	
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date: Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact: Critical (4) Likelihood: Likely (3) Rating: 12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:	Impact: Likelihood: Rating:

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
<p>The Council continues to face financial pressures and has a statutory requirement to set an annual balanced budget. This has become significantly more challenging in the context of COVID-19 and the associated financial impact on the Council.</p> <p>Failure to develop plans to set and maintain a balanced budget and/or to manage the potential financial impact of COVID-19 (i.e. combination of projected reductions in locally raised taxes, increased service costs e.g. adult social care providers and expected reductions in fees/charges) could lead to budget pressures and result in service delivery impacts, negative feedback or publicity or in the worse-case, an ultra vires deficit budget position.</p>								Sean Clark Directors Board	
Link to Corporate Priority									
People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	28/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 28/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 28/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 28/02/2022
<p>Page 112</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>

Comments

Regular financial reports presented to members throughout the current financial year.

Budget for 2020/21 has been delivered and a balanced budget for 2021/22 was set, with a remaining gap of £25.349m for the subsequent 2 years (2022/23 and 2023/24) as reported to Cabinet and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee January 2021, prior to full approval by Council in February 2021.

This includes funding announcements in December 2020 but this only covers 1 year. Hence there is uncertainty over the funding for the next 2 years. Additional Covid funding supported the position in 2020/21 and continues to address some pressures in 2021/22. Further progress on delivery of the savings target will continue in 2021/22 and will be reviewed by Cabinet. Further clarity on funding for 2022/23 is expected by December 2021.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. 2021/22 budget proposals and MTFS established and reported to Cabinet/Council February 2021 (via Overview and Scrutiny Committee Jan 2021).								Feb 2021
2. Central government funding in response to Covid-19 & ongoing monitoring/reporting of cost to MHCLG								From Apr 2021
3. Update on MTFS & revenue budget reported to Cabinet July 21 (including update on addressing the funding gaps in 22/23 and 23/24)								July 2021
4. Development of savings plans and linked refresh of the MTFS in progress								Ongoing
5. Ongoing discussions with MHCLG in respect of cost pressures and future funding in progress								Ongoing
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	28/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
6. Ongoing application of actions 2, 4 & 5 above		Ongoing						
7. Ongoing regular budget monitoring reports, including proposals to reduce the funding gap to Cabinet, via Directors Board and Management Teams.		From July 21						
8. Agreement and reporting of Budget 2021/22 (and 2022/23+)		Feb 2022						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	28/02/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
<p>Work is underway to widen the A13 from 2 to 3 lanes in both directions between the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) and the A1014 (The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope).</p> <p>When complete, the widened section will join with the existing 3-lane section of the A13, west of the A128, providing a continuous 3-lane road in both directions between the M25 and Stanford-le-Hope.</p> <p>As part of the work, 4 bridges will be replaced, the Orsett Cock roundabout will be widened and new traffic lights will be installed to help manage vehicle flows. Public bridges will be built and opened before the old bridges are demolished.</p> <p>The Council is undertaking a number of major projects which place significant demands on the Council and failure to increase capacity to meet the demand could impact the successful delivery of the project.</p>								Colin Black	
Link to Corporate Priority									
Place – A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future. Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places									
Prosperity – A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	29/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 29/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 29/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022

Comments

The A13 corridor is a vital part of the transport network in Thurrock and the south Essex area, enabling the economy to grow through expanding businesses, new housing and more jobs.

Major economic growth

Thurrock and the south Essex area has seen major investment in recent years, including the opening of DP World London Gateway Port and Logistics facility, and the continued development of Lakeside retail and entertainment complex. This is part of a planned £20 billion investment in jobs, homes and infrastructure in Thurrock, including developments led by the private companies at Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside Basin and the Port of Tilbury. A widened A13 will help support these developments, and also the significant investment planned for other parts of south Essex, including £272 million at Airport Business Park in Southend.

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description	Risk Owner								
<p>The Waste Strategy for Thurrock was adopted by Cabinet in November 2020. The strategy called for radical changes to the waste collection regime across the borough, including the introduction of a separate weekly food-waste collection and a move to alternate-weekly residual waste collections (AWC). As part of the move to AWC there is a requirement to procure a number of larger and specialised waste collection vehicles via procurement framework. The purchase of these vehicles is critical to the delivery of the new services and the prompt delivery of these vehicles is time-sensitive to ensure the service can commence on time in September-22 and contribute to the budget savings for the year.</p> <p>The consultations of a number of elements within the Waste Strategy for England including Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Consistent Collection and more source-separated recycling collections are still being debated and any potential impact on the strategy for Thurrock is not known in full at this time.</p> <p>These consultations may also have an impact on a number of waste-disposal contracts presently being negotiated for tender and some potentially challenging decisions may have to be made in order to have appropriate and suitable disposal arrangements in place, that have the potential to allow variations should the national strategy dictate.</p> <p>Key Risks are as follows:</p> <p>Timeline: The Strategy roll-out is planned to commence in September-22, and in advance of this roll-out a number of elements need to be in place in the lead up to the start-date. Vehicles are needed, the orders have been placed and a programme of phased deliveries established with the providers, over a period of December-21 to August-22, food-caddies will need sourcing, procuring and delivering prior to the commencement of the scheme, a complete overhaul of the existing waste collection-rounds using Route-Optimisation software is necessary with the new routes having been shared with Trade Unions and operational staff and a communications campaign designed and implemented to support the new scheme to ensure residents are fully aware of all changes and expectations. These elements will need to follow a planned schedule in order to be successful.</p> <p>Political Differences: While the Waste Strategy for Thurrock was approved by Cabinet, there have since been concerns raised by a number of elected members around the collection regime proposed within the Strategy. The Political arena has not changed over the last round of elections, however given the vigorous programme of annual elections within the borough there still remains a potential for a change in leadership that may or may not influence the decisions made as part of the Strategy, as while the overall aim is to improve recycling performance the route to this improvement is open to interpretation and individual political direction regardless of the earlier cross-party co-operations.</p> <p>Government Influences: The Central Government continue to consult around various elements of the Waste Strategy for England, some of which may still have direct financial impacts as they come to fruition. The decision to introduce a mandatory separate food-waste collection by 2023 has determined a number of critical decisions had to be made in order to meet this deadline that may now potentially risk not qualifying for government funding being made available due to said decisions already been taken. The Waste Strategy for Thurrock was written to encompass the current National Strategy, however this stance is fluid and there is a continued risk the Waste Strategy may not now fully embrace the statutory demands of National Policy and may still be subject to further discussion and adjustment.</p>	Julie Rogers								
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Place - a heritage-rich borough that is ambitious for its future. Fewer public buildings with better services</p> <p>People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services that are right first time.</p> <p>Prosperity – a borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services.</p>									
Inherent Risk Rating	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>01/07/2021</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Very Likely (4)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table>	Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16		

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/08/2022																																																																																																
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Comments
<p>The Waste Strategy for Thurrock has been adopted and preparations for its implementation have begun. National Strategy and Policy are still being consulted upon and decisions are still being finalised. This has the potential to leave the councils strategy for waste at risk of non-compliance in some areas, however as the Strategy is considered a living document, adjustments and amendments are anticipated. If the national strategy becomes such that decisions taken at the start of writing the local strategy may result in service-delivery choices requiring rethinking or changing. The risk is that such choices around vehicle-design etc. are difficult and potentially costly to change once made. Political influence via leadership changes continue to remain a possibility particularly given the program of local elections within the borough.</p> <p>Internal consultation has been sourced in order to sense-check the strategy against current national policy and a temporary pause placed on part of the new vehicle procurement process, however this remains time-critical and action may be required imminently if considered necessary from the sense-checking.</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented									
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The Waste Strategy for Thurrock was formally approved in November 2020. The procurement process for the new collection vehicles has been completed and the tender awarded to the successful supplier. Orders for the vehicles placed and delivery programme details are in discussion to finalise delivery dates that will ensure the new collection regime can commence as planned in September-22. 	<p>Nov 2020 Completed Orders placed</p>									
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Residual Risk Rating</td> <td>Date:</td> <td>01/07/2021</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Likely (3)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>	Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12		

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FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date		Progress					
4. Regular monitoring and consideration of consultations with regard to the Waste Strategy for England and reporting of outcomes and impacts.			From July 2021							
5. Regular monitoring and reporting to Directors Board, Overview & Scrutiny and Cabinet as appropriate.			From July 2021							
6. Food caddy procurement and delivery			From Jan-22 to Aug-22							
7. Route optimisation exercise.			From Jul-21 to Jan-22							
8. Consultation & communication with stakeholders.			Ongoing to Sept 2022							
9. Programme of phased delivery of vehicles			Dec 21 - Aug 22							
10. Roll out of Waste Strategy			Sept 2022							
Forecast Risk Rating			Forecast Date:	31/08/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8
Revised Residual Risk Rating			Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

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UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description								Risk Owner	
The Council is responsible for and provides a wide range of functions and services.								David Kleinberg	
There is a risk that the Authority experiences significant incidents of fraud, bribery, corruption or other economic crime as well as cases of money laundering. This can subsequently result in losses from the delivery of Council functions and services.									
Link to Corporate Priority									
People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	30/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 30/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 30/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022
<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>	<p>Impact</p>

Comments

The Counter Fraud & Investigation service has an organisational-wide strategy and proactive work plan to monitor and manage the identified risks. A persistent training and education regime is in place, where experts from the service work with staff, contractors, Members and in the council's supply chain to identify and mitigate the risks, and increase awareness.

The council has current and effective policies on Counter Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and Money Laundering which are kept under constant review, with relevant updates being added or removed where appropriate. These policies acknowledge the threats and install an action plan in identified incidents including, civil & criminal litigation and redress to recover any identified losses. Any control weaknesses identified in investigations are rectified in collaboration with the affected services and Internal Audit through SMART Action Plans.

In the last year the council has come under pressure from COVID-19 and the situation has reduced the traditional work that CFI would complete during a year, however that has not meant the CFI team haven't assisted in the fight against fraud. Due to the pandemic the government announced a number of grants that were to be administered by local authorities, these were collectively known as Business Support Grants (BSG). The CFI team have worked closely with the Revenues team (those responsible for administering the grants) to complete pre and post assurance checks on all applications that were received. This preventative counter fraud work saw 61 grant applications investigated and stopped, saving over £600,000 of potential losses of public funds.

These risks have sat alongside the 'normal' fraud risks that the council faces every day, namely Single Person Discount fraud, Tenancy Fraud, Right To Buy fraud as well as other forms of fraud such as Procurement/Contract fraud. The fraud awareness programmes that were put to all staff will assist with identifying this risk and early intervention is always key to an organisation combating the risk it faces. These have continued and working alongside our alert system, staff are made aware of fraud trends and or known risks.

Covid 19 has also enabled an easier avenue for 'mandate fraud' which has been highlighted to staff, as we are not in the office spaces we once shared, communication is largely placed within the email systems. This can create the opportunity for criminals to compromise email accounts and facilitate a fraud. Where staff would normally be able to speak directly to a colleague, this now does not happen and must be brought into the risk faced by the council. CFI have been approached by various council who have fallen victim to £1m+ mandate frauds.

CFI has a programme of proactive work proposed to ensure the council's posture against fraud is robust and effective. Details of the proactive work programme are included in the management action plan for the risk.

The risk remains at 12, as new risks have emerged alongside old risks, the new risks have mitigated measures taken, however it is clear that those measures do not affect the 'attempts' we come across and thus it is felt that the risk to the council remains likely and critical. The council can ill afford a substantial loss of funds at this very critical time.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented	
1.	Establishment & proactive enhancement of CFID							Nov 2014	
2.	Fraud and Corruption Policy established and maintained from 2014							From 2014	
3.	Counter Fraud Work Plan established and maintained							2017	
4.	Regular review of policies and procedures from within the council to ensure that it can prevent, detect and deter and fraud and other economic crime.							From Nov 2014	
5.	Counter Fraud and Money Laundering Policies Established and maintained.							2017	
6.	Corporate-wide Bribery & Corruption Risk Review							From Oct 2018	
7.	Corporate-wide Cyber Crime Risk Review							From Dec 2018	
8.	Fraud risk matrix/loss assessment development and roll out							From Jul 2018	
9.	Review of supply chain against identified national crime risks							Oct 2018	
10.	Ad-hoc services to prevent/detect fraud (e.g. operations to prevent/detect housing tenancy fraud, counter money laundering & social care fraud)							From Oct 2018	
11.	Enhanced intelligence programme							Feb 2019	
12.	Application of Counter Fraud Risk Analytics across the council's high risk/threat areas.							From May 2020	
13.	Install improved Anti-Money Laundering (AML) controls at all of the council's Customer Contact Points.							From May 2020	
14.	COVID-19 Business Grants Counter Fraud Programme.							From May 2020	
15.	Fraud e-learning training programme.							Dec 2020	
16.	Training of high risk areas in counter fraud measures							From Jun 2021	
17.	Mandate Fraud – Counter fraud/awareness							July 2021	
Residual Risk Rating		Date:	30/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
18. Ongoing application of actions 1-17 above as appropriate.		From July 2021						
19. Renewed Education & Marketing Campaign for Countering Fraud, Bribery, Corruption and Money Laundering		Dec 2021						
20. Review all policies concerning fraud aspects		Jan 2022						
21. Targeting POCA and Civil Legislation to maximise effect on criminal behaviour		Jun 2022						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description	Risk Owner								
<p>There is a statutory requirement on the Council to produce an up-to-date Local Plan to guide the future development and growth of the Borough. Work began on the preparation of the new Local Plan in 2014. The Council's Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation was undertaken in 2018 and a Report of Consultation published in October 2019. Thereafter a Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) will be submitted for consultation before moving to the publication of the Local Plan (Regulation 19) and following examination by an independent inspector it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted in 2024.</p> <p>The preparation of a Local Plan is a complex process and as such there are a number of risks which need to be mitigated and/or managed over the period of the plans preparation, all of which have the potential to significantly delay the efficient and effective development of the plan. The key risks which need to be managed in relation to the Thurrock Local Plan are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertainty surrounding the precise alignment, design and phasing of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) which could adversely impact on the availability of land for future development and impacts that any further delay in concluding the LTC DCO process will have in constraining the Councils ability to submit a Local Plan for examination. • The on-going impact of Covid-19 on the plan-making process including a significant reduction in the ability of the Council to effectively engage with Local Communities. • A lack of adequate and on-going funding to support the plan-making process. • The impact of ongoing delay in preparing the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan JSP which will provide the strategic context for the preparation of the Local Plan. • An ongoing failure to recruit and retain experienced policy planners to support and expedite the preparation of the Local Plan. • Proposed changes to the planning system which if implemented could involve the Council having halt production of the Local Plan to transition over to the preparation of a different type of Local Plan. • The impact of local and national political considerations on the plan-making process. 	<p>Julie Rogers Sean Nethercott</p>								
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Place – A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future. Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places Prosperity – A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy</p>									
Inherent Risk Rating	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>28/07/2021</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Very Likely (4)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table>	Date:	28/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
Date:	28/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16		

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 28/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 28/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022																																																																																																																												
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Comments
<p>Any failure on the part of the Council to prepare a Local Plan in accordance with the timescale and programme set out the Council's Local Development Scheme will put it at risk of possible intervention by the Secretary of State. Should this occur the Council could lose the ability to plan for future development of Thurrock with its plan-making powers being taken away by the Secretary of State who has the option of directing another body to take over responsibility for preparing the Local Plan.</p> <p>Further sanctions could also come in the form of the loss of the Council's New Homes Bonus and a reduced ability to bid for national funding support for new infrastructure.</p> <p>A failure on the part of the Council to provide a rolling five year land supply would also increase the possibility that land owners and developers would be able to obtain planning permission upon appeal to the Secretary of State for speculative, uncoordinated and piece-meal development in the Green Belt.</p> <p>Finally the reputational damage and harm to the Council could be substantial as would the abortive costs involved in promoting a Local Plan which will be found unsound at examination.</p> <p>Despite the problems caused by lockdown and the pandemic situation, significant progress has been made in moving the Plan forward with a particular focus being on the development of the Local Plan evidence base. Further progress has also been made in rolling out Local Plan Planning Performance Agreements with landowners and developers promoting sites and in building up towards the launch of the Community Design Charrettes which will now start in September.</p> <p>Regular updates on the development of the Local Plan and next steps provided to the Local Development Plan Task Force (a cross party Members working group) and the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the project and the plan to be considered throughout the process.</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
<p>In order to manage and/or mitigate the risk of delay to the plan-making process the Council's Local Development Scheme sets out a range of measures designed to reduce the overall risk of the plan production being de-railed due to the impact of a number of internal or external influences. These include</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The adoption of a staged approach to the development of the local plan evidence base, and where appropriate, assessing a range of alternative scenarios (for example with/without LTC) to help better understand the options available for accommodating future development in a range of different locations. 2. The adoption of an evidence based approach to plan-making to ensure that both Members and the Local Community are made fully aware of the implications and impacts of adopting a range of different spatial options. 3. The setting up of Leaders and Members Briefing sessions to build up a better understanding of the issues to be addressed and cross party support for the emerging Local Plan. 4. Measures to both inform and manage land owner and developer expectations and knowledge of the plan-making process as an important first step in building up their confidence and support for the plan-making process and its ability to deliver positive outcomes for all the parties involved. 	<p>February 2014 – ongoing</p>

<p>5. Innovative measures designed to support wider public and stakeholder engagement in the plan-making process</p> <p>Other measures developed and rolled out to manage and/or mitigate the impact of the risk of the local plan process being frustrated include:</p> <p>6. Further and more proactive engagement with Highways England and other Government Departments to bring forward a scheme which promotes rather than hinders the potential for future economic and housing growth in Thurrock.</p> <p>7. Greater use and an expanded role for PPA's in funding the development of the LP evidence base and the recruitment of additional staff resources to assist the plan-making process.</p> <p>8. Increase the frequency and scope of Member and Community engagement in order to go beyond 'the numbers' and focus on the benefits that that further growth can bring to local communities.</p> <p>9. Improved terms and conditions to help recruit and retain experienced planners and greater use of PPAs to expand the capacity of the service to prepare the Local Plan.</p> <p>10. Development of new virtual public consultation platforms and approaches</p> <p>11. Roll out of Thurrock Design Charrette process to commence in December 2020 and conclude June/July 2021.</p> <p>12. Prepare draft Regulation 18 Local Plan for public consultation in summer 2022, including commissioning of a wide range of technical studies and further work to inform the production of the plan</p> <p>13. Roll out of Thurrock Local Plan Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) with site promoters to help fund the preparation of the Local Plan in Sept 2020</p> <p>14. Build capacity with Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), Homes England, Department for Transport, Highways England to help ensure the early delivery of homes and supporting infrastructure</p> <p>15. Subject to resources, the recruitment of additional professional and technical support to prepare the plan via direct appointments as full time staff, secondments from consultancies and short term fixed contracts with Public Practice.</p> <p>16. Ongoing development of the technical evidence base to inform the production of a sound and legally compliant draft Local Plan for publication and consultation in 2022.</p> <p>17. Development and implementation of Member Engagement Strategy</p>								<p>From Dec 2020</p> <p>Dec 20 - Jul 21</p> <p>From July 2020</p> <p>From Jul 2020</p> <p>From Jul 2020</p> <p>From Jul 2020</p> <p>From July 2021</p>
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	28/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
18. Ongoing application of items 1-17 above as appropriate		From Jul 2021						
19. Potential for significant changes to the planning system following the publication of the Planning White Paper – Planning for the Future.		2021/22						
20. Thurrock Design Charrettes, Stage 2 – Community Design Charrettes Workshops to be held in Sept & Oct 2021		Sept/Oct 2021						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description	Risk Owner
<p>The growth programme in Thurrock continues to be one of the largest and most exciting opportunities in the country. Thurrock’s reputation as a place full of opportunity has helped attract a number of large scale projects including London Distribution Park at the Port of Tilbury, the continuing investment at DP World London Gateway, expansion of Lakeside, Purfleet Regeneration, Thames Freeport etc. As a direct result of the scale of the growth agenda in Thurrock the Council will be involved in three National Infrastructure Projects over the coming years.</p> <p>Managing these projects alongside the other key regeneration projects will place significant demands on the Council and ensuring the authority have capacity in key areas is important in maintaining momentum and maximising opportunity for the borough.</p> <p>Failure to increase capacity to meet current, future or competing demands could impact the successful delivery of the major schemes and projects.</p>	Sean Clark

Link to Corporate Priority
<p>Prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy • Vocational and academic education skills and job opportunities for all. <p>Place – a heritage rich borough which is ambitious for its future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places • Fewer public buildings with better services

Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
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DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at: 26/07/2021	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2022

Comments
<p>The Thurrock growth programme crosses many disciplines within the Council. It requires significant programme management capacity from the Regeneration team to lead the programme alongside a joined up approach with other areas of the authority to ensure that relevant specialisms are brought in as required and programmes and strategies are complementary. Investment needs to be committed to project development stages before outputs and benefits are realised, significant levels of funding are committed at risk to prove feasibility and investment then needs to continue to secure the benefits from the initial funding. External funding is committed to numerous projects, whilst this reduces the financial burden to the Council, compliance with funding agreements must be achieved to ensure the Council is not exposed financially via claw back mechanisms. Projects span numerous financial years and have to be able to respond to changing market, policy and financial conditions. Strong project and programme managers are</p>

essential to ensuring that delivery stays on track and investment secures value for money outputs. Increasing resource capacity in the team via Matrix has provided some additional support and approval has been received to secure 1 additional FTE. The project portfolio could benefit from significant external funding which will put additional pressure on the existing staff resource as more projects are developed. Momentum needs to be maintained in the ongoing restructure to improve working approaches and secure additional resource.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Overall								
1.1 Managing the impact of various outcomes relating to the UK's exit from the EU								Ongoing
1.2 Include Brexit contingency in all project budgets to cover the potential for increased construction costs due to potential increases in labour/material costs.								Since Oct 2018
1.3 Managing the impact of COVID-19 on projects and programmes, including assessment on the cost of the programme of all projects								Ongoing
1.4 Appropriately qualified team in place.								Ongoing
1.5 Specialist expertise brought in on a consultancy basis as required.								Ongoing
1.6 Programme Management methods in place with all projects having a project programme, budget and risk register set up from the outset.								Ongoing
1.7 Area based Programme Boards operational to ensure cross department buy in.								Ongoing
1.8 Funding agreements managed to ensure compliance and reduce risk of claw back								Ongoing
1.9 Increase of capacity required in team (additional FTEs)								Ongoing
1.10 Standardised project management documentation implemented and consideration of standardised project management software solution.								Jun 2019
1.11 Continuously improve our ability to deliver projects and share the learnings from other								Ongoing
2. Grays Underpass								
2.1 Managing costs within GRIP stages with Network Rail								Ongoing
2.2 Information campaign to help prevent accident or incident at level crossing								Ongoing
2.3 Performance of Network Rail team monitored and managed through Senior Steering Group								Ongoing
3. Purfleet Primary School								
3.1 Facilitated discussions with all stakeholders on size of site, budget and programme								Ongoing
4. Stanford le Hope Transport Interchange								
4.1 Steering Group Meetings established including strong engagement from all stakeholders								Ongoing
4.2 Detailed design work being undertaken ahead of appointing contractor for phase 1								Ongoing
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	26/07/2021	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
5. Ongoing application or implementation of actions 1-4 above			From 26 Jul 2021					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

Opportunities In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description							Opportunity Owner		
Opportunity to promote the borough and secure investment in growth through SELEP, Thames Estuary Growth Commission and other Government funding sources to maximise benefit from the growth programme for local residents and businesses. This includes maximising opportunities created by the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • impact of strategic interventions, eg Freeports • third party funding opportunities, eg SELEP • promotion of Thurrock's economic assets and opportunities to attract investment 							Gerard McCleave		
Link to Corporate Priority									
Prosperity – A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy.									
Inherent Opportunity Rating		Date:	15/07/2021	Impact:	4 (Exceptional)	Likelihood:	1 (Very Unlikely)	Rating:	4

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date: 15/07/2021	Residual Opp. Rating as at: 15/07/2021	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Forecast Opp. Rating & Date: 31/03/2022
P 129 Likelihood Impact	Likelihood Impact	Likelihood Impact	Likelihood Impact	Likelihood Impact	Likelihood Impact

Comments

The Council has successfully secured significant amounts of Local Growth Fund, Getting Building Fund and other funds to directly deliver projects and programmes that benefit local residents and businesses directly or through investment infrastructure. This year there has already been opportunity to secure investment from the Community Renewal Fund. The Shared Prosperity Fund is expected to be announced in the Autumn and the Council is also expected to apply for Levelling Up Fund later in the year.

The results of the Towns Fund applications submitted in early 2021 have been announced this week and have secured, in principal, around £40m investment in Thurrock subject to business cases and due diligence.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Bids for Towns Fund investment in Grays and Tilbury submitted 2. Bidding round for Community Renewal Fund managed – results expected early August 3. Horizon scanning for investment opportunities underway 4. Towns Fund bids - funding announcement 5. Freeport - expression of interest submitted							2020 June 2021 April 2021 July 2021 2021	
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	15/07/2021	Impact:	4 (Exceptional)	Likelihood:	3 (Likely)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
6. Ongoing application of actions 1 - 5 as appropriate 7. Confirmation of Towns Fund Proposals by the Board and signed HoT 8. Development of Towns Fund Business Cases 9. Implementation of CRF projects (if approved) 10. Development of Levelling Up Bid 11. Submission of outline business case for Freeport	From Jul 2021 October 2021 Oct 21- Mar 22 August 2021 Autumn 2021 August 2021							
Forecast Opportunity Rating	Forecast Date:	31/03/2022	Impact:	4 (Exceptional)	Likelihood:	4 (Very Likely)	Rating:	16
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

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UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description							Opportunity Owner		
<p>A mix of approaches (e.g. service reviews, expenditure efficiencies, general income increases, managing demand, transformation, investment, etc.) have been adopted to deliver future balanced budgets and enable services to continue to be provided to meet the needs of residents.</p> <p>All the approaches are important to maintain balanced budgets for the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and it is recognised that investments continue to maintain significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision (e.g. in recent years the treasury function and activities have contributed significant income to support the budget position).</p> <p>The Investment Strategy has been paused but current investments continue to provide the Council with significant levels of income and contribute towards the delivery of wider Council services.</p>							Sean Clark		
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services. People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.</p>									
Inherent Opportunity Rating		Date:	29/07/2021	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date: 29/07/2021	Residual Opp. Rating as at: 29/07/2021	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Forecast Opp. Rating & Date: 31/03/2022																																																																																																
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Comments

Investments identified as having the greater ability to make significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision. Investment Strategy established. Review undertaken and position reported to Council Feb 2021. Ongoing review, monitoring and presentation of investment briefings to Standards & Audit Committee, Cabinet, Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee; MTFS Update & Revenue Budget Monitoring report to be presented to Cabinet Sept; MTFS Update & General Fund Budget Implications due Cabinet Oct; Financial Update report to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee due Nov. Cross party Shadow Investment Committee established in 2020 and meetings commenced in quarter 3 2021.

The Council's investment strategy has been paused for new activity following changes to central government lending conditions associated with PWLB borrowing. Existing investments continue to deliver significant income to support service delivery. The pause in new activity will reduce the overall projected level of forecast in the MTFS which will be reflected in the associated future budgets.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and proposed investment approach (including principles) reported to and agreed by Cabinet 11 th Oct 2017.							Oct 2017	
2. Follow up on the investment approach and the revisions required to the Treasury Management Strategy reported to and agreed by Council 25 th Oct 2017, including increases to the parameters for how much the council can borrow/invest and changes required to bolster the investment programme (e.g. capital cash investments/expenditure, acquisition or development of revenue generating assets, bringing more sites forward for development through Thurrock Regeneration Ltd).							From Oct 2017	
3. Capital Strategy (incl Treasury Management Strategy), Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, proposed Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management projections reported to and agreed by Council 27 February 2019, via Cabinet 12 February 2019 and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee 31 st January 2019							Feb 2019	
4. Continue to develop investment programme in line with codes of practice and guidance to Identify further investment opportunities and achieve a balanced portfolio.							From Feb 2019	
5. Review of Capital Strategy (including Investment and Treasury Management Strategy), Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement & Prudential Indicators undertaken and reported to Council Feb 2021.							Feb 2021	
6. Manage current and explore, develop and implement new opportunities.							Ongoing	
7. Regularly review/monitor and report on all investments							Ongoing	
8. Pause on new activity under the Council's investment strategy.							Ongoing	
9. Cross Party Shadow Investment Committee established and meetings commenced in quarter 3 2021							Q3 2021	
10. Continue to follow agreed democratic oversight arrangements for the Council's investment and capital strategy.							Ongoing	
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	29/07/21	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
11. Ongoing implementation or application of actions 6 - 10 above	From Jul 2021							
12. Review and report Capital Strategy (including Investment and Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement & Prudential Indicators to Council Feb 2022	Feb 2022							
Forecast Opportunity Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2022	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood

Appendix 3

Criteria Guide for Impact Levels

Risk

Negative Impact	Description
4 Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver a number of strategic objectives or a priority. • Major loss of service, including several important service areas • Major reputation damage - adverse central government response, involving threat of / removal of delegated powers or adverse and persistent national media coverage • Loss of Life • Major personal privacy infringement - All personal details compromised / revealed • Huge financial loss/cost - >£1M in a year. Up to 75% of budget. • Major disruption to project / huge impact on ability to achieve project objectives.
3 Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver an organisational priority or strategic objective. • Major disruption to important service or a number of service areas. • Significant reputation damage - adverse publicity in professional/municipal press or adverse local publicity of a major and persistent nature. • Major injury. • Many individual personal details compromised / revealed • Major financial loss/cost - >£500K - <£1M in a year. Up to 50% of budget • Significant disruption to project / significant impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.
2 Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant disruption to important service or major disruption to non crucial service. • Moderate reputation damage - adverse local publicity / local public awareness • Serious injury • Some individual personal details compromised / revealed • High financial loss/cost – >£100K - <£500K in a year. Up to 25% of budget • Moderate disruption to project / moderate impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.
1 Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief disruption to important service or significant disruption to non crucial service. • Minimal reputation damage - no external publicity and contained within Council • Minor injury or discomfort. • Isolated individual personal detail compromised/ revealed • Low or medium financial loss/cost <£100K in a year. Up to 10% of budget • Minor disruption to project / minor impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.

Opportunity

Positive Impact	Description
4 Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objectives/priorities • National award or recognition/elevated status by national government • Positive national press/media coverage • Major improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders • Income/savings of >£500K in a year or exceptional saving of resource (e.g. time and labour)
3 Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Regional recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Positive publicity in professional/municipal press or sustained positive local publicity. • Significant improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders • Income and/or savings of >£250K - <£500K in a year or major savings of resource (e.g. time and labour).
2 Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Borough or County wide recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Positive local publicity / local public awareness • Moderate improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders. • Income and/or savings of >£100K - <£250K in a year or moderate savings of resource (e.g. time and labour).
1 Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Local level recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Minor positive local publicity • Minor improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders. • Income and/or savings of <£100K in a year or minor saving of resource (e.g. time and labour)

Criteria Guide for Likelihood Levels

Risk

Likelihood	Description
4 Very Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 75% chance of occurrence Will probably occur at some time or in most circumstances. Circumstances frequently encountered - daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly.
3 Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 40% and 75% chance of occurrence. Fairly likely to occur at some time or in some circumstances. Circumstances occasionally encountered - occurs once every 1 to 2 years.
2 Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 10% and 40% chance of occurrence. Fairly unlikely to occur, but could occur at some time. Occurs once every 2 to 3 years
1 Very Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 10% chance of occurrence. May occur only in exceptional circumstances. Has never or very rarely happened before.

Opportunity

Likelihood	Description
4 Very Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 75% chance of happening. A clear opportunity already apparent, which can easily be achieved with a bit of further work or management. Achievable in under 1 year (12 months)
3 Likely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 40% and 75% chance of happening. An opportunity that has been identified and/or explored and may be achievable but will require some further work or management. Achievable between 1 to 2 years
2 Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 10% and 40% chance of happening Opportunity that is fairly unlikely to happen that will need full investigation and require considerable work or management. Achievable between 2 to 3 years
1 Very Unlikely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 10% chance of happening. Opportunity that is very unlikely to happen that will need full investigation and require considerable work or management. Achievable in more than 3 years

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Risk/Opportunity Matrix & Priority Table

	Risk		Opportunity																														
<i>Very Likely</i>	4	<table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">4</td><td style="background-color: #FFD700;">8</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">12</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">16</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">3</td><td style="background-color: #FFD700;">6</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">9</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">12</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">2</td><td style="background-color: #FFD700;">4</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">6</td><td style="background-color: #FF0000;">8</td></tr> <tr><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">1</td><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">2</td><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">3</td><td style="background-color: #90EE90;">4</td></tr> </table>	4	8	12	16	3	6	9	12	2	4	6	8	1	2	3	4	<i>High Priority</i>	4	<i>Very Likely</i>												
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12	9	6	3																														
8	6	4	2																														
4	3	2	1																														
<i>Unlikely</i>	2			<i>Low Priority</i>	2	<i>Unlikely</i>																											
<i>Very Unlikely</i>	1				1	<i>Very Unlikely</i>																											
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Medium	6 - 9	Medium																															
Low	1 - 4	Low																															

9 September 2021	ITEM: 10
Standards and Audit Committee	
A13 Widening Project	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Colin Black, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery	
Accountable Assistant Director: Colin Black, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report will focus on the latest progress in delivery of the scheme and the impact of any changes in the agreed programme.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee note and comment on the report content.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This project involves widening the A13 Stanford le Hope by-pass from 2 to 3 lanes in both directions, from the junction with the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) in the West to the A1014 (The Manorway) in the East and replacing four bridges. Once the project is completed, there will be a continuous three-lane carriageway from the M25 to Stanford le Hope, reducing congestion and resultant pollution, improving journey times and supporting further economic growth not only in Thurrock but across the whole south Essex corridor.

2.2 There have been a number of issues with the project that have resulted in delays in the delivery and an increase in costs, which have been discussed and considered in previous reports to both this Committee and PTR O&S.

2.3 This report will focus on progress in delivery and provide an update on the programme.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Progress

3.1 Progress report to end of July 2021:

- Horndon and Saffron bridges have been completed and opened for use;
- The drainage and other earthworks on the verges were completed and the traffic was switched to the verges to allow access to the Central Reservation. Works to install drainage and the concrete vehicle restraint barrier has progressed ahead of programme;
- Both new bridges at the Orsett Cock roundabout were completed and traffic has been switched on to them allowing the demolition of the two old bridges. Works are currently underway to realign the roundabout and finish works in the area;
- More than £12 million has been invested locally, by using regional suppliers and businesses based within 10 miles of the project – supporting the local economy at a time when this is needed more than ever; and
- There has now been more than 850 000 hours since the last RIDDOR and more than 1.3 million hours worked on the project in total. The Project Accident Incident Rate is currently zero which is a significant achievement.

Programme

3.2 The current accepted programme has an anticipated planned completion date of January 2022.

3.3 Work is underway to identify ways in which the programme will deliver a road open to traffic in December 2021.

Budget

3.4 The team worked closely with Aecom and Kier during the first six months of 2021 to produce, agree and sign a Deed of Variation and a Settlement Agreement. These agreements encompass all of the risks and outstanding Compensation Events up until the end of 2020 (including Covid in 2020) and provide a revised Target Cost for the scheme. These agreements provide more certainty on both the programme delivery and the associated costs for the Council as they reduce the level of project risk.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To respond to the Committee's request for an update on the A13 project.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared and agreed.
- 5.2 Member briefing sessions are held periodically at the A13 Site Offices and provide an opportunity for Members to receive a presentation from the contractor and raise issues on behalf of local residents.
- 5.3 Meet the team sessions are held monthly at the A13 Site Office and are a popular way for residents and road users to find out more about the works and ask any questions, although as a result of Covid-19 these (and the Member briefing sessions) are currently postponed

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The A13 Widening scheme supports the corporate priorities by encouraging and promoting economic prosperity.
- 6.2 The A13 Widening scheme also supports the Thurrock Transport Strategy (2013 – 2026) and in particular policy TTS18: Strategic road network improvements by creating additional capacity to reduce congestion, improve journey times, facilitate growth and improve access to key strategic economic hubs.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director - Finance

The forecast position on the project remains under review as the project progresses through to the final stages of completion.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This is an update report and there are no specific direct legal implications arising.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**

Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health

There are no implications arising from this update report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

The contractor is required to risk assess all aspects of this project and put in place appropriate procedures and measures to safeguard lives as well as the environment.

The contractor is also required to prepare a sustainability plan that reduces carbon emissions and reduces the project's carbon footprint.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Colin Black

Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery

9 September 2021	ITEM: 11
Standards and Audit Committee	
Stanford Le Hope Transport Project	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Colin Black, Assistant Director, Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery	
Accountable Assistant Director: Colin Black, Assistant Director, Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report the Stanford Le Hope Transport project will focus on the latest progress in delivery of the scheme and any changes in the agreed programme.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee note and comment on the report content.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This scheme involves the construction of new station buildings with footbridge and lifts, passenger information system under Phase 1 and bus turnaround facility. Passenger drop-off points and cycle parking will be addressed under Phase 2.
- 2.2 There are a number of stakeholders involved in the scheme including UK Power Networks, c2c, Network Rail and the Port of London Authority and it will be delivered under a Development Agreement with c2c, who is the principal land owner.
- 2.3 There have been a number of issues with the project which culminated in a pause and review of the scheme. The reasons for that have been discussed and considered in previous reports to both this committee and PTR O&S.

- 2.4 Since that review, there has been many positive changes to the scheme that have created a greater level of certainty on its deliverability and improved the quality of the scheme.
- 2.5 A similar report was considered by Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 February 2021.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Progress

- 3.1 The Concept Design for both the station and the transport hub have been completed and passed Inter Disciplinary Review with very positive feedback. The planning application for the Phase 1 station was re-presented at Planning Committee on 15 July 2021 following deferment in February and was passed unanimously.
- 3.2 In response to matters raised at the Planning Committee, there were many reasons for splitting the project into phases, including enabling the scheme to come forward within the current programme for the station site, to phase construction making it cheaper and simpler for the contractor to deliver given the physical constraints of the station site and to manage budget and costs.
- 3.3 The concept design for the Phase 2 Transport Hub is currently under review to ensure that the original project requirements as defined in the SELEP Business Case are valid and current and that due consideration is being given to the wider transport and accessibility requirements of an area with many new developments planned. This includes investigations into the condition of London Road Bridge and how any future bridge repairs might be seen as an opportunity to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists along London Road. Consultation is on-going with the key Stakeholders including London Gateway DPW and c2c, Thurrock Planners and local developers. The details of the submission required for pre-application planning review are currently under discussion with Planning towards developing a pre- application for planning permission for the Phase 2 site in the coming months.
- 3.4 Information was sent out to 19 potential Principal Contractors within an existing Thurrock Council Framework Agreement. Of the 19, eight hold the appropriate Network rail accreditations and Expressions of Interest are expected by the end of August 2021 from a sufficient number to represent a meaningful tender – four or more. The tender documentation will be completed and be ready to be issued on 9 September, which is a delay of 28 weeks on the original programme of 22 February 2021. The delay reflects the time taken to secure full planning permission as set out above. The intention is still to let a design and build contract on a fixed price basis to ensure costs are effectively controlled and managed.
- 3.5 The project steering group is continuing to meet on a monthly basis, to share information and ideas and obtain feedback on progress to ensure this

infrastructure is moving forward with the support and agreement of Stakeholders and local residents. So far, the feedback has been very positive.

Programme

- 3.6 Following the planning deferral and the resulting slippage in the original programme, a revised, detailed programme, reflecting the current baseline has been developed and is being maintained to track the time required to deliver the scheme, including a fully compliant tender process. As a consequence of the decision to defer the application for Phase 1 at Planning Committee, the programme is currently showing the likelihood that the completion of the station site will be delayed until late 2023. However, this is a notional date and will be updated when the successful bidder submits his programme, which becomes contractually binding.
- 3.7 The threat from Covid is now considered less of an issue in terms of project delivery with the national improvement in the general situation but this will continue to be monitored. An allowance in the Risk Register is retained against any future adverse impacts. This will also be monitored and kept under review.

Budget

- 3.8 It was agreed in the original Project Improvement Plan that high level “estimated project” outturn cost evaluation exercises would be carried out at two “checkpoints” through the design process - once when the basic concept is agreed and a further check at final concept design approval - to give further certainty and provide some indicative numbers in support of the tender evaluation process. It was planned to carry out a further check, using independent estimators to carry out a pricing exercise in parallel with the tender, to provide a benchmark against which to evaluate the tender submissions. Owing to the delay with the deferment of the Planning decision, it was decided to do this pricing exercise prior to tender.
- 3.9 The budget for the scheme will be considered further following completion of the phase 1 tender exercise. The decision to defer the planning application for Phase 1 will continue to have an impact on the budget due to the increased costs of employing the technical team for longer than was anticipated in the original programme.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To respond to the Committee’s request for an update on the Stanford-le-Hope Interchange project.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Consultation was undertaken as part of planning process and further Stakeholder engagement is continuing. This includes meetings with the residents of Chantry Crescent and local Councillors.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Stanford-le-Hope scheme supports the Place corporate priority, in particular:

- Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director, Finance

The financial implications are considered in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Since this is an update report, there are no specific direct legal implications. Legal Services will provide any legal advice in relation to this project as and when required.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health

There are no direct implications arising specifically from this update report. If the scheme progresses it will offer a greater level of accessibility at the station.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

Not applicable.

- 8. Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

- 9. Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author:

Colin Black

Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery

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9 September 2021	ITEM: 12
Standards and Audit Committee	
Investment Briefing	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report of: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director Finance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Standards and Audit Committee has received a number of updates on the council's investments and borrowings with the most recent being at their meeting on 11 March 2021. As requested by the committee this report provides the latest update to Members.

This report sets out the actual level of investments and borrowings as at 31 July 2021.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 As previously noted, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasts only presented a one year balanced budget up until the Investment Strategy was agreed. Future years were shown with significant deficits projected for the remaining years. This short term approach meant that the Council had to focus on efficiencies and service reductions to deliver the budget in the relevant financial year without the ability to think longer term to transform services more effectively.

2.2 While there has been a greater focus on commercial investment in the public sector in the last five years, it is important to note that councils have always carried out investments – traditionally through money markets but also including commercial property such as industrial units.

- 2.3 In 2014, the council changed its approach with its first investment in the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) property fund with further investments in CCLA and the first investments in the renewable energy market taking place in the subsequent two years. Following the success of the initial investments, the council unanimously agreed a new, formal Investment Strategy at its meeting in October 2017.
- 2.4 Whilst there has also been significant focus on the council's level of debt, it is important to remember that the amounts relating to these investments will be repaid at the end of the term or, at the wish of the bond issuer, earlier.
- 2.5 Set out below is key financial information on the council's investment performance and position as at 31 July 2021. The overall debt position is £50m higher than it would normally be as the Council, like a number of authorities, increased its cash balances as the COVID restrictions commenced.

Source	£m	£m
PWLB – GF	494	
PWLB – HRA (2012)	161	
LOBOS (Various Pre May 2005)	29	
Other Public Bodies – Short Term (rolling debt built since start of council)	689	
Other Public Bodies – Long Term (rolling debt built since start of council)	95	
Gross Debt		1,468
Less:		
COVID Related Borrowing	50	
Investments – Bonds, CCLA, etc	1,068	
Total Repayable		1,118
Net Debt		350

- 2.6 The net hard-debt shown above largely relates to expenditure on the historic and current capital programme. Gross debt has reduced by £37m since the first reported position as at the end of June 2020 and net debt by £56m.

2.7 The investment approach contributed a net income of £23.7m in 2020/21 and, in total, has contributed £116.7m since its implementation in 2016/17 and continues to support the delivery of the council's core services and priorities.

2.8 The spread of the investments are as follows:

- Renewable Energy Sector 79.8% (spread over approx 60 interests)
- CCLA 10.5%
- Other, including TRL 9.7%

2.9 The impact of COVID restrictions highlighted the likely loss of income for those authorities who purchased, for example, shopping centres, airports or retail parks. Some councils were reporting up to 25% loss of income in property-related investments.

2.10 The administration has always maintained that owning a shopping centre or retail park leaves any council with long term borrowing costs – fixed costs – but variable income streams, as has been evidenced in recent months.

2.11 This potential risk is not the case for Thurrock where the investments have been in bonds and where the drive to increase investment in renewable energy schemes is well documented at a national level.

2.12 There has still been no material adverse impact from the start of the COVID pandemic on the council's investments and income streams have remained stable.

3 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options related to this report as it is simply a briefing on the council's investment position.

4 Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The recommendation is simply to note the report as it is a report for information only.

5 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Whilst there has been scrutiny through the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, Council Spending Review and Council annually, there has been no consultation on this information report.

6 Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The council made a unanimous decision in October 2017 to supplement the council's budget through an investment approach. This has allowed

investment across all of the council's front line services and includes additional services such as increasing the police presence across the borough.

- 6.2 There are other obvious benefits such as supporting renewable energy, a key approach against the impact of climate change.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery

The benefit of the investment approach has been set out in the report.

It is clear that the approach has significantly contributed to the provision of services to Thurrock's residents against a national norm of service reductions and closures.

It had always been intended that the level of investment would reduce over time and the nature of the bond periods facilitated this.

Members need to be aware that there are significant commercial considerations when discussing investments and Local Authority inter-lending.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law & Governance

The Council has a requirement to finance its operation in order to deliver services to residents and to have a balanced budget.

The legislative framework underpinning local government financing permits Councils to undertake borrowing and lending activities as part of their routine treasury management.

In considering the approach to scrutinising the Councils activities Members should have regard to the commercial sensitivities which can arise from detailed discussions of the Councils investment and borrowing portfolio. Members are reminded that the Councils own commercial interests can be considered as a ground for excluding the press and public from a meeting under schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, however in assessing the need for this Members should also consider the public interest and need for transparency in the Councils operations. The information contained in this report is provided in a public form balancing the competing interests.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**
Strategic Lead Community Development and Equalities

There are no specific diversity and equalities implications as part of this report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

The Council's financial position has allowed for additional investment across all services with additional funding, specifically, for services to the vulnerable, fighting Anti-Social Behaviour and Climate issues including allocations for tree planting and air quality measures.

8 Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9 Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery

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**Standards & Audit Committee
Work Programme
2021/22**

Dates of Meetings: 8 July 2021, 9 September 2021, 25 November 2021 and 10 March 2022

Topic	Lead Officer
8 July 2021	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 - 2020/21 Activity Report	Lee Henley
Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report – Year ended 31 March 2021	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Annual Report & Strategy	David Kleinberg
Annual Information Governance Report	Lee Henley
Red Reports (as required)	
9 September 2021	
Annual Complaints & Enquiries Report 2020/21	Lee Henley
Counter Fraud & Investigation Performance Report Q1	David Kleinberg
Internal Audit Charter 2021	Gary Clifford

Refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	Andy Owen
Investment Briefing	Sean Clark
A13 Widening Project	Sean Clark / Colin Black
Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects	Sean Clark / Colin Black
Red Reports (as required)	
25 November 2021	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) – Activity Report April 2021 – September 2021	Lee Henley
Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Performance Report Q2	David Kleinberg
Audit Completion Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2021	BDO / Sean Clark / Jonathan Wilson
Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement 2020/21	BDO / Sean Clark / Jonathan Wilson
Red Reports (as required)	
10 March 2022	
External Audit Plan 2021/22	Lisa Clampin (BDO)/Jonathan Wilson
Complaints and Enquiries Report – April 2021 to September 2021	Lee Henley

Annual Review of Risk and Opportunity Management and the Policy, Strategy and Framework	Andy Owen
In Quarter 4 Review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register	Andy Owen
Internal Audit Progress Report 2021/22	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Performance Report Q3	David Kleinberg
Thurrock Annual Audit Letter 2020/21	BDO / Sean Clark
3 Year Strategy 2021/22 to 2023/24 and Annual Plan 2022/23	Gary Clifford
Red Reports (as required)	

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