



Fairness in Thurrock Review

March 2014

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Chair's Introduction

Thurrock is changing fast, as the council's growth and regeneration begins to take hold.

We have thousands of new jobs coming at the new London Gateway port and in the Lakeside shopping basin. The High House Production Park and the National Skills Academy are changing the cultural landscape in ways we couldn't have imagined.

But amidst this growing prosperity, poverty still exists within Thurrock. Inequalities are rampant, not only between the communities that make up our borough but within them as well.

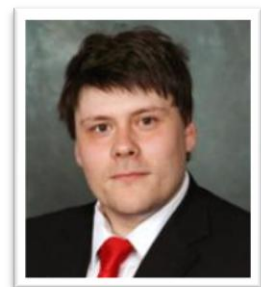
It was once said that a rising tide lifts all boats but with inequality growing nationally this isn't necessarily the case. As a council we must ensure that the economic growth that we expect benefits everyone in our community and not just a few. And where possible this economic growth should be the servant of reducing these pre-existing inequalities.

Throughout the course of this task and finish group we have seen strong evidence about the kind of deeply-embedded inequalities that remain in our communities. We have received submissions from community groups and charities that detail how access to services and to opportunities continues to be unfairly distributed.

Tackling these problems won't be easy. Incredibly challenging funding settlements from central government have meant that local government everywhere is struggling to find money, even to pay for statutory services.

But, if we do not face up to the reality of unfairness and inequality within the Borough we risk sleepwalking into making the situation worse. We owe our residents of today and those of tomorrow more than that.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions made by Thurrock Coalition, who produced an excellent report to inform our investigation, and to all of the community and voluntary sector representatives who participated in the stakeholder workshop. The responses were invaluable to shaping the work of this panel.



Councillor Richard Speight
Chair of Fairness in Thurrock Review

Introduction

The topic of Fairness was brought to the fore by the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee, which wanted to explore and evidence issues relating to Fairness in order to better understand and address the barriers to equality in the local area.

Thurrock, located on the River Thames immediately to the East of London is home to some of the most exciting opportunities in the Country, yet although relatively small compared to many of its more metropolitan neighbours, Thurrock faces its own challenges even during this period of growth and economic expansion made possible through the current regeneration programme.

The population is spread over a fairly wide geographical area which varies significantly in its nature, with rural countryside and village communities located to the North and East of the Borough compared to the more industrial and built up areas to the West and South with their access to global trade and logistics opportunities.

It was of popular perception that inequalities existed between these areas, and that wards in the south of the Borough such as Tilbury St. Chads, Grays Riverside, Belhus and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park experienced premature death rates that were much greater than wards in the north of the Borough.

At a time of economic austerity, the prospect of slow growth for years to come, increasing cuts to public spending and services and growing financial pressures on individual household incomes, coupled with Thurrock's significant demographic changes highlighted in the most recent census data and major policy shifts in terms of the Welfare Reform agenda, Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt that it was increasingly important to examine and promote equal life chances for all Thurrock's residents.

In September 2013 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with cross-party support, agreed to establish a Task and Finish review: ***“To look at ways other local authorities deploy equality commissions within budgetary constraints and progress equality issues within their localities. The panel would make recommendations on the relevance of a commission for Thurrock, other alternatives, as well as any costs involved”***.

Glossary of Terms

Acronym	Full Meaning
CGS	The Cleaner, Greener & Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinises Crime and Disorder Partnerships under the Police and Justice Act 2006, the provision, planning, management and performance of waste and recycling, community safety, trading standards, licensing, environmental protection and related matters in Thurrock.
HWB	Health and Well-being Board. The Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board works to improve health and reduce inequalities, to develop and facilitate the delivery of transitional arrangements to meet statutory requirements within the emerging health agenda and to determine the health improvement priorities in Thurrock.
IMD	The English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) are weighted summary measures of seven domains (income, employment, health, education, housing, crime and living environment) with the income and employment domains taking up the strongest weight. It is used to analyse patterns of deprivation, identify areas for specialised initiatives and as a tool to determine eligibility for funding.
JSNA	This Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is an important driver in the commissioning processes across key strategic partners in Thurrock including health, local government and the third sector. It drives decision making processes of the Thurrock Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and local Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
LLW	Local Living Wage. The LLW differs from the national minimum wage in that it is set by law and is at present below the levels of a LLW. The LLW can have a positive impact on the income of lower paid staff.
LSOA	A Lower Super Output Area is a very small geographical area – a ward area can be broken down into many LSOA's and cover just a few streets. Population and deprivation data are both published at this level. These small geographical areas can show strong contrasts but can be difficult to evaluate because of the problem with small numbers. LSOAs are given a coded number, for example Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park is LSOA 0018D.
MSOA	A Middle Layer Super Output Area is a geographical area of similar average size to a Council Ward. MSOA's are most commonly used for health inequality-related analyses.
PSSVA	The Public Service Social Value Act 2012 establishes responsibilities for all public authorities to consider not only how to improve the economic, social and environmental, well-being of the area served by them through their procurement activities, but also to undertake the process of procurement with a view to securing that improvement and measuring its attainment during the life of the contract.
The Ward	A Council ward is a geographical area that is established for electoral purposes, sometimes referred to as a 'Census Ward'. There are currently 20 wards in Thurrock, each of which has electoral representatives (known as Councillors) who represent the interests of residents of the ward. Wards have familiar names, such as 'Belhus', 'Grays Riverside', 'West Thurrock & South Stifford' and 'The Homesteads.'

Membership of the Review Panel

Councillor Richard Speight (Chair) – Labour

Councillor Oliver Gerrish – Labour

Councillor Barry Johnson – Conservative

Councillor Sue Shinnick – Labour

Terms of Reference

We agreed that our key aims were:

1. The group will explore the plans and strategies that are already in place to reduce inequalities in Thurrock.
2. To build a clearer picture of the realities of inequality in Thurrock.
3. To liaise with other Overview and Scrutiny Committee colleagues to see how inequality is being addressed in these forums, for example Health and Wellbeing, Cleaner Greener Safer boards.
4. To review the work of Fairness Commissions in other parts of the Country and examine best practice.
5. To examine the alternatives to a Fairness Commission.
6. To evaluate whether a new structure is needed and if so to discuss how this could look for Thurrock.
7. To liaise with key stakeholders (Police, NHS, Academies, Head teachers, Voluntary Sector), evaluate current policies to inequality in Thurrock and to determine whether there would be any “buy in” for a Thurrock Fairness Commission or similar alternative.
8. To consider the resourcing implications of any recommendations.
9. To produce a report of findings in respect of current strategies and make recommendations as to how the Council can further commit to addressing inequality in Thurrock going forward.

Activity Timeline

The group undertook the following activities to reach their recommendations:

12 November 2013	Held an initial meeting to discuss general issues and agree terms of reference.
November – December 2013	Evidence Gathering, met with officers and examined strategies to determine the levels of inequality in Thurrock.
November – December 2013	Wrote to Fairness Commissions (and alternatives) in order to examine best practice and undertook desk-based research.
7 January 2014	Held a panel meeting with key officers from across the organisation to explore the level of inequality in Thurrock and debate the merits of the current approach to the equalities agenda.
Early January 2014	Contacted key partners, community and voluntary organisations with fairness questions and to invite them to the stakeholder workshop in order to seek their views.
Mid-January 2014	Received reports and information from the voluntary and community sector.
30 January 2014	Held a Stakeholder Workshop to consult with key partners.
11 February 2014	Final meeting of the Panel to discuss findings and agree recommendations.

Why review Fairness in Thurrock?

Undertaking a Fairness Review is all the more important during a time of economic austerity, when communities are increasingly at risk of becoming unequal and unfair due to growing financial strain on household budgets, shifts in the employment market and changes in welfare reform. The local authority has a moral and legal duty to address the barriers that exist, and promote equal life chances for all its residents.

At a time when the local authority is facing significant budget savings, when the work of service areas is ever more challenging with the increased demand for services, yet the resources available are diminishing and are under pressure, the authority needs to identify new and innovative ways to tackle these issues that goes beyond the simple reallocation of budgets. In these times there is no easy fix solution and no ample pot of money to contend with the problems faced, however this doesn't mean that the issue of Fairness is too difficult and so insurmountable that we should not try to readdress the gap in equality.

It was the key purpose of this review to examine the evidence, determine the actual levels of inequality between Council wards based on tangible results and identify a new way forward, whether a Fairness Commission or an alternative, that will pave the way to make Thurrock a 'fairer' and more equal place for residents.

The review started in earnest in November 2013, and one of the first aspects of the panel's work was to examine how other local authorities around the Country progress equality issues and the Fairness agenda. This preliminary work was essential to the review and to provide some context on how the panel's thought process evolved some salient points are summarised below.

Fairness in Context

The issue of inequality and the effects on society as a whole was brought to the forefront in 2009 by the publication of '*The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*,'¹ co-authored by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. All Fairness Commissions can trace a common thread back to this publication, which received a good level of cross-party support at the time and in many ways remains highly relevant in the economic circumstances of today. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that widespread inequality helps increase a range of social ills, with the result that everyone suffers – even the most “well off”. Inequality in their view isn't just bad for the poor; it's also bad for the rich. Their argument is compelling, that in essence,

¹ Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, (London, 2009).

everyone benefits from a fairer society in which the gap between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ is narrowed.

In response to the publication, a range of local authorities from across the Country have established Fairness (‘equality’) Commissions, or an alternative. As a key part of the review was to examine how local authorities deploy equality commissions within budgetary constraints we feel that it is first best to provide some more information on what a Fairness Commission is – as it is only after knowing more about the work of Commissions can we fully determine its relevance for Thurrock.

What is a Fairness Commission?

A Fairness Commission is an advisory body (that can be independent or council led), delegated to recommend ways in which the Council and its partners can increase fairness and reduce inequality across a particular geographical area. Most Fairness Commissions have adopted a parliamentary Select Committee model, being enquiry based, taking evidence and then producing a final report.

What is ‘Fair’?

In order to review the work of Fairness Commissions, examine the alternatives and to consider what would work best for Thurrock the panel wanted to acknowledge at the outset what ‘Fairness’ as a concept means. Defining the principle of fairness was useful for the decision-making process and anchored discussions and recommendations.

What is ‘fair’ is a contested concept and much time could have been spent debating the subject. We did not want to muddle the work of this review nor over simplify the investigation, and to this end the basic principles of fairness was defined below in order to assist the panel in their work.

If a Thurrock Fairness Commission is established following this review then we feel that this would be a matter that would need to be taken forward by the Commission in their initial work.

Defining ‘Fair’ for the purposes of the Fairness in Thurrock Review:

‘Fairness’ for many is equated with ‘equality’ but there is not one simple definition and the two concepts – although inextricably linked – are inherently different. People tend to have their own view of what Fairness means and the debate was further triggered by Wilkinson and Picketts’ book ‘*The Spirit Level*’.

Fairness encompasses equality but without implying uniform treatment and reward for everyone. For example, to address unfairness we may need to treat people unequally – by helping those most in need – in order to create a ‘fairer’ society.

In essence a fair society is where people have an **equal chance to realise their full potential** and have an **equal chance to have their voices heard and impact on decision making**. This decision making may result in unequal distribution – targeting those who are most disadvantaged by circumstances beyond their control – but it is often more acceptable to agree to unequal treatment if people have been fairly treated. In summary although inequalities exist it is hoped that we can still take fair decisions.

Review of Current Policies and Strategy

Critical to the work of the review and to enable the panel to make sound recommendations, a thorough examination of Thurrock's current approach to the equalities agenda and assessment of existing policies and strategies was required.

At our first meeting on 12 November 2013 we as a panel were particularly interested in mapping the pathway of inequality for children and young people. It was clear that we wanted to ensure that children and young people in Thurrock had the best possible start in life, and that importantly this start was fair. With this in mind we were keen to review policies and strategies that formed the Council's general approach to the equalities agenda, whilst also examining those with a specific child and young people focus. It was hoped that this would assist us in determining the levels of inequality in Thurrock and that an informed data comparison of children and young people's life chances by ward area could also be made.

Evidence Gathering

Fairness is a complex subject which affects and involves everyone. We were keen to engage with officers from across the Council to try to build a clear picture of inequalities in Thurrock, where these were and what was being done to try to tackle them.



A number of people were contacted and responses received from across the Council, including council officers in the following service areas:

- Community Development
- Children's Services
- Public Health
- Performance Quality and Information (Adults Social Care)
- Community Safety
- Information Management – GIS team (Geographic Information)

What is being done to foster equality in Thurrock?

From the evidence gathering exercise it was clear that Thurrock has a significant amount of information detailing the levels of inequality in the Borough and that a number of strategies and policies are in place that attempt to address these issues and ultimately foster equality in Thurrock. We have detailed these strategies and policies below:

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is carried out whenever the council is planning, changing or removing a service, or developing a policy, plan, strategy or function. The requirement to carry out an appropriate analysis of equalities is established by the Equality Act 2010. The process aims to support good policy and decision making by ensuring that any strategy, policy, plan or change initiative which is proposed by the council (proposed step) addresses inequality.

Community Strategy

The Community Strategy is the long term vision and overarching direction for Thurrock to realise opportunities and potential across the borough and to address local needs. It sets the overall strategy and ambition to deliver change over the next decade. The Community Strategy was agreed unanimously by Council in September 2012.

The Community Strategy has 5 priorities one of which is:

- Improve health and well-being

This priority has 3 objectives, one of which is specifically:

- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being

Although this priority/objective is the primary medium for initiatives regarding inequalities, all five of the corporate priorities link into the various areas where inequalities may impact on the lives of Thurrock residents. Another specific link is priority 3, ***Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities***, which aims to build strong communities as a commitment to tackling inequality.

Health & Well-being Board (HWB)

The Health and Well-being Board (HWB) brings partners together to lead the integration of health and well being services across the NHS and local government; to assess the community's assets and needs; and has developed a Health & Well-

being Strategy to improve the health and well-being of the community and to reduce inequalities. As such, the Health and Well-being Board is the lead body for Community Strategy priority ***Improve health and well-being***.

The Health and Wellbeing Board's vision is for "Resourceful and Resilient People in Resourceful and Resilient Communities". The Board has four aims:

- Every child has the best possible start in life
- People stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Inequalities in health and well-being are reduced; and
- Communities are empowered to take responsibility for their own health and well-being

The Strategy has a number of clear priorities and objectives and spans both adults' and children's issues. The children's element of the strategy is managed by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board arrangements, but with reporting to the Health and Well-being Board.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

One of the key pieces of intelligence used by the Health and Well-being Board in developing its priorities is the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The JSNA aims to provide a 'big picture' description of health and well-being in its widest sense. Where data sources are available, it focuses down to ward and Middle Layer Super Output Area (MSOA) to describe and highlight differences in the health and wellbeing status of populations living in different areas within Thurrock.

Building Positive Futures

The Building Positive Futures (BPF) programme was launched in March 2012 as Thurrock's response to the Ageing Well agenda, and to take forward the initiatives approved by Cabinet in December 2011 aimed at improving cooperation between housing, health and adult social care, in order to meet the needs of an ageing population.

Building Positive Futures also encompasses the council's transformation of adult social care and the programme is a key element of the Health and Well-being Strategy. The three main themes of the strategy are:

- Better health and wellbeing: to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and residential care and to reduce length of stay where admission is needed.

- Improved housing and neighbourhoods: to give people more - and better - choice over how and where they live as they grow older
 - Stronger local networks: to create more hospitable, age-friendly communities
- Each of these themes is linked: high-quality homes, in towns and villages, with services and support to build resourceful, resilient, self-reliant communities.

Progress reports are regularly taken to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

Child Poverty

One of the aims within part 2 of the Health and Well-being Strategy (focused on children and young people) is to **reduce and mitigate the impact of child poverty**. A lot of work is undertaken within Children's Services to help reduce the inequalities within our young population. As well as the overriding Health and Well-being action plan, the council has adopted a specific Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan, supported by needs analysis. The Child Poverty strategy 2011-2014 was significant to the review and key points are raised here in this report.

Children's Services hold a wide range of data that can indicate a level of inequality between children and young people living in different wards of Thurrock.

There are also some new focussed initiatives such as:

- the **Early Offer of Support Strategy** and **Troubled Families Initiative** which assist parents who are struggling to bring up families.
- **Wishes Project** which secures adult learners on the pathway to work, thereby taking them and their families out of poverty.
- Raising attainment of children who receive Free School Meals (FSM). In Thurrock, children on free school meals do well in education terms. Ofsted specifically noted good progress on eliminating the gap in attainment for pupils who received free school meals.

Public Health

Public Health came under the responsibility of the council formally from 1st April 2013. This puts the council in a strong position to set the strategy and actions to combat some key health inequalities issues facing the borough, including the two key issues of smoking and obesity.

The Health and Well-being Strategy has a very clear action plan and performance framework which is monitored closely and reported to the HWB and to the **Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee**. For issues relating to

children and families these are reported to the **Children and Young People's Partnership**, then onto Health and Well-being Board.

A key role of public health is to reduce health inequalities and health inequities. Measuring inequalities accurately is essential to targeting effort and monitoring change. However, this is still a complex area with a number of controversies. Efforts to reduce inequalities include:

- Health Needs Assessment looking at vulnerable populations
- Health Equity Audit of service delivery
- Work to improve Equality, Diversity and Human Rights.
- Health Impact Assessment of Policies, Programmes and Plans

Strategies to address health inequalities have, in recent years, focused on the need for partnership working which is vital in addressing some of the social, economic and environmental factors which contribute to poor health.

Community Safety Partnership

The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) is central to delivering Thurrock Council's strategic objective to ensure a safe, clean and green environment. It aims to reduce crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and other behaviour affecting the local environment, as well as reducing the misuse of drugs and alcohol, and reducing the fear of crime.

The TCSP Plan outlines some of the risk factors and areas of focus which have been identified through undertaking a strategic assessment about the scale and scope of crime, disorder and community safety issues within Thurrock including understanding the patterns, trends and shifts relating to crime and disorder and substance misuse.

The TCSP Strategy has a very clear action plan and performance framework which is monitored closely and reported to the TCSP and the **Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee**.

Work with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Groups

Thurrock Council has a good record of positive engagement with the voluntary, community and faith sector. The council works closely with Thurrock CVS and has refreshed the **Thurrock Joint Compact** during 2012-13 which is a framework to support and inform joint working across sectors for the benefit of residents and

communities in Thurrock. The five key principles reflect commitments in the National Compact. One of the 5 principles is specifically ***“an equal and fair society”***.

This is essential to service delivery strategies when looking at how, at a local level and with specific groups, we can reduce the impact / improve levels of inequalities. How we work with our voluntary, community and faith group partners is also crucial in building the capacity and resilience to sustain initiatives.

Community Hubs

Within the context of the Corporate Plan, the development and roll-out of community hubs will facilitate a new relationship and way of working between the Council and communities. It will also enable, under the umbrella of the Community Engagement Strategy, a consolidated approach to a range of 'localism' initiatives, including; Asset Based Community Development, Local Area Co-ordination, Community Led Planning and Community Councils. These, alongside an increased focus on volunteering, build an ambitious vision of shared leadership between communities and public services to realise and deploy all of a community's resources to build resilience and strength within neighbourhoods.

Annual Equality Report

The Annual Equality Report was presented to Council in March 2013 and highlighted some of the equality challenges ahead for Thurrock including the recruitment of a more diverse range of foster carers to meet the needs of children in care, tackling health inequalities, improving educational attainment, working with partners to create more employment opportunities for young people, and tackling hate crime in the borough. The report concluded that ***“the equality challenge is now more complex but also more important than ever before. Meeting this challenge will require both strong corporate leadership and a real commitment from all sections of the Council”***.

Ward Profiles

Demographic profiles for most of the wards in Thurrock were developed during 2012-13 which provide detailed data on the population, deprivation levels, income and employment, housing, health, employment and education. These profiles provide a ranking of each ward in the analytical field.

The Thurrock Ward Profiles (December 2013) were used in the review panel's evidence gathering exercise. An excerpt can be found in **Appendix 1**, on page 47.

Public Sector Social Values Act (PSSVA)

Since 31 January 2013, the Public Service Social Value Act 2012 establishes responsibilities for all public authorities to:

- consider not only how to improve the economic, social and environmental, well-being of the area served by them through their procurement activities, but also to
- undertake the process of procurement with a view to securing that improvement and measuring its attainment during the life of the contract

The advent of the PSSVA provides a catalyst for the Council to develop a bespoke approach to measuring the impact for communities gained not just through commissioned activity, but also through the design, development and delivery of our services, strategies, policies and programmes (a commitment from the Council also outlined in the Thurrock Joint Compact).

The Social Values Framework for Thurrock is still in development stage, however already has support in principle from Leadership Group, Joint Strategic Forum and the Thurrock Business Forum.

Welfare Reform

The changes brought about by the recent welfare reform legislation is already starting to have an impact on people's lives and will to continue to do so in the short-medium term. The council in 2013 set up a Welfare Benefits Reforms task and finish group whose remit is to examine and review the different aspects of the Welfare Benefits Reforms that the council is tasked with implementing.

The aim is to ensure that a wide range of views, inputs and experiences from different people in the council and local community is received and represented when developing and implementing new local welfare support schemes and initiatives.

This focussed approach ensures that the welfare support services / provision delivered by the council takes into account and, best meets the needs of all residents that are impacted by the current and future welfare benefits reforms.

Local Living Wage (LLW)

The implementation of the LLW was initiated by a Council motion in July 2012 and considered and supported by Corporate Overview & Scrutiny in September 2012. Adopting the LLW is entirely voluntary. The LLW differs from the national minimum wage in that it is set by law and is at present below the levels of a LLW. The LLW can have a positive impact on the income of lower paid staff. Full Council agreed the implementation of the LLW (£7.48 per hour) for Council employees which was effective from 1 April 2013. It is anticipated that the introduction of a higher pay floor for council employees, who are 75 – 80% Thurrock residents, will provide an economic boost to the community which will be enhanced if the concept is extended to contractors and other businesses in Thurrock who can be persuaded to follow the example.

Current Policies & Strategies: In Summary

It was clear to us that there was a lot being done to tackle inequality; however we felt that it was difficult to really understand what this meant in reality for Thurrock residents. It is evident that there are numerous strategies in place, but we really wanted to delve beyond these high level policies.

We agree that Equality Impact Assessments and Thurrock's numerous other strategies are a good thing, and are required in order to meet our statutory duties, but what does this mean for the average resident? What can be done above and beyond this to encourage and promote Fairness?

As a panel one of the key questions we asked was whether these policies and strategies meant that two babies born at the same hospital in Basildon who then went on to grow up in two different areas of Thurrock (say Orsett and Ockendon) would have significantly different access to opportunities in life? Or would they have a fair start?

As a Councillor, we often hear and discuss statistics and figures that are quoted in various reports and these can lead to pre-conceptions about particular areas of Thurrock being "better" than others. We wanted to find out if these perceptions were well founded, as we could only base a decision on whether a Fairness Commission was needed based on firm, tangible and accurate evidence.

To base our decision on certainties we used these policies to 'examine the evidence'.

Examining the Evidence

It was clear from the research that Thurrock has a significant amount of information detailing the levels of inequality in the Borough. A summary of the data that we collected is provided in this report in order to set the context for Fairness in Thurrock.

Exercising Caution with the Data

Before examining the data there are some important points to first note. Although data is important in order to separate 'fact' from 'perception', perceptions of unfairness are in many ways just as important because they can fuel tensions, distrust and conflict, even when the perception is not an accurate reflection of reality.

For communities to thrive people must feel they are being treated fairly and have equal chances to enjoy a good quality of life. Whilst data can help us understand the prevalence of inequality, community engagement and partnership working is also needed to understand the impact and to build capacity within communities to tackle inequalities.

At the time of the publication of this report Thurrock was embedding an approach known as 'asset based community development'. A key component of this involves analysis of what is positive or strong in an area, as well as what is wrong or seen as failing. We hope that initiatives in 2014 will provide a greater opportunity to map the assets or strengths of communities in Thurrock and examine areas including physical assets, community associations, skills, knowledge and aspiration for change. It is evident that knowing and valuing an area's strengths can help foster a more effective approach to tackling inequalities. If a Fairness Commission is agreed as a result of this review we feel that this is an area that would benefit from some further investigation.



Knowing and **valuing** an area's **strengths** can help foster a more effective approach to tackling inequalities.

Just because the data indicates there is a level of inequality in one particular area it does not mean that the residents who live there feel the same way. This is something that has been highlighted again and again through the work of Fairness Commissions, with residents in the areas seen as 'failing' reporting that they are lucky to live in their community which has a strong sense of empowerment and friendliness – and that if given the choice and complete flexibility (for example if they had the money to afford to move to another area) they would not choose to live

anywhere else. This relates back to the asset based community development approach, and therefore any work should be exercised with sensitivity.

Determining the level on inequality based on one index is difficult and should be exercised with caution. A ward area that may score positively on a range of indices (which would allude to the area not suffering from the issues associated with inequality) may on another indicator score very highly and be the 'worst performing' in comparison to other wards. These anomalies are important and should be examined in context so as not to skew the results. This is illustrated in the table of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Ranking for Thurrock by Ward in [Appendix 1](#), on page 47, specifically in relation to the Chafford and North Stifford and Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park wards.

Although it is relatively easy to compare Council wards to each other, this can hide the fact that within one ward area there could be a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) that has issues at the opposite end of the spectrum or more extreme results. For example, at ward level, child poverty is highest in Tilbury Riverside, (36.6%), but within the neighbourhood of Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park, LSOA 0018D - 55% of children live in poverty.

What existing information do we have about inequalities within Thurrock?

The evidence we gathered was large and wide ranging and we worked to pull out as many of the multi-faceted issues that impacted on life chances and were linked to fairness as possible. For ease of reference we have broken down the main themes and summarised what we have observed about inequality in Thurrock.

Demographics – how big is the population and what is our starting position?

Thurrock has a population of 157,705 at the most recent 2011 Census estimate and is growing fast. Our population is projected to increase by almost one third by 2033. Thurrock is also becoming more ethnically diverse, with more than 30 per cent of primary school pupils from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) group. In total it is estimated that 19.1% of residents are from a Black or Minority Ethnic group. 21.3% of children are estimated to live in poverty, 28.1% of adults are thought to be obese and those claiming out of work benefits are calculated to be 11.11%².

The proportion of the population that is economically active is slightly higher than the national average, though slightly lower than the figure for the Eastern Region.

² *Thurrock Ward Profiles* (December 2013), (p.1)

However, the working population tends to be employed in occupations requiring fewer skills and qualifications rather than in higher-level professional jobs. Thurrock's unemployment rate is similar to the national position, though the figure for youth unemployment is particularly challenging

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Indices of Multiple Deprivation were invaluable to our investigation. The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) are weighted summary measures of seven domains with the income and employment domains taking up the strongest weight. It is used widely to analyse patterns of deprivation, identify areas for specialised initiatives and as a tool to determine eligibility for specific funding streams. It combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area (LSOA) in England. In essence, **the higher the IMD score, the more deprived the area.**

All of these can be mapped to show the significant variation across Thurrock and within each ward. There is also a younger person and an older person index of deprivation. This means that small areas of the Borough can be examined to determine persistent pockets of deprivation.

Thurrock is ranked 217 out of 349 in the IMD (2007) overall score for local authorities in England. We found that overall changes in deprivation in Thurrock between 2007 and 2010 have been very small; although Thurrock may have become less disadvantaged the IMD score indicates that we may not be closing the gap of Fairness fast enough.

The 20% most deprived Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) within Thurrock fall within the south and west of the borough and include Tilbury, West Thurrock and South Stifford, Belhus, Ockendon, parts of Chadwell St.Mary, Blackshots and parts of Grays.

Fewer than 20% Thurrock's LSOAs fall into the most deprived national quintile. However, significantly more than 20% of its LSOAs fall into the second most deprived national quintile and combined, more than 40% of Thurrock's MSOAs fall into the 40% most deprived national quintile.

Child Poverty

We found that a fifth of Thurrock children are growing up in poverty, according to the official definition of child poverty. The vast majority of the 7,335 children affected are under the age of 11 and more than half are under the age of 5 years³. Overall, child

³ *Thurrock Child Poverty Needs Analysis*, (p.1)

poverty in Thurrock is slightly below the national rate but higher than average for the East of England. Two Thurrock LSOAs are within the worst 15 neighbourhoods for child poverty in the East of England.

It was clear child poverty exists everywhere in Thurrock but that it was most concentrated in the most deprived parts of the Borough. At ward level, Child Poverty is highest in Tilbury Riverside, (36.6%) Tilbury St Chad's (36.5%), West Thurrock and South Stifford (29.1%), Grays Riverside , (27.1%) and Chadwell St Mary (26.6%). On the opposite end of the spectrum Child Poverty is lowest in Orsett (6.4%), South Chafford (8.2%) and Corringham & Fobbing (8.3%)⁴. This is demonstrated in **Appendix 3** on page 49.

We observed that at LSOA level the difference between different areas was even more extreme. In the 'worst' neighbourhood of this indicator, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park (LSOA 0018D) 55% of children live in poverty, 25 times the proportion in the neighbourhood with the lowest child poverty rate, which is in Corringham & Fobbing. This indicates that children born at the same time but who live in opposite ends of the Borough do not have an equal start in life and fair access to opportunity.

In Thurrock, the areas of the borough which have the highest rates of child poverty in most cases also have the lowest educational attainment; more people in poor health or with disabilities which prevent them from working; higher proportions of workless families; more families who lack bank accounts or home insurance; fewer car owners; and higher proportions of adults who have poor basic skills or who lack qualifications.

As a panel we were particularly keen to examine whether there was a link between tenancy type and child poverty. The Child Poverty Strategy detailed that in March 2010, there were 11,250 housing benefit recipients in Thurrock. Nationally, 70% of housing benefit recipients lives in the social rented sector and 27% have dependent children. This suggests there may be more than 300 families with children in Thurrock receiving housing benefit⁵.

Education Deprivation

From the data we received it is clear that there are a substantial number of education statistics and data sets, many of which indicate that there is a level of inequality both between and within Council wards.

⁴ *Thurrock Child Poverty Needs Analysis*, (p.1)

⁵ *Thurrock Child Poverty Needs Analysis*, (p.19)

There is a strong association between educational attainment and good health and wellbeing outcomes and a large body of evidence supports this. This is unsurprising, as educational attainment is critical to accessing opportunities that support good health and wellbeing later in life such as employment and earning potential.

In **Appendix 5** on page 51 we can see that at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) performance from 2013, the highest ward with a good level of development is Corringham and Fobbing (at 75%) whilst East Tilbury has the lowest figure (27.8%).

At key stage 2 level, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics varies between council wards. The highest being the Homesteads (reading 89.8% and writing 86%) and Stanford-le-Hope West (maths 89.9%) and the lowest at Tilbury St. Chads (reading 73.0%), West Thurrock (writing 71.2%) and Stifford Clays (maths 70.2%). This is demonstrated in the **Appendix 6** on page 52.

At GCSE level in 2013 we found the difference to be even more stark, with the number of pupils achieving 5 or more A* to C GCSE's (including English and Maths) varying greatly between wards. This is demonstrated in **Appendix 7** on page 53, where South Chafford (90.3%) has a substantially better performance rate in this area compared to Tilbury Riverside (43.8%).



The Index of Multiple Deprivation includes a domain for education deprivation. This domain of deprivation captures the extent of deprivation in education, skills and training. It falls into two groups; children and young people and adults' skills. From the research we can see that Education Deprivation is greatest in the areas of Tilbury, Riverside and Thurrock Park, Ockendon and Aveley and Uplands.

Health

We found that there is still a significant gap in life expectancy for both men and women from the 10% most affluent to the 10% most deprived areas of Thurrock.

From the latest data available in the 2013 Thurrock Ward Profiles (excerpt attached in **Appendix 2** on page 48) we can see that there is a 6.4 year gap in life expectancy at birth for women (with the lowest life expectancy in Grays Riverside at 79.3 years

compared to 85.7 years in Corringham and Fobbing). Whilst for men there is a 7.9 year difference from the lowest life expectancy in the wards of Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park and Tilbury St Chads (73.9 years) compared to that of Chafford & North Stifford, South Chafford and Stanford-le-Hope West (which have the highest male life expectancy of 81.8 years).

From our discussions with officers, we found that at the time of this review the Public Health team were planning to undertake a focussed piece of work later in 2014 around inequalities in Thurrock as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis process. This is potentially an exciting avenue of investigation and an area which we feel a potential Fairness Commission could link in with to add value to the examination of inequalities.

The Marmot Review, Fair Society, Healthy Lives

From our research we observed that the findings and recommendations from the Marmot Review should be integral to the work around reducing inequalities in Thurrock – and therefore should be included in any future work of a Commission.

There is significant overlap with the arguments put forward in the *Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone* and the Marmot Review *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*. The Marmot Review has a particular focus on giving every child the best start in life and this closely linked in with our aims and why it featured as part of the Fairness in Thurrock review.

The Marmot Review into health inequalities in England was published on 11 February 2010. It proposed an evidence based strategy to address the social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age and which can lead to health inequalities. It draws further attention to the evidence that most people in England aren't living as long as the best off in society and spend longer in ill-health. *Premature illness and death affects everyone below the top.*

The report, titled 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives', proposes a new way to reduce health inequalities in England post-2010. It argues that, traditionally, government policies have focused resources only on some segments of society. **To improve health for all of us and to reduce unfair and unjust inequalities in health, action is needed across the social gradient.**

Central to the Review is the recognition that disadvantage starts before birth and accumulates throughout life. This is reflected in the 6 policy objectives and to the highest priority being given to the first objective '*giving every child the best start in life.*

Smoking

Smoking prevalence is not distributed evenly within Thurrock. The highest prevalence of smoking is in Grays, Tilbury and St.Chads, Tilbury Riverside and parts of Stanford East and Corringham Town.

The prevalence of smoking of the population aged 16 and over in the most deprived area is approximately two and a half times that the population living in the least deprived area. This is significant to our evidence gathering exercise, as differences in smoking prevalence between affluent and deprived communities are this single biggest cause of health inequalities.

Healthy Eating

From our evidence gathering exercise we found that the areas where people eat the least healthily in Thurrock are Tilbury, Chadwell St. Mary and West Thurrock. Conversely the areas where people eat the most healthily are in North Stifford, Orsett and Bulphan. (Eating healthily is defined as eating 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables a day where a portion is defined as an 80g serving)

Alcohol

Thurrock has an estimated binge drinking rate of 20.9%. This is greater than the England (20.1%) and the East of England (18.2%) rate. Thurrock is ranked 180th out of 326 local authorities for binge drinking

Physical Activity

Thurrock has relatively low levels of physical activity levels in children at school. Swimming and football are the most popular and second most popular sports in Thurrock and have a greater percentage of adults participating in them compared to England and the East of England. Cycling has significantly lower levels of participation in Thurrock compared to regional or national rates.

Thurrock has a particularly low level of swimming pools and grass pitches compared to its nearest neighbours, facilities that are needed to allow our population to participate in the activities that are most popular.

Obesity rates are significantly higher than national and regional rates – 10% of children are obese by the age of five, increasing to 21.1% by the age of eleven. 28.1% of adults in Thurrock are obese.

Debt

In Thurrock 8 of the highest 11 LSOAs for child poverty also have high levels of financial exclusion. The areas with the highest child poverty rates also have high levels of families not in work. Ockendon, Chadwell St Mary, Grays Riverside, Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park have levels of around 40% with some areas of Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park having levels of 55%.

Housing Tenure by Ward

Nearly half of people in Corringham and Fobbing own their property outright (47.3%), whilst three quarters of people in Chafford and North Stifford own their own home with a mortgage (74.8%). This compares to Grays Riverside and Tilbury St. Chads where the majority of residents rent their property. (Tilbury St Chads has the most Local Authority households at 37.4% and Grays Riverside has the most households renting from a housing association at 5.5% and private landlord or letting agency at 16.4%).

Sense of Belonging

The Place survey 2008/09 asked how residents felt they belonged to the local area. The results showed that 52.4% of Thurrock residents said they have a strong feeling of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood. Wards with the strongest sense of belonging those containing the areas of affluence within the Borough: Corringham and Fobbing (79%), The Homesteads (72.6%), Orsett (72.5%), and Stanford East and Corringham Town (68.1%).

This compares to the wards with the lowest sense of belonging which contain the most deprived areas in the Borough: West Thurrock and South Stifford (31.7%), Grays Riverside (37.0%), South Chafford (43.2%) and Ockendon (45.5%).

The Place Survey also sought to measure the percentage of residents who believed they could influence local decisions and was seen as a local level indicator of empowerment. The most positive responses tend to come from residents of Orsett, with results above the national average at 83.1%. The lowest percentage of residents that believe people from different backgrounds get on well together was found in Tilbury St. Chads at 16.7%.

Orsett has the greatest percentage of residents at 82.4% that are satisfied with their local area, which is above both the national and unitary average. People living in Tilbury St. Chads and Tilbury Riverside were the least likely to be satisfied with their local area as a place to live with 50% of residents satisfied.

The Evidence: In Summary

There is a considerable amount of evidence that exists which suggests much is being done to address inequalities in the Borough. We found that there are various strategic boards, partnerships and action plans that have been developed by council officers and partners, and these strategies are making progress in improving the life chances of Thurrock residents – including children and young people.

The data enabled us to make an informed comparison of children and young people's life chances by ward, and also how the life chances of adults were affected by the multi-faceted issues that we know link to and impact upon equality.

However, despite this good work it was clear from the evidence that there is an equality gap. Again and again we can see a significant difference in life chances and inequalities between council wards in every indicator. We feel that this is not good enough for Thurrock residents and much more could be done to make Thurrock 'fair.'

Integral to the debate was whether a Fairness Commission is the right mechanism for Thurrock to drive forward the equalities agenda and speed up closing this gap between the 'advantaged' and the 'disadvantaged' or whether an alternative approach is required.

To find out more about Fairness Commissions and to make an informed decision we undertook some research, further details of which can be found in the next section.

Children living in Poverty

6.1%

Average Income

£63,000

GCSE education 5 A* to C

90.3%

Life Expectancy

Male 82 years

Female 86 years

35.51% vote



The Advantaged

Children living in Poverty

41%

Average Income

£30,000

GCSE education 5 A* to C

43.8%

Life Expectancy

Male 74 years

Female 79 years

19.5% vote



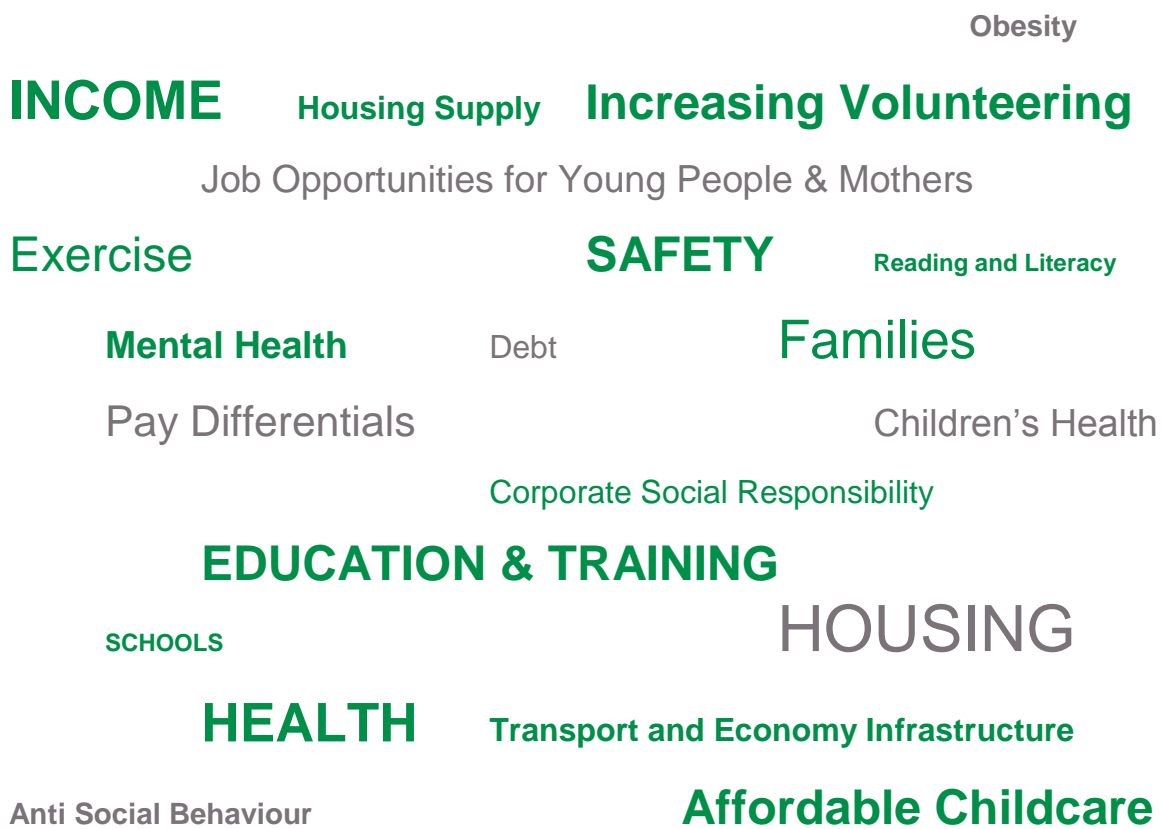
The Disadvantaged

Determining Best Practice

A key part of our work was to look at ways other local authorities deploy equality commissions and progress equality issues within their localities. It was only after examining the work of Fairness Commissions could we determine the relevance of a commission to Thurrock, and importantly whether this could be progressed within budgetary constraints.

We conducted a significant amount of research into Fairness Commissions. A number of councils have established Fairness Commissions, although they have varied according to local circumstances. Fairness Commissions have adopted different approaches to the challenges but all have examined a wide range of complex issues which are often interlinked. Many Local Authorities who established Commissions already had a range of strategies in place for tackling issues linked to inequality, for example Health Inequality through the Health and Wellbeing Board, but it is evident that the Commissions value is that all these issues come together in one place for discussion.

We found that the key themes which have been investigated by Commissions include:



The following Boroughs and Cities have established Fairness Commissions to date:

- Islington Fairness Commission (2009)
- Liverpool (April 2011)
- York (July 2011)
- Newcastle (Summer 2011)
- Leicester (November 2011)
- Sheffield (February 2012)
- Blackpool (May 2012)
- Newport (September 2012)
- London Borough of Tower Hamlets (November 2012)
- Plymouth (April 2013)
- Southampton (June 2013)
- Oldham (July 2013)
- Bristol (May 2013)

We have summarised the information we found during the course of our research below in order to build a more accurate picture of the work of Fairness Commissions.

Membership

Commissions are widely made up of professionals with a variety of expertise, including key representatives from the police, health, education, private companies, chamber of commerce, charities, disability action groups, social enterprises and community groups. It was clear to us that Commissioners must share ownership in the delivery of the project for it to be successful and are chosen because of their local knowledge and their ability to affect change.

To ensure effective buy in from across the Council both Council Officers and Councillors are represented on many of the Commissions, with great value placed on cross-party representation. The Islington Fairness Commission (IFC) aimed to reflect the makeup of the Council, acknowledging that for the Commission to be effective a consensus had to be developed at a political level about the challenges facing the area and the measures the Commission proposed in order for the exercise to be successful.

Nevertheless we discovered that there were other Commissions that took a different approach – such as Newcastle – that were completely independent from the local authority with no formal representation from elected Members or council officers.

Timeline

The majority of Fairness Commissions have completed work within 1 year, following which recommendations were made to the Council and its partners in regards to policy, strategy and implementation.

Approach

By examining the Commissions who have completed their work we can see how they have mainly approached the task in 2 stages:

Stage 1: Focused on engaging with communities and partners and speaking with regional and national experts to build a picture of inequality. During this stage Commissioners examined the data and identified how public services were currently working to tackle inequality.

We feel that a considerable amount of this stage of work has been achieved through this review. We hope that if a Fairness Commission is agreed, this work can inform the Commissioners and be a good building block for further work to be undertaken.

Stage 2: During which Fairness Commissions considered the evidence and explored the solutions. Involvement with regional and national experts during this period is increased, resulting in final report setting out findings and recommendations. This stage also involves much council cross-departmental problem solving.

During both stages a range of engagement mechanisms are used by Commissions including public meetings, expert witnesses, individual interviews as well as utilising existing forums.

Aims

The role of Fairness Commissions is to assess fairness and equality outcomes in their area and put forward approaches to tackling the inequitable distribution at a local level. In particular, they explore how local public services, through their design, delivery and funding, can tackle inequality within the Borough. It is evident that by establishing a Fairness Commission local authorities have hoped to be able to exercise greater influence outside of the authority, which is helped by the fact Commissions are an independent professional body (containing some Council Membership) with members of the panel who are all 'experts' in their field.

Recommendations of Fairness Commissions

The Commissions that have completed their work have differed in the type of recommendations they have made. The Islington Fairness Commission recommended a range of practical actions such as publishing pay differentials, and exploring whether a by-law could be passed to prevent the operation of pay day loan companies in the Borough. Whereas the Newcastle Fairness Commission placed much more focus on the principles of decision making.

Monitoring

In some of the initial research and public discussions undertaken by the Commissions, it is evident that there was a level of scepticism among the community

on what the actual outcomes and achievements of the Fairness Commission would be and whether it would successfully effect change. There seems to be a general consensus that a Commission needs to make things happen and bring together organisations such as the police, NHS and other local stakeholders to work together to make a real difference in the longer term.

As a result Fairness Commissions are monitoring delivery of their recommendations in a number of ways, some methods of which are detailed below:

- By a public progress report to a relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee every 6 months.
- An annual progress report to Full Council tracking progress, for example York's annual 'Progress towards Fairness' report.
- To report on the performance of fairness and equalities outcome indicators over the long term, for example on life expectancy, income levels, employment rate, child poverty, performance at key stages 2-4, volunteering levels and to see how these are improving.
- Through raising the profile of work undertaken around inequalities through Fairness Commissions mini-websites or pages.

Resources

It is apparent from the research that establishing a Fairness Commission requires a level of resource, particularly in relation to the officer time that is needed not only to set up the Commission but also to gather, process and evaluate all the evidence and general day to day administration, including booking and arranging meetings for Commissioners to engage with partners and residents.

In our initial research the information on exactly how many resources and the costs incurred to the Local Authority (or equivalent body) for establishing a Commission was not readily available. However one Commission – the Islington Fairness Commission (IFC) – publicly stated costs on their Council website.

Survey Results

To try to get a more accurate idea of costs and to think about how a potential Thurrock Fairness Commission could be established within budgetary constraints we felt that more detailed information was required, which was not always available on Fairness Commission websites, at the relevant local authority website or in Council papers.

As a result in November 2013 we contacted every Fairness Commission that had already been established around the Country with a letter and a short survey in order to find out more about their work. We asked a number of questions we thought would

be pertinent to Thurrock's decision to establish a Fairness Commission and this information enabled us to conduct a risk / benefit analysis. Four responses were received and are summarised below:

Newport Fairness Commission:

Prior to the Newport Fairness Commission being established the City Council had prioritised community cohesion for several years and work was underpinned by statutory duty. Before reaching a decision to establish a Fairness Commission basic research was undertaken by the local authority, in relation to make-up, remit and work programmes of existing Fairness Commissions. The Fairness Commission had officer support (one policy officer for approximately two days per week) who undertook administration and research.

The main focus of the work was to provide the City Council with a better working understanding of fairness and how this could be applied to decision making. This was developed with the input and experience of Fairness Commission members. The Fairness Commission did not look to instruct the Council on which specific issues to concentrate on, which is a different approach to other Fairness Commissions who have sought to promote priority issues.

The Fairness Commission involved residents and non-council organisations in its work; membership of the Fairness Commission was made up of individuals broadly representing equalities interests in Newport. They undertook a resident's survey, consulted with member organisations and launched a website to promote the work to date and seek involvement. Officers at Newport City Council responded that if they were to undertake this work again and had the opportunity to do something differently, they would examine Membership more closely and the level of time commitment required by Commissioners.

They aimed to complete a final report approximately within one year of the Commission being established. Year one activity included the review of Council budget proposals and examining the residents' survey on perceptions of fairness.

The Commission is independent of the Council and operates within relatively open terms of reference. The two main political parties are represented on the membership but their remit is intended to be non-political. The other members were sought to represent key fairness concerns, locally. They are drawn mainly from local organisations but are not representing those organisations directly.

The Commission had a small budget to cover supplies and services which was anticipated to be around £5,000. Newport Fairness Commission found it particularly difficult to receive commitment outside of meetings, for example in completing working group tasks. It was felt that Commissioners who were members

representing statutory agencies might be expected to give a higher level of input if the Fairness Commission was considered part of the 'day job'.

It was reported that the Council Administration had found the Fairness Commissions input supportive and informative during the current context of unprecedented financial pressures.

Newcastle Fairness Commission:

Newcastle Fairness Commission was supported by two policy officers and one Director, all of whom undertook this work as part of a range of duties – no one supported the Commission full time and Commissioners gave their time for free. The costs of the Commission were minimal (such as room hire, refreshments) and drew on existing council processes to engage the public on existing data already held, rather than initiating new engagement or research.

The Fairness Commission was clear that its aim was not to provide the council with a list of actions, but to develop a set of principles of fairness and a small number of recommendations that could be used as a tool to inform decision making and guide the work of the council and other organisations within the city.

In September 2012 the City Council agreed to adopt the principles, ideas and recommendations set out in the report of the Newcastle Fairness Commission. A brief overview of the outcomes of the work are summarised below:

- The fairness principles guided decision making when the Council set their current three year budget. They incorporated the principles into their “fairness test” – an Integrated Impact Assessment tool that is applied to the budget process and all major policy decisions.
- The concept of progressive universalism is a way of thinking that informs the Newcastle Future Needs Assessment process – an evidence based approach to deciding how best to allocate increasingly scarce resources.
- Similarly, ‘progressive universalism’ (building on Marmot’s principle that actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage’) is one of the key underpinning principles of Newcastle’s recently published Wellbeing for Life Strategy.

Southampton

Southampton City Council decided to establish a Fairness Commission in 2013 and Commissioners were selected after an open call in summer 2013 asking for people to submit Expressions of Interest.

At the time of the response the Commission was still in the early stages of its work and as a result the meeting formats and themes are still being confirmed.

Islington Fairness Commission

Islington Fairness Commission was established by Islington Council and included representatives from outside the council, including major organisations such as the police and NHS.

The Islington Fairness Commission required the support of three full time equivalent members of staff for six months. This was partly to provide ongoing support setting up meetings and responding to enquiries. Particularly intensive support was required in the establishment of the Commission and the preparation of its final report. Other additional costs include meeting costs including the hiring of British Sign Language interpreters and venue hire, stationery and mailing costs. The total cost of the Islington Fairness Commission, excluding officer time, was £13,990. The Commissioners received no payment for their time.

The Commission undertook a year-long listening exercise which included:

- Seven public meetings around the borough with 500+ attendees
- Testimony from local residents
- Evidence from expert witnesses
- Written submissions from over a hundred local groups and individuals
- Cross-departmental problem solving team of council staff
- Bilateral discussions with a wide range of community groups
- Interim Report in February 2011: *Bringing the two Islington together*
- Final Report in June 2011: *Closing the gap*
- 19 recommendations to make the borough a fairer place by reducing poverty and inequality in the areas that matter most

The Commission is held into account in the following ways:

- Corporate plan: *Towards a fairer Islington*
- Public progress report to Committee and Council every 12 months
- 30,000+ visits to Fairness Commission mini-site

It was felt that there were a number of political benefits, alongside benefits in terms of policy and practice which included:

- Provides Islington Council with clarity and simplicity of definition: people know what they are about and what they stand for.
- Puts flesh on the bones of the Council's 'fairness in tough times' mantra.
- Provides a rationale for the tough decisions the Council has to make.
- Enables them to exercise influence outside of the authority.

The Alternatives

A key part of our work was to make recommendations on the relevance of a Commission for Thurrock as well to investigate other alternatives.

We found that a number of other Borough and City Council's have introduced alternative initiatives in order to try to tackle inequality instead of introducing a standalone Fairness Commission. These include:

- Kirklees Tackling Poverty Strategy
- Leicester Child Poverty Commission
- Brighton Reducing Inequality Review
- Greater Manchester Poverty Commission
- Camden Equality Task Force – (July 2012)
- London Borough of Haringey – One Borough One Future
- Birmingham City Council – Giving Hope Changing Lives

These alternatives varied widely. We observed how the Brighton and Hove 'Reducing Inequality Review' was commissioned by the Council on behalf of the 2020 Community Partnership. Two consultancies were appointed to undertake the 6 month study. A steering group was formed, made up of various key stakeholders and over 100 people and groups contributed to evidence gathering.

The Birmingham 'Giving Hope and Changing Lives' initiative was a six month social inclusion process led by the Bishop of Birmingham and explored how issues of exclusion and poverty could be addressed more effectively. Community conversations were with hundreds of organisations and individuals to gather idea about how to tackle disadvantage in neighbourhoods. The findings of this turned into seven commitments to social inclusion. This initiative used social media to communicate with residents and seek their ideas. 'Fairbrum' was the name given to the digital presence of Giving Hope Changing Lives online.

The London Borough of Haringey introduced a £1.2 million pound 'One Borough One Future' Fund. The initiative aimed to inspire people to come forward with ideas to tackle inequality and deliver better services in the Borough.

Fairness Commissions: The right mechanism for Thurrock?

From our investigation it is apparent that Fairness Commissions vary widely in terms of Membership (and how they recruit Commissioners), their aims, their resourcing implications and how they monitor effectiveness. Some Commissions have incurred greater expenses than others, which is dependent on the approach they have taken in the review. All have required a level of staffing support, some who have incorporated this into their normal daily duties whilst others have fully focussed on the Commission.

After examining the alternatives we felt that a Fairness Commission is most relevant for Thurrock. Some of the other alternative initiatives incurred greater expense – from either the money set aside to develop new groups and initiatives or the cost of commissioning out a research study to an external consultant. We felt that these alternatives went against Thurrock Council's corporate priorities and that it would be more beneficial to establish a Fairness Commission that brings together local community partners, stakeholders, leaders of local industry and Elected Members as one voice to greater influence and exert change.

We know that Thurrock is already doing a great deal of work to try to reduce inequalities, in much the same way other local authorities had been before they also established Fairness Commissions. What is clear from the research is that Fairness Commissions do not seek to duplicate the good work that is already being done, rather they bring this all together in one forum to drive forward the agenda, identify any gaps and devise new ways of working and thinking. Importantly these decisions are reached by working with local people to ensure that communities feel a sense of ownership.

The Results from the Stakeholder Workshop

We held a stakeholder workshop in order to evaluate current policies that attempt to tackle inequality in Thurrock and to determine whether there would be any support for a Thurrock Fairness Commission.

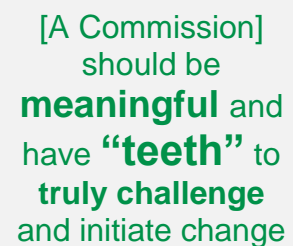
Participants included representatives from Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions, Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERRIC), Thurrock CVS, Open Door, Thurrock Coalition, Thurrock Centre for Independent Living, One Community Development Trust, TRUST, Ngage, Essex Police, a spokesperson from the Troubled Families Initiative in addition to officers from across the Council.

We discussed three key questions which included:


- If there was one thing you could change in Thurrock to make the Borough 'fairer' what would it be?
- Do you feel people living across Thurrock have fair access to services and fair access to opportunities?
- Are there any areas where you believe individuals living and working in Thurrock need extra support?

An open debate took place on Fairness Commissions and whether this would add value to the equalities agenda in Thurrock. A summary of the key themes of the workshop have been noted in **Appendix 9** on pages 55-58. Overall the mood was positive and there was much support for a Thurrock Fairness Commission, but it was emphasised that the Commission should be meaningful and have “teeth” to truly challenge and initiate change and not just pay lip service. It was reiterated that any potential Commission should formulate strong achievable outcomes and impact change in real life rather than just achieving things on paper.

It was felt that a Fairness Commission should be a critical friend and have the necessary breadth of knowledge and expertise from the local community. Although it was reiterated that a Commission should be community led, stakeholders remarked that it was important that a Senior Council Officer, such as the Assistant Chief Executive, should be one of the Commissioners in order to give weight and provide more backing internally within the Council. It was felt that the



[A Commission] should be **meaningful** and have **“teeth”** to **truly challenge** and initiate change



To formulate **strong achievable outcomes** to impact change in

Assistant Chief Executive was an appropriate choice as a relatively independent officer with broad knowledge of the authority rather than a Director who may influence the work of the Commission depending on their own service area and expertise. It was also observed that there should be one representative from each of the two largest political parties in Thurrock, in line with other Commissions which had already been established.

In order to make Thurrock a 'fairer' place to live and work it was indicated that decent quality housing, a good education and access to a good standard of primary health care were important and that a level playing field needed to be created.

We found that there was a general acceptance that equalities strategies – and the approach of the potential Commission – needed to be flexible to meet individual needs, especially as there are pockets of wealth in areas of the Borough that tend to be associated with poverty and disadvantage. The importance of community pride was raised and that this often comes from a feeling of ownership of an area; this is something we felt that a Fairness Commission could develop further.

Stakeholders were keen to be kept up-to-date of the developments of the Fairness in Thurrock Review and be involved in any work of a Thurrock Fairness Commission should it be established, particularly in assisting to identify suitable Commissioners.

Thurrock Coalition Feedback & Engagement Workshop

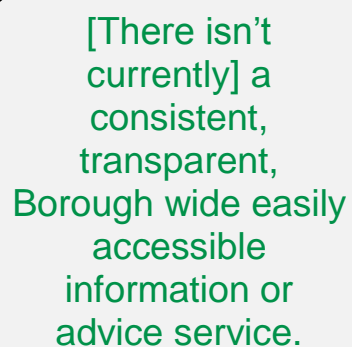
During the course of the review we contacted a number of stakeholders and partners, not only to outline the work of the panel so far and to invite them to the workshop, but to also find out more about their strategies and seek their input into the questions we as a panel had devised around Fairness.

In response the user-led organisation of Thurrock Coalition ran an engagement workshop with their partners – Thurrock Diversity Network (TDN). Thurrock Diversity Network has a broad membership base of 45 individuals and organisations with an interest in disability issues in connection to Thurrock. Through a series of group work, feedback and discussions they provided a report which informed the work of the Fairness in Thurrock Review. The full report is attached at **Appendix 10** on pages 59-71.

The report indicates that a great deal of work is already undertaken in Thurrock to ensure that the voices of vulnerable disabled, older people, their families and carers are heard, listened to and acted upon. It was noted that particular sections of the community in Thurrock are unfairly represented, such as the disproportional representation in the official and unofficial statistics relating to women with learning

disabilities being subjected to sexual violence. There were many more examples of areas that could be improved, such as disability in sport, and fair access to housing.

However, although much work is already being done it is evident that the issues surrounding inequality are of concern for residents of Thurrock and this is exemplified in a number of ways.



[There isn't currently] a consistent, transparent, Borough wide easily accessible information or advice service.

From the responses it is **apparent that a perception of unfairness exists in the Borough**. People felt that there was a digital divide, as increasingly methods of accessing services are only available online and it was observed that not everyone has access to the internet. This is significant to us and we feel that this problem will only set to wider over time as increasingly the authority goes digital. As a result it was felt that people living across Thurrock did not have a fair opportunity to access services, particularly for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups in obtaining information and advice – and that this was a barrier to equality.

Transport was recognised as a multi-faceted concern and a key enabler or barrier to inclusion. In addition to accessibility to public transport it was also commented upon that it was unfair how there was a lack of respect for disabled users who relied on blue badge spaces.

It was also emphasised that more work could be done to assist vulnerable and disabled people into local employment and it was reported that local employers have insufficient understanding of the different needs of people with mental health issues.

These are all areas which we feel would benefit from the work of a Thurrock Fairness Commission, where major local employers, schools and colleges, user-led organisations and residents could come together in a forum to discuss these issues and develop plans to try to readdress these problems.

Summary & Recommendations

The aim of this review was to look at ways other local authorities' deployed Fairness commissions and how equality issues were progressed within budgetary constraints during a time of increasing cuts to public spending and services.

It is clear that there is a wealth of data that indicates a level of inequality exists in Thurrock and that there are a number of strategies and action plans in place to try to tackle this. The issues and initiatives around reducing inequalities are cross council, cross theme and cross partners.

By examining the evidence we found that much is being done to address inequalities in the Borough through the work of various strategic boards, partnerships and action plans developed by council officers and partners, and that these strategies are making progress in improving the life chances of Thurrock residents – including children and young people.

Nevertheless there is still an equality gap and as a panel we felt that this is something that will only be set to widen over time, particularly within this challenging economic climate. As a result we make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1:

Thurrock establishes a Thurrock Fairness Commission to progress equality issues within the Borough

We recognise the good work of Fairness Commissions around the Country, all of which have been set up to address diverse problems and different local circumstances. We have also observed how inequality touches on a wide range of complex and often inter-linked issues that cannot simply be solved by local action or policy. As a panel we felt that a Thurrock Fairness Commission is the best mechanism to coordinate and drive the equalities agenda going forward and that it will bring council departments, third sector organisations, partners and members of the public together as a collective with a greater voice to address these issues.

It is important that answers are reached by working with local people and that there is a sense of ownership from the community in tackling these challenges. This was reiterated in our discussions with Senior Management, one of whom had experience of working at a local authority which had a Fairness Commission, and a strong action

plan that was owned by all, which successfully challenged inequalities and raised aspirations.

It is evident from our research that stakeholders want to be a part of developing a Fairness Commission in the strive to create a 'Fairer Thurrock' and that is important the Commission is meaningful and truly challenge the council, officers and its partners.

Through working together on issues based on hard evidence and involving communities themselves we hope that a Fairness Commission can bring a new focus and influence to the equalities agenda in Thurrock and impact upon local delivery. By raising fairness issues higher up the agenda we hope that this will accelerate the change that has already been happening and prevent a wider gap from emerging between those 'that have' and those that 'have not' in Thurrock.

We feel that it is only then by working together in order to collectively address the cross theme and cross departmental issues that Thurrock can truly be a **fair place of access to opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where all individuals, communities and businesses flourish.**

In order to provide an idea of our vision for a Thurrock Fairness Commission more further detailed information has been provided in **Appendix 11** on page 72-74.

Recommendation 2:

That no more than 15 Commissioners form the Membership of Thurrock Fairness Commission.

A Thurrock Fairness Commission should engage with Thurrock residents from all walks of life, listen to their views and opinions, provide meaningful challenge and initiate change. In order to successfully do this potential Commissioners need to represent and possess a range of skills, knowledge and expertise and have the necessary breadth of understanding of the local community. This was reiterated in our work with stakeholders.

As a result of our research into other Commissions and in liaison with stakeholders we have included a proposal of what a Thurrock Fairness Commission could look like. This can obviously be a fluid number and should recommendation 1 be agreed we hope to further consult with stakeholders on the membership of a Commission.

Similar to other Fairness Commissions across the Country we would expect that Commissioners would not be paid and would dedicate their time for free around their other commitments. Elsewhere Commissioners were offered travel expenses to cover their costs, however as all Thurrock Commissioners would be local to Thurrock and not travelling significant distances we anticipate the costs in this area would be negligible. We have suggested that the Membership of the Commission could include:

- Labour Councillor
- Conservative Councillor
- Assistant Chief Executive or Senior Management Team Member of Thurrock Borough Council.
- Head teacher
- Disability Group Representative
- Senior figure from local industry
- Housing Representative
- Economist
- Health Representative
- Youth Cabinet Representative

Recommendation 3:

The work of the Thurrock Fairness Commission is progressed within existing resources.

As a panel one of our valid concerns was how a potential Fairness Commission could be progressed within budgetary constraints. At a time of significant public sector cuts and challenging funding settlements there is ever increasing pressure on staff to undertake more work – and less money around to undertake it. Especially during a period of welfare reform when there is often increased demand on local authority services.

From our examination into best practice of Fairness Commissions the costs of supporting a Commission varied significantly, with Islington Fairness Commission spending a significantly large sum of £13,990 (excluding officer time) whilst others such as Newcastle Fairness Commission reported minimal costs (only room hire and refreshments). Most Fairness Commissions have utilised existing staff to facilitate and support the work of the Commission but all have been fairly small in number or staff have included this work as part of their ‘regular’ day jobs and workload.

As Thurrock is very different in its size and nature to those authorities such as Islington (the Fairness Commission budget was mainly spent on language interpreters, venue hire, stationery and mailing costs) we feel that a Thurrock Commission should be more in line with those Commissions such as Newport and

Newcastle, and that costs would be minimal. By taking a partnership approach it is expected that the Commission will share venue spaces and it would be anticipated that no venue hire charges will be incurred.

At the outset of the review some officers raised concerns that they felt their particular teams did not have the resource to support a Fairness Commission. As a result this has been widely discussed at panel meetings and costs and staffing implications investigated in our research and correspondence with best practice Fairness Commissions.

During these discussions a number of Directors demonstrated their support for a Commission and it was reported that officers could be identified in their respective service areas that could facilitate the work of a Thurrock Fairness Commission and for whom this work could be incorporated into their workload.

In response this matter was raised at a meeting of Directors Board in January 2014 where it was resolved that a lead contact be established in each service area to support the work of the Thurrock Fairness Commission and that this work would be coordinated by an officer from the Chief Executive's Delivery Unit.

As a panel we felt that this was a positive way forward and an option that would enable a Thurrock Fairness Commission to be established but with minimal costs to the authority. Just because there is pressure on public sector budgets and the issues surrounding Fairness can be perceived as such a large task that it can almost appear insurmountable does not mean that we should not face these challenges head on. If we are to make a real difference to Fairness in Thurrock then we need to identify new ways of working and adapt accordingly. We feel that a Thurrock Fairness Commission would assist in this work, forming a cross-departmental problem solving team of council staff, along with stakeholders, to examine issues surrounding inequality, identify ways this can be improved and make sound recommendations.

As a panel we feel that should the recommendations of a Thurrock Fairness Commission be agreed by Cabinet, Directors should identify appropriate officers to help facilitate the work of the Commission in discussion with service managers.

Recommendation 4:

That the work of the Thurrock Fairness Commission is regularly reviewed and that a final report is received to Cabinet and or Council one year after its inception.

The majority of Fairness Commissions have generally completed work within one year, following which recommendations are made to the Council and its partners regarding policy, strategy and implementation. At this point the work of the Fairness Commission is reviewed and extended if necessary.

As a panel we feel that a Thurrock Fairness Commission should work to a similar model. A draft terms of reference for Thurrock Fairness Commission is included in **Appendix 11** on page 72-74 as an example, although this would be at the discretion of the Commissioners themselves to amend if they see necessary.

We feel that a 6 month update report should be reviewed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to monitor the progress of the Commission. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee should also review the Thurrock Fairness Commissions final report before it is received back to Cabinet and or Council one year after the Fairness Commissions inception.

Following the publication of the final report the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive regular updates from officers regarding the progress of implementation of the Thurrock Fairness Commissions recommendations.

Next Steps

If a Fairness Commission is agreed to be established following our recommendations we suggest that the next steps should include Directors to identify appropriate staff in their service area to facilitate the Fairness Commission, including an appropriate officer in the Chief Executive's Delivery Unit to coordinate the work. A Councillor from each of the two largest political parties in Thurrock should also be nominated in order for initial work in appointing Commissioners to begin.

It is important to us that the outcomes of this review are reported back to the stakeholders who attended the workshop and contributed to the panel's investigation, and that a further meeting is held in order to involve partners and stakeholders to identify potential Commissioners. We feel that some of our stakeholders would be good community voices to have on a Commission. During this

transition period, until Commissioners are appointed, we as a panel can assist and advise on local partners and stakeholders who could become potential Commissioners and hope that this final report will assist a Thurrock Fairness Commission in their initial evidence gathering and work.

Appendix 1: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Ranking for Thurrock by Ward, excerpt from Thurrock Ward Profiles (December 2013, v.2)

The table below shows how Thurrock's wards compare in terms of deprivation. The higher the rank (i.e. the lower the number), the more deprived the ward is in comparison to other 20 wards in Thurrock. [If viewing in colour red indicates more deprived and green indicates least deprived]

Ward	2011 Total Population	% Pop. change since 2001	Total Households	Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) - RANK								Other comparators						
				IMD Rank	Income	Employment	Health	Education	Housing	Crime	Living Environment	Average Income	Male - Life expectancy	Female - Life Expectancy.	% House Ownership	% Obese Adults	% children in poverty	% Free School Meals (FSM)
Tilbury St Chads	6177	4.7	2469	1	2	3	2	1	8	1	8	£30k	74	79	50.1	29.9	41	29
Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	6878	11.3	3031	2	1	2	3	2	12	2	13	£31k	74	79	45.5	29.9	41	31
Belhus	9780	11.9	4201	3	3	1	1	4	5	4	10	£32k	76	81	56.9	30.2	27.1	21.7
West Thurrock and South Stifford	10478	34.2	4934	4	5	8	8	6	4	3	2	£39k	77	83	53.0	28.6	33.2	25.3
Chadwell St Mary	9865	2.3	4261	5	4	4	4	3	14	8	15	£32k	78	83	57.5	27.6	30.7	24.6
Ockendon	9680	7.7	4493	6	6	5	5	7	11	6	14	£35k	78	83	61.6	28.6	26.7	25.5
Aveley and Uplands	8912	6.1	4076	7	8	6	6	5	6	7	3	£35k	77	85	66.4	28.2	23.5	20.9
Grays Riverside	11695	25.3	5381	8	7	7	9	11	7	5	1	£41k	76	79	47.9	26.4	29.4	21
Grays Thurrock	9150	0	3863	9	10	10	10	10	15	9	4	£36k	77	80	63.7	27.5	17	16.2
Stanford East and Corringham Town	8607	-3.1	3891	10	9	9	11	8	13	17	16	£33k	79	84	68.7	29.7	17.5	17.1
Stifford Clays	6460	3.7	2735	11	11	11	7	14	20	14	12	£35k	79	82	71.5	27.8	15.4	13.8
East Tilbury	6364	-0.9	2722	12	12	13	13	12	10	16	5	£40k	79	80	76.3	29.3	18	14.8
Little Thurrock Blackshots	5770	-3.1	2550	13	13	12	12	13	18	12	11	£37k	79	81	81.8	28.1	14.7	11.3
Stanford-le-Hope West	6379	-4.0	2886	14	14	14	15	9	19	10	7	£38k	82	84	71.1	29.7	15.7	16.8
Corringham and Fobbing	5478	-4.2	2413	15	16	15	16	16	1	19	17	£38k	82	86	88.8	29.6	8.5	7.3
Little Thurrock Rectory	5955	0.15	2817	16	15	16	14	17	17	11	6	£40k	79	82	82.3	26.4	9.4	6.9
Orsett	6115	8.65	2553	17	17	18	17	18	2	13	9	£47k	80	83	84.2	25.6	6.1	5.2
The Homesteads	8507	-6.7	3536	18	19	17	19	15	9	20	18	£41k	81	85	89.5	29.7	13.2	7.3
Chafford and North Stifford	8071	43.3	3045	19	18	19	18	19	3	18	19	£58k	82	81	81.3	24.5	8.2	6.4
South Chafford	7384	148	3003	20	20	20	20	20	16	15	20	£63k	82	81	72.7	24.5	8.2	4

IMD Key: RANK (of 20, where 1 is most deprived)

Income: captures the proportions of the population experiencing income deprivation in an area

Employment: people of working age who are involuntarily excluded from the world of work, either through unemployment, ill health or family circumstances

Health: relatively high rates of premature death or whose quality of life is impaired by poor health or who are disabled,

Education: two sub-domains: one relating to lack of attainment among children and young people and one relating to lack of qualifications in terms of skills.

Housing: two sub-domains: 'geographical barriers' and 'wider barriers' which includes issues relating to access to housing such as affordability

Crime: rate of recorded crime for four major crime themes – burglary, theft, criminal damage and violence - representing the occurrence of personal and material victimisation at a small area level.

Living Environment: two sub-domains: the 'indoors' living environment which measures the quality of housing and the 'outdoors' living environment which contains two measures about air quality and road traffic accidents.

NB. The information in the document is based on snapshots in time and purely on statistical analysis and is subject to regular change as data is updated.

Please be careful if using any of this data to draw conclusions on any particular area or issue. Individual statistics used alone without other contextual data can be misleading or incomplete.

Please check with the council's Research and Intelligence team for more information (0208 227 3424)

Appendix 2: Demographic range within the borough by characteristic

Characteristic	Thurrock	Lowest* Borough	Highest* Borough
Population	157,705	Corringham & Fobbing (5,478)	Grays Riverside (11,695)
% Population change	10.1%	The Homesteads (- 6.7%)	South Chafford (148%)
Number of households	62,400	Corringham & Fobbing (2,413)	Grays Riverside (5,381)
% Household ownership	66.7%	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park (45.5%)	The Homesteads (89.5%)
% of 0-14 year olds	20.4%	Corringham & Fobbing (15.22%)	South Chafford (27.26%)
% of 15-64 year olds	66.9%	Stanford East & Corringham Town (61.4%)	Grays Riverside (72.09%)
% of over 65 year olds	13.2%	South Chafford (2.11%)	Corringham & Fobbing (21.87%)
% of BME residents	19.1%	Corringham & Fobbing (3.9%)	South Chafford (40.3%)
Indices of Multiple-Deprivation (IMD) Ranking	n/a	Tilbury St Chads (1)	South Chafford (20)
Average household income (£)	£39K	Tilbury St Chads (£30K)	South Chafford (£63K)
Workless rate (May 2013) (on key out of work benefits) (%)	11.11%	South Chafford (4.0%)	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park (19.7%)
Employment Support Allowance/ Incapacity Benefit (%) (May 2013)	5.11%	South Chafford (1.4%)	Belhus (8.8%)
Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) Claimant Rate (%) (Oct 2013)	3.4%	Orsett (1.3%)	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park (6.5%)
Life expectancy at birth – Males	78.4 yrs	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park / Tilbury St Chads (73.9 yrs)	Chafford & North Stifford / South Chafford / Stanford le Hope West (81.8 yrs)
Life expectancy at birth – Females	82.2 yrs	Grays Riverside (79.3 yrs)	Corringham & Fobbing (85.7 yrs)
% Obese Adults	28.1%	Chafford & North Stifford / South Chafford (24.5%)	Belhus (30.2%)
% Children living in poverty	21.3%	Orsett (6.1%)	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park / Tilbury St Chads (41%)
% of Free School Meals	17.4%	South Chafford (4%)	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park (31%)
% Good Level of Development in Early Years Foundation Stage	53%	East Tilbury (27.8%)	Corringham and Fobbing (75%)
% attainment Level 4 in Reading, Writing & Maths (Primary)	71.9%	West Thurrock (60%)	The Homesteads (80.7%)
% 5 A*-Cs at GCSE/equivalent inc. English and Maths	59.1%	Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park (43.8%)	South Chafford (90.3%)
% Attendance (Primary)	95.1%	East Tilbury (94.63%)	South Chafford (96.57%)
% Attendance (Secondary)	94.1%	Tilbury St Chads (91.95%)	South Chafford (96.55%)

* the categorisation of lowest and highest relates to the actual number not whether it is worse or better.

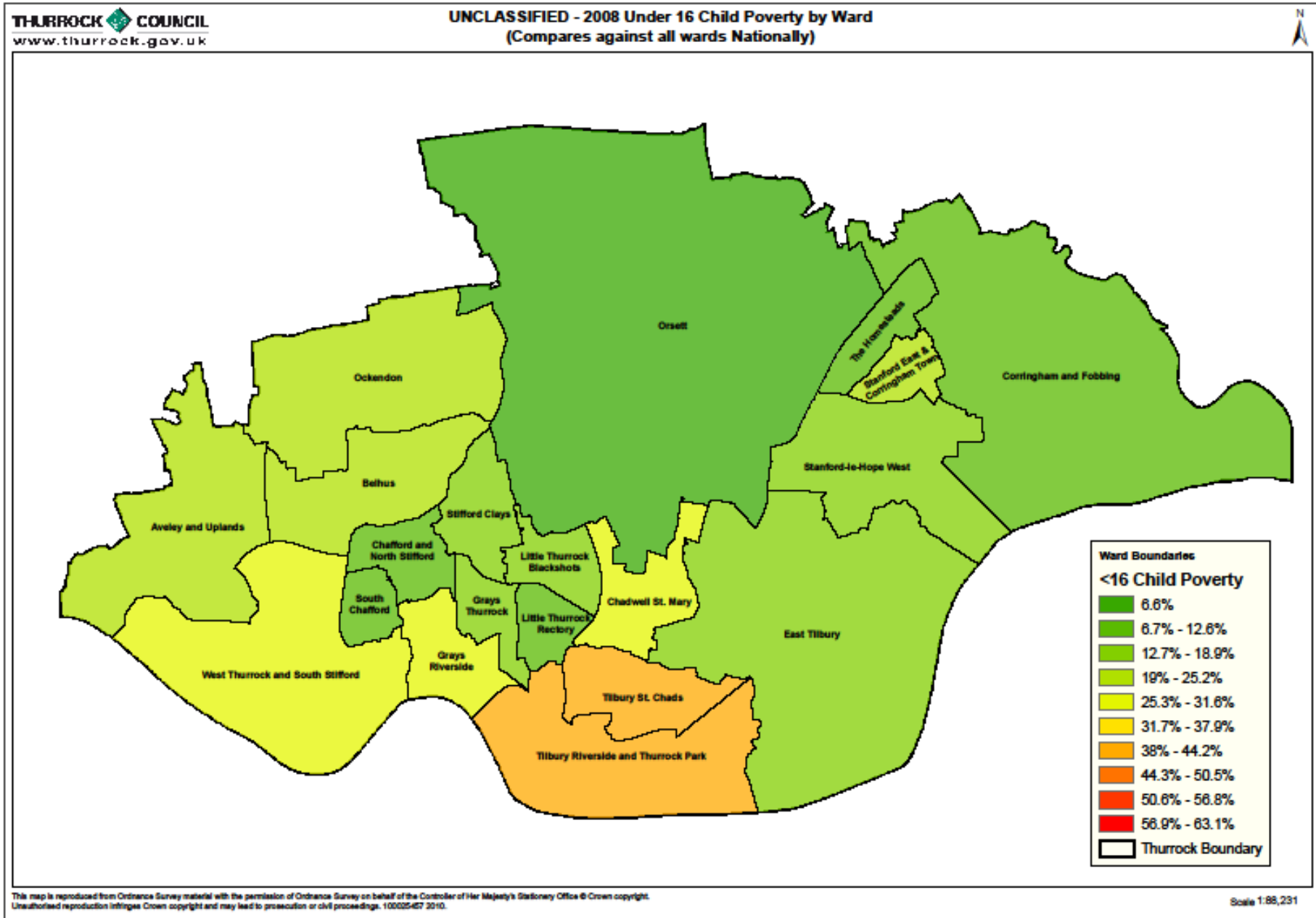
** source and definitions of indicator stated at the back of this document

NB. The information in the document is based on snapshots in time and purely on statistical analysis and is subject to regular change as data is updated.

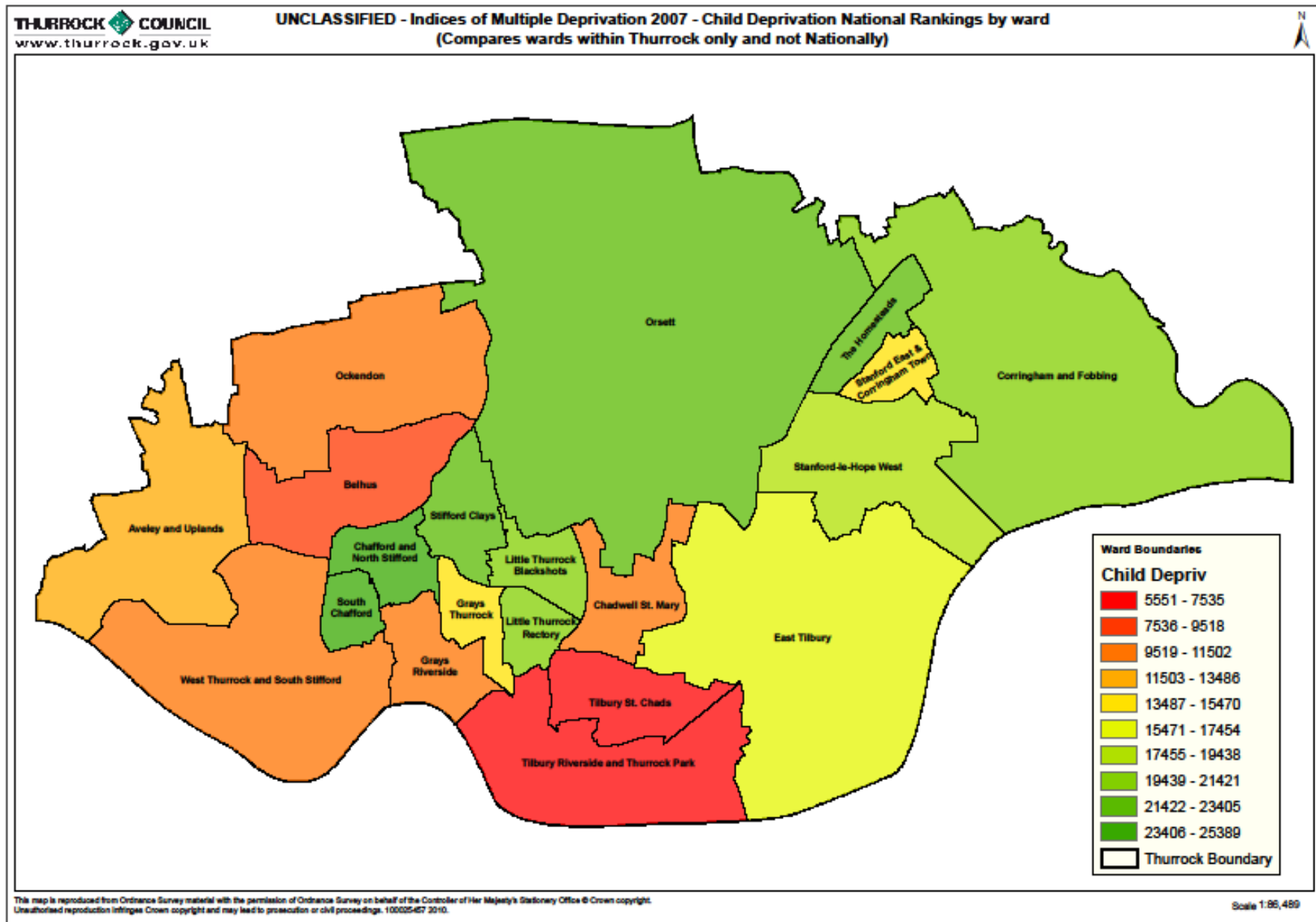
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Please check with the council's Research and Intelligence team for more information (0208 227 3424)

Appendix 3: Under 16 Child Poverty by Ward (2008)



Appendix 4: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 – Child Deprivation National Rankings by Ward



Appendix 5: Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) performance data by Ward (2013)

ATP = Average Total Points

GLD = Good Level of Development

Ward	ATP	GLD %
Aveley and Uplands	31.5	41.4%
Belhus	33.9	57.3%
Chadwell	32.6	46.0%
Chafford and North Stifford	32.3	47.7%
Corringham and Fobbing	33.6	75.0%
East Tilbury	30.7	27.8%
Grays Riverside	31.2	57.5%
Grays Thurrock	32.1	59.6%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	33.1	53.6%
Little Thurrock Rectory	33.4	54.1%
Ockendon	34.0	59.8%
Orsett	33.4	63.8%
South Chafford	34.4	61.4%
Stanford East and Corringham Town	31.6	47.8%
Stanford-le-Hope West	31.9	62.5%
Stifford Clays	33.8	63.4%
The Homesteads	33.2	62.0%
Tilbury Riverside	30.6	41.0%
Tilbury St. Chads	30.1	41.7%
West Thurrock	34.1	52.9%
Out of Borough	31.0	46.7%
Thurrock	32.5	53.0%

Appendix 6: Key Stage 2 Results by ward (2013).

KS2 Ward	Pupils	Reading L4+	Reading L5+	Writing L4+	Writing L5+	Maths L4+	Maths L5+	RWM L4+
Aveley and Uplands	82	87.8%	36.6%	74.4%	13.4%	75.6%	28.0%	68.3%
Belhus	117	88.0%	41.0%	80.3%	30.8%	89.7%	47.0%	76.1%
Chadwell	119	85.7%	39.5%	87.4%	25.2%	88.2%	37.0%	76.5%
Chafford and North Stifford	106	85.8%	51.9%	87.7%	38.7%	89.6%	60.4%	80.2%
Corringham and Fobbing	64	89.1%	29.7%	76.6%	18.8%	81.3%	37.5%	73.4%
East Tilbury	74	83.8%	32.4%	78.4%	13.5%	79.7%	31.1%	66.2%
Grays Riverside	94	80.9%	33.0%	77.7%	16.0%	84.0%	27.7%	72.3%
Grays Thurrock	98	84.7%	33.7%	77.6%	20.4%	83.7%	32.7%	65.3%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	62	82.3%	35.5%	83.9%	25.8%	69.4%	30.6%	61.3%
Little Thurrock Rectory	68	88.2%	47.1%	82.4%	30.9%	85.3%	38.2%	75.0%
Ockendon	100	85.0%	32.0%	85.0%	29.0%	88.0%	41.0%	78.0%
Orsett	58	84.5%	39.7%	84.5%	31.0%	86.2%	34.5%	77.6%
South Chafford	110	89.1%	47.3%	86.4%	35.5%	83.6%	45.5%	77.3%
Stanford East and Corringham Town	114	84.2%	34.2%	78.1%	25.4%	83.3%	33.3%	71.1%
Stanford-le-Hope West	69	82.6%	39.1%	87.0%	26.1%	89.9%	42.0%	76.8%
Stifford Clays	84	81.0%	29.8%	81.0%	26.2%	70.2%	27.4%	61.9%
The Homesteads	88	89.8%	40.9%	88.6%	28.4%	89.8%	52.3%	80.7%
Tilbury Riverside	97	79.4%	35.1%	83.5%	22.7%	87.6%	37.1%	71.1%
Tilbury St. Chads	89	73.0%	29.2%	79.8%	19.1%	76.4%	33.7%	64.0%
West Thurrock	125	78.4%	29.6%	71.2%	18.4%	71.2%	32.0%	60.0%
Out of Borough	23	91.3%	60.9%	91.3%	26.1%	87.0%	60.9%	87.0%
Thurrock	1841	84.2%	37.3%	81.6%	25.0%	82.9%	38.2%	71.9%

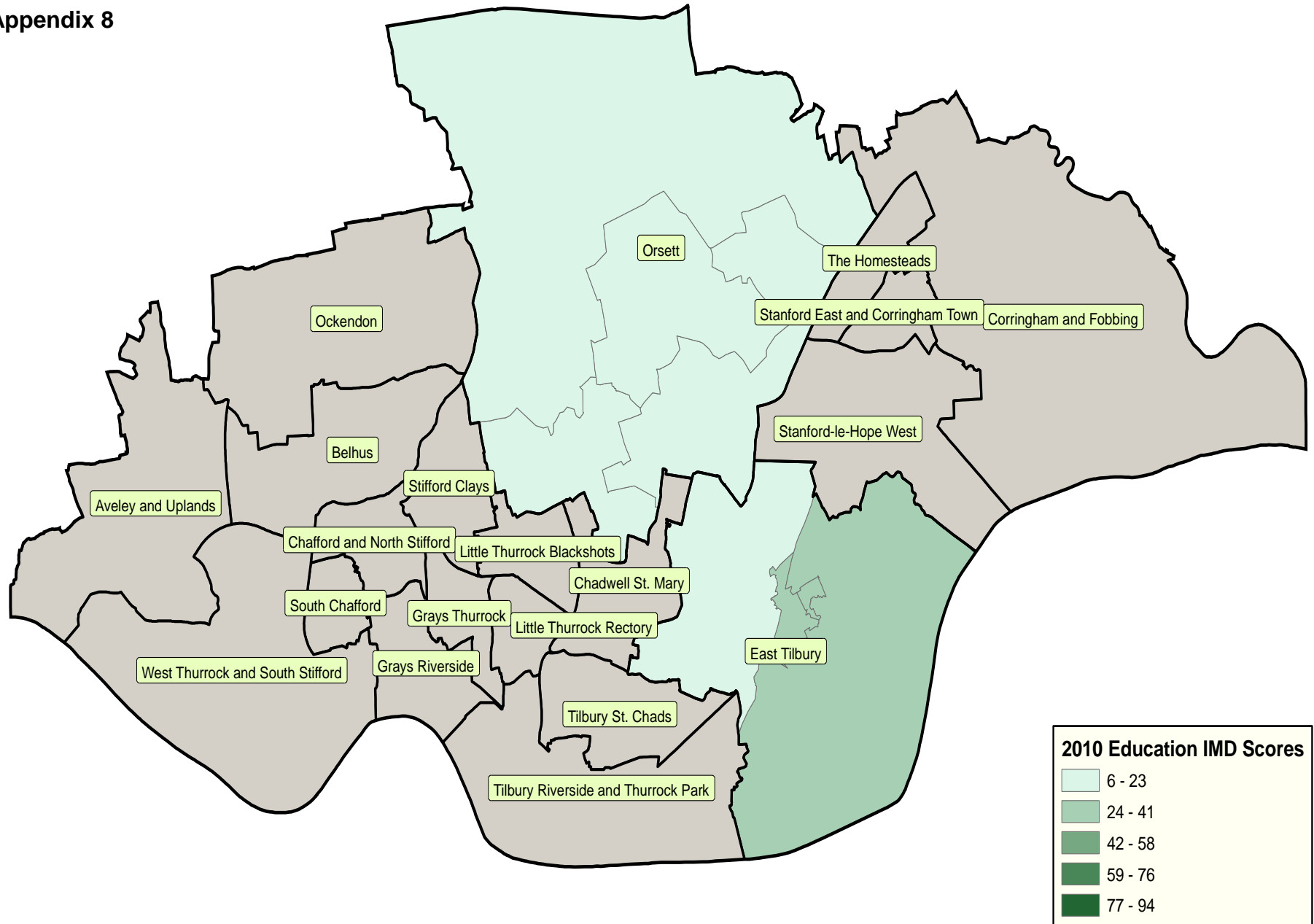
Appendix 7: Key Stage 4 results by ward (2013)

Calculated from provisional data supplied by the Department for Education (DfE).

Ward	5+ A*-C including GCSE English and maths
Aveley and Uplands	51.6%
Belhus	49.6%
Chadwell	52.5%
Chafford and North Stifford	72.6%
Corringham and Fobbing	76.8%
East Tilbury	70.1%
Grays Riverside	53.1%
Grays Thurrock	48.6%
Little Thurrock Blackshots	66.2%
Little Thurrock Rectory	62.3%
Ockendon	48.8%
Orsett	67.7%
Out of Borough	60.3%
South Chafford	90.3%
Stanford East and Corringham Town	56.1%
Stanford-le-Hope West	61.6%
Stifford Clays	62.7%
The Homesteads	67.3%
Tilbury Riverside	43.8%
Tilbury St. Chads	51.8%
West Thurrock	52.3%
Thurrock	59.1%

Education, Skills and Training IMD Scores 2010

Appendix 8



Appendix 9: Notes from the Stakeholder Workshop – 30 January 2014

Group 1

The Breakout Group had the strongly held view that it was crucial to look at specific issues and try and address matters on a targeted basis, rather than trying to consider too many issues at the same time. The following examples were discussed:

- Replacement Kitchens – was it fair that due to programming, a tenant in one area might have to wait 5 years for a replacement kitchen, yet in another area a tenant may get a replacement immediately, even though the tenant who has to wait 5 years has a kitchen in greater need of replacement;
- School Academies – there was major concern about the lack of information academies provide to other organisations. This often had a ‘knock on’ affect as it had become more difficult for other organisations to offer assistance to young people and give them fair access to help available. It was accepted that academies had a mandate to self-manage, but it needed to be made clear that they have a duty of care. This is the sort of thing a Fairness Commission could influence;
- The Commission could look at and exert influence over how Community Infrastructure Premium funding (previously S.106), was spent as there seemed to be no fair or cohesive structure to this at the moment. The same applied to the Pupil Premium.

Making Things Happen

- It was felt that it was crucial that a Fairness Commission should have some ‘bite’, with a high profile Chair and other commissioners that could ‘make a difference’. Two of the commissioners should be Members of the Council. The Commission needed to be ‘real’ and capable of making a difference.
- To make things happen the Fairness Commission would need information that wasn’t readily available at the moment, such as the number of children living in Council properties and the number of children that had been subjected to abuse.

Sensitivity

- The breakout group were mindful of the sensitivity surrounding the current financial climate and in particular, the 33m cuts the Local Authority was facing in the next few years. It was noted that there was already a commitment to utilise existing Council Officer resources and it might be possible to provide some revenue

Group 2

The table had a really interesting discussion and although did not come to any clear cut answers to the three questions posed, did have a number of points to be considered moving forward. These are not in any order of importance.

- In some cases the issue of whether there is fair access to services/opportunities for residents may also be determined by the awareness of the service/opportunity – effective communication, marketing, promotion
- Some people do not want support despite their circumstances, some want a bit, some expect to full support - example given was two families in similar circumstances – one mum does not want support with her child as feels it is her role to look after them, another mum wants full support provided by council and other public sector partners
- Some young people’s access to opportunities are hindered by the outdated perceptions of their parents eg racial prejudice, job v benefits, “working down the docks” – educating whole families
- Each case is different – for some having a nice house is the catalyst for fairness, some having a job, some having good health etc
- There are pockets of “wealth” in areas of “poverty” and vice versa – therefore whatever approach needs to be flexible
- Pride in the area often comes from a feeling of ownership – example of the Ockendon School 10+ years ago – had been in special measures and had history of poor behaviour. New head decorated the school (got rid of graffiti, grubby, flaking paint), tidied the neglected gardens (got the pupils involved in doing so), removed all the rubbish and litter, installed a smart new uniform. Along with other measures, behaviour and attendance improved, and subsequently so did performance.
- Getting the community involved is key – principles of ABCD at work – but also communities need to be resilient to be able to cope with those “neighbours” who do not want to get involved/are antisocial
- One area the Commission could consider looking at is the monitoring of whether the growth agenda is narrowing or widening the gap – although this could take much longer than the life of the Commission

Group 3

Key themes:

- A Fairness Commission should be a critical friend.
- It should “rubber stamp” strategies and policies to ensure they are fair.

- A Commission should be able to truly challenge the council, officers and its partners but should clarify where it would fit within the corporate structure.
- It should have “teeth” and not pay lip service.
- It should be meaningful and have the necessary breadth of understanding from the community..
- A Senior Council officer should be on the Commission – suggested the Assistant Chief Executive, Steve Cox – so that he could give weight to the Commission and give it more backing internally with Council officers. (Especially if there was any reluctance to implement a Commission’s strategy).
- That a Commission should be politically proportional and include one senior Council Officer (suggested Assistant Chief Executive) and the remaining members should be significant people within the community who possess specialist knowledge but can have a breadth of understanding. (And therefore not focus unduly on one specific community group/local issue).
- That a Commission should not be weighted to one particular service area, e.g. by having a Director from Children’s Services or Public Health on the Commission. Rather a Commission should have one senior officer who is impartial and can work across all the different service areas to effect change.
- That a Commission should engage with residents in a variety of ways, and not just online.
- That it should be clarified how the decision making process would work, could the Commission call in “unfair” decisions to Cabinet? What would the Commissions power be?
- The Commission should have strong “doable” outcomes. And that sometimes small actions or changes can make a big difference to the local community.
- Commissioners should have empathy.
- The Commission should impact change in real life (the importance of achieving things in practice rather than just being something on paper).
- The Commission should change the “computer says no” attitude by some officers in Thurrock.
- It was asked how long a Commission would be in existence for.

The group were positive and felt that a Fairness Commission was a good idea, but that it should have a meaningful role with “teeth” in order to provide effective challenge.

The group were keen to be kept up-to-date with the outcomes of the Fairness in Review panel (e.g. from a “You Said, We Did” session) and be involved if a

Fairness Commission was established – even if this meant a further meeting to identify suitable Commissioners from within the community.

Group 4

If there was one thing you could change in Thurrock to make the Borough 'fairer' what would it be?

Decent quality housing

Good education (how to define?)

Access to good primary health

Systems need to flex to meet individual needs eg translation – for example, if someone wants to appeal the process would be very difficult if English is not your first language and may need a longer time frame

People need a level playing field

Everyone needs a safety net – public opinion sets divisions between those who work and who don't (mortgages / insurance)

Do you feel people living across Thurrock have fair access to services and fair access to opportunities?

No

Access – transport, language

If commissioners target an area with a larger need, it can be even more negative in a smaller area

Choice vs. catchment areas

Are there any areas where you believe individuals living and working in Thurrock need extra support?

Sign posting

Thurrock vs. individual areas

Promote local £

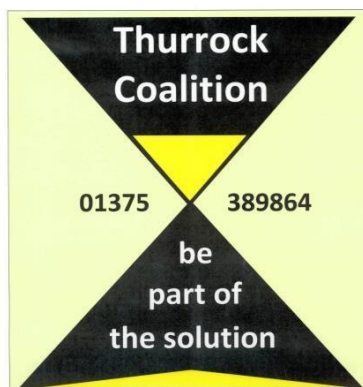
Disparity between great things on paper and in reality

Pupil premium and how spent

S106

Appendix 10

Thurrock Coalition



www.thurrockcoalition.co.uk

Informing the work of the Overview and Scrutiny review into Fairness in Thurrock

Introduction

Thurrock Coalition offers advice and support for disabled and older residents of Thurrock and their carers. We are a wide network of individuals and groups aiming to inform people about their rights and entitlements and to improve the quality and choice of services that might assist them. Our main role is to engage, consult and listen to the views of Citizens of Thurrock.

To this end, we are involved in co-productive activities with Thurrock Council, building upon our positive and constructive relationships with Directorates, Heads of Service and Managers, particularly Adult Social Care and Housing.

As the User-Led Organisation for the borough we have a meaningful strategic and operational input into consultations, strategies, policies and work streams. Thus helping to ensure the voices of people who use services, their families and their carers are heard, listened to and implemented, with the aim of achieving more positive outcomes and change for Citizens of Thurrock.

We have noted an increased recognition on the part of the Council of the importance and added value of early engagement with the people who have lived experiences of using Council services. It is clear that increased consultation and co-production has enormous potential to create a “fairer” Thurrock for all.

Addressing the questions of fairness in Thurrock:

General observations

Fairness is an inappropriate tenet upon which to base such a Review. “Fairness” is inherently subjective and open to broad interpretation, thus making measuring effective implementation of any recommendations difficult. We submit that Equality is more appropriate in this context. The principles Equality are defined in Law. Equality is absolute; people are either treated equally or not, whereas “Fairness” can be interpreted in degrees. The focus should be upon achieving Equality through empowerment for choice and control for all in the community.

Current focus and examples of inequality that Thurrock Coalition (The User-Led Organisation – ULO for Thurrock) Partners are addressing:

- The World of Work (WoW) initiative - supporting individuals with learning difficulties to gain equal access to employment opportunities and the employment market
- Third Sector multi-agency work is being carried out to increase the fair access to BSL interpreters and similar reasonable adjustments for people with sensory impairments when accessing Adult Social Care and Health Services.
- Third Sector multi-agency work is being carried out to highlight issues around the scope of advocacy funding and service provision in Thurrock.

Examples of the wider work streams and impact of Thurrock Coalition (The User-Led Organisation – ULO for Thurrock)

Some examples of the work of Thurrock Coalition and its partner organisations aimed at addressing issues of inequality and access to services through various strategy input and work streams are as follows:

Work stream: Sensory Confrontation Event

People with sensory impairments, including members of the Thurrock Unsighted People’s Society (TUPS), have told us that there is a gap in the provision of services and equipment being offered to Thurrock residents by the council. We saw that the gap in service provision needed addressing.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

As a result of the day, Thurrock Council now wants to Co-produce its sensory strategy alongside local people. As the User-Led Organisation for Thurrock, Thurrock Coalition is keen to provide input in a comprehensive and strategic manner and to ensure that the process is informed by the views and concerns of residents of Thurrock.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

There is currently no strategic statement on sensory impairment in Thurrock. To approach this omission co-productively, Thurrock Coalition initially held a Sensory Confrontation event to identify some relevant issues. They then asked people with sensory impairment about their experiences to date using a solution focused approach which emphasises what has worked and why. This does not avoid problem talk, but does concentrate on what could happen that would make things better and thus sets a firmer basis for the initial vision for both Council services and for current and potential customers.

Thurrock Coalition then held a series of consultation and engagement workshops with people who have sensory impairments. The report and recommendations were drafted to help to inform a sensory strategy for Thurrock.

There is now a text phone, a Sensory Development worker and Visual Rehab Worker at Thurrock Council as a direct result of this project
We are awaiting the draft of the Thurrock Sensory Strategy from Thurrock Council.

Workforce Planning and Development

Thurrock Council engaged Thurrock Coalition to consult with people who use adult social care services in Thurrock and gather their experiences, views and opinions on what training should be given to adult social care staff to further the implementation of the Personalisation agenda.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

Residents will have expressed and elaborated upon the skills, qualities, competences and qualifications they feel the workforce should have and what would make a "good social care worker. *Their views will be analysed and collated to inform the Council's workforce strategy.*

The views, experiences, issues and identified outcomes from all 4 Focus Groups were analysed for commonality from which the following were extrapolated:

Agreed outcome – A - I feel I have choice and am in control of the services I receive and they meet my needs

Agreed outcome – B - I feel I have been listened to and understood and am in control of the assessment process

Agreed outcome – C - I feel confident that social care staff know what they are doing Social care policies are clear and understood by everyone.

Agreed outcome – D - I feel all relevant information about me is shared appropriately and with my knowledge.

Agreed Outcome – E - I understand what is available to me both in my community and from health and social care.

Agreed outcome – F - I feel recognised as an individual, able to make decisions for myself and my own contribution to society.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

A consolidation event was held in order to provide a further opportunity for feedback on the draft strategy to see that it accurately reflected the outcomes developed by the people of Thurrock. These outcomes now appear in the Thurrock Council Workforce Strategy and have potential over-arching application across all of Thurrock Council's Adult social Care strategies now and in the future.

Thurrock Coalition and Thurrock Council then worked co-productively to develop processes and procedures for an observation of training programme to be User-Led, its membership drawn from interested individuals who were involved in the initial Workforce Planning project. This work is ongoing as of November 2013.

Informing a Transition Strategy for Thurrock

It was recognised that a new, refreshed, over-arching Transition strategy was needed. Thurrock Council already has a transitions pathway with which they are already working. The overarching strategy document must be simple and easy for people to understand.

It was agreed that to start this process Thurrock Council needs to know what young people, parents and carers want their transition service to look like. What are their hopes and wishes for the future, and how can we help them get there.

With this in mind Thurrock Coalition produced a plan of service user consultation events - including what funding was needed and for the Transition parents support group to be involved.

The second phase involved Thurrock Council Officers gaining the views of professionals working in the field

It was intended that Phase 3 would involve commissioning and a local offer

What was the outcome of this work stream?

The intended outcomes of Phase 1 are as follows:

We appreciate that the experiences (past, present and future) of individuals, parents and carers embarking on the transition process are varied and wide-ranging and we explained exactly of what it comprises to each focus group. By the end of the process:

a) Residents will have a better understanding of what the Council does and does not provide in terms of its Transition service and therefore what they can legitimately expect from it.

b) Residents will have expressed and elaborated upon the Transition service experience that they should expect to have and what would improve the experience further. Their views will be analysed and collated to inform the Council's Transition strategy.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

The outcomes and themes identified on the day will help to shape and influence the work of the Transition Strategy Group (of which Thurrock Coalition is an active member). Thurrock Coalition also facilitated a Workshop between practitioners, individuals and parents in January 2013. Third Sector, Parent, Carer and individual involvement in the Transition Strategy Group is ongoing.

Housing Hurdles Event

The Housing Hurdles Event was held in order to engage key organisations in the Third Sector including as well as Citizens of Thurrock, and Council Officers to explore and discuss issues around housing specifically affecting disabled people in Thurrock. The issues covered included: accessibility, assessments, experiences, delays, homelessness, equipment, adaptations and priority within the allocation system.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

The event provided a valuable opportunity to explore the strengths of the Housing service in Thurrock and included discussions around what has worked/is working well presently and what has not worked so well and how to improve this moving forward based upon the lived experience of Thurrock Citizens. Further engagement events in the form of Issue Specific Focus Groups are planned in Co-production between Thurrock Coalition and Thurrock Council's Housing Directorate.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

Thurrock Coalition has been asked by the Director of Housing at Thurrock Council to attend a forum to discuss the deficiencies in training provision for housing staff – specifically around disability equality awareness and provision of aids and adaptations in housing services.

Thurrock Diversity Network, as a member of Thurrock Coalition has informed the contents and drafting of the Thurrock Council housing allocations policy and specifically how it relates to and provides for disabled people and their families. The suggested amendments have been implemented and are now reflected in the strategy.

Workstream: Sport For You Event

Thurrock Coalition was invited by Senior Officers at Thurrock Council to look into ways of sustaining the interest and momentum behind the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, focussing upon increasing participation, inclusion and involvement in sports, activities and recreation in Thurrock for individuals of all impairment types.

One of the main issues that needed to be addressed was access to information and awareness of: what sport/activity related opportunities are actually available in Thurrock and how people can be encouraged to get involved within the local area.

The “Sport For You” event was held in order engage Citizens of Thurrock, parents, carers and families and Council Members Officers and Third Sector groups to explore, map and discuss current and potential future provision of Sport and Activity for Disabled people in Thurrock.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

- a) The event informed the development of networking, information sharing and increased communication between individuals and organisations to improve availability of opportunities for sport and activity for Disabled people in Thurrock.
- b) Thurrock Coalition is working closely with Thurrock Council’s Sports Council, partners and individuals.
- c) Thurrock Coalition is helping to ensure that the Pledges made at the event are fulfilled wherever possible.
- d) Thurrock Coalition has developed an Opportunity Database for Thurrock that effectively and accurately reflects the consultation feedback and includes the views of individuals their parents, families and carers
- e) Thurrock Coalition is continuing to support and strengthen the partnership between local government and the people of Thurrock.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

The Steering Group that was established to support the event has developed an action plan, with the aim of improving access to opportunities in sport and activity for Disabled People in Thurrock. The actions taken since the day are as follows:

The Thurrock Coalition Sports Opportunity Database is now active – detailing a broad range of accessible sports and activity opportunities for disabled people in Thurrock. The Thurrock Coalition Disability Sports page is now live (<http://www.thurrockcoalition.co.uk/sport.html>) – to be updated periodically when new information is received and the Steering Group will review every 6 months

Thurrock Coalition will draft periodic press releases and speak to Thurrock Council Communications Department in relation to maintaining the profile of the Sports initiatives for disabled people in Thurrock

Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions (TLS) have seconded a member of staff into the role of Sports Champion/Community Sports Connector.

Steering Group members have met with the Funding Officer at Thurrock Council re: funding – Thurrock Coalition is now receiving the funding Bulletin and forwards information to TLS. Transport solutions (accessible buses) have been pledged by: TLS, Thurrock Mind and Grangewaters.

An A4 TDN Guide to accessible transport has been created – it includes Buses, trains, taxis and Trans-Vol (and accessible telephone numbers for Thurrock companies).

Thurrock Coalition has located existing “free” resources e.g. school halls, sheltered accommodation complexes: Frederick Andrews Court, Davy Down. Frederick Andrews Court (Sheltered Housing Complex) is now used (in partnership with Sheltered Housing Residents and Managers, for a monthly activity and social event and opportunities, including Table Tennis, Bowls, Darts, Table Cricket and Horseracing. Football opportunities are now in place in Thurrock as well as Archery (standard and soft archery). In terms of swimming – The Steering Group Members plan to liaise with Impulse Leisure to increase the number of inclusive and accessible opportunities for swimming and request an inclusive sports leaflet/information bulletin, which lists the available opportunities in the borough.

Work stream: Highlighting Violence Against Women and Girls in Thurrock

Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions (TLS) – one of the constituent partners of Thurrock Coalition has undertaken work in noting the particularly 'unfair' way in which women with Learning Disabilities are disproportionately represented in the official and unofficial statistics relating to sexual violence.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

A film was made to highlight this inequality as part of Thurrock Council's violence against women and girls strategy.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

The specific impact is yet to be seen. However, senior managers of Social Care have pledged to support further strategies to minimise this inequality in future.

Thurrock Peer Challenge

Thurrock Coalition was invited to play a key role in informing the Thurrock Council Adult Social Care Peer Challenge. To this end, Thurrock Coalition designed, developed and facilitated a number of “Pre Challenge” Focus Groups in order to engage Citizens of Thurrock, people who use services, parents, families and voluntary sector colleagues to explore and discuss Thurrock Council's progress in terms of the Transformation agenda and the Building Positive Futures programme in a solution-focused manner.

What was the outcome of this work stream?

At the end of the 3 day on-site visit, the Peer Challenge Lead and colleagues attended a meeting of Thurrock Diversity Network to feedback findings from the Review to those organisations, groups and individuals who had contributed to the “Pre-Challenge” Focus Groups. A further example of how the user and carer voice is encouraged and included in the work of Thurrock

Council is that the Peer Challenge focused upon this topic as a key element of the scope and that Thurrock Coalition was an important member of the Peer Challenge Team.

Examples of the impact of the work stream

The impact of the work stream is yet to be measured, but it is hoped that implementation of the Recommendations from the Peer Challenge will be undertaken with partners in the continued spirit of co-production.

The above examples are not exhaustive, but are intended to provide an indication of the increased co-productive partnership-working in Thurrock in recent years with a view to increasing equality of opportunity and access to services for disabled people, older people, their families and carers in Thurrock

Further detailed information including local and national co-production, consultation and engagement reports and recommendations are available at: <http://www.thurrockcoalition.co.uk/reports.html>

Thurrock Diversity Network – “Fairness in Thurrock” Engagement Workshop – January 2014

We recently ran an engagement workshop through our Thurrock Coalition partners – Thurrock Diversity Network (TDN) – a registered Co-operative, set up in order to benefit disabled adult residents of Thurrock through the development of inclusive communities, citizenship, active participation, promotion of independent living and the advancement of human rights, equality, diversity and the Social Model of Disability.

Thurrock Diversity Network has a broad membership base of 45 individuals and organisations with an interest in disability issues and a connection to Thurrock. Through a series of group work, feedback and discussions, the following answers were collated in terms of Fairness in Thurrock:

When asked if there was one thing that people could change in Thurrock to make the borough fairer, they key issues included: Widening the accessibility of all documents produced and distributed by Thurrock Council, thus making having a universal Easy Read Policy. Secondly that Commissioning should keep a local focus, to support knowledge, skills and specialist expertise in Thurrock. There should be a broad choice of advocacy, advice and information services, available to all, which should include form filling available to all through a “one stop shop”

Further issues identified the lack of a Central Post Office in the borough as well as the need for a re-think on hospital car park availability and charges. The approach to access to information and after-care following discharge from hospital would benefit from being more joined up so as to provide continuous and seamless support. Participants also took the view that Council Tax liability for people on low incomes should be abolished.

Transport was a vital issue that was raised across the breakout groups: Individuals were also concerned about a need for greater parking enforcement and respect for the Blue Badge system, along with increased access and availability of appropriate spaces. The number of routes and frequency of service for trains and buses should be increased across the whole of Thurrock.

Participants also highlighted the need for greater understanding and awareness of the specific needs of individuals with mental health issues and/or sensory impairments.

Participants felt that work is needed to address the digital divide in Thurrock, which leads to inequality as more and more methods of accessing services are only available online and not everyone has the internet, or access to it.

When asked “Do you feel people living across Thurrock have fair access to services and fair access to opportunities?” Overwhelmingly people felt that people living across Thurrock do not have fair access to services or opportunities, specifically people took the view that there isn’t currently a *consistent, transparent, borough wide easily accessible information or advice service – particularly relating to form completion and form filling.*

Furthermore, there is a perception around an inequality in obtaining information/advice/statutory services for disadvantaged groups. Several participants shared the concern that there are still too many barriers to fairness and equality. A participant raised the question of how the Council is currently implementing the Social Model of Disability. How this is monitored, to ensure that its use has a real, tangible and positive effect for vulnerable people in Thurrock?

Discussion also took place around the issue of employment training and opportunities for vulnerable groups. The group were of the view that any such opportunities should be linked to the local developing work market and economy. For example: the new “DP World” port and local colleges should be engaged with and available to all vulnerable people. These institutions should focus upon vocations and skills that can be used to benefit Thurrock and to empower local communities.

The issue of transport was also raised and it was recognised as an overarching and multifaceted concern, moreover, it is a key enabler or barrier to inclusion and participation in communities and wider society.

A lack of information and knowledge sharing can also contribute to reduced and/or poor access to services and opportunities (particularly if individuals are not supported to find out about which services are available and then how to access relevant services.

When asked about whether there any areas where individuals living and working in Thurrock need extra support, the following issues were raised: Older people will increasingly need extra support (particularly in terms of the

ageing population). People with Sensory Impairments need extra support
Young people also need extra support (people in transition and young adults).
Work needs to be done to increase aspirations, learning, knowledge and
employment opportunities in Thurrock.

Conclusion

It is evident that a great deal of work has been carried out to ensure that the voice of local vulnerable, disabled, older people, their families and carers are heard, listened to and acted upon to improve the quality of services available to them. These include, but are not limited to: Sensory Service Development, Workforce Planning, Housing Adaptations, Transition, and Accessible Sport.

However, issues of inequality are a concern for citizens of Thurrock, for example: a need for readily accessible, easy to understand information, advice and advocacy, form filling, a need for commissioning to have a focus upon local providers, problems around health and social care and hospital support upon and after discharge, the digital divide, education, employment and training opportunities, transport, parking availability, cost and enforcement, environmental and urban planning (disability equality and awareness), the lack of a central post office in Thurrock, accessible toilets, council tax, improving access to services for BME groups and carers.

It is hoped that the information contained in this report will be used to inform the work of the Overview and Scrutiny review into Fairness in Thurrock.

Thurrock Coalition – January 2014.

Appendix: Informing the work of the Overview and Scrutiny review into Fairness in Thurrock

If there was one thing you could change in Thurrock to make the Borough 'fairer' what would it be?

- *ALL documents from the Council (across all Directorates) should be in Easy Read*
- *Commissioning of services for the local population should be kept local (not national). Greater weight should be given to the value of local knowledge, skills and specialist expertise throughout commissioning cycles. People who use services should be routinely involved throughout the commissioning process.*
- *People should have choice and control over which services they wish to access, for example there should be a range of commissioned provider for people when they require advice, information and advocacy.*
- *There should be a form filling service for all*
- *Communication to and from Thurrock Council has too many layers – A solution would be to offer a “one stop shop”*
- *Thurrock should have its own Central Post Office*
- *The cost and availability of hospital parking is currently unfair.*
- *Access to after care information and services after hospital discharge.*
- *Council Tax for people on a low income should be abolished*
- *Create equal access to transport (increase the number of routes and frequency of service across the whole of Thurrock). Use of the phrase: “Lakeside is close by” should be discouraged. It is not close to (or easily accessed by) a large proportion of the population of Thurrock.*
- *Parking Enforcement should be tightened up (particularly around abuse/lack of respect for Blue Badge parking spaces). The proportion of Blue Badge parking spaces in car parks should be increased in line with the needs of the local population.*
- *Planners should consider the needs of individuals with Sensory Impairments with regard to Highways.*
- *Employers have insufficient understanding of the different needs of*

people with Mental Health issues.

- *There is a digital divide in Thurrock and this leads to inequality as more and more methods of accessing services are only available online and not everyone has the internet, or access to it.*
- *There is insufficient numbers, availability of accessible toilets and changing facilities in Thurrock.*

Do you feel people living across Thurrock have fair access to services and fair access to opportunities?

- *No – people don't have fair, consistent, transparent or easy access to advocates and support information.*
- *People with Protected Characteristics do not have fair access to opportunities or services or social opportunities.*
- *There is an inequality in obtaining information/advice/statutory services for disadvantaged groups.*
- *There are still too many barriers to fairness and equality. How is the Council implementing the Social Model of Disability in a way that has a real, tangible and positive effect for vulnerable people in Thurrock?*
- *No, all employment training and opportunities should be linked to the local developing work market and economy. For example: the new "DP World" port – local colleges should be available to all vulnerable people and should focus upon vocations and skills that can be used to benefit Thurrock and to empower local communities.*
- *No, because access to transport and parking is currently not fair.*
- *There is poor access to services and opportunities (particularly if you don't know how to access services) if you're:*
 - *a carer*
 - *a member of a BME group*

Are there any areas where you believe individuals living and working in Thurrock need extra support?

- *Older people will increasingly need extra support (particularly in terms of the ageing population).*
- *People with Sensory Impairments need extra support*

- *Young people need extra support (people in transition and young adults)*
- *Work needs to be done to increase aspirations, learning, knowledge and employment opportunities in Thurrock.*

Appendix 11: Vision for Thurrock Fairness Commission

Thurrock Fairness Commission

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The rationale for a Thurrock Fairness Commission

- 1.1 The Thurrock Fairness Commission has been set up as an independent body to examine the issues surrounding inequality and to make Thurrock a fairer place to live. The Commission aims to engage with local people, listening to their views and opinions to inform decisions and priorities. It will provide a set of recommendations that will help shape public sector strategies for service provision based on sound evidence and best practice. The Commission will celebrate and promote the positive work that currently takes place within Thurrock, whilst also encouraging greater working relationships between organisations and the local business economy.

2. What the Commission will do:

- 2.1 The Commission has been established with its partners:
- To identify the real issues that will need to be tackled to reduce inequality and create greater Fairness.
 - Will consider how the Council and its partners can make best use of its powers, duties and resources to get the best and fairest outcomes for Thurrock residents.
 - To build on the information that we already know about inequality and will not seek to replicate research that has already been done in this area. The findings of the Fairness Review Panel will assist the Commission in their initial work.
 - To listen to Thurrock residents and their perceptions of Fairness and to strengthen the current asset based community development approach by examining the communities' strengths, particularly in relation to those areas that could be perceived to be at a 'disadvantage'.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Commission will identify and better understand inequalities and challenges within the Borough and develop a clear long term strategy to reduce inequalities and make Thurrock a fairer place for all its residents.

3.2 The Commission will examine the key priority areas that are known to impact on Fairness, including but not limited to: Income, Education, Work, Health, Housing, Families, Community, Safety.

4. Timeframe

4.1 The Commission will meet at least 5 times (bi-monthly) over a 12 month period.

4.2 The Thurrock Fairness Commission will provide a progress update report to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 6 months after work has commenced.

4.3 A draft final report will be submitted to the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to the final report being submitted to Cabinet 1 year after its inception.

5. Membership

5.1 Members will be selected to join the Steering Panel for a one year period when membership on the Panel will be reviewed.

5.2 The Commission will be chaired by a non-partisan member of the voluntary or community sector.

5.3 The Chair will be the figurehead of the Thurrock Fairness Commission; he/she will represent the Commission and be a strong advocate for Fairness in Thurrock.

5.4 The Commission will have no more than 15 Commissioners who will be representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Example of membership below:

- Labour Councillor
- Conservative Councillor
- Assistant Chief Executive or Senior Management Team Member of Thurrock Borough Council.
- Head teacher
- Disability Group Representative
- Senior figure from local industry
- Housing Representative
- Economist
- Health Representative
- Youth Cabinet Representative

5.5 Commissioners will meet regularly to discuss key fairness issues and will be encouraged to identify and bring forward practical ideas that can be

implemented locally through the creation of project delivery groups based on ongoing discussions with the Commission and other stakeholders i.e. residents.

6. Methodology

It is anticipated that the Thurrock Fairness Commission will undertake a series of activities which may include:

6.1 Public meetings.

Where the following can be reviewed and obtained:

- a) Minutes
- b) Evidence Papers
- c) Testimony from expert witnesses
- d) Discussions between Commissioners
- e) Contributions from residents
- f) Contributions from key stakeholders, voluntary and community sector.

6.2 Private meetings for Commissioners only.

6.3 Submissions from Members of the Public

6.4 Publicity

- a) Online at Thurrock Council's website www.thurrock.gov.uk
- b) Press Releases
- c) E-Newsletters, such as Insight in order to reach Council staff who are also residents.

6.5 Meetings of cross-departmental problem solving team of council staff.

6.6 Discussions with:

- Ngage
- Thurrock Coalition
- DP World
- Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions
- One Community Development Trust
- South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)
- Essex Police
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Open Door
- Thurrock Centre for Independent Living
- TRUST

