

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

## Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held at **7.00 pm** on **22 July 2015**

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

### Membership of the Council:

Sue Gray (Mayor)  
Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor)

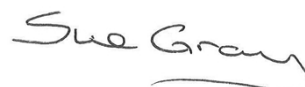
Tim Aker  
Chris Baker  
James Baker  
Jan Baker  
Clare Baldwin  
Terry Brookes  
Russell Cherry  
Colin Churchman  
Mark Coxshall  
Leslie Gamester  
Oliver Gerrish  
Robert Gledhill  
Yash Gupta (MBE)  
Graham Hamilton  
Garry Hague  
James Halden

Shane Hebb  
Terence Hipsey  
Victoria Holloway  
Barry Johnson  
Roy Jones  
Tom Kelly  
John Kent  
Martin Kerin  
Charlie Key  
Steve Liddiard  
Brian Little  
Susan Little  
Sue MacPherson  
Ben Maney  
Tunde Ojetola  
Bukky Okunade

Barry Palmer  
Jane Pothecaray  
Robert Ray  
Joycelyn Redsell  
Barbara Rice  
Gerard Rice  
Andrew Roast  
Peter Smith  
Graham Snell  
Richard Speight  
Deborah Stewart  
Michael Stone  
Pauline Tolson  
Kevin Wheeler  
Lynn Worrall



**David Bull**  
**Interim Chief Executive**



**Councillor Sue Gray**  
**Mayor of Thurrock**



## **Agenda**

Open to Public and Press

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<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>9 - 22</b>
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 24 June 2015.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Items of Urgent Business</b>	
	To receive additional items that the Mayor 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.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
	To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Questions from Members of the Public</b>	<b>23 - 24</b>
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors</b>	
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Petitions Update Report</b>	<b>25 - 30</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels</b>	
	The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.	

<b>10</b>	<b>Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2014/15</b>	<b>31 - 56</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Review of Members' Allowances - Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel</b>	<b>57 - 84</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board - Change to Membership</b>	<b>85 - 92</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care</b>	<b>93 - 104</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection</b>	<b>105 - 122</b>
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In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

<b>16</b>	<b>Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies</b>
<b>17</b>	<b>Minutes of Committees</b>

<b>Name of Committee</b>	<b>Date</b>
General Services Committee	4 June 2015
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	18 February 2015
Corporate Parenting Committee	12 March 2015
General Services Committee	16 June 2015
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 February 2015
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	26 March 2015
Licensing Committee	18 December 2014
Planning Committee	11 June 2015

- 18 Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year 125 - 130**
- 19 To consider motions from Members in the order in which they were submitted 131 - 134**

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution.

**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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

**Future Dates of Council:**

23 September 2015, 28 October 2015, 25 November 2015, 27 January 2016, 24 February 2016, 23 March 2016. 25 May 2016 (Annual Council)

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## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

No speech may exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor [Rule 19.8], except for the proposer of any motion who shall have 5 minutes to move that motion (except on a motion to amend where the 3 minute time shall apply) [Rule 19.8(a)]

**All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C**

- |           |    |  |                            |
|-----------|----|--|----------------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | A1 | Motion is moved                            | [Rule 19.2]                |
|           | A2 | Mover speaks                               | [Rule 19.8(a) (5 minutes)] |
|           | A3 | Seconded                                   | [Rule 19.2]                |
|           | A4 | Secunder speaks or reserves right to speak | [Rule 19.3] (3 minutes)    |

Then the procedure will move to either B or C below:

<b>B.</b>		<b>C.</b>	
<b>IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)</b>		<b>If NOT amended i.e. original motion</b>	
B1	The mover of the amendment shall speak (3 mins).	C1	Debate
B2	The seconder of the amendment shall speak unless he or she has reserved their speech (3 mins).	C2	If the seconder of the motion has reserved their speeches, they shall then speak
B3	<b>THEN</b> debate on <b>the subject</b> .	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak	C4	Vote on motion
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply		
B7	Vote on amendment		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate		

**Vision: 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 aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

**2. Encourage** and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

**3. Build** pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

**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 and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

**5. Promote** and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

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# 100 Years in Memoriam

## Remembering Thurrock's Fallen of World War One

Each month during the centenary period of the First World War, Thurrock Council will pay tribute to the 834 local residents known to have lost their lives due to causes associated with the war and their service. At each meeting of Council until November 2018, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of signing of the Armistice with Germany, a Roll of Honour will be published with the agenda detailing the casualties from that month 100 years ago to commemorate the sacrifice made by Thurrock residents.

### July 1915

DATE	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	WARD	RANK	SERVICE	DIED
10-Jul	GREEN	HERBERT	28	G	PTE	ESSEX - 2	FRANCE
11-Jul	FULCHER	FRANK WILLIAM	20	TIL	CORPL	ESSEX - 9	BELGIUM
14-Jul	KNOWLES	ALBERT EDWARD	26	G	DRIVER	RFA	TURKEY
18-Jul	WILDEN	EDWARD JOHN	24	G	GUNNER	RGA	HOME
20-Jul	LINDSAY	ROBERT JOHN	21	G	PTE	SEAFORTH HIGH. - 6	FRANCE
24-Jul	COTTIS	HENRY CHARLES	24	G	PTE	WEST KENT - 2	IRAQ
24-Jul	BOOSEY	ROBERT HENRY	20	TIL	PTE	WEST KENT - 2	IRAQ
24-Jul	TERRY	ALBERT JAMES VICTOR	22	TIL	PTE	WEST KENT - 2	IRAQ
27-Jul	ROWKINS	REGINALD	31	TIL	PTE	BUFFS - 6	BELGIUM

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## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 24 June 2015 at 7.00 pm

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**Present:** Councillors Sue Gray (Mayor), Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, James Baker, Jan Baker, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Mark Coxshall, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Garry Hague, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Barry Johnson, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Charlie Key, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Jane Potheary, Robert Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice (from 7.10 pm), Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Richard Speight (from 7.02 pm), Deborah Stewart, Pauline Tolson, Kevin Wheeler and Lynn Worrall

**Apologies:** Councillors Clare Baldwin, Terry Brookes, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Terence Hipsey, Martin Kerin, Bukky Okunade, Barry Palmer, Andrew Roast and Michael Stone

**In attendance:** Reverend Darren Barlow, Mayor's Chaplain  
David Bull, Interim Chief Executive & Director of Planning and Transportation  
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive  
Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services  
Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning  
Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance  
Mike Heath, Head of Environment  
Jackie Hinchliffe, Head of HR, OD & Transformation  
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications  
Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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The Mayor informed all present that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

The Mayor commemorated the seven Thurrock men who lost their lives in June 100 years ago during World War One, and advised that at each Council meeting there would be a Roll of Honour to commemorate the sacrifice made by Thurrock residents 100 years ago.

*Councillor Speight arrived at the meeting at 7.02pm.*

The Mayor reminded Members of appropriate conduct at Full Council meetings and advised that guidance had also been circulated by Democratic Services.

The Mayor then welcomed Mr David Bull to the meeting, as it was his first meeting in the position of Interim Chief Executive,

Before the start of the meeting, the Mayor invited Reverend Barlow to lead those present in prayer.

## **15. Minutes**

The Mayor reported that an amended version of the minutes had been circulated to Members, published online and tabled at the meeting for Members approval.

The Minutes of Annual, held on 27 May 2015, were approved as a correct record.

Councillor S. Little highlighted that the minutes stated that Members appointed to the Corporate Parenting Committee required a DBS check to be undertaken before they could sit on the Committee, and questioned whether this had been done.

In response the Interim Chief Executive advised that he believed this had been completed, however he asked officers to check and confirm outside of the meeting.

## **16. Items of Urgent Business**

The Mayor informed the Council that she had not agreed to the consideration of any items of urgent business.

## **17. Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Ojetola declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 12, 'School Capital Programme Update', as he was a governor at the Gateway Academy.

## **18. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council**

The Mayor announced that since being elected Mayor she had the privilege of attending a number of events.

Members were informed that she had attended a BBC Symphony Orchestra event with school children from across the borough at the High House backstage centre in Purfleet, and that schools had worked very hard with pupils who had learnt about Holst, Beethoven, Mozart and all the classic composers.



*Councillor G. Rice arrived at the meeting at 7.10pm.*

The Chamber were advised that the Rotary Club had received over 400 entries for the Thurrock Cycle Marathon where riders could undertake a 7 mile or 21 mile bike ride, which had raised considerable sums of money for charity and involved riders of all ages and abilities.

The Mayor further highlighted that the Thurrock Gurkha and Nepalese Community had held a Charity night for the earthquake victims in Nepal and raised £3,000 towards a new classroom in a small village.

The Leader of the Council reported that there had recently been a meeting held at East Thurrock United's ground in Corringham where around 200 people had attended to have their say about the possibility of creating a Parish Council for the area, and specifically what to do about the condition of the roads.

The Leader of the Council further reported that when it was time for the Council to decide whether or not a Parish Council should be created, the question that needed to be asked by Members by law was not to do with the roads, but first and foremost was whether or not a Parish Council would enhance community cohesion on the Frost Estate.

The Chamber were advised that when the Leader of the Council spoke towards the end of that meeting he said he would try to arrange a coming together of minds from the various interested parties so that the issues could be discussed and an amicable agreement reached. He observed that the joining together of diaries was unlikely to be easy but that he felt it would be the best way forward.

Members were advised that the Mayor had agreed to hold an extraordinary meeting of Council in August with standing orders suspended to discuss the Frost Estate Parish Council proposal, in order to allow all interested parties to have their say and be heard directly by all 49 Councillors who would ultimately decide.

The Leader remarked that it would give the Council an additional four weeks to ensure as many people as possible were involved in the discussions whilst also allowing Thurrock Council enough time to make its decision on a Parish Council before the September deadline.

Councillor Stewart remarked that she had not received any correspondence regarding potential dates of a meeting with residents and asked if she had been missed of the list, to which the Leader of the Council explained that an invitation had not yet been circulated as he felt it was important to coordinate a suitable date with residents first.

## **RESOLVED:**

**That an extraordinary meeting of the Council be called for August in order to consider the proposal to create a Frost Estate Parish Council.**

### **19. Questions from Members of the Public**

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed under the relevant meeting date at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock>.

### **20. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors**

The Mayor informed Members that, in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the requisite notice had not been given by any councillors or members of the public that they wished to present a petition at the meeting.

### **21. Petitions Update Report**

Members received a report on the status of those petitions handed in at Council Meetings and Council Offices over the past six months.

### **22. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels**

The Mayor enquired whether Group Leaders wished for any changes to be made to the appointments previously made to Committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following change:

- for Councillor Gerrish to be appointed as a member of the Licensing Committee to replace Councillor Brookes.

Councillor Hebb, on behalf of the Leader of the Conservative Group, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- for Councillor Ojetola to be appointed as a member of the Standards and Audit Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall.
- for Councillor Ojetola to be appointed as a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall.
- for Councillor B. Little to be appointed to the vacancy on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- for Councillor Coxshall to be appointed as a member of the Essex Fire Authority to replace Councillor Halden.

There was a brief discussion on whether there was a vacancy on the Health and Wellbeing Board which could be appointed to, during which the Interim Chief Executive advised that this would be checked following the meeting but it was believed there was one vacancy that could be filled.

It was confirmed by the Leader of the UKIP Group and Councillor Ray that no changes to appointments were to be made.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That Councillor Gerrish be appointed as a member of the Licensing Committee to replace Councillor Brookes.**
- 2. That Councillor Ojetola be appointed as a member of the Standards and Audit Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall.**
- 3. That Councillor Ojetola be appointed as a member of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall.**
- 4. That Councillor B. Little be appointed to the vacancy on the Health and Wellbeing Board.**
- 5. That Councillor Coxshall be appointed as a member of the Essex Fire Authority to replace Councillor Halden.**

*Addendum to the Minutes:*

*Subsequent to the meeting it was clarified that Councillor Ojetola should have also been appointed as Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee, following his replacement of Councillor Coxshall as Member and Chair of the Committee.*

*Group Leaders were consulted and for clarity it was agreed for Councillor Ojetola to be appointed as the Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall, ahead of the Standard and Audit Committee meeting scheduled for July, which was expected to be held prior to the next meeting of Full Council.*

- 6. That Councillor Ojetola be appointed as Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee to replace Councillor Coxshall.**
- 23. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 - Appointment and Dismissal of Senior Officers**

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report which proposed amendments to the Council's Procedure Rules regarding the disciplining and dismissing of senior officers in accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 which came into force on 11 May 2015.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the changes which enabled accountability and the process to be dealt with swiftly if required.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation, whereupon the Mayor declared this to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Council approve the modifications to Council Procedure Rules (Chapter 10 – Officer Employment Procedure Rules of the Constitution) in relation to the appointment and dismissal of senior officers.**

**24. Housing Revenue Account - Housing Development Programme Phase 2**

Councillor Worrall, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report which provided an update on the Council's ambition to deliver 1,000 new homes in the next five years. In introducing the report the Cabinet Member highlighted progress on the Belmont Road and Seabrooke Rise sites and progress against delivery of the HAPPI (Housing for an Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation) standard, which included:

- 160 new homes were expected to be completed under Phase 1 of the Programme by 2016/17.
- That the Calcutta Road site in Tilbury was being progressed as a second HAPPI scheme.
- £4.57 million of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding had been secured to build new homes in Chadwell St. Mary and South Ockendon.
- Under Phase 2 of the programme approximately 333 new homes were expected to be completed by 2018/19 in order to build around 700 new homes in the next five years.

Councillor Ojetola thanked the Portfolio Holder for the report and remarked that it was positive news schemes were going ahead in order to meet the Council's house building target of delivering 1,000 new homes over the next 5 years. He questioned whether a number of paragraphs had been mistakenly included in the report and asked for clarification regarding the discussions to increase the £4.57 million of funding specified.

Councillor Worrall remarked that she looked forward to working with Councillor Ojetola in his capacity as Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing, and apologised that paragraphs 3.4 and the first section of 3.5 should have been removed from the report before publication.

Councillor Worrall reported that £4.57 million of funding had already been secured but that negotiations were ongoing to increase the amount in order to deliver more homes in Thurrock.

Councillor B. Rice welcomed the investment in Chadwell-St-Mary and observed that she was looking forward to the Defoe Fields development of bungalows. She commended the work of the Director of Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Housing in the progress so far, and felt that construction of

bungalows and HAPPI homes would free up under-occupied family homes for others.

Councillor B. Rice further thanked the Director of Housing for her attendance at three meetings of the Chadwell St. Mary Community Forum, as she felt that strong community engagement had helped local residents shape the type of properties being developed in the area.

Councillor Ray commended the Portfolio Holder for her report but remarked that it was important that Thurrock delivered the quality of build that residents aspired to in order to create a sense of pride and confidence where people lived.

Councillor Worrall agreed that it was important to examine where to build, the type of properties and build style and explained that through community consultation it had been identified that Thurrock had a shortage of 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

Councillor S. Little questioned how many people had applied to build under the self-build scheme, in response the Cabinet Member for Housing explained that as of yet no residents had applied to build under the scheme which was a new requirement introduced by recent government legislation.

Councillor Johnson commended that bungalows were being built in Chadwell St. Mary and asked what type of properties would be constructed in South Ockendon. He further requested clarification as to whether the £4.57 million of funding would be used to construct more homes or units of better quality.

In response the Cabinet Member for Housing advised that Members could view a map online which detailed the type and location of properties being constructed under the scheme and that the funding was being used to build a greater number of dwellings.

Councillor Redsell observed that increasingly more residents wished to move into bungalows and questioned whether the Council was working with the private sector to deliver more of this type of property, which the Cabinet Member for Housing assured Members was the case.

The Cabinet Member for Housing commended the work that was being undertaken in Thurrock to help residents get on the property ladder and called for all Members to read an article that had been published in The Guardian that day which highlighted that the ground-breaking scheme was receiving national praise.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. Note the additional resources which have been obtained to assist with the funding of the second phase of HRA housing development sites which are now ready to be committed as part of the new build development programme within the HRA development reserve and borrowing cap.**
- 2. Agree that the second phase of the HRA housing development programme be included in the Housing Capital programme.**

**25. School Capital Programme Update**

Councillor J. Kent, Cabinet Member for Finance and Education, introduced the report which sought approval for the re-commissioning of Knightsmead School and provided an update on other projects in order to deliver sufficient pupil places for the 2015 and 2016 academic years.

Councillor Coxshall asked for assurances that the Tilbury Pioneer Academy would be progressed at pace as the project had stalled in recent years and questioned whether the budget was fixed.

Councillor J. Kent assured Members that the necessary work would be undertaken to get the site open as quickly as possible, and reported that the project had stalled due to a combination of issues that included the contractor, the type of material used and proposed designs.

Councillor Ojetola highlighted a number of contractual issues that had been examined by the Standards and Audit Committee, following which Councillor J. Kent assured Members that he had no reason to believe any improper practices had occurred since this case.

Councillor J. Kent moved the recommendations as printed in the report, which was seconded by Councillor B. Rice.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, whereupon the Mayor declared these to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. For Council to amend Cabinets decision made on the 9th April 2014 to return the Knightsmead site transferred to Housing by giving this site back to Education so that additional school places in the Aveley/South Ockendon area can be provided.**
- 2. To approve a £2.5M budget for the re-commissioning of Knightsmead School and the provision of a link building to Somers Heath School to be funded from the School' Basic Need capital funding 2015/16 & 2016/17.**

3. **Approve the commencement of the procurement process in accordance with Council & EU procurement procedures to appoint Specialist Project Teams, for the School Improvement Programme and appoint the Principal Contractors to take forward the proposed schemes.**
4. **That authority be delegated to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to enter into any form of agreement following the award of the agreements arising from 1.3 above in compliance with the Council's procurement regulations.**
5. **Council notes updates on Capital Programme Schemes for 2014/15 & 2015/16.**
6. **Council notes temporary accommodation and the re-modelling of school accommodation to build in capacity to meet increase in demand for pupil places from September 2015.**

**26. Appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service**

The Mayor reported that the General Services Committee had met the previous day to advise on the appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, and as a result the report had been marked as 'to follow' and published online as a supplementary agenda item.

The Mayor advised that the report had been circulated electronically to all Members and a copy tabled at the meeting.

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which recommended the appointment of Lyn Carpenter as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Thurrock Council, subject to agreement on a start date and DBS check.

The Leader of the Council reported that the General Services Committee had met the previous day to interview five candidates and was pleased to recommend Lyn Carpenter to the position, who was currently the Bi-Borough Director of Environment, Leisure and Residents Service for both the London Boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the swift appointment of Lyn Carpenter and recalled that through the Annual Pay Policy Statement in March 2015 Full Council had agreed for the recruitment of appointments over £100,000 to be agreed by Council.

Councillor Hebb further observed that the recommendation did not include details regarding the salary of the position and proposed an amendment so that the recommendation could include this information in order to demonstrate value for money for Thurrock Council taxpayers.

The Leader of the Council informed Members that the salary range had been agreed by all Group Leaders but offered to report back to Members on what the exact salary would be, which would also be published online.

The Interim Chief Executive clarified the new recommendation, which was agreed by all Members, and read as follows:

That Lyn Carpenter be appointed as the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Thurrock Council, subject to agreement on a start date, DBS check and informing Members on the final salary offered.

Councillor J. Kent moved the revised recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor Coxshall.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation, whereupon the Mayor declared this to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Lyn Carpenter be appointed as the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service of Thurrock Council, subject to agreement on a start date, DBS check and informing Members on the final salary offered.**

**27. Appointment of Monitoring Officer**

The Mayor advised that the report had also originally been marked as 'to follow', published online as a supplementary agenda item, circulated to all Members by email and tabled at the meeting.

The Mayor advised that the report requested confirmation to appoint Mr David Lawson to the post of Monitoring Officer at Thurrock Council following interviews held on the 16th June 2015.

Upon being put to the vote, Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendation, whereupon the Mayor declared this to be carried.

**RESOLVED:**

**That David Lawson be appointed as Monitoring Officer of Thurrock Council.**

**28. Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy**

Councillor J. Kent, Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy, introduced the report and, in doing so, highlighted the following key points regarding communication:

- That effective communication – both with internal officers and front-facing with residents – was important at a time when the Council



had to make challenging decisions regarding budget cuts and reducing the services it provided.

- That over the coming months the Council would need to increase its communications to speak face-to-face with as many people as possible in order to explain to them the changes that were anticipated.
- That a “core minimum” service was being planned for that was “capacity focused” and digital.
- He recognised that not all residents were familiar with computers and technology, and therefore it was important not to solely rely on offering a digital service.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy reported that a balanced budget had been achieved for a fifth year in a row and that further funding had been identified in order to help change the way the Council works, with some finances from reserves to mitigate the impact of proposed cuts to some services – such as the environment.

In relation to the financial challenges faced by the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Strategy made the following observations:

- That in the case of the Environment service the budget cuts had been too deep and too quick; in response additional funding was being put back into the service in order to ease the transition.
- He reiterated that it did not mean cuts would not come, rather cuts would be delayed and the money would need to be replaced in the various reserves.
- That Thurrock’s external auditors noted that “Thurrock is facing significant financial challenges over the next three to four years” and that “external funding sources are reducing and are subject to change and uncertainty”.
- That five years ago Thurrock Council’s budget was £124 million, since then additional responsibility had been taken on in Public Health, that had totalled £8 million, and Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation responsibilities had been brought back in-house – totalling an additional £3 million.
- That in 2010 this equated to a budget total of £134 million.
- It was reported that the budget set in February 2014 was for around £109 million, and that with the further cuts expected the Council was expected to have a budget in 2018/19 in the range of £80 million.
- That it was estimated that the cumulative cuts from 2010 would be in the region of £105 million by 2017/18.
- That refreshed corporate priorities had been agreed earlier in the year which reflected the need to change the way communities were supported and services delivered, which included greater partnership and, in some cases, using commissioning arrangements with the community and business sectors.

The Chamber were advised that Thurrock was highly commended in the prestigious MJ Awards category of 'Best Achieving Council' for its leadership role.

Members questioned the Portfolio Holder and received responses on the following matters:

- Councillor Hebb asked the Cabinet Member to publish a breakdown of labour costs, to include a full list of the number of staff employed on a permanent, fixed term, agency and temporary basis.

The Cabinet Member advised that this was a matter that could be examined in more detail by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, of which Councillor Hebb was Chair.

- Councillor S. Little questioned whether any new Council properties had been purchased in the past year, and felt that it was important the Council continued to make improvements to its assets.

The Cabinet Member reported that details of the properties purchased were documented in Cabinet Minutes.

- Councillor Redsell questioned what was being done to look after assets in Thurrock to prevent properties from falling into a state of disrepair.

The Cabinet Member provided assurances that Council assets were being maintained and asked the Member to clarify which asset she was referring to.

- Councillor B. Rice congratulated the Portfolio Holder and the finance team for their good work in managing the budget since 2010, which had faced cumulative savings of £83.2 million. She observed that with the challenging budget reductions faced by the authority, the Council had a responsibility to communicate effectively with residents.
- Councillor Johnson expressed a view that the additional funding that had been found to mitigate the impact of savings on services such as libraries and the environment had not materialised by magic and instead was down to strategy, which he felt could be enhanced by the adoption of a zero based budgeting process. He felt that government cuts had proven that local authorities historically had not been spending money wisely.
- The Cabinet Member observed that prior to 2010 the Council's budget had been overspent.

## **29. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that two questions had been submitted to the Leader and a further three questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

As apologies had been received from Councillor Brookes, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection, Councillor Redsell confirmed that she wished to withdraw both her questions that had been submitted to him for a response.

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be found at Appendix A to these Minutes.

## **30. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

Councillor Ojetola provided an update on the work of Impulse Leisure, during which Members were advised of the following key points:

- That Thurrock Council had committed to spend up to £1,500,000 on replacements to maintain Belhus Park Pool which secured its future and included roof and boiler replacement.
- Impulse Leisure had replaced Belhus Park gym kit, added new resistance equipment in the gym, improved the décor and air conditioning and committed to extending the gym and studio before Christmas 2015.
- The Council were seeking to progress outstanding maintenance items at Blackshots and the Civic Hall, which had been delayed due to staff shortage since September 2014.
- Negotiations between the Council and Impulse Leisure continued regarding the future arrangements for providing the well utilised leisure service in the future.
- It was reported that Impulse Leisure had made a surplus during the previous year which was being spent on service improvements.
- That Impulse Leisure has made significant business improvements and efficiencies, coupled with sensible investments to improve financial robustness.
- That Impulse Leisure continued to increase the already substantial work they had achieved in order to increase physical activity levels within the community with the aim of improving health and wellbeing.

Councillor Ojetola thanked Mr Mike Baden, Mr Derek Stanton and the other trustees for their work, which included ex-trustees Tony Fish and Lynn Worrall, and welcomed Councillor Okunade as the other Council representative on Impulse Leisure. He further advised all Members that they were welcome to attend the AGM in August.

**31. Minutes of Committees**

The Minutes of Committees, as set out in the Agenda, were received.

**32. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year**

Members received an information report updating them on progress in respect of Motions resolved at Council over the past year.

Councillor S. Little highlighted Members attention to a motion that had been submitted by Councillor Halden on 23 July 2014 which called for the Council to reaffirm its commitment to the principles of Corporate Parenting in terms of making the service budget as transparent and accountable to members as possible via appropriate reports. She felt that the motion had not been fulfilled at the current time and requested officers and the Portfolio Holder to ensure this was resolved in future.

In the absence of Councillor Okunade, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, the Leader of the Council suggested Councillor S. Little discuss this matter during Corporate Parenting pre-meetings with officers in order to achieve the correct and appropriate balance.

**33. To consider motions from Members in the order in which they were submitted**

No motions had been submitted for debate.

**The meeting finished at 8.39 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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There is one question from a member of the public.

1. **From Mr Perrin to Councillor J Kent**

“In his budget speech the Chancellor intimated the Government would devolve power to Local Government to decide issues regarding “Sunday Trading”. It is suggested that the current restriction of 6 hours trading on a Sunday imposed on shopping malls and other large stores be lifted and the hours of trading should be in line with those permitted for small shops and businesses. Should your administration inherit such powers would you give me some idea as to what you would propose?”

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## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

Petition No.	Description	Presented by (and date)	Portfolio Holder	Status Full copies of the responses may be obtained from Democratic Services
449	We the undersigned, all tenants residing at the Attlee Court Sheltered Housing Complex, wish to make it clear our distress and upset regarding the withdrawal of the full time Warden Service.	04/02/2015	Cllr Worrall	<p>Petition just received after verification. Response will be written regarding the changes made to Sheltered Housing.</p> <p>A tenants meeting will be arranged regarding specific issues for Attlee Court to allay any concerns.</p>
450	We the undersigned, demand that the Library Service investigate imaginative library provision rather than the suggestions included in the 'Future of Library Service' survey and are against the proposal for closure of libraries including the mobile library	25/02/2015 Presented by a resident	Cllr J. Kent	<p>A full response is being prepared to send to the petitioner. Over 3000 responses were received by the council in response to the consultation about the future shape of the library service. All responses have been carefully considered and will inform the changes which will need to be made to the library service to ensure it has a vibrant future in the face of budget reductions to meet the savings required by local government. Additional uses for library buildings to generate income, shared use of facilities and the transformation of libraries into community hubs are all being planned. A late submission to the consultation regarding the mobile library is also being considered although current plans are to publicise the Homelink home delivery service to replace the mobile library, which has become in need of costly repair.</p>

## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

451	We the undersigned, residents of London Road call upon Thurrock Council to improve residents parking facilities. There are parking problems being caused by parking from the users of the Sure Start Centre and the Local Doctors Surgery	Presented by Cllr Baldwin at Council on 25/02/2015	Cllr Gerrish	This matter is being investigated.
452	We the undersigned, being residents of East Tilbury and/or users of East Tilbury Library, petition and request Thurrock Council to ensure that no cuts are made at East Tilbury Library to either staffing and/or current opening hours.	Presented by Cllr Palmer at Council on 25/02/2015	Cllr J. Kent	A full response to the petitioner is currently being prepared. The decision of the March 2015 Cabinet meeting was to support the recommendation that no library will close in 2014/15. Due to the level of savings to be achieved no guarantee can be given regarding reductions in staffing or hours, however the council is working to minimise any impact to residents.
453	We the undersigned, wish to protest strongly about the Council's decision to withdraw the 374 bus and want them to carry on running what is a lifeline to Basildon and Orsett Hospitals.	Presented by Cllr S. Little at Council on 25/02/2015	Cllr Gerrish	A revised 374 bus service will start on the 5 <sup>th</sup> May to link East Tilbury and Linford to Grays and Stanford-le-Hope. This is a commercial service with a revenue contribution from the Council. The 265 service will now go to Horndon-on-the-Hill.
454	This petition has been started by the people of East Tilbury and Linford to save the bus that serves the villages. This bus is essential to the residents, young and old for schools, college, hospital, shopping and access to chemists and dentists.	Submitted by Cllr Palmer on 25/02/2015	Cllr Gerrish	A revised 374 bus service will start on the 5 <sup>th</sup> May to link East Tilbury and Linford to Grays and Stanford-le-Hope. This is a commercial service with a revenue contribution from the Council. The 265 service will now go to Horndon-on-the-Hill.



## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

455	<p>Save Our Thurrock Libraries</p> <p>We, the undersigned, oppose the closure of any of our 9 Thurrock Libraries. We also oppose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any significant cuts to the library services in all 9 Thurrock Libraries.</li> <li>• The proposal of libraries being run solely by volunteers, as trained staff are essential to run our libraries on a day to day basis.</li> <li>• The withdrawal of the mobile library service, which serve the most vulnerable and isolated of our community.</li> </ul>	Presented by Cllr Speight at Council on 25/02/2015	Cllr J. Kent	A full response to the petitioner is currently being prepared. In 2014/15 none of the 9 libraries will close and the council is working to minimise cuts to library services. No library will be run solely by volunteers and the valuable contribution of trained staff is acknowledged. The mobile library service is due to be replaced by the Home Link service which will enable books and other items to be delivered to residents homes. The local Authority continues to be committed to ensuring a service is provided to our most vulnerable and isolated residents by expanding the Home Link service.
456	This is a Petition from the residents of Manor Road, Grays, RM17 6EF to state that we would like our road to be a resident parking only with Aid of Permits for all residents and also with Visitor Permits.	09/03/2015 Submitted online by a resident.	Cllr Gerrish	This matter is being investigated to assess feasibility.
457	Concern that the level of traffic at the “Cross Keys” junction needs to be regulated by the traffic lights in situ so as to avoid potentially dangerous situations arising in which vehicles attempting to turn right across the junction.	Presented by Cllr B. Rice at Council on 25/03/2015	Cllr Gerrish	<p>The Council is aware of the difficulties experienced at the cross keys signalised junction following requests by the Chadwell Forum for alterations to the signals operation.</p> <p>In 2014/15 the Council commissioned a report to investigate the junction with a view to making improvements. The results have been reviewed and a delegated decision report will be prepared for consideration by the Councillor with the Portfolio Holder for</p>

\* indicates petitions handed in at the Civic Offices or e-petitions - not presented at Council

## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

				<p>Highways and Transport.</p> <p>Regarding parking issues, Linford Road has parking restrictions from the Cross Keys across the frontage of the Church but the remaining section of road to the East does not. Brentwood Road currently has HGV waiting restrictions (in excess of 7.5t). The parking section regularly carry out enforcement and issue Penalty Charge Notices in this area.</p> <p>The proposal to introduce a 7.5t weight restriction on Linford Road to 100 metres East of Cole Avenue is not feasible. Currently the HGV route to the industrial area off Linford Road is via the principal road network, i.e. the A13, A1089 Dock Road approach road, Marsh Foot Road, Chadwell Hill and Linford Road. The Council does not have plans to introduce a weight restriction in Linford Road because HGV's have a right of access to premises within these areas.</p>
458	We, the undersigned being residents of Horndon on the Hill and/or users of the 374 bus service, petition and request Thurrock Council to reconsider their decision to axe the 374 bus service via Orsett Hospital and Horndon on the Hill.	Presented by a resident at Council on 25/03/2015	Cllr Gerrish	<p>Local bus services are not something Councils have to support by law, although some, like Thurrock, choose to assist residents by subsidising services in areas where there is little or no privately-financed public transport.</p> <p>However, every area of Council spending is coming under increasing scrutiny and pressure to make reductions in spending and</p>

\* indicates petitions handed in at the Civic Offices or e-petitions - not presented at Council

## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

			<p>the bus subsidy is no exception. We would have liked to have kept all three of our subsidised routes operating and we have been working very hard to find other funding streams to do that.</p> <p>The Council is funding service 11 and 265 and has now agreed a small payment for service 374. There will now be 8 return trips per day between Basildon and Grays via East Tilbury every 90 minutes. Saturday will also offer the same journeys with 4 return trips per day every 3 hours. The new 374 is a commercial service and unfortunately the operator did not include Horndon on the Hill in the route as he felt that the number of trips would not benefit this service remaining commercial.</p> <p>However, Trans Vol, the winning bidder of service 265 (Bulphan to Grays via Orsett Hospital) has offered to visit both Horndon on the Hill and Stanford Le Hope a limited service at no extra cost to the Council. Residents will now have a weekday service of 4 return trips per day and access at either Grays or Stanford Le Hope for ongoing services.</p>
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## Item 8: Petitions Update Report – 22 July 2015

459	This Petition is the Thurrock Council to take action to make an indoor shopping centre in our local area South Ockendon. We want it to be built in the free space around the station area.	22/06/2015*	Cllr Speight	<p>South Ockendon is an area that the Council is focussing on through a number of initiatives such as the development of the Community Hub and delivery of high quality housing. We recognise that Derwent Parade has declined over the years and now has a number of units vacant, but this decline is symptomatic of a lack of demand for retail floorspace in the area which makes it unlikely that a private sector developer could be secured to deliver a new covered shopping centre in this location.</p> <p>The development of South Ockendon over the next 20 years is, like the rest of the Borough, being considered through the development of the Local Plan. It may be that, in putting the plan together, further retail demand is identified which might encourage the provision of more retail space but this would require significant growth in the local residential population and, even then, consideration would need to be given to increasing provision in Derwent Parade over providing a wholly new facility.</p>
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<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 10</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-Key
<b>Report of:</b> Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> David Bull, Interim Chief Executive	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

This report introduces the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which in accordance with the Council's Constitution, should be presented to the Council.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**1.1 That the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15 be noted.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Each year an Annual Report is produced detailing the work of the six Overview and Scrutiny committees and their main achievements for that municipal year. The report is designed to inform residents of this work in an accessible and engaging format.

2.2 The last municipal year has seen Overview and Scrutiny tackle a wide range of topics, with Members leading on issues that have come to the fore both through their own research but also by understanding the issues that have arisen in the community. The continued use of task and finish groups has meant that this annual report will focus again on the key issues that the committees picked for in depth investigation, rather than a general overview of each committee's day to day work or a simple recounting of the work programmes of each committee.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 It is hoped that the format of the Annual Report will highlight to residents how the Overview and Scrutiny committees have picked relevant community issues and how Members undertook work to form recommendations that positively affected these issues.
- 3.2 The report will be published on the Council's website and key community groups and participants from last year's work will be made aware of its publication.

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 The report outlines the positive work that has been undertaken during 2014-15 and is being referred to Council for review in order for Members to comment on the overall Overview and Scrutiny function of Thurrock Council, and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

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

- 5.1 In accordance with Chapter 4, Part 1, Rule 7.1 of the Constitution, the annual report is submitted to Council for their consideration and comment.

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

- 6.1 The positive impact of the work of the Overview and Scrutiny committees for 2014 and 2015, in allowing residents to participate in decision making and tackling key issues of local concern, is clearly documented in the annual report. In receiving this report at its meeting, the Council has the opportunity to further align the Overview and Scrutiny function with corporate and community priorities by suggesting issues for investigation in the forthcoming year.

### **7. Implications**

#### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Management Accountant**

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. If any recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for adoption by the Council have financial implications they are identified separately in each report.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**  
**Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report but it is good practice to produce an annual report reviewing Overview and Scrutiny activity.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Overview and Scrutiny function recognises the importance and role of diversity and equality issues. All work in 2014-15 sought to include sections of the community relevant to the issues being investigated. Members made every effort to engage and consult Thurrock residents when required.

## 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):

- Agenda, Reports and Minutes of meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Task and Finish Reviews, available from:

<http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/>

## 9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014-15

### Report Author:

Stephanie Cox  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Legal and Democratic Services

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# Overview and Scrutiny

## Annual Report

### 2014-15



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# Introduction

Overview and Scrutiny in Thurrock during 2014-15 have tackled a wide range of issues from supporting young people into pathways into work and the future of the Thameside Complex. Members have also established three significant task and finish reviews in order to consider in detail matters that are important in the Borough.

The agendas and associated reports of each Committee can be accessed by the following link: <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/>

Sadly in 2014 Thurrock lost two much valued members of Council. Councillor Andy Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Highways and Transportation and Labour Ward Councillor for West Thurrock and South Stifford was an experienced and dedicated Councillor who was committed to improving the lives of the residents he represented. In September 2014 Councillor Maggie O’Keeffe-Ray, Ward Councillor for Aveley and Uplands and valued Member of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, passed away and we would like to pay tribute to their work for the wider community of Thurrock.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Members who sat on the Committees for their efforts this last year, as well as the specialists and visitors who attended to help better understand some of the issues facing our communities. Council officers, third sector partners and residents also contributed to our work and their role should also be recognised.

## What is Overview & Scrutiny?

In general terms, Overview and Scrutiny is the process whereby Councillors investigate, scrutinise and oversee the work of the Council. More specifically Overview and Scrutiny pays particular attention to:

- The decisions made by Cabinet, Council and officers in relation to Council policy or key decisions.
- The activities carried out by the Council and other bodies (such as the National Health Service (NHS)).
- The performance of the Council in relation to its targets and objectives.

## Work Programme

The work programme for Thurrock’s Overview and Scrutiny is informed by a combination of:

- What Councillors feel are important topics (this is gathered from their work in their wards and activities across the whole of the Council).
- Members of the public highlighting issues for debate, either through Call-Ins or through consultation.
- Requests by Thurrock’s Cabinet for Overview and Scrutiny to undertake “pre-decision scrutiny” prior to policies being taken to Cabinet for consideration and decision.
- Council officers requesting Overview and Scrutiny to investigate and consider certain issues on their behalf.

## Committees

At Thurrock, the work of the Overview and Scrutiny function is carried out by six committees, which each have a specific remit:

- Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
- Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Membership

The membership of Thurrock’s Overview and Scrutiny Committees is made up of Councillors drawn from the political parties of the Council. The Overview and Scrutiny function enables Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet (also known as the Executive) to have an active role in the decision-making process of the Council.

Thurrock has a number of non-Councillors sitting on Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Children’s Services Committee has two parent-governors as well as a diocesan representative from the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches respectively. There are also two co-opted members on the Health and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Committee representing health interests.

In addition, sub-committees or panels may also be formed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to undertake specific tasks, such as a review, the membership of which is decided alongside the remit of the review.

## The decision making process

In Thurrock, Overview and Scrutiny plays a key role in adding value to the Council's decision-making process. It also reviews the existing practices of the Council and makes recommendations to Cabinet to enhance and improve service provision.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees meet in an informal atmosphere and engages with people who can help with their work and provide evidence for their reviews. Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Committees and at the discretion of the Chair may even be able to take part.

## Overview and Scrutiny Online

Overview and Scrutiny has a dedicated section on Thurrock Council's website and can be found at ([www.thurrock.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny/overview-and-scrutiny-committees](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/overview-and-scrutiny/overview-and-scrutiny-committees)).

Thurrock Council's website provides the most up-to-date information on Overview and Scrutiny in Thurrock. Participation from the public is actively encouraged and promoted online.

A number of documents are available and easily accessible, including our Overview and Scrutiny annual reports. Reports, agendas and minutes from each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting are also available electronically from Thurrock's website.

## Getting in Touch

The Overview and Scrutiny process at Thurrock is managed by our Overview and Scrutiny Team. The Team is located within Democratic Services which is part of Legal Services. Democratic Services manages the Council's decision making process and services a wide range of Council decision making bodies including the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet, Planning Committee, Licensing Committee as well as full Council.

If you have any queries about this report or the Overview and Scrutiny process, or if you are interested in participating, please feel free to contact us.

Email: [scrutiny.team@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny.team@thurrock.gov.uk)

Address: Overview and Scrutiny Team, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays  
Essex RM17 6SL

# Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny

This year the Committee have continued to build strong links with Youth Cabinet, with two Youth Cabinet Members attending meetings to give young people a voice on matters affecting children and young people in Thurrock. Members have found this arrangement to be beneficial, with Youth Cabinet representatives contributing their views on the work experience and apprenticeship offer in Thurrock.

In November 2014 the Committee established a Task and Finish Review to identify further opportunities to support pathways into work for young people – with a view to addressing some of the sector specific opportunities locally.

Members have monitored the progress of the Education Commission to keep well-informed of Thurrock's school improvement strategy and have welcomed a number of notable achievements, including the launch of the Thurrock Education Awards, Thurrock's success in recruiting and retaining Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's) and fostering strong governance in schools.

In light of the findings from the Jay Report regarding Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, the Committee scrutinised the arrangements the local authority had in place to address this issue. It was highlighted that Thurrock was working in partnership with Southend-on-Sea Council and Essex County Council to develop strategies to address child sexual exploitation and support the needs of children both within the Borough and across wider Essex. This will continue to be of high importance to Members, with the action plan referred to future meetings in order for Members to monitor implementation.

In February 2015 the Committee also considered the learning points from the Serious Case Review of "Julia", with Members keen to ensure that officers remained vigilant and that mechanisms were in place to ensure that any concerns in future were identified and acted upon as soon as possible. In response the Committee instructed that a protocol to be referred to the Corporate Parenting Committee for informing Members of such cases in future, a Peer Review for Thurrock's Social Work team to be undertaken based on the findings of the report and for the multi-agency action plan to be reviewed by the Committee.

The Committee also continued to receive updates in relation to the budget and savings proposals and in January 2015 considered a proposed consultation document which set out a number of options recommended for consultation on how savings could be achieved in the library service. There was an overwhelming 3,102 responses to the consultation which highlighted the importance of the library service to residents and users, following which a proposal was referred to Cabinet for approval in March 2015.

# Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny

One of the key issues which was scrutinised by the Committee over the past year was fly-tipping in Thurrock, in light of the challenges that were faced by the service in summer 2014 in Cory Wharf, Purfleet. Prevention and enforcement action against fly-tipping has remained a priority of Members, the rates of which had fallen by 55% between 2008-2012 but have started to rise since – with the cost of removing fly-tips in 2013-14 totalling £117,916.

Improvements and developments have been made since, which include:



- Vehicle details from unlawful encampments are put on the Police National Computer, which allows the Police to better track vehicles that have been subject to Section 61 and prevent future unlawful activity.
- Teams are better informed about their powers relating to unlawful encampments and are better equipped through body cameras to identify unlawful activity.
- Essex Police developed a toolkit to better deal with issues such as Cory Wharf. For example, there was suspected fly-tipping activity in Schoolfield Road in November relating to an encampment. Police intelligence was used and a number of waste bearing vehicles were stopped. Following this action the encampment disappeared within five hours.
- Fly-tipping in Orsett had seen the Police use CCTV to identify suspect vehicles and this has been passed onto the Council.

Local Air Quality Management was also examined and the Committee recommended to Cabinet that a new air quality management area be established along Dock Road, Calcutta Road and part of St Chad's Road in Tilbury.



The Committee also considered various saving proposals which were then referred to Cabinet, which included revisions to waste collection and disposal arrangements, the restructure and review all grounds maintenance operations and the implementation of area based working and optimising routes.

The Committee worked on a number of key issues for the Council this year. Our biggest achievement was to instigate a new working protocol between the Council and Essex Police to deal with major fly-tips. We also contributed to budget setting by making specific recommendations against reducing bin collections to fortnightly collections, a recommendation the Cabinet endorsed.



***Councillor Cathy Kent***

***Chair of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee***

# Corporate Overview and Scrutiny

Due to the considerable savings and efficiencies that were required to be delivered the budget was subject to much debate and discussion, and as a result was a key feature of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year.

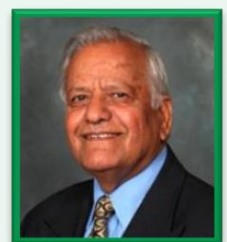
At the Committee's first meeting in July 2014 the budget savings proposals were discussed at length, in particular relation to the Council's funding and support of organisations such as Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau and the impact of budget savings on the Community and Voluntary Sector. These discussions, combined with those concerns raised through the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee by Trans-Vol, resulted in the convening of a special meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Chairs in October 2014. This enabled the impact of savings proposals on Thurrock's Voluntary Sector to be discussed in more detail.

The Committee considered the progress of the Transformation Programme which was focused on enabling services to make savings through revised working arrangements and processes. These different ways of working, customer service and channel shift were further reviewed later in the year which detailed the new website and increased digitisation of council work through 'my account' where the public could access services direct online, the role and use of the contact call centre and the implementation of a modern telephony system.

One of the key issues which was scrutinised by the Committee over the past year was the future of the Thameside Complex. Members considered the approach taken to complete the options appraisal, identified some of the emerging themes and reviewed the impact of the existing savings targets. Subsequently the Thameside Complex Task and Finish Review was established in February 2015 which set out to build upon the work completed to date, understand the challenges and benefits of the Thameside Complex and providing services from it, consider the proposed future options and provide a thorough and balanced report.

2014-15 saw a number of important pieces of work in relation to the budget and the Thameside Complex, which is an emotive issue close to many residents' hearts. This is just a brief overview of the work undertaken by the Committee during the past year. I would like to thank all members, officers and partner organisations for their hard work, commitment and desire to secure the best future for Thurrock residents. Special thanks to the vice-chair Councillor Shane Hebb for his support throughout the year.

***Councillor Yash Gupta MBE***  
***Chair of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee***



# Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny

The Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to be one of the busiest Committees and one which scrutinises topics of much local interest. In July 2015 Members considered the results of the Meals on Wheels public consultation and the future of short break services for disabled adults in Thurrock.

The Committee had to review some challenging issues in light of the considerable budget pressures faced, as the adult social care service is demand led with two-thirds of the budget spent on placements. This included determining efficiencies in Public Health Commissioning, Voluntary and Third Sector Contracts and the Supported Living Review.

Members considered the impact of the Care Act 2014, which had been described as the most significant piece of legislation affecting Adult Social Care for over 40 years. It built on the review of the “patchwork” of Acts covering Adult services undertaken by the Law Commission and put into legislation the recommendations for how Adult Social Care was funded as proposed by the review undertaken by Sir Andrew Dilnot. Local authorities were required to meet the Care Act’s duties, statutory guidance and regulations from April 2015.

The Committee were regularly updated on the establishment of the Better Care Fund (BCF) pooled fund to promote integrated care and support services. The purpose of the exercise was to drive through significant changes to Thurrock’s health and social care systems so that care was more effective, efficient and economic, and so that users, patients and carers experience better co-ordinated care and improved outcomes.

One of the Committees key items of interest regarded the work that Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had conducted so far to facilitate the process of decision-making on the future of the Thurrock Walk-in Centre.

The Committee valued the contributions from the representatives from HealthWatch and Thurrock Coalition, who provided important input on issues relating to patients’ care in the Borough.

# Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thurrock has seen enormous growth over the past ten years and with huge investment planned in Thurrock to support this growth, housing is a central part of that change. As a result the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee have had the opportunity to examine a number of interesting topics thought the year.

The Committee have kept up-to-date with the Transforming Homes Programme, the £68 million programme to improve Council housing stock over the next five years. This includes a range of measures through the Damp and Mould Programme, which has remained a priority for the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to improve housing standards and the health of residents.

The progress of Gloriana Thurrock Limited has remained high on the agenda for the Committee, which considered a report in January 2015 as to the latest developments in the ambitious target to deliver 1,000 affordable homes in Thurrock over the next five years. This included plans for over one hundred new homes on the former St Chad's School site in Tilbury.

In May 2013, following an extensive public consultation, the Council introduced a new Housing Allocations Scheme along with a new online housing application form. A first year review of the scheme was undertaken from July to September 2014 which the Committee subsequently scrutinised. Members considered the survey results and information obtained from feedback sessions and an online survey for staff, members and partner organisations and recommended changes and improvements to the scheme which included the continuation of priorities and concessions for the armed forces.

Another subject under review was the decommissioning of selected Sheltered Housing units due to their lack of desirability or being unfit for purpose. The Committee examined the outcomes of the Sheltered Housing Consultation, supported the items put forward and recommended for approval a new sheltered housing service model.

Members of the Committee also had the opportunity to review the Draft Housing Strategy which set out the vision and direction for housing from 2015-2020.

They endorsed the vision and proposed action which was:

*Thurrock is a destination of choice with growing healthy and prosperous communities, living in high quality housing across all tenures where residents are empowered to help themselves, and supported with consistently excellent services.*

There were three core priorities that underpinned the Housing Strategy vision which included:

- Core Priority 1 – Raising the Bar: Delivering high quality housing and services
- Core Priority 2 – In on the Ground Floor: Proactively supporting residents to maximise health, wellbeing and employment outcomes
- Core Priority 3 – Looking Ahead: Creating sustainable communities and boosting housing supply

The progress on delivery against the vision and core priorities will be an area for further investigation for the Committee in 2015-16.

# Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny

The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee have had an interesting year and considered a significant number of high profile regeneration developments that are set to stimulate Thurrock's local economy for years to come.

The Committee considered and endorsed a number of wide ranging developments such as the Purfleet Regeneration Programme and the Grays Town Centre Regeneration scheme which are of great interest to Thurrock residents and the local business community.

At the July 2014 meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee it was agreed that a Community Transport Task and Finish group be established in order to help determine the impact of the suggested proposal to cease grant funding to TransVol on both the charity and residents, and identify whether there were any viable alternative funding stream options available.

The Task and Finish Group was formed of 3 Elected Members, one from each political group, and during discussions at the meeting the following key points were identified:

- That Members of the Review Panel agreed with Officers that community transport was required within the borough for its elderly and vulnerable residents;
- The service provided by TransVol was valued by its Members;
- The Council statutory priority was to users who had little or no public transport or those who had disabilities and required medical appointments or to use shopping facilities.
- TransVol were proactive in admitting that with only this amount of funding it would be almost inevitable that the charity would have to close.

Throughout the year a number of other key issues were also examined by the Committee, which included European Union Funding Programme, Economic Development, Parking Charges within the Borough, Thames Enterprise Park and Grays Rail Station Regeneration.

Members were also presented with proposals and contributed ideas on the development of the Lakeside Growth Hub, during which the following key points were highlighted:

- The Shopping Centre itself was 23 years old and has become an ambitious area thanks to its assets;

- Since the Thurrock Core Strategy was introduced in 2011, there had been a lot of commercial interest within the area including retail, homes and jobs. This strategy had now become part of the Thurrock Local Plan 2035;
- That lakeside was the major shopping centre serving Thurrock and had unique qualities to the borough, which were integral to the vision of turning Lakeside to a Town Centre rather than being focused on as just an area for shopping;
- It was considered a key challenge to look at changing retail, economic and social trends, this was due to the rise of online shopping which impacted on investment decisions and shopping patterns.
- The growing competition to Lakeside's established retail and leisure role within the borough and the need to improve visitor experience and attractiveness of Lakeside as a destination, this would include the need to improve access to and within the Lakeside;
- The accessibility to lakeside by car and other means of public transport. This would include keeping road capacity maintained and to improve local connection, with an increase of the choice of routes. There was the possibility of a network of bus and pedestrian routes and new transport interchange to encourage people to walk once inside the centre;
- The Council was working with Partners and Stakeholders, to bring forward growth developments to make Lakeside more people friendly.

Members also had the opportunity to re-examine a Cabinet decision in relation to Investment in Highways Lighting which was called-in in November 2014. Members listened to all suggestions and new proposals put forward and were informed by Officers that LED lights were more reliable and a trail of 500 lights within Thurrock were being monitored.

The key role of Overview of Scrutiny in the decision making process was ever more evident this year and its importance demonstrated through the Committee's work with TransVol. I'm pleased that the Overview and Scrutiny process assisted TransVol in putting their case forward and initiated a Task and Finish review which helped investigate this issue in more detail.

The work on the A13 Widening Scheme, Purfleet Regeneration Scheme and the Lakeside restyle and improvements are all something I am very proud of and look forward to the completion which will help all our local residents on their daily travels.

***Councillor Sue Gray***  
***Chair of Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee***



# Budget Overview and Scrutiny

This year the scrutiny of the budget was a priority for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, which was also a subject of much public interest, particularly around savings proposals involving the Library Service, Day Nurseries, Grangewaters Outdoor Activity Centre, Waste Rationalisation and the impact of budget cuts on the Community and Voluntary Sector – including TransVol and Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau.

Members were keen to scrutinise the budget to ensure that the Council was on target to achieve the significant budget savings and to identify if further value for money and efficiencies could be realised. With challenging public sector cuts and the knowledge that more was to come, Members were keen to ensure that Thurrock was doing all it could to ensure value for money and ascertain any new income streams whilst protecting services that were important to local people.

Scrutiny Committees held productive and engaging debates on a number of key issues in order to maximise efficiency savings to the authority. In response to public concerns raised through the Overview and Scrutiny process regarding the impact of budget cuts on the Community and Voluntary Sector, particularly in relation to TransVol and Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau, an informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees was convened.

## Meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

In August 2014 Cabinet agreed to convene an informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to consider the impact of savings proposals to the Voluntary Sector. This suggestion was made by Councillor John Kent (the Leader of the Council,) and supported by Councillor Richard Speight (as Portfolio Holder for Communities) at Cabinet 27 August 2014 in response to concerns from the voluntary sector through Thurrock Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) acting as the umbrella and infrastructure organisation for Thurrock's voluntary sector.

In October 2014 a meeting was held, chaired by Councillor Shane Hebb, during which the impact of savings proposals on Thurrock's Voluntary Sector – from both the perspective of the Council and the Voluntary Sector were set out.

Thurrock CVS agreed to represent all groups affected by the proposed cuts to the voluntary sector, even those that were not members of TCVS. The sector was concerned that decisions were being taken in the silos of each directorate and the



wider impact to voluntary organisations could not been seen. A report was examined to ensure that Thurrock was doing everything it could to ensure the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny committees were fully informed of the wider impact of the proposed savings on voluntary sector organisations.

The current financial position of the Council was also considered that sought to provide some context as to why savings that impact on the voluntary sector needed specific consideration.

At the meeting an alternative budget proposal was supplied by the voluntary sector which was reviewed and studied to ascertain its viability and it was agreed that the Voluntary Sector would provide plans on how they could work together to provide joined up services in the future.

Officers and Portfolio Holders were also instructed to review the proposals for outsourcing council services to the voluntary sector and for savings proposals to be qualified in future so Members could understand the value of savings in terms of value for money.

We had a unique opportunity this year, when a full and frank debate was had between councillors from all parties (who led the Scrutiny committees for the municipal year), and voluntary sector leaders representing groups who fight for improved health outcomes for those who need it. The Leader of the Council and the Shadow Cabinet member also contributed to the debate, and there were a number of actions which came out to be addressed.

Like many organisational conflicts, the root cause was gaps in communication from the council. Once we agreed on what needed to be done better, the dialogue flowed for a better outcome for those we all represent!

***Councillor Shane Hebb***  
***Chair of informal meeting of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees***



# Overview and Scrutiny Reviews

Overview and Scrutiny Committees can establish Scrutiny Review Panels to investigate in-depth issues which have come to their attention. In 2014-15 three Scrutiny Review Panels were established, the details of which are set out below.

## Community Transport Review

At the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2014 it was agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group in order to explore the implications of various levels of financial funding to TransVol to provide community transport in Thurrock.

The Community Transport review panel undertook an investigation into community transport provided by TransVol and explored whether the same service could be provided to residents within budgetary constraints. At the meeting of the Community Transport Review Panel in October 2014 the panel were particularly interested in identifying as to whether there was an option to carry on providing funding to the charity. Participants included representatives from TransVol, senior officers and Members.

The aim of this review was to look at ways other local authorities' provided funding for community transport and to see if there were any other ways to grant continued financial aid to TransVol. During the review it was clear that there is a need for community transport within the borough; discussions moved on to whether the service provided was value for money. An open conversation took place on community transport and whether the funding granted to TransVol provided value for money for the Council. During the review representatives from TransVol explained that without the funding provided the charity would be unable to supply the current service for their clientele.

The review panel considered four options in relation to the grant funding for TransVol and recommended an additional alternative which was subsequently agreed, in order to provide 'one off' financial support of £50,000 to support continuity of service whilst other viable options could be secured by TransVol and a business development plan formed.

## Thameside Complex Review Panel

The future of the Thameside Complex has been a longstanding, recurring topic of discussion which has been thrown into sharp focus in recent years as cuts in public sector spending have given rise to linked debates over the costs of running and

maintaining the building, its use, the quality of the services being provided from within it and its ultimate fitness for purpose in a much changed cultural landscape. These debates routinely provoke passionate responses from various parties, driven by concerns that the Council is seeking to unilaterally close the building and cease providing the services currently hosted therein – particularly the Thameside Theatre.

In August 2014 Cabinet received a report entitled ‘Thameside Complex – securing theatre provision for Thurrock’. The report set out some of the context surrounding the Thameside and sought approval, duly given, to undertake an options appraisal with a view to securing the long-term future for a theatre within the Borough. The complex is important to many local people, both for the services it contains and for what it represents; placing Grays at the heart of culture, heritage and the arts in Thurrock and as the administrative and civic centre of the Borough. As was apparent from discussion amongst Cabinet Members during the meeting even the proposal to carry out an options appraisal had raised concern.

In January 2015, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the Thameside Complex. It was decided at this meeting that a cross-party Task and Finish group could usefully support the detailed consideration of the options for the future of the services and the complex. Members of the committee felt the complex and its services were vitally important to Thurrock and needed proper consideration. The purpose and the aims of the review panel were to:

- Building upon the work completed to date, understand the current challenges and benefits of the Thameside Complex and providing services from it.
- Consider the proposed future options for the services as outlined in the Cabinet report of February 2015, using witness sessions, consultation and other research to provide a balanced view of each.
- Provide a thorough and balanced report to Cabinet outlining the Group’s consideration of each option.

A witness day was held to meet with voluntary sector tenants, service managers and theatre specialists in order for panel members to gain an insight into the challenges faced by the Thameside Complex and the benefits.

A final report is currently being prepared that sets out a vision for the Thameside Complex and for securing theatre provision in Thurrock.

## Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People

The topic of work experience was brought to the fore by the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which wanted to explore how the work experience offer could be improved in Thurrock to help young people into work locally. This was supported by the Youth Cabinet representatives who attend meetings of the Committee, who have been an active voice on matters affecting children and young people in the Borough.

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.

As a result in November 2014 the Committee agreed to establish the Supporting Pathways into Work for Young People Review Panel 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.

The work on this review panel is currently ongoing and it is expected an update will be provided by the Committee in due course following which the panel will make its final recommendations.

# Call-ins

Thurrock's Call-In process is a vital aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny function. It allows Councillors or Members of the public to ask that a decision of the Cabinet not be implemented until it has been subject to scrutiny by the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A Call-In of a Cabinet decision can be requested by two elected Members who are not members of the Cabinet, a voluntary group with an interest in the Borough, a local business situated in the Borough or ten residents in the Borough. The Call-In must be in writing and include reasons for the Call-In together with an alternative course of action.

The Call-In once it has been verified as legitimate and in accordance with the provisions of the council's constitution is then referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The Committee receives all the evidence relating to the issue in question and following consideration, makes recommendations about whether the original decision should stand or whether Cabinet should be requested to reconsider its original decision.

During 2014-15 the Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered two Call-Ins as detailed below:

## Shaping the Council 2015 and Beyond

In July 2014 the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a Call-In in respect of Shaping the Council 2015 and beyond, which related to budget setting process. The Members who called-in the decision felt that further detail should be provided so that Members could evaluate the rationale for the savings proposals.

The Committee considered the comments of the Call-In Members together with the views and comments of officers and the Leader of the Council. Following a debate the Committee agreed to reject the Call-In on the basis that the Council Constitution distinguished between Council and Cabinet functions and it was within Cabinet and the Leader of the Council's authority to make in-year budget savings and efficiencies in line with the budget framework determined by Council.

## Investment in Highways Lighting

In September 2014 a Call-In was submitted in relation to Investment in Highways Lighting which related to the introduction of a more reliable LED light across the highways network. The Members who called-in the decision cited that the decision maker failed to undertake due consultation or have due regard for individuals and

communities served by Thurrock. Following a debate the Committee agreed to reject the Call-In, and that progress of the implementation of LED lighting would be monitored.

<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 11</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Review of Members' Allowances – Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key
<b>Report of:</b> Mr Colin Sivell – Chair of The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Fiona Taylor – Head of Legal Services	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> David Bull – Interim Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The Council are presented with the report and recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, following its review of the Scheme of Members Allowances.

The Council is required to “have regard” to the report and recommendations of the Panel which is attached at Appendix 1 and, whilst it must act reasonably, it is not obliged to follow the recommendations that have been made.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 There is no change to the current Basic Allowance payable to Thurrock councillors (remaining at £8,670 per annum for Thurrock Councillors).**
- 1.2 The Members' Allowances schemes is amended to clarify that the Basic Allowance in each council includes not only postage, stationery and minor items of office equipment but also the cost of printing cartridges and paper.**
- 1.2 There is no change to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for the following positions:**
  - a) The Leader of the Council
  - b) The Deputy Leader of the Council
  - c) The Chair of Planning Committee
  - d) The Vice-chair of Planning Committee
  - e) The Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- f) The Vice-chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees**
- g) The Chair of Licensing Committee**
- h) The Vice-chair of Licensing Committee**
- i) The Chair of Standards and Audit Committee**
- j) The Leader of the Main Opposition Group**
- k) The Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group**

- 1.3 The Allowances Scheme be made clear that the qualification of 16 seats (or one third of the seats on Council) is required for a group to attract an allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group.**
- 1.4 The SRA for portfolio holders is increased to 130% of the Basic Allowance or £11,275**
- 1.5 Leaders of other opposition groups, which have more than four members but are not the main opposition group, should be paid an SRA of 25% of the Basic Allowance (£2,165) and that this is added to the Allowances Scheme.**
- 1.6 The Chair of the Health and Well-being Board does not receive an SRA.**
- 1.7 The Allowance Scheme continues to prohibit the receipt of more than one SRA regardless of the number of remunerated posts a Member may hold.**
- 1.8 The allowance for ordinary co-optees on the Standards and Audit Committee remain unchanged.**
- 1.9 The allowance for statutory co-optees on overview and scrutiny committees is reduced to £260 per annum in line with Southend Borough Council.**
- 1.10 The Civic Allowances for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor remain unchanged.**
- 1.11 Allowances for the following remain unchanged:**
  - a) Dependants Carers' Allowance**
  - b) Subsistence Allowance**
  - c) Travelling Allowances**
- 1.12 The remuneration for the Independent Persons in relation to disciplinary action against a statutory officer remain at £500 with the Panel reviewing this in later years.**
- 1.13 Basic Allowances, SRAs and co-optees' allowances are indexed to the annual percentage salary increase.**



- 1.14 Mileage allowance is adjusted in line with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs rates.**
- 1.15 Subsistence Allowance to be indexed to the same percentage increase that may be applied by the Council to officer subsistence allowances.**
- 1.16 Child Care rates are indexed to the national minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The power under which schemes of Members' Allowances are made is contained in Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000 and in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the Regulations").
- 2.2 The Regulations impose a duty on local authorities to establish an Independent Panel to provide advice on its scheme of allowances and the amounts to be paid. In April 2005, the Council agreed to establish a Joint Panel with Southend-On-Sea Borough Council, consisting of 5 independent members. Since that time, the Panel has met on four occasions (June 2007, August 2010, June 2011 and June 2015).
- 2.3 On 2 and 3 June 2015, the Panel met to undertake a review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances for both Southend and Thurrock councils, in accordance with the law which requires a new scheme to be put in place. The terms of reference for the review are set out as follows:
  - 1. The amount of basic allowance that should be payable to the elected Members
  - 2. The categories of Members who should receive a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance
  - 3. The amount of Co-optees allowances where applicable
  - 4. Travel and Subsistence Allowances
  - 5. The amount of Childcare and Dependent' Carers' Allowances
  - 6. Whether the allowances should continue to be adjusted in line with the average pay increases negotiated through the National Joint Committee for Local Government Employees
  - 7. The implementation date for the new Scheme of Allowances
- 2.4 In reviewing the Scheme, the Panel had regard to statutory guidance in relation to allowances, previous reports of the Panel and the results of a benchmarking exercise. The Panel also took account of written

representations made by Councillors Roy Jones, Gerard Rice, Barbara Rice and Steve Liddiard, as well as undertook interviews with Councillor John Kent, Leader of the Labour Group and Councillor Robert Gledhill, Leader of the Conservative Group.

2.5 The report of the Panel is attached at **Appendix 1**.

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 It is for the Council to determine to what extent it wishes to have regard to the recommendations made by the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, but it must implement a new Scheme by virtue of the relevant statutory requirements.

3.2 Should the recommendations of the Panel be implemented in full, Thurrock Council will not see an increase in overall basic allowance payments. In respect of special responsibility allowances, the cost will increase by £5,277. Conversely, the allowances paid to the statutory co-optees on overview and scrutiny committees will be reduced by £4,104.

3.4 Accordingly, should the recommendations of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel be agreed (in accordance with the accepted formula and multipliers used), the Council will see a total increase in its expenditure of £1,173

3.5 The Panel has reminded the Council that its Members have no obligation to take all or part of their remuneration, or claim any reimbursements to which they are entitled. For those Members who disagree with the Panel's recommendations and the Council's subsequent implementation of a new scheme of allowances, the members' allowances scheme does enable them to forgo part or all of their allowances.

### **4. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

4.1 All Members were invited to submit written representations to the Panel and all Group Leaders were invited to attend an interview with the Panel on the days they met.

4.2 A copy of the final report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel has been sent electronically to Group Leaders for their information.

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

6.1 A Scheme of Members' Allowances provides financial support for councillors in undertaking their role and must reinforce the culture of the modern council and address, as far as possible, any disincentives to serving in local politics.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**  
**Chief Accountant**

The Financial Implications are contained within the body of the report.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**  
**Deputy Head of Legal Services**

The review has been undertaken pursuant to the power contained in Section 18 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2000 and in the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

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

The Panel have been guided by the overarching principle that it should seek to minimise barriers to public service to enable a wide range of individuals to become a Councillor without incurring undue personal financial cost. This principle is maintained through the recommendations referred in section 1 of this report.

### **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):

- The papers considered are referred to in the report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.

## **9. Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Report of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

**Report Author:**

Matthew Boulter

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**A Joint Review  
Of  
Members' Allowances  
For  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
&  
Thurrock Borough Council**

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**A Report  
By the  
Joint Independent Remuneration Panel**

Mr Colin Sivell (Chairman)	Joint Thurrock/Southend Borough Councils Appointee
Mr R. Ferris	Thurrock Borough Council Appointee
Mr W. Robb	Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Appointee
Mr Ray Smallcombe	Thurrock Borough Council Appointee

July 2015

# JOINT INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

## A REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

FOR

**SOUTHEND-on-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL**

AND

**THURROCK BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Introduction: The Regulatory Context**

1. This report is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the statutory Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (the Panel) appointed by Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils to provide advice to each Council on its current Members' Allowances scheme.
2. The Panel was convened under *The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (SI 1021)* (the 2003 Regulations). These regulations, which arise out of the relevant provisions in the *Local Government Act 2000*, require all local authorities to maintain an independent remuneration panel (also known as an IRP) to review and provide advice to Councils on Members' allowances. This is in the context whereby elected Members are able to determine their own levels of remuneration, and much of the scope and levels of other allowances/reimbursements.
3. All Councils are required to convene their Panel and seek its advice before they make any changes or amendments to their members' allowances scheme and they must 'pay regard' to the Panel's recommendations before setting a new or amended members' allowances scheme.
4. In particular, the Panel has been reconvened under the *2003 Regulations [10. (50)]*, which states:

Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.

5. This mechanism is utilised to oblige all Councils to reconvene their Panel, usually at least once every four years, as a means of ensuring a degree of public accountability vis-à-vis their members' allowances schemes. It is under this requirement that the Joint Panel has undertaken this review of members' allowances for Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils.

### **The Joint Panel**

6. Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils reconvened their joint independent remuneration Panel consisting of the following members:
- Mr Colin Sivell (Chairman) Southend/Thurrock Borough Council Appointee
  - Mr R. Ferris Thurrock Borough Council Appointee
  - Mr W. Robb Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Appointee
  - Mr Ray Smallcombe Thurrock Borough Council Appointee
7. The Review was supported and serviced throughout by the following Officers:
- Colin Gamble Group Manager (Democratic Services)  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
  - Matthew Boulter Principal Democratic Services Officer,  
Thurrock Borough Council
8. The Panel was also supported by Declan Hall (PhD), a former lecturer at the Institute of Local Government, The University of Birmingham and currently an independent consultant specialising in Members' Allowances.

### **Terms of Reference**

9. The terms of reference for the joint review are to make recommendations on:
- I. The amount of basic allowance that should be payable to the elected Members
  - II. The categories of Members who should receive a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance
  - III. The amount of Co-optees allowances where applicable
  - IV. Travel and Subsistence Allowances
  - V. The amount of Childcare and Dependent' Carers' Allowances
  - VI. Whether the allowances should continue to be adjusted in line with the average pay increases negotiated through the National Joint Committee for Local Government Employees
  - VII. The remuneration of the Independent Person in light of their new responsibilities

## VIII. The implementation date for the new Scheme of Allowances

### **Evidence Reviewed by the Panel**

10. The Joint Panel met at the Civic Offices of Thurrock Borough Council on 2-3 June 2015 to hear and consider oral evidence from Members, receive and consider the written submissions from Members, and briefings from Officers – see appendices one and two for details. The Joint Panel also reviewed further written information pertinent to the review, such as meetings schedules, benchmarking data, statutory guidance, etc. See appendices three and four for further details.

### **Principles and Observations**

#### **Reducing Barriers and Providing Recompense**

11. The Panel continues to be guided by the overarching principle that underpinned its previous joint reviews; namely, that it should seek to minimise barriers to public service to enable a wide a range of people to become a Councillor without incurring undue personal financial cost. Consequently, the allowances should provide a degree of recompense for time spent and responsibility carried by Members.
12. On the other hand, the Panel recognises that an element of Members' input should be voluntary, given freely as a public service so that Members do not stand for and remain on either council primarily for financial reasons.

#### **Transparency**

13. Once again the representations made to the Panel emphasised that allowances schemes should be transparent so to understand how and why the allowances are being paid and for the schemes to be simple to operate. The transparency principle has led the Panel to take a consistent approach in how it has arrived at its recommendations so as both elected Members and the public understand the logic of the allowances payable.

#### **Equity**

14. The Panel remains convinced that except in a borough-specific instance the allowances payable for the equivalent role in each council should be the same. No evidence was received to suggest there should not be equity across the board. While there is some discrepancy in the levels payable for the same role or post, arising out of different implementation dates of the main index, these differences are so marginal in most cases so as not to effectively regard them as being equal.



## Recognising Current Economic Context and the Role of the Panel

15. While there was evidence indicating that some of the allowances merited a fundamental review the Panel has to be aware of economic reality. The weight of the representations evidence received by the Panel indicated that general increases in allowances or wholesale additional remunerated posts could not be justified. This has led the Panel to ensure that its recommendations do not increase the total spend on allowances.
16. Consequently the role of the Panel during this review has been to address any anomalies arising due to legislative and structural changes over the last 4 years. The Panel has sought to correct any incongruities that are apparent rather than undertake a resetting of the whole allowances scheme.

## The Panel's Recommendations - The Basic Allowance

### Recalibrating the Basic Allowance

17. The Panel, in line with the 2003 Statutory Guidance (paragraphs 67-69) revisited the original variables utilised in arriving at the Basic Allowance but updated for the most recent values available.
18. The 3 variables and their respective values are as follows:
  - **Input:** 144 days per year
  - **Public Service Discount:** 33%
  - **Rate of Remuneration:** £94 per day
19. The expected minimum annual input of 144 days was arrived at by taking the most recent figures from the 2013 Councillors Census (LGA) which shows that Members of unitary councils with no positions of responsibility on average put in 21.6 hours per week on "council business".<sup>1</sup> This equates to 144 days per year on a 7.8 hour working day.
20. The Public Service Discount is the element of a Members' time that is not remunerated and is given freely as public service or *pro bono publico*. Thus, out of the 144 days per year expected input for Members 48 days were assumed to be unremunerated, leaving 96 remunerated days.
21. The updated rate of remuneration is based on the 2014 median daily pay (gross) for all full time employee jobs in Southend and Thurrock Borough Council areas.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Specific information supplied to Dr Hall in an email from the LGA, 20 September 2014, and based on the raw data gathered for the publication of the 2013 Councillors Census

<sup>2</sup> Based on 2014 median weekly pay (gross) for all full time employee jobs in Southend of £475.20 and £462.30 in Thurrock, which equates to £93.75 per day across both council areas, which the Panel has rounded up to £94. See Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE), Table 7.1a Weekly pay (gross) for all full time employee jobs,

22. Thus the recalibrated Basic Allowance has been arrived at by applying the following formula as laid out in the 2003 Statutory Guidance:
- 144 days minimum annual expected average input – 48 days per year as a Public Service Discount  
= 96 remunerated days per year
  - 96 days per year x £94 per day  
= **£9,024**
23. The current Basic Allowance (Southend £8,673 and Thurrock £8,670) has not kept pace with local salaries largely because no indexation was applicable for 2011-13. In effect there has been a reduction in the Basic Allowance. However, while there was some support in the representation received to increase the Basic Allowance it was primarily on an abstract level. The overwhelming view was that in reality it would be difficult to publicly justify any increase the current Basic Allowance even where it may be justified.

### **Benchmarking the current Basic Allowance**

24. As a further check, the Panel benchmarked the current Southend and Thurrock Basic Allowance (£8,673 and £8,670 respectively) against that paid in the comparator councils utilized for the Southend/Thurrock benchmarking group. The benchmarking, or comparator group of Councils are the eight nearest neighbours for both Southend and Thurrock as defined by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)<sup>3</sup>.
25. This exercise was carried out to ascertain that by not “recalibrating” the current Basic Allowance whether it had significantly fallen behind that paid in peer authorities. The Panel has not been driven by the comparative remuneration figures but used them for simply placing the current Basic Allowance in context and to test out whether there is an external reason to recommend the recalibrated Basic Allowance (£9,024).
26. The average Basic Allowance paid in the benchmarking group is £8,729. The Panel is content that the current Basic Allowance represents a fair remuneration in relation to peer authorities and in light of the representation received that overwhelmingly did not support such a recalibration.
27. **Consequently, the Panel recommends no change to the current Basic Allowance payable for Southend-on-Sea (£8,673) and Thurrock Borough (£8,670) Councils.**

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UK 2014, Office of National Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> See appendix 3 for more details. Thurrock's sixth nearest neighbour - Reading - has not been included as it is such an extreme outlier it disproportionately distorts the averages in a benchmarking group of this size. The Southend fourth and fifth nearest neighbours - Torbay and North Tyneside - have also been excluded as they have elected mayors.

### **Clarifying the expenses included in the Basic Allowance**

28. The Panel received representation to clarify the expenses that are included in the Basic Allowance for Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils as they are both in the process of becoming a 'paperless council.' As such, **the Panel recommends that the Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils Members' Allowances schemes are amended to clarify that the Basic Allowance in each council includes not only postage, stationery and minor items of office equipment but also the cost of printing cartridges and paper.**

### **Recommending the Special Responsibility Allowances – The Leaders SRA**

29. The SRA for the Leaders of Southend (£30,354) and Thurrock (£30,346) is noticeably above the mean (£24,978) SRA paid in the benchmarking group. However, previously the Panel has consciously recognised the sub regional agenda in relation to the Thames Gateway, an agenda which continues albeit with a greater south Essex dimension. If anything the Panel heard that the demands on the Leaders are now greater - the devolution agenda will be a pressing issue for the Leaders once the imminent legislation is passed.
30. Another development since the previous review is the implementation of the provisions contained in Part 3, Chapter 5 of the Local Government and Public Involvement Health Act 2007, namely the requirement to have a strong leader model of executive. The strong leader model had only just been implemented as the Panel was sitting in 2011. Nonetheless, this has put further responsibility on both Council Leaders such as acquiring the powers to determine size of executive and scope of the powers of executive members; a power that has been exercised by both Leaders. Finally, while there is no legal requirement for the Leaders of Southend and Thurrock to be full time the post holders, regardless of whom they may be, are effectively prohibited from being able to earn an outside living by virtue of holding the Leader's office. This is not the case in all the comparator councils.
31. **The Panel recommends that the current SRA paid to the Leaders of Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils is still appropriate at £30,354 and £30,346 respectively.**

### **The Deputy Leader**

32. Similarly the Panel found no reason to revise the SRA paid to the Deputy Leaders (Southend £15,611 and Thurrock £15,605). The mean SRA for Deputy Leaders in the comparator councils is £15,351.
33. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Deputy Leaders of Southend and Thurrock remains unchanged.**

### **The alternating model of Deputy Leaders in Southend-on-Sea**

34. Southend-on-Sea has no overall control by a single party group and the Independent, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Southend Independence groups have formed a joint administration as outlined in the "Joint Administration Agreement" (May 2015). In particular, there are 2 Deputy Leaders who each rotate the statutory duties of a Deputy Leader on a six monthly alternating basis. Consequently the Deputy Leaders' SRA is paid pro rata to each for the duration of their six month formal term of office.
35. This is a sensible arrangement but in the interests of transparency **the Panel recommends that the Southend-on-Sea Members' Allowances scheme is amended to reflect the fact that the Deputy Leaders' are paid an SRA on a pro rata basis.**

### **The Other Executive Members**

36. Benchmarking shows that the mean SRA paid to other Executive Members in the benchmarking group is £12,701, whereas the SRA for this post is £10,841 in Southend and £10,830 in Thurrock. While this is not sufficient reason to alter the current SRAs there has been a change in the size of the Executive since the previous review. In Southend the number of other Executive Members has reduced from 6 to 5 while in Thurrock it has reduced from 8 to 7 (excluding Leaders and Deputy Leaders). In effect the Other Executive Members in each council have had an additional workload and responsibility of at least 10% once the rebalancing of portfolios across all executive members has been taken into account.
37. Consequently, the Panel has decided to recalibrate the SRAs for the Other Executive Members. The current SRAs were originally calculated at 125% of the Basic Allowance, the Panel has increased the percentage to 130% to go half way in recognising the enhanced workloads and responsibilities, which equates to £11,275 in both cases.
38. **The recommended SRA for the Other Executive Members in both Councils is £11,275, or 130% of the Basic Allowance.**

### **The Chair and Vice Chair<sup>4</sup> of the Development Control Committees**

39. The SRAs for the Chair and Vice Chair of the respective Development Control Committees were originally arrived at by assessing it at 100% of the Basic Allowance. Currently this is £8,663 in Thurrock and £8,673 in Southend. The Vice Chairs SRA was set by multiplying the Basic Allowance by 25%, which is

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<sup>4</sup> Thurrock uses the term Chair and Vice Chair while Southend-on-Sea calls equivalent posts, Chairman and Vice Chairman. The report has adopted the Thurrock terminology for the purposes of this report.

currently £2,168 (Southend) and £2,165 (Thurrock). Benchmarking shows the mean SRA for these posts are respectively £8,030 and £3,724. No evidence was received to revise the current levels payable.

40. **The Panel recommends that the SRAs for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning/Development Control Committees in both Councils are not changed.**

### **The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

41. The SRA for the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees was originally set at 75% of the Basic Allowance, which now equates to £6,505 in Southend and £6,503 for Thurrock. For the Scrutiny Vice Chairs the operative ratio is 15% of the Basic Allowance, which now equates to £1,301 in both councils. The mean SRA for the Chairs of Scrutiny in the benchmarking group is £6,182 and £2,531 for Vice Chairs, although the latter post is only paid in four out of the 13 comparator councils.
42. Southend and Thurrock each have a different operational model of scrutiny. In Southend there is greater emphasis on 'call-in' where the Chair and Vice Chair play leading role. While in Thurrock the emphasis is more on policy development and review.
43. Yet, benchmarking does not give the whole picture. Southend maintains 3 Scrutiny Committees while in Thurrock the number has grown to 6. Thus, the remuneration of the scrutiny function in Thurrock is twice that of Southend. It is also noted that the benchmarking figures do not take into account the number of scrutiny committees a council may have at any one time.
44. Nonetheless, the Panel received no evidence to indicate the current levels are no longer appropriate. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees in Southend and Thurrock is unchanged.**

### **The Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Licensing Committees**

45. The Southend Chair of Licensing's SRA is £5,204 and £5,192 in Thurrock whereas the benchmarking group mean SRA is £7,508. The comparatively low SRA in Southend and Thurrock for their Chairs of Licensing is counter balanced by the comparatively high SRA they pay their Licensing Vice Chairs; £4,770 in Southend and £4,781 in Thurrock whereas the mean SRA in the 4 out of 13 comparator councils that remunerate the equivalent post is £3,811.<sup>5</sup> Thus, once the comparatively high SRA paid to their Licensing Vice Chairs is taken into account the total remuneration in both Southend and Thurrock on the licensing function is in line with peer authorities.

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<sup>5</sup> A further 2 comparator councils remunerate all Members of their Licensing Committee and 1 remunerates their Licensing Vice Chair and all other Licensing Members.

46. The Panel is content with the comparatively narrow differential in the SRA paid to Chairs and Vice Chairs of Licensing as the Vice Chair in each council undertakes a leading role in the Licensing Sub Committees where much of the work of licensing is undertaken.
47. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Licensing Committees in Southend and Thurrock is unchanged.**

#### **Posts specific to Southend-on-Sea Council: Chair of Audit Committee**

48. Southend has a standalone Audit Committee, the Chair's SRA set at 25% of the Basic Allowance, which is currently £2,168. The mean SRA paid to similar positions in the comparator councils is £6,092. The comparatively high SRA in peer councils is partly accounted for by some of them having a wider remit, e.g., in Bournemouth, Sefton and Warrington it is the Audit *and* Governance Committee. Moreover, no representation was made suggesting the SRA for the Chair of Audit at Southend-on-Sea Borough Council required revising.
49. **The Panel recommends that the current SRA (£2,168) paid to the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Audit Committee Chair is unaltered.**

#### **Chair of the Standards Committee**

50. Southend has retained a standalone Standards Committee post-*Localism Act 2011*, which discontinued the requirement to maintain such a committee. The Chair of the Standards Committee is now an elected Member who receives an SRA paid at the same amount as when it was a Co-optees' Allowance. i.e., when the Chair was a Co-optee. This equates to an SRA of £2,168. Whereas the mean SRA for this post in the comparator group is £2,801. The reality is that the workload and responsibility is not what it was and the number of formal meetings greatly reduced and the powers it can exercise being much reduced, e.g., it can no longer suspend a Councillor. Yet, the Chair still has a role to undertake at a more informal level when a complaint against a Councillor is received in that they are now almost always resolved informally by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the new post of Independent Person and Chair of Standards before it goes before the Standards Committee. On balance the Panel felt the current SRA is no longer justified and should be recalibrated by setting it at 20% of the Basic Allowance.
51. **The Panel recommends that the SRA payable to the Chair of the Standards Committee for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is £1,735.**

#### **Chairs of the Appeals Committee A & Appeals Committee B**

52. The remuneration, currently £4,336 each, of the Chairs of the Appeals Committees A & B is unusual as equivalent committees elsewhere are often

chaired by an executive Member or the workload is so infrequent that an SRA is not merited. Both Committees in Southend meet as and when required but their respective workloads are constant (if concentrated around certain periods) albeit not always as constant as with other committees with a total of 4 hearings last year.

53. The evidence indicated that the Appeals Committees A & B are more on a par with the Audit Committee and as such the Panel has reset the recommended SRA for the 2 Appeals A& B Chairs at 25% of the Basic Allowance.
54. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Chairs of the Southend-on-Sea Appeals A & B Committees is £2,168, which equates to 25% of the Basic Allowance.**

#### **Vice Chairs of the Appeals Committee A & Appeals Committee B**

55. Similarly the Panel has decided to reduce the current SRA (£1,085) paid to the Vice Chairs of the Appeals Committees A & B by the same proportion it has reduced the SRA for their respective chairs and reset the percentage from 12.5% of the Basic Allowance to 6.25%
56. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Vice Chairs of the Southend-on-Sea Appeals A & B Committees is £542, which equates to 6.25% of the Basic Allowance.**

#### **Posts specific to Thurrock Council: Chair of Standards & Audit Committee**

57. In light of the impact of the *Localism Act 2011* that required a 'lighter touch' from its Standards Committee Thurrock Borough Council decided to merge it with its Audit Committee with the SRA maintained at 25% of the Basic Allowance, which is currently £2,159. No evidence was received to indicate this SRA needed revising.
58. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Thurrock Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee is unchanged.**

#### **The Opposition Group SRAs – Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups**

59. The SRA for the Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups in both Southend and Thurrock was set at 100% of the Basic Allowance which is now £8,673 and 8,670 respectively. The mean SRA paid to equivalent posts in the comparator councils is £8,539. No evidence was received to revise this SRA.
60. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups in Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock is unaltered.**

### **Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group**

61. The respective Main Opposition Group Deputy Leaders receive an SRA of £2,168 in Southend and £2,160 in Thurrock. It is not typically a post that is paid in all councils but the Panel is content with the situation in Southend and Thurrock as there are no SRAs for Opposition Spokespersons, which does occur with greater frequency elsewhere and the fact that there is a qualifying criterion for the SRA to be paid.
62. In the July 2011 Report the Panel recommended that this SRA is only payable if the main Opposition Group has at least 1/3 of the total seats on the Council. This currently equates to 17 seats in Southend and 16 seats in Thurrock. Interestingly the Southend Allowances scheme clarifies this qualification and the Thurrock scheme does not. The Thurrock scheme should be clarified to point out the SRA for the Deputy Leader of the Main Opposition Group will only be payable if the Group consists of at least 1/3 of the total Council membership.
63. **The Panel recommends that the Deputy Leaders of the Main Opposition Groups continues to be paid at £2,168 in Southend and £2,160 in Thurrock.**
64. **The Panel further recommends that the Thurrock Members' Allowances scheme is amended to clarify that this SRA is only paid to the Deputy Leader of the main Opposition Group in Thurrock if their group has attained 1/3 or 16 of the seats on Council.**

### **SRAs for Leaders of Other Opposition Groups**

65. In the July 2011 Report the Panel recommended that an SRA should be paid to Leaders of Other Opposition Groups at 10% of the Basic Allowance per group Member up to a maximum of 90% of the SRA paid to the Leader of the Main Opposition Group subject to having a minimum of 4 group Members. Again the Southend scheme reflects this recommendation but the Thurrock scheme does not. That needs to be rectified.
66. Moreover, while this SRA is not actually payable in Southend nor would be in Thurrock the Panel now recognises that the methodology utilised in arriving at this SRA has the potential to create a comparatively high SRA - another Opposition Group would only have to have 7-8 Members and the Leader would be receiving an SRA greater than that paid to most Chairs.
67. The Panel has decided to alter how it arrives at this SRA by resetting it as a fixed figure at 25% of the Basic Allowance. This equates to £2,168 in Southend and £2,165 in Thurrock.
68. **The Panel recommends that the SRA for the Leaders of the Other Opposition Groups is £2,168 in Southend and £2,165 in Thurrock, subject to the qualifying criteria of having at least 4 Members.**



69. **The Panel further recommends that Thurrock Borough Council adopt this recommendation and insert it in its allowances scheme.**

#### **SRAs Arising - Chair of Health and Well Being Board**

70. All councils are now required to appoint to a Health and Well Being Board which also has on it relevant Officers and public health officials and other stakeholders. It is tasked with taking a more joined up approach to improve the health of residents. No representation was received to indicate that the Chairs of the Southend and Thurrock Health and Well Being Boards merited an SRA. The Panel was informed that the relevant executive Member from both councils will invariably chair their respective Health and Well Being Boards, an element of their wider responsibilities which their SRA recognises.
71. **The Panel does not recommend that the Southend and Thurrock Members' Allowances schemes include provision for the payment of an SRA to the Chairs of their respective Health and Well Being Boards.**

#### **All Group Leaders**

72. The Panel also received representation to provide for an SRA for Group Leaders whose Group may be part of the administration but the Group Leader is not otherwise in receipt of an SRA. As this 'anomaly' does not exist and it is only reasonable to expect any Leader of a group that is part of a joint administration that they would otherwise be in receipt of an SRA by virtue of holding a senior remunerated post (most likely on the Cabinet) **the Panel does not recommend an SRA be provided for Group Leaders whose group in a joint administration if they are not otherwise remunerated.**

#### **Confirming the "1-SRA only" Rule**

73. In line with good practice **the Panel recommends that the allowances schemes for both Councils continues to prohibits the receipt of more than 1 SRA regardless of the number of remunerated posts a Member may hold.**

#### **Other Allowances – The Co-optees' Allowances**

##### **Co-optees on the Thurrock Standards and Audit Committee & Southend Audit Committee**

74. Thurrock continues to appoint 3 Co-optees on its merged Standard and Audit Committee, each eligible for a Co-optees Allowance of £1,084. Southend pays the same Co-optees Allowance to its single co-optee on its Audit Committee.

75. As the remit of these co-optees includes the Audit function which requires a degree of financial knowledge the Panel has decided to maintain this allowance at the current level, set at 12.5% of the Basic Allowance.
76. **The Panel recommends that the Co-optees' Allowance for the ordinary Co-optees on the Thurrock Standards and Audit Committee and Southend Audit Committee remains unaltered at £1,084.**

### **Statutory Co-optees on the Scrutiny Committees**

77. The Panel notes that the Co-optees on the relevant Scrutiny Committees for Southend and Thurrock are all eligible for a Co-optees Allowance. In Southend the level payable is £260 whereas in Thurrock it is £1,286. The Panel decided that the statutory Co-optees should be entitled to a small annual Co-optees Allowance that is an honorarium for their service and the level payable in Southend is the appropriate one.
78. **The Panel recommends that both Southend and Thurrock pay an annual Co-optees Allowance of £260 (set at 3% of the Basic Allowance) to their statutory Co-optees on Scrutiny.**

### **The Civic Allowance for the Mayors and Deputy Mayors**

79. While the Civic Allowance is outside the remit of the Joint Panel as it is an allowance payable under s3(5), and s5(4), of the *Local Government Act 1972* rather than arising from the *Local Government Act 2000*. The 1972 Act permits a principal council to pay the chair and vice chair of a council an allowance which it thinks reasonable for the purpose of meeting the expenses of those offices.
80. However in the interests of transparency both councils continue to seek independent advice from the Joint Panel on the appropriate Civic Allowance for their respective Mayors and Deputy Mayors who receive £13,009 and £3,035 in Southend and £13,006 and £3,048 in Thurrock. Out of this allowance they have to meet their own day to day expenses that invariably arise from representing their respective councils at public and other events they have to attend.
81. Benchmarking is of little value in this case as the full picture on allowances received by Civic Heads in the comparator councils cannot be obtained. For instance, five of the comparator councils do not include any payment of allowances for their civic heads in their allowances schemes. This does not mean they do not get a civic allowance. The likelihood is that they do but there is no formal requirement to publish such a payment in a members' allowances scheme. Another five comparator councils publish a figure that they confirm the allowances payable are Civic Allowances, the remaining three councils state that the published allowance payable to their civic heads

is an SRA. This may or may not be the case as it is often mislabelled as SRA when in fact it is a civic allowance. Moreover, even if an SRA as stated there is no way to know whether they also get a Civic Allowance in addition.

82. Representation was received to adjust the Civic Allowance by paying more to the Deputy Mayor when the latter is required to stand in more than usual. The Panel felt that this was more a work load issue and is not making any recommendation in this regard.
83. Furthermore, the Panel received no evidence that the current Civic Allowance paid to the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of Southend and Thurrock Councils required revision.
84. **The Panel recommends that the current Civic Allowance paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Southend and Thurrock is unaltered.**

#### **The Dependants' Carers' Allowance (DCA)**

85. No representation was received to suggest that the scope and level of reimbursements claimable under the Dependants' Carers' Allowances needed revising.
86. **The Panel recommends that the current scope and level of reimbursements payable under the Dependants' Carers' Allowance are unaltered.**

#### **Subsistence Allowances**

87. No issues were raised regarding the Subsistence Allowances. **The Panel recommends that the scope and level of Subsistence Allowances are unaltered.**

#### **Travelling Allowances:**

88. Two issues emerged regarding Travelling Allowances. First, both the Southend and Thurrock schemes do not reflect the full range of HMRC mileages rates. **The Panel recommends that the both the Southend and Thurrock Members' Allowances schemes are (amended to clarify that the 'Mileage Allowances' are specified as follows:**

The HMRC Mileage Approved Payments (MAPS) are:

<b>Mode of Transport</b>	<b>First 10,000 miles in year</b>	<b>Additional miles</b>
<b>Cars and vans</b>	45p	25p
<b>Motor cycles</b>	24p	24p

<b>Bicycles</b>	20p	20p
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89. Secondly, representation was made that travel and subsistence allowances should not be claimable for Members undertaking an approved duty outside the Council area. The Panel rejected this view as there can be substantial costs involved when attending conferences and seminars outside of the two council areas. **The Panel recommends no other change to the scope and level of Travelling Allowances.**

### **The Independent Person and their new role**

90. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015/881 the Independent Person, appointed under the *Localism Act 2011* has acquired an additional responsibility. The new regulations replace the statutory protection that required an appointment of a Designated Independent Person (DIP) to investigate any allegation of misconduct against statutory officers. In the place of a DIP process, any decision will now be taken by full council, who must consider any advice, views or recommendations from an independent panel, the conclusions of any investigation into the proposed dismissal, and any representations from the officer concerned.
91. In the case of a proposed disciplinary action against a statutory officer the Council is required to invite independent persons who have been appointed for the purposes of the members' conduct regime under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to form an independent panel..
92. The Joint Panel was asked to consider the implications of the new regulations on the current remuneration paid to the Councils Independent Persons, which is £1,084 in Southend and £500 in Thurrock. However, it was noted that the Regulations also make a provision limiting the remuneration that they would normally receive as an Independent Person in the conduct regime. Therefore it is not possible to recognise the additional responsibility by increasing the amount currently paid to such persons.
93. **The Panel recommends that the amount payable to the Independent Persons at Southend (£1,084) and Thurrock (£500) is unaltered.**

### **Members' Allowances and variation**

94. There was some representation that felt Members remuneration should bear a greater relationship to input and that not all Members merited their Basic Allowance. The Panel discussed this issue and no evidence was produced that it is a major problem in either Southend or Thurrock. Moreover the Panel is unable to play a role in this regard so it is not making any recommendation regarding variation of allowances based on inputs by Members.

95. There was also a view that the Basic Allowance should be adjusted depending on the level of deprivation in an individual Members' ward. Apart from the problem of identifying how representing a deprived ward may have more impact on a Members' workload than other variables that are present in other Members wards the legislation requires the payment of an equal Basic Allowance to all Members. Thus the Panel cannot make any recommendation in this regard.
96. Another representation felt it was inequitable that some council appointments to outside bodies were remunerated e.g., the Fire Authority, while others, the vast majority, were not. However, the Panel has always made clear that the Basic Allowance and SRAs are intended to recognise that all Members can reasonably expect to be on outside bodies, whether as a council appointee or by virtue of being a Councillor. Where remuneration is received for being on that body it is outside the remit of this Panel.

### **Indexation**

97. **The Panel recommends that the following indices are applied to the remuneration and allowances paid to Members of both Councils:**
- a. **Basic Allowance, SRAs and Co-optees Allowances:**
    - Indexed to the annual percentage salary increase for local government staff (at spinal column 49) to be implemented from the start of the municipal year, rather than financial year, for which year it is applicable.
  - b. **Mileage Allowance:**
    - Adjusted in line with HMRC rates
  - c. **Subsistence Allowances:**
    - The day subsistence allowances and overnight subsistence allowances should be indexed to the same percentage increase that may be applied by the Council to Officer day and overnight subsistence rates.
  - d. **DCA:**
    - **Child Care rates:**
      - Indexed to national minimum wage applicable to the age of the carer

### **Implementation of Recommendations**

98. **The Panel further recommends that both Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock Borough Councils implement the recommendations contained in this report from 1 August 2015. .**

## **Appendix One: Information received by the Joint Panel**

1. Panel's terms of reference
2. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Members' Allowances Scheme, 2015-16
3. Thurrock Borough Council, Members' Allowances Scheme, 2015-16
4. Joint Administration Agreement between Independent, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Southend Independence Groups on the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council
5. The Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Borough, Review of Allowances Report, July 2011
6. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Schedule 2 - The Constitution and Terms of Reference of Cabinet, Committees, etc May 2015
7. Thurrock Borough Council, The Cabinet and Committees: How the council works and how decisions are made, <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/how-council-works-and-how-decisions-are-made/how-council-works>
8. Email to Dr Hall, Councillors mean weekly hours by council and whether a post is held, based on 2013 Councillors Census, 20 September 2014
9. Annual Survey of Hourly Earnings (ASHE), Table 7.1a Weekly pay (gross) for all full time employee jobs, UK 2014, Office of National Statistics.
10. The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, 2015/881.

## **Appendix Two: Members and Officers who met with the Panel**

### **Southend-on-Sea Borough Council:**

#### **Members:**

Cllr J. L. Lamb	Leader of the Opposition (Conservative) Group
Cllr R. Woodley	Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Cabinet (Independent Member)

#### **Officers (Briefings):**

Colin Gamble:	Group Manager (Democratic Services)
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### **Thurrock Borough Council:**

#### **Members:**

Cllr R. Gledhill	Leader of the Opposition (Conservative) Group
Cllr J. Kent:	Leader of the Council and Labour Group Leader

#### **Officers:**

Matthew Boulter	Principal Democratic Services Officer
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## **Appendix Three: Written Submissions Received by the Panel**

### **Southend-on-Sea Borough Council:**

Cllr B. Ayling	Chairman Appeals Committee A and Independent Group Member
Cllr D. Kenyon	Independent Group Member
Cllr C. Nevin	Labour Group Member
Cllr G Longley	Deputy Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Tourism & Economic Development and Leader of Liberal Democrat Group

### **Thurrock Borough Council:**

Cllr R. Jones	Chairman of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Vice Chairman of Licensing Committee and Deputy Leader UKIP Group
Cllr S. Lilliard	Mayor of Council and Labour Group Member
Cllr B. Rice	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Labour Group Member
Cllr G. Rice	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Labour Group Member



#### Appendix Four: Southend and Thurrock CIPFA Near Neighbours - summary of main Allowances payable 2015/16

ALLOWANCE PAYABLE	Thurrock	Southend	Bournemouth	Milton Keynes	Peterborough	Plymouth	Poole	Sefton
Basic Allowance	£8,670	£8,673	£9,291	£9,962	£7,962	£10,368	£9,553	£8,520
Leader's SRA	£30,346	£30,354	£17,652	£29,625	£21,498	£31,102	£22,848	£25,560
Deputy Leader SRA	£15,605	£15,611	£13,239		£16,123	£21,885	£13,709	£17,040
Leader of Opposition SRA	£8,670	£8,673	1,764 + £176 per Group Member	£620 per Group Member	£7,166	£10,368	£4,570 + £50 per Group Member	£4,260
Deputy Leader of Opposition	£2,160	£2,336				£5,184		
Portfolio Holder	£10,830	£10,841	£11,034	£10,753	£14,332	£20,733	£11,424	£17,040
Chair of Scrutiny	£6,503	£6,505	£4,413	£4,500	£7,166	£10,368	£4,570	£4,260
Vice Chair of Scrutiny	£1,301	£1,301	£1,104					
Chair of Planning	£8,663	£8,673	£8,826	£8,132	£7,166	£10,368	£9,139	£8,520
Vice Chair of Planning	£2,165	£2,168	£4,413			£5,184		
Chair of Licensing	£5,192	£5,204	£8,826	£8,132	£7,166	£10,368	£4,480	£8,520
Vice Chair of Licensing	£4,781	£4,770	£4,413					
Chair of Audit	£2,159	£2,168	£4,413	£5,422	£7,166	£5,184		£4,260
Vice-Chair of Audit			£1,104					
Chair of Standards		£2,168	£4,413	£2,962			£1,371	
Vice-Chair of standards		£1,301	£3,309					
Co-optee (Standards)	£1,084	£1,084		£640			£505	
Co-optee (Education)	£1,286	£260	£929	£640				
Co-optee (Other)	£1,084	£1,084	£929	£640	£1,000		£907	
Mayor	£13,006	£13,009		£10,647	£12,000	£14,402		£12,780
Deputy Mayor	£3,048	£3,035		£5,324	£3,600	£4,754		
Any other notes	Indicates paid as civic allowance			Figures in red indicate paid as a Co-optees' Allowance				

Stockton	Swindon	Telford	Trafford	Warrington	Wirral	Mean	Thurrock	Southend	ALLOWANCE PAYABLE
£9,300	£7,710	£7,870	£6,491	£7,911	£8,712	<b>£8,729</b>	<b>£8,670</b>	<b>£8,673</b>	Basic Allowance
£25,000	£19,674	£23,768	£35,559	£20,015	£22,927	<b>£24,978</b>	<b>£30,346</b>	<b>£30,354</b>	Leader's SRA
£13,750	£11,699	£15,898	£18,176	£15,012	£11,463	<b>£15,351</b>	<b>£15,605</b>	<b>£15,611</b>	Deputy Leader SRA
£5,000	£4,670	£9,837	£12,983	£8,506	£13,756	<b>£8,539</b>	<b>£8,670</b>	<b>£8,673</b>	Leader of Opposition SRA
					£6,878	<b>£6,031</b>	<b>£2,160</b>	<b>£2,336</b>	Deputy Leader of Opposition SRA
£11,250	£9,837	£11,805	£12,983	£10,008	£9,171	<b>£12,701</b>	<b>£10,830</b>	<b>£10,841</b>	Portfolio Holder
£6,250	£4,930	£7,139	£7,788	£8,506	£4,585	<b>£6,182</b>	<b>£6,503</b>	<b>£6,505</b>	Chair of Scrutiny
£3,125			£3,894	£2,002		<b>£2,531</b>	<b>£1,301</b>	<b>£1,301</b>	Vice Chair of Scrutiny
£6,250	£6,381	£7,870	£10,387	£8,506	£4,585	<b>£8,030</b>	<b>£8,663</b>	<b>£8,673</b>	Chair of Planning
£3,125			£3,894	£2,002		<b>£3,724</b>	<b>£2,165</b>	<b>£2,168</b>	Vice Chair of Planning
£6,250	£4,253	£7,870	£10,387	£8,506	£4,585	<b>£7,508</b>	<b>£5,192</b>	<b>£5,204</b>	Chair of Licensing
£3,125			£3,894			<b>£3,811</b>	<b>£4,781</b>	<b>£4,770</b>	Vice Chair of Licensing
£6,250	£4,253	£7,870	£7,788	£8,506		<b>£6,092</b>	<b>£2,159</b>	<b>£2,168</b>	Chair of Audit
£3,125			£3,894		£4,585	<b>£3,177</b>			Vice-Chair of Audit
	£4,253	£3,935	£2,295	£2,002		<b>£2,801</b>		<b>£2,168</b>	Chair of Standards
					£1,375	<b>£2,342</b>		<b>£1,301</b>	Vice-Chair of standards
	£1,000		£766			<b>£700</b>	<b>£1,084</b>	<b>£1,084</b>	Co-optee (Standards)
						<b>£785</b>	<b>£1,286</b>	<b>£260</b>	Co-optee (Education)
£650			£1,147			<b>£795</b>	<b>£1,084</b>	<b>£1,084</b>	Co-optee (Other)
<b>£15,625</b>	<b>£10,000</b>			£10,700		<b>£12,130</b>	<b>£13,006</b>	<b>£13,009</b>	Mayor
<b>£4,910</b>	<b>£3,500</b>			£1,500		<b>£3,481</b>	<b>£3,048</b>	<b>£3,035</b>	Deputy Mayor
	Lic Mbrs paid		Lic Subs Mbrs paid	T&S Lump Sum					Any other notes

<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 12</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board – Change to membership</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non-key
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Barbara Rice, Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> n/a	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning	
<b>This report is Public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a committee of the Council. As such, its terms of reference are agreed by Council and are contained within the Council’s Constitution.

Statutory provisions for Health and Wellbeing Boards are contained within the Health and Social Care Act 2012. This includes provisions about changes to Board membership.

This paper asks Council to agree to the following organisations and posts becoming members of the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- NHS Providers North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), South Essex Partnership Trust (SEPT), and Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals Foundation Trust (BTUH) - one executive officer representative per organisation;
- Thurrock Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) – one representative; and
- Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group’s Executive Nurse.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Council agree to NHS Providers NELFT, SEPT, and BTUH becoming members of Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board;
- 1.2 That Council agree to Thurrock CVS becoming a member of Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board;

- 1.3 That Council agree to Thurrock CCG's Executive Nurse becoming a member of Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board; and**
- 1.4 That subject to agreement to recommendations 1.1 – 1.3, Council agrees the amended Terms of Reference for the Health and Wellbeing Board.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is a statutory partnership board governed by s194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (the Act). The Act specifies who must be a member of the Board and specifies how additional Board members are to be appointed.
- 2.2 The Act states that at any time after a Health and Wellbeing Board is established, the Local Authority must, before appointing another member of the Board, consult the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 2.3 At its meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the Health and Wellbeing Board agreed changes to its membership - subject to those changes being endorsed by Council.
- 2.4 The purpose of this report is to ask Council to endorse the changes to membership agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at its 15<sup>th</sup> June meeting. The remainder of the report provides the rationale for appointing those additional members to the Board.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board has leadership responsibility for influencing and developing the agenda across the health and care system so that it improves the health and wellbeing of and reduces inequalities in health and wellbeing within Thurrock's population. As part of this, Boards have responsibilities for encouraging integrated working and partnership arrangements for health and social care services – such as integrated provision and pooled budgets via the development of Better Care Fund Plans. As the agenda continues to evolve and as Boards continue to develop their system leadership role, it is difficult to see how comprehensive discussions and decisions about the future of the system governing health and wellbeing can take place without all partners – including key NHS providers – being included.
- 3.2 A significant number of Boards (estimated one third in October 2014 but now likely to be higher as a result of the agreement of Better Care Fund Plans) have already taken the step to include key NHS providers as full members. A recent letter from the current Secretary of State for Health urged Boards who did not have providers as members to reconsider this position stating 'that where providers have been included as full members on Boards there have been clear advantages' and going on to say that Boards should 'at least

consider current arrangements, and assure themselves that the right structures and relationships are in place’.

- 3.3 Health and Wellbeing Boards will continue to shape the system so that it not only responds effectively when people become ill and/or need a service, but so a greater number of people can be supported within their communities and by their communities – to prevent, reduce, and delay a decline in health and wellbeing or the need for a traditional service response. Due to the growing emphasis on the role communities play as a part of the ‘system’, the paper recommends that Council endorse the decision to provide Thurrock CVS with a seat on the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 3.4 Additionally, Thurrock CCG’s Acting Interim Accountable Officer recommended to the Board that a membership place should be given to the CCG’s Executive Nurse, thus strengthening clinical representation. This was agreed by the Board.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 As set out in section 3, the recommendations aim to ensure that membership of the Board appropriately reflects the health and care system and therefore enables that system to be developed and shaped to improve the health and wellbeing of Thurrock’s population, and reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing of Thurrock’s population.

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

- 5.1 The recommendations have been discussed and agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board at the Board’s meeting of the 15 June 2015.

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

- 6.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board leads on the community and corporate priority ‘improve health and wellbeing’. It is important that its membership is appropriate to influencing and setting that agenda and allows health and wellbeing in Thurrock to be improved and inequalities in health and wellbeing to be reduced.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**  
**Management Accountant**

There are no financial implications.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Dawn Pelle**  
**Adult Care Lawyer**

There are no legal implications

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no diversity and equality implications.

## 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):

- Report to Health and Wellbeing Board 15 June 2015

## 9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Health and Wellbeing Board Terms of Reference

### Report Author:

Ceri Armstrong

Strategy Officer

Adults, Health and Commissioning

## Draft Terms of Reference

### **Key Strategic Aims of Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Board**

Resourceful and resilient people in resourceful and resilient communities where:

- Every child has the best possible start in life;
- People make better lifestyle choices and take more responsibility for their Health and Wellbeing;
- People stay healthier longer, adding years to life and life to years; and
- The Health and Wellbeing of communities in Thurrock are more equal.

### **Purpose**

- To improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities in health and wellbeing;
- To develop and facilitate the delivery of transitional arrangements to meet statutory requirements within the emerging health agenda; and
- To determine the health improvement priorities in Thurrock

### **Functions**

- Identify and join up areas of commissioning across the NHS, social care, public health, and other services directly related to health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities;
- Encourage and develop integrated working – for the purpose of advancing the Health and Wellbeing of and reducing health inequalities amongst Thurrock people;
- Oversee the on-going development and refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA);
- Oversee the on-going development, refresh, and implementation of Thurrock's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWS) – ensuring that it provides an overarching framework for commissioning plans related to Health and Wellbeing and Health Inequalities;
- Sign-off key commissioning plans, strategy, and policy related to Health and Wellbeing;
- Oversee the development of the pharmaceutical needs assessment; and
- Performance manage the achievement of and progress against key outcomes identified within the JHWS and against key commissioning plans.

### **Membership**

- Leader of the Council
- Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health (Chair)
- Opposition Group Representative x 2
- Clinical Representative: Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Executive Nurse: Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chair of Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

- Chief Operating Officer of Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Portfolio Holder for Children’s Social Care
- Chair of Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Chair of Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board
- Lay Member for Patient Participation: Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group
- Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning
- Director of Housing
- Director of Children’s Services
- Director NHS England Essex Area Team
- Director of Commissioning NHS England Essex Area Team
- Director of Public Health
- Chief Operating Officer Healthwatch Thurrock
- Chair Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Board
- Community Health Provider - North East London Foundation Trust – Executive Level Representative
- Mental Health Provider - South Essex Partnership Foundation Trust – Executive Level Representative
- Acute Health Provider – Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals Foundation Trust – Executive Level Representative
- Thurrock Council for Voluntary Services 1 x representative

In accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2012:

- Elected members will be nominated by the Leader of the Council
- The Local Authority may nominate additional Board members in consultation with the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Board may appoint additional members as it thinks appropriate

### **Chair arrangements**

- Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health

### **Meeting Frequency**

- The Board will meet a minimum of six times a year

### **Governance and Approach**

- The Board will function at a strategic level, with priorities being delivered and key issues taken forward through existing partnership arrangements – which may at times include the establishment of task and finish groups
- Only a small number of permanent sub-groups will exist to support the work of the Board: Health and Wellbeing Executive Committee; and Joint Commissioning Board
- Decisions taken and work progressed will be subject to scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee – and other Overview and Scrutiny Committees as appropriate (nb Healthwatch has a scrutiny function)

### **Wider Engagement**



- The Board will ensure that the decisions it makes and the priorities it sets take account of the needs of all of Thurrock's communities and groups – particularly those most in need
- The Board will ensure that stakeholders including providers are engaged, with a Health and Wellbeing Stakeholder Network established to assist with this purpose
- The Health and Wellbeing Board will host at least one Stakeholder Forum per year

The development of the Health and Wellbeing Board and its agenda is a dynamic process. As a result, the Board's Terms of Reference will be reviewed at least annually and altered to reflect changes as appropriate.

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<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 13</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member Report – Children’s Social Care</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Bukky Okunade, Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care	
This report is public	

## 1. Introduction

1.1. This report covers the following areas of council responsibility:

- Family Support, Children in Need and Child Protection – this includes the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and assessment functions, support services for disabled children, children in need, including those on child protection plans.
- Children and young people who are in the Care of the Local Authority and for whom we are corporate parents
- Adoption - children for whom adoption has been identified as being in the child’s best interests
- Care Leavers – children and young people who have left the care of the local authority
- The Youth Offending Team – those young people who have come to the attention of the criminal courts
- The Troubled Families programme
- The Thurrock Local Safeguarding Board

## 2. Family Support

### 2.1 Early Offer of Help

Our Early Offer of Help puts the ethos of Early Intervention at the heart of delivery across children’s services and a range of agencies. Through this we are transforming our systems, including children’s centre delivery to support those most in need at an earlier stage.

2.2 Our approach is one of a multi-agency partnership, working to collectively provide a team around the family approach utilising evidence based primary prevention programmes such as Family Nurse Partnerships (FNP) and the Maternal and Early Childhood Sustained Home Visiting Programme (MESCH). Aligning these programmes with wider services, such as the Healthy Child Programme and access to early education for two, three and four year olds mean that we can offer a structured programme of support.

- 2.3 This 'wrap around approach' embeds the team around the family approach in universal services but with structured links to targeted early support when it is needed. Community based services such as Community mums and dads add to our support pathways that are made up of both statutory and community based services.
- 2.4 MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub )\_will only proceed to a formal assessment of need when the threshold for social care intervention is met and referrals are stepped up to CFAT. In the event where referrals do not meet the social care threshold but still require additional support, referrals are stepped down to the Early Offer of Help services.
- 2.5 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
Thurrock introduced the MASH in July 2014 with the official launch taking place in September 2014. The MASH provides a new multi-agency model for delivering services to children and families in Thurrock that offers a single point of entry for all referrals and requests for help for children and young people. The MASH brings together a variety of agencies into an integrated co-located multi agency team; where information is shared appropriately and securely on children, families and adults.
- 2.6 The MASH is situated at the centre of the main council offices in Grays and has successfully performed its functions as set out in my previous report in October 2014 regarding:
- Informing partners in the MASH about the level of need or risk at the first point of contact.
  - Playing a lead role in supporting and promoting effective information sharing across agencies.
  - Supporting processes that ensures Children Social Care remain responsible for the overall decision making on cases referred to it.
- 2.7 MASH core agencies include: Children Social Care, Essex Police, Locality Senior Practitioner, Troubled Families Programme Manager, Health, Probation, Housing and Education Welfare.
- 2.8 An independent review of the MASH was carried out in March 2015. The report scores the MASH as 'Good' against the Ofsted grade descriptors.
- 2.9 The MASH is expanding its role to include the piloting of a First Response Team to increase capacity to focus cases appropriately towards early intervention where this is appropriate to the levels of need and risk.
- 2.10.1 Family Support Services consist of MASH, Child & Family Assessment Team (CFAT), Four Family Support Teams, an Adolescent Support team and a specialist service consisting of two practitioners dealing with Domestic Violence and Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse.
- 2.10.2 Family Support Teams deal with Children who are deemed as 'Children in Need'.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 imposes on Local Authorities a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in their area who are 'in need' and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs. Other agencies have a duty to co-operate with Social Care in carrying out their duty to assess the needs of the children in need to provide services as necessary.

- 2.10.3 Family Support teams work with children who are subject to Child Protection Plans. Section 47 of the Children Act requires that where a Local Authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a child in their area is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, they shall make necessary enquiries so that they can determine what, if any, action needs to be taken in order to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.
- 2.11 The service continues to review the quality of provision to children and families in need. Regular CIN surgeries are held to ensure that cases are being appropriately progressed in relation to outcomes for children and young people.
- 2.12 Where appropriate cases are stepped down to early offer of help from being on Children in Need plans or up to child protection plan or legal proceedings within the Public Law Outline.
- 2.13 The Adolescent Support Team provides focused support to young people and their families. The team have developed and embedded an adolescent neglect tool taking learning from local and national Serious Case reviews to ensure that the signs of adolescent neglect are recognised and acted on. The team's primary function remains to enhance outcomes for adolescent young people and avoid family breakdown.

### **3. Children who need help and protection**

- 3.1 The rate of children subject to child protection plans has fluctuated in Thurrock. The rate had been on an upwards curve in Thurrock and continued to rise through 2013/14. The rate per 10,000 children in 2013/14 was 75 (288 children). This compares to a rate of 53 per 10,000 in 2012/13.
- 3.2 As set out in my previous report the service has undertaken auditing of these decisions. The Head of Service has been holding CP surgeries to systematically review all cases where children have been subject of plans for 18 months or more with a further surgery to focus on children on plans for 12 months or more.
- 3.3 As at end of August 2014 there were 194 (49.2 per 10,000) children subject to plans compared to 236 in the same period in 2013/14. The number of children subject to Child Protection Plans reached its lowest point in October and November 2014 with 167 children and young people being subject to a CP plan.
- 3.4 Since November 2014 the number of children and young people subject to a Child Protection plan has again increased to 51 per 10,000 as of 31.3.15. At the time of writing in June 2015 there are 210 children subject to Child Protection plans.
- 3.5 The increase in the number of children subject to plans is seen as being due to better identification and responses to neglect and more robust escalation from Children in Need plans to Child Protection plans.

- 3.6 Two children have currently been subject to Child Protection Plans for more than 3 years. No children have currently been subject to Child Protection Plans for between 2 – 3 years. 176 of the current 210 children have been subject to a Child Protection Plan for between 0 - 11 months.
- 3.7 Public Law Outline (PLO) tracking meetings have been established to ensure that where cases are escalated from child protection plans to pre- court proceedings, these are tracked robustly. Under the new arrangement we are ensuring that in future no case remains subject to PLO (the pre-issuing of court proceedings stage) for more than 6 months. The outcomes required from the parents (care givers) under the pre-care proceedings agreement are either achieved within timescales or the matter is progressed to issuing an application to the court. Where required progress and improved outcomes have been made the matter is stepped down.

#### **4. Disabled children**

- 4.1 The Team for Disabled Children continues to provide support for children, young people and their families. Commissioned and In House services offer families a variety of short breaks via sitting and befriending, access to social and leisure activities, residential overnight breaks and overnight breaks in the child's home. These services ensure that as many disabled children and young people continue to live with their families for as long as possible.
- 4.2 The Sunshine Centre continues to offer support to children, young people and their families by providing individual, group activities and additional short breaks in school holidays. The Centre now provides targeted support to those children and young people that need it the most and are making progress in supporting more able children into mainstream activities. The Sunshine Centre continues to provide activities two evenings a week to Young Carers aged 4-8 years. These children provide some form of care to either a disabled sibling or parent with drug and alcohol issues, mental health problems or disabilities.
- 4.3 The Sunshine Centre's services for Early Years were inspected by Ofsted in August 2014. The Centre received the grading of Outstanding for all the 3 areas inspected.
- 4.4 The service for disabled children continues to lead on the commission of an organisation called "Young Carers of Barking and Dagenham" who co-ordinate our young carers group for children and young people who have a disabled sister or brother or a parent who suffers from a physical or mental illness or substance misuse problem.
- 4.5 In partnership with Children's Services, the Young Carers of Barking and Dagenham are working with Thurrock Schools to achieve the 'Gold Award' for all schools in supporting young carers and promoting their educational attainment.
- 4.6 In partnership with parents and young people the Children with Disability Service has worked to improve communication methods with children, young people and their families. Advocacy services available to children with disabilities have been reviewed to ensure that these are responsive to the diverse needs of young people. Spot purchasing arrangements are in place for where the communication needs of the child or young person are highly specialised and cannot be met within existing

provision.

- 4.7 In-line with parents' wishes greater use of social media and on-line forms of communication have been made to communicate with parents.
- 4.8 The department continues to work closely with the parent consultation group CaPa to review and develop the Thurrock 'Local Offer'. The 'Local Offer' is published as part of the SEND reforms under the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 4.9 The Local Offer provides:
- Information about education, health and care services
  - Information about leisure activities and support groups
  - Hold all the information in one place
  - Service provision that is co-produced and more responsive to local needs and aspirations

## **5. Family Group Conferencing**

- 5.1 A family group conference is a process led by family members to plan and make decisions for a child who is in need or at risk. Children and young people subject to their age and understanding are normally involved in the conference and supported to express their wishes and feelings.
- 5.2 Thurrock continues to provide an in-house family group conference service. The service continues to support families in finding solutions in the provision of safe care for children within the family, or finding alternative care for children within the extended family.

## **6. Looked After Children and Young People and Care leavers**

- 6.1. Our numbers of looked after children in Thurrock had risen over recent years. In August 2014 the number of looked after children was 307, which equates to 78 per 10,000. As of 31.3.15 this has reduced to 70 per 10,000. In June 2015 we currently have 285 looked after children.
- 6.2. All of the looked after children must have a registered placement and the placement budget remains an area of ongoing financial pressure for the service. Children are placed in foster care whenever possible and within the local area. Specialist residential placements are used when these are in the best interest of the young person.
- 6.3 The placement of choice for most children is a foster home registered directly with the council, thus ensuring effective co-working with the social work teams, continuity of school and family and friends contact, as well as better value. At the 31 March 2015 Thurrock had a total of 104 fostering households with a potential occupancy of 141 children.

## **7. Care Proceedings**

- 7.1 The service has responded to the challenge of concluding care proceedings within 26 weeks, implementation by the Family Justice review, with a reduction in the average

duration to 27 weeks. Thurrock also saw a reduction in the overall number of proceedings issued in 2014/15.

- 7.2 Our key priorities remain to ensure only the 'right' children come into care and the 'right' time into the 'right' placement. A number of actions have been put in place and continue to address this: a Looked After Children's Surgery is chaired monthly by the Service Manager; the Threshold to Care Panel chaired by the Head of Service meets weekly, full integration of the MASH, Troubled Families and Early Offer of Help; Court and Permanency tracking panels.
- 7.3 The number of care proceedings issued in 2014/15 has shown a marked reduction on the level of proceedings issued during 2013/4 and 2012/13.

## **8. Adoption & Permanency**

- 8.1 Permanency Plans are put in place at the second LAC review and supported by robust legal planning meetings, other than in cases when a permanent placement is required from the outset e.g. a relinquished baby.
- 8.2 We have been very successful in the outcomes of family finding and as of the 31.3.15 had only two children we were actively family-finding for re: adoption.
- 8.3 Timeliness has been an issue for us as reflected in our scorecard (3 yrs average of 710 days between BLA and placed for adoption) but, as also reflected in the scorecard, we have made measurable progress which we intend to continue to build on.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adoption-scorecards>

Our in year average for 2014/15 is 507 days.

- 8.4 We have twelve approved adopters without links and consider that we have sufficient in-house capacity to meet our needs while contributing to wider national needs. We are exploring links with Essex County Council to utilise our adopters.
- 8.5 Timeliness has been an issue in relation to the completion of PARs within stage 1 & 2 and we are focused on achieving continuous improvement in this area.
- 8.6 In order to continually improve our recruitment of adopters we are exploring possible partnerships with the Coram Adoption Charity.

## **9. Care Leavers**

- 9.1 We have seen an increase in care leavers who are recorded as being in employment, education and training from 35% (19, 20 & 21 birthday) to 42%.
- 9.2 This is below our aspirational target of 70% of care leavers being in employment, education or training, which when achieved on current data would make us one of the best performing authorities in the country. Our ultimate aim is for 95 - 100% of care leavers without complex disabilities or mental ill health to be in continuous



employment, education or training.

## **10. The Youth Offending service**

10.1 YOS is a statutory agency responsible for the enforcement of all criminal court orders in respect of 10-18 year olds and for the delivery of interventions attached to those orders plus the planning and through care of those young people serving custodial sentences. The YOS is multi-disciplinary staffed and funded by partner agencies in Police, Local Authority, Education, Probation, Health and the Ministry of Justice via the Youth Justice Board to whom it reports. It has a governance board, comprising senior members of partner agencies with a dual reporting line to the Community Safety Partnership and the Children and Young People's Partnership Line management of staff is through the Council and YOS manages staff from the partner agencies.

10.2 In April 2015 the YOS received a Short Quality Screening from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. The report is highly complimentary of the work undertaken by the YOS, particularly in relation to safeguarding:-  
<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2015/05/Thurrock-SQS-0415.pdf>

10.3 Thurrock is a low spending authority generally and has the smallest YOS in the country. The value for money indicators are therefore good for Thurrock's YOS. Thurrock YOS generally achieves a lower re-offending rate than the national, regional and family averages.

10.4 The last full inspection of Thurrock YOS was in January 2012 by both the Care Quality Commission and HMI Probation. Both outcomes were very positive with an overall minimal improvement required and the action plan as a result of the inspection was successfully implemented.

10.5 The YOS is continually improving and developing to respond to new challenges and opportunities. The YOS has expanded its provision to respond and support victims of crime; is leading on promoting social cohesion and combating radicalisation (as part of the PREVENT agenda) and is working in partnership to reduce serious youth violence.

## **11. Troubled families**

11.1 The national Troubled Families programme focuses on families with worklessness, poor school attendance and anti-social behaviour as problem features. This is operated locally under the national descriptor and uses programme managers to work to support the lead professional for each family, as is identified in the early help model of delivery. This a 'payment by results' (PBR) programme.

11.2 Our validated PBR data shows that Thurrock have successfully 'turned around' over 100% of families within Phase 1 of the Troubled Families Programme.

11.3 We believe the 'Triad' (MASH, Troubled Families and Early Offer of Help) provides us with a solid base for entering Phase 2 of the Troubled Families Programme.

11.4 I am very proud of our Troubled Families Programme and unique Thurrock strengths, which include:

- Dedication to working with and helping improve the lives of the people living within Thurrock. A team that are prepared to work and deliver support services in flexible ways to ensure the best outcomes for the Troubled Families e.g. one Parental Outreach Worker is currently taking a number of previously withdrawn young people out doing “Positive Activities” (Football/Basketball/Tennis, etc.) in local parks. Some of these young people were so withdrawn they had seldom ventured out of the family home or to school in over a year. This has also allowed other services to engage them such as Thurrock Therapeutic Treatment Services.
- A strong belief in the ideals of the Troubled Families programme - use of the Team Around the Family model which emphasises and encourages participation; is action orientated and supported by a SMART outcomes framework.
- A full engagement plan for schools, with frequent visits to ensure the Troubled Families agenda is fully embedded within participating local schools.
- Development of co-located Thurrock Housing Department, TF Champions
- A strong Multi-Agency Partnership Board

## **12. The Local Safeguarding Children’s Board**

12.1 The board has continued to be proactive within the community, raising awareness on safeguarding.

12.2 Key achievements for the board during 2014/15 have included :

- Continuation of ‘Walk online’ Programme across schools and ‘Stranger Danger’ to raise awareness of online exploitation and protection amongst pupils, teachers, parents, professionals and carers.
- Development of the Risk Assessment Group and Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Group to co-ordinate multi-agency identification, disruption and support for young people at risk of CSE; young people who go missing and young people who experience a multiplicity of risk factors.
- Development of a clear Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) pathway
- The LSCB Conference in November 2014 – Spotlight on Neglect

12.3 In December 2014 the Safeguarding board published the serious case review ‘Julia’. A copy of the full report can be found on the LSCB website. As portfolio holder I deeply regret the historic failings highlighted within the review and I am closely monitoring progress with officers against the LSCB ‘Julia’ action plan.

- 12.4 The LSCB continue to monitor the 'Julia' action plan across all agencies and updating reports on the action plan have been and will continue to be presented to the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 12.5 A further Serious Case Review – 'Megan' has been commissioned by the board and is due for publication later this year. Initial learning from Megan has been applied across agencies and a detailed action plan will be produced.

### **13. Conclusion**

- 13.1 Thurrock Children Social Care (CATO) has made significant progress within 2014/15 and remains focused on achieving continuous improvements in practice and outcomes for children.
- 13.2 Thurrock was last inspected by OFSTED in 2012 – it is expected in the next year that there will be an inspection from OFSTED under the new Framework. This incorporates the Safeguarding inspection, with looked after children, including care leavers, but this also includes the previous separate inspections of the fostering and adoption service. There is also a separate inspection of the LSCB that happens concurrently.
- 13.3 Learning from Serious Case review has been disseminated across the Thurrock LSCB partner agencies and continues to be embedded into practice.

## 14. Financial Information:

(A Motion agreed by the Council on 23 January 2013 requires the Cabinet Member to cover all finance and budget issues of their portfolio that they consider relevant, including (but not limited to): fiscal management; budget responsibility of the cabinet member; receipts and actual spend vs. predicted spend; the levels of virements and value for money.)

### 14.1 Details of the 2014/15 out turn and variances are detailed below.

Cost Centre	Sum of Original Budget 14-15	Sum of Revised Budget 14-15	Sum of 14-15 Out-turn	Sum of Variance budget v Out-turn
Youth Services	1,359,263	1,012,017	873,622	(138,395)
Social Care - Service Managers	944,650	1,052,719	1,063,896	11,177
Legal Proceedings	707,678	607,678	500,961	(106,717)
External Purchasing	9,023,135	9,023,135	9,069,069	45,934
Internal Fostering and Adoption Costs	5,555,224	5,677,698	5,624,593	(53,105)
Thurrock Access to Resources Panel	107,000	107,000	204,455	97,455
Initial Response Team	499,690	1,157,109	1,154,544	(2,565)
Family Support Services	1,203,022	1,203,022	1,774,502	571,480
Troubled Families	92,039	42,039	-62,763	(104,802)
Children with Disabilities	1,361,237	1,361,237	1,535,807	174,570
Safeguarding and Review	580,763	624,548	825,131	200,583
Through Care and UASC	1,075,931	1,088,433	1,385,365	296,932
Other CATO Services	2,137,447	2,070,711	2,272,946	202,235
<b>Total Care and targeted outcomes</b>	<b>24,647,079</b>	<b>25,027,346</b>	<b>26,222,128</b>	<b>1,194,782</b>

14.2 The largest budget pressures are:

- External placements / rises in numbers of LAC
- Agency staff
- Legal fees

14.3 External placements

This budget covers all external fostering placements with Independent fostering agencies, residential placements, semi-independent provision and also includes costs for secure placements. This budget has been previously added to by the council to meet the growing demand. The external placement budget has been reduced by £2m in 2015/16. We continue to hold weekly threshold panel to scrutinise every decision for a child to become accommodated as well as monthly LAC surgeries to ensure permanence plans are progressed rapidly and challenge if children and young people remain in residential care longer than they need. We continue to focus on increasing our pool of in-house foster carers; more robust commissioning and partnerships with other local authorities to achieve maximum value for money.

14.4 Agency staff

The service remains committed to establishing a diverse permanently staffed workforce to meet the needs of the community. The retention of experienced staff is a key priority for the service.

Spending on agency will remain a high risk area for the budget.

There is a current 30% vacancy rate across CATO and particularly within the Children and Family Assessment Team and Family Support Teams.

A range of recruitment initiatives are being undertaken including:

- Recruitment of Newly Qualified Social Workers and support packages via the ASYE Academy
- The Return to Social Work Programme
- Step Up to Social Work Programme.

14.5 Legal fees

This budget covers the cost of Court fees, legal representation for the Council and any specialist reports requested by the Court. Thurrock has seen a reduction in the number of weeks taken to conclude proceedings and this is now at an average of 27 weeks. The aim is to reduce this to 26 weeks or below in-line with the best interests of children and value for money. The threshold panel continues to scrutinise requests to issue proceedings to ensure that these are appropriate.

14.6 The service continues to face challenges in bringing the budget on line with increasing demand and expectations as well as making the required budget savings that have been identified.



<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 14</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member Report – Communities and Public Protection</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Terry Brookes, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection	
This report is public	

I am delighted to be presenting my portfolio report to Council for the first time.

This portfolio covers a very wide range of statutory services, the overall aim of which is to protect the public and develop the community in Thurrock. Teams in Communities and Public Protection continue to work hand in hand with many other agencies including the Government Departments, Other Councils, the Police and the Fire Brigade to achieve this aim.

I will outline the work of the teams that deliver this activity on behalf of the Council and update members on the changes that have been made in light of budget reductions and the changing regulatory landscape we are operating in. Our teams continue to provide a professional service in the face of financial challenges and I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers for their continued hard work.

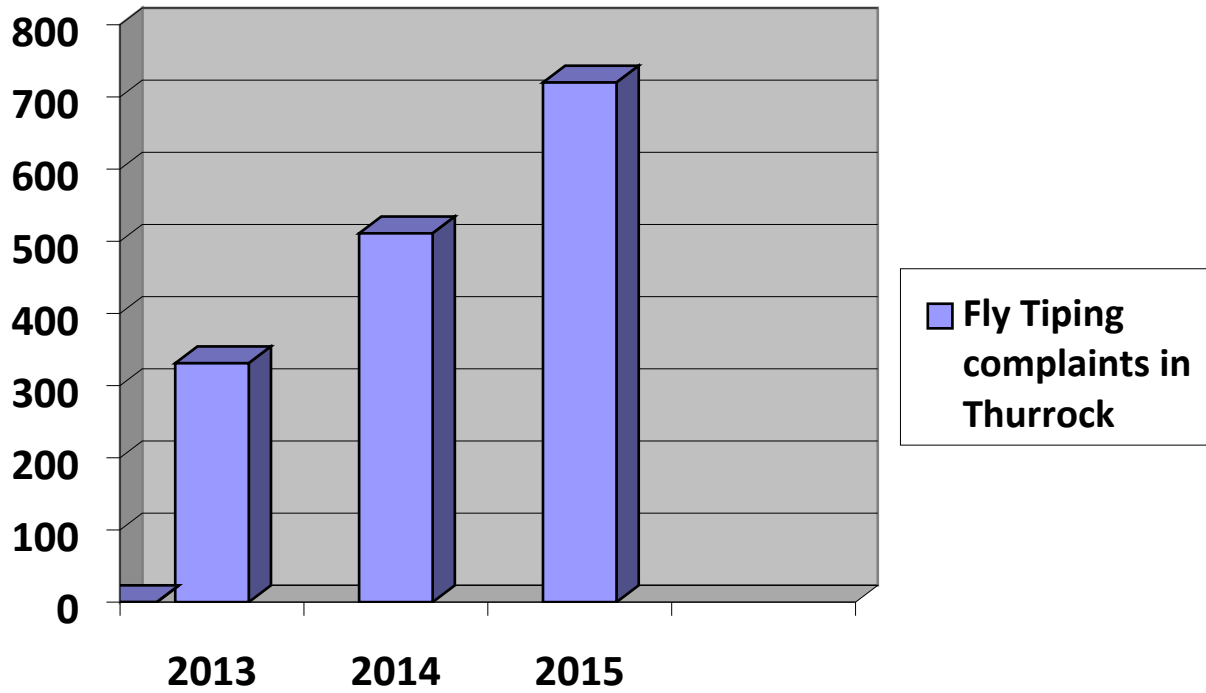
### **Environmental Crime**

The Community Protection Team that previously undertook work on environmental crime has now been dis-banded, the remaining two officers undertaking this work have been moved to report to the Team Leader for Environmental Protection.

These officers have nevertheless continued to address environmental crime issues across Thurrock on a priority basis. One area of particular activity this year has been the pursuit of fly tippers. This has resulted in the prosecution of five individuals for waste offences so far this year and further prosecutions are in progress or in the pipeline. As members will be aware from the considerable press coverage surrounding this issue, fly tipping is an increasing problem in Thurrock and in most local authority areas in the Country. We know that fly tipping is a major area of concern for our residents and so we have concentrated the efforts of our remaining environmental enforcement officers on this area of work, in particular where evidence can be obtained for prosecution of offenders. In the first quarter of this year we have received 720 complaints about fly tipping from Thurrock residents, this is 41% more than during the same period last year and represents an increase of 117% since 2013. Unfortunately during this same period the number of officers available to deal with all aspects of environmental crime including fly tipping has reduced from five to two. The following charts illustrate the trends in fly tipping

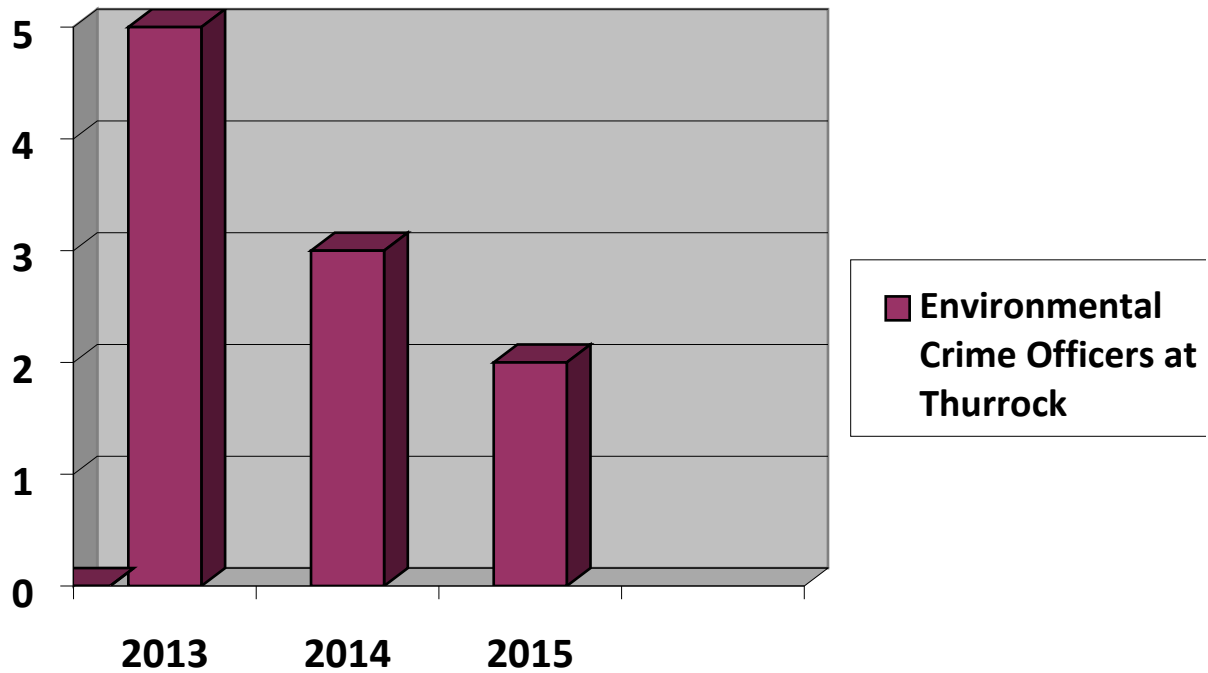
complaints from residents and in staffing to address these complaints.

Fly-tipping complaints in Thurrock 2013-15 (1st Qtr)



Staff dealing with Environmental Crime in Thurrock 2013 -15





### Environmental Protection

The work of the Environmental Protection (EP) Team encompasses the areas of pollution control and statutory nuisance. The team have dealt with 4601 service requests since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014.

They operate the out of hours noise service and have had considerable success in the last year in reducing the exposure of residents to noise at night that would otherwise disturb their lives.

The team have used a combination of informal intervention and formal legal action, including the service of abatement notices to achieve results.

In the last year the out of hours noise team dealt with 632 requests for service, which included evidence gathering visits.

Other areas of EP enforcement work include high hedges, light nuisance, odour nuisance investigation and consultation work on large scale planning applications to promote good environmental compliance on development.

EP Officers completed all 69 statutory industrial process inspections. Works continue to reduce the impact of these processes on the wellbeing of residents.

The team achieved 100% DEFRA statistical data return rate for their Local Authority Pollution Control Duties.

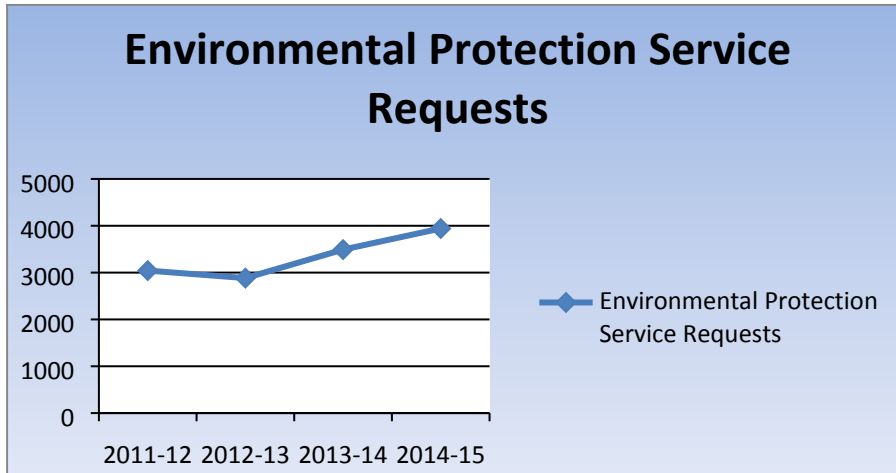
The team provided expert acoustic and pollution control advice to 158 planning and licensing applications over the year.

The team implement the Air Quality Management Regime in Thurrock and monitor 16 designated Air Quality Management Areas.

The team maintain and collect data from scientific monitoring equipment at 5 sites in

the borough.

The team dealt with 86 Contaminated Land (CL) enquiries over the year. The review and re-write of the CL strategy for Thurrock was completed and approved by cabinet in March 2015.



In order to accommodate the 15-16 budget reductions some areas of service have unfortunately had to be discontinued from the start of this year, these include dealing with unsecure premises, filthy and verminous property, rubbish accumulations and pests. These and the other changes to provision made by the team have contributed 96k to the savings achieved by Public Protection.

## Licensing

The Licensing Team are responsible for a wide range of licences. Premises Licence (Alcohol and Entertainment), Taxis, Gambling, Sex Establishments, Animal Welfare (e.g. Pet shops, Boarding Kennels), Charity Collections and Scrap Metal.

Last year saw the team processing over 1400 applications for all types of licences. In addition to the application processing, the team have taken part in numerous multi agency operations with partner agencies around Scrap Metal; the Thurrock Community Alcohol Project; Taxis/Limo's enforcement and the night time economy, as well as general enforcement of licences and their conditions.

The inclusion of Scrap Metal Dealing within activities that require a licence happened in the last months of 2013. The rationale behind the legislation was to introduce a regime to regulate the commerce in scrap metal and disrupt the sale of stolen metal by thieves. Members will recall that metal theft from highways and railways was causing considerable inconvenience and risk to the public in Thurrock and more widely.

Since the introduction of the licensing regime metal theft has declined considerably and the continued efforts of our licensing officers working with the local police to check local scrap dealers is helping to protect the public and businesses from the risks arising from this activity.

To date only one scrap metal dealer has had to have their licence revoked in Thurrock. The majority of local scrap metal dealers have complied with licensing requirements.

The team continues to support the Licensing Committee and is currently undertaking a review of all licence fees and reviewing the policies around the fitness to hold a taxi drivers licence in relation to previous convictions; as well as implementing the changes to both alcohol and entertainment licensing, and taxi licensing brought in by the by the Deregulation Act 2015. These changes allow venues to provide much of the previously licenced entertainment, such as live and amplified music, up until 11pm without a licence. This represents a relaxation of the licensing regime and only time will tell whether this is a welcome reduction in bureaucracy or a recipe for increased neighbourhood disturbance.

There have been numerous Licensing Sub-Committees where decisions have been made over a variety of taxi and alcohol licensing matters, with any appealed decisions being successfully defended at court. I would like to thank Licensing Members for their continued work on the committee and at the many sub-committees that have been held so far this year. Without the dedication of these Members, the operation of an effective licensing regime at Thurrock Council would not be possible.

We have continued to support the borough wide Pubwatch and Behave Or Be Banned Scheme (BOBB), and are actively participating in the Community Alcohol Project in Purfleet which is targeting access to alcohol in the Purfleet area by young people, as well as promoting the messages around the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the Prevent Agenda with local licence holders.

Thurrock Safety Advisory Group is administered and chaired through the Licensing Team which continues to review large events in the Borough providing support, guidance and regulation, ensuring that the community attending those events remain safe and that those organising the events have access to the skills and resources of all partner agencies.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

The Council is a statutory member of the Community Safety Partnership along with the Police, Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Group, and Essex Fire and Rescue. The responsible authorities who form the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in a local government area are required to work together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area and to have in place a partnership plan for that area, setting out the CSP's priorities;

The partnership must have due regard for the police and crime objectives set out in the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) police and crime plan

Community Safety Partnerships were set up under the 1998 Crime and disorder Act to ensure joint working between partners including councils to reduce crime and promote public safety in a locality

The overall picture in relation to crime in Thurrock is, Crime has decreased in the year ending March 2015 with a 2.1% reduction to 10,956 crimes.

Domestic burglaries remained in line with last year at 809 (+15 burglaries)

Vehicle crime reduced by 14% to 1,522 crimes.

There were increases in violence against the person of 14% to 2,648 crimes and serious sexual crime was up 42% to 196. This is in response to positive campaigns encouraging the reporting of domestic abuse by victims and the national headlines with regards to historical sexual abuse.

In order to address local crime issues and assist in addressing emerging issues around the radicalisation of groups the partnership has set itself priorities for the year ahead, these are:

1. **Reduce Youth offending and re-offending of adults & young people**  
This will address volumes crimes of: Domestic burglary; Most serious violence; Personal robbery and drug offences
2. **To reduce harm to and safeguard vulnerable victims** from: Domestic abuse; Sexual offences including rape; Child sexual exploitation; Serious Youth Violence; Hate crime; Anti-social behaviour; Cyber bullying; Honour based abuse and Serious Organised Crime encompassing Modern day slavery & Fraud where victims are vulnerable
3. **Violent extremism:** Delivering the Governments counter terrorism strategy – Prevent locally

In order to deliver these priorities the partnership will take a multi-agency approach to tackle operational issues around crime, offenders and anti-social behaviour continue to deliver improvements in community safety for our residents, continue to work closely with colleagues in adult social care and the voluntary sector to raise awareness of violence against women, raise awareness and encourage the reporting of hate crime through our hate incident reporting centres and work with the PCC for Essex to help reduce crime, and disorder and improve support for victims within our communities. We host multi-agency locality action groups to provide response to individuals impacted by either ASB or hate crime in their community, as well as attending fortnightly police tasking meetings.

The Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Bill came into force on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014, with part of the Bill being implemented in January 2015. There is still considerable work for the CSP to scope out the impact and ensure maximum benefits are realised for Thurrock residents.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 and places a duty on local areas to, as a minimum, understand the local threat and judge whether activities underway are sufficient to meet it. It also places a duty on educational establishments “to have due regard to the need to prevent people from

being drawn into terrorism". To support with this we have offered train the trainer WRAP training to all schools, have provided guidance on inclusion within their safeguarding policies and have shared the advice being given by the Home Office with regards to travelling to Syria. We are working with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on ensuring that it is included within on-line awareness training.

## **Civil Protection**

The work of Civil Protection impacts on every resident, commercial enterprise and Council department. The team produce plans which inform the Councils' response to a range of emergencies and disruptive occurrences that could arise in Thurrock.

The Civil Protection team work hard to co-ordinate resources in an emergency incident, operating a 24/7 on call duty system. They were recently involved in co-ordinating the initial response to the sink hole that appeared in Hogg Lane. The majority of this work involves pre-planning and monitoring the high risks in Thurrock e.g. for our potentially hazardous industrial sites designated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) and flood risk such as the potential for an east coast tidal surge.

This year the team are:

- exercising the plan for the Thurrock Council Incident Control room at the end of July involving staff from all council directorates, volunteers and management from Public Protection so as to be ready to get the emergency control room up and running if it is required to respond to an incident;
- reviewing, exercising and finalising our major incident and recovery plans before the end of January 2016;
- undertaking school critical incident management planning to ensure the schools who choose this service are more resilient in dealing with any incidents, such as the coach crash in Belgium, whereby the incident was across social media and the news before the parents could get any information;
- training duty officers from the 24/7 on call system to ensure the knowledge and ability to deal with an incident is current;
- continuing co-ordination with all stakeholders (emergency services, industrial partners, health agencies, government and voluntary agencies etc.) to ensure response and recovery is appropriate for each of the industrial sites.

We have pre-arranged mutual aid agreements with neighbouring Councils to help strengthen our response and recovery arrangements in the provision of control centres should we not be able to access the civic offices, as well as for equipment / resources if required. We have also recently agreed a memorandum of understanding with Grangewaters for the temporary provision of accommodation for any evacuees in an emergency incident, therefore utilising Council resources in a cost effective way.

The team are working with Thurrock Faith Matters and other local voluntary organisations to ensure community resilience is strengthened and to ensure that help can be provided to those who need it during and in the aftermath of an

emergency.

Internal business continuity was coordinated by the team until March 2015, this area of work has now been devolved to managers across the Council. Placing the focus on business continuity back into the services who are best placed to know their critical functions and requirements and simultaneously realising a saving to the Councils budget.

## **Trading Standards**

Trading Standards enforce consumer protection legislation to bring about a fair, safe and equitable trading environment within Thurrock. The work of Trading Standards impacts on every resident and commercial enterprise in the area. It also has the potential to impact upon other individuals and organisations external to Thurrock.

### Ports work

The team are involved in the, National Trading Standards Board, Safety at Ports Project. They receive funding in order to enable them to undertake safety checks on consumer goods coming into the UK at Thurrock's two main ports, London Gateway and Port of Tilbury. The team use various sources of information to identify containers of potentially unsafe consumer products for examination and testing. These sources range from national and international data about product types to local knowledge from the officer's own expertise.





From April 2013 to date, 9,809 carcinogenic skin lightening creams have been intercepted at Tilbury and Gateway ports

For the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 14 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 15:

At London Gateway and Tilbury Ports

We have stopped 16 Consignments for being unsafe entering the UK, these consignments included 10,206 unsafe products and these were prevented from potentially harming UK consumers.

We have identified 77 non-compliant consignments including a total of 499,757 products. In most of these cases the matter was referred to the importers local Trading Standards to work with them to rectify problems. Where this was not possible goods were destroyed or placed under suspension notices prohibiting them from being supplied until they were made compliant.

In June 2014 we received a letter of thanks from Lord Toby Harris, chair of the National Trading Standards Board.



In 2014 we embarked on a number of significant counterfeit prosecution cases. Most of which will be in court in 2015. These cases have the potential to generate significant Proceeds of Crime Act Orders (POCA) once the defendants have been found guilty.

Following our success in getting a £300k POCA order in December 2014 against a trader in a counterfeit DVD case we are hoping to get a one off award to fund further casework in this area. This could help to offset some of the effects of budget reductions in Trading Standards that have unfortunately meant that counterfeit work will not be routinely done going forward.

Other ongoing prosecutions include illegally imported puppies, underage sales, illegal clamping, a rogue mechanic who was ripping off consumers large sums of money but not actually doing any work and overloaded vehicles.

Of particular note among these are cases involving illegally imported puppies, not only do many of these puppies exhibit health problems that mean that owners are faced with unexpectedly high vets bills but they are often not correctly vaccinated against rabbies and so have to be quarantined to prevent in the introduction of rabbies into the UK.

### **Travellers Encampment Work**

Thurrock continues to have significant numbers of unauthorised encampments, continuing the trend seen last year. Between 1.3.14 and 28.2.15, there were 57 such encampments in our Borough, of which 18 were on private land, the remaining 39 were responded to, on behalf of the Council by the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU), of which the Council is a subscribing member. (£7,200 p.a.). This year, since 1.3.15 to 16.6.15, there have been a further 20 unauthorised encampments, of which 2 were on private land and the remaining 18 on public or Council-owned land, these were also dealt with by the ECTU.



The staff of the ECTU have a target to effect the removal of all unauthorised encampments within 10 working days. They hit this target on every occasion, often getting the removal within 7 or 8 days. Furthermore, the annual subscription for all participating Councils was reduced by 10% this year.

## **Health and Safety**

The main focus this year has been moving to a self service model for internal health and safety management. This has involved the updating of the Councils Health and Safety Policy Statement and the development of internal procedures and documentation to assist managers across the organisation to manage health and safety compliance within their areas of responsibility on behalf of the Council.

This process has been completed and the revised policy and procedures have been to the Corporate Health and Safety Board for approval. The next meeting of this board will provide the opportunity for service representatives to comment on the revised policy and procedures and for the chair of the board, the Chief Executive to determine any further work required. The adoption of a self service model has allowed for the required staff reductions in health and safety to keep within budget.

The work of the teams external health and safety inspectors has involved participation on projects and investigation of accidents in the workplaces in Thurrock.

A number of enforcement actions are in progress in relation to these accident investigations, including several prosecutions.

## **Food Team**

The Food Team has continued to undertake its statutory duties to ensure food safety in Thurrock. They have carried out food hygiene and standards inspections in approximately 1,300 premises from manufacturers, packers, cold stores, import/exporting companies, restaurants and takeaways to schools, care homes and retail stores.

While the team supports businesses wherever possible, the team has served 19 food hygiene improvement notices, undertaken a voluntary closure and issued 153 written warnings for breaches of food hygiene legislation. The team also has a prosecution for alleged food hygiene offenses being heard in Court this month.



The team were successful in receiving grant funding from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to undertake advisory visits to food businesses to encourage the display of food hygiene ratings at their premises in places where consumers could easily see them.

The project demonstrated a significant uptake in the display of hygiene ratings which made the scheme more visible to consumers and increased competition between businesses.

The project acted as an additional incentive for businesses to improve, and consumers are already starting to question and draw their own conclusions if they don't see a sticker on display. The data gained as part of this project has assisted the FSA for pressing the case for mandatory hygiene rating display in England.

The team also carry out investigations into food and food premises complaints from residents, allegations of food poisoning, unsafe drinking water and notifiable infectious diseases including legionella.

Food is regularly sampled from businesses across the borough to ensure food safety and accurate labelling (to prevent contamination by allergens and food contamination). The team undertakes a programme of sampling each year which concentrates on known high risk foods, local manufacturers and national surveys. This has proved to be an efficient and effective method to identify food safety risks in food prior to complaints or notifications of illness. One of the areas currently being focussed on is food substitution where meat and fish will be substituted for cheaper meats or other ingredients. Tests to establish the proportion of meat and fish of the correct type in products is undertaken.

A slimmed down food sampling programme will be undertaken this year maintaining as far as possible this valuable area of protective work whilst recognising the realities of the reduction in sampling budgets required to meet savings targets.

The volume of imported and exported food stored, transported and sold within the borough continues to increase, including the import of nuts, seeds, spices, fruit and vegetables and the export of similar foods. The food team provide export health certificates to enable Thurrock companies to sell their food outside the EC, including margarine and baby milk powder going to China.

The team also operate Thurrock Council's Street Trading Consent scheme, which licenses mobile food vehicles across the borough. This is to prevent nuisance to residents and reduce risks to road users, in addition to ensuring food safety.

## **Parking Services**

Parking Services enforces on-street traffic regulation orders and manages off-street car parks; Controlled Parking Zones and Permit Parking Areas across the Borough to support the Council's obligations in relation to traffic management and road safety. In a typical year, the civil enforcement team issues around 11,000 penalty charge notices for parking contraventions.

2014/15 showed a steady increase in pressures from commuter parking. In response, the Council:

- extended South Ockendon Permit Parking Area
- introduced Badger's Dene Permit Parking Area
- extended Stanford-le-Hope Controlled Parking Zone, and
- converted the Controlled Parking Zone in Seabrooke Rise to a Permit Parking Area
- progressed the introduction of a new controlled off-street car park at Station House
- Free weekend parking was again provided during December 2014 in all on and off-street pay-and-display parking places.

The operational surplus on the 2014/15 car parking account is £182,704. This is published in the Annual Parking Report for 2015.

## **Community Development**

Community development helps ensure that residents can come together to improve local life. This may be through taking voluntary action in a neighbourhood, engaging residents in decision-making or helping to improve someone's life.

Invariably, much of the team's work depends on a close relationship with the voluntary, community and faith sector as conduits into communities. In July 2012 Cabinet agreed that management of the Voluntary Sector Development Fund - which is the management of grants to the voluntary sector – should pass to CVS. The total value of the fund is £432,600. Thurrock CVS took on administration of the fund in recognition of their role in being best placed to develop the sector, and to help inform the best investment decisions in partnership with the Council. I look forward to working with the grants panel to ensure that future awards invest in local initiatives to improve life in Thurrock, whilst looking to ways we can grow the funds available to support community led action in Thurrock. As the council faces increasing challenges to public sector budgets, we have to look at innovative and creative ways to ensure that we preserve and nurture the offer made by the voluntary and community sector which adds to the quality of life in Thurrock

The Joint Strategic Forum meets on a quarterly basis and provides an opportunity to hold strategic discussions with the voluntary sector about how we can work closer together in the interests of our residents. I look forward to working with the JSF on this agenda and I am particularly keen to ensure the principles of Thurrock's Joint Compact underpin our work.

The development of Community Hubs demonstrates how working differently can unleash the passion and skills inherent within communities to bring people together and make a difference to local people. Thurrock was fortunate to secure £550k funding from Government to support the development of Hubs from April 2015. Funding will support five hubs directly in South Ockendon, Stifford Clays and Blackshots, Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and Aveley. A training and development programme will support the development of volunteers and a charitable company to develop hubs. In addition, a number of exciting opportunities are being explored to see how services can be delivered differently through hubs so they are more relevant to local people whilst helping to make savings and be more efficient in the future.

Connecting people is a key ambition of the Stronger Together partnership. Stronger Together looks to share best practice and encourage communities to be able to help themselves using the assets and informal associations around them first and before traditional service models. The ambition is that communities can do all they can for themselves without having to rely on statutory services to improve communities. Stronger Together is underpinned by 5 common themes, they are: place based, strength based, relationship driven, citizens in the lead and social justice. Stronger Together will be hosting an event on 10<sup>th</sup> August to help inspire new ways of working within communities and to help support those who can best connect people where they live. I encourage all councillors as community leaders to think about how they can support stronger communities in their wards and to attend the event on 10<sup>th</sup> August – more information is available via [www.strongertogether.org.uk](http://www.strongertogether.org.uk). Stronger Together embraces Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as a concept to underpin our approach to community development and engagement. I am particularly encouraged to see how ABCD has helped to speak up Thurrock – recognising our assets and strengths as a foundation for the future.

Strong relationships must underpin our work with communities – if we are to truly encourage people to take action to improve their own lives, they must feel confident that the Council is there to support and recognise this effort. The council is extremely proud of the 250 volunteers who give their time to support council services in a wide range of roles across Thurrock museums, libraries, youth offending and children centres to give just a few examples. In June 2015 we marked Volunteers' Week by thanking volunteers for their time, and recognising their contribution through certificates awarded by The Mayor. As a council we are always looking for new ways in which to capture the enthusiasm of residents to volunteer with us. When an appropriate placement is not available, we are lucky to have a thriving Volunteer Centre in Thurrock based at ngage.

As Portfolio Holder for Communities my role also includes liaison with the armed forces. Thurrock was the first council in Essex to develop a Veterans' Charter, and we signed the Essex Community Covenant in 2013. In June Thurrock launched the Veterans' Information Portal - or the VIP Portal – as part of its Flying the Flag ceremony to mark Armed Forces Day. The portal has been developed through the Essex Military Civilian Partnership and Thurrock is pleased to be part of this initiative, encouraging services to promote it through the web site and encouraging veterans to register by using their service number.

The World War One Commemorative Group enjoys cross party membership as well as a rich contribution from many service and heritage groups active in Thurrock. Following the very successful commemorative event at Tilbury Fort in 2014, I very much look forward to this year's commemorative event at Coalhouse Fort on 24 August 2015. These events provide a unique opportunity to remember the sacrifices made in previous conflicts so that we might enjoy the freedom and choice we enjoy today.

Another key event I look forward to later this month is The Big Lunch. This event is now established in the annual calendar as a day when families can get together and enjoy a wide range of activities at no cost. From next year this event will be organised by The Grays Riverside Big Local group. Such events would not be possible without the strong partnerships we enjoy in Thurrock and I extend my thanks to all who are helping to contribute to this and other events over the summer period.

The Community Development and Equalities Team continues to support our communities and residents through stronger joint working between our community partners and this has strengthened our ability to tackle social exclusion, and create communities in which everyone can participate. The team have supported the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) through attendance at the Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and supported active partner working in relation to hate crimes, as well as supporting the Prevent agenda in Thurrock across communities. They have also secured support from the national Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA) programme to develop a local approach to Community Asset Transfer in Thurrock. A partnership of council and voluntary sector groups has now been formed and will be taking this agenda forward through 2015/16.

The framework for Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) is now well established and will continue to be used as a tool to inform new policy arrangements, key decisions and budget savings proposals.

This year the council will review its Translation and Interpreting service considering how we can best work with our communities and partners to understand the demand for provision and how we might achieve a more focussed and efficient service in the future.

Following a full relaunch in December 2014, the council now has over 100 staff forum members engaged with six interest groups for Mental Health, Disability, BME, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT), Women and Men. Underpinned by a strong governance model the issues and actions arising from forums are prioritised and progressed with the support of People Board and a wider network of Corporate Champions. Staff forums play a key role in developing internal and external partnerships – for example, the LGBT forum is leading the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index review for the Council, and the women's forum is supporting the CSP around domestic abuse policy.

In April 2014 Cabinet agreed to establish a Fairness Commission for Thurrock based on a great deal of evidence into levels of inequality in the borough. The

priorities for the commission include ensuring fair access to services and opportunities, ensuring equal life chances, building stronger and cohesive communities and involving residents and listening to their views on fairness in Thurrock. The Fairness Commission is currently holding a 'Summer of Listening' to help understand people's perceptions of fairness. By understanding how people experience life in Thurrock, the Commission will be better placed to reflect on our opportunity to ensure that current regeneration opportunities benefit the whole borough, and tackle historic examples of inequality. Councillors can help to promote the work of the Commission to bring a new focus and influence to the equalities agenda so that Thurrock can truly be a fair place of access to opportunity, enterprise and excellence where all individuals, communities and businesses flourish.

The Council's Consultation Portal is an online engagement tool which is mostly utilised for online consultation with Thurrock Residents. Members of the public can also use the system for submitting petitions. The Community Development & Equalities Team continues to maintain and monitor the system as well as supporting other departments to carry out consultation and engagement exercises. There are currently over 3000 residents signed up to the portal, this means that an automatic alert will be sent to them when a new consultation is listed. A group training session for council staff has been scheduled for August to enable more people to use the system for online engagement. To view current and past consultations and petitions click on 'Have my say' on the [thurrock.gov.uk](http://thurrock.gov.uk) homepage.

### Public Protection Financial Information – Overview

The overall net budget within Public Protection is £1.695m. Below is the financial summary of the services, with the annual budget assigned to each individual area.

#### 2015/16 Revised Budget

Service	Revised Budget	Budgets to Date	Actuals To Date	Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Environmental Health Food Safety	210	52	46	(6)
Environmental Protection	301	75	75	(0)
Licensing	(51)	(2)	24	26
Trading Standards	331	82	70	(12)
Public Protection	236	93	71	(38)
Health & Safety	309	85	70	(15)
Public Protection Service Management	49	(7)	(7)	0
Community Protection	80	0	(37)	(37)
Community Safety	21	3	0	(3)
Civil Protection	151	34	36	2
CONTEST	0	0	0	0
Safer Communities	18	(35)	(35)	0
Domestic Violence	40	0	0	0
	<b>1,695</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>(83)</b>

## Financial information – Forecast 2015/16

The service is expected to achieve a breakeven financial position at the end of the financial year. The service finished the 2014/15 with a small budget surplus, but as part of the 2015/16 base, the following savings need to be achieved:

### 2015/16 Budget Savings

Public Protection efficiencies.	169.5
Reduction in Corporate Health and Safety team (self-service provision going forward).	37.5
Removal of Corporate Health and Safety fund.	50.0
Food Safety - reduction in food sampling programme.	4.0
Cessation of Council funding to Thurrock Community Safety Partnership.	50.0
Trading Standards cessation of work on <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• trade-marks</li><li>• counterfeiting</li><li>• animal welfare</li></ul>	40.0
Environmental Protection – Cessation of work in relation to: noxious matter accumulations pests filthy and verminous premises unsecured premises pollution permit inspections.	96.0
Civil Protection – cessation of business continuity planning (self- service provision).	14.0
<b>Total Reduction</b>	<b>461.0</b>

There is no adverse pressure that the service is forecasting to have a detrimental effect on the outturn position for 2015/16, outside of those that could be demand lead or unforeseen.

### Community Development and Equalities Financial Information

The Community Development and Equalities team is within the Strategy team in the Chief Executive's Delivery Unit.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Budgets to Date</b>	<b>Actuals To Date</b>	<b>Variance to Date</b>
<b>Strategy Team</b>	<b>728,387</b>	<b>98,780</b>	<b>102,809</b>	<b>4,029</b>
<b>Community Development Projects</b>	<b>50,900</b>	<b>8,475</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>(5,696)</b>
<b>Voluntary Grants</b>	<b>432,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,211,887</b>	<b>107,255</b>	<b>105,589</b>	<b>(1,667)</b>

There are no significant variances to the budget that are forecast at this stage.

#### Strategy Team DA500

This code includes salary and non-salary budgets for the Strategy Team including corporate and service planning, performance management, research and intelligence which are outside of this portfolio area as well as community development and equalities within it.

There are four posts supporting Community Development and Equalities. The remaining budget funds one Strategy post and covers all other service costs and recharges.

#### Community Development DA501

This code is used to support specific projects undertaken by the team, for example The Big Lunch and World War One Commemorative events. The base budget is supplemented by external funds – for example a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund in spring 2014 to support the WW1 event at Tilbury Fort. There has been an increase in the amount available to support community projects through reviewing and realigning non salary budgets.

#### Voluntary Grants DA502

The code is used to pay the funding agreements administered via CVS to support voluntary sector development and delivery



### QUESTION TIME

**Questions from Members to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee in accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.**

There is 1 question to the Leader and a further 3 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER

#### 1. From Councillor Ojetola

"News reports state that a lot of radicalisation takes place in schools, or via social media, leading to recruitment of young people to extremist groups. Please outline what Thurrock Council is doing to prevent the radicalisation of Thurrock young people"

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

#### 1. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Brookes

"The majority of parking outside schools is done responsibly. Having had many yellow lines placed outside of schools, and parents still park(ing) illegally or irresponsibly in side roads and around the school. How do you envisage the pilot scheme allowing teachers to take on parking enforcement will tackle and solve the problem?"

#### 2. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Brookes

"The unlawful grazing of horses on council land including some children's play areas and also in many other parts of Thurrock. Can you inform the chamber what if any revenue this brings to Thurrock Council or if not, what action is taken to stop this?"

#### 3. From Councillor Aker to Councillor Worrall

"Can the Portfolio Member for Housing inform the Council how many people in Thurrock are on the Council's Housing Waiting List?"

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## Item 18 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 22 July 2014

Date	From	Motion	Status	Accountable Director
23/07/14	Cllr J Kent	<p>This council believes that work should pay and therefore opposes the introduction of schemes which force job seekers into unpaid work or face losing their benefits – schemes known popularly as workfare.</p> <p>This council is concerned that there is no evidence workfare assists job seekers in finding work and in fact working a 30-hour week makes that more difficult; that workfare is replacing paid work; and that workfare stigmatises benefits claimants and locks them further into poverty.</p> <p>This council therefore pledges not to use any workfare placements and also calls for our partners and contractors not to use the schemes.</p>	<p>In accordance with the pledge the council is not using workfare placements.</p> <p>A letter is being sent to partners and contractors to highlight the pledge and seek their co-operation.</p> <p>The Council has given information via the procurement process for all contractors (existing and potential) on the council's position re fair pay. We are committed to ensuring this is done on an ongoing basis that respective contractors will be aware of.</p>	Graham Farrant / Jackie Hinchliffe
23/07/14	Cllr C Kent	<p>This council believes that the changes proposed to Grays Fire Station are detrimental to the safety of the public and firefighters and we call on the Chief Fire Officer to reconsider them in light of new information brought to our attention by the Fire Brigades Union highlighting Thurrock as an area of extremely high risk.</p>	<p>A letter was sent to the Chief Fire Officer and Deputy Chief Fire Officer on 8 July 2014 and a response was received on 22 August 2014.</p> <p>In the absence of the Chief Fire Officer, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer acknowledged that the motion had been considered by Members of the Fire Authority.</p> <p>Furthermore the Deputy Chief Fire Officer recognised the invitation to attend a meeting of Council and confirmed that he was happy to meet with Thurrock Councillors to explore the rationale for the recent decision of Essex Fire Authority and the impact of the Fire and Rescue Service on Thurrock. He invited a group of Councillors that included both Councillors nominated to Essex Fire Authority, the Leaders of each Political Group, the Leader of the Council and the Mayor</p>	Graham Farrant / Lucy Magill

## Item 18 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 22 July 2014

			<p>of Thurrock to a briefing at Service Headquarters at Kelvedon Park, Witham, in order to discuss this matter further.</p> <p>A copy of the letter from the Deputy Chief Fire Officer that was sent to the Mayor of Thurrock was copied to Councillors Cathy Kent and Tom Kelly in their position of nominated Councillors to the Essex Fire Authority.</p>	
23/07/14	Cllr Hebb	<p>On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2014, employees in the public sector took strike action in respect of pay, which caused disruption to the tax-paying public.</p> <p>With a number of local authorities being hit with strike action, and to free up funds to allow Thurrock to negotiate and determine salary increases locally, we call on the Chief Executive, as part of the current budget process, to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask Senior Officers to volunteer a salary reduction of 5% in annual salaries, which had approval by members back in 2010.</li> <li>2. Undertake a review of all indirect or direct funding to trade-union representatives in the council – moving to a volunteer-based representative-model (like the private sector).</li> </ol>	The Chief Executive has written to all Members following consultation with the Leadership Group.	Graham Farrant
23/07/14	Cllr Halden	While acknowledging the justifiably protected nature of information in child social care, Council expresses concern in regards to comments made at the last meeting of the corporate parenting committee, in regards to removing financial information and reports from members for their scrutiny. Council reaffirms its commitment to the principles of corporate parenting in terms of making the service budget as transparent and accountable to members as possible via appropriate reports.	The contents of the information provided to the Corporate Parenting Committee have been reviewed by the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, the Shadow Portfolio Holder, the Director of Children's Services and Senior Officers in Democratic services. All agree that there is a need and desire for transparency around financial matters whilst protecting the individual details of children and young people. Reports have been prepared with this fine balance in mind. Members will have the opportunity for further discussion in a pre-	Carmel Littleton

## Item 18 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 22 July 2014

			meeting of the committee.	
10/09/14	Cllr Tolson	Thurrock Council calls upon government to make the display of Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Certificates compulsory in England as it currently is in Wales.	Letter drafted and sent by Cllr Tolson to Jackie Doyle-Price MP and Stephen Metcalfe MP	Graham Farrant / Lucy Magill
10/09/14	Cllr Gerrish	That Thurrock Council pays tribute to Andy Smith and mourns his sad passing. We recognise and give thanks for the many years of hard work and commitment that he gave to the people of Thurrock.  The Council asks that the Mayor holds a memorial service in Andy's memory.	Officers are currently exploring options for a memorial service to be held in memory of Councillor Smith.	Graham Farrant / Linda Foster
10/09/14	Cllr Kelly	We call on Thurrock Council to complete the verge hardening projects started in Little Thurrock Rectory, Stifford Clays and Aveley.	Works within the scope of the current pilot have been completed. The pilot is ongoing and the performance of the materials used will be monitored throughout the winter months. The geo-grid material used for the pilot costs £100 per square metre and the Council does not have money within the current year capital programme to extend the pilot.  The Council is currently pursuing competitive grant funding for highways maintenance. The potential to finance a verge hardening programme will be reviewed once the outcome of Thurrock's funding bid is known. The bid for highway maintenance improvements was submitted before the DfT deadline of 9 February 2015. We are currently awaiting a response.	David Bull
10/09/14	Cllr Gledhill	We call on government to make Councils, who are housing authorities, subject to the same sanctions as private landlord. This would require changing the law to allow Councils to be prosecuted easier where they fail to bring tenants homes up to an acceptable standard.	A letter has been sent to the Prime Minister to advise of the request made in the Motion and to seek a response to the issue raised. Any response received will be reported to a future meeting of the Council by way of this update report.	Barbara Brownlee

## Item 18 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 22 July 2014

22/10/14	Cllr Halden	The Chamber instructs the constitution working group to carry out a governance review, in order judge the need for the committee, cabinet, mayoral, or hybrid forms of governance from May 2015 onwards.	<p>It was agreed at the meeting of Council on 22 October 2014 that an item on the Constitution Working Group be brought back to the next meeting of Council (28 January 2015) and a small budget be allocated to the group to investigate thoroughly the benefits and disadvantages of different forms of governance within similar size authorities, such as Brighton and Hove and East Cheshire.</p> <p>The CWG was constituted at Council on 28/01/15 and a budget allocated to the group.</p> <p>The first meeting of the CWG took place on 2 March 2015 and work is currently underway on the Governance Review.</p>	Graham Farrant / Fiona Taylor
28/01/15	Cllr Pearce	Along with the residents of Aveley and Uplands this council welcomes the decision by the Secretary of State to reject plans for 500 houses on the former fireman's club site in Aveley on greenbelt land.	No update required.	David Bull
28/01/15	Cllr Aker	Thurrock Council calls on the Cabinet to reject fortnightly bin collections.	At its meeting on 11 February 2015 Cabinet considered the comments of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the proposal to move to alternate weekly collections for the residual and recycling waste streams. Following receipt of the committees comments Cabinet agreed to withdraw the proposal for alternate week collections of these two waste streams within the current year's budget proposals and instructed officers to seek alternative savings from within the waste collection budget.	Mike Heath
25/03/15	Cllr Gledhill	We call on Thurrock Council to investigate taking similar action to Essex and Harlow Councils and apply for an injunction to help stop unauthorised traveller encampments in Thurrock.	The granting of an interim injunction in Harlow against unauthorised encampments and the future court hearing to establish whether a full injunction will eventually be granted is being closely followed to see if a similar measure would be an appropriate measure in Thurrock. This is being done both locally and through the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit, of which Thurrock is a	Gavin Dennett

**Item 18 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 22 July 2014**

			member council. A further response will be submitted when the outcome of these court proceedings is known.	
25/03/15	Cllr Gledhill	This Council thanks all retiring elected members for their service to Thurrock.	No action required.	David Bull

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### **Motions Submitted to Council**

#### **In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution**

#### **Motion 1**

#### **Submitted by Councillor Ojetola**

"Radicalisation of youths seems to be quite rampant, doing nothing is not an option as parents are losing their children to extremism.

We call on Thurrock Council to create a member led committee to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to tackle the threat of extremism and radicalisation in line with our Duty to Prevent".

#### **Monitoring Officer Comments:**

The Prevent duty is the duty set out in section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 on specified authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. Schedule 6 of the Act specifies that local government is a specified authority. The Government is in the process of publishing guidance to assist on the execution of the duty. This responsibility would be located within the remit of the Cabinet and associated partnership bodies.

#### **Section 151 Officer Comments:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this motion although the implications of any outcome will have to be considered.

#### **Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?**

The subject of motion reasonable, however to evaluate the current depth and scale of radicalisation of young people in the borough will need further research co-ordinated with other specified authorities operating within and in close co-operation with regional and national authorities too to establish robust evidence.

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**Motions Submitted to Council**

**In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution**

**Motion 2**

**Submitted by Councillor Aker**

“The Council calls on the Cabinet to initiate a local referendum for the residents of Greenwood House, Butler House and Davall House in Grays, to ask whether they accept demolition of the three blocks and the Council's proposals so far to re-house the residents. The Council calls for this referendum to be held before further consultation is carried out.”

**Monitoring Officer Comments:**

The Local Government Act 2003 provides a specific power for principal local authorities in England and Wales to hold polls in order to ascertain views on any matter relating to their services, expenditure on those services or their power to promote well being in their areas.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with residents and this has encompassed several areas of consideration. The consultation process is designed to establish resident's views on whether to agree to the demolition of the three blocks. This project is currently on hold until September to further consider the position.

**Section 151 Officer Comments:**

There will be costs associated with a referendum but these can only be determined once the scope is known. As this is a Housing Revenue Account issue, any cost will have to be met from the HRA.

**Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?**

Yes

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