

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where
individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **11 November 2014**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Val Morris-Cook (Chair), James Halden (Vice-Chair), Charles Curtis and Martin Kerin and 1 UKIP vacancy.

Patricia Wilson, Roman Catholic Church Representative
Reverend Darren Barlow, Church of England Representative

Substitutes:

Councillors Mark Coxshall, Sue MacPherson, Jan Baker, Oliver Gerrish, Sue Gray and Yash Gupta

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 14
To approve as a correct record the minutes of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 July 2014.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	

5	Shaping the Council and Budget Progress Update	15 - 36
6	Children's Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2013-14	37 - 68
7	Work Experience - Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People	69 - 80
8	Child Sexual Exploitation and the Jay report – implications for Thurrock	81 - 94
9	Report on Headline Key Stage Results Report on Headline Key Stage Results	95 - 104
10	Work Programme	
11	Children's O&S Work Programme 2014-15	105 - 108

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **3 November 2014**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspirations and attainment so that local residents can take advantage of job opportunities in the local area
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity
- Support local businesses and develop the skilled workforce they will require
- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock’s physical environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities

- Create safer welcoming communities who value diversity and respect cultural heritage
- Involve communities in shaping where they live and their quality of life
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and safeguard the vulnerable

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being
- Empower communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

5. Protect and promote our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock’s river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock’s natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock’s streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 July 2014 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Val Morris-Cook (Chair), James Halden (Vice-Chair), Charles Curtis, Tunde Ojetola and Maggie O'Keeffe-Ray

Patricia Wilson, Roman Catholic Church Representative
Reverend Darren Barlow, Church of England Representative

Apologies: Councillors Martin Kerin

In attendance:

Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services
Nicky Pace, Interim Head of Service for Care and Targeted Outcomes
Teresa Goulding, Troubled Families Co-ordinator
Sue Green, Strategic Leader Early Years, Families & Communities
Mike Peters, Strategic Lead, School Improvement, Learning and Skills
Ashley Wilcox, Marketing Manager
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Councillor Halden chaired the meeting in the absence of Councillor Morris-Cook, who had advised that she would arrive late for the meeting.

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 18 March 2014, were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Curtis declared a non-pecuniary interest in the general business of the meeting as he had grandchildren attending Bulphan School and was a Governor at the Ockendon Academy.

Councillor Ojetola declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the general business of the meeting as he had children attending the Gateway Academy,

Belmont Castle Academy and was a Governor at Palmer's College and Gateway Academy.

Reverend Barlow declared a non-pecuniary interest in the general business of the meeting as he had children attending St Thomas Primary School, Grays Convent and Palmer's College. He was also a trustee and corporation member at Palmer's College.

4. Budget Update and Savings Proposals

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report which set out the savings that the Council was required to make over the next three years. The Committee were advised of two key points:

- That a further £5.3 million of savings needed to be found during the 2015/16 financial year that went beyond the presented savings, as these were not yet the full set of savings.
- Officers had been working hard to put forward the proposed savings and include the appropriate level of detail for the Committee to scrutinise.

The Director of Children's Services drew the attention of the Committee to Appendix 1, which set out the totality of proposals, and explained that the first 3 savings proposals were those which Cabinet had requested be referred to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consultation and scrutiny.

The Chair of the Committee proposed that officers explained in more detail the proposals set out in Appendices 2a, 2b and 2c for further comment and discussion, to which the Committee agreed.

Officers introduced the savings proposals outlined in appendix 2a in relation to School Effectiveness. It was reported that there had been a steady improvement in school performance over the past two years, as recognised by Ofsted, and that during this time there had been a gradual move in schools converting to academy status. As a result of these changes the school improvement strategy had also adjusted to a system of school to school support. It was explained that this meant that the Council was able to reduce the volume of resources which it commissioned directly, thereby saving on cost.

A Member questioned why the proposed savings were only being suggested now, one year on from the implementation of the school improvement plan and after a number of schools had successfully converted into academies. He felt that these savings could have been found and implemented earlier, noting the earlier February budget setting process.

In response officers explained that they had been working hard to support schools to become independent and that they worked with the whole community of Thurrock Schools, both maintained, free schools and

academies. The Director of Children's Services felt that sometimes better value for money could be achieved from smaller teams, which was the case with the School Improvement team, which had undertaken focussed work and witnessed school results in Thurrock go on an upward trajectory. It was reported that the team always worked hard to realise savings wisely and not resist them.

Officers further reported that the money had been used wisely and the number of primary schools in Thurrock that achieved a good or outstanding rating by Ofsted had increased from 32% to almost 70%.

The Committee were advised that the funding had been used to put Thurrock schools on a good footing, and that this meant that schools were now in a strong position to support each other.

A Member was concerned that money was being taken away from Children's Services and questioned where support would come from for Schools in the future. Officers acknowledged this concern but reassured the Committee that it was possible to scale back funding because Thurrock was in a strong position as a higher percentage of schools were now deemed to be 'Good' or better and therefore could offer support to other schools directly.

Concern was expressed by a Member regarding the proposed reduction of provision for Children's support services at Women's Aid refuge as this was a service that vulnerable families relied upon. The Chair clarified that this saving had been agreed by Cabinet and was for noting, but explained that there would be the opportunity to discuss this at the end of the item.

A Member echoed the sentiments outlined above, in that possibly these savings could have been found at an earlier date. However he commended the proposal and the fact that improvements had been made due to the work of the Education Commission. The Member particularly welcomed the move to a Commissioner model from a provider model and noted an example where a local school had commissioned work from another school which was both mutually beneficial and saved the Thurrock taxpayer money. The Director of Children's Services agreed that this was a helpful approach and one which had been put in place by the council over the last three years with the backing of schools.

It was further questioned what the effect would be on Special Educational Needs (SEN), the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the schools ability to Commission specialist services such as psychological children's support.

The Committee were advised that schools already had the opportunity to commission specialist services such as the non- statutory elements of psychological support and that this was actively encouraged, however a small amount of Dedicated Schools Grant was retained centrally.

A Member expressed his disappointment that the Cabinet Member for Education was not in attendance to discuss the budget proposals.

Officers reiterated that the Council was committed to the vision of all Thurrock schools being judged as 'good' or 'outstanding'. Members were assured that despite cuts to centrally retained funds, schools would still have their own budgets. It was recognised that there were many good examples of school to school support, with head teachers sharing best practice, schools sharing School Governors and conducting joint reviews.

A Member echoed this good work and recognised that this was not a cut in the service but a change in the way the service was commissioned.

Officers introduced section 2b of the report, which was a piece of work that had been developed in partnership with the Cabinet Office, which outlined the realignment of Youth Provision and related services to a mutual or community interest company. Members were advised that:

- The proposal could attract more external funding and therefore was a way of protecting the service rather than necessarily reducing it.
- A research and benchmarking exercise had been undertaken with a local provider in another county, and that the new contract had income generation capabilities.
- The re-organisation of service would be a managed and staggered process.
- The proposal would be referred to Youth Cabinet for consultation, following which it would also go out for wider consultation with young people in Thurrock.
- The service was attempting to reduce the number of Council run buildings in order to maximise efficiency savings.

Members questioned whether the risks related to the reduction in front line services had been identified. In response, officers explained that this had not been detailed yet but further consultation would be undertaken with partners to evaluate take up in an attempt to mitigate the impact.

A Member sought for clarification regarding the 7.5 posts that had been identified for deletion, whether these related to a specific area and was at a manager or officer level. He was concerned that more could be done to offer reassurance and clarity to members of staff, who may have felt vulnerable as this information had been released into the public domain.

In response officers made the following key points:

- That although savings had to be made in this area, there was an element of flexibility on how many posts required to be cut. Staff may leave voluntarily, meaning redundancies may not have to be made, or if income was generated this may offset the costs of these posts.
- The 7.5 posts were evaluated at an average cost but this could be made up of a number of combinations at different management and officer levels.

- That job cuts would only be considered if absolutely necessary.

Youth Cabinet representatives asked whether the effects of the proposed service reduction had been measured and emphasised that the views of students were important as there may be services funded there were not popular with young people or underutilised. Officers stated that there would be a consultation with young people to consider their views and options going forward.

Some Members questioned why the service redesign was only just being considered and consulted upon, in Year 4 of the public account savings. Officers explained that they had been working on the proposals for some time with the Cabinet Office.

Members were keen that the results of the consultation should be reported back to the Committee, to which the Director of Children's Services agreed that this would be presented at a later date.

Officers then introduced appendix 2c of the report relating to the reduction in the cost of Community Library Provision. Key points to note were that:

- Closing some libraries or reducing library opening hours was a necessity if the required savings were to be found, however all options were being investigated to minimise the impact as far as possible on residents.
- The numbers of library staff had already been reduced to minimum levels due to previous budget cuts.
- It was intended that a number of options would be put forward for public consultation, based on focused research regarding footfall, numbers of books being loaned, profiles of library users.
- In areas where there was a lack of community resource, such as East Tilbury, provision would be examined closely.

A Member asked how these plans were influenced by community hubs, to which officers explained that residents would be involved in shaping their own services through the consultation and whether a library could save money by being located within a community hub. However Members were advised that this posed difficulties as community hubs did not have set budgets allocated to them.

Councillor Ojetola questioned how mobile libraries fit into the proposal, and asked what was being done to ensure residents did not become digitally excluded with the increasing number of council services being provided online.

Mrs Wilson left the meeting at 7.45pm.

The Committee were advised that a number of different options would be developed before this information would go out to public consultation.

Members were keen to see the full detail of the proposed options before the information was opened for public consultation, and the Director of Children's Services assured Members that this information would be referred back to the Committee for review.

A Member proposed that the Library Strategy should also come back to the Committee for review and comments, which was also agreed by the Director of Children's Services.

Some Members of the Committee expressed their disappointment that efficiency savings outlined in section 2 were only for noting, and that Cabinet had not provided the Committee with the opportunity to scrutinise and contribute before their decision had been taken.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the comments detailed above with regard to the savings proposals within Children's Services be noted.**
- 2. That the Director of Children's Services to refer back to the Committee a full options analysis of Community Library Provision prior to the information being released for public consultation.**
- 3. That the Committee agree to receive a report at a later date on the outcomes of the consultation on Youth Provision in Thurrock.**

5. Education Commission Update

Officers introduced the report which outlined the developments regarding the Education Commission and provided an update to the associated action plan. Key achievements to date included:

- The launch of the Thurrock Education Awards, the next was scheduled for November and nominations were already being received.
- Success in recruiting and retaining both Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT) and experienced Head teachers in Thurrock.
- Strong Governance was a significant feature in Education Commission reports.

A Member questioned what support was being offered to schools and academy partners if they experienced a change in circumstances. Officers assured the Committee that the Local Authority was responsible for safeguarding in Thurrock, even though academies were self governing, and offered support as and when required. It was felt that there was strong local intelligence in Thurrock to schools changing circumstances.

Councillor Morris-Cook arrived at 8.05pm.

A Member referenced the financial implications and welcomed the fact that the Council had committed £1 million of reserves to support the Education Commission, but asked for clarification regarding accountability and sign off as to how the money was spent.

The Committee were advised that the Thurrock Education Alliance and Thurrock Excellence Network held into account the spending of reserves that supported the work of the Education Commission.

A Member suggested that a regular back check should be undertaken to ensure value for money and evaluate the impact of the work. Officers welcomed the proposal and stated that a regular update would be provided to the Committee, particularly in relation to the spending of the funds and achievements. It was reported that the funding had already made significant progress to date, which included:

- The introduction of the Cultural Entitlement for Young People in Thurrock.
- The recruitment and retention of teachers.

A brief discussion was had on the recruitment and retention of Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) and how this compared with other local authorities. Officers stated that there was an event held recently to celebrate the achievements of NQT's in Thurrock and that the vast majority were staying on in employment in the Borough. It was felt that the retention rate was very good and that NQT's had a positive impact to education in Thurrock.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the progress and achievements of Thurrock Schools and Partners be noted.**
- 2. That the Committee's comments on the content of the report be noted and that a further update to be provided on the statement of drawn down funds from the Education Commission reserves.**

Councillor Morris-Cook took the position of Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

6. Troubled Families Programme

Officers introduced the report which provided an update on the successes of the Troubled Families Programme.

A Member asked whether officers faced any difficulties, particularly in relation to data security, to which officers stated that they did not as applicants signed consent forms to release their personal information.

The Committee were informed that to date all cases that had been referred had been accepted into the Troubled Families Programme.

A brief discussion was had on the success of the payment by results scheme. Members were advised that it took time for the payment by results scheme to filter through, and that there was a 3 term timescale for education cases and 6 months for youth offending cases before claims can be made.

The Committee requested that a bi-monthly update be provided by briefing note as to the progress of the Troubled Families programme, the success of the payment by results scheme and any support that officers felt that was required in order to assist them in the ongoing development of the programme.

Members commended the work of officers on the excellent report and work that had been undertaken.

A Member acknowledged the good work of the Committee but asked if residents were discouraged from coming forward to receive support because of the name of Troubled Families scheme. Officers stated that in their experience this was not the case in Thurrock and that people had not been deterred in coming forward, noting that there had recently been 3 self referrals.

A Member requested that in future the financial implications should not be included within the main body of the report, to which officers agreed.

Rev Barlow left the meeting at 8.32pm.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

7. Work Programme

Members requested that the two parent governor representative vacancies on the Committee to be filled as soon as possible, to which officers confirmed that the Governor Services team were working to appoint to the roles.

There was a brief discussion on work placements and the pathway into work for young people in Thurrock, following which Members requested that an item be added to the work programme for October. Key points that were discussed included:

- Interview techniques and guidance for young people
- Pathway into employment in Thurrock
- Work placements scheme and the schools offer
- The business offer – what local companies were doing to assist young people in Thurrock.
- That with increased education attainment and regeneration schemes creating a wider jobs market in Thurrock, how these opportunities were being realised by young people.

Members also requested that in future budget items to include details of budget outturn for the previous financial year in order for comparisons to be made.

The Chair also requested that in future items 'to note' to be provided in the form of a briefing note to the Committee, rather than a formal report and agenda item.

RESOLVED:

1. That an additional item on work placements and the pathway into work for Young People be added to the work programme for October.
2. That the work programme be noted.

The meeting finished at 8.50 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

This page is intentionally left blank

11 November 2014	ITEM: 5
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Shaping the Council and Budget Progress Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
Report of: Councillor John Kent, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer; Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

As reported to Cabinet in July, August and September 2014, in excess of £37m of savings are required over the three years between 2015/16 and 2017/18, the scale of which is impossible to achieve through efficiencies and minor service changes alone. This report updates Cabinet on changes to the forecast position as reported in September.

Cabinet have already endorsed savings to be achieved through management actions and agreed that other proposals go forward for further development and public consultation. Appendix 1 sets out those that have been considered by the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet approval has been sought for those proposals for implementation. Appendix 2 sets out those proposals that are still in the process of being developed or consulted upon.

1. Recommendation(s):

1.1 That the Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the current financial forecasts, status of proposals and those areas or risk and comment accordingly.

2 Introduction and Background

2.1 Cabinet have considered detailed reports at each of its meetings in this municipal year that have followed on from the Council budget report in February 2014.

- 2.2 Each report has tracked changes from that budget report explaining changes to assumptions, identifying further pressures and offsetting the deficit by a number of savings proposals.
- 2.3 These proposals were set out into two categories:
- 2.3.1 Those that are within the delegated authority of officers, such as implementing efficiencies and staffing restructures; and
- 2.3.2 Those that have required various levels of consultation with Members and communities as required. Appendix 1 sets out those proposals that have completed this process and are recommended to Cabinet for approval. Appendix 2 sets out those proposals that are either still being developed or consulted upon.
- 2.4 The following changes have taken place to the forecast included within the August Cabinet report and are summarised in the table below:
- 2.4.1 Cabinet did not agree to progress the proposal for Controlled Parking Zone charges;
- 2.4.2 Cabinet had agreed to a proposal to introduce a residency criteria into the Local Council Tax Scheme. Since that decision, Sandwell Council has lost a legal challenge on this criteria and so this is a proposal that we cannot legally implement;
- 2.4.3 In checking through all of the proposals, officers identified a double count of savings within Children's services;
- 2.4.4 Cabinet agreed to retender the waste disposal contract. Market evidence indicates that further savings will be achieved through this process;
- 2.4.5 The savings from fortnightly waste collection had been included within 2015/16 figures for a full year. This is currently planned for implementation from October 2015 and so the savings need to be re-phased;
- 2.4.6 A provision of £1m had been included within the MTFS for demographic pressures but services are currently working to cash envelopes. At this stage, officers believe that half of this sum can be given up and will review the balance over the coming months;
- 2.4.7 The MTFS includes growth of £1.5m per annum for each of the three years for staff incremental progression and a 1% pay award. Discussions are taking place with the Unions and a level of savings are being assumed at this stage; and
- 2.4.8 Directors' Board are monitoring the top six proposals where the value is high and delivery is at least, in part, subject to approvals from other bodies or linked to demand (see para 2.7). Original proposals included a £2m saving from the implementation of the Better Care Fund (BCF) but recent months

have seen a change in direction from the government on the focus of the BCF and it is considered prudent to now halve this saving.

	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	Total £m
As per August Cabinet Report	0.460	4.675	0.603	5.738
Controlled Parking Zones	0.072			0.072
LCTS Residency Criteria	0.320			0.320
Children's Double Count	0.230			0.230
Waste Disposal	(0.285)	(0.290)		(0.575)
Fortnightly Waste Collection	0.260	(0.260)		-
Demographic Growth	(0.500)			(0.500)
Pay Terms and Conditions	(1.000)	(0.750)	(0.750)	(2.500)
Better Care Fund	1.000			1.000
Revised Total	0.557	3.375	(0.147)	3.785

- 2.5 Officers will continue to work on identifying further options. There will be a strong focus on finalising 2015/16, especially once the grant announcement is received in December, but discussions also continue on meeting the deficits for future years.
- 2.6 Cabinet should note that the figures above are not the end of the financial pressures the Council faces. All indications are that further significant reductions will be required from 2018/19 onwards.
- 2.7 As stated above, Directors' Board are also monitoring proposals where the value is high and delivery is at least, in part, subject to approvals from other bodies or linked to demand. These are as follows and officers are still confident that, whilst acknowledging the difficulties, that these will be achieved with the probable exception of the business rates proposal. These are further discussed in paragraph 3.1.1 and will be subject to a further update in the December report.

	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m	Total £m
Children's Social Care	1.000			1.000
External Placements - Adults Social Care	0.500	0.500	0.500	1.500
Better Care Fund	1.000			1.000
Pay Terms and Conditions	1.000	0.750	0.750	2.500
Savings from the Serco Contract	0.700	0.900	0.400	2.000
Business Rates Growth	1.000	1.500	1.500	4.000
Target Total	5.200	3.650	3.150	12.000

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Officers are currently carrying out detailed work on two specific budget areas and these are likely to have a detrimental impact on the figures:

- 3.1.1 Business Rates: Officers have previously reported that the income available to the Council through the localisation of business rates is being significantly reduced through appeals that local businesses have made to the Valuation Office. As at 31 March 2014, the Council has had to make a provision of £12m, 49% of which will have to be borne by the Council, and cover a period from before the localisation of business rates came into effect through to the 31 March 2014. As these become settled, two things are apparent. Firstly, the provision was largely correct as we are not seeing any significant variation from appeals being settled to what we had assumed. The second is more harmful at this stage though. The ongoing impact of these appeals into the current year and future years is a reduction in business rates collectable of £4m per annum, 49% of which must be borne by the Council. In addition, growth is slower than originally forecast with the most public example being the proposed Marks & Spencer building at London Gateway no longer going ahead.
- 3.1.2 Shared Services: The announcement that the shared Chief Executive arrangement with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD) will cease has started a review of all other shared arrangements with LBBD. This will impact on the Council financially and this impact will be reported to Cabinet in December.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Council has a legal obligation to ensure that any budget set can be met from the combination of Council Tax, business rates, grants, other income and reserves. Maintaining a Medium Term Financial Strategy is the foundation of this requirement to ensure that Members and officers are aware of the Council's financial position to be able to manage it accordingly.
- 4.2 The reduction in funding to the Council is unprecedented at a time when demand on services is growing, requiring a fundamental change in the way the Council approaches addressing the budget gap and in considering the future shape of the Council going forward. This report recommends the final approval of a number of proposals that have been considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

- 5.1 The Leader, Portfolio Holders and Directors Board have been consulted on developing the savings proposals. Group Leaders have been offered a presentation on the budget and MTFS for their groups to understand the overall financial position.
- 5.2 Savings proposals have and will continue to be subject to consultation through Overview and Scrutiny Committees and more widely with the public.
- 5.3 The outcomes of the remaining consultations will feed into the final proposals put forward for decision making at the earliest opportunity as part of a rolling timetable followed by implementation.

5.5 Internal consultation with staff on specific proposals, particularly where there is a restructure, will be in line with HR policy and guidelines. Discussions have commenced with Trade Unions.

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

6.1 The issues and proposals set out in this report have wide ranging implications for the Council, the way it works and the services it provides. Some of these may actually improve the way the Council does business and the service provided to residents by making them more targeted and efficient, however the cumulative impact of such a significant reduction in budget and the implementation of savings proposals will reduce service delivery levels and our ability to meet statutory requirements and therefore impact on the community and staff. The potential impact of the savings proposals on the Council's ability to safeguard children and adults will be kept carefully under review and mitigating actions taken where required.

6.2 The Council has commenced a voluntary redundancy process with staff. The outcomes from the process and full impact of the savings proposals on staff will be known over the next few months feeding into the implementation of management actions and decision making for savings proposals.

7. Implications

7.1 Section 151 Comment

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance/S151 Officer

Members will be aware that I have a statutory obligation to complete a statement on the robustness of the estimates when you consider the budget at the February budget meetings. Cabinet have already considered a number of savings and I note significant risk in the delivery of some of these proposals, especially where they relate to demand led services and where savings are dependent on other organisations agreeing or delivering savings. The past four years have demonstrated strong financial management within the Council and this provides me with some comfort that these will be delivered. However, I need to strongly advise that the balance of savings is focussed primarily on where the delivery is within the control of the Council. This will undoubtedly make decisions for Members more difficult as they are more likely to impact on services that affect residents to a greater degree or conflict with political ambition and narrative.

7.2 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance/S151 Officer

The financial implications are set out in the body of this report. Detailed financial implications will be provided in business cases for each of the proposals.

Council officers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the Council can contain spend within its available resources. This must also include a consideration of the risk in achieving that budget and so robust monitoring of accepted proposals will be essential throughout the coming years.

Regular budget monitoring reports will continue to come to Cabinet and be considered by the Directors Board and management teams in order to maintain effective controls on expenditure during this period of enhanced risk. Austerity measures in place are continually reinforced across the Council in order to reduce ancillary spend and to ensure that everyone is aware of the importance and value of every pound of the taxpayers money that is spent by the Council.

7.3 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Fiona Taylor**
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

There are statutory requirements of the Council's Section 151 Officer in relation to setting a balanced budget. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Section 114) prescribes that the responsible financial officer "must make a report if he considers that a decision has been made or is about to be made involving expenditure which is unlawful or which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency to the authority". This includes an unbalanced budget.

There are no specific legal implications as a result of this report, however, any implications of specific savings proposals will be set out in individual business cases to inform consultation and final decision making.

7.4 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

Each savings proposal with changes to the service which requires public consultation will have a detailed business case setting out how the savings will be achieved including the level of service reduction and mitigating actions. As part of developing the business case a comprehensive Community and Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) will be completed and informed by any consultation outcomes. Directorates are required to complete a cumulative impact assessment. An assessment of the cumulative impact from all Directorates will be completed by the Community Development and Equalities team to inform final decision making on the savings for 2015/16 and beyond.

It is recognised that there is likely to be a cumulative impact on the voluntary and community sector due to proposals to both reduce core grants and specific grants currently provided by services across the Council, as well as reductions to commissioned services. A full assessment will be completed in

consultation with the CVS to determine the implications for the sector and impact on the wider community. A special meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee chairs and vice-chairs took place with the voluntary sector on 27 October 2014.

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

Any other significant implications are being identified in each savings proposal business case to inform the consultation process and final decision making.

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

- Budget working papers including previous MTFS
- Budget savings proposals working papers and business cases
- Cabinet reports - 2013/14 Draft Outturn and MTFS Update and Shaping the Council 2015/16 and Beyond, July, August and September 2014

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Status of Savings Proposals Requiring Cabinet Decision in November 2014
- Appendix 2: Status of Savings Proposals Requiring Future Cabinet Decision

Report Authors:

Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance/S151 Officer, Chief Executive's Office

Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

This page is intentionally left blank

APPENDIX 1

Shaping the Council

Status of savings proposals requiring Cabinet decision in November 2014

The detailed business cases for proposals were presented to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee and are available on the council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/Committees.aspx> under the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Meetings held in July and September 2014.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

Introduce a Local Residency Rule to the Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS)	Amount	Status
	-	Retracted
This proposal had to be removed following the court ruling against Sandwell Borough Council		

Stop/ Reduce the council tax discount given to empty unfurnished properties	2014/15 5 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	400	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by Corp O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>Corp O&S (July) - Members were in agreement that it was sensible to examine the cessation or reduction of the Council Tax discount provided to empty or unfurnished properties. Some Members recognised that landlords needed some time to turnaround their properties and felt that a 100% Council Tax discount should be applied to empty/unfurnished properties for a period of one month only. It was also felt that this would encourage landlords to better maintain their properties so that they could be turned around faster. The Committee felt that three months discount was too much, but were in agreement that a reduction to one month's discount was fair. The Committee agreed that there was scope to review and consider both of the above options.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>This proposal is unlikely to have any negative impact on the protected groups. Indeed, removing the discount adds a disincentive to leave properties empty thus supporting the Council's priority of bringing properties back into use. This supports our demand for houses and the reduction of associated anti-social behaviour and crime and thus will have a possible impact on the local area/community.</p>				

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DELIVERY UNIT

Leisure - cessation of grant funding to Impulse Leisure	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	350	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>There is an ongoing dialogue with Impulse Leisure Centre.</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) - no formal objections were made to this proposal going forward.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>Although there is the potential to mitigate the impact of this proposal through asset transfer, there remains a risk of negative impact on the following equality groups – young people, older people, gender, BME and disability. In addition this proposal could impact on families and the direct communities where leisure centres are based. Finally, the proposal is likely to have a negative impact on residents' ability to improve their health and wellbeing. Risks and mitigation will be fully considered through a Transformation Group to be established between Impulse Leisure and the council.</p>				

CHILDRENS SERVICES

Commission school effectiveness in partnership with schools	2014/15 5 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	350	150	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • July Children's O&S • August Cabinet – agreed to bring forward £100K 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>Children's O&S (July) welcomed the move to a Commissioner model from a provider model and noted an example where a local school had commissioned work from another school which was both mutually beneficial and saved the Thurrock taxpayer money. It was noted that this was a helpful approach and one which had been put in place by the council over the last three years with the backing of schools. It was also recognised that there were many good examples of school to school support, with head teachers sharing best practice, schools sharing school governors and conducting joint reviews, with the brokerage of the local authority and the Thurrock Excellence Network.</p> <p>This has also been consulted upon with the Schools Forum, headteachers and school governors who have backed the proposal.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>No impacts on customers/ community or equality/diversity implications have been identified.</p>				

Reduce and realign youth provision across Thurrock and related service through internal reorganisation and developing the services as a mutual/ outsourced service	2014/15 5 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	450	230	232
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • July Children’s O&S • Youth Cabinet consultation – ends on 5 November 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>July Children’s O&S - Youth Cabinet representatives asked whether the effects of the proposed service reduction had been measured and emphasised that the views of students were important as there may be services funded there were not popular with young people or underutilised.</p> <p>We are currently undertaking a consultation exercise around the delivery of youth activities across Thurrock. This has been designed and led by the Thurrock Youth Cabinet. Young people have been integral to its design and ensuring that we get a broad based representative view across Thurrock. This consultation will support the development of an alternative delivery model. Thurrock have accessed training provided by the Cabinet Office around the development of staff mutuals to develop a range of youth related activities within the context of a community interest company – we have recently presented this opportunity to other colleagues across Europe as part of our European Social Fund project, URBACT, which is looking to support youth unemployment across the European Union. In response to this presentation the Cabinet Office have been contacted to present to the European Commission in March 2015.</p> <p>Members were keen that the results of the consultation should be reported back to the Committee. These will be presented to Children’s O&S in January.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>There will be a reduction in some youth related activities across Thurrock, which could have a negative impact on young people including those with the following protected characteristics: BME, Faith/religion/disabilities/sexual orientation/pregnancy/maternity. Front line work will be focussed on local delivery with links to existing community groups, which will help mitigate impact.</p> <p>EQIA undertaken in July</p>				

ADULTS, HEALTH & COMMISSIONING

Efficiency in Public Health Commissioning	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	1400	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • July HWB O&S • Sept HWB O&S 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>Health & Well-Being O&S (July) – A concern was raised that the savings made to a variety of services would decrease the effectiveness of them. Officers replied that all the services were still running and that the efficiencies made (which had reduced the duplication of work among other changes) had actually improved service delivery to residents. For example, in terms of weight management services, the money was being put into projects that provided community activities and support that reached a more diverse base of residents for longer than a twelve week programme.</p> <p>This matter was discussed further at the September meeting of Health and Well Being O&S. Also the specifications for the service reviews under way have been discussed with Scrutiny members – in particular the plans around school nursing, adult weight management and the children’s weight management programme. Individual elements have also been shared and discussed in depth with the relevant stakeholders – e.g. the proposals around school nursing have been extensively discussed with Thurrock Schools. As a result we feel that we can deliver this level of saving with minimal impact and through reducing some one-off schemes that will not be re-run. In order to protect the ring fence around the Public Health Grant (PHG), public health money released will be used to fund other well-being priority areas within the Council that are consistent with the requirements of the PHG.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>EQIAs will be completed to inform the new contracts to be/being tendered as a result of this efficiency.</p>				

Older People voluntary sector contracts - to stop funding those areas that are non-statutory	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	100	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • July HWB O&S considered and requested further information • September HWB O&S provided with additional information • A meeting of all the O&S Chairs, Vice Chairs and representatives of CVS took place on 27 October. 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>Health & Well-Being O&S (July) – One councillor felt that this saving needed to be returned to Cabinet for more discussion, stating that older people, as a section of the population, were increasing and that the majority of the support these organisations provided were vital to the communities they served. Another councillor agreed with this view but stated that savings had to be made and if the council did not make savings to these contracts, then the savings would have to be made to other services.</p>				

Health and Well-Being O&S (September) - Members were presented with more information regarding this proposal, along with the proposal below regarding other 3rd sector contract reductions. Members did not raise any formal objections to this going forward.

Amendments to the schedule of reductions have been made following feedback from HWB O&S members and individual organisations in the sector.

Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:

Some reductions to the original proposed savings have been amended to limit the impact on equality groups. However, a negative impact remains and in some cases certain equality groups will be disproportionately affected through the proposals, particularly older people and people with disabilities – but that is inevitable given the fact that the funding is exclusively for those groups in the first instance. The savings mean that the capacity of organisations delivering services will be reduced. This has been mitigated by amending the proposals for Thurrock Age Concern, TOFF and Thurrock Asian Association. As well as impacting on older people and people with disabilities, the proposals will impact on gender with more women accessing current services, BME, religion and faith.

The meeting of all the O&S Chairs, Vice Chairs and representatives of CVS on 27 October may include some additional outcomes which effect impact analysis.

Learning Disability, Mental Health and other 3rd sector contracts - to cut or reduce those areas that are non-statutory	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	213	-	-

- Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet
- July HWB O&S considered and requested further information
- September HWB O&S provided with additional information
- A meeting of all the O&S Chairs, Vice Chairs and representatives of CVS took place on 27 October.

Summary of consultation:

HWB O&S (July) - Officers agreed to provide a breakdown of all the proposed savings for voluntary sector grants so the organisations could see which projects would be affected. Officers would be reviewing the advocacy service contract as soon as it was up for renewal but added this was a statutory service so would be suitably funded in the future. The committee agreed that this item required an equality impact assessment, which included effects on the disabled community.

One councillor requested that the council look at how to re-model the advocacy and advice services so that savings could be made but also provide a service to those communities that required help. He also felt that Age Concern UK was vitally important to helping older people with living and should be part of the impact assessment. This will be looked at when the contract comes to an end in approximately 18 months, but will not form part of the savings proposal for 2015/16.

HWB O&S (September) – A representative of HealthWatch stated that the mitigation for BATIAS which proposed the engagement of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) would also be in jeopardy because the CSP was also facing cuts. Likewise the use of

volunteers would not wholly replace the skills and expertise of staff. One councillor stated that he felt HealthWatch was in need of greater support as it could prevent additional costs on the department through its work. He felt that other organisations listed did not have a direct effect on the health of residents and could legitimately be reduced. He queried whether organisations offering similar services could be merged or work in collaboration and officers responded that this was being considered at present.

Another councillor was concerned that volunteers would not be able to provide a consistent and reliable service in comparison to a funded professional body of workers. Another councillor highlighted the need for the HealthWatch mitigation to be more robust before Cabinet made a final decision on its funding future.

Amendments to the schedule of reductions have been made following feedback from HWB O&S members and individual organisations in the sector.

Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:

Some reductions to the original proposed savings have been made to help limit the overall impact to voluntary sector organisations. For example, the proposal to reduce small grants has been removed, and the proposed reduction to HealthWatch has been amended to £25k. Negative impacts remain for people with disabilities, but this is inevitable given the fact that the funding is exclusively for that group in the first instance. There is not considered to be a disproportionate impact on gender or other protected characteristics.

The Impact Assessments for each part of this savings proposal were presented to Health and Well Being O&S Committee in September and can be found on CMIS at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2448/Committee/411/Default.aspx>

The meeting of all the O&S Chairs, Vice Chairs and representatives of CVS on 27 October may include some additional outcomes which effect impact analysis.

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION

	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
Increase car parking charges	15	85	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by PTR O&S in July • Full separate report going to Cabinet in November 				
Summary of consultation:				
Separate report on November Cabinet agenda				
PTR O&S (July) - an update report on parking within Grays should be taken back to Committee at a later date.				
Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:				
To enable a full understanding of the equality implications arising from this proposal, the council will complete a widely available community consultation in compliance with				

Sections 35C and 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The information gathered from this process will support the completion of a Community and Equality Impact Assessment determining the mitigating actions that may be taken where potentially negative impacts are identified.

	Status
<i>Controlled Parking Zones (based on £30 per car per household)</i>	Retracted
A clear steer was given from members in August that this would not be acceptable.	

ENVIRONMENT

Restructure and review of all grounds maintenance operations	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	990	331	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July • August Cabinet – agreed to bring forward £660K 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) - The Committee expressed their concern over reducing these greening services and felt that Thurrock’s visual image and street scene would suffer. Officers did respond to a comment that they may look at responding to grass cutting on an ‘as needed’ basis rather than a prescribed schedule.</p> <p>The Committee identified forty two job losses and there was a query regarding whether a service could be provided to private companies to generate income and kept he staff. Officers responded that they did offer limited services in this area already but the savings were so pressing and there was no guarantee money could be generated. The savings had to be made.</p> <p>With regards to sports pitches, officers stated that they were working with community groups to encourage them to undertake maintenance on their own initiative. Some councillors felt this could be too much to ask on residents who were already paying money to be part of the sport already. Officers said there was scope to provide a service in this area by reducing the quality of maintenance or hiring maintenance equipment instead of purchasing it.</p> <p>A concern was raised about reductions in cemetery maintenance and asked whether a reduction in ranger presence at Coalhouse Fort could jeopardise its future Lottery funding and blue flag status.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>This proposal may have a negative impact on current and future users of parks and green spaces, although this is likely to be minimal as the reductions should not impact the way residents currently access the boroughs parks and open spaces. For instance, community sports facilities, including football pitches will still be available but will not be maintained at the current national FA level. There will be a gradual reduction in the number of play areas</p>				

for young people, as these will be removed as they become unserviceable/unsafe. The quality of outdoor space will reduce as maintenance regimes are less frequent, but it is unlikely to lead to people feeling unsafe. Any negative impact will be mitigated by working with communities to increase volunteer and community involvement where possible.

Reduce frequencies of street cleansing and partially mitigate impact through implementing area based working and optimising routes	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	172	516	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) - there would be capacity for the service to respond to resident complaints and requests if there was a particularly bad area. Some councillors felt this would not be effective because residents would not make these requests but officers stated the 'report it' app the Council had introduced had been well used.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>A reduction in street cleaning will impact on how people feel about where they live, and may have a negative impact on investment in the borough. This proposal may have a negative impact on borough residents, including (but not specifically) younger people, older people and people with disabilities. The service will seek to mitigate the impact by working with communities to support community litter picking and other clear ups.</p>				

Transfer highways maintenance, gully cleansing, emergency response and winter maintenance services to Planning and Transportation	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	55	165	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) - no formal objections were made to this proposal going forward.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>There are no equality impacts arising from this proposal</p>				

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Cessation of Council funding to Thurrock Community Safety Partnership	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	50	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) – It was noted that the level of activity of the Partnership could reduce as a result but officers would work to obtain external funding from the Police Crime Commissioner for certain related projects.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>A key priority for the CSP is hate crime which impacts the equality strands of race, disability and sexuality. A reduction in funding will impact the ability to promote reporting of hate crime. A reduction in funding to tackle violence against women and girls will impact negatively on women and young people in particular. Our work to reduce youth offending and support troubled families will also be reduced impacting on young people. Our work on crime prevention targets the vulnerable communities and if reduced will impact on the disabled and older people.</p> <p>The work of the partnership will continue, however, it will have less funding for projects and interventions.</p>				

Trading Standards - cessation of duties in relation to trade marks, counterfeiting and animal health	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	40	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) – The Committee recognised this reduction in one officer’s role and learnt that because of the specialisms involved, it was very difficult to retrain existing staff. The proposal could lead to a redundancy or a reduction in an officer’s contracted hours. The Committee debated whether officers from other councils could be shared. It was explained that the specialisms were covered across Thurrock and Barking and Dagenham but due to the amount of work each field officer had in each council, it was not a viable option to have them working across both sites.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>The reactive work will continue where there is a reported safety risk. However, the proactive work to prevent counterfeiting will stop and therefore, young people and low income families, in particular, will be adversely impacted by the reduction in counterfeit product detection.</p>				

Environmental Protection - reduction in duties	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K
	-	96	-	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet • Considered by CGS O&S in July 				
<p>Summary of consultation:</p> <p>CGS O&S (July) - no formal objections were made to this proposal going forward.</p>				
<p>NB – Of this £96K, two thirds relates to statutory duties which will no longer be undertaken, including work around dealing with infested land and properties and the inspection of industrial / commercial environmental permits. Failure to undertake these functions may lead to intervention by DEFRA or other government departments or agencies due to the Council’s default in respect of its statutory duties. This would increase the likelihood of adverse Local Government Ombudsman adjudications.</p>				
<p>Summary of Equality Impact Assessment:</p> <p>Potential detrimental impact on some groups, in particular the elderly, the very young or those with certain health issues, which will be exacerbated in areas of higher deprivation as permitted industry in Thurrock tends to be focussed in these areas. The occurrence and duration of local air quality incidents will increase.</p>				

APPENDIX 2

Shaping the Council - Status of savings proposals for requiring future Cabinet decision

	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K	Status
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DELIVERY UNIT					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in Voluntary Sector Core Grants 		150	75	75	To be agreed in December
COMMERCIAL SERVICES					
Complete reduction of maintenance costs related to Thameside and associated Serco staff reductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet £200K agreed to be brought forward to 2015/16 in August Cabinet Options appraisal underway regarding options for Thameside complex 		200	200		To be agreed in February
CHILDRENS SERVICES					
Reduction in the costs of Community Library provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet July Children's O&S August Cabinet – agreed to bring forward £200K August Cabinet - agreed to additional £169K subject to consultation Due to go back to Children's O&S in December/January prior to start of consultation 		569			To be agreed in February
Consultation on commissioning out council nurseries to reduce costs and re-provision of youth work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – August Cabinet Due to go back to Children's O&S in December /January 		100			To be agreed in December/January

	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K	Status
ADULTS, HEALTH & COMMISSIONING					
<i>Extra Care – Piggs/Kynoch – redesign service offer</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation as appropriate – August Cabinet Due to go back to Children’s O&S in November 		200			To be agreed in December
Public Health Review of Contracts			250	250	To be agreed in 2015/16
Supported Living Review – to cut or reduce those areas that are non-statutory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet July HWB O&S August Cabinet – agreed additional £250K in 2015/16 September HWB O&S provided with additional information 	70	680			To be agreed in December
PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION					
Cease grant funding to Transvol <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet Considered by PTR O&S in July A Task and Finish working group met in late October to discuss further with Transvol representatives 		100			To be agreed in December
Reduce public transport subsidies (bus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet Considered by PTR O&S in July Proposal is for 2016-17 therefore decision will be taken in 2015/16 			190		To be agreed in 2015/16
Invest in modern highway maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet Considered by PTR O&S in July Decision was called in Due to go back to PTRO&S on 15 November This is an invest to save proposal which will not create savings until 2017/18 				260	To be agreed in December
Contribution to Tilbury Ferry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having initially been rejected by members, Cabinet members agreed in 		87			Date for final agreement to be confirmed

	2014/15 £K	2015/16 £K	2016/17 £K	2017/18 £K	Status
<p>August, that this should proceed to consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiations have taken place with Port of Tilbury and future conversations are being scheduled with Kent County Council and the Port of London Authority to look at alternative ways to fund the ferry. 					
ENVIRONMENT					
<p>Revisions to waste collection and disposal arrangements (including charging for garden waste)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – July Cabinet Considered by CGS O&S in July August Cabinet – agreed to additional £285K in 2015/16 and £290K in 2016/17 		973	520		To be agreed in February
<p>Fortnightly collection of residual waste and recycling</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed to proceed to consultation – August Cabinet This is due to go to CGS O&S in November 		260	260		To be agreed in February

This page is intentionally left blank

11 November 2014		ITEM: 6
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Children's Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2013/14		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Carmel Littleton – Director of Children's Services		
Accountable Head of Service: Nicky Pace – Interim Head of Children's Social Care		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton – Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

The annual report for Thurrock Council on the operation of the Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure covering the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014 is attached as Appendix one. It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report on children social care complaints.

The children's social care complaints procedure is operated in accordance with the 'Getting the Best from Complaints' guidance 2006 as governed by the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, Children Leaving Care Act 2000 and the Adoption & Children Act 2002.

The report sets out the number of representations received in the year including the number of complaints, key issues arising from complaints and overall learning and improvement activity for the department.

A total of 203 representations were received during 2013-14 as detailed below:

- 62 Compliments
- 62 Stage 1 complaints received
- 3 Stage 2 complaints received
- 1 Stage 3 complaint received
- 34 Concerns and issues received
- 19 MP enquiries
- 20 Member enquiries
- 2 Ombudsman enquiries

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Scrutiny Committee consider and note the report

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This is the annual report for Thurrock Council on the operation of the Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure covering the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report on Children's Social Care complaints.
- 2.2 The Children's social care complaints procedure is operated in accordance with the Children Act 1989 Regulations and 'Getting the Best from Complaints' guidance 2006.
- 2.3 The Children's social care complaints procedure operates in three stages. Stage 1 is referred to as local resolution where the Team/Service Manager responds to the complaint within 10 – 20 working days. Stage 2 complaints are investigated by an independent investigator and independent person. Stage 3 complaints are reviewed by a panel made up of three independent panel members. The panel make their recommendations to the Director of Children Services who then reaches a decision and any actions to be taken.
- 2.4 If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the independent review panel, they have the right to take their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 2.5 In the complaints leaflet, children and young people are advised of their right to advocacy when making a complaint or for support. This is in accordance with the Advocacy Regulations 2004. Thurrock Children's Services commissions Open Door Advocacy for this service.
- 2.6 Staff are encouraged to resolve issues at the first point of contact in line with good practice as outlined by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- 2.7 The complaints procedure provides Children's social care with an additional means of monitoring performance and improving service quality and provides an important opportunity to learn from complaints

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 This is a monitoring report for noting, therefore there is no options analysis. The annual report attached as Appendix one includes consideration of reasons for complaints, issues arising from complaints and service learning and improvement activity in response.
- 3.2 The headline messages for this report are:

3.3 Summary of representations received 2013/14

- 62 Compliments
- 62 Stage 1 Complaints received
- 3 Stage 2 Complaints received
- 1 Stage 3 Review
- 34 Concerns and issues received
- 19 MP enquiries
- 20 Member enquiries
- 2 Ombudsman enquiries

3.4 Compliments

Compliments are expressions of good feedback. The team recorded 62 compliments this year compared to 60 recorded last year and 90 recorded for 2011/12. Examples include:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your invaluable support during the last 7 years...I would not be the woman I am today and our family would not be as strong without the support we received. I would like you all to realise the extremely positive impact you all had on my family and my life. Team for Disabled Children

J's support of C went over and above what is expected of a foster carer and she skilfully managed some very difficult and emotional situations. I found J to be highly professional and caring. J did a fantastic job caring for C who presented many challenges. Re: foster carer

I am happy with my family as well as my social worker. Fostering & Adoption Team

3.5 Complaints

The department received a total of 62 stage 1 complaints in 2013/14, which is a decrease of 26% on the number of complaints (84) received for 2012/13.

While there is a falling trend in terms of complaints numbers, this can be partly contributed to the introduction packs provided to families, which provides information on making a complaint and teams are successfully resolving more queries and concerns before they become a formal complaint.

Three complaints progressed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure and were investigated by independently commissioned complaint investigators.

One complaint progressed to stage 3 review and at the end of the reporting period remained open, awaiting a panel date.

Complaints publicity materials will be reviewed together with the complaints procedure during 2014-15 to ensure that the procedure is accessible to all

service users to ensure that they know how to make a complaint and feel able to do so.

3.6 Concerns and Issues

The complaints team recorded 34 concerns and issues for this reporting period which were successfully resolved within the teams without the need to record them as formal complaints. If the concern cannot be resolved, it will become a complaint and be processed in accordance with the complaints procedure.

3.7 Local Government Ombudsman

There were 2 cases received by the Ombudsman's office for this reporting year. Of these, two cases were referred to the council for investigation through the complaints procedure, both were concluded.

One case found the council at 'fault causing injustice'. This was a joint case across adult and children's social care. The case resulted in the Ombudsman publishing her findings in a public report. This report was considered by Cabinet on 12 March 2014. Cabinet referred the report to this committee for consideration. The report is therefore attached as Appendix two.

The second case was in relation to the failure to implement support following the complainant agreeing to care for family members. The case was upheld.

Further detail on these cases as well as the process for LGO complaints is included in section 10 of the annual report (Appendix one).

3.8 Learning from Complaints

Complaints and feedback provide the service with an opportunity to identify things that can be improved. The learning from complaints is an essential part of the process. Examples of the learning received this year are shown below. Further details are shown in section 11 of the annual report (appendix one).

Factual errors to be amended on reports where they are identified

Foster carers to undertake additional training particularly with regard to de-escalation techniques

Staff to be aware of the information governance guidance regarding information sharing and data protection

3.10 Future area for development

A rolling program of visiting social care teams will commence during the period 2014-15. This is to highlight the importance of learning from

complaints and compliments, with an emphasis on complaint handling, the key legislation and related processes.

The Complaints Manager will consider further ways of capturing feedback from children and young people regarding Children's social care services.

The Complaint procedure will be reviewed together with the related communication materials, including the complaints leaflet.

Complaints activity and learning will continue to be reported to the department throughout the year and disseminated to all staff.

The Complaints Manager will continue to work closely with the Essex Complaints Manager Network and other councils to explore the potential for developing shared arrangements to access a pool of experienced independent persons for stage 2 investigators and Stage 3 reviews and at the same time securing efficiencies for the service.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual complaints report on children's social care complaints. It is best practice for this to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny. This report is for monitoring and noting.

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

- 5.1 This report has been agreed with the Children's social care senior management team. Consideration of complaints issues and learning and improvement arising from them are identified as an ongoing priority in the report.

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

- 6.1 Thurrock's Children and Young People's Plan 2013-2016 sets out a vision for ensuring that 'every child has the best start in life'. Safeguarding and protecting the well-being of vulnerable child and young people is one of the priorities in the plan. This is reflected in the 'protection when needed' priority.
- 6.2 Feedback from children and young people is an important part of the service performance and quality framework. It enables the service to identify areas for improvement, to recognize the things that are done well and to help assess progress in meeting our priorities for children and young people.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor Children's Safeguarding

There are no specific legal issues arising from the report as this is just for members information.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

Whilst there are no specific diversity issues arising from this report, Children's Services are presently considering means for capturing demographic information pertinent to those submitting complaints, concerns and/or issues in the future. The availability of this additional data will support the council to identify where there are trends associated with the characteristics of those submitting complaints, concerns and/or issues and to develop measures to support specific groups where needed. It will also help to establish where there are indeed no diversity-based trends apparent which may be equally helpful to understand the need to further tailor some services.

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

None

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

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Children’s Social Care Complaints and Representations Annual Report 2013/14
- Appendix 2 - Local Government Ombudsman – Report on an investigation into complaint numbers 12 012 268 and 12 005 756 against Thurrock Council (Cabinet Paper)

Report Author:

Harminder Dhillon

Statutory Complaints & Engagement Manager

Adults, Health & Commissioning, Children’s Services

HDhillon@thurrock.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Children's Social Care Complaints and Representations

Thurrock Council

Annual Report 2013-14

Harminder Dhillon
Statutory Complaints & Engagement Manager
Adults, Health & Commissioning, Children's Services

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Summary of Representations Received	4
3. Complaint Issues	5
4. Stage 1 Complaint Outcomes	6
5. Stage 2 Complaints	7
6. Stage 3 Complaints	7
7. Concerns	7
8. Compliments	8
9. Response Times	9
10. Local Government Ombudsman	9
11. Learning from Complaints	10
12. Staff Training	10
13. Feedback & Participation	10
14. Future Areas for Development	11

1. Introduction

The Children's Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure stipulates that an annual report on complaints and representations should be produced, as processed under the Children Act 1989, and the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and Adoption & Children Act 2002. Thurrock's procedure is governed by the 'Getting the Best from Complaints' guidance 2006.

This report provides information about the complaints and representations received for the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014. The report sets out the number of representations including complaints received, key issues and learning for the department.

Staff are encouraged to resolve issues at the first point of contact in line with good practice as outlined by the Local Government Ombudsman. Staff are familiar with the Social Care Complaint Procedure and in directing service users to access the complaints procedure where a complaint cannot be resolved locally.

The statutory complaints procedure sets out that a complaint can be made as a result of a whole range of issues that are relating to statutory social services functions such as:

- an unwelcome or disputed decision,
- the quality and appropriateness of a service,
- delay in decision making or provision of services,
- attitude or behaviour of staff
- or the quantity, frequency or cost of a service

A complaint will not be considered:

- if the person making the complaint does not meet the legal requirements of who may complain and is not acting on behalf of such an individual
- when the complaint is not in relation to the local authority or any body acting on its behalf
- where the same complaint has already been dealt with at all stages of the complaints procedure

The Complaints Procedure operates in 3 stages:

Stage 1

Local Resolution where Team/Service Managers respond to a complaint within 10 working days which can be extended to 20 working days for more complex complaints.

Stage 2

The complainant can request their complaint to be progressed to stage 2 within 20 working days of receiving their stage 1 response. This stage involves an independent investigation which is conducted by an independent investigator and independent person who oversees the investigation for fairness and transparency of the process. The investigation can take within 25 to 65 working days. Following the investigation, the report sets out its findings and recommendations and this is considered by the Children's Head of Service who then provides a written response within 15 working days of receiving the panel's recommendations.

Stage 3

Where a complainant requests a review of their complaint, the panel must be organised within 30 working days of the request. The complaints review panel is made up of 3 independent panel members. The panel makes their recommendations to the Director of Children's Services, who will then reach a decision and any actions to be taken.

Local Government Ombudsman

If a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the independent review panel, they have the right to take their complaint to the local Government Ombudsman. Complainants can refer their complaint to the Ombudsman's office at any time, although the Ombudsman may refer the complaint back to the Local Authority if it has not been fully considered through the complaints procedure.

Advocacy

In our complaints leaflet, we advise that children and young people have a right to advocacy when making a complaint or if they need any support. This is in accordance with the Advocacy Regulations 2004. Thurrock Children's Services commission Open Door Advocacy for this service. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) provide a further important link between a child, the service and the complaints procedures. Independent Reviewing Officers can often ensure that issues of concern can be identified and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

2. *Summary of Representations received*

A total of 203 representations were received during financial year 2013-14 as detailed below:

- 62 Stage 1 complaints
- 3 Stage 2 complaints
- 1 Stage 3 panel review
- 34 Concerns/ issues
- 62 Compliments
- 19 MP enquiries
- 20 Member enquiries
- 2 Ombudsman enquiries

The department received a total of 62 stage 1 complaints compared to 84 complaints received last year which is a decrease of 26%. This can partly be contributed to the introduction packs which are now provided to families and encloses information on making a complaint as well as teams successfully resolving more queries and concerns in an informal way.

Trends in complaints received from 2010 until 2014:

Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
2013/14	62	3	1
2012/13	84	4	1
2011/12	93	2	0
2010/11	107	2	0

Table 1

The number of referrals to children’s social care for 2013/14 was approximately 1750. For the same period, 62 stage 1 complaints were received which represents 3.5% of all referrals made and 4% of the estimated number of families who received a social care service (which was approximately 1500) for this reporting period.

Complaints by Service Team for 2013-14:

Complaints	Adoption	1
	Child Protection	8
	Disabled Children	4
	Family Support (Central)	5
	Family Support (North East)	1
	Family Support (South East)	3
	Family Support (West)	2
	Fostering	5
	Initial Response	14
	Youth Offending Service	1
	Permanence/Court Work	6
	Through Care 1	5
	Through Care 2	3
	Aftercare Team	3
	Adolescent Team	1
Total	62	

Table 2

3. Complaint issues

It is important to consider the reasons why complaints are made as detailed in table 3. The table indicates that staff attitude and conduct was the reason most frequently complained about. However, it should also be noted that Children’s social care services are generally very involved with families and their personal issues. This will inevitably lead to queries and complaints about social work staff and their involvement and professional opinions when making assessments and reports.

Assessment/decision making	10
Communication	7
Delays	3
Foster care	2
Welfare issues	1
Service quality	5
Staff conduct/attitude	31
Other services	2
Legal decision	1
Total	62

Table 3

4. Stage 1 Complaint Outcomes

The stage 1 outcomes are detailed below. It is noted that 53% of the complaints were not upheld.

Upheld	5
Partially Upheld	6
Not Upheld	33
In Progress	8
Withdrawn	10
Total	62

Table 4

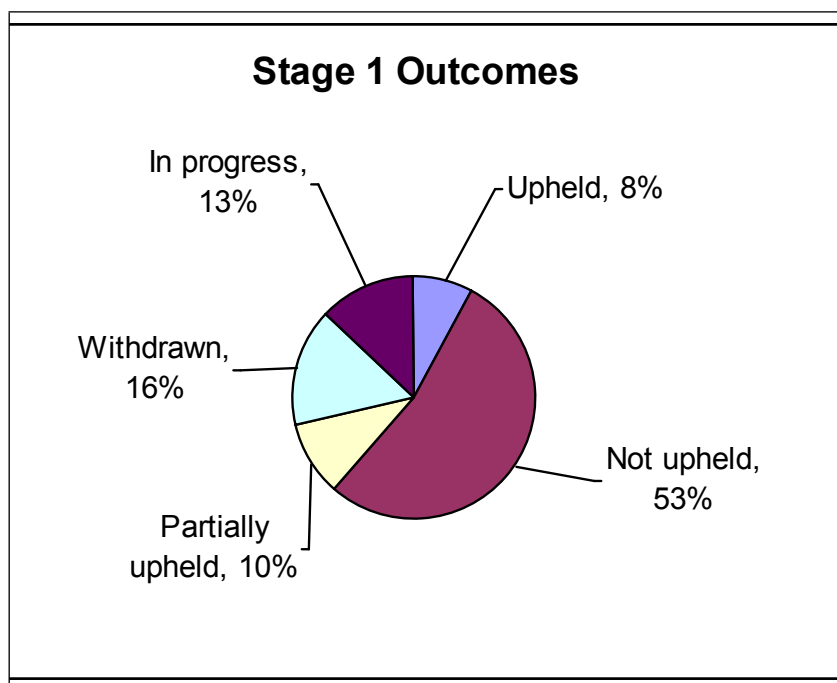


Figure 1

With regard to those complaints upheld, the Department offered apologies and advised the service users of actions that would be taken to prevent the incident that lead to the complaint recurring. Further details regarding complaint outcomes are detailed in the 'Learning from Complaints' section of this report.

5. Stage 2 Complaints

Three complaints progressed to stage 2 of the complaints procedure during the reporting year. These complaints were investigated by independently commissioned complaint investigators.

Case 1 – Complaint regarding the welfare of grandchildren in foster care and service team communication and delays. The complaint progressed to stage 3 and remained open at end of reporting period, awaiting a panel date.

Case 2 – Young person in care complained about various issues concerning his personal belongings and finance issues. The independent complaint investigation was in process at the end of the reporting period.

Case 3 – Complaint regarding the process and decision for a child removed into care. Complaint investigation was underway at the end of the reporting period.

6. Stage 3 complaints

A stage 3 complaint panel review was held regarding an independent foster carer and the removal of children from her care. The recommendations are detailed in the learning section.

7. Concerns

Apart from complaints, the complaints team recorded other representations received about the service as it is required to do. Representations can be positive comments and feedback about the service or comments and queries regarding a service.

The complaints service recorded 34 concerns which are usually successfully resolved quickly and without the need for an investigation. If a concern cannot be readily resolved, it will become a complaint.

8. Compliments

Compliments are expressions of good feedback and the team recorded 62 compliments this year compared to 60 recorded last year and 90 recorded for 2011/12.

Compliments received by service team:

Compliments	Admin Hub	2
	Aftercare	2
	Connexions	1
	Childcare & Targeted Outcomes	1
	Child Protection	3
	Disabled Children	2
	Family Support SE	2
	Fostering & Adoption	17
	Initial Response	3
	Oaktree Resource Centre	1
	Performance Quality and Business Support	1
	Sunshine Centre	4
	Therapeutic Foster Care	14
	Through Care 1	4
	Through Care 2	2
	Troubled Families	2
	Thurrock Youth Offending Service	1
Total	62	

Table 5

What people have said:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your invaluable support during the last 7 years...I would not be the woman I am today and our family would not be as strong as it is now without the support we received. I would like you all to realise the extremely positive impact you all had on my family and my life. Team for Disabled Children

The parents of C reported that the visit social care made yesterday has been vital in helping to keep the family together and in enabling all to make sense of their feelings, all with the context of a highly fuelled crisis. The social worker provided a voice for the child and enabled the parents to hear his difficulties. The strategies she (the worker) used were appropriate, insightful and containing. Youth Offending Team

Police have complimented the whole service on their communication in terms of missing children. She stated we make her job easier as she knows exactly who to go to with her queries. She is a great supporter of the Missing Children Panel and has been informing other authorities of the panel. She has requested that a social worker from Essex attends our panel to show them 'best practice' in order that they are able to set up something similar in Essex. Quality Assurance, Safeguarding and Child Protection

J's support of C went over and above what is expected of a foster carer and she skilfully managed some very difficult and emotional situations. I found J to be highly professional and caring. J did a fantastic job caring for C who presented many challenges. Re: Foster carer

I am happy with my family as well as my social worker. Fostering & Adoption Team

9. *Response Times*

For stage 1 complaints, responses should be completed within 10-20 working days and the department responded to 24 complaints (39%) within this timescale. For those complaints that exceeded 20 working days, the department responded to 20 complaints (32%) and 18 (29%) were either withdrawn/cancelled or still in progress at the end of this reporting year.

The reasons for delay included the complaints being of a complex nature and requiring more detailed investigation, staff absence and legal case work priorities.

The statutory response timescale for stage 2 complaints is between 25 and 65 working days. It is the service's aim to undertake stage 2 complaints within this time period. However, this timeframe can often be exceeded for a number of reasons. This includes the serious nature of the issues being investigated and the time incurred ensuring comprehensive investigation, as well as ensuring same time availability of the investigation team and staff for interviews and file viewing. In all cases where there is a likely delay, the complainants are kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

10. *Local Government Ombudsman*

The Ombudsman investigates complaints of injustice caused by 'maladministration' or 'service failure'. The Ombudsman cannot question whether a Council's decision is right or wrong simply because a complainant disagrees with it. The Ombudsman must consider whether there was fault in the way the decision was reached. If there has been fault, the Ombudsman considers whether there has been an injustice, and if there has, a remedy will be suggested.

There were 2 Ombudsman enquiries received for 2013/14 period as detailed below:

Case 1 - Joint investigation for adults and children's social care regarding a parent and her disabled child. The Ombudsman found **fault causing injustice** and issued a public report (please see Appendix A). Compensation was recommended as detailed on page 10.

Case 2 – Complaint regarding the failure to implement support following the complainant agreeing to care for family members. The complaint was **upheld** and compensation was agreed as detailed on page 10.

The recommendations for these cases are included in the 'Learning from Complaints' Section.

11. Learning from Complaints

Learning from complaints is an important aspect of the complaints procedure. The following are examples of learning that were identified from the complaints processed during 2013/14:

Communication

- To ensure sufficient information is provided to social workers prior to the placement when considering matching
- Ensure that reports are discussed with family prior to panels and information to be recorded on time
- Ensure all information is clarified with the service user before it is made a record.
- Joint work with Adult Social Care services where there is both an adult and child service user receiving services

Service improvement

- Factual errors to be amended on reports where they are identified
- Social workers to ensure that children are offered independent advocacy
- Council to ensure that the support it commissions is provided and monitored according to the relevant regulations

Staff Training

- Foster carers to undertake additional training particularly with regard to de-escalation techniques
- Staff to be aware of the information governance guidance regarding information sharing and data protection
- Ensure that Independent Reviewing Officers understand their responsibilities under the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review regulations 2010 as well as the Independent Reviewing Officers handbook

12. Staff Training

Staff are able to access e-learning courses as provided by the Workforce Planning and Development team regarding complaints handling and customer care.

13. Feedback and participation

The Complaints Manager is a member of the Children's Participation and Engagement Champion's Group, which includes representation from Open Door Advocacy and key services that involve children who are in care. The group's primary focus is to ensure services are accessible for children in care as well as considering ways of actively engaging young people and children in care and capturing their views and feedback.

14. Future areas for development

- Complaints Refresher Training with an emphasis on complaints handling, the key legislation and related processes and learning will be rolled out to all social care teams during 2014/15
- The complaints team will consider further ways of capturing young people's feedback regarding Children's social care services in relation to services working well and where they could be improved
- The Complaints Manager will support operational staff and Managers in handling and responding to complaints more effectively
- The Complaints Manager will ensure that learning is disseminated to all staff by producing a weekly report for the senior management team to track and monitor complaints and a quarterly report with detailed analysis of complaints and representations to be disseminated to all staff
- The Complaints Procedure will be reviewed
- The Council's website will be updated, together with all related communication materials including the complaints leaflet
- The service will continue to increase the aware of the complaints and representations procedure for staff and service users
- The Complaints Manager will continue to work closely with the Essex Complaints Manager Network and other Councils to explore the potential for developing shared arrangements to access a pool of experienced independent persons for Stage 2 investigators and Stage 3 reviews and at the same time to secure efficiencies for the service. Also to maintain links regionally and nationally with complaints teams in other authorities for key issues arising and sharing best practise

This page is intentionally left blank

Report

on an investigation into
complaint numbers 12 012 268 and
12 005 756 against
Thurrock Council

10 October 2013

Investigation into complaint nos 12 012 268 and 12 005 756 against Thurrock Council

Table of Contents	Page
Report summary	1
Introduction	2
Legal and administrative background	2
The Council's obligations to children in need	3
The Children Act 1989 complaints procedure	3
The Council's obligations	3
The Council's guidance for resources panels	4
Investigation	4
Conclusion	6
Ms J's assessment	6
The direct payments for Ms J's care provision	7
Ms J's entitlement based on eligible need	7
Ms J's formal complaint about her daughter's care	7
Ms J's daughter's care provision	8
The direct payments for Ms J's daughter	8
Recommendation	8

The Local Government Act 1974, section 30(3) generally requires me to report without naming or identifying the complainant or other individuals. The personal names used in this report are therefore not the real names.

Key to names used

Ms J – the complainant

Child J – the complainant's daughter

Report summary

Subject

Ms J complained that the Council failed to properly assess her adult social care needs. She also said she was assessed as needing 10 hours of assistance each week but the Council reduced this to six hours with no explanation. Ms J said there was no provision in place while the Council wanted her to arrange direct payments.

Ms J also complained on behalf of her daughter, Child J. She said the Council consistently failed to provide care for Child J. When the care was arranged, Ms J said, it was of a poor standard. Ms J also complained she was pressured into accepting direct payments for Child J's care and the Council failed to respond to her concerns about these issues.

Finding

Fault causing injustice.

Recommendation

I recommend, and the Council has agreed to take the following steps to remedy the injustice caused to Ms J and Child J as a result of the faults identified.

- a. Pay Ms J £500 to acknowledge that between June 2011 and January 2012 she received no services despite being assessed as having an eligible need.
- b. Pay Ms J £1000 to acknowledge that the Council, on several occasions, did not provide care for Child J.
- c. Pay Ms J £250 for the time and trouble she has spent pursuing the matter because the Council failed to respond to her complaint.

Introduction

1. Ms J, who suffers from chronic fatigue syndrome and back pain along with other physical disabilities, moved to the Council's area in 2011. It commissioned and put in place a care plan for 70 hours assistance each week for her 11 year old daughter, Child J, who has been diagnosed with autism and various communication difficulties and who also has epilepsy and other physical conditions affecting her mobility. Ms J then asked for an assessment of her own needs which the Council completed in May 2011.
2. Ms J complained that the Council failed to carry out its assessment of her needs properly. She was also concerned that the Council decided she required fewer hours of support than were identified in the assessment and the Council had not explained why. In relation to her eligible needs, she said the Council pressured her to arrange the care herself and it failed to put provision in place in the interim.
3. In November 2011 Ms J raised concerns about the standard of care provided for Child J by an agency, and that the provision was erratic. The Council did not reply.
4. In July 2012, Ms J approached the Ombudsman as she was not satisfied with the action the Council had taken in response to her concerns. Part of the complaint related to assistance for her daughter. I am satisfied Ms J is a suitable person to bring this part of the complaint on her daughter's behalf.
5. One of my investigators has discussed the complaint with Ms J and made enquiries of the Council. She sent the Council her provisional views, which found fault by the Council causing injustice to Ms J. The Council failed to respond to the issues relating to Ms J's adult social care needs and did not accept the provisional conclusions in relation to how it had provided for her daughter's care needs. The Council and Ms J have since provided further comments.

Legal and administrative background

6. The Ombudsman investigates complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. In this report, I have used the word fault to refer to these. If there has been fault, the Ombudsman considers whether it has caused an injustice and, if it has, she may suggest a remedy. (*Local Government Act 1974, sections 26(1) and 26A(1)*)
7. The Ombudsman cannot question whether a council's decision is right or wrong simply because the complainant disagrees with it. She must consider

whether there was fault in the way the decision was reached. (*Local Government Act 1974, section 34(3)*)

The Council's obligations to children in need

8. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 (the Act) places an obligation on local authorities to provide a range and level of services appropriate for 'children in need'. 'Children in need' are defined in section 17(10) (c) of the Act as including disabled children. The way local authorities determine the appropriate services is by carrying out an assessment of the child's needs under schedule II of the Act.

The Children Act 1989 complaints procedure

9. The Act contains a mechanism^[1] for service users to raise complaints about children's social care. It is a three stage process, which involves:
 - a) a response by the manager of the team complained about;
 - b) an independent investigation adjudicated by a senior council officer; and
 - c) a review of the investigation by a panel of independent persons, followed by a final decision by the director for children's social care.

The Council's obligations

10. Under section 47 of the NHS and Community Care Act 1990, councils must assess the care needs of a range of adults with disabilities who may qualify for community care services. If a council identifies that a person needs community care services and that person meets any eligibility criteria which the council has set, then it must provide those services, subject to any charging provisions. A care plan agreed with the service user should include a statement of the needs identified, the services to be provided and the objectives of providing the services.
11. The Department for Health has issued guidance on direct payments in the Children's Services setting – Guidance on Direct Payments: For Community Care, Services for Carers and Children's Services (the Guidance).
12. Paragraphs 52 and 53 of the Guidance outline council responsibilities when offering direct payments. Paragraph 52 says the council should be satisfied there is an understanding of what is involved in managing direct payments. Paragraph 53 says councils should make it clear that a person does not have to accept direct payments. The council should discuss with recipients what to do if they no longer wish to receive direct payments.

13. Paragraph 72 of the Guidance says, where someone deciding whether to accept direct payments does not already have provision in place, the council may need to provide services in the interim. Paragraph 74 says councils may wish to explore ways of assisting individuals in managing direct payments. Paragraph 77 says the council should make suitable arrangements to ensure direct payments do not continue if the person becomes incapable of managing the payments.

The Council's guidance for resources panels

14. The Council has provided a copy of a document called '*Adult Social Care: Managing Our Resources Effectively*' (the Resources Guidance). The Resources Guidance sets out the principles panels should follow when considering assessments and says:

The panel decision report will be signed by the chair at the time of panel (sic) with the decision and full details of the decision will be recorded ... with the reasons behind the decision making.

Investigation

15. Ms J contacted the Council on 4 April 2011 and requested an assessment to help her with household chores in caring for her daughter. She was not assessed until 25 May. The Council says this was partly because Ms J wanted to arrange for an advocate to be present during the assessment, but the reason for the delay recorded on the assessment form is lack of assessor availability.
16. The Council officer conducting the assessment completed a detailed background description of Ms J and her daughter and outlined the areas where it was considered she needed support. Ms J was assessed as having 'substantial' needs requiring 10.5 hours of support each week because of her parenting responsibilities.
17. A proposal, for 10 hours support for Ms J, was considered by the relevant Council's panel. Officers were told to liaise with the Children's Services team to see whether the cost of providing services to Ms J and her daughter could be reduced by joint provision. The departments met on 13 June to discuss the possibility of providing support to Ms J as a carer in the context of her daughter's support package. There is no record of any decision, or rationale for any decision.
18. On 16 June, Ms J complained to the Council she had not received a copy of her assessment. She wanted some of her daughter's care hours to be reallocated to help her in her carer's role.

19. The Council says that, based on the departmental discussions, it decided to provide six hours of support to Ms J, through direct payments managed by an agency. Ms J felt she needed more help with domestic tasks, which she set out in some detail to the Council and said that, in her view, she needed at least 16 hours. The Council said it considered six hours were sufficient but it would review the matter after three months if necessary.
20. Ms J asked why she was not receiving at least the 10.5 hours' support she had been assessed as needing. She also said the way the Council proposed to deliver the care (i.e. in two, three-hour sessions a week) was unworkable.
21. Ms J's assessment said the provision was to be made by direct payments, but she said she was too ill to put in place care for her daughter via direct payments, she had not received any care from Adult Care Services, and nobody had been in contact.
22. The Council says it referred Ms J to an agency which helps service users to manage direct payments. Ms J denies being referred to the support agency, but emails and file notes show she was in contact with it from August 2011. She was then encouraged to complete a job description for a personal assistant, but a file note from September says Ms J wanted to get support for her daughter arranged first before addressing her own direct payments. In December the Council reminded her that she could access the support.
23. In November, Ms J wrote to the Council about the care provided by the care agency for her daughter. She said that carers had failed to attend regularly, the Council had an obligation to provide the care package and the care agency had simply told her there were no carers available. The Council replied that it had no influence over the management of the care agency's staff and service provision, and she should address issues directly with the agency. Ms J said she did not wish to make a formal complaint, but her previous communications had been a request that the Council intervene. She also said the care agency continued to fail to provide care for her daughter and, when it was provided, it was of a poor standard. For example, Ms J complained that one carer did not engage with Child J adequately.
24. Ms J wrote to the Council in January 2012, again saying the care agency had failed to provide care and that there was no care booked for her daughter for the following week. She asked the Council to treat the letter as a formal complaint in the following terms.
 - a) The Council had failed to provide her daughter's care package.
 - b) The care that was being provided was inadequate.
 - c) Her daughter had no social worker support.

25. The Council offered to meet with Ms J and said it hoped to respond formally to the complaint by 6 February. Meantime, Ms J wrote again, saying the care agency continued to fail to provide care for her daughter. She also said she felt she was being forced to accept direct payments as a result of the agency's failings. The Council responded the same day, offering emergency respite care and explained it was trying to identify an alternative agency to provide care for her daughter.
26. On 7 February, Ms J wrote outlining the care her daughter would need for the following week. She wrote again the following week to say the carer had failed to attend. She said she had called the care agency but there was no answer. Ms J sent similar emails on 19 March and 30 April. The Council has provided evidence that on some occasions Ms J cancelled the care provision because she did not consider the standard of care to be adequate.
27. In May, Ms J asked the Council why it had not completed its investigation into her complaint. The Council was unaware of an outstanding complaint. It explained it had closed the complaint in January, following a meeting between Ms J and the allocated social worker. It invited her to raise any concerns again as a separate complaint. Ms J approached me on 1 July, as she was not satisfied with the Council's response. She said she no longer wished to complain about the lack of social worker support but the other two points from her January complaint to the Council remained unresolved.
28. Ms J has managed her daughter's care package since June 2012 by way of direct payments. The Council has provided funds backdated to June 2011. She says that she is not able to cope managing the payments, but she wants the payments to continue, with adequate support. The Council says Ms J is not spending the allocated funds and will not increase the direct payments while they remain unspent. Ms J is clear she needs help in managing her payments.

Conclusion

Ms J's assessment

29. There was some delay in carrying out the assessment, but it is unclear to what extent this was affected by Ms J's wish to have an advocate present and the arrangements around this. Nevertheless, the delay was not substantial and I do not consider delay which may be attributable to the Council caused an injustice which would warrant a remedy.
30. I have seen no evidence of fault in the way the assessment was carried out. The Council officer conducting the assessment appears to have made judgements based on Ms J's needs. I do not, therefore, find fault here.

The direct payments for Ms J's care provision

31. While Ms J denies being given information about the agency which helps service users to manage direct payments, I have concluded the information was provided and she was in touch with the agency.
32. The Council knew Ms J was not using the direct payments and it is clear that by September 2011 it knew she was having difficulty accessing them. I consider from that point the Council should have been proactive and commissioned the care for Ms J rather than waiting for her to arrange it and use the payments herself. Meanwhile, she did not receive the care to which she was entitled and which she needed. I consider this was fault causing injustice. It is not appropriate for a council to identify an eligible need then fail to put the provision in place because the service user is not insistent it does so. This is especially the case given the context, that the Council is meeting the needs of vulnerable clients.
33. The Council says Ms J now arranges the support she needs via direct payments but she is not using the full entitlement she has been assessed as needing.

Ms J's entitlement based on eligible need

34. I am concerned about the decision to reduce Ms J's assessed provision from the 10.5 hours, outlined in the assessment, to six hours. The Council has a policy that full details of the decisions of resource panels are recorded. It says the chair made the decision to reduce Ms J's entitlement based on other cases and the funding provided by Children's Services. However, it is unclear how the Council is able to make this statement when no record of the decision exists. I cannot say why it decided it was appropriate to reduce the provision by almost half. I consider this lack of evidence for the decision making is fault. The only evidence available for the number of hours Ms J needed is the assessment. I therefore conclude the Council's decision was fault which resulted in an injustice to Ms J, in that she has not been able to access the level of the help she was assessed as needing.

Ms J's formal complaint about her daughter's care

35. I have seen no evidence the Council has responded to Ms J's complaint about its failure to provide services for her daughter and Ms J has therefore had to contact the Council on numerous occasions and, finally, complain to this office. It was inappropriate for it to say it had no influence over the management of the care agency's staff and its service provision. The Council is responsible for ensuring the support it commissions is provided. It cannot renege on this because it is meeting its obligations through a contractor. I

consider this is evidence of fault, without which Ms J would have been saved significant time and trouble.

Ms J's daughter's care provision

36. The Council determined Ms J's daughter was entitled to significant levels of care services and was under an obligation to provide them. As I have said, it cannot pass this responsibility over to the care agency. Ms J repeatedly reported failures in the provision of care for her daughter. On some occasions Ms J cancelled the care provision because she did not consider the standard to be adequate. The Council is responsible for the failings of the agency to meet the assessed need, which is fault, but cannot be held responsible for failing to provide services where they were offered, but refused.
37. In relation to the standard of care, different carers will provide care in different ways, with which Ms J may not always agree. The care agency was under an obligation to vet its carers properly to ensure they had the requisite qualifications and training. I have seen nothing to question these matters and consider the Council's offer of direct payments was a suitable resolution to this aspect of the complaint as they allow Ms J to select her own carers.

The direct payments for Ms J's daughter

38. Ms J said the Council pressured her into accepting direct payments. As Ms J was not satisfied with the standard of care the Council was providing for her daughter, I consider it was reasonable for the Council to offer direct payments.

Recommendation

39. I recommend, and the Council has agreed to take, the following steps to remedy the injustice caused to Ms J and her daughter as a result of the faults identified.
 - a) Pay Ms J £500 to acknowledge that between June 2011 and January 2012 she received no services despite being assessed as having an eligible need.
 - b) Pay Ms J £1000 to acknowledge that the Council, on several occasions, did not provide care for Child J.
 - c) Pay Ms J £250 for the time and trouble she has spent pursuing the matter because the Council failed to respond to her complaint.

J. Martin

**Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry
CV4 8JB**

10 October 2013

This page is intentionally left blank

11 November 2014	ITEM: 7
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Work Experience – Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Michele Lucas, Learning and Skills Manager	
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children’s Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Work experience has undergone significant change over the last four years. With a change of central government the statutory duty to provide work experience was removed and schools were given the opportunity to decide whether to continue with work experience or remove it from the timetable for young people aged 14-19.

The decision to remove the duty to provide work experience was based to a certain extent on an independent review carried out by Professor Alison Wolf (2011). The review identified that there was little evidence of work experience (for 14-16 year olds) having a positive impact in supporting the progression of young people into employment. However, the report did conclude that “genuine work experience” for 16-19 year olds had significant benefits in preparing young people for the challenges of work and enabled employers to identify young people with talent for their organisations.

Thurrock, like many other Local Authorities, saw a very mixed picture emerge, with some schools continuing to offer work experience and others offering alternative work related activities – some of which included placing a charge on parents who requested a work experience placement to pay for the mandatory health and safety checks for any work experience placement a young person undertakes.

In September 2013, the provider of work experience opportunities in Thurrock went into receivership. The Learning and Skills team in the Council were approached by the Principal of The Ockendon Academy to offer work experience opportunities as part of an emerging traded offer to schools which includes impartial information advice and guidance and support to recruit apprenticeships and other work related activities.

In response to this request, Thurrock Council has provided Health and Safety assurance for students to participate in work experience placements for the past

year. This activity provides a source of income to Thurrock Council and enhances the school curriculum to prepare local young people for employment. Eleven institutions commissioned the work experience service in its first year (13/14). It is anticipated that 14 institutions will be utilising the service from September 2014.

The latest guidance released around work related activities states

“Work experience is vital for young people and employers. It bridges the gap between school, college and work, helps young people make decisions about their future and develop new skills, and gives employers the chance to spot good new recruits”.

Skills Minister, Matthew Hancock October 2013

This support for work experience has been welcomed and echoed by local employers who have stated that they identify potential apprentices from the young people who undertake work experience within their companies.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the work already undertaken and the achievements over the last year in the development of a traded offer, supporting both employers and educational institutions, be noted.**
- 1.2 That a Task and Finish group be established to identify further opportunities to support pathways into work for young people – with a view to addressing some of the sector specific opportunities locally.**
- 1.3 That the number of Members of the Task and Finish group be agreed, following which Group Leaders will be requested to make nominations in accordance with political proportionality.**
- 1.4 That the scope and terms of reference of the Task and Finish group be agreed, as outlined in draft in appendix 1.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In August 2013, the Hertfordshire Careers Service went into administration. The Learning and Skills team created a work experience service that includes Health and Service assurance, and the identification of placements, which complemented the impartial information advice and guidance offered to local schools and colleges.
- 2.2 Competitive rates for two types of service: student sourced placement or Local Authority sourced placement; a set of documents to enable Ofsted to measure the impact of the young peoples’ experiences and a simple Service Level Agreement. As a result eleven institutions have chosen to provide work experience placements through Thurrock Council.

- 2.3 The Learning and Skills Team created a work experience placement service, in partnership with the 11-19 Strategy Group. This included the identification of placements and Health and Safety assurance for young people. Competitive rates for two types of service were negotiated, these include student sourced placement or LA sourced placement. We have also developed a set of documents to enable Ofsted to measure the impact of the young peoples' experiences and a Service Level Agreement has resulted in eleven institutions choosing to arrange work experience through Thurrock Council.

Take up to date

Institutions	No. of students placed (or to be placed)
Ormiston Park Academy	22
The Ockendon Academy	180
Ockendon Studio School	38
William Edwards School	9
St Clare's School	190
Princes Trust	42
Pupil Support Service	7
Gable Hall School	6
Stanford and Corringham 6 th Form	14
Total	508

From Sept 2014 – work identified	
Hassenbrook School	Signed SLA
Palmers College	Signed SLA
Gateway	Considering SLA
Grays Convent	Considering Offer Document
The Ockendon Academy	Signed SLA
Princes Trust	Signed SLA

Achievements to date

- Promotion of the service at partnership meetings has resulted in more take up of the service.
- A set of documents to enable education institutions to provide (and evidence to Ofsted) outcomes.
- Utilising a work experience student at Thurrock Council to enhance the content of the student forms.
- Efficient and effective communication between the Work Experience Co-ordinator and partner contact
- Approximately 280 local employers regularly provide work experience placements, across all sectors.

- Thurrock Council leading the way in providing work experience placements in a range of different directorates.

Challenges

- Thurrock Council being reliant on one person to provide assurance for work experience placements
- Clashing work experience dates between institutions
- Continual need to promote and secure a range of placements as demand grows
- Sector specific engagement e.g. more opportunities in logistics sector to take advantage of the regeneration opportunities locally.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options. (Thurrock - Service Delivery)

- 3.1 The work experience service provided in 13/14 was delivered by one person. Robust systems and processes are in place to make efficient use of their time, but limited capacity/budget has meant that growth in the offer has been limited.
- 3.2 To extend capacity and mitigate the risks of one 'expert', two members of staff have been trained to conduct Health and Safety visits for work experience placements. This additional responsibility has been incorporated into their performance objectives/daily work. It is planned for two further members of staff to be trained by early October.
- 3.3 The cost of five staff, on a part-time basis, conducting health and safety visits to enable work experience placements is estimated to extend capacity by 100%. The potential income generated covers the additional training costs.
- 3.4 The first year costs of the service has exceeded income by 30%, with the increased demand we are working towards a position of creating opportunities to provide a cost neutral position in 15/16.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Thurrock Council is in a unique position with some of the largest regeneration opportunities across the country – the continuing support around providing a range of work experience opportunities for young people will ensure that Thurrock's young people can participate in and be part of the exciting agenda and promote the council's priorities around ensuring young people can gain the managerial jobs of tomorrow.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Children's O&S Committee may wish to establish a task and finish group to gain a greater understanding around the current work place arrangements in Thurrock and to identify ways in which support could be offered around the development of work experience opportunities across Thurrock.
- 5.2 To support this, members could engage with a range of partners including:-
- Headteachers/Principals
 - Work experience leads
 - Careers staff
 - Young People
 - Employers
 - LA officers
- 5.2 This would enable committee members to gain a greater understanding of some of the ways in which this offer could be enhanced – this could be undertaken by hosting a business networking event inviting key partners to discuss and identify ways to enhance and support the current offer.
- 5.3 The key timescales and meeting plan is outlined in appendix 1.

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

- 6.1 The work experience service directly contributes to Thurrock Council priorities 1 and 2:

Create a great place for learning and opportunity
Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- 6.2 The work experience service positively impacts on Thurrock Council's employer engagement activities, by generating new employment with training opportunities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

When the Local Authority were approached by the Chair of the 11-19 Strategy Group to develop and oversee the work experience offer agreement was reached via the development of a traded offer. The intention in taking on this work was to ensure that this work was cost neutral within 12 months. With the increase in schools offering work experience this will be achieved by

December 2014. As a result there are no financial implications associated with the work experience traded offer.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

The Committee is asked to note the report content, and make two decisions, both of which are within the remit of the Committee's terms of reference and powers.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

In working closely with local businesses and the community we are ensuring that we offer young people a range of work experience placements that are based on young people skills and interests and not on a gender bias or educational attainment. We have secured a range of work experience placements that are suitable for both young women and young men and that have challenged some of the gender stereotyping for example young men into childcare. We will continue to explore ways in which we can challenge stereotyping of all appropriate protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010 .

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

None

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

None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – draft terms of reference for the Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People Task and Finish Review.

Report Author:

Michele Lucas

Learning and Skills Manager

Learning and Skills Team

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Draft Terms of Reference

Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People Task and Finish Review

<p>Membership</p>	<p>Membership must be politically proportional. Group Leaders will make nominations to the number of seats available in accordance to the Political Balance of the Council.</p> <p>The Children’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to decide on the number of seats available on the Task & Finish group based upon the calculations below. Please note that the political calculations are correct as of 11 November 2014, however may be affected by the result of the forthcoming by-election.</p> <p>5 Seats: (2 Labour Members, 2 Conservative Members, 1 UKIP Member). 4 Seats: (2 Labour Members, 2 Conservative Members) 3 Seats: (2 Labour Members, 1 Conservative Member).</p>
<p>Lead Scrutiny Officer</p>	<p>Democratic Services with colleagues in Children’s Services.</p>
<p>Draft Purpose and Aims of Task and Finish Group</p>	<p>The scope of the Task and Finish Group (initial draft to be discussed and agreed with Members):</p> <p>“To examine how Thurrock Council and its partners currently support young people into the workplace, particularly through teaching employability skills in education and the work experience offer in Thurrock. The group will make recommendations on how value can be added to the current offer.”</p> <p>The review will aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build a clearer picture of the realities of work placements in Thurrock and evaluate how young people are being equipped with the necessary skills to enter the workplace. • To examine how Thurrock could increase the employability skills of young people of secondary school age in Thurrock so that they are ready for work. • To review the quality of work experience placements in Thurrock and identify opportunities for improvement. • To consider how Thurrock could increase the number of young people who are undertaking work experience placements of some form at Key Stage 4/5. • To liaise with key stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of

	<p>current work placement and employability skills education in schools at preparing young people for the local workplace.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To engage with local employers and industry leaders to determine how Thurrock can better support young people into the workplace. • To produce a report of findings in respect of current strategies and make recommendations on how value can be added to the current offer, feeding in the outcomes of the review to existing action plans and the work of the Thurrock Education Alliance.
Issues in-scope	<p>There will be 2 specific areas examined as part of this review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Employability Skills in Schools 2) Work Experience <p>These areas have been identified as where a review could add most value and avoid duplicating other work already underway.</p> <p>Employment skills The types of employability skills that will be considered are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confidence building - Reading, writing and numeracy skills - Financial understanding - Personal development - Self-responsibility/attitude/work ethic <p>Key issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a shared understanding of what is meant by employability skills? - What is the baseline for current levels of employability skills? - What is the ambition/goal for levels of employability skills? - How do we measure employability skills? - What type of community work can help provide employability skills? - What is the role of schemes such as – Duke of Edinburgh in helping young people to be ready for work? - What is best practice nationally? <p>Work Experience This review could explore how to encourage schools, parents businesses and young people to undertake work experience of some form. This may explore the different types of work experience beyond the traditional 2 week block placement at KS4.</p> <p>Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the evidence of the benefits of work experience placements? - How can schools, parents and young people be convinced of the importance of offering their students the opportunity of work experience?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there alternative forms of work experience placements that are more flexible that can be provided? - How can the Council & partners assist with this? - What are trends nationally? <p>This review could feed into the action plan for delivery of the ‘Ambition, Achievement and Aspiration’ Strategy developed as part of the Thurrock Education Alliance work, arising from the Education Commission report, published in 2013.</p>
Activities	<p>The Group will initially undertake the following activities, to gather information for its review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Receive an information pack from Officers on how the council and its partners are currently supporting young people into work. (Current performance on employment skills & work experience) b) Engage with young people on their experiences of work placements in the Borough. c) Consult Strategies and Action Plans of Thurrock Council and its wider partners. d) Write to, hold an event with, or visit Local Business and Industry Leaders to determine what skills young people require and whether current strategies and work placements are successful at equipping young people with the required skills. e) Identify opportunities for further development in collaboration with both industry leaders, young people through Youth Cabinet, schools and other key stakeholders. f) Determine best practice regionally and nationally and undertake a gap analysis in order to identify the ambition for Thurrock. g) Identification of improvement areas for further investigation & review of key stakeholders <p>As the review develops, it may be that in the light of information received, it is decided to broaden the scope of these activities.</p>
Key stakeholders	<p>Secondary Schools/Academies Palmer's College South Essex College Job Centre Plus Thurrock Careers Learning & Skills Team Voluntary and Community Sector LEP – Employability and Skills Sub-Group (led by Essex County Council) 11-19 Strategy Group</p>

	<p>Children and Young People’s Partnership Youth Cabinet</p>
<p>Meeting plan (subject to change as review progresses).</p>	<p>End of November / Early December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Leaders to nominate Members to the Task & Finish Group. <p>December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers to conduct research and prepare information pack for Members. <p>January – 1st meeting of the Review Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive and scrutinise information pack. • Agree Terms of Reference • Portfolio holder witness session. • Officer witness session <p>February 2015 Evidence gathering with key stakeholders. Could include Stakeholder event, visit to partners or meetings with local industry leaders.</p> <p>Mid-Late February 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather and review evidence and make recommendations. • Final meeting of review panel to prepare final report for Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (Deadline 24 February 2015). <p>March 2015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report back to Children’s Overview and Scrutiny on 10 March 2015.

11 November 2014		ITEM: 8
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Child Sexual Exploitation and the Jay report – implications for Thurrock		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Nicky Pace Interim Head of Care & Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Head of Service: Andrew Carter – Head of Care & Targeted Outcomes		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton – Director of Children's Services		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report outlines the findings of Professor Jay enquiry into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. Her report highlighted serious failings in the council and other agencies, especially the police, over a number of years with regard to the safeguarding of children, and also serious failings of corporate governance, leadership, culture and the operation of the overview and scrutiny function.

This report reflects an early review of the service delivery in Thurrock in relation to CSE and the actions being taken to address any identified gaps.

1. Recommendations

1.1 For the overview and scrutiny committee to note the contents of this report.

1.2 To recall the action plan to future O&S meetings for updates on implementation.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 There has been a growing awareness of the involvement and targeting of children and young people in society. With the increased use of the internet 'stranger danger' is no longer the stereotypical person waiting at the school gates in a white van, it is now a sophisticated international issue and often linked with organised crime. Paedophiles hunt children on the web and now an image of a child can be spread to thousands of users without the child knowing. The Jay report into Rotherham is one of many that have

highlighted the risks posed to young people through sexual exploitation. The report into paedophile rings in Derby city, Oxfordshire and Rochdale to name but a few and the recent report from the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups have all highlighted the issues.

2.2 Sexual exploitation and grooming

2.2.1 What is child sexual exploitation? In 2008 the national working group network developed the following definition, which is commonly used in government guidance and policy:

2.2.2 'The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (eg food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and /or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example by persuading them to post sexual images on the internet/ mobile phone without any immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and /or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social / economic and /or emotional vulnerability. '

2.2.3 The process of 'grooming' by paedophiles has been well documented in national reports and research. Many of the children are already vulnerable when grooming began. The perpetrators often targets children's residential units and residential services for care leavers. It was not unusual for children in residential services and schools to introduce other children to the perpetrators.

2.2.4 Many of the children have troubled family backgrounds, with a history of domestic violence, parental addiction, and in some cases serious mental health problems. A significant number of the victims in Rotherham had a history of child neglect and/or sexual abuse when they were younger. Some had a desperate need for attention and affection. In Rotherham schools raised the alert over the years about children as young as 11, 12 and 13 being picked up outside schools by cars and taxis, given presents and mobile phones and taken to meet large numbers of unknown males in Rotherham, other local towns and cities, and further afield. Typically, children were courted by a young man whom they believed to be their boyfriend. Over a period of time, the child would be introduced to older men who cultivated them and supplied them with gifts, free alcohol and sometimes drugs. Children were initially flattered by the attention paid to them, and impressed by the apparent wealth and sophistication of those grooming them.

2.2.5 Many young people are convinced that they were special in the affections of a perpetrator, despite all the evidence that many other children were being groomed and abused by the same person. Some victims are never able to accept that they had been groomed and abused by one or more sexual predators. A key objective of the perpetrators was to isolate victims from family and friends as part of the grooming process. Over time, methods of grooming have changed as mobile technology has advanced. Mobile phones, social networking sites and mobile apps have become common ways of identifying and targeting vulnerable children and young people and we know that much younger children are being targeted in this way. Unguarded use of text and video messaging and social networking sites, can mean that children can unwittingly place themselves in a position where they could be targeted, sometimes in a matter of days or hours, by sexual predators from all over the world. In a small number of cases, this can lead to direct physical contact, rape and sexual abuse with one or more perpetrators. Grooming can move from online to personal contact very quickly indeed. One of the most worrying features is the ease with which young children aged from about 8-10 years can be targeted and exploited in this way without their families being aware of the dangers associated with internet use.

2.2.6 The Jay report

The Jay report into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham has received considerable media attention and makes chilling reading. This Independent Inquiry was commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in October 2013. Its remit, covered the period 1997- 2013 and it believed that during this period 1400 children and young people had been sexual exploited. This abuse is not confined to the past but continues to this day. In just over a third of cases, children affected by sexual exploitation were previously known to services because of child protection and neglect. These children and young people suffered the most appalling abuse. They were raped by multiple perpetrators, trafficked to other towns and cities in the north of England, abducted, beaten, and intimidated. There were examples of children who had been doused in petrol and threatened with being set alight, threatened with guns, made to witness brutally violent rapes and threatened they would be next if they told anyone; girls as young as 11 were raped by large numbers of male perpetrators.

2.2.7 The collective failures of political and officer leadership were clearly laid out in the report. From as early as 1997 there was growing evidence that child sexual exploitation was a serious problem in Rotherham. It would appear that within social care, the scale and seriousness of the problem was underplayed by senior managers. At an operational level, the Police gave no priority to CSE, treating many child victims with contempt and failing to act on their abuse as a crime. Further stark evidence came in 2002, 2003 and 2006 with three reports known to the Police and the Council, which could not have been clearer in their description of the situation in Rotherham. The first of these reports was effectively suppressed because some senior officers disbelieved the data it contained. The other two reports set out the links between child

sexual exploitation and drugs, guns and criminality in the Borough. These reports were ignored and no action was taken to deal with the issues that were identified in them.

- 2.2.8 It would appear that senior officers in the Police and children's social care continued to think the extent of the problem, as described by those working with the young people (predominantly women) was exaggerated. At an operational level, staff appeared to be overwhelmed by the numbers involved. The report suggests that there were improvements in the response of management from about 2007 onwards but by 2009, the children's social care service was acutely understaffed and over stretched, struggling to cope with demand. Seminars for elected members and senior officers in 2004-05 presented the abuse in the most explicit terms. After these events, nobody could say 'we didn't know'. In 2005, the Council Leader chaired a group to take forward the issues, but there is no record of its meetings or conclusions, apart from one minute. This led Professor Jay to conclude that there was a closed, often macho culture which led to accusations of a 'cover up'. She also reported totally inappropriate use of language by some elected members and officers, which appeared to have gone unchallenged.
- 2.2.9 By far the majority of perpetrators were described as 'Asian' by victims, yet throughout the entire period, councillors did not engage directly with the Pakistani-heritage community to discuss how best they could jointly address the issue. Some councillors seemed to think it was a one-off problem, which they hoped would go away. Several staff described their nervousness about identifying the ethnic origins of perpetrators for fear of being thought racist; others remembered clear direction from their managers not to do so. The issue of race, 'Asian men, white girls' which was reported in the media was over simplistic, as it did not account for the abuse of Asian women and girls in their own communities who for many reasons may not have come forward. There is growing evidence of Somalian and Eastern European gangs who are involved in organised crime, gun running, drugs as well as sexual exploitation. However, one of the key features in Rotherham was a resistance to acknowledging the ethnic makeup of the perpetrators and the failure to engage with the communities.
- 2.2.10 In December 2009, the Minister of State for Children and Families put the Council's children's safeguarding services into intervention, following an extremely critical Ofsted report. The Council was removed from intervention thirteen months later.
- 2.2.11 The Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and its predecessor oversaw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE. The weakness in their approach was that members of the Safeguarding Board rarely checked whether these were being implemented or whether they were working. The challenge and scrutiny function of the Safeguarding Board and of the Council itself was lacking over several years at a time when it was most required.

- 2.2.12 The Jay report highlighted many improvements in the last four years by both the Council and the Police in Rotherham, but it recognises the growing demands and financial constraints of both police and social care to respond continues to be challenging.
- 2.2.13 The Jay report made 15 recommendations to improve the response to victims of CSE in Rotherham. One of the key areas was the lack of ongoing treatment and therapeutic support for the victims.
- 2.2.14 As a direct response to the issues raised in this response, the Government have commissioned Louise Casey with a team to review the response to CSE in Rotherham. Alongside this, OFSTED have undertaken an in-depth CSE inspection (including a further ten of these across the country) as well as an inspection of safeguarding. Teresa May has also asked all police forces to review their current and past response to CSE (see below and attached letters?).

2.2.15 Thurrock response

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is completely unacceptable, regardless of race and culture. It is the collective responsibility of all agencies to identify those children at risk of CSE and ensure that swift and appropriate actions are taken to prevent them from becoming sexually exploited and to safeguard them from further risk of harm. A recent Children's Commissioner Report sets out recommendations and minimum standards that we need to ensure are in place to support tackling CSE. I am pleased to report that the majority of those recommendations are already in place in Thurrock. Our approach and response to CSE takes into account the Children's commissioner report and also Working Together 2013 and its previous editions, the supplementary guidance published in 2009 and the legislation framework of the Criminal Justice System. It is an integral part of our current LSCB Business Plan and Children's and Young Peoples Plan (CYPP) and is one of the elements of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) adopted across the Borough. The LSCB is committed to combating the sexual exploitation of children through effective and coordinated multi agency and partnership working. The Children's Safeguarding Board are working closely with the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPP) and adult safeguarding to ensure that children and young people who have been subjected to child sexual exploitation will receive seamless support as they progress from childhood to adulthood.

- 2.2.16 We have worked in partnership with our colleagues in Southend and Essex to develop a strategy and approach to meet the emerging needs across Essex as well as in Thurrock. The Southend, Essex and Thurrock CSE Strategic Group was established in 2012 and is chaired by the public protection lead for Essex Police. The Strategic Group, which includes representatives from agencies across the three authorities, is coordinating the multi-agency response to cases of CSE in Southend, Essex and Thurrock. There is also a

local multiagency 'missing' panel which meets monthly that looks at all children and young people who have been reported missing from home, care or education and identifies any risk factors which may indicate that the child is being sexually exploited. Thurrock has had a Missing protocol in place from 21012. Cases are regularly reviewed by this forum. The work of this panel led to an investigation known as Operation Steelband.

2.2.17 We also have a multi-agency work stream that focuses on exploitation of children on line, which includes feedback from a young person's group. We have successfully rolled out through the LSCB a 'walking on line' roadshow which has targeted years 5,6 and 7 and reached in the region of 5,500 children. The focus has been warning them of the dangers of the internet and the 'dark web' but more importantly teaching them how to keep themselves safe. A number of roadshows are also being held for parents across Thurrock to raise awareness and help parents keep their children safer.

2.2.18 We have rolled out a multi agency e-learning basic awareness course on across agencies from the LSCB, to ensure that all staff coming into contact with children and young people are aware of the signs and Champion training – symptoms and what they need to do in the event of any concerns. The LSCB through the interagency training group have made initial provision for 1,500 on-line licences to be available for this training. CSE Champion training is being provided to enable additional knowledge and awareness to be available to support front line staff. A champion will be an individual such as the safeguarding lead at a school, team leader or GP practice. In addition to completing the e-learning course they will attend a day session explaining the Thurrock approach to CSE in more detail including a risk assessment toolkit and intelligence pathway. This training is being implemented from March 2014 following the initial completion of on line training. All partners represented on the LSCB will nominate a lead professional for CSE, who will act as the single point of contact for all matters relating to child sexual exploitation for their individual agency. They will complete the on line course and attend a half day lead champion session.

2.2.19 To aid front line practitioners and managers in determining the best response to a child or young person who may be at risk of CSE, the Strategic Group has agreed a common risk assessment toolkit to aid identification of the risk a young person or child may face. The newly established MASH carries out a risk assessment of every referral for CSE, since its implementation in July three young people have been identified as at risk of sexual exploitation.

2.2.20 A close relationship has been developed with licensing, specifically of taxis and budget hotels in the borough. This raised awareness across the service has led to one taxi driver having his licence revoked following concerns.

2.2.21 Essex Police have agreed to be the lead agency in collating CSE intelligence. There is no specific offence of CSE and its pathways are very varied so all intelligence received associated with CSE will be tagged "Operation Care". This will enable analytical work to be conducted and produced to aid

identification of linked offences or intelligence that will support a better understanding of the scale of the problem.

2.2.22 As a direct response to the Jay report, Thurrock's LSCB, children's services, alongside the police and health are reviewing all cases where there has been any concerns about CSE and reviewing any recent operations and cases, as well as looking at historic cases from the last 5 years.

2.2.23 We believe that our response and approach is sufficiently flexible to respond to and learn from the experience of other areas, reviews and future guidance. We recognise there is more to be done and this is highlighted in future actions at the end of this report to ensure that we are confident that we have a robust response to CSE in the local area. We are not complacent about addressing this difficult issue.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 In appendix 1 the areas for future work and gaps in our response in Thurrock are outlined. However, this is an initial analysis and it will need to be developed further following the review of historic cases.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 For the overview and scrutiny committee to note the contents of this report.

4.2 To recall the action plan to future O&S meetings for updates on implementation.

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

5.1 In consultation with other agencies including the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Licensing.

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

6.1 The Jay report highlights a number of implications for corporate ownership and governance. It highlights the importance of a robust scrutiny role where challenge of the organisational culture is an open one.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager – Children’s Services

Increasing awareness raising may lead to increasing demand for services to investigate and support children and young people subject to CSE, which may put additional pressure on the children’s social care budget. Any major operations that need ring fenced resource may not be able to be met from existing resources.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lindsey Marks**
Principal Solicitor for Children’s Safeguarding

There may be a necessity to take protective action of any children and young people who may have been subjected to CSE.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

This report highlights the necessity to develop strong links with developing communities, to understand the issues faced and address any developing areas of concern directly.

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

This report highlights that CSE is not just an issue for Children’s social care but wider issues such as licensing, public health (including sexual health) need to be aware of and addressing issues of CSE.

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

- Professor Jay report into CSE in Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – action plan

Report Author:

Nicky Pace
Interim Head of CATO
Children's Services

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Action plan for Child Sexual Exploitation

Objective /outcome	Action	When	Who
Ensure robust systems in place to report on missing children and those identified as children at risk of sexual exploitation	➤ Staff reminded of process of recording missing & returned on LCS	Completed – 15.10.14	NP
	➤ MASH to record all children & young people missing	Completed – July 2014	MASH
	➤ Produce weekly report of missing LAC	Nov 2014	Bob Mills/Leslie Tabrett
	➤ Additional mandatory questions to be added to LCS in C&F assessment & outcomes of CP & LAC reviews	Nov 2014	Leslie Tabrett
	➤ Adopt CSE 'workspace recording system	March 2015	Leslie Tabrett
A risk assessment to be undertaken on all children & young people over 120 subject to CP plans or LAC with specific focus on LAC placed at a distance from the borough	➤ Staff required to undertake risk assessment tool on all cases over 10, subject to CP plan or LAC	End of December 2014	SMT
	➤ IROs /CP chairs to ensure completed as part of process	January 2015	Neale Laurie
All children missing have an appropriate & independent interview	➤ Commission Vol	In place by end of 2014	NP/ Mark Livermore

following being missing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ organisation to undertake return interviews ➤ Variation of contract to Open Door being considered ➤ Analyse return interviews 	<p>December 2014</p> <p>March 2015</p>	Mark Livermore
Policy /procedure are up to date & reflect CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ JSNA has section on CSE ➤ Section of Commissioning strategy on CSE ➤ Community safety partnership relates to CSE ➤ CSE protocol with YOS ➤ CSE protocol with Health inc CAMHS 	<p>In place by end of 2014</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p>	<p>Deborah Maynard</p> <p>Mark Livermore</p> <p>Michele Cunningham</p> <p>James Read</p> <p>Paula McCullough</p>
The LSCB has an overview and strategic leadership of the multi-agency response to CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CSE performance management data ➤ Audit of CSE activity ➤ Multi agency audit of CSE cases 	<p>December 2014</p> <p>January 2015</p> <p>December 2014</p>	<p>Alan Cotgrove</p> <p>Alan Cotgrove</p> <p>Alan Cotgrove</p>
That children & young people, parents and professionals have information on CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Produce leaflets for all groups 	September 2014	LSCB
Engagement of faith communities to raise awareness and address risk of CSE (& other abuse issues ie FGM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engage with faith communities in raising awareness 		LSCB

<p>Raise awareness and appropriate reporting of CSE with licensing / taxis and local hoteliers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Operation Care implemented across Essex – need to roll out to hotels ➤ Awareness raising sessions ➤ 	<p>March 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p>	<p>LSCB</p> <p>LSCB</p>
<p>Review all cases where children and young people are thought to have been at risk of CSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current cases • during the past 5 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ identify cases through current casework/managers/ SMT ➤ methodology to be agreed & implemented 	<p>November 2014</p> <p>January 2015</p>	<p>Neale Laurie</p> <p>Neale Laurie</p>
<p>Ensure there is appropriate preventative support available to prevent C&YP escalating behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review EoH provision to ensure services available for C&YP who may be at risk of CSE 	<p>March 2015</p>	<p>Mark Livermore</p>
<p>Ensure sufficient therapeutic services available for young people who have been subjected to CSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ working with CAMHS and health review current provision ➤ Develop bespoke services when necessary 	<p>By 2015</p> <p>March 2015</p>	<p>CAMHS /Paula McCullough</p> <p>CAMHS /Paula McCullough</p>
<p>Review effectiveness of intervention /diversion /treatment of C&YP subjected to CSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clarify champion role in CSC ➤ Merge missing panel to incorporate children identified as CSE ➤ Review mechanism for cases where CSE 	<p>Andrew Carter</p> <p>Neale Laurie</p> <p>Neale Laurie</p>	<p>October 2014</p> <p>By December 2014</p> <p>By December 2014</p>

	identified , separate from stat processes		
Review corporate whistle blowing policy	➤ Ensure that staff are aware of whistle blowing policy and expected relationships/behaviour.	December 2014	Corporate strategy team

11 November 2014	ITEM: 9
Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Report on Headline Key Stage Results	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Ruth Brock, Interim Strategic Leader, School Improvement	
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton, Director of Children’s Services	
This report is to provide an overview of standards across all phases in settings and schools based on provisional national tests and examination results for summer 2014.	

Executive Summary

Raising achievement in all areas of education has been a priority for a number of years and has seen considerable success in the last four years as attainment and progress has risen. Further strategies have been put in place as a result of the recommendations from the Education Commission Report, the impact of which has been to place the local authority in a strong position when in comparison with other statistical neighbour local authorities.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the provisional outcomes of the summer 2014 tests and examinations and commends pupils, schools and parents/carers on their achievements.**
- 1.2 That the Committee recognises how the Education Commission recommendations and existing strategies have been best deployed to raise achievement and consider how these will raise still further across all key stages, especially at Key Stage 2.**

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 2.1 Meeting and exceeding the national average at all key stages has been a priority for the council for the past few years with the target of achieving outcomes in line with and beyond national at Key Stage 2, the priority for 2014.
 - 2.1.1 As a result of intensive support and training for Early Years teaching and moderation in settings and schools, outcomes for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are above national levels, as are GCSE.

2.1.2 The report presents provisional data, giving an overall picture of the performance of settings and schools in summer 2014. It is important to note that, with the publication of validated data later in the year, there could be minor changes. A full report that drills down into the data for different groups of pupils will be provided in the New Year.

3. ISSUES AND/OR OPTIONS:

3.1 Early Years Foundation Stage (age 5)

3.1.1 The mechanism for assessing the levels of development for 5 year olds has changed markedly from previous years so it is not possible to provide trend data as with other phases.

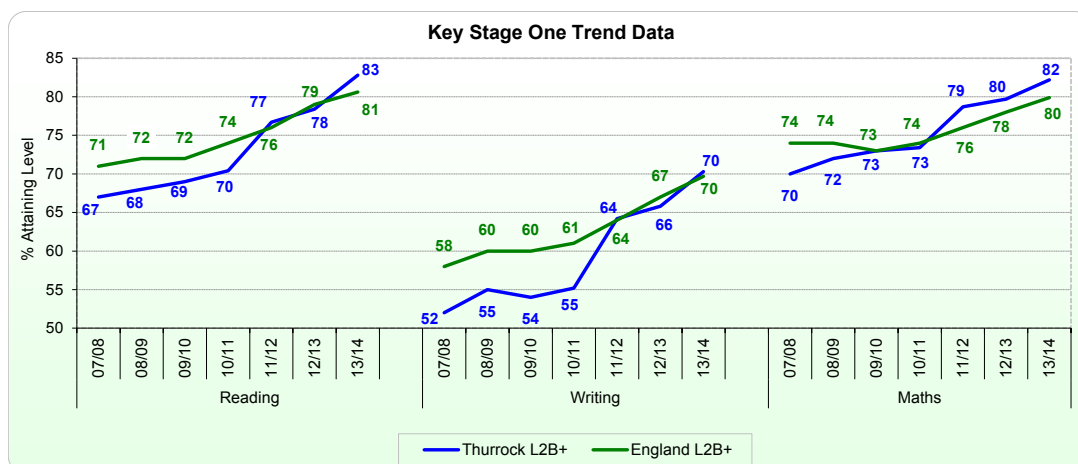
3.1.2 The Good Level of Development (GLD) represents the achievement of the Early Learning Goals, in the prime areas of learning and in literacy and mathematics.

	GLD 2013	Average Total Points 2013	GLD 2014	Average Total Points 2014
Thurrock (All)	53%	32.5	66%	33.7
- Boys	43%	31.3	49%	32.7
- Girls	64%	33.9	73%	34.6
National (Estimated)	52%	33	60%	33.6

3.1.3 To reach a percentage of children that make a good level of development, each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals; whether she/he meets the level, has not yet reached the level or exceeded it and points awarded accordingly in a range from a minimum of 17 to a maximum of 51. If a child meets every Early Learning Goal, she/he will receive 34 points.

3.1.4 The provisional result for Thurrock is very encouraging. Pupils achieving a GLD increased by 13% from last year and currently this is estimated as being 6% higher than the National average of 60%. The Average Total Points has increased by 1.2 points which is more than the 1 point increase nationally but still 0.1 points below the National average. As referred to at 2.1.1, this is an outcome of significant investment in school improvement staff for this phase and expertise in training and supporting staff in schools and settings.

3.2 Key Stage 1 (age 7)

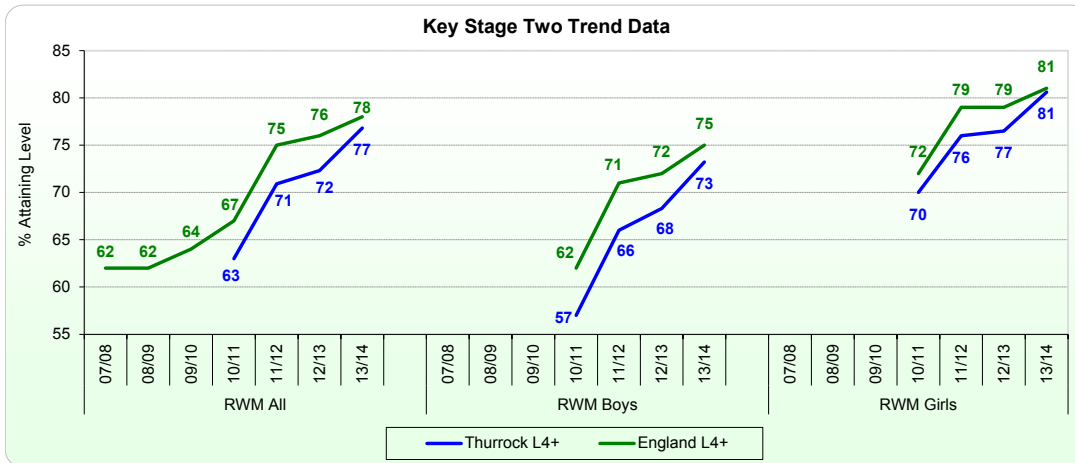


3.2.1 There has been no change to the benchmark measure for Key Stage 1 this year. Children are expected to achieve at least Level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths. Thurrock's outcomes for reading are above the provisional national figure and on a three year upward trajectory. In writing, they are 0.5% above national but also on a three year upward trajectory with a 4.5% increase on 2013. In maths they exceed the national figure by at least 2% for the second year running.

3.2.2 At all levels – 2+, 2B+ and 3+ – the majority of schools have demonstrated improvement. Where the gap with national persists is in the attainment at the higher level, 3+, across all 3 subjects but most notably in reading and writing. However, increases in the number of children achieving level 3+ in 2014 were considerably higher than the national increase.

3.2.3 This summer saw the third year of the Phonics check, undertaken at the end of Year 1. Thurrock children have made a significant leap to 76%, a 5% increase from 2013 and 2% above the estimate for the national result. This will help to underpin improvement in the standard of reading at the end of Key Stage 1 for the future.

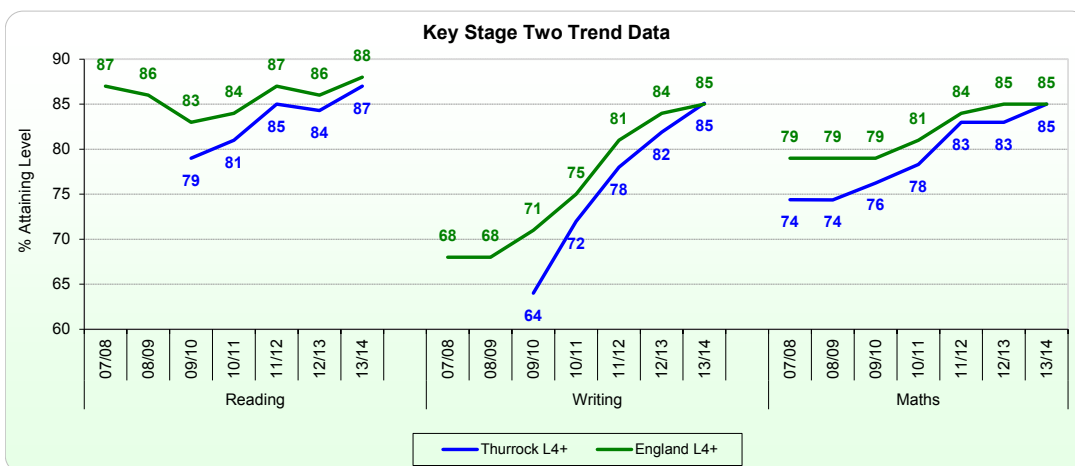
Key Stage Two (age 11)



3.3.1 The benchmarked standard at the end of the key stage has not changed since last year and measures the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4+ combined, the scores being aggregated in reading, writing and maths.

3.3.2 For the fourth year, there is an upward trend in combined subjects. The 4.5% improvement from last year exceeds the national rate and has closed the gap with national by 1.5% last year. Despite a considerable rise in level 5 achievement in reading and writing, there is a need to improve Level 5+ performance across all 3 areas and in particular in mathematics.

3.3.3 Boys' achievement has continued to improve, a welcome development. There are significant gaps between boys and girls across all phases. This will continue to be a focus for further research and identification of good practice to share across all schools.

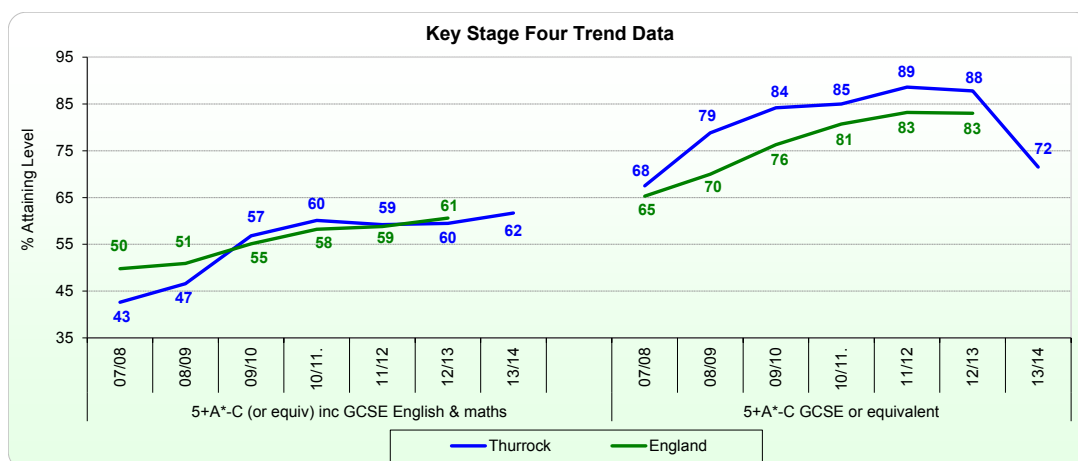


3.3.4 The graph above shows that the upward trajectory towards narrowing the gap with national continues, and at a faster rate than the country-wide rate. It is pleasing to note that writing – a key area of improvement focus for schools – has continued to improve by a further 4% narrowing our gap by 2%. While

the three year trend is good, it is important to increase even further the rate of improvement, so that reading, writing and maths are all above average rather than the 1% below provisional national figures.

- 3.3.5 This year saw the second year of a test for Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling. Thurrock schools' results were 2.5% below the national average. However, indications are that national results will have risen by 3% from 2013.
- 3.3.6 With the introduction of the new floor standard, no schools are below the floor standard at Key Stage 2. It is pleasing to note that this is the first time in at least seven years that there have been no schools below the government floor standard. Achievement in the floor standard has been set at 65%, a rise from 60% in 2013. The criteria for this achievement is that pupils must attain level 4+ in reading, writing and maths and progression by 2 levels in reading, writing and maths should be at or above the English median.

3.4 Key Stage 4 (age 16)



- 3.4.1 Thurrock schools have managed for the second year running, to increase the percentage of students attaining the benchmark measure of 5A*-C passes at GCSE including English and maths against a predicted fall in the national figure.
- 3.4.2 There continues to be a greater focus this year on the measure of 5A*-C passes including English and maths at GCSE only i.e. without the equivalent vocational or applied exams. It is encouraging to note that Thurrock's rate increased by 7%.
- 3.4.3 Another measure that is increasingly used to denote greater academic rigour is the percentage succeeding in achieving A*-C passes in the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects comprising English, maths, sciences, humanities and a modern or classical foreign language. Commendation is undoubtedly due for the 2% increase in students achieving the EBacc which further builds on last year's 9% increase.

3.4.4 The range of results at Key Stage 4 is still too wide, spanning some 85 percentage points. Two academies are below the floor standard this year which has risen from one in 2013, although one academy is within one percentage point.

3.5 Key Stage 5 (post-16)

3.5.1 This is the second year that Level 3 results, both A level and vocational equivalents such as the BTEC Extended Diploma, have been reported in schools and academies in Thurrock. In 2013 there were 5 centres which has now reduced to 4, as Gateway academy closed its sixth form. From this academic year there are now 5 centres, including the consortium representing 3 schools. All centres have signed up to the UCAS Progress website which allows students to view and compare courses and apply online. They are now experiencing external interest to boost their numbers.

3.5.2 The pass rate for BTEC averaged 99%, with a healthy representation of the higher grades. Results for this year indicate that there is a drop since 2013 in some sixth forms. This will be analysed in greater detail when national benchmarking becomes available.

3.5.3 A more detailed report on post 16 results will be presented when national and statistic neighbour comparisons are made available.

3.6 Looked After Children (LAC)

3.6.1 At Key Stage 1 – 63% achieved level 2B+ in their SATs in reading, writing and maths combined. 75% achieving level 2B+ in reading, writing and maths separately. At Key Stage 2, 50% achieved the benchmark measure of level 4 for reading, writing and maths combined. 40% of this cohort had SEN and 25% of the cohort has a statement. At GCSE, two students from the cohort of 30 obtained 5A*-C passes including English and maths. A number of post-16 students acquired qualifications, too, at colleges and in training. Further analysis of these results will be presented in the Spring term.

3.6.2 Throughout the past year the system used for tracking the progress of LAC has been reviewed. The service is now commissioning a new tracking system allowing pupil progress to be tracked in a much more detailed way. This will allow the Headteacher of the Virtual school for looked after children to commission appropriate intervention for them. Following a tendering process, the current system will be replaced in the New Year by an interactive system used by many local authorities both large and small.

3.6.3 With the increase in funding for LAC via the Pupil Premium, a greater scrutiny of and support for schools' role in raising achievement for LAC is taking place. With the permanent Headteacher for Virtual School now in place, there are robust processes in place to ensure that targeted support is in place for all pupils and in particular in English and maths years 10 and 11. Arrangements have been introduced to release funding to schools when impact of the

designated Pupil Premium resource has been evidenced. The Headteacher keeps a close track of Personal Education Plans for our children and young people who are looked after.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 That Children's overview and scrutiny note the further work which has been undertaken to raise standards in education following the Education Commission Report and the Council's response to that report and draw attention to any areas for further improvement.

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

- 5.1 The provisional results have been shared with Headteachers and Principals through Headteachers' Briefing and comment invited. A second report, with validated data and more detail of the performance of different groups in each phase, will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in the spring term.

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

- 6.1 This report relates to the council priority to improve the education and skills of local people.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance

There are no direct financial implications in this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Lucinda Bell**
Education Lawyer

A duty is imposed on the Council by s13A of the Education Act (EA) 1996 duty to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential.

S22(3)(a) of the Children Act 1989 imposed a duty to as amended by section 52 of the Children Act 2004. Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 imposes a duty on the Council to safeguard and promote the welfare of any child it looks after, and this includes a duty to promote their educational achievement.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

School attainment has a significant impact on equality levels between different groups. The spring term report will present more granulated data regarding the performance of key groups, including actions to address the gap in attainment between girls and boys.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental

RISKS

- 7.4.1 Schools, including academies, that do not meet the floor standard are at risk of inspection by Ofsted and intervention by the relevant accountable body.
- 7.4.2 Any failure to raise standards would exacerbate recruitment and retention difficulties and make it harder for children and young people to reach age related expectations and to progress to further education, training and employment in the jobs that growth in the borough will generate. This risk is mitigated by scrutiny of the performance of each school and academy and subsequent action planning.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Pupils and those who support them in and beyond school are to be recommended for the progress that has been made this year. It is important that the good progress in many areas is now built on to ensure that in every subject, at every age, improvement which outstrips the national standard is made. Forensic analysis of data to target support and extensive use of school-to-school mechanisms in addition to interventions by school improvement officers and external consultants has proved effective.
- 8.2 Where schools have found it more difficult to improve standards a number of contributory factors may be identified:
 - continuing recruitment and retention issues at all levels
 - the quality of leadership and of governance
 - achieving a consistently high standard of teaching
- 8.3 In response, a number of strategies are already being adopted, such as working in partnership with and commissioning support from the Teaching Schools and engaging with more schools regionally in a systematic sharing of good practice. Support for governance has been given greater prominence with increased numbers of governors attending training leading to positive

comments from Ofsted inspectors in reports. The local authority as well as schools and academies themselves have also commissioned reviews of their governing bodies to drive and secure excellence.

8.4 The Education Commission report has made several recommendations in addition to those outlined above. These include:

- helping to build and communicate a compelling case for change and a powerful vision for education across the community in Thurrock
- redefining the role of the local authority and agreeing with partners what change means in practice
- growing the role of schools themselves as the leaders in supporting other schools to improve

8.5 Considerable work has been undertaken to ensure that the recommendations above are put in place. The introduction of the Thurrock Education Alliance and the delivery arm of this strategic body, the Thurrock Excellence Network, is enabling targeted and continued support.

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

- None

10. **Appendices to the report**

- None.

Report Author:

Ruth Brock

Interim Strategic Leader, School Improvement

Children's Services, School Improvement

This page is intentionally left blank

WORK PROGRAMME
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

ITEM 10

Conservative	Independent	Labour	UKIP	Co-opted
Cllr Halden (Vice-Chair)		Cllr Morris-Cook (Chair)	Cllr O'Keeffe-Ray	1. Mrs P Wilson (Roman Catholic Church Representative)
Cllr Ojetola		Cllr Kerin		
		Cllr Curtis		
Substitutes	Substitutes	Substitutes	Substitutes	
Cllr Coxshall		Cllr Gerrish	Cllr J Baker	3. To be nominated (Parent Governor Representative)
Cllr MacPherson		Cllr Gupta		
		Cllr Gray		

Meeting Dates: 15 July 2014, 7 October 2014 (Cancelled), 11 November 2014, 6 January 2015, 10 February 2015, 10 March 2015.

Topic Name	Description of areas to be explored	Why this should be scrutinised	Outcome	Lead Officer	Brought to Committee by (Officer/ Member/ Statutory Reason)	Expected Completion Date / Meeting
Budget Update and Proposals				Sean Clark / Carmel Littleton	Officer	15 July 2014
Education Commission Update				Mike Peters / Carmel Littleton	Member	15 July 2014
Troubled Families Initiative	Assessment of the success of the programme so far	To ensure the programme is on track and making a real difference to the lives of families in Thurrock.	Dissemination of good practice from the programme	Nicky Pace / Teresa Goulding	Officer	15 July 2014
MASH intervention update	Update on the project to date			Nicky Pace/ Chris Wade / Marisa de Jager		Briefing Note - completed
Work placements and the pathway into work for young people in Thurrock				Carmel Littleton	Member	11 November 2014
Children's Social Care – Statutory				Rhodri Rowlands	Officer	11 November 2014

Updated: 27 October 2014

WORK PROGRAMME
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

ITEM 10

Topic Name	Description of areas to be explored	Why this should be scrutinised	Outcome	Lead Officer	Brought to Committee by (Officer/ Member/ Statutory Reason)	Expected Completion Date / Meeting
Complaints Annual Report						
Child Sexual Exploitation and the Jay report – implications for Thurrock.				Nicky Pace	Officer	11 November 2014
Budget Update and Proposals				Sean Clark / Carmel Littleton	Officer	11 November 2014
School Results/School Performance	An update on results at KS1, KS2, KS4 and post 16	To determine the progress of Thurrock schools and academies	Updated information and scrutiny of outcomes of national assessments and relative performance of schools	Carmel Littleton	Officer	6 January 2015
Budget Update and Proposals				Sean Clark / Carmel Littleton	Officer	6 January 2015
Pupil Place Planning				Janet Clark / Carmel Littleton	Member	6 January 2015
Budget Update and Proposals				Sean Clark / Carmel Littleton	Officer	10 February 2015
School Capital Programme	A review of educational capital building works	Scrutiny will want to be advised of successfully completed projects, progress and other relevant updates	For noting and scrutiny of value for money	Janet Clark	Officer	Briefing Note TBC
Grangewaters Alternative Delivery Models	To consider options prior to presenting to Cabinet	To ensure all options have been fully explored	Agreement on recommendations to go to Cabinet	Sue Green	Officer	TBC
Annual report of the LSCB	An account of the activity and	To ensure that the LSCB is effectively	Understanding of the effectiveness of	Alan Cotgrove		TBC

Updated: 27 October 2014

WORK PROGRAMME
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

ITEM 10

Topic Name	Description of areas to be explored	Why this should be scrutinised	Outcome	Lead Officer	Brought to Committee by (Officer/ Member/ Statutory Reason)	Expected Completion Date / Meeting
	effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board over the past year	discharging its duties by contributing council scrutiny to the process	the LSCB in undertaking its safeguarding responsibilities			
Youth Cabinet Report				Sue Green / Youth Cabinet		TBC
YOS annual report	An account of the activity and effectiveness of the Youth Offending Service over the past year	Members need to be satisfied that the Youth Offending Service is effective and making a positive difference to the lives of those referred to it	An analysis of the effectiveness of measures to reduce youth offending	James Waud	Officer	TBC
Local Government Ombudsman – Report on an investigation into complaint numbers 12 012 268 and 12 005 756 against Thurrock Council	To consider learning. Referred from Cabinet in March 2014.			Rhodri Rowlands	Officer	TBC
Report of the next SCIE review	To ensure that any lessons are learned from a case examined under the Social Care in Excellence Framework	To ensure that these lessons are understood across Thurrock and shape future provision	Agree recommendations around dissemination of learning and practice	Nicky Pace / Alan Cotgrove	Officer	TBC

This page is intentionally left blank