

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 **24 February 2016**

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

Membership of the Council:

Sue Gray (Mayor)
Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor)

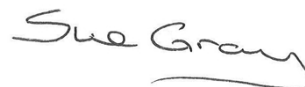
Tim Aker
Chris Baker
James Baker
Jan Baker
Clare Baldwin
Russell Cherry
Colin Churchman
Mark Coxshall
Leslie Gamester
Oliver Gerrish
Robert Gledhill
Yash Gupta (MBE)
Graham Hamilton
Garry Hague
James Halden
Shane Hebb

Terence Hipsey
Clifford Holloway
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 Potheary
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



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive



Councillor Sue Gray
Mayor of Thurrock

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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Name of Committee	Date
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Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	4 November 2015
Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12 November 2015
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Planning Committee	14 January 2016

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

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Future Dates of Council:

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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

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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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

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

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|--|----------------------------|
| A. | 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.		C.	
IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)		If NOT amended i.e. original motion	
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	THEN debate on the subject .	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 100th 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.

February 1916

DATE	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	WARD	RANK	SERVICE	DIED
07-Feb	FREEMAN	WILLIAM DAVID	21	TIL	L/CPL	WEST KENT - 2	IRAQ

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 January 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Sue Gray (Mayor), Cathy Kent (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Russell Cherry, Mark Coxshall, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Terence Hipse, Clifford Holloway, 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, Robert Ray, Joycelyn Redsell, Andrew Roast, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Deborah Stewart, Michael Stone, Pauline Tolson, Kevin Wheeler and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Colin Churchman, Garry Hague, Jane Potheary, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice and Richard Speight

In attendance: Nick Alston, Police and Crime Commissioner
Stephen Kavanagh, Chief Constable, Essex Police
Leigh Norris, Chief Inspector Essex Police
Matt Cornish, Inspector, Essex Police
Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Fiona Taylor, Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

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

120. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of Council, held on 25 November 2015, were approved as a correct record.

121. Items of Urgent Business

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

122. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

123. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

Firstly the Mayor invited all those present to reflect and remember Thurrock's fallen during World War One.

The Mayor wished everyone a late Healthy Happy New Year.

The Mayor stated that she had the honour of marking International Holocaust Memorial Day today through a special memorial service where white pebbles were laid on the newly refurbished memorial. This allowed time for those present to pause and remember the millions of people whose lives were lost or changed forever during the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Mayor sent a congratulation message to Councillor Gledhill on the birth of his son.

Finally, the Mayor took the opportunity to thank Carmel Littleton for her contributions and hard work to the Council and wished her well in her new role.

The Leader of the Council commented on the announcement made by Highways England on the Lower Thames Crossing. Councillor J. Kent confirmed that there were now three variants to Option C north of the Thames and two to the south with the proposal of a tunnel being built instead of a bridge.

Councillor J. Kent reminded Members that this decision was made by Highways England and not Thurrock Council. He also stated that a public consultation had commenced and asked Members to stand together and fight this for the residents of Thurrock. He encouraged Members to raise the awareness and promote the events that were currently being organised.

The Leader went on to express his irritation with the 8 week consultation process and what appeared to be only 1 consultation day arranged for Thurrock with that being only 7 days after the announcement of the consultation. Councillor J. Kent stated this was not good enough and he would be writing to Highways England and the Minister to ask that further sessions be arranged towards the end of the 8 week consultation process, which would then give residents the time to digest and understand all the information being suggested.

Councillor J. Kent stated that Thurrock had to be prepared to continue to fight to get the best possible deal for Thurrock residents and for the borough itself. He had spoken to the Director of Finance for a provision to support residents who may be affected, with monies being put aside from budgets. This would be an item on the February Budget meeting. At this juncture the Leader asked Members to stand to show their support for opposing the current options and the chamber all stood at his request.

124. Presentation from Essex Police

The Mayor introduced Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston, Chief Inspector Leigh Norris and Inspector Matt Cornish to the meeting of Council and asked that they deliver their presentation which would then be followed by questions by Members.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh thanked Members for the privilege of being invited to the meeting of Council.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris outlined to Members the key local issues the Police faced:

- The District Profile – 62 square miles around 70% rural, population of 165,000, 62,000 households, examples of strategically significant sites in Thurrock is that in December 2015, 2.5 million visitors to Lakeside and a million vehicles a week use the Dartford Crossing.
- Community Safety Hub – A new concept to Essex Police, Thurrock being one of the four pilot areas which started 1 year ago. Feedback from pilot was healthy with some areas to be concentrated on. Highlighted the volume of partnership operations and activities.
- Dwelling Burglary – Burglary of residents' homes was a very important area of business. Thurrock is geographically vulnerable having borders with Kent and Newham and the Dartford Crossing with a large number of vehicle movement across the borough. Prediction of offences made via Operation In-Sight and being heavily involved in social media.
- Street Racing and Vehicle Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Issue for the western area of the district for the last 20-25 years. Main concern around this is to prevent serious injury or fatalities for spectators. The current PSPO is working, with Thurrock being the second place in the county to have this. There have been no reported incidents this week of any reports of racing. This will be continued to be enforced with on the spot fines.
- Fly Tipping – Thurrock Council and Essex Police have worked together and come up with Fly Tipping Protocol. Activity targeting vehicles carrying waste.
- Hate Crime – Identify that the need to step up and help victims. Using the multi-agency approach and educating parents and families.
- Unauthorised Encampments – Thurrock had its fair share of encampments, which tend to be seasonal. Now is the time to re-group

and look what needs to be done to make the process as rigid and robust as possible.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris offered to speak to Members further after the committee if required.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh provided Members with a broader prospective of activities going on across the County. Essex Police continue to change and adopt at a pace but one thing that was not immediately apparent to those outside of policing was the level of neglect of key infrastructures and buildings with a £30 million backlog in maintenance and £2.5 million increase each year.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh also acknowledged and apologised to Members for the departure of the last district commander. With the appointment of Chief Inspector Leigh Norris he hoped that the Council feel pleased with this and that it was evident that he cared deeply for the authority and residents.

The Chief Constable continued by stating that the savings identified in the Autumn Statement had changed significantly.

To better understand what the demand across the borough looked like Officers had shift patterns changed to make sure they were on duty when the public needed them and poor sickness levels in Essex Police were being addressed.

Introduction of a new computer system meant that Essex Police were the first force to change the way in which crime was recorded.

The Chief Constable finished his presentation by highlighting that missing children were being placed in Thurrock without the proper protection plans. Other London councils were also putting families into Thurrock. Essex Police were trying to understand the issues and pressures of these vulnerable individuals. It was confirmed that at this time the Chief Constable was investing officers into public protection, into domestic abuse and into digital investigations and that the organisation was changing to make sure that they remain relevant as things changed.

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Roast: For you to have your ideal premier A Team for Essex, how much would you be realistically asking for per household?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that in reality Officers needed better technology to provide the best and most efficient service to the community, so there was a need to invest in the right technology and equipment. The challenge would be for Members to engage with communities on how the changes to policing affected them.

It was stated that Essex Police had the lowest cost levels in the country and Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh did not want Essex Police to have low investment put into it.

Councillor Stewart: What were the plans for protecting small businesses against theft, fraud and shoplifting?

Chief Inspector Norris stated that there was a Crime Unit at Lakeside Shopping Centre and a small unit in Grays town centre. PCSOs undertook foot patrols which take in the local shopping areas. The visibility of the PCSOs could be more but they were faced with different challenges and were stretched across all areas.

Councillor Ojetola: Under the new government funding will you keep all the PCSOs?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that not all PCSOs would be kept as £13.5 million still needed to be found as part of the budget cuts.

Chief Inspector Leigh Norris confirmed that the number of incidents of boy racers in West Thurrock had reduced and that on-line activity had virtually ceased.

Councillor Redsell: How often do the traffic department visit crime hotspots?

Chief Inspector Norris stated that he had no figures to hand but re-assured Members that every effort to support these hotspot areas is given.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that recognition vehicles were now being deployed in these areas and on training courses, officers were briefed on the presence of patrol cars using blue lights in these high crime hotspots areas could prevent burglaries from happening.

Councillor Hipsey: Asked the Crime Commissioner to tell the chambers, the public and residents that he would change his mind and keep our police stations open.

Nick Alston reconfirmed that for every police station kept open it meant fewer police able to respond to community concerns out on patrol. A simple equation was either to spend money to keep police stations open or spend money on officers with the right technology and on patrol. As Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh had already told the chamber he did not need all current police stations open as officers were on the road dealing with issues. Communication between local communities would need to be improved. Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that money had to be freed up to pay for modern officers with modern technology.

Councillor Halden: What ambitions do you have with the Fire Authority and Essex Police services working together?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated they had a good relationship with the chief Fire Team who met once a month. The ambition was to work more effectively together whilst protecting the autonomy and specialities of each service. The Chief Constable observed that public safety in terms of police could be managed more effectively whilst working with the fire service.

Nick Alston stated that it was his role to keep the Chief Constable to account and that the best police service was provided.

Councillor Jones made a statement to the effect that Essex Police should look at Thurrock as a special case as it is the industrial hub of Essex.

Councillor Worrall: Thanked Chief Inspector Leigh Norris for his continued work in the borough. You propose to close buildings and talk to the communities. How do you intend to engage with communities, how were you going to make those residents feel safe and how many officers were we going to lose in Thurrock?

The Chief Constable confirmed that the intention was to maintain the Officer number at 2800 with a reduction in sickness levels. The Community Hubs needed to be in the right location where services could be accessed and that were staffed at the right times.

Councillor S. Little: How were responses to 101 calls managed in rural communities?

Councillor S. Little thanked Essex Police for the Community Speed Training and for their support.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh confirmed that 101 calls were monitored but had concerns on the consistency of the number of calls answered. The map training element of the question would be taken away and explored.

Councillor Hamilton: With the introduction of ATHENA do you think there will be any radical reappraisal of bureaucracy involved in policing? Could evidence be used in court?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh commented that ATHENA would be used to populate all details and had reduced bureaucracy to a degree. When the mobile technology was available for statements to be immediately loaded onto the system at the scene of crime the Chief Constable was confident that ATHENA would improve the efficiency of processes over the next 12 months.

Councillor J. Kent: On rationalisation of the estate, in negotiations with owners of building and land that you do not currently own how confident were you to exit these leases in sufficient time to make the savings that were predicted? How many extra PCSOs do you intend to keep in Thurrock?

Nick Alston confirmed that very few properties were leased. The majority of the buildings around the county were freehold. It is planned that 8 of the

freehold properties will be sold in the next few months, with the savings plan running over 5 years.

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh did not have this figure of how many extra PCSOs intended to keep in Thurrock to hand and would report back to Members.

Councillor Kerin: You say the service is stretched finely. How stretched is it? And how far away were you from the elastic snapping?

Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh stated that modern Police Officers were under much more strain compared to previous generations and that productivity was monitored and constantly under scrutiny. The change in shift patterns had helped but ATHENA had not helped as much as would have liked. There were over 1200 calls received a day but only 600 can be dealt with.

Councillor Victoria Holloway: If the reduction in budgets had not been made by the current Government would we not be in this position of making cuts and closing police stations?

Nick Alston replied that it was the government that maintained the budget and an extra £500,000 had been given to spend.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston, Chief Inspector Leigh Norris and Inspector Matt Cornish for their time this evening.

At 8.12 pm, Chief Constable Stephen Kavanagh, the Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston and Inspector Matt Cornish left the council chambers.

125. 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> and were attached at Appendix A to these minutes

126. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members that she had been made aware that Councillor Redsell was due to present a petition to Council regarding “Blackshots – Impulse Leisure Parking Charges”. Although this issue had now been resolved with discussions between the Council and Impulse Leisure, due to the large number of signatures and the work undertaken by Councillor Redsell, the Mayor invited Councillor Redsell to speak on this issue.

Councillor Redsell stated that a petition with over 2000 signatures had been submitted and questioned why residents were being asked to pay again for

parking permits and that the Council should be encouraging residents to use these facilities to keep fit and healthy.

Councillor Redsell stated that her petition had taken too long to verify and suggested that the process be changed to speed up the verification of petitions and hoped that lessons could be learnt.

Councillor Redsell confirmed that a letter from the Chief Executive, Lyn Carpenter, had been received on Monday, 24 January 2016, stating no charges would be imposed at Blackshots. Councillor Redsell took this opportunity to thank the residents and would provide an update to them once all the signatures had been verified.

127. 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.

128. 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 there were no changes to declare.

The Leader of the Conservative Group informed the Chamber there were no changes to declare.

The Leader of the UKIP group confirmed that he wished to make the following changes in according with the new Political Balance calculations:

- For Councillor C. Baker to be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.
- For Councillor Smith to be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.

Councillors Ray and Palmer also informed the Chamber there were no changes to declare.

Members voted unanimously in favour of the changes to appointments to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor C. Baker be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.**

2. **That Councillor Smith be appointed as a substitute Member of the General Services Committee.**

129. To Note the Appointment of the Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services Service

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report highlighting that the General Services Committee on the 6 January 2016 agreed the appointment of David Archibald as the Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services.

Councillor J. Kent informed Members that David Archibald was the director of Children Services at Ealing Council for 10 years and was a credible candidate who would cover until the appointment of the substantive successor. The advert closed on 29 January for the substantive post and General Services should soon be able to fill the vacancy.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Opposition, agreed with the report and stated that he was sorry to see Carmel Littleton depart.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, also commented his support of the new appointment.

Councillor Ojetola requested background information on the career history of David Archibald.

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 note the appointment of David Archibald as Interim Corporate Director of Children's Services with effect from 25 January 2016.

130. Annual Pay Policy Statement 2016/17

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, briefly introduced the report which sought the approval of the Council's annual Pay Policy Statement for 2016/17. It included the requirement, under the Localism Act 2011, to publish its policy relating to pay of Chief Officers.

Councillor J. Kent stated that the report varied little from last year and that the pay award for senior manager remained the same.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the cost of living award for single status staff for 2016/17 should continue to reflect any award agreed by the NJC.**
- 2. That senior management should receive no cost of living pay award for 2016/17.**
- 3. That the Council should continue to pay the UK Living Wage as a supplement to its lowest-paid employees, and that this rate should rise on 1 April 2016 in line with the Living Wage Foundation's recommended rate of £8.25ph.**

131. The Local Council Tax Scheme 2016-17; setting of the Council Tax Base for 2016-17 and Determination of The Collection Fund Balance 2015-16

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, introduced the report that required Council to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement for chief officers that must be approved by Council by 31 March each year.

Councillor J. Kent provided Members with information required for approval; the estimated balance of the council tax collection fund that would be apportioned between the Council and the major precepting authorities (the Police and Fire Authorities) and the estimated balance of the business rate collection fund that is apportioned between the Council, Central Government and the Fire Authorities.

Councillor Gledhill agreed with the report and stated that it was good to see the increase of properties within the borough and the reduction of numbers on the council tax support scheme.

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

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the LCTS scheme for Thurrock Council is maintained with the inclusion of a reduction in the period an award can be backdated to four weeks. This reduction is in line with welfare reform legislation changes to housing benefit from 1 April 2016. The 2016/17 Scheme will now contain the following elements:**
 - The first £25 per week of earned income will be disregarded when calculating levels of council tax support.**
 - The maximum capital limit is to be set at £6,000. This means anyone who has savings over £6,000 may not receive support with their council tax.**

- For working age claimants, the maximum support that will be allowed will be 75% of their full council tax bill.
 - Child benefit and child maintenance received will not be included as income in the calculation of council tax support.
 - The maximum period a claim for LCTS can be backdated when a customer provides good cause for not claiming earlier is four weeks.
 - There is a full disregard of military compensation payments, including War Disablement Pensions, War Widow's Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments.
2. To recommend that Council set the Council Tax Base for 2016/17 by approving the following resolutions:
- (a) That the report of the Head of Corporate Finance for the calculation of the Council's Tax Base for the year 2016/17 be approved; and
 - (b) That pursuant to the Head of Corporate Finance report and in accordance with the relevant regulations, the amount calculated by Thurrock Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2016/17 shall be 48,856.
3. To recommend that the Council:
- (a) Determines the estimated 31 March 2016 balance of the Council Tax Collection Fund to be a surplus of £1,199,312 (before distribution to major precepting authorities).
 - (b) Allocates the surplus to the three main precepting bodies in proportion to their precepts for 2015/16 as follows:
 - (i) Thurrock Council £1,007,909;
 - (ii) Essex Police Authority £131,877; and
 - (iii) Essex Fire Authority £59,526.
4. To recommend that the Council:
- (a) Determines the estimated 31 March 2016 balance of the Business Rate Collection Fund to be a deficit of £5,761,084 (before distribution to Central Government and Essex Fire Authority).
 - (b) Allocates the deficit to the three main precepting bodies in the proportion set out in legislation:

- (i) **Thurrock Council £2,822,931;**
- (ii) **Central Government £2,880,542; and**
- (iii) **Essex Fire Authority £57,611.**

132. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that one question to the Leader of the Council had been received and four questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

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

133. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

A report from Councillor Cathy Kent regarding Essex Fire Authority was tabled at the meeting.

134. Minutes of Committees

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

135. 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 Gledhill pointed that on Motion 'we call on Thurrock Council to investigate similar action to Essex and Harrow Council' the status should read Update - January 2016 and not 2015.

136. Motion submitted by Councillor Hebb

The first Motion, as printed in the agenda, was proposed by Councillor Hebb and seconded by Councillor B. Little. The motion read as follows:

"That Thurrock Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard/Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth.

Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request."

Councillor Hebb introduced the motion, and in doing so, explained that this Motion had gone to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny last month to identify a definition of fares.

Councillor Hebb confirmed that this scheme had not been extended into other areas of the borough and that it should be consistent throughout the borough, for all to reap the benefits.

Councillor Gerrish, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, agreed his support for this motion to encourage an easier and faster way of travelling and that Smart Card would be available in all boroughs.

Councillor B. Little stated that this scheme would benefit residents of the borough with the ticket transaction process being made more quickly, which in turn would make journey transitions easier.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard/Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth.

That the Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request.

137. Motion submitted by Councillor Halden

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda, was proposed by Councillor Halden and seconded by Councillor Snell. The Motion read as follows:

“The chamber resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to poor communication/engagement from representatives of National Health Service (NHS) England and NHS Commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the Positron Emission Tomography – Computed Tomography (PET CT) Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.”

Councillor Halden introduced the Motion, and in doing so, explained that the PET CT scanner was used mainly for detecting lung cancer which was the second highest cancer recorded in Thurrock.

Councillor Halden stated that the NHS England Consultation was to move the PET CT scanner from Basildon to Southend and confirmed that this decision was being made solely by NHS England.

Councillor Halden explained that NHS England had attended the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) on the 13 October 2015 after submitting a very late paper which contained inaccuracies and with no clinical consultation being undertaken. This paper was rejected by the HOSC Chair and Members.

Councillor Halden also stated that NHS England were in the process of undertaking a public consultation at Lakeside Shopping Centre, using the same paper which was rejected at HOSC. This had only come to light after HealthWatch had contacted the Council to ask what part we were playing in this consultation.

Councillor Halden stated that this was not the way public services should be run and that better communication from NHS England was required.

Councillor J. Kent stated that he was in agreement with the Motion and emphasised that when the PET CT contract was awarded to Basildon Hospital, this meant that the scanner remained at Basildon and not be moved.

Councillor Snell, Chair of HOSC, observed that he would be supporting the motion.

Councillor Halden welcomed the cross party support and stated that there was no clinical reason for the PET CT scanner to be moved.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to the poor communication/engagement from representatives of NHS England and NHS commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the PET CT Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.

138. Motion submitted by Councillor Stone

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda, was proposed by Councillor Stone and seconded by Councillor Jones. The Motion read as follows:

“Further to the proposed cuts to the fire service across the borough of between one third and one half. This council resolves to express its concerns by:

- a. Objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue service (EFRS) public consultation - and urges residents to do the same.*
- b. Raising these concerns with the two Members of parliament to enlist their support.*
- c. Urge the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.”*

Councillor Stone introduced the motion, and in doing so, expressed concern over the proposed cuts being put forward as part of the Fire Authority

Consultation. Councillor Stone also made Members aware that the Acting Chief Fire Officer, Adam Eckley, would be attending the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Committee on the 17 March 2016 and the need to liaise with Fire Authority to express the concerns of Members about proposed changes to services.

Councillor Coxshall stated that he did not support this motion as dramatic changes had taken place over the last 30 years, with the increase in emergency calls and the number of firefighters decreased. It was time for change and to look how tax money was being spent and he highlighted the work the Police were having to undertake to modernise their service. His only suggestion on cuts would be to cut the Fire Authority.

Councillor Cherry was concerned that the proposals would leave his ward, which had three large tower blocks, with no fire service cover and this would need to be made clear as part of the consultation.

Councillor Halden stated he did not support the motion because options needed to be based on the local needs. As a Member representing the Homesteads ward he would be attending the Cleaner, Greener and Safer committee in March to question the fire service and urged all Members to abstain from a vote tonight.

Councillor J. Kent asked that a requisition vote be undertaken.

Councillor J. Kent stated that Councillor Coxshall, who was a Member of the Fire Authority, had only attended one meeting of the Authority out of the seven so far held.

Councillor Hipsey commented that after listening to the Conservative party at a meeting last week he blamed the Conservative party and its membership for letting this happen and the need was to protect the people of the expanding borough and not save money. He stated that the Council should be looking after public services as once they had gone they would not come back.

Councillor C. Holloway stated the uniqueness of Thurrock and how the Council should support the motion. The Council had a duty of care to its residents.

At 9.25 pm, the Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2.5 hour time limit until 9.40 pm. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.

Councillor Kerin stated he would be supporting this motion as chances could not be taken on the fire service, as you could not predict when incidents would happen.

Councillor Kelly requested more explanation on how this would be funded so would not be supporting this motion.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that this motion required more information. It was stated that Councillor Jones would be holding the Fire Authority to account at the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Committee and that Members be invited by the Chair. At this time he would not want to second guess the outcome and findings of that meeting. He agreed that change was required and if it proved that Thurrock was at substantial risk from these cuts this Motion should be brought back to Council.

Councillor Snell echoed Councillor Gledhill comments but also took on board all Members comments. He was not happy to vote on a motion that the chamber did not have sufficient information on.

Councillor Gerrish thanked Councillor Stone for bringing the Motion this evening but after reviewing the 3 proposals it did cause concern and he worried about the effect these cuts would have on the community.

Councillor Jones stated it was letting the Essex Fire Service know how the Council felt now. Councillor Jones seconded the motion and would not be supporting the cuts as Thurrock was the industrial hub of Essex and Thurrock should be treated as a special case.

Councillor Stone summed up the Motion with stating that Orsett were called to 1003 incidents last year an increase of 72 the previous year.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 20.7, Members indicated that the vote on the motion be recorded. Democratic Services conducted the recorded vote, the result of which was as follows:

Votes in favour of the motion:

Councillors Tim Aker, Chris Baker, Russell Cherry, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Yash Gupta (MBE), Graham Hamilton, Terry Hipsey, Cliff Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Bukky Okunade, Barry Palmer, Peter Smith, Michael Stone, Kevin Wheeler, Lynn Worrall, Cathy Kent, Sue Gray **(22)**

Votes against the motion:

Councillors Mark Coxshall, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Charlie Key, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Tunde Ojetola, Robert Ray, Joy Redsell, Andrew Roast, Deborah Stewart, Pauline Tolson **(17)**

Abstentions:

Councillor Graham Snell **(1)**

The Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

RESOLVED:

That the Council will express its concerns by objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) public consultation and urges residents to do the same.

That the Council will raise these concerns with the two Members of parliament to enlist their support.

Urge the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.

The meeting finished at 9.41 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 27 January 2016

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

One question was submitted from a member of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor J. Kent

Resulting from the “Awareness” campaign organised by Mrs Deirdre Lodge it is accepted that damp and mould, especially toxic black mould, is a serious threat to the health and wellbeing of those living with it in their homes, though I believe there are some people, Councillors included, who would dispute that toxic black mould is a category 1 hazard. I acknowledge that this Council has taken this matter seriously and has endeavored to tackle the problem. What is the Council’s ultimate goal in the battle is it complete eradication of toxic black mould in Council homes, if so are you winning the battle?

Councillor J. Kent

Madam Mayor, Thurrock Council’s ultimate goal is to ensure that all council homes in the Borough are at the beyond decency standard that mean that they are properly equipped to allow residents to live in homes where the environment is properly and easily controlled so mould growth does not occur. Madam Mayor, as to if we are winning the battle it would be incredible difficult to totally eradicate mould, for instance, in my home I suffer from mould growth that I have to treat on a fairly regular basis. In the last couple of years we have treated over 340 homes with full thermal insulation measures that will help in that effect. At the moment we are coming to the end of a programme of works to another 450 properties that would include window replacement, roof repairs and repairs to external cladding that will help. I would never want to say the we are winning or getting there but want I can say is that we are doing all that we can to tackle this scourge.

Mayor

Thank you Councillor Kent.

Mayor

Mr Perrin, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Mr Perrin

No thanks you Madam Mayor.

Item 14 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 1 question had been submitted to the Leader and a further 4 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

By the time this question is heard, Chafford's famous young lady Louisa Johnson, would have reigned for almost six weeks on the X factor throne. What, if any, has the Council done to recognise this achievement and to ensure Louisa's determination to excel in exceptional circumstances is a role model to young residents of Thurrock?

Councillor J. Kent

Madam Mayor you have written to Louisa both to congratulate her on her success and to rather cheekily invite her to come along to the civic awards that are being held next month. Unfortunately the X Factor finalists are on tour so that will not be possible but we are currently seeking an alternative date in what is obviously a very busy diary and schedule now for Louise to come along so that we can properly congratulate her. I have got to say I am full of praise for a local young woman who has made the most of her talent and done that so quickly in her life. I do, as I am sure we all do, wish her luck in the world. And I do believe she can be seen as a role model for young people in Thurrock. Madam Mayor we all have talents, very few of us can sing in the way that Louisa can, but we are all still good at something and the Councils aim as far as our young people is concerned should be to do all that we possibly can to help every young person in Thurrock. Whether their skill or talent is singing, playing an instrument, fixing an engine, writing, mathematics, science, drawing, computer gaming or brick laying whatever it is to reach their full potential. Not everyone has the opportunity to catch a moment in time as Louisa has, yet everybody has the potential to shine in their own way and that's why they should follow Louise's lead and to coin the world worn phrase to reach for the stars. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Mayor

Councillor Ojetola do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Ojetola

Thank you Madam Mayor. I am pleased that you have written to her and invited her to the civic awards and to any other future event and want to place on record my own congratulations. I was wondering how John, the Leader, would somehow get something about X Factor in and congratulate on one moment in time. Thank you.

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

1. From Councillor Johnson to Councillor J. Kent

Can the portfolio holder confirm that the consumption of alcohol ban is still in place on the Flowers Estate South Ockendon?

Councillor J. Kent

Councillor Potheary is unfortunately at a funeral this evening a long way from the borough so is unable to be here. So I will do my best to answer the question. The direct answer is yes that the Designated Public Place Order (DPPO) is still in place and have to point out of course that it does not actually ban the consumption of alcohol on the estate. I think if it did, Councillor Johnson may have a lot of disgruntled constituents banging on his door, soberly of least.

The Flowers Estate DPPO targets alcohol-related anti-social behavior. What it does is gives police officers the power to require people drinking alcohol and acting in anti-social ways to stop drinking or risk confiscation of the drink and perhaps this is the most important point. The DPPO covers the Flowers Estate between South Road, West Road and Tamarisk Road and the immediate surrounding area is the responsibility of the police to enforce and perhaps Councillor Johnson might have been better directing this question to the Police earlier this evening and for completeness the legislation which introduced DPPOs, was replaced by the Anti-Social Behavior, Crime and Policing Act, on 20th October 2014 extending the life of this order for a further three years. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Mayor

Councillor Johnson, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Johnson

Yes please, Madam Mayor, thank you. Maybe they can listen to this whilst they are still here. The reason I asked was that we heard from the police earlier today the boy racers seemed to have quietened down which they believe is down to the public order in no certain terms. Over the last month or so I have had to ask officers twice to go down to the little area just behind Canterbury Parade to remove, on the first attempt, to remove well over a 100 cans of very strong lager. I was just wondering, I think, it is an equal responsibility between the council and the police to try and police this. So maybe I could ask Councillor Kent if he would support a private company coming in and maybe looking at with no cost to the tax payer to help us out with this.

Councillor J. Kent

Madam Mayor this is one of the issues that just about every one of us encounters in our own patches. I know in Grays there are problems with problem drinkers/troubled drinkers that cause real distress to people. We see it in Gray's town centre; I see it in places, such as Church Path in Grays. Everyone in Chadwell Corringham and anywhere could come up with the same stories. I am not sure how a private company coming in to do the job as Councillor Johnson suggests would work. I do, however, think that it is one of those areas that Councillor Jones Overview and Scrutiny Committee could have a look at and see if that works. If it does we can perhaps launch as a pilot on the Flowers Estate.

Mayor

Thank you Councillor Kent.

Councillor Johnson, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Johnson

No thanks Madam Mayor.

2. From Councillor Hipsey to Councillor J. Kent

Of recent weeks the North of England has experienced one of the wettest winters on record where small villages, towns and cities have been damaged to the severe flooding and a lack of under investment to river flood defenses.

As one of the ward councillors for Stanford le Hope I feel I have duty bring this to your most urgent attention where any prolonged heavy down pours such as experienced in Northern England could cause real concern for parts of East Thurrock.

Would you kindly explain to the chamber if any lessons have been learned from the North of England tragedy and to consider investigating areas especially where the Government inspectorate have given prior planning consents in areas that assist to protect the neighborhoods from any risk of future flooding.

Councillor J. Kent

Thank you Madam Mayor. We are investigating the feasibility of introducing a number of measures to combat flooding issues on the out skirts of Stanford. In order to capture and slow down the release of runoff water into the town itself. This will form the basis of future funding bids to the Environment Agency in the future. We have also successfully negotiated flood attenuation measures in recent developments such as on Butts Lane and Branksome Avenue. Madam Mayor recently at cabinet we launched Thurrock's first flood risk management strategy. This has involved really close working partnerships with other organisations that are responsible for flood risk management such

as Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Essex Fire and Rescue and Rescue Service. We always think of the fire service/rescue service as putting fires out, they are also invaluable when pumping out flooded properties.

The Strategy Madam Mayor outlines an Action Plan of measures to be implemented over the coming years to address the risk of flooding targeted in areas at highest risk and there are thousands of Thurrock homes that are at risk not necessary at risk of rising river levels but runoff due to very heavy rainfall. I think one of the most important things to note is residents and businesses are actually being aware of their own flooding risks so I would advise everyone to look on the council's website. It is under the tab "flood", go to the map section and if necessary have a look and take heed of the advice given. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Hipsey, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Hipsey

Yes thank you Madam Mayor. Obviously being a resident of Stanford for many years, grown up from down the Warren, know the town very well. We have a river tributary called The Brook that runs through part of the Homesteads ward and in Stanford West and then travels out to the River Thames. Could I urge that the leader of the council or in fact when the member of environment returns from his holidays to instruct officers to actually investigate and if at all possible work with the environmental agency to carry out some maintenance clearance of The Brook because there are quite a number of areas along there that are totally overgrown with vegetation and quite a lot of metal objects such as trollies etc. We know if we have heavy downpours like they have sustained up in the north of England, what will happen to parts of the Stanford, parts of the Homesteads, if these river ways are not cleared as soon as possible really.

Councillor J. Kent

Councillor Hipsey has campaigned on flooding issues around Stanford for a good deal of time and I know it is something that he has regularly bent my ear about it and I know he has bent Gerald Rice ear about it to. I don't necessarily think we should wait for the portfolio holder to return, the Chief Executive has heard what Councillor Hipsey has to say and I am sure that is all that is needed for us to move this action. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Hipsey, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor G Rice

No thank you Madam Mayor.

3. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Gerrish

Can the portfolio holder tell us what actions he is taking to ensure the Highways Agency England are cleaning verges of the A1089 and part A13 to a good standard?

Councillor Gerrish

Thank you Madam Mayor. I am happy to take this question and thank you Councillor Liddiard for the question. Clearly this has been a long-standing issue which persists despite the efforts of Council Officers and Politicians at all levels to resolve it. Although he is not here this evening I would pay particular thanks to Councillor Gerald Rice who is cabinet member for environment who has led on efforts on how we can clean up our roads and verges where we are not directly responsible. As members will know the responsibility of cleaning verges on the A1089 and part of the A13 lies with Highway England. They simply have not been doing a good enough job and as a result there is far too much litter and debris present on and around our roads.

I have personally written to Jim Sullivan, Chief Executive of Highways England to highlight the fact that the present situation is unacceptable. I am aware that Highways England are progressing plans to close lay-bys on the A1089 and A13 which may reduce the problem in due course, however, Highways England need to arrange for more resources in the short-term to ensure the removal of litter which is both an eye-sore and a danger to public health.

I am aware that Councillor Gerald Rice, the Cabinet member for Environment, has also been in extensive discussions alongside Lyn Carpenter, our Chief Executive about this problem. She has also written to Highways England asking them to deal with this litter problem. Lyn as I understand it as yet to receive a formal response them.

Finally I have written to both of our local MPs, Stephen Metcalfe and Jackie Doyle Price, asking for any cross party pressure they can apply to Highways England to help to get this issue sorted once and for all.

Madam Mayor this is a very serious issue which we are not taking it very lightly. Highways England do need to realise they cannot continue to shirk their responsibilities and let's not forget that some of these areas will be impacted by a new Thames Crossing and as well does anyone think this will help matters. This is just another reason to just say no.

Mayor

Councillor Liddiard, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Liddiard

No supplementary question.

4. From Councillor Stewart to Victoria Holloway

Would the Portfolio Holder advise on what system a concern or complaint is recorded and advise how that system ensures all departments of the Council are working together and not in isolation?

Councillor Gerrish

All concerns and complaints are recorded and processed on the council's complaints system. This system is called Respond. The corporate complaints team upon having visibility of the feedback (e.g. concern or complaint), will ensure this is recorded and processed in-line with the council's complaints procedure. Complaints data is then analysed and shared with service areas and reports are taken to Cabinet and Standards and Audit Committee on a six monthly basis.

Mayor

Councillor Stewart, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Stewart

Yes please Madam Mayor, thank you. To share an example, I have estimated the cost of one simple area of not sharing information between departments to be in the region of £200-£400. Where an elderly resident wanted to free up a family home by taking advantage of the councils down-sizing policies. She was then refused payment and complained. Her complaint was upheld and the council agreed she would not incur any moving expenses only to be billed a month later, to complain again, have the complaint to be upheld again or receive yet another apology all due to poor communication between departments and not sharing on IT systems. This is not a lone occurrence could the portfolio holder tell me how many complaints were raised last year that were attributed to poor communication and what the true cost to the rate player was to put them right.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Holloway can you respond?

Councillor Victoria Holloway

I am sorry to hear about the resident's case and I know it would be very helpful if you could pass that on to the officers and they could properly investigate and promptly rectify that and specifically obviously then speak to

the Portfolio Holder for Housing because obviously it is connected there. I agree that communication is essential but I am not 100% sure that we actually record complaints and communication and errors in that way so officers will look into it and get back to you on that.

Mayor

Councillor Stewart, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Yes please. Do you not think it's about time that Thurrock learnt from these complaints then, and made clear the true cost to the tax payer of remedying the situations that are caused?

The one in question is now resolved.

Councillor Victoria Holloway

Yes absolutely, I am glad that the issue has been resolved and of course we don't want any errors happening, indeed we don't want any complaints at all and we have a very strict complaints procedure and I think again, if we pass it on to officers we can work and see what's happening.

Mayor

Thank you very much, we will now move on to Item 15.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are two questions from the members of the public.

1. **From Mr Perrin to Councillor L. Worrall** (received 15/2/16 @ 13:12)

“Are you entirely satisfied with the quality of the work done by contractors such as Mears and Wates including sub-contractors employed by them and do you consider such work to be value for money?”

2. **From Teresa Webster to Councillor L. Worrall** (received 15/2/16 @ 16:35)

“Does Thurrock Council have any plans to review the scope of which HMOs are within its mandatory licensing policy so that HMOs under three or more storeys are brought within the policy - this may help to alleviate the poor living conditions experienced by some of our most vulnerable people, who feel they have no other choice but to accept the poor conditions they are living in when renting from unscrupulous private agents/landlords?”

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Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 24 February 2016

Petition No.	Description	Presented by (and date)	Portfolio Holder	Status Full copies of the responses may be obtained from Democratic Services
466	A Petition to Thurrock Borough Council by residents to reinstate the 374 bus route service.	9/9/2015	Cllr O Gerrish	<p>Residents of Fobbing or Corringham and other visitors, who relied on the 374 bus route that previously ran along High Road, Fobbing urge Thurrock Borough Council to commit to reinstating this much valued public transport service.</p> <p>The deadline to respond to the lead petitioner is 9 October 2015.</p> <p>There are six communities within Thurrock that require financial support for a bus service to be provided. A number of options for April 2015 were considered. Faced with a diminishing budget it was extremely disappointing that we could not seek to provide a bus service that met the needs of all residents. Both Amber Coaches and First Essex buses were prepared to put on a limited service for Fobbing but not on a commercial basis. Therefore the financial implications for the authority exceeded the bus budget available and difficult decisions had to be made. As part of ongoing concerns from residents and ward members this issue was taken to Overview & Scrutiny for Planning & Transportation on both the 29th July 2015 and 16th September 2015. It was agreed that a further review was required in</p>

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

Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 24 February 2016

				order to try and encourage bus operators to offer commercial services through Fobbing. We have approached commercial operators who are not willing to divert existing services through Fobbing. We are continuing to try to find ways of delivering bus services for all of our communities; however, the budget position for 2016/17 requires further reduction to bus subsidies.
467	Petition to save our homes being pulled down: Butler, Davall and Greenwood.	23/09/15 at Council	Cllr Worrall	<p>At the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 October 2014 (decision 01104415) it was resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet not to award decant status to three Grays high rises – Butler, Davall and Greenwood House, but instead to note that continued consultation should take place with residents to include detailed design on alternative home provision to ensure residents are given a clear unambiguous set of choices. 2. Cabinet to agree that officers consider feedback from this consultation as part of the development of the emerging master plan for Grays Town Centre. 3. Cabinet to note that the Council’s new build development on Seabrooke Rise will be allocated in accordance to the Council’s existing Lettings Policy and existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers will not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, therefore Council explores a local lettings plan as a

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				<p>matter of urgency.</p> <p>4. Cabinet to note that the Council is currently reviewing the proposed Housing Development Plan and Estate Regeneration Programme in the light of the Government's imposed reductions in rent. The Council are assessing the implications and options available to ensure that the financial parameters of the HRA are met, whilst retaining an affordable and deliverable programme of housing investment and new build development.</p>
468	<p>Noise and pollution from 'The Village' building works in Aveley. Petition to complain about the activity at 'The Village' Persimmon building development in Aveley, numerous complaints have been made already about the noise from the work site. Work often begins before 8am, carries on after 5pm and on Sundays too. Thurrock Council has warned the site managers about this before and have found out that work is being done outside the permitted time and, as such, there is scope for prosecution.</p> <p>Further to this, many residents in St Michael's Close and Stanford Gardens in Aveley have been unable to use their gardens owing to the failure of the workers to dampen waste rubble that is causing dust to pour into residents' gardens. Many</p>	23/09/15 at Council	Cllr G. Rice	<p>Planning Enforcement and Environmental Health monitor sites for compliance with the construction environment plan agreed as part of the original planning application.</p> <p>This plan includes provisions to control dust and noise.</p> <p>If evidence of failure to comply with the conditions is found the builder will be contacted and the relevant changes in practice agreed or failing this regulatory action started.</p> <p>No evidence of breaches at the Village site is currently available. Residents experiencing issues resulting from this site should continue to report these to either the site or the Council on a case by case basis.</p>

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	<p>residents have been unable to use their gardens and this is particularly affecting families with children.</p> <p>The petition seeks compensation for residents of Stanford Gardens and St Michael's Close and that something is done so we can use our gardens again and not have to put up with building noise outside of normal working hours.</p>			
469	<p>We, the undersigned residents of Blackshots, Woodside and also many other areas affected by bikes travelling at speed on pavements across main roads ending up on Blackshots Park, we have been blighted by this problem for many years. We ask that Councillors, Council and Police take notice of this problem that is escalating day by day, waiting for a traffic accident to happen.</p>	23/09/15 at Council	Cllr G. Rice	<p>Anti-social use of motorcycles and other vehicles is dealt with under section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002. The Thurrock Neighbourhood Policing Team formed in July are tasked with dealing with this in Thurrock. So far this year 11 vehicles have been seized by Thurrock Police but unfortunately this is not broken down by cause or vehicle type on the relevant police computer system and so it is not possible to determine what percentage of these seizures were for section 59 at Blackshots.</p> <p>The Police have advised that they have no reported injuries or road traffic collisions attributable to this activity and that over recent months complaints to them about nuisance motorbikes have reduced.</p> <p>They will continue to deal with these complaints on a case by case basis with the continued support of the Councils CCTV system and other departments as necessary.</p>

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470	Petition to demolish Butler, Davall and Greenwood High Rise blocks in Grays.	14/10/15	Cllr Worrall	<p>At the meeting of Cabinet held on 14 October 2014 (decision 01104415) it was resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet not to award decant status to three Grays high rises – Butler, Davall and Greenwood House, but instead to note that continued consultation should take place with residents to include detailed design on alternative home provision to ensure residents are given a clear unambiguous set of choices. 2. Cabinet to agree that officers consider feedback from this consultation as part of the development of the emerging master plan for Grays Town Centre. 3. Cabinet to note that the Council’s new build development on Seabrooke Rise will be allocated in accordance to the Council’s existing Lettings Policy and existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers will not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, therefore Council explores a local lettings plan as a matter of urgency. 4. Cabinet to note that the Council is currently reviewing the proposed Housing Development Plan and Estate Regeneration Programme in the light of the Government’s imposed reductions in rent. The Council are assessing the implications and options available to ensure that the financial parameters of the HRA are met, whilst retaining an
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				affordable and deliverable programme of housing investment and new build development.
471	The petition is with regards to the shelters on Dilkes Park on the Belhus Estate, the undersigned would like them to be removed. Issues include groups of individuals setting fires, taking drugs, drinking and generally terrorising residents.	22/10/15	Cllr Potheary	<p>Resident of the surrounding area of Dilkes Park have suffered from persistent antisocial behaviour in the area resulting in worry for the community.</p> <p>Although the Police, supported by the Council, have been addressing the issues and taking action in the area against perpetrators, it is agreed that these shelters should be removed.</p> <p>On visiting the site it can be seen that the shelters are not in keeping with what is otherwise a very family friendly park.</p> <p>The shelters are repeatedly damaged and vandalised, leading to the Environmental workforce having to continually commit resource to address ongoing issues.</p> <p>The intention is to have the shelters removed before Christmas 2015.</p> <p>There is a risk that this will just move the problem of the antisocial behaviour, however the Police will continue to work with the Council and the Community to address any ongoing issues.</p> <p>It should be noted that removal of the shelters</p>

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				<p>will be an estimated cost of £4000.</p> <p><u>Update – 8 February 2016</u></p> <p>Shelters have been removed.</p>
472	<p>Residents of Long Lane (Rugby Club end), Kerry Road, Jesmond Road and Laird Avenue are asking for a one way system for the bus route number 88.</p>	<p>28/10/15 at Council</p>	<p>Cllr Gerrish</p>	<p>Bus route 88 is operated by a private operator, Ensign Buses, and they have confirmed there are no major operational issues and do not intend to register a route change with the traffic commissioners as requested.</p> <p>In such circumstances the Council have no or few powers to act due to bus deregulation.</p>
473	<p>The residents of Webster Road call on the Council to commence a review in aid of securing additional parking arrangements / facilities in the immediate vicinity. A suggestion is the potential reconfiguration of the land outside properties with the lowest door numbers in Webster Road on the grass section in front of houses (i.e. numbered 1,3,5,2,4,6 etc).</p> <p>Residents call on Thurrock Council to discuss this with the local residents to see how this piece of land could be changed / adapted to accommodate more vehicles. A potential example can be found in Deveron Gardens in South Ockendon.</p>	<p>25/11/15 at Council</p>	<p>Cllr Gerrish</p>	<p>An investigation into the possibility of providing parking on the Highway green in front of properties 1-9 & 2-10 Webster Road.</p> <p>The area will be reviewed with a view to providing verge protection to the green to permit parking whilst retaining the pleasant feel of the area and to assist with drainage. A scheme proposal will be drawn up and a cost estimate will be calculated.</p> <p>However, a preliminary view of the site indicates that currently vehicles are parking in the turning head in front of the green and I must point out that that some of this will be lost to permit access to the green and allow for vehicles to turn.</p> <p>Officers will advise when furthers costs are known.</p>

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474	The petition is too keep gate 129 between College Avenue and Bradleigh Avenue, Grays closed. It has been gated and closed to the public since 2008 following local residents fighting long and hard for it to be. The Pathway is close to a school and house.	1/12/15	Cllr Gerrish	The current Gating Order is valid until October 2017. Officers are exploring the case for permanently stopping up the footpath using the Council's powers under s116 of the Highways Act, and proposals will be subject to formal consultation in due course.
475	The residents of Blackshots and surrounding areas are against any charging of the car park at Impulse Leisure as this could have a devastating effect on adjacent roads.	27/01/16	Cllr Redsell	<p>Impulse Leisure carried out a consultation exercise during November and December 2015, seeking public views on the introduction of parking charges at Blackshots Leisure Centre. This was a management response to identify potential solutions to parking problems at the site.</p> <p>Impulse clearly recognised from the response to their consultation exercise that car parking charging was a controversial and sensitive issue and concluded that even if charges were considered as a way forward, this could only be the case if the Council implemented a residents only parking scheme in surrounding roads. The Council's view however is that parking charges at Blackshots are not a practical or preferred solution and it has been made clear to Impulse that we will not be introducing residents parking for nearby roads.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Council's interpretation of the formal lease between the parties is that the introduction of charges to the current parking arrangements would represent a</p>

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				<p>variation. The Council has written to Impulse Leisure, advising that no such variation would be agreed to, but also committing to working with them to try to identify other ways of improving the parking issues at the site.</p> <p>It is therefore considered quite clear that parking charges will not be introduced at the Blackshots Leisure Centre.</p>
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24 February 2016	ITEM: 11
Council	
General Fund Budget Proposals	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor John Kent, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

There have been a number of reports considered by Cabinet throughout the municipal year on the projected financial positions for 2015/16, 2016/17 and the medium term.

The report considered by Cabinet on 10 February 2016 reported a balanced budget for 2016/17 but continuing budget pressures for the period 2017/18 – 2019/20. In the absence of a Council Tax freeze grant going forward, this report recommends that the Council increases Council Tax by:

2% towards the cost of Adult Social Care; and

1.99% towards the cost of all services provided by the Council.

The report also sets out the proposals for the Capital Programme for 2016/17.

1. Recommendation(s):

That the Council:

- 1.1 **Considers and acknowledges the Section 151 Officer's (Director of Finance and IT's) report on the robustness of the proposed budget, the adequacy of the Council's reserves and the Reserves Strategy as set out in Appendix 1, including the conditions upon which the following recommendations are made;**
- 1.2 **Following the recommendations of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet, agree to a 2% Council Tax increase in respect of Adult Social Care;**

- 1.3 Following the recommendations of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet, agree to a 1.99% Council Tax increase in support of the general budget;**
- 1.4 Approve a General Fund net revenue budget for 2016/17 of £110,289,954 allocated to services as set out in paragraph 5.3;**
- 1.5 That Cabinet recommend to Council that delegation be granted to the Director of Finance and IT, in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, the authority to make the relevant submissions to government to secure the four year settlement and freedom to use capital receipts for transformation purposes if considered to be in the Council's best interest;**
- 1.6 Approve the Dedicated Schools Grant as set out in section 7 and Appendix 4;**
- 1.7 Approve the new General Fund capital schemes as set out in section 9 and Appendix 5;**
- 1.8 Delegate to Cabinet:**
 - 1.8.1 The approval of any expenditure, including loan and equity advances, related to Gloriana Thurrock Ltd developments and these be deemed as part of the capital programme;**
 - 1.8.2 The ability to agree schemes where it can be evidenced that there is a spend to save opportunity and these be deemed as part of the capital programme; and**
 - 1.8.3 The ability to agree schemes that use any unbudgeted contributions from third parties, including those by way of grants or developers' contributions, and these be deemed as part of the capital programme.**

Statutory Council Tax Resolution

(Members should note that these recommendations are a result of the previous recommendations above and can be agreed as written or as amended by any changes agreed to those above).

- 1.9 Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2016/17 is £57,135,138 as set out in the table at paragraph 5.3 of this report.**
- 1.10 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**

- (a) £390,012,962 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £332,877,824 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £57,135,138 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.10(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.10(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
- (d) £1,169.46 being the amount at 1.10(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (Council Tax Base of 48,856), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £1,169.46 being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by Item T, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

1.11 To note that the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the tables below.

1.12 That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2016/17 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

2016/17 COUNCIL TAX FOR THURROCK PURPOSES EXCLUDING ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY AND ESSEX POLICE AUTHORITY

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2016/17							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
779.64	909.58	1,039.52	1,169.46	1,429.34	1,689.22	1,949.10	2,338.92

- 1.13 That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 Essex Police Authority has stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2016/17							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
101.40	118.30	135.20	152.10	185.90	219.70	253.50	304.20

- 1.14 That it be noted that for the year 2016/17 Essex Fire Authority has stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2016/17							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
45.12	52.64	60.16	67.68	82.72	97.76	112.80	135.36

2016/17 COUNCIL TAX (INCLUDING FIRE AND POLICE AUTHORITY PRECEPTS)

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2016/17							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
926.16	1,080.52	1,234.88	1,389.24	1,697.96	2,006.68	2,315.40	2,778.48

2 Introduction and Background

The Process for Agreeing the Council's Budgets

- 2.1 The Council must set its annual revenue budget and associated Council Tax by 11 March of the preceding financial year. If, for whatever reason, the Council cannot agree a budget and Council Tax at its meeting on 24 February 2016, Members should be aware that it is unlikely that the Council Tax bills could be sent out in time for April instalments (taking into account the necessary notice period and the time required to print the bills and accompanying information).
- 2.2 It is also good practice to approve the capital programme at the same time because there is an interdependency between the budget streams. Fees and Charges were approved by Cabinet on 10 February 2016.
- 2.3 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget needs to be agreed in a timely manner to ensure that rent increases can be reflected from 1 April of each year. A separate report on this agenda deals with Housing Rents and Charges for 2016/17.

- 2.4 This report presents the proposed 2016/17 General Fund revenue and capital budgets, as per the recommendations of the Cabinet that have been formed through budget reports presented to each Cabinet over recent months.
- 2.5 The Director of Finance and IT's statutory statement on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003 is included at Appendix 1. This must be considered by Council before approving the budget and Council Tax.

Revenue

The 2015/16 Budget Position

- 2.6 Cabinet has received a number of reports throughout the year identifying pressures in both Environment (reversal of the decision to charge for green bins) and Children's Services. The gross pressures were estimated at £6.1m.
- 2.7 In addition, the contracted obligation to reimburse Serco for its surplus in the Essex Pension Fund has been estimated at £2.5m.
- 2.8 Officers reported various mitigating actions that brought the budget back into balance but recognised a number of the pressures as ongoing and made provision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2016/17.
- 2.9 The most recent analysis has identified that the pressures within Children's Services are increasing for three main reasons:
- a) Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC), including recognising assumed levels of reimbursement from government for the 2014/15 financial year;
 - b) The cost of placements; and
 - c) The cost of interim staff over and above establishment to meet acceptable social worker to child ratios.
- 2.10 These will be further considered by Cabinet in March 2016 and mitigating action taken to minimise any further impact in 2016/17.

Financial Self Sustainability and Government Grants

- 2.11 Government announced the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) in November 2015 and this provides the financial framework and direction that public services will have to work within over the life of this parliament.
- 2.12 Key messages from the CSR were as follows:
- a) Confirmation that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) will be abolished over the life of this parliament through a continuation of year on year reductions, in addition to the £29m lost between 2010/11 and 2015/16;

- b) That, as a result of the abolition of RSG, Council's will be reliant on raising necessary funding locally through Council Tax, Business Rates and other Income Generation;
- c) That Local Government will retain all Business Rates collected in any one area from 2019/20 but will still be subject to tariffs and top ups – in other words, for Thurrock Council, the Council will still have to pay a significant proportion of the Business Rates it collects to central government for redistribution. (Thurrock Council currently retains approximately 30% of what it collects); and
- d) That, as a result of more Business Rates being available to councils nationally, there will be added obligations for councils to meet. These new duties have not yet been announced and will be subject to consultation over the coming months but it is likely that any increased funding will be absorbed by these new requirements.

2.13 Simply, the cost of paying for the majority of the services that the Council is responsible for will have to be met from income raised directly: Council Tax; Business Rates, and; fees, charges and recharges. It is in this context that this report makes its recommendations on increases to Council Tax for just the second time since 2010 as a direct response to the government direction in the Autumn Statement.

2.14 Based on the proposals within this report, the following table demonstrates the direction of travel for the financing of local government:

	2010/11 %	2015/16 %	2016/17 %
Government Grant	54.2	22.7	15.9
Business Rates (Retained)		26.7	29.7
Council Tax	44.3	47.6	51.1
Fees, Charges and Other Income	1.5	3.0	3.3

2.15 The Council also receives a number of grants for specific purposes. In line with the overall direction of less government support, the reductions in these grants have been factored into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). However, two areas in particular are a cause of particular concern.

2.16 Public Health Grant. As part of the reforms contained within the Health and Social Care Act 2012, responsibility for commissioning certain public health functions moved from the NHS to Local Authorities. In 2013 a ring fenced Public Health Grant was provided to all top tier local authorities in order to commission mandated and discretionary Public Health services.

- 2.17 During 2015/16, the Chancellor announced in-year cuts to the grant of 6.2% amounting to an in-year reduction of £655k. A further cut of up to 3.9% was announced in the 2015 Autumn Statement and this has increased the annual reduction to £924k in 2016/17.
- 2.18 The Better Care Fund. This is a joint budget between the Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The government has committed to increasing the amount available for Adult Social Care over the life of this parliament but, although the Council is still waiting for details regarding 2016/17, no increase is expected despite the increases in the cost of care brought about by the increase in the minimum wage (£1.5m) or the increased demand, especially in areas such as dementia and autism (£1m).

3 Council Tax Proposals

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the concept of a referendum where a proposed Council Tax increase exceeds its excessiveness principles either by the billing authority (Thurrock Council) or one of its major preceptors. Simply, a referendum would be required if the Council resolved to increase Council Tax by a higher percentage than the government guidelines. This report does not propose increases that would call for a referendum.
- 3.2 The Autumn Statement confirmed that there would no longer be a freeze grant offered to councils. As the MTFs had assumed a grant would be available, the Council's estimated financial deficit for 2016/17 was increased by £600k.
- 3.3 Other national changes have also increased liabilities on the Council through the Minimum Wage (£1.5m on Adult Social Care contract) and the National Insurance and Apprentice Levy changes (£0.5m).
- 3.4 The government's spending power calculation for all councils with adult social care responsibility assumes increases of 2.00% per annum over the life of the settlement to offer a form of protection to adult social care budgets.
- 3.5 The government's spending power calculation included a further increase of 1.75% per annum in line with the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) over the next four years.
- 3.6 These published increases are a reversal of previous policy where a Council Tax freeze was recommended.
- 3.7 When considering Council Tax increases, Members should consider Thurrock Council's position nationally in terms of the funding available to it to provide the wide range of services, including the need to manage increases in demand for both Children's and Adults' Social Care.
- 3.8 Of the 55 Unitary Authorities, Thurrock Council has the third lowest Council Tax Band D and:
- a) Is able to raise the third lowest amount of Council Tax;

- b) Receives the third lowest level of Revenue Support Grant (RSG);
- c) Has the third lowest net budget; and
- d) Has the fifth lowest net budget per head of population.

3.9 This clearly demonstrates the Council has one of the lowest levels of expenditure for services in the country.

3.10 Due to the loss of assumed freeze grant and the Council's low budget base as set out above, **a 3.99% increase is recommended** that will raise some £2.2m in 2016/17 and make some headway towards the more difficult task of balancing 2017/18 and beyond. For Thurrock Council, a referendum would be triggered where Council Tax is increased by 4% or more above the authority's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2015/16.

3.11 A 3.99% increase in Council Tax equates to £44.82 for a Band D property in Thurrock. 71% of properties in Thurrock are Bands A-C where the increase ranges from £29.88 - £39.84 per year or £0.57 - £0.77 per week. The table below sets out the impact on the various bands for Thurrock households:

Band	2015/16	Increase	2016/17	Weekly
A	749.76	29.88	779.64	0.57
B	874.72	34.86	909.58	0.67
C	999.68	39.84	1,039.52	0.77
D	1,124.64	44.82	1,169.46	0.86
E	1,374.56	54.78	1,429.34	1.05
F	1,624.48	64.74	1,689.22	1.25
G	1,874.40	74.70	1,949.10	1.44
H	2,249.28	89.64	2,338.92	1.72

3.12 A survey carried out amongst Municipal and Unitary Treasurers in early January 2016 provides some national context to the recommended increase in Council Tax. Two specific questions were asked and these are set out below along with the responses:

- a) Is your Council minded to increase Council Tax by 2% for Adult Social Care?

Yes	76.19%
No	1.59%
Undecided	22.22%

- b) In addition, is your Council minded to increase the general Council Tax element?

No Increase	6.82%
0.00 – 0.99%	4.55%
1.00 – 1.49%	0.00%
1.50 – 2.00%	70.45%
Undecided	18.18%

- 3.13 The survey results show strong support for Council Tax increases nationally.
- 3.14 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee hold the responsibility for reviewing the general aspects of the budget. As such, Cabinet asked the committee to discuss the proposed Council Tax increases at their meeting on 2 February 2016:
- a) The committee recognised the direction of travel towards financial self-sustainability and acknowledged that raising the necessary finance was now the Council's responsibility with the phasing out of the Revenue Support Grant; and
 - b) There was some discussion as to whether the increase should be limited to 3.75% but, on hearing that this only saved Bands A-C 3-5 pence a week but would cost the Council £137,500, the committee unanimously recommended a 3.99% increase.
- 3.15 Cabinet considered this response at their meeting on 10 February 2016 and decided to also recommend a 3.99% increase to Council.

4 Changes to the 2016/17 Budget

- 4.1 Recent years have seen a number of consultations across all services that have proposed a wide range of service reductions and increases to fees and charges.
- 4.2 At the Council meeting in February 2015, Members considered the MTF5 and this set out a projected budget gap for 2016/17 of £9.966m. Appendix 2 sets out the changes that have been made and are recommended to not only bridge that gap but to also create a provision of £0.365m to support the Council in achieving financial self-sustainability. This budget would be used on projects covering, for example:
- a) Increased income through both existing charges and securing additional income streams;
 - b) Continuing the work on rationalising the Council's assets to reduce costs and maximise income potential;
 - c) Driving efficiencies through better ways of working;

- d) Financing spend to save initiatives;
 - e) Investigating and implementing new delivery models; and
 - f) Financing organisational change where necessary.
- 4.3 Whilst there are no further budget reductions to front line services proposed, this budget includes delivery of previously agreed savings from the 2015/16 budget setting process of £3.391m and the risk to delivery and impact of these proposals cannot be under estimated. It is clear from the table that, if the Council is to balance the budget for 2016/17 without having to make further reductions to services, the Council Tax increases as recommended are essential.
- 4.4 If a 3.99% Council Tax increase is not supported, options will need to be available for the Council to set a balanced budget. Options will focus on:
- a) The removal of the re-instated budget for bus subsidies as this is a previously agreed saving and is not yet contractually committed;
 - b) A reduction to the growth provision for Children's and Adults' social care pressures;
 - c) Reductions in the Environment Service where levels of activity are more easily flexed albeit with a visible impact for residents across the borough; and
 - d) Reductions to other discretionary services such as libraries, arts and leisure services.

Other Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Considerations

- 4.5 There are two specific areas that need further consideration from the CSR:
- a) Four Year Settlement – the provisional settlement issued by the government on 17 December 2015 included forecasts through to 2019/20. Local authorities are invited to 'sign up' to these figures through an efficiency plan to be lodged with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). However, the message was clear that these could be amended should the government believe that there is a need to and so they would only remain indicative; and
 - b) Capital Receipts – through setting out a transformation plan, Council's would be able to use capital receipts to pay for revenue transformation programmes and activities.
- 4.6 In both cases, the government is yet to issue guidance and even clarity on the detail of these two proposals. As such, it is recommended to delegate the final decision and submissions to the Director of Finance and IT in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

5 Proposed General Fund Revenue Budget 2016/17

- 5.1 Cabinet has considered detailed reports at each of its meetings in this municipal year following on from the Council budget report in February 2015. These have included recognising pressures in the current financial year and making provision in 2016/17. These are all summarised in the table at Appendix 2.
- 5.2 The impact from 2015/16 is demonstrated in the increased provision for both Children's and Adults' Social Care that reflects both increases in demand and the economic impact of the government's changes to the minimum wage. Provision has been increased from £3m to £4.5m and this will be held centrally and allocated as the pressures materialise.
- 5.3 The proposed net General Fund revenue budget is £110,289,954 and is allocated to services as set out below:

	£000's
Adults, Housing and Health	32,023
Children's Services	27,429
Environment and Place Directorate	32,714
Chief Executive's Office	24,436
Commercial Services	348
Contingency for Demand and Economic Pressures	4,500
Recharges	(5,971)
Specific Grants	(1,572)
Service Budget Total	113,907
Levies	539
Capital Financing	(4,156)
Net Expenditure	110,290
<i>Financed by:</i>	
Revenue Support Grant	(20,673)
NNDR	(30,917)
New Homes Bonus	(3,383)
Collection Fund Balances	1,818
To be funded through Council Tax	(57,135)

6 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

- 6.1 The MTFS covering the period 2017/18 through to 2019/20 is attached at Appendix 3 which includes the assumption that there will be a 3.99% Council Tax for each of the following years. This is in line with the government's spending power assumptions.

- 6.2 Even with the proposed Council Tax increases, the deficit of £18.5m is still very challenging. Any reduction to the proposed Council Tax increase in future years will increase the deficit and impact the following financial years.
- 6.3 The budget proposal for 2016/17 includes a provision of £365k to help meet the challenge of the future financial pressures. Broadly, activity will include but not be limited to:
- a) Income generation;
 - b) Asset rationalisation;
 - c) Spend to save initiatives; and
 - d) Service and related employment reductions.

7 Government Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant

- 7.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was introduced in 2006/07 as a 100% specific grant to fund the schools' budget.
- 7.2 Since 2013/14 the Grant has been split into three blocks: these are the Schools Block, the High Needs Block and the Early Year Blocks. Whilst the DSG is ring-fenced the separate blocks are not ring-fenced to each area, however any movement from the Schools block would need to be agreed by the Schools Forum.
- 7.3 The original allocation of the DSG was calculated based on the 2012/13 spend and there has been no inflationary increase since then.
- 7.4 The Schools block and the Early Years block are uplifted, based on a multiple of pupil numbers and unit value, however where there is population growth there is no increase to the High Needs block, which represents 15% of total DSG funding, and is the greatest risk area for the Council.
- 7.5 Within the Schools block, the Local Authority is not permitted to increase the central expenditure, beyond the levels of 2012/13 which relates to prior commitments. All other funding is delegated to schools to manage locally.
- 7.6 The DSG allocation is based on the October pupil count, and allocations are given in December for the Schools and High Needs block with an indicative allocation of the Early Years block which is updated for actual pupil take up during the year.
- 7.7 The basis of the October count has caused some dilution of funding to schools as Thurrock is going through a significant period of pupil growth. This means that we are funding pupils in schools before they are funded in the DSG resulting in a top slice to all schools funding rates to cover the increased numbers.

- 7.8 There has been no major change to the Thurrock formula for financing schools this year, with the Schools Forum agreeing that during a time of reducing budgets further turbulence should not be added by changing the method of distribution.
- 7.9 The only change in the formula funding for 2016/17 School budgets is a reduction to the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) by 0.6% to allow for the funding of the agreed growth, all other factor have remained constant.
- 7.10 DSG is calculated for all mainstream schools in Thurrock, including Academies, using the Thurrock funding formula. The Education Funding Agency then recoups funding to be distributed to Academies and a net Grant is paid to the Authority to ensure that Academy and maintained schools are funded on the same basis. All figures in this report are gross.
- 7.11 The allocation of funding for special schools and the Pupil Referral Unit is no longer included as schools funding, but is included in the High Needs Block.
- 7.12 The Department for Education will be consulting in late February/ early March on a different allocation methodology and a move to a national funding formula for all Schools and Academies is expected to be introduced for the 2017/18 academic year.
- 7.13 The per pupil rate of Schools block DSG paid to Thurrock is £4,459.07, the early years pupil rate is £3,715.04. The total value of the DSG paid for 2016/17 is £135.597m (Gross before Academy recoupment) made up of:-
- | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------------------|
| a) | Schools Block | £109.506m |
| b) | High Needs Block | £20.466m* (gross) |
| c) | Early Years Block | £8.572m |
| d) | Non Block Funding | £0.036m |

*Net allocation of High Needs block including funding allocated directly to Academies is £17.484m.

- 7.14 At the end of 2015/16 all but one secondary school has converted to Academy status, 25 of the 39 primary schools and 1 of the 2 special Schools. The Pupil Referral Unit, and two primary schools converted to Academy status at the beginning of this Financial year. Currently we have no school confirming they will convert to Academy status over the financial year although we are aware that several are investigating their options with the government agenda stating their intention to move to an all Academy model.

8 Reserves

- 8.1 The Council's total useable reserves as at 1 April 2015 were £53.158m. However, a number of these reserves are for capital, schools and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The estimated balance available for GF purposes

as at 1 April 2016 is just the General Fund unearmarked balance of £8m. This balance is in line with the Council's optimum level of reserves as set out in the 2015/16 budget papers.

- 8.2 There is no set formula to determine this balance but it is for the Council's S151 Officer to consider the Council's past financial performance and risk to the budget over the future medium term and to then recommend a balance to the Council. It is, however, for the Council to set this balance considering that recommendation.
- 8.3 The Council has now delivered within budget for each of the financial years 2010/11 through to 2014/15 and expects to do so again in 2015/16 despite the reported pressures in Children's Services and the additional cost of the Serco pension liability. This in itself reduces the risk and would have traditionally given the S151 Officer the opportunity to recommend a lower balance. However, this needs to be measured against the ongoing financial difficulties the Council will face. This report has already stated that delivering savings is becoming increasingly difficult and this will continue through the medium term.
- 8.4 There has been some comment that the £8m General Fund balance could be reduced as the Council's budget becomes smaller. In fact, the opposite could be argued as demand is increasing with less resource available.
- 8.5 Considering the above, the recommendation is to maintain the General Fund balance at £8m for 2016/17.

9 Proposed Additions to the Capital Programme

- 9.1 The majority of the Council's capital programme is funded from grants in terms of both schools and highways and from rents and grants for the HRA.
- 9.2 For the remainder of the General Fund or, indeed, to supplement the above, the following sources are available:
 - a) Capital Receipts – these are the receipts realised from the disposal of capital assets such as land and buildings. Members will be aware that the Council reviews its asset base and there is a programme of disposals being progressed;
 - b) Grants and Contributions – these could be ad hoc grants awarded from government or other funding agencies or contributions from developers and others;
 - c) Prudential Borrowing – the Council is able to increase its borrowing to finance schemes as long as they are considered affordable. The MTFS assumes repayments on £3m of borrowing per annum; and
 - d) Revenue – this approach is not recommended as it has an immediate and costly impact on the General Fund.

- 9.3 Attached at Appendix 5 are the schemes being proposed for the Cabinet's consideration. They have been considered against the following criteria:
- a) Whether they are categorised under Health and Safety, Statutory, Invest to Save or desirable; and
 - b) Through a scoring process against the Council's priorities.
- 9.4 Officers do recognise these are all schemes that address predominantly short-term issues and a more ambitious capital programme needs to be developed to support growth throughout the borough. In addition, the Council must be able to transform itself into a more modern authority that also reflects the changes that are inevitable to achieve financial self-sustainability.
- 9.5 These schemes could include a new theatre, town centre regeneration, support to businesses, further development at High House Production Park, etc. Schemes to also support revenue generating opportunities will also be developed.

10 Capital Programme Overview

- 10.1 Operational Buildings – these schemes have been proposed at a level to ensure that the buildings remain operational and fit for purpose for the short term. These proposals provide funding for various schemes but will only be spent where absolutely necessary. Funding is also requested for Collins House to carry out essential works as well as to fund a feasibility study into whether the building would be best served through a major refurbishment or replacement.
- 10.2 Environment – there are proposals for essential service items such as replacement household bins, vehicles and plant. There are also other schemes for maintaining/enhancing open spaces and for efficiency improvements. Although not included within these proposals, Members should be aware that officers are working on the re-tendering of the waste contracts. The current fleet is approaching the end of its life and consideration will be given during the tender process for replacement vehicles.
- 10.3 IT – now that the service has been brought back in-house, a comprehensive programme is being developed to improve stability, both for normal operational purposes but also for Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery purposes. Bids also include works to major applications, such as Oracle, that will improve efficiency throughout the workforce to compliment the staffing reductions.
- 10.4 Community Environmental Development Fund (CEDF) – Cabinet agreed to propose a new fund, the CEDF. This is for communities to bid against criteria being developed for capital enhancements to their areas. A fund of £250k is proposed.

11 Other Capital Recommendations

- 11.1 There are three areas where the Council has previously given Cabinet delegation to approve additional schemes and this is being recommended again for 2016/17:
- a) Additional Funding – throughout the year, the Council quite often receives additional funding through, for instance, government grants and developers' contributions;
 - b) Invest to Save – these schemes could only be approved where the reduction in ongoing expenditure or increased income exceeds the cost of repaying the prudential borrowing required for the scheme; and
 - c) Gloriana – Members will be aware that there are a number of governance gateways before approval for a scheme is considered by Cabinet. These gateways include discussion within a governance group consisting of the three group leaders, the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance and IT.
- 11.2 The delegation requested is that any approval is deemed to be part of the capital programme and that the necessary prudential indicators set out in the Treasury Management Strategy are amended accordingly.
- 11.3 This approach means that estimated amounts for schemes that may or may not take place are not included in the programme, removing the need for speculative provisions.

12 Key Points from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Capital)

- 12.1 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee (2 February 2016) and Cabinet (10 February 2016) considered the capital proposals:
- a) The committee and Cabinet agreed the proposals but recognised that these were all of operational necessity and did not yet reflect the aspirations of the Council. Members supported the need for a more aspirational programme for the future to be brought back in due course; and
 - b) The Overview and Scrutiny committee debated the three areas of delegation to Cabinet and, for 2016/17, have supported these. There was discussion about how these delegations could be capped to ensure that Council was still involved in the more financially significant projects but agreed this should be developed over the coming months as a consideration for future years.

13 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 13.1 The issues and options are set out in the body of this report in the context of the latest MTFs and informed by discussions with the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Directors' Board.

14 Reasons for Recommendation

- 14.1 The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget annually. This report sets out the budget pressures in 2015/16 and 2016/17 along with actions to mitigate these pressures and create a budget to implement changes required to reshape the Council.

15 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 15.1 This report has been developed in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holders and Directors Board. In addition, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 2 February with their comments set out above. Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders have been involved throughout the budget planning process through the Budget Review Panel. The Director of Finance and IT has attended each political group meeting providing a briefing on the overall financial position.
- 15.2 Budget consultation sessions were held separately with the voluntary sector, Community Forum Chairs and the Business Board in January 2016. This provided an opportunity to set out the Council's overall budget position and consider together areas where further collaboration could be explored in future such as alternative service delivery models.

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

- 16.1 The implementation of previous savings proposals has already reduced service delivery levels and our ability to meet statutory requirements, impacting on the community and staff. There is a risk that some agreed savings may result in increased demand for more costly interventions if needs escalate particularly in social care. The potential impact on the Council's ability to safeguard children and adults will be kept carefully under review and mitigating actions taken where required.
- 16.2 The scale of future budget reductions as set out in this report are such that work is underway to develop a transformational approach to tackling this challenge in future years.

17 Implications

17.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Director of Finance and IT

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

Council officers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the Council can contain spend within its available resources. Regular budget monitoring reports will continue to come to Cabinet and be considered by the Directors

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

This report does not just set out the actions required to set the budget for 2016/17 but provides a financial framework to facilitate change going forward.

17.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Deputy Head of Legal & Governance - Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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

17.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no specific diversity and equalities implications as part of this report. A comprehensive Community and Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) will be completed for any specific savings proposals developed to address future savings requirements and informed by consultation outcomes to feed into final decision making. The cumulative impact will also be closely monitored and reported to Members.

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

Any other significant implications will be identified in any individual savings proposal business case to inform the consultation process where applicable and final decision making.

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

- Budget working papers held in Corporate Finance
- Budget Review Panel papers held in Strategy and Communications

19 Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Report of the Council's Section 151 Officer under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003: Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves
- Appendix 2 – Summary of MTFS Movements
- Appendix 3 – Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Appendix 4 – Schools' Budget
- Appendix 5 – General Fund Capital Programme Additions

Report Authors:

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**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S STATEMENT ON ADEQUACY OF BALANCES AND
THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE BUDGET – BUDGET YEAR 2016/17**

Introduction

The Chief Financial Officer is required to make a statement on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of the budget. This is a statutory duty under section 25 of the 2003 Local Government Act which states the following:

- (1) *Where an authority to which section 32 or 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (billing or major precepting authority) or section 85 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29) (Greater London Authority) applies is making calculations in accordance with that section, the Chief Finance Officer of the authority must report to it on the following matters:-*
 - (a) *The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations; and*
 - (b) *The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.*
- (2) *An authority to which a report under this section is made shall have regard to the report when making decisions about the calculations in connection with which it is made.*

This includes reporting and taking into account:

- The key assumptions in the proposed budget and to give a view on the robustness of those assumptions; and
- The key risk areas in the budget and to assess the adequacy of the Council's reserves when reviewing the potential financial impact of these risk areas on the finances of the Council. This should be accompanied by a Reserves Strategy.

This report has to be considered and approved by Council as part of the budget approval and Council Tax setting process.

This document concentrates on the General Fund 2016/17, the Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme but, in addition, it also considers key medium term issues faced by the Council.

Statement of the Council's Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance and IT)

1. I have reviewed the budget proposals for 2016/17 and consider them to be challenging but achievable. There are three specific areas within the General Fund budget that cause concern and will require strong officer and political management to achieve them:
 - a) During the 2015/16 budget setting meetings, service related savings of £3.3m were agreed for the 2016/17 financial year and some of these are still in the process of being delivered;

- b) The level of Public Health Grant (PHG) for 2016/17 was only published on 11 February 2016 and resulted in a reduction of £924k over the original 2015/16 budget. As this spend is based on 12 month contracts, it is not yet certain whether this reduction can be contained without a call on the General Fund; and
 - c) Over the course of the last year, Cabinet have received a number of reports on the performance against budget for 2015/16. Pressures have been identified and reported on the following:
 - (i) Environmental Services: not implementing the decision to charge for green bins, the closure of the Sita recycling facility and the decision to finance additional cleaning rounds during the Summer; and
 - (ii) Children's Social Care: pressures have been reported in the cost of placements, an increased number of social workers due to caseloads and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.
2. The gross pressures from the above have been reported at £6m and, since that date, further pressures in Children's Services have been identified and are in the process of being costed.
 3. Whilst provision has been made within these budget proposals for considerable growth in these areas, there remains the challenge of reducing and managing these increasing pressures to remain within the agreed budget envelope.
 4. Confidence in achieving this comes from having consistently managed in-year pressures since 2010/11 and coming within budget for each of those years. However, as budgets and discretionary spend reduces, the ability to make in-year reductions to other areas of the budget reduces also.
 5. With regards to the HRA, the 1% rent reduction has reduced resources in 2016/17 by £1m and is forecast to have lost a total resource of £14.6m over the life of the MTFs. Whilst a significant reduction to the Council's housing aspirations for both current and new stock, these reductions can be managed through deferring and slowing down current programmes although the impact on residents is obviously considerable.
 6. The key process risks in making the above statement is the availability of timely and relevant financial information to the services. This is two-fold:
 - a) The reporting ability of the Council's financial system, Oracle, is still inadequate and requires considerable manual intervention before being of use to service managers; and
 - b) A number of the service specific systems, notably housing and Social Care, do not interface with the Oracle system in a way that allows the identification of future commitments.

These risks are known and work continues to improve this position.

7. My statement is also conditional upon:
- Council acknowledging the need to increase the Council's income base, specifically through Council Tax increases;
 - A budget for officers to plan for and implement change to meet the financial challenges over the medium term;
 - The agreement of a Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan for 2017/18 to 2019/20 that will require significant reductions in net revenue expenditure to deliver a balanced budget for the financial years 2017/18 and beyond;
 - A recognition in the medium term planning approach that the level of reserves and corporate risk assessment need to be regularly reviewed in the light of changing circumstances and that it may not be possible to match the two at any single point in time. The Council needs to show a commitment to maintain reserves at a level which provides adequate cover for most identified risks during the planning period. This approach is pragmatic and shows a clear commitment to prudent contingency planning. It must be noted, however, that the recommended levels of reserves still leave the Council exposed to the very exceptional risks identified in this review and, if those risks crystallise, to reserves being inadequate;
 - Portfolio Holders, Directors and Heads of Service managing within their cash limits for 2016/17 (and future years covered by the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Plan);
 - Taking every opportunity to meet the Reserves Strategy as a first call on windfall under spends or receipts;
 - Not considering further calls on reserves other than for those risks that have been identified, those that could not have been reasonably foreseen and that cannot be dealt with through management or policy actions. The exception to this is where the Reserves Strategy (reviewed annually) is met. Even in those circumstances, it is not prudent to finance ongoing spending from one-off reserves. Any excess reserves should be targeted towards one-off 'invest to save', supporting the transition that is required for future service delivery and contributions to fund the Council's capital programme;
 - Where there is a draw-down on reserves, which causes the approved Reserves Strategy to be off target, that this is paid back within a maximum of three years; and
 - That the Council has arrangements and resources in place to consider value for money in preparation for future years' budgets.
8. In relation to the adequacy of reserves, I recommend the following **Reserves Strategy** based on an approach to evidence the requisite level of reserves by internal financial risk assessment. The Reserves Strategy will need to be reviewed annually and adjusted in the light of the prevailing circumstances.

- An absolute minimum level of General Fund reserves of £7.0m that is maintained throughout the period between 2016/17 to 2019/20;
 - An optimal level of reserves of £8.0m over the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 to cover the absolute minimum level of reserves, in-year risks, cash flow needs and unforeseen circumstances;
 - A maximum recommended level of reserves of £10.0m for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 to provide additional resilience to implement the Medium Term Financial Plan; and
 - In relation to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) my recommendation is that reserves be maintained at £1.7m.
9. The estimated level of unallocated General Fund reserves at 31 March 2016, based on current projections is £8.0m, depending on final spending. Therefore:
- The absolute minimum level of reserves of £7.0m is currently being achieved.
 - The optimal level of reserves of £8.0m will be maintained by the end of the current year.
 - The recommended maximum level of reserves of £10.0m will not be reached during 2016/17.
10. These recommendations are made on the basis of:
- The detailed discussions that have taken place at Directors' Board, including the regular review of the high risk proposals;
 - My own enquiries during the development of the budget;
 - The resilience required to deliver the Medium Term Financial Plan;
 - One-off unallocated reserves not being used to fund new ongoing commitments;
 - Reserves in 2016/17 and the foreseeable future being used only where planned and if risks materialise and cannot be contained by management or policy actions; and
 - That where reserves are drawn down, the level of reserves is restored within a maximum of three years to that required by the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
11. There are also serious exceptional risks over and above those mentioned which, if they crystallise, could eliminate the Council's reserves and leave its financial standing seriously in question. These include:
- Not having a clear plan on how to meet the financial challenges of 2017/18 and the medium term;

- Not realising the efficiencies from transformation and new ways of working;
- Unforeseen impacts arising from the consequences of welfare reform, in particular the roll out of Universal Credit;
- Unforeseen impacts arising from the governance and financial changes in the provision of public health services;
- The impact of the localisation of business rates and the consequences of future changes in the total rateable value of businesses located in Thurrock;
- Interest rate rises that would reduce the ongoing savings arising from the restructuring of debt carried out in August 2010;
- The failure of Gloriana Thurrock Ltd;
- Any shortfall against the expected value of assets identified for disposal; and
- The lack of contingency funds to meet demographic and economic pressures, especially at this time of significant change.

12. In relation to the General Fund and HRA Capital Programme 2016/17 (including commitments from previous years and new projects):

- The HRA Capital Programme will need to be contained within total programme costs;
- The General Fund Capital Budget is based on the best information available in terms of project costs. What is less certain, given the history of cost variations, is the phasing of expenditure; and
- The strategic schemes identified in the Capital Programme will be closely monitored in-year.

13. In relation to the medium/long term Capital Programme:

- The delivery of the agreed Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan is a critical priority to enable the matching of resources to needs and priorities; and
- It is recognised that there are a number of schemes in discussion, especially in terms of town centre regeneration, health centres and theatre provision, that are not yet included within the agreed programme but will require significant resource in the medium term.

Assurance

Given all these factors I consider the estimates for 2016/17 to be sufficiently robust for approval by the Council but they are challenging and dependent on the Council Tax being increased by 3.99% and strong financial management from officers and Members. I advise the Council that both the General Fund and HRA Reserves are

currently at the optimum level required to ensure financial stability over the medium term and recommend that the Reserves Strategy be maintained in 2016/17 and the medium term.

	£m	
February 2015	9.966	The MTF5 forecast as reported to Council
Social Care Precept	(1.099)	A 2% increase on the current Council Tax level
General Council Tax Increase	(1.093)	A 1.99% increase on the current Council Tax level
Council Tax Freeze Grant	0.600	Freeze grant no longer available
Grants	(1.746)	An improved position on estimated settlement
Prior Year Council Tax and Business Rates Reconciliation	(1.121)	Every year the Council has to estimate the surplus or deficit in terms of amounts collected against originally estimated. There are still significant pressures on Business Rate appeals that leaves the Business Rate position in deficit but the Council Tax position continues to have a positive impact
Increased Income Generation	(0.700)	As reported to the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees, an additional £0.5m has been built into the base budgets over increases that had already been targeted. This is an essential component of the Council's move towards financial self-sustainability
Pay Related	1.048	Recognises the inclusion of Serco as Thurrock workforce, the changes to NI and the Apprentice Levy
Inflation	(1.018)	Reductions in contract and utility inflation provisions recognising the low rates and cost reductions
Treasury	(4.054)	The Council has been proactive in achieving technical accounting efficiencies such as an annual reduction in the Minimum Revenue Provision and also making significant increases in investment income through

	£m	
		CCLA and Gloriana
Environmental Services	1.460	Includes the decision not to implement the charge for green bins and the increased costs arising from the closure of the recycling facility.
Serco	(3.400)	The net saving resulting from the termination of the Serco contract
Growth	1.500	The MTFs assumes annual increases for demographic growth of £3m. However, with the increase in the minimum wage and unprecedented increases in demands for both Children's and Adults' Social Care, further provision is required
Staffing Cost Reductions	(1.200)	Savings have been identified through the senior management restructure, the savings from the Serco management that did not transfer to the Council and the opportunities to achieve efficiency savings from Thurrock Online
Bus Subsidies	0.190	<p>The issue of bus subsidies has been the subject of a motion at Council on 25 November 2015 and it was also raised as a concern in a budget consultation meeting with the Community Forums on 20 January 2016.</p> <p>Tenders have now been received back and have included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Service 11 to offer a 90 minute service including Horndon on the Hill; – Service 374 to offer a 90 minute service commercially with a de minimus payment from the Council; and – Service 14 to offer Fobbing a limited

	£m	
		service to Corringham and Basildon.
Lower Thames Crossing	0.050	Working budget as raised at Council on 27 January 2016
Other	0.252	Other minor amendments in terms of technical items, Council Tax base assumptions, etc
Balance	(0.365)	Available to finance the various initiatives required towards financial self-sustainability

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Medium Term financial forecast	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	£000	£000	£000
Local Funding			
Council Tax	(1,607)	(1,650)	(1,697)
Council Tax Social Care Precept	(1,153)	(1,186)	(1,222)
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	382	390	0
Business Rate Growth	(475)	(1,500)	0
Business Rate - Collection Fund Deficit	(860)	(860)	0
	(3,714)	(4,806)	(2,919)
Total Government Resources			
Revenue Support Grant	6,013	3,960	2,215
Other Central Grants	300	300	300
	6,313	4,260	2,515
Net Additional (Reduction) in resources	2,599	(546)	(404)
Inflation and other increases			
Pay award at 1% - Exc HRA inc SERCO (wp 6)	1,596	831	848
Contract Inflation (wp 7)	407	424	442
Non Contract Inflation (utilities) (wp 8)	563	619	681
Balance sheet adjustment (waste)	(117)	0	0
Fees and Charges	(100)	(100)	(100)
B/f budget surplus	(365)		
	1,984	1,775	1,871
Capital Financing			
Prudential Borrowing & Treasury Management	1,329	869	0
	1,329	869	0
Departmental Savings			
Finance and Education	(232)	0	0
Adult Social Care & Health	(750)	0	0
Regeneration	(335)	0	0
Highways and Transportation	(510)	0	0
Central Services	(632)	0	0
Communities & Public Protection	(75)	0	0
Total Net Service Reduction	(2,534)	0	0
Loss of Purfleet Asset income	500	500	
Demographic and Economic Pressures	3,500	3,500	3,500
	4,000	4,000	3,500
Total Savings to Identify	7,378	6,098	4,967

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Government Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

<u>2016/17 Schools Funding</u>	£000's
DSG Schools Block	109,506
SEN Transport	(1,252)
Maintained for Central Spend	<u>(1,546)</u>
	106,708
Retained for School Growth (Note a)	(750)
Retained for Exceptional High Needs (Note b)	<u>(425)</u>
Distributed to Schools	105,533

Notes

- a) Known growth has been built into the allocations but future growth funding will be allocated to Schools in year, where the school has been requested by the Local Authority to open an additional class in the academic year due to pupil demand. This funding is not allocated for general in year pupil movement. A growth policy has been approved by the Department for Education, and any remaining balance at the end of the year must be returned to the Schools block.
- b) This funding is retained to be distributed to Schools that have a disproportionate number of pupils requiring additional high needs support and is allocated to eligible Schools on a termly basis.

<u>2016/7 Estimated High Needs Block Spend</u>	£000's
Special Schools	6,500
Resource provisions	3,200
Independent/ Non Maintained Special School	3,600
Pupil Referral Unit/Alternative provision	2,500
Schools additional needs top up	3,566
Nursery SEN	500
Post 16 additional needs top up	600
Total	20,466

2016/17 Early Years Block Spend

Formula allocations to providers are currently under review but it should be noted that as with other blocks of the DSG there has been no cash increase.

3 and 4 year Old Provision

All of the Early Years block spend will fund the free 15 hour per week, 38 week placements for 3 and 4 year olds delivered at either a School, Private, Voluntary or Independent early years setting. This is adjusted mid-year based on the average of the last two January counts.

2 Year Old Provision

2 year old provision is funded at a higher rate as is only available to pupils in lower income households. Funding will all be allocated to providers to deliver the 15 hours, 38 week provision, and is allocated to the Authority based on participation. This funding is subject to the normal DSG conditions.

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices 1 - Air Handling Unit replacement	150	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices - Renew Main Public Entrance and Public Area Automatic Doors	36	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Universal Power Systems - ICT Server Room	33	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Thameside - Various Works	180	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic & Thameside - Electrical Wiring Inspections	20	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices - Implementation of water controls and Sub-Meter systems for Utilities (Water & Electricity)	61	-	-	Buildings

Comments
Business continuity requirement due to age & condition of Air Handling Unit. In the event of major failure AHU repair may not be feasible and building would technically be uninhabitable by Council staff and any tenant(s).
Health & Safety recommendation due to age and condition of current units resulting in reliability and performance issues. Consider as part of the ground floor refurbishment project.
Business continuity requirement due to age of current systems batteries (at 7 yr life expectancy). In the event of a mains power failure current battery backup may fail resulting in loss of server room systems. Significant operational impact as this would result in loss of all ICT servers.
Various works have been identified including electrical upgrades, ventilation enhancements, ad hoc window replacements and roofing works. This is a contingency and will only be drawn down where necessary as feasibility work continues on an alternative facility.
Health & Safety requirement regulation require that inspections are performed every 5 years of electrical systems. This must be performed for the council to remain complaint with regulations during 2016/17.
Energy Efficiency and more accurate sub metering of water & electrical costs and recharges to tenants. Draw down in line with plans to let areas within CO1 as part of increasing income generation.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices Lift Replacement and Updates	254	240	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices Underground Parking Area - Sprinkler System Flow Rate Enhancement	62	184	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices 1 - Staff, Public and member areas toilet facilities Refurbishment	173	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices 1 - LED Lighting upgrade	127	-	-	Buildings
Ian Rydings	Civic Offices - Security Bollards Loading Bay and Main Entrance Areas	10	-	-	Buildings

Jenny Meads	Libraries - Replacement of all staff and public pc's	30	70	-	Libraries
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Comments

Health & Safety current systems are at the end of normal life cycle, and are not fit for purpose due to increased demand from hot-desking introduction. This would modernise the lifts and repurpose internal goods lift to be used by staff also.

Health & Safety recommendation due to limited flow-rates meaning that not all sprinkler heads can trigger simultaneously to contain a large or multi-area fire.

Additional provision to be used in conjunction with the Civic Office ground floor project.

Consider the availability of Salix funding to support this project. Should only be progressed in line with commercial discussions on the letting of CO1.

Should only be progressed as part of the Civic Office ground floor programme.

The PC's in Thurrock's libraries have been in place for over 4 years and whilst they have recently been upgraded to Windows 7 if we want to offer our communities an exceptional digital service we need to start considering replacing our current PC's with newer updated technology.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Jenny Meads	Libraries - Provision of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) units	140	-	-	Libraries

<i>Comments</i>

Setting up RFID units in Aveley, Blackshots, East Tilbury, Stanford and Tilbury or Purfleet.

These units will allow visitors to borrow and return items, pay fines and charges themselves. Printing can also be added to these units so that prints can be selected and paid for without staff intervention.

Murray James	ICT - Upgrades to major line-of-business systems	42	51	60	ICT
Murray James	ICT - Contact Centre Telephony	200	-	-	ICT
Murray James	ICT - Strategic Infrastructure	550	550	-	ICT

Major line-of-business systems include BACS, SX3, Northgate, Oracle. Without regular version upgrades the Council could find itself running unsupported versions of key Line of Business Applications and the Council would not be PSN Compliant and could lose use of its key systems and its connection to the Public Services Network which would severely hamper the ability of the council to work with other PSN connected public sector organisations (e.g. DWP), and lose the ability to send sensitive information using GC mailboxes.

Replace the outdated legacy Contact Centre telephony solution with a fit-for-purpose, modern fully supportable solution that will support the Council's Channel Shift strategy.

The majority of the existing ICT infrastructure does not allow for a "24/7" operation due to it being hosted in a single, on-premise data centre that has no capability for continual business operation out of hours for several reasons. The current infrastructure does not also provide a suitable level of Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery because it is hosted in a single location (Civic Office) and no off-site replication of data or systems is in place.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Murray James	ICT - Smartphones Tech Refresh	-	80	-	ICT
Page 84 Tony Bulmer	ICT - Oracle Improvement Project	680	-	-	ICT

Comments

Replacements for the current smartphone estate of 800 devices.

The existing smartphones will be end-of-life and are unlikely to be able to receive updates to the operating system and apps. Specifically, the Enterprise mobile apps are unlikely to be patchable.

This project is designed to address both technical / configuration issues with the system as well as the business processes necessary to optimise the value and integrity of the system. In addition it will address the skills and structures necessary to maintain the integrity of the system moving forward.

This project has been designed around 2 phases, an initial phase to make the Oracle e-Business Suite a fit-for-purpose system, configured to maximise its value and usability, with business processes designed to optimise the potential of the system.

A second phase, to be developed once a stable fit-for-purpose environment has been delivered, will focus on maximising the potential of the Business Intelligence capabilities of the Oracle system to support and drive future business capabilities and decisions.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Geoff Galdwin	Infrastructure improvements in parks, burial grounds and open spaces, including recycling bins etc.	250	250	250	Environment
Geoff Galdwin	Replacement of Council-owned vehicles and plant	1,916	1,352	341	Environment

Comments

Enhanced paths, roads and other infrastructure aspects of our facilities will improve public access and help to mitigate the safety and visual impact of reduced maintenance within parks, burial grounds, etc, necessary to meet revenue savings targets.

An effective number of litter/dog waste bins sited in appropriate locations helps to reduce the volume of waste discarded in streets, parks and other public areas. This improves the visual amenity of the borough, encourages more use of parks facilities, and reduces the dependence on front line teams to manually sweep and litter pick.

An effective vehicle and plant fleet is essential in enabling front line services to be delivered efficiently and continuing to operate vehicles and plant beyond their optimum economic life increases both the downtime of front line teams due to breakdowns and the cost of repairs and maintenance.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Geoff Galdwin	Bartec Unit Upgrades	50	-	-	Environment
Daren Spring	Implementation of back office and mobile working solution for Street Services teams.	70	-	-	Environment

Comments

The fleet of Refuse Collection Vehicles are fitted with in-cab devices that allow the drivers to report the completion of their rounds. The devices that are currently in the vehicles are reaching the end of their life (installed over 5 years ago) and may need to be replaced during the course of 2016-17.

Accurate reporting of missed bins is an essential part of customer service for the waste collection team. Use of the Bartech system enables that data to be reported to residents in real time – reducing contacts with the Council. Additionally, the Bartech system is an important tool, used by the Collection Supervisors in managing their teams.

Currently there is not a back office system that can be used for scheduling, monitoring and reporting on the work undertaken on street cleansing, grounds maintenance, arboriculture and related activities. A business case has been approved by Digital Board for the Department to investigate potential solutions. This work has identified some options that are being further reviewed.

By not having a robust back office system, the Department will continue to be in a position where work cannot be efficiently scheduled, allocated and reported on. Some of the inefficiencies inherent in the current paper based systems will be retained. The ability of the front line teams to maintain acceptable standards of street cleanliness and grounds maintenance across the borough will be impeded.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
Daren Spring	Replacement and additional wheeled bins for waste collection service	120	120	120	Environment
Roger Harris	Improvement works to Collins House	100	-	-	Social Care
David Bull	Improvements to Thurrock Signage throughout the borough	100	-	-	Highways

Comments

Wheeled bins are required for each household to enable the Council's waste collection service to operate. Bins have a finite functional life due to wear and tear, damage etc, and new bins (dry recycling, food/garden waste, and residual waste) are required to meet the growth in domestic properties.

Collins House is directly run by the Council and provides 45 bedspaces for vulnerable older people. We have identified a number of essential upgrade items – washrooms, dining areas, toilets etc – that need essential maintenance and improvement. These are essential to ensure we meet CQC registration standards but also that we maintain occupancy. We need to maintain 95% occupancy to meet our income targets. Estimate cost £ 75k

In addition we want to undertake an initial feasibility study to either expand or relocate the existing building but on the same overall footprint. This will be in order to consider a larger number of beds, redesign to meet modern standards e.g. providing en-suite facilities, or possibly enable us to market the beds to external partners e.g. the NHS. Estimated cost £ 25k

Signage, especially into the Borough, is in need of replacement. This will include the replacement of the Welcome to Essex signs and open up opportunities for sponsorship.

2016/2017 Capital Bids Summary

Lead Manager	Scheme	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Category
David Bull	Community Environmental Development Fund	250	250	250	Highways

<i>Comments</i>
This scheme will support street-scene infrastructure and environmental improvements which have demonstrable local priority.

Total Capital Bids	5,604	3,147	1,021
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Buildings	1,106	424	0
ICT	1,472	681	60
Libraries	170	70	0
Environment	2,406	1,722	711
Social Care	100	0	0
Highways	350	250	250
	5,604	3,147	1,021

Available Resources			
- New Prudential	3,000	3,000	3,000
- Existing Prudential	3,195	147	-
- Grant	140	-	-
	6,335	3,147	3,000

24 February 2016	ITEM: 12
Council	
Housing Revenue Account Base Budgets and Rent Setting 2016/17	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor J Kent, Portfolio Holder for Finance	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director Adults, Housing & Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposals for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) base budgets for 2016/17 and identifies the changes between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Any growth and loss of income within the budgets will be funded through savings and efficiencies identified elsewhere.

On the 8 July 2015 the Government announced key policy changes that impact on the Council's HRA business plan. They were as follows:

- A 1% reduction in social rents for four years from the 1 April 2016
- Pay to stay proposals from 2017/18
- The disposal of 'high value' properties as they become vacant to finance the expansion of the 'Right to Buy' to tenants of registered social landlords

In order to ensure that the HRA remains financially viable following the proposed legislative changes set out in the Governments budget statement, detailed work has been undertaken on the options available to bridge the financial gap.

The current estimated cumulative impact of the Government's proposals has the potential to make the Council's current HRA business plan unviable. However at this stage, the focus has been on making recommendations that would mitigate the financial impact of the most mature of these proposals, the 1% reduction in rents for four years from 1 April 2016. This alone has an estimated impact of taking £14.6m out of the business plan from 2016/17 to 2019/20, and £218m over the 30-year life of the business plan.

Recommendations need to be made to Cabinet and subsequently Council regarding the setting of the base budgets, rent levels for dwellings, garages and travellers sites for the next financial year 2016/17.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the changes included in the base budget for 2016/17 be agreed.**
- 1.2 That the 1% rent reduction outlined in the Summer Budget be noted.**
- 1.3 That a 1% increase in de-pooled service charges for 2016/17 be agreed.**
- 1.4 That a 2.5% increase in garage rents for 2016/17 be agreed.**
- 1.5 That a 1.5% increase in to central heating charges in 2016/17 be agreed.**
- 1.6 That a 2.5% increase in traveller's sites rents be agreed.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report sets out the Base Budgets for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2016/17 along with the proposals for rent and service charges. The main changes are discussed within the report.
- 2.2 The report identifies the changes within the base budgets between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Increases to budgets and the reduction in rental income will be funded from savings and efficiencies on existing expenditure along with inflationary increases to charges.
- 2.3 The HRA base budgets have been compiled in accordance with the 30-year business plan. This takes into account the long term strategy for the financial viability of the service.

Background

- 2.4 The base budgets represent the cost to the Council of continuing to operate the existing level of service.

The main areas of income are:

- Rent and Service Charges - paid by tenants
- Other Income - income from residential and commercial leaseholder service charges and other miscellaneous income

- 2.5 The major items of expenditure are:

- Capital financing – the sum is used to finance the cost of major works as part of the HRA capital programme. This is calculated in accordance with the 5 year capital programme.

- Repairs and Maintenance – responsive repairs, planned maintenance and adaptations
- Salaries – the cost of employing staff
- Funding of further housing development and regeneration. This includes schemes to build 90 new properties which are on site this financial year.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Forecast Outturn Position 2015/16

Before considering the budget proposals for 2016/17, it is necessary to review the 2015/16 position. This gives an indication of the likely level of the HRA balances to be carried forward into 2016/17. Details from the October 2015 (Period 7) forecast position are detailed below:

Table 1 – Overall forecast variance

Service Area	Revised Budget £000's	Forecast Pressures £000's	Forecast Underspends £000's	Total Variance £000's
Repairs & Maintenance	12,671	418	(172)	246
Supervision & Management	10,734	156	(402)	(246)
Service Improvement	83	0	0	0
Financing & Recharges	24,547	0	0	0
Rent & Income	(48,828)	0	0	0
Development	793	0	0	0
Grand Total	0	574	(574)	0

Commentary on forecast variances

Repairs and Maintenance

There is a net forecast overspend of £0.246m in relation to Housing Repairs. Expenditure relating to voids and responsive repairs is forecast to be overspent by £0.418m against a budget of £10.029m. Repairs to voids are demand led and dependant on the condition of the dwelling and responsive repairs can be volatile due to fluctuations in demand. An underspend of £0.172m on general investment and development costs partially offsets the overspend. This underspend is mainly due to reduced staffing costs.

Housing Management

Housing Management represents the cost of delivering the landlord and business services functions, as well as central overheads and operational support. Across these services there is a net forecast underspend of £0.246m. Staff vacancies and general efficiencies account for the underspends across a number of areas and these mitigate the impact of forecast pressures elsewhere. A review of expenditure and individual budgets will be carried out as part of the detailed budget setting process to ensure they reflect service delivery.

Table 3 – New Build Schemes

Scheme	Forecast Scheme Cost £000's	Actual Expenditure 2013/14 £000's	Actual Expenditure 2014/15 £000's	Forecast Expenditure 2015/16 £000's
Seabrooke Rise	13,211	25	5,884	7,302
Bracelet Close	4,928	7	249	3,907
Derry Avenue	8,880	0	2,828	6,052
Empty Homes Renovation	1,881	0	597	1,284
Calcutta Road	10,259	0	8	593
Grand Total	39,159	32	9,566	19,138

- 3.2 Table 3 shows the forecast and actual spend in relation to the Council's new build schemes. While this is classified as Capital Expenditure, the HRA part of the funding for such projects can be financed through direct revenue funding. As a result, the balances held within the Development Reserve are intrinsically linked to the operating revenue position.
- 3.3 The forecast outturn position has the following impact on the level of HRA Reserves. There will be a £1.2m call on reserves from the HRA in 2015/16 by way of the HRA's share of the SERCO settlement payment.

Table 4a – Forecast Retained Surplus at 31st March 2015

	£m	£m
<i>Forecast net operational overspends</i>	0.574	
<i>Forecast net underspends</i>	(0.574)	
Net Operating Surplus		0.000

Table 4b – Forecast level of financial reserves at 31st March 2015

Unallocated Balance	£m
Balance as at 1 April 2015	(2.654)
Use of balances	1.200
Forecast Balance 31 March 2015	(1.454)

Development Reserve	£m
Balance as 1 April 2015	(3.117)
Budgeted contribution	0
Net operating surplus	0
Forecast Balance 31 March 2015	(3.117)

2016/17 Base Budgets

- 3.4 The proposal for a £2m reduction in revenue expenditure from the HRA will be delivered via a four year savings plan that will build on existing actions that

have been taken to realise efficiencies over the last three years. These will include further opportunities for increases income, reductions in consultancy spend as a result of contraction of investment programmes, reductions in service delivery costs through reshaping and restructuring and a reduction in third party spend. As agreed at December 2015 Cabinet.

A summary of the changes to the budgets from 2015/16 to 2016/17 are shown in Table 5a and 5b below.

Table 5a – 2016/17 Base Budget Changes

2016/17 Budget Estimates	Budget Changes £000's
Budget Pressures/Inflation	
Salaries and Pay Award	282
Total Budget Pressures/Inflation	282
Budget Savings/Increased Income	
Service Charges	(22)
Garage Rents	(27)
Heating	(1)
SERCO Transition	(500)
Total Budget Savings/Increased Income	(550)
Rent Reduction – loss of income	460
Contribution from reserves	(192)
Total HRA Net 2016/17 Budget	0

Table 5b – 2015/16 to 2016/17 HRA Budgets

Service Area	2015/16 Budget £000's	Proposed Changes £000's	2016/17 Base Budget £000's
Repairs & Maintenance	12,671	0	12,671
Supervision & Management	10,734	(218)	10,516
Service Improvement	83	0	83
Financing & Recharges	24,547	0	24,547
Rent & Income	(48,828)	410	(48,418)
Development	793	0	793
Contribution from Reserves	0	(192)	(192)
Total	0	0	0

The main reasons for the changes between the 2015/16 budgets and those proposed for 2016/17 are as follows:

- **Salaries and pay award growth: £0.282m** - As part of the terms and conditions of employment, incremental increases due as well as a provision for a pay award (1%) have been included within the estimates for 2016/17.
- **SERCO transition saving:** As a result of the reintegration of SERCO into the council there will be savings of £500k to the HRA.

Rent

- 3.5 Social housing rents are currently set according to the Government's rent policy guidance. The current rent guidance was published in May 2014 (with effect from April 2015) and expected annual rent increases to CPI +1% for the next 10 years. This was the assumption applied within the HRA 30-year business plan. The 8 July 2015 budget announcement effectively suspends the current social rent policy guidance and instead of on-going rent increases of CPI +1%, the Council is now required to reduce rents by 1% from current levels (with a base date of 8 July 2015) i.e. the rent for a dwelling in 2016/17 should be 1% less than the rent as at 8 July 2015 and the rent in subsequent years should be 1% less than the previous year. The treatment of service charges is unaffected by the announcements.
- 3.6 The majority of tenants are paying target rent in 2015/16 which means the 1% reduction will be applied to that base. Rents for new properties will be calculated at the 2015/16 target level and then reduced by 1% to give the 2016/17 rent.
- 3.7 The Council has an ambitious programme to improve the quality of Council owned homes within the borough to a high standard that supports the long-term viability of the asset and to build new affordable homes for current and future generations. With our investment programmes well underway, the Council does not have significant surpluses in which to absorb the impact of more major changes in central Government policy, unlike many registered providers within our sector. These changes, therefore, requires changes to our existing housing investment and development programmes in order to deliver a balanced HRA and supports the recommendations that were proposed to Cabinet for approval on 11 November 2015.
- 3.8 As outlined in the report to Cabinet on 9 December 2015 there is an opportunity for the Secretary of State to issue a direction to exempt a local authority from the requirement to reduce rents by 1% to:
- Require that rents remain the same each year; or
 - Require that rents reduce by an amount which is less than 1% each year.

An exemption, or a relaxation in the 1% reduction in rents, is possible if a Local Authority is able to evidence that serious financial difficulties are unavoidable if it were to comply with the requirements.

The Council intends to submit a case for exemption early in the New Year.

- 3.9 Cabinet should note the change to the government’s rent policy and that the Council will be implementing the policy as set out in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, whilst seeking an exemption from the Secretary of State. The average rent for a property in Thurrock will be £86.48 reducing from £87.34 in 2015/16. The HRA stock by bedroom size and average rent is shown below:

Bedroom Size	No of properties	2016/17 Average Rent
0	248	£58.04
1	2,849	£73.04
2	2,282	£78.43
3	4,447	£99.61
4	201	£112.43
5	3	£106.45
6	2	£121.73
Grand Total	10,032	£86.48

- 3.10 For comparison purposes only, the previous rent setting arrangements and assumptions would have set an average rent of approximately £88.22 as opposed to £86.48 shown above. The previous assumptions were a 1% rent rise rather than a reduction. The rent loss shown in table 5a is the 1% loss against the 2015/16 base position. The loss in terms of the original business plan assumptions is 2% which is approximately a £920,000 loss on original assumptions.

3.11 Depooled Service Charges

It is recommended that the service charges for Caretaking and Concierge are increased by 1%. This is to ensure that these services are self-financing. This increase will finance cost pressures that arise. **Members are asked to agree this as per recommendation Paragraph 1.3.**

3.12 Garage Rents

The current weekly charges for garage rents are £8.81 for a Council tenant garage and £10.21 for a privately rented garage per week. It is recommended to Cabinet that an increase of 2.5% be agreed for 2016/17. **Members are asked to agree this as per recommendation Paragraph 1.4.**

3.13 Traveller’s Sites

The council currently maintains and provides services for the following sites: Pilgrims Lane, Ship Lane and Gammons Field.

The gross cost of providing the service must be recovered by the Council through rent charges, excluding utility charges which are not supported by Housing Benefit payments.

The base budget for traveller’s sites for 2015/16 has been reviewed and it is expected that there will be an increase in 2016/17 costs due to inflationary

pressures. Therefore in order to ensure a breakeven budget us set a 2.5% increase needs to be applied to the current weekly rent charge. **Members are asked to agree this as per recommendation Paragraph 1.6.**

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The report sets out the implications for the HRA Budget in 2016/17. The proposals put forward have been calculated and assessed in line with affordability consideration and ensure that financial reserves remain with agreed levels. It is essential that rent, service charges and other charges match projected expenditure. This is a legal and operational requirement. While acknowledging that the drive for efficiency both in terms of cashable and non cashable savings is a continuous process, there are financial risks associated with assuming that the rent reduction can be mitigated solely through savings and efficiencies.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 This report has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of the February Cabinet Meeting and the recommendations noted.

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

- 6.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) recommends that the HRA maintains a minimum level of general reserves of £1.7m up to a maximum of £3.0m.
- 6.2 The management and operation of the HRA strives to support vulnerable people. The 30 year business plan sets out to ensure there is value for money within the Housing Service.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Julie Curtis**
HRA and Development Accountant

Financial implications are included throughout the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Martin Hall**
Solicitor / Team Leader

This report has been produced pursuant to Part 2 of the Local government Act 2003. The Act contains a series of duties and powers that give statutory support to important aspects of good financial practice in local government, but leaves the outcome of those processes to the judgement of local authorities.

The Council has a legal requirement to review the housing Revenue Account and ensure that it does not go into deficit. In addition, determinations made under the Local government and Housing Act 1989 prescribed what can be charged to the HRA and the calculation of those charges.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The base budget for 2016/17 reflects the Council's policy in relation to the provision of social housing with particular regard to the use of its own stock. In addition to the provision of general housing, it incorporates a number of budgetary provisions aimed at providing assistance to disadvantaged groups. This included adaptations to the stock for residents with disabilities.

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

- N/A

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):

- N/A

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Julie Curtis
HRA and Development Accountant
Corporate Finance

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24 February 2016	ITEM: 13
Council	
TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17	
Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Kent, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Strategy	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
Accountable Head of Service: N/A	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services and the Prudential Code requires local authorities to determine the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators on an annual basis. The annual strategy also includes the Annual Investment Strategy that is a requirement of the Department for Communities and Local Government Investment Guidance.

In accordance with the above Codes, this report:

- a. Sets out the Treasury Management strategy for 2016/17;
- b. Confirms the proposed Prudential Indicators for 2016/17; and
- c. Sets out the Treasury Management projections for 2016/17.

The report sets out the Annual Borrowing and Investment Strategy and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement. The function has again contributed towards protecting front line services and will be used to facilitate the housing development programme for the borough.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Council:

- a. **Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2016/17 and its application to 2015/16 including approval of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement for 2016/17 and its application to 2015/16;**
- b. **Approve the adoption of the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix 1;**

- c. **Delegate the approval of any changes to the Prudential Indicators to Cabinet where required due to the delivery mechanism for affordable homes in the borough as outlined in paragraph 2.16; and**
- d. **Note the revised 2015/16 and 2016/17 Treasury Management projections as set out in paragraph 2.34.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual MRP Statement are prepared under the terms of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code) and approval is sought for the adoption of the Prudential Indicators that have been developed in accordance with the Code. CIPFA revised the Treasury Management Code and Guidance Notes as well as the Prudential Indicators in late 2011. The Council has had regard to these documents in compiling this report.

2.2 The report also revises the 2015/16 forecast for interest on borrowing and investment and forecasts the 2016/17 indicative interest payable and receivable.

Borrowing Activity 2015/16 and 2016/17

2.3 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes, as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), together with balances and reserves, are the core drivers of Treasury Management activity. The estimates, based on the current revenue budget and capital programmes are set out on the following page.

	31/3/2016 Estimate £m	31/3/2017 Estimate £m	31/3/2018 Estimate £m
General Fund Borrowing CFR	159,952	176,417	183,265
Housing Revenue Account Borrowing CFR (includes effects of Housing Finance Reform based on current available figures)	184,067	201,811	205,890
Total Borrowing CFR	344,019	378,228	389,155
Less: External Borrowing	339,889	339,889	369,889
Internal/(Over) Borrowing	4,130	38,339	19,236
Less: Useable Reserves	8,000	8,000	8,000
Borrowing Requirement	-3,870.0	30,339	11,236

- 2.4 The Council's level of physical debt and investments is calculated by reference to the Council's balance sheet. The Council's main objectives when borrowing money are to secure low interest costs and achieve cost certainty over the period for which funds are required. A further objective is to provide the flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long term plans change.
- 2.5 Given the ongoing significant cuts to local government funding, the Council's borrowing strategy continues to balance affordability and the longer term stability of the debt portfolio. Given the availability of low short term interest rates it is more cost effective to either use internal resources, or to borrow over short term periods. The table above shows that in 2016/17 and 2017/18 it may be necessary for the Council to borrow further funds and this will be monitored on a regular basis by officers to assess the most appropriate form of borrowing.
- 2.6 This enables the Council to reduce borrowing costs (despite forgone investment income) and reduce the overall treasury risk. While such a strategy is most likely to be beneficial over the next 1-2 years as official interest rates remain low, it is unlikely to be sustainable in the medium-term. The benefits of internal borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long term borrowing rates are forecast to rise. The Council's advisors, Arlingclose, will assist the Council with this assessment and breakeven analysis. This will help inform whether the Council borrows additional sums at long term fixed rates in 2016/17 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional costs in the short term.
- 2.7 In addition, the Council may use short term loans (normally up to one month) to manage the Council's cash flow.
- 2.8 In conjunction with advice from its treasury advisor, the Council will keep under review the following sources for long term and short term borrowing:
- Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans and its successor body;
 - UK Local Authorities;
 - Any institution approved for investments;
 - Any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK;
 - UK public and private sector pension funds;
 - Capital market bond investors;
 - UK Municipal Bonds Agency;
 - Special purpose companies created to enable joint local authority bond issues;
 - Local Authority bills;
 - Structured finance, such as operating/finance leases, hire purchase, Private Finance Initiative or sale and leaseback.
- 2.9 With regards to debt rescheduling, the PWLB allows Councils to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Some bank lenders may also be

prepared to negotiate premature repayment terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall saving or reduction in risk.

- 2.10 Borrowing and rescheduling activity will be reported to the Cabinet on a regular basis during 2016/17.
- 2.11 In August 2010 the Council repaid its entire PWLB portfolio of loans (£84 million) to obtain significant interest savings. The re-financing was undertaken by utilising short term funds from the money markets, mainly other Local Authorities, at substantially lower rates than taking longer term fixed debt. To the end of 2014/15 the rescheduling had saved £15.5m of interest cost and is estimated to have saved £18.8m by the end of 2015/16. Currently financing from short term money market debt is expected to continue into 2016/17. The inherent risk of this strategy is noted with potentially higher rates and increased debt costs in the future.
- 2.12 Borrowing can be swiftly re-fixed if required via the PWLB, either in total within a matter of days of the decision to re-fix being made or profiled against the maturity schedule of the short term debt. It is expected official rate increases will not occur until September 2016. Subsequently only gradual increases to the base rate of between 1.50% to 2.25% are anticipated by March 2018. The normalised level of the bank base rate post-crisis is expected to be between 2.50% to 3.50%.
- 2.13 Based on this outlook, officers will continue to borrow on a short term basis when required while monitoring interest rates to ensure borrowing is fixed if required.
- 2.14 The Council has £29 million of loans which are LOBO loans (Lenders Option Borrowers Option) where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these loans could now be amended at the request of the lender only and, although the Council understands that lenders are unlikely to exercise their options in the current low interest rate environment, there remains an element of refinancing risk. In the event the lender exercises the option to change the rate or terms of the loan, the Council will consider the terms being provided and also repayment of the loan without penalty. The Council may utilise cash resources for repayment or may consider replacing the loan by borrowing from the PWLB or capital markets.
- 2.15 On 1 April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) pools. New long-term loans will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs and income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged or credited to the respective revenue account. The Council will credit interest to the HRA

based on the average balances of its reserves and revenue account balance at the average 7 day LIBID rate for the year.

- 2.16 The Council has made clear an aspiration to create new affordable homes in the borough. The delivery body of these homes is to be a wholly owned company (Gloriana) with the Council borrowing the required funding and lending it on to the company at a commercial rate. This is likely to require changes to the Council's prudential indicators and it is requested these changes be delegated to Cabinet for this purpose only to allow the development to take place. The changes would be required in terms of the Council's borrowing activity and, with a likely increase over the period of development, this would affect the Authorised and Operational Borrowing Limits and any affected Capital Indicators.
- 2.17 The Council is also undertaking a series of new building schemes utilising borrowing headroom within the HRA debt cap. Current indications are for new borrowing of approximately £25.0m over the next three years that would put the Council's HRA borrowing level close to its debt cap. The Council will therefore manage this programme to keep the HRA borrowing level within the debt cap by utilising other resources such as capital receipts from Council house sales, other cash backed resources, or through bidding for increases to the debt cap where considered prudent.
- 2.18 Finally, there are significant regeneration programmes and opportunities being considered and progressed at this time. The need to borrow for investment will be considered on a case by case basis.

Investments

- 2.19 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. It is envisaged that investment balances will be approximately £15 million at the financial year end. The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties detailed in Appendix 2.
- 2.20 The Council held £20m invested in the CCLA Property Fund at the end of 2014/15. The 2015/16 Treasury Management Strategy allowed for additional amounts to be added to the fund if deemed appropriate. The Director of Finance and IT, using powers delegated to him under the Treasury Policy Statement approved by Council and the associated Treasury Management Practices, increased the investment in the Fund by £10m in July 2015. A further £20m was then invested in November 2015 to bring the total invested to £50m. These increases were reported to members in the 2015/16 Treasury Mid-Year Review report. The expected return net of fees in 2015/16 is estimated to be 5% with income in the region of £1.7m and assuming a similar net return of 5% in 2016/17, returns should be in the region of £2.5m.
- 2.21 Local Authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk. The general power of

competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over Authorities use of standalone financial derivatives. The CIPFA code requires authorities to clearly detail their policy on the use of derivatives in the annual strategy.

- 2.22 The Council will only use standalone derivatives (such as swaps, forward, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of financial risks that the Council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.
- 2.23 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit. The local authority will only use derivatives after seeking expertise, a legal opinion and ensuring officers have the appropriate training for their use.
- 2.24 The Council complies with the provisions of s32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget.
- 2.25 The needs of the Council's treasury management staff for training in investment management are assessed as part of the annual staff appraisal process and additionally where the responsibilities of individual members of staff change. Staff attend courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA. Relevant staff are encouraged to study for professional accountancy qualifications from appropriate bodies.
- 2.26 The Council has appointed Arlingclose Ltd as treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investments, debt and capital finance issues. The quality of service is assessed by regular review meetings between Arlingclose Ltd and officers from the Council.
- 2.27 The Council may borrow in advance of need where this is expected to provide the best long term value for money. Since amounts borrowed will be invested until spent, the Council is aware it will be exposed to the risk of loss of the borrowed sums and the risk that investment and borrowing rates may change in the intervening period. These risks will be managed as part of the Council's overall management of its treasury risks. The total amount borrowed by the Council will not exceed the Council's Authorised Borrowing Limit as set in the prudential indicators. The maximum period between borrowing and expenditure is expected to be two years, although the Council is not required to link particular loans with particular items of expenditure. Any potential situation will be assessed for suitability as to the overall effect on the Council's treasury position.

Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

- 2.28 Local Authorities are required to prepare an Annual Statement of their policy on making MRP for each financial year. Appendix 3 outlines the assessment of the Council's Annual MRP Statement for 2016/17, which is included as item (i) in the Annual Strategy in paragraph 2.30.
- 2.29 Officers have reviewed the current strategy and recommend two amendments to the 2015/16 strategy and hence also impact on the 2016/17 strategy. These are to take out any reference to Investec as Fund Managers and replace it with reference to the CCLA Property Fund and to enable officers consider the use of capital receipts to pay the annual MRP charges.
- 2.30 Therefore, with regards to the following paragraphs on Borrowing Activity and Investments the following statement form part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy with effect from 1 April 2016 and also apply to the 2015/16 strategy:
- a) To obtain any long term borrowing requirement from the sources of finance set out in paragraph 2.8;
 - b) To continue to fund the ex-PWLB debt via short term funds from the money markets unless circumstances dictate moving back into long term fixed rate debt. The borrowing sources mentioned in paragraph 2.8 will then be assessed as to their suitability for use;
 - c) To repay market loans that require renewal by realising equivalent amounts of investments. If it is not possible to realise investments then the borrowing sources in paragraph 2.8 will be assessed as to their suitability for use as replacements;
 - d) To undertake short term temporary borrowing when necessary in order to manage cash flow to the Council's advantage;
 - e) To reschedule market and PWLB loans, if practicable, to achieve interest rate reductions, balance the volatility profile or amend the debt profile, dependent on the level of premiums payable or discounts receivable;
 - f) To ensure security and liquidity of the Council's investments and to then optimise investment returns commensurate to those ideals;
 - g) To contain the type, size and duration of investments with individual institutions within the limits specified in Appendix 2;
 - h) To move further funds into the CCLA Property Fund if it is felt prudent to do so; and
 - i) To meet the requirements of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Council's policy for the calculation of MRP in 2016/17 shall be that the Council will set aside an amount each year which it deems to be prudent and appropriate, having regard to statutory requirements and relevant guidance issued by DCLG. The Council will also consider the use of capital receipts to pay down any MRP incurred.
 - j) To ensure all borrowing and investment activities are made with due reference to any relevant Prudential Indicators.

The Prudential Indicators

- 2.31 The prudential indicators are monitored by the Council to ensure that capital investment is affordable, prudent and sustainable. The indicators are reassessed annually to ensure their continuing relevance and appropriateness to the Council.
- 2.32 The proposed indicators for 2016/17 are set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Interest Projections 2015/16 Revised and 2016/17 Original

- 2.33 The CIPFA document Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice places a requirement on the Council to publish estimates relating to the operation of the borrowing and investment function.
- 2.34 The 2015/16 budget and the projected position for 2015/16 as at December 2015 and also an initial projection for 2016/17 are shown in summary format in table 2 below.

	Budget 2015/16 £000's	Projected 2015/16 £000's	Budget 2016/17 £000's
Interest payable on External Debt			
1. Debt Interest		2,437.7	2,824.9
2. Total internal interest		<u>116.0</u>	<u>154.0</u>
3. Interest payable	<u>2,980.0</u>	<u>2,553.7</u>	<u>2,978.9</u>
Investment Income			
4. Interest on Investments	<u>-1,055</u>	<u>-1,947.2</u>	<u>-3,364.8</u>
5. Net interest charged to General Fund	<u>1,925.0</u>	<u>506.7</u>	<u>-385.9</u>
6. MRP- Supported/Unsupported Borrowing	<u>5,982.0</u>	<u>3,696.8</u>	<u>4,586.6</u>
7. Overall charge to GF	<u>7,907.0</u>	<u>4,203.5</u>	<u>4,200.8</u>

- 2.35 It should also be noted that the figures shown above for 2016/17 are based on assumptions made about the level of balances available for investment, any anticipated new long term borrowing and the level of interest rates achievable. They may be liable to a significant degree of change during the year arising from variations in interest rates, other market and economic developments, and officers' response to those events.

- 2.36 In accordance with the requirements of the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Council will report on treasury management activity and the outturn against the treasury related Prudential Indicators at least twice a year, one such report will be after the financial year end.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The strategy of the Council is contained within the body of the report and has been set with consideration of relevant legislation and appropriate guidance. The Prudential Indicators are governed by decisions made on the revenue and capital budgets.
- 3.2 There are three key areas in this report for Members to be particularly mindful of:
- a) The plan to maintain temporary borrowing for the foreseeable future. Officers will continue to monitor this to react to any changes in the economy; and
 - b) There is a clear commitment and need for affordable housing in the borough and this could impact on the prudential indicators appended to this report through an increase in borrowing.
 - c) The approach taken to the minimum revenue provision.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 There is a legal requirement for a Treasury Management Annual Strategy and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement to be ratified by Full Council. This report and appendices have been written in line with best practice and the Council's spending plans.

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

- 5.1 The Council's Treasury Advisors, Arlingclose, have been consulted. As set out in section 4, the report is largely based on best practice and the Council's spending plans that have been scrutinised throughout recent months.

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

- 6.1 Treasury Management plays a significant support role in the delivery of services to the community. Since the debt restructure in August 2010, the function has contributed savings in the region of £16m to date.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Chris Buckley**
Corporate Finance

The financial implications are included in the main body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Monitoring Officer

The report is in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, related secondary legislation and other requirements including the Prudential Code.

Publication of the strategies is a statutory requirement and conforms to best practice as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no direct diversity implications noted in this report.

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

Not applicable

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

- Revised CIPFA Prudential Code
- Revised draft ODPM's Guidance on Local Government Investments
- Revised CIPFA's Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes
- Treasury Management Policy Statement
- 2015/16 Annual Investment Strategy
- Arlingclose's Investment Review.

9. Appendices to this Report

- Appendix 1 – Prudential Indicators
- Appendix 2 – Specified and Non-Specified Investments
- Appendix 3 – Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

Report Author

Chris Buckley
Treasury Management Officer
Corporate Finance

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Prudential Indicators 2016/17 to 2018/19

The following prudential indicators are recommended to the Council.

A. Prudential indicators for Affordability

In demonstrating the affordability of its capital investment plan the Council must:

- Determine the ratio of financing costs (e.g. capital repayments, interest payments, investment income) to net revenue stream for both the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and non-HRA services for a 3 year period.
- Determine the incremental impact on the Council tax and housing rents (in both instances the scope for increases is governed by the Government's ability to limit council tax increases and the current restriction on council rents).

Indicator A1 sets out the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream. The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.

A1: Prudential indicator – Estimates of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate	2018/19 Estimate
Non HRA	4.04%	5.93%	7.32%
HRA	12.80%	13.0%	13.2%

Indicators A2 and A3 set out the estimated incremental impact on both the levels of council tax (Band D equivalent) and housing rents of the recommended capital investment plans and funding proposals. The impact has been calculated using the latest projections on interest rates for both borrowing and investments. The impact does not take account of government support included for new borrowing within the formula spending share and housing subsidy.

A2: Prudential indicator – Estimates of the incremental impact of the new capital investment decisions on the council tax 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate	2018/19 Estimate
Additional annual Council Tax requirement	1.88	27.81	42.62

A3: Prudential indicator – Estimates of the incremental impact of the new capital investment decisions on the average weekly housing rents 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate	2017/18 Estimate	2018/19 Estimate
Addition in average weekly housing rent	5.87	11.14	13.53

B. Prudential indicators for Prudence

B1: Prudential indicator – Gross debt and the capital financing requirement

This is a key indicator of prudence. In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the local authority should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years.

If in any of these years there is a reduction in the capital financing requirement, this reduction is ignored in estimating the cumulative increase in the capital financing requirement which is used for comparison with gross external debt.

The Director of Finance and IT reports that the Council had no difficulty meeting this requirement in 2015/16, nor is there any difficulties envisaged in future years. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the approved budget.

Where the gross debt is greater than the capital financing requirement the reasons for this should be clearly stated in the annual treasury management strategy.

The table below shows the projected position from 31 March 2015.

Indicator	Estimate £'000
CFR at 31/3/15	305,288
Increase in 15/16	38,731
Increase in 16/17	34,209
Increase in 17/18	10,927
Total CFR	389,155
Gross Debt	339,889

C. Prudential indicator for Capital Expenditure

Elsewhere in this report /agenda is a recommendation for the capital investment plans for the Council over the next three years. Indicator C1 summarises the recommendations within that report. Indicator C2 sets out the estimates of the capital financing requirement over the same period.

C1: Prudential indicator – Estimates of total capital expenditure 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate £'000	2017/18 Estimate £'000	2018/19 Estimate £'000
Total Non HRA	46,559	21,174	11,761
Total HRA	33,050	13,787	9,000
Total Programme	79,609	34,961	20,761

In considering the capital investment plan the Council had regard to a number of key issues, namely:

- affordability, e.g. implications for council tax/housing rents
- prudence and sustainability, e.g. implications for external borrowing
- value for money, e.g. option appraisal
- stewardship of assets, e.g. asset management planning
- service objectives, e.g. strategic planning for the Council
- practicality, e.g. achievability of the forward plan.

C2: Prudential indicator – Estimates of capital financing requirement 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate £'000	2017/18 Estimate £'000	2018/19 Estimate £'000
HRA	201,811	205,890	205,890
Non-HRA	176,417	183,265	180,846
Total	378,228	389,155	386,736

The estimates are based on the financing options included in the recommended capital investment programme. The estimates will not commit the Council to particular methods of funding – the actual funding of capital expenditure will be determined after the end of the relevant financial year.

The Council has a number of daily cashflows, both positive and negative, and manages its treasury position in terms of its borrowings and investments in

accordance with the approved treasury management strategy and practices. In day to day cash management no distinction can be made between revenue cash and capital cash. External borrowing arises as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the Council and not simply those arising from capital spending. It is possible external debt could exceed the capital financing requirement in the short term.

D. Prudential indicators for External Debt

A number of prudential indicators are required in relation to external debt

D1: Prudential indicator – Authorised limit 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate £'000	2017/18 Estimate £'000	2018/19 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	482,781	482,721	463,221
Other Long Term Liabilities	1,000	800	600
Total	483,721	483,521	463,821

The authorised limit is the aggregate of gross borrowing (i.e. before investment) and other long term liabilities such as finance leases. In taking its decisions on the budget report the Council is asked to note that the authorised limit determined for 2016/17 in the above table is a statutory limit required to be determined by full Council under section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The authorised limits are consistent with the Council's current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the budget report for capital expenditure and financing, and with its approved treasury management policy statement and practices. The Director of Finance and IT confirms that they are based on the estimate of most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario, with in addition sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for operational management, for example unusual cash movements. Risk analysis and risk management strategies have been taken into account, as have plans for capital expenditure, estimates of the capital financing requirement and estimates of cashflow requirements for all purposes.

D2: Prudential indicator – Operational boundary 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17 Estimate £'000	2017/18 Estimate £'000	2018/19 Estimate £'000
Borrowing	452,721	452,721	433,221
Other Long Term Liabilities	1,000	800	600
Total	453,721	453,521	433,821

The operational boundary is based on the authorised limit but without the additional headroom. The operational boundary represents a key management tool for in-year monitoring by the Director of Finance and IT. As with the authorised limit figures for borrowing (gross) and other long term liabilities are separately identified.

The authorised limit and operational boundary separately identify borrowing from other long-term liabilities. It is recommended that Council delegate authority to the Director of Finance and IT, within the total limit for any individual year, to effect movement between the separately agreed limits for borrowing and other long term liabilities, in accordance with option appraisal and best value for money for the Council. Any such changes made will be reported to the Council at its next meeting following the change.

D3: Prudential indicator – HRA Limit on Indebtedness Under Self Financing

This is known as the Debt Cap and is the absolute level of debt permitted under Self Financing Regulations. The debt cap is set at £188.141m which means debt attributable to the HRA cannot exceed this figure. Agreement to increase the debt cap to borrow an additional £11.58m in 2015/16 with regards to the HRA has been received from the DCLG, giving a revised debt cap £199.721m. At 31 March 2015 the Council had total HRA borrowing of £160.9m and the figure will be the same as at 31 March 2016.

E. Prudential indicators for Treasury Management

A number of prudential indicators are required in respect of treasury management. The indicators are based on the Council’s treasury management strategy and take into account the pre-existing structure of the Council’s borrowing and investment portfolios.

E1: Prudential indicator – the Council has adopted the “CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services” within its Financial Standing Orders.

The Council has adopted the code within the financial standing orders and monitors the treasury management function to ensure it continues to meet the specified requirements.

E2: Prudential indicators – Upper limits on interest rate exposure 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Upper limit on fixed interest rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable interest rate exposure	50%	50%	50%

This indicator specifies the limits on the proportion on the Council net outstanding principal sums (i.e. net of investments) with fixed interest payments and variable interest payments.

The upper limit of 100% is a consequence of the Council maintaining an investment portfolio. Indicator E2a exemplifies the indicator over borrowing and investment.

E2a: Prudential indicators (supplemental) – Upper limits on interest rate exposure 2016/17 to 2018/19

Indicator	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Upper limit on borrowing – fixed rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on borrowing – variable rate exposure	50%	50%	50%
Upper limit on investments – fixed rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on investments – variable rate exposure	50%	50%	50%

Indicator E2a is supplemental to Indicator E2 and shows separately the maximum limits for both borrowing and investments. The indicator is not a requirement of the prudential code but it does show more clearly the interest rate exposure limits within which borrowing and investments will be managed.

E3: Prudential indicator – Upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing 2016/17

	Upper Limit	Lower Limit
under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	60%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	60%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	60%	0%
10 years and within 20 years	60%	0%
20 years and within 30 years	60%	0%
30 years and within 40 years	60%	0%
40 years and within 50 years	100%	0%
50 years and above	100%	0%

The limits in Indicator E3 represent the amount of projected borrowing that is fixed rate maturing in each period as a percentage of total projected borrowing that is fixed rate at the start of the period.

E4: Prudential indicator – Principle sums invested for periods longer than 364 days

Indicator	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Limit	65,000	65,000	65,000

E5: Prudential indicator – Credit Risk:

The Council employs Treasury advisors (Arlingclose) who provide monthly updates that consider security, liquidity and yield in that order, when making investment decisions. Credit ratings remain an important element of assessing credit risk, but, they are not a sole feature in the Council's assessment of counterparty credit risk. The Council also considers alternative assessments of credit strength and information on corporate developments and market sentiment towards counterparties. The following key tools are used to assess credit risk:

- Published credit ratings of the financial institution (minimum BBB- or equivalent) and its sovereign (minimum AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns)
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Credit default swaps (where quoted)
- Share prices (where available)
- Economic fundamentals, such as country's net debt as a percentage of its GDP
- Corporate developments, news, articles, market sentiment and momentum
- Subjective overlay

The only indicators with prescriptive values remain to be credit ratings. All other indicators of creditworthiness are considered in relative rather than absolute term.

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Specified and Non-Specified Investments

Approved Investment Counterparties

Credit Rating	Banks/Building Societies Unsecured		Bank/Building Societies Secured		Government		Corporates		Registered Providers	
	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period
UK Govt	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£unlimited	50 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
AAA	£5m	5 years	£10m	20 years	£10m	50 years	£5m	20 years	£5m	20 years
AA+	£5m	5 years	£10m	10 years	10m	25 years	£5m	10 years	£5m	10 years
AA	£5m	4 years	£10m	5 years	£10m	15 years	£5m	5 years	£5m	10 years
AA-	£5m	3 years	£10m	4 years	£10m	10 years	£5m	4 years	£5m	10 years
A+	£5m	2 years	£10m	3 years	£5m	5 years	£5m	3 years	£5m	5 years
A	£5m	1 year	£10m	2 years	£5m	5 years	£5m	2 years	£5m	5 years
A-	£5m	13 months	£10m	13 months	£5m	5 years	£5m	13 months	£5m	5 years
BBB+	£2.5m	6 months	£5m	6 months	£2.5m	2 years	£2.5m	6 months	£2.5m	2 years
BBB	£2.5m	100 days	£5m	100 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BBB-	£2.5m	100 days	£5m	100 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
None	£2.5m	6 months	N/A	N/A	£5m	25 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Pooled Funds and External Fund Managers – Decisions are based on each individual case.

The above limits are the maximum that the Council would expect to have in place at any time. However, in practice the actual duration limits in place are continually assessed in conjunction with Arlingclose and are often much shorter than the limits in the above table.

Credit ratings: Investment decisions are made by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's or Standard & Poor's. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used.

Banks and Building Societies Unsecured: Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail.

Banks and Building Societies Secured: Covered bonds, reverse repurchase agreements and other collateralised arrangements. These investments are secured on the bank's assets, which limits the potential loss in the unlikely event of insolvency and means that they are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but, the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the highest of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used to determine cash and time limits. The combined secured and unsecured investments in any one bank will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

Government: Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multi development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in and there is an insignificant risk of insolvency. Investments with the UK Central government may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

Corporates: Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in, but, are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent.

Other Organisations – The Council may also invest cash with other organisations, for example making loans to small businesses as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely. Because of the higher perceived risk of unrated businesses such investments may provide considerably higher rates of return.

Registered providers: Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of Registered Providers of Social Housing, formerly known as Housing Associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes and Community Agency and as providers of public services they retain a high likelihood of receiving Government support if needed.

Pooled Funds: Shares in diversified investment vehicles consisting of any of the above investment types plus equity shares and property. These funds

have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a fee. Money market funds that offer same-day liquidity and aim for a constant net asset value will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts while pooled funds whose value changes with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods.

Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but, are more volatile in the short term. These allow authorities to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. These funds have no defined maturity date but are available for withdrawal after a notice period. As a result their performance and continued suitability in meeting the authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly and decisions made on entering such funds will be made on an individual basis.

Risk assessment and credit ratings: Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the authorities' treasury advisers who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- No new investments will be made
- Any existing investment that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- Full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments: The Council understands that credit ratings are good but not perfect predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2011, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but, can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to

invest the authorities cash balances then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government via the Debt Management Office or invested in treasury bills for example or with other local authorities. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned, but, will protect the principal sum.

Specified Investments

Specified investments will be those that meet the criteria in the CLG Guidance, i.e. the investment

- is sterling denominated
- has a maximum maturity of one year
- meets the "high credit quality" as determined by the Council or is made with the UK government or is made with a local authority in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland or a parish or community council.
- The making of which is not defined as capital expenditure under section 25(1)(d) in SI 2003 No 3146 (i.e. the investment is not loan capital or share capital in a body corporate)

The Council defines 'high credit quality' organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of BBB- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds 'high credit quality' is defined as those having a credit rating of A- or higher

Non-specified Investments

Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Council does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares

Non-Specified Investment Limits

	Cash Limit
Total Long Term Investments	£65m
Total Investments without credit ratings or rated below A-	£25m
Total Investments in foreign countries rated below AA+	£10m
Maximum total non-specified investments	£100m

Investment Limits

The maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (except the UK Government) is £5m. A group of banks under the same ownership, a group of funds under the same management, brokers nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors will all have limits placed on them as in the table below:

	Cash Limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£5m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£10m
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£30m
Any external Fund Manager	£60m
Negotiable instruments held in a brokers nominee account	£10m
Foreign countries (total per country)	£15m
Registered Providers in total	£10m
Building Societies in total (excluding overnight investments)	£25m
Loans to small businesses	£10m
Money Market Funds	£25m

Liquidity Management

The Council maintains a cash flow spreadsheet that forecasts the Council's cash flows into the future. This is used to determine the maximum period for which funds may be prudently committed. The forecast is compiled on a pessimistic basis, with receipts under estimated and payments over estimated to minimise the risk of the Council having to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments.

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Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement

Introduction

The rules for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) were set out in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These rules have now been revised by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

Authorities are required to submit to a meeting of their Council an annual statement of their policy on making MRP.

Background

Each year the Council borrows money in order to finance some of its capital expenditure. The loans taken out for this purpose, unlike a mortgage which is repaid in part each month, are fully repayable at a future point in time. The repayment date is chosen to secure the best financial result for the Council.

The concept of Minimum Revenue Provision was introduced in 1989 to prescribe a minimum amount which must be charged to the revenue account each year in order to make provision to meet the cost of repaying that borrowing.

The detailed rules and formulae to be used in the more recent method of calculation were laid down in the Regulations mentioned in the introduction section.

This system has now been radically revised and requires an annual statement to full Council setting out the method the Council intends to adopt for the calculation of MRP.

Issues and/or Options

Under the old regulations Local Authorities were required to set aside each year, from their revenue account an amount that, in simple terms equalled approximately 4% of the amount of capital expenditure financed by borrowing. Local Authorities had no freedom to exercise any discretion over this requirement.

The amendment regulations introduce a simple duty for an authority each year to set aside an amount of MRP which it considers to be 'prudent'. The regulation does not define a 'prudent provision' but the MRP guidance makes recommendations to authorities on the interpretation of that term.

The MRP guidance document is a statutory document and authorities are obliged by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to such guidance. The guidance aims to provide more flexibility and in particular for development schemes it is possible to have an MRP “holiday” for assets or infrastructure under construction.

Officers have been in discussion with the external auditors on accounting for the wholly owned housing company, Gloriana. This has given officers an additional view of how to account for MRP on projects where a capital receipt is expected. It has been accepted that there is not a requirement to set aside MRP for loans, through prudential borrowing, that are taken by the Council for onward lending to Gloriana. The basis of this decision is that Gloriana will be making repayments at some point in the future, through either the disposal of properties or rental streams, and that these be set aside for debt repayment purposes. This approach could also be utilised for other schemes, especially in terms of regeneration and economic development purposes with Purfleet regeneration being such an example.

The operative date of the change was 31 March 2008, which means the new rules have applied since the financial year 2007/08.

The Annual MRP Statement

As stated above, Local Authorities are required to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP for submission to their full Council. This mirrors the existing requirements to report to the Council on the Prudential borrowing limits and Treasury Management strategy. The aim is to give elected Members the opportunity to scrutinise the proposed use of the additional freedoms conferred under the new arrangements. The statement must be made before the start of each financial year.

The statement should indicate how it is proposed to discharge the duty to make prudent MRP in the financial year in question for the borrowing that is to take place in that financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original statement during any year, a revised statement should be put to Council at that time.

The guidance includes specific examples of options for making a prudent provision. The aim of this is to ensure that the provision to repay the borrowing is made over a period that bears some relation to the useful life of the assets in question or where a capital receipt will be received to repay the debt in part or in full.

The current approach to the calculation of MRP is that the total of all supported borrowing is written down over a period of 50 years on an equal annual instalment basis and that any unsupported borrowing is written down over the expected life of the asset on an annuity calculated basis.

Proposals

To amend the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2015/16 and also confirm the policy for 2016/17 as follows:

- In accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Council's policy for the calculation of MRP in 2016/17 shall be that the Council will set aside an amount each year which it deems to be prudent and appropriate, having regard to statutory requirements and relevant guidance issued by DCLG.
- The Council will also consider the use of capital receipts to pay down any MRP incurred.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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24 February 2016	ITEM: 14
Council	
Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) and Design Strategy Consultations	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Speight, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration	
Accountable Head of Service: Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth	
Accountable Director: David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The meeting held on the 12 February 2014, the Cabinet gave authorisation for the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the future development of Thurrock.

The preparation and publication of the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation represents the first key stage in the plan-making process and provides the local community and stakeholders with their first opportunity to help shape the future development of the Borough.

The Consultation Document sets out a series of high level questions designed to start a conversation with the public in order to identify the key issues affecting the Borough which the Local Plan will need to consider and address during the course of its development.

Alongside the Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document it is also proposed to publish the draft Thurrock Design Strategy for public consultation. The Design Strategy is intended to promote higher standards of design in Thurrock and provide detailed guidance to developers and landowners on how to achieve attractive and well-designed schemes.

Consultation on both documents will run for a six week period beginning on Friday 26 February and closing on Monday 11 April 2016.

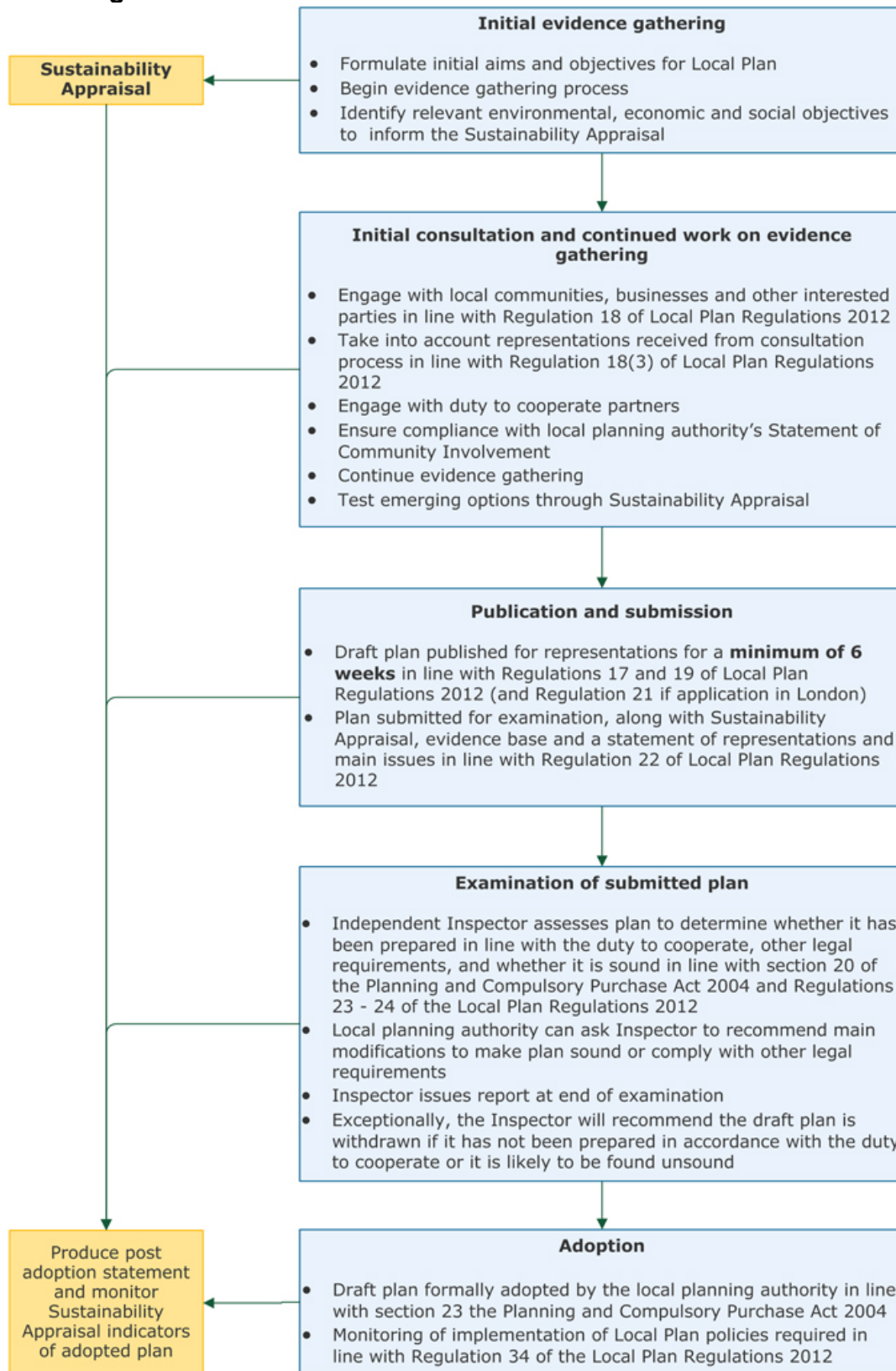
1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Council authorise public consultation on both the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document and the Thurrock Local Plan Design Strategy Document.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Council has an adopted Local Plan in the shape of the Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development DPD (December 2011). However, on the 12 February 2014 Cabinet gave approval to undertake a review of the Core Strategy and begin the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the development of the Borough over the period to 2035.
- 2.2 A key principle underpinning the operation of the planning system is the requirement that local authorities must have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area. The February 2014 Cabinet resolution recognised that a review of the Core Strategy was required in order to address the impact of economic change and a number of significant changes to the planning system at the national, regional and local levels. These include:
- The need to for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to coordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock;
 - The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs;
 - A requirement for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support long term economic growth;
 - Legislative changes that fundamentally affect the form, content and process for preparing a Local Plan;
 - A need to plan for a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and its potential economic, transport, and environmental impact on the Borough.
- 2.3 The process for preparing and adopting Local Plans is set out in the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. An over view of the plan-making process is set out in Figure 1. Any failure to comply with or follow the steps set out in Figure 1 could lead to the plan being found unsound with the significant risk that the Government could step in and impose a new plan or development on the Borough.

Figure 1 Local Plan Process



Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 2.4 Local Authorities are required to set out in a project plan the timetable for the production of a Local Plan. This document known as the Local Development Scheme (LDS) identifies the stages that have to be completed before the Local Plan can be submitted to the Secretary of State and then adopted by the Council following an Examination in Public.
- 2.5 The Council's current Local Development Scheme was approved by Cabinet at the meeting on 9 December 2015. Key dates in the plan-making process are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Local Plan Timetable

Consultation Stage	Anticipated Date
Local Plan (2015-2035)	
Issues and Options – Stage 1 (Strategic Policies)	February/March 2016
Issues and Options – Stage 2 (Spatial Options and Sites)	October/November 2016
Draft Local Plan	October/November 2017
Publication Draft of the Local Plan	October/November 2018
Submission to the Secretary of State	March 2019
<i>Examination in Public (Hearings)</i>	<i>April 2019 – September 2020 (October/November 2019)</i>
<i>Adoption</i>	<i>October 2020</i>
Supplementary Planning Documents	
Design Strategy - Draft	February/March 2016
Design Strategy - Adoption	September 2016
Design Strategy Technical Annex - Draft	June 2016
Design Strategy Technical Annex - Adoption	December 2016
Planning Obligations - Draft	October/November 2016
Planning Obligations - Adoption	March 2017
Interim Guidance Note	
Affordable Housing – Off Site Contributions	March 2016

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 2.6 In preparing a new Local Plan the Council is required by legislation to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the activities the Council must legally undertake when preparing a plan along with setting out what the Council will do to engage the local community and stakeholders in helping to shape the future development of Thurrock.
- 2.7 Following public consultation earlier this year, the Council approved the adoption of a new SCI at the meeting on the 25 November 2015.
- 2.8 To supplement the SCI the Council has prepared a Local Plan Engagement Strategy (Phase 1) which builds upon the basic requirements set out in the SCI and provides additional detail about the activities the Council are intending to undertake to involve the public in the plan-making process which go beyond the legal requirements. This reflects the fact that different consultation approaches will need to be evolved to meet the needs of different stakeholders and sections of the community, including harder to reach groups. The Local Plan Engagement Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Thurrock Local Plan Issues & Options (Stage) 1 Consultation Document

- 3.1 This report seeks the Council's approval to publish the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document for public consultation over a six week period commencing on Friday 29 February and concluding on Monday 11 April.
- 3.2 The purpose of the Consultation Document is to obtain the views of the local community, businesses and stakeholders on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address in order to meet the Borough's future development needs and in protecting and enhancing the built and natural environments. In order to begin a conversation with the wider community on the major issues facing Thurrock the Consultation Document sets out a series of simple high level questions on some of the key issues the public might wish to consider and comment on.
- 3.3 The Consultation Document sets out an initial list of the key strategic cross-boundary planning issues which the Council will need to consider through the Duty To Cooperate with neighbouring Local Authorities and prescribed bodies such as Highways England, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, the Port of London Authority and Network Rail. Consultees will be asked to consider the list of issues identified by the Council and advice on the appropriateness and scope of the matters which need to be considered under the Duty To Cooperate.

- 3.4 In addition it is intended to produce a range of supporting documents, including summary non-technical documents, to help generate interest in the Local Plan process and obtain comments and views back from all sections of the community. These together with the main Consultation Document will be made available on the Council's website and in hard copy at various locations across the Borough.
- 3.5 Following the conclusion of the consultation period all responses will be logged and reported back to Members as a precursor to the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation which will be held in late 2016. At that stage of the process the public will be consulted on a range of policy and development options which will be based on the responses to the stage 1 consultation and the emerging findings from the development of the Local Plan evidence base.

Thurrock Local Plan Design Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

- 3.6 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are produced to provide additional detail and guidance to support policies and proposals in an adopted development plan. Although they do not have the same weight or status as policies in a Local Plan as they are not subject to an independent examination before an Inspector they can still form a 'material consideration' in determining planning applications once they have been adopted by the Council following public consultation.
- 3.7 The importance of achieving good design and the benefits this can bring in delivering sustainable communities, is clearly set out in National Planning Policy and Guidance. In preparing the Design Strategy the Council is committed to substantially raising design standards across the Borough and the delivery of the following six objectives:
1. Improve the overall design quality standards of development in Thurrock, enhancing perceptions of place and reinforcing a strong sense of civic pride
 2. Innovate through design improvements in locations where the existing built environment requires regeneration
 3. Enhance the best of the existing built and natural environments drawing on the heritage and identity of towns and villages in Thurrock
 4. Provide clear guidance on the Council's expectations regarding the design approach to be adopted in Thurrock
 5. Work proactively with the development industry to bring forward proposals in a timely and effective way having regard to statutory policy requirements
 6. Lead by example through the design and implementation of Council-led development projects

- 3.8 The overarching objectives described above will be implemented through the application of the Design Strategy to all projects coming forward within Thurrock where the Council will work closely with developers and landowners to secure the delivery of high quality development across the Borough. The Design Strategy sets out a toolkit of guidance that the Council will use when assessing proposals through the Development Management process. Where proposals do not reflect the guidance and are contrary to national policy they will be considered for refusal.
- 3.9 It is proposed to publish the Design Strategy SPD for public consultation alongside the Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation Document. Following the six week consultation period the Council will consider any comments received on the draft SPD and amend the document should it be required. The final draft SPD together with a Report of Consultation will then be submitted back to full Council for consideration and adoption.

Consultation Arrangements

- 3.10 The two consultations will be the subject to a six week consultation period commencing on Friday 26 February 2016 and running through to a close on Monday 11 April 2016. The consultation process will be taken forward in accordance with the approach set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the Local Plan Engagement Strategy.
- 3.11 It is proposed to undertake a variety of different consultation approaches to ensure that all sections of the community have a full and proper opportunity to become involved in shaping the future direction of their Borough.
- 3.12 In addition to the opportunities for direct contact with the local community, it is also proposed to use digital platforms as well as both the printed and social media to advertise the consultation process, to encourage the public and stakeholders to become actively engaged in the plan-making process and to have their say on the future of the Borough. In recognition that not everyone has access to the internet all the relevant consultation documentation and materials will also be made available at a variety of accessible locations around the Borough over the 6 week period.
- 3.13 The major costs associated with the preparation of the Local Plan will be incurred during the financial year 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, and 2018/19. The costs of preparing the Local Plan will be met from existing budgets and their re-allocation in line with the programme of activity set out in the approved Local Development Scheme. This includes the on-going budget for preparing the Local Plan and a separately identified ear-marked reserve held on the Council's balance sheet.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan is required to ensure that the significant progress being made in securing future growth and

regeneration of the Borough is not stalled by the lack of an up-to-date development plan. This is particularly important given that national planning policy guidance states that where the development plan is out-of-date, permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits of doing so. The implications of this point are clear; if an authority fails to plan properly for its own area, then the opportunity to do so will be lost through planning appeals determined by Planning Inspectors or by the Secretary of State.

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

- 5.1 A report setting out progress on preparing the Local Plan was considered and approved by the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 20 January 2016.
- 5.2 The Thurrock Local Plan will be the subject of extensive public consultation at each stage of the plan-making process in accordance with the approach and practice set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted by the Council in November 2015 and the Local Plan Engagement Strategy approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015.

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

- 6.1 This report sets out how the preparation of Local Plan will be undertaken in a manner consistent with wider corporate objectives. The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment opportunities. An Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) will be conducted as part of the process of preparing the new Local Plan. The approach to consultation set out in the newly adopted SCI will ensure that the consultation process associated with the new Local Plan will provide an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

Preparation of the Local Plan will be funded through a combination of existing revenue budgets within Planning and Growth and an ear-marked reserve held for this purpose.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by **Vivien Williams**
Planning and Regeneration Solicitor

Set out in the body of the report

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

Set out in the body of the report

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

There are no other implications associated with the Report.

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

- Thurrock Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) November 2015
- Thurrock Local Plan Engagement Strategy (Phase 1) November 2015
- Thurrock Local Development Scheme (LDS) December 2015

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1: Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document
Appendix 2: Local Plan Design Strategy SPD (Draft) Consultation Document

Report Author:

Sean Nethercott
Growth and Strategy Team Manager
Planning and Transportation

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Thurrock Local Plan

Issues and Options (Stage 1)



February
2016

INFORMATION

How can I have my say on this consultation document?

Consultation on the Local Plan - Issues and Options (Stage 1) document and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report will take place between 9am Friday 26 February and 5pm Monday 11 April 2016. We strongly encourage responses to be made on-line via the Council's interactive consultation system, however, you can submit your comments in any of the following ways:

- On-line by following the links from our web-site: www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan
- By e-mail: growth&strategy@thurrock.gov.uk
- By post: Growth and Strategy Team, Planning and Transportation, Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Comments forms are available on request at the Civic Offices and in all libraries in the Borough. A printable PDF version of the form can also be downloaded from the Local Plan page on the Council's website.

How will my comments be used?

We will acknowledge receipt of your comments and fully consider them, although the Council will not enter into individual correspondence. Comments received will be published on the Council's consultation portal in accordance with the Data Protection Act and used to prepare the next stage of consultation on the Stage 2 Issues and Options Document.

If you need help with your representation or wish to discuss the content of document, please see the details on the back of this document. There will also be opportunities to meet with members of the Growth and Strategy Team face-to-face, at public drop-in exhibitions to be held throughout the consultation period. Please visit our website for details on times and locations at www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan.

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Section 1: Introduction

What is the Thurrock Local Plan?

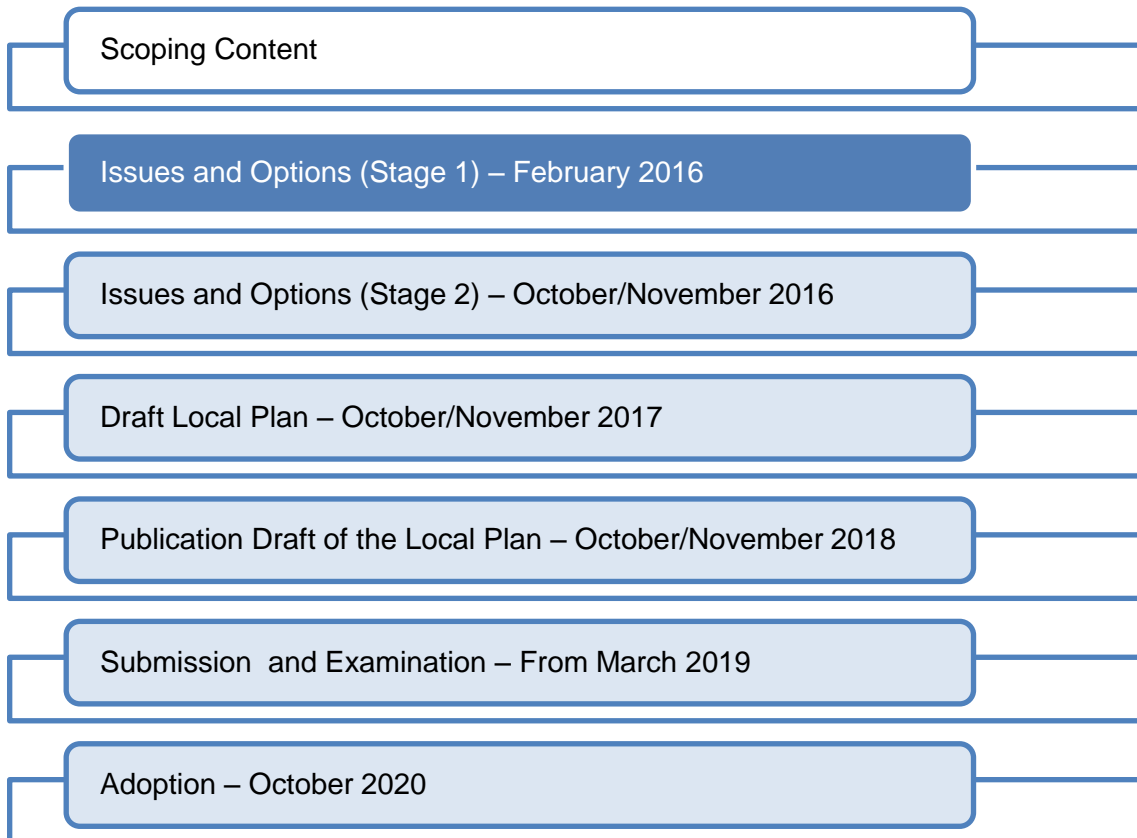
- 1.1 The Local Plan is used to guide decisions on planning applications for development as well as set out the strategic direction of the area on social, economic and environmental matters. All Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan setting out planning policies for their area.
- 1.2 Local Plans include targets for the number of homes and jobs to be provided together with the infrastructure needed to support them. They identify sites for development as well as areas of land which should be protected. They set out who needs to work together to deliver the plan and a timeline for its delivery.
- 1.3 Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the national Planning Practice Guidance online resource (PPG).
- 1.4 In February 2014 the Council decided to commence work on a new Local Plan for Thurrock to respond to a number of major challenges. These included:
 - The need for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to co-ordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock
 - The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs
 - The need for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support economic growth
 - A need to plan for the possible impact of a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)
- 1.5 This Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation document is an important step in producing the Thurrock Local Plan. It allows people to input their views on the issues affecting the Borough. These comments will be used to identify the Plans priorities and develop policy options.
- 1.6 The Council is intending to produce a Stage 2 Issues and Options consultation document in October/November 2016 to look in more detail at specific policy options and site allocations. It should be noted that for some issues there may not be an option or limited options for how that issue is addressed. This is because the NPPF and PPG set the ground rules and represent the main starting point for determining the direction of policies in the Local Plan.

How will the Local Plan be prepared?

- 1.7 Preparation of the Local Plan must follow a number of stages to ensure that local people and other stakeholders are fully engaged in the process and that its contents are based on robust evidence, testing of alternatives and then external examination by

an Inspector. These stages of work are summarised in Figure 1. It is expected that the Local Plan will be adopted by the Council in 2020, however due to the complex nature of the work; the programme will be kept under regular review. For more details on the Local Plan work programme please see the latest Local Development Scheme (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

Figure 1 – Local Plan Stages of Preparation



How are communities and key stakeholders going to be involved?

- 1.8 In preparing a new Local Plan the Council is required by legislation to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the activities the Council must legally undertake when preparing a Plan along with setting out what the Council may do. These include making consultation documents available on the Council’s webpage and in hard copy of the Civic Offices, Grays and in all of the Borough’s libraries.
- 1.9 The Council is keen to engage as many people as possible in the development of the Local Plan and is achieving this by building upon the basic requirements of the SCI and promoting range activities which go above and beyond the legal requirements including, but not limited, to:
 - The creation of a Local Plan Residents Forum, Youth Forum, Developer Forum and Business Forum.

- Organising a series of drop in events across the Borough to allow people to come along and share their views in person.
- Setting up an online poll to allow more people to have their say on the big questions.

INFORMATION

The Local Plan Forums have been created to ensure that the plan is influenced by local people and businesses. Forum members will be involved throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, interrogating evidence and being party to the difficult decisions needed through each stage.

If you are interested in joining one of the Local Plan Forums please contact a member of the Growth and Strategy Team using the details on the back of this document.

- 1.10 All engagement and how it has influenced the Plan at each stage will be recorded in the Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Statement, which will eventually be submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the examination. This document will be published in sections alongside each stage of Local Plan preparation so that people can see how their contribution is helping to shape the Plan.

What information will be used to inform the Local Plan?

- 1.11 Local Plans must be based on robust evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Much of this evidence is of a technical nature and is therefore not described in detail in this document. Key pieces of evidence currently being prepared include:

- Active Place Strategy
- Accessibility Mapping
- Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2016 Update)
- Employment Land Availability Assessment
- Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Local Plan and CIL Viability Study
- Landscape and Seascape Character, Seascape and Capacity Assessment
- South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment

QUESTION 1

As the Plan progresses more evidence will be need to be prepared. What other evidence documents do you think the Council will need to commission or produce to ensure that the Plan is sound?

How will the Local Plan relate to other Plans and strategies for the area?

1.12 Partnership working and co-ordination of strategies are key features of the planning system. The Council is therefore liaising with relevant bodies that prepare strategies affecting the Borough's future, including health, transport, housing, employment, and the environment. This is to ensure that Plans and policies are as closely aligned as possible and that strategies support each other. Some of the policies in the Local Plan will rely on actions by other parties, so it is important that they are engaged early on in the process and agreement reached on who does what.

How will the Local Plan relate to Plans by neighbouring authorities?

1.13 The Council is working jointly on strategic priorities with other authorities in South Essex, London and beyond. This is known as the Duty to Cooperate. Thurrock forms part of the South Essex Housing Market Area and as such the Local Authorities work very closely together particularly when planning for housing, the economy and infrastructure needed to support growth.

1.14 The development of the Local Plan evidence base so far and meetings held as part of the Duty to Co-operate identified a number of issues which need to be discussed at a strategic level. Figure 2 sets out the high level issues that will need to be discussed.

Figure 2 – Cross Boundary Issues



QUESTION 2

Do you feel that all the key cross boundary issues have been identified? If not, then please state any other issues that we should be working with our partners to address.

How will the Council assess the environmental impacts of the emerging Local Plan?

- 1.15 Undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan is an essential part of the plan-making process. The sustainability appraisal must address the legal requirements of the EU Directive (2001/42/EC) known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive. A failure to undertake the sustainability appraisal process properly can expose the Plan to legal challenge.
- 1.16 The sustainability appraisal being undertaken for the Local Plan adopts an integrated approach and also includes a health impact assessment, an equalities impact assessment and a Habitats Screening assessment as required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.17 The first stage in the Local Plan sustainability process is the preparation of a Scoping Report. This will explain the context in which the Plan is being prepared, identify sustainability objectives and the proposed approach of the assessment and identify relevant environmental, economic and social issues. The final scope of the appraisal will need to be determined through consultation with, English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.18 The Council is now consulting on the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which is now available to view on the Thurrock Local Plan website. Your comments on the scoping report are welcomed and will be used to help inform the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal as we move forward with the plan-making process.
- 1.19 The Council also intends to set up an external partner Sustainability Appraisal Stakeholder Reference Group as a mechanism for facilitating the wider involvement of key organisations and prescribed Duty to Co-operate bodies in the process of developing the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Framework. The Council would welcome nominations from all interested parties to sit on the Sustainability Appraisal Stakeholder Reference Group.

What is the status of the Core Strategy and other planning documents now the Council is preparing a new Plan?

- 1.20 The Council adopted its Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Local Plan (Core Strategy) in December 2011. The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the development of Thurrock.

- 1.21 Following the publication of the NPPF, the Council identified a number of policies in the Core Strategy which requires updating to ensure that they were in full compliance with the NPPF. These updated policies were adopted by the Council in January 2015.
- 1.22 The policies within the Core Strategy will continue to be used in decision making until the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted. However, as work on the new Local Plan progresses, emerging policies could start to influence decisions on planning applications. Once the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted it will replace the existing documents.
- 1.23 Work on documents previously in preparation, including the Sites Allocations Local Plan, has now been suspended indefinitely. Relevant comments received on these documents will be considered in the preparation of the Local Plan.

What are Neighbourhood Plans and how will the Local Plan affect them?

- 1.24 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape how their local areas develop and change by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) or Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs). In Thurrock only designated Neighbourhood Forums are able to produce NDPs and NDOs.
- 1.25 Through producing a Neighbourhood Plan communities can take the lead on developing planning policies for their areas, as long as certain rules are followed and any Plans and policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan.
- 1.26 Although the Council already has a series of adopted strategic policies (Core Strategy) the wording of these policies and their strategic direction may need to be re-examined and updated as work on the emerging Local Plan continues.

INFORMATION

At the time of publication the Council has not received any formal applications by community groups to be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum and/or received any official requests for support.

If you and your local community are considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan we would recommend that you speak to a member of the Growth and Strategy Team as soon as practical. Contact details are on the back page of this document.

Section 2: Thinking Forward

Promoting a clear vision

- 2.1 Thurrock has a unique location, benefiting from large areas of green open space and riverfront whilst being in close proximity to the nation's capital. Thurrock's position by the River Thames has long since made it a strategic location and hub for industrial growth. The area's riverside location and vast natural resources are the key to its past as well as its future development and success.
- 2.2 Over the decades new communities have developed in Thurrock in response to major business growth. Tilbury was designed and expanded to provide homes for people working in the Port, East Tilbury Bata estate developed to support the Bata shoe factory, which came to Thurrock from Czechoslovakia and cottages were developed through Purfleet to support the riverside industries.
- 2.3 The Borough has often been described as a place of contrast and it is home to a number of paradoxes with busy towns and picturesque villages framed by an established industrial backdrop along the Thames.
- 2.4 Thurrock Council's corporate vision is 'to create a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish'. The Local Plan vision needs to expand upon this and explore key questions, including: What Thurrock as a place will look like in the future?; Where will people be living and working? and; What will they be doing in their spare time?
- 2.5 The Core Strategy vision was based on targets set at regional level and talked about the creation of 23,000 new homes and 26,000 new jobs. It focussed on the redevelopment and regeneration of the five main growth areas as a way of meeting these targets. These areas are:
 - Purfleet
 - Lakeside/West Thurrock
 - Grays
 - Tilbury
 - London Gateway
- 2.6 A number of the aims and ambitions of the vision set out in the Core Strategy are now coming to fruition. However, some have wavered as a result of the national economic crisis and others may need rethinking (e.g. as a result of any government decision on a Lower Thames Crossing).
- 2.7 In creating the Local Plan vision it is important to revisit our previous goals and reflect on the successes and challenges, but ultimately we must move forward if we want the Borough to become an even greater place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence.

QUESTION 3

What would you like Thurrock to be like in the future and what do you think should be the key economic, housing, environmental, social, community and health outcomes that the Local Plan should help to deliver?

QUESTION 4

Do you believe that the vision and approach set out in the Core Strategy of focusing development within Thurrock's urban area and major growth hubs remains the most appropriate option for meeting the Borough's future development needs?

Determining an appropriate timeframe

- 2.8 National policy states that Local Plans should preferably plan for a 15 year time horizon. If the Plan is adopted in 2020 as programmed, this would mean it would need to have an end date of 2035. However some of the background evidence, especially that which relies on national data sets, may have a longer lifespan. There may also be ambitions in the vision which may not be able to be delivered by 2035.

QUESTION 5

Do you think that the plan period of 2015-2035 is appropriate? If not please suggest a more suitable plan period.

Section 3: Key policy areas

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR LOCATION

THE LOCAL AREA

- 3.1 Thurrock's close proximity to London and excellent strategic transport links together with its role as international gateway represent major drivers for positive change and regeneration in the Borough. However, more needs to be done at the local level to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are fully shared by all sections of the community.
- 3.2 Whilst there is much to celebrate in terms of major new developments and jobs that have been created, there are also areas of Thurrock which have not seen much investment in recent decades and are now in need of renewal and regeneration. These include many older housing and industrial areas across the Borough as well as some district and local shopping centres where the quality of the environment and condition of buildings has begun to deteriorate. Equally, declining levels of investment or changing economic circumstances have meant that some areas no longer have easy access to an adequate range of services necessary to meet their needs.
- 3.3 In most cases, the size and function of a settlement affects the amount of services and facilities available to the people that live or work there. If these services and facilities are close by, it reduces people's need to travel. In some parts of the Borough there are examples of settlements which are large in size but residents do not have access to the range and type of services, shopping and community facilities needed. In other parts of Thurrock smaller settlements are not large enough to support the retention of key local services much to the detriment of these areas and their future.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.4 Although the Core Strategy focusses primarily on the redevelopment and regeneration of the five main growth areas it also identified the need for the Council and its partners to develop and implement a range of strategies to secure the comprehensive regeneration and renewal of Thurrock's older housing, employment and shopping centres. Also identified as a priority is the need to bring forward improvements to a number of Council housing estate's where problems of social deprivation remain a concern.

QUESTION 6

Policies in the Local Plan can seem very high level but at their heart they are all about creating better places to live, work and play. What would you change in your local neighbourhood to make it a better place to live?

RIVER THAMES

- 3.5 The Borough's character and history is interwoven with that of the River Thames and it will continue to be important that the Local Plan is embedded in a strategy which recognises and exploits the economic opportunities provided by Thurrock's location by the river but also respects the need to protect and enhance the distinctive 'riverscape' along the southern edge of the Borough which plays a vital role in the region's economy. Key amongst these are Tilbury which is currently the busiest port on the river and the growing new deep sea container port at London Gateway.
- 3.6 The river is also important as a natural habitat and a unique and important riverscape, including heritage assets such as Coalhouse and Tilbury forts.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.7 The Core Strategy recognises that whilst there is a strong need to protect industry and support the regeneration of Thurrock riverside in the broadest sense, the river and its setting needs to be accessible and visible, capitalising on the landscape and environmental improvements that will be realised for the future.
- 3.8 Going forward, priorities around the development of the river and its foreshore will vary as individual areas will lend themselves to different opportunities. Whether that is the maximising the potential of the ports, promoting and protecting the environment, creating an attractive place to live or encouraging people to travel by river.
- 3.9 In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to consider whether there is a need to amend this approach to reflect any new opportunities for accommodating development in areas adjoining the river and in improving the appearance and environmental quality of a number of riverscape and surrounding areas. Improving access to the river will also need to be considered but care will also need to be taken to ensure that this is balanced with the need to protect and enhance key environmental and ecological assets along the river.

QUESTION 7

The River Thames is one of the Borough's biggest assets but has been somewhat neglected over the years. Going forward we need to ensure that the river and the areas around it are developed in the right way. How would you make the best use of the River Thames and its foreshore?

NEW HOMES

- 3.10 The population of Thurrock is relatively young with a large proportion of the population of working age. Nearly a third of households are families and lone parents with dependent children. With the current housing market, this means more young people are living at home for longer and unable to move on from the family home. The older population, in particular, is projected to grow significantly in the next twenty years, moving more in line with the national average, placing additional pressures on housing and social care services. The majority of new growth in the Borough is anticipated to be as a result of natural change, i.e. existing families growing and people living longer.
- 3.11 The Government has a strong agenda to increase the supply of housing in order to meet the national housing shortage. Planning is a key focus for the Government in addressing the housing shortage.
- 3.12 National policy tells us that we should seek to plan to meet our Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in full. The OAN is determined by looking at a range of secondary data sources like the Census and government housing and employment projections, as well as more localised indicators of need.

The Core strategy says...

- 3.13 The housing target set out in the Core Strategy is to deliver a minimum of 18,500 new dwellings between 2001 and 2021. This target was determined by the then East of England Plan. This regional tier of planning has now been removed by the Government leaving Councils to determine their own housing requirements. However setting a new target is not as easy as just selecting a number we feel comfortable with.
- 3.14 With a growing population, an ageing population and changes in household make-up, the need for housing is high and increasing. New development is an important responsibility that we have in order to help ensure that future generations can find homes of their own in the future. Preventing further growth and development is not an option that we have as we must seek to plan for our full OAN over the plan period.

QUESTION 8

Have you ever experienced any difficulty in trying to find a suitable property in the Borough? If yes what were your biggest challenge?

DECIDING WHERE NEW HOMES SHOULD GO

- 3.15 National policy states that the Plan should seek to encourage sustainable patterns of movement which means that we should make sure that new housing is properly serviced by existing or new infrastructure.
- 3.16 National policy also encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), an approach that is also promoted through the

Core Strategy. However, it is not always possible to build on this land and/or there is not enough of this land available to accommodate the number of new homes needed.

- 3.17 In late 2014/early 2015 the Council undertook a Call for Sites exercise to help inform its emerging Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA). Over 170 sites were submitted during this call. Since the last call for sites Officers have been identifying a number of other potential development sites using the methods suggested in national guidance. A report documenting all of the sites and drawing conclusions about each will be published in summer 2016. It is important to remember that the HLAA report is only a technical evidence document and it does not allocate sites for development

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.18 The Core Strategy prioritises the development of brownfield sites and seeks to focus the majority of new housing development (10,010 dwellings) into the Thurrock Urban Area (Purfleet, Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary). A further 2100 dwellings were set to be allocated in the outlying settlements to the north of the A13 with the remaining dwellings provided in the outlying settlements to the south of the A13.
- 3.19 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would allocate individual sites for development. Work on that document has commenced but was suspended in favour of putting together an integrated Local Plan.
- 3.20 Since 2006, 2,366 net additional dwellings have been built resulting in an under build of 6,184 dwellings. This under build is a result of several factors including the economic recession of recent years. Going forward we will need to make sure that our approach is flexible enough to respond to changing markets.

QUESTION 9

National policy states that the Council should prioritise the development of redundant brownfield sites that have good access to existing services for new housing. What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites to meet its housing need?

INFORMATION

If you know of any brownfield sites which could be considered for use as housing land please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document. Please note that we may not be able to include sites submitted after this deadline in the 2016 Housing Land Availability Assessment.

DECIDING WHAT TYPES OF HOMES TO BUILD

- 3.21 Housing should be of a high quality, sufficient quantity, affordable and of the type needed in order to create successful communities. It is important to plan for a mix of homes and a range of sizes and types to meet both current and future housing needs.
- 3.22 National policy encourages Local Plans to plan positively for a mix of housing based on an assessment of the type of people that live in the Borough both now and in the future. This includes providing a mix of homes to meet the needs of different groups such as families with children, older people, those with disabilities or particular support needs and those wishing to build their own homes.
- 3.23 Two thirds of households in Thurrock live in semi-detached and terraced houses. The majority own their own home but Thurrock has nearly double the regional and national averages renting from the Council, with a small number renting from Registered Providers.
- 3.24 Thurrock's housing situation reflects the national situation, with house prices outstretching average earnings meaning that many cannot afford to buy or even rent a home.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.25 In terms of general housing mix the Core Strategy promotes the use of lifetime/accessible housing and suggested that dwelling mix be determined by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Council is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 3.26 With regards to affordable housing the Core Strategy currently seeks a minimum of 35% affordable housing on new housing developments. Although there is still a strong need to provide more affordable housing in the Borough this has to be balanced against the viability of individual sites.

QUESTION 10

National policy encourages Local Plans to plan positively for a mix of housing based on the type of people that live in the Borough both now and in the future. What types of housing do you think will be most needed in the Borough over the coming years?

QUESTION 11

The costs of developing some sites and the risks involved can mean that some sites which are suitable for housing cannot come forward due to viability issues. Should the Council explore the potential for variable affordable housing targets and approaches so that difficult higher risk sites can be developed?

INFORMATION

The Government has published the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 setting out its proposals to increase home ownership and boost levels of house building. A key component of the Bill is the creation of a new duty on all Local Authority Planning departments to promote the supply of starter homes in their area. Starter homes are exclusively for first time buyers under the age of 40, for sale at 20 per cent below normal market prices.

MAKING SURE THE NEEDS OF GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE ARE MET

- 3.27 Definitions for Gypsies and Travellers vary across pieces of legislation. The definition used in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites is: “Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their families or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age has ceased to travel temporarily or permanently”.
- 3.28 The National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites document requires all Local Authorities to set targets for new pitches and plots. Local Authorities must also identify and maintain a five-year supply of sites in order to meet their targets for both new permanent residential and transit pitches.

The Core strategy said...

- 3.29 The Core Strategy set a target to provide 87 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2006 and 2021. This target was determined by the former East of England Plan. This regional tier of planning has now been removed and Councils need to determine their own requirements through undertaking a thorough assessment.
- 3.30 The most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed in September 2014. At the time of production the 2014 Essex GTAA was prepared in full conformity with the then national policy and assessed both current and future pitch requirements. In August 2015 national policy was updated meaning that the GTAA now needs to be updated. Work on updating the Essex GTAA is now underway.
- 3.31 With regards to meeting the needs of Travelling Show People the Core Strategy safeguarded the existing sites within the Borough and set out locational criteria to assess applications for new sites/pitches.

QUESTION 12

National policy states that the Council should prioritise the development of redundant brownfield sites that have good access to existing services for new housing which includes pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people. What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites for new pitches?

INFORMATION

If you know of any suitable brownfield sites which could be considered for use as use as Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People pitches please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document.

JOB CREATION

- 3.32 In 2013, Thurrock's economy was estimated to be worth around £2.8bn with employment levels having recovered quickly following the economic down turn. Looking ahead, it is forecast that the Thurrock economy will grow by an average of 3.2% per annum between 2012 and 2030 and that total employment of will grow by an average of 1.5% a year, equivalent to an increase of 21,200 jobs in Thurrock over the same period.
- 3.33 The main employment sectors in the Borough are transport and logistics, port functions and retail. The strength of these sectors reflects some of Thurrock's key locational advantages which include its close proximity to London and international gateways (ports and airports) which make it an attractive proposition for continued inward investment and job creation.
- 3.34 Government policy is committed to building a strong and competitive economy in order to create jobs and prosperity. To help achieve economic growth Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities are required to:
- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
 - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period
 - Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and where possible identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances
 - Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries
 - Identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement
 - Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.35 The Core Strategy approach is based on promoting and supporting economic growth and development through the provision of land, premises and supporting infrastructure in five Key Strategic Economic Hubs across the Borough. These comprise Purfleet, Lakeside/West Thurrock, Grays Town Centre, Tilbury and London Gateway. In preparing the Local Plan the Council will need to consider whether this strategic approach remains appropriate or whether it needs to be revised to include, for example, Thames Enterprise Park at Coryton as a sixth Strategic Economic Hub.
- 3.36 Despite the challenging economic environment that has existed at the time of the Core Strategy's adoption in 2011, the Plan has been instrumental in attracting significant

inward investment into the Borough leading to a faster rate of jobs growth in Thurrock than either the national or regional average. Testimony to this are the levels of private sector investment which has/will be generated by proposed or committed development at London Gateway, Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside, Purfleet and the Port of Tilbury.

- 3.37 In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to develop a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating within the Borough and wider Thames Gateway South Essex area. This will include an assessment of the need for additional land or floorspace for economic development, including both the qualitative and quantitative needs for anticipated types of economic activity over the plan period, including retail and leisure development.
- 3.38 Alongside the need to ensure the availability of appropriate land and property to meet forecast growth in jobs, the Local Plan will also need to support efforts to diversify the Borough's unbalanced employment base which is dominated by the transport, logistics, port functions and retail.

QUESTION 13

What are the main barriers to growth that need to be addressed in the Local Plan to ensure that all sections of the community have access to the benefits of future employment creation in Thurrock?

QUESTION 14

Do you think there is a need to identify additional land for employment and what other employment uses outside of the port, logistics and retail sectors should the Local Plan support and promote?

INFORMATION

If you know of any sites which could be considered for use as employment land or that are currently used for employment but could be used for other uses please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document. Please note that we may not be able to include sites submitted after this deadline in the 2016 Housing or Employment Land Availability Assessments.

SHOPPING AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.39 Town centres are at the heart of community life and play a key role in shaping people's perceptions of an area. Attractive, vibrant and prosperous town centres can act as an important catalyst for attracting growth and investment into the wider area. Equally, declining centres can have the opposite effect and serve to deter and undermine efforts to turn round the economic fortunes of an area.
- 3.40 Over the last five years town centres have had to face the challenge of major economic and social change which has had an impact on the way we shop, the development of new retail formats and changing patterns of retail development. This has been manifest in the rise in internet shopping, the rapid growth of discount retailers and the 'convenience' shopping concept, the consolidation and concentration of investment into fewer larger centres and an overall decline in the demand for town centre retail floorspace in all but the largest and more successful centres.
- 3.41 To ensure the vitality of town centres Paragraph 23 of the NPPF requires that 'planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres'. This includes a requirement that 'needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability'.
- 3.42 National policy also requires Local Plans to be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. In terms of a retail evidence base, paragraph 161 states that they should assess:
- The need for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
 - The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of the centres;
 - The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development;
 - Locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action

The Core Strategy says....

- 3.43 The Core Strategy defines the hierarchy of centres in Thurrock and sets out the Council's commitment to supporting the transformation of the northern part of the Lakeside Basin into a new regional centre through the plan-making process and the preparation of an Inset Plan for the area. Policy CSTP7 also sets the Council's support for the regeneration of the remainder of the Borough's network of centres with particular reference to the need to promote Grays town centre as a focus for cultural, administrative and educational functions, whilst providing retail development that is complementary to the Lakeside Basin.

3.44 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2011 the retail landscape has changed dramatically with far reaching implications for the demand for retail and leisure development both across the UK and within Thurrock. In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to review the existing policy approach and to identify the need for additional guidance on the scale, nature of location of new retail and leisure development across the Borough. Consideration will also need to be given to the need to prepare more detailed town centre development and regeneration strategies to co-ordinate, prioritise and implement a range of measures to maintain the viability and vitality of the Borough's wider network of Town, District and Local Centres.

QUESTION 15

What do you think are the key challenges facing Thurrock's retail centres and how can the Local Plan maintain and enhance their role?

QUESTION 16

What improvements would you like to see in those centres that you visit regularly and what would make you visit them more often? Please state the name of the centre in your response.

QUESTION 17

What are the best locations for new retail and leisure development in the Borough and how can future development be harnessed to support the delivery of wider regeneration and economic growth needs and objectives?

QUESTION 18

Is there a need for the development of retail, leisure and other town centres uses in locations outside the existing established retail centres and if so where?

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

- 3.45 In Thurrock, the general health of the population is good and with a below average number of residents experiencing long term health conditions or disabilities. However, at the local level there are clear health inequalities, with life expectancy in the most deprived areas more than eight years lower for men and seven for women compared to those living in the least deprived locations.
- 3.46 There is a high rate of obesity for both children and adults prevalent in Thurrock, compounded by poor levels of healthy eating and low levels of participation in sport. This has health implications in both the short and long term and can impact on a child's development and educational attainment.
- 3.47 Planning can play an important role in creating healthy, inclusive and active communities. For example, positive planning can lead to reductions in health inequalities, by improving access to healthy food, through offering choices in the local market and reducing obesity by encouraging physical activity through the inclusion of open-spaces and leisure facilities. Planning can also facilitate social interaction which in turn can lead to improvements in mental health and general well-being.

OPEN SPACES AND SPORT FACILITIES

- 3.48 Leisure, sport and open spaces are of prime importance to improving and maintaining the quality of life in the Borough, by encouraging an active and healthy community. Thurrock has a wide range of existing public open spaces, parks, and recreational areas, from Country Parks to amenity green spaces, with a range of equipped play spaces and natural play areas. These spaces provide varied opportunities for formal and informal active and passive recreation.
- 3.49 National policy recognises the important role open spaces play in local communities and indicates that in developing a Local Plan, Local Planning Authorities must assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas.
- 3.50 To help protect green spaces which are important to local communities, national policy has introduced the ability to designate such land as Local Green Space. National policy considers that this special protection would not be appropriate for most open space and should only be used under the following conditions:
- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
 - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a local significance, for example because of its historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
 - Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.51 The Core Strategy states that the Council and Partners will support the delivery of a physically active, socially inclusive and healthy community through the provision of high quality sports and leisure facilities and appropriate open spaces for those that live, work, and visit the Borough.
- 3.52 In the past open spaces were often planned to meet a single purpose, such as sport or flood protection. However, today it is recognised that open spaces can frequently combine several functions including:
- Informal recreation and relaxation
 - Children's play
 - Outdoor sports provision
 - Countryside access and tourism
 - Conserving wildlife habitats and creating wildlife corridors
 - Protecting landscapes
 - Managing water resources and flooding
 - Producing useful products, such as timber, bio-crops and local food
- 3.53 At the end of 2015 the Council sought to find out from residents what types of open spaces they use, how regularly they use them, how they get there, and any ideas they may have on how things could be improved. This information will be used by the Council to help form new standards for open space. Going forward it is essential that all new developments continue to contribute to and improve the provision of open spaces so that local needs are met.

QUESTION 19

What new sport and leisure facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?

QUESTION 20

National policy gives Councils new powers to protect valued open spaces by designating them as a Local Green Spaces. Are there any open spaces that are special to your local community which should be designated? If yes, please provide details of the open space, its location and the reason why it is special to you and your community.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

- 3.54 In recent years the education system has been overhauled with the introduction of Free Schools and Academies. There are currently 39 state maintained primary schools in Thurrock:
- 22 Academies
 - 9 Community Schools

- Voluntary Aided Schools
- 1 Voluntary Controlled
- 1 Foundation
- 1 Free School

3.55 Each Academy, Free School and Voluntary Aided-School is its own Admissions Authority. The Council is the Admissions Authority for Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools. The number of school places required in Thurrock is regularly reviewed as new data becomes available and an annual plan is published. Pupil forecasts are based on live birth data, information on proposed housing developments, pupil numbers on roll at Thurrock schools and other demographic data.

3.56 New residential developments and population increase will inevitably bring an increased demand for school places. Although some local schools have extra capacity, there may be a need for more places to be made available or for completely new education facilities to be built.

The Core Strategy says...

3.57 The Core Strategy sets out a comprehensive strategy to enhance educational achievement and skills in the Borough. The approach suggested included things like promoting the integration of schools into multi-functional hubs with linkages to key facilities such as sports and leisure facilities, health and social care and working with key partners to transform post-16 routes.

QUESTION 21

What new educational facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

3.58 With a growing and ageing population, the provision of health and community facilities/services in the Borough is going to become even more important in the future than it already is now. Thurrock CCG and the NHS are currently in the process of reviewing the way in which health care is provided which, in the future, could involve more care being provided in the home, better online 'self-help' services and the creation of a smaller number of health hubs with sufficient doctors to serve a greater number of patients and facilities on site for undertaking a range of minor procedures.

The Core Strategy says...

3.59 The Core Strategy recognises the need to provide health care facilities that meet existing and future community needs, including those needs arising from the new housing and employment that will be developed in the Borough over the lifetime of the Plan.

- 3.60 Going forward, the Council needs to continue planning positively to meet needs for social, recreational, cultural facilities and services. Successful health and community facilities/services are integral to the vibrancy of communities across the Borough. Good community facilities provide opportunities for interaction between people, the chance to get involved in activities and to have increased accessibility to basic services. This benefits the social prosperity of communities across the Borough, whilst providing knock-on benefits for health and well-being, sustainability and the economy.

QUESTION 22

What new health and community facilities do you think are needed in the Borough to support both new and existing communities?

QUESTION 23

Buildings in community use are a valuable local resource. Displacing them by redevelopment or change of use makes it far more difficult to return them to community use. What kind of things could the Local Plan do to protect these valuable community assets?

POLLUTION AND AIR QUALITY

- 3.61 There are 18 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Thurrock. AQMAs are areas where the Council monitors air pollution levels from roads, industry, and property. Traffic emissions, especially from heavy goods vehicles, are the major contributor to poor air quality in most of these areas.
- 3.62 National policy makes clear that Local Plans can affect air quality in a number of ways, including through what type of development is proposed and where and the encouragement given to sustainable transport.
- 3.63 The Borough has a history of incompatible land uses, with housing having been developed next to heavy industries. This has resulted in some poor living environments. The Council's aspiration is to break from previous trends and to minimise pollution, enhance local amenity and provide safe and healthy environments for communities.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.64 The Core Strategy recognises the need to locate more sensitive land uses, especially housing, schools and health facilities away from areas of high pollution. The Plan also requires assessments to accompany planning applications where it has reasonable grounds to believe that a development may breach standards relating to pollution and air quality.

QUESTION 24

What approach could the Local Plan take to ensure that issues relating to pollution and air quality are minimised?

ACCESSIBILITY

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CHOICES

- 3.65 Sustainable transport choices can play a significant role in improving health and well-being. Walking and cycling have obvious health benefits and people who use public transport are more likely to walk for part of their journey than those who drive.
- 3.66 Thurrock benefits from a good location in terms of transport. Regular rail services operate between London and Southend on Sea, serving seven stations. The Port of Tilbury provides international connections for both passengers and freight.
- 3.67 Thurrock also has an extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways with just over 170km of Public Rights of Way providing valuable access to the countryside, local parks and open spaces, helping to promote healthier lifestyles.
- 3.68 National policy focuses on the importance of sustainable transport choices and the wider role that this can play in achieving sustainability and health objectives as well as reducing congestion. It also states that new development should be located where it is accessible by public transport. This is particularly important for developments with high trip generation. This is more difficult to achieve in rural areas and consideration needs to be given as to how new development can encourage the provision and use of public transport and how the solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.69 The main focus for the transport and access policies in the Core Strategy is to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly in the urban areas.
- 3.70 In July 2011, Thurrock Council was successful in securing £5m from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). This funding was primarily used in the Borough's main urban area to encourage a modal shift away from car use. The key components of the programme included smarter choices measures, walking, cycling and public transport improvements, and freight measures.

QUESTION 25

There is a growing need to deliver the infrastructure required to support sustainable transport choices. What kind of things could the Plan do to help you make more sustainable transport choices?

QUESTION 26

Are there any specific sustainable transport projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail about the project.

GETTING AROUND BY ROAD

- 3.71 Thurrock is well-situated in the South East of England and is considered to be a strategic transport and distribution hub serving London and the wider region. With its three strategic ports feeding into the M25 and A13 trunk road network, this has increased opportunities for commercial and industrial development to be located within the Borough.
- 3.72 This high proportion of commercial and industrial development also brings with it a number of transport and health related challenges. This includes the need to effectively manage traffic issues caused by industrial and commercial development such as parking, HGV routing and provision of welfare facilities.
- 3.73 Increased residential development in the Borough over the plan period will bring different challenges including placing an increased burden on both the local and strategic road network, especially at key junctions. Although the Council will always seek to promote sustainable transport options by putting in place the physical infrastructure to enable a behavioural change, it cannot force it to happen.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.74 The Core Strategy supports the delivery of additional highway capacity where modal shift alone was insufficient to address congestion. Priority was given to routes that provide access to strategic employment sites and regeneration areas.
- 3.75 Policy CSTP17 specifically addresses freight movement and access to ports. This policy seeks to support economic growth by ensuring sustainable and reliable freight access to the ports and other key employment locations, whilst minimising the adverse impacts such activity may have on people, the environment and the transport system.

QUESTION 27

Are there any specific road transportation projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail on the project, its location and the reason why you believe it is necessary.

QUESTION 28

It is likely that port-related and freight activity will continue to be a main feature of the Borough's economy over the plan period. What kind of things can the plan do to reduce the adverse impacts of freight movements?

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- 3.76 High quality design is fundamental to the creation of high quality places by both enhancing appearance and functionality. High quality design has a significant impact on quality of life. It influences safety and security and encourages economic investment as well as fostering community cohesion and inclusion. It can encourage greater levels of walking and cycling, to address health and wellbeing, as well as addressing the causes and effects of our changing climate.
- 3.77 High quality design is crucial if the settlements throughout the Borough are to maintain and enhance their valued local distinctiveness and emerge as more sustainable, higher quality environments that thrive economically, socially and culturally.
- 3.78 National policy reinforces the principles of good design. It states that Local Planning Authorities should:
- Create a high quality built environment
 - Secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity
 - Promote mixed use development
 - Take account of the roles and characters of different areas
 - Plan positively for high quality and inclusive design, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and the wider area
- 3.79 Going forward the Local Plan will need to find a way to make sure that existing assets such as buildings, streets and spaces, green infrastructure and community facilities are managed imaginatively and that new developments are designed intelligently.

INFORMATION

The Council is currently consulting on a draft Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the Council's core design principles ensuring that future development in the Borough is of the highest design standards. Once adopted, the Design Strategy will be used as a tool to inform and assess proposals within existing locations, at all scales. For more information on the draft Design Strategy and the consultation please visit the Local Plan page on the Council's website:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 3.80 The historic environment has a powerful influence on people's quality of life in terms of promoting civic pride and a sense of local identity. Important local architectural, archaeological and landscape features such as the forts, the medieval parish churches

and Bata village all highlight the area's unique history. In terms of designated heritage assets the Borough has:

- 7 Conservation Areas
- 243 Listed Buildings
- 17 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 1 Park/Garden of Special Interest
- 23 Ancient woodlands

3.81 Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of national planning policy. National policy encourages Local Planning Authorities to promote a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans. It goes on to state that the strategy put forward should recognise that conservation is not a passive exercise and that Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

3.82 National policy also seeks to promote the idea of locally listed heritage assets. Around half of all local planning authorities have produced lists of locally important buildings and sites, although not all of these have adopted the list as part of their development plan.

The Core Strategy says...

3.83 The Core Strategy sets out a plan to preserve and enhance Thurrock's historic environment. The strategy includes preventing the loss of key heritage assets and seeks use them as a catalyst for regeneration in the wider area. Priority assets identified in the plan included Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts and the Bata Factory Complex.

QUESTION 29

What things could the plan do to protect and enhance the Borough's listed building and conservation areas?

QUESTION 30

Are there any buildings of significance in your local community which should be included on a local heritage list? If yes, please provide details including its location and the reason why it is special to your community.

LANDSCAPE

3.84 The landscape forms the context for people's lives. Its character and quality is key to maintaining a strong sense of place. Thurrock exhibits a mixture of markedly contrasting landscapes, from open and relatively tranquil and undeveloped farmland in the rural parts of the Borough to the north, to the contrast of the densely developed urban areas and industrial development, adjacent to the openness of the grazing marshes along the Thames riverside. Within the Borough there are two Special

Landscape Areas classified for their landscape importance in a regional and countrywide context, the Mardyke Valley and Langdon Hills.

- 3.85 National policy requires local authorities to take a criteria based approach to protecting the landscape. This approach requires an understanding of landscapes that are valued and an understanding of the significance of particular landscapes and their components rather than just carrying out a crude check whether the landscape is designated or not.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.86 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's intention to protect, manage and enhance the Character of Thurrock. It also promotes the need to create a multi-functional landscape with clear connections between environmental assets.
- 3.87 The Council is currently in the process of updating its work on landscape and seascape character and its sensitivity to change. This work will be a key tool for guiding decisions around site selection, meaning that decisions affecting the landscape and views will therefore be judged not only on its designation but also on the value and the significance of the landscape, its features and the degree of harm caused by any proposed development.

QUESTION 31

What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's landscape, seascape and its key features are protected and where possible enhanced?

QUESTION 32

How should the Local Plan use the information from the landscape and seascape capacity and sensitivity study?

NATURE CONSERVATION

- 3.88 Thurrock has a variety of habitats for both animal and plant life, many of which are protected under European or English Law. Sites designated for their wildlife importance within Thurrock include:
- 1 Ramsar site
 - 1 Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - 12 Wildlife Corridors
 - 11 Habitat Chains/clusters
 - 2 Local Nature Reserves
- 3.89 There are also other sites contributing to the network that have considerable biodiversity value but which are not statutorily protected, including 70 Local Wildlife

Sites. A number of these local sites are on brownfield land which has biodiversity value and species of principal importance.

- 3.90 National policy expects Local Planning Authorities to include criteria based policies in their Local Plan against which the impact of development proposals on or affecting protected biodiversity and geodiversity can be considered. It also requires distinctions to be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites. This is so that protection afforded to these sites is proportionate with their status and appropriate weight is given to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks. It also states that Local Plan Authorities should plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.91 The Core Strategy sets out a range of policies which seek to conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity network and green assets through appropriate design and management.
- 3.92 The Core Strategy also identifies several key areas could be enhanced through working with our partners. These areas are East Thurrock Marshes, the Mardyke Valley Project, Local Wildlife Sites and 'Living Landscapes Sites'.
- 3.93 The Local Plan needs to maintain and improve the natural environment and will include policies to ensure that development proposals minimise negative impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible.

QUESTION 33

What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's natural assets are protected and where possible enhanced?

CLIMATE CHANGE

- 3.94 Minimising our contribution to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a key consideration, but we also need to take measures to respond to the already inevitable effects of climate change in order to minimise the impact they have on the Borough. Climate change is expected to continue during the plan period. Hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters are expected together with an increase in frequency of intense rainfall events. This has implications for flooding, ground stability and the need to heat and more commonly, cool buildings.

MANAGING THE RISK OF FLOODING

- 3.95 Thurrock has suffered the consequences of flooding in recent years and it has been estimated that there are more than 11,000 properties across the Borough at risk of flooding. The majority of the flood risk to urban areas is located along the Thames Estuary. However, the presence of flood defences means that the risk of flooding in this area from fluvial and tidal flooding is low.
- 3.96 Flooding is likely to become a more frequent event due to climate change and the scale of flood events may also increase in the future. The cause of the increase in flood events would be wetter weather throughout the year contributing to surface water flooding through the overloading of the existing drainage systems, as well as river flooding through increased catchment runoff.
- 3.97 National policy requires that new development is located in sustainable locations, at the least risk of flooding, taking into account vulnerability to flooding. Appropriate mitigation should be provided where necessary to ensure that development remains safe, resilient to the impacts of flooding and does not increase flooding elsewhere.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.98 The Core Strategy recognises that due to the location of the main settlements in Thurrock and the nature of flood risk in the Borough, it is not necessarily possible to locate all new development in areas of least flood risk. However, development in these areas would need to be carefully planned in line national guidance.
- 3.99 Policy CSTP27 also mentions the need for strong partnership working with the Environment Agency and other main stakeholders in ensuring that all flood risk, including the risks posed by surface water, is appropriately managed.

QUESTION 34

In planning for new development, how much weight should the Local Plan give to flood risk relative to other objectives (including sustainability, regeneration, local need and the local economy)?

IMPROVING WATER EFFICIENCY

3.100 Recent changes to national policy mean that the Councils can no longer require new developments to meet a particular level in the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'. However, the Government has maintained the ability to set a water efficiency requirement for new residential properties through the introduction of 'Optional Technical Housing Standards'. Guidelines for when and how these optional standards can be applied are set out in national policy. These guidelines state that local authorities must demonstrate a clear local need to adopt these standards.

The Core Strategy says...

3.101 Several policies within the Core Strategy encourage new development to incorporate energy and water efficiency into design.

QUESTION 35

Should the Plan seek to promote higher water efficiency standards by adopting the Government's Optional Technical Housing Standards?

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

3.102 The construction process for any new development utilises a significant amount of resources and generates waste and spoil. It is therefore important that as well as designing developments to be sustainable when completed, developments should take account of the principles of sustainable development during the construction process. The term renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment. Low-carbon technologies are those that can help reduce carbon emissions. It also includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity.

3.103 National policy states that Local Planning Authorities may wish to establish policies which give positive weight to renewable and low carbon energy initiatives which have clear evidence of local community involvement and leadership. The Government's Community Energy Strategy also states that:

- Government wants to see all authorities showing leadership to help deliver community energy projects.
- Government urges all local authorities to fully explore partnership and investment opportunities for community energy in their local area.

The Core Strategy says...

3.104 The Core Strategy actively promotes the idea of renewable and low carbon energy generation. It highlights the fact that Thurrock presents unique opportunities for encouraging additional standalone, large-scale renewable or low-carbon energy generation projects. The Core Strategy states the Council's intention to promote the

delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy developments utilising technology such as solar panels, biomass heating, small-scale wind turbine, photovoltaic cells, Combined Heat and Power and other methods.

QUESTION 36

How should the Local Plan take account of and encourage community owned renewable energy schemes?

QUESTION 37

Which renewable technologies do you think are most suitable for large scale proposals in the Borough? Please provide additional information as to why you deem these to be suitable.

MINERALS AND WASTE

MINERALS

- 3.105 Minerals are a finite and important resource both nationally and locally. Unlike most other forms of development mineral extraction can take place only where the mineral is found. Therefore it is important to protect areas where it is known, or suspected, that commercially valuable minerals exist.
- 3.106 The unique geology of Thurrock means that sand, gravel, chalk and London Clay can be found in the Borough. Sand and gravel is located throughout the Borough except to the north east and central fens. Clay is found in the north and west, and chalk in the south-west.
- 3.107 The River Thames is also a strategic transshipment location and a major route for the import and distribution of aggregates including the landing of hard rock and marine dredged aggregate. This material has been and continues to be distributed throughout Thurrock, London and the wider region.
- 3.108 National policy places importance on facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and asks local authorities to include policies relating to the extraction, prior extraction of minerals and for reclamation and restoration. It also recognises the need to set out environmental criteria and to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.109 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach towards maintaining a supply of minerals throughout the plan period. It suggested that this could be achieved by providing for appropriate sites assistance in meeting the sub-regional apportionment and encouraging a more sustainable and prudent use of mineral resources.
- 3.110 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would set out specific development policies for minerals and waste and allocate individual sites for development. Work on this document has now been suspended in favour of putting together a new, integrated, Local Plan.

QUESTION 38

How can the Plan ensure that enough minerals are available for development and also protect resources for the future?

WASTE

- 3.111 As a Unitary Authority Thurrock must plan for the management of waste by setting the planning framework for an adequate supply of waste treatment and disposal facilities. Waste is produced by a wide range of domestic, commercial and industrial activities, sometimes in large quantities.

3.112 A new National Waste Planning Policy was published in October 2014 and provides the specific national framework for waste planning. It operates alongside the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste. The new policy requires that Local Plans:

- Help drive waste up the waste hierarchy
- Deliver sustainable development and resource efficiency
- Provide appropriate infrastructure
- Enable businesses and communities to take more responsibility for their own waste without harming human health or the environment

The Core Strategy says...

3.113 The Core Strategy sets out a waste strategy for the Borough and encourages reducing waste and maximise the use of recycled materials. It also recognises that the Council still needs to find new and alternative methods to manage and dispose of the remaining waste arising.

3.114 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would set out specific development policies for minerals and waste and allocate individual sites for development. Work on this document has now been suspended, in favour of putting together a new, integrated, Local Plan.

QUESTION 39

What should the Local Plan do to ensure that waste management facilities are located, designed and operated to minimise impacts on climate change, local amenity for residents, and the natural and built environment?

INFORMATION

If you know of any sites which could be considered for used for waste management purposes please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document.

Section 4: The power of placemaking

- 4.1 Placemaking is a process and way of thinking aimed at achieving better quality places. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of new development and spaces, as well as the protection and enhancement of existing assets. It is fundamentally about responding to the context of a place, through an understanding of its evolution, its functionality and its impacts.
- 4.2 It is the Council's view that the production of an integrated Local Plan which provides strategic policies alongside more detailed policies and allocations will help to create successful places and facilitate the delivery of high quality, sustainable and well located development supported by the timely provision of infrastructure.
- 4.3 For the Local Plan to create successful places it needs to be developed in a collaborative way with those who live and work or have an interest in Thurrock to discover what their needs and aspirations are and how these can be addressed through the Local Plan.
- 4.4 The policies and allocations in the Local Plan need to be shaped by communities, which is why we need you to get involved. The only way we will know what you think is if you tell us and the more people who have their say, the more likely it is that the final Plan will be a true reflection of local views.

QUESTION 40

This document sets out the issues that need to be addressed through the new Local Plan. There may be matters that have been missed or that are not covered by the other consultation questions. Are there any matters you think also need to be considered at this stage and why?

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Planning and Growth

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**The consultation on this document runs from
Friday 26 February to 5pm Monday 11 April 2016**



Thurrock Local Plan

Design Strategy SPD

DRAFT

February
2016

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Design Strategy SPD

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1. Introduction

Setting a Design Standard for Thurrock

- 1.1 The importance of achieving good design, and the benefits this can bring in delivering sustainable development and communities, is of significant importance to Thurrock Council. Achieving good design outcomes must be an important component of delivering development proposals across Thurrock. They will also contribute significantly to achieving Thurrock Council's corporate and community priorities comprising:
- » **Creating a great place for learning and opportunity**
 - » **Encouraging and promoting job creation and economic prosperity**
 - » **Building pride, responsibility and respect**
 - » **Improving health and wellbeing**
 - » **Promoting and protecting Thurrock's clean and green environment.**
- 1.2 In preparing a Design Strategy Thurrock Council aims to substantially raise design standards across the Borough. Thurrock Council recognises that there are many locations that have attractive, well designed environments that contribute much to the character of the Borough. Many are highly valued by the communities that live within them. Elsewhere there are examples of less attractive environments. Many feature standard layouts, house types and development forms that say very little about the character of Thurrock.
- 1.3 The Design Strategy has been informed by an understanding of the established character of towns and villages, landscape areas, the River Thames, and green infrastructure. Thurrock has a unique location benefiting from large areas of green belt land and riverfront whilst being in close proximity to London.
- 1.4 Thurrock's position by the River Thames has long since made it a strategic location and hub for industrial growth and the borough stands at the economic heart of the South East and Thames Gateway home to vital economic infrastructure of national and international importance.
- 1.5 The borough has often been described as a place of contrast and it is home to a number of paradoxes with Thurrock's network of busy towns and picturesque villages creating a thriving population. The area's riverside location and vast natural resources are the key to its past as well as its future development and success.
- 1.6 The Design Strategy is underpinned by six objectives:
1. **Improve the overall design quality standards of development in Thurrock, enhancing perceptions of place and reinforcing a strong sense of civic pride.**
 2. **Innovate through design improvements in locations where the existing built environment requires regeneration**
 3. **Enhance the best of the existing built and natural environments drawing on the heritage and identity of towns and villages in Thurrock**
 4. **Provide clear guidance on the Council's expectations regarding the design approach to be adopted in Thurrock**
- 1.7 In order to achieve this the Council will:
5. **Work proactively with the development industry to bring forward proposals in a timely and effective way having regard to statutory policy requirements**
 6. **Lead by example through the design and implementation of Council-led development projects in Thurrock**
- 1.8 The objectives will be implemented through the application of the Design Strategy to all projects coming forward within Thurrock.
- 1.9 In considering proposals the Council will not hesitate in refusing those schemes which do not reflect its design quality aspirations for the Borough. Both the National Planning Policy Framework and supporting National Planning Policy Guidance make clear the important role good design has in achieving sustainable development. This is further iterated through national design guidance which, in addition to this Design Strategy, forms a solid foundation from which to consider and assess proposals.



Using the Design Strategy

- 1.10 The Design Strategy will be used as a tool to inform and assess proposals within existing locations, at all scales, from small infill sites through to larger regeneration and redevelopment schemes. It will also be used on new comprehensive development sites and masterplanning projects as and when they come forward within the Borough. It does not establish a rigid blueprint but a framework within which well-designed proposals can be shaped and assessed.
- 1.11 The Design Strategy focuses in particular on two main considerations:
1. **providing guidance on designing having regard to the context of a site, ensuring that proposals are embedded within an understanding of place and thereby avoiding anonymous, 'off-the-peg' schemes that have no design relevance to Thurrock; and**
 2. **identifying five broad place typologies that exist within the Borough. These are representative of particular development types and uses. Guidance is provided on the special characteristics of each typology that are relevant to Thurrock as well and design considerations that must be taken into account as part of the design process.**
- 1.12 The Design Strategy is organised around four main Sections, in addition to the introduction:
- Section 2** provides an overview of relevant national design policy and guidance which Thurrock Council will use in assessing and determining proposals.
- Section 3** sets out Thurrock Council's requirements regarding assessing the context of a site, including a checklist of key questions that will need to be addressed as part of the design process. The section is illustrated with examples from within the Borough and elsewhere.
- Section 4** gives details on the five broad place typologies. Again this section is illustrated with examples from within the Borough and elsewhere.
- Section 5** provides a checklist of pre-submission, submission and post-submission design requirements that Thurrock Council will expect in support of planning application proposals.
- 1.13 A **technical appendix**, in lose-leaf format enabling it to be updated, will provide information on more detailed design standards.
- 1.14 The Design Strategy will be adopted by Thurrock Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. As such it will form part of the approved planning policy context against which proposals will be assessed. This gives it significant weight as part of the planning process.



2. The Importance of Good Design

Investing in Design Quality

- 2.1 Research by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) provide evidence that investing in design quality can add value to development and regeneration projects.
- 2.2 The HCA compared the different residential developments in terms of the quality of their designs and associated costs and benefits and found that a well-designed scheme does not need to cost more than others. A strong focus on design - how to relate buildings to streets, where to locate parking and how to include landscaping elements into the streetscape - can influence the quality of a development without a huge burden on cost (Urban Design Lessons: Housing Layout and Neighbourhood Quality HCA, 2014).
- 2.3 This view is supported by CABE which commissioned the redesign of a number of recent housing estate layouts judged to be poor under Building for Life criteria. The work, published in 2010 ('Simpler and Better: Housing design in everyone's interest'), found that designs can greatly – and very quickly – be improved without, for example, compromising on the use of standard house types. In some cases CABE found that it was possible to fit more homes on sites in better configurations. This suggests that sites can become better quality places without significant additional cost, delivering more product, more efficiently and/or more profitably, through the application of good design.
- 2.4 Where design requires additional investment, CABE argues that this generates greater value (Good Design: The Fundamentals, CABE 2009). Volume house builders can expect better designed developments to generate greater values and enjoy a greater competitive advantage (The Value of Good Design, CABE, 2002). Investment in the quality of streets is linked to retail and property prices (Paved with Gold: The Real Value of Street Design CABE, 2007). According to the Royal Institute of British Architects property agents believe that good design is an important consideration in the residential market (Good Design: It All Adds Up RIBA, 2011).
- 2.5 The potential value to be gained by investing in design quality should not be overlooked in how development can transform and alter the people's perception of place. It is no accident that attractive parts of Thurrock, areas such as the Avenues, Horndon on the Hill and Orsett for example benefit from higher property values. The quality of these types of locations can and will influence where people choose to live and invest.



Planning and Design Policy

- 2.6 The Design Strategy has been produced within the context of the latest national and local planning policy and guidance. It supplements and expands upon the adopted Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development. The Design Strategy does not seek to replicate policy rather expand and amplify, where necessary, in order to respond to the particular circumstances prevailing in Thurrock.
- 2.7 An overview of the key statutory policy context is set out on the next pages. These comprise:
- » The National Planning Policy Framework;
 - » National Planning Practice Guidance: Design; and
 - » Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development.
- 2.8 The review emphasises the policy requirement for careful consideration to be given to good design and design matters. Thurrock Council will use the support given by planning policy and guidance, and the guidance set out in this Design Strategy, to assess and scrutinise design issues with the aim of improving the overall quality of the built environment in the Borough.
- 2.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes design content relating to sustainable development, town centres, transport and highways, housing and residential environments and health. The importance of good design is expressed throughout the document and is one of the twelve Core Planning Principles that should underpin plan-making and decision-taking. Paragraph 17 states that planning should:
- “Always seek to secure high quality design and good standards of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.”*
- 2.10 The NPPF expands upon the issue of good design as part of Delivering Sustainable Development. Point 7, Requiring Good Design, is clear on the great importance the Government attaches to the design of the built environment. Paragraph 58 sets out how local planning policies should set out the quality of development that will be expected. (see Table 1: Policy Summary)
- 2.11 In accordance with paragraph 58 of the NPPF the Design Strategy, is not intended to be prescriptive in detail, or to impose particular forms or styles. It aims to stimulate the creation of proposals that are innovative, of high quality, inclusive and can be shown to respond well to context. The Design Strategy aims to encourage new development that can integrate well with the existing natural built, historic environment and landscape, not just in terms of how it looks but, importantly, how it will function.



National Planning Policy Framework



National Planning Practice Guidance: Design (2014)

- 2.12 The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), launched in March 2014, supports and expands on the design related content in the NPPF. Following recommendations of the Taylor Review (December 2012) the guidance rationalises content that was contained in a number of previous documents, including “By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System—Towards Better Practice” (2000), “Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention” (2004), and Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access (2002). The guidance is intended to be a live resource that is continually updated.
- 2.13 The NPPG under the “Design” category, elaborates on the content expressed in the NPPF, expressing the importance of good design and how it can play a role in achieving wider planning objectives. It then goes on to set out what is a well-designed place, how development and spaces should be considered, planning processes and tools for good design and additional detail on types of development including residential development, town centres and streets, including a number of design principles. (see Table 1: Policy Summary).

Thurrock Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development

- 2.14 The principal policy that the Design Strategy will supplement is Policy PMD2 which states:

“The Council requires all design proposals to respond to the sensitivity of the site and its surroundings, to fully investigate the magnitude of change that would result from the proposals, and mitigate against negative impacts.

All development proposals must satisfy the following criteria:

- i. **Character** – Development must contribute positively to the character of the area in which it is proposed, and to surrounding areas that may be affected by it. It should seek to contribute positively to local views, townscape, heritage assets and natural features, and contribute to the creation of a positive sense of place.
- ii. **Continuity** – Development proposals must promote continuity of street frontages and provide active ground floor frontages as far as reasonably possible.
- iii. **Public Realm** – New development should contribute to improvements in the public realm by contributing sensitive planting, street furniture, appropriate lighting and public art where appropriate. The quality of the design and detailing of all development, including interfacing elements such as facades, steps and walls should be robust, engaging and contribute positively to the public realm.
- iv. **Public and Private Amenity space** – Development proposals must provide adequate public and private amenity space in accordance with Thurrock’s relevant adopted standards, particularly in areas with identified deficiencies. It should be attractive, safe, uncluttered, readily accessible and should promote play.
- v. **Accessibility** – Development proposals must allow easy and safe access for all members of the community. Development must also integrate land uses and all modes of transport but pedestrians and cyclists must be given priority over traffic in scheme design.
- vi. **Permeability and Legibility** – Development should promote connections between places that people wish to use, including public transport links, community facilities and the Greengrid. Development should be designed to help people find their way and must be legible for all members of the community, providing recognisable routes using landmarks and signage where appropriate.
- vii. **Safety and Security** – Development proposals must create safe and secure environments and reduce the scope for crime and fear of crime. Where appropriate, proposals should adopt the principles of Designing Out Crime set out in the Police Service’s publication ‘Secured by Design’.
- viii. **Landscape** – Features contributing to the natural landscape in the Borough, such as woods, hedges, specimen trees, unimproved grassland, ponds and marshes, will be protected and where appropriate enhanced to maintain their landscape and wildlife value. Provision and enhancement of landscape features will also be required to contribute to multiple uses and/or eco-system services, including amenity, recreation, flood alleviation and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.
- ix. **Diversity** – Development proposals must promote variety and choice through a mix of mutually compatible developments and uses.
- x. **Utilities** – Development proposals must accommodate public services and utilities without compromising design and layout. This includes providing suitable access to maintenance, waste and emergency service vehicles.
- xi. **Energy and Resource use** – Development should be designed to minimise energy and resource use. This includes integrating sustainable construction techniques, siting and orientation of buildings to maximise energy and water efficiency.
- xii. **Layout** – The layout of all development should optimise the assets of the site, while conforming to the appropriate standards for layout, design and access set out in the Layout and Standards SPD.”

Other Key design Documents

- 2.15 In addition there are a number of non-statutory design documents that Thurrock Council will have regard to when assessing proposals. These include:
- » The Urban Design Compendium (2000) and Compendium 2 (2007);
 - » Building for Life;
 - » Manual for Streets (2007) and Manual for Streets 2 (2010); and
 - » Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (2013), Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment.
- 2.16 Thurrock Council will encourage applicants and developers to reference these documents setting out how and where best practice guidance has been incorporated as part of the design process.
- 2.17 In addition Thurrock Council will update and produce further guidance and background evidence documents to inform the design process. These will include:
- » landscape characterisation for the Borough;
 - » conservation area appraisals and reviews of existing appraisals; and
 - » an active place strategy that will draw of work already published by Design Council CABE (Active by Design, 2014), Sport England and Public Health England (Active Design, October 2015) and the TCPA (Planning Healthy Weight Environments, December 2014).
- 2.18 Use of the full range of guidance and background evidence that is available will contribute to a thorough and rapid understanding of place in Thurrock. In turn this will readily facilitate a contextually sensitive response that will best meet the ambitions expressed by Thurrock Council through this Design Strategy.

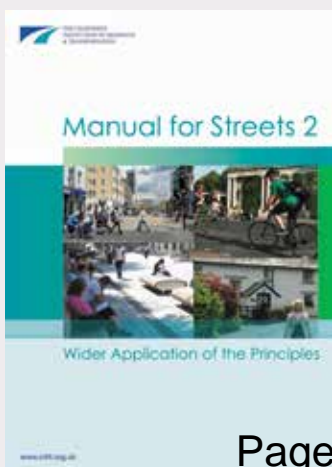
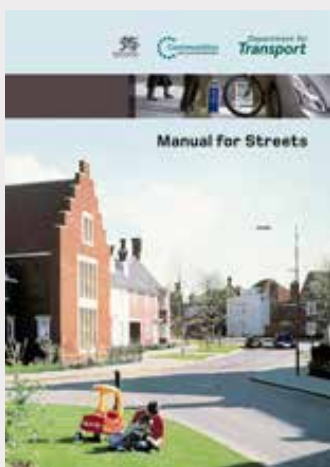
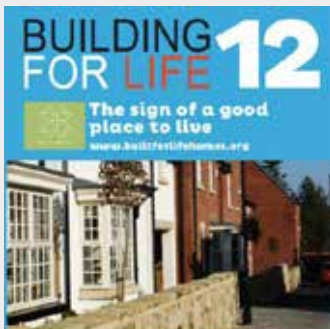


Table 1: Policy Summary: *The relationship between design principles expressed in the NPPF, NPPG and this Design Strategy.*

National Planning Policy Framework	National Planning Practice Guidance	Thurrock Core Strategy	Thurrock Design Strategy
Create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion.	A well designed public space is lively – public spaces available for everyone to use, bring neighbourhoods together, provide space for social activities and civic life.	Policy CSTP22 – Thurrock Design: V Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: ii, iii, v, vii	Making connections: C1, C3
Places are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.	A well designed space has a distinctive character – what makes a place special and valued reflecting the areas, function, history and potential need for change.	Policy CSTP22: Thurrock Design: I, VI Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: I, iii, viii	Understanding the place: A1, A2 Working with site features: B5
Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit.	A well designed space promotes ease of movement – being able to move safely, conveniently and efficiently on routes which are well connected.	Policy CSTP22 – Thurrock Design: I, III Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: I, ii, iii, vi	Working with site features: B2 Making connections: C1, C2, C3
Respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.	A well designed space is attractive – how a place looks, feels and even smells.	Policy CSTP22– Thurrock Design: I, III Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: I, iii, iv	Understanding the place: A1, A4, A5, A6 Working with site features: B1, B3 Building in sustainability: D1, D2
Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks.	A well designed place supports mixed uses and tenures – a good mix of uses and tenures makes a place economically and socially successful. A well designed place is functional – fit for purpose, delivering the intended function and achieves value for money.	Policy CSTP22 – Thurrock Design: I, VII Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: iv, ix, x, xii	Understanding the place: A3, A7 Working with site features: B2, B3, B4, B5 Making connections: C1, C2, C3, C4 Building in sustainability: D3
Developments that function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.	A well designed place is adaptable and resilient – is able to adapt to changing circumstances and demands.	Policy CSTP22 – Thurrock Design: II, VII, IV, VII Policy PMD2 – Design and Layout: xi	Understanding the place: A7 Working with site features: B3, B5 Making connections: C1, C2, C3 Building in sustainability: D1, D2, D3, D4

Understanding the Character of Thurrock

- 2.19 Character comprises many elements which make up the whole. In Thurrock this encompasses townscape, landscape and seascape. For any size of development, and at each stage in a project, an assessment can be made as to whether a decision is harming or benefiting the character of a development, the site or the surrounding area, see the accompanying diagram.
- 2.20 Thurrock has markedly contrasting landscapes; from open and relatively tranquil and undeveloped farmland in the rural parts of the Borough to the contrast of the densely developed urban areas and industrial development adjacent to windswept grazing marshes along the Thames riverside.
- 2.21 The level and expansive coastal grazing marsh landscapes within Thurrock stamp their identity on the Borough. These vast open spaces have a wild and windswept character that is accentuated by broad expanses of sky. The marshland grasses create a constantly moving and changing tapestry of vegetation the character of which is influenced by the seasons and daily by light.
- 2.22 Although marred in places by landfill sites and the clutter of pylons and power lines, the marshlands have an air of ancient permanence that contrasts sharply with the ever-changing urban forms adjacent to them. Of all the different landscapes within the Borough the intrinsic character of the marshland landscapes has remained essentially unchanged for centuries.
- 2.23 The Thames forms a distinctive 'riverscape' along the southern edge of the Borough. In the west near Aveley Marshes, the Thames is narrow, widening towards Holehaven Creek in the east. The banks of the river are penetrated by large creeks, smaller inlets and bays. Numerous jetties, wharfs and piers punctuate the northern bank, which is heavily industrialised for most of its length between Aveley Marshes and Tilbury, and again around Holehaven Creek.



The former State Cinema is an impressive landmark, Grays



Royal Opera House workshops, offices and facilities, Purfleet



Former Bata shoe factory



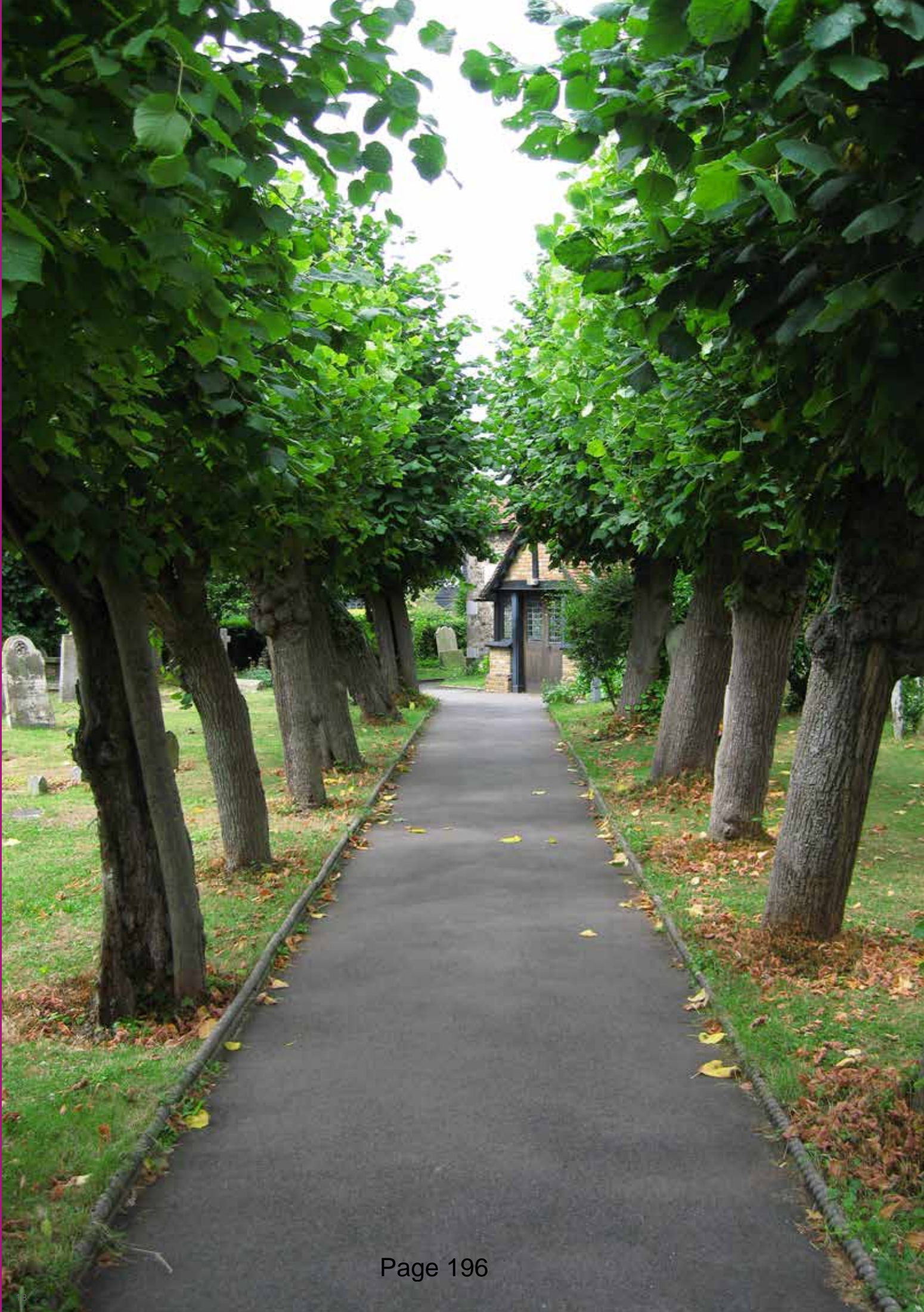
RSPB Visitor Centre, Rainham Marshes



Grand, listed house in Horndon on the Hill (Hill House)

2.24 The presence of industry creates a dramatic riverscape of angular machinery and buildings, dock activity, river traffic and changing light reflected on the constantly moving water of the Thames. This contrasts with adjacent open and low-lying marshes that accentuate the vertical features of the docks. DPWorld Settlement has sprawled along an east-west band to the north of the river and at South Ockendon. Road and rail infrastructure, pylons and power lines are prominent features within the urban fringe landscapes.

2.25 A successful approach to working with character is not necessarily about developing more of the same or screening what is different. Good design makes the most of what is already valued, and contributes to a sense of place by providing sustainable multiple benefits to the development and the surrounding area. Where a proposal cannot meet the expectations of character policies, a proposal may be refused or additional changes on site or off site, will be sought to reduce or compensate for the shortfall.



3. Designing in Context

Site Appraisal

- 3.1 The starting point for every development proposal must be a detailed study of the site and its physical context. This is of key importance to:
- » gain a proper understanding of place; and
 - » establish locally distinctive and responsive designs.
- 3.2 An appraisal will need to cover many aspects of a site and its physical context. In Thurrock the diverse nature of settlements and landscapes mean that the need for a robust appraisal is critical to the success of the design process. Site appraisal should not be viewed simply as a means to an end. Appraisals that fail to be robust can undermine the potential design quality of a development proposal as will proposals that fail to respond to the key issues that arise from the appraisal process.
- 3.3 Appraisals should be seen as vital evidence that the site and its physical context has been well understood thereby underpinning the key design principles and objectives for development. Clearly the level of detail will respond to the size and complexity of the site – the appraisal of a small infill scheme, for example, will be more straightforward than that of a substantial regeneration or development site.
- 3.4 In preparing a site appraisal Thurrock Council will expect four main considerations to be taken into account:
- A. Understanding the place
 - B. Working with site features
 - C. Making connections
 - D. Building in sustainability
- 3.5 Each of these considerations are discussed in more detail over the following pages.
- 3.6 A proper understanding of place is crucial to ensuring that design proposals respond positively to a given location. In order to ensure that new developments take account of the character of an existing place the Council will require proposals to demonstrate how the design and layout has responded to:
1. The strategic and local setting and key views
 2. Strategic Green Infrastructure and landscape
 3. Character, layout and local features
 4. Site boundaries and adjacent land uses

A. Understanding the Place

A1) Appreciating the strategic and local setting and preserving key views

- 3.7 Where a site is located, and how that site relates to the strategic features of Borough, is a natural starting point. A robust site appraisal should begin with appreciating the site's location in relation to the key physical and geographical features within Thurrock, for example principal routes, the River Thames, the principal settlements, landform and rural areas. It will also include an analysis of the immediate setting, including local streets, spaces, land-uses and features.
- 3.8 The topography of the site and wider landform, in combination with natural and built features, all influence how development will affect views. Views of the site are important if development is likely to affect the setting of existing landmarks or the wider landscape. Retaining such views can contribute to the structure and legibility of a new development.
- 3.9 Thurrock Council will expect an analysis of views within and around a site and how these have been accounted for by the design process. Depending on the site, surrounding features, and the scale and type of development proposed, a robust landscape assessment may be required to establish existing conditions and assess the potential effects on the wider setting.
- 3.10 In addition the landscape character and setting, biodiversity interest and green infrastructure of a site also contributes significantly to quality of place. Thurrock Council wants to ensure that new development proposals:
- » make the most of existing green spaces;
 - » create new spaces that are well integrated with wider greenspace and green infrastructure networks;
 - » sit comfortably within the varied landscapes Thurrock; and
 - » ensure that the Borough's biodiversity and habitats are protected and enhanced.



Street market in Grays town centre



Market time, Grays town centre



The Dartford Crossing is a distinctive landmark in Thurrock



Thurrock Thameside nature park

- 3.11 Thurrock Council has commissioned a landscape characterisation study. When complete this will provide a detailed understanding about the diverse mosaic of different landscape elements that make up the Borough. Developers will be expected to demonstrate how sites relate to the wider landscape context.

A2) Incorporating strategic green infrastructure features as part of a landscape framework

- 3.12 Green infrastructure relates to the wide variety of landscape, vegetation and habitat features that exist within the Borough. Thurrock Council aims to establish a high quality, functional green and open space network that is well related to a wider network in the Thames corridor.



Retained trees contribute to the character of new development, Orsett

- 3.13 Thurrock's Green Infrastructure includes a wide variety of green and open space and natural features, from the expanse of the marshes, fenland and farmed woodlands; parks, highways verges, and private gardens; ponds, trees and vegetation. The spaces provide multiple functions including recreation, cultural heritage, wildlife habitat, flood management and cleaner air and water.

- 3.14 To gain the most from these spaces they need to be designed and managed for multifunction benefits and to be connected to the wider network of spaces by recreational routes and wildlife corridors. Well designed development will contribute to Thurrock's Green Infrastructure and respond to the Green Grid network of green and open spaces. Thurrock Council will expect development proposals to:

- » make the most of existing green spaces;
- » create new spaces that are well integrated with wider greenspace and green infrastructure networks;
- » sit comfortably within the varied landscapes Thurrock; and
- » ensure that the Borough's biodiversity and habitats are protected and enhanced.

3.15 The site appraisal should inform how proposals can work with existing site features and incorporate them into the green infrastructure that forms part of a robust landscape framework. A place check of features should be incorporated into the appraisal and in turn proposals for the site to demonstrate how the proposal has considered key elements such as:

- » The role and function of different locations and places
- » Footpath and cycle linkages to wider network
- » Accessibility for all users
- » Healthy network of routes to promote exercise
- » SUDs and water attenuation
- » The mosaic of habitats and whether they comprise key designations of spaces or corridors
- » Types of grassland, hedgerows, trees to inform the components of landscape proposals
- » The potential for creating productive landscapes, with spaces including community orchards, allotments and creating, protecting and enhancing features such as hedgerows and trees with edible fruits



Thames footpath and cycleway, Rainham Marshes



Grays Park in Autumn



Structure and grain contributes to the character of a place



Larger scale development defines a key approach into Grays town centre

A3) Understanding and responding to the character of surrounding development

- 3.16 A well-designed scheme will be expected to interpret and respond to the character of surrounding development. This comprises the nature, combination and appearance of buildings, structures, streets, spaces together with landscape and natural features. It can be analysed having regard to structure, grain, scale, and density.
- 3.17 How the site and surrounding area has evolved and changed over time provides important context. It influences the basic **structure** of a place i.e. the pattern of development block, streets and spaces, and its **grain** – the composition of development blocks be that a few significant buildings or a large number of small buildings, or a combination of both.
- 3.18 Thurrock Council will expect an analysis of the prevailing structure and grain of a particular development location to show how the design has responded, where appropriate, to its context. OS mapping and figure ground analysis will reveal the structure and pattern of development including its grain as well as reference to historic map data.
- 3.19 **Scale** is used to describe the size of blocks and also the size of individual buildings. **Mass** relates to the overall volume. Analysing the scale and massing of existing development in the vicinity of a site, or in a comparable location, should inform the design of proposals and help integrate them with the existing context.
- 3.20 **Density** is a measure of the amount of development in a given area, usually expressed as dwellings per hectare. Understanding the prevailing density of an area will help reinforce an understanding of the site and how the design of new development should respond. Different densities within a development may be acceptable provided that the design response can relate well to the wider context.

- 3.21 In addition, architectural detail and materials also have a significant impact on the character and identity of a place. The site appraisal will record any key features that contribute to a place's identity with an audit of materials used. Good design uses this information to create a proposal that is distinctive yet locally relevant, without resorting to pastiche or to justify more of the same.

- 3.22 There are many parts of Thurrock which have a positive and attractive character. In areas that have a less distinct or attractive character Thurrock Council will expect proposals to establish a positive benchmark for change, with design quality that raises the bar.

- 3.23 In assessing character regard must also be had to the broad typology of the area taking account of those identified within this Strategy – ***Urban Centre and Transport Hubs; Residential Neighbourhood; Commerce and Industry; Thurrock Lakeside;*** and ***Village Locations*** (see **Section 4**).



A rich palette of materials and historic building types, Horndon on the Hill



Attractive, contemporary design, Cory Environmental Trust visitor centre



Traditional housing in the Orsett conservation area



An acoustic fence has been carefully integrated for HS1



Open space provision incorporates noise bund, Brooklands, Milton Keynes

A4) Responding to site boundaries and adjacent land uses

- 3.24 The immediate boundaries and adjacent land uses of a site must be clearly identified and accounted for as part of the design process and will have a significant impact on the type of design response required. This will include issues of maintaining privacy and amenity where residential development edges a site; protecting against noise and disturbance where major infrastructure or industrial uses edge a site; or ensuring that development positively addresses edges that comprise an area of open space, waterbody, or riverside, notably the Thames.
- 3.25 Thurrock Council will expect an appraisal to demonstrate how the design relates to site edges, and how the proposal has appropriately responded. This will help to inform the composition of uses that the site should accommodate and where appropriate uses should be located relative to one another.
- 3.26 There are a large number of major industrial and commercial areas across Thurrock, much of it focussed on the River Thames corridor clustered around Purfleet, West Thurrock, Tilbury Docks, and Coryton. Major transport routes and corridors also cross parts of the Borough including the M25, A13, A1089 and A1014 as well as local, national and international rail routes.
- 3.27 Sites within or close to these areas have a challenging context to work with and in most cases the design response will need to consider the proximity and scale of these uses and how their impacts could affect new development. Site layout and orientation away from the bad neighbour must be carefully considered, as well as opportunities for physical interventions such as landscaped bunds. In addition, the positioning of less noise sensitive uses within the site can minimise impacts.

B. Working with Site Features

3.28 As well as green infrastructure and landscape considerations there are other site features that must inform the appraisal process and eventual design proposal. These can have a positive impact, heritage assets and water features for example, or must be addressed in order for a safe environment to be established, dealing with issues of contamination for example.

3.29 In appraising a site's features and immediate context the Council will expect proposals to demonstrate how the design and layout has responded to:

1. Heritage assets
2. Topography
3. Water features
4. Physical and hidden constraints
5. Green Infrastructure Open space and landscape framework

B1) Identifies, preserves and enhances heritage assets

3.30 Heritage assets include formally designated listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. There are other buildings, structures or other features that could be of historic or cultural interest even though they aren't formally listed.

3.31 Within the area there may also be wider historical cultural references that could be exploited to create a place that is distinctive and locally grounded. Such features must be carefully considered as part of the design process, not only to preserve or enhance their character and setting but also as features around which proposals can be shaped. This will contribute towards establishing local character and place identity.



Thames waterfront is an important asset in Thurrock



Preserved dovecote provides a focal point, Purfleet



Renovated farm buildings support a mix of uses, High House, Purfleet



Housing responds to sloping site, Purfleet

B2) Works with the existing topography of the site

- 3.32 The landform of a site can constrain development if it includes steep slopes or highly visible areas with a sensitive natural or built setting. Prominent areas create opportunities for new viewpoints and locations for landmark buildings. Developments that work with the contours of a site will help to create a logical structure. They can also address matters of local drainage, micro-climate and aspect. The latter can contribute towards maximising solar gain.

B3) Positively addresses water bodies and courses in and around the site including the River Thames



Housing at The Garrison turns its back on the river

- 3.33 Thurrock has a variety of water features that include rivers, lakes and water courses with The Thames being the most significant asset. The Thames provides an historic focus for Thurrock as well as supporting a diverse range of major employment sites and centres for local and national economic activity including the ports. Significant marsh and grassland habitats adjoining the river also support a diverse range of species, particularly birds.

- 3.34 Where water features are included at the edge of or within a site, development must be designed to have a positive relationship including with active frontages and a well-integrated public realm. Water features can also be used to create focal points in new developments, within public spaces or wider greenspace networks for example, contributing to the character of a place and enhancing biodiversity.

B4) Identifies and mitigates physical constraints.

- 3.35 Physical constraints can include redundant buildings, access roads, hard standings and overhead transmission lines. Hidden constraints include underground services and areas of former landfill or potential contamination. Whilst some of these constraints can be moved others will need to be integrated into the development design and layout.



Development at Grays waterfront positively addresses the Thames





B5) Identifies and incorporates green infrastructure, existing open spaces and wider networks as part of a robust landscape framework

- 3.36 Well-designed developments must carefully integrate open space into the layout as part of a landscape and open space framework. Opportunities to create focal points with spaces should be exploited to help create a logical structure and enhance a sense of place. More informal spaces can also be valuable for linking wider green corridors and protecting and enhancing biodiversity and their habitats.
- 3.37 Thurrock Council will reject proposals that have not fully considered the importance of open space as an integral part of the development layout.
- 3.38 In some parts of the Borough the Council have identified a requirement for additional open space to meet local need over and above that required as part of development proposals. Developers should discuss opportunities to help address shortfall with the Council including enhancing existing open spaces enabling them to be used more intensively.



Open space overlooked by adjoining houses, Orsett



The Beach at Grays is an attractive amenity



Play space in Grays Park



C. Making Connections

3.39 A key consideration in the design process is establishing safe and effective connections for all modes between development sites and their surroundings. This contributes towards integrating development into existing settlement patterns as well as encouraging sustainable and healthier patterns of movement. Connected places also assist in establishing integrated communities, particularly where the co-location of shared facilities can benefit existing as well as future residents e.g. new schools.

3.40 Thurrock Council will expect development proposals to build on guidance offered through documents including 'Manual for Streets' and 'Manual for Streets 2' to ensure that schemes consider quality of place as well as movement and safety. Key considerations must include:

1. Opportunities to integrate development with existing movement networks
2. Establishing a clear and legible hierarchy of streets
3. Encouraging active lifestyles and supporting public transport through design and connections
4. Providing for car parking that does not dominate the street-scene

C1) Integrating the site to the local movement networks

3.41 In Thurrock there are a wide variety of movement networks that have been established over time. These including strategic networks of major roads and rail corridors which provide access across the Borough and beyond, but can provide a barrier to local movement patterns. It also includes a finer network of local streets, footpaths and cycleways ranging in character from busy high streets, tree lined residential streets, terraced streets, and rural lanes.

3.42 Thurrock Council will expect a careful assessment of existing movement networks ensuring that proposals are designed to be integrated with existing routes. This is

particularly critical to enable access existing local facilities, including shops, schools, open spaces and local play and sports pitches, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. This will ensure that existing and new communities can benefit from as wide a range of facilities as possible.

3.43 In areas with a more traditional and finer pattern of streets, existing connections will more readily inform the pattern of connections within the site. The site appraisal should also consider whether there are any existing footpaths, public rights of way or bridleways around or across the site and in creating a design response. The design of development could include footpath routes through the site which will incorporate or connect to these existing routes. Again this ensures that different neighbourhoods and communities are linked together.

3.44 In locations where the existing context is dominated by cul-de-sac layout, it will be important to make the most of the fewer opportunities that exist to integrate connections to and through the site. This may also create opportunities to change the character of peripheral distributor roads identifying place where frontage development can be introduced together with space for pedestrian and cyclists.

C2) Establishes a clear and legible pattern of streets

3.45 The context of existing development and movement patterns will influence the design of a logical network and hierarchy of streets. An effective pattern of streets can include primary, secondary and tertiary streets, depending on the size of the site, around which development is structured.

3.46 Streets must link together key locations, uses, and public spaces within and around the site providing access for all modes but giving priority to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport. Thurrock Council also wants to establish healthy places that encourage and facilitate activity (see C3). Clearly access for emergency services is also a key design consideration.







3.47 In design terms all streets must be fronted by development, with principal entrances, doors and windows addressed the public realm. This provides a sense of enclosure as well as opportunities for passive surveillance.

3.48 Thurrock Council will also require street trees to be incorporated as part of the hierarchy of streets in all developments. Street trees already contribute significantly to the character and identity of different locations in Thurrock. Elements of on-street parking should also be accommodated as part of the street network.

3.49 The hierarchy of streets is not meant to be rigidly applied and does not necessarily mean that it is always more important to provide for pedestrians than it is for other modes. However, they should at least be considered first ensuring that the street will serve all of its users in a balanced way.

3.50 Primary streets form the main points of access capable of integrating public transport routes and also providing an attractive environment for pedestrian and cyclists. Primary streets should be defined by development that is greater in form, scale and density with a focal points for schools, shops and community facilities.

3.51 Secondary streets will generally be narrower, with clear residential frontages. The street should be designed with alignments, building lines or other public realm features that establish a traffic calmed environment. Junctions with primary streets must be emphasised through provision of a building corner, differentiated public realm, and tree planting. This aids legibility by highlighting the change from one type of street to another.

3.52 Tertiary streets will comprise a variety of lanes, mews, and courts providing local connections between secondary streets. This contributes towards the overall permeability of the development. Shared surfaces could be incorporated together with home zones.



Secondary street with parking, Purfleet



Defined corner at junction of streets, Grays



The Avenues' provide exemplar residential streets, Grays



Shared surface tertiary street, Grays

C3) Promotes active and healthy lifestyles and public transport

3.53 Streets that are well connected to existing movement networks, public transport services and local facilities have the potential to increase travel choice. They can in turn make walking and cycling more attractive as a mode of choice for local journeys or simply for recreation and therefore encourage “active travel”. Local connections to existing schools or for new education facilities in the new development in particular will offer the opportunities for walking to school.

3.54 Integrating walking and cycling routes with a network of open spaces, green corridors and recreational routes within and outside developments will also promote active recreational lifestyles including walking and cycling for leisure and sport activities and play. Reference should be made to Sport England and Public Health England publication ‘**Active Design**’ (2015) and CABE Design Council ‘**Active by Design**’ (2014). The TCPA publication ‘**Planning Healthy Weight Environments**’ (December 2014) also provides useful guidance.



On-street parking provision overlooked by houses, Purfleet

C4) Integrates car parking and provides for cycle parking

3.55 Parking is a critical design consideration. Adequate space must be provided to serve the proposed development, assessed within the context of proximity to public transport. A mix of both on-street and on-plot car parking should be provided, with designs allowing for discrete groups to reduce overall visual impact within the street-scene.

3.56 Tree and landscape planting should be provided to further reduce visual impact particularly for on-street parking provision or where substantial areas of car parking are required for a particular use or mix of uses.

3.57 Provision should also be made for cycle parking and storage, together with an allowance for electric charging points.



Parking square defined by street trees, Purfleet

D. Building in Sustainability

3.58 Sustainable design encompasses wider considerations of site orientation, topography and local micro-climate as well as more detailed design matters or resource minimisation and efficiency. In appraising a site's features and immediate context Thurrock Council will expect proposals to demonstrate how the design and layout has responded to:

1. Local micro-climates
2. Opportunities to integrate local and sustainable energy generation
3. Integrating SUDs
4. Adaptability over time

D1. Designs for local micro-climates

3.59 A robust site appraisal will assess how the site is oriented in relation to the local topography and weather pattern, including the sun, prevailing wind conditions and take into account other site features that will have an effect on local micro-climates. An important related consideration will be topography and aspect and how this can be used to inform design and layout and contribute towards passive solar gain, for example.

D2. Identifies opportunities local and sustainable energy generation

3.60 A site appraisal should identify opportunities for integrating on site energy generation including renewable energy. There may be sites that are located close to industrial activities that could take advantage of waste heat. Sites may have the potential to be developed with their own combined heat and power system.

3.61 At a more detailed level principles for building design at the master planning stage should be able to guide the detailed design of new buildings with key objectives to maximise resource efficiency through, for example, designing for solar gain and minimising heat loss through insulation and thermal mass of building fabrics.

3.62 Developers should consider including or at least ensuring that developments are designed to be adaptable to the integration of new energy and heating technologies as they become more viable in future.

D3. Incorporates sustainable drainage measures into the design and layout

3.63 Assessing the hydrology of the site, along with landform, geology, drainage and flood risk should reveal the scope for integrating SUDs into development with appropriate measures that will work best for the site. An important related consideration will be the green infrastructure across and around the site, presence of existing watercourses and features, and how these can all be integrated into a comprehensive landscape framework.

D4. Includes space for storage and adaptability over time

3.64 A critical but frequently overlooked part of the design process is the inclusion of adequate space for servicing and storage. This must include provision for wheeled bin and recycling provision, utilities meters, cycle and more general storage space e.g. for pushchairs and lawnmowers, and for the servicing of commercial and business premises. As a general rule such features must be seamlessly integrated as part of the overall design and built envelope of the building, be unobtrusive from the public realm and readily accessible. In addition design proposals must have reference to Building for Life principles covering use and adaptability over time.



Space for parking, cycle, and wheeled bin storage integral to the design, Newhall, Harlow



Summary Appraisal Checklist

3.65 A summary of the key questions to consider for the site appraisal is set out below. Thurrock Council will expect these questions to be addressed as part of the overall site appraisal process.

Key Design Considerations

A. Understanding the Place

Where is the site located and how does it relate to Thurrock and key strategic features?

What is the defined landscape character of the surrounding area?

Are there any key views that should be preserved?

Are there any green infrastructure features within the site and surroundings biodiversity assets and habitats?

What is the structure and grain of development around the site?

What is the scale and massing of buildings like in the locality?

What is the prevailing density of the surrounding area?

What land uses are within the site and surrounding area?

Are there any noteworthy elements of built form detail?

B. Working with Site Features

Are there any heritage asset features in or around the site?

What is the topography like across the site?

Does the site include any water bodies, water courses, or lie adjacent to the River Thames?

Does the site contain any physical constraints and how will these be accounted for as part of the potential development layout?

Does the site include any existing publically accessible open space?

How does the site relate to any adjoining open space networks?

C. Establishing Connections

Does the local movement network provide opportunities to integrate development with its surroundings?

What is the proposed site street hierarchy and how does it function?

How can the movement network within the site encourage active lifestyles?

What is the potential demand for car parking and how can this best be managed?

Are public transport services available and how could they be accessed from and through the development?

D. Building in Sustainability

What are the micro-climatic conditions?

Are there opportunities for local and sustainable energy generation?

What is the scope for integrating SUDs into the site?

Is provision made for wheeled bins, recycling and storage?

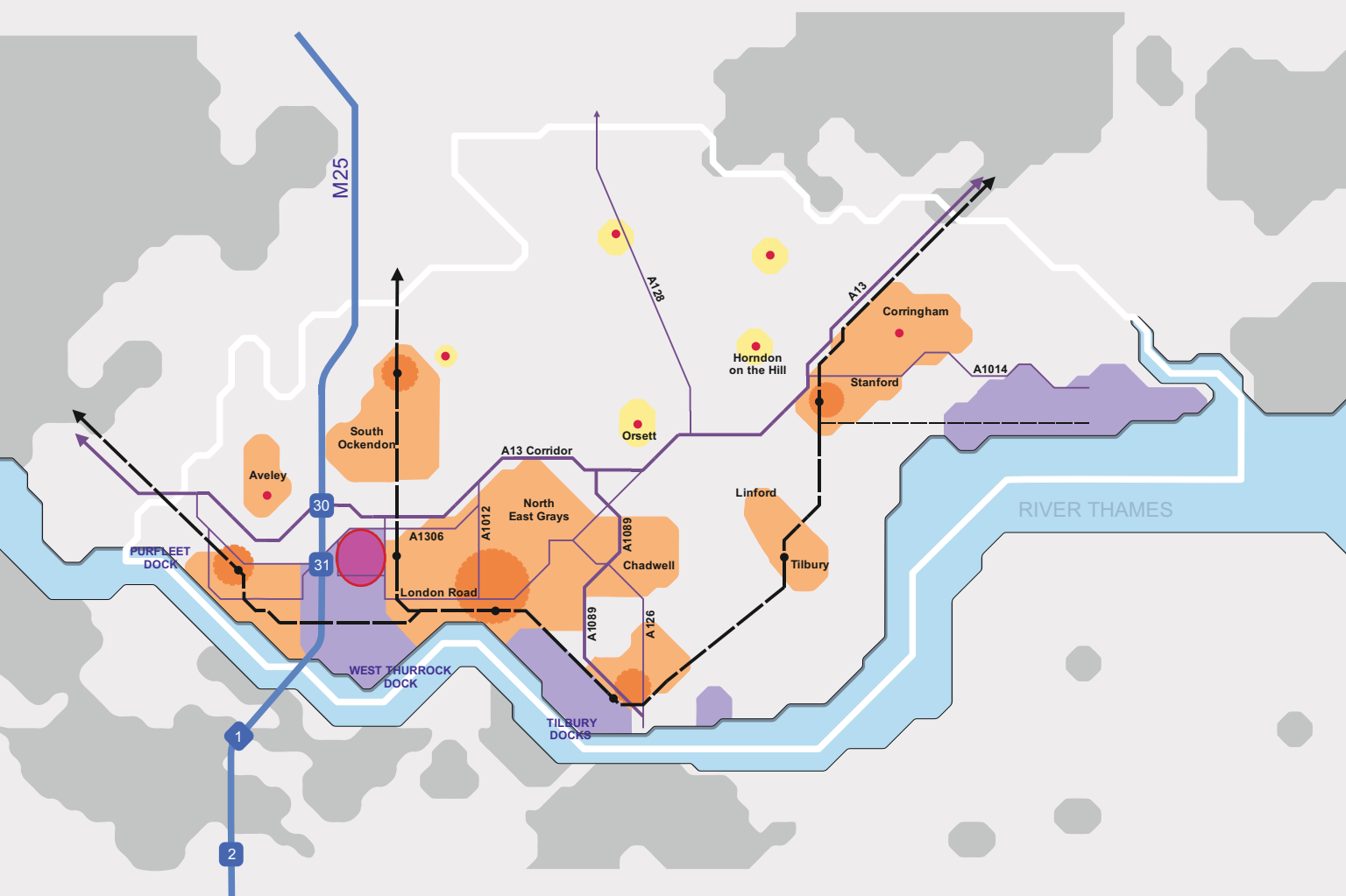
	How Addressed?



4. Place Typologies in Thurrock

Identifying Place Typologies

4.1 From an understanding of different locations and places in Thurrock, as well as the types of development proposal likely to come forward within the Borough, five broad 'place typologies' can be identified. Each is representative of typical locations within the Borough, representing a mix of different land uses at different scales and intensities. They draw on the best place examples in Thurrock as well as other best practice examples from elsewhere.



- Urban Centres and Transport Hubs
- Residential Neighbourhoods
- Village Locations
- Thurrock Lakeside
- Commerce and Industry

4.2 The Place Typologies comprise:

One. Urban Centres and Transport Hubs

This typology encompasses town, neighbourhood and local centres and the built environment around the immediate edges of those centres. Urban centres will be characterised as mixed-use locations, the focus for retail, commercial, community and education uses, with good accessibility particularly by foot, cycle and public transport.

Locations that immediately adjoin the Urban Centres are also characterised as mixed-use locations but with secondary commercial, retail or community development together with a significant proportion of residential development, the proportion reflecting the status and size of the centre.

The typology also includes transport hubs within existing urban centres, around which more intensive forms of mixed-use development will be encouraged.

Two. Residential Neighbourhoods

This typology will form a substantial proportion of development coming forward within Thurrock. It comprises the bulk of residential-led development within which different character areas should be defined depending on context. Residential Neighbourhoods will also be supported by provision of mixed use neighbourhood and local centres, depending on the size of the scheme and location relative to existing centres (see guidance in Typology One).

Residential Neighbourhoods must provide a range of different housing reflecting local need, include a range of tenures and affordable homes, and be constructed at a range of densities depending on accessibility and location.

As a general rule higher density development will be acceptable around locations with good public transport accessibility and a mix of commercial and community uses close by, whilst lower density development will be appropriate to provide the interface between urban and rural locations.



High Street, Grays



Established residential neighbourhood, Grays



New residential neighbourhood, Orsett



Port facilities, Tilbury

Three: Commerce and Industry

This typology includes large format retail and industrial facilities which are an important characteristic of Thurrock, particularly associated with the port activities at Tilbury, London Gateway and Purfleet. It also encompasses smaller scale commercial and employment uses where these form part of a more comprehensive, residential led mixed-use development.

Four: Thurrock Lakeside

As part of the broader Commerce and Industry typology it is important to recognise the significance of Thurrock Lakeside as an economic driver and attractor within the Borough. Specific guidance is highlighted for the Lakeside area.



Village centre, Horndon on the Hill

Five: Village Locations

This typology captures the variety of villages that exist outside the main urban areas in Thurrock. Many have historic cores and have experienced some relatively modest expansion. Although the potential for change is likely to be limited, the ability to integrate development in a way that relates well to character of these villages and the landscapes in which they sit will be important considerations.



Infill development, Horndon on the Hill

Typology One: Urban Centres and Transport Hubs

- 4.3 Urban Centres, and the areas that edge onto them, are key locations within Thurrock. They provide a focus for a mix of different uses including commercial, retail, employment community and civic functions, and also include residential development. They are also characterised by being highly accessible for a variety of modes including public transport. As such the typology includes Transport Hubs particularly where they are well related to existing urban centres.
- 4.4 Urban Centres will also include principal streets and public spaces as well as important notable buildings. This will traditionally have been a church for example, but also includes other grand civic and commercial buildings that will often contribute significantly to the character and identity of a particular town, village or neighbourhood.
- 4.5 It is critical that Urban Centres are distinguished within the overall pattern of development in order to provide a clear hierarchy, ensuring that the legibility of existing and proposed places is maintained and enhanced making them easy to navigate and move around.
- 4.6 The transition between the Urban Centre and surrounding neighbourhoods is also an important consideration. Development around the edges of a town centre or large neighbourhood centre could include a larger proportion of other uses that complement the function of the centre as well as higher density forms of residential development. Development around smaller neighbourhood or local centres might only contain a smaller proportion of other uses or be entirely residential in nature with higher density forms appropriate.
- 4.7 Thurrock Council places a great deal of importance on ensuring that Urban Centres, including Transport Hubs, are well designed, accessible mixed-use places that naturally form a focus for existing and future communities. This will apply to proposals coming forward within established town and neighbourhood locations as well as the design and layout of new town, neighbourhood and local centres.



Community and retail space with residential above, Newhall, Harlow



Typical Local centre providing a mixed use focus point in an accessible location



Residential development above a mix of ground floor uses







Typology One: Urban Centre and Transport Hubs

Key Design Requirements

1. Thurrock Council will require the focus for mixed-use facilities that generate the highest levels of activity to be located in the most accessible locations. This will typically be on the primary street network and particularly streets that are well served by public transport services.
2. Proposals for Urban Centres must form part of the overall hierarchy of centres across the Borough. On major development sites a number of neighbourhood and local centres will be required to serve the needs of the development and adjoining communities.
3. Attractive, clearly defined and convenient links between new and existing mixed-use centres, edge of centre locations and residential neighbourhoods must be provided in order to make them easy to access. Linkages must be designed to encourage walking and cycling through use of lighting, signage, layout, and passive surveillance from adjoining development.
4. All Urban Centres at all scales must provide for the co-location of different land uses to form mixed-use 'hubs'. This can be achieved by clustering community, education, small scale employment and commercial uses together in a single, accessible location. Co-location of different uses can help support the function of the Urban Centre by encouraging linked trips. This also has the benefit of providing a focus for new and existing communities.
5. Thurrock Council will expect vertical mixed use development to be incorporated into Urban Centres providing alternative ground floor uses below upper floors of residential development. Ground level floor to ceiling heights should be a height that is capable of accommodating a range of uses including retail. In these locations there may be opportunities for taller buildings subject to a wider consideration of site context. Such proposals will be considered on their own merits having regard to the advice on tall buildings at point 11 below.
6. Key facilities including retail units, schools, community buildings and other uses must be carefully integrated as part of the overall design of the centre with main frontages that clearly address principal street and key spaces. Car parking must be discretely accommodated away from the streetscene, or as part of a well-designed focal square or space. Servicing access must be away from principal areas of public realm and well screened.
7. Principle streets and key spaces must be well overlooked by the main frontages and entrance points of principal land uses that generate activity. Buildings designs will be expected to emphasise ground level uses with floor to ceiling heights and are adaptable to changes in use over time.
8. Thurrock Council will expect a focal point to be provided as part of the design and layout of Urban Centres of a scale appropriate to that centre. This should comprise a 'high street', square, park or garden around which all principal land uses are grouped.
9. It will be appropriate to consider the character of established town centres within the Borough to identify design references that can influence the design of local and neighbourhood centres. This will provide a contemporary interpretation of existing mixed-use environments that are locally distinctive and 'of their time'.
10. Within Urban Centres proposals for small residential infill development must pay careful regard to context but Thurrock Council will also encourage more innovative and contemporary architectural styles and layouts in order to demonstrate how places develop over time.
11. Tall buildings are not a common feature of existing Urban Centres in Thurrock. Where proposals come forward they must be focused in the largest centres in the Borough where these are highly accessible by a variety of modes. Thurrock Council will assess proposals on their merits having particular regard to accommodating parking and servicing requirements, pedestrian entrances, the mix of ground floor uses and their relationship with the public realm; issues of daylight, sunlight and overshadowing; and wind and micro climate around the base of the building. Reference will be made to the Historic England Advice Note 4 'Tall Buildings' (December 2015), and any subsequent guidance.



Small business 'Enterprise Centre', Priors Hall, Corby



New square provides a focal point, Telford



Local centre with retail space below residential accommodation overlooking a central square

12. The treatment of boundaries and edges of developments in Urban Centres must carefully relate to the public realm both visually and functionally. Blank walls or elevations and extensive use of fences will not be appropriate or acceptable design responses. Security measures must be carefully integrated into the design and landscape layout to be functional but without being visually intrusive. The design of boundary treatments should allow for future growth including reconfiguration to increase connectivity where required.
13. The **frontages** of the development (buildings and landscape) border the public realm serving a transport hub should join seamlessly with it. Highest design standards should be applied to the primary frontages that define the public realm outside the hub.
14. Higher **density** and more compact development forms will be encouraged to support transport services. Appropriate design strategies should be used to **mitigate the noise, privacy** and the other challenges associated with proximity to transport hubs.
15. Large-scale developments near transport hubs should pay special attention to the **permeability** and **walkability** in site layout in order to maximize the advantage of the adjacency to transport facilities. If there are opportunities to create direct pedestrian routes through the development to the transport hubs or town centre destinations, these will be encouraged.
16. If the edge of the development fringes the primary route to the transport hub, alternative **security measures** should be implemented so inactive features such as long fences/blank walls do not dominate the public realm.

Typology Two: Residential Neighbourhoods

- 4.8 Residential Neighbourhoods are a key typology, and will continue to represent the most substantial development opportunity within Thurrock. Creating attractive, healthy, safe and sustainable places for existing and future residents to live is a key priority for Thurrock Council.
- 4.9 Within the Borough Residential Neighbourhoods encompass a significant proportion of the existing housing stock, much of which was constructed inter-War and post-War. It provides a mix of residential development and other facilities but in places lacks a strong place identity, including the use of standard house types and cul-de-sac layouts that are not particular to Thurrock.
- 4.10 Thurrock Council wishes to raise the quality and design standards of proposed residential neighbourhoods within Borough, be that infill development or more comprehensive development proposals, a major urban extension for example. The Design Strategy will be an important part of achieving this aim.
- 4.11 In assessing proposals for new residential neighbourhoods, at all scales, Thurrock Council will expect to see how the design proposals have responded to context and the how the key considerations set out in Section 3 of this Strategy have been taken into account.



Typical Primary Street with corners defined by development, street tree planting and space to accommodate public transport



Street trees and high quality material help derive the character of the development in Corby



Typical Secondary Street with on-street parking provision, street tree planting and overlooked by frontage development



Typology Two: Residential Neighbourhoods

Key Design Requirements

1. A clear hierarchy of streets and spaces integrated with a robust landscape framework must form part of the basic layout of Residential Neighbourhoods. Thurrock Council will require proposed development to have a permeable layout and integrate with existing development through providing connections to existing local roads, footpaths and open space networks.
2. Development proposals that adjoin existing streets and spaces must positively address and front onto them. The relationship of new developments with existing highways must be appropriate to their role in terms of 'movement' and 'place'. Developments edges adjacent to main urban highways must be considered carefully to consider the impacts of noise and air quality on new developments.
3. Proximity to substantial rail and road infrastructure is a critical part of the design and layout of development as part of a residential neighbourhood. Thurrock Council will require design measures necessary to mitigate any adverse impacts arising from noise, air quality and visual amenity. These will include the positioning of habitable rooms relative to infrastructure, location of sensitive land uses, and physical measures such as landscape bunds or acoustic fences.
4. Existing green infrastructure assets must be integrated into a landscape framework. Streets and squares will have a role as part of the landscape framework which will include opportunities for multi-purpose spaces that are well overlooked by new residential development.
5. Thurrock Council will expect proposals for Residential Neighbourhoods to incorporate a number of character areas differentiating one location from another. This can be achieved through different densities depending on context or location relative to Urban Centres for example, or rural edges. Here lower density development will be expected with buildings that are lower in height and reduced in scale and massing. The number of character areas will depend on context and the size of the scheme being proposed.
6. Where smaller scale residential neighbourhoods are proposed, which do not require the inclusion of a new local or neighbourhood centre, Thurrock Council will expect the design and layout to enable access to existing facilities. This will help integrate development with its surroundings.
7. Consideration must be given to the character of the most positive residential areas within the Borough to identify design references that can influence the design of new residential development. A contemporary interpretation of the local vernacular styles can create developments that create a more unique sense of place.



Typical tertiary street with a shared surface defined and overlooked by housing



Modern design with traditional materials define this scheme in Safron Walden



Housing fronts on to the street and informal, multi-use space at Priors Hall



Typology Three: Gateways, Commerce and Industry

- 4.12 One of the more striking and defining characteristics of Thurrock is the historic relationship of the Borough with the River Thames. This has resulted in a legacy of significant commerce and industrial land uses, infrastructure and associated structures, many of which are monolithic in scale and therefore highly visible.
- 4.13 Ports at Tilbury, London Gateway and Purfleet are a focus for commerce, employment and activity, with cranes, silos and vessels providing striking features within the landscape. Associated warehouses, refineries and industrial complexes, and administrative blocks are also part of overall pattern of development associated with the typology.
- 4.14 The ports, bridges and intersections are also gateways into the Thurrock. Although some, notably The QE2 Bridge, are significant landmarks, others, particularly major motorway and trunk road intersections and junctions, have little to recommend them in terms of design and appearance as major points of arrival.
- 4.15 Given the prominence and economic importance of these land uses and structures, and the significant potential for expansion, Thurrock Council is keen to ensure that consideration is given to the design, layout and appearance of developments. This is particularly important around gateways in order to communicate a positive impression upon arrival into Thurrock.
3. At riverside and port facilities use of colour, repetition in the design and appearance of large scale plant and machinery and plant, and grouping of open air storage can mitigate the massive scale of such facilities. Thurrock Council will expect proposals to carefully consider how facilities can be simplified ensuring that only the minimum development is proposed in order to ensure operational requirements are met.
 4. Where major development proposals come forward adjoining key gateways, including major roads, Thurrock Council will require particular attention to be paid to the design of key elevations addressing the gateway together with a comprehensive hard and soft landscape strategy to ensure a positive environment is created.
 5. Within commercial, employment and industrial development opportunities to group entrance points as well as supporting facilities around a focal point or 'hub' must be considered. Here mixed-use facilities to support the working population can be provided together with public transport stops, and other shared uses.
 6. A hierarchy of street and spaces must be included as part of the layout of new development making effective linkages to adjoining areas where necessary and providing a structure around which large scale proposals can come forward.

Key Design Requirements

1. Thurrock Council will expect proposals to demonstrate how issues of grouping and massing have been considered as part of the design process within the context of the wider landscape. Views towards new developments, particularly those that will be prominent features within the landscape, will need to be fully assessed with consideration given to the need for a visual impact assessment.
2. For large scale storage, distribution and warehouse schemes Thurrock Council will require design interventions including the use of coloured cladding, substantial landscape planting, layout and grouping to be employed in order to break up the potential bulk and massing of proposed buildings.
7. Extensive use of hard and soft landscaping and tree planting must be included as an integral part of new proposals in order to break-up the scale of many commercial and industrial buildings as well as providing a robust visual framework.
8. Care must be taken when designing hard and soft landscape features to account for the prevailing character of the area – this is particularly important in locations near the Thames where marshland and grasslands predominate.
9. Boundary treatments and security features must also be designed to have a minimal visual impact whilst remaining effective.
10. Proposals must consider how plant equipment, areas for machinery and lighting are integrated into the design from the outset to form a 'composition' of elements.



London Gateway Port



B8 development screened by landscape planting with colour cladding used to break up scale and massing



Business Premises grouped around a central space

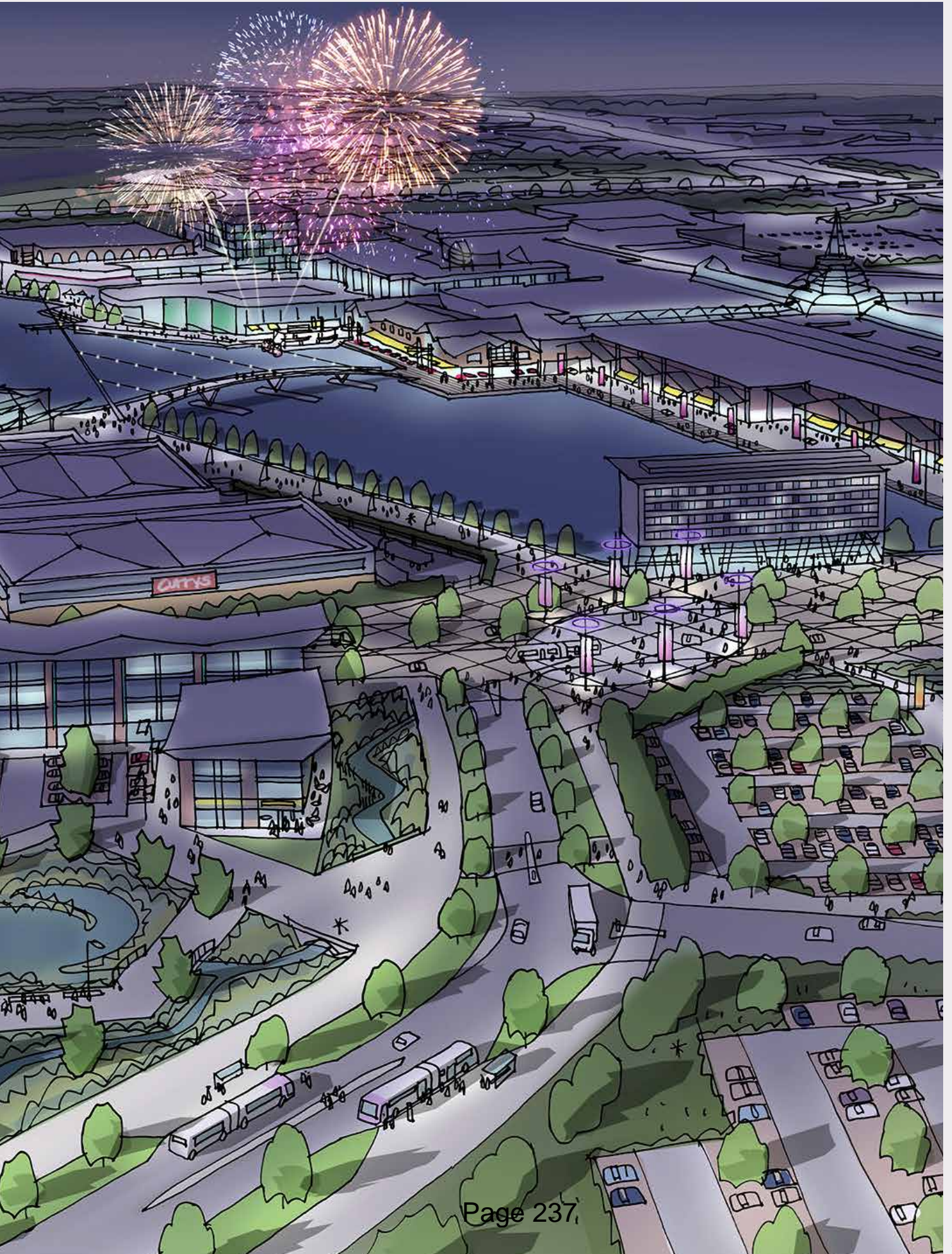
Typology Four: Thurrock Lakeside

4.16 A further significant location is the mixed commercial, retail parks and shopping centre at Thurrock Lakeside, focused around Alexandra Lake and adjoining junction 30 the M25. Intu Lakeside is a regional shopping centre attracting on average around 500,000 visitors per week. Thurrock Council recognise the economic significance of the Lakeside area which has substantial growth and development potential.

Key Design Requirements

1. Development at Lakeside must contribute to achieving a mix of uses that are appropriate to a strategic commercial and retail centre.
2. Proposals must enhance a sense of place focusing on key streets and spaces, including Alexandra Lake, through the positioning of active ground floor uses and entrances.
3. The public realm must be of a high quality to improve the overall character and appearance of Thurrock Lakeside and establish a cohesive and unified appearance.
4. Selective redevelopment will be encouraged in order to promote a finer grain of development in Lakeside whilst supporting the economic and commercial character of the area.
5. Car parking should be designed to make efficient use of available land, with surface parking complemented by multi-storey structures which are sleeved by single aspect development. This will promote a wider mix of uses and increase development density.
6. Public transport gateways for bus and rail must be fully integrated providing attractive, safe and convenient onward pedestrian linkages to key locations.





Typology Five: Village Locations

- 4.17 The villages and rural locations within the Borough have a strong identity and contribute much to the overall character of Thurrock. Traditional Village Centres can be an important focal point for the community including a mix of uses. They can also contain landmark and historic buildings often at the convergence of key, historic routes.
- 4.18 Proposals coming forward within these locations are likely to be more limited to include small scale infill and redevelopment proposals within the defined development boundaries of existing settlements.



Traditional street scene, Orsett



New development integrated into village location, Saffron Walden



An informal layout around shared streets and spaces established through character, Kings Hill

Typology Five: Village Locations

Key Design Requirements

1. With infill sites, new development must be able to relate successfully to the existing grain and reflect patterns and rhythms, considering where relevant, building lines, set-backs and spacings.
2. Development layouts will be expected to be formed to a pattern, character and appearance that is well related to the existing settlement. Design references in terms of the relationship between uses and spaces and the treatment of the public realm are key considerations, public realm and mix of uses that characterise village centres in Thurrock.
3. A contemporary interpretation of character is encouraged to create successful designs that are locally distinctive but 'of their time'. For example, the use of mews style developments close to established village centres could be a way of increasing density without impact on the rural character of the area.
4. Self-build development plots will be governed by a robust design framework or design code establishing broad parameters within which individual design responses can be drawn up. The framework or code must be robustly informed by the design context of the wider settlement.
5. Residential streets and access to individual plots / dwellings must be sensitively designed with an emphasis on place to prevent highway design standards undermining local development character.
6. New development edges addressing the countryside must be laid out to include with generous landscaping to create a development that is appropriate to the setting of the settlement and the character of the rural landscape.
7. The site boundary should be sensitive to the surround landscape. The boundary and edge of the development should feel a part of the rural setting. Lower density development that fronts onto the surrounding landscape and features appropriate planting will be expected. Close boarded fences, and exposed rear elevations and blank flank walls will not be acceptable design responses.



Informal open space that is fronted and overlooked by residential development





5. The Development Process

Planning Application Design Requirements

- 5.1 Good design is an integral part of the development process and must be considered from the outset to ensure a positive outcome. The best outcome is achieved when all parties (developer, designer, community, statutory advisers and local planning authority) work together to solve problems and identify the best solutions.
- 5.2 Applicants are encouraged to consult with Thurrock Council at the earliest opportunity before formulating development proposals and submitting a planning application.
- Pre-Application Stage**
- 5.3 Pre-application discussions provide the opportunity for the applicant to understand Thurrock Council's design expectations and tackle key design issues which are considered to be important. It also provides an opportunity for applicants to set out their objectives and aspirations of a proposed development. Discussions about the design of a development early in the process with initial design ideas and concepts is more efficient, avoiding unnecessary delays trying to incorporate revisions at a later stage, particularly with larger proposals where changes needed may become significant. Thurrock Council offers a pre-application service takes a multi-disciplinary approach in advising on the design quality of emerging proposals.
- 5.4 Large scale strategic developments may require a number of meetings and the provision of extensive information. In these circumstances Thurrock Council will expect developers to enter into a planning performance agreement that will set out fees and other arrangements as necessary.
- 5.5 Thurrock Council may also require larger scale projects to be assessed by a Design Review. Design Review is an independent and impartial process for evaluating the quality of major developments. The aim is to ensure the highest possible quality of development. It is a valid and effective approach that is specifically referenced in the government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).
- 5.6 Major projects that are considered to play a key role in contributing to the development and regeneration of Thurrock will be referred to the Design Review Panel. These are expected to include urban extensions and major urban redevelopment proposals.

Supporting Material

- 5.7 The Council's Validation Checklist provides a starting point setting out the details that will be required to be submitted as part of a planning application. Pre-application discussions will also determine any additional material that will be required to support formal planning applications.
- 5.8 The Council will also require Design and Access Statements to support major development proposals or smaller developments in conservation areas (in accordance with the requirements set out in article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015). Design and access statements will be required to:
- » Explain the principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development
 - » Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the proposed development, and how the design of the development takes that context into account
 - » Explain the approach to access
 - » To set out how relevant Local Plan policies and guidance, including this Design Strategy have been taken into account.
- 5.9 Further guidance for preparing Design and Access Statement is offered by Design Council CABE in "Design and Access Statements: How to write, read and use them" (CABE, 2006). For major development proposals applicants will be expected to demonstrate that a comprehensive master planning process has been undertaken.
- 5.10 For outline proposals, Thurrock Council will expect applicants to submit sufficient information that shows the proposed development extent, land uses, scale and heights of buildings, access plots and provide an indicative layout of development. Further information with regard to movement, density, streetscapes open space and landscaping and appearance will be encouraged to provide guidance to developers wishing to bring forward subsequent schemes. For larger schemes design codes may be requested to reinforce key design requirements for subsequent reserved matters proposals.
- 5.11 For reserved matters proposals, applicants will also be expected to provide further details relating to layout, scale, access, movement open spaces, landscaping and appearance, including building materials, streetscapes and boundary treatments.

Post Application, Conditions and Monitoring

- 5.12 When development proposals are granted planning permission Thurrock Council will use appropriate planning conditions to ensure that the design quality of development is achieved.
- 5.13 For outline proposals, Thurrock Council will seek to agree certain development 'fixes' which may take the form of a development framework or a more comprehensive master plan. In this context a condition will require subsequent reserved matters proposals to relate to key master planning design principles and parameter drawings.
- 5.14 There will also be circumstances, particularly for large sites where Thurrock Council will through an appropriate condition require further details to be submitted in the form of a design code to provide greater control on the design quality of reserved matters applications. Design codes are important for expressing the design requirements of development frameworks and master plans in greater detail especially for sites that are likely to be delivered by more than one developer over a long timescale.
- 5.15 For detailed applications conditions will require further details to ensure a quality outcome on aspects such as materials and cladding and landscape specifications.
- 5.16 Thurrock Council will resist subsequent proposals for minor amendments or to vary extant permissions or conditions that are likely to undermine their design quality.
- 5.17 Thurrock Council will also ensure that the design quality of schemes is met by monitoring the compliance of development with approved plans, conditions and details. Monitoring of developments will also provide valuable feedback on the quality of new developments across the Borough.

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility

The ease with which a building, place or facility can be reached by people and/or goods and services. Accessibility can be shown on a plan or described in terms of pedestrian and vehicle movements, walking distance from public transport, travel time or population distribution.

Adaptability

The ability of a building or space to be changed in response to changing social, economic and technological conditions.

Amenity

Relates to the immediate environment around new development. Safeguarding residential amenity means that existing levels of privacy; degree of overlooking, and quality of environment are not compromised by adjacent or surrounding development.

Building Line

The extent of the built component of a development (external walls/arcades). Usually refers to the front elevation of a building.

Built Form

The shape of developments including buildings and other structures, not only individually but as a collective.

Continuity of Street Frontages

Refers to the use of continuous or "joined up" building frontages and built forms to reinforce the perceived degree of enclosure. This can be achieved by the use of buildings, boundary treatments (e.g. walls/fences/railings) or landscaping.

Connectivity

The degree to which a place, street or series of buildings is connected to its surroundings. Connections may be visual or physical, and usually relate to sight lines or movement (vehicular/cycle/pedestrian).

Context

The setting of a site or area.

Context Appraisal

A detailed analysis of the features of a site or area (including land uses, built and natural environment, and social and physical characteristics) which serves as the basis for an urban design framework, development brief, design guide, or other policy or guidance.

Cul De Sac

A street closed at one end, often having a curvilinear form where the closed end of the street is not visible from the junction.

Density

A measure of the average number of persons, households or units of accommodation per area of land.

Design Code

A document providing detailed guidance on aspects of design which developers of individual parts of the site will be expected to adhere to. Guidance is usually provided on highway design, open space, public realm and landscape design, and the layout of new housing/employment development. Guidance on architectural detailing and materials is sometimes also provided. It typically includes details of dimensions and street cross-sections.

Design Guidance

A generic term for documents providing guidance on how development can be carried out in accordance with the planning and design policies of a local authority or other organisation.

Design Guide

Design guidance on a specific topic such as shopfronts or house extensions, or relating to all kinds of development in a specific area.

Design Policy

Relates to the form and appearance of development, rather than the land use.

Design Reference

Refers to a built or natural feature (existing or proposed) which, by virtue of its location or prominence, is a reference point which should govern the design of subsequent development.

Design Principle

An expression of one of the basic design ideas at the heart of an urban design framework, design guide, development brief or design code. Each such planning tool should have its own set of design principles.

Design Standards

Produced by districts and unitary authorities, usually to quantify measures of health and safety in residential areas.

Enclosure

The use of buildings to create a sense of defined space. Enclosure is achieved where the buildings form a strong continuous edge and where the ratio of the width of the space or street to the height of the buildings enclosing it is sufficient for the observer to feel that they are in an enclosed rather than an open space.

Façade

The face of a building, especially its principal front.

Figure Ground

A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets and the interiors of public buildings such as churches) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background, or the other way round.

Frontage

That part of a building/group of buildings which significantly contributes to the character of an area and defines the street.

Gateway

Refers to a point on a key route which creates a sense of arrival, often through the enclosure of existing buildings, or through techniques such as changes in surfacing or tree planting.

Grain

The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

Landmark

A memorable building or structure which stands out from its background by virtue of its height, size or some other aspect of design. Often significantly contributes to the character of an area. Landmarks are often used as orientation points within the local environment, and aid legibility (see below).

Landscape

The appearance of land, including its shape, form, colours and elements, the way these (including those of streets) components combine in a way that is distinctive to particular localities, the way they are perceived, and an area's cultural and historical associations.

Landscaping

Refers to the use of materials for landscaping purposes. Usually incorporates the use of paving, street furniture, public art, trees, shrubs, and water features.

Legibility

The degree to which a place (its structure, form and function) can be easily understood and communicated.

Massing

The combined effect of the arrangement, volume and shape of a building or group of buildings. This is also called bulk.

Master Plan

A plan or illustration which sets out the overall structure or layout of new development. Often used to convey a development concept or image of the development rather than specify elements of detailed design.

Mixed Use Development

Development which encompasses a variety of different land uses within close proximity. Can refer to adjacent buildings which accommodate different land uses, or different land uses which are accommodated within a single building or group of buildings.

On-Plot

Refers to activities located within the curtilage of a building, usually in private ownership (e.g. on-plot parking, on-plot landscaping).

On-Street

Refers to activities located within the public highway, usually in public ownership (e.g. on-street parking).

Open Space and Green Space

Refers to locations that can be used for a multiplicity of functions including formal and informal recreation, community focal points, biodiversity and nature conservation.

Permeability

The degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it.

Primary Street/Avenue

A street which by its design can be identified as the most important and connected route through an area. Often accommodating public transport, street planting and higher levels of public activity, primary streets can define and contribute greatly to the character of an area.

Public Realm

Streets and spaces available for use by everyone without charge - shaped by buildings, landscaping, structures and activities alongside or within them.

Secondary Street

A street which by its design can be identified as a lower key route than the primary street (see above), whilst still providing important connections through the development. Secondary streets have lower levels of public activity, and tend to provide a second (alternative) route between destinations. Secondary streets can also contribute greatly to the character of an area, particularly in creating a sense of enclosure and human scale.

Sense of Place

A person's perception of a location's indigenous characteristics, based on the mix of uses, appearance and context that makes a place memorable.

Settlement Pattern

The distinctive way that the roads, paths and buildings are laid out in a particular place.

Scale

The size of a building in relation to its surroundings, or the size of parts of a building or its details, particularly in relation to the size of a person.

Shared Surface

These are streets within which a single surface treatment is employed. Vehicular movement, parking and pedestrian areas are integrated with no segregation of movement/space.

Street Furniture

Objects desired or required as part of the laying out of a street. Includes seating, lighting, bins, cycle storage, signage, boundary treatments and planters). Street furniture can also incorporate public art.

Streetscape

The term used to describe the visual impact and composition of a street, usually comprising building frontages, boundary treatments, spaces, views and vistas, landscaping, street furniture and materials.

Storey Height

Can be expressed as the number of floors of a building (e.g. 3 storey), or as a specific measurement (e.g. storey height equating to a minimum of 7.5 metres façade height). Specifying minimum storey height can assist in creating a sense of enclosure.

Topography

The arrangement of the natural and artificial physical features of an area.

View

The direct, prominent and unobstructed lines of sight within the public realm visible from a particular point and contributing to the legibility of the area.

Vista

An enclosed/framed view.



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24 February 2016	ITEM: 15
Council	
Constitution Working Group – Governance Review	
Wards and communities affected: None	Key Decision: Not Applicable
Report of: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Head of Service: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal and Democratic Services	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

On 22 October 2014 a motion was considered and unanimously agreed which requested the Constitution Working Group to carry out a governance review, in order to judge the need for the committee, cabinet, mayoral or hybrid forms of governance.

In the course of debating the motion, the Leader of the Council suggested that an item on the Constitution Working Group be brought back to the next meeting of the Council and that a small budget be allocated to the group so that they could investigate thoroughly the advantages and disadvantages of the different forms of governance with similar sized authorities. This was reported to Full Council on 28 January 2015 which approved a budget of £5,000 and the composition of the Constitution Working Group.

The current form of governance has been in place for some time and the aim of the review was to see where any improvements could be made to improve local democracy, scrutiny, efficiency and decision making.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the options discussed at Constitutional Working Group set out below at 3.1 to 3.14 be investigated further for best practice and that potential protocols, changes to procedures or draft amendments to the Constitution be developed for consideration where appropriate.
- 1.2 That pursuant to the recommendation at 3.15 the function of setting the Council Tax Base and Determining the Collection Fund Balance be delegated to the section 151 Officer.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The importance of good governance

Councils have a responsibility to ensure that decision-making is as effective as it can be. Many councils are making informal changes to their governance arrangements including tightening up existing processes, making sure that avenues exist for all members to get involved in the policy development process (for example, through overview and scrutiny) and putting in place consultation arrangements for particularly contentious decisions.

Changing governance under the Localism Act

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) expanded the number of decision-making systems that councils could adopt. Since that Act was passed there are 3 main models to choose from. Councils wishing to move from one to another must make a formal decision to do so, using a resolution of Full Council. In some instances a referendum will also be required.

Leader and cabinet

Cabinet is led by a leader, who is elected by Full Council (and will usually be the leader of the largest party on the council). The intention is that the Full Council will determine its policy framework (through approval or adoption of a series of plans or strategies) and its budget, following proposals from the Executive: the Executive is then responsible for implementation of the policy framework. These councils must have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

Mayoral system

These councils have a directly-elected executive mayor with wide decision-making powers. The mayor appoints a Cabinet made up of other councillors, who may also have decision making powers. These councils must also have at least one overview and scrutiny committee.

Committee system

Committee system councils make most decisions in committees, which are made up of a mix of councillors from all political parties. These councils may have one or more overview and scrutiny committees but are not required to.

Hybrid systems

There are variations for each of these models that can lead councils to adopt hybrid approaches; most commonly this is a hybrid between leader/cabinet and the committee system (with such an approach usually seen legally as being a modified version of the leader/cabinet system, and therefore not requiring a formal change under the Act).

This report therefore seeks the agreement of Council to the further development and investigation of options identified by the Constitution Working Group as having potential to achieve improvements.

- 2.2 Constitution Working Group (Group) approached a range of authorities with different governance systems and visited Kent County Council which operates a hybrid executive model. Following this visit, the Group decided that they needed to understand better what was perhaps not working in Thurrock's current governance system or could work better and the most efficient way of proceeding was for the Group to consult all Thurrock Members to gather feedback on what Members themselves thought were the strategic and procedural weaknesses of the Council's current leader/cabinet governance system. This would allow an opinion to be formed as to whether these issues could be addressed by changes short of a formal governance system change or not - which would potentially be quicker and less expensive. The Monitoring Officer was asked to provide a briefing to the Group on Members' responses to the consultation and whether any identified issues could or could not be addressed within the existing leader/cabinet governance system or a hybrid thereof. The Group agreed that the responses from Members should be anonymised, reviewed and presented to Full Council.
- 2.3 Democratic Services sent out a consultation document to all Members and the Monitoring Officer in August 2015 provided a detailed and extensive briefing note to the Group of the options available within the existing governance system in response to issues identified by Members - which the Group discussed at its meeting held on 20 October 2005.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

The Group considered the issues raised by Members and the Monitoring Officer's response in order to identify areas for possible further work are set out below at 3.1 to 3.15.

3.1 Requisition vote at all meetings

Monitoring Officer' advice: In the case of principal councils the method of voting is not prescribed by statute - though usually by standing orders it is by show of hands. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 there must be a recorded vote where the decision relates to the budget / council tax at a budget decision meeting of the Authority. Also an individual Member of the Authority can require his/her vote to be recorded by virtue of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993.

At the moment a recorded vote can be triggered at Full Council by any 5 Members present at the meeting standing to indicate such a demand – the procedure is that the Mayor shall put the motion and the Chief Executive shall call out the names of Members and record their votes or abstentions. Likewise

the Committee Procedure Rules provide for a recorded vote if no fewer than one fifth of the Committee's Membership demand it at the meeting.

Discussion: The disadvantage to this at Full Council would be an obvious delay if for every vote the current procedure of calling out names was maintained – instead there may be alternative electronic or administrative methods for a quicker capture of voting history which may have less impact than a change in the relevant standing order but achieve largely the same outcome.

Options: No constitutional change is required as such rather an alternative electronic or administrative method of capturing full voting history could be investigated as likely to be the most cost efficient and transparent solution.

3.2 **Members budget for ward work**

Monitoring Officer advice: It is a matter of policy as to whether there should or should not be a Members budget for ward work – Section 236 of the Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 provides that arrangements may be made for the discharge of any function of a local authority by a member, to the extent that it is exercisable in relation to the electoral ward of that member.

Discussion: The Group felt it would be an improvement if each ward could have a budget for work within a ward. However this option is already canvassed within the Constitution at Chapter 2, Part 1 – The Full Council - Rule 4.2 and Chapter 3, Part 1 – Article 7 – The Leader / Cabinet Executive Rule 9.6.

Options: Whether Cabinet / Full Council wish to investigate this option further.

3.3 **Prayers after the meeting starts**

Monitoring Officer advice: Local Government (Religious Observances) Act 2015: this Act came into force on 26 May 2015. It gives local authorities the power to include prayers as an item of business should they wish to do so.

Discussion: This would require a minor change in the Constitution to reflect prayers as an item of business at Full Council meetings.

Options: Given this new legislation this option should be referred to Full Council for consideration as to whether it should be investigated further.

3.4 **Planning proposals on huge issues to be discussed at full council**

Monitoring Officer advice: The Group discussed options for greater Member involvement for major developments of a certain size, scale and complexity including a process that involves the referral of decisions to Full Council –

following consultations with chairs and seeking 'best practice' examples from other councils there would be a number of concerns including the need to ensure that all Members are trained and constantly 'refreshed' and potential uncertainty – both in terms of outcome and timescales for the development industry. This would be counter-productive to growth and investment in the Borough.

That said, Members desire to effectively influence major development proposals is fully appreciated but following consultation and 'best practice' enquiries it appears that the best time for getting wider Member engagement is at the beginning of the process, where Members can truly help to influence and shape things.

One particular best practice example was a process whereby schemes of a certain scale can [preferably at pre-app stage, if not within the first 3 weeks of submission] be put in front of a Member Panel. Westminster are one authority that run a process of this nature.

Such a process could be structured to effectively combine the engagement of councillors, community representatives and members of the public in a single meeting. It differs from the Member /community briefings in that it is not an information opportunity but a working discussion therefore it is important that this takes place when the scheme remains fluid and capable of change - such discussions should be a material consideration later in the application process.

Discussion: The Group engaged in discussion around how to define "huge developments"

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council for consideration as to whether it should be investigated further in order to identify best practice as to wider Member engagement.

3.5 Clarify on signatures for petitions

Monitoring Officer advice: In Chapter 1 Part 1 Para 7.1 our Constitution confirms that:

"the term residents includes (where appropriate) those people who live, study, work or have businesses in the borough or who receive services for which the Council is responsible"

Each local authority can choose how to verify the signatures given on a petition. That said it is expected that local authorities will remove duplications and obviously frivolous signatures.

Discussion: The Group discussed whether possible to incorporate views of residents outside borough but still proximate and affected within ambit of Petition Scheme – this may arguably depend on some reciprocity which may not be forthcoming from other authorities.

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further with neighbouring authorities as to best practice.

3.6 **Planning site visits, request prior to the debate**

Monitoring Officer advice: Pre-debate site visits, by convention, can already be requested via Democratic Services / Chair or arranged by officers under the existing Rule 8 Chapter 5 Part 3 of the Constitution

Discussion: This convention could be mentioned in the Constitution in a more explicit way to see if the number of adjournments mid application can be reduced.

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further as to best practice.

3.7 **Longer to speaking right on larger developments application.**

Monitoring Officer advice: Rule 6.1 of Chapter 5, Part 3 indicates the normal procedure for speaking rights at Planning Committee –there is an inherent discretion which would reside with the Chair to depart from the normal timings where the nature of the application justifies such departure.

Discussion: Whilst possible to specify extra speaking time there is a risk that being over prescriptive may be counterproductive when compared to an agreed convention or consensus to allow extra speaking time with the consent of the Chair.

Options: Given the existing discretion to depart from normal timings and the inflexibility of being over prescriptive in the Constitution this option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further as to best practice.

3.8 **Timings for items at council**

Monitoring Officer advice: The Mayor has both an inherent and explicit discretion to exceed standard timings for speeches under the Council Procedure Rules.

Discussion: Whilst possible to specified extra speaking time there is a risk that being over prescriptive may be counterproductive when compared to an agreed convention or consensus to allow extra speaking time with the consent of the Mayor. As to any removal of the current guillotine standing order at 9.30 pm (or two and a half hours after the meeting commenced) this would require an explicit change of the Constitution – however Members are always prompted to consider suspending this standing order should they desire to continue longer at any particular meeting.

Options: Given the existing discretion to depart from normal timings and the inflexibility of being over prescriptive in the Constitution this option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further.

3.9 **Confirm the calling in of contracts**

Monitoring Officer advice: Currently under Chapter 4, Part 3 – Scrutiny Procedures Rules 10.14 (d) “decisions to award a contract **following a lawful procurement process**” cannot be subject to Call In

Procurement usually involves a decision to issue an agreed tender where parties compete for a contract against a set range of criteria with an evidenced decision reached. If there are grounds for believing that such a lawful process was not followed then an award of contract could be called in under the above rule. If a lawful process has been followed after a duly released tender and there is then a delay and / or change of decision there may be a significant risk of litigation. Arguably the key stage is the decision to release the tender – if a robust and compliant process is duly followed then the award of the contract to the successful party would appear to be merely administrative / operational matter but if the process is flawed then a case could be put forward for call in – even under the existing rule.

Discussion: The current rule doesn’t absolutely prohibit this – rather recognises that where an agreed and lawful procurement process has been undertaken then final stage should almost be administrative – if flaw in lawful procurement process then call-in possible – perhaps further guidance on this.

Options: As the current rule does not prohibit call in of a contract award where there are evidenced concerns that a lawful procurement process has not been followed the wording could be at looked again to seek to make this clearer as a consequential clarification.

3.10 **Overview and Scrutiny feels like its only job is to "note" actions of the current administration renaming them as Select Committees with specific outcomes such as suggesting policy, not just overiewing the Cabinet, would give them a fresh start and renewed focus**

Monitoring Officer advice: Some councils call their Overview & Scrutiny Committees – “Commissions” or “Select Committees” there is no particular reason why the name cannot be changed.

Discussion: The name change is perfectly possible but Members already have agenda setting rights and scrutiny committees can play an important role in policy development.

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further for best practice.

- 3.11 **A feeling that Cabinet / officers can simply ignore committees that have no judicial powers. A remedy could be insisting that no item can go to Cabinet without going to committee first, even if this means more emergency sessions to discuss an item before it comes to Cabinet**

Monitoring Officer advice: The Cabinet system is a very flexible vehicle if there is consensus amongst Members for example; Kent County Council who we visited has a system with all forward plan matters going to cross party advisory committees before Cabinet – who then submit a report to Cabinet. There is provision for urgent decisions and a single O&S committee retained for Call In.

Discussion: This would be regarded as a consensual hybrid change with the current 6 Overview & Scrutiny Committees being perhaps replaced with an emphasis on pre scrutiny of key decisions by a Cabinet Advisory Committee(s) with provision for a mandatory Overview & Scrutiny Committee for Call in purposes and modified provision for urgent decisions. If there is no consensus with the Leader / Cabinet this would not be a possible option.

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council and Cabinet as to whether it should be investigated further.

- 3.12 **Stilted rules of Full Council debate, 3 minutes is too short for speaking time, not being allowed to interject in debate, ability to yield to Members who may wish to interject, Points of Order more flexible, Members being able to table a short period to address the meeting on an issue they feel is important, but does not require a motion.**

Monitoring Officer Advice: Rules of debate are fairly standard and ubiquitous across all local authorities probably because most council have followed the template of the Modular Constitution

“14.4 Content and length of speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order. No speech may exceed () minutes without the consent of the chairman”

Therefore the period of time allocated could be varied or a longer period be permitted under the existing discretion of the Mayor / Chair.

Points of order are in the main an objection submitted to the Chair / Mayor for decision claiming some irregularity in the constitution or conduct of the meeting – a member may raise a point of order at any time without notice - it must however be raised immediately the alleged irregularity or impropriety becomes apparent – citing the rule or procedure breached - they would or should not be limited by number.

Personal Explanation can be reasonably flexible to correct a misstatement or something that has been misunderstood by a later speaker – a few councils

appear to have the concept of “points of information” for example Brentwood Borough Council.

“Point of Information or clarification

A point of information or clarification must relate to the matter being debated. If a Member wishes to raise a point of information, he/she must first seek the permission of the Mayor. The Member must specify the nature of the information he/she wishes to provide and its importance to the current debate, If the Mayor gives his/her permission, the Member will give the additional information succinctly. Points of Information or clarification should be used in exceptional circumstances and should not be used to interrupt other speakers or to make a further speech when he/she has already spoken during the debate. The ruling of the Mayor on the admissibility of a point of information or clarification will be final”

Discussion: Members present expressed an interest in more flexibility on timings and when Members can speak again outside the Rules of Debate. There is inherent flexibility under the discretion of the Mayor as to timings.

Options: The potential option of including a “Point of Information or Clarification” should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further as to best practice.

3. 13 **Members understand that we should not have direct operational power however there is a feeling that we have little power over officers to influence the delivery of service. All officers at the Head of Service level and above should be confirmable by the General Services Committee, including temporary appointments, to give member buy in to officer appointments. Manager level appointments should be raised with the Committee to see if it is a role that is of significant interest to Members that it would merit the Committee’s attention.**

Monitoring Officer advice: This is possible to draft if “Heads of Services” are within the statutory definition of “Deputy Chief Officer” however the Head of Paid Service must be confirmed by Full Council, such “interim appointments” can be included in a definition of Member involvement – less clear is where an officer is acting up / covering a role merely temporarily but retaining their substantive role.

Discussion: Manager level appointments would be the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service. Finally officers owe an explicit duty to the whole Council and not particular groups.

Options: The option of including Deputy Chief Officers confirmable at General Services Committee” should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further as to best practice.

3.14 **Full Council delegates the power to make PSPO's to the Licensing Committee. Also consider how to best exercise other public protection powers**

Monitoring Officer advice: Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) potentially provide a flexible and effective tool to tackle many forms of environmental nuisance. They were brought in by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which replaced 19 existing powers dealing with anti-social behaviour with 6 broader powers, Injunctions, Civil Behaviour Order, Community Protection Notice, PSPO, Closure Powers, and Dispersal Powers.

In the case of the 2014 Act it is understood that local authorities will soon be consulted about clarifying that all of its functions should be specified in regulations as local choice functions. These are functions where the Council has discretion as to whether the function should be discharged by the Council, Committee of Council or by the Leader / Cabinet.

Therefore there appears to be potential flexibility, subject changing the constitution, as to whether the decision to make a PSPO is made by Cabinet, Full Council, Committee or a further delegation in consultation.

Discussion: There is flexibility here for Council to decide to lodge the remit for making of PSPOs with the Licensing Committee with appropriate delegations to officers.

Options: This option should be referred to Full Council as to whether it should be investigated further as to best practice.

3.15 **That setting the Council Tax Base and Determining the Collection Fund Balance be delegated to the section 151 Officer**

Monitoring Officer advice: Both calculations are simply for Members' information and approval. They cannot be amended as they are based on factual numbers and technical assumptions. It is common practice for a section 151 Officer to have such delegations and would be in line with not bringing reports that can only be noted by Members.

Recommendation: That the function of setting the Council Tax Base and Determining the Collection Fund Balance be delegated to the section 151 Officer.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The current form of governance has been in place for some time and the aim of the review and consultation with all Members was to see where any improvements could be made to improve local democracy, scrutiny, efficiency and decision making.

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

5.1 This matter has been the subject of consultation with Group Leaders, Chairs, Members and Senior Management.

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

6.1 The governance reviews are an ongoing process and both contribute and promote good governance in Thurrock.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Director of Finance & IT

There are no financial implications arising from this report at this stage

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Fiona Taylor**
Director of Legal

The Localism Act 2011 enables local authorities to decide on their own form of governance. Councils have a responsibility to ensure that decision-making is as effective as it can be and decision making should critically benefit from the perspective of all councillors, but also be accountable, and involve the public. In undertaking the Governance Review the Constitution Working Group was expected to help promote and foster good governance in Thurrock.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no diversity implications arising from this report at this stage.

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):

- Localism Act 2011 as amended

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

David Lawson

Monitoring Officer

Legal & Democratic Services

24 February 2016	ITEM: 16
Council	
Cabinet Member Report - Education	
Report of: Councillor John Kent	
This report is Public.	

Background

I am pleased to present my portfolio holder report for education in a year which has seen Thurrock schools continue to perform well in comparison to statistical neighbours and national averages. Over the last year I have continued to visit our schools and academies in Thurrock and aim to get to all of them in the next term. I have been impressed by our head teachers, staff, governors and children. Many heads have spoken to me about a step change in the aspirations for our children and young people and the shared vision which has been developed. Heads have spoken very positively about the quality of relationships with the local authority and the shared priorities which we have developed through the “**Plan on a Page**” (*appendix*) where we have identified the 5 key priorities to move the education service forward. We have been working for some time in supporting and challenging schools and academies to help each other in line with the national drive towards sector-led improvement.

Executive Summary

All councils have been asked to consider the persistent variation that exists across our school system and the role the local authority should play in raising educational standards for all children and young people.

As an education service we continue to place high value on:

- knowing our schools and academies well;
- investing in our school leaders and creating opportunities for new leaders to emerge;
- challenging leaders about rates of pupil progress;
- supporting our governors to recruit the best leaders;
- developing the skills of governors in holding school leaders to account;
- creating opportunities for schools/academies to provide support and challenge to each other;
- identifying risks early so that we can work with schools and academies to address issues quickly;
- ensuring that all schools and academies are using data smartly to drive focused initiatives and promoting the highest expectations within communities for children’s well-being and educational aspirations.

Thurrock Local Authority will continue to play a central role in driving ambition at individual school level and across the borough to sustain the recent improvements in school provision, reducing variation across schools and matching the pupil progress outcomes within the Eastern Region.

Thurrock Education Alliance (TEA)

Excellent progress has been made in developing the strong partnership work between schools, academies and the local authority. Over the last year, schools, academies and early year's providers have worked closely with the local authority to create a strong and shared vision to reach excellence in every area.

Following a review of the current arrangements, the Alliance has agreed to take over the role previously fulfilled by the Excellence Network so that in future the approval and monitoring processes will rest with the single committee – TEA.

Underpinning the approach to ensure improvement, the principle that there is a wealth of expertise across our schools and settings that can be used to support others in their improvement. Following the conference last year led by Professor Bill Lucas, schools and academies have put in place plans to share their expertise in groups of three or four, sharing areas of expertise and collaborating on areas for development. HMI have praised the council for supporting their schools in developing sector-led improvement and reiterated the importance of a shared vision such as that developed in Thurrock.

Thurrock Education Awards

One of the strong recommendations coming out of the Education Commission was the need to celebrate success and publicise our educational achievements in Thurrock. I was delighted – and I know many of my fellow councillors were too - to attend the second Thurrock Education Awards at High House Production Park, an excellent event again with more than 300 guests attending. The event celebrates the achievements of our head teachers, teachers, support staff and governing bodies who work tirelessly to transform our children's lives. I particularly wanted to recognise the substantial support from our local businesses that sponsored the event, gave financial support and proudly presented awards. After the success of this second year we have already even more sponsors confirmed for the 2016 Education Awards, as this is now an eagerly anticipated event.

Educational attainment and OFSTED outcomes

Overall Performance of Thurrock Primary schools

Early Years

- The validated data for Thurrock shows a further rise in pupils achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD). Performance was already 6% higher than the national average in 2014 and this has increased to 7% in 2015 based on data collected from all 152 Local Authorities. Thirty of our 39 primary schools in Thurrock are at or above the national average for 2015 at the end of the Reception year.

- The Inequality gap, which measures the percentage gap in achievement between the lowest 20% of children achieving the median score for all children, continues to reduce. In Thurrock the gap has decreased by 0.9% from 28.8% in 2014 to 27.9% in 2015. The gap to national was -5.1% in 2014 so it is likely that Thurrock is better than national.
- 5 out of the 6 children looked after by Thurrock Council and educated by Thurrock schools achieved a good level of development in 2015 (83%). This is an improvement on the previous 2 years of 57% in 2014 (7 LAC children) and 17% in 2013 (6 LAC children).
- The GLD Free School Meal attainment gap remains unchanged from last year at 16 percentage points. This is 3 percentage points lower than the national gap in 2014. The Pupil Premium gap has increased very slightly to 13 percentage points from 12 percentage points in 2014. There is no national comparative data available.
- The percentage of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard for phonic decoding remains at 76% in 2015 which places Thurrock just 1 percentage point below the national average.

Key Stage 1 performance – (7 year olds)

- Thurrock was at or above national in all Key Stage 1 subjects in 2014. In 2015 performance dropped very slightly and the advantage over the national average last year has been reduced in all subjects at Level 2+ with writing now 1.4% below the national average.
- Performance at Level 2B+ remains in-line or above national but it's at Level 3+ where the gap to national has been closed. Thurrock is now 1% below national for reading (5% below in 2013) and 3% below for speaking and listening (11% below in 2013).
- Overall, Thurrock has been above, close to or above the national average for Level 2+ in the last 2 years. This year the gap has closed at Level 3+ in reading and speaking & listening but the advantage over national at Level 2+ has reduced. Writing and maths have been the weaker subjects for Thurrock in 2015.

Key Stage 2 performance – (11 year olds)

- In Thurrock performance at Level 4+ and Level 5+ has improved across all of the major subjects at Key Stage 2 – reading, writing, maths and grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS). It looks encouraging for Thurrock with the national increases less or in line in most aspects.
- For the key measure of Level 4+ for reading, writing and maths combined, Thurrock looks to have closed the gap to the national average to be just 1% behind (79% overall).
- Reading performance at Level 4+ is currently in line with the national estimate with Thurrock improving by 2% to 89% with the national average unchanged from 2014. The gap to national at Level 5+ has reduced even further from 7% in 2014 to an estimated 4% in 2015. These results are backed up with excellent progress in reading for 2015 with 95.5% of pupils making at least 2 levels progress, a big improvement from last year.

- Performance at Level 5+ has improved with reading, maths and GPS all improving and closing the gap to national. Despite a 1% improvement for writing at this level, the national improvement is greater as it increased by 3%.
- Maths is the weakest subject in 2015 with a small increase in pupils achieving L4+. However, the national increase was also small so the gap remains unchanged from last year.
- Overall, there have been some significant improvements for many Thurrock schools over the past 3 years which has helped the authority to close the gap with the national average. However, there remains a small number of primary schools (4 of the 39) that have not seen the same increases or have seen a concerning downward trend in performance.

Overall Performance of Thurrock Secondary schools

This year saw Thurrock's best ever results at early years and foundation stage, key stage 1 and key stage 2. In a year which saw a dip in GCSE results locally following changes in the grade boundaries for GCSE English and maths by the examination boards, the number of Thurrock young people that achieved the benchmark 5 grade A*-C including English and Maths decreased by 5 percentage points. This affected the majority of secondary academies, however, our only maintained secondary school, Grays Convent, achieved a 7 percentage point lift to 70%. There is considerable support from the local authority, from academy trusts and from the Thurrock Education Alliance to support schools and academies which perform less well than others.

In terms of OFSTED outcomes, Thurrock has retained its strong position with 74% of our primary schools and academies currently rated as good or outstanding – up from 33% in 2010. We believe that 6 of our primary schools where we have no Ofsted judgement (Academy converters) would be judged good or better raising the percentage to above 80%. This shows the significant efforts being made to raise standards undertaken by governors, teachers, headteachers and support staff which have contributed to this.

In the secondary sector currently 80% of our schools and academies are good or outstanding and places Thurrock is in the top quartile in the Eastern region and a strong performance compared with the national position. Until very recently no Thurrock school or academy was in an Ofsted category, however, following an inspection in January 2016 we are anticipating one of our secondary academies to be placed in a category.

Three of our secondary academies have been subject to unannounced Ofsted inspections following concerns around safeguarding following parental complaints. I am delighted to inform you that all 3 academies were found to be safe and received excellent comments which can be found on the Ofsted website.

The outcomes at GCSE for children looked after (CLA) remain a significant concern to the local authority. Of the 38 pupils in Year 11 last summer, only two young people in care achieved the benchmark 5 GCSE A*-C grades whilst all pupils gained Level 1 and 2 qualifications.

Areas for development over the coming year continue to focus on supporting the attainment of children who are looked after, who often have disrupted schooling and, in common with the national picture, underachieve compared with their peers.

Pupil Place Planning and School Building

Over the last 12 months we have continued to see an increasing trend in the demand for primary school places. I am very proud to say that, through the strong relationships that have been built with Academy sponsors and our schools, we are able to increase capacity for school places and deliver an excellent working environment for our children. Our partnership working with Reach2 will see the completion of the expansion of the Purfleet Primary Academy by 1FE and this is due to be completed in the next few months. I am pleased to report that work continues at pace at the new 5FE Harris Mayflower Academy and this is due for completion in September 2016.

We have commenced with the expansions of Thameside and Woodside schools, which will increase each school by 1FE. We will be taking an application to the Planning Committee in the next few months to seek agreement to expand Somersheath School by 1FE by re-commissioning the old Knightsmead school site which is adjacent to Somersheath. We have also put in additional primary classes at East Tilbury, Kenningtons and Giffards schools.

Pupil Attendance

Children are unlikely to reach their full potential if they do not attend school regularly. Although national figures for the academic year 2014/15 are not yet published, the indications are that overall absence in primary schools is likely to be only slightly lower at 4%.

Secondary absence was 4.6% which, whilst 0.1% higher than previously reported, is still likely to be lower than the anticipated national average for the second year running.

The Education Welfare Service, which monitors attendance and intervenes where necessary, continues to work closely with staff and families at schools and academies to ensure that good attendance is a top priority for all. Our expectation is that the improvements in primary attendance will provide an improved foundation for attendance in secondary schools as expectations about and patterns of good attendance are embedded early.

Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

This year Thurrock has once again done well in ensuring that young people not in education, employment or training are all identified and Thurrock careers personal advisers support them into an appropriate training/education or employment option. The NEET figure has continued to decrease down to 4.7% in December 2015.

Particularly pleasing is NEET 16 Year old figure standing at 1.2% which is 0.6% less than England average (1.8%). Participation figure has increased in December 2015 to 83.7% placing Thurrock above England average at 81% and well above South East average at just 77.5%.

The not-known figure now stands at just 0.4%. The Department for Education (DfE) has praised Thurrock Careers on their commendable partnership with other Thurrock Council departments and would like to use Thurrock as an example of best practice for other local authorities.

Thurrock is providing career advice not only in secondary educational establishments but also in primary – raising children’s aspirations and ambitions from an early age.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Local Authority has continued to work successfully in partnership with our pre-schools, schools and academies to implement the changes brought in by the reforms to the support arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

There continues to have been close work and strong partnership with our representative parent groups, educational settings, health, social care and educational agencies. The comprehensive 3 year transformation plan to transfer statements of education to education health and care (EHC) plans is being implemented successfully and has succeeded in 354 reviews of statements in its first year from September 2014 to August 2015.

New arrangements for the co-ordination and delivery of support to pre-school children with SEND has taken place with a new multi-agency panel coordinating the statutory response from Education Health, and Social Care, building on our highly successful Early Support programme. There has been a significant increase in requests for statutory support, as anticipated, as part of this process. The Local Offer setting out the support and services for children and young people with SEND is firmly established and continues to be reviewed and developed in response to feedback from service users.

The new Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans have been reviewed and the format enhanced following feedback from the first year of their implementation and there has been positive feedback from the DfE Regional Adviser on their structure and content. There are clear systems of local quality assurance established for the EHC plans and there continues to be a significant level of regional working to ensure their successful implementation.

Arts and Cultural Entitlement – the Trailblazer programme

2015 also saw the continuation of the arts and cultural entitlement programme in Thurrock for young people, with 28 schools involved in the pathfinder programme which was devised here in Thurrock and has created considerable national interest. The council commissioned the Royal Opera House Learning team to organise the programme for the schools. What particularly excites me, apart from the obvious cultural benefits, is the way the programme has been jointly funded between the council, the Arts Council and schools themselves. It is this partnership approach I believe which will support us through tough financial times ahead.

Participating schools are currently involved in a rich and diverse programme of activities including visits to leading arts organisations, as well as creating and responding to cultural activities themselves. One of the things which singles Thurrock out is the growing arts and cultural scene locally and I am delighted that this has been taken up so wholeheartedly by our schools.

Conclusion

There has been a huge amount to celebrate in Thurrock's schools and settings this year. The whole educational community has worked very hard to develop a shared vision with the council and other partners. The Thurrock Education Alliance has made good headway in agreeing the vision and priorities and the Thurrock Excellence Network has already put together a comprehensive training brochure, is progressing a teacher recruitment and retention strategy and is organising support between different schools and academies across the primary and secondary sectors.

The Education Awards evening showed the best of Thurrock. It showcased the many examples of outstanding head teachers, effective governing bodies and inspiring staff members. We haven't got everything right. We know that there is more to do until all schools and academies are good and/or outstanding. We know that we would like all children to achieve their potential and there is more to do with some groups of pupils, particularly children in the care system who currently underachieve compared with others.

What I am enormously heartened by as I have visited schools and academies is the desire and drive to work together to get the best for our children and young people, regardless of type of school or institution.

Financial Information

Education is funded through the Dedicated School Grant (DSG), which is the main funding source for all Schools. This is broken down into three blocks, Schools block - which is for direct School funding; High Needs Block - which covers the costs of additional needs of students, including both state and independent special schools and pupils with Statements in schools. The third block is the Early Years block - which supports the costs of 2, 3 and 4 year old provision in schools and private and voluntary provision.

Schools block funding is allocated to schools using a formula methodology agreed by the Schools' Forum. This is the same formula for both maintained schools and academies; however for academies the grant is "recouped" from the Local Authority and paid directly to them by the Education Funding Agency.

The Dedicated Schools Grant has stayed at the same per pupil amount for the last four years and has only been increased in relation to pupil volume.

Use of the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2014/15 is as below.

Notes

Schools Budget Funded By Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

		Central Expenditure £000	Individual Schools Budget £000	Total £000
A	Final DSG for 2014/15 before Academy Recoupment	-	-	128,326
B	Academy figure recouped for 2014/15	-	-	73,743
C	Total DSG after Academy Recoupment for 2014/15	-	-	54,583
D	Brought Forward from 2013/14	2,784	0	2,784
E	Carry Forward agreed to 2015/16			0
F	Agreed budgeted distribution in 2014/15	4,880	49,703	54,583
G	In Year Budget Adjustments	(256)	440	184
H	Actual Central Expenditures	4,502		4,502
I	Actual ISB deployed to schools		50,143	50,143
J	Local authority contribution 2014/15	0	0	0
K	Carry Forward to 2015/16	2,906	0	2,906

- A** This is the original Final DSG Figure, before recoupment for historic and in-year Academy Conversions.
- B** This is the reduction in the Thurrock allocation of DSG for those Schools that are no longer under local Authority Control and are now funded directly by the DfE
- C** This is the Net DSG figure issued by DfE in March 2015. For Funding Maintained Schools and Specific Education services to Schools and Academies.
- D** This figure brought forward from 2013/14, is unspent Central DSG Contingency.
- E** Any amount which the authority decided after consultation with the schools forum to carry forward to 2015/16 rather than distribute in 2014/15.
- F** Budgeted distribution of DSG, adjusted for in year Academy conversions, as agreed with the schools forum.
- G** Budget movements from Contingency to the Individual Schools Budget (ISB)
- H** Actual amount of central expenditure items in 2014/15, after contingency allocations to ISB.
- I** Amount of ISB actually distributed to schools (ISB is regarded for DSG purposes as spent by the authority once it is deployed to schools' budget shares).
- J** Any contribution from the local authority in 2014/15 which will have the effect of substituting for DSG in funding the Schools Budget.
- K** Carry forward to 2015/16.

I want us to ensure that every child achieves their potential through excellent teaching and inspired learning.
Carmel Littleton, DCS

AMBITION, ACHIEVEMENT AND ASPIRATION EDUCATION STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2015/16 PLAN-ON-A PAGE

WHY ARE WE HERE?

1. TO ENSURE EVERY SCHOOL AND SETTING IN THURROCK IS GOOD OR OUTSTANDING AND PROVIDING EXCELLENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CYP)

2. THE PRIORITIES FOR 2015/16

<p>2.1 Improve pupil achievement and attainment so that all Thurrock educational provision is at least good and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is closed, and ensure more able and talented pupils reach their potential.</p>	<p>2.2 Develop an excellent teacher and senior manager Recruitment and Retention Strategy and deliver high quality teaching and learning in all schools and settings.</p>	<p>2.3 Ensure Safeguarding, Personal Development, Health and Wellbeing are central to the way schools and settings support and challenge their pupils in quality learning environments</p>	<p>2.4 Ensure access to the best quality local offer to meet the needs of all CYP with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)</p>	<p>2.5 Working with families, continue to develop the cultural entitlement within a high quality curriculum to include culture, music, and sport and work experience for all</p>
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3. RAISE ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

3.1 Progress at all Key Stages will be at least good, so that:-

All of our early years settings are good or better, and pupils will be well prepared for their reception year. 77% of our 5 years olds will reach a good level of development (GLD) at the end of their reception year

At least 85% of our 11 year olds will reach above national standards in reading, writing and maths so that they are secondary ready.

Young people will achieve above the national average at 5+ higher grade GCSEs including positive progress 8 and all will be ready for the next steps in their life

Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium will achieve in line with their peers.

Young people will make informed choices about their future and engage in high quality education and training, and have access to Higher Education including the Russell Group of Universities

Every young person post 16 will be engaged in high quality education, employment or training with no NEETs or unknowns

4. WHAT WE NEED TO DO TO GET IT RIGHT TOGETHER

<p>4.1 Continue to improve communication with and between schools and academies. Engage and empower leaders, including governors, at all levels to develop a sustainable sector-led model of continuous improvement</p>	<p>4.2 Increase knowledge, skills and understanding of school performance (without levels!) with accurate and up-to-date tracking data</p>	<p>4.3 Develop more effective use of best practice within the borough promoting school to school support and building on the good practice</p>	<p>4.4 Increase the pace of improvement and accelerate progress especially in English, mathematics and science; improve attendance; reduce exclusions and narrow the gap made by different groups of CYP</p>	<p>4.5 Develop a range of high quality employment, apprenticeships and training opportunities supported by schools, academies and business to ensure no-one is NEET</p>	<p>4.6 Through effective differentiation, engagement and tracking ensure all vulnerable pupils achieve their potential.</p>
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24 February 2016	ITEM: 17
Council	
Cabinet Member Report – Communities and Public Protection	
Report of: Councillor Jane Potheary	
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 and Rescue Service to achieve this aim.

I will outline the work of the teams that deliver this activity on behalf of the Council. 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

One area of particular activity this year has been the pursuit of fly tippers. This has resulted in the prosecution of thirteen individuals for waste offences so far this year and further prosecutions are in progress or in the pipeline. 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 environmental enforcement officers on this area of work, in particular where evidence can be obtained for prosecution of offenders. Fly tipping reports have continued to increase in the last 3 years.

Environmental Protection

The work of the Environmental Protection (EP) Team encompasses the areas of pollution control, air quality management, contaminated land, statutory nuisance and environmental enforcement.

EP continues to deal with the enforcement of high hedges, light nuisance, odour nuisance and dust nuisance. The team provide advice including expertise in acoustics to planning and licensing applications to promote good environmental compliance on developments and licensed events / premises.

EP Officers completed all 69 permitted industrial process inspections. This statutory duty includes the enforcement of environmental permit conditions to ensure compliance with emissions to air, land and water. Works continue to reduce the impact of these processes on the wellbeing of residents and improve the industrial processes environmental management systems.

The team implement the Air Quality (AQ) Management Regime in Thurrock and monitor 16 designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's). The team continue to maintain and collect air quality data from scientific air quality monitoring equipment at 5 remote sites in the borough.

Air quality officers continue to work with Highways and Public Health officers to produce a new AQ strategy and Air Quality Action Plan for Thurrock's current and new AQMAs and this should be completed in early 2016.

The team dealt with 69 Contaminated Land (CL) enquiries this year. Enquiries are made from site developers, businesses and residents looking to purchase new houses or land for development. The team store and maintain records of historical land use, remediation and current status to answer specific CL enquiries.

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.

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.

The team 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.

Thurrock 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.

In order to address local crime issues and assist in addressing emerging issues around the radicalisation of groups the partnership priorities are:

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

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

Violent extremism: Delivering the Governments counter terrorism strategy – Prevent locally

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 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.

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. The team are involved in the, National Trading Standards Board, Safety at Ports Project. For more information on this area of work please see the report which went to Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny in September.

The team have had a successful prosecution in relation to 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 rabies and so have to be quarantined to prevent the introduction of rabies into the UK.

Unauthorised Traveller Encampments

Thurrock continues to have significant numbers of unauthorised encampments, continuing the trend seen last year. Between 1.3.15 and 10.12.15, there were 56 such encampments in our Borough, of which 7 were on private land. In such cases it is the responsibility of the landowner to get the travellers moved on; the remaining 49 were responded to by the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU), of which the Council is a subscribing member. Once the ECTU has been notified of an unauthorised encampment which is on public or Council-owned land, it undertakes all the remaining actions required, including court appearances, to get the encampment moved on.

The ECTU has a target to remove of all unauthorised encampments on public or Council-owned land within 10 working days. This is the minimum time required to comply with the service of the necessary papers for the various stages of the removal process. I am pleased to report that they have continued to hit this target on every occasion in Thurrock, often getting the encampment removed within 7 or 8 days.

The Council has recently funded a programme to target-harden those sites which have been used on a number of occasions by travellers, to make them less accessible for unauthorised encampments to be set up.

The annual cost of membership to the ECTU was reduced by 10% this year to £6,462.90p, which I believe represents excellent value for money.

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. 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.



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.

Parking Regulation, Enforcement and Management

The management of parking across the Borough is an essential tool in supporting road safety and balancing the often competing needs of our communities. Examples of this include balancing the needs of commuters and residents, or the needs of those wanting the roads kept clear for safety reasons, alongside the needs of those wishing to park. As land uses change and communities evolve, new Traffic Regulation Orders are required and others need to be amended. So far this year, Thurrock's Traffic team have developed and consulted on 17 new or amended orders.

Notable trends this year have been the growing numbers of rail commuters, with increased demand for parking places near railway stations, and increased designated lorry parking places allowing the Council to be more rigorous in restricting parking in on-street locations where this causes problems for local residents. In December, Cabinet gave approval for a new commuter car park at Purfleet, and 132 additional spaces at Grays' Beach.

School Gate Parking enforcement continues to be an issue for communities across the Borough. Our innovative trial in partnership with Tilbury Pioneer has demonstrated what can be achieved by joint working. Initial evaluation suggests a significant reduction in parking violations and complaints from parents.

Our Parking Enforcement Team supports the maintenance and management of on and off-street parking as well as Controlled Parking Zones and Permit Parking Areas across the Borough.



At the start of this year, we had 2,731 resident's parking permits issued across the Borough, representing a 12.7% increase on the previous year. Free weekend

parking was again provided during December 2015 in all on and off-street pay-and-display parking places.

Community Development and Equalities

As pressures on council budgets continue to impact on local services, it is imperative that we support people to be resilient and build support within communities. In November, Cabinet agreed to establish the Community Environment Development Fund – subject to Council’s approval of the budget in February 2016. Communities can apply to the fund for infrastructure and environmental improvements such as better road layouts and verge reinforcements. The idea behind creating this fund is so the council can support this process with a transparent system looking at capital requests. In many parts of Thurrock residents are incredibly proud of the area where they live and we councillors are often approached with exciting and innovative ideas aimed at improving those areas – this fund will help those residents keen to take forward their ideas forward.

Empowering communities to do more for themselves results in more appropriate, community led responses that are sustainable and holistic in their approach. This continues to be a leading principle behind the development of Community Hubs. Hubs demonstrate how working differently can unleash the passion and skills inherent within communities to bring people together and make a difference to local people. Two hubs have opened this year – Stifford Clays ‘Acorns’ Hub and Tilbury Hub. A charitable organisation – Thurrock Community Hubs – has now been established under the umbrella of Thurrock CVS to develop and sustain hubs across the borough. Funding from the Transformation Challenge Award has now been set aside to support hubs and a training programme supports the development of volunteers. As well as helping resident’s access council services, hubs enable local people to come together around the issues they feel most passionate about.

Volunteering continues to be supported across Thurrock from formal opportunities to ‘Time Bank’ requests for more practical exchanges of support. The council is extremely proud of the 257 volunteers who give their time to support council services across Thurrock museums, libraries, youth offending and children centres to give just a few examples. A mid-year review was carried out across the summer, with 100% of respondents saying they would recommend volunteering with Thurrock Council to others. All volunteers received a certificate of thanks, signed by the mayor, during Volunteers’ Week in June, As a council we are always keen for ways 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 veterans to register by using their service number. I urge all Councillors to learn about the VIP Portal and to encourage all veterans to sign up so that we can build a picture of the profile of veterans living in Thurrock.

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. Unfortunately, poor weather meant that the sports day at this year's event at Coalhouse Fort had to be abandoned. However, those attending were still able to enjoy the displays and re-enactments arranged to commemorate the Great War, 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.

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.

Following a successful relaunch in December 2014, the council now has 5 very active staff forums representing Mental Health, Disability, Black, Minority Ethnic staff (BME), Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) and Women. The groups have achieved a great deal in the last 12 months from reviewing and updating our HR policies, to completing an accredited assessment of our support for staff. Some fantastic achievements from our dedicated workforce that we should all be proud to celebrate.

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 Fairness Commission held its first meeting March 2015 and defined fairness as '*A fair society is where people have an equal chance to realise their full potential and an equal chance to have their voices heard and be part of decision-making*'.

From June to October the Commission held 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. The Commission is due to share its report with Cabinet next month. I endorse their recommendation to review the Single Equality Scheme (SES) with a comprehensive focus on access, tackling poverty and building cohesion. A robust SES will replace the Annual Equality Report to Council. Workforce equality data will continue to be published on the website as this is a statutory requirement under the Equalities Act.

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

Cost Centre	Revised Budget £000's	Actuals To Date £000's	Budgets to Date £000's	Variance to date £000's	Forecast Outturn £000's	Revised Variance £000's
Environmental Health Food Safety	210.5	116.8	140.3	(23.5)	187.0	(23.5)
Environmental Protection	330.6	184.2	218.4	(34.2)	316.4	(14.2)
Licensing	(51.3)	(38.3)	(58.5)	20.2	(31.1)	20.2
Trading Standards	331.4	177.2	221.0	(43.8)	287.7	(43.8)
Public Protection	236.0	154.6	157.3	(2.8)	233.2	(2.8)
Health & Safety	308.7	157.7	205.8	(48.1)	327.3	18.6
Public Protection Service Management	49.4	24.4	32.9	(8.5)	40.9	(8.5)
Community Protection	79.8	53.7	53.2	0.5	80.3	0.5
Community Safety	21.0	0.0	14.0	(14.0)	7.0	(14.0)
Civil Protection	151.0	80.0	100.7	(20.7)	130.3	(20.7)
Safer Communities Fund	18.3	0.0	12.2	(12.2)	51.7	33.3
Domestic Violence	40.0	0.0	40.0	(40.0)	40.0	0.0
Grand Total	1,725.4	910.3	1,137.3	(227.0)	1,670.7	(54.7)

Financial information – Forecast 2015/16

The service is expected to achieve a £0.050m surplus at the end of the year. This is the overall position of operational activities, and is helped by additional proceeds of crime income within the service.

Community Development and Equalities Financial Information

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

Cost Centre	Revised Budget £000's	Actuals To Date £000's	Budgets to Date £000's	Variance £000's	Forecast Outturn £000's	Revised Variance £000's
Strategy Team	403.69	280.10	286.67	(6.56)	397.12	(6.56)
Community Development Projects	50.90	25.49	39.60	(14.11)	36.79	(14.11)
Voluntary Grants	432.60	346.08	317.24	28.84	432.60	0.00
Grand Total	887.19	651.67	643.51	8.17	866.51	(20.67)

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

This code is used to support specific projects undertaken by the team.

Voluntary Grants DA502

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

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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 one question to the Leader and no 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 Aker** (received 15/02/2016 @ 14:48)

"Given Highways England's reluctance to send a consultation pack with freepost reply envelope to every resident in the borough, will the leader of the Council look into using the £30,000 fighting fund to see each resident is sent a consultation pack and given a chance to object to the Thames Crossing going through Thurrock."

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

No questions received.

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Item 21 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 24 February 2016

Date	From	Motion	Status	Accountable Director
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.	<p>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 member council. A further response will be submitted when the outcome of these court proceedings is known.</p> <p><u>Update – January 2016</u></p> <p>On 16th December 2015 Harlow Council and Essex County Council were granted a full injunction in Harlow. It bans 35 named persons from setting up unauthorised encampments on any land in Harlow. It also protects 321 vulnerable sites across Harlow including parks and playgrounds, previously occupied sites, highway verges, schools, cycle tracks and private land identified by Harlow Council and Essex County Council from persons unknown setting up unauthorised encampments. Officers are now looking at the work Harlow have undertaken in conjunction with Essex County Traveller Unit to see if a similar measure would be an appropriate in Thurrock.</p>	Gavin Dennett
25/03/15	Cllr Gledhill	This Council thanks all retiring elected members for their service to Thurrock.	No action required.	David Bull
22/07/15	Cllr Ojetola	<p>Radicalisation of youths seems to be quite rampant, doing nothing is not an option as parents are losing their children to extremism.</p> <p>We call on Thurrock Council to create a member led committee to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach</p>	A full briefing note on the background, current provision and options for greater Member involvement / panel was provided to Constitution Working Group Members in August 2015.	David Bull

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		to tackle the threat of extremism and radicalisation in line with our Duty to Prevent.		
23/09/15	Cllr Halden	<p>Legal highs are quickly becoming a social disaster, from both the point of view of being harmful as substances, but also giving a very incorrect impression of the dangers of substance abuse, especially amongst younger people.</p> <p>We instruct Council to consult with Essex Police on the most effective way of tackling the use of legal highs in public spaces, including Public Space Protection Orders, with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitoring the outcome.</p> <p>In addition we instruct the constitution working group to consider how to best exercise and delegate all of our streamlined public protection powers that come from the 2014 Crime and Disorder act to be accessible to all members.</p>	<p>The Head of Public Protection has consulted with the Local Police Commander to determine whether the Police would support the application of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Thurrock to impose control measures on the use of legal highs.</p> <p>The Police have indicated that based on the evidence available to them and the practicality of enforcing control measures against an otherwise legal activity they would not prioritise enforcement of any control measures imposed by a potential PSPO at this time.</p> <p>Should further evidence alter the Police position with regard to the prioritisation of enforcement resources for legal high work they will update the Council and liaise with the relevant council department to consult on a PSPO for this purpose.</p>	Gavin Dennett
23/09/15	Cllr Worrall	<p>Thurrock Council are concerned over implications for tenants and housing stock of the Conservative government's Emergency Budget's housing measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit withdrawn for 18–21 year olds; • Housing Benefit/ Local Housing Allowance (LHA) frozen for five years; • Tax Credits and Housing Benefit/LHA include only first two children in households born after April 2017; • Market rents charged in social housing where incomes are £30,000, additional rent 	<p>A paper is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 11th November on the principles the council may adopt for mitigating detrimental impact that these proposals may otherwise have on our existing affordable housing building programme. This is set to be followed by a report to Housing O&S with the results of the more detailed impact assessments that are currently being undertaken.</p> <p>In addition the Council is in the process responding to recent formal consultations issued in respect of the market rents proposals for all households exceeding £30,000.</p> <p>David Bull will be writing to the MPs in October with the</p>	David Bull

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		<p>receipts go to Treasury not Housing Revenue Account or Council.</p> <p>The impact will increase poverty, homelessness and numbers at risk of being homeless, amongst young and very low income families.</p> <p>For individual tenants who have faced significant above inflation rent increases and falling incomes over the last few years, the Budget proposal to cut social sector rents by 1% for the next four years will be welcome.</p> <p>That a 1% rent cut will mean loss of rental income to Housing Revenue Account of £18.75 million by 2019/2020, that loss will have significant consequences for Council's plans to build new homes, maintain and refurbish existing stock of homes.</p> <p>The Council resolves to write to the two MPs for Thurrock to lay out concerns and to highlight the impact on Thurrock residents of these measures in Westminster.</p>	<p>current understanding of the proposed measures on Thurrock Residents.</p>	
23/09/15	Cllr Ray	<p>This Council calls for those Councillors who passed away during their service as a member of Thurrock Council (since the turn of the new century) to be commemorated in the Council Chamber for their work and contributions to the community of Thurrock.</p>	<p>Research has been undertaken to identify around ten councillors who have passed away while still serving on the council since 1998. Officers are now looking into the various options for designing a suitable memorial.</p>	Fiona Taylor
23/09/15	Cllr Halden	<p>The current crisis with refugees has led to calls for national and local governments to act in support. The chamber agrees with this.</p> <p>Thurrock resolves to play its part to aid refugees and will make this position known to the Home</p>	<p>Officers have been looking at how the council currently supports refugees and those seeking asylum and how it can do so in the future. There is a well-established process for dealing with unaccompanied asylum seekers who are looked after as children in care. Thurrock has recently looked after higher numbers of</p>	Carmel Littleton

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		<p>Office.</p> <p>We instruct the council to be ready with clear plans for service support from housing, social care, to public protection.</p> <p>While we welcome the notion of using international aid funding to help with costs, we of course understand local pressures we are already under and therefore council will make representations to the Home Secretary that support must be evenly sought across local authorities to avoid disproportionate costs being applied to the taxpayer.</p>	<p>unaccompanied asylum seeking children than in previous years and is already playing a full part in offering support.</p> <p>Departments across the council are looking in details at how refugees subject to the new resettlement scheme can be accommodated successfully in the borough and the funding available from government to achieve this. Early details of government funding for the scheme have been released and these are informing departmental plans. A letter has been sent to the Home Secretary requesting that support is evenly sought across local authorities to avoid disproportionate costs falling to the taxpayer.</p>	
28/10/15	Cllr Redsell	<p>We call on Thurrock Council to take action with its partners to help prevent the use of motorbikes and similar vehicles on our green spaces.</p>	<p>The Council work closely with Essex police to address this problem across the Borough. There are posters advising residents against this anti-social behaviour and requesting that they report such illegal use to either the Police or crimestoppers; which have been displayed in all housing communal areas.</p> <p>Specific concerns are brought to the multi-agency community safety partnership Local Action Groups for discussion and attention. This has led to a section 59 notice being served at Blackshots and a subsequent reported reduction in nuisance vehicles.</p> <p>The Police will continue to deal with such reported nuisance with support as required from their partners.</p>	Lucy Magill
28/10/15	Cllr J. Kent	<p>Thurrock Council is concerned at reports that government is considering scrapping Universal Free School Meals for infant school children.</p> <p>We believe that such a move would be damaging to both the education and health outcomes of our young people so resolve to write to the Treasury</p>	<p>Letter to Treasury, DfE and Thurrock 2 MP's sent out.</p>	Carmel Littleton

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		and Department for Education to show our support for the continuation of Universal Free School Meals as well as to our two members of parliament to make them aware of our concerns.		
28/10/15	Cllr Ray	That this Council will explore ways of working with NHS partners to fully endorse and promote the importance of giving blood and signing up for organ and tissue donation in Thurrock.	<p>Ian Wake, the Council's Director of Public Health has discussed Councillor Ray's motion with senior colleagues in NHS Thurrock CCG.</p> <p>The Council's Public Health team have agreed to develop a joint communications campaign with the CCG to promote blood and organ donation and encourage our population to participate in both of these important national programmes.</p>	Roger Harris / Ian Wake
28/10/15	Cllr Potheary	<p>Essex Police have recently announced they plan to close two of the borough's police stations and sell off a third, as well as cut the number of PCSOs in Thurrock from 38 to just 6. After already making cuts of £40million, Essex Police is facing having to make over £60million worth of cuts by 2020 thanks to the Government. The dramatic reduction in the number of police officers and PCSOs on our streets is a big issue for our residents and has worrying implications for community safety.</p> <p>The Council resolves to write to the two MPs for Thurrock to set out our concerns about the detrimental impact of police cuts on Thurrock residents and community safety, and ask them to lobby for better funding for Essex Police.</p>	Letters sent to both MPs	Lucy Magill
25/11/15	Cllr Kent	This Council remains opposed to government plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock and commits to continue campaigning, alongside local residents, on this issue.	The Council is expecting a Government decision on route options for the Lower Thames Crossing before the end of January. Two public meetings have been organised to discuss the issues on January 25th and February 25th and a special extended Planning,	David Bull

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			Transportation and Regeneration Scrutiny is planned for 9 February 2016. Highways England's proposals were published on 26th January with a preferred option for a bored tunnel between Gravesend and Tilbury.	
25/11/15	Cllr Halden	Thurrock Council adopts the official position of being pro grammar school and desires that Thurrock children should have access to them. The Authority should actively pursue / explore opportunities for grammar schools to expand into Thurrock via an annex.	Local authority officers met with the Regional Schools Commissioner representative on 14.1.15 to explore opportunities for grammar schools to open an annexe in Thurrock. Exploratory discussions will be held over the coming weeks with local grammar schools.	Carmel Littleton
25/11/15	Cllr Stewart	That we ask Cabinet, at its next meeting, to immediately fund an alteration to the bus route to serve Fobbing over the winter months.	This has been implemented. Route 14 serves Fobbing to Basildon via Corringham and will operate until the end of the financial year.	David Bull
27/1/16	Cllr Hebb	That Thurrock Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard / Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth. Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request.	Discussions are ongoing between Council Officers and c2c to progress this request.	Ann Osola
27/1/16	Cllr Halden	The chamber resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to poor communication/ engagement from representatives of NHS England and NHS commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the PET CT Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.	On the 5 February 2016 a letter was sent to The Rt. Honourable Jeremy Hunt M.P, Secretary of State for Health, House of Commons.	Ian Wake
27/1/16	Cllr Stone	Further to the proposed cuts to the fire service across the borough of between one third and one half. This council resolves to express its concerns	The Fire Authority will be attending Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny on March 17th as part of their consultation exercise. This will give members the	Lucy Magill / Karen Wheeler

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		<p>by:</p> <p>a) Objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) public consultation - and urges residents to do the same.</p> <p>b) Raising these concerns with the two members of parliament to enlist their support</p> <p>c) Urging the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.</p>	<p>opportunity to raise their concerns.</p> <p>Both MPs have been written to.</p> <p>A link to the EFRS public consultation has been included on the Council's website under Have my say (consultation portal).</p>	
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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 T. Aker

"Thurrock Council calls on C2C rail company to return to its pre-December 13th timetable".

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The motion relates to a matter which affects the authority or the authority' area and the authority have a relevant role in representing its views to such an external body.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no direct financial implications to the Council as a result of this motion.

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

Yes

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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 R. Jones

“In light of recent events where the Borough of Thurrock was brought to a virtual standstill on the 28th January and 9th February because of events relating to the Dartford crossing, we request that Thurrock Council send a letter to both Essex Police and Essex Fire and Rescue Services to rethink their proposals to drastically cut essential services to the borough of Thurrock and work with Highways England on an action plan to combat the chronic congestion that affects the whole Borough during such incidents.”

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The motion relates to a matter which affects the authority or the authority' area and the authority have a relevant role in representing its views to such an external body. This Motion has on balance been differentiated from the previous Motion to January 2016 Full Council objecting to Essex Fire & Rescue Service proposals because it is addressed to the specific issue of traffic congestion in the light of 2 recent traffic events and is addressed to Essex Police, Highways England as well as Essex Fire & Rescue Service in this specific context.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no direct financial implications to the Council as a result of this motion.

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

Yes

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