

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

Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held at **7.00 pm** on **28
September 2016**

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

Membership of the Council:

Cathy Kent (Mayor)
Tunde Ojetola (Deputy Mayor)

Tim Aker
John Allen
Chris Baker
James Baker
Jan Baker
Clare Baldwin
Russell Cherry
Colin Churchman
Gary Collins
Mark Coxshall
Jack Duffin
Tony Fish
Leslie Gamester
Oliver Gerrish
Robert Gledhill
Garry Hague

James Halden
Graham Hamilton
Shane Hebb
Clifford Holloway
Victoria Holloway
Roy Jones
Tom Kelly
John Kent
Martin Kerin
Steve Liddiard
Brian Little
Susan Little
Sue MacPherson
Ben Maney
Bukky Okunade
Terry Piccolo

Jane Pothecary
David Potter
Joycelyn Redsell
Barbara Rice
Gerard Rice
Sue Sammons
Angela Sheridan
Peter Smith
Graham Snell
Luke Spillman
Deborah Stewart
Michael Stone
Pauline Tolson
Aaron Watkins
Kevin Wheeler



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1	Apologies for absence	
2	Minutes	9 - 38
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 27 July 2016.	
3	Items of Urgent Business	
	To receive additional items that the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4	Declaration of Interests	
	To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
5	Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council	
6	Questions from Members of the Public	39 - 40
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
7	Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors	
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
8	Petitions Update Report	41 - 44
9	Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels	
	The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.	

Future Dates of Council:

26 October 2016, 30 November 2016, 25 January 2017, 22 February 2017, 29 March 2017, 24 May 2017 (Annual Council)

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Information for members of the public and councillors

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

Recording of meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

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

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

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

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

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

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

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

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100 Years in Memoriam

Remembering Thurrock's Fallen of World War One

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

September 1916

DATE	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	WARD	RANK	SERVICE	DIED
02-Sep	EVANS	ARTHUR	29	HOH	PTE	EAST SURREY – 1	FRANCE
03-Sep	HINES	HAROLD	27	G	RFMN	RIFLE BRIG – 10	FRANCE
03-Sep	JAGGARD	CHARLES HENRY	29	G	RFMN	KRRC – 17	FRANCE
06-Sep	SMITH	WILLIAM JOHN	19	G	PTE	WEST SURREY – 2	FRANCE
09-Sep	PIKE	ROBERT	22	TIL	RFMN	LONDON – 12	FRANCE
13-Sep	HOWARD	HENRY	U/K	TIL	PTE	SUFFOLK – 9	FRANCE
14-Sep	CRICKMER	JAMES GEORGE	21	SLH	PTE	R/FUS –23	FRANCE
14-Sep	WOOLLINGS	SIDNEY JAMES	27	BUL	PTE	CEF	BELGIUM
15-Sep	COOPER	WILLIAM ALMER	22	L/TH & TIL	PTE	LONDON – 15	FRANCE
15-Sep	PAYNE	LEONARD	24	STIFF	L/SGT	ESSEX – 11	FRANCE
15-Sep	GIGGINS	GEORGE HAROLD	18	TIL	L/CPL	R/FUS – 32	FRANCE
16-Sep	SMITH	HAROLD	20	G	PTE	LONDON – 23	FRANCE
16-Sep	WILDEN	GEORGE HENRY	33	G	PTE	LONDON – ½	FRANCE
16-Sep	LAVER	CHARLES	U/K	ORS	PTE	SUFFOLK – 9	FRANCE
16-Sep	MOTHERSELE	ARTHUR	30	ORS	PTE	LONDON – 23	FRANCE
23-Sep	ROGERS	FREDERICK CHARLES	18	PUR	GUNNER	RFA	FRANCE
23-Sep	BRAZIER	PETER JOSEPH	24	TIL	PTE	ESSEX – 11	FRANCE
26-Sep	COOKE	HAMLET HENRY	28	SLH	L/CPL	R/FUS – 11	FRANCE
27-Sep	FARR	ARTHUR ERNEST	29	G	PTE	ESSEX – 11	FRANCE
28-Sep	ARCHER	CHARLES WALTER	34	HOH	PTE	WEST SURREY – 7	FRANCE

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

Present: Councillors Cathy Kent (Mayor), Tunde Ojetola (Deputy Mayor), Tim Aker, John Allen, Chris Baker, James Baker, Jan Baker, Clare Baldwin, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Roy Jones, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell (*arrived 7.50*), Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Deborah Stewart, Pauline Tolson, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

Apologies: Councillors Bukky Okunade and Michael Stone

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

The Mayor invited Father Paul of Milton Keynes to lead those present in prayer and a one minute's silence was held as a mark of respect to reflect the recent tragedies that had taken place around the world.

27. Minutes

Councillor Allen requested an amendment to the minutes as it was himself that presented the Petition on behalf of the residents of Lansbury Gardens and not Councillor Collins as stated in the minutes.

The Mayor accepted the requested amendment to which Members indicated their agreement.

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 29 June 2016 were approved as a correct record.

28. Items of Urgent Business

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

29. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

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

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

The Mayor announced that the itinerary of her mayoral events for this year would be emailed to all members and would be grateful for members' support.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, firstly stated that on behalf of the Administration and the Council he welcomed the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Theresa May, and congratulated her on forming a new government. Councillor Gledhill stated that he would be writing to members of her administration team to secure the best positive outcomes for Thurrock.

He also stated that work to improve the environment across Thurrock was ongoing at a pace with the Administration's commitment to "Clean It, Cut It, Fill It".

At the last Cabinet meeting it had been agreed that tougher enforcement powers to crack down on those blighting the borough with litter would be introduced and a public awareness campaign would shortly be underway to inform residents on how to change their behaviour or risk being fined.

The new Trade Ways Team was working their way through the borough offering business council trade waste as a new business opportunity.

The new Waste Data Systems were currently being installed to allow street and ground maintenance teams to log and see all service requests via the "Report It" mobile application. This would be accessible through the council contact centre, the communications team and be available on the council web site. Councillor Gledhill stated that the Administration was still committed to a weekly bin collection.

Starting next week the Thurrock section of the A13 would be cleaned up with the grass being cut and litter picked up and hoped that the Highways Agency would follow suit.

Councillor Gledhill stated that it would not be possible to pick every piece of litter up and encouraged residents to not drop litter, dispose of larger items appropriately and to report those that do.

Flooding at Grays Beach at the weekend was caused by high tides and the Council was working with Anglian Water to clean up the damage and ensure this did not happen again.

Progress had been made and further works were planned to fulfil the Administration's vision of making Thurrock a safer and cleaner place to live.

Finally, the Leader took the opportunity to thank Richard Parkin, Head of Environment, for his contributions and hard work to the Council and wished him well in his new role.

31. Questions from Members of the Public

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

32. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members that, in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, the requisite notice had been given by a member who wished to present two petitions at the meeting.

Councillor Duffin presented a petition on behalf of the residents of Limeslade Close on the lack of parking spaces for residents.

Councillor Duffin presented a petition on behalf of the residents of Southend Road, Plashet Close and Abbots Drive on the introduction of parking permits.

33. Petitions Update Report

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

34. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

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

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Council Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

- For Councillor Piccolo be appointed as member of the Planning Committee
- For Councillor Piccolo be appointed a member of the Standard and Audit Committee.
- For Councillor Ojetola be appointed a substitute member of the Standard and Audit Committee.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, informed the Council Chamber he had no changes to make.

Councillor Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Council Chamber that he wished to make the following change:

- For Councillor Liddiard be appointed a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Piccolo be appointed a member of the Planning Committee.**
- 2. That Councillor Piccolo be appointed a member of the Standard and Audit Committee.**
- 3. That Councillor Ojetola be appointed a substitute member of the Standard and Audit Committee.**
- 4. That Councillor Liddiard be appointed a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board.**

35. Review of Electoral Arrangements

Councillor Hebb introduced the report which provided members with background information to enable them to make a decision on the recommendation received from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee that Full Council consider consulting with the communities in Thurrock on the potential changes to the Council's electoral arrangements.

Councillor Hebb pointed out an error in the report on page 37, paragraph 2.8, fourth line down, third word in which it should have said country rather than borough.

Councillor Hebb stated that residents did not feel that their votes counted and made enough of a difference to their lives. He stated that members were close enough to the electorates to know that and that it was time to potentially rectify this. In the past the debate on elections and the future of elections had taken place within the four walls of the Council Chamber. It was now the intention to take the question of electoral reform to the heart of the community to give all residents the opportunity to have their say.

The report proposed that the Council changed its electoral cycle and opt for a whole council election taking place four-yearly, rather than by the current method of elections by thirds and recommended that a public consultation be undertaken before any final decision can be made.

Councillor Hebb stated that this consultation exercise was key and the need to give residents the opportunity to respond. It was proposed that the consultation be carried out using:

- Social media
- Letters
- Reference Point on the Council website
- Forums
- Consultations with elected members and local members of parliament
- Press releases

In early 2017 a hard copy format of the consultation would be sent out as a reminder to all residents with Council Tax notices.

Councillor Duffin stated that he could not see any point or benefit from the four-yearly elections and that a consultation would not work. Councillor Duffin suggested that elections should be left as they currently were.

Councillor Spillman agreed with Councillor Duffin and asked Councillor Hebb how much the consultation would cost. At present there was a real connection between the elected candidates and residents due to the yearly nature of elections and did not see any point or benefit of the consultation.

Councillor G Rice stated that from previous experience of four-yearly terms at Essex County Council members 'go to sleep' and totally disconnect with the public. The public should be able to vote year by year and hold councillors to account.

Councillor J Kent stated that he would support the consultation going ahead and give the public the opportunity to speak but had concerns that the key motivator for changing to four-yearly elections was to save money and democracy should not be done on the cheap.

Councillor Aker stated that there should be more opportunities for residents to get involved and engage more in the voting process but believed the costings of the consultations would be far greater than the projected savings and would not be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Hamilton believed that members would become disconnected with the public if the four-yearly term were to go ahead.

Councillor Watkins stated he supported the consultation process at this stage as it was up to residents to decide how members get elected.

Councillor V Holloway stated that she supported the recommendation in the report which had been received from an overview and scrutiny committee and that the engagement with residents should continue. Councillor V Holloway asked Councillor Hebb how many responders would be required to make the consultation a valid sample before this was discussed next time.

Councillor Snell stated that he had a different opinion to the rest of the members of his party on this item and that he would vote in favour for the recommendation to give residents an opportunity to speak and that a figure be agreed that could be accepted as a representative sample for responses.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that residents should be given the opportunity to have their say and would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Gerrish stated that he would be willing to back the recommendations in respect of the consultation but had concerns over the cost of the consultation. To ensure that the wording in the recommendation was neutral he felt that a valid sample, 33 per cent, could be used as a turn out figure.

Councillor B Rice stated she would not be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Kerin stated that he agreed with the consultation and debate should be undertaken when feedback was available.

Councillor Jones stated that from experience consultations do not get a good response rate and would not be supporting this recommendation.

Councillor Hebb summed up from his report and thanked those members who agreed that residents should have a say. Councillor Hebb stated that a cross party discussion would need to take place before a final decision and from an operational point of view this discussion had to be informed by feedback from the consultation. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee could look at the wording of the recommendation relating to the consultation and the costs of consultation. In addition the consultation would be digitalised and hard copies would be sent out with Council Tax notices.

The Mayor called a vote on the report recommendation:

For : 31

Against : 15

The Mayor declared the recommendation be carried.

RESOLVED

That a public consultation exercise be undertaken in accordance with the statutory requirements relating to the proposals to change the cycle of electing councillors to Thurrock Borough Council from elections by thirds to whole-Council elections, with effect from May 2018.

36. Annual Cabinet Member Report for Education and Health

Councillor Halden introduced the report and stated that he was delighted to be presenting this report tonight as the Cabinet Member for Education and

Health and that the mission and overriding priority was to tackle mediocrity to ensure that Thurrock can fulfil its potential.

Councillor Halden stated that the three key areas of tackling mediocrity in Thurrock were:

- Council Leadership – Display true commitment to leadership to improve public services.
- Expectations – Be more rigorous in challenging services and becoming residents' champions to hold poor general practitioners and Primary Care facilities to account.
- Early Years Support – A role as a corporate parent or in the role monitoring the causes of child poverty or neglect and to view poor early years support as a serious threat to the long term future of the borough.

Councillor Halden explained the reason for bringing Education and Health Directorates together as one report which was to ensure that any gaps found between education and employment outcomes with associated poor physical and mental health outcomes were bridged.

Councillor Halden updated members on the number of visits and meetings attended in his time so far as portfolio holder.

Councillor Halden stated he was grateful to be given the opportunity to undertake a job that he relished and would give it his all. Councillor Halden then thanked his party colleagues, officers in his directorates and the residents of Thurrock.

Councillor V Holloway asked what authority the scorecards would have and why general practitioners would sign up to them. Councillor Halden stated that providers would be held to account if services did not improve and peer pressure would be evident amongst providers.

Councillor Gerrish welcomed Councillor Halden to his role and shared his passion with other members that young people do well in education, be set up for life and the healthcare be the best for residents. With regard to the much reduced role in the local authorities post academies, Councillor Gerrish asked Councillor Halden if the educational budget could be radically cut or had he changed his mind now that he was in office. Councillor Halden referred members to past actions of Councillor Gerrish's portfolio holder and that he should not be lecturing him.

Councillor Jones was concerned that there were not enough provisions for senior schools and insufficient monies were being spent on obesity which was at a high level in the borough. Councillor Halden stated the reason his lobby unit was in place was to holistically look at the entire school system and to look at where schools need to plan forward. The redesign of the children's centres and bringing the health and education strands together would ensure that children get comprehensive and joined up care.

Councillor Watkins asked Councillor Halden for a performance update on the schools in his ward. Councillor Halden stated the results at the moment were provisional. Corringham Primary and Gable Hall had been outstanding and showed a good example where multi academy trusts work.

Councillor Fish asked Councillor Halden what other strategies were in place should the plans to enforce disability health checks by general practitioners failed. Councillor Halden stated that general practitioners would be held to account for undertaking these checks and that the scorecard could be used to improve the service.

Councillor Spillman stated that Aveley had a lack of general practitioners, as well as issues in recruiting and retaining general practitioners and that over the last 12 months this area had lost four general practitioners. He asked Councillor Halden how long before key worker housing would be available to encourage general practitioners to the area. Councillor Halden stated he thanked Steve Munday, the head teacher at William Edwards School, who had shown him the key worker housing used on their site and how this had impacted on teacher retention. The final ideas were not known but would be shared with overview and scrutiny when known and members would have the opportunity to feed into it.

Councillor Kerin asked Councillor Halden to guarantee that the many multi academy trusts in the borough would provide school places in the areas they were needed and not where there was already a surplus. Councillor Halden stated that looking at data projections there would not be many areas with surplus places. A vital part of the portfolio holder's role was the building of relationships between council, schools and providers.

Councillor J Kent stated that as the Council were currently in dialogue for free schools in the borough this could put pressure on some schools or even result in the closure of schools. He asked Councillor Halden how he would ensure that this did not happen. Councillor Halden confirmed that parents should be given the choice to decide which school they send their children to. He had the support of officers and the advice given to ensure that support was targeted.

Councillor Collins asked Councillor Halden for an update on Basildon Hospital. Councillor Halden stated that the hospital had much improved since 2010 which had been down to the leadership of governors. There was still a very substantial operational deficit which was being tackled. The Sustainability and Transformation Plan and the Success Regime were important to ensure a system wide transformation would be delivered.

Councillor Snell expressed concern that the Success Regime and the Sustainability and Transformation Plan would result in changes to the health care in the borough and could the portfolio holder ensure that communication was right and that residents were made aware of what was happening. Councillor Halden stated that as part of the Engagement Panel he had already written to express his displeasure on how some of the consultations

had been carried out and the requirement to consult with Thurrock was vital for these projects to work.

37. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that two questions to the Leader of the Council had been received and 7 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee were received.

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

38. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Members representing the Council on outside bodies.

39. Minutes of Committees

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

Members were informed that the General Services Minutes for the 17 May 2016 should have been included in the agenda item. Copies of these minutes were tabled.

40. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

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

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

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

Thurrock Council calls upon the government to introduce legislation to provide for a right of "Real Recall" of underperforming local government councillors on grounds similar to those put before parliament when MPs debated "Real Recall" in 2014.

Councillor Duffin introduced the Motion, and in doing so, explained that if legislation was passed Thurrock Council could then work to implement "Real Recall".

Councillor Duffin explained that if a councillor was underperforming the Council would be able to deal with the matter instantly and not have to wait for their four year term to finish. The recall mechanism would potentially see 20

per cent of registered voters campaigning to get a councillor removed for the following situations:

- Misconduct
- Failure to Represent
- Crossing the Floor
- Breaking Electoral Promises

This motion was to put the power back in the hands of the voters.

A proposed amendment to the Motion had been submitted by Councillor Hebb and seconded by Councillor Gledhill. The amended Motion read as follows:

Thurrock Council calls upon the government to introduce legislation to provide for a right of "Recall" of local government councillors, alongside Thurrock Council also exploring the possibilities to introduce its own local recall scheme.

Councillor Hebb introduced his amendment and stated that it was an important matter to consider and that it was announced at Council last year as an Administration policy to ensure that councillors who do not behave were held to account.

The amendment was made to ensure that the work already undertaken by the Council had not been overlooked.

Councillor J Kent stated that he would be supporting the amendment and stated that the principal behind Recall was right. He stated that over the past 20 years the vast majority of elected members of all parties had stood for election to do the best they could to improve the area they lived in. Councillor J Kent stated that if recall was brought in it would be used very rarely. He stated that the current six month rule can be waived when health matters were involved and that the current regime could be tightened up. The council could also publish the casework undertaken by councillors to show their activity in office. Councillor J Kent went on further to say that some transparency was needed to give residents the tools to hold councillors to account which they currently do not have.

Councillor Aker stated that he supported Councillor Duffin's motion and told members that if the Real Recall were to pass he believed that it would never get used. Having agreed with Councillor J Kent's comment that people get involved with politics for the right reasons Councillor Aker felt that the passing of this motion would demonstrate that councillors were already happy to hold members to account.

At 9.15pm, the Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2.5 hour time limit until completion of business. Members indicated their disagreement to the proposal and that the meeting should finish at 9.30pm.

Councillor Gledhill also agreed with Councillor Kent's comments and stated that some clarity would be required on what was being done by a councillor and how often this was done. Councillor Gledhill stated that he was in favour of Recall and that it would be used very rarely and would need to be thought through properly which could then be used as a good example for other councils to use. Councillor Gledhill was in favour of the amendment and looked forward to discussing it at the Constitution Working Group and to ensure that residents had an input.

Councillor Hebb stated that all parties were in agreement in a higher accountability of councillors and although there would be a long way to go he stated Thurrock Council should make a start and put Thurrock on the map for open democracy.

Councillor Duffin summed up by confirming that it was 20 per cent of registered voters in the initial motion and not 5 per cent as Councillor Hebb quoted. Councillor Duffin stated that if the Amendment was passed, he would vote against the Bill as this did not allow voters to recall anyone. The amendment did nothing to resolve the issue and urged members to vote in favour of the original motion.

Councillor Duffin requested a requisition vote be undertaken.

The Mayor called a vote on Councillor Hebb's amendment.

Upon being put to the vote, 28 Members voted in favour of the Amendment with 16 Members voted against, whereupon the Mayor declared the Amendment carried.

Councillor Duffin stated that his request for a requisition vote be withdrawn.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion as amended.

Following a clear majority in favour, the Mayor declared the Amended Motion carried.

The meeting finished at 9.30pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 27 July 2016

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

One question was submitted from members of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Coxshall

In 2014 I raised the issue of the £600,000 gifted to the Council by the Heritage Lottery Fund to spend on improvements to the Mardyke Valley. Can you tell me what improvements have been made since 2014 and if any improvements are currently ongoing?

Councillor Coxshall

Well, I never thought I'd be answering questions from Mr Perrin! In 2005 the Heritage Lottery Fund awarded £611,000, like you asked in the last question in 2014, this was for a three year Mardyke Valley project on behalf of, led by, Thames Chase and including Thurrock Council. Although the project finished in 2008, it included provision for the ten-year management plan produced to make work to deliver the project rather than make further improvements at the Mardyke Valley.

Mayor

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

Mr Perrin

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I do not know if you or any other Councillors have recently walked the Mardyke Valley, either from the Davey Down entrance or the Ship Lane entrance. I have attempted to do so twice in the last seven days, yesterday 26 July being the most recent. I had to walk a gauntlet of brambles, nettles, and in some areas ankle-deep pools of stinking, stagnant water on what was supposed to be designated walkways. I also climbed the steep stepped walkway, which had a handrail rendered useless owing to the overgrown vegetation. The entrance to this step way is located off Cullen Grove, near number 52. In short, far from being a pleasant walk, it was a hazardous journey, fraught with danger. Should you consider my comments to be an exaggeration, I ask you, and any other Councillor, join me in a walk along the Mardyke Valley so that you and they can judge if the £600,000 has been well spent and provided the people of Thurrock with an asset that is value for money.

Councillor Coxshall

As we've said, Mr Perrin, the £600,000 was spent in a three-year period. I think Councillor Kent answered this question to you as well in 2014 actual capital works a ten-year management plan was put in place and reviewed in

2014. In 2014 it showed that this Council had spent £200,000 extra maintaining that in 2014. There have been no figures in the past five years because it hasn't finished in 2018. This Council at the moment is reviewing the alternative management options at this very moment for the Mardyke, in place for what happens after 2018. I take your point that there are issues around the walkways, the public walkways, but I think every Councillor in here has had said issues, I know personally, my public footpaths have been impossible to walk around in certain places in Corringham, are very, very bad. As you know, we have "Clean it, Cut it, Fill it" and the problem is, what we have got to do is actually deliver a reasonable, clean, cut area. Two of those priorities I mentioned there, so I will certainly take that back, understand that we have got to do more there and actually look into why the management is failing, let's be honest. We're nearly at the end of the management plan for up to 2018, we then will look and see issues of how we can, who can carry on looking after that, from 2018 onwards, and whether that needs to come back to the Council or be into a private outsourced vehicle.

Mr Perrin

Thank you, Madam Mayor

Item 12 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 8 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

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

1. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Gledhill

Is your Administration still proposing to only debate decisions and reports at Cabinet that have passed through pre-scrutiny at the overview and scrutiny committees first?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor, and thank you Councillor Duffin for your question. No, to be clear I said that all major decisions would go through the pre-scrutiny process before coming to Cabinet. The Cabinet has a specific role to make decisions, not just debate them. There are some decisions that would not go through scrutiny, such as the recent insurance report that came to Cabinet last week, certain procurement projects or indeed decisions that are

deemed “urgent”, for example if a road has collapsed and we need to spend vast sums of money from the capital fund to ensure that it is reopened. However I do feel that the scrutiny process is extremely important, I do feel that we have not used it properly in the past and we should start using it with pre-scrutiny as we go through for all those major decisions. It’s not going to be as easy as I’d hoped, it’s going to take some time to make sure that all these decisions can go through the process, because of course the previous administration didn’t believe in this process so of course there will be some decisions that come in quick and not allow us to have enough time to go through the pre-scrutiny. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Duffin, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Duffin

Are you not worried that big decisions could take up to three months to then be made, because that’s effectively what we’re going to see with the move to a more committee system? If the big decisions need to be made, are we not going to force them through quickly?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Duffin. As said, there is obviously going to be some leading time into this. I would much prefer that there be more Overview and Scrutiny Committees held, to be brutally honest, and that would allow not only the Cabinet to be held to account more regularly, it would also enable Members to have a much bigger and longer oversight at some of the many complex things that we have to deal with as a Council and give residents confidence that we will hold ourselves to account and that we will answer questions that need to be answered.

Mayor

Councillor Duffin, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor Duffin

I support your move to more of a committee system. I would just wonder though, that when you’re moving more decisions away from Cabinet and down to the Committee system, do you not agree that paying yourself and your Conservative colleagues £120,000 a year of tax payers’ money to make less decisions surely is a saving we should be looking to make?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Duffin. Again, as I said, we make the decisions; Overview and Scrutiny make recommendations, which is completely different. So we will still be held accountable, after it’s

gone to scrutiny or if it doesn't go to scrutiny on what we say; we of course could, as the last administration did, quite regularly just ignore the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny. I don't think that's right, we should take that on board and that should be part of the built in process, it's the same as the built in process with any other Local Authority. So, no, it's not the kind of savings we should be looking at because if we went to a Committee system there would still be a Chair of the Committee earning the same kind of allowances so it would all be shifting from one area to another, so no, but thank you.

2. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill

Mayor

Councillor Jones, could you please read out your question as on the Agenda.

Councillor Jones

Thank you, Madam Mayor. The Conservative Administration's new agenda programme for Thurrock - Clean It, Cut It, Fill It. Has this been costed?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Jones. You will no doubt be, I should hope you're not surprised actually, to hear that the answer is yes, it has been costed. As with everything the Council does there is a cost and that will have to be factored into the level of service the Council supply to meet any requirements for this project, or indeed any of its projects.

Mayor

Councillor Jones, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Jones

I do Madam Mayor, thank you very much. The reason I ask this question, quite simply is because it was stated by yourself, you just stated it just now, major decisions at scrutiny, that all ideas, agenda programmes, before being advertised or implemented were to go through the process of the Scrutiny Committee so all could be involved in the decision making process before it came to Cabinet, and then on to Full Council. This agenda seemed to have escaped the net. Question two; could you inform the Chamber when these costings were carried out for this process?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Jones. Obviously it is still the decision of the Cabinet to decide what becomes a priority. You must remember, of course, that over the past two years you, and your party, have backed up the cuts that have been proposed by the former administration,

and in this particular area came to somewhere in the region of £1.8 million and I think somewhere in the region of sixty staff being cut. So yes, we could have waited another three or four months to start making the borough look better, or we could have just grasped the nettle, if you'll excuse the pun there, and got on with the job, which we have. In response to 'when was this done?' this has been done over a period of time with officers coming forward with various sums for various different levels of service and I for one and indeed my Cabinet Member, Councillor Tolson, do not think we should go back to a period in time, for instance 2014 or 2012, with a certain amount of staff and certain amount of equipment, we should be looking forward to what we can do this year, what we can do next year and what we can do for all future years.

Mayor

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

Councillor Jones

I do, Madam Mayor. Thank you, Leader. You make it sound like I don't want a good borough, I do and I don't remember being part of that cut that you were on about and stuff like that. Now, we all know about the "fill it" part of this agenda programme, because the Council basically made us all aware that they are trialling a new system for filling in the potholes, which actually should have the effect of making the limited funds available go further. I've seen this in action and I must admit I'm quite impressed, and recently with the weather, both being extremes water and heat, it seems to be holding out quite well. Added to the fact that the Department for Transport also has allocated an additional £110,000 this year to Thurrock Council for pothole repairs, so for the "fill it" part of this agenda programme we all know where some of the money is coming from, where is the extra money coming from for the "clean it, cut it" part of the programme? Thank you.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Jones. This will come from existing budgets; it will not come from reserves. It will come from savings that we can make in-year, for instance we have a member of staff who is leaving us voluntarily and we will not be replacing that member of staff immediately. That saving for instance, the in-year saving in there will go towards the "clean it" aspect of it and there will be very similar viaments within the system to make sure that happens.

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

1. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Tolson

Please could the Council publish on its website the monthly grass cutting calendar as many residents have concerns over the Council's promises to cut

their grass and this way residents and Councillors can make sure that they are getting the promised services that they pay their Council Tax for?

Mayor

Councillor Tolson, could you please answer the question.

Councillor Tolson

Evening, Madam Mayor. Thank you for your question. Yes, we will be doing that because it's something I raised at my first meeting in June. We aim to be having it on within the next few weeks; maybe a month and we will be publishing parks and major routes cutting.

Mayor

Councillor Duffin, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Duffin

If it's just parks and major routes, what about all the other green spaces because myself and Councillor Jones had to go to the ends of the Earth to get a piece of grass that was apparently the fault of Newham, then another part that was the fault of DP World. Are we going to get actual solid detail on everything or are we just going to get the three biggest areas and everywhere else ignored?

Councillor Tolson

Yes, thank you very much. Well, as Councillor Gledhill alluded to earlier Madam Mayor, you will remember this because you chaired the July 2014 O&S Committee meeting where a saving, or cut, was brought forward of 46% of staff in street and parks, that equated to 59 posts being deleted. So if you've said 28 in parks and 28 in streets, the service has been under pressure. Now, when you're saying about 'Newham' are you talking about housing land? Once we've got consistency, and I will actually pay tribute to the small and dedicated team that we've had actually, who have worked extremely hard, and they have never known it like this because they've never had 59 posts deleted before, a 46% cut that UKIP colleagues of yours voted for in the February 2015 budget, so that is your UKIP and Labour legacy.

Mayor

Councillor Duffin, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor Duffin

Just a point of information that it's your party butchering Local Government but we won't go down that route or present the graph of doom. I'll go back to the second question I actually asked and you didn't bother answering; will you

give us information on every piece of Council grass, when it's being cut, or are you just going to give us the three big parks, because you didn't answer that question so I'll ask it again.

Councillor Tolson

No.

Mayor

Councillor Smith, could you please read your question out, as it appears on the Agenda.

2. From Councillor Smith to Councillor Gledhill

How many repeat visits (more than 3) for minor/intermediate and major repairs have TBC repairs contractors made in municipal year 2015-2016?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill, could you please answer the question.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Smith for another insightful question. Between April 2015 and March 2016, Mears reported that 2053 jobs had more than three appointments. On the average of around 30,000 repairs a year this is 6.84%. These repeat appointments were for visits and take into consideration the additional work that may be identified as part of it, for example the installation of a bath may then need new plastering, or indeed some tiling or some painting done which will then give you a repeat visit. At this time I have not been able to identify where residents have had repeat visits because the wrong traders turned up or the tradesman has turned up without the parts to complete the job, or where the wrong job has been booked. I will be asking officers to see if this can be drilled down to that level. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Smith, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Smith

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I'm bewildered at the number of times I hear that TBC contractors have had to revisit a resident's home to affect a repair, in fact it's ongoing, it's not a daily occurrence but it's certainly every week. Just last week a resident reported a leaking radiator and Councillor Gledhill will join me in not being impressed that five visits later the final contractor diagnosed a faulty pump, and I will certainly forward that to you if you wish. During this

time the family with young children under ten were without hot water for nearly a week. Is this reasonable service?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you, Councillor Smith. On this individual case, no. Unfortunately I'd like to say that this was an individual case but I hear this all too regularly myself, where people are left without essential services within their house because either the wrong contractors turn up, or they're unable to fix it at that time, or for whatever reason. We've got to remember, of course, 2053 jobs where there are more than three appointments that really should be a daily occurrence, it's terrible to say but that's somewhere in the region of ten a day and it's not acceptable, absolutely not acceptable at all. If you'd like to pass me that particular case on, I will indeed look into it. I'll also be looking into the way that there should be an acceptable standard of services that a resident can expect, irrespective of what repairs need to take place, you're quite right, no family should be left without hot water, for however long, we should at least be able to fix that or at least give them some form of alternative than their boiler.

Mayor

Councillor Smith, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor Smith

Could we expect Thurrock Council's housing repair supplier to improve on this level of service, which Councillor Gledhill just touched upon, thus bringing to an end the merry-go-round of visits by contractors, and moreover would the Portfolio Holder seek to reinforce only tradespeople with the correct qualification and skill are deployed, and penalise the contractor when failing to affect a repair promptly?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor Smith. I'm beginning to think you've had my office bugged at times because these are exactly the problems that I wish to make sure are tackled. It is no point sending a carpenter out to do the job of a plumber. It is no point, as my own mother found out, to send a plumber to deal with an electricity problem. About a week ago I met with the Tenant Excellence Panel who informed me that the information that they have is that this part of the service is improving and that it is not as many. I have asked officers to try to back that up, to make sure that the figures they are getting from Mears correlates with the figures we're getting from Mears, and yes, it's just not acceptable if we have the wrong person turning up. I will be asking for a lot more information, and not just asking for that information but acting on it. I will also be sharing that obviously with Councillor Spillman who is the Shadow Member for Housing; indeed I've asked him to be included in the Tenants Excellence Panel meetings so he can hear, direct from those tenants that are dealing as part of the Excellence Panel with Mears and the

repairs to see their views of what they see. Unfortunately, of course, we get a bit of a jaded view because we only get the ones that fail; they get the ones obviously that work first time. Thank you.

3. **From Councillor B Rice to Councillor Gledhill**

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. Councillor Gledhill, how many Thurrock households are currently classified as homeless?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor, and thank you Councillor Rice for your question. The number of households defined by Statute for homelessness changes on a daily basis and we actively manage the service and try to help those in need. To answer the question I therefore asked for a snapshot of the last day of June to provide figures, it should be noted that we only have figures for those who approach the Local Authority for assistance not those that approach other agencies. At the end of June we had 162 households that were going through the process of being assessed on whether they meet the statutory duty of homelessness or not. A further 82 households had been through the investigation stage, of which 81 had had their homelessness duty accepted and they were waiting for accommodation either private or social sector housing. 31 had been assessed as having no duty from the Local Authority and would be provided with advice and assistance. On that date, Thurrock Council had 85 households in temporary accommodation that were classed as homeless.

Mayor

Councillor B Rice, do you have a supplementary.

Councillor B Rice

Madam Mayor. Thank you Councillor Gledhill for those figures, and I wondered if you have had a chance to read, and I'm sure you have, the Thurrock Tenancy Policy, in particular the bit around succession. Now I'm really quite perturbed about this part of our policy and I just want to say a few things about it. It's a very complex policy because of the Localism Act in 2012 as you no doubt know. Residents who have been both informal and formal carers, or indeed are children of tenants are treated differently because of the 2012 Localism Act. Some are automatically given the right to succession, and some it's a discretionary look at with a panel, so all I'm asking you Councillor Gledhill, with no tricks or anything like that, I just want you to give your assurance that we can go and have a look at this policy again so that we can give some continuity to our residents, and that people will be treated equally across the board so we as councillors will be able to say 'this is the fact' and not 'well if you moved in before this date, or if you moved in after that'. I'm asking for that policy to be looked at, please. Thank you.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Rice. I probably should ask if there's a doctor or medic in the house, because some people might be shocked at my next answer, so shocked that they may actually need that help. I actually agree with Councillor Val Morris-Cook, who was Portfolio Holder for a number of years on this very subject. The Policy is not a stone tablet; it is not something that we etch out, whack on a shelf and leave until we decide to have a look at it again. It needs to be a living, breathing programme. I am more than happy for this, amongst other things on tenancy agreements that we have, to be looked at potentially to be changed, obviously in line with the Law and legislation. There is a number of new legislative changes coming through, as you know, that would have gone to Overview and Scrutiny I believe it was on the 21st, but I am more than happy for all of this to be reviewed. It is no point, as I say, having a slab of stone sitting on a shelf somewhere, it's not the way we should work as a Local Authority. Needs change monthly, needs change yearly, so we do need to make sure that we're moving with the herd on this.

Mayor

Councillor B Rice, do you have a second supplementary question.

Councillor B Rice

No, I just want to say Thank you to Councillor Gledhill, thanks.

Mayor

Okay, thank you. Councillor J Kent could you please read your question out, as set on the Agenda.

4. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Tolson

There is a severe problem of dumping in back alleyways in the Grays Thurrock ward. This is of course not a new problem and not a problem confined to Grays Thurrock.

Does the portfolio holder have any plans for helping residents deal with this scourge?

Mayor

Councillor Tolson, could you respond.

Councillor Tolson

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Kent, for your question. Just as there was an upward trend with fly-tipping in the borough our enforcement officers, there was six in the Public Protection team and six

enforcement officers, were cut to two in the February '15 budget, supported by UKIP. So, we went from twelve to two at a time when the trend for flytipping was going up. Yes you know that we've brought an enforcement document forward, you know that we also have waste enforcement contracts now coming into force in the borough, there was a resource before but it was removed now it's being put back again. So, you are aware that we are concentrating on this matter at the moment.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Yes, Madam Mayor. I'm sure that residents will be glad that come September there will be a paper that goes to Cabinet that looks at enforcement. Until then though, what practical steps can the Portfolio Holder outline to help residents to deal with and clear some of the rubbish?

Councillor Tolson

Thank you. So, we are going to have a clean-up of the borough, Madam Mayor, and we are going to be using CCTV because some residents that don't act in this deplorable way find it very antisocial and very irritating that other neighbours do act in that manner. So what we want to do is, we've already mapped where fly tips happen, predominantly it is Grays but it does happen across the borough too, so ideally what we want is witnesses and enforcement action if we get the evidence, but that is what we are proposing shortly. A campaign to stop it.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Yes. Again, an answer that's about enforcement and not dealing with the problem on the ground. I've yet to see a CCTV camera that can actually lift up a mattress and put it in a skip, perhaps that would be helpful Madam Mayor. In the William Street area of Grays residents have totally cleared the back alleyway between William Street and Arthur Street, but they're left with a good deal of vegetation. In an alleyway in John Street there are piled up a chest freezer, cans, bottles, mattresses. Residents are quite prepared to help clear the refuse but they need a skip. Will the Portfolio Holder undertake to meet residents half way and perhaps clear the weeds with weed killer in the one back alleyway, and provide a skip so that residents can clear the other?

Councillor Tolson

Well, as I said, we will be doing a pre-clean of the borough, and Councillor Kent has alluded to CCTV but he never asked for any in that area, and neither has any Councillor that represents that Ward.

Mayor

Councillor Barbara Rice, could you please read your question out as it appears on the Agenda?

5. From Councillor B Rice to Councillor Tolson

Thank you very much, Madam Mayor. Right, okay. Following reports of the council failing to cut grass at Blackshots leading to residents having to do the job themselves can the portfolio holder explain what steps she is taking to ensure this doesn't happen again?

Councillor Tolson

Yes. Reports on this, Madam Mayor, are sketchy and, as with anything, if you want it cut in the borough, as I've told you, we've had less staff, assets sold, I told you that last month when I don't believe some Councillors were present. Something put in for repair, the spearhead, which is the first cut of the season, that didn't even get its MOT or service until June; it's supposed to be out cutting in the borough in March. So, you report it, that's the first thing and there isn't any interviews or reports coming through for Blackshots, but what we have done, because we was in such a shambolic situation, is we hired in a tractor, a trimax rotary and a flowell, prior to this Blackshots event because we needed equipment to get on with the job, and now we've just got another tractor on hire, a further tractor.

Mayor

Councillor B Rice, do you wish to raise a supplementary question.

Councillor B Rice

Well, thank you for letting us know just how many staff the previous administration disposed of. The issue, Madam Mayor, that I'm referring to tonight, and Councillor Tolson, is the football pitches – I'm going to pass these around – these are football pitches at Orsett Heath, football pitches, Madam Mayor that was raised and dug out and built from the proceeds of 106 monies, from the development over at Woodview. Okay? At the beginning of May they were in pristine condition and conformed to the football pitch maintenance schedule, okay? Which clearly states that we cannot have more than 60mm on any football pitch. Madam Mayor, I'm going to pass these around 'cause it's an absolute disgrace and I'm absolutely disgusted and I want to know how this is going to be rectified, 'cause it won't be rectified by a cut, Madam Mayor, it's gone back to heathland. Okay? Because of neglect we

now have 4ft high thistles, all across the heath, okay? Not lovely pristine green grass, so it's not down to getting rid of staff, this is a problem that we need to have solved and we need to have solved now. We have continually in Chadwell-St-Mary reported week on week. The question is, when is it going to be resolved? That's the question, and how was it allowed, Madam Mayor, to get to almost 4ft high, and also – No! This is since May Councillor Halden! - Madam Mayor, this has been since May okay? That's when it's grown since. It's an absolute disgrace, complete waste of 106 monies and I want to know how we're going to rectify the situation.

Mayor

Councillor Tolson.

Councillor Tolson

Okay, thank you Madam Mayor. Well, I really can't understand why Councillor Barbara Rice is getting so animated given that the minutes of the CGS Committee in July '14 are a historical document and all the Committee Members on that expressed concern at the nearly 50% cut of staff. You wasn't here last month, I've told you that you've got rid of 59 posts in frontline street services and parks so if you've said 28, you've then later sold assets that we could've used for a window of time. The previous Portfolio didn't check on the spearhead and it went in for MOT in November and didn't come out until June '16! This really is something of your own sewing, isn't it? You reap what you sew and you haven't done very well at all, it's appalling your shambolic record. So, report it and we'll get it cut!

Mayor

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

Councillor B Rice

Okay, I did not receive an answer. I have stated and told you that this was in pristine condition in May. I am animated, absolutely, and so will the residents of Thurrock be when they see what a waste of money we've had in this Authority in the last two months, and where are our kids going to play football come September?

Point of order

The question: how is this going to be rectified for the children of Thurrock to be playing football in September? That's the question.

Councillor Tolson

Yes. Report it and it will be cut.

Mayor

Councillor Kent, would you like to read your question as on the Agenda, please.

6. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Hebb

What is the current Thurrock Council savings target for the financial year 2017/2018?

Mayor

Councillor Hebb, please answer.

Councillor Hebb

Thank you, Councillor Kent, for your question. The medium term financial strategy showed a projected budget gap of £7.4million in February of this year and the MTFS is currently being reviewed and will be presented at Cabinet in September of this year. The Conservative Administration's commitment to "Cut it, Clean it, Fill it" and the pilot which has been planned will be used to determine any additional funding which is necessary to be directed towards the priority. So, to call it out, I have requested that a range of targets between the £7.4million previously reported and up to £11-12million, to give all Members real choice in the future, are brought forward to all members to consider in the future. This is following feedback from yourself, last year, and following some feedback from yourself, Councillor Kent I have also requested that the previously adopted Panel Review budget process be evolved into a new, strategic process, a process where priorities are set, budgets are allocated to those services, contra to the previous top-down cuts we've lived with for the last six years. A process which will have cross-party involvement, it will have staff involvement, and I'm really passionate about that one, and Cabinet leadership at heart. The new budget setting process will be called the Council Spending Review, and it is this process which will define the new Thurrock offer for the future. In essence, we are looking to save more so we can spend more on the environment of Thurrock. To do that, looking at £18.5million over two years may simply not do, as all we will be doing is currently maintaining the existing standards which, let's be frank, are absolutely not good enough. Our residents deserve a better Thurrock, a Thurrock that will now be forged, from now on, through the Council Spending Review, taking a hard look at how we spend, what we spend and the decisions on where we put the money and making decisions with the wishes and needs of alarm clock Thurrock first and foremost in our minds.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent, do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Madam Mayor, setting a balanced budget is an arduous and long task, I know, I've been responsible for it for the last six years. I'm therefore concerned that we've had no report presented to Cabinet or to Council on planning for a balanced budget for 2017-2018. As we have no cabinet meeting until September, the first public sight of these plans on delivering a balanced budget for 2017-18 will be practically half way through this financial year. Is the Portfolio Holder really satisfied that that is appropriate?

Mayor

Councillor Hebb

Councillor Hebb

Absolutely, and I thank you for the question. The truth be told is, you're going to be engaged throughout the whole process, Councillor Kent, as will all political groups. We'd had an undertaking and you and I had a conversation about the previous year's system not being the best system, we've agreed that all parties will be involved in the process. So you have an undertaking from me, and while we're talking about a legacy of Councillor John Kent, let's just remind everybody about the reserves that we've had to look at since coming into office. For six years we've been told by the Labour Administration that the reserves have been built up and saved for a rainy day, when I asked when a thorough review was last completed the answer was 2010-11; six years ago! Six years ago we sat down, wrote on a bit of paper how much we've got to spend and what our commitments were if something bad went wrong and we haven't reviewed it ever since. Six years! David Cameron had just become Prime Minister, we were still in a recession caused by inadequate banking control and public spending, we had the London riots, we had the Diamond Jubilee, we had the Olympics, Cyprus has been bailed out, you know nearly every country in Greece has been bailed out, just recently we voted to leave the EU and not once have we done a thorough review of the reserves. This is absolutely unacceptable, so I can announce that I have instigated a thorough review of the general fund balance and again to call it out, should the professional comprehensive guidance come out and emerge that we need to bolster the reserves so to support Thurrock for a rainy day, then we will fix the roof while it's shining and we will plan to ensure that those reserves are maintained at the level that is as recommended by professionals, something his administration forgot to do for over half a decade.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent, do you wish to ask a second supplementary.

Councillor J Kent

Yes, does Councillor Hebb recall every year, when we come to set the budget, reading the Section 151 officers' Section 25 statement that includes a

review of the level of reserves? Does he not recall voting on that every year? Does he further not recall that when the Labour group took the administration in 2010, the level of reserves that we inherited was £1.8million and that it took us years to build up reserves to an appropriate level of £8million? And does he understand that people will be concerned that the noises that the Administration is making is to go back into this kind of slash and burn, spend the reserves and let somebody else come in to clear up the mess?

Mayor

Councillor Hebb.

Councillor Hebb

Let me look you squarely in the eye and call you out. This Administration, despite all the rhetoric and rubbish on social media, is not going to use reserves to fund cuts. The reserves are our bank account for a rainy day. I am not going to put the future of all of your children, my children and my grandchildren at risk to use reserves to cut back, to mitigate the damage caused by cuts. We will find those cuts by being innovative and with respect, with working together and not against each other.

Mayor

Councillor Redsell, could you please read your question out as it appears on the Agenda.

7. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Gledhill

As I am still getting a regular complaints about damp and mould can the portfolio holder say whether he is happy with the current service being provided to tenants in respect of treating and resolving these issues in Council properties please?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Redsell. For a long time I've said I'm not satisfied with the service that we're providing to tenants regarding damp and mould. It is a difficult issue to solve, not one that is simply just replacing a tap or fixing in a new socket. Last year the sample of those residents who had works to tackle the problem only 44% said they were satisfied with the service and only 1/3 of them said that the problem was eventually fully resolved. I'm sorry, but anyone who would be satisfied with that level of satisfaction or that level of success would seriously be letting our residents down, so no, I am not happy with it.

Mayor

Councillor Redsell, do you wish to ask a supplementary question.

Councillor Redsell

Thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor Gledhill. That's actually shocking. I was told that the Council spent nearly £200,000 on all types of repairs last year; in that case could you tell me what is being done to stop the problem and improve satisfaction?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Redsell. I think the figure you were talking about was actually £240,000 on somewhere in the region of 950 separate jobs, or separate properties that were visited, of which 123/125 had more than one visit. So what we're talking about is 1 in 10 properties getting at least one visit in relation to mould which is not good. But to your substantive question; damp and mould are sometimes misunderstood problems. I've asked officers to look at different solutions to damp and mould and we've broken these down into two areas. Firstly, the fabric of the building – that includes the way it was constructed and the way it's been looked after. Our housing stock has for many years been underinvested and this is beginning to show clearly, and this is not a slight at any particular administration this goes back for some significant time. Secondly is the tenants' lifestyle issues and the way they actually live within the property. What we're doing now is we are currently changing the process in regards to damp and mould. Previously if a tenant reported damp and mould what would happen is someone would go out, clear it up with antifungal paint and wash. That sometimes would rectify the issue, if not they'd come and get a repeat visit and it would be some time before someone qualified would come along to see what the cause is. That will now change. We will now be putting the horse in front of the cart and the qualified damp building surveyor will go first, he will identify whether it's the fabric of the property, if it's damage to the property or whether it is the lifestyle or the way that tenants are using it. If it is found that there is a problem with the tenant our resident liaison officers will be liaising with them to explain how to do things better, how to make sure that condensation and damp isn't kept within the property, obviously to help inhibit the mould. So we're hoping actually by changing the process completely will stop the repeat visits, will identify the problems and where it is a fabric issue we'll deal with that rather than just blame it on the tenants. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Redsell, do you wish to pose a second supplementary.

Councillor Redsell

Thank you, Madam Mayor. I think Councillor Redsell has answered my next supplementary question, but a lot of my residents have actually been told it is their lifestyle that is causing the problem and the advice of officers is that they really could, and the underlying problem with the property that they're in is ignored. What are we doing about these special cases? Thank you.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Redsell. I know, from someone who lived in a private rented accommodation that was regularly high-humidity and mould problems, I was really annoyed and indeed shocked when my landlord was telling me it was all my fault, I needed to open windows, I needed to not dry washing indoors, something which I actually did open windows and didn't dry washing indoors. What was interesting was when I managed to record the humidity in the property when I was on holiday for two weeks and it was clear there was a fabric issue with the property, not with the tenant, i.e. me. This is going to happen with our tenants as well, and where there are extenuating circumstances where tenants do feel it's not what they're doing is the problem, and sometimes tenants have got no alternative but to dry washing indoors if they live in flats or live in areas where washing just can't be hung up, then we will have to look to see if there is an alternative to help that resident live a decent, normal lifestyle and be able to carry on living at the property but be able to carry out those day to day things, like cooking, like cleaning, like indeed washing and drying stuff inside. That will be dealt with on an individual basis, not as a block for each individual area. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are 3 questions from the members of the public.

1. From Mr Jackson to Councillor Tolson

With an increasing number of Heavy Good Vehicles using Thurrock's road network and a linked decreasing air quality (in recent years illustrated by increasing Air Quality Monitoring in the Borough). Will the Council introduce a Low Emissions Zone for Thurrock, following the lead of many neighbouring London Boroughs?

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Tolson

Anti-social behaviour is invariably a traumatic experience for the persons being transgressed against, particularly when it appears to be taking an inordinately long time to resolve. Could you tell me how long, on average, a case of anti-social behaviour takes to conclude?

3. From Mr Westall to Councillor Gledhill

With reference to unauthorised Traveller encampments in Thurrock, what action has been taken or being proposed by Thurrock Council having regard to the guidance document first published in August 2013 jointly by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office and the Ministry for Justice and re-issued on the 25th March 2015 which sets out the many powers available to local authorities and others when dealing with illegal and unauthorised encampments?

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Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 28 September 2016

Petition No.	Description	Presented by (and date)	Portfolio Holder	Status Full copies of the responses may be obtained from Democratic Services
477	Highways England proposals for a New Crossing in Thurrock	23/03/2016	Cllr Gerrish	Following a unanimous vote opposing the Crossing at Council on the 23rd of March, Thurrock Council submitted a formal response to Highways England's Route option Consultation comprising of a letter signed by all three Group Leaders, an Evidence Gathering Report developed by Planning, Transportation, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee summarising the various representations made to the Council in relation to the consultation; and a report by the Council's technical advisors, Peter Brett Associates, who provided a critique the detail of Highways England's proposals.
478	Petition on behalf of residents of Lansbury Gardens, Tilbury on the increased concerned for the safety of the complex	29/06/2016	Cllr Gledhill	Officers are currently assessing the request for installing gates as well as other means to improve the security and safety of residents at this complex. Other sheltered blocks have made similar request and so all of these will need to be looked at in terms of priority and available resources
479	Resolve the problems it has with the owners of "Nisa" and "Ockendon Pound Store" and allow them to continue trading thereby providing a much needed and highly value facility for the residents of South Ockendon	29/06/2016	Cllr Tolson	There has been communication between a number of people (within and external to the Council) regarding matters relating to the occupation of 11, 13 and 15 Derwent Parade for a number of years. Matthew Essex, Legal

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

Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 28 September 2016

			<p>and Corporate Property have provided a number of replies to enquiries regarding the action being taken under the leases.</p> <p>The Council is very much aware of the value placed on the service provided through the NISA store by local people within the South Ockendon area and remains in direct discussion with the tenant and their nominated representatives with a view to reaching an amicable agreement.</p> <p>The Council and other agencies have registered a range of concerns with the tenant in respect of changes that they have made to the property and these lie at the heart of the action being taken. The Council is coordinating its action with those other agencies and is working with the tenant to support their efforts to remedy the issues identified and has recently granted an extension of time to allow the tenant further opportunities to do so.</p> <p>We are hopeful that the tenant will ultimately be able to address these issues. However, in the event that they cannot and the Council is forced to seek the return of the property it will clearly be a priority to secure an alternative operator who can continue to provide this much needed service to local people.</p>
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* indicates petitions handed in at the Civic Offices or e-petitions - not presented at Council

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480	There is insufficient parking for local residents living in Limeslade Close. We request the Council build more parking so that residents are able to park their cars in the road that they live. The two ideas we would like to see is the grass at the end of the Cul de sac on the right turned into parking	27/07/2016	Cllr B Little	Officers in Housing are currently investigating the feasibility of the proposal, obtain quotes for the work, carry out a full consultation with the residents and then if necessary add the request to the list.
481	There is insufficient parking for local residents living in Plashet Close and along Southend Road between numbers 94-116. There is parking outside their properties but this is regularly used by people that are not local to the area meaning that residents cannot park their cars. We request the Council install a parking permit scheme for the parking spaces outside of these properties which would mean that local residents could guarantee that there is space for them to park their vehicles.	27/07/2016	Cllr B Little	<p>This request with be included in the Stanford Le Hope Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) review for inclusion into next year's Highways Capital Programme.</p> <p>There is also merit in undertaking further grassed verge reinforcement to provide additional spaces and this will be added to the request list for review under next year's programme.</p>
482	We ask our Councillors, to consider what the least worst option would be in their view given the possibility of Option A, Route 14 and request officers of the Council to look at this as an option and report on its viability. An announcement from the Government will be due to follow soon, we request the Council, to be prepared and well researched into the best possible solution should be we faced with no other alternatives outside of Thurrock.	30/08/2016	Cllr B Little	A response is currently being prepared by Officers. An update will be presented at the October full council.

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28 September 2016	ITEM: 10
Council	
Thurrock Local Plan: Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation	
Wards and communities affected:	Key Decision:
All	Key
Report of: Councillor Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration	
Accountable Head of Service: Andy Millard, Head of Planning and Growth	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director Environment and Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

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

As part of the formal plan-making process the Council is required to consult the local community, business and stakeholders on the content of the Local Plan. On the 24 February the Council authorised a 6 week public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Thurrock Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy.

This report provides a summary of the representations made in response to the Issues and Options (Stage1) Consultation Document and seeks authorisation by the Council to publish the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation which sets out in more detail the responses received by the Council in March and April 2016.

The Local Plan is a key corporate document that will guide and shape sustainable growth and placemaking in the Borough over a 15 year period. Work on the Issues and Options (Stage 2) document is already under way and a comprehensive engagement strategy being rolled out with key stakeholders and community groups.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Council notes progress on the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan.

1.2 That the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation be approved by Council for publication.

1.3 That delegated authority is granted to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Environment and Place to amend the Thurrock Local Development Scheme when required.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council has an adopted Local Plan in the shape of the Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development DPD (December 2011). However, on the 12 February 2014 Cabinet gave approval to undertake a review of the Core Strategy and begin the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the development of the Borough over the period to 2035.

2.2 A key principle underpinning the operation of the planning system is the requirement that local authorities must have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area. The February 2014 Cabinet resolution recognised that a review of the Core Strategy was required in order to address the impact of economic change and a number of significant changes to the planning system at the national, regional and local levels. These include:

- The need to for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to coordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock;
- The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs;
- A requirement for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support long term economic growth;
- Legislative changes that fundamentally affect the form, content and process for preparing a Local Plan; and

- A need to plan for a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing and its potential economic, transport, and environmental impact on the Borough.
- 2.3 Government policy requires that in drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities should set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth. Although the adopted Core Strategy both reflects and responds to many of these requirements in a positive way, it does not wholly reflect the significant progress that is being achieved by the Council in driving forward an ambitious growth agenda and long term vision for the Borough. The new Local Plan will have a key role to play in accelerating the development of new town centres at Purfleet and Lakeside, the regeneration of Grays Town Centre and the wider Tilbury area, together with implementation and delivery of strategic employment opportunities at London Gateway and the adjoining Thames Enterprise Park. Crucially, the Local Plan will also need to identify and bring forward land to meet the Borough's future housing needs and to ensure the delivery of over 20,000 new homes and supporting community and transport infrastructure over the plan period to 2036.
- 2.4 The process for preparing and adopting Local Plans is set out in the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Any failure to comply with or follow the Regulations could lead to the plan being found unsound with the significant risk that the Government could step in and impose a new plan or development on the Borough. When preparing a new Local Plan, Regulation 18 of the above directs that a local planning authority should both invite and consider representations from specific consultation bodies, local residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area about what a local plan ought to contain. In order to comply with these requirements and provide the community with an opportunity to shape the scope and direction of the Local Plan, the Council at its meeting on 24 February 2016 authorised a 6 week public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Thurrock Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy.
- 2.5 This report summarises the representations and public comments received by the Council to that consultation process, which will be used to help inform the preparation of the Local Plan. Further details on the representations received in response to the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy will be set out in a separate report to Council later this year. That report will also seek approval for the formal adoption of Thurrock Design Strategy.

*Local Plan (Regulation 18) Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation
February – March 2016)*

- 2.6 The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views of stakeholders, local businesses and the community on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address and the potential range of options for meeting Thurrock’s future development needs while at the same time protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment of the Borough.
- 2.7 The Council consults extensively on all planning documents and has an ever evolving consultee database stored on the Council’s online consultation portal. This system is updated at each consultation event or when notified by consultees. The Objective consultee database ensures that all interested parties who have previously expressed an interest or commented are notified by means of email or letter. This list currently consists of circa 4500 persons or groups.
- 2.8 During the consultation period, the Council undertook a range of activities which went above and beyond the legal requirements; this was to ensure that everybody who wanted to could get involved in development of the Local Plan at this early stage. A summary of the activities undertaken is set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Summary of Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Activities

Consultation Activity	Intended Participants
<p>Formal Consultation Document: A full copy of the consultation document was made available at the Civic Offices in Grays, at all libraries and online. The document contained 40 questions covering a wide range of thematic issues related to the key challenges and opportunities facing the Borough. Consultees were encouraged to use the Council’s consultation portal to respond to the consultation, with hard copies of the comments form only made available on request from the Civic Offices or the libraries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory Consultees and Duty to Cooperate Bodies • Local Businesses • Local Community/ Interest Groups • Local Residents
<p>Big Questions Survey: The ‘Big Question Survey’ was an online 10 question survey designed to attract a high volume of responses to key planning issues such as housing, employment, retail and the environment. The</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Businesses • Local Community/ Interest Groups • Local Residents

<p>questions were similar to those used in the formal consultation document. Only 40 people completed the survey during the consultation period, as such the Council made the decision to re-launch the survey.</p>	
<p>Local Plan Roadshows: The Council hosted 12 roadshow events over the consultation period. These events provided local residents; businesses and interest groups with the opportunity to discuss the consultation document with officers and participate in some art based visioning activities (burning issues board).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Businesses • Local Community/ Interest Groups • Local Residents • Site Promoters and Developers
<p>Community Forum and Interest Group Meetings: To raise awareness of the consultation was stimulate discussions in local communities the Growth and Strategy Team contacted local community forums and interest groups to see if they would like a member of the team to deliver a presentation to their group at their next meeting. In total the Growth and Strategy Team attended 5 meetings during the consultation period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Businesses • Local Community/ Interest Groups • Local Residents
<p>Duty to Cooperate Stakeholder Workshop: The Council organised a workshop with relevant Duty to Cooperate bodies on Monday 21 March 2016. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the programme and timescales for preparing the Local Plan and to ascertain their initial views on the scope and nature of the cross-boundary issues which will need to be addressed as part of the plan-making process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duty to Cooperate Bodies

2.9 In order to establish effective cross-boundary working relationships with neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies (as required under the Duty to Cooperate), the Council organised a Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Workshop on 21 March 2016. The purpose of the workshop was to advise representatives from local authorities drawn from across Essex, London and North Kent together with statutory consultees such as Natural England on the programme and timescales for preparing the Local Plan and to ascertain their initial views on the scope and nature of the cross-boundary issues which will need to be addressed as part of the plan-making process.

- 2.10 As part of the public consultation process the Council also launched a further formal 'Call for Sites' whereby landowners, stakeholders and the local community are invited to identify sites or broad areas of land for development and/or for protection. Any sites or broad locations identified through this exercise will then be assessed and considered further for allocation within the Local Plan.
- 2.11 By the close of the consultation period on 11 April, a total of 70 organisations and individuals had responded with 548 separate comments having been received in response to the questions set out in the Consultation Document and a further 25 sites put forward by landowners and developers for consideration and allocation for development in the Local Plan in response to the 'Call for Sites' process.
- 2.12 A full record of the comments received and the Officers response to these representations is set out in the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation, copies of which are available to view in the Members Rooms. The Report of Consultation is submitted for approval alongside this Report. Subject to Council's approval of the Report of Consultation, it is intended a copy of the Report will be uploaded onto the Thurrock Local Plan website.

Summary of Consultation Responses

- 2.13 A summary of the key consultation responses on the main issues, opportunities and challenges which the Council will need to consider in preparing the Local Plan is set out in the following sections of this report.
- 2.14 The key issues raised by landowners, developers and the business community related to the need for the Local Plan process to:
- Recognise that a failure to identify additional land for housing and employment development would threaten the future economic prosperity and growth of the Borough.
 - Consider the development of a new spatial strategy which goes beyond the current approach of focusing investment and development within the existing urban area and the established Economic Growth Hubs in order to meet Thurrock's future development needs.

- Undertake a full review of the Green Belt to identify additional land to meet Thurrock's future housing and employment needs consistent with the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Consider the allocation of land to meet the future housing needs of London and neighbouring South Essex local authorities in addition to meeting Thurrock's own Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) in full.
- Ensure that the Council actively engages with the neighbouring South Essex Local Authorities through the Duty to Cooperate process to meet London's future housing needs.
- Consider reviewing the Borough's retail hierarchy and the relative roles of Lakeside and Grays Town Centre in accommodating future strategic retail needs over the plan period.
- Establish a 'town centres first' policy approach to the location of town centre uses with a policy to resist further significant out of centre retail development in order to support the retail led regeneration of Grays Town Centre.
- Plan positively for growth by supporting the transformation of the Lakeside Basin into a new regional town centre with Intu Lakeside providing the best location for new retail and leisure development in the Borough for comparison retailing and leisure development.
- Ensure that existing centres including Grays and Intu Lakeside can provide for the future shopping needs of Thurrock. Further development outside these centres is not required and identified needs should be focused on maintaining and enhancing existing centres.
- Plan positively to maximise the economic benefits that will arise following the development of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.
- Support the future commercial viability and expansion of the Ports through continued investment in new infrastructure, housing, education and skills development.
- Identify additional sites for dedicated truck parks in order to meet future demand and reduce the environmental and transport impact of logistics related traffic growth on the Borough.

- Recognise the importance of protecting the role played by the River Thames in supporting economic growth.
- Allocate land for the development of new waste and renewable energy facilities which recognises Thurrock's strategic location and the current availability of sites for new development.
- Recognise the importance and value of Thurrock's green infrastructure and heritage assets in supporting the delivery of wider economic, environmental, health, and community and transport objectives should be recognised.

2.15 In addition to the consultation responses received from landowners, developers and the business community, further representations were also submitted by Community Organisations and neighbouring Local Authorities. These included the South Essex authorities, Chelmsford City Council, Essex County Council, the Greater London Authority, North London Waste Plan Authorities, Barking and Dagenham LB, Dartford BC, Gravesham BC and Medway BC. The key issues raised by these bodies related to the need for the Local Plan to:

- Consider through the Duty To Cooperate process the need for Thurrock to contribute towards meeting any unmet future housing needs from adjoining authorities including London and Southend in particular.
- Ensure that future residential developments should be supported by health facilities, in order to combat the existing health inequalities experienced at a local level.
- Consider the requirement for Thurrock to make additional provision to meet Basildon's unmet Gypsy and Traveller needs.
- Support the delivery of the Thames Vision which promotes the retention of riverside industry and employment locations, and the protection and enhancement of the distinctive riverscape in terms of its water quality, wildlife and attractiveness as an open space.
- Consider the impacts of any planned expansion or change to port facilities along the Thames within Thurrock on Medway's port infrastructure.
- Safeguard wharfs in Thurrock for the importation of marine dredged and other minerals resources into the region.

- Consider the future role of Lakeside and the need to manage the scale and nature of its future development in order to safeguard the viability and vitality of other strategic centres in South Essex, North Kent and East London.
- Recognise Thurrock's future role in meeting London and the wider South East's waste needs.
- Consider the future implications of strategic transport improvements including the Lower Thames Crossing and Cross Rail 2.
- Support the delivery of an enhanced public rights of way network accessible to all users – walkers, cyclist, equestrians and the disabled, including increased access to the Borough's open spaces.

2.16 Representations were also received from Heritage England, Natural England, the Environment Agency and Highways England. In the main the responses submitted by these organisations were general in nature and welcoming of the opportunity to work with the Council in preparing the Local Plan. A series of follow up meetings are now being arranged with each of these statutory consultees to further strengthen and develop the working relationship between the parties as progress on the plan moves forward.

Local Plan Roadshow Consultation Responses

2.17 To ensure that everybody attending the Local Plan Road Show events had an opportunity to have their say on the big issues facing the Borough the Council set up a 'Burning Issues' board at each of Roadshow Events. With over 500 comments received the most frequently voiced concerns related to the issues set out below.

- The lack of affordable housing available to local people.
- The need for new homes to be built near transport hubs and existing community facilities and services like schools and doctors.
- The need for new homes to be built in areas where they can support the delivery of better community facilities and services.
- The preferred location for new homes should be on brownfield sites.

- Better health, education and community facilities are required to meet local needs.
- More activities should be provided for young people.
- The adverse impact of lorry movements in residential areas should be addressed.
- Industrial and residential areas should be segregated in order to minimise the impact of bad neighbour uses on local communities.
- There is a need for better parking provision in town and local centres.
- There is a need for improved standards of road maintenance and investment in Thurrock's roads.
- There is a need to tackle the poor quality of the environment and poorly maintained public open spaces.
- There is a need to provide new public open spaces and sports and leisure facilities.
- The provision of improved walking and cycling facilities should be promoted.
- The health impacts of poor air quality on local residents should be considered and addressed.
- There is a need for improved standards of design.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Report of Consultation sets out in full the representations submitted by the 70 organisations or individuals who responded to publication of the consultation document. The report also sets out the Council's recommended response to those representations which, in the main, is to note the concerns and views of the respondents and to invite them to meet with officers to discuss their submissions further and, where appropriate, agree the 'next steps' in developing the Local Plan evidence base.
- 3.2 Many of the issues flagged up in the various consultation responses are already in the process of being addressed through the technical work

currently underway to support the development of a robust and deliverable Local Plan. This includes a range of housing, employment, retail, transport and infrastructure studies which will identify the scale and nature of future development needs which the Local Plan must plan for over the period to 2036.

- 3.3 Crucially the technical work currently underway will also consider the capacity of the Borough to sustain and support different levels of growth together with the viability and deliverability of new development in different locations across the Borough. The outcome of this work will be used to inform the development of a range of alternative spatial strategies which will set out a range of options for accommodating the Borough's future development needs. This will include more detail on the future scale, mix and distribution of development across Thurrock and associated future infrastructure needs and costs. The emerging Spatial Development Options will form the focus of the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Public Consultation which will commence in March 2017.
- 3.4 At this stage of the plan-making process it is important to note that although many of the representations submitted are asking for the Council to make provision to meet the housing needs of neighbouring areas including London and adjoining South Essex authorities, it remains the case that no surrounding authority has formally approached the Council with a request that Thurrock should through the Duty to Cooperate process consider the allocation of additional land to meet any unmet needs in their own administrative area. Neither is it the case that any evidence has been produced by any party to justify why Thurrock should meet the needs of adjoining authorities. This relates both to the respondent local authority being able to evidence their own inability or lack of capacity to meet identified growth targets or why it is appropriate for Thurrock to contribute towards meeting their unmet development needs. These issues will need to be further explored through the Duty To Cooperate mechanisms including the recently established South Essex Members Board.
- 3.5 A further issue that will need to be addressed is that progress on getting the Local Plan adopted by 2020, as set out the Thurrock Local Development Scheme (the project plan that guides the delivery of the Local Plan), will be largely dependent on there being an early decision and resolution of the issues associated with the Lower Thames Crossing.
- 3.6 Due to the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of that process and the uncertain timescales for its resolution, it is not possible for the Council to consult on the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation in October/November 2016, as was originally proposed in the current Local

Development Scheme which approved by Cabinet in 2016. As a result it will therefore be necessary for the Council to amend the Local Development Scheme to reflect any revised timescales for preparing the Local Plan once a decision has been made in connection with the Lower Thames Crossing proposals. Reflecting these considerations, it is therefore proposed that Council grant delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration in consultation with the Director of Environment and Place to amend the Thurrock Local Development Scheme at an appropriate future stage. It should be noted that any such changes would be solely related to timescales and not to the content of the Plan.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To comply with the requirements set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Localism Act 2012 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

4.2 The preparation and adoption of a new Local Plan is required to ensure that the significant progress being made in securing the future growth and regeneration of the Borough is not stalled by the lack of an up-to-date development plan. This is particularly important given that national planning policy guidance states that where the development plan is out-of-date, permission for development should be granted unless any adverse impacts would outweigh the benefits of doing so. The implications of this point are clear: if an authority fails to plan properly for its own area, then the opportunity to do so will be lost through planning appeals determined by Planning Inspectors or by the Secretary of State. Similarly a failure on the part of the Council to prepare and adopt a Local Plan within the timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme could leave it vulnerable to intervention by the Secretary of State.

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

5.1 This report was considered by the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 13 September 2016.

5.2 The Thurrock Local Plan will be the subject of extensive public consultation at each stage of the plan-making process in accordance with the approach set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) adopted by the Council in November 2015 and the Local Plan Engagement Strategy approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2015.

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

6.1 The documents cited within this report support the production of the Council's new Local Plan. The Local Plan will guide new development within the borough over the period to 2036 consistent with the delivery of wider corporate policies, priorities and objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Finance Officer – Management
Accounts

The major costs associated with the preparation of the Local Plan will be incurred during the financial years, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20. Subject to the decision of the Council in agreeing the recommendations set out in this report, it is proposed to re-align existing revenue budgets towards the preparation of the new Local Plan in line with the plan-making programme and timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme.

The ongoing delay by the Government in coming to a decision on the Lower Thames Crossing has also lead to an increase in costs associated with the preparation of the Local Plan. This could increase further depending on the outcome of any future decision by Government and any additional costs would need to be met by the Council or the Government if progress on preparing the Local Plan is to remain within budget and in accordance with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme.

7.2 Legal

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

The preparation of a new Local Plan will be carried out in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

A failure to undertake the preparation of a new Local Plan would be contrary to the requirement set out in the NPPF that plans should be kept up-to-date and proactively drive and support sustainable economic development.

Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Section 111 of the Localism Act 2011) requires that a Local Planning Authority must prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme. The scheme must specify the documents which form the Local Plan and include a timetable for their production.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment opportunities. An Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) will be conducted as part of the process of preparing the Local Plan as an integral element of the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal. This is a statutory requirement and obligation placed on the Council. The approach to public consultation set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (November 2015) will ensure that the consultation process provides an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

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

There are no other implications associated with the report

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

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document Questions

Report Author:

Sean Nethercott
Growth and Strategy Manager
Planning and Growth

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Appendix 1

Q 1	What other evidence documents do you think the Council will need to commission or produce to ensure that the Plan is sound?
Q2	Do you feel that all the key cross boundary issues have been identified? If not, then please state any other issues that we should be working with our partners to address.
Q3	What would you like Thurrock to be like in the future and what do you think should be the key economic, housing, environmental, social, community and health outcomes that the Local Plan should help to deliver?
Q4	Do you believe that the vision and approach set out in the Core Strategy of focusing development within Thurrock's urban area and major growth hubs remains the most appropriate option for meeting the Borough's future development needs?
Q5	Do you think that the plan period of 2015-2035 is appropriate? If not please suggest a more suitable plan period.
Q6	What would you change in your local neighbourhood to make it a better place to live?
Q7	How would you make the best use of the River Thames and its foreshore?
Q8	Have you ever experienced any difficulty in trying to find a suitable property in the Borough? If yes what were your biggest challenge?
Q9	What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites to meet its housing need?
Q10	What types of housing do you think will be most needed in the Borough over the coming years?
Q11	Should the Council explore the potential for variable affordable housing targets and approaches so that difficult higher risk sites can be developed?
Q12	What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites for new pitches?
Q13	What are the main barriers to growth that need to be addressed in the Local Plan to ensure that all sections of the community have access to the benefits of future employment creation in Thurrock?
Q14	Do you think there is a need to identify additional land for employment and what other employment uses outside of the port, logistics and retail sectors should the Local Plan support and promote?
Q15	What do you think are the key challenges facing Thurrock's retail centres and how can the Local Plan maintain and enhance their role?
Q16	What improvements would you like to see in those centres that you visit regularly and what would make you visit them more often? Please state the name of the centre in your response.
Q17	What are the best locations for new retail and leisure development in the Borough and how can future development be harnessed to support the delivery of wider regeneration and economic growth needs and objectives?

Q18	Is there a need for the development of retail, leisure and other town centres uses in locations outside the existing established retail centres and if so where?
Q19	What new sport and leisure facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?
Q20	Are there any open spaces that are special to your local community which should be designated? If yes, please provide details of the open space, its location and the reason why it is special to you and your community.
Q21	What new educational facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?
Q22	What new health and community facilities do you think are needed in the Borough to support both new and existing communities?
Q23	What kind of things could the Local Plan do to protect these valuable community assets?
Q24	What approach could the Local Plan take to ensure that issues relating to pollution and air quality are minimised?
Q25	What kind of things could the Plan do to help you make more sustainable transport choices?
Q26	Are there any specific sustainable transport projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail about the project.
Q27	Are there any specific road transportation projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail on the project, its location and the reason why you believe it is necessary.
Q28	What kind of things can the plan do to reduce the adverse impacts of freight movements?
Q29	What things could the plan do to protect and enhance the Borough's listed building and conservation areas?
Q30	Are there any buildings of significance in your local community which should be included on a local heritage list? If yes, please provide details including its location and the reason why it is special to your community.
Q31	What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's landscape, seascape and its key features are protected and where possible enhanced?
Q32	How should the Local Plan use the information from the landscape and seascape capacity and sensitivity study?
Q33	What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's natural assets are protected and where possible enhanced?
Q34	In planning for new development, how much weight should the Local Plan give to flood risk relative to other objectives (including sustainability, regeneration, local need and the local economy)?
Q35	Should the Plan seek to promote higher water efficiency standards by adopting the Government's Optional Technical Housing Standards?
Q36	How should the Local Plan take account of and encourage community owned renewable energy schemes?

Q37	Which renewable technologies do you think are most suitable for large scale proposals in the Borough? Please provide additional information as to why you deem these to be suitable.
Q38	How can the Plan ensure that enough minerals are available for development and also protect resources for the future?
Q39	What should the Local Plan do to ensure that waste management facilities are located, designed and operated to minimise impacts on climate change, local amenity for residents, and the natural and built environment?
Q40	Are there any matters you think also need to be considered at this stage and why?

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28 September 2016	Item : 11
Full Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance	
Report of: Councillor Hebb, Portfolio Holder for Finance	
This report is public.	

Introduction By Portfolio Holder

The report you are reading is based on one-half of my Cabinet responsibilities – specifically Finance and IT. It is my view, that my Directorate is an enabling directorate; one that enables other areas of the council to survive and thrive.

This report sets out a new direction of travel; how we will ensure that the Thurrock leadership of today, stimulate economic prosperity in the future for our children, and our children’s children.

My Cabinet colleagues have all set their stall on how they seek to reshape community living – focusing on helping the youth of today make good decisions for the future.

Broadly speaking, the Administration’s finance management plan echoes that ethos:

1. **We will not only stabilise the ship, we will chart the course for a 30 year journey** – upon entering administration, we have reviewed upward our “rainy-day” fund, in the most comprehensive way since 2010, and we have shaped the budget planning structure for which this council will create a three year budget, with a 30 year plan in mind. The Council Spending Review is a different mechanism from previous: building budgets to enable the right services to operate well – not merely adopting a salami-slice cut model – will ensure services are set-up strongly to deliver our vision of a better borough.
2. **We will be unashamedly pro-revenue growth** – revenue-generation is not an ugly word. Think about your household budget – if you have too many commitments, you have to reduce your outgoings. You can do that by spending less, but also by trying to earn more. That means being commercial – that means selling our services to other councils and other organisations; it means ensuring that everyone pays what they are due to pay; it means being truly open for business – dragging investment into the borough (grammar schools, Port of Tilbury expansion etc.)
3. **We will enable this council to focus on the right things** – the Conservative Administration took office with a simple mantra – tidying Thurrock up. Thus,

“Clean It – Cut It – Fill It” was born. Revenue generation and smarter finance management enables key initiatives like this to be implemented, and make a difference to people’s lives. Our customers deserve clean green spaces, their public spaces to be kept free of litter, and the promise that there are consequences to those who do not play that game.

The report follows a simple structure, and covers Corporate Finance, Fraud & Intelligence, ICT, Internal Audit, Risk & Insurance and Revenues and Benefits.

I will take a dedicated moment to recognise the many council staff who have worked unceasingly before and after the change of administration, for the betterment of Thurrock residents. Allow me to take this moment to say, on behalf of many, thank you.

I would also pay tribute to my predecessor. While views about “HOW” we try to achieve things sometimes have and will always often vary, I have no doubt that our hopes, dreams and aspirations for the people of this borough are very similar.

Cllr Shane Hebb | Cabinet Member for Finance & Corporate Operations, September 2016

CORPORATE FINANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

Corporate Finance lead on the promotion and delivery of good financial management to ensure that the council's financial position is managed appropriately and public money is safeguarded. The service leads on all financial management processes and supports both internal customers, such as other council services, and external customers in the form of the borough's schools and other statutory bodies. Key duties include:

- Statutory returns and reports
- Provision of financial information and advice
- Budget holder support
- Revenue and capital budget preparation and monitoring
- Preparation of the Statement of Accounts
- Tax advice and planning
- Treasury management activities
- Schools support

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

The council continues to operate in a challenging financial environment. Significant savings have been delivered in previous years and the council continues to face considerable budget challenges over the coming years. I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the work carried out by officer team, including all members of staff, as well the previous administration in delivering balanced budgets at both budget setting time and, indeed, practically then coming within the budget envelope.

The 2015/16 financial outturn position was reported to Cabinet in July 2016. As noted in the report, the council managed a number of financial pressures such as demand-led social care pressures, re-profiling of the Transforming Homes programme and the termination of the shared services contract with Serco. Despite this, the General Fund balance was maintained at £8.0m and the Housing Revenue Account balance maintained at £1.754m.

The most significant service pressure related to Children's Services. The overspend was due to a combination of factors including service pressures resulting in in-year savings on staffing and placements not being achieved. Staffing costs were made up of both increased numbers over establishment due to demand pressures and the cost of agency staff as recruitment and retention continued to be a problem. Placement costs remained at a similar level to 2014/15, however, the original budget proposed significant savings. The number of Unaccompanied Asylum seekers continued to increase, which resulted in a significant budget pressure as rates paid by the Home Office were considerably below the costs incurred.

In 2015/16 the council had to fund the total cost of terminating the Strategic Services Partnership with Serco. This totalled £13.4m which consisted of £9.9m termination payment and £3.5m of pension costs. Of this, £11.7m was charged to the General Fund, £1.2m to the Housing Revenue Account and £0.5m was capitalised.

The council delivered a balanced position through a combination of service underspends, treasury management and releasing usable reserves set aside for this purpose. An underspend of £3.926m in Treasury related predominantly to savings arising from the rescheduling of minimum revenue provision payments, greater returns on investments and lower than expected interest payments. Useable Reserves of £10.251m were released to fund the in-year pressure of the Serco termination payments.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

The 2015/16 outturn position is summarised below. This was reported to Cabinet in July 2016.

	Revised Budget £m	Outturn £m	Variance £m
Service:			
Adults, Health & commissioning	31.820	31.985	0.165
Public Health Expenditure	10.550	10.184	(0.366)
Children's Services	29.896	35.510	5.614
Environment	18.108	18.579	0.471
Planning & Transportation	7.127	6.860	(0.267)
Chief Executives Office	12.749	11.129	(1.620)
Treasury	7.907	3.981	(3.926)
Chief Executives Delivery Unit	2.589	1.189	(1.400)
Commercial Services	14.925	13.519	(1.406)
Public Protection	1.737	1.652	(0.085)
Housing Services	0.735	0.595	(0.140)
Service Total	138.143	135.183	(2.960)
Financed by:			
Other Non-specific Grants	(14.358)	(15.884)	(1.526)
NNDR	(26.780)	(26.806)	(0.025)
RSG	(26.462)	(26.535)	(0.073)
Council Tax	(54.758)	(54.838)	(0.080)
Total Financing	(122.358)	(124.063)	(1.704)
Direct Total	15.785	11.120	(4.664)
Levies & Recharges	(12.656)	(12.569)	0.087
Exceptional	0.000	11.700	11.700
Net Operating Deficit After Exceptional Items	3.129	10.251	7.123
Use of Usable Reserves	(3.129)	(10.251)	(7.123)
Overall Impact on General Fund	0	0	0

► FUTURE: COUNCIL SPENDING REVIEW

This administration intends to maintain and, more importantly, improve the budget setting process and the Council's financial standing in an uncertain world.

Since May 2010, Thurrock Council adopted a top-down budget saving process in order to meet the available budget envelopes of each successive year. This model, effectively reducing department budgets, has led to the budget book being, by-and-large, balanced each year.

However, as part of this exercise, departments have not been forced to revisit their purpose and intent. We are now faced with council departments being ill-equipped to fund the services they provide in the now. This carries risk, and must be managed.

The new administration of May 2016 is seeking to change the way Thurrock Council budgets – instead of departments being required to maintain the existing service on less budgets, the new administration is tasking everyone in the organisation of designating which services the council must and/or should offer, and build a budget upward to support the execution and embedding of a quality public service.

Some may call this zero-based budgeting; the new administration calls it the Council Spending Review.

The Council Spending Review – or CSR for short – is not a tool merely to make budgets fit on a spreadsheet and carry on doing what we have been doing for, arguably, decades. The CSR is much more than that – it is a process which has one question in mind:

“What is the role of local government in Thurrock today, and what do we fund as a priority?”

Effectively, what is the “New Thurrock Offer”?

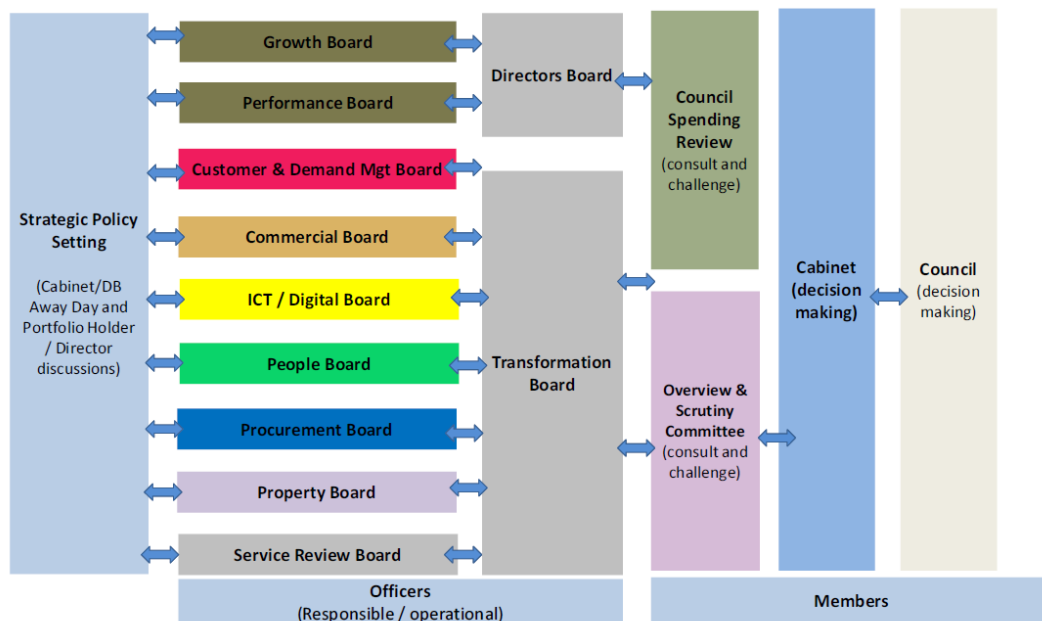
The outputs of this process will be a zero-based set of public services which have been agreed as priorities by:

- The Cabinet (Executive)
- Opposition Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders x2
- Directors Board and Heads of Service
- Members of “shop-floor” (Thurrock Council staff, of which 80% are Thurrock residents)
- Councillors who sit on Overview & Scrutiny
- All 49 Councillors via Budget Council

Over the coming months, all services will have a zero-based review – is there a statutory or non-statutory requirement for the service?; is this service in the public interest?; when held against another service, which service offers more for a higher number of people? These are all questions which will be asked.

Proposals will focus on: income generation; doing more or same for less; and reducing the need for service demand increases (most notably in social care).

Below is the Council Spending Review Framework:



Firstly, the Cabinet (executive) have submitted their collective contributions to the over-arching Transformation Board.

At the next stage, there are a number of new strategic Boards chaired by members of the Council's Directors' Board which will oversee the second stage of this process: Customer and Demand Management; Commercial; Digital and ICT; People; Property; Procurement and Service Review Board. This is where staff involvement is key and my expectation is that staff from the “shop-floor” are fully informed and active in participation.

For clarity, these reviews will not just be about the General Fund. We are all aware that the Council has responsibility for the Housing Revenue Account and Public Health, both services that have a significant impact on our communities and their own challenges. As such, these services will also be covered through this approach.

Once the Boards have met, and have digested Cabinet’s input with the zero-basing of services provided, the next stage will be to go through the entire council leadership – i.e. Conservative, UKIP and Labour Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders – and the Overview and Scrutiny process.

Lastly, all 49 councillors will be able to review proposals, with the faith that staff from all levels, Directors Board, and all political group leadership have reviewed, proposed and progressed the recommendations for the New Thurrock Offer.

► **FUTURE: CLEAN IT – CUT IT – FILL IT**

At September Cabinet, it was reported that the pilot of Clean It – Cut It – Fill It – will cost the local authority in the region of £260k. This long overdue spend, which was met by efficiencies in operational budgets, aimed to give the residents of Thurrock a

well-deserved first-thought in what this council should be doing as a priority – making Thurrock a place we are all proud to live, work and play in.

Such a simple concept isn't it?

However, a “one-off” campaign, paid for once, will simply not suffice. Alarm-clock Thurrock deserves better, not just this year, but each-and-every Summer in the future. The administration take a simple view of clean parks, cut grass, and smooth roads – its what people, in the main, pay their council tax for.

In order to achieve this sustainably into the future, this council has to save more than what the budget gap is in the MTF5 over the next three years. It needs to be said now. As everyone will capture from my tone in the paragraph above, this means we have look harder and deeper at our finances, in order to fund this customer service activity #1, #2 and #3. Therefore I can confirm that officers have been instructed to look far past the budget gap figure in order to identify sustainable funding for this scheme, year-in and year-out.

► **FUTURE: GENERAL FUND RESERVES**

However, before we can set off completing a CSR, or zero-based service review, it is critical that our “rainy-day” fund is at the required levels to withstand unanticipated events and crises.

Councillors will be aware that one of my first acts as Cabinet Member for Finance was to ask for the General Fund Balance to be thoroughly reviewed. As reported to Cabinet earlier this month, we intend to support the Director of Finance and IT's recommendation for a phased increase of £1.26m over the next three years, meaning that the General Fund Balance will move from £8m to £9.26m by 2019.

Six years has been far too long to thoroughly review the General Fund Balance. In the name of our children, and grandchildren, this is something that we must not allow again. So I confirm that it is my intention that thorough three-yearly General Fund Balance Reviews will be undertaken as a planned norm, not at the sporadic request of political leadership.

Reserves are not to be used to fund reductions in council funding – this is administration policy.

► **FUTURE: CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

In terms of the capital programme, there is no question that there have been a number of notable projects delivered in recent years. However, as Chair to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee last year, I noted that the programme was short of aspiration. As such, an Investment Strategy is being developed that will bring together a number of projects, often discussed by ourselves with the community and partners, but not always taken through to approval. The Investment Strategy will also inform investment decisions over the longer term on the basis of opportunity, risk and the generation of ongoing financial returns.

And all of this will be delivered transparently, through reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Council Spending Review group that includes the three main parties.

Building on the good work previously carried out in Treasury Management, the Council continues to look for opportunities in addition to the gains being made through the CCLA and Gloriana investments. More recently, the Council, with other local authority partners, has issued a bond for the operation of a solar farm in Swindon. The Council's share of this is £15m over a five year period and attracts a 5% return per annum for the first four years and 8% in the final year.

“Open for Business” is no longer just a label on the front door of this council, but a reality. This will be a pro-revenue council, earning as many pennies as it can to put back into our neighbourhoods.

COUNTER-FRAUD & INTELLIGENCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The service is continuing to deliver the Council's annual counter-fraud strategy, working across the different directorates to improve business processes and better educate staff on the fraud risks the council faces. The service operates a trading model selling specialist anti-fraud services to other public bodies.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

A programme of anti-fraud workshops took place at the end of last year and there has been a welcome increase in dialog between specialists from the service and other council services, in areas such as identify fraud and anti-fraud data sharing.

Key successes include:

- The launch of the Essex Fraud Partnership (as detailed later in this report)
- The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act to recover monies from convicted fraudsters, over £180,000 has been recovered
- The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act to restrict assets held by suspected fraudsters in order to maximise recovery during the court process
- Successful delivery of co-operation between the service and Essex Police in order to share intelligence and resources to tackle serious and organised fraud

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Reports of fraud received and under investigation:

- Housing fraud - 72
- Blue Badge - 40
- Social Care - 6
- Council Tax - 46

- Other - 20 (including 6 large complex investigations which are ongoing, concerning external threats to Thurrock Council)

Successful recovery of £1.7million which was being held by an external company, but should have been in Thurrock Council bank accounts.

Intelligence reports received from sources including Police and Government are now distributed immediately to areas which could be affected, reducing the risk of fraud occurring

Successful prosecutions relating to Housing Fraud (sub-let) and Council Tax discount, including the first of its type where a student exemption was claimed

7x cases currently at court stage awaiting prosecution

The unit have recovered 52 properties that were being fraudulently used, these have now been re-let to those in genuine need. The value of this fraud is £936,000

Six right to buy applications have also been stopped, meaning that valuable social housing stock remains available and under the control of Thurrock Council

► FUTURE: FOCUSES, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The service continues to sell specialist anti-fraud services to other public bodies to assist them tackling their own fraud risks. Building on the relationship with Southend, Thurrock Council has recently agreed to work with Castle Point Borough Council in delivering an anti-fraud strategy for them and has an officer working across the two authorities to share in Thurrock's successful approach.

Essex Counter Fraud Partnership

As part of the government funded project, hosted at Thurrock Council, the service launched the Essex Counter-Fraud Partnership in July, bringing together councils from around the county as well as the Police, Home Office, Housing Associations and other public bodies to unify against fraud.

This collaboration sees agencies share best practice and resources to safeguard residents where the misuse of social housing through fraud is identified. The operation, named **Operation Domus**, was developed by Thurrock Council's Counter Fraud & Investigation Service and is the first of its kind in the country to bring the advanced technical resources created here into a multi-agency targeted approach.

As Cabinet Member for this department, I am keen to enhance relations with other local authorities and public sector bodies if there is a benefit of doing so. My stance on fraud is clear – that people are individually responsible for the actions they take, and therefore accountable for doing so.

There is no such thing as “frauding the council” – criminals who undertake such practices are stealing from the rates that alarm-clock Thurrock residents are paying

for good public services. We will fight for the highest sanction to be awarded by such perpetrators.

RISK & INSURANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Risk and Insurance Team aim to maintain appropriate risk management, insurance and risk financing arrangements for the Council. The team provides a specialist risk and insurance consultancy facility and the key service functions include:

- The development and implementation of the risk and opportunity management framework
- Arrangement of external insurance cover
- Management of internal insurance arrangements
- Coordination and management of all claims covered by the insurance programme.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

The Council's Risk and Opportunity Management Framework remains in line with good practice.

The Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is refreshed annually, reviewed quarterly and reported in line with the Risk and Opportunity Management Framework - quarterly reporting to Directors Board, via Performance Board and bi annual reports to Standards & Audit Committee.

Operational Risk and Opportunity Management is maintained through service risk and opportunity registers which are developed and incorporated in Service Plans. Guidance for project level risk and opportunity management has been updated and risk management support is provided for key projects. Risk and opportunity management principles applied when working with Partners are reviewed and incorporated in Finance Procedure rules.

The Risk and Opportunity Management Policy Strategy and Framework are reviewed against good practice on an annual basis with review outcomes reported to Standards & Audit Committee via Directors Board and Performance Board.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

The service continues to monitor risk and opportunity including action identified to manage and mitigate.

► FUTURE: RISK MANAGEMENT

The mid-year review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is to be undertaken in September and the outcome of the exercise is due to be reported

to Standards and Audit Committee November 2016. The annual review of the Risk and Opportunity Management (including the Policy Strategy and Framework) is scheduled to be reported to Standards and Audit Committee February 2017.

► **FUTURE: INSURANCE CONTRACT**

The current insurance contract is for an initial period of 3 years and is due to expire 31 March 2017. Under the contract there is an option to extend for a further 2 one year periods if renewal terms presented by the Insurer are favourable. Discussions with the Insurer on possible contract extension commenced in July. The 2017/18 renewal terms are expected to be presented for consideration in September.

If the renewal terms presented by the Insurer are not favourable the Council will tender the contract. This process is underway to ensure compliance with procurement regulations. The presentation of renewal terms by the current Insurer and work with the Insurance Broker on the insurance market and tender will help to inform judgements on which route will provide the best terms available to the Council in the current insurance market conditions.

DIGITAL / ICT SERVICES

► **SERVICE OVERVIEW**

The ICT service is responsible for the delivery of digital, information and communication technologies (including telephony) for the council.

The ICT service transferred back to the Council in December 2015 with an initial budget for the 2016/17 financial year of just under £5m, 40% of which is staff cost, and 60% of which is 3rd party contractual costs.

The scope of duties is aligned to the UK Government recognised Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and currently includes:

- CTO Office – Service Planning, Budget Management, Business Partnering, Enterprise Architecture, 3-5 Year Strategy, High Level Design, Design Governance, Digital Innovation
- Operations – Incident Management, Problem Management, Service Desk (including Event Management, Request Fulfilment, Access management), Field Services (including Desktop Support, Office Moves), Infrastructure Support (including Servers, Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, Microsoft Productivity Tools), Service Design and Transition (including Continuous Service Improvement, Service Level Management, Continuity Management, Change Management), Network Management, Telephony Support
- Change and Implementation – Business Services (including Business Analysis, Process Engineering), Applications Management (including Software Analysis, Configuration and Development, Data Management, Applications Support), Technical Project Delivery (including Portfolio Management, Project Management, Technology Workstream Management)

- Commercial – Configuration and Asset Management, Supplier Management, Traded Services (including Product Development, Sales Support, Customer Relationship Management, Billing Support), ICT Procurement (including Contract Negotiation, Due Diligence)

► REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The service underwent a review in the final quarter of the 2015/16, and this initiated a transformation and restructuring of the service to ensure it is properly focussed on supporting the digital requirements and ambitions of the council.

ICT continue to provide broadband services to schools, generating £150k in revenues. Officers are investigating ways of developing this further by upselling other services to schools, and expanding the market into other related sectors. The department is also in the early stages of identifying trading opportunities with other councils.

The ICT service is actively pursuing cost savings in the 3rd party contracts base through a combination of renegotiation and rationalisation. However it should be recognised that savings made on existing technology and contracts will likely be offset by additional costs as the council invests in more digital technologies.

Key achievements include:

- Entire estate migrated from Windows XP to Windows 7 operating system
- Migration to virtual desktop infrastructure completed as part of Civic Offices refurbishment, and establishment of community hubs in Purfleet and Tilbury.
- Upgraded the council's main data storage infrastructure.
- Supported the changes to systems required as part of the bank change including an upgrade of the councils BACS infrastructure.
- Provided ongoing technical support to the project replacing the council's housing system.
- Moved Oracle system support to a third party organisation, realising a saving of around £50k per annum over provisioning the service internally.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

There are no formal corporate performance measurements for ICT, however the service continue to track performance against a subset of the KPIs that were reported by Serco.

The following table shows the average of monthly performance against those measures in the period December 2015 to August 2016.

Title	Target	Actual
The availability of all Servers and Specified Critical / Core Applications and Services - AVAILABILITY OF NETWORKS	99.50%	98.95%
The aggregate percentage of up time for Libraries connected to the LAN within working hours	99.50%	95.97%
The availability of all Servers and Specified Critical / Core Applications and Services - AVAILABILITY OF SERVERS	99.50%	99.86%
Percentage of Helpdesk tasks to be resolved within agreed priorities/targets	85.00%	89.23%
Customer Satisfaction on HelpDesk service	6.00	6.50

The red measures were wholly attributable to refurbishment and building works which required local elements of the network to be taken off line. Without these works, the SLAs would have been met.

► **ACTION PLAN FOR “FAILED” PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2015-16**

The “missed” measures are because our monitoring systems make no distinction between planned outages (e.g. where a site is being refurbished) and unplanned outages. ICT are currently reviewing the council’s network monitoring systems as part of improving the council’s infrastructure and “smarter” solutions may be available.

► **FUTURE: IT STRATEGY**

The IT/IM strategy expires in 2016, and a new combined Digital and IT Strategy is being developed for publication in late 2016.

This strategy will define the council’s technology aspirations from four main perspectives:

- Digital Foundation – technologies to ensure reliable and resilient infrastructure
- Digital Office – technologies to enable the council to operate more efficiently.
- Digital Council – technologies to allow citizens to access end to end council services
- Digital Thurrock – technologies that enhance the lives of citizens, enable smart cities, provide income generation opportunities, and facilitate the delivery of community/corporate priorities.

Technology is evolving and becoming pervasive within the community. Technology in its own right is moving towards being a front line service in some local authorities.

This strategy will determine Thurrock's level of readiness for this new world, technology's role in enabling Thurrock to maximise its potential as a strategic economic hub, whilst setting a realistic pace for our journey over the next 5 years.

► **FUTURE: TELEPHONY**

Capital funding has been allocated in the 2016/17 plan to make critical improvements to the Council's infrastructure, the main outputs being a new Contact Centre telephone system – the council currently uses an obsolete telephony platform to serve its contact centre. Serco were in the process of replacing it with their own system at the time the SSP was terminated, and the Council made the decision to retain the old system as an interim measure in order to avoid any future reliance on SERCO. The technology is robust, but lacks many of the features required to support digital channel shift and a replacement is currently being sought.

► **FUTURE: IT SYSTEMS RESILIENCY**

As Cabinet Member for IT, the resilience of our systems is a high-priority for me.

Working with the IT service, we have identified a number of component work-streams which will be progressed to ensure that the security and resiliency of our IT systems is maintained:

- Strategic Infrastructure – The Council's infrastructure is hosted within council premises with the main server room being located in the Civic Offices. The infrastructure has received significant investment in recent years. The facilities, in my view that support a high-tech, high-energy and high heat-generating server room, need review. It is therefore my intention for this council to seek to invest in a facilities upgrade which will exceed the specification requirements for maintaining an environmentally controlled facility for IT servers, so to ensure we have additional capacity in the future, and the potential for housing customer IT systems as part of our pro-revenue growth agenda.
- Strategic Infrastructure – Following the withdrawal of the Culver Centre there is no offsite failover facility which means that all IT can be lost if the Civic Offices Server room is lost. There have been two near misses in the last 12 months, a power failure in November 2015, and an air conditioning failure in June 2016, both of which impacted service for a number of hours. This frailty around resilience will be addressed, starting with the deployment of an interim disaster recovery facility in Southend council. This interim solution will allow for 100 users to have near immediate access to core systems through VDI in the event of a total loss of the Thurrock server room. A more strategic solution will be developed taking individual service requirements into account and will consider all options, including more investment in infrastructure, partnering with other councils, or the procurement of cloud based services.
- External threats – viruses etc. Cybercrime is a growing problem and a number of local authorities have suffered attacks. To put this in context, the most common form of attack at the moment is Ransomware which makes infected files unusable unless a ransom is paid. Other than paying the ransom (which

is not advised as there is no guarantee that files will be released), the only way to recover from an attack is to take all systems down, find and destroy the virus, and then restore all data from back ups. Lincolnshire County Council were without IT systems for four days earlier this year due to this type of attack. ICT and Information Management have been working together to ensure that Thurrock is not vulnerable. Measures currently in place include:

- Attacks are blocked at the perimeter with MessageLabs email filtering from Symantec (almost all attacks are initiated through email).
- If an attack penetrates the perimeter we have MacAfee antivirus on all machines which will prevent the delivery of the “payload” if somebody clicks on the link.
- ICT operate a rigorous approach to windows security patching to close down the vulnerabilities that these viruses exploit.
- Information Management have initiated a communication and training campaign to increase awareness amongst officers and provide guidance on appropriate safety measures.
- ICT have delegated authority to respond immediately to any threat, and will take immediate action to resolve vulnerabilities without seeking approval from services.

ICT are not complacent and are planning the following action to further protect against attack.

- We are planning to upskill the network support team with externally recognised certifications in cyber protection
- We are planning to replace the Symantec email filtering solution with an even more robust solution from Mimecast
- We are reviewing the frequency of our patching regime. Because patching involves downtime on servers this is not a straight forward exercise if we are to maintain our current service availability, however a combination of technology and process solutions are being considered
- We continue to raise awareness of the issue.

► **FUTURE: ENHANCED MOBILITY – CHOOSE YOUR OWN DEVICE (CYOD)**

In advance of the strategy being published a trial of new smart devices is being undertaken. A small number of “2-in-1” tablet devices are being trialled alongside Windows smart phones to assess their usability and determine which form factor allows officers and members to work more efficiently. The aim is to reduce the reasons for officers to have to return to base.

Assuming the trial is successful, a CYOD policy will be implemented where, subject to business case, services will be able to equip their workers with the most productive corporate devices, selected from a service catalogue which will be continually reviewed and updated.

► FUTURE: TECHNOLOGY REFRESH

The council's recent investment in technology has vastly improved the council's ICT capability and enabled its digital transformation. In order to maintain this level of service we need to refresh hardware and software as it becomes obsolete. The normal hardware lifecycle is 5 years, although our thin client estate is designed to last a minimum of 7 years.

Our current Windows operating systems will need to be upgraded within the next 24 months, including:

- Upgrade to Windows 10
- Upgrade of Exchange email servers
- Upgrade to Office 2016

ICT will use the opportunity of the Office upgrade to investigate whether there is a business case for moving to Office 365, which allows Word, Excel and other Microsoft applications to be delivered from "the cloud". There are a number of considerations to be taken into account – particularly the licensing model which is based on users rather than devices. However Office 365 offers a number of additional collaboration features which may bring benefit to the council, and therefore a thorough needs and benefits based analysis will be conducted.

REVENUES & BENEFITS / COLLECTIONS

► COUNCIL TAX - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The service aims to maximise income through efficient billing, better detection of fraud and error and firm but fair recovery.

In order to support this, the team have been reviewing opportunities to enhance detection of fraud and error within the base and as a result have recently commenced work with Capacitygrid to undertake a review of:

- Empty properties to maximise income from the New Homes Bonus; and
- Tax payers currently claiming Single Person Discount.

The review process consists of matching our data with external sources to identify accounts for further investigation.

Currently there are 19,000 households claiming SPD at a cost of £6m. The work will be undertaken on a no win no fee basis and whilst it is not possible to accurately gauge success rates, based on the experience of other authorities using this product we estimate a potential 5% removal rate, generating a saving to Thurrock of circa £300k per annum.

The team are working with Agilysis to further enhance the E-services available and as part of this are looking to introduce E-billing by the end of September. Once introduced, this will enable people who request it to retrieve their bill online reducing printing and posting costs.

To date circa 12,000 tax payers have registered with my account.

► **COUNCIL TAX - FUTURE**

The Thurrock collection process includes additional mailings outside the statutory process in an effort to ensure that those owing money are given fair opportunity to resolve the situation and those in genuine need of assistance are identified and if need be signposted to an organisation for assistance. Whilst debt recovery by its nature can generate complaints I am pleased to report the numbers of upheld complaints remain low. Furthermore, I have reviewed the Debt Collections Process, and have asked for the clear demarcation between what the council does as part of (a) the statutory process, and (b) what Thurrock does above and beyond to support council tax debt recovery in a compassionate way, but with no dilution of the accountability to pay dues. I am pleased the report that Thurrock has voluntarily added 3 stages to its recovery process and enhanced statutory stages to provide clear information for those in financial difficulty; demonstrating a desire to work with those who want to engage with the council to resolve old issues.

For 2015/16 Thurrock collected 98.58% of council tax in-year with further being collected this year. This performance placed Thurrock amongst the top performing councils and well above the national average of 97.1%. In conjunction with these impressive figures the amount we write off as a proportion of the amount billed is well below the national average. Thurrock publically declares its council tax collection %'s, and will continue to do so.

► **NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR's) - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M**

The team are placing additional effort on initiatives to counter losses, where possible, through improved collection performance and additional surveillance to identify businesses that either do not appear or are undervalued in the rating list.

Since Business rates retention was introduced, circa £11m in rateable value has been added to the list through these initiatives.

In terms of collection, the performance in Thurrock is again amongst the best performing councils. For 2015/16 the team achieved a collection rate of 99.8% which was significantly higher the National average of 98.2%

► **NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR's) - FUTURE**

The next business rates revaluation will come into effect on 1st April 2017 and will re-assess all business properties in England and Wales based on rental value as at 1st April 2015. It has been a full seven years since business rates were last assessed.

Over the last few months the Valuation Office Agency has been in the process of collecting information from businesses to assist the revaluation. This phase is now complete and the VOA is due to publish the draft list online on the 30 September 2016. This will enable Businesses the opportunity to check their draft valuation and advise the VOA of any items which are not correct before Thurrock uses this information to calculate bills for 2017/18.

A key associated risk for councils in relation to Business Rates is the potential impact of reductions in rateable value following appeal to the Valuation office. Currently Thurrock has a total provision of £13.3m for outstanding appeals, the risk for which is jointly shared with the government.

Whilst we continue to monitor the position closely and represent Thurrock's position where appropriate, the responsibility for valuation and appeals itself is outside of the council's control. In addition the extent of future appeals is difficult to forecast with any certainty - for example, Lakeside has recently lodged an appeal with the valuation office for loss of income relating to work on the A13.

► **SUNDRY DEBTORS - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M**

The overall debt book as at the end of July was £4.8m compared to £7m last year. For this year to date almost 10,000 invoices have been raised which is 13% more than the same period last year. The total over 6 months old debt across all portfolios is £1.9m compared to £1.7m last year however the value of write offs has dropped by over £300k in a rolling 12 month period.

► **SUNDRY DEBTORS - FUTURE**

In order to ensure amounts due to the council are billed and recovered as efficiently as possible, I have asked my management team to undertake a review with the aim of streamlining the process of raising an invoice to reduce administration costs and improve cashflow. Potential Options for consideration are:

Introducing improved controls to highlight delays between service provision and invoices being raised.

Providing departments with the facility to 'self raise' invoices directly through Oracle.

► **HOUSING BENEFITS - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M**

This year the Government increased the amount of money it provides to Thurrock for Discretionary Housing Payments by £132k (£423,988 in total) to provide additional support to those affected by the welfare reforms. In Autumn this year the DWP are due to introduce the next phase of the Benefit Cap which will reduce the total amount of Benefits unemployed households can claim to £385 per week for a household with children and £258 per week for single claimants.

The council has received an initial list from the DWP which suggests 493 claimants within Thurrock will be potentially affected by this change. The DWP are currently communicating with those who will potentially be affected, to advise of the likely deduction and options available to them to mitigate the impact. Once the DWP has completed this process it will provide a final list to the council for processing and at this stage, we will again write to people highlighting options and also promoting the DHP fund for those in severe financial difficulty.

The roll out of Universal Credit commenced in Thurrock on 16 March 2015. Initially the DWP's rollout within Thurrock is only for single people of working age submitting a new claim for Job Seekers Allowance. As a result, claimant numbers are still low and there has been minimal impact on Housing Benefit claims.

Whilst Universal Credit is administered by the DWP and longer term will replace Housing Benefit for most working age applicants, there will not be any significant volumes transferring to UC in Thurrock before the DWP rolls out its digital platform later next year, however, full migration will not be completed until March 2022. It is worth noting that under current plans, even when fully rolled out, the Thurrock benefits team will still be responsible for processing claims for Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit for pensioners and some other groups.

Whilst the lack of certainty on the migration approach to UC presents difficulties in the long term planning, the service continues to promote online transactions and as a next step to this we are looking at solutions to allow residents to submit evidence to support their E-claims online i.e. Wage slips etc.

In the meantime the processing times for New Claims and Changes in Circumstance continue to achieve processing targets of 18 Days and 8 Days respectively.

► HOUSING BENEFITS - FUTURE

The new administration take the view that monies owed to Thurrock Council – rents, council tax etc. – should be paid as soon as possible after benefit / Universal Credit etc. – is issued to claimants.

The onset of Universal Credit will mean that Benefits will no longer be posted to Council Tenants rent accounts, therefore I have requested that Officers investigate ways we can mitigate this risk, so to ensure as full recovery of owed amounts to the council treasury as possible (and as legally mandated) to ensure correct cash-flow through the organisation through the whole year, and to assist claimants on budgeting for the forthcoming period of time between this payment to the council, and their next benefits payment.

► ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

Focus remains in this area on paying Creditors in a timely manner and reducing costs through continued promotion of iSupplier, payment through BACS and using electronic methods/system functionality wherever possible.

This year to date, Thurrock has paid 96.6% of invoices within 30 days. Whilst this performance is still 0.4% below our upper quartile target, it continues to improve on previous years with various initiatives being progressed to further improve performance.

► ACCOUNTS PAYABLE - FUTURE

We currently pay 94.51% of our suppliers by BACS (electronically). There is also a joint project underway in conjunction with Commercial Services to increase the use of purchase cards for spend under £10k, that will further minimise the use of cheques, speed up payments and deliver back office savings in processing.

Further improvement will be made through the continued push for iSupplier that allows our suppliers to 'self-serve' their own transactions eliminating the need for any data processing duplication. To date approximately 1,528 of our commercial suppliers have signed up which is 59.13% of the supplier base.

As a KPI which Thurrock Council has to yet truly master, I have asked my management team for continued focus on closing the gap on invoices being processed in the required time. Some of the current initiatives in place to achieve this are:

- Ongoing promotion of iSupplier, which negates the need for an invoice.
- Targeted communications to remind requisitioners of correct process and managing invoices on hold.
- Late payment liability reporting to highlight the potential financial impact of late payment.
- Visibility of Retrospective Orders raised by service included in monthly reporting.
- Regular communication, and meetings where necessary, with high impact areas to improve performance by updating processes.
- Procurement card project in process to potentially eliminate all invoices under 10K (Dependant on sign off).
- Targeted distribution of the BVPI08 report to Performance Improvement Officers in high impact areas.

► **PERFORMANCE DATA**

Indicator	RAG Status	New Framework	Direction of Travel since 2014/15	Year End Outturn	Year End Target
% Council Tax Collected	A	FAILED	Worse	98.58	98.9
% National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Collected	G	ACHIEVED	Better	99.8	99.3
% Invoices Paid Within Timescale	A	FAILED	Better	95.37	97

► **ACTION PLAN FOR “FAILED” PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2015-16**

See relevant sections above.

INTERNAL AUDIT

► **SERVICE OVERVIEW**

In April 2015, the decision was made to end the contract with the previous contractor and bring the Internal Audit service back in house.

Internal Audit is an independent assurance function that primarily operates in accordance with best practice professional standards and guidelines. It reviews on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council’s objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources

Internal Audit reports are presented to the Standards and Audit Committee on a quarterly basis and at the July meeting through the Internal Audit Annual Report

which gives an assurance opinion on the overall internal control, risk management and governance environments. Any individual internal audit review judged “Red” or “Red/Amber” is subject to timely action plan and follow up audit.

► REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

As a result of the decision to bring the Internal Audit service in-house, the service is in the process of going through a recruitment exercise to strengthen its resources. The service is managed by the Chief Internal Auditor.

In accordance with Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Chief Internal Auditor is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation’s risk management, control and governance processes.

The opinion does not imply that internal audit has reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the organisation but is one part of the assurance framework that the Council takes into account in making its annual governance statement (AGS).

In giving our opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes.

During 2015/16, the service finalised and issued a total of 31 assurance reports including an advisory report on Special Guardianship. We were requested to carry out and assist with a number of investigations involving staff employed by, or working for, the Council and worked closely with the Counter Fraud & Investigation Service. We also provided advice and guidance around procurement cards. In total, we issued 25 reports with a positive assurance opinion and 5 reports with an Amber/Red (negative) assurance opinion.

In June 2016, we reported to the Standards & Audit Committee that we have assessed that there has been no significant change from the previous year for governance which remains Green. Despite the changes in the Amber/Red assurance opinions no longer being seen as positive, we concluded that the control environment remains Green as no Red reports were issued during 2015/16.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Internal Audit issued the following Final Reports in 2015/16 with the following ratings:

Audit Report (2015/16)	Opinion	Recommendations		
		H	M	L
Special Guardianship	Advisory	4	0	0
Adult’s Direct Payments	Amber/Red	1	2	1
Safeguarding of Assets (Appointeeship and Deputyship)	Amber/Red	1	4	2
Bonnygate Primary School	Amber/Red	0	5	6
Children’s Direct Payments	Amber/Red	2	2	0
Supported Living	Amber/Red	1	3	1
Arthur Bugler Primary School	Amber/Green	0	3	4
Fostering	Amber/Green	0	3	0

Audit Report (2015/16)	Opinion	Recommendations		
		H	M	L
Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary School	Amber/Green	0	2	4
Orsett Primary School	Amber/Green	0	3	4
Somers Heath Primary School	Amber/Green	0	3	2
Street Lighting	Amber/Green	0	3	1
Accounts Payable	Green	0	1	3
Accounts Receivable	Green	0	1	2
Adult Social Care Expenditure	Green	0	2	1
Adult Social Care Income	Green	0	2	1
Bonnygate Primary School Follow Up	Green	0	1	2
Cash & Banking	Green	0	0	3
Chadwell St Mary Primary School	Green	0	1	2
Children's Centres	Green	0	2	2
Council Tax	Green	0	0	1
Education Transport (Post 16 and Denominational)	Green	0	0	1
Housing Benefit	Green	0	0	5
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School	Green	0	2	2
Housing Rents	Green	0	1	1
NNDR	Green	0	0	0
Payroll (including HR)	Green	0	2	2
Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality	Green	0	0	2
School Condition Funding	Green	0	0	0
St Joseph's RC Primary School	Green	0	2	2
Warren Primary School	Green	0	1	2

Internal Audit issued the following Final Reports in 2016/17 with the following ratings. However, it must be noted that the reports have not been presented to Standards and Audit Committee yet:

Audit Report (2016/17)	Opinion	Recommendations		
		H	M	L
Procurement – Schools	Advisory	0	3	1
Third Party Spend (UNDER £75K)	Advisory	2	3	1
Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings (excluding Council Houses)	Red	2	2	0
Recruitment and Selection Process	Red	1	8	2
Recruitment and Selection Process Follow up	Good Progress			
Car Park Follow Up	Amber/Green	0	0	8
Gas Inspections	Green	0	1	1

► ACTION PLAN FOR “FAILED” PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2015-16

There were no Red internal audit reports issued in 2015/16.

Two Red reports have been issued in 2016/17 so far and progress against delivering the resulting actions will be presented to Standards and Audit Committee on 29th September 2016. The reports concerned are:

- Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Buildings (excluding Council Houses)
- Recruitment and Selection Process

► FUTURE

The 2016/17 plan was developed following meetings with relevant Directors and Heads of Service and covers operations across all the Council’s directorates. It takes into account the key risks identified within the Council’s Corporate Risk Register as well as the External Auditor’s Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report. New issues and potential emerging risks were also identified and discussed with senior management.

As part of the CSR, the future of the way this service is delivered will be reviewed.

DIRECTORATE BUDGET CONTROL

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2016/17

Service Area	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance £000
Corporate Finance	1,401	1,301	(100)
Counter Fraud	402	352	(50)
Risk & Insurance	693	693	0
ICT	4,881	4,631	(250)
Revenues & Benefits	2,351	2,351	0
Internal Audit	289	289	0
Chief Executive	252	252	0
Total	10,268	9,868	(400)

Finance and IT are currently forecasting to underspend by £0.400m by the end of the year. This will support the mitigation of council wide pressures and contribute towards delivering a breakeven position.

As can be seen from the table above, forecast underspends are within ICT, Corporate Finance and Fraud. An underspend of £0.250m is forecast in ICT primarily through restructure savings and is in addition to a further £0.250m ICT budget reduction at the start of the year in respect of the £1.200m Organisation Challenge

savings target. The underspend forecast within Fraud relates to additional income and the underspend within Corporate Finance will result in post reductions. This represents the first year target towards the 15-20% budget reduction challenge. Revenues and Benefits are forecasting to breakeven, however, this is after a budget reduction of £0.150m as part of the delivery of the £1.200m Organisation Challenge savings target.

► **TREASURY – 2016/17**

	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance £000
Interest Payable on External Debt	2,876	3,292	417
Interest Receivable on Investments	(3,145)	(4,162)	(1,017)
Net Interest	(270)	(870)	(600)
MRP	4,262	4,262	0
Total	3,992	3,392	(600)

Current projections indicate a further £0.600m to be realised this year through more effective treasury management and investment returns. An increase in interest payable of £0.417m due to the inclusion of debt management costs direct to the interest budget is more than offset by the £1m additional gains on investments. This is from an expected benefit of £0.200m from an improved treasury position and an in-year £0.400m return on a joint LA Bond issued to the private sector for a renewable energy project. This builds on the previous investments that the council has made with CCLA over the last two years. The current MTFs already included a further £0.582m benefit in 2017/18 and this has been increased by a further £0.350m as a result of the full year impact of the renewable energy investment.

QUESTION TIME

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

There are 3 questions to the Leader and 10 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

1. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill

In light of the events of the weekend of the 30/31 July, regarding the King Of The Road travellers pony and trap racing on the Manorway public road Corringham, and further to the scrutiny work and recommendations of Cleaner Greener & Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2016 can the Leader let me know what measures are now being put in place or considered to prevent such activities being repeated.

2. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader of the Council believe that the Council has sufficient legal powers to deal with unauthorised traveller sites in Thurrock?

3. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Gledhill

Will the Leader of the Council explain the process for agreeing Thurrock Council's submission to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission?

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

1. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor B Little

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that residents including parents with buggies are being forced to walk in the road, around the blind corner on Silvertown Avenue and Thors Oak because people are parking on pavements and may I ask what, if any, action is the Council planning to take to stop this?

2. From Councillor Stone to Councillor Coxshall

How many days was the cafe open at Grays beach during the last 3 months?

3. From Councillor Watkins to Councillor Halden

Could the Portfolio Holder for Education, please inform me what steps are being taken for sports at all schools in Thurrock?

4. From Councillor Cherry to Councillor Tolson

The very latest Traveller incursion onto land at Chadwell Hill, Chadwell St Mary cost the Council over £6000. This is likely to happen again next year as it has happened before, unless something is done. Would you agree that the money that will very likely be spent next year be earmarked and spent towards preventing incursions there and elsewhere in Thurrock where this regularly happens by using methods of hardening that cannot easily be undone. Thus sending out the message that Travellers who break the law are not welcome so that all Travellers do not get blamed in Thurrock and save Thurrock residents the cost and annoyance of this unlawful trespass on their community land.

5. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

From the second year of pay-to-stay any revenue raised, after the council's expenses are deducted, will be sent to the treasury. How much revenue does the portfolio holder believe will be raised by pay-to-stay in Thurrock after the council has deducted its expenses?

6. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Stewart

If the Council does not extend its transition funding to Thurrock Citizen Advice Bureau I believe there may be a risk that it will close its doors in April 2017. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm whether the Council's transition funding will cease in April 2017?

7. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Tolson

The problems caused by people drinking in Grays Town Centre are getting worse. Will the portfolio holder commit to working with the police to look at introducing a PSPO to help deal more effectively with the issue?

8. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Halden

Can the Cabinet Member for Education outline what action the Council is taking in order to take full advantage of the Prime Minister's statement on Grammar Schools?

9. From Councillor Smith to Councillor Stewart

The Portfolio Holder will no doubt be aware of the closure of Aveley community forum and the many youth services it provides. Is the Council considering action to mitigate the loss of the important services it was offering to residents?

10. From Councillor Pothecary to Councillor Halden

When does the Portfolio Holder expect full GCSE results for each school in Thurrock to be published?

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Item 15 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 28 September 2016

Date	From	Motion	Status	Accountable Director
23/09/15	Cllr Halden	<p>Legal highs are quickly becoming a social disaster, from both the point of view of being harmful as substances, but also giving a very incorrect impression of the dangers of substance abuse, especially amongst younger people.</p> <p>We instruct Council to consult with Essex Police on the most effective way of tackling the use of legal highs in public spaces, including Public Space Protection Orders, with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee monitoring the outcome.</p> <p>In addition we instruct the constitution working group to consider how to best exercise and delegate all of our streamlined public protection powers that come from the 2014 Crime and Disorder act to be accessible to all members.</p>	<p>The Head of Public Protection has consulted with the Local Police Commander to determine whether the Police would support the application of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Thurrock to impose control measures on the use of legal highs.</p> <p>The Police have indicated that based on the evidence available to them and the practicality of enforcing control measures against an otherwise legal activity they would not prioritise enforcement of any control measures imposed by a potential PSPO at this time.</p> <p>Should further evidence alter the Police position with regard to the prioritisation of enforcement resources for legal high work they will update the Council and liaise with the relevant council department to consult on a PSPO for this purpose.</p>	Gavin Dennett
23/09/15	Cllr Worrall	<p>Thurrock Council are concerned over implications for tenants and housing stock of the Conservative government's Emergency Budget's housing measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Benefit withdrawn for 18–21 year olds; • Housing Benefit/ Local Housing Allowance (LHA) frozen for five years; • Tax Credits and Housing Benefit/LHA include only first two children in households born after April 2017; • Market rents charged in social housing where incomes are £30,000, additional rent receipts go to Treasury not Housing 	<p>A paper is scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 11th November on the principles the council may adopt for mitigating detrimental impact that these proposals may otherwise have on our existing affordable housing building programme. This is set to be followed by a report to Housing O&S with the results of the more detailed impact assessments that are currently being undertaken.</p> <p>In addition the Council is in the process responding to recent formal consultations issued in respect of the market rents proposals for all households exceeding £30,000.</p> <p>David Bull will be writing to the MPs in October with the current understanding of the proposed measures on</p>	David Bull

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		<p>Revenue Account or Council.</p> <p>The impact will increase poverty, homelessness and numbers at risk of being homeless, amongst young and very low income families.</p> <p>For individual tenants who have faced significant above inflation rent increases and falling incomes over the last few years, the Budget proposal to cut social sector rents by 1% for the next four years will be welcome.</p> <p>That a 1% rent cut will mean loss of rental income to Housing Revenue Account of £18.75 million by 2019/2020, that loss will have significant consequences for Council's plans to build new homes, maintain and refurbish existing stock of homes.</p> <p>The Council resolves to write to the two MPs for Thurrock to lay out concerns and to highlight the impact on Thurrock residents of these measures in Westminster.</p>	Thurrock Residents.	
23/09/15	Cllr Ray	<p>This Council calls for those Councillors who passed away during their service as a member of Thurrock Council (since the turn of the new century) to be commemorated in the Council Chamber for their work and contributions to the community of Thurrock.</p>	<p>Research has been undertaken to identify around ten councillors who have passed away while still serving on the council since 1998. Officers are now looking into the various options for designing a suitable memorial.</p>	Fiona Taylor
23/09/15	Cllr Halden	<p>The current crisis with refugees has led to calls for national and local governments to act in support. The chamber agrees with this.</p> <p>Thurrock resolves to play its part to aid refugees and will make this position known to the Home Office.</p>	<p>Officers have been looking at how the council currently supports refugees and those seeking asylum and how it can do so in the future. There is a well-established process for dealing with unaccompanied asylum seekers who are looked after as children in care. Thurrock has recently looked after higher numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children than in</p>	Carmel Littleton

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		<p>We instruct the council to be ready with clear plans for service support from housing, social care, to public protection.</p> <p>While we welcome the notion of using international aid funding to help with costs, we of course understand local pressures we are already under and therefore council will make representations to the Home Secretary that support must be evenly sought across local authorities to avoid disproportionate costs being applied to the taxpayer.</p>	<p>previous years and is already playing a full part in offering support.</p> <p>Departments across the council are looking in details at how refugees subject to the new resettlement scheme can be accommodated successfully in the borough and the funding available from government to achieve this. Early details of government funding for the scheme have been released and these are informing departmental plans. A letter has been sent to the Home Secretary requesting that support is evenly sought across local authorities to avoid disproportionate costs falling to the taxpayer.</p>	
28/10/15	Cllr Redsell	<p>We call on Thurrock Council to take action with its partners to help prevent the use of motorbikes and similar vehicles on our green spaces.</p>	<p>The Council work closely with Essex police to address this problem across the Borough. There are posters advising residents against this anti-social behaviour and requesting that they report such illegal use to either the Police or crimestoppers; which have been displayed in all housing communal areas.</p> <p>Specific concerns are brought to the multi-agency community safety partnership Local Action Groups for discussion and attention. This has led to a section 59 notice being served at Blackshots and a subsequent reported reduction in nuisance vehicles.</p> <p>The Police will continue to deal with such reported nuisance with support as required from their partners.</p>	Lucy Magill
28/10/15	Cllr J. Kent	<p>Thurrock Council is concerned at reports that government is considering scrapping Universal Free School Meals for infant school children.</p> <p>We believe that such a move would be damaging to both the education and health outcomes of our young people so resolve to write to the Treasury and Department for Education to show our support</p>	<p>Letter to Treasury, DfE and Thurrock 2 MP's sent out.</p>	Carmel Littleton

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		for the continuation of Universal Free School Meals as well as to our two members of parliament to make them aware of our concerns.		
28/10/15	Cllr Ray	That this Council will explore ways of working with NHS partners to fully endorse and promote the importance of giving blood and signing up for organ and tissue donation in Thurrock.	<p>Ian Wake, the Council's Director of Public Health has discussed Councillor Ray's motion with senior colleagues in NHS Thurrock CCG.</p> <p>The Council's Public Health team have agreed to develop a joint communications campaign with the CCG to promote blood and organ donation and encourage our population to participate in both of these important national programmes.</p>	Roger Harris / Ian Wake
28/10/15	Cllr Potheary	<p>Essex Police have recently announced they plan to close two of the borough's police stations and sell off a third, as well as cut the number of PCSOs in Thurrock from 38 to just 6. After already making cuts of £40million, Essex Police is facing having to make over £60million worth of cuts by 2020 thanks to the Government. The dramatic reduction in the number of police officers and PCSOs on our streets is a big issue for our residents and has worrying implications for community safety.</p> <p>The Council resolves to write to the two MPs for Thurrock to set out our concerns about the detrimental impact of police cuts on Thurrock residents and community safety, and ask them to lobby for better funding for Essex Police.</p>	Letters sent to both MPs	Lucy Magill
25/11/15	Cllr Kent	This Council remains opposed to government plans for a further river crossing in Thurrock and commits to continue campaigning, alongside local residents, on this issue.	The Council is expecting a Government decision on route options for the Lower Thames Crossing before the end of January. Two public meetings have been organised to discuss the issues on January 25th and February 25th and a special extended Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Scrutiny is planned for	David Bull

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			<p>9 February 2016. Highways England's proposals were published on 26th January with a preferred option for a bored tunnel between Gravesend and Tilbury.</p> <p>Revised Text:</p> <p>The Government decision on route options for the Lower Thames Crossing was published on 26th February 2016. Since then two public meetings have been organised to discuss the issues on January 25th and February 25th and also a special extended Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Scrutiny took place on 9 February 2016.</p> <p>Highways England's preferred option is for a bored tunnel between Gravesend and Tilbury</p> <p>A PTR Scrutiny report has been produced and discussion took place at Cabinet on 9 March 2016. Three letters seeking to extend and then stop the flawed consultation were sent to the Secretary of State for Transport. No replies have been received.</p> <p>This Council meeting is being asked to sign off the formal consultation response in the opposition to the LTC through Thurrock.</p>	
25/11/15	Cllr Halden	<p>Thurrock Council adopts the official position of being pro grammar school and desires that Thurrock children should have access to them.</p> <p>The Authority should actively pursue / explore opportunities for grammar schools to expand into Thurrock via an annex.</p>	<p>Local authority officers met with the Regional Schools Commissioner representative on 14.1.15 to explore opportunities for grammar schools to open an annexe in Thurrock. Exploratory discussions will be held over the coming weeks with local grammar schools.</p>	Carmel Littleton
25/11/15	Cllr Stewart	<p>That we ask Cabinet, at its next meeting, to immediately fund an alteration to the bus route to serve Fobbing over the winter months.</p>	<p>This has been implemented. Route 14 serves Fobbing to Basildon via Corringham and will operate until the end of the financial year.</p>	David Bull

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27/1/16	Cllr Hebb	That Thurrock Council looks to encourage the extension of the current Oyster Card Railcard / Contactless Payment Scheme and/or its replacement from Grays C2C station to all zones across the borough as they would both be helpful and a support to residents and growth. Council resolves to work with external agencies to realise this request.	Discussions are ongoing between Council Officers and c2c to progress this request.	Ann Osola
27/1/16	Cllr Halden	The chamber resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health with regards to poor communication/ engagement from representatives of NHS England and NHS commissioning, particularly with reference to the consultation on the PET CT Scanner (cancer services) which we view as an unsound consultation.	On the 5 February 2016 a letter was sent to The Rt. Honourable Jeremy Hunt M.P, Secretary of State for Health, House of Commons.	Ian Wake
27/1/16	Cllr Stone	Further to the proposed cuts to the fire service across the borough of between one third and one half. This council resolves to express its concerns by: a) Objecting to these proposals through the Essex Fire and Rescue Service (EFRS) public consultation - and urges residents to do the same. b) Raising these concerns with the two members of parliament to enlist their support c) Urging the EFRS to consider expanding the level of fire cover in Thurrock due to the rapid increase in jobs, industry and homes.	The Fire Authority will be attending Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny on March 17th as part of their consultation exercise. This will give members the opportunity to raise their concerns. Both MPs have been written to. A link to the EFRS public consultation has been included on the Council's website under Have my say (consultation portal).	Lucy Magill / Karen Wheeler
24/2/16	Cllr Aker	A letter has been sent from the Leader of the Council to the Chief Executive of c2c setting out this request. No response has been received to date.	A letter has been sent from the Leader of the Council to the Chief Executive of c2c setting out this request. No response has been received to date.	Ann Osola

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			<p>C2C have endeavoured to find additional carriages to relieve the overcrowding in peak periods on services through Thurrock. However they have not been successful to date.</p> <p>Council officers pressed C2C to attend PTR Scrutiny on 1st March 2016 but they were unable to attend. It has now been agreed that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport and the PTR Scrutiny Chair will meet with C2C to discuss progress on the issues. A letter explaining the reasons for the Council motions has been sent to C2C.</p>	
24/2/16	Cllr Jones	In light of recent events where the Borough of Thurrock was brought to a virtual standstill on the 28th January and 9th February because of events relating to the Dartford crossing, we request that Thurrock Council send a letter to both Essex Police and Essex Fire and Rescue Services to rethink their proposals to drastically cut essential services to the borough of Thurrock and work with Highways England on an action plan to combat the chronic congestion that affects the whole Borough during such incidents.	Essex Police and Essex Fire and Rescue Service have been written to.	Lucy Magill
23/3/16	Cllr Halden	Thurrock Council calls on the Home Office to expedite work to release money from police management costs in order to provide more funding to the front line, such as the ongoing work to bring the blue light services together.	Letter sent by Steve Cox to the Home Secretary.	Lucy Magill
23/3/16	Cllr Snell	This Chamber agrees that excessive bureaucracy and costs emanating from the EU have a detrimental effect on the efficiency and cost of Thurrock Council meaning that Thurrock Council would be better off if Britain was to vote to leave the European Union.	This motion does not require officer action.	

Item 15 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 28 September 2016

27/7/2016	Cllr Hebb	Thurrock Council calls upon the government to introduce legislation to provide for a right of "Recall" of local government councillors, alongside Thurrock Council also exploring the possibilities to introduce its own local recall scheme.	The methodology and detail of the public consultation to be discussed at Governance Group and reviewed and agreed by General Services Committee on behalf of Full Council.	David Lawson
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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor Aker

Thurrock council calls on the government to make unauthorised traveller pitches and unauthorised events a criminal offence.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The notice of Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority' or the Authority' area and relates to a matter in respect of which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this motion.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 2

Submitted by Councillor Jones

We call on Thurrock Council to write to the Secretary of State to express many residents' views that in its present state the police service contact number 101 is not fit for purpose.

Statement:

The 101 police service contact number was first set up in 2006 under a labour government. The idea of the police contact number service 101 was to take pressure off 999 call to provide an alternative to the public to report minor crimes such as car thefts, ABS, criminal damage and minor road accidents. Unfortunately the free provision 101 service after costing £41 million pounds a charge was introduced in 2011 at a rate of 15 pence a call for the service.

I like many other councillors attend residents, shop traders and forum meetings along with the many police presentation meetings and the main concern from residents is the length of time it takes to report crime through the 101 service. The police officers that take these presentation meetings acknowledge that there are problems. It appears to be getting to the stage where residents are not bothering to report minor crime anymore with residents complaining as to how long it takes to get through to report any crime.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The notice of Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority' or the Authority' area and relates to a matter in respect of which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this motion.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 3

Submitted by Councillor Duffin

That Thurrock Council support the inclusion in the annual Council Tax mail out of details of changes to Council funding by government in the last 5 years and an indication of planned changes in the next 3 years, including in graph format. This would be an effective way to let residents of Thurrock understand the financial pressures the Council has faced over this period and those due to be addressed.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The notice of Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority' or the Authority' area and relates to a matter in respect of which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

The Council already sends out financial information to help explain the bill and the services that council tax helps to provide. Whilst there is a minimum requirement, there is discretion on the level of detail provided as long as this is not political but assists in the explanation.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 4

Submitted by Councillor J Kent

Thurrock Council is extremely concerned that much of Grays Beach Park was not open for residents to enjoy for so much of the summer. Council requests that the Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee (or / and the relevant director) investigate these issues including inviting evidence from Anglian Water, relevant council officers and members before reporting back to the Full Council as soon as reasonably practical about the reasons and responsibilities for so much of Grays Beach Park not being open to residents over the summer period.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The notice of Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority' or the Authority' area and relates to a matter in respect of which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

Although there are obviously costs associated with the issues at Grays Beach, this motion in itself has no financial implication as the costs of an investigation would be met from budgeted officer and democratic services' time.

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

Yes

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