

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

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **7 January 2016**

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

Membership:

Councillors Shane Hebb (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Russell Cherry, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard and Deborah Stewart

Substitutes:

Councillors Yash Gupta (MBE), Barry Johnson and Tunde Ojetola

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Minutes	5 - 16
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 November 2015.	
An action list update is also attached for Members information, in response to matters raised at previous meetings.	
3. Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4. Declaration of Interests	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **22 December 2015**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 November 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Shane Hebb (Chair), Graham Snell (Vice-Chair), Russell Cherry, Martin Kerin and Deborah Stewart
Apologies:	Councillor Steve Liddiard
In attendance:	Les Billingham, Head of Adult Services Andrew Carter, Head of Children's Social Care Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration Jackie Hinchliffe, Head of HR, OD & Transformation Wendy Allen, People and Organisational Development Manager Stephanie Cox, 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.

17. Minutes

Councillor Hebb requested that an action list be compiled for future meetings so that Members could monitor actions, such as which other accreditations the authority could undertake in order to demonstrate performance.

Councillor Stewart advised that at the previous meeting she had requested a list of statutory and discretionary services and that as of yet she had not received this information.

In response the Head of Corporate Finance advised that he could send information on the statutory and discretionary budget services as the slide packs had been used as part of the Budget Review Panel Process. He informed Members that more detailed work on other services areas was currently underway and once finalised could be circulated to Members.

The Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 17 September 2015, were approved as a correct record.

18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

19. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Cherry declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 5, 'Serco Transition Update', as his wife had once been subject to TUPE, the

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations to Serco and back again to Thurrock as a Council Employee.

20. Serco Transition Update

The Head of Regeneration introduced the report which outlined the broad background to the transition programme, the work completed to date and the proposals for the hosting and management of the returning services.

At 7.08 pm Councillor Kerin arrived at the meeting.

Councillor Snell requested an update with regards to the transition of the ICT Call Centre, to which the Head of Regeneration advised that the interim system had been integrated and tested and there were no anticipated issues at this stage.

Councillor Kerin asked for further information on the review of terms and conditions and associated rates on contracts in order to determine whether the Council was receiving best value.

Members were advised many of the contracts were annual contracts which were currently being brought across as they were, however the Commercial Services team would be scoping all contracts as they come back to the authority, and four had already been examined already in order to make savings.

Councillor Hebb recognised that this was one of the largest TUPE, Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, exercises since the Thames Gateway Development Corporation and asked whether as part of the transition staff were receiving regular one-to-one meetings and contact with their line manager.

The Committee were advised that a Consultation and Engagement Process was underway, where in addition to a formal consultation that had taken place, there had been conversations with the cohort of staff affected through staff briefings, welcome sessions, management training packages and regular one-to-one staff meetings.

Councillor Snell asked how the test payroll runs were going, to which it was reported that one payroll run had been undertaken which had not demonstrated any problems that had not been expected and a second test off live payroll data would be conducted before the transition date.

Officers assured Members that it was critical that staff were getting paid the right amount of money, especially in light of Christmas approaching. The Head of Corporate Finance further reported that a treasury system would also be set-up on standby to ensure that if there was an issue staff salary could still be paid.

Councillor Hebb felt that it was important to keep everyone well informed of the key milestones during the transition and asked whether a weekly briefing could be provided to identify whether the transition was on/off track.

The Head of Regeneration explained that a weekly progress tracker was prepared and circulated, which he could also share with Members.

RESOLVED:

Members are asked to acknowledge the work completed to date and the progress achieved in transferring services back to the Council.

21. Training and Development - Officers

The Head of HR, OD & Transformation introduced the report which focused on the training for officers from both adults and children's social care, which included mandatory training, certification requirements, how the Council ensured staff remained competent and demonstrated the balance between personal/council accountability.

Councillor Hebb remarked that the Committee asked for the report in order to ensure that standards were of the highest quality.

Councillor Kerin questioned whether there were any measures in place if an employee did not book on mandatory training courses, to which it was explained that training and development fell within the management framework and all employees were required to discuss and agree their development plan through ongoing discussions with their line manager.

The Committee were advised that all employees were subject to a six month probation period during which the skills and development required to undertake the role would be agreed within a set timetable and according to agreed objectives. The employee would then receive a full review after six months and the appraisal system was linked to the financial year, with a detailed appraisal being conducted for all employees at the end of March.

The Head of HR, OD and Transformation advised that the setting of objectives and development plans were undertaken simultaneously.

Councillor Kerin asked how often local policies and procedures were reviewed in relation to Female Genital Mutilation and Child Sexual Exploitation and whether other organisations were involved in this process.

In response, the Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes explained that the range of training was set by both the Council and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and informed by the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation (MACE) group, who also worked in partnership with the People and Organisational development team. Members were assured that cross-checks were undertaken to flag up anyone who may have missed a course in order for them to be re-booked.

The Committee were informed of the comprehensive training programme for Social Workers, for whom records had to be signed off by line managers and a random dip sample taken each year by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in order to ensure that all employees met the professional standard.

Councillor Stewart asked for clarification around the audit process for care homes that looked after young people under the age of 16 years, which she understood did not have to be registered with the local authority.

The Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes explained that semi-independent care homes for those under 16 years were not statutorily bound to register with the local authority but that evidence of training around the prevent strategy and child sexual exploitation were monitored through commissioning arrangements.

Councillor Stewart commended the Corporate Parenting training she had received and asked whether providers were rigorously monitored to ensure that they were appropriate for the Looked After Child, to which the Head of Care and Targeted Outcomes advised that all providers were subject to a high level of scrutiny that included an initial social worker visit, weekly visit for the first 4 weeks of the placement and regular contact with the Reviewing Officer thereafter in the case of young people under the age of 18 years.

Councillor Snell commended the report which he felt was thorough and asked for clarification around the process if an employee was not meeting the standard expected despite training and assistance. In response the Head of Adult Services informed Members that training was constantly being undertaken in the day-to-day working environment and he felt the workforce was a valuable asset to be proud of. In circumstances when the expected standard was not met a capability process was followed where support was provided to the employee to enable them to improve or deal with any issues and in circumstances where it was not possible to resolve the issue a contract would be terminated.

Officers clarified the definition of the Victorian Risk Management Framework which was a model for describing the minimum risk management requirements agencies were required to meet to demonstrate that they are managing risk effectively.

The Committee were informed that training was increasingly offered online through e-learning packages as it was available to a wide range of people at any given time and cost-effective; however for high level issues more appropriate class room methods, or a blend of methods, were used.

Councillor Cherry asked whether there were sufficient ICT and desks available in light of the transfer of staff from Serco and the hot-desking policy, to which officers advised that the 7/10 hot-desking ratio was working well and

staff could access training from a variety of locations, which included home working.

Councillor Hebb questioned how training was quality analysed, to which the People and Organisational Development Manager explained that:

- Following all training courses attendees were sent 'Happy' sheets to formally request feedback on the session provided.
- Feedback was also undertaken through the PDR process and three months after attending the course, managers were contacted to identify any improvement in performance.
- That extensive work was undertaken in partnership with Thurrock Coalition, who observed training and independently provided feedback.

Councillor Hebb further questioned how much was spent on training and development and requested that a benchmarking exercise be undertaken to determine how Thurrock's investment compared with other similar sized unitary authorities.

The Head of Adult Services cautioned against drawing a direct correlation between the quality of training with the amount of money spent as he felt it would provide a false picture of the support offered internally by colleagues, but acknowledged that it was reasonable to undertake a benchmarking exercise.

Councillor Hebb asked for clarification on a number of the training courses listed, including what was Extremist Ideology Training and why only one person was documented having attended. Officers felt that this was an error and reported that they would check the records to identify the discrepancy, as it was believed this referred to 'Prevent' training which had actually been undertaken by a significant number of employees.

In light of the discrepancy Members questioned how officers checked the integrity of training records to which it was explained:

- All staff applied for training through Oracle, which could in turn produce reports.
- Training was monitored through staff supervision and line managers
- The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) annually sampled training records.
- Officers provided feedback that training was fit for purpose.

There was a detailed debate on how training and development was audited in Thurrock in order to assess the integrity of training records and evaluate the success of the programme. Members explained that they did not doubt that training was robust but wanted to ensure that all records were accurate and that any gaps could be identified and rectified quickly, which was particularly important in relation to employees in the Children's Social Care service.

Members were advised that training records were not currently subject to an internal audit by the audit team but the Head of HR, OD and Transformation confirmed that she would investigate to see if it was possible to include the audit of training records on the annual work programme. The Committee were advised that other services, such as statutory finance, would be prioritised but that this would be taken away as an action point.

Following the debate the Committee agreed to add two additional recommendations which included:

- 1.4 *That the Committee request the internal audit team conduct an audit of training records as a due diligence exercise and make recommendations as they feel appropriate.*
- 1.5 *That officers undertake a benchmarking exercise to determine how Thurrock's investment in training compares with other similar sized unitary authorities.*

RESOLVED:

1. **Members to comment on the rigour and range of training.**
2. **Members to review the information for comment.**
3. **Members to be reassured that the rigour and range of training meets both national and local requirements, including legal requirements.**

22. Members Training and Development

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which set out the current Members Training and Development programme offered to all Elected Members in order to assist them in their work.

Councillor Snell felt that all Members should attend courses offered through the Members training programme, and although he appreciated some Councillors may struggle with some daytime courses due to work commitments, all courses should be mandatory and a known requirement before Councillors stood for election.

The Committee felt that the Members Training Programme would benefit if there was a form of accreditation Members could achieve through the completion of courses.

The Committee highlighted that resilience was required from all Group Leaders to ensure that Members bought into compulsory courses.

Members felt that it was only right that when they expected officers to be of excellent quality that Councillors should also be of excellent standard and training courses would assist with performance.

Councillor Stewart felt that training should be mandatory for all new Members and suggested that training courses should be split between those for new members and those for existing members so that the content was targeted appropriately.

Councillor Stewart further observed that Members had a duty of care and as a result suggested that the performance of Councillors should be reviewed every 6 or 12 months.

Councillor Kerin highlighted the fact that he sometimes found it difficult to attend daytime courses due to work commitments, and felt that online training should be further developed to enable Members to complete the required training at home in the evenings or weekends.

The Committee agreed that it was important to improve the accessibility of training and that Members should be held accountable. It was suggested this could be improved through the introduction of webinars, recommended reading lists, Group Meetings and videos.

The Committee agreed to establish a Working Group in order to further identify ways that the Members Training and Development Programme could be improved. The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that Group Leaders would be approached to seek nominations to the Working Group.

As a result Members agreed to amend the wording of recommendation 1.2 to read as follows:

“That officers to form a working group with Members to identify innovative and accessible ways to enhance the Member Development and Training Programme in Thurrock, such as through the development of a regional Member Development Programme, an Online Training Portal and to identify a list of mandatory training courses for Members.”

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Committee comment upon the quality and breadth of the current Members Training and Development Programme.**
- 2. That officers to form a working group with Members to identify innovative and accessible ways to enhance the Member Development and Training Programme in Thurrock, such as through the development of a regional Member Development Programme, an Online Training Portal and to identify a list of mandatory training courses for Members.**
- 3. That each Political Group nominate a “Training Advocate” to act as a lead liaison between Elected Members and Democratic Services in order to help identify which skills Members wish to develop and promote the training courses on offer.**

23. Work Programme

The Chair requested that an action log be created for future meetings in order for the Committee to establish whether actions previously raised were on track.

The Head of HR, OD & Transformation reported that website users could now provide feedback online regarding the functionality of the Corporate website.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting finished at 8.45 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**

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action List Update

Date	From	Action	Status	Lead Officer	Resolved?
25 June 2015	Cllr Hebb	An update on the development of a pop-up window on the Corporate website to enable users to provide feedback regarding functionality.	An update was provided to the Committee on 19 November. It was reported that this function was now live and web users could provide feedback.	Jackie Hinchliffe	CLOSED
25 June 2015	Cllr Hebb	That a summary of the work undertaken by the Budget Review Panel, once concluded, be referred to the Committee for consideration and comments.	It is anticipated that an update will be referred to the Committee in January 2016.	Sean Clark / Steve Cox	OPEN
17 September 2015	Cllr Stewart	For officers to investigate whether blue recycling and brown garden waste bins were combined together when collected, for example if they were collected on the same refuse trucks.	There are operational occasions where this might happen and it is trying to be minimised. At a time if a road is missed then it is possible that all the waste streams for that road will be mingled on collection, this is due to the cost of sending out two crews and refuse lorries rather than the minor cost of sending such a small tonnage of waste to landfill. The department are looking to take actions to minimise this from happening and are hopeful that a future change of work arrangements will make this a very small exception. The department are aware of the disincentive this depicts for people who have taken their time to recycle.	Richard Parkin	CLOSED
17 September 2015	Cllr Liddiard	For a vision of Community Hubs to be shared with the Committee outside of the meeting.	Officers are currently investigating.	Steve Cox	OPEN
17 September 2015	Cllr Stewart	For a list of statutory and discretionary services to be shared with the Committee so that Members could be more informed of the impact of the budget savings. Officers explained that the slide pack from the budget review panel process could be circulated.	A list of statutory and discretionary services is currently being developed by Directors Board and it is anticipated an update will be available in the New Year.	Steve Cox / Sean Clark	OPEN
17 September 2015	Cllr Hebb / Cllr Liddiard	It was agreed that officers could obtain further detail of what Cllr Hebb wanted to achieve from changing the reporting mechanism from outside of the meeting, following which both reporting	The Corporate Planning Framework is currently under review and will be considered by Directors Board in January. This will include a review of how we will monitor the	Sarah Welton / Karen Wheeler	OPEN

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action List Update

		<p>mechanisms could be considered by Performance Board and the findings presented to the Committee at a later meeting.</p> <p>In relation to this Councillor Liddiard requested:</p> <p>For officers to investigate the viability, cost impact and ability to change the currently RAG (Red, Amber, Green) reporting system and consider the wider implications.</p>	Council's performance against the Corporate Plan.		
17 September 2015	Cllr Hebb	How the target of the number of apprentices employed by the Council was set.	65 was the target in 2013/14 and originally it was intended that the target would be increased each year. However, over the last couple of years, given the budgetary situation across all directorates, the ability to recruit and accommodate apprentices and still ensure that their training and experience was of a good standard, has been reduced. Thus rather than increase the target, and put services under increasing pressure, it was decided to maintain the same target – which is still very challenging in the current climate.	Sarah Welton	CLOSED
17 September 2015	Cllr Hebb	Whether the geographical areas with the most contaminated recycling waste loads had been identified and if communication could be targeted in these areas to mitigate the volume of contaminated waste.	<p>The Environment Department have seen a gradual decline of recycling levels over the last few years. This is a national trend however there are certain Councils who are still increasing their recycling rates.</p> <p>Early in the new year the department are looking to have a new action plan in place regarding the increase of recycling.</p> <p>Part of this plan is to target specific area/rounds where recycling appears to be lower than other areas. There is a complication in this however as some rounds have less properties/bin lifts than others therefore some assumptions will need to be worked on.</p>	Richard Parkin / Karen Wheeler	OPEN
17 September	Cllr Hebb	What other accreditations the authority could undertake to demonstrate performance against the	The Council holds the Lexcel Law Society Practice Management Standard for Legal	Jackie	OPEN

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action List Update

2015		priority of a 'well-run organisation'.	Services; ADSO Award for Democratic Services Team of the Year; Customer Contact Association (CCA) global standard; Bronze Homelessness Standard and IIP Gold accreditation. The Information Management team are currently looking at pursuing the ISO 27001 Certification for Information Security Management and are considering costs and requirements. Currently awaiting further feedback from other services.	Hinchliffe	
19 November 2015	Cllr Hebb	To circulate a weekly progress tracker regarding the Serco transition to identify whether key milestones were on or off track.	An update report for the Serco work was circulated to the Committee which completed on 1 December 2015. The project arrangements have now been concluded and no further reports will be circulated.	Matthew Essex	CLOSED
19 November 2015	Committee	To investigate whether an audit of training records could be undertaken by the internal audit team as a due diligence exercise and included on the annual audit work programme as appropriate.	Will submit the proposal to be considered for inclusion in the 2016/17 audit plan.	Jackie Hinchliffe / Wendy Allen	OPEN
19 November 2015	Committee	That officers undertake a benchmarking exercise to determine how Thurrock's investment in training compares with other similar sized unitary authorities. The results of any such exercise can be updated to Members in the form of a briefing note.	Options for conducting a meaningful benchmarking exercise to be researched with a view to conduct the benchmarking in April/May.	Jackie Hinchliffe / Wendy Allen	OPEN
19 November 2015	Committee	That officers form a working group with Members to identify innovate and accessible ways to enhance the Member Development and Training Programme.	Group Leaders and Independent Members have been invited to put forward nominations to the Working Group. Nominations have been received and Members will be contacted in the New Year to arrange for a first meeting in order to progress this matter further.	Democratic Services	OPEN
19 November 2015	Committee	That each Political Group nominate a "Training Advocate" to act as a lead liaison between Elected Members and Democratic Services in order to help identify which skills Members wish to develop and	Group Leaders have been invited to nominate a Training Advocate for their respective groups. Nominations have been received and	Democratic Services	OPEN

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action List Update

		promote the training courses on offer.	Members will be contacted in the New Year.		
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7 January 2016	ITEM: 5
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Mid-Year Corporate Progress and Performance Report 2015/16	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Councillor Victoria Holloway, Cabinet Member for Central Services	
Accountable Head of Service: Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy & Communications	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This report combines the performance against the corporate scorecard with progress against the related deliverables as outlined in the Corporate Priority Activity Plan 2015/16. This is used to monitor the performance of key priorities of the Council and enables Members, Directors and other leaders to form an opinion as to the delivery of these priorities.

At the mid-year point 82% of the indicators are either meeting or within an acceptable tolerance of their target and 96% of deliverables are progressing in line with projected timelines or within tolerance.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee members comment on and note the performance at this mid-year stage and identifies, where necessary, any further areas of concern on which to focus action.**
- 1.2 That Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends the report to other relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee Chairs.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This is the mid-year (Quarter 2) progress and performance report in relation to the Corporate Priority Activity Plan 2015/16. This report combines the performance against the corporate scorecard with progress against the related deliverables /actions/ projects for 2015/16.**

- 2.2 Appendix 1 provides details on the progress of all the deliverables and associated key performance indicators (which hitherto have been reported to Cabinet in the monthly corporate performance reports). This information has been provided by service leads and coordinated by Performance Board – a cross-service group of performance leads and specialists.
- 2.3 The Corporate Plan has five priorities, each of which has three corporate objectives. Therefore Appendix 1 has been produced in an objective-by-objective format, to give an holistic picture of how the council is performing in relation to the overall Corporate Plan priorities. Including the narrative progress summary around deliverables, half way through the year, provides a fuller and clearer picture, rather than the inherent limitations of a defined basket of indicators.
- 2.4 Reference to the related corporate risks and opportunities is also included in Appendix 1; the full report on the council’s corporate/strategic risks and opportunities monitoring was presented to Standards and Audit Committee in December 2015.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

This report is a monitoring report for noting, therefore there is no options analysis.

Report Headlines

The headline messages for this report are:

- 3.1 **Performance against target** - of the 44 indicators that are comparable, at the end of September 2015 (*NB KPIs = Key Performance Indicators*)

	KPIs at end of September 2015	<i>KPIs at end of June 2015</i>
GREEN - Met their target	47.7% (21)	45%
AMBER - Within tolerance	40.9% (18)	27.5%
RED - Did not meet target	11.4% (5)	27.6%

The backdrop of government funding reductions, a growing population and increasing demand on services, and in particular, how these measures impact on the Council’s finances has been well reported. Close monitoring continues at corporate, service and team levels including the impact on performance and ability to achieve key targets.

Cabinet has been receiving monthly summaries of all the key corporate performance indicators (KPIs) throughout the year and will continue to be

presented with regular updates, including more in depth information on any KPIs which the Performance Board feel warrant closer scrutiny.

In addition, the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee review all the KPIs on a quarterly basis, and during 2015/16 will be paying particular attention to all indicators which are RED ie below target. This includes senior officers attending the meeting to explain the reason behind the performance and confirming plans in place to address areas for improvement.

3.2 Progress against Corporate Priority Activity Plan Deliverables

NB. The following RAG status' are based on a subjective rating for each deliverable.

	GREEN - progressing as planned	AMBER - some slippage but within tolerance	RED - requires remedial action
Priority 1: Create a great place for learning and opportunity	70% (7)	20% (2)	10% (1)
Priority 2: Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity	81.8% (9)	18.2% (2)	0%
Priority 3: Build pride, responsibility and respect	50% (4)	50% (4)	0%
Priority 4: Improve health and well-being	87.5% (7)	12.5% (1)	0%
Priority 5: Promote and protect our clean and green environment	75% (6)	12.5% (1)	12.5% (1)
Well-run organisation	50% (4)	50% (4)	0%
Overall Total	69.8% (37)	26.4% (14)	3.8% (2)

*Numbers in brackets denotes actual number of priority activities

3.3 2015/16 Performance Highlights so far

Already in 2015/16 there have been some good news stories. Some key achievements are highlighted below and more are included in the body of the appendix:

- The trading standards team was one of only three in the country to receive government funding to intercept unsafe goods in ports
- Launched the Older People's Charter - ten pledges to improve the quality of life of older people

- Opportunity Thurrock event attracted approximately 3,000 young people
- Worked with community and cultural partners on Village Beach
- Organised the Big Lunch in Grays Park
- The opening of the Royal Opera House Costume Centre
- 100% of new housing benefit claims are now made online through My Account
- Annual Audit Letter praised the standard of the work in closing the accounts for 2014/15
- Awarded Homelessness Bronze Standard by the National Practitioner Support Service
- Continued refurbishment of Grays Magistrate’s Court and agreed further development of new business units
- Opened additional Community Hubs – four now open in total
- Launched the Adults Autism Strategy
- Continue to be amongst the best in the country at tracking our school leavers and getting them in to Education, Employment or Training
- Secured the future of the State Cinema
- Timeliness of the processing of planning applications continues to be amongst the best in the country

3.4 There are, of course, some areas to improve upon and some challenges to overcome over the second half of the year.

- Levels of recycling continues to be below target and further education and engagement is planned
- Landfill usage is not yet on target
- Whilst improving, the percentage of primary schools judged “good” or better is not yet meeting our ambitious target
- The positive work started with care leavers to get them into education, employment or training is starting to show improvement but not yet good enough

More detail of all of these is provided in Appendix 1 and 2.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This monitoring report is for noting. It is also considered at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

5.1 This monitoring report is considered on a quarterly basis by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and where there are specific issues relevant to other committees these are further circulated as appropriate.

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

6.1 This monitoring report will help decision makers and other interested parties, form a view of the success of the Council's actions in meeting its political and community priority ambitions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

This is a monitoring report and there are no direct financial implications arising. However, in light of the significant budget challenge facing the Council, officers and Members need to continue to consider and monitor any impact on performance and service delivery.

Within the corporate scorecard there are some specific financial performance indicators, for which commentary is given within the report. With regard to other service performance areas, any recovery planning commissioned by the Council may well entail future financial implications, which will be considered as appropriate.

7.2 Legal

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

This is a monitoring report and there are no direct legal implications arising.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

This is a monitoring report and there are direct diversity implications arising. The Corporate Scorecard contains measures that help determine the level of progress with meeting wider diversity and equality ambitions, including sickness, youth employment and attainment, independent living, vulnerable adults, volunteering etc. Individual commentary is given within the report regarding progress and actions. The Corporate Priority Activity Plan also has some direct references to equality and diversity and fairness, for which there is commentary within the report.

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

The Corporate Priority Activity Plan and the Corporate Scorecard contain measures related to some staff, health, sustainability and crime and disorder issues. Individual commentary is given within the report regarding progress and actions.

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):

- **Corporate Priority Activity Plan 2015/16 –**
<https://thurrockintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=129&MIId=2548&Ver=4>

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: Mid-Year Corporate Progress and Performance Report
- Appendix 2: Focus on RED Key Performance Indicators

Report Author:

Sarah Welton

Strategy & Performance Officer

Strategy Team, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

APPENDIX 1

Corporate Plan Progress & Performance Mid-year 2015/16 Report

	Key for Performance Indicators	Key for progress against Deliverables
G	GREEN - met their target	GREEN - progressing as planned
A	AMBER - within tolerance	AMBER - some slippage but within tolerance
R	RED - did not meet target	RED - requires remedial action

Priority	Create a great place for learning and opportunity
Objective	Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
<p>Work through the Thurrock Education Alliance and the Thurrock Excellence Network to ensure all schools, education and early years providers are on track to be rated good or outstanding by OFSTED at the end of 2016 or sooner</p> <p>As at the end of September 72.2% of schools were rated Good or better .The target for the end of the year is to reach 85% to be in line with or exceed the national average. This is deliberately a very challenging target and whilst the data suggests Thurrock is well below target currently, the work going on behind the scenes with schools is moving forward and shows signs of great improvement.</p> <p>The data can only change once a school has had an inspection, timing over which, the authority has no control. There have been no inspections of schools/academies this academic year, however several schools are due an inspection over the next few months and it is anticipated that the proportion of good or better schools will then increase. There have been three section 8 inspections which have all had a positive outcome. 86% of Early Years settings are rated as good or better. There are 11 primary schools currently rated as Requires Improvement (RI). Of these, 50% are predicted to be rated Good or better when inspected. One secondary school is currently rated as RI and is working with a number of partners to improve on this.</p>	A
<p>Increase the attainment and achievement of children and young people in line with ambition and achievement strategy and education alliance action plan</p> <p>Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Good Level of Development (GLD) increased by 7 percentage points to 73% which is 7 percentage points higher than the national average.</p> <p>Thurrock’s Key Stage 1 results for reading at Level 2B+ demonstrate a three year upward trend and at present is 1% above the provisional national average. Writing is in line with the provisional national average. Whilst the mathematics data is 1.9 % below the national average, it has improved year on year. This remains a focus for a number of our schools. At Level 3+ Thurrock has improved significantly in all areas and is broadly in line with the provisional national average.</p> <p>The upward trend for Key Stage 2 data continues in all measures. The combined measures of level 4+ (the expected level for the end of year 6) in reading, writing and mathematics all increased. Level 5+ results are improving however, as have national averages and the gap remains at 4%.The percentage of children who made more than expected progress was higher in Thurrock in reading and writing than pupils nationally.</p> <p>Provisional results for Key Stage 4 shows a slight decrease from last year for 5+ GCSEs including English and mathematics and therefore slightly below the national average. However, there are a number of schools seeking re-marks for English and mathematics papers therefore this provisional figure may change.</p>	A
<p>Narrow the gap between groups to ensure good attainment for all including looked after children (LAC) and other groups vulnerable to underachievement</p> <p>Primary</p> <p>Of the cohort of twelve Year 6 looked after pupils, nine are placed out of borough. In</p>	G

<p>total, 9 pupils took their Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) achieving:- Reading 67%, Writing 67%, Maths 78%, Combined 67%. Primary schools have prioritised the attainment and progress of all Looked After Children, making effective use of Pupil Premium Plus, to ensure they are ready for secondary school and have good foundations of literacy and numeracy to access the new curriculum offer.</p> <p>Secondary</p> <p>28 pupils were entered for GCSEs from the Looked After Children (LAC) cohort of 42 with 13 attending a local Thurrock school. All 28 were entered for examinations (including vocational options) and all achieved a qualification in a range of subjects. Every mainstream school/academy in Thurrock included at least one looked after child in their Year 11 cohort and of the five predicted to gain 5 or more GCSEs, two students achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and maths. In discussion with Thurrock secondary school's senior teams it has been agreed that the focus on "narrowing the gap" for disadvantaged groups, including those in the care of the local authority are prioritised in the new 2015/16 School Development Plans (SDPs). A number of LAC were unaccompanied asylum seekers, at an early stage of learning English, and therefore not yet able to take GCSEs.</p>	R
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Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
% of primary schools judged "good" or better	R	72.2%	85%	Above national average

Academic Year KPI Performance	RAG Status	Latest Data (as Sept)	Latest Target	Year End Target
KS2 Attainment – Achievement at Level 4+ in Reading, Writing & Maths	A	78.6%	80%	80%
KS2 Attainment – Achievement at Level 5+ in Reading, Writing & Maths	A	20.3%	24%	24%
Achievement of Level 2 qualification at 19 years old	n/a	n/a	n/a	Above national average
Achievement of Level 3 qualification at 19 years old	n/a	n/a	n/a	Within 5% national average
LAC KS2 Attainment – Achievement at Level 4+ in reading, writing and maths	G	66.7%	64%	64%
LAC KS4 Attainment – 5+ A*-C (including English and maths GCSEs)	R	5%	15%	15%

Priority	Create a great place for learning and opportunity
Objective	Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
Work through existing partnerships to provide training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities to Thurrock residents, for example through the housing investment programmes and cultural and creative industries education offer	G
The development of apprentices across the authority and through our partnership arrangements has provided opportunities across directorates. The Housing team has used contracting arrangements to ensure that apprenticeships are seen as a key driver for employing young people. Through the strong partnership with the Royal Opera House a further 12 work-related opportunities have been identified for young people considering careers in the creative and cultural industries.	
The Council continues to support care leavers via the Diversity in Apprenticeship programme which works to secure work placements and employment opportunities. The proportion of care leavers in employment, education or training is improving and this remains a key focus in the Autumn term with two special events involving care leavers in October as part of National Care Leavers week.	
The recent Opportunity Thurrock event attracted around 3,000 young people and engagement with local businesses increased by around 10%. The event has attracted attention from across the Thames Gateway and the feedback has been extremely positive.	
A programme of Supported Internships for young people with Special Educational Needs / Disabilities is in place with 15 young people registered on the programme at Thurrock Adult Community College in partnership with Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions.	
Support local people to acquire the skills required within the key economic sectors of Ports, Transport and Logistics; Creative and Cultural; Manufacturing and Engineering (including Environmental Technology)	G
In partnership with The Prince's Trust, the Council has developed a 'Get into Construction' programme which looks to support young people around career development and choices. The team is actively looking to develop these relationships with health and will be looking at integrated health/social care apprenticeships in the autumn term. The team is exploring a range of opportunities with local employers to further enhance and support young people in accessing opportunities in growth sectors across Thurrock.	
Deliver effective careers information, advice and guidance for young people working in effective partnerships across the education and business community	G
Thurrock Careers continues to provide support to young people in career choices. The team has recently secured 100% in our September Guarantee which ensures all young people have an offer of post 16 education. The percentage of "unknowns" has remained at 0% which is achieved by staff finding innovative ways in which young people are tracked ensuring they are aware of the local opportunities.	

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
% of 16-19 yr old Not in Education, Employment or Training	A	6.2%	6.1%	5%
% of 19-21 yr old Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training	R	47.7%	70%	70%

Priority	Create a great place for learning and opportunity
Objective	Support families to give children the best possible start in life

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Deliver new responsibilities regarding commissioning of 0-5 health pathway from October 2015 and review after six months for 2016/17		
<p>The 0 – 5 Healthy Child Programme successfully transferred from NHS England to Thurrock Council on 1 October 2015. With the transition, a review of the service is necessary and the team is approaching this by carrying out a benchmarking process with our CIPFA comparator local authorities. A 0 – 5 Healthy Child Programme Review Group has been set up to oversee the benchmarking process. A term of reference and draft plan for this group has been produced and shared with members. This review process will continue well into 2016.</p>		G
Ensure sufficient, good quality early years places are available and are taken up by families, particularly those in most need and the needs of children and young people with SEN are supported in line with the SEN reforms		
<p>The Council continues to support families in areas where the highest needs are identified. Through our Children Centres there are engagement activities to encourage the take up of early years' places for vulnerable children. The Council works closely with providers via the Sufficiency Officer to ensure that the levels of childcare opportunities are in areas of most need. With the changes around the early years offer which will see a move towards offering 30 hours of childcare provision there is active engagement with providers to ensure that support can be offered to parents with 3 & 4 year olds and thus enabling them to access local employment opportunities.</p> <p>The new arrangements for children and young people with Special Educational Needs Disabilities are fully established with new systems for the assessment and delivery of Education, Health and Care Plans in place. The Local Authority has established a new linked system combining Early Support, Multi Professional Assessment planning and Education Health and Care Plans for preschool children which has led to clear identification and support of the needs of these children in preschool and school settings. Between 1 September 2014 and 1 October 2015 there have been 354 reviews of statements held for conversion to Education Health and Care Plans. This covers all conversions covered by Statutory Requirements for 2014/15. There have been 183 (includes 48 pre-school children) new requests for Education Health and Care Assessments of which 157 were agreed to go forward to develop new Plans.</p>		G
Ensure children and families are supported by a timely and effective early offer of help, including the troubled families programme, to minimise statutory intervention and escalation of need		
<p>The Council continues to expand and develop the early offer of help and Troubled Families programme. Thurrock was an early adopter of phase 2 of the Troubled Families programme having exceeded the target for families turned around during the phase 1 of the programme. The team are actively working with families and are on track to meet agreed targets. The team have maintained highly effective engagement from partners and a clear focus on reducing unemployment, under-employment and anti-social behaviour.</p>		G

Year to date there has been an increase in Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF) completed with 369 to date for 2015/16. The Council continues to provide threshold training with partner agencies to ensure an effective response based on a continuum of need. Further training for nursery providers has been identified to support them in the role of acting as lead professionals within the early offer of help. An action plan has been developed to target BME groups across the borough, who are currently under-represented on the Early Offer of Help programme as well as all groups within the Tilbury, Ockendon and Grays Riverside areas. A combined focus and targeted advertising has been undertaken within the programme to increase uptake of the 2 year old education offer. All spaces that were initially allocated to early offer of help have been filled.

The early offer of help and Troubled Families programme remain fully integrated within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the First Response Worker post has been developed to better sign-post cases to universal, targeted and specialist provision and avoid referrals to social care where these are not required. The First Response Worker continues to offer consultations to teachers, GPs and allied professionals.

From 2nd November 2015 two additional practitioners will join the MASH to triage children's cases regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health (formerly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - CAMHS). This service will offer an integrated single point of entry to child mental health services.

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
CSC Service Standards & inspection Outcome	Critical/Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Number of places available for two year olds to access early years education in the borough	G	1260	913	Latest DFE Target
Number of places accessed for two year olds for early years education in the borough	A	666	730	85% of Latest DFE Target
*Rate of Children subject to Child Protect Plan	n/a	58	n/a	n/a
*Rate of Looked After Children	n/a	82	n/a	n/a
Average time (in days) for a child to be adopted (3 year average)	A	529	457	426
Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days) (3yr average)	A	212	121	121

*These do not have a RAG status as do not have targets in the traditional sense. The "target" therefore in these cases is an indicative figure to bring Thurrock in line with national benchmark.

Priority	Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
Objective	Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
Develop and promulgate a clear and positive narrative that will stimulate further growth and promote investment in Thurrock	G
During 2015 the Council will be refreshing the Economic Development Strategy which was published in 2007. This will provide a clear picture of how well economic challenges have been addressed and on priorities moving forward. This will be used to inform the new South Essex Growth Strategy which will present the investment proposition to government and other investors. Work is also underway to develop a place “marketing” strategy with inward investment as a key theme.	
Develop and progress the Local Plan and create a sound and deliverable spatial vision for the growth and future prosperity of the Borough	G
Following a decision by Cabinet in February 2014 work has commenced on the preparation of a new Local Plan for Thurrock. Significant progress has been made in developing the evidence base for the new Local Plan which has included a Call for Sites which resulted in more than 70 sites or broad locations for development being submitted by landowners for assessment by Council as part of the plan-making process. Following public consultation earlier in the year a new Statement of Community Engagement (SCI) will be considered by Council in November 2015. A revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) will be submitted for Cabinet approval in December 2015. The LDS sets out the project plan for the preparation of the Local Plan with the programme now committing the Council to producing a plan for submission to the Secretary of State in early 2019. Following an Examination in Public it is anticipated that the Local Plan will be formally adopted by the Council in summer/autumn 2020. Work is also ongoing in producing a First Stage Issues and Options Document which will seek the community’s views on the key issues and challenges which the Local Plan will need to address.	
Progress the Purfleet Centre regeneration scheme signing the development agreement and commencing phases one to three, including the TV and Film studios	G
Since the last report, a funding partner has been identified and, following an extended due diligence process, terms have been agreed which will secure the funds necessary to deliver the first phase of the project. A Cabinet report in October received approval for the commercial terms and conditions as the basis for contractual agreement and delegated authority for it to be signed.	
Consult businesses and partners on future devolution arrangements including a possible Combined Authority with Southend-on-Sea Council and others (subject to legislative changes) and continue to be an influential partner in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) exceeding our share of funding per capita	G
The Council has continued to work closely with local authorities and other partners on devolution options. There have been regular updates to the Thurrock Business Board and a workshop for over 50 South Essex businesses was held on 23 October. This workshop looked at what devolution is, the process and how business could influence and debate the outcome. The Council has continued to play an active role in SELEP resisting calls for SELEP to be broken up and calling for a new Vice-Chair for South Essex. Officers have also supported implementation of a number of pan-LEP projects, including the launch of the new Growth Hub and led a number of EU funding bids. £164m of LGF has been allocated to South Essex which is over 31% of the total allocated to SELEP.	

Sustain the external funding stream from the National Trading Standards Board for port safety work	G
<p>September saw the highest number of interventions at the ports ever undertaken with 45 in a month. There has been a continuation of illegal and unsafe skin-lightening creams coming in through the ports with the biggest haul this year being 1,036 creams from Africa. These were refused entry and destroyed by the importer. Other dangerous cosmetics have been refused entry to the UK including 136,000 unsafe hair dyes. These products contained carcinogenic ingredients and were unfit for the UK market. There have also been some successes with larger consumer products including 55 unsafe mattresses imported from Pakistan which were highly flammable and 300 non-compliant bunk beds. An average of 15.52% of samples checked were unsafe and prevented from entering the UK market for the period of April to August 2015. In July and August however it was 25% and 23% respectively indicating improved targeting and hitting of those consignments which are unsafe much more frequently. Due to the high risk associated with unsafe items entering the UK marketplace through ports, National Trading Standards Board have highlighted that this work should continue to be funded in 2016/17. However, the actual amount allocated has yet to be confirmed.</p>	

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
% of Major planning applications processed in 13 weeks	G	80	75	75
% of Minor planning applications processed in 8 weeks	G	89.5	88	88
% of SELEP funding received by Thurrock	n/a	31%	No target	No target

Priority	Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
Objective	Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
<p>Promote employer engagement in skills development and local employment, working with Growth and Business Boards, schools, colleges and health partners, such as the work with Thames Enterprise Park</p> <p>The Business & Education Summit took place in June, feeding into the Economic Development and Skills Partnership (EDSP)– a representative group of schools, colleges, Further Education providers, key employment agencies and the Council. This group is now developing an action plan to take ideas from the summit forward. A number of the major investments (part of Tilbury and London Gateway) are now starting to see significant numbers of jobs created. While this is obviously good news in terms of local employment it also presents a challenge in terms of securing the number of people the business are looking for, for example, one Tilbury based business opening in March 2016 will be looking for 700 staff. To assist with this challenge the EDSP is establishing bespoke Task Force Groups to support employers. Businesses and skills providers have been engaged in devolution discussions and have identified improvements to better align provision with need.</p> <p><i>Opportunity Thurrock</i> was well supported by business and saw around 3,000 students pass through the event looking at career opportunities.</p>	G
<p>Increase NNDR income supporting more businesses to develop and grow by accessing European and other funds for business support activity</p> <p>At 25% Thurrock has seen a higher rate of business growth than any region in England including London. A number of bids have been or are being developed for further ERDF funding to enhance the business support offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOCASE is the successor to the Low Carbon Business Programme which ended in March 2015. The pan-LEP bid (in which Thurrock is a key delivery partner) will provide access to grants and business support. • KEEP+ will link higher education institutions with business and facilitate knowledge transfer placements • The Growth Hub will sustain simplified access to support for businesses and grants • i3 will provide access to cheap loans <p>Further bids are being developed to support inward investment and to grow the creative and cultural sector.</p>	G
<p>Increase the scale and quality of business accommodation in the Borough to support new businesses to grow.</p> <p>There are already two business centres in Thurrock: the Old Post Office in Grays and Tilbury Riverside. The refurbishment of Grays Magistrates Court into a business centre is progressing and is due to open in Winter 2015. The centre will have office space of nearly 1,900m for rent, providing 39 business units of varying sizes for start-up and more established businesses. There has been strong interest from the small business community in the new units. The latest stage of the Enterprise Units strategy is two-fold: work on an extension to the current Tilbury Riverside Business Centre is underway; and plans for a new commercial space at High House Production Park with sufficient accommodation to support a business centre in its own right plus extra accommodation to supply the demand for additional artists' studios.</p> <p>A report went to Council in September on all of these schemes.</p>	G

Related Strategic/Corporate Opportunities	Impact / Likelihood
Business/NNDR Growth	Major / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Net gain in employment land made available for employment development – Total amount of additional floorspace	n/a - annual indicator			TBC
No of new apprenticeships within the council	A	25	37	65

Priority	Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
Objective	Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Deliver homes, jobs, transport and other key infrastructure to support development in Thurrock, including the six growth hubs outlined within the Economic Development Strategy and the Local Development Framework, working with the private sector and other partners		
<p>The Council is continuing to work with its partners on key infrastructure, focussing on the 6 Growth Hubs. Recent developments include the opening of new business parks at Tilbury and London Gateway, plus the continued working arrangements with Thames Enterprise Park partners on the masterplan.</p> <p>There were 5,000 jobs created during 2007-2013 despite the severe economic downturn. Investment in growth hubs is starting to generate significant job numbers, eg Port of Tilbury and London Gateway. Planning applications show significant new employment at both locations. The council has applied to the government to give Thames Enterprise Park status as an Enterprise Zone. There has also been a planning applications received to build a solar farm.</p>		G
Progress the delivery of £100m investment in improved highways, street lighting and railway stations including widening the A13		
<p>The A13 Widening scheme is progressing in advance of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) 2016/17 £5m development funding. Details and terms for agreement with London Gateway Port are nearing completion and preliminary design work is being tendered using the Highways England framework. The business case is progressing but may depend upon access to a Highways England traffic model for a lower Thames crossing which is under development.</p> <p>A plan has been agreed with partners to manage interdependencies with a possible Lower Thames Crossing, but is subject to further consultation and meetings.</p> <p>Stanford-le-Hope interchange is being progressed in partnership with Network Rail, c2c and London Gateway Port, although slightly delayed due to Network Rail's governance structure.</p> <p>Highways maintenance and LED implementation are progressing to plan.</p>		A
Seek the best possible outcome for the community and businesses from the Thames River Crossing decision		
Officers have attended regular update meetings with Highways England to stay apprised of plans for the development of the scheme. Consultation on route options is due to commence in January 2016 and continue until March 2016. Public meetings and a special Scrutiny meeting are being organised by the Council to inform the Council's response to the consultation process. A meeting is being sought with Government to present Thurrock's views.		A

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood	Related Strategic/Corporate Opportunities	Impact / Likelihood
Purfleet Regeneration	Critical / Likely	South East Local Enterprise Partnership	Exceptional / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Latest Data	Latest Target	Year End Target
Unemployment rate (data from ONS/NOMIS)	A	6.6 (June)	4.6	Regional average
% of properties transformed against programme	G	100	100%	100%

Priority	Build pride, responsibility and respect
Objective	Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
<p>Ensure fair access to services and opportunities, equal life chances, building stronger and cohesive communities by developing our asset based approach and involving residents by supporting the newly established Fairness Commission</p> <p>The Fairness Commission (FC) is an independent body, set up in March 2015 and has been gathering evidence in a variety of ways, including information from council officers and partners, a series of high profile public engagement activities and feedback from community and voluntary sector representatives. The FC is using this evidence to make recommendations on the extent of fairness in Thurrock. The Commissioners' report should be finalised early in the new year and will be reported to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny in January, followed by Cabinet in February.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the Stronger Together Partnership. This involves identifying the range of assets in any community – including buildings, people with knowledge or skills, associations, places to meet others. In the first half of 2015, this approach has included a conference to celebrate local stories and the recruitment of over 25 community connectors who will be supported in holding community conversations to help bring people together – for example, the environment, cultural celebrations or supporting single parent families. More information can be found at www.strongertogether.org.uk</p>		G
<p>Ensure that partners are brought together to improve community safety and cohesion through a shared focus on key community safety priorities</p> <p>All partners agreed on the following priorities for 2015/16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 (ASB); cyber bullying; honour based abuse and serious organised crime encompassing modern day slavery & fraud where victims are vulnerable • Violent extremism: Delivering the Government's counter terrorism strategy – <i>Prevent</i> - locally <p>Joint action plans are in place to ensure coordinated and targeted delivery. These priorities concentrate on the most vulnerable and at risk within our communities, and therefore enable us to target our stretched resources effectively. Multi-agency meetings are in place to ensure appropriate support and intervention for vulnerable victims of ASB and hate crime. These are new priorities for the Community Safety Partnership and therefore priorities will remain as is for 2016/17.</p>		G

Ensure children and young people in need of help or protection are safeguarded and supported to achieve their potential	G
In April 2015 the Youth Offending Service (YOS) was inspected by HMI Probation, who concluded: <i>“Overall, we found that the quality of the work carried out with children and young people and their parents/carers, in particular safeguarding and public protection, was excellent in Thurrock. All key processes were in place to enable case managers to concentrate on a holistic approach to their work. There was real understanding of how the different aspects of a child or young person’s life interacted with each other. We saw effective support provided alongside the imposition and enforcement of necessary boundaries.”</i>	
In line with Children’s Social Care policy, every young person subject to intervention with the YOS undergoes a CSE risk assessment in addition to full vulnerability and mental health screenings. YOS is an active member of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board at both executive and full board level. A YOS operations manager chairs the Children’s Risk Assessment Group (RAG) and reports to the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Group. The service has identified and raised concerns with the relevant bodies in relation to the safeguarding of young people in custody, which is now being supported by the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.	

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
CSC Safeguarding & Protection C&YP	Critical / Likely
Emergency Planning & Response	Substantial / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
% of young people who reoffend after a previously recorded offence	G	5%	7%	25%

Priority	Build pride, responsibility and respect
Objective	Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Lead the creation of Community Hubs to transform relationships and service models between the Council, voluntary sector and communities to strengthen local communities and manage demand complimenting Building Stronger Communities initiatives e.g. Local Area Co-ordinators		A
<p>South Ockendon Centre and Chadwell St Mary Centre have now been joined by Stifford Clays Hub which opened in May 2015 (one morning, one afternoon a week). Tilbury Hub opened in October and a new hub is being built in Aveley using S106 ring-fenced for community use. A new Hubs charitable incorporated organisation has been established to support all hubs, eg policy development and fund-raising. This is being led by the Community Network Partnership Board (CNPB).</p> <p>Local Area Coordination has now been successfully integrated as part of the core offer from Adult Social Care in Thurrock. The preventative value of LAC has been further evidenced through an independently verified evaluation report which has shown the social return of investment at £3.50 for every £1 invested along with recommendations showing how this return can be increased. The added value of LAC across the entire public sector including Housing, Police, Health and Fire Service is a feature of this approach; although significant improvements to Adult Social Care effectiveness remain the main outcome. It is very clear from the evaluation work and from the stories about individual outcomes that LAC provides preventative support for people who have either been failed by services previously or never supported prior to LAC involvement.</p>		
Work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver the roll out of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms - supporting people back into work, maximising take-up and working to reduce poverty		A
<p>In order to best manage welfare system changes, the Council works closely with the Department for Work and Pensions and a Delivery Partnership Agreement was signed in March 2015.</p> <p>The agreement aims to assist households affected by the welfare changes and help them obtain jobs. The council continues to work towards the goals of this agreement. This initiative is currently implemented in one of our hubs, and the initial feedback suggests that unemployment is decreasing in the area. As such, a feasibility analysis is due soon to establish the viability of extending this initiative further.</p>		

Related Strategic/ Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood	Related Strategic/ Corporate Opportunities	Impact / Likelihood
Welfare Reforms	Critical / Likely	Community Hubs and Community Engagement	Major / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Number of volunteer opportunities in the council	G	257	250	250

Priority	Build pride, responsibility and respect
Objective	Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
Implementation of the Care Act 2014 - leading to more people receiving personal budgets, improved advocacy, increased support for carers and better access to advice and information	
<p>Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 became operational as of April 2015. Having carried out actions during 2014 via the oversight of the Care Act Implementation Group, it was felt that the Council had a good state of readiness. Key deliverables include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new information and advice portal accessed from the Council's website; • A new assessment tool designed to ensure an outcome-focus; • A Resource Allocated System (RAS) in place and being used by practitioners to deliver an understanding of resource requirement at the earliest opportunity; • The development of a Market Position Statement; • Updated Adult Social Care policy framework – Care Act compliant; • Updated Deferred Payment Agreements; • Agreed approach for Carers' Assessments (to be delivered via pilot with Cariads); • All Adult Social Care practitioners having received training to assist with delivery of and compliance with the Act <p>Further work is being carried out during 2015/16 to test how well embedded the Act is as part of social work practice, and the impact this is having on the Council (e.g. demand and resources), service users and carers. An approach has recently been agreed via the Care Act Implementation Group and will be carried out during the latter part of 2015/16.</p>	A
Review and tackle demand pressures in Adult Social Care to deliver a sustainable local health and social care economy. Produce and implement our Market Position Statement and review our domiciliary care, residential and nursing home contracts.	
<p>The Market Position Statement has been produced and approved through the Health & Wellbeing Board. It is available on Thurrock Council's website (https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/our-vision-for-future/market-position-statement) and hard copies are available upon request.</p> <p>Year to date the review of our contracts has been focussed around domiciliary care due to the current local and national situation, including the introduction of the national living wage and the impact of this. Increased monitoring of domiciliary care provision is in place to support this.</p>	A
Deliver new HAPPI housing for older people providing 60 dwellings in two schemes in 2015/16 and 2016/17	
<p>Thurrock Housing is currently in the process of building two housing developments to HAPPI standards: A first development in Derry Avenue in South Ockendon will add 25 new homes to the current social housing stock. The development is on target to be completed this year. A second development in Calcutta Road in Tilbury will add further 37 new homes with a completion date of September 2017. A further development in St Chads in Tilbury will see 128 properties developed, 3% of which will be disabled adapted standards.</p>	G

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
Failure to implement the Care Act	Critical / Likely
Adult Social Care, Cost & Quality Standards	Critical / Likely

Priority	Improve health and well-being
Objective	Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Establish a pooled fund for health and social care with Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group via the Better Care Fund leading to more integrated services for older people and better joint working with the NHS		
The Council and Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have, as part of the Better Care Fund, an £18m pooled fund. The Fund is part of a section 75 agreement that was established and signed off prior to April 2015. How the Fund is to be spent is contained within Thurrock's Better Care Fund Plan. The Plan contains a number of schemes and focuses on older people – both in terms of system redesign and integrated services. The delivery of the Better Care Fund Plan is overseen by an Integrated Commissioning Executive which reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board.		A
Implement our Carers Strategy locally through the development of a Shared Lives scheme, expanding respite options and increasing the numbers of carers receiving direct payments		
Contract is now in place to provide external funding and support from national implementation organisation "Community Catalysts" to deliver the Shared Lives programme in Thurrock. It is anticipated that implementation of the full service will take approximately 12 Months so should be available summer 2016.		G
Invest in cycling and walking and create a low emission zone		
The 2015-16 Local Strategic Transport Framework works to improve cycling and walking access in Grays are progressing to plan. The 2016-18 Local Growth Funded Cycling Infrastructure Programme is being developed to plan, for implementation commencing March 2016.		G
Grant funding has been sought from DEFRA to progress development of a Low Emission Zone. Air quality monitoring and modelling is ongoing.		

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
Health & Social Care Transformation	Critical / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Emergency admissions to hospital (Total non-elective admissions in to hospital (general & acute), all-age, per 100,000 population)	G	6042	6681	13,361
Self-Directed Support - % adult social care users in receipt of SDS	G	75%	75%	75%
% older people still at home 91 days after discharge	A	88%	91%	91%
Delayed transfers from care – part a: delayed transfers of care from hospital part b: delayed transfers of care attributable to adult social care only	G	A: 3.2 (Aug) B: 0.8 (Aug)	n/a	A: 9.6 B:3.1
Permanent admissions to residential/nursing homes per 100K population	A	64	60	121

Priority	Improve health and well-being
Objective	Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Relentless action on the top-two public health priorities from the Thurrock Health and Well-Being Strategy: smoking and obesity, through the implementation of our Tobacco Control Strategy and our Weight Management Strategy		
<p>The tobacco data is reported 2 months in arrears, such is the need to allow time for all those smokers that set a quit date to qualify as a 4-week quitter. Performance as at end of September is just below the expected level, which equates to 14 people for this Indicator. The tobacco KPIs are 'back-loaded' to incorporate two key events in the annual quit calendar – Stoptober and New Year – periods that traditionally see spikes in the 4-week quit data. Early indications from the provider, Vitality, are that performance is on par with last year's Stoptober activity for smokers setting a quit date.</p> <p>For adults the weight management services were re-tendered and the new services didn't start until Quarter 2. There are therefore no performance figures as yet for September. For children, as the reporting period is the school year the latest outturn of 94.6% is the end of year outturn – this exceeds the target set.</p>		G
Achieve full Homelessness Gold Standard by adopting initiatives such as "No Second Night Out"		
<p>The National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS) has set all Local Authorities ten challenges in order to improve frontline homelessness services. Currently only Greenwich Council has achieved the Gold standard and it has taken two years to do so. Achieving Gold Standard is dependent on NPSS service assessments. Originally it was anticipated that Thurrock could undertake one challenge per month but limited resources within NPSS has prevented this.</p> <p>The Council was successfully awarded the Bronze Standard by NPSS in September 2015; only eighteen other Local Authorities across England received this award. The authority continues to work towards achieving Gold Standard; more challenges have been submitted and are currently awaiting assessment. Also additional resources are in place to complete the other challenges. Realistically, and considering the current pace NPSS is assessing challenges Thurrock could achieve Silver Standard by March 2015.</p>		G
Develop a local Autism Strategy		
<p>Thurrock Council's Adults Autism Strategy has been developed over the past year and is now final and published. During the months of January and March 2015, consultation on the strategy took place, which saw the final version being taken to Health & Well Being Board in July 2015 for approval. The strategy is now available on the Council's website: https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/asc-strategy-autism-2015-v01.pdf</p> <p>Delivery of the action plan contained within the strategy will be monitored through the Autism Action Group, including a commitment to review and update the action plan on an annual basis.</p>		G

Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
Housing Needs & Homelessness	Substantial / Likely

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Tier 2 weight management services for adults: % of course attendees who achieve their goal by 12 weeks.	n/a	Quarter in Arrears	40%	40%
% of children identified in year 6 as overweight/obese that have an evidenced follow-up offer by the 5-19 team for ongoing support	G	94.6%	92%	92%
% of 4 week Quitters are from the 40% most deprived LSOAs in Thurrock	A	37.02%	n/a	40%
Number of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance	n/a	1441	Baseline of 1200 based on 2014/15	Baseline of 2400 based on 2014/15

Priority	Improve health and well-being
Objective	Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
<p>Improve the quality of housing stock through effective engagement with private/social landlords, increasing stock which meets the New Thurrock Standard</p> <p>The joint Housing and Public Health initiative, Well Homes, is a new way of improving housing conditions and improving access to a much wider variety of services, including local health services. A Well Homes Advisor visits owner occupiers/private tenants at home with information and advice about a broad range of housing, safety and health services, focused around what makes them feel better at home. 85% of residents who have been visited have told the service they feel 'healthier and safer' at home. So far, the initiative has helped more than 566 households (3% of Thurrock population). As part of Well Homes landlords are encouraged to become accredited. Accreditation educates landlords and gains a commitment from them to raise housing standards.</p> <p>Thurrock Housing Solutions team is also leading on the re-launch of a landlord forum where landlords will be advised and equipped with information to help improve their stocks quality. The forum is likely to be re-launched early 2016.</p> <p>The Transforming Homes programme, which started in 2013, continues to deliver and now in year three, more than 4900 properties have been completed. The Council is on track to transform 60% of its stock by the end of the municipal year.</p> <p>At this point, it is important to draw attention to the 1% rent reduction and the extended right to buy scheme of which affects all social landlords as set out in the 2015 Summer Budget. Following this announcement, Thurrock Council is currently undertaking an impact assessment to mitigate as best as possible the potentially significant impact this may have on service delivery.</p>	G
<p>Support young people into work by opening specialist housing providing a safe environment and access to local job opportunities</p> <p>Across the range of housing investment programmes and the procurement framework, there are substantial opportunities for the supporting young people into work such as apprenticeship programmes. The Authority works with partners across sectors, in order to understand, shape, implement and monitor programmes which address local priorities. Since April, at least ten local people have taken part of the apprenticeship offered by the various housing programmes. For 2015-16 and beyond, Housing Investment & Development aims to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 apprenticeships across all programmes • £30m programme spend within the local economy (one in three pounds). • 200-300 jobs created or retained. • 15 total rounds of programme delivery, across all pathway programmes. • New initiatives and partnerships developed to target local resident in need. • 350 residents supported through pathway programmes. • 65% of those completing programmes, gaining employment or further training. 	G

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
No of council households assisted to move to a smaller property (downsize)	G	37	28	55
% General Satisfaction of tenants with neighbourhoods/services provided by Housing	A	70%	75%	75%

Priority	Promote and protect our clean and green environment
Objective	Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
<p>Deliver Thurrock's first community based cultural river festival in July 2015 and establish a long term legacy event</p> <p>The first Village Beach event took place on 18 July and attracted thousands of people to Grays Beach Park to celebrate local talent. Organised by Metal, there were seven stages with three of them dedicated to home grown talent. Other attractions included the Thameside Panto troupe entertaining the crowds with costumes and lively demonstrations as well as the launch of idea13.org website – showcasing arts and culture events taking place locally. The event also saw the completion of the final 10 miles of the Thurrock 100 walking campaign. In total, over 6,000 people attended on the day and more than 480 artists and performers participated. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>Such was the success of Village Beach, it is hoped that this will be the first of many annual celebrations.</p>		G
<p>Create a continual pathway along the 18 miles of river front to enable greater access to cultural assets and opportunities for walking and cycling</p> <p>Opportunities to further develop the riverfront pathway along the Thames are being explored to animate the riverfront as part of the Council's approach to arts, culture and heritage. The Transportation and Highways Service have facilitated the new bridleway to improve access to the bridleway 190 (part of the Thames Estuary path). A number of river front projects have been included for long listing for the LGF Cycling Infrastructure Programme.</p>		A
<p>Implement the three headline aims from the Cultural Strategy: Cultural Entitlement, Cultural Enterprise and Creative Place Making including reviewing the role of the Thameside Centre in future provision</p> <p>The Council is currently developing a full Cultural Strategy, with components of it taking shape or already having been delivered. This includes working with partners and sponsors on events such as Village Beach, the transformation of facilities at Coalhouse Fort and the many exciting opportunities brought about through High House Production Park, including the new degree course in Costume Construction run in partnership with South Essex College and the Royal Opera House.</p> <p>Cabinet in October received a report from the member-led Thameside Complex Review Panel who has been looking at the options for the building and services contained within the Thameside Complex. Following this, a separate officer report will be presented to Cabinet in December/January to provide the professional and specialist advice needed to consider these further options.</p>		G

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
No of Thurrock people on cultural and creative industries related courses through HHPP/SEC	n/a	Yearly figure		No baseline

Priority	Promote and protect our clean and green environment
Objective	Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Reduce landfill by improved contractual arrangements for household waste collection and engaging with residents and the community to improve recycling and re-use levels		
<p>The campaign to reduce landfill has started well. A new disposal contract for residual waste has been agreed and took effect in September. Under this contract all residual waste collected from households in Thurrock will be diverted to energy recovery rather than being sent to landfill. This has both environment and economic benefits. Additionally a focused programme has been underway to reduce the levels of contamination in our household recycling bins. This was an important starting point, as it has helped to improve the quality of the recycling across Thurrock, which once again has both economic and environmental benefits. The contamination level has fallen from a peak of around 17% to 8% as at the end of September 2015. The team are looking to recruit volunteers, so that the ground work built by the programme can be continued. A new campaign of communication and education is about to commence which is aimed at increasing the level of participation in recycling across the Borough.</p> <p>Despite these successful efforts, the performance indicator linked to this objective is unlikely to reach the target of 45%. In part this is due to contamination levels of recycling earlier in the year. The closing of our disposal site in Tilbury which required that all recycling is now transported to Bow for disposal has also had an impact.</p>		R
Introduce a more environmentally-friendly and efficient way to maintain our roads and keep them safe especially in the winter months		
Thurrock has introduced new service maintenance techniques which recycle worn out surface materials into new road surfacing. The Council is also using materials which reduce traffic noise in residential areas. As in previous years, the Council has ensured that it has adequate salt stocks for winter gritting and the communications team are ensuring local people are kept informed of road conditions during the winter period.		G
Implement the provisions of the flytipping protocol agreed between Local Authorities and the Environment Agency in Thurrock		
The national protocol has now been reviewed by officers who are aware of the provisions therein for liaison between the Environment Agency and the Council's Environmental Enforcement Officers. The relevant contact details for officers at the Council and the Agency have been refreshed to avoid any communication difficulties arising in the event that future large scale fly tips in Thurrock require joint operations between council officers and Environment Agency staff.		G

Related KPI Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
% Household waste reused/recycled/composted	R	42.5	44.88	48
% Municipal waste sent to landfill	R	23	19	19
Street Cleanliness - a) Litter	G	4.3%	6%	6%
Street Cleanliness - c) Graffiti	G	0%	2%	2%
No of reported incidents of Fly tipping	n/a	1327	Baseline is 925	Baseline is 1850
No of reported incidents of abandoned vehicles	n/a	447	Baseline is 370	Baseline is 740
% of refuse bins emptied on correct day	G	98.5	98.5	98.5
Tonnage of street waste removed	n/a	1639.5	No target	No target

Priority	Promote and protect our clean and green environment
Objective	Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
<p>Build new homes to Lifetime Homes, Sustainable Homes Code 4 Standards and exemplar architectural design with public art at all new housing developments and Council projects, with design standards reinforced through the Local Plan</p> <p>Thurrock housing building programme is engineered to deliver a long term suitable housing offer to local people. By building homes to high and lifetime standards, future occupants will be able to continue living in their homes even when their health needs changes overtime. The authority is also delivering new housing developments via Gloriana, the Council wholly owned company. For example, a housing scheme at Belmont Road, Grays, (subject to planning) providing 78 units with a completion date of February 2018. Other developments include:</p> <p>Seabrooke Rise in Grays: a new development that is at its final completions stages, will deliver 53 new affordable homes, and a Community Hall to serve the local community.</p> <p>St Chads in Tilbury: an architectural award winning development, will see 128 properties developed, 3% of which will be disabled adapted, likely to be ready in 2017</p> <p>Calcutta Road in Tilbury: 37 new homes planned. To be completed by 2017.</p>	G
<p>Encourage the community to help maintain children’s play areas so that they remain safe and enjoyable for families</p> <p>The safety inspections and repairs to play equipment in our parks and open spaces are a statutory undertaking of the Environment Directorate and as such are undertaken by trained staff. However, there are a number of ways in which community groups can and have been engaging with the service to ensure that parks and open spaces and also town centres remain enjoyable for all. Significant work has been undertaken this year to nurture and extend those opportunities.</p> <p>Three excellent examples of this are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Blooming Marvels in Stanford Le Hope who have become involved in the planting and maintenance of floral displays in their town centre • The community group from Hardie Park who are in the process of taking over responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and development of the park • The Lightship Café group who are in discussion with the Council about assuming responsibilities for the running of the Grays Beach Café. <p>Further opportunities for working with communities to encourage their engagement in and support for parks and open spaces are being actively pursued.</p>	G

Related Strategic/Corporate Opportunities	Impact / Likelihood
Gloriana Thurrock Ltd	Exceptional / Very Likely

Priority**Well run organisation**

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES		RAG
Develop and deliver contemporary services to support a sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy and implementation of savings proposals for 2015/16		G
<p>Cabinet received a report at their meeting in November setting out the half year forecast that will build on previously reported pressures. The report also set out what actions are being taken to protect the Council's financial position. The December Cabinet report shows full mitigations.</p> <p>The Asset Disposal programme for 2015/16 is currently on track to deliver in excess of £6m of capital receipts.</p>		
Develop and agree further savings, new service delivery models, investment opportunities and external funding to enable a balanced budget for 2016/17		A
<p>Cabinet received a report at their meeting in November that provided a revised MTFS based on the pressures, both emerging and experienced, in 2015/16. The December Cabinet report also set out the recommendations for balancing the 2016/17 budget subject to the CSR and grant announcements.</p> <p>The Asset Disposal programme for 2016/17 is currently under review whilst consideration is given to whether income from retention and then letting of council owned properties would be more financially beneficial than disposal.</p>		
Deliver an ambitious People Strategy to recruit and retain an engaged, confident and high performing workforce		A
<p>A new Corporate Workforce Group is being established and will help shape and deliver a new People Strategy to ensure the Council has the appropriate workforce fit for the future. Throughout the Serco Transition programme, staff briefings have included information on policy and standards linked to the People Strategy to ensure the move back to the council for those staff is as smooth as possible. The council also re-tendered the agency management contract and the new service will be delivered by Matrix from December.</p>		
Improve health and attendance through excellent people management, education and health promotion		A
<p>A number of new initiatives have taken place over the last 6 months, to add to the raft of policy and procedural improvements begun during last year. These include linking in with Public Health on initiatives such as Step Jockey, Thurrock 100 and Stoptober.</p> <p>A Health and Well Being week in October saw a full programme of events, activities and awareness-raising sessions directly aimed at staff. Sickness absence rates have improved over last year with an end of year forecast of an average of 9.13 days. This is not quite on target (9 days) but better than last year and a significant improvement on the 11.15 days average experienced in 2013/14. Stress related absence has also fallen significantly during the first few months of this year. These improvements have been attributed to significant investment of time from both HR and managers in detailed and active absence management on an individual case by case basis.</p>		

YEAR 2 DELIVERABLES	RAG
<p>Deliver a programme of leadership and workforce development to support service delivery and develop skills and aspirations of staff</p>	
<p>An updated leadership and management development programme is now in place with plans to further develop post the Serco transition when there will be an opportunity to deliver an in house ILM level 3 programme. As part of the Serco transition a programme for managers has been developed that captures both process and behaviours. This will be delivered to all people managers as part of the transition. HROD will be building on the 360 degree leadership programme through a skills development programme to enable this to be run in house and wider than the current group and there will be a wider focus on commercial skills and building innovation.</p>	G
<p>Modernise our internal processes and ways of working through digital technology, employee self-service and on-line learning</p>	
<p>The council has been driving out employee and manager self-service through Oracle over the last year as part of the Transformation Programme, and this has also been fed into the Serco transition programme. Objective EDRMS – the new electronic document retention management system which is driving records management into a single, efficient, modernised digital format – is now on its final phases of roll out and is on track to be fully implemented on time by June 2016.</p> <p>HROD are continuing to develop an e learning portfolio with wider use of our learning platform functionality to deliver webinars. The e-learning platform continues to grow with a number of new courses developed this year. The team is also developing a number of resources for libraries, the Stronger Together Community Hub and around self-harm and suicide awareness. The team have now developed a suite of screen cast training to support the Serco transition. This model will be introduced more widely following the transition.</p> <p>The Council is working with a supplier to develop a predictive model that will identify children in the 0 to 2 age range who are most at risk of mal-treatment by age 5. This system will provide the Council with alerts to identify children at risk, enabling earlier intervention to support families and prevent maltreatment.</p>	G
<p>Deliver strategic and modern communications to enhance the profile of the place and Council, inform of service changes, encourage participation and manage expectations at a time of unprecedented change aligning external and internal communications where appropriate</p>	
<p>The strategic approach to communications and priority campaigns has been agreed. Following the restructure of the Communications Team, a new Marketing and Communications Manager joined the Council in August. This has enabled the development of a forward plan for communication and marketing activity focused on priority projects that support residents, can help reduce spend and/or manage demand for services e.g. My Account, fostering, childcare for 0-2 year olds, recycling.</p> <p>In addition work is underway to specifically promote growth and regeneration in Thurrock and the place itself including the benefits to local people and in order to attract additional inward investment.</p>	A
<p>Deliver the Transformation Programme, driving channel shift and customer access arrangements to reflect the digital council ambition</p>	
<p>Digital Board and Transformation Board have signed off the Channel Migration strategy and a full implementation plan has been developed. The strategy proposes that for most</p>	G

resident, the first point of contact should be online channels, although there will still be telephone and face to face contact available. Recent data shows that our customers want to transact with us digitally:

- 23,600 My Account signs ups
- 6,980 Council tax registrations since Sept 2014
- 100% of new housing benefit claims are made online
- 2,156 housing benefit registrations online
- 302 bulky waste bookings made online since going live in May 2015
- 100 Registrar appointments made online since go live in August 2015
- 7,660 environmental reports made online since Oct 2013

Quickheart – the new online adult social care information and advice site – is implemented, and work is underway to see how it can be developed further to offer full self-assessment capabilities.

Satellite council offices are in the process of having their IT upgraded in line with Civic Offices systems, and this should be completed by the end of November. All Civic Offices moves are on track to be completed by end of November, with the associated IT improvements.

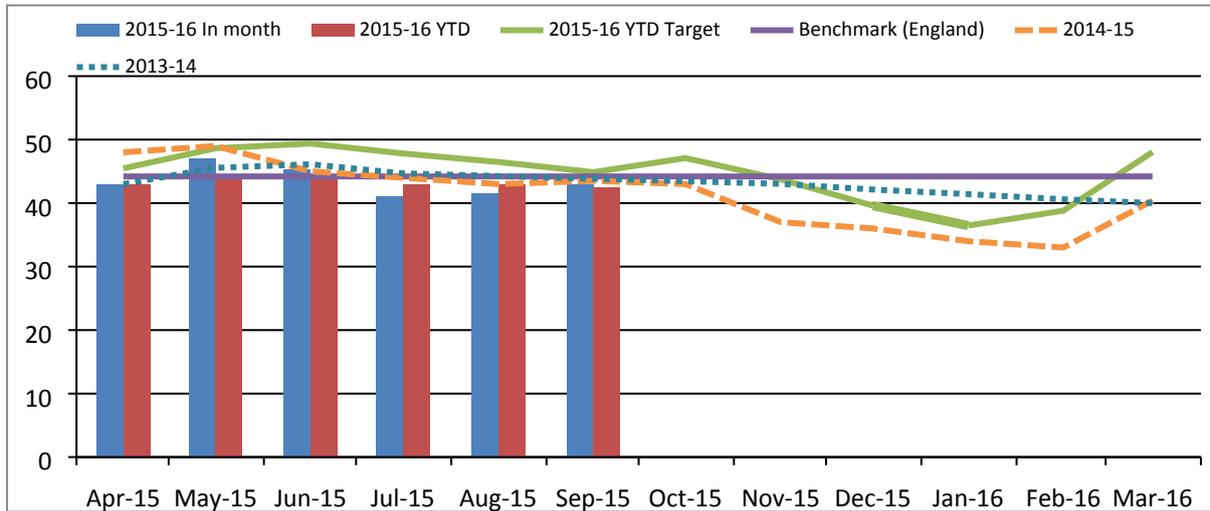
Related Strategic/Corporate Risks	Impact / Likelihood
Managing Change/Capacity for Change	Substantial / Likely
Sickness Absence	Substantial / Likely
Delivery of MTFS – 2015/16	Critical / Likely
Delivery of MTFS 2016/17 -2018/19	Critical / Likely
Property Ownership Liability	Critical / Unlikely
Reputation & Profile	Substantial / Likely
Business Continuity	Critical / Likely
ICT Disaster Recovery Planning	Critical / Unlikely
ICT Infrastructure	Critical / Unlikely
Related Strategic/Corporate Opportunities	Impact / Likelihood
Digital Programme	Exceptional / Unlikely

Well Run Organisation Performance	RAG Status	Mid Year Data (Sept YTD)	Mid Year Target	Year End Target
Overall spend to budget on Capital Programme	G	38	30	90
Overall spend to budget on General Fund (variance)	A	0	0	0
Overall spend to budget on HRA (£K variance)	G	0	0	0
% Council Tax collected	G	54.22	54.17	98.9
% National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected	A	57.96	59.51	99.3
% Rent collected	G	95.6	93.5	99.5
% invoices paid within timescale	A	94.94	97	97
% timeliness of all Complaints	A	97.6	98	98
Average sickness absence days per FTE	A	4.57	4.5	9
% long term sickness	A	47	40	34
% stress/stress related absence	G	16.65	20	18
No of people registered for My Account	G	23,624	16,000	25,000

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Mid Year Corporate Progress and Performance Report 2015/16
Appendix 2: Focus on RED Key Performance Indicators

RAG	DOT from last year	Measure	Data	
RED	Worse	% Household Waste reused, recycled and composted	Sept Actual/YTD	42.99%/ 42.5%
			Sept Target	44.88%
			Year End Target	48%



The indicator measures percentage of household waste, which has been sent by the Authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion. This is a key measure of local authorities' progress in moving management of household waste up the hierarchy, consistent with the Government's national strategy for waste management.

The recycling performance this year continues to lag behind target with the current projected outturn being circa 39%. Nationally, recycling levels have been falling in many areas of the country. In Thurrock, the levels of recycling are lower than in many areas due to the high proportion of flats (30% of all properties) with communal bins.

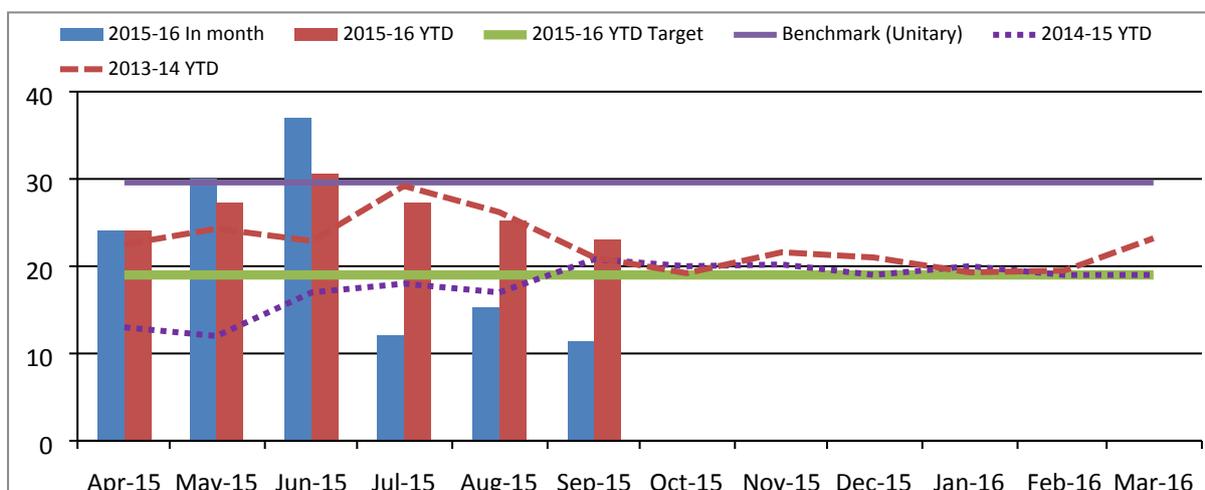
In addition a small but significant number of residents are using their blue bins to dispose of general waste rather than recyclable materials. This has led to an increase in the contamination level of our recycling and as a result many loads have been rejected from the recycling processing plant and have had to be disposed of as residual waste.

A communication and engagement project is underway within the department to tackle the levels of contamination with detailed information of the materials that can be recycled provided to every household. In recent months, the information on the council's website (thurrock.gov.uk/bins) has been improved and bin stickers are clear about what can go in each bin. The team are also soon to launch a pre-Christmas recycling campaign, followed by targeted campaigns in specific areas, including flats.

A new process is in place whereby the recycling bins are checked before being loaded into the waste trucks and tagged if they are contaminated. Residents with tagged bins are contacted directly and the recycling process and implications of contamination further explained. As a last resort we are now removing recycling bins from persistent offenders.

A further consequence of a contaminated recycling stream is that disposal costs increase from £55 per tonne to £95 per tonne. We collect and dispose of 13,000 tonnes of recyclable material per year and as contamination levels rise, so do the costs.

RAG	DOT from last year	Measure	Data	
RED	Worse	Percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill	Sept Actual/YTD	11% / 23%
			Sept Target	19%
			Year End Target	19%



This indicator refers to the volume of municipal waste that is sent to landfill. This includes the waste collected from households as well as that from the Civic Amenity site, bulky waste collections and street cleansing and grounds maintenance.

Since the beginning of September 2015 the Council has been working under a renewed disposal contract. The impact of this is that all waste collected from households will now be diverted to energy recovery and therefore not landfilled.

The level of waste still being landfilled has fallen to 11% in September and is likely to continue at that rate for the foreseeable future, which should mean that this indicator is well within target by the end of the year.

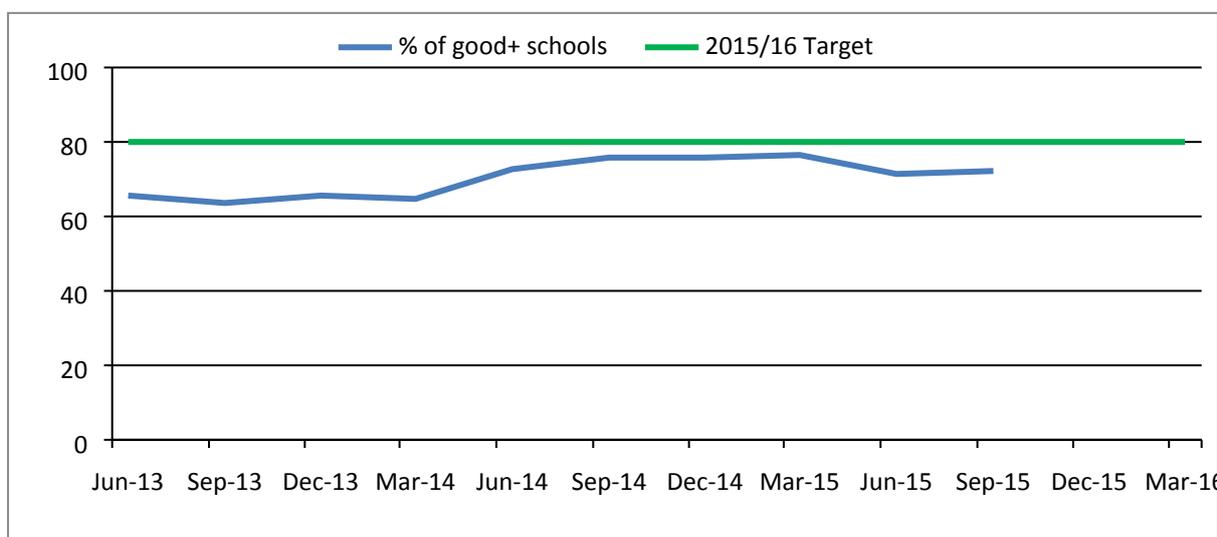
This indicator is shown as RED because although in-month performance is much better than target, the cumulative position as at the end of September is 23% due to high levels at the beginning of the year and looks therefore worse than the target of 19%.

This is a significant improvement on previous performance of this indicator (19% in 2014-15) and will mean that Thurrock continues to be amongst the best performers in the Eastern region.

RAG	DOT from last year	Measure	Data	
RED	Worse	% of primary schools judged "good" or better	Sept Actual	72%
			Sept Target	80%
			Year End Target	80%

The percentage has risen minimally, largely due to the low number of primary inspections over the past year. The Director of Children's Services (DCS) has requested that two schools be re-inspected early due to significant improvements back in the spring term. These have not yet taken place.

Two primary inspections that did take place in the summer term with 'requires improvement' outcomes were unexpected and, due to the timing, the schools' most recent SATS data was not taken into consideration. A senior HMI has since visited both schools at the request of the DCS and has agreed that on reflection the judgements were rather harsh.

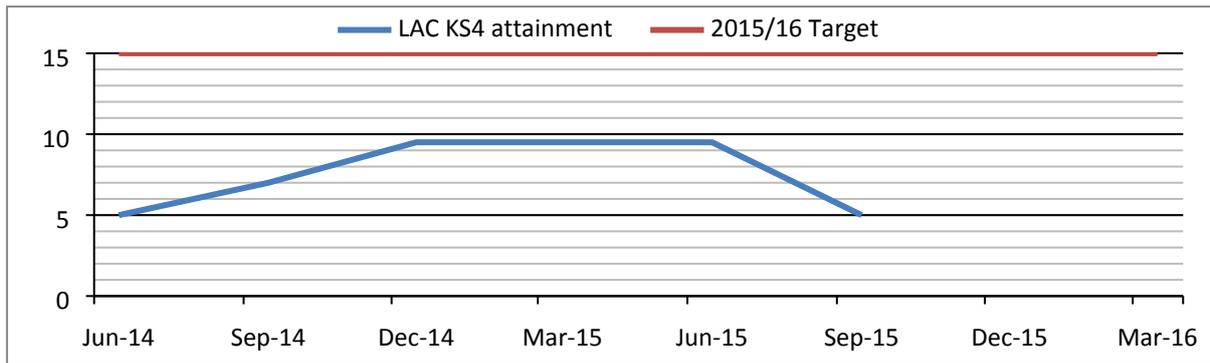


RAG	DOT from last year	Measure	Data	
RED	Worse	LAC KS4 Attainment – 5+ A*-C (including English and Maths GCSEs)	Sept Actual/YTD	5%
			Sept Target	15%
			Year End Target	15%

28 pupils were entered for GCSEs from the Looked After Children (LAC) cohort of 42 with 13 attending a local Thurrock school. All 28 were entered for examinations (including vocational options) and all achieved a qualification in a range of subjects.

Every mainstream school/academy in Thurrock included at least one looked after child in their Year 11 cohort and of the five predicted to gain 5 or more GCSEs, two students achieved 5 A*-C grades including English and maths.

In discussion with Thurrock secondary schools' senior teams it has been agreed that the focus on "narrowing the gap" for disadvantaged groups, including those in the care of the local authority are prioritised in the new 2015/16 School Development Plans (SDPs). A number of LAC were unaccompanied asylum seekers, at an early stage of learning English, and therefore not yet able to take GCSEs.

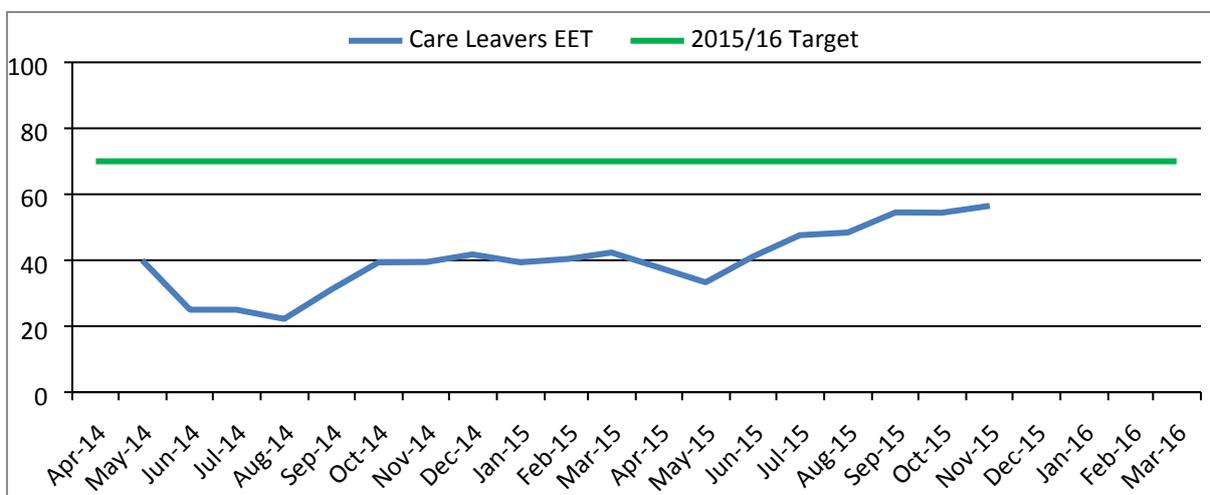


RAG	DOT from last year	Measure	Data	
RED	Better	% of 19-21 yr old Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training	Sept Actual/YTD	47.7%
			Sept Target	70%
			Year End Target	70%

A deliberately high target of 70% was set to enable Thurrock young care leavers to outperform the rest of the country. Across Children’s Services and the wider Council we continue to focus on NEET reduction and promoting contact with our care leavers.

Since this data was submitted, updates have been made which has increased the level of EET to 54.5% by the end of September 2015. This is above the national average for 2014/15 (47.8%) and would therefore be re-graded as “Amber” due to the significant improvements made by the social workers helping 19-21yr olds access employment, education or training. Improvements have also been made to the reporting of this data and teams have been assigned to manage these young people and update the system according to the new rules set out by the DfE this year. Data as at the end of November shows a further increase to 56.5% of care leavers aged 19-21 recorded as being in employment, education or training around their birthday.

The Council continues to support care leavers via the Diversity in Apprenticeship programme which works to secure work placements and employment opportunities. The proportion of care leavers in employment, education or training is improving and this remained a key focus in the Autumn term with two special events involving care leavers in October as part of National Care Leavers week.



7 January 2016	ITEM: 6
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Fairness Commission Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non key
Report of: Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy and Communications	
Accountable Head of Service: Karen Wheeler, Head of Strategy and Communications	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive	
This report is public.	

Executive Summary

In April 2014 Cabinet agreed to establish a Fairness Commission for Thurrock as recommended by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group. This report presents the Commission's report and recommendations following a summer of consultation and engagement across the borough.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Note the contents of the report and give consideration to how the Council responds to the recommendations detailed at 3.8 prior to the report being presented at Cabinet in February 2016.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 12 September 2013 to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at how other local authorities have deployed equality commissions, within budgetary constraints, to progress equality issues within their localities. The panel's overall aim was to make recommendations on the relevance of a commission for Thurrock, other alternatives, as well as any costs involved.

2.2 The Fairness in Thurrock Review Panel was subsequently established and undertook this investigation, reporting to Cabinet in April 2014. Cabinet approved recommendations to establish a Fairness Commission to progress equality issues within the Borough, and agreed that a Thurrock Fairness Commission Annual Report is received by Cabinet to review and monitor progress. The report will be presented to Cabinet 2016.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Fairness in Thurrock Review made a number of recommendations to progress a Fairness Commission as the most relevant mechanism for progressing equalities in Thurrock.
- 3.2 The Review provided a draft Terms of Reference with suggested members for a steering panel. An open nomination process was held from November 2013 to identify suitable and willing candidates. This included two articles in the local press, as well as contacting target organisations and partnership groups. The final membership list for the Commission is as follows:

Membership Criteria	Commissioner
Chair, Voluntary Sector and resident	Demus Lee
Voluntary Sector and resident	John Rowles
Voluntary Sector and resident	Diane Lee
Voluntary Sector and resident	Len Orpin
Head teacher	Dr Asong, Gable Hall School
Health	Len Green until June 2015 then Lesley Buckland, Thurrock NHS CCG
Economist	Andrew Sentance
Local business and industry	Matthew Johnson, Palmers Solicitors
Housing Tenant Representative	Carol Purser
Youth Cabinet	George Wright
Labour Councillor	Cllr Oliver Gerrish
Conservative Councillor	Cllr Robert Gledhill
UKIP Councillor	Cllr Graham Snell
Assistant Chief Executive representing Senior Management Team, Thurrock Council	Steve Cox

- 3.3 One resident representative left the Fairness Commission shortly after its first meeting. It was not possible to fill the post for a disability group representative, something the Commission had aimed to achieve.
- 3.4 Thurrock Fairness Commission held its first meeting on 12 March 2015. Work prior to this concentrated on the recruitment of Commissioners according to the recommendations set out in the review report.
- 3.5 From its first meeting the Fairness Commission highlighted the need to understand more about local perceptions of fairness. The Commission undertook a 'Summer of Listening' from June – October 2015, capturing over 300 comments from events across the Borough, along with 200 responses to an on-line survey.

- 3.7 The attached draft report sets out the Commissioner's consideration of the consultation results and their recommendations. Services have been asked to respond to the comments as the Commission is keen to ensure local people recognise their views have been listened to, and answers provided to some of the concerns raised as well as recommendations to tackle inequality in the Borough.
- 3.8 The Commission has made a number of recommendations and will be formally requesting agencies working in Thurrock to respond. Thurrock Council endorses the recommendations made by Thurrock's Fairness Commission and our initial response is likely to result in the following actions.

Recommendation	Proposed Response
1. Principles of Fairness	The Council will support by issuing press releases, publicising the principles and promoting the process to support residents who have reason to complain about something against the principles.
2. Strengthening Communities	The Council will arrange a summit of partners to consider how best to design a campaign. This will include businesses and the potential for inward investment. It will also include Stronger Together a partnership supporting asset based community development of which the Council is a partner.
3. Improved Communications	Thurrock Council will be developing a new Customer Service Strategy in 2016. The strategy will be informed by recommendation 1 and 3.
4. Residents Survey	Thurrock Council agrees that a regular survey would support policy development and will be exploring the feasibility of this in the coming months.
5. To provide feedback to those consulted	We will publish the report on the website.
6. Review Thurrock's Single Equality Scheme	We welcome the observations provided by the Commission and will be reviewing the Single Equality Scheme accordingly.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To share the draft report and recommendations from Thurrock's Fairness Commission and to seek comment prior to the final publication.

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

- 5.1 As detailed in the report, Thurrock's Fairness Commission has carried out extensive consultation including outreach and an on-line survey. Consideration of local views has helped inform the recommendations set out by the Commission.

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

- 6.1 A Fairness Commission for Thurrock will have a positive impact on all of corporate priorities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

The Fairness Commission will be funded through existing resources, facilitated by existing staff and incorporated into current workloads and priorities.

7.2 Legal

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

There are no legal implications arising from this report beyond the fact that this recommendation will contribute towards good and informed governance as to our equality duty.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Council is under a statutory duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations. The Fairness Commission will provide a good mechanism for meeting our equality duties.

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):

- <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/diversity-and-equality/thurrock-fairness-commission>

The Fairness in Thurrock Review and related information can be accessed via the above link.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Fairness Commission Draft Report, January 2016 (Draft)

Report Author:

Natalie Warren

Community Development and Equalities Manager

Strategy Team, CEDU

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Thurrock Fairness Commission

Final Report and Recommendations (January 2016)

An independent report on the findings and recommendations of the Thurrock Fairness Commission following consultation and engagement with local residents, businesses and public agencies between April - October 2015

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Introduction by Demus Lee



One of the main drivers for Thurrock to consider a Fairness Commission was the lack of open discussion and apparent awareness in Thurrock about some of the key, historic examples of inequality that blight our communities. August 4th 2015 brought this fact home to me. I had spent the day with others from the Fairness Commission at a fun day in Tilbury, speaking to people about how they felt about fairness. We spoke with lots of people who touched on a range of concerns – mainly around the need for parks and open spaces to be safer and cleaner. That evening, Tilbury appeared on the news. There wasn't any mention of the positive day spent in the open air, enjoying sports and community life. Instead the report raised the major concerns about the level of healthcare provision – especially the number of GPs

needed in Tilbury and the size of GP patient lists compared to the mid Essex average. On that day in August, not one resident raised accessing their GP with us as a concern. Official data shows poor health levels amongst Tilbury residents where the average life expectancy is 8 years lower for men and 7 years for women than more affluent parts of the Borough. Yet this issue was not raised with us by residents themselves – a clear example of why a Fairness Commission was considered important.

An equally compelling reason for a Fairness Commission for Thurrock was the scale of regeneration and growth planned. This provides our best opportunity to tackle historic areas of inequality for the benefit of existing residents and future generations.

Thurrock as a Borough is growing – current estimates expect our population of 164,000 in 2015 to grow to 190,000 by 2030. The creation of new jobs and new housing presents many opportunities for the residents of Thurrock. However, public sector budgets are shrinking. Thurrock Council has made £83.2m savings over the last six years (2010-2016) and faces an estimated budget gap of over £28m from 2016/17 – 2019/20. And the Council is just one of the agencies managing key public services for Thurrock residents.

I am grateful to my colleagues who have given their time in 2015 to the Fairness Commission, and to the hundreds of residents who shared their views with us providing the content for this report and its recommendations.

Demus Lee
Chair, Thurrock Fairness Commission

Message from the Commissioners

Thurrock Fairness Commission was established to find out more about inequality in Thurrock and to make recommendations about how to achieve positive change for the future.

As a group of individuals from across a wide range of interests, the Commission has aimed to steer clear of coming up with a wish list of recommendations that would cost money and probably be at risk of ever being considered. We are bound by the context in which we work and have tried to use this opportunity to shine a light where more awareness is needed, so that we can work together for a fairer future.

The Fairness Commission agreed its own definition of fairness as: *“a fair society is where people have an equal chance to realise their full potential and an equal chance to have their voice heard and be part of decision-making.”* Discussion of the definition helped the Commission reflect on the need to understand the wider public’s view of fairness. This informed our commitment to the Summer of Listening, providing opportunities to speak to residents across the Borough.

Our formal role on the Fairness Commission will end with the publication of this report. However, as a group of individuals committed to seeing change in Thurrock, we will continue to meet and scrutinise future policy to ensure this report has a lasting legacy for our Borough.

Dr Sophina Asong	Head teacher, Gable Hall School
Steve Cox	Assistant Chief Executive, Thurrock Council
Cllr Oliver Gerrish	Labour Councillor
Cllr Robert Gledhill	Conservative Councillor
Len Green (until June 2015) & Lesley Buckland	Lay Member for Public and Patient Participation, NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group
Matthew Johnson	Business Representative Palmers Solicitors
Demus Lee	Resident of Thurrock, Chair of Thurrock Fairness Commission
Diane Lee	Resident of Thurrock
Len Orpin	Resident of Thurrock
Carol Purser	Tenant Representative, Thurrock Tenancy Excellence Panel
John Rowles	Resident of Thurrock
Andrew Sentance	Economist
Cllr Graham Snell	UKIP Councillor
George Wright	Thurrock Youth Council

Executive Summary

Between March 2015 and October 2015 the Thurrock Fairness Commission – an independent group of individuals from across a wide range of interests including local residents, business people, councillors, professionals and academics – have been undertaking an analysis of the evidence and the perception of fairness in Thurrock. Through a series of meetings, presentations and a *Summer of Listening* to residents, the Commissioners received a wealth of information and hundreds of views from which they have developed this report and the recommendations within it.

The Fairness Commission has made 6 recommendations plus a set of ***Principles of Fairness*** to which Thurrock should commit.

Principles of Fairness

Thurrock commits to:

- **Eliminating unfairness**, promoting opportunities that benefit all people, whatever their background
- **Empowering people** to do things for themselves, working **with** rather than **for** the community
- Promoting **social responsibility** amongst local employers so Thurrock people have the earliest opportunities for employment and self-development
- Making decisions and running services **openly**, listening to communities and communicating outcomes and reasons in good time
- Giving priority to **those in greatest need** when allocating resources

Recommendations

1. A Fairness Charter

That Thurrock's Fairness Commission's 'Charter for Fairness' based on the ***Principles of Fairness*** above is adopted by public agencies working in Thurrock with consideration of how these will be achieved, linking to performance frameworks where possible.

2. Strengthening Communities

Explore a campaign to build on the pride which exists in Thurrock and to promote all that is good about the Borough as well as its economic potential. A campaign should explore a 'giving' element to build on the passion and energy for a more caring, connected Thurrock which brings residents, the public sector, businesses and charities together.

3. Improved Communications

Residents need to know where to go to access relevant, accurate information. This should promote positive opportunities for the Borough, help increase pride in Thurrock, and ensure residents can have their say and be heard and understand the reasons behind decisions.

4. Introduce a regular Residents Survey for Thurrock

A regular, consistent survey across key agencies and policy areas will help ensure that people's perceptions about Thurrock were taken into consideration when developing policy.

5. To provide feedback to all stakeholders that contributed to the *Summer of Listening*

The publication of this report will be widely shared to assure residents that we have aimed to represent their voice to help create change in the future.

6. Review Thurrock's Single Equality Scheme

To provide a focus on objectives for Thurrock regarding:

- Access to services – e.g. health care, school placements, physical access
- Poverty and austerity, including child poverty
- Building cohesion and creating welcoming communities

Section 1- Background to the Fairness Commission

Why have a Fairness Commission for Thurrock?

Many statistics relating to Thurrock suggest high levels of inequality amongst our communities. Inequality is evident across areas including health, educational attainment, employment, income and child poverty to name some key examples.

Within this context, the Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed on 12 September 2013 to establish a Task and Finish group to look at ways other local authorities deploy equality commissions within budgetary constraints and progress equality issues within their localities. The panel's overall aim was to make recommendations on the relevance of a commission for Thurrock, other alternatives, as well as any costs involved.

The Fairness in Thurrock Review Panel was subsequently established and undertook this investigation, reporting to Cabinet in April 2014. A copy of the report published as a result of the review provides a great deal of relevant information and background to Thurrock's Fairness Commission. This can be viewed online - www.thurrock.gov.uk/fairness

Thurrock Council's Cabinet approved recommendations to establish a Fairness Commission in April 2014. The focus for the commission was:

- to progress equality issues within the Borough, and,
- to prepare a Thurrock Fairness Commission Annual Report for Cabinet to review and monitor progress.

The initial report prepared by the Fairness in Thurrock Review Panel contains detailed data and evidence regarding the equality challenges for Thurrock. Thurrock's Fairness Commission has neither sought to replicate that data nor the work of the Review Panel.

Alongside some of the data and statistics for Thurrock, we felt it imperative to understand the perception of how people feel about the area and how fair they feel the Borough to be. As a Commission, we commended the work of the Review Panel in highlighting examples of inequality through data – but we needed to understand how people felt about how best to tackle inequality and create greater fairness.

Many of the statistics around inequality point to a north-south split in the Borough where communities south of the A13 are more at risk of experiencing inequality. The perception of all, however, was felt to be central to our mission.

Everyone has to understand the benefit of a more equal society in order for the incentive to create change to be fully embraced. These early principles underpinned our approach to taking on the task set to us in considering fairness in Thurrock.

The Role and Remit of the Fairness Commission

The Review Panel agreed a Terms of Reference for the Commission (Appendix 1). This set the framework for a time-limited consideration of fairness in Thurrock with a view to making recommendations to improve fairness in the future.

The Terms of Reference suggested organisations to approach to bring together a panel of commissioners. A recruitment process was held in order to attract a wide range of interested residents and professionals.

Thurrock Fairness Commission held its first meeting on 12 March 2015.

The approach taken by the Fairness Commission

Based on the early principles to seek the perceptions of all and provide an understanding of a more equal society, the Commission set a work plan which sought to:

- a) examine themed areas, and,
- b) conduct a *Summer of Listening* campaign.

a) Themed areas

Two themed meetings were held focusing on Housing (April 2015) and Life in Thurrock (June 2015). A review of this approach was completed in June 2015 as some concern was expressed about the ability of themed meetings to really reflect residents' views and the support in place to promote the Commission's message to residents.

b) *Summer of Listening* Campaign

From July 2015, a *Summer of Listening* was launched with a supporting programme of events between July and the end of August 2015.

During the course of the campaign the Fairness Commission:

- attended 9 community events across the Borough and recorded comments from over 300 people and spoke with many more about their perceptions of fairness
- conducted a survey into fairness in Thurrock with over 200 responses (extended to early October 2015);
- issued press releases, tweets and posters promoting the work of the Commission as well as writing to over 200 stakeholders encouraging participation; and
- established a dedicated mobile telephone number, email address and webpage on Thurrock Council's website.

The evidence gained through the *Summer of Listening* is covered in detail in Section 2 of this report. The recommendations made by the Fairness Commission are based on our consideration of how Thurrock works as a Borough, taking into account the views and perceptions gained through our evidence gathering.

The following section of this report aims to summarise the key points made through the consultation.

People were very open with us; they made considered points and were clearly passionate and keen to have their say. Many were interested in what difference the Commission would have. We felt it absolutely essential that people's views be shared with decision makers to help to provide this insight to local people's perceptions.

Responses provided from some of the agencies who co-ordinate services are contained in Section 3 of this report.

Section 2 – What we found

At our initial meeting in March 2015, we agreed to hold topic-based meetings to allow us to focus on key issues in Thurrock including, education, housing and health and well-being. However, very early on we felt that these themed meetings did not attract public involvement. The Fairness Commission could already access strategies, reports, data and policies for Thurrock – but what we wanted was to get under the skin of how people felt. We decided therefore to focus on a *Summer of Listening* that would involve meeting people and talking to them with an on-line survey running alongside.

It rapidly came apparent that the concept of ‘fairness’ was too wide to confront and would need breaking down. The question ‘what do you think is unfair about Thurrock?’ often became translated as what people liked and disliked about Thurrock. The on-line survey was something that could be completed later following time to reflect, but most Commissioners had this experience at outdoor events.

At engagement events, we used a stall with prompts to help over 300 people reflect on local issues. Examples of this include:

- Participants were asked to use shells to indicate what level of child poverty existed in Thurrock – the majority got this right by choosing the bowl marked 22% rather than 13% or 17.5% - those who got it wrong were often not surprised by the true result.
- A Town Crier was used at some events to help stop people and engage them on the issue of fairness. We found that using someone in this role helped people respond to a question on ‘what they thought’ rather than ‘who is asking the question’.

Feedback from this direct engagement was gathered together with survey results received during the course of the online consultation. The key themes that emerged from the *Summer of Listening* campaign were:

- The environment – the look and feel of the Borough
- A growing population
- Activities for children, young people and families
- Public transport

Many members of the community that shared their views told us they were happy in Thurrock. Quite often their comments were preceded with ‘more could be done to improve...’ or ‘well I’m quite happy here, although ...’ This type of feedback is explored further in the following sub-sections of this report that focus on the emerging themes.

The Commissioners felt that as well as listening to people about their views of fairness, it was equally as important to capture comments and recognize how people felt, as well as provide feedback on the comments and suggestions received. Initial feedback from the Commissioners follows a summary of the comments received around different themes. Where possible, we have sought feedback from services to the views of local people – these are contained at section 3.

The Environment

More comments were received about the environment than any other issue. The comments we received ranged from the loss of green belt to the increase of litter and the quality of open space.

This comment was typical of many received through the survey and face to face consultation: *“Grays looks like a rubbish dump and it’s unfair of the Council that they don’t seem concerned enough to clean it up and actively punish those who drop litter and don’t clean up after their pets”* (online survey response).

Many of those we spoke to saw a clear correlation between fairness and the state of the environment. There was a clear frustration amongst the public who regarded a littered and overgrown environment with a lack of pride. That frustration was vented at services that were not seen to carry out effective enforcement against those who cause litter and who were deemed as ‘not listening’ to the concerns of local people by cutting a service that sought to benefit all.

A poor environment was considered to impact on the well-being of the area. People were left feeling as if the Borough didn’t care about how it was perceived. This was seen to be deterring inward investment as well as having a negative impact on people’s well-being.

Lots of people valued the open space and parks around Thurrock. People who had moved here more recently seemed to value these areas more and young people spoke very well about the number of parks.

Feedback received from one child indicated *“I like Thurrock, (there are) lots of parks to play in”*. Children were generally positive about the Borough but wanted to see more entertainment and leisure opportunities to add to their quality of life.

However, nearly all comments concluded with an appeal for safer, cleaner parks. In some areas, Tilbury and Chadwell St Mary for example, there was a clear frustration with many residents who really felt as if their concerns about safety continued to fall on deaf ears. *“My child is hyper but the park where I live is too dangerous to visit and play there – there are drugs and needles left behind. A fence needs fixing to stop horses getting in, plus there is a building that is derelict which should be pulled down as kids play on the roof (Daisy Field)”* Tilbury Fun Day, August 2015.

A common theme from respondents was that they felt their particular neighbourhood was neglected at the expense of other places in Thurrock that were considered to get a better service.

Some people expressed concern that the Council mixed recyclables, wasting people’s time in the separation of rubbish into three bins. There was praise for weekly waste collection. *“What is fair in Thurrock is that we all continue to have our waste collected weekly”* (online survey response).

Air quality was raised as a concern by some residents, with the number of lorries using our roads adding to the problem. Specifically, one resident told us *“It is unfair that West Thurrock is seen as the not so desirable part of the Borough and a place for industry and HGVs to take over. Also that people living here are expected to take the brunt of traffic congestion, exhaust fumes, air and noise pollution that already exist. I think that is unfair that Thurrock has so much air pollution”*.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Environment

The Commission was not surprised that concern for the environment topped the list of issues raised by local people. As identified with other commissions, people report the issues they experience most day to day. In addition, the Commission’s engagement coincided with a time when service reductions, following cuts to budgets, had just come into play. This attracted a lot of media attention in late Spring 2015, the time when grass grows the most!

That said, Thurrock does not enjoy a positive reputation for being an attractive place. Its industrial landscape often overshadows its many qualities – 17 miles of riverfront, 70% greenbelt and a wealth of heritage sites. Yet there is a clear passion amongst local people who want to see these assets shine and the ‘dumping ground’ stigma lost.

Residents make a clear link between the quality of the environment and impact on a person’s health and well-being. The evidence collated will be shared with Thurrock’s Health and Well Being Board to encourage better consideration of this correlation in future policy development.

Grays High Street is recognised as a key area in need of improvement. It is not just that it is dirty and often covered in litter. As the main town in Thurrock it needs to be transformed. A place we can all be proud of and want to come into. Similar concerns are around the cleanliness of the “Gateway into Thurrock” i.e. the A13.

There is a clear opportunity here that must be grasped. The Council cannot continue to provide a service which meets local aspirations. It must therefore work to tap into the passion and opportunities within communities to help people do more to take pride in where they live.

Consideration of the feedback on the environment led to **recommendation 2 and recommendation 3**. There is a great deal of evidence that people are willing and keen to get involved with protecting and beautifying their local environment and a campaign to strengthen communities would help more people get involved in other areas too. A more positive portrayal of Thurrock through the media, celebrating local achievements and dispelling myths would build pride in Thurrock.

A Growing Population

The growth in Thurrock's population was raised as a concern by many. Often, immigration was the focus, with an appeal to government to limit the number of immigrants and to assess the skills base of new immigrants. Many others however welcomed the increasing diversity of Thurrock, although more should be done to encourage cohesion and a shared understanding.

"I can't think of anything that is fair in Thurrock. But what is unfair is the way that the English hard working people are put at the bottom of lists and foreigners and people who have no intention of working and do nothing but claim benefits are put at the top" (via online survey).

Of course, one can pick this argument apart. Not all immigrants have no intention to work and not all who claim benefits are immigrants. But the perception was evident – a large section of those we spoke to felt their prospects and ability to access services from housing to health were at risk due to the growth in population, partly due to immigration.

Migration from London was also considered a threat to local services, making the pressure on current residents unfair. *'Sadly there is a strong resentment to people moving into the area from London and some comments/ attitudes are racist'* (feedback from resident at Grays Big Lunch event).

In addition, travellers were mentioned by a small number of people as presenting the same pressure.

'Speedier action with Essex colleagues to remove travellers before they become ensconced' (via online survey),

Another correlation made by some respondents was between an increased population (immigration, migration from London and travellers) on the look and feel of the Borough. Many respondents felt Thurrock was becoming more like London, dirtier with too much rubbish and anti-social behaviour – the perception being this was often carried out by people coming in to Thurrock. One resident that attended a community engagement event described the Borough as *"London's dustbin (with) local people treated with a lack of respect by authorities"*.

Many comments however welcomed the increase in diversity in Thurrock. We spoke to lots of people who had moved to Thurrock, often from London. They really valued our open spaces and celebrated living here. *'(I) moved here from London and like it as it is quieter and I'm happy for my children to be brought up here'*.

Whilst some felt Thurrock had a long way to go to be more welcoming – not only to welcome newcomers, but also to be more accepting of people who were disabled and or frail. *"(I) felt uninvolved by (my) neighbourhood when moved into Thurrock from East London."* (Village Beach) *"I don't know my neighbours and could never ask for their help. We need to be more considerate and kind to others"*. (Over 60s club)

Others felt that Thurrock could be very insular as a Borough, and that more could be done to encourage an understanding of people from different backgrounds. This comment was made a

number of times in relation to combating homophobia, racism and discrimination against people with disabilities, including children and the need for inclusive activities and buildings.

Much of the face to face engagement we undertook happened at open, community events. Many people felt these were positive opportunities to build a cohesive, less insular Thurrock to build strong communities.

Comment from Fairness Commission: A Growing Population

Thurrock's population is set to grow further. More homes are to be built and our neighbourhoods will expand, potentially changing the 'urban village' feel of Thurrock. As a result, our population will continue to become more diverse.

Managing this change in a positive way which addresses the fears of existing residents is paramount. As an area, we have to know and understand all our communities – including emerging communities. Engaging positively with all communities will help to ensure people come together around the issues they share concern about. This will strengthen common bonds and build stronger communities. Engagement also means bringing people together so they have a shared experience. We need to build on the warmth people feel for the Borough so that everyone feels welcomed and encouraged to get involved in making Thurrock a better place to live.

The Commissioners reflected on the value that people placed on the free events held over summer 2015 and the opportunities these gave different people to mix together, breaking down barriers. **Recommendation 2** is informed by our desire to see more opportunities for Thurrock communities themselves to make our communities stronger, more connected places to live. We want to unleash the energy and passion people have for Thurrock to increase community-led action. This will need more community funding, advice, joined up information and support. Community venues need to be more accessible so that all residents can arrange meetings and events for their neighbours. We heard from *Islington Giving* about how they worked with businesses and residents to form a common campaign to achieve these very aims. We feel Thurrock can benefit from the same approach and encourage a detailed consideration by all partners in Thurrock to make this happen locally.

Recommendation 3 should help ensure more people are aware of the prospects and opportunities in Thurrock so they can take advantage from the benefits this will bring, especially with regard to jobs. **Recommendation 4** is intended to ensure that the decision makers keep their finger on the pulse of public opinion.

Young People

The majority of comments made relating to young people concerned the need to see more facilities and opportunities for children and young adults. A lack of youth clubs and activities

was considered to increase the risk of anti-social behaviour as young people were left to roam the streets or congregate in parks.

Affordability and access to opportunities for young people were considered important factors. Thurrock's transport arrangements for young people were considered poor. Free events were encouraged, and as captured under 'The Environment', many people celebrated our parks and open spaces which were seen to have potential for more organised leisure activities for young people. Free events and activities are particularly needed by working parents with children. They earn too much to be on benefits but not enough to be able afford many of the fee charging events and entertainments, particularly through the summer months. Some felt more was needed to help ensure activities were accessible to young people with physical and learning disabilities.

Access to community buildings to help run activities was considered a barrier and some commented that community venues originally intended for young people were now hired out for other purposes (e.g. Chadwell St Mary).

Education levels were considered to be improving, but more was needed to increase aspirations in an area where low paid jobs were considered the norm.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Young People

As a Commission, we attended 10 events across Thurrock in the summer – but we could have attended many more. These events were free, most held in parks and open spaces and encouraged families to take their own refreshments and spend time with other residents. We felt more joined up communication was needed to ensure all families knew about these opportunities so they did not have to face spending lots of money to have a good time.

Recommendation 3 therefore encourages better communication in Thurrock – we need to co-ordinate information so people have a 'one stop shop' for all they need to know. This should make full use of social media but also cater for people excluded from modern communications and encourage 'word of mouth' and social interaction.

Recommendation 2 is also relevant – most of the events held in Thurrock are community-led. This fact needs to be celebrated, recognized and invested in. We felt that a specific campaign to strengthen communities help this happen so that more communities were helped to help themselves.

Travel and Transport in Thurrock

Access to affordable, convenient public transport was often spoken of in relation to work (especially shift work) and leisure as well as essential services – health care and education.

Poor public transport was considered to negatively impact young people, older people and those who could not afford private transport. Improved bus services in particular were spoken about as requiring investment – often seen as a lifeline to help people stay active and connected. As one person at a summer event said: *“I like living in Thurrock but I don’t want to grow old here due to the public transport”*.

Accessible public transport was raised on a number of occasions. We heard from people who felt if a bus was too packed, or too late, that the driver would not stop to assist someone with mobility problems to get on. Ramps were often broken and bus companies reluctant to prioritise their replacement.

Traffic congestion was raised by many as a key concern. The west of the Borough in particular was considered to be too congested with HGVs, pollution and constant traffic jams. Increased housing would make this problem worse. People expressed frustration with some of the ways in which roads were designed. Simple solutions raised by residents were thought to be ignored. Many people are worried about the proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing. Many more bemoaned the charge to residents for using the Dartford Crossing.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Travel and Transport

People’s ability to go about their day to day business has a huge impact on their perception of fairness. Whilst we recognise that public transport exists within a financial market, more could be done to represent the frustrations of people living in Thurrock with current levels of service.

Discussion on this point, as well as the perception that when residents made suggestions to officers that their views were ignored, led to **Recommendation 1: A Fairness Charter for Thurrock**. We see this as an opportunity to agree principles that people in Thurrock can expect - for example, transparency and helping people make the most of local opportunities. Complaints arising from statements in the Charter would be taken up with the most appropriate organisation – Thurrock Council’s information management service could assist in identifying who to approach.

Housing

Residents of the Borough expressed deep concerns around the local housing market, the affordability of properties within the Borough and housing options available to residents.

Many people expressed frustration with the difficulty young families have in finding affordable accommodation. Many accepted that the cost of housing in Thurrock was relatively lower than London and the South East, but this attracts people to Thurrock at the expense of local people who cannot afford to stay.

The frustration felt by many was linked to issues expressed by residents with access to housing options within the social sector (Council housing). Many residents wanted to see preferential treatment of local residents of social housing to be a fairer prerogative. Many views were expressed about housing in Thurrock which suggest that myths take hold very quickly – for example, that housing lists are not reviewed, that the council is selling housing to London councils and that immigrants are given preferential treatment to access council housing – when in fact, the policy states that people have to be resident for five years before being accepted onto the list.

One council tenant that completed the online survey highlighted a lack of availability of suitable housing: *“The way the housing is today it is unfair that people like myself wish to downsize but I am too young to downsize to a bungalow or a nice ground floor place in areas I wish to go - they are all for 55 years with DLA or 60 plus...it’s crazy as the council would gain a very big three bedroom house back here with so much parking and it has been very looked after in and out it looks private as well...so this should be looked into for people like myself”*.

Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau has highlighted the top housing issues it has supported April – September 2015 as being:

1. Threatened homelessness – 20%
2. Private rented property – 20%
3. Local authority housing – 10%
4. Access to accommodation – 9%
5. Actual homelessness – 8%

Thurrock CAB are seeing more and more clients struggle to find decent affordable private rented accommodation. Some are receiving a section 21 (no rent arrears) from their landlords simply because the landlord has received a better offer elsewhere. Often this better offer includes an incentive to take a tenant from out of the area and provide a 2 year fixed term tenancy. This additional problem further reduces the affordable housing available to the local community. This reflects the concern raised by residents that they are increasingly priced out of the local private rented market.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Housing

Thurrock Council presented its new Housing Strategy to the Commission. This takes a holistic approach to housing and its impact on well-being where people live happy and healthy lives. The Council has taken proactive measures to improve the repairs service experienced by tenants. Housing is being re-let quicker than ever and new developments planned across Thurrock with the advent of *Gloriana* – the council-owned housing company, building new affordable houses in the Borough.

Whilst the demand for social housing outstrips supply, the ability of residents to access suitable housing is affected by their personal circumstances as much as the physical availability of housing. There is a particular concern regarding housing for single occupancy tenants who are often young people or vulnerable and in need of safe housing. Commissioners were shocked to hear of the potential numbers of street homeless in Thurrock – between November 2014 and March 2015 twelve men and two women were supported by St Mungo's. Faith organisations and other practitioners raised wider concerns with homeless figures in Thurrock, reporting people living in tents as well as sofa-surfing between friends and families. We understand the Council is looking at commissioning additional support for people experiencing homelessness, something welcomed by the Commission.

The many comments made to the Fairness Commission about the availability of housing and the perceived preference given to people from out of Borough has informed **Recommendation 3** (improved communications) and **Recommendation 4** (a residents survey to ensure people's perceptions are considered when policy is developed).

Thurrock Council

Many of the comments received by residents were coupled by criticism of Thurrock Council. Many people felt that the Council didn't care how local people felt about a number of issues from the state of the environment to the design of highways. Staff were often cited as 'not listening to local people'.

Some staff were praised, especially in front line roles such as social care. Overall, however, people were skeptical about the influence of local people on the decisions made. There was little awareness of the role of Councillors compared to paid staff.

The Council's customer contact systems were considered poor by many. We heard lots of examples of when residents had reported something but never heard back, or didn't see the incident dealt with. Contacting the Council was something people felt very negative about. Telephone calls would be passed around the organisation, with too much communication via the website.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Thurrock Council

The Fairness Commission felt that whilst the Council (and other agencies working in Thurrock) carries out a lot of specific consultation, there is still a strong perception that local people are not listened to.

Recommendation 1 – A Fairness Charter aims to set out key principles to create a fairer Thurrock. The Commission also recommends a regular residents survey.

Recommendation 4 - so that decisions are informed by people's perceptions. Whilst we recognise there is a cost to a new approach there are likely to be savings (by reducing the

number of specific consultation exercises). Furthermore a better understanding of how people feel about Thurrock is likely to result in more effective services and communication.

Recommendation 3 – Improve communications to dispel myths and build positive relationships – is made in response to the way people feel about living in Thurrock and their relationship with the Council.

Education

Most comments relating to education recognised the improved attainment levels in recent years. Adult skills were considered as needing improvement.

The largest number of comments received about education related to catchment areas and the size of classes in a growing community. Competition for places at schools was compounded by more people moving to Thurrock, often attracted by lower priced housing.

Some comments appealed to the need to educate children and the wider public around behaviours – especially the importance of recycling rubbish and tackling racism.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Education

The Fairness Commission recognises the frustration of parents seeking school placements near to their home. Current arrangements fall to individual schools; however, the Council could encourage a discussion around greater co-ordination of catchment areas and boundaries.

Recommendation 1 sets out key principles to help drive a Fairer Thurrock. The adoption of these principles would help address current barriers experienced by families when considering school placements.

We need to raise aspirations of young people with better and more opportunities for apprenticeships. All young people should have an entitlement to an employment destination in Thurrock whether or not they have formal qualifications. This includes the need to encourage partnerships with local industry and businesses and promote social responsibility towards people in Thurrock.

Young people need to be able to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by the location of the Royal Opera House, and the future of the TV and media studios in Purfleet. This is happening for those who are still at school, through such initiatives as the Royal Opera House's Trailblazer programme. However, for those young people who have already left school, the opportunities are less clear.

The Fairness Commission felt the need to continue to monitor closely the groups of children who successfully achieve their targets to ensure that no group of children is left behind – particularly white, working class children.

Finally, the Fairness Commission echoed the many sentiments to have a university offer in Thurrock to allow local young people the opportunity to achieve higher level qualifications.

Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

At the time of preparing this report, Essex Police had just announced plans to close two of the Borough's police stations and cut the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Thurrock from 38 to just 6.

The dramatic reduction in the number of police officers and PCSOs on our streets was flagged on a number of occasions during the *Summer of Listening* where it was recognised as a key issue for our residents with worrying implications for community safety.

One resident that completed the online survey highlighted their feelings of helplessness arising from the limited powers and resources available to the police to intervene and manage crime in Thurrock. They noted: *"The Police Force has been and still is being stripped of its manpower, assets and powers to the extent that they are now little more than a small dog with no teeth. It is unfair that the remaining police officers etc. are lucky if they can be reactive slightly, let alone proactive as in the distant past. A simple call to them typically takes weeks to be addressed as the few remaining personnel are dealing with emergencies"*.

Other concerns included the lack of visible and quality policing, the scale of drug use and drunkenness (particularly around parks and high streets), anti-social behaviour and support for vulnerable residents. First-hand experience of this impact was shared by a resident that attended a community event and stated: *"I have had several instances of unfairness: My wife was attacked by youths and the Police Force has been unable to do much about it. Any real initiatives that may help, will have to be performed by the public or volunteers"*.

Feedback from the online-survey also revealed individual examples of fears from perceived crime: *"I don't feel safe if I have to work late evenings. Many of the street lights don't work which makes travelling by foot dangerous. I have to walk 10 minutes to my car and sometimes it's very dark and dangerous especially during the winter evenings"*.

Suggestions to overcome these issues ranged from increasing police patrols and expanding youth activities in Thurrock with one resident proposing *"Youth projects in areas like East Tilbury and more effective policing"*. Another that had completed the online survey highlighted *"street wardens in the past knew the hot spots and where our vulnerable members of our community were and helped to keep them safe"*.

The role of parents in educating their children against anti-social behaviour was also noted *"More education for parents to (be) better role models for children. Anti-Social behaviour, racist"*

abuse aimed at me when I walk passed school age kids walking the streets during term time. Why?"

Comment from Fairness Commission: Crime / Anti-Social Behaviour

The online consultation closed just prior to the announcement from Essex Police that, after already making cuts of £40 million, they face having to make over £60 million worth of cuts by 2020. Commissioners anticipate that if the survey was run again, residents' concerns about the scale and impact of cuts on crime rates in Thurrock would be greater. The Commissioners felt that the proposed loss of the PSCOs was considerable and that this should be looked at again by the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner.

Thurrock's Community Safety Partnership has been established for some years and helps to bring together public agencies to work together to improve the safety of residents in Thurrock. It has produced a detailed plan to tackle many of the issues highlighted. These include maintaining local multi-agency action groups to challenge anti-social behaviour and hate crime, working with Local Area Coordinators and Neighbourhood Watch to support vulnerable residents, and increasing the number of youth activities.

The Commissioners recognised the excellent work that has been done by Community Builders and continues to be done by the Local Area Coordinators. They did feel, however, that it was not always clear how to access the Local Area Coordinators.

These provisions should however continue to be strengthened and linked to the Fairness Commission's **Recommendations 1** (A Fairness Charter). Furthermore **Recommendation 6** (A Single Equality Scheme with a priority around building cohesion) will support stronger, more welcoming communities. **Recommendation 4** (a residents' survey to capture people's perceptions) would also help to ensure that people's concerns around crime and safety were understood when developing policy.

Health and Well Being

Fewer comments were made about health and well-being than any other issue. The Commissioners felt that the *Summer of Listening* campaign may not have captured the views of people who are disabled or in ill health and felt that this might have been because they were not able or did not wish to attend the outdoor community events. For this reason, the views of those members of the community may be underrepresented.

Those comments we did receive largely related to the availability of services and access. The loss of a dedicated general hospital for Thurrock was cited by many who felt that as Thurrock grows in size, we need better access to secondary care.

The time it takes to book a GP appointment in Thurrock received some comments, as did the decision to close Thurrock's Walk in Centre in Grays.

Support for people with disabilities, mental health and those receiving social care was mentioned by many to be an issue. There was a feeling amongst some who we spoke to that people didn't receive enough help when they experienced ill health, especially relating to welfare support and general community care.

Concern was expressed for those experiencing social isolation and loneliness. Many of the conversations we had reflected on the need to create a culture of care within communities – a more human approach to the traditional service offer through social care and NHS services.

Comment from Fairness Commission: Health and Well Being

As a Commission, we were surprised that health inequalities did not resonate with people as much as we had expected. Thurrock residents face some dire inequalities around health from life expectancy to the prevalence of some diseases. The Health and Well Being Board is currently reviewing its priorities. In doing so it has opportunities to engage with residents and identify actions that aim to reduce health inequalities within Thurrock.

As detailed in the Chair's introduction, Tilbury experiences some of the most stark health inequalities however, this was not raised by any of the people we spoke to when attending a community outreach event in Tilbury.

Most of the comments received reflected concerns about accessing hospitals (because they are outside the Borough) or problems accessing GP appointments (due to quality of service and demand). It was also felt that access to services at the weekend, both for health and wider welfare issues, was a particular problem. Access to health care must be improved if the health challenges we face are to be addressed. The quality and availability of primary health care across Thurrock must be improved to avoid the need for people to travel. The Fairness Commission has recommended that access to services be adopted as a priority for the Single Equality Scheme (**Recommendation 6**). We are confident that services are planning to address the challenges in services, but a clear focus on this is required.

Concern was expressed about the quality of mental health provision for adults and for dementia in older people. A great deal has been achieved in Thurrock to create dementia friendly communities. A Fairness Charter (**Recommendation 1**) would help to further this work in Thurrock.

Recommendation 4 (a residents survey) and **Recommendation 5** (improved communication) would help strengthen an alliance between services and residents so that expectations are more aligned.

Poverty and wider indicators

As identified with other commissions, it is not surprising that people report the issues they experience most day to day. It is important therefore to consider a wider range of evidence.

Utilising the experience of the local voluntary sector is considered invaluable in understanding grass roots views of how a community is operating. Although not necessarily provided to the Commission since its formation in March 2015, the sector has provided some evidence to the Task and Finish Group, and has produced reports, for example through Annual Reports, that can help to inform our understanding of fairness in relation to specific issues or themes. The commission is aware of the limited capacity within local organisations, and the campaign role they play in highlighting issues of inequality and disadvantage in Thurrock.

Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau is one such organization working locally. CAB specialises in welfare and money advice but provides advice on a full range of issues. The main issue presented between April and September 2015 related to welfare benefits (31%) and the main concern in relation to benefits was Housing Benefit (17%) and Child and Working Tax Credit (15%). CAB explained that Housing benefit issues often go hand in hand with financial pressures including rent arrears. Recent welfare reform changes, especially the under occupancy deduction to housing benefit, often increase the pressure upon an already stretched household budget. Sometimes these pressures may be resolved by a successful discretionary housing application but this is becoming more and more difficult because discretionary housing payments are designed to be a short term 'stop gap'.

Thurrock CAB also explained that Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claimants currently have a 5 week waiting period to receive a medical assessment. This can be a distressing 5 weeks when someone is genuinely struggling with their care and mobility.

Full roll out of PIP for those residents currently claiming Disability Living Allowance was introduced in Thurrock from October 2015, with residents being randomly selected to receive their PIP pack, asking them to apply by a set date, failure to do so or failure to secure enough points at the medical assessment will see them losing their DLA income or possibly receiving a lower rate, which may reduce their household income. Thurrock CAB often see clients who use this DLA or PIP income to help cover essential living expenses which is not what it is designed to do, any change or reduction to this income places further pressure on stretched budgets.

Further tax credit changes start in April 2016, along with a further reduction to the benefit cap (£20k) and changes to the work related activity group of Employment and Support Allowance in 2017 that are likely to have further impact.

Interestingly, residents did not raise austerity as a key issue to Commissioners. Related issues such as concerns for affordable housing, finding work that pays and quality of life were raised, but overall there was a low awareness of the impact of welfare reform on residents.

Whilst Thurrock's Fairness Commission wanted to listen to local people's perceptions of fairness, we also wanted to prompt people to think about the hidden issues within our communities. One way in which this was done was by asking people to place a shell in one of three bowls to indicate how many children in Thurrock they felt lived in poverty. The choices were 13%, 17.5% or 22%. Most people guessed correctly and said they were not surprised; they only had to look around the Borough to see evidence of child poverty. Although one woman was reduced to tears by this fact, most thought it a shame but had little else to say. The figure is from the Public Health Report 2014 where child poverty in Thurrock is measured above the regional average (16.7%) and the national average for England (20.6%). This is

based on the measure for relative poverty. Relative poverty, defined by Prof. Peter Townsend as when someone's 'resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities'

Partnership Working and Policy Making in Thurrock

Thurrock is a unitary authority and unlike many cities or urban areas, we have a single Council and health authority (NHS Clinical Commissioning Group) operating within our boundary. Essex Police is a County based organisation, but Thurrock's approach to dealing with crime and community safety is locally influenced through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) of which the Police are a part. The CSP – as well as the Health and Well Being Board and the Children and Young People's Partnership are all required to work for the interests of residents by Government – they are a statutory requirement and are responsible for shaping the policy and use of resources to meet local need. They work alongside Thurrock Council and elected Councillors to ensure accountability. The Commission is confident that partnership working in Thurrock is strong, focusing on priorities for improvement. As a Commission, we have avoided duplicating the work of existing partnerships.

It does appear however that issues impacting on equality are very cross cutting in their nature and that there is scope to bring a common focus to some key areas of concern. Child poverty, life expectancy, homelessness, educational achievement and local income levels are obvious examples. Rather than duplicate the work of existing partnerships, we feel that a focus around three key outcomes in a Single Equality Scheme would help drive a focus around how we improve the life chances and living conditions in the Borough, as well as attract people to think about living here from outside the Borough. We want to see improved life chances because people's lives have improved – not just because the population has increased with more affluent residents moving from outside areas.

Recommendation 6 therefore calls for a Single Equality Scheme where all effort from public sector agencies can be monitored and tracked to see how things are made better for people living in Thurrock.

Thurrock Fairness Commission recommends that the Single Equality Scheme provides a focus on three key areas. These are:

- Access to services – e.g. health care, school placements, physical access
- Poverty and austerity, including child poverty
- Building cohesion and creating welcoming communities

Collating the intended actions, headline evidence and performance against targets in one place will help ensure all public agencies are focused on improving equality for future generations.

Area Specific

Many of the comments received related to specific parts of Thurrock. This was compounded by the outreach supported by the Fairness Commission throughout the *Summer of Listening*.

Wherever possible, comments have been linked back to the relevant issue (e.g. environment or housing).

Section 3 – Service responses to consultation

Environment

As with many other Directorates within the Council, the level of funding available for Environment Services (including Waste Collection, Street Cleansing, Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Open Spaces, Country Parks and Burial Grounds) was reduced significantly from April 2015. The savings targets meant that the Department has lost approximately 30% of front line staff and 45% of the back office and management team.

The results of this are the remaining area based staff have to achieve more with less. The impact of that has been a reduction in frequencies of grass cutting and litter picking. In part the task has been made harder given the increase in fly-tipping over the course of this year and the significant reductions in the number of enforcement staff.

For the purpose of providing efficient street services, the Borough has been divided into four segments with a dedicated team working in each. The thinking is that enhanced local knowledge will enable the teams to focus on hot spots that require additional input rather than following a set schedule that may include some tasks that don't need to be done. The pilots for this started at the beginning of 2015. Progress and outputs are being closely monitored so that adjustments to teams and activities can be undertaken as required.

The Directorate would welcome support from communities in keeping our Borough clean and tidy. This can be as small as just taking your rubbish home rather than dropping it in the street. There are a number of community groups that are carrying out excellent work with the Environment Teams including the Blooming Marvels in Stanford Le Hope.

The Council are aware that there are parts of the Borough with poor air quality and are currently in the process of producing an Integrated Air Quality and Health Strategy, which will provide information on the current status of air quality in the Borough, summarise the known evidence of poor air quality on health and help to identify the communities most vulnerable to the impacts of poor air quality.

Thurrock monitors air quality in the borough via continuous monitoring stations in four locations, and NO₂ diffusion tubes which are more flexibly distributed. There are a number of

different pollutants that are measured across the sites, and there are acceptable threshold limits nationally set for each pollutant. Measurements are submitted to DEFRA on an annual basis. An Air Quality Management Area is designated for an area where pollutant levels continue to exceed acceptable levels, and an Air Quality Action Plan devised for each of these areas.

The Integrated Air Quality and Health Strategy is due for completion in early 2016 and will provide a set of recommended actions to be undertaken across the Council and with partners, which will best mitigate negative impacts.

Growing Population

In February 2014, Cabinet gave approval to undertake a full review of the Core Strategy and to begin the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the future development of Thurrock over the period to 2035.

The Council recognises that significant changes are likely to take place in Thurrock, South Essex and London over the next twenty years with increased local population growth and growing demand for new homes, jobs and facilities to serve both existing and future residents. The production of a new Local Plan is a key component in securing the benefits of growth for existing and new residents and contributing to the creation healthy, sustainable communities where everyone has a chance to succeed and nobody gets left behind.

The emerging Local Plan is still at an early stage in its production. Going forward we need to make sure the plan we put forward is fit for purpose and deliverable. To achieve this we will ensure need to ensure that community consultation is embedded into the plan making process. The Local Plan Engagement Strategy approved by Cabinet in December 2015 sets out a range of activities that the Council will seek to undertake as it develops the first stages of plan making. These activities go above and beyond the legal requirements and will hopefully ensure that more people than ever get involved with plan making.

The first consultation on the new Local Plan is scheduled to take place in February 2016.

Young People

Thurrock Council manages many of the youth services offered in Thurrock. Youth services can also be delivered through the voluntary sector and through private provision. Sometimes, this is funded through the Council service via grants or contracts.

Youth Services recognise that reduced funding in the public sector has had a negative impact on some areas of youth provision in Thurrock. However, youth services are highly valued and effort is made to attract more external funding into the Borough to encourage and sustain opportunities (for example Art Space in conjunction with the Royal Opera House).

Engagement with young people is key to ensure that the youth offer meets the aspirations of young people themselves. Currently, a youth bus is used to help reach out across Thurrock supporting engagement and some provision.

All activities and events, including school holiday activities, are advertised on the Family Information Service website. Youth Services work closely with community safety to help improve safety and the Youth Cabinet has championed improved transport for young people.

Youth services are working with a number of communities where there is an aspiration to see more youth provision. Training, support with external funding and support for adult supervisors can all help develop more community led opportunities to support young people.

Education is covered separately, but there are undoubtedly links between youth activity and aspiration. It is very important that young people have the opportunity to achieve their potential. The opening of the new South Essex College in Grays and a wider offer around a vocational pathway both help to support young people to access the increasing number of local regeneration opportunities.

Travel and Transport

In the past 5 years, Thurrock Council actively encouraged the use of sustainable transport modes through number of Local Sustainable Transport projects which had positive impact on the attitudes of the residents and their wellbeing thanks to them walking and cycling more often. The Council has successfully obtained additional funding to improve cycle infrastructure and to enhance accessibility and punctuality of the bus services across the Borough. The public transport is currently served by commercial operators. However, where the demand is low, the Council financially supports the services as it understands that the provision of public transport is considered important to social inclusion, especially of youth and older people, and to the most vulnerable members of the community who thus have fair access to the public realm. In particular, disabled people place a high priority on the provision of such services.

As the Local Highway Authority the Council has statutory responsibilities for the safety of the road users and for highway maintenance to reasonable condition. Thus, the roads are designed, built and maintained according to the appropriate engineering standards. The road safety audits are built into the delivery of every engineering scheme as this approach to road design aims at best interest, safety and fairness to local residents. In addition, the Local Sustainable Transport projects involved working in partnership with Parking Association, Essex police, HGV companies and Local Authority which facilitates sharing and finding common solutions to issues such as lorry parking.

Residents who are worried about the proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing are advised to take part in the next round of consultations. For more details residents are invited to refer to Council's online communication which will be updated early in 2016 as the new Highways England consultation is launched - www.thurrock.gov.uk/thames-crossing.

Housing

Thurrock's housing market is closely linked to the London one and naturally follows the national trend. House prices are increasingly less affordable within the Borough. However, mitigating measures are being implemented, for example Thurrock Council is currently building new affordable homes for local people via its wholly owned company: *Gloriana*.

In addition, Thurrock Council offers financial help to its social tenants with a cash grant of up to £20,000 to buy a home on the open market. This grant can be used towards purchasing a property in the location of choice, thus helping social tenants into home ownership, and freeing social housing stock.

Obviously, the effectiveness of such endeavours are determined by the size these contribute to the housing market.

Residents in Thurrock can influence the way social housing is allocated by various means; for example by lobbying their elected Councillors, MPs, and MEPs, or by actively engaging in the relevant consultations both local and national. Tenants can also join the Tenants Excellence Panel.

Thurrock Council

There were a number of comments about the Council not communicating sufficiently.

The Council is currently reviewing its approach to communicating with residents and will shortly be launching a year-long programme of engagement activities and opportunities. The details are under development at the point of preparing this report, but are likely to include a range of formats including meetings in the community, summer-long engagement at community events, a regular newsletter, possibly by e-mail as well as online feedback.

During the course of the consultation, several comments related to contacting the Council and the lack of telephone numbers on the Council website for residents to contact Council staff.

The Council has a Channel Migration Strategy that highlights the need to target increasingly limited resources to those with the most complex needs and proposes that for most residents, the first point of contact will be online. This reflects the increased use of technology by residents and the ease of online access nowadays through smartphones and tablets. However, it is also recognised that some of the Council's most vulnerable and older residents may still want to contact the Council by telephone or face to face and there are still ways to do this, but increasingly, experience is showing that they also rely on family members for assistance and those family members expect to be able to transact online.

Education

Legislation requires that all parents can apply for schools in any local authority and that local authorities and other admission authorities must not give priority on the basis of residence in a local authority area. Local authorities are required to ensure that a place is offered to all those requiring one.

The decision about whether or not to use a catchment area or priority admission area as part of a school's admission arrangements rests with the admission authority as does the determination of the catchment area or priority admission area boundary. All ten of Thurrock's secondary schools are their own admission authority and are thus responsible for these decisions.

We are currently experiencing an unprecedented level of "in-year admissions" The increase is due, in part, to the fact that families are attempting to find accommodation which is affordable within the new welfare benefit constraints and Thurrock generally has more affordable accommodation. We are working hard with our primary schools to deal with these large increases by using the capital programme to help provide places through school expansions, demountable classrooms, and the remodeling of classrooms. We continue to monitor this on a regular basis with our Admissions team and LA Officers and we are proactive in taking necessary action where appropriate.

We have had a complete review of our pupil place planning strategy to take into account the growing demand and have forecasted accordingly. With regards to Secondary schools we currently have enough places available for the number of pupils. Future requirements will need additional secondary places as our primary pupils feed through.

With regards to builders providing school places – we are very robust in seeking Section 106 (S106) contributions from developers, either by cash or buildings, where there is an impact on education. S106 Agreements are legal agreements between Local Authorities and developers which are linked to planning permissions S106 contributions are paid to the Local Authority and to date these monies have offset the Capital spend in the areas that the developer has chosen within the restrictions on use of this funding. One example of this is the expansion of Bonnygate Primary School.

As Thurrock's population grows, and as national policy relating to early years supports an increase in provision, Thurrock Council is working to increase the number of placements to support local families, especially to support 2 year old entitlement provision. There is a clear correlation between good early years' education and educational achievement in later years. Similarly, early years provision and childcare enables parents to return to work and support their families prosper. Demand does outstrip supply in some parts of the Borough but we are working with private providers and schools to help source appropriate accommodation to help ensure places for all eligible early years children.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (CSP) helps agencies to work together to improve the safety of residents in Thurrock. It is a statutory board with members from Essex Police, Local Authority, Essex Fire Service, Probation (both the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company), and the Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group. The voluntary sector, housing, youth offending and adult social care are also key members of the partnership.

The CSP recognises the issues identified by the Fairness Commission *Summer of Listening* which overlaps with the shared objectives for the partnership to:

1. Reduce youth offending and re-offending of adults and young people, thereby reducing instances of domestic burglary, most serious violence, personal robbery and drug offences.
2. Reduce harm to vulnerable victims and safeguard them 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 and fraud.
3. Prevent violent extremism locally, delivering the government's counter-terrorism strategy.

In addition to maintaining key community projects that support victims of crime and work with perpetrators, the CSP will improve communications and engagement with residents in Thurrock to:

- Enable concerns to be shared
- Feed back to residents on action taken, in a *You Said We Did* style
- Promote the use of anti-social behavior case reviews more.

The CSP wants to work with communities to help them stay safe. It is important that residents continue to report crime and anti-social behavior in a timely fashion to both the Police and Council. Where there is no immediate risk of harm or threat it may not be responded to, however it enables intelligence to be built up and appropriate long term solutions found.

Health and Well Being

Health and Wellbeing Boards have responsibility for reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing and improving the health and wellbeing of their local population. Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Board has a key role to play therefore in contributing to the delivery of the Fairness Commission's recommendations.

The Board is in the process of refreshing its Health and Wellbeing Strategy and a number of the themes to come out of the Commission's work will feature heavily. Improving the access to and quality of Primary Care service in Thurrock for example will be a key priority.

The Board is well aware of the inequalities in health and wellbeing within the Borough. The Strategy's focus will be on reducing these inequalities – with an overriding focus on prevention and early intervention.

The low numbers of comments with regard to health and wellbeing generally echoes the relatively small percentage of Thurrock citizens who responded to the consultation on the decision to close the Walk in Service based in Grays. Following an in-depth and wide-reaching engagement period which lasted almost 18 months, the decision was taken to close the Walk in Service and reinvest the money that would be saved in four weekend health hubs across Thurrock – Corringham, Grays, South Ockendon and Tilbury. The Walk in Service will finally close at the end of March 2016. However, the weekend health hubs are already up and running across Thurrock and proving very popular. There is a commitment to use the money saved from the running of the Walk in Service to enhance the weekend health hubs. This will be done collaboratively with members of the public.

The issue of accessing GP appointments continues to be a high priority for the health system. There are a number of work streams within Thurrock that are tasked with attracting more GPs to Thurrock and improving the health facilities with the aim of enhancing the patient experience. However, we must not forget that everyone has a part to play in creating a resilient health system. The current difficulties in the system are against a backdrop of extremely high numbers of patients who do not cancel their GP appointments. There are more than 30,000 'Do Not Attend' GP appointments every year from the 32 practices across Thurrock.

Thurrock Public Health recognises the impact that unhealthy behaviours can have on individual and community health and provide many local programmes to help combat these such as smoking cessation, drug and alcohol, and sexual health services and also weight management programmes both with schools and community settings. We also liaise with Public Health England around national initiatives and help to shape government information and campaigns.

Poverty and wider indicators

A number of initiatives have been introduced by Thurrock Council to address poverty in Thurrock. As one of the largest employers, we introduced the Living Wage in April 2013 – 80% of our workforce is made up of residents of Thurrock so this was a significant move by the Council.

With regard to welfare reform, a cross agency group meets on a regular basis to review the impact locally and to consider actions to mitigate negative impact. The government provides a limited amount of funding each year towards discretionary housing allowance, but once this has been allocated, no further payments can be made. Claimants will not be considered unless they can prove they have attempted to change their circumstances such as downsizing or cutting back on non-priority commitments.

Current concerns relate to future welfare changes and include:

- Housing benefit for 18-21 years will be cut from April 2017

- All working age benefits will be frozen for 4 years from April 2016 including the Local Housing Allowance rates.
- Social housing rents will be reduced by 15% for the next 4 years with an estimated loss to Thurrock Council of £1.2million per year.
- Housing benefit will only be back dated for a one month period from the previous six months leading to more rent arrears and convictions. We have noticed a threefold increase in the use of food vouchers being issued across Thurrock over the past year.

Thurrock Council fully recognises the impact of these changes on many of our residents. We operate a Fair Debt Policy which aims to support people make the payments they can afford in agreement with us. Importantly is our commitment to **Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity**. Our regeneration programme is the biggest in England, creating thousands of new career opportunities for local people to aspire to. We also have a number of programmes targeting young people and supporting their progression into the world of work, as well as return to work support for parents and the long term unemployed.,

We are committed to ending child poverty and have recently agreed a refreshed strategy and action plan. This recognises the work of Thurrock's Fairness Commission and calls on the whole community including employers, faith groups, voluntary organisations and residents to work alongside public agencies to achieve our vision. The strategy recognises employment as the main route out of poverty but it also recognises the need for parents to receive a living wage, and support for skills development, to break the cycle of in-work poverty.

Section 4 – Our Recommendations

1. A Fairness Charter

That Thurrock's Fairness Commission's 'Charter for Fairness' is adopted by public agencies working in Thurrock with consideration of how these will be achieved, linking to performance frameworks where possible.

We have recommended a set of Principles of Fairness to which Thurrock* should commit.

Thurrock* commits to:

- **Eliminating unfairness**, promoting opportunities that benefit all people, whatever their background
- **Empowering people** to do things for themselves, working **with** rather than **for** the community
- Promoting **social responsibility** amongst local employers so Thurrock people have the earliest opportunities for employment and self-development
- Making decisions and running services **openly**, listening to communities and communicating outcomes and reasons in good time
- Giving priority to **those in greatest need** when allocating resources

**Thurrock* here means the wider community, including local public sector, voluntary organisations, schools, businesses and residents, recognising that this cannot be done in isolation.

Throughout our *Summer of Listening*, Commissioners heard many examples of people feeling let down by the services they rely on. This cut across public and private business, although some of the private business is commissioned through public sector services such as the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

We therefore recommend the above Principles of Fairness so that everyone can come to expect a minimum standard when living and working in Thurrock. We invite services to set out how they will respond to these, and how they will embed these principles across their organisations, staff and procedures.

As well as changing how people are treated, we also hope the Principles will encourage more residents to challenge their own perceptions of what is and is not acceptable from public services. As Commissioners we were left with the impression that people often accept what they are offered, rather than demanding more. A more empowered community should be able to work with services, demanding the best for residents from Government and ensuring we get our fair share of investment for the future.

2. Strengthening Communities

Explore a campaign to build on the pride which exists in Thurrock and to promote all that is good about the Borough as well as its economic potential. A campaign should explore a 'giving' element to build on the passion and energy for a more caring, connected Thurrock which brings residents, public sector business and charities together. Local people love Thurrock – lets tap into that local energy to see a better Borough, helping communities to improve their areas for the future.

This should include:

- A giving campaign to build on the passion and energy for a more caring Thurrock
- A partnership with business that helps companies give time, sponsorship or expertise through a co-ordinated approach, building a legacy for a more prosperous Borough
- Recognition for all that is achieved through community led action to beautify our Borough and care for its residents outside the formal structures of public services
- Make sure we make it easy for people to help themselves and others, reducing red tape wherever possible, to build community spirit
- A branded campaign to galvanise the energy of all working and living in Thurrock

So much happens across Thurrock because people care enough to make things happen. Just a quick look at activity across cleaning and greening demonstrates this with 'Stanford Bloomers' bringing colour and design to the east of the Borough, and Grays Phoenix clearing rubbish and cutting back hedges in the south. Bulphan in Bloom has transformed the village into a truly beautiful location, and there are many examples of residents wanting to improve the look and feel of where they live by developing small community gardens – such as at Peartree Close in South Ockendon.

Often these community led initiatives relate to the passion in that area – Thurrock is a collective of small towns and people love where they live. This was evident from our *Summer of Listening*. We were impressed with the sentiment that people Love Thurrock – this was expressed by people that believed they were disadvantaged as much as from those that felt that they were not. Pride in Thurrock is one thing everyone can share. It can bond and unite communities for the greater good, regardless of their financial or social status. It can foster cohesion, encourage community interaction and self-help. As commissioners, we were greatly encouraged when the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community found it easy to tell us they loved where they lived.

We would like to see all support for increasing community pride easily available to all residents so those active can do so with ease and that those who want to make a difference can do so easily. A fresh campaign to galvanise community spirit in Thurrock could benefit from using social media as well as more traditional methods. It must however be a campaign that calls all partners to action, and enables business, residents and public agencies to play to their strengths, leading where they can best. Discussion on how to take this forward should be started by a conversation between the Council, CCG, Police and CVS. Decreasing public funds means we have to create a new relationship with people who are generally willing to help if asked. Hopefully, partners will respond because this is the right thing to do, regardless of the economic realities we face in Thurrock today.

3. Improved Communications

As a unitary authority we need to ensure residents know where to go to access relevant, accurate information. This should promote positive opportunities for the Borough and help to increase pride in Thurrock, as well as ensure residents understand the reasons why decisions are made and how to have their say when they want to respond.

Thurrock is a growing Borough. We have an opportunity to create a more positive identity for Thurrock, welcoming those new to the area to learn more about our heritage as well as ways to get involved locally.

Thurrock does not have one ‘go to’ place for news and information. The council is increasingly relying on its website to deliver services, and press releases are covered by a range of online and printed press. Positive news, especially announcements around what’s on, or opportunities to get involved with something fun, are often kept within the realms of those ‘in the know’ via email chains.

Throughout the *Summer of Listening*, we heard numerous myths about Thurrock. Myths do take hold quickly, and are difficult to shake once set into people’s minds. With lack of consistent, positive communications across providers in Thurrock, there is little opportunity to change people’s opinions and get the good news through.

Positive communications also includes the need for consistent and respectful customer services. The Principles of Fairness should underpin the need to design and deliver clear, efficient interaction between local people and the services they need day to day.

4. Introduce a regular Residents Survey for Thurrock - to ensure how people feel about the Borough is considered when developing policy and making decisions.

A regular, consistent survey using agreed methodology across key agencies and policy areas would help ensure that people's perceptions about Thurrock were taken into consideration when developing policy. The resource implications should be weighed against the potential to stop some consultation exercises with the development of one consolidated approach.

From the *Summer of Listening*, Commissioners found that people were willing to talk about how they felt about fairness, and welcomed the opportunity to have their say. They did not however believe that much would change as a result. Too many people that we spoke to felt that local peoples' views had no bearing at all on decision making. A regular survey, promoted and explained to the public, will help ensure that how people feel has more impact on how we plan services and respond to local issues.

5. To provide feedback to all stakeholders that contributed to the Fairness Commission's *Summer of Listening*

The publication of this report will be widely shared to assure residents that we have aimed to represent their voice to help create change in the future.

6. Review Thurrock's Single Equality Scheme

Thurrock Council is responsible for the Single Equality Scheme. The current scheme was due to be reviewed in March 2015. At this time Thurrock Council said it would base the review on the feedback from the Fairness Commission consultation.

As explained at Section 2, the Fairness Commission would like to see a Scheme which is comprehensive in its consideration of what all agencies are doing in Thurrock to tackle inequality. To be effective, this should focus on a small number of priorities. Based on the *Summer of Listening*, we feel these should be:

- Access to services – e.g. health care, school placements, physical access
- Poverty and austerity, including child poverty
- Building cohesion and creating welcoming communities

Collating the intended actions, headline evidence and performance against targets in one place will help ensure all public agencies are focused on improving equality for future generations.

Section 5 - Next steps

1. The Fairness Commission asks all organisations and partnerships named* in this report to provide their response and commitment to delivery of attributed recommendations and initial estimates of timetables by July 2016.
2. The Fairness Commissioners will remain actively involved in analysing actions against key themes, acting as critical friends and advisors if required.
3. The Fairness Commission recommends that an Annual Report is produced over each of the next five years to monitor progress against all its recommendations. We expect this is best managed via reporting on the Single Equality Scheme.
4. The Fairness Commission's webpages will continue to be maintained and updated to reflect progress against these recommendations and ensure public accountability. The report will be shared with all stakeholders who took part in the *Summer of Listening* and made available through the online survey.
5. The Fairness Commission will hold a conference by summer 2017 to review progress. In the interests of even greater public accountability, representatives from local media organisations will be invited to help cover the event and take part in the review.

*The organisations and partners referenced in this report include the following:

Thurrock Council

Thurrock NHS Clinical Commissioning Group

Thurrock Council for Voluntary Service, umbrella group for Thurrock's voluntary sector

Essex Police

Essex Police and Crime Commissioner

Community Safety Partnership

Children and Young People's Partnership

Health and Well-Being Board

Section 6 – Conclusion

From the very beginning of the Fairness Commission, the Commissioners wanted to delve into the issues around fairness and to get under the skin of how people felt. They had access to many strategies and evidence-based data and analysis, but knew that this was only part of the story. The *Summer of Listening* enabled the Commissioners to engage with hundreds of residents who shared their views providing the content for this report and its recommendations.

What is clear is that “fairness” is a difficult concept to get to grips with – one person’s interpretation of “fairness” may be different to the next person’s definition. Overall, the *Summer of Listening* showed that people are happy in Thurrock, however their responses often continued to say “... *but it would be better if X*” or “... *but there should be more Y*”.

The recommendations made by the Commission will hopefully address some of this.

The Fairness Commission’s formal role ends with the publication of this report. However, as a group of individuals committed to seeing change in Thurrock, we will continue to meet and scrutinise future policy to ensure this report has a lasting legacy for our borough and to see progress against our recommendations. It is hoped that the ***Principles of Fairness*** will be embraced throughout the whole of Thurrock. Fairness is not something that can be achieved in isolation by one organisation. It must be a holistic effort of the wider community including local public sector agencies, voluntary organisations, schools, businesses, politicians and residents.

Appendix 1 – Terms of Reference

Thurrock Fairness Commission

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. The rationale for a Thurrock Fairness Commission

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

2. What the Commission will do:

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

3. Scope

- 3.1 The Commission will identify and better understand inequalities and challenges within the Borough and develop a clear long term strategy to reduce inequalities and make Thurrock a fairer place for all its residents.
- 3.2 The Commission will examine the key priority areas that are known to impact on Fairness, including but not limited to: Income, Education, Work, Health, Housing, Families, Community, and Safety.

4. Timeframe

- 4.1 The Commission will meet at least 5 times (bi-monthly) over a 12 month period.
- 4.2 The Thurrock Fairness Commission will provide a progress update report to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee 6 months after work has commenced.
- 4.3 A draft final report will be submitted to the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee prior to the final report being submitted to Cabinet 1 year after its inception.

5. Membership

- 5.1 Members will be selected to join the Steering Panel for a one year period when membership on the Panel will be reviewed.
- 5.2 The Commission will be chaired by a non-partisan member of the voluntary or community sector.
- 5.3 The Chair will be the figurehead of the Thurrock Fairness Commission; he/she will represent the Commission and be a strong advocate for Fairness in Thurrock.
- 5.4 The Commission will have no more than 15 Commissioners who will be representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors. Example of membership below:
 - Labour Councillor
 - Conservative Councillor
 - Assistant Chief Executive or Senior Management Team Member of Thurrock Borough Council.
 - Head teacher
 - Disability Group Representative
 - Senior figure from local industry
 - Housing Representative
 - Economist
 - Health Representative
 - Youth Cabinet Representative
- 5.5 Commissioners will meet regularly to discuss key fairness issues and will be encouraged to identify and bring forward practical ideas that can be implemented locally through the creation of project delivery groups based on ongoing discussions with the Commission and other stakeholders i.e. residents.

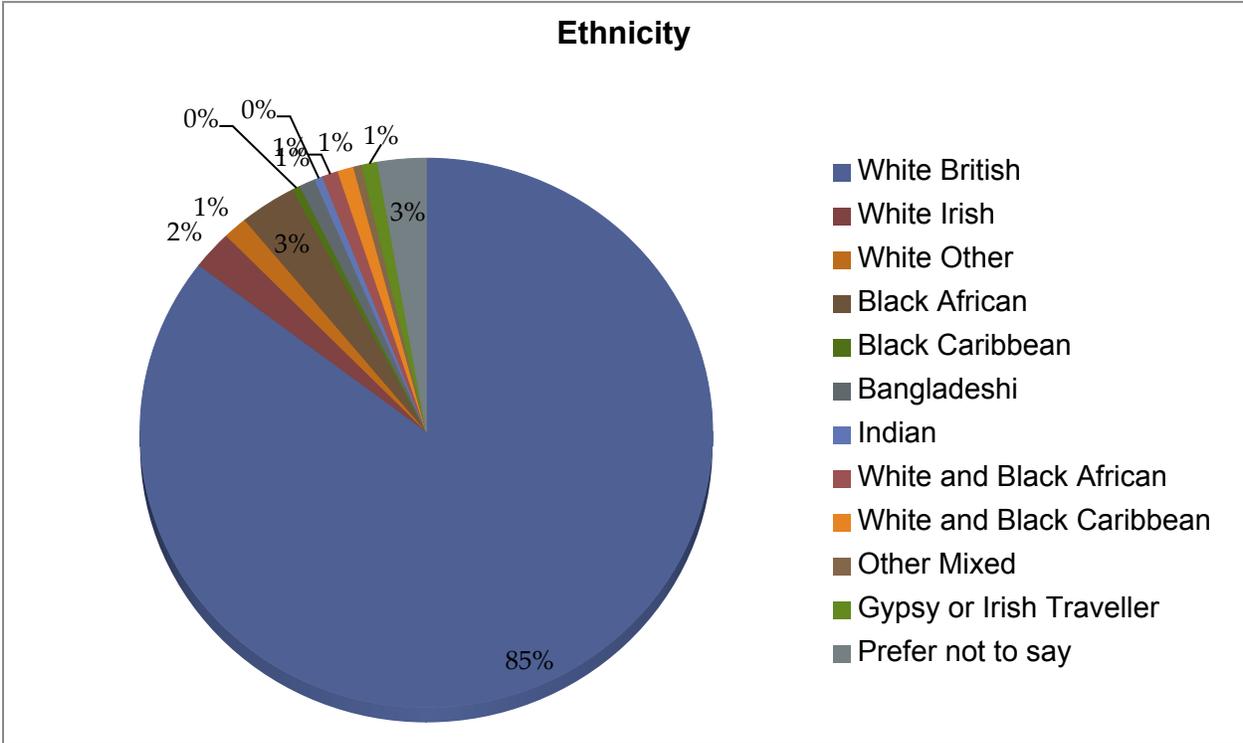
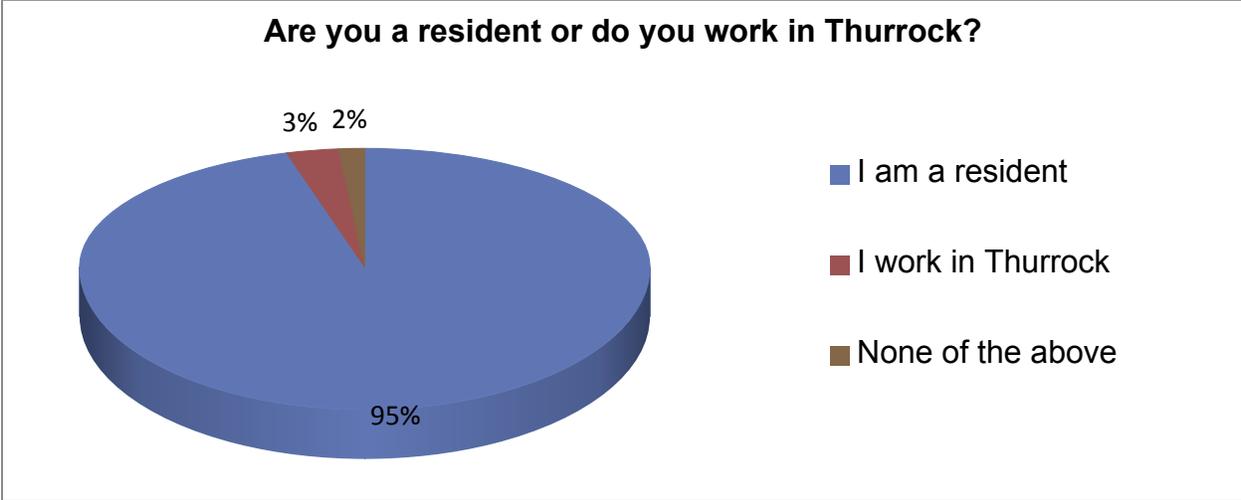
6. Methodology

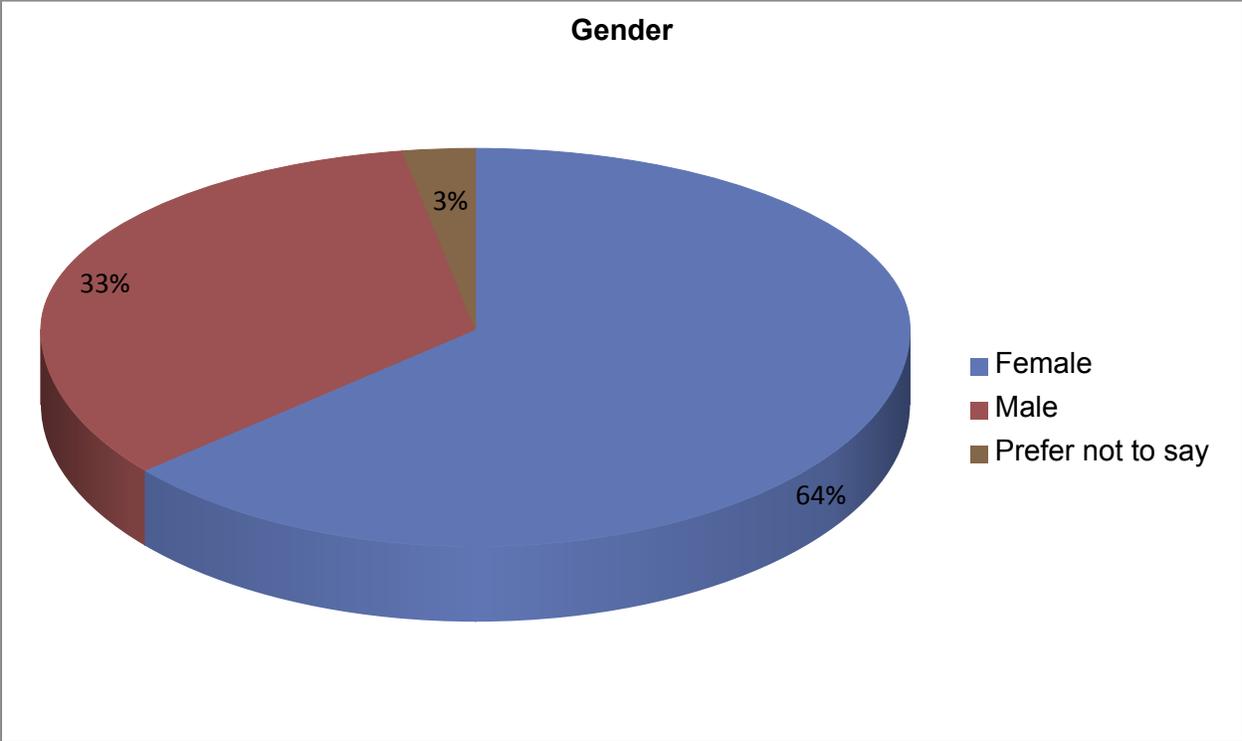
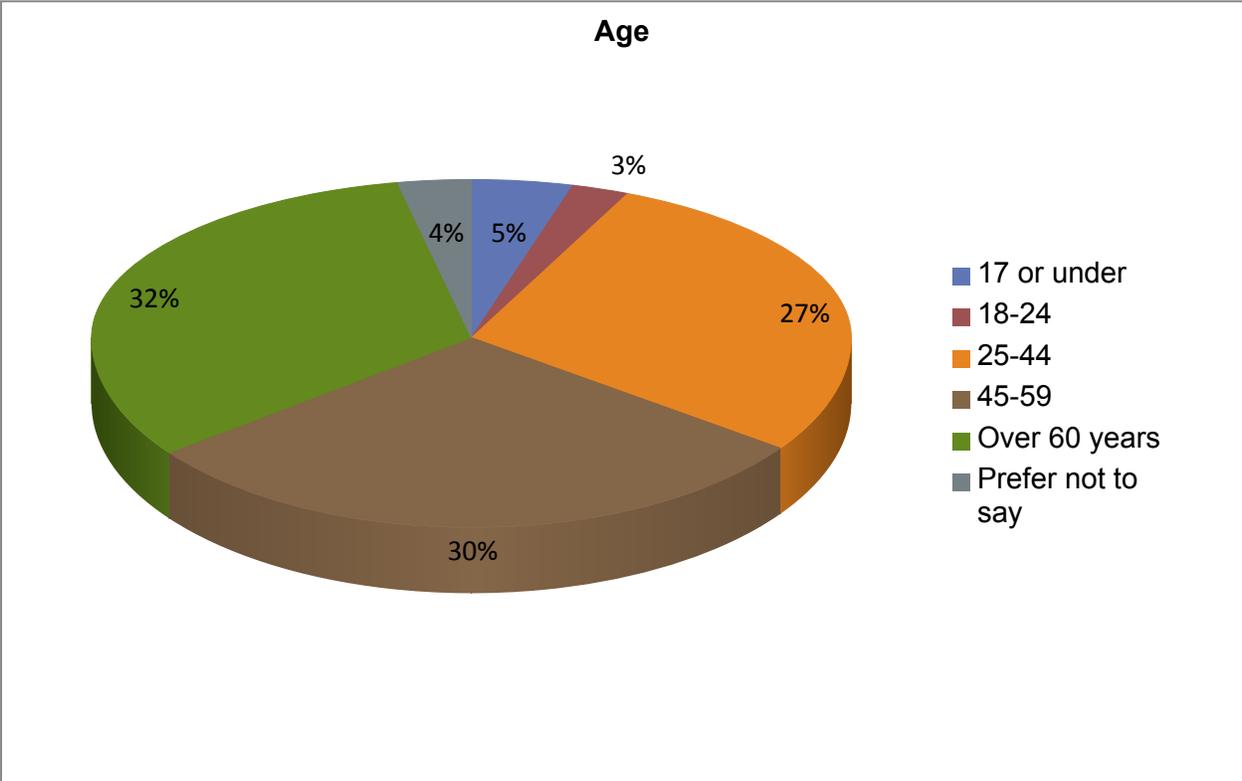
- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Thurrock Fairness Commission will undertake a series of activities which may include public meetings public meetings.
Where the following can be reviewed and obtained:
- a) Minutes
 - b) Evidence Papers
 - c) Testimony from expert witnesses
 - d) Discussions between Commissioners
 - e) Contributions from residents
 - f) Contributions from key stakeholders, voluntary and community sector.
- 6.2 Private meetings for Commissioners only.
- 6.3 Submissions from Members of the Public
- 6.4 Publicity
- a) Online at Thurrock Council's website www.thurrock.gov.uk
 - b) Press Releases
 - c) E-Newsletters, such as Insight in order to reach Council staff who are also residents.
- 6.5 Meetings of cross-departmental problem solving team of council staff.
- 6.6 Discussions with:
- Ngage
 - Thurrock Coalition
 - DP World
 - Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions
 - One Community Development Trust
 - South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)
 - Essex Police
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Open Door
 - Thurrock Centre for Independent Living
 - TRUST

Appendix 2 – Research profile generated from online survey and summary of outreach events attended

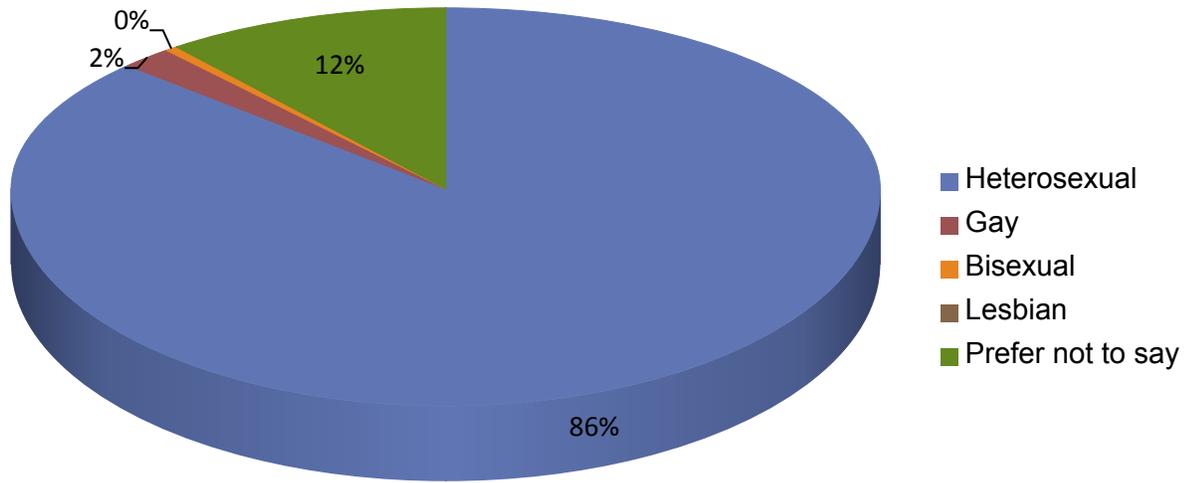
Research Profile

The following data is taken from responses to the online survey, any paper versions of this survey completed are also included. This does not include comments given during the *Summer of Listening* which took the Fairness Commission across Thurrock and gathered over 300 written comments.

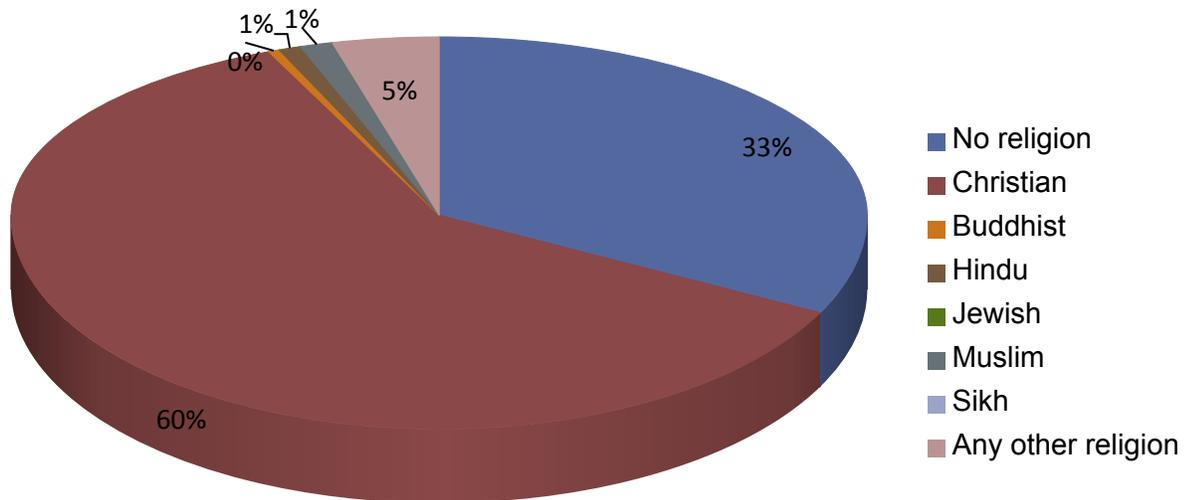




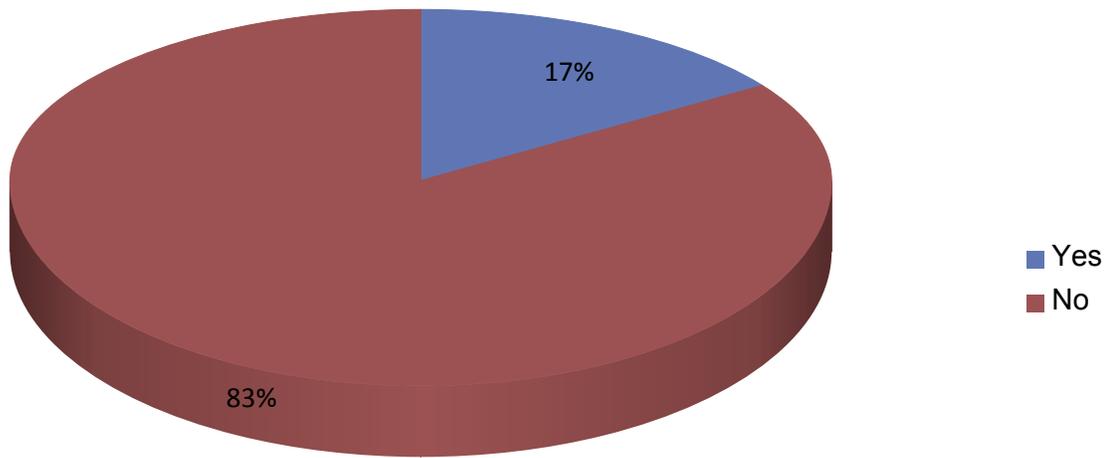
Sexual orientation



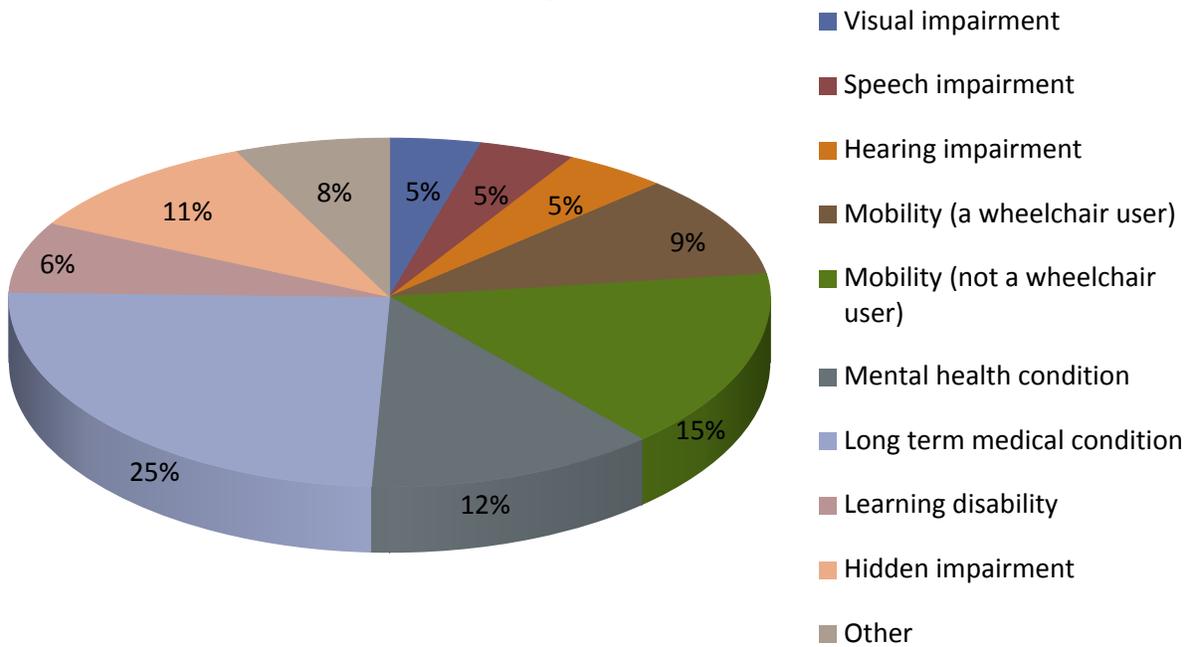
Religious belief



Disability



Impairment



Outreach events attended

Grays Big Lunch
Tilbury Fun Day
South Ockendon Fun in the Park
Village Beach
Coalhouse Fort WW1 Event
Orsett Show
Over 60s Club
St Stephens' Fun Day
Stifford Clays Primary School Fete

Acknowledgement

The Fairness Commissioners would like to thank everybody who has contributed to this report.

This includes the public sector officers, partners, local businesses and the hundreds of residents who have fed back their thoughts and feelings about Thurrock.

Special thanks go to the Strategy and Community Development team for the coordination of this report and the organisation of the Commission meetings and the *Summer of Listening* events.

7 January 2016		ITEM: 7
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Review of Pre-Election Period Guidance		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: David Lawson, Monitoring Officer		
Accountable Head of Service: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal Services		
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
This report is public.		

Executive Summary

The period just before local elections when there are restrictions on local authority publicity and rules concerning media reporting of the election campaign, the so-called 'pre-election' or 'purdah' period, is defined as beginning with the last date for publication of notice of the election.

'Purdah' is a political convention, which formally applies to government ministers and civil servants in central government during the period immediately before a general election.

During a pre-election period, ministers and civil servants will refrain from taking decisions or making policy announcements which are significant and may be politically contentious.

As with central government, 'business as usual' will always continue, but on certain issues a local authority may act cautiously and delay decision-making until after the election has concluded.

Government published a new Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in 2011. The Code is based around seven principles to ensure that all communications activity:

- is lawful
- is cost effective
- is objective
- is even-handed
- is appropriate
- has regard to equality and diversity
- is issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

This last principle, to ensure special care is taken during periods of heightened sensitivity is of particular relevance during the pre-election period.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That comments made by the Committee through the discussion of the current Pre-Election Period guidance are taken into consideration when the guidance for the 2016 elections is prepared, and reported to the Standards & Audit Committee as appropriate.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 As indicated the pre-election period or 'purdah' is a political convention, which is designed to prevent actions being taken by government or local authorities in the run up to an election being used (or perceived to be used) to influence the outcome of an election. It has been the position of the Council that during this time the Council (staff and councillors) should, unless circumstances dictate otherwise, refrain from taking decisions or making policy announcements which are significant and may be viewed as politically contentious.
- 2.2 Councils will sometimes clarify this in the case of by-elections that the Council will not take significant decisions *relating to the ward where an election is taking place* during a pre-election period. While the business of the Council must continue, decisions on matters of policy and other issues such as large and/or key procurement contracts specifically relating to the ward where an election is taking place, are generally postponed until after the election, provided that the postponement is not materially detrimental to the Council's interests, an individual, the public purse or detrimental commercial interests.
- 2.3 However it should be remembered that this restriction on decision making is largely a political convention and that as confirmed in the Local Government Association' 2015 guidance. "Purdah: A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period" councils can, "continue to discharge normal council business (including determining planning applications, even if they are controversial)."
- 2.4 A Pre-Election Period Guidance note from prior to the May 2015 elections for Members and Officers is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5 This guidance note has been prepared in line with statutory obligations, which are referenced in the Local Government Association document entitled "Purdah: A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period" – published March 2015, which is attached at **Appendix 2**.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The Committee requested to review the application of the Pre-Election Period Guidance in Thurrock, which is explained in more detail below:

3.2 Advice and guidance in relation to Press Releases

- that all press releases will be signed off by legal and the Chief Executive during a pre-election,
- that in the vast majority of such releases a lead officer should be used instead of a Member;
- that where a Member is used for civic announcements or where there is a genuine need for a Member level response - such as an emergency situation or an important event beyond the Authority's control - in such special cases the Mayor can be used in line with the flexibility acknowledged in the code;

Advice in relation to reports being referred to a Committee for decision-making

3.3 The Council's day to day work will continue on a "business as usual" basis with decisions being made and services provided but the Council will seek to avoid consideration of, or publicity for, politically contentious issues during the pre-election period.

3.4 The basic principle for all officers is not to undertake any activity which would call into question their political impartiality, or could give rise to the criticism that public resources are being used for party political purposes.

3.5 Although local authorities are not under any legal restrictions on activity in the pre-election period, they should act with caution to reduce the risk of a challenge that a decision has been made on party political grounds rather than on its merits. They should also note that for publicity, pursuant to Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986 as amended in 1988 councils, should "not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party" and that Section 43 of the Act makes clear that councils need to have regard for the code of recommended practice that supports the Act. As stated a new code of practice was published in 2011.

3.6 Generally there are some actions that the Council should make to avoid such claims, which include:

- to review all up and coming Key Decisions and re-schedule any particularly sensitive ones to a date outside the pre-election period;
- to make sure that no major consultations start or finish during this period;
- check that major procurement contracts are signed by the end of March;

- to ensure that members and officers are aware of the guidance on what they can and can't publicise, as outlined in **Appendix 1**.

How Thurrock's application of the Pre-Election Period Guidance compares with other local authorities

- 3.7 Since purdah is a 'self-denying ordinance', it is within the power of local authorities to adopt their own version of the convention in the period leading up to local elections.
- 3.8 However, the application of purdah in local government can be more unpredictable than in central government. Southwark Borough Council indicates that:

"Purdah can end up being treated very differently by different authorities. This can sometimes be justifiable because of local conditions, but clearer guidance would be welcome."

- 3.9 As with central government, 'business as usual' will always continue, but on certain issues a local authority may act cautiously and delay decision-making until after the election has concluded.
- 3.10 There is an indication that some local authorities are concerned that decisions made during a pre-election period may be subject to an increased risk of challenge. Surrey County Council states:

"There is no statutory restriction on the council's decision-making during the election campaign. [...] However...it may be that while the councils' decision-making can carry on other factors may well limit it... The profile of issues will be increased in this period and could have more prominence than at other times. This may distort decision-making and create a risk that the decision will be made on party political grounds rather than on its merits and, therefore, it is challengeable."

- 3.11 A challenge on this basis was made in the case of *R (on the application of Lewis) v Persimmon Homes Teesside Ltd (2008)*. The case was unsuccessful in the Court of Appeal, but it indicates the enhanced scrutiny which potential claimants may give to decisions made during a pre-election period, and may well provoke greater conservatism on the part of local authorities.
- 3.12 Although the application of the pre-election period guidance can vary between local authorities, Thurrock's guidance (attached at **Appendix 1**) is in line with other Essex local authorities – links to which have been provided in under the 'Background Papers' section of this report.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Committee requested to review the application of the Pre-Election Period Guidance at Thurrock in order to ensure that any guidance issued to

Councillors and Officers is up to date with current policy, legislation, good practice and national guidance

- 4.2 The Committee are asked to review and comment upon the current Pre-Election Period Guidance, following which comments will be taken into consideration by the Standards & Audit Committee and Monitoring Officer when the guidance for the 2016 elections is prepared.

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

- 5.1 There has been no consultation undertaken in respect of this report.
- 5.2 Should the Committee decide to make a recommendation to amend the Pre-Election Period Guidance the comments will be fed back to Group Leaders and the Standards & Audit Committee.

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

- 6.1 The Guidance builds on the Council's good governance arrangements and reputation during pre-election periods.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

There are no specific financial implications arising from the contents of this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Paul Field**
Senior Corporate Governance Lawyer

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, under the Local Government Act 1986 ("the Act") which came into force on 31 March 2011. The Code is recognised as the statutory guidance for local authorities to have regard to, about publicity during the purdah period just before local elections.

Local authorities are required by section 4(1) of the Act to have regard to the contents of the Code in coming to any decision on publicity. Section 6 of the Act defines publicity as "any communication in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or a section of the public". The Code therefore applies in relation to all decisions by local authorities relating to paid advertising and

leaflet campaigns, publication of free newspapers and newssheets and maintenance of websites – including the hosting of material which is created by third parties.

Nothing in the Code overrides the prohibition by Section 2 of the Act on the publication by local authorities of material which in whole or in part appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. Paragraphs 21 to 24 offer some guidance for local authorities on the management of publicity which may contain or have links to party political material.

This Guidance follows best practice and assists the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to have regard to national guidance about pre-election publicity.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

There are no specific diversity and equality implications arising from this report in so far that the Council must ensure that any guidance issued to Councillors and Officers is up to date with current policy, legislation, good practice and national guidance. It is also important to ensure that the contents are clear and concise and easily understood.

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):

- Bevan Brittan, Going into "Purdah" – decision making in the pre-election period <http://www.bevanbrittan.com/articles/Pages/Purdah-pre-electionperiod.aspx>
- Tendring District Council, Pre-Election Period Publicity Guidance <http://democracy.tendringdc.gov.uk/akstendring/images/att2338.pdf>
- Southend Borough Council – Guidance in the Pre-Election Period <http://www.southendcdrp.co.uk/documents/Publicityinthepre-electionperiod.pdf>
- Herefordshire, https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/media/7924055/pre_election_guidance_2015.pdf

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Thurrock Pre-Election Period Guidance for Members and Officers (updated February 2015).
- Appendix 2 – Local Government Association, Purdah: A Short Guide to Publicity during the Pre-Election Period.

Report Author:

David Lawson

Monitoring Officer

Legal and Democratic Services

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PRE-ELECTION PERIOD GUIDANCE

ELECTION GUIDANCE IN THE RUN UP TO THE PARLIAMENTARY & LOCAL AUTHORITY ELECTIONS – 7 MAY 2015

ADVICE FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Introduction

Staff are reminded of the political sensitivities in the run up to the Parliamentary Election taking place on Thursday 7 May 2015.

The date of publication of the Notice of the Election (local government elections) is **Monday 30 March 2015** which will be the start of the pre-election period and will run until the day after the elections on **Friday 8 May 2015**.

The Dissolution of Parliament will take place on Monday 30 March. The receipt of the writ is due on Tuesday 31 March and the Parliamentary Notice of Election will be published on the same day. The pre-election period will start from the 30 March 2015 as this is the earliest of the two dates.

The pre-election period or 'purdah' is a political convention, which is designed to prevent actions being taken by government or local authorities in the run up to an election being used (or perceived to be used) to influence the outcome of an election. During this time the Council (staff and councillors) should, unless circumstances dictate otherwise, refrain from taking decisions or making policy announcements which are significant and may be viewed as politically contentious.

Do remember however:

- Essential business must continue
- The rules are simply an emphasis on and an extension of those that apply at all times
- The basic principle for any Council officer is to maintain political impartiality
- These rules are set out in the Code of Conduct for Members, Officers Code of Conduct and the Member/Officer Protocol
- There are specific rules that cover carrying on business, publicity and the use of premises by candidates during the pre election period
- Extra caution is necessary in relation to publicity

Publicity

The Local Government Act 1986 makes it clear that a local authority should not publish any material at any time which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or an individual candidate. The key points are as follows:

- Publicity is defined very widely, covering leaflets and press releases; it can also include sponsorship, events photos and posters.
- Publicity produced by the local authority is restricted at all times and in the run up to an election, further rules apply.
- Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity - Guidelines specific to election periods states that: *"the period between the notice of an election and the*

election itself should preclude proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. Publicity should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals or recommendations in such a way that identifies them with individual Members or groups of Members."

- This "period" referred to above is between the notice of election and the election itself.
- It is, however, *"acceptable for the authority to respond in appropriate circumstances to events and legitimate service enquiries provided that their answers are factual and not party political."*
- The Code acknowledges that a degree of flexibility is necessary: *"Members holding key political or civic positions should be able to comment **in an emergency** or where there is a genuine need for a Member level response **to an important event outside the authority's control**. Proactive events arranged in this period should not involve Members likely to be standing for election."*

Consultations

- Officers should also consider decisions planned to take place after an election campaign and ensure that any consultation does not run through the pre election period.
- Consultation should not be launched during an election period.
- It may be appropriate to postpone consultations once an election has been called.

Entitlement to Use Rooms

Under the Representation of People Act 1983, candidates are entitled to use certain rooms free of charge for election meetings, subject to certain conditions. A separate guidance note will be produced for prospective Parliamentary candidates and their agents nearer the time of the election, however in summary:

A candidate is not entitled to use a room for an election meeting where:

- the candidate has not given reasonable notice,
- the candidate's use of the room would interfere with the use of the room for an educational purpose or another pre-agreed purpose,
- there is a prior agreement for the letting of the room.

In many cases, this relates to a request to use schools or school rooms but it is important to understand that it is not solely related to the use of schools.

Candidates using rooms are required to meet expenses incurred in the use. The local authority cannot refuse a candidate the right to use a room on public order grounds. If the local authority has concerns about public order at an election meeting, it is imperative that it advises the Returning Officer immediately and liaises, in consultation with the Returning Officer, with the Police. It is the Police who have responsibility for maintaining public order using the powers available to them.

Use of and Access to Premises

No candidates, at elections can use Council or education authority premises in an election campaign by visiting them for electioneering purposes. This includes schools, care homes and similar facilities. This is especially relevant to photo opportunities.

Candidates should not be afforded special access rights to controlled residential areas or block of flats for electioneering.

If a legitimate reason for a visit is identified during the pre-election period, extreme caution should be exercised, and the following rules must be followed and arrangements will be made by the candidates/agents with the relevant officer:

- The Chief Officer with responsibility for the function/premises is the final decision-maker about whether a visit can take place. The decision will take account of various factors including, but not limited to, operational concerns. Advice should always be sought from officers listed below.
- If there is any possibility that the visit could be used for electioneering it should not go ahead. While the premises may be visited and individuals involved with particular services (e.g. teachers can meet candidates), no officer or premises can be involved in electioneering. Particular care must be taken by officers, the parties, candidates and agents to avoid this.
- In some circumstances, events may not be appropriate due to the inability to separate the event from electioneering. Alternatively, Council staff may be advised not to participate in the event, even if the facility is made available for a visit.
- Any candidate/party is entitled to the same rights as the original candidate/party seeking an invitation to an event. Candidates of all parties (and independents) must be treated at all times in an even-handed way.

Where properties are not the responsibility of the Council, visits will be determined by the relevant organisation. If these organisations seek advice, we should advise them that the decision rests with them but there is an expectation that the candidates of all parties will be treated in an even-handed way. Particular care must be taken in relation to education establishments not to involve children in overt or indirect electioneering or inappropriate media coverage.

Where there are partnership arrangements, for example where one agency owns the land and a number of agencies collaborate in a partnership project, the lead will be taken by the agency with responsibility for the premises. The other agencies should be involved in discussions surrounding such an event to establish their level and/or extent of involvement. An example may be, a partner organisation making a decision about an event because they are responsible as the landowners/landlords and the Council staff not participating in an event to avoid compromising their impartiality – this does not necessarily mean that the event will not take place.

It is important that candidates and their agents observe these principles and understand that any request for an event needs to be made in a timely and effective manner and to the correct body/individual. In most cases, where there is any uncertainty, particularly in relation to partnerships there should be discussions well in advance of the event with the relevant Chief Officer.

Meetings

There are no statutory restrictions on the Council's decision-making, meetings, or political debate during any election campaign, however in order that meetings are not used as a political platform and to free councillors for campaigning the Council Calendar of meetings has been organised to keep the pre election period clear with the exception of those public meetings necessary for processing the business of the Council such as Licensing. Officers should not permit any issues to be deliberately brought forward during the campaign to create political advantage.

Should there be an urgent reason for the Council to call any kind of public meeting the permission of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer will be required.

Councillor Enquiries

During this period there may be an increase in the number of queries raised and councillor should ensure that the queries are directed to the appropriate officer.

Officers should deal with queries promptly and in accordance with corporate guidelines.

Enquiries from prospective election candidates

Prospective Parliamentary election candidates and local election candidates have no more rights to information or access to facilities than a member of the public. Even when they might be official candidates nearer to the time of the election, they have no special rights or privileges. If a prospective candidate writes to or contacts any service on behalf of a resident purporting to be assisting the resident with an issue, you should politely respond that you are sorry, but that you are unable to deal with them directly and that the resident should make direct contact themselves or seek assistance through a currently elected local councillor.

Where FOI requests or general enquiries are made by prospective candidates, these should be dealt with in exactly the same way as any other general enquiry.

Fly posting

Any fly posting of political leaflets or notices on Council buildings, equipment or street furniture etc, or left within any council building or school, must be removed immediately.

Use of social media

All social media platforms operated by the Council are subject to the pre-election period guidance.

Specific guidance is set out below for the main social media platforms maintained by the Council:

Twitter

- Do not retweet political parties, politicians or political opinion.
- Do not tweet on matters which are politically controversial.
- Do not tweet images of political parties, politicians or subjects which are politically controversial.
- Tweets by and about the Mayor may be retweeted as long as they are not of a political nature.
- In exceptional circumstances please first seek permission from Communications to tweet or retweet a comment by a politician during the pre-election period.

Facebook

- Do not post or share updates from political parties, politicians or political opinion.
- Do not post or share images from political parties, politicians or political opinion.
- Monitor your page and delete any content which is politically controversial with an explanation that this has been done because of the rules that govern the pre-election period – you can always provide a link to this advice.

YouTube & Flickr

- Do not post or share updates from political parties, politicians or political opinion.
- Do not post or share images from political parties, politicians or political opinion.

- Monitor your page and delete any content which is politically controversial with an explanation that this has been done because of the rules that govern the pre-election period – you can always provide a link to this advice.
- Videos or images by or about the Ceremonial Mayor may be added as long as they are not of a political nature.
- In exceptional circumstances please first seek permission from Communications to add a YouTube clip by a politician during the pre-election period.
- Please disable the ability to download images of politicians during the pre-election period.

For further and more specific advice please contact:

NAME	ROLE	E-MAIL
Fiona Taylor	Monitoring Officer	Fiona.Taylor@bdtlegal.org.uk
David Lawson	Deputy Head of Legal Services	David.Lawson@bdtlegal.org.uk
Matt Boulter	Democratic Services Manager	mboulter@thurrock.gov.uk
Elaine Sheridan	Electoral Services Manager	esheridan@thurrock.gov.uk
Andy Lever	Senior Media Officer	alever@thurrock.gov.uk

Reviewed: February 2015

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Purdah: A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period

Purdah: A short guide to publicity during the pre-election period

Introduction

In response to requests from council communications teams to produce a simple, updated guide to communications during the pre-election period (also known as 'purdah'), we are publishing this short guide.

This document provides advice on the publicity restrictions that should be observed during the purdah period. It should be read in conjunction with any guidance produced by your own Returning Officer or Monitoring Officer, which provides specific advice depending on your local circumstances.

The term 'purdah' has come into popular use across central and local government to describe the period of time immediately before elections or referendums when specific restrictions on communications activity are in place. The term 'pre-election period' is also used.

For general elections in the past this period commenced with the announcement of the election by the Prime Minister. This year, the Fixed-term Parliament Act 2011 has already set the date as 7 May 2015 and Parliament will be dissolved on 30 March 2015. For other elections, purdah is taken to start from the publication of the Notice of Election.

2015 Local Elections and the General Election

Many authorities will have triple elections on 7 May 2015: parish and town councils, borough or district and unitary, and the General Election.

The latest date that purdah can start is 30 March 2015. Local government sometimes views this period as a time when communications has to shut down completely. This is not the case, and the ordinary functions of councils should continue, but some restrictions do apply, by law, to all councillors and officers.

The Code

The Government published a new Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity in 2011. The Code is based around seven principles to ensure that all communications activity:

- is lawful
- is cost effective
- is objective
- is even-handed
- is appropriate
- has regard to equality and diversity
- is issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

This last principle, to ensure special care is taken during periods of heightened sensitivity is of particular relevance during the pre-election period.

Legal basis and official guidance

The pre-election restrictions are governed by Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986¹, as amended in 1988². Essentially councils should “**not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.**”

Section 4³ of the Act makes clear that councils need to have regard for the code of recommended practice that supports the Act. A new code of practice was published in 2011⁴ which replaced all previous guidance. The essential points from the code are:

- In general you should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters (an exception being situations covered by legislation or regulations directing publication of information about referendums for explanatory purposes, for example promoting the existence of the referendum and explaining how to take part).
- Particular care should be taken during the pre-election period to abide by the Act.
- Consider suspending hosting third party material or closing public forums if these are likely to breach the codes of practice.
- Do not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views on proposals in a way which identifies them with individual councillors or groups of councillors.
- Publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.
- You are allowed to publish factual information which identifies the names, wards and parties of candidates at elections.

Although this new code supersedes the previous versions and may seem less

1 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/10/section/2

2 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/9/section/27

3 www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/10/section/4

4 www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity

specific, in practice your conduct should be similar to previous elections.

What this means in practice

Publicity is defined as “**any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.**”

The first question to ask is ‘could a reasonable person conclude that you were spending public money to influence the outcome of the election?’ In other words it must pass the ‘is it reasonable’ test. When making your decision, you should consider the following:

You should **not**:

- produce publicity on matters which are politically controversial
- make references to individual politicians or groups in press releases
- arrange proactive media or events involving candidates
- issue photographs which include candidates
- supply council photographs or other materials to councillors or political group staff unless you have verified that they will not be used for campaigning purposes
- continue hosting third party blogs or e-communications
- help with national political visits (as this would involve using public money to support a particular candidate or party). These should be organised by political parties with no cost or resource implications for the council.

You should also **think carefully** before you:

- Continue to run campaign material to support your own local campaigns. If the campaign is already running and is non-controversial (for example, on issues like recycling or foster care) and would be a waste of public money to cancel or postpone them, then continue. However, you should always think carefully if a campaign could be deemed likely to influence the outcome of the election and you should not use councillors in press releases and events in pre-election periods. In such cases you should stop or defer them. An example might be a campaign on an issue which has been subject of local political debate and/or disagreement.
- Launch any new consultations. Unless it is a statutory duty, don't start any new consultations or publish report findings from consultation exercises, which could be politically sensitive.

You **are allowed** to:

- Continue to discharge normal council business (including determining planning applications, even if they are controversial).
- Publish factual information to counteract misleading, controversial or extreme (for example, racist/sexist information). An example might be a media story which is critical of the council, such as a media enquiry claiming that the salaries of all the council's senior managers have increased by five per cent. If this is not true, a response such as 'none of the council's senior management team have received any increase in salary in the last 12 months' is acceptable. It is perfectly right and proper that the council responds, **as long as it is factual**.
- Use relevant lead officers rather than members for reactive media releases.

- Use a politician who is involved in an election when the council is required to respond in particular circumstances, such as in an emergency situation or where there is a genuine need for a member-level response to an important event beyond the council's control. Normally this would be the civic mayor (as opposed to the elected mayor in those areas with elected mayors) or chairman (that is, someone holding a politically neutral role). If the issue is so serious, it is worth considering asking the council's group leaders to agree to a response which would involve all of them.
- If you are in any doubt, seek advice from your Returning Officer and/or Monitoring Officer, legal or communications colleagues.

Ultimately, you must always be guided by the principle of fairness. It is crucial that any decision you take would be seen as fair and reasonable by the public and those standing for office.

Further guidance

You can find more information from the following:

- referring to advice published by your Returning Officer or Monitoring Officer
- the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity
- the LGcommunications leaflet, Cracking the Code
- annex A – template letter to councillors.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does this guidance only apply to councils?	No. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity covers the full range of authorities.
What happens in an area where there is no local election? Do these rules still apply?	Yes. As this year is a general election year, the guidance applies to all local authorities, even if there are no local elections.
Do these rules apply to councillors who are not running for re-election?	Council business continues so all sitting councillors, whether seeking re-election or not, are bound by the pre-election restrictions.
Can council officers get involved in campaigning in their own time?	Officers who hold politically restricted posts, or who are likely to be involved or employed in connection with the elections, should not take part in a political campaign or canvass on behalf of a political party or candidate. Please check local arrangements.
Do the restrictions apply to officers who are members of a trade union?	Trade unions themselves are not bound by the Code, but individual officers are, and must have regard to the Code.
Can council press offices still put out press releases ahead of the election?	Yes, but with limitations. Official, factual press statements about council decisions for public information purposes may still be issued. However, no publicity should deal with controversial issues or report views or proposals in a way which identifies them with individual councillors or groups of councillors.
Can we use the chair of a council-commissioned review, who is up for re-election, as spokesperson for the report?	The best approach could be to delay publication of the review until after purdah. However, if there is an imperative to publish you should use another, non-political spokesperson.
Can we host a photo call for the council leader or other leading councillor to open a new council facility (such as a play park) during purdah?	No
Can councils sanction the use of schools for political purposes?	Schedule 5 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 covers the use of meeting rooms in school premises for parliamentary elections. The Registration Officer is required to keep lists of such premises.
Do the restrictions apply to council notice boards?	Councils are required to publicise details of the election and how to register to vote. Material relating to wider political issues should not be posted on official notice boards which may be seen by members of the public. This includes publicity issued by, or on behalf of, a trade union.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can councillors issue their own press releases or talk to the media?	Councillors are free to talk to the media and issue press releases, but must not use council resources to do so.
Can councillors write letters 'for publication' to their local newspaper?	Yes, as long as they don't use council resources (such as staff) to help them do it.
Can councillors still tweet or blog?	Councillors can continue, but must not use council resources (such as council twitter accounts, email accounts, telephones etc.) to do so.
Can councillors who are up for re-election refer to themselves as councillors in their public statements?	A person remains as a 'councillor' and can refer to themselves as such until they retire on the fourth day after the ordinary day of election.
Can councillors request to visit council establishments?	The guidance may vary by council. Generally reasonable requests by current members who are also candidates at the election to visit council establishments in the course of their council functions would be approved. Again, check local arrangements and any such visits must not be supported by the council's media team or council officers.
Can councillors speak/canvas at a student union (which is a registered charity) during the pre-election?	Yes they can. In fact it is to be expected. Councillors and those potentially standing for election can arrange to speak and canvass as long as these activities are not funded nor arranged by local authorities. The fact that the union is a charity has no bearing - the guidance applies to local authorities, not to other organisations.
Can the council still publish its newsletter/magazine during purdah?	Yes, if it is done in the ordinary course of business and meets all other purdah requirements.
What happens if there are protracted coalition negotiations? Do the restrictions continue beyond the election until a government is formed?	The publicity restrictions as set out in the Code of Recommended Practice only apply to the pre-election period.
Can the Mayor's office continue to promote events being organised on behalf of the Mayor or their charities?	Where the office of Mayor is a non-political post, it is appropriate for them to continue their civic duties and appearances at events and to be supported by council resources (including communications) as they fulfil this function. It would be inappropriate for the post holder to speak on controversial issues or those associated with a particular political party and care should be taken about using photos from such events if any members are standing for election.

Acknowledgements

The LGA would like to thank LGcommunications, Coventry City Council, Warwickshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council in the creation of this document.

Annex A : Template letter for sending to councillors

Dear Councillor

Guidelines and restrictions on decision making and publicity during the pre-election period

As you will be aware, the local and general elections are due to take place on 7 May 2015, so I thought it would be useful to remind you about the guidelines and restrictions on publicity during the pre-election period that starts on **XXXX date**. These restrictions apply to all elections happening during this period.

From the start of the pre-election period ('purdah'), the council must comply with restrictions outlined in Section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986. In addition a Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity published in 2011 makes clear that particular care should be taken in periods of heightened sensitivity, such as in the run up to an election. The Act defines publicity as "**any communication, in whatever form, addressed to the public at large or to a section of the public.**"

Generally, the Act says that we should "**not publish any material which, in whole, or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party.**" The Code of Practice recommends that authorities should generally not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters and that publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.

Decision making

In relation to decision making within the council, the position remains that it is 'business as usual' unless there are very good reasons why this should not be the case. In the vast majority of cases, the pre-election period will have no impact on normal council business, including the approval of planning decisions.

What this means

- The primary restriction is on proactive publicity by the council which particularly relates to candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election.
- The council can still issue media releases on factual matters provided that these do not identify individual councillors or groups of councillors.
- Councillors are still free to respond to enquiries received from the media in a personal capacity.
- Individual councillors can issue their own statements, write letters to the local newspaper(s) for publication, contact the media directly or say what they like in a personal capacity, but must not use council resources to do so.

It is still possible for the council to issue statements on behalf of a councillor holding a key political or civic position provided it relates to important events which are outside the council's control and can be shown to justify a member response. These occasions are likely to be rare and to be the exception, rather than the rule.

I hope this letter provides you with the general information you need for the pre-election period, but if you have specific concerns or queries, please feel free to **contact xxxx**.

Yours sincerely



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7 January 2016	ITEM: 8
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Fees and Charges 2016/17	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Mike Jones, Strategic Resources Accountant	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This report seeks approval to revise fees and charges for Thurrock Council with effect from 1 April 2016.

The paper provides narrative for all discretionary charges for each directorate. It is to be noted that there is a wider review of commercial opportunities across the Council in progress. Any proposed price changes proposed as part of the wider review will be managed under the delegated authority of the Chief Executive and relevant Cabinet Member (where appropriate.)

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the committee consider the proposed charges as detailed in the appendix.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 In reviewing the fees and charges for 16/17 officers (where practicable) have ensured cost recovery of discretionary activities while at the same time undertaken a benchmark against neighbouring authorities.

2.2 The table below highlights the actual (14/15) and forecast (15/16) income from external fees and charges.

Service Area	Actual 14/15 £000's	Budget 15/16 £000's	Forecast ¹ 15/16 £000's
Adults	7,463.0	8,358.6	8,254.6
Thameside Theatres	471.4	346.7	425.0
Children's Services	4,881.9	5,248.3	5,204.3
Environment	681.9	739.8	846.7
Legal Services ²	119.8	84.5	124.9
Registrars	234.4	155.8	213.4
Commercial Hall Hire	88.5	82.6	83.9
Public Protection	363.8	337.8	378.7
Housing (General Fund)	844.1	744.5	786.0
Transport & Highways	949.7	994.8	1,109.8
Planning & Developments	1,709.1	1,449.2	1,865.8
TOTAL	17,807.6	18,542.6	19,293.1

2.3 In setting the fees for 16/17, a total growth of £775k has been applied that equates to a stretch target of £600k and £175k previously agreed at the first phase of the MTFS process, the following tables provides a high-level reconciliation.

Description	Amount £000's
Budget 15/16	18,542.6
1% uplift on existing fees & charges (bud 15/16)	185.4
<u>Rebaseline budgets to actual performance for 15/16</u>	
➤ Registrars (Fcst Outturn £213.4k in 15/16)	68.0
➤ Environments (Fcst Outturn £846.7k in 15/16)	102.0
➤ Thameside Theatre(Fcst Outturn £425k in 15/16)	75.0
➤ Growth in Grangewaters Income	20.0
➤ Parking Charges Increase	150.0
<u>MTFS Items previously agreed</u>	
➤ Filming/Sponsorship	100.0
➤ Growth in Legal Traded Services	50.0
➤ Increases in Planning Fee Income	25.0
TOTAL EXTERNAL INCOME BUDGET 16/17	19,318.0

Service Area	Budget 15/16 £000's	1% uplift £000's	Growth Items £000's	Budget 16/17 £000's
Adults	8,358.6	83.6		8,442.2
Thameside Theatres	346.7	3.5	75.0	425.0
Childrens Services	5,248.3	52.5	20.0	5,320.8
Environments	739.8	7.4	102.0	849.2
Legal Services	84.5	0.8	50.0	135.4
Filming & Sponsorship			100.0	100.0
Registrars	155.8	1.5	68.0	225.0
Commercial Hall Hire	82.6	0.8		83.9
Public Protection	337.8	3.4		341.1
Housing General Fund	744.5	7.5		751.9
Transport & Highways	994.8	9.9	150.0	1,154.8
Planning& Growth	1,449.2	14.5	25.0	1,488.7
TOTAL	18,542.6	185.4	590.0	19,318.0

2.4 As part of the commercial transformation work that is in progress, detailed sales and marketing plans will be developed for each service area.

3. THURROCK CHARGING POLICY

3.1 The strategic ambition for Thurrock is to adopt a policy on fees and charges that is aligned to the wider commercial strategy and ensures that all discretionary services cost recover.

3.2 Furthermore, for future years, while reviewing charges, services will also consider the level of demand for the service, the market dynamics and how the charging policy helps to meet other service objectives.

4. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE³: THAMESIDE THEATRE & MUSEUMS

4.1 In recent years the external income achieved for Thameside Theatre (including museums) is highlighted below.

	14/15 Actual £000's	Budget 15/16 £000's	Forecast 15/16 £000's	16/17 Target £000's
External Income	471.3	346.7	425.0	425.0

4.2 The average anticipated increase for 16/17 is 1%, the external income target remains at 15/16 levels and Thameside Theatres will be further reviewed following the development of a detailed sales and marketing plan. A full list of the charges is set out in the Appendix.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE: REGISTRARS

5.1 The Register Office provides the statutory service of registering births deaths & marriages alongside the non-statutory service of nationality checking and citizenship ceremonies (on both a group and individual basis.)

5.2 In recent years the external income achieved for the Registrars Services is highlighted below.

	14/15 Actual £000's	15/16 Budget £000's	Forecast 15/16 £000's	16/17 Target £000's
Registrars Income	234.4	155.8	213.5	225.0

5.3 In general existing services have increased between 2 -3 % with the exception of the following items.

Description	15/16 charge	16/17 proposed	Comment
24hr Certificate Issue	17.00	20.00	18% and represents a rate that allows full cost recovery of the service while being competitive (this is still a cheaper offer compared to neighbouring authorities.)
2hr Certificate Issue	26.00	30.000	15% and represents a rate that allows full cost recovery of the service while being competitive (this is still a cheaper offer compared to neighbouring authorities.)
Ceremonies held at Thameside – Hawthorne Suite Sat	210.00	230.00	Ensures full cost recovery of the service.
Sat pm	260.00	280.00	
Ceremonies held at Thameside – Hawthorne Suite Sat	260.00	290.00	
Sat pm	260.00	330.00	
Nationality Checking Service	60.00	70.00	In keeping with the guidelines from the Home Office

5.4 It is proposed that the following new charges are introduced.

Description	16/17 proposed	Comment
Non Refundable Deposit for Notice of Marriage Appoints	£35.00	<i>Charges introduced in keeping with other authorities to ensure cost recovery of the service.</i>
Non Refundable Deposit for all Ceremonies at Approved Premises	£100.00	
Non Refundable deposit for all Ceremonies in Register Office Marriage Room	£46.00	
Non Refundable fee for appointment/ceremony rescheduling	£25.00	
Postal Charge	£1.00	

5.5 The Register Office operates at an FTE of 4 officers; discussions are underway regarding the utilisation of legal officers (once trained) to undertaken Nationality Checking in order to manage demand during busier times.

5.6 The existing and proposed charges are detailed in the appendix.

6. COMMERCIAL: HALL HIRE

6.1 The strategic objective for charging for Hall Hire services is to ensure cost recovery of the activity (as far as is practicable.) An inflationary uplift of 1% is proposed for existing services.

6.2 In recent years the external income achieved for Hall Hire is highlighted below.

	14/15 Actual £000's	15/16 Budget £000's	Forecast 15/16 £000's	16/17 Target £000's
External Income	88.5	82.6	83.4	83.4

6.3 The external income target for 16/17 has been maintained at £83.4k and a further review will be undertaken during the development of the sales & marketing plan. The existing and proposed charges are set out in the Appendix.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

The increase in fees and charges set out in the report have been built into the overall 2016/17 budget.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Toohey**
Principal Solicitor Contracts and Procurement

Fees and charges generally fall into three categories – Statutory, Regulatory and Discretionary. Statutory charges are set in statute and cannot be altered by law since the charges have been determined by Central government and all authorities will be applying the same charge.

Regulatory charged relate to services where, if the Council provides the service, it is obliged to set a fee which the Council can determine itself in accordance with a regulatory framework. Charges have to be reasonable and must be applied across the borough.

Discretionary charges relate to services which the Council can provide if they choose to do so. This is a local policy decision. The Local Government Act 2003 gives the Council power to charge for discretionary services, with some limited exceptions. This may include charges for new and innovative services utilising the power to promote environmental, social and economic well-being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. The income from charges, taking one financial year with another, must not exceed the cost of provision. A clear and justifiable framework of principles should be followed in terms of deciding when to charge and how much, and the process for reviewing charges.

A service may wish to consider whether they may utilise this power to provide a service that may benefit residents, businesses and other service users, meet the Council priorities and generate income.

Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to the Council's decision-making structures. Most charging decisions are the responsibility of Cabinet, where there are key decisions. Some fees are set by full Council.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Council has a statutory duty under the Race Relations Act 2000 (Amendment), the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment.

Decisions on setting charged and fees are subject to the Council's decision-making structures. Concessions should be available to groups or individuals in the community, where the increase may result in them being excluded from particular activities.

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

Not applicable.

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

- None.

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: Draft Fees and Charges Booklet 2016/17.

Report Author:

Mike Jones

Strategic Resources Accountant

Corporate Finance

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Fees and Charges Booklet

2016-17

KEY

VAT indicator

Throughout this booklet the following VAT indicators are used
Z = zero
O = outside scope
E = exempt
S = standard

Statutory or Discretionary indicator

This Booklet is divided into 2 parts;

Part A is Statutory or reasonable charges
Part B is Discretionary charges

POA - Price on Application

Notes on presentation

It is assumed that the date of increase in all cases will be 1st April.

Fees and Charges Booklet

2016-2017

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Chief Executives Legal Services	Page 1
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LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
<u>Legal charge re drafting of document for:-</u>					
Section 106 (Standard)	S	910.35	O	1,000.00	1,000.00
Section 38 (Standard)	S	N/A	O	1,000.00	1,000.00
Section 278 (Standard)	S	910.35	O	1,000.00	1,000.00
Reg of Assign	S	29.40	O	29.40	29.40
Grazing Licence	S	441.00	O	441.00	441.00
Street Licence	S	307.65	O	307.65	307.65
Section 50 Agreement	S	470.40	O	650.00	650.00

Fees and Charges Booklet

2016-2017

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Part B Discretionary Charges

Chief Executives

Legal & Democratic Services
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Planning and Transportation

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Environment

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Housing Services

Housing Services

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LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
MISCELLANEOUS		£		£	£
Licences to assign Leasehold Premises	D	502.45	O	517.50	517.50
Authorised Guarantee Agreement	D	466.75	O	480.75	480.75
Shop Leases	D	697.20	O	718.10	718.10
Sale of Land	D	If under £1,000 min charge £368, then incremental depending on value	E	If under £1,000 min charge £500, then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)	If under £1,000 min charge £500, then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)
Sale of Garden Land/Additional Land	D	682.50	E	703.00	703.00
Copy of Lease	D	87.50	S	90.10	108.12
Commercial Lease Assignment	D	630.00	E	648.90	648.90
Commercial Lease Grant (Simple)	D	682.50	E	703.00	703.00
Commercial Lease Grant (Complex)	D	682.50	E	1200.00 upwards (no maximum)	1200.00 upwards (no maximum)
Commercial Licences	D	188.25-693	E	193.90-713.80	193.90-713.80
Deed of Covenants	D	438.40	E	451.55	451.55
Landlords Licence	D	531.85	O	547.80	547.80
Licence of Alteration	D	682.50	O	703.00	703.00
Notice of Assignment	D	79.30	O	81.70	81.70
Notice of Charge	D	79.30	O	81.70	81.70
Retrospective Consent	D	116.05	O	119.50	119.50
Right to Buy Engrossment	D	71.40	O	73.55	73.55

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>					
<u>Legal charge re drafting of document for:-</u>					
Section 106 (Complex)	D	1670.55	O	1750.00 upwards (no set maximum)	(no set maximum)
Section 38 (Complex)	D	N/A	O	No Set Maximum	
Section 278 (Complex)	D	910.35	O	No Set Maximum	
Rent Reviews	D	211.05 - 278.25	O	217.4 - 286.60	217.4 - 286.60
Easements	D	826.35	O	851.15	851.15
Surrenders	D	539.70	O	555.90	555.90
Deed of Variation	D	539.70	O	555.90	555.90
Transfer of Open Spaces	D	748.65	O	771.10	771.10
Wayleave Agreement Democratic Services	D	308.70	O	318.00	318.00
Verification of Proof of Life	D	Free	O	25.00	25.00

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
<u>COUNCIL HOUSE SALES</u>					
Transfer prints	D	42.55	O	42.55	42.55
Lease prints	D	68.25	O	68.25	68.25
Ownership Changes Leaseholds Houses & Flats	D	44.65	O	44.65	44.65
Transfer of Equity approval and seal	D	70.90	O	70.90	70.90
Stat charge discharge - discount 3 year period	D	68.80	O	68.80	68.80
Letter of Postponement concerning authorized works on properties with statutory discount charge	D	66.70	O	66.70	66.70
Leasehold Enquiries - Maintenance and rent details , insurance etc.	D	155.40	O	155.40	155.40
Copy of Landlord's Offer Notice Full	D	35.00	S	35.00	42.00
Copy of Landlord's Offer Notice Part	D	14.05	S	14.05	16.86
Fee for Application to buy garage	D	76.15	S	76.15	91.38
Copy of Service Charge Certificate	D	30.20	S	30.20	36.24
Copy of Insurance Policy	D	45.50	S	45.50	54.60
Document retrieval	D	9.00	S	9.00	10.80
Photocopying					
A4	D	0.83	S	0.83	1.00
A3	D	1.25	S	1.25	1.50
Post & Packing	E	3.00	E	3.00	3.00

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
REGISTRATION					
Certificates issued by Superintendent Registrar					
Standard Certificate of Birth - 24 hour service	D	17.00	O	20.00	20.00
Standard Certificate of Death - 24 hour service	D	17.00	O	20.00	20.00
Standard Certificate of Marriage - 24 hour service	D	17.00	O	20.00	20.00
Short Certificate of Birth - 24 hour service	D	17.00	O	20.00	20.00
Certificates issued by Superintendent Registrar					
Standard Certificate of Birth - 2 hour service	D	26.00	O	30.00	30.00
Standard Certificate of Death - 2 hour service	D	26.00	O	30.00	30.00
Standard Certificate of Marriage - 2 hour service	D	26.00	O	30.00	30.00
Short Certificate of Birth - 2 hour service	D	26.00	O	30.00	30.00
Deposit for Notice of Marriage Appointment	D	0.00	O	35.00	35.00
Deposit for all ceremonies at Approved premises	D	0.00	O	100.00	100.00
Deposit for all ceremonies at Register Office marriage Room	D	0.00	O	46.00	46.00
Re-Schedule of Appointment/Ceremony	D	0.00	O	25.00	25.00
Postage Charge	D	0.00	O	1.00	1.00
Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership					
Monday - Friday	D	390.00	O	400.00	400.00
Saturday	D	420.00	O	430.00	430.00
Sunday, Bank or Public Holiday	D	480.00	O	490.00	490.00
Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Register Office for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership)					
Saturday	D	225.00	O	230.00	230.00
Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership)					
Monday - Friday	D	265.00	O	270.00	270.00
Saturday	D	295.00	O	300.00	300.00
Sunday	D	325.00	O	330.00	330.00

LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
<u>REGISTRATION</u>					
Approved Premises Regulations					
- application for approval	D	1,915.00	O	1,975.00	1,975.00
- request for review	D	600.00	O	620.00	620.00
Hawthorne Suite - Thameside					
Monday - Friday	D	175.00	O	180.00	180.00
Saturday	D	210.00	O	230.00	230.00
Saturday PM	D	260.00	O	280.00	280.00
Private Citizenship Ceremony					
Monday - Saturday	D	140.00	O	140.00	140.00
Nationality Checking Services	D	60.00	O	70.00	70.00
Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre Mon-Fri	D	230.00	O	230.00	230.00
Thameside Theatre Saturday	D	260.00	O	290.00	290.00
Thameside Theatre Saturday PM	D	260.00	O	330.00	330.00
<u>REGISTER OF ELECTIONS</u>					
Register of Electors - Certificate of Residency, per elector, per year	D	13.50	E	13.90	13.90

CULTURAL SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
THAMESIDE THEATRE AND CENTRAL COMPLEX					
The Thameside Theatre operates 3 tariffs dependant on the status of the hirer					
Tariff 1 Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges					
Standard Fee per Hour 09.00 to 18.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	55.00	E		56.00
Fri	D	71.00	E	72.00	0.00
Sat	D	90.00	E	91.00	91.00
Sun	D	115.00	E	116.00	116.00
Standard Fee per period 18.00 to 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	242.00	E	244.00	244.00
Fri	D	443.00	E	448.00	448.00
Sat	D	583.00	E	589.00	589.00
Additional Hours after 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	128.00	E	129.00	129.00
Fri	D	160.00	E	162.00	162.00
Sat	D	232.00	E	235.00	235.00
Sun	D	263.00	E	266.00	266.00
Insurance @ 9 % is applicable on these prices					
Tariff 2 Thurrock based commercial organisations					
Mon to Thurs	D	122.00	E	124.00	124.00
Fri	D	129.00	E	131.00	131.00
Sat	D	132.00	E	134.00	134.00
Sun	D	214.00	E	217.00	217.00
Standard Fee per period 18.00 to 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	400.00	E	404.00	404.00
Fri	D	675.00	E	682.00	682.00
Sat	D	890.00	E	900.00	900.00
Additional Hours after 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	173.00	E	175.00	175.00
Fri	D	195.00	E	197.00	197.00
Sat	D	255.00	E	258.00	258.00
Sun	D	343.00	E	347.00	347.00
Insurance @ 9 % is applicable on these prices					

CULTURAL SERVICES	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONAR	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
THAMESIDE THEATRE AND CENTRAL COMPLEX					
Tariff 3 Commercial organisations from outside Thurrock					
Mon to Thurs	D	136.00	E	138.00	138.00
Fri	D	143.00	E	145.00	145.00
Sat	D	155.00	E	157.00	157.00
Sun	D	228.00	E	230.00	230.00
Standard Fee per period 18.00 to 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	500.00	E	505.00	505.00
Fri	D	800.00	E	808.00	808.00
Sat	D	1,085.00	E	1,095.00	1095.00
Additional Hours after 23.00					
Mon to Thurs	D	185.00	E	187.00	187.00
Fri	D	205.00	E	207.00	207.00
Sat	D	345.00	E	349.00	349.00
Sun	D	380.00	E	284.00	284.00
Insurance @ 9 % is applicable on these prices					
Performance Surcharge	D	77.00	S	78.00	93.60
Where an audience is present a one off surcharge will be applied to cover the cost of the box office,kiosk,bar and staff.					
Bank Holidays are charged at 200% of whichever tariff applies.					
Venue details on www.thurrock.gov.uk/theatre .					
Thameside Theatre Telephone for further details					
0845-300-5264 or 01375 413981 - Thurrock Council Extension 4981					

CORPORATE ASSETS	STATUTORY OR DISCRETIONARY	BASIC CHARGE 2015/16	VAT GROUP	2016-17 PROPOSED BASIC CHARGE	2016-17 PROPOSED CHARGE INCLUDING VAT
		£		£	£
<u>Commercial Matters</u>					
Administration fee for processing Commercial & Other applications			S	25.00	30
New Letting - Standard Commercial Shop Lease	D	370.00	S	375.00	450.00
New Letting - Non Standard Commercial Shop Lease Dependant upon complexity or extended negotiations	D	615 to 1,225	S	625 to 1250	750 to 1500
Dilapidation Surveys and Schedules of Repair/Condition (Council Owned Premises) Minimum fee and hourly rate charge in preparing survey and supervising works	D	370.00	S	375.00	450.00
Assignment of Leases (Council owned premises) Minimum charge May rise to maximum of £670 if negotiations extended	D	370 to 735	S	375 to 750	450 to 900
Licence to vary lease terms (Council owned premises) May rise to maximum of £670 if negotiations extended	D	370 to 735	S	375 to 750	450 to 900
Licence to undertake alterations/building works May rise to maximum of £670 if negotiations extended	D	370 to 735	S	375 to 750	450 to 900
Other processes and consents	D	370.00	S	375.00	450.00
<u>Non Commercial Matters</u>					
Request for an easement over Council Land Applicant would also need to pay for additional cost of works (eg drop kerb and crossover) and any additional legal costs affecting the title to the property.	D	370.00	S	375.00	450.00
<u>Area up to 25 square metres</u>					
Sale of land at the end of the rear garden retained by the Council from a Right to Buy sale or amenity land adjoining a property sold under a Right to Buy;	D	Negotiable	S	Negotiable	Negotiable
Land offering development potential either as a separate plot or if combined with other land	D	Negotiable	S	Negotiable	Negotiable
Other processes and consents	D	370.00	S	375.00	450.00
<u>STANLEY LAZELL MEMORIAL HALL</u>					
<u>Dell Road</u>					
1. Whole Hall hire Weekends per hour	D	36.00	E	36.00	36.00
2. Whole Hall hire Weekdays per hour	D	17.00	E	17.00	17.00
3. Hire of Small Meeting Room per hour	D	7.20	E	7.20	7.20
4. Senior Citizens / Charitable Organisations	D	-	E	-	-
5. Whole Hall hire Daytime/weekends per hour	D	22.45	E	22.45	22.45

**CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16**

Meeting Dates: 2 February 2016, 24 March 2016

Report Name	Lead Officer	Meeting Date
Budget Update	Sean Clark	2 February 2016
Review of the Election Models available to Thurrock Council, and existing boundaries	Elaine Sheridan	2 February 2016
An update on the Council's temporary, contract and agency staff, performance ratings.	Jackie Hinchliffe / Mykela Hill	2 February 2016
Capital Programme	Sean Clark	2 February 2016
Qtr 3 Corporate Performance Report 2015/16	Sarah Welton	24 March 2016
Budget Update	Sean Clark	24 March 2016
Digital Programme Update	Jackie Hinchliffe	24 March 2016
Review of support services and facilities available to members to enable them to perform their role as ward representatives	Fiona Taylor / Matthew	24 March 2016

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Report Name	Lead Officer	Meeting Date
	Boulter	
Fair Debt Policy	Sean Clark	24 March 2016
Update on the outcomes from the Budget Review Panel	Sean Clark / Karen Wheeler	To be included in budget update standing item as appropriate.