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

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **18 January 2017**

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

Membership:

Councillors John Kent (Chair), Leslie Gamester (Vice-Chair), Jack Duffin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney and Aaron Watkins

Substitutes:

Councillors Tim Aker, James Baker, Tony Fish, Oliver Gerrish and Tom Kelly

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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

Agenda published on: **10 January 2017**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

When should you declare an interest _at a meeting_?

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

↓

> **Does the business to be transacted at the meeting**
> - **relate to; or**
> - **likely to affect**
>
> **any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?**
>
> Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:
>
> - your spouse or civil partner's
> - a person you are living with as husband/ wife
> - a person you are living with as if you were civil partners
>
> where you are aware that this other person has the interest.
>
> A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

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

Pecuniary

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

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

> **Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:**
> - **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
> - **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
> - **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**
>
> **If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps**

Non- pecuniary

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

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

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

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

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

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

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

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

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

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

4. Improve health and well-being

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

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 November 2016 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors John Kent (Chair), Jack Duffin, Steve Liddiard, Ben Maney and Aaron Watkins
Apologies:	Councillors Leslie Gamester (Vice-Chair)
In attendance:	Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health Tracie Heiser, Operational Services Lead Sarah Welton, Strategy & Performance Officer Jonathon Wilson, Chief Accountant, Finance Charlotte Raper, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

17.   **Minutes**

The minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 September 2016 were approved as a correct record.

18.   **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

19.   **Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interests.

20.   **Review of Vision and Corporate Priorities**

The Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services presented the report which outlined the ambition for both Thurrock Council and Thurrock as a borough. Members were shown the existing vision and corporate priorities as well as the proposed new draft priorities, and were asked to comment as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Duffin asked why the Council were going through this process as the new priorities seemed to be a lot of words that would not dictate strategy and meant very little to him, and he felt that many of Thurrock's residents would feel the same. He questioned the use of spending a lot of time and money on something that would, in his opinion, achieve very little. The

Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services thanked Councillor Duffin for his feedback and agreed that it would need to be meaningful and there was a risk of being too generic, with no real relation to Thurrock and being unrecognisable. She continued that these visions and priorities were part of the framework for service planning and core service delivery.

Councillor Duffin suggested it be amended to bullet point form, and put more plainly so that it was more accessible for residents. Councillor Liddiard agreed that for the residents of Thurrock there was a large amount of rhetoric, though he felt that the vision and priorities were important to officers to show them what they, and the Council as a whole, would be working towards. Councillor Maney interjected that in terms of what the document meant and how it would be delivered was surely the responsibility of elected Members, and that he suspected in a few months' time Members would be holding officers to account. He queried the meaning of "Wider Team Thurrock" and added that it felt like too much jargon. Many Members echoed this question. The Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services explained that it referred to the Council's partners, businesses and institutions within Thurrock, to identify that a great deal of work done within the borough was a collaborative effort. She agreed that it could be articulated more effectively.

Councillor Watkins agreed that it was important to ensure that officers and those working with the Council were clear of what the expectations and aims were. He referred to the fact that some partner organisations had been listed and not others and asked whether there was any reason why. Members were informed that it was just to give an example, that there was no reason those specific organisations had been listed.

The Chair raised his concern that previously this type of review had always been a "bottom up" process beginning with public consultation whereas in this instance the decision to review the Council's visions and priorities had not been made by Full Council, or even the Cabinet, but solely the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder which implied a very "top down" approach. He continued that in reality there was very little information and detail included; there were three broad areas that no Local Authority would disagree with. The document made no specific reference to schools or increasing pride in Thurrock, Community harmony or Thurrock's heritage. While he accepted this was a first stab he felt it was a disappointing effort.

Councillor Duffin asked what the cost of the consultation process would be and how much time it would absorb as he felt personally that a large number of consultations were undertaken by Thurrock that seemed not to achieve much. The Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services assured Members that the Council had used the wealth of feedback for the most important priorities, from existing forums rather than carrying out a separate exercise which would cost more. She agreed that the feedback of what details were missing from the report would be taken on board, as well as the fact that the approach needed to be "bottom up". She explained that this

had been the first draft to test the waters but agreed that there was work to be done.

Councillor Liddiard outlined that if you were to ask an IT specialist how to improve a situation the response would be to get a new server, a Highways specialist would suggest building another road. It was important that the process considered all areas and options. The Chair agreed that the importance was for people to see the document and own it and the difficulty of a top-down approach was that the final changes would need to be approved by Full Council and this had not been a good start.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented upon the proposed new vision and corporate priorities.

21.   **Mid-year Corporate Plan Progress and Performance Report 2016/17**

The Head of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service presented the report which provided a progress update in relation to the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and against the related actions outlined in the Corporate Priority Activity Plan for 2016/17.

Councillor Duffin referred to Focus 2, regarding the percentage of adults who smoke, in terms of the amount of money spent and the number who quit smoking and asked why the Council was spending money telling adults what to do with their lives. Adults were capable of making their own choices and it was not cost effective as it clearly was not achieving much. He also referred to Focus 3, regarding bin collection, and asked why the Council would consider moving to fortnightly collection if they could not achieve their targets with weekly collection, as it would make the issue of missed bins far worse if residents had to wait a further fortnight rather than one week.

The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health explained that the Council was not "throwing money" at the issue and the amount at present was between £100,000 and £120,000 spent on a largely treatment based plan. The money was being spent on treatment programmes via pharmacies and GP services rather than publicity, the majority of anti-smoking publicity seen was part of national campaigns funded by the NHS or Public Health UK. The Council had commissioned GPs and other services to run treatment programmes, but it had to be accepted that the traditional four-week programme was very rigid and a new plan was needed. The entire programme was being retendered. Focus had shifted to working with schools to stop children taking up smoking in the first place. Councillor Duffin agreed with the work being carried out in schools and expressed his view that it was important but felt money could be better spent on GP surgeries rather than anti-smoking propaganda. Members heard that GPs were not tendered by the Local Authority and Thurrock was facing the problem that the improvement in number of people who smoked had plateaued which was not

the case nationally, with the added worry that the number of young people smoking had begun to rise.

The Chair asked why Thurrock was now an outlier, with the number of smokers not reducing whilst other boroughs still were. He asked what the borough was doing wrong. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health explained that there were a wide range of issues such as primary care, peer group pressure and economic deprivation to consider as well as vulnerable groups such as those with learning difficulties and mental health issues. Some other boroughs had also put far greater focus on educating young people sooner whereas Thurrock was making that shift now. There were a wide range of issues but the traditional four week treatment programme was definitely outdated and needed to be revised.

The Chair also asked whether the KPI was set locally or nationally and Members heard that though it was set locally it had previously been a national target and the Council still had to feed data into Public Health England, based on the number of people that had undertaken the four week programme that were still not smoking after 13 weeks.

The Chair interjected that the Council should be realistic and accept the fact that it would not reach this target any time soon. The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held in October 2016 showed that resources would no longer be used to re-educate adults about their lifestyle, which implied the Council was no longer trying to get adults to stop smoking and so the target would not be met.

The Committee heard that both this target and the target surrounding obesity, in terms of public health would be the two most challenging targets faced and therefore when the target would be set next year there would be a need to reassess whether or not it was an achievable target. The Chair followed that it could therefore be concluded that the Council would not be helping adults with their weight problems or to stop smoking. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health clarified his point that the focus would be moving away from generic, publicity based campaigns towards more targeted treatment and early intervention.

Councillor Liddiard asked what the length of the contracts would be, as there was concern that the Council could find itself bound into a contract that it was not working. Members were informed that the contract usually included a number of providers and the length of tender was to be 3 years. Councillor Liddiard raised concerns that, within his ward at least, there were a large number of people who smoked and many who were obese and nothing seemed to be working to change these facts. The Committee heard that improvement in both areas had plateaued in Thurrock hence the need for a more targeted approach and increased work with young people in the borough.

Councillor Duffin asked whether the funds were ring-fenced, or if the Council had the ability to change how it would be spent. It was confirmed that the

Public Health Grant was ring-fenced for the next 2 years, and those areas discussed would be part of a contract and therefore ring-fenced as part of that.

The Chair referred to Focus 1 regarding the percentage of good or better primary schools and highlighted the tremendous achievement since 2010 when 30% of children in the borough were attending Good or Outstanding schools which had now risen to 92.4%. He took the opportunity to warn against risking undoing the good work that had been done, especially in the face of looming large cuts to school budgets.

RESOLVED:

1) **The Committee noted and commented upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are IN FOCUS.**

2) **The Committee noted and commented upon the progress in relation to the key corporate priority activities for 2016/17.**

3) **The Committee identified any areas which required additional consideration.**

22. **Customer Services Strategy**

The Operational Services Lead presented the report which outlined the draft Customer Services Strategy and proposals for a number of service areas. This would be particularly important as at present there was no overarching strategy for the Council as a whole which meant there were no consistent standards. The council was not managing residents' expectations, nor did it provide clarity for staff. Members were invited to offer comments on the proposals to make some services online only and make others appointment only, whilst aiming to reduce the level of face-to-face walk in clients and increase self-service.

Councillor Liddiard asked how many active "my account" users there were as this was important information. The Committee was advised that currently, whilst there was information surrounding the number of accounts, it did not show how many were actively used.

Councillor Watkins raised concern firstly for those residents without online access and reminded officers that they should be considered. He referred to section 2.6 of the report and expressed his dislike for the wording as it implied the Council did not want residents to be in contact, and also asked whether residents were ever asked why they were not using the website to identify whether it was due to lack of internet access or the website itself. Drawing on his personal experience at work he suggested use of a live-chat system on the website and also highlighted the benefits of phone applications versus traditional webpages.

Members were assured that presently, officers carried out a range of activities to help residents get online, including assisting in the creation of their "my account". At present applications for benefits or to register as homeless were compulsory online forms and if residents encountered problems there was support to help them complete these forms. The potential of mobile applications was something that would be considered and fed back as a result of the debate. It was stressed that support was 100% available for those in need. Officers hoped to assist vulnerable residents with face-to-face appointments but at present they were having to wait in a queue alongside other residents; it was hoped that resources would be less strained if those who were capable would use the website or the phone service. The majority of those asked advised that they generally came into the Council Offices purely because that was the route they had always taken.

The Director of Strategy, Communication and Customer Services added that every page of the Council's website had a "did you find what you were looking for" link to obtain comments and feedback from service users. She agreed that the wording of section 2.6 needed to be amended but that it constituted two key points:
1. Getting things right in the first place, for example missed bins. This should reduce the need for residents to contact the Council to complain.
2. A current lack of clarity about standards. At present residents were calling to chase applications if they had not received a response within a few days when the process took a minimum of 7 days. If this was more clearly communicated it would reduce the need for service users to contact the Council to chase a response.

Councillor Liddiard noted that the issues raised by residents in his ward had shifted from largely being related to housing repairs to a wide range of social issues including debt management, mental health issues and substance abuse. He asked whether services were being devoted proportionately and suggested making the service more user friendly with 1-click icons for areas such as housing. He also enquired as to whether there were plans to bring the service surrounding emergency alarms for the elderly, currently located in Harty Close, in house. As yet there were no plans to bring the Care Line in house as it was a fairly small operation that worked 24hours a day with only 2 people working at any one time, who also carried out home visits and as such it was quite a tight resource.

Councillor Liddiard wondered how residents were informed that they could attend their Community Hubs for information and assistance as there were currently a number of volunteers while only a small percentage of the population were aware the Hubs existed. The Committee heard that it was hoped to widen that knowledge and educate residents that they need not come to the Civic Offices for every service. Councillor Liddiard also considered that bus far into Grays could be quite costly from certain parts of the Borough and attending local Hubs could save residents money, although the libraries charged 10p per copy which seemed counterproductive as they were documents requested of residents by the Council. That cost to residents

needed to be addressed. The Operational Services Lead informed Members that the Council was looking at introducing self-scanning booths in the Community Hubs.

Councillor Liddiard also remarked that residents often complained, when using the online system, that they received no response. He asked how officers could ensure jobs were actually being completed. The Committee was advised that this was exactly why the Customer Service Strategy was required, whilst the Contact Centre could log a job it was necessary to ensure jobs were being completed by the relevant service areas. Now that the Customer Services department was an in-house operation it was possible to make improvements.

Councillor Duffin supported suggestions of a live-chat system and agreed that the majority of people these days tended to use apps rather than traditional websites. He admitted that he had been forced to use the telephone service three times due to problems with the "my account" system and that he had experience of emailing with no response, he understood why so many residents called or came into the office if they felt they were not getting anywhere. He suggested the Council should do more with email communication, such as automated replies including timeframes for responses.

Councillor Maney added that encouraging residents to use the online system was a good idea, though certain applications required submission of documents and that was a more complicated matter. He echoed concerns around attempting to reduce email communication, particularly if there was a need to reduce the number of residents coming to the Civic Offices for enquiries. He asked what exercise had been carried out to give the result of 85% of residents that were happy to go online, and whether it was online in general or online with Thurrock Council. He remarked that one of the biggest complaints about Thurrock Council was that requests seemed to go in and nothing more would be heard, which is why people tended to come into the office.

The Committee was advised that the exercise had taken place 3 years ago and as such it would be reasonable to expect that number to be higher at present, and the commitment to supporting those who need help was reiterated.

Councillor Maney asked that the proposals be amended to move away from reducing email communication and Members were assured that feedback would be taken on board. Councillor Liddiard suggested caution as whilst email was easy to use it was also very possible that residents would not include all the information required by the Council and therefore it might be better to promote the use of "my account". He stated that he had seen data that suggested 85% of people had access to Wi-Fi, which was a very different matter. There were houses within his ward that had no computer or Wi-Fi and were not aware that these were available in libraries, he stressed the importance of informing residents of resources available to them.

Councillor Watkins urged Members and Officers to remember that everyone would have a different need and that it was paramount that there was a clear and definite strategy to ensure these needs would be met. He asked if it might be possible for an automatic system within the council to flag up if requests had not been responded to within a certain timeframe, and proposed the use of online forms with enough information for services users and to outline exactly what the Council required.

Councillor Watkins also expressed the need to increase the Council's social media reach to engage with residents and be easily contactable. Councillor Duffin agreed that the Council did not utilise social media to its full potential. He asked whether there was any way for residents on hold to be aware how long they could expect to wait before their call would be answered and echoed Councillor Watkins' call for a system to ensure response deadlines were met and requests were not missed and that interactions did not reach the complaint stage. The Operational Services Lead outlined that a Customer Charter was to be set which would give very clear timescales for transactions. The Director of Strategy, Communication and Customer Services highlighted that there was currently a consistency issue; once the process left the Contact Centre it fell to the individual departments and some areas had flag systems whilst others did not, the process and standards needed to be constant.

The Committee began to discuss options for Social Media but it was agreed that it would be more practical to discuss at the next meeting when a report on Communications would be presented.

Councillor Liddiard asked whether the Council used exercises such as mystery shoppers to assess the quality of Customer Service. The Committee heard that Customers were invited to participate in a Customer Satisfaction Survey at the end of their call and the Contact Centre service had been independently audited, so there were mechanisms in place. Councillor Liddiard added that the issue did not lie with the Contact Centre but calls put through to the back office. This had been noted and there were plans to undergo a telephony review.

Councillor Liddiard also noted that homelessness was a major issue within the borough and there needed to be a strategy in place to help with access, though he was unsure whether it could be dealt with from a Customer Service view. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health agreed that customer access needed to be reviewed as presently there was a compulsory online form which was not the most suitable method.

Councillor Watkins asked whether calls were recorded for training purposes, though he was aware that telephone recording was an expensive service. The Committee heard that there was set call quality criteria and all Contact Centre calls were recorded and spot-checked.

The Chair referred to p9 of the Customer Service Strategy and highlighted that, although the document read "*We must start our journey with a clear*

definition of Customer Services" none was given. Members were advised that it was about understand who the Council's customers were, that customers included both residents and businesses and anyone who entered the Civic Offices; it was agreed that there should be a line detailing that information. The Chair reminded the Committee that whilst the Council should be professional and business like, it was not a business and the thought of removing reception services made him uneasy, as did the thought of removing staff to be replaced by volunteers. Online services and applications were pointless if there was not sufficient staff on the receiving end.

He also highlighted that recommendation 1.3 concerned the savings proposals listed in paragraph 4.2of the report, but it gave no details of savings proposals. The Committee heard that the proposal referred to resource savings and staff reduction, along with held vacancies, however Members agreed that without full details they could not pass comment.

RESOLVED:

1) **The Committee commented on the draft Customer Services Strategy at Appendix 1.**

2) **The Committed commented on the proposals for the service areas set out in Appendix 2.**

3) **The Committee felt they could not comment on the savings proposals for customer services as set out at paragraph 4.2 as there was insufficient information provided.**

23.   **Local Council Tax Scheme**

The Chief Accountant presented the report which outlined proposed changes and options to the Local Council Tax Scheme, which would build upon the existing scheme and align with central Government changes to the Housing Benefit and Universal Credit regulations. There were six proposed changes to the existing scheme, four of which were likely to reduce the amount of support available to individual claimants under the scheme. Members were therefore asked to decide whether to support the proposed changes, but were reminded that the final decision would be made at Full Council.

The Chair led by expressing his disappointment at the low number of responses to the consultation, the highest number of which was 30. He advised that the Committee should not put much weight on the percentage in favour of any changes as the figures were minimal.

He objected to Proposed Change 1, as he felt it would hit the working poor with a loss of £180 support over the course of a year, which for some people was a large amount of money. He continued to state that he was not against Proposed Change 2. As for Proposed Change 3, he expressed his discomfort at ending support for self-employed residents as there some people were self-employed as it was the only way to ensure an income. Finally he objected to Proposed Change 5 as it would penalise larger families which would be unfair,

and there would be a risk of two families living side by side receiving different levels of support.

Councillor Duffin echoed his earlier comments surrounding consultations carried out by the Council and insisted that a consultation with 30 respondents was unremarkable, the percentages might as well be discounted by the Committee as even 24/24 was a minimal percentage of the population of the borough. He expressed disappointment that, in his opinion, Members seemed to be given only two options; hit the working poor or cut Council Services. The proposed changes would have a negative impact on the working poor and those with children which he did not support.

Councillor Maney interjected that he personally would support all the proposed changes, though he would be cautious about Proposed Change 3, which would target self-employed residents. He stated that the reality was the Council needed to reduce the welfare bill. As for Proposed Change 5, he suggested that there was tension in the community around those who made the decision to start a family based upon access to benefits and support; as such he would personally support the change. The Chief Accountant informed Members that, regarding Proposed Change 3, there were currently 400 claims, 160 of which would qualify for the reduction in support.

Councillor Duffin agreed that Proposed Change 2 seemed sensible, but queried whether there would be safeguards in place for families with triplets for example within Proposed Change 5.

Councillor Liddiard echoed the concerns of the Chair and Councillor Duffin, and insisted that he could not support the proposed changes at all.

The Committee was advised that the issue of triplets had not yet been raised but the question would be asked and Members could receive a response outside of the meeting. The Director of Finance and IT advised Members that the report had been incredibly challenging to write and any feedback regarding additional information that would support Members would be greatly welcomed, if they could contact him afterwards.

Councillor Watkins also agreed that the consultation had been poorly attained and added that he had sought clarification whilst reading the report, so it would likely be difficult for many residents to fully comprehend too. He continued to express his support for the changes, especially Proposed Change 2, though he shared Councillor Duffin's concerns regarding Proposed Change 5 and safeguards for families whereby the decision to have more than 2 children was beyond their control.

The Committee voted in favour of Proposed Change 2, and against Proposed Changes 1, 3 and 5. Councillor Watkins asked if there could be clarity on the questions raised regarding Proposed Change 5 ahead of Full Council when the decision would be made.

RESOLVED:

1) **Members specifically considered if they support the changes to the scheme detailed in section 3.4 in respect of proposed changes 1, 2, 3 and 5. This is in the context of the impact on individual customers and the cost to the Council.**

2) **Members approved the proposed change 2 as outlined in section 3.4.**

3) **The Committee rejected the proposed changes 1, 3 and 5 as outlined in section 3.4.**

4) **Members approved the proposed changes 4 and 6 as outlined in section 3.4 on the basis that these changes are supported by the consultation response.**

24. **Council Investments Paper**

The Director of Finance & IT presented the report which provided a briefing on the governance around treasury management, including investments, and the benefits that treasury management has brought to the Council's financial position in recent years.

Councillor Duffin proposed some form of democratic oversight to be included within the Treasury Management Strategy which would be approved by Full Council in February, following a Council investment of which Members had been unaware. The Chair interjected that he did not feel it was strictly necessary to be outlined within the Constitution, as up until the investment in Rockfire and the Solar Park the process seemed to have worked well.

Clarification of the investment was sought and the Director of Finance & IT explained that the council had lent money through a bond to a company called Rockfire that in turn owned the Swindon Solar farm. It had been a joint approach with other Local Authorities and the solar farm was equity within the investment. It was further explained that there was an end buyer, HSBC, and the contract was for 15 years with an initial return of 5% that would then rise to 8% at the five year review point. The Council may also be able to extend its period of investment at that time at the higher rate of return and this would be considered nearer the time.

The Chair asked why the process had been so different in this instance. Members heard that the negotiations took place during the period of the election and the immediate weeks after. The Chair continued to probe as to why there had been a press release which said Thurrock Council was proud to invest in Swindon Solar Parkand the Director of Finance & IT explained that there had been a period of commercial sensitivity and, when announced by Rockfire some time later, the Council was responding to questions from the media.

Councillor Duffin expressed concern that it set a precedent and stressed that Members should be made aware of Council investments before press releases were issued. He felt there should be some agreed process to avoid a recurrence. The Chair expressed his concern at how this investment decision had been managed and communicated.

RESOLVED:

1) **That the Committee received this update on investments.**

25. **Council Spending Review Update**

The Director of Finance & IT presented the report which updated Members on the proposals which were currently being considered that would affect Central Services budgets.

Councillor Duffin referred to section 2.5 of the report and requested for options for alternative budget reductions to be included in a future report ahead of Full Council so that Members would be clear on impacts if proposals were not accepted. He also questioned whether section 3.4, which indicated a review of all services by March 2019, meant that the report would be ready by then or the review would be completed by then and the report would follow. The Director of Finance and IT assured Members that there would certainly need to be a contingency report and so Councillor Duffin's request would be met. The review of services would be an ongoing process and as such would be brought into the democratic process as and when they were completed. Members were directed to Appendix 3 which outlined the timescale for reviews to be completed.

The Chair referred to section 3.4 and his unease at *"a target of 15-20% efficiencies in each service"* which sounded like services would be "top sliced" and then the Council would have to see how to make the remaining resources work. The Director of Finance and IT admitted that he would happily rephrase the wording of the principle, but the target was subject to the results of service review and efficiencies would only be made where possible. There were possibilities of improved use of IT and merged service areas to also meet this figure.

The Chair referred to 4.1.1 and what the savings amounted to; it was confirmed that the savings, if met, would amount to £2,525,000. The Chair stated that the target areas seemed to be old favourites listed year in and year out yet never delivered upon, with no more certainty that the majority of areas would deliver now. The Committee heard that certain areas, such as agency staff, had been quite modest savings and more could be achievedand that officers were confident of delivering these.

The Chair requested that the proposal *"Treasury Vehicles- full year effect of the solar farm investment"* on page 113 of the report be re-worded following comments in the previous item that the Council had not invested directly in a

Solar Farm and queried why there had been a separate line included, could the report not simply read "Treasury Management".

RESOLVED:

1) **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the revised MTFS position and the Council Spending Review approach and timetable.**

2) **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of this committee.**

26. **Work Programme**

Members were asked if there were any amendments to the Work Programme they wished to propose, in addition to the two reports already requested within the evening's debate. Councillor Duffin requested, following his earlier comments surrounding the cost and functionality of consultations, that a report might be presented outlining the consultations carried out over the past 12 months including details of their cost and the level of response. The Chair agreed that this would be a very useful report for the Committee to receive with regards to what the Council could carry out on its own, and what could be done with partner organisations. The cost would be a key factor as the resident survey had originally been stopped as a cost saving method.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the Work Programme, including the addition of a report on the Council's Consultations.

27. **Item 10 - Appendix 4 - Savings Proposal 2017/18 - EXEMPT**

The Committee agreed to exclude the press and public for this item.

The Director of Finance & IT presented the Appendix to the Council Spending Review Update which outlined a savings proposal in the form of buying out a current outsourced contract for the service to be directly managed in-house.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the Director of Finance & IT.

The Chair expressed he would be perfectly happy for the service to be managed directly but it would be dependent upon a strong business case, which, as yet, had not been presented to the Committee.

The meeting finished at 9.23 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

18 January 2017	ITEM: 5
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Communications Update	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	Non-key

Report of:
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services

Accountable Head of Service: n/a

Accountable Director:
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services

This report is public

Executive Summary

This report was requested by the Chair of Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programme.

It summarises the focus of the corporate communications team over the last year, highlighting the main promotional campaigns throughout the year and the outcomes.

The Committee are invited to give their views on the future direction of travel for communications to inform a Communications Strategy to be developed for 2017/18.

1. **Recommendation(s)**

1.1 **To note and comment upon the update and direction of travel for communications to inform the development of a Communication Strategy.**

2. **Introduction and Background**

2.1 The Communications team is part of the Strategy, Communications and Customer Services Directorate and is responsible for media liaison (proactive and reactive), social media, marketing campaigns, design, and the council's website. Internal communications has recently returned to the central team from Human Resources and Organisation Development.

2.2 Communicating effectively is every service's responsibility and the team provide advice, guidance and technical support to promote what the council is

doing and to raise its profile, provide important information to residents and protect the council's reputation.

2.3   The team's work programme is driven by the council's priorities and direction from the Administration on the overall approach. The team also respond to ad hoc requests from services for communications support including proactive press releases, promotional information such as leaflets and updates to the website.

2.4   The council follows the Recommended Code of Practice for Local Authority Publicity. The Code provides guidance on the content, style, distribution and cost of local authority publicity.

3.   Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Communication Activity

3.1   The main areas of communication activity over the last year are set out below. The activity reflects the use of a range of communications channels and tools, within the context of an overall shift from print to online media and keeping pace with these changes. The council needs to be able to respond to the way the media operates locally, regionally and nationally, as well as how residents want to be kept informed and where different audiences are most likely to pick up and react to key messages. This is in line with the overall approach to digital and channel shift in the emerging Digital and Customer Services Strategies.

Local Media

3.2   The local and regional media organisations are an important channel for getting messages out to the public, however, this is no longer just focused on a weekly print deadline. Many media organisations now operate a 'digital-first' approach to publishing content and have an increasingly active social media presence.

3.3   The team also identify opportunities to share releases with national trade press such as the LGC and MJ where the story is of more strategic significance or innovative in nature.

3.4   Media/press releases are issued proactively to highlight good news, communicate important messages to residents and share key decisions after meetings such as Cabinet and Council. The team also publicise the important work of Overview and Scrutiny committees by issuing press releases in discussion with Chairs of committees. 286 releases were issued between 1 April and 30 November 2016. All releases are issued to media outlets including radio and television, all Councillors and are made available on the council's website and social media channels. However, the media do not have to cover what we release and can take their own perspective on a story.

3.5   The team also respond to enquiries from the media on a daily basis, and on high profile issues out of hours where necessary, providing statements with the council's response to a particular issue. The team has a key role should the emergency plan be activated and participate in practice exercises with emergency service partners. They are also represented on the Congestion Taskforce.

3.6   The team provides media liaison and support at key events and public meetings, for example, the general and local election counts and the public meetings on the Lower Thames Crossing.

3.7   The council has a contract with the Gazette for the publication of Public Notices which runs until June 2016. Other adverts can be placed in any newspaper at our discretion and are done so for issues such as changes to refuse collection days over Bank Holidays as an additional channel to communicate the message where appropriate.

3.8   To support members, the team offered media training sessions to Cabinet members, Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and Planning and Licencing Committees. This included media awareness as well as practical interview training led by nationally recognised journalists.

Campaigns

3.9   A number of communication campaigns have taken place throughout the last year. These have been prioritised and focused on particular areas which can lead to efficiencies and behaviour change. The campaigns include social worker recruitment, Thameside Theatre events, My Account and fostering. Appendix 1 provides a summary of some of the key campaigns which have taken place over the last year. This includes the evaluation of the campaigns where available.

3.10   Campaigns involve a mixture of communications channels, including releases to local media, posters and outdoor advertising, internal promotion, digital and social media to enable the greatest possible reach across the borough as well as targeted marketing to particular audiences.

3.11   The communications team also have a role as guardians of the council's brand. There are brand guidelines available for all services to use including templates for email signatures and Powerpoint presentations etc. This is to ensure consistent and appropriate use of the brand including when we work with partners.

3.12   Promoting events and awards - which are funded through sponsorship - is also a significant activity for the team including campaigns to communicate the Education and Civic Awards in 2016 and critically support on the night. The team has started to use video as a way of capturing the event and promoting future sponsorship opportunities. Video is also a channel that is

used to support campaigns and bring them to life e.g. foster carer case studies.

Social Media

3.13 Social media use has increased in recent months with a proactive approach including posting press releases, campaign information, events, and sharing both promotional and emergency information from partners such as health and police. This has seen an increase in people engaging with the council's pages.

3.14 We had 9,803 Twitter followers and 2,102 Facebook likes as of mid-December 2016. We tweet on average 170 times each month and also use targeted Facebook advertising for campaigns where appropriate. Social media also gives the council the ability to communicate with a more personable but professional tone rather than as an institution. Although more business–focused, the council also utilises LinkedIn with 1,747 following us. The council also has a YouTube channel but this currently not fully utilised.

3.15 We use a range of channels to get the maximum impact and reach of our messages. Twitter is used both proactively and reactively for news and alerts and Facebook for more social activities such as events in general. A recent example is the Give a Gift tree which apart from two press releases and some localised promotion in the council offices and intu Lakeside, was only communicated via social media but resulted in over 1,600 presents being donated for Thurrock's young people in care and need for Christmas.

3.16 Other social media channels will be explored in the new year in order to ensure we cover a wide demographic with our communications but digital communication is a growing area for us as it is both 'always-on' and more cost effective - but also evolves very quickly.

Resident e-newsletter

3.17 Thurrock News, a new monthly e-newsletter, was introduced in October 2016 - as an additional communication channel to complement the use of other channels. This is now a regular email communication that residents can sign-up to receive. At the end of December 2016 there were 11,000 subscribers.

Internal Communications

3.18 Approximately 80 per cent of the council's staff are also Thurrock residents, and even more have friends and family who live within the borough. Therefore, internal messaging about public campaigns is of vital importance. As well as effective engagement on internal issues, the success of which is reflected in the reaccreditation of Investors in People Gold. Some examples are included in Appendix 1.

Other Communication Activity

3.19 Other areas of importance for 2016 have included an increased focus on raising the profile of Thurrock 'the place' and the council to both ensure residents know what is happening and available to them on their doorstep, as well as attract inward investment to the borough. This activity has included:

- Working with partners at High House Production Park including the Royal Opera House, Creative and Cultural Skills and the National College to jointly promote events
- Awards submissions to the LGC and MJ local government annual awards with consistent shortlisting success and highly commended achieved in some categories as well as winners in other business areas e.g. HR and OD
- Promoting investment opportunities through the MJ/MIPIM investment guide widely circulated at the Property and Investment Trade Show
- Thames Estuary Growth Commission handout with Thurrock skyline and key facts
- Developing a new roundabout sponsorship scheme which will launch in January 2017 generated income but also promoting both local businesses and the council.

Next Steps

3.20 Work is already underway to develop a forward plan of communication activity for 2017/18 with an overarching communication strategy. This will be informed by the results of the Residents Survey completed in December 2016. The strategy, alongside our overall approach to engagement, will be developed for March 2017 providing clarity of our overall approach and direction of travel. The committee is invited to comment on this report and activity to date to inform the development of an overarching communication strategy.

3.21 The service has delivered significant savings in the last few years and now has a budget of £444k for 2016/17. The majority of this budget is for the 9.6 FTE. This also includes the centralised corporate communication budget of £144k which is used to fund all priority communication campaigns and activity including internal communication materials.

3.22 There will be a full service review in February 2018 in line with the council's transformation approach.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This update was requested by the Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the work programme. The committee are invited to note the information provided and comment on the approach to communications to inform the development of a communications strategy for 2017/18.

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

5.1   This is an update report and no specific consultation has been completed other than with members of the communication team and Directors Board.

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

6.1   Communication of the priorities, policies and performance is key to the overall success and reputation of the council as well as the wellbeing of residents. The service therefore actively supports and plays both a public facing roles in helping residents to access services and be informed as well as internally advising and assisting other directorates.

7. Implications

7.1   **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**

                              Management Accountant

There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. The budget for the service is set out at 3.21.

7.2   **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

                              Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

7.3   **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**

                              Community Development Officer

There are no direct diversity and equality implications as a result of this report, however, the council must ensure that a range of channels are used to communicate with residents so as not to exclude any particular group. The results of the Residents Survey will be used to inform the development of an overarching strategy and includes information on how people are kept informed. The strategy will developed alongside the review of the engagement strategy, strengthening the overall approach in 2017/18.

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

There are no other specific implications, however, the council regularly communications issues in partnership with other public sector organisations, the voluntary sector and businesses as appropriate and agreed as part of the work programme and overall approach as well as demand.

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: Summary of Marketing Campaigns 2016

Report Author:

Karen Wheeler

Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Services

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Thurrock Campaigns 2016

thurrock.gov.uk

Do something amazing today

Targeted campaign to increase enquiries from people suited to the children identified in need, including increasing fostering awareness from BME communities with a view to increasing in-house foster carers.

Key results

- **2016**
  Webpage views - 15,250
  Peak activity - significant increase during main campaign period from 9 February to 23 March, and slightly higher than average trends throughout November up to Christmas during the online campaign period.

- **2015**
  Webpage views - 8,742
  Peak activity - Slight increase on average trends from 28 August to 29 October.

	2015	2016
Number of fostering enquiries	120	209
Number of people approved to foster	8	13

Grow with us

Campaign to help recruit and retain child and family social workers in the borough, as well as to celebrate the work and achievements of existing social workers.

Key results (during campaign period)

- 460 per cent increase in web views for comparison periods

- 9 May - 27 June 2016
  1,116 clicks on google AdWords

- Newly Qualified Social Workers -
  142 Applications - 6 successful

- Experienced social workers -
  11 Applications

- Team manager - Children's Services -
  6 Application: 3 - successful

GROW WITH US

Children's social care in Thurrock

Do you thrive when faced with new challenges and want to make a difference to the future of children and young people? Social work in Thurrock offers great opportunities and rewards.

Grow with us and put down roots in our community – apply to work in children's social care

www.thurrocksocialwork.org.uk

thurrock.gov.uk

Save time, go online

My Account, the citizen portal to enable self-service, went live in October 2013. Regular and ongoing communication is needed to encourage more residents to sign-up to use services such as Council Tax and Housing Benefit - links should be made to other Council messages. Ongoing campaign with bursts. The campaign is linked to the wider Channel Migration Strategy. The approach will also be reviewed once the Customer Services Strategy is agreed.

Key results

• In January 2016 there were 27,000 My Account users. By December 2016, more than 45,000.

SAVE TIME GO ONLINE

Sign up to **My Account,** you can:

✓ Manage your council tax

✓ Apply for benefits

✓ Book an appointment at the register office

✓ Book a bulky waste collection

✓ Report problems from fly-tipping to missed bins

QUICK - EASY - SECURE

My Account

You can now access many council services on the go via a tablet, smart phone or computer.

For more information visit **thurrock.gov.uk/getmyaccount**

Free internet access is available at our libraries and community hubs in the borough.

thurrock.gov.uk

Say something if you see something

Child sexual exploitation awareness raising campaign to engage with residents, social work practitioners, professionals and key stakeholders to help protect those at risk. Artwork adopted from Waltham Forest's campaign.

"HE ASKS ME TO HAVE SEX WITH HIS FRIENDS OR HE'LL STOP TAKING CARE OF ME"

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse where children are manipulated into sexual activity by an adult, usually in return for something.

THIS IS ABUSE. DON'T MASK THE PROBLEM.

Call ChildLine on 0800 1111
for help and advice or speak to an adult you trust
thurrock.gov.uk/reportchildabuse

thurrock.gov.uk

Thurrock Education Awards

Thurrock's sponsored education awards recognise and celebrate excellence in the borough's schools.

The campaign focuses on encouraging nominations and raising awareness of the awards. The event was held on 18 November 2016.

Key results

- Nearly 420 nominations received in 2016 which is over double the amount of nominations received in 2015.

Thurrock EDUCATION AWARDS 2016

Recognising and celebrating excellence in education

Nominations close 3 October

thurrock.gov.uk/education-awards

Thurrock Education Awards 2016 Award Categories

- Outstanding Early Years Practitioner
- Outstanding New Teacher
- Aspiring Leader
  Sponsored by ALM Training
- Creative Teaching and Learning
  Sponsored by High House Production Park
- Education Support
- Excellence in English and/or Maths
- The Inspiring Career Opportunity Award
  Sponsored by Palmers Solicitors
- Excellence in Science and Technologies Award
  Sponsored by Thames Oilport

- Governing Body of the Year
  Sponsored by Kingston Smith LLP
- Teacher of the Year in Primary Education
- Teacher of the Year in Secondary Education or Post 16 Provision
  Sponsored by ALM Training
- Teacher of the Year in a Special School or Alternative Provision
- Headteacher of the Year in Primary Education
  Sponsored by HW Wilson
- Headteacher of the Year in Secondary Education, Special Education, Alternative or Post 16 Provision
  Sponsored by Port of Tilbury
- Outstanding Contribution to Education in Thurrock
  Sponsored by Port of Tilbury

Thurrock Education Awards 2016 kindly sponsored by

PALMERS SOLICITORS
www.palmerslaw.co.uk

High House Production Park

ALM Training Services

Kingston Smith
helping clients succeed

Thames Oilport

PORT OF TILBURY LONDON

HW WILSON
BUILDING ON OUR REPUTATION SINCE 1920

CRUISE & MARITIME

thurrock.gov.uk

Thameside Theatre

The theatre requires ongoing promotion of the year's programme of events and activities.

Key results

- 2016 pantomime Peter Pan officially become Thameside Theatre's most successful ever single production. Already beaten audience figures from last year's Sleeping Beauty with nearly 1,000 more tickets sold in December in comparison to the same period last year.

thurrock.gov.uk/theatre   f Facebook.com/thameside   🐦 @thethameside

Thameside Theatre
EVENT 2016/17

thurrock.gov.uk

Love Thurrock

Clean it, Cut it, Fill it

The council led on a borough wide clean up during summer 2016 – the message represents a zero-tolerance approach to offenders.

#LoveThurrock

BIN IT

£75 FINE for dropping litter

thurrock.gov.uk/lovethurrock

thurrock.gov.uk

Recycle it

Recycling rates need to be increased in the borough. The campaign focuses on organic and dry waste as well as any issues arising such as contamination. Targeted campaign activity and ongoing messages.

#LoveThurrock

RECYCLE IT

70% of household waste can be RECYCLED

We would save £35,000 for every one per cent increase in recycling

thurrock.gov.uk/bins

thurrock.gov.uk

Internal campaigns

IIP

Investors in People (IiP) assessors returned to Thurrock from 12 to 28 July 2016. We received Gold again!

Staff Awards

Annual sponsored event to celebrate and recognise the great work being done by Thurrock employees, express our thanks and celebrate outstanding efforts.

263 nominations were submitted from staff across the council - a 70 per cent increase from 2015.

Staff Survey 2016

Carried out by BMG Research on behalf of Thurrock Council in April gave staff a chance to share their views.

More than 1,400 surveys were returned giving more than 40,600 responses to the 29 questions.

Thurrock Council
Awarded
Investors In People
GOLD
JULY 2016

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE | Gold

thurrock.gov.uk

Staff Awards

8.12.16

Thurrock Council
Staff Awards
2016

Nominations Open Monday 10 October 2016

Nomination forms available on In-Form. Paper copies also available.

thurrock.gov.uk

THURROCK Staff Survey 2016

71% of staff responded

What we do well

87% have had your PDR or appraisal in the last year

89% are clear about what is required of you in your job

93% understand how your work contributes to your service objectives

What we can improve

ONLY **58%** agree that induction gave them the information and tools needed to start their role *Down 14% from 2014*

ONLY **42%** agree that the council motivates them to go the extra mile *Down 12% from 2014*

ONLY **32%** agree that our IT systems meet the needs of the business

bmg in association with Thurrock Council **Visit In-Form for the full survey results and updates**

thurrock.gov.uk

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18 January 2016	ITEM: 6
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Investors in People 2016	

Wards and communities affected:	Key Decision:
None	No

Report of: Jan Cox - Strategic Lead HR & OD
Accountable Head of Service: Jan Cox - Strategic Lead HR & OD
Accountable Director: Jackie Hinchliffe - Director of HR,OD and Transformation
This report is public

Executive Summary

This report outlines the feedback from the Investors in People assessment that took place 12th – 28th July 2016. The Council retained Gold status and received a continuous improvement plan from the assessor; work has been undertaken to build this plan into the new People Strategy and use the Investors in People standards as a key theme for developing our people over the next four years. The report will also outline next steps on the journey of continuous improvement.

1.   **Recommendation(s)**

        Members to note and comment on:

1.1   **The achievement of reaccreditation of Investors in People Gold**

1.2   **The analysis being undertaken to identify the benefits to the Council of moving forward with the Generation 6 Framework requiring a potential re-assessment in 2019 and a number of formal progress meetings throughout 2017/18.**

1.3   **The incorporation of the Investors in People continuous improvement plan into the key actions within the new People Strategy**

2.   **Introduction and Background**

2.1   Since the launch of the first Organisational Development Strategy in 2010 the Council has been committed to external assessment and validation of its practice and progress as an employer.

2.2 The Investors in People (IiP) accreditation is an international standard for people management recognised in over 75 countries. The standard reflects leading workplace trends and has been developed to describe organisations capabilities whilst also highlighting improvements and steps to achieving and maintaining excellence. The framework provides a pathway to future progress and demonstrates through meeting the indicators that the Council is an organisation that consistently outperforms their peers, is an employer of choice and an organisation that can compete in the business marketplace.

2.3 The cost of the external accreditation is based on time spent on site carrying out the assessment and number of assessors required linked to amount of staff employed. Thurrock's costs were £13,500 for 2016 based on 15 days on site and was managed by one lead assessor, with some days covered by a support assessor in order to meet all staff interviews and observations within the timeframe.

2.4 IiP Gold is held by only 3% of organisations nationwide and is the highest accolade achievable within the current framework.

2.5 Research shows that IiP accredited organisations are:

- More profitable
- More sustainable
- More optimistic about the future
- Report significant organisational benefits such as increased staff satisfaction in employee engagement surveys and greater participation in staff forums
- Supported in transforming business performance through their people
- Able to enhance their employer brand with a positive effect on recruitment and retention

2.6 The IiP Framework contains ten indicators to assess performance framed around a model of Plan, Do, Review, these are:

1) Business Strategy
2) Learning and Development Strategy
3) People Management Strategy
4) Leadership and Management Strategy
5) Management Effectiveness
6) Recognition and Reward
7) Involvement and Empowerment
8) Learning and Development
9) Performance Management
10) Continuous Improvement

3. IIP Assessment 2016

3.1 The plan for the 2016 accreditation was to ensure that we demonstrated areas of continuous improvement as outlined in the 2013 report demonstrate where we met the indicators and provide good examples of where we felt work excelled. A project group was established to deliver the work required by IiP; the project sponsor for Directors Board was Jackie Hinchliffe.

3.2 Each standard is looked at from the perspective of our Top Managers (DB and Leadership Group), Line Managers and People and evidence is obtained through a variety of groups meetings, one to one interviews and attendance at key events. In addition we completed a self-assessment portfolio of evidence as a reference tool aswell as case studies, as time on site and spent with employees was limited, given the size of the organisation, our multi sites and variety of services.

3.3 There is a minimum of 165 evidence requirements to be accredited Gold in Investors in People spread across the 10 Indicators - in 9 of these we achieved all, or most of the requirements.

3.4 The assessors met with over 120 staff including:

- 5 part time staff
- 3 new starters
- 5 rising stars, which have been supported to develop by the Council through CPD and other opportunities
- apprentices
- 2 from ASYE academy
- At least 3 staff who were interviewed last time
- 10 middle managers (band 8 and above)
- 5% of team leaders- band 6/7
- The oldest and youngest members of staff
- The Leader of the Council
- The Chief Executive

3.5 The assessors attended Directors Board, People Board, and The Corporate Workforce group, met the Corporate Staff Forum Chairs, trades union's representatives and spent a day off site at Oliver Close.

3.6 The outcome of the project was the successful retention of IiP Gold; achieving 176 out of a potential 196 indicators and more than the 165 indicators required to achieve gold. The assessor stated:

> "As well as maintaining (Gold) they have changed and improved structures, business and people processes. They clearly recognise the benefits of a well trained workforce to deliver services in a more cost effective and productive manner whilst maintaining high levels of motivation and job satisfaction. This is an organisation that punches well above their weight and fully recognises just how important their people are. From being an organisation recognised as 9ct Gold in 2013, Thurrock can consider they are now an 18ct Gold organisation in 2016".

3.7 Compared to the 2013 assessment there was improvement in evidence across most indicators for 2016 however there does remain some key areas that need a particular focus in order to improve:

- Indicator 6 Recognition and Reward - 11 out of a potential 19 evidence requirements being met.
- Indicator 5 Management Effectiveness – reduced by 2 evidence requirements compared to the 2013 assessment.

3.8 The 2016 Improvement Plan is attached at Appendix 2 – a key point to note is there are twenty suggested improvements which have been analysed to inform actions and activities within the new People Strategy (currently in draft form and out for consultation);.

3.9 The rationale for building the improvement plan into the new People Strategy is to ensure this key work is joined up with the main people development activity of the Council. Also given that five suggested improvements had already been identified prior to this assessment via staff forums and other internal reviews, it's vital that development areas already being addressed are viewed as 'business as usual' and embedded into the way we work. Going forward there is also a major change in the structure of IIP programme that will require us to evidence the delivery of our People Strategy under a new framework (this is explored further in Section 3.7).

3.10 In their summary the assessors noted;

> "There is much innovation, energy and enthusiasm to tackle challenges often having to make difficult decisions to meet their priorities of clean it, cut it and fill it strapline and much more in securing their future."

3.11 The assessors fed back under the two main areas;

Area 1: **Changing personality of the Council, continuous improvement and pursuit of excellence/high performance** - where they noted:

- "The Council undertook an LGA Corporate Peer Review in February 2016 to get an objective, external opinion on their plans and strategies"

- "They cannot achieve the best for Thurrock on their own. Working with partners, the Council wants to drive growth in their role as community champions for the place and as local system leaders to maximise opportunities to attract inward investment."

- "All of this requires significant cultural shift for 2,000 staff particularly the 400 employees who were TUPE transferred back to the council in December 2015 following the termination of the strategic Services Partnership with Serco. Operation Welcome was a great success"

- "An open and engaging culture permeates the council, with a strong emphasis on staff consultation and open communication routes from the Chief Executive's intranet blog to internal e-newsletters, regular management conferences"

- "They now boast a 21st century forward-looking council, using modern management methods, leading and empowered workforce to deliver entrepreneurial services with partners and communities"

Area 2: Staff involvement, empowerment and motivation processes. Leadership, management and maintaining gold recognition; where they noted:

- "This without a doubt is a learning organisation where learning is an everyday activity. They continue to demonstrate improvements in health and wellbeing, equality, Occupational Health, reward and recognition, recruitment, Applicant Tracking System, exit interviews, special interest forums, regional benchmarking, inform, oracle, Employee Assistance Programme and staff survey"

- "People think it is a great place to work and many are long serving and promoted internally. They have a great apprenticeship programme with nearly 200 apprentices trained over the last three years"

- "Since the 2013 IiP accreditation, Thurrock has taken additional approaches to engaging and working with staff in decision making. The Corporate Workforce Group (CWG) was set up by the Chief Executive in 2015 .The group is made of directorate representatives from front line staff and front line managers. The model has been replicated across directorates and in a short time the CWG has provided input to the staff survey question development, provided feedback on key

issues and set up a Meet and Eat area for staff. Representatives of CWG now attend People Board."

- "Learning and development continues to be a key priority for Thurrock. As both employers of choice and IIP Gold holders the way people learn and develop is central to the ethos of the Council."

- "Learning e-Management is now part of the Oracle Self-Serve and as such allows each individual to access information about learning activity and to book places which are sent automatically to the manager for approval"

- "Off-site workers are able to record the details of their learning needs which take place during Job Chats and are recorded on a specifically designed form."

3.12   The assessors also noted key strengths of the organisation:

"During the review we spoke to a wide range of people across the organisation covering all the major functions of the Council. Those that we spoke to were generally very positive about working for Thurrock Council, and many recognised that as local residents they were contributing to the improvement of their own area and the prospects of its citizens. We have therefore provided a sample of the comments we were given in the interviews:

- "There are lots of stresses and strains but we've refocused and tightened up."
- "I am proud to work at Thurrock."
- "I am trusted and have a definite sense of pride in working for the Council."
- "The new Chief Executive is visible and takes an active interest in the staff."

They also noted:
- "The Council continues to test its performance through peer reviews and staff survey"

These comments provide a flavour of the assessment and our experience which was very positive for all involved. The objective of undertaking external scrutiny to assess our investment in our staff through the delivery of our organisational development strategy was achieved.

4.   **IIP Generation 6**

4.1   IiP Generation 6 launched in 2016, it follows a different framework and assessment which all organisations would have to now work to for reaccreditation in 2019. Further analysis of these changes is required to understand the impact of putting ourselves forward for this new Framework and exploring the benefits to us. The specific differences are:

- Change of focus on assessing our abilities in Leading, Supporting and Improving
- 2 new indicators – Structuring Work and Creating Sustainable Success
- Additional reviews with assessment at 12 and 24 months rather than just one at 18 months
- 20% IiP online staff survey
- Committing to a 'Context session' with IiP assessors to plan lines of enquiry mapped to framework
- Assessment focused on "observe and record" rather than paper based evidence led
- 4 Performance levels, Developed, Established, Advanced and High Performing
- Changes to the cost structure of the assessment.

5   Reasons for Recommendation

5.1   To advise the committee of the actions taken and planned in response to the 2016 IiP Assessment.

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

6.1   None

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

7.1   There is an impact on corporate policies and people priorities which will be addressed as the work continues. As plans for the workforce are developed our policies and priorities will be reviewed in line with the agreed focus for our workforce. We will ensure that full impact analysis is undertaken as each area is considered, once the People Strategy is agreed.

8.   Implications

8.1   **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**

Management Accountant, Corporate Finance

No financial implications.

8.2   **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

Monitoring Officer

No legal implications.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**

Community Development and Equalities Manager

Although there are no direct implications from this report, the work to embed Gold IIP positively impacts on all aspects of supporting equality and diversity across our workforce.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)
None

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

None

10. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – IiP Framework Summary
- Appendix 2 - IIP Improvement Plan, Response and progress update

Report Author:
Janet Cox

Strategic Lead HR OD

HR OD and Transformation

The Investors in People Framework Summary

Plan				Do				Review	
01 BUSINESS STRATEGY	02 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	03 PEOPLE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY	04 LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT	05 MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS	06 RECOGNITION & REWARD	07 INVOLVEMENT & EMPOWERMENT	08 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT	09 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT	10 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Standard Top managers should make sure (and their people should confirm) that:

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
The organisation has a vision/purpose, strategy and plan People are involved in planning Representative groups (where appropriate) are consulted when developing the plan	Learning priorities are clear and linked to the plan Resources for learning and development are made available The impact will be evaluated	People are encouraged to contribute ideas There is equality of opportunity for development and support	Managers are clear about the capabilities they need to lead, manage and develop people People know what effective managers should be doing	Managers are effective and can describe how they lead, manage and develop their people	People believe they make a difference People believe their contribution is valued	Ownership and responsibility are encouraged People are involved in decision-making	People's learning and development needs are met	Investment in learning can be quantified Impact can be demonstrated	Evaluation results in improvements to people strategies and management

Extended Framework

01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Clear core values relate to vision and strategy Key performance indicators are used to improve performance Social responsibility is taken into account in the strategy People and stakeholders are involved in strategy development	The learning and development strategy builds capability Plans take account of learning styles People help make decisions about their own learning Learning and development is innovative and flexible There is a culture of continuous learning	The recruitment process is fair, efficient and effective A diverse, talented workforce is created A work-life balance strategy meets the needs of its people Constructive feedback is valued The structure makes the most of people's talents	Leadership and management capabilities for now and the future are defined Managers are helped to acquire these capabilities Leadership and management strategy link to business strategy, taking account of external good practice Everyone is encouraged to develop leadership capabilities	Managers are role models of leadership, teamwork and knowledge sharing Coaching is part of the culture People are helped to develop their careers There is a culture of openness and trust	Reward and recognition strategies link to business strategy and are externally benchmarked Representative groups are consulted (where appropriate) What motivates people is understood Success is celebrated Benefits strategy goes beyond legal requirements Colleagues' achievements are recognised	Effective consultation and involvement is part of the culture People are supported and trusted to make decisions Knowledge and information are shared People are committed to success There is a culture of continuous improvement People can challenge the way things work There is a sense of ownership and pride in working for the organisation	Learning and development resources are used effectively Learning is an everyday activity Innovative and flexible approaches to learning and development are used People are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential All learning is valued and celebrated and is an everyday activity Mentoring is used Personal development is supported	The contribution of people strategies is measured and evaluated Impact on key performance indicators can be described Performance improves as a result Career prospects improve Flexible and effective approaches to measuring return on investment are used Return on investment in people is reported to stakeholders	Self review and information from external review are used Effective feedback methods are used to understand people's views on how they are managed Internal and external benchmarking are used People's views on how they are managed improves People believe it's a great place to work

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Business Issue What?	Suggested Actions How?	Potential Benefit Why?	Priority When?	Solutions Support Available Who?	Actions	Lead	Update
Corporate social responsibility to be updated in community engagement strategy dated 2011 to 2016.	Staff able to do volunteer days, e.g. one or two a year.	Improving corporate social responsibility.	Medium	Internally	Addition to Holiday and Time Off Policy to include formal allowances for volunteer days.	HROD	Recommendation to People Board to include formal wording around 2 maximum days available for volunteering.
Consider coaching pool and put on inform/TLZ.	Anglian Ruskin.	Develop Jedi Masters.	Medium	Internally	Introduction of Coaching based training for Managers and CPD opportunities	P&OD	Managing in Coaching Culture introduced. 2 x training 2016/17 CPD offer already exists 2 x per year
Set up good manager practice forum, e.g. role modelling, inspirational leadership, commercial skills, delegated authority.	Forum.	Sharing good practice.	Medium	Internally	Review of Leadership and Manager Training to include commercial, coaching skills as standard. Introduction of new bite-size training to allow for all manager accessibility in creative ways and delivery.	P&OD	CEX offering staff shadowing opportunities. L&M Framework of training to include succession planning, Thurrock Manager model aligned with People Strategy
Extend 360° to second tier managers where finances will allow.	-	Management effectiveness.	Medium	Internally			Review for Financial Year 16/17 indicates not viable from existing provider. Considering options of skilling up managers and other potential tools in alignment with new Leadership and Management framework for 17/18.

Version 3 14.12.16

Consider train the trainer skills for the depot.	-	Improved capability.	Medium	Internally	Full review of E&P training needs including CPD applications and development opportunities	P&OD	People & OD are delivering skills across E&P operational sites in January 2017 covering Equality and Diversity Customer Service and Professional Boundaries. Health and Safety train-the-trainer being investigated.
Induction –consider minibus tour of Thurrock showing key developments.	-	Showcase are for new staff.	Medium	Internally	Induction review following SS 2016 with proposal on new content based on focus group findings – proposed digital journey of Thurrock	P&OD & HR	• Focus group and feedback received. Proposal to People Board with new format and robust local induction checklist • Induction model for all managers • IT induction element • Recruitment training refreshed to incorporate induction element
Consider lowering long service award from 25 years.	-	Recognition.	Medium	Internally	To be reviewed	Improvement Team	Reviewing other authorities and option list to go to DB.
Consider adding challenge to 4 Cs behaviour framework.	Challenge to improve performance of the organisation.	Changing face of the Council.	Medium	Internally	Challenge comes under the remit of continuous improvement which all staff are obligated to consider during their work.		No further action
Residents survey by end of 2016.	-	Overdue feedback.	Medium	Internally	In place before assessment	Strategy Team	This was carried out during November and December 2016 and the results (due end of December) will be reported to members in the

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							new year and will feed into the vision and priorities refresh alongside the corporate performance framework review.
Five priorities could do with a refresh in line with changing personality of the Council.	-	New direction.	Medium	Internally	V&P under review	Strategy Team	New draft vision and priorities is currently out for consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Final version will also take into account views from the resident survey and will be presented to Cabinet in February for final approval by Council in late February alongside the MTFS
Develop step up management programme for 3rd and 4th tier managers.	Middle leader development.	Management effectiveness.	Medium	Internally	Manager training to include opportunities for aspiring managers in planned before assessment. – Thurrock Manager – 21st Century Worker	P &OD	New L&M Framework in progress to cover all tier managers including pre-requisite people manager modules
Consider 1:1 template to include workload, pressure points and training.	Common template.	Consistency.	Medium	Internally	Template for supervision already in place before assessment. Audit to ensure this is use across Council	HROD	No further action
Develop stand-alone work life balance policy.	-	Reflecting different ways of working.	Medium	Internally	Flexible working policy in place – consider title change on next refresh to include IIP suggestion.	Policy	Flexible working police being reviewed to include statement around work life balance.
Embed apprentice forum.	-	-	Medium	Internally	Apprentice opportunities and hub planned before assessment	Improvement Team & HR	Ongoing work with collaborative projects across departments and as part of Apprentice Levy project.
Consider HR audits by	-	Maintain gold.	Medium	Internally		HR	Improved guidance in managers' handbook and all

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directorate to ensure key people processes are being maintained, e.g. meetings, PDRs, 1:1s, inductions.							connected training driving continued support for staff via PDR and 1-2-1s.
Investigate spans of management control in ex Serco teams.	-	Management effectiveness.	Medium	Internally	To be reviewed	HR	Will be picked up under the 5/8 model during Service Review following design principles rather than a separate piece of work.
Refresher on managers' handbook.	Workshops.	-	Medium	Internally	Refreshed planned and underway before assessment	P&OD & Improvement Team	Handbook to go to forums with a fresh review in line with new Leadership and Management framework.
Service review for depot following cuts and undertake management skills audit. Encourage depot to nominate people for staff awards.	Too lean. Greater staff engagement and recognition.	Clean it. Cut it. Fill it. Celebration.	Medium. Medium.	Internally Internally.	Audit of skills and needs analysis planned and in place	P&OD/ BC	Manager skills have been audited and a framework of training identified to support managers including coaching, PDR, grievance and managing stress. Staff awards engagement programme included site visits to depot and linked offices. Improved submission and support given to complete forms.
Consider all staff induction refresher.	Jackie –over to you.	Transformation.	Medium.	Internally.	As part of induction review, electronic resources to be reviewed with a re-launch of induction practices across the council following full induction review	P&OD	Digital resource (growth video style) to be considered – potentially with external comms – to be considered Feb 2017.

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18 January 2017	ITEM: 7
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Staff Survey 2016	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	No

Report of: Jan Cox – Strategic Lead HR & OD

Accountable Head of Service: Jan Cox – Strategic Lead HR & OD

Accountable Director: Jackie Hinchliffe – Director of HR, OD & Transformation

This report is public

Executive Summary

Members received a report in September 2016 outlining the results of the 2016 Staff Survey and detailing the highest and lowest areas of performance. This report provides an update on the corporate actions taken in response to the survey findings and the plans to assess impact with a 'pulse survey' in Spring 2017.

1.   Recommendation

1.1   Members to note and comment on the corporate actions taken to respond to the 2016 Staff Survey findings.

2.   Introduction and Background

2.1   The 2016 staff survey was undertaken by BMG Research in April 2016. The survey went live on 11th April 2016 and ran for three weeks. During which time all employees were given the opportunity to complete a survey.

- A total of 1,475 responses were received, giving an excellent response rate of 71%, which is in line with the rate achieved in 2014 (72%).
- A total of 1,228 online responses were received out of 1,483 that were sent, which is a response rate of 83%.
- 247 staff completed paper copies, which is a response rate of 41%.

2.2   The outcomes of the survey were widely communicated though manager and staff conferences, posters and internal communications. BMG facilitated action planning workshops for each directorate and for the council as a whole,

enabling the development of focussed action plans. The key council wide priorities were identified as:

- Employee Engagement
- Induction
- IT
- Motivation
- Change Management
- Communication (particularly across directorates)

2.3 People Board provide the overall governance of the delivery of the action plans with DMTs, the Corporate and Directorate Workforce Groups and the council's Staff Forums contributing to the development and delivery of the interventions.

3. Progress to Date

3.1 Employee Engagement

3.1.1 Engagement of staff links to a variety of areas including turnover, retention, wellbeing, absence, innovation and productivity. Engagement needs to be considered along with communication and sharing information.

3.1.2 Actions since survey:
- Additional analysis carried out to identify key indicators of engagement
- Directorates have been informed and guided around teams and areas of least engagement and indicators
- Directorate Workforce Groups established and supported by HR&OD to increase engagement across the council
- Engagement already showing signs of success:
  - 70% increase in nominations for Staff Awards 2016 compared to 2015
  - Wellbeing programme activity offsite including blood pressure checks, massages and free products
  - Communication posters and training offers via network of key personnel in satellite offices – via face to face engagement visits and digital communications
  - Increased Continuous Professional Development (CPD) applications across directorates

3.2 Induction

3.2.1 Effective induction is critical to ensure new employees are welcomed to the council, their expectations met and they are retained. Although the survey result was not negative it did show a 14% reduction in satisfaction from 2014

across the indicators. The Corporate Induction had been extensively reviewed following the appointment of the new Chief Executive in September 2015. Additional analysis undertaken following the survey demonstrated the changes had resulted in a positive improvement in feedback. However, consistency of experience and timeliness of information within local inductions were identified as key challenges.

3.2.2   Actions since survey:

- Focus group involving cohort of pre survey and post survey new staff plus members of Corporate Workforce Group and Staff Forums
- Trial and identification of improvements for induction checklist
- Update of resources on In-Form to support induction for staff and managers
- Introduction of additional elements including corporate systems, Health and Safety i.e.: lone worker, DSE, hot desking and remote working
- Introduction of Manager Induction
- Analysis of a re-induction
- Continued evaluation of both corporate and local induction
- Proposal of reviewed and improved induction including the corporate element to change to a "Welcome" event with local induction undertaking other areas of information
- New Recruitment and Selection training delivered in house incorporating a renewed directive for induction and probation as standard with expectations for Managers to follow for all staff

3.3   IT

3.3.1   Despite considerable improvements to the IT infrastructure since 2014 only 32% of staff indicated that the systems meet the needs of the business. Detailed analysis and feedback from the conferences, a focus group, the corporate workforce group and the IT Service Desk identified two key areas for action – Communication and Skills. In order to effectively progress the council's digital agenda and new ways of working is it critical staff understand the need for corporate systems and have the skills and confidence to utilise IT to its greatest effect.

3.3.2   Communication - Actions since survey:

- 4 targeted workshops have been run with selected 'remote staff'. This told us that we had good solutions for corporate training packages such as Objective but challenges with basic IT skills

- Planned Digital Strategy Workshops to communicate vision and understanding with support via a Digital newsletter to inform changes and improvements.
- Creation of library of tips/shortcuts and guides generated via intelligence from Service Desk and focus group with ongoing feed to measure change
- Improvements specifically around Phone Book and new user familiarity of desktop

3.3.3 Skills - Actions since survey:

- Additional induction element to include use of corporate systems and support for IT skills.
- Drop in sessions for January 2017 onwards to share/promote online learning.
- Thurrock Learning Zone review in March 2017 with increased use of platform for self-serve development and access to online resources
- Planned framework of development support across council for IT Skills
    - Basic IT skills programme for all teams, user led/self-serve, digital delivery where suitable with health check at recruitment stage to drive up IT literacy
    - Core offer IT skills for corporate programmes including VDI, Objective, ESS, MSS including Manager 1-1 sessions
    - Enhanced offer for teams using specific software and identifying shared learning and development for linked areas of work

3.4 Motivation

3.4.1 Motivation is a complex measure and impacted by a number of factors. The survey demonstrated a decrease since 2014. One of the key drivers of motivation is management behaviour, particularly recognition so the focus in this area is supporting managers to develop and utilise the behaviours needed to motivate teams.

3.4.2 Actions since Survey:
- Motivation included as a key action and consideration for all Directorate Action Plans
- A revised Leadership Development programme to be implemented in 17/18
- Manager development programme enhanced through bite-size sessions including "Managing in a Coaching Culture"
- Corporate Workforce Group and Directorate Action Groups directed to challenge and investigate motivational factors within their areas

- Motivation within teams communicated via Organisational Development with suggested guidance on what motivates staff
- Review of the skills set of the People and Organisational Development team

3.5 Change Management

3.5.1 Change Management was one of the lowest scoring areas across the council, although the result was in line with the benchmark. It was prioritised as a key area for action in recognition of the considerable change the council will be facing in the next few years and our commitment to effective change management. Key area of change in the next 3 years will be around Service Reviews and areas of improvement in change management will be evaluated to measure impact of improvements.

3.5.2 Actions since survey:
- Change Management is a standard priority and area of improvement for all directorate Action Plans
- Service Review Programme includes an engagement and communications plan with ongoing evaluation
- Front line staff involved in Service Review teams
- Support to all Directorate Workforce Groups via Organisational Development
- Information sharing via 'Team Briefing' to ensure all staff are engaged and understand reasons and intentions of change
- Staff Matters development programme refreshed from model of Serco Transition to support managers, staff and teams going through change
- Leadership & Management Development programmes to embed change management standards and best practice

3.6 Communications

3.6.1 The majority of the communications indicators were positive; the key factor identified by the survey was communication across directorates.

3.6.2 Actions since survey:

- Directorate newsletters in central area of Objective for all staff to access
- Internal and External communication departments centralised to align key messages across council
- Residents E-newsletter (to support 80% resident/staff in organisation) launched with staff encouraged to sign up

- Leadership Group focus on corporate working and sharing information across and through hierarchal channels
- Culture of "All Channel's Open" to be used in communications in all departments to be embedded across organisation
- Reviewed Thurrock Manager in collaboration with Service Boards, press office and identified HR areas to inform managers on wider information to be disseminated to staff
- Updates to improvements and actions via In-Form, Insight and via Corporate Workforce Group and Directorate Workforce Group

3.7 **Ongoing Progress**

Monitoring of the ongoing progress of actions from Staff Survey is being tracked and followed up using the Corporate Wide Action Plan (attached at Appendix 1). A red, amber, green (RAG) system is used on the plan to measure actions identified, progressing or completed. Dates on the action plan indicate work commencement and many are ongoing and being developed. The RAG system will be updated to show status of actions with reviews of all actions for January 2017and beyond being followed up by Organisational Development.

4. Communication and Evaluation

4.1 The response to the survey is communicated through extensive engagement of workforce groups and through a 'you said, we did' campaign to ensure the whole workforce can see the benefit of participating in the survey.

4.2 A staff 'pulse survey' will be undertaken in the Spring of 2017 to assess and evaluate the impact of the actions to date and enable action plans to be modified if required.

4.3 The survey results have informed the development of the council's People Strategy to ensure improvements are embedded in the longer term and support a high performing workforce.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 To advise the committee of the actions taken and planned in response to the 2016 staff survey and to convey progress.

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

6.1 Consultation with workforce groups is ongoing as part of the development and delivery of the action plans. Specific events at manager and staff conferences have engaged the wider workforce.

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

7.1 A high performing and motivated workforce is instrumental in the delivery of the council's priorities and in effective customer service.

8. **Implications**

8.1 **Financial**

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

The report provides an update on the actions taken to respond to the 2016 Staff Survey and does not result in any direct financial implications. Actions undertaken and planned will have to be met from existing budgets.

8.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

Monitoring Officer

The report does not raise any legal implications.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**

Community Development & Equalities Tea,

The staff forums have worked with HR & OD to assess any potential diversity and equality implications arising from the survey. No implications have been identified.

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

No other implications.

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

- Corporate O&S report September 2016
- Staff Survey results and action plans

10. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Corporate Wide Action Plan

Report Author:

Amanda Sweeney

Senior Development Officer

People & Organisational Development

Corporate Wide Action Plan - Staff Survey 2016 (V5 14/12/16)							
Background	Solution	Actions	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
IT, Induction, Change, Motivation, Communication, Engagement - 6 Priorities	Address 6 corporate wide action priorities across the organisation	All directorate action plans incorporate 6 priorities	Request made at People Board for all plans to hold 6 priorities and shared in Objective	A	All	Nov-16	Pulse Survey should incorporate specific low scoring questions across all priorities

Induction

Background	Solution	Actions	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
14% decrease from 2014 tells us staff are not as satisfied with their Induction. 4 Specific Questions My manager ensured I was inducted into my new role I am satisfied with the corporate induction I received So far, the council has lived up to the expectations at recruitment My induction gave me the information and tools I needed to start my role effectively	Understand and improve Corporate Induction and local inductions	Hold IT focus group to understand induction experience and identify improvements	Held November 16 - improvements in local inductions highest priority	G	P&OD	Nov-16	Improvements required identified and proposal of new induction offer to People Board in January 17
		Review and support local inductions within directorates	All directorates asked to review local induction via CWG and via People Board	G	All	Dec-16	
		Update and improve induction checklist	Improved checklist trialled by new starters, CWG asked to contribute via DWG	A	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Review Corporate Induction offer	Monitoring of corporate offer continuous. Focus group identified areas that are suitable for a collective "Welcome to Thurrock" for all staff irrespective of date of attendance and will also cover agency / short term / contract staff	A	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Consider pre-boarding options for induction of new staff	Ongoing and considering options for pre-boarding	A	Recruitment/ P&OD	Jan-17	
		Investigate re-induction options	Options considered - "Welcome to Thurrock" with a refresh every 2 years - potentially as an online offer	A	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Update resources on In-Form	In progress following refresh of checklist, managers handbook and focus group feedback	A	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Short-cut key from desktop to induction area on In-Form	Request to be made following completion of resources on In-Form	A	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Additional training element within recruitment and selection training to incorporate inductions	Pilot session of recruitment and selection training held 7 December16. Induction element proved very useful and task of considering local inductions within areas given to all delegates attending	G	P&OD	Jan-17	
		Additional mandatory programme to cover IT systems (Objective, Oracle, VDI, MSS)	Within proposal of changes to be submitted and agreed at People Board - new videos and e-learning to be created	A	P&OD / IT	Jan-17	
		Evaluation of induction experience at local and corporate level to continue with checklist accompanying probation paperwork	To be requested when final proposal of changes submitted and agreed at People Board	A	P&OD	Jan-17	

Background	Solution	Actions	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement

Employee Engagement

Background	Solution	Actions	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
Three fifths of the Thurrock Workforce are defined as engaged 60% 6% are actively disengaged 34% are partially engaged	Understand the links to engagement using reportal and additional analysis highlighting areas most disengaged	BMG to provide detailed analysis of engagement scores by lowest drivers	Completed and received	G	BMG	Oct-16	Understand factors of engagement
		Consider the lowest scoring engagement scores and present analysis to managers and team leaders with recommended actions	Additional analysis complete. Presentation of findings to managers in December 2016	A	P&OD	Dec-16	Managers receive analysis and actions
		Extend targeted off site programme of engagement which is showing signs of success (E&P)	Engagement programme embedded in work for P&OD. Increase in engagement of 70% seen for staff award nominations	G	P&OD	Nov-16	Increased engagement in staff via activities and planned 2017 pulse survey
		Support continued engagement via CWG and DWG	Action plan shared with all CWG, Updates given at CWG 30/11/16	G	AS	Nov-16	Action plans presented at CWG
		Support DWG in all areas to set up and operate effectively	Offer given to attend, support and advice on DWGs October and Nov 16	G	AS	Oct-16	All DWG active, effective and feeding back to CWG
		Create and implement a plan of communication and engagement for survey messages, updates and information	Communication and engagement plan complete. Updates given via Insight, In-Form and CWG	G	AS	Oct-16	Communication and engagement plan created and messages understood by staff

Background	Solution	Actions - Communications	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
IT				A			
IT scored significantly lower than the BMG benchmark of 54%. 2 separate area of Communications and Skills were identified as not meeting employee expectations.	**Communications** - understand and implement changes around informing and feeding back re improvements and IT across organisation	Workshops around Digital Strategy to include what the vision is	Leadership Group session booked for Jan 26th- to be facilitated by SOCITM. Digital Board members taking strategy to indivdual DMTs and CWG.	A	MJ, CS, GS	Mar-17	Workshops take place and attended - aim for approval at March Cabinet
		Supporting communications plan for the digital strategy including offsite engagement	Being developed alongside workshop. MJ/CS have met with Karen Wheeler. Agreed to set up forum on In-form where staff can feedback	A	MJ, CS, GS	Jan-17	Offsite visits take place
		Launch digital newsletter so changes and improvements can be regularly updated and to include hints and tips on 3 corporate systems - to be posted in In-Form	Planned to launch following focus group feedback	R	MJ, CS, GS	Feb-17	Digital newsletter being produced
		Library of tips/shortcuts and guides on In-Form via shortcut on desktop	Discussions underway with Steve Rigden to ascertain best repository for knowledgebase. Will be incorporated with refreshed IT intranet site (final part of ICT relaunch)	A	IT / POD	Mar-17	Library available and being used
		Phone book to be improved via integration with Oracle HR data	Currently implementing full integration with Skype which will allow "click to dial" capability. Awaiting data cleansing of hierarchies in Oracle (due by Feb 2017) before integrating them with Global Address List.	R	IT/Transformation	Apr-17	Feedback via staff engagement
		Implement automated process of updating at point of recruitment and leaving the organisation	To be progressed via Oracle improvement group and IT	R	Transformation	Mar-17	Feedback via staff engagement
		Focus group to understand key improvements and IT concerns	Four targeted workshops taken place with "remote staff" identifying basic IT skills are weak in some areas. IT focus group December 16 will direct other areas of improvement including where most support/training is required.	G	P&OD	Sep-16	Workshops take place and attended
		Investigate automated process of amendments to correct existing data post and ongoing restructures entered at Oracle mydetails level	To be progressed via Oracle improvement group and IT. HR process improvements and lowe rprioirty data cleansing currently on hold. Specific processes for maintaining posts, positions and hierarchies will be in place by March 2017	R	Transformation	TBA	Improvements made

Background	Solution	Actions - Skills	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
IT scored significantly lower than the BMG benchmark of 54%. 2 separate area of Communications and Skills were identified as not meeting employee expectations.	**Skills** - understand and improve IT training via IT Framework	Introduce IT health checks at point of recruitment to inform IT skills in the organisation, support required and training	New Applicant Tracking System (ATS) due for go live February 2017 and has a library of tests / skills assessment that can be used at any part of the recruitment or on boarding stage	A	Improvement Team	Feb-17	System in place
		Ongoing intelligence to be fed back via IT Service Desk to link with P&OD to support corporate training offer, monitor changes and track improvements	Service Desk linked with P&OD and areas of improvement are understood and are informing training and library of tips/shortcuts	A	IT / POD	Ongoing	Ongoing feedback and driving content, FAQ list sent to POD Dec 16 for review, IT to create Help sheets
		Programme of basic IT skills to improve IT literacy across the council and support self-service and e-learning engagement	Basic IT skills programme being delivered in collaboration with free online learning resources feature on Thurrock Learning Zone. Drop in sessions being held from January 17 to support users in accessing and using online resources	A	P&OD	4th quarter 16/17	Programme in place and drop in sessions taken place and attended; review into levels of training offered and matching this to the assessments from recruitment
		Skills programme for corporate system users	E-Learning resources already available for ESS and 1-1 session available via systems team i.e. Oracle and P&OD. Training needs analysis underway linking with areas across the organisation around ensuring access to systems training is available.	A	P&OD	4th quarter 16/17	Feedback from staff requiring support
		Enhanced skills offer targeted at specific teams using systems	P&OD linking with departments to support systems within teams via DMT and ad-hoc requests	G	P&OD	4th quarter 16/17	Feedback from staff requiring support

Background	Solution	Actions	Progress	RAG	Who/Lead	Time	Outcome / Measurement
CHANGE							
Across the council, change is one of the lowest scoring areas but also subjective to what changes are happening and the impact on self and immediate team.	Understand and implement resources to support change across the organisation	Service Reviews to include an engagement and communications via teams, CWG and DWG	Engagement and communication plan in progress, draft copy done. Plans for engagement and communication will cover the individual service under review and corporate awareness and updates.	A	SH / GS	Jan-17	Completing plan
		Information sharing via hierarchical channels from top to team level as standard	As part of engagement and communication plan	A	LG	Ongoing	Increased awareness of information
		Support to all DWG via OD to communicate change and monitor teams going through change	Support and attendance at DWG by OD officer to support communications and monitor impact	A	P&OD	Ongoing	Attendance and feedback received
		Staff Matters programme refreshed and provided as a toolkit of resources for managers to support staff through change	DQ working with SH to create programme to be triggered in line with service reviews	A	P&OD	Jan-17	Programme complete, visible and being used
		Monitor and evaluate through engagement of staff across the organisation to measure impact of change and change management	Evaluation to be carried out post service reviews for teams. Ongoing engagement with CWG, DWG to monitor impact.	A	P&OD	Ongoing	Evaluation carried out and shared with stakeholders
		Managers support and briefing packs made available to ensure that all managers are skilled in supporting staff through change	Resources being gathered and information will be available digitally for managers to use.	A	P&OD	Jan-17	Resources complete, visible and being used
Background	**Solution**	**Actions**	**Progress**	**RAG**	**Who/Lead**	**Time**	**Outcome / Measurement**
COMMUNICATIONS				A			
Communications generally seem good but notably across directorates this varies among departments. CSS - department communications score low	Improve communications via a "All Channels Open" culture	Directorate newsletters in central area of Objective	Complete and invitation made to all directorate to create and store newsletters within the area	G	P&OD	Sep-16	Newsletters in new area
		Residents Letter (to support 80% resident/staff) with encouragement for staff to sign up	Residents letter complete and being pushed out to all staff to encourage sign up	G	Communications Team	Nov-16	Increased numbers of sign up from staff
		Pulse Survey to measure messages and improvements resulting from Staff Survey	Planning for Pulse survey as part of project plan with update and actions going to CWG and People Board in Jan 17	A	JC	Jan-17	Survey planned and agreed
		Leadership Group directive around sharing information down to teams	Directive to LG understood	A	LG	Dec-16	Increased awareness of information
		Updates to improvements and actions via In-Form, CWG, DWG and other digital methods	Updates are going to CWG, DWGs and a feature of all digital mediums.	G	AS	Ongoing	Updates received
		Thurrock Manager publication to include update on Service Boards, press office and identified HR areas to inform of wider information to be disseminated to staff	Thurrock Manager refreshed and new content agreed. Next issue for Jan 17 will hold updates from action plans	G	Communications Team	Nov-16	Change of format and content
		Communication and Poster Campaign "You Said, We Did"	Communication plan and poster for first quarter agreed. Induction led poster for December 16	A	AS	Oct-16	New posters and plan received
		Standing item on People Board for all plans for governance and sharing information.	Updates going to People Board monthly	G	AS	Ongoing	Updates received
Background	**Solution**	**Actions**	**Progress**	**RAG**	**Who/Lead**	**Time**	**Outcome / Measurement**
MOTIVATION							
A decrease since 2014 and below benchmark. Motivational factors linked to communications and engagement.	Understand and increase motivation. Support via draft People Strategy outlining model of the Thurrock Manager	Improve motivation skills in managers	Managers training introduced bite size sessions including Managing in a Coaching Culture.	G	P&OD	Nov-16	Improved motivation, increase manager skills. Measure via Pulse Survey and Full Survey 2018
		CWG and DWG to challenge and investigate motivational factors in their areas.	CWG and DWG have been asked to consider motivation within teams and feed back	G	P&OD	Nov-16	
		Review skills set of P&OD to target team to Change Agents to support change across the organisation	P&OD working onwards completing skills audit in line with becoming change agents and also up skilling to provide AIG around mentoring, coaching for managers	A	P&OD	Feb-17	
		Guidance on motivating teams to be directed via OD	Additional analysis in progress to identify those teams needing targeted support following completion and receiving feedback from staff groups	A	P&OD	Jan-17	

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18 January 2017	ITEM: 8
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Budget 2017/18 – Capital Programme Approach	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	Key

Report of: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
This report is Public

Executive Summary

As part of the budget process each year, the Council needs to set its capital programme for the following financial year. The future development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy will also need to take account of future capital spending plans over the period of the strategy.

Historically, the schemes have largely met operational requirements and so officers were challenged to come forward with a more aspirational programme.

This report updates the committee on the progress and approach currently being taken to bring forward proposals.

1.   **Recommendation(s)**

1.1   **That the Committee notes the progress on bringing forward capital proposals; and**

1.2   **That the Committee comments on an approach to delegations.**

2.   **Introduction and Background**

2.1   As part of the budget, the Council needs to set its capital programme for the following financial years. The future development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy will also need to take account future capital spending plans over the period of the strategy.

2.2   The following sources of funding are available to the General Fund:

Capital Receipts – these are the receipts realised from the disposal of capital assets such as land and buildings. Members will be aware that the Council reviews the asset base and there are few disposals in progress;

Grants and Contributions- these could be ad hoc grants awarded from government or other funding agencies or contributions from developers and others;

Prudential Borrowing – the Council is able to increase its borrowing to finance schemes as long as they are considered affordable; and

Revenue – the Council can charge capital costs directly to the General Fund but the pressure on resources means that this is not recommended.

2.3   Officers were encouraged to bring forward schemes that were more aspirational, in terms of improvements to the public realm, buildings and facilities, and spend to save ideas.

2.4   A large number have been received and these are still going through an initial assessment of viability. What is clear is that before a full allocation can be agreed for a number of schemes – examples include a theatre, an integrated healthy living centre at Tilbury, industrial units – more detailed work is needed on their feasibility and cost-benefit analysis.

2.5   As such, it is recommended that these schemes are not included for full funding at this stage but that an allocation of up to £2m, to only be drawn down as and where necessary, is agreed within the programme to build business cases on a number of schemes to be considered later this year by the relevant O&S Committee, Cabinet and Council.

2.6   All other schemes are currently being evaluated and challenged by officers. Proposals to meet the council's more general service requirements will be brought forward for consideration in February under three categories: Invest to save; digital; and operational.

3.   Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1   In previous years, the recommendations to Council have also included delegations to Cabinet to agree additions to the capital programme under the following criteria:

- If additional third party resources are been secured, such as government grants and s106 agreements, for specific schemes;
- Where a scheme is identified that can be classed as 'spend to save' – where it will lead to cost reductions or income generation that will, as a minimum, cover the cost of borrowing; and
- For Gloriana schemes – these actually also fall under the 'spend to save' criteria set out above.

3.2   No limits have been put on these delegations in the past but Members may want to consider whether a de minimis level should be introduced.

4.   Reasons for Recommendation

4.1   The capital programme forms part of the formal budget setting in February and is an integral part of the Council's overall approach to financial planning.

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

5.1   A number of schemes have been discussed in a number of forums but never brought forward for a budget allocation. This approach will ensure that a number of those more aspirational schemes come forward with the relevant information for Members to make a decision.

5.2   Directors' Board are currently going through a period of challenge on the various bids and further reports on the programme to be submitted later this year will go through the relevant O&S Committee and any other relevant consultation.

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

6.1   Capital budgets provide the finance to meet the Corporate Priorities. If a capital project was not to proceed, this may impact, positively or negatively, on the delivery of these priorities and performance with a corresponding impact on the community.

7.   Implications

7.1   **Financial**

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

The financial implications have been set out throughout the body of the report.

7.2   **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
                              Deputy Head of Law and Governance

Local authorities are under an explicit duty to ensure that their financial management is adequate and effective and that they have a sound system of internal control and management of financial risk. This budget report contributes to that requirement although specific legal advice may be required on each projects business case.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
                            Diversity and Equalities Officer

All local authorities are required to have due regard to their duties under the Equality Act 2010. The capital programme is assessed at keys stages to ensure the impact of each scheme is measured in a propionate and appropriate way to ensure this duty is met and the needs of different protected characteristics are considered.

7. **Appendices to the report**

- There are no appendices to this report.

Report Author Contact Details:

Sean Clark. Director of Finance and IT

18 January 2017	ITEM: 9
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Fees & Charges Pricing Strategy 2017/18	

Wards and communities affected:	**Key Decision:**
All	Key

Report of: Carl Tomlinson - Finance Manager
Accountable Head of Service: David Lawson – Monitoring Officer
Accountable Directors: Fiona Taylor - Director of Law and Governance
This report is public

Executive Summary

Local Authorities are involved in a wide range of services and the ability to charge for some of these services has always been a key funding source to Councils.

This report specifically sets out the charges in relation to services within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Charges will take effect from the 1 April 2017 unless otherwise stated.

In preparing the proposed fees and charges, Directorates have worked within the charging framework and principles set out in the report.

The full list of proposed charges is detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.

1.   **Recommendations**

1.1.   **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the revised fees and charges proposals.**

1.2.   **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of this committee.**

2.   **Background**

2.1.   The paper describes the fees and charges approach for the services within the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee remit for 2017/18 and will set a platform for certain pricing principles moving forward into future financial years.

2.2.   The paper provides narrative for Legal Services which is the only service within the Committees remit with external fees and charges

Directorate: £000's	Actual 15/16	Budget 16/17	Budget 17/18
Legal Services	197	352	363
TOTAL	**197**	**352**	**363**

3. Thurrock Charging Policy

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

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

3.3. When considering the pricing strategy for 2017/18 some key questions were considered.

- Where can we apply a tiered/premium pricing structure
- How sensitive are customers to price (are there areas where a price freeze is relevant)
- What new charges might we want to introduce for this financial year
- How do our charges compare with neighbouring boroughs
- How do our charges compare to neighbouring boroughs and private sector competitors (particularly in those instances where customers have choice)
- How can we influence channel shift
- Can we set charges to recover costs
- What do our competitors charges
- How sensitive is demand to price
- Statutory services may have discretionary elements that we can influence
- Do we take deposits, charge cancellation fees, charge an admin fee for duplicate services (e.g. lost certificates.)

4. Proposals and Issues

4.1. The fees and charges for each service area have been considered and the main considerations are set out below.

4.2. A council wide target of £0.350m has been proposed within the MTFS for additional income generation in respect of fees and charges income for 2017/18.

5. Legal Services

5.1. A benchmarking exercise revealed that Thurrock legal fees for section 106, section 38 and section 278 agreements was far less than charged by other authorities and therefore these fees were increased in line with the evidenced benchmarking.

5.2. A previous exercise lifting fees by a set percentage had resulted in some odd values with pence and these have therefore been rationalised to rounded amounts.

5.3. A new fee of £500 has been introduced in respect of section 111 agreements as these are being used more often and other authorities apply a small fee in addition to the section 106 fee in relation thereto and are therefore likewise evidenced by benchmarking.

5.4. A second new fee of £1,500 has been introduced in respect of draft agreements for footpath/bridleway creation and/or diversion

5.5. Legal Services has not made any change to statutory prescribed fees.

5.6. Verification of proof of life charges have increased to reflect the cost to the Authority of completing documentation and confirming identity. The increased fee is approximately half of the fee from a private practice solicitor.Requests are received from persons in receipt of overseas pensions as it is a common requirement for continued receipt of such pensions.

5.7. Legal Services has introduced a new fee for sealing contracts to aid with the required and reasonable administrative support associated with this work without impeding the Council from procuring contractors.

5.8. Finaly, it should be noted that in the wider context of public sector to public sector trading of legal services the shared service is permitted pursuant to the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970 to supply legal services to other public bodies on a commercial basis rather than cost recovery basis.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

6.1. The setting of appropriate fees and charges will enable the Council to generate essential income for the funding of Council services. The approval of reviewed fees and charges will also ensure that the Council is competitive with other service providers and neighbouring councils.

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

7.1. Consultations will be progressed where these is specific need. However, with regard all other items, the proposals in this report do not affect any specific parts of the borough. Fees and charges are known to customers before they make use of the services they are buying.

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

8.1. The changes in these fees and charges may impact the community; however it must be taken into consideration that these price rises include inflation and no profit will be made on the running of these discretionary services.

9. Implications

9.1. Financial

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

Additional income will be generated from increases but this is variable as it is also dependent on demand for the services. Increases to income budgets have been built into the MTFS.

9.2. Legal

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

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

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

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

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

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

9.3. Diversity and Equality

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

The Council has a statutory duty under the Race Relations Act 2000 Amendment), the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (Amendment) to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment. Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to the Council's decision making structures. Concessions should be available to groups or individuals in the community, where the increase may result in them being excluded from particular activities.

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

None applicable

10. **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

11. **Appendices to the report**
- Appendix 1 – Schedule of Proposed Fees and Charges for 2017/18

Report Author:

Carl Tomlinson - Finance Manager

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Name of fee or Charge	Statutory/ Discretionary Charge	VAT Status 17/18	Charge excl. VAT 2016/17	VAT Amount 2016/17	Charging incl. VAT 2016/17	Charge excl. VAT 2017/18	VAT Amount 2017/18	Charging incl. VAT 2017/18
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Copy of Insurance Policy	D	S	£ 45.50	£ 9.10	£ 54.60	£ 45.83	£ 9.17	£ 55.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Copy of Landlord's Offer Notice - Full	D	S	£ 35.00	£ 7.00	£ 42.00	£ 35.00	£ 7.00	£ 42.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Copy of Landlord's Offer Notice - Part	D	S	£ 14.05	£ 2.81	£ 16.86	£ 14.17	£ 2.83	£ 17.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Copy of Service Charge Certificate	D	S	£ 30.20	£ 6.04	£ 36.24	£ 30.00	£ 6.00	£ 36.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Document retrieval	D	S	£ 9.00	£ 1.80	£ 10.80	£ 9.00	£ 1.80	£ 10.80
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Fee for Application to buy garage	D	S	£ 76.15	£ 15.23	£ 91.38	£ 75.83	£ 15.17	£ 91.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Lease prints	D	O	£ 68.25	£ -	£ 68.25	£ 68.00	£ -	£ 68.00

Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Leasehold Enquiries - Maintenance and rent details, insurance etc.	D	O	£ 155.40	£ -	£ 155.40	£ 155.00	£ -	£ 155.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Letter of Postponement concerning authorized words on properties with statutory discount charge	D	O	£ 66.70	£ -	£ 66.70	£ 67.00	£ -	£ 67.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Ownership Changes Leaseholds Houses and Flats	D	O	£ 44.65	£ -	£ 44.65	£ 45.00	£ -	£ 45.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Photocopying A3	D	S	£ 1.25	£ 0.25	£ 1.50	£ 1.25	£ 0.25	£ 1.50
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Photocopying A4	D	S	£ 0.83	£ 0.17	£ 1.00	£ 0.83	£ 0.17	£ 1.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Post and Packing	E	E	£ 3.00	£ -	£ 3.00	£ 3.00	£ -	£ 3.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Stat charge discharge - discount 3 year period	D	O	£ 68.80	£ -	£ 68.80	£ 69.00	£ -	£ 69.00

			£	£	£	£	£	£
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Transfer of Equity approval and seal	D	O	£ 70.90	£ -	£ 70.90	£ 71.00	£ -	£ 71.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Council House Sales - Transfer prints	D	O	£ 42.55	£ -	£ 42.55	£ 43.00	£ -	£ 43.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Authorised Guarantee Agreement	D	O	£ 480.75	£ -	£ 480.75	£ 481.00	£ -	£ 481.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Commercial Lease Assignment	D	E	£ 648.90	£ -	£ 648.90	£ 649.00	£ -	£ 649.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Commercial Lease Grant (Complex)	D	E	£1,200 upwards (no maximum)	£ -	£1,200 upwards (no maximum)	£1,200 upwards (no maximum)	£ -	£1,200 upwards (no maximum)
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Commercial Lease Grant (Simple)	D	E	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00	£ 740.00	£ -	£ 740.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Commercial Licences	D	E	£193.90-£713.80	£ -	£193.90-£713.80	£194-£714	£ -	£194-£714
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Copy of Lease	D	S	£ 90.10	£ 18.02	£ 108.12	£ 90.00	£ 18.00	£ 108.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Deed of Covenants	D	E	£ 451.55	£ -	£ 451.55	£ 452.00	£ -	£ 452.00

Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Landlord Licence	D	O	£ 547.80	£ -	£ 547.80	£ 548.00	£ -	£ 548.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Section 278 (Complex)	D	O	No Set Maximum	£ -	No Set Maximum	£2,500 upwards (No set maximum)	£ -	£2,500 upwards (No set maximum)
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Deed of Variation	D	O	£ 555.90	£ -	£ 555.90	£1,000 upwards (No set maximum)	£ -	£1,000 upwards (No set maximum)
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Easements	D	O	£ 851.15	£ -	£ 851.15	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Rent Reviews	D	O	£217.4 - £286.60	£ -	£217.4 - £286.60	£220 - £350	£ -	£220 - £350
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Section 106 (Complex)	D	O	1750.00 upwards (no set maximum)	£ -	1750.00 upwards (no set maximum)	£2,500 upwards (no set maximum)	£ -	£2,500 upwards (no set maximum)
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Section 38 (Complex)	D	O	No Set Maximum	£ -	No Set Maximum	£2,500 upwards (No set maximum)	£ -	£2,500 upwards (No set maximum)

Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Surrenders	D	O	£ 555.90	£ -	£ 555.90	£ 600.00	£ -	£ 600.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Transfer of Open Space	D	O	£ 771.10	£ -	£ 771.10	£ 800.00	£ -	£ 800.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Verification of Proof of Life	D	O	£ 25.00	£ -	£ 25.00	£ 50.00	£ -	£ 50.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Legal Charge re drafting of document for:- Wayleave Agreement Democratic Services	D	O	£ 318.00	£ -	£ 318.00	£ 500.00	£ -	£ 500.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Licence of Alteration	D	O	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Licences to assign Leasehold Premises	D	O	£ 517.50	£ -	£ 517.50	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Notice of Assignment	D	O	£ 81.70	£ -	£ 81.70	£ 82.00	£ -	£ 82.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Notice of Charge	D	O	£ 81.70	£ -	£ 81.70	£ 82.00	£ -	£ 82.00

			£	£	£	£	£	£
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Retrospective Consent	D	O	£ 119.50	£ -	£ 119.50	£ 120.00	£ -	£ 120.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Right to Buy Engrossment	D	O	£ 73.55	£ -	£ 73.55	£ 75.00	£ -	£ 75.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Sale of Garden Land/ Additional Land	D	E	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00	£ 703.00	£ -	£ 703.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Sale of Land	D	E	If under £1,000 min charge £500, then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)	£ -	If under £1,000 min charge £500, then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)	If under £1,000 min charge £703 then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)	£ -	If under £1,000 min charge £703 then incremental depending on value & complexity (no maximum)
Legal and Democratic Services - Miscellaneous - Shop Leases	D	O	£ 718.10	£ -	£ 718.10	£ 720.00	£ -	£ 720.00
Legal and Democratic Services - Register of Elections - Certificate of Residency, per elector, per year	D	E	£ 13.90	£ -	£ 13.90	£ 14.00	£ -	£ 14.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Footpath/ Bridleway Creation or Diversion Agreement	S	O	New			£ 1,500.00	£ -	£ 1,500.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Grazing Licence	S	O	£ 441.00	£ -	£ 441.00	£ 441.00	£ -	£ 441.00

Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Reg of Assign	S	O	£ 29.40	£ -	£ 29.40	£ 30.00	£ -	£ 30.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 106 (Standard)	S	O	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,750.00	£ -	£ 1,750.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 111 Agreement (in addition to S106 fee)	S	O	New			£ 500.00	£ -	£ 500.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 142 Licence	S	O	New			£ 250.00	£ -	£ 250.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 278 (Standard)	S	O	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 38 (Standard)	S	O	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ 2,500.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Section 50 Agreement	S	O	£ 650.00	£ -	£ 650.00	£ 650.00	£ -	£ 650.00
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Stopping up/ Orders etc. under Highways Act	S	O	New			Estimate in circumstances of the case	£ -	Estimate in circumstances of the case
Legal charge re drafting of document for:- Street License	S	O	£ 307.65	£ -	£ 307.65	£ 310.00	£ -	£ 310.00

Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value £750,000 to £1,500,000	D	E	New			£ 350.00	£ -	£ 350.00
Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value £1,500,000 to £2,500,000	D	E	New			£ 550.00	£ -	£ 550.00
Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value £100,000 to £250,000	D	E	New			£ 150.00	£ -	£ 150.00
Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value £2,500,000 to £5,000,000	D	E	New			£ 650.00	£ -	£ 650.00
Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value £250,000 to £750,000	D	E	New			£ 250.00	£ -	£ 250.00

Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Contract Value exceeding £5,000,000	D	E	New			£ 850.00	£ -	£ 850.00
Legal Services - Contract & Procurement - Engrossment/ Sealing of Contract Fees - Discretionary/ No VAT - Variations/ Novations (where original contract value exceeds £250,000)	D	E	New			£ 150.00	£ -	£ 150.00
Photocopying:- Election expense returns (per side copied)	S	E	New			£ 0.20	£ -	£ 0.20
Sale of the edited register:- In data format, £20 *plus £1.50 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) in it	S	E	New			£20 *+£1.50	£ -	£20 *+£1.50
Sale of the edited register:- In printed format, £10 *plus £5 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) in it	S	E	New			£10 *+£5	£ -	£10 *+£5
Sale of the full register and the notices of alteration:- In data format, £20 *plus £1.50 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) in it	S	E	New			£20 *+£1.50	£ -	£20 *+£1.50

Sale of the full register and the notices of alteration:- In printed format, £10 *plus £5 for each 1,000 entries (or remaining part of 1,000 entries) in it	S	E	New			*£10 *+£5*	£ -	*£10 *+£5*
Sale of the list of overseas electors:- In data format, £20 *plus £5 for each 100 entries (or remaining part of 100 entries) in it	S	E	New			*£20 *+£1.50*	£ -	*£20 *+£1.50*
Sale of the list of overseas electors:- In printed format, £10 *plus £5 for each 100 entries (or remaining part of 100 entries) in it	S	E	New			*£10 *+£5*	£ -	*£10 *+£5*
The cost of a marked document (Register or Absent vote list):- Data copies is £10 *plus £1 per 1,000 entries or part thereof	S	E	New			*£10 *+£1*	£ -	*£10 *+£1*
The cost of a marked document (Register or Absent vote list):- Printed copies is £10 *plus £2 per 1,000 entries or part thereof	S	E	New			*£10 *+£2*	£ -	*£10 *+£2*

18 January 2017	ITEM: 10
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Draft General Fund Budget 2017/18	

Wards and communities affected:	Key Decision:
All	Key

Report of: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT

Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT

Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT

This report is public

Executive Summary

This report sets out the draft budget proposals for a balanced budget for the financial year 2017/18.

Cabinet considered a report on 7 September 2016 that amended the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) in light of changes to business rates and inflation assumptions. This demonstrated a base budget pressure of circa £10m and this increased by a further £0.420m through recommending a phased increase to the General Fund balance.

Cabinet has also agreed a pilot in 2016 of the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It initiative and, at their meeting on 14 December 2016, agreed an extension to the end of this financial year. The draft report includes £1m to mainstream this initiative into the base budget from 1 April 2017.

The September 2016 report also set out the Council Spending Review (CSR) approach – a move towards commercialism and greater efficiencies through four main streams: income generation; more or same for less; reducing the MTFS growth through greater demand management; and a comprehensive service review over a two to three year time period of all council services.

This approach has been managed through a number of Boards and the proposals, set out in this report, have been considered by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees over recent weeks.

This report demonstrates that, subject to a number of assumptions set out in the report, a balanced budget has been achieved.

Finally, the report makes recommendations regarding the Adult Social Care Precept and Support Grant.

1   Recommendation(s)

1.1   **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the report;**

1.2   **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the Adult Social Care precept options as set out in section 4 of this report.**

2   Introduction and Background

2.1   The approach to achieving a balanced budget for 2017/18 and the medium term was first presented to Cabinet on 7 September 2016 and has subsequently been reported to the various Overview and Scrutiny Committees including this committee on 20 September and 22 November 2016.

2.2   In summary, the approach has been, and continues to be, a focus on:

- Income generation – including increasing the Council's commercial trading base. Council Tax increases also fall under this category;
- Achieving more / same for less – including further transformational projects, contract reviews, spend to save initiatives and alternative delivery models; and
- Demand management / early intervention. Examples include the Local Area Co-ordinators and Community Hubs.

2.3   This has been delivered through the following Boards, each chaired by a member of the Directors' Board, with each Board consisting of a cross section of service representatives:

Customer Service & Demand Management	Commercial
ICT / Digital	People
Procurement	Property

2.4   In addition, there is a comprehensive programme of service reviews that are underpinned by the following principles.

- Becoming financially self-sustainable;
- Maximise efficiency in each service;
- A review of all services by March 2019 using common design principles (customer / demand management, commercial, ICT / digital, people, procurement, property and process);
- Non-statutory income generating services should be cost neutral; and
- Outcome focused including consideration of prevention and early intervention.

3   Provisional Grant Announcement and Council Tax

3.1   Thurrock Council signed up to the four year grant settlement that was announced in December 2015. Whilst not guaranteeing exact amounts, the settlement did give some greater indication of the likely Revenue Support Grant for the period 2017/18 through to 2019/20. However, there are a number of other specific grants that impact on the General Fund, including the Education Support Grant and Housing Benefit Administration Grant, totalling some £1.62m in 2016/17, that have been reducing in recent years.

3.2   Changes have been made to the New Homes Bonus to support Adult Social Care financial pressures. Although this was expected over the medium term, a transfer of resources was not expected in 2017/18. However, the government has redirected £241m from the NHB national pot in 2017/18 and this has been distributed to top tier authorities in line with the adult social care relative needs formula in way of an Adult Social Care Support Grant. Cabinet should note that this grant is for 2017/18 only.

3.3   Further reductions have been proposed to the NHB for future years as the government looks to transfer further funding into the Better Care Fund (BCF) to support Adult Social Care pressures. Whilst the council will gain funding for ASC through this change, the funding will be ring-fenced for this purpose and non-specific grant will be reduced adding pressures to the council's wider general fund budget.

3.4   The general council tax increase has, as expected, been capped at 2% and the Cabinet are asked to support the maximum increase allowed that, when rounded, equates to a 1.98% increase.

3.5   The ability to raise an Adult Social Care precept was introduced for the 2016/17 financial year. At the time, the increase was limited to 2% in any one year and only the four years 2016/17 to 2019/20.

3.6   For the remaining three years, councils have now been given further options. Whilst there can be no increase greater than the 6% over the remaining three years, councils have been given the option of bringing forward increases from the final year to both 2017/18 and 2018/19 although there is a cap of 3% on both of these years. As such, the following are the most likely options:

3.6.1   A 3% increase in both 2017/18 and 2018/19 and no increase in 2019/20; or

3.6.2   A 3% increase in 2017/18, 2% in 2018/19 and 1% in 2019/20; or

3.6.3   A 2% increase for each of the three years.

3.7   It is recommended that Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider these options in a more detailed paper in advance of the February Cabinet and Council meetings.

4   Adult Social Care

4.1   Previous budget reports justified the 2016/17 Adult Social Care precept in 2016/17 through the impact of the national minimum wage and increase in complex demand such as autism and dementia. Despite this additional funding, budget update reports in 2016/17 have highlighted increased pressures during this financial year, including market failure and the subsequent need to bring some service provision back in-house.

4.2   As set out above, the ability to raise council tax by 3% and the Adult Social Care Support Grant will increase the resources available to meet these pressures. The Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health has set out the following as the justification for the ASC precept increase of 3% (2.99% when rounded) that, together with the ASC Support Grant, will go towards meeting the immediate pressures:

Original 3 year MTFS savings	£ 750k
Procurement / demand management	£ 100k
Demographic pressures – older people, learning disabilities, mental health and transitions	£ 1,032 – this is based on detailed analysis of trends, transition and population assumptions. I have made assumptions that 50% can be managed through our demand management programme (Shared Lives, LACs etc)
Cost pressures – National Living Wage principally within external providers and domiciliary care basic rate.	£ 745k – based on estimated 5% uplift that providers will face with NLW increase next year and an allowance for increase in basic rate for domiciliary care (NB only half year)
Total	**£2,627k**

Proposed Funding Sources

Adult Social Care precept (assumes 3% at this stage)	£ 1,700k
Adult Social Care Support Grant	£ 657k
Total	**£2,357k**
Shortfall	**£ 270k**
Further options being explored:	
• Further demand management	
• Including Higher level of DLA / PIP /AA in the income assessment of service users	

4.3   Whilst it is the recommendation of officers to increase the ASC precept by 3% for each of the next two years, Members are asked for guidance as to which of the three options, as set out in paragraph 3.6, is preferred.

4.4 Officers can see the need for immediate increases to meet the increased costs of the minimum wage and demand pressures. The National Living Wage increase over 2 years will represent a 12% increase and has put un-precedented pressure on our local providers. We have faced considerable difficulties with our domiciliary care providers with one provider giving the contract back to the Council and a second having its contract terminated due to quality concerns. There is an urgent need to stabilise this market and we are about to go out to tender for this service – our current basic rate of £13ph is un-sustainable and the officer view is that an increase in the rate now is essential to provide a more stable and higher quality service.

4.5 The following forecasts show that there is a projected £19k difference to the budget between the two extreme options.

Based on 3%/3%/0%				ASC	ASC
Year	Prev C Tax	ASC	Base	Income	Income Raised
2016/17	1,124.64	22.49	48,856	1,098,771.44	1,098,771.44
2017/18	1,180.80	35.42	49,732	1,761,706.37	2,860,477.81
2018/19	1,239.84	37.20	49,732	1,849,791.69	4,710,269.49
2019/20	1,264.59	-	49,732	0	4,710,269.49

Based on 3%/2%/1%				ASC	ASC
Year	Prev C Tax	ASC	Base	Income	Income Raised
2016/17	1,124.64	22.49	48,856	1,098,771.44	1,098,771.44
2017/18	1,180.80	35.42	49,732	1,761,706.37	2,860,477.81
2018/19	1,227.96	24.56	49,732	1,221,378.13	4,081,855.94
2019/20	1,264.77	12.65	49,732	628,995.42	4,710,851.36

Based on 2%/2%/2%				ASC	ASC
Year	Prev C Tax	ASC	Base	Income	Income Raised
2016/17	1,124.64	22.49	48,856	1,098,771.44	1,098,771.44
2017/18	1,169.55	23.39	49,732	1,163,281.21	2,262,052.65
2018/19	1,216.26	24.33	49,732	1,209,740.85	3,471,793.50
2019/20	1,264.86	25.30	49,732	1,258,080.35	4,729,873.85

5   Draft 2017/18 Balanced Budget and Assumptions

5.1 The following table summarises the proposals that are recommended to meet the original budget gap of circa £10m but also the increased budget requirements of increasing the General Fund Balance and including the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It initiative within the base budget.

5.2 Points to note include:

5.2.1 That there will be a general increase in council tax of 1.99%;

5.2.2 That there will be an increase in the ASC precept of 2.99% with the income raised of £1.7m, along with the ASC Support Grant, being allocated to the ASC budget; and

5.2.3 That the original assumptions on government grant remain correct – at the time of writing, not all grants have been announced but indications are that the MTFS assumptions are broadly correct.

	2017/18	
	£000s	
Opening Estimated Deficit	9,976	
Base budget pressure 2016/17	206	
Future savings agreed during 2014/15	(2,484)	
Children's full year savings from 2016/17 mitigation	(1,200)	
Council Tax base adjustment	(590)	This relates to the increase in Band D properties – a council tax increase of 3.99% is included in the opening balance
Reduction to employment budget growth	(200)	A reduction in the provision for the pay award and increments post review
Income generation (Commercial)	(1,030)	See appendix
Property/asset rationalisation (Property)	(835)	See appendix
Procurement/contracts (Procurement)	(940)	See appendix
Efficiencies/transformation (Digital & ICT)	(130)	See appendix
Efficiencies/transformation (Customer)	(100)	See appendix
Efficiencies/transformation (People)	(700)	See appendix
Sub-total	1,973	
Target reduction in growth allocation (currently £3.5m)	(1,700)	The remaining £1.8m allocated to ASC £1.1m in line with 2% precept and £0.7m allocated to Children's Social care in line with iMPOWER recommendation
Efficiencies/transformation (Service Reviews)	(577)	See appendix
Contribution to increased GF Balance	420	
Working Balance deficit/(surplus)	116	
Environmental investment	1,000	Clean It, Cut It, Fill It
Revised deficit/(surplus)	1,116	
Capitalise part of MRP budget to meet GF balances contribution	(420)	This meets the principle of only budgeting for the approach of capitalising MRP for items that are not ongoing base budget pressures
Revised Treasury projections	(500)	Ongoing low interest rates, investment returns and a reduction in the MRP budget
Reduction to Transformation Budget	(200)	A reduction to the provision made to

	2017/18	
	£000s	
		meet ongoing costs – licenses etc – of transformation projects
Total deficit/(surplus)	**(4)**	

5.3   The budget also assumes that all services' base budgets are amended to reflect the variances reported to Cabinet in recent months. This includes a further budget allocation, in addition to the £0.7m set out in the table above, to Children's Services to meet the circa £4m pressures. This is funded from permanent budget transfers from the other service areas that have delivered surpluses throughout the year to meet this pressure.

5.4   In addition to the above, it is proposed to allocate a further £1.25m of growth to meet Adult Social Care pressures through the additional increase to the ASC precept to 2.99% and the ASC Support Grant.

6   Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

6.1   Options include whether to continue with the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It initiative or whether to allocate some or all of the £1m identified to another service and/or to offset savings proposals.

6.2   Cabinet will also have to consider the level of council tax to recommend to Full Council. The recommendation from Directors' Board is for the 1.99% general increase and the full 3% ASC precept to help meet ongoing pressures.

7   Reasons for Recommendation

7.1   The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget annually. This report sets out the approach to achieve that balanced budget whilst also providing additional resources for both Adults' and Children's Social Care and the Environment Service.

8   Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

8.1   The budget planning governance structure includes involvement and consultation with Officers, Portfolio Holders and Members and the various Overview and Scrutiny committees considered proposals during October to December.

8.2   The CSR approach also involved monthly meetings to which all Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders were invited. These sessions provided an opportunity to discuss the latest budget position as well as consider specific ideas and savings proposals. These meetings will continue and work is underway to progress other areas where efficiencies could be made, identified through the meetings, including becoming cashless and reducing spend on subscriptions.

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

9.1   The implementation of previous savings proposals has already reduced service delivery levels and our ability to meet statutory requirements, impacting on the community and staff. The potential impact on the Council's ability to safeguard children and adults will be kept carefully under review and mitigating actions taken where required.

10   Implications

10.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**

Director of Finance and IT

Council officers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the Council can contain spend within its available resources.   With the need to become financially self-sustainable the approach taken this year to concentrate on a more commercial attitude is set out in this report.

The proposals also include growth for the demand led services of Adults' and Children's social care whilst also including an additional £1m to enhance the cleanliness of the borough.

The General Fund Balance has been maintained at £8m over recent years. The target level has been revised to £9.26m and these proposals include a new budgeted contribution of £0.420m per annum for three years to meet this level.

10.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**

Deputy Head of Law & Governance

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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

10.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Price**

Community Development and Equalities

There are no specific diversity and equalities implications as part of this report. Equality and Community Impact Assessments have been completed for specific proposals where required e.g. implications of the new approach in the Customer Services Strategy subject to agreement.

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

Any other significant implications will be identified in any business cases for a proposal and consultation where required.

11 **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):

- Various working papers within Finance and relevant services
- DCLG announcements on various grants and council tax principles

12 **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Schedule of proposals

Report Author:

Sean Clark

Director of Finance and IT

Finance and IT

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SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Reference	Board	Proposal	2017/18	Comments
PROC-2017-01	Procurement	Adult Care Placements (18-65 age group) – Review of placement costs against care plans.	100	Review of placement costs (MH, PD, LD) against care plans. This is in addition to the existing savings target underway for Placements.
PROC-2017-02	Procurement	Parking – service brought in house. There will be initial set up costs in 2016/17 but new service should realise savings from 2017/18	75	End of Serco Parking Processing contract – service brought in-house. There will be set up costs initially (in 16/17) will realise savings from 17/18
PROC-2017-03	Procurement	Home to School Transport (Education budget)	25	Savings from rationalising demand and sharing vehicles.
PROC-2017-04	Procurement	Waste disposal contract negotiations	25	Savings from contract extension will be sought.
PROC-2017-05	Procurement	ICT Category – Achievable savings on main contracts and rationalisation of smaller ones	110	Achievable savings on main contracts and rationalisation of smaller ones
PROC-2017-06	Procurement	Insurance – modest savings secured through renegotiation of existing contract	30	Modest savings to be secured through renegotiation at extension or through re-procurement.
PROC-2017-07	Procurement	Creative use of Purchase Cards – savings from a reduction of 2 FTE plus rebate from supplier	55	Savings from reduction of 2 FTE from Creditors Team 17/18 plus £10K annual estimated rebate from RBS (£5K in year 1). Additional savings will be secured by better low value contract management and less maverick spend.
PROC-2017-08	Procurement	Overpayment Review – use of specialist no-win, no fee consultants to identify overpayments to contracts	100	One off saving in 2017/18 through use of consultants to identify overpayments on contracts. Payment by results. Successful with other Councils and on CCS Framework.
PROC-2017-09	Procurement	Review of Translation and Interpretation Services – procurement exercise to improve consistency via a framework agreement at an agreed price	20	Procurement of formal contract and some reduction in spend (keeping interpretation and statutory translation requirements)

SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Reference	Board	Proposal	2017/18	Comments
PROC-2017-10	Procurement	Reduction of Consultancy Spend	300	Reduce consultancy spend across the organisation
PROC-2017-11	Procurement	Contract Management	100	Savings delivered through more effective contract management
COMM-2017-01	Commercial	WIFI/Small Cell & Rooftop Concession contract – Tender documents issued 23/9 target date for contract award Jan 2017	75	As per soft market test £750k over 10 years
COMM-2017-02	Commercial	Counter Fraud & Investigation – expansion of traded services	150	Creation of a commercial vehicle
COMM-2017-03	Commercial	Trade Waste Year on Year Growth	75	Development of the trade waste service
COMM-2017-05	Commercial	Maximise use of external funding opportunities	40	Make more effective use of external funding opportunities
COMM-2017-06	Commercial	Further income from advertising/ sponsorship/ filming including roundabouts	20	Further Income opportunities from advertising / sponsorship & filming
COMM-2017-07	Commercial	Trading grounds maintenance services	40	This is a separate item to traded services to schools to reflect the fact that other services could also be traded
COMM-2017-08	Commercial	IT – expansion of traded services	30	Exploring market to identify non-school prospects for broadband. First school telephony pilot almost complete – now reviewing and prioritising other schools (targeting 5 sign ups in 2017/18).

SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Reference	Board	Proposal	2017/18	Comments
COMM-2017-09	Commercial	Fees & Charges	250	No further growth due to £750k being realised since 16/17
COMM-2017-10	Commercial	Treasury Vehicles – full year effect of the solar farm investment	350	Full year effect of existing investments
CUST-2017-01	Customer & Demand Management	Customer Services Strategy	100	Savings from channel migration and digital enabling a reduction in resources required for face-to-face contact.
DIGI-2017-02	ICT / Digital	Citizen Journeys - Enable citizens and customers to do business with the council digitally	30	Productivity savings across all services £30k in 2017/18 through Thurrock Online - Revs and Bens. Remainder to be allocated
DIGI-2017-03	ICT / Digital	Legacy Digital Programmes - Ongoing benefits realisation from completed projects	100	Property Rationalisation and Productivity Savings across Services in 17/18 Productivity Savings across Services from 18/19
PEOP-2017-01	People	Agency staff – reduce use of high cost agency staff through recruitment and retention initiatives and service/workforce re-engineering	400	Reduce the use of high cost agency staff through recruitment and retention initiatives and service/workforce re-engineering
PEOP-2017-02	People	Sickness Absence – reduce overtime and agency costs through effective attendance management	100	Reduce overtime and agency costs through effective attendance management
PEOP-2017-04	People	Review of overtime spend – currently at £1.5m	200	Manage overtime spend across the council
PROP-2017-01	Property	Rental income stretch target - Annual 5% increase in rent roll (excluding Purfleet Centre)	50	Annual 5% increase in rent roll (excluding Purfleet Centre)
PROP-2017-02	Property	Further letting income – from Civic Offices 1 (rent and service charge)	50	Allow for slow build up of occupation. Figure shown includes rent and s/c.

SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Reference	Board	Proposal	2017/18	Comments
PROP-2017-03	Property	Further letting income – Thameside Centre (rent and service charge)	30	Building likely to close in following year. Letting income potentially limited by nature of space.
PROP-2017-04	Property	Relocation of YOS from Corringham Police Station	50	Saving will fall in first year and not be repeated. Likely to be accrued within Children's Services
PROP-2017-05	Property	Corporate Landlord ie centralised maintenance and management of all corporate assets – 10% reduction in running costs through economies of scale	25	Corporate Landlord programme is underway. Libraries have transferred already and Children's estate now being audited. Savings and income opportunities highly likely but cannot be accurately quantified until estate is better understood.
PROP-2017-06	Property	Corporate Landlord – Additional income target	25	Additional income target through the Corporate Landlord model
PROP-2017-07	Property	Facilities Review	175	Review the impact of the running of operational properties under the Corporate Landlord model
PROP-2017-08	Property	Street Lighting efficiencies – LED replacement programme – savings through energy efficiency and maintenance	430	LED replacement programme - savings though energy efficiency and maintenance
SERV-2017-01	Service Review	Libraries	80	The service review will examine options for a comprehensive library service as part of an integrated approach to the provision of community facilities in the Borough.
SERV-2017-02	Service Review	Children's Service business admin - reorganisation of service offer	130	The current business support does not currently meet the requirements of a more integrated children's service so the changes will deliver a more bespoke model of support and bring further efficiencies.
SERV-2017-03	Service Review	Adult Social Care - Fieldwork Services	100	We are maintaining the austerity measures we introduced during 2016/17 pending the full review of the fieldwork service. This includes only recruiting to essential posts and the centralisation of non-staffing

SAVINGS PROPOSALS

Reference	Board	Proposal	2017/18	Comments
				budgets.
SERV-2017-04	Service Review	ASC Commissioning (voluntary sector)	97	We are reviewing our entire voluntary sector grants and contracts budget to identify savings on those groups / projects that were either time limited or have a lower priority.
SERV-2017-05	Service Review	Private Rented Sector - HMOs, condition etc	45	In line with the report that was submitted to Housing Scrutiny in December 2016 the definition of an HMO has been extended and so this gives the Council a potential increased income stream.
SERV-2017-06	Service Review	Debt collection	55	Debt collection is currently carried out in a number of sections throughout the authority. The service review is likely to recommend an integrated approach that will save on FTE but, more importantly, create a more cohesive approach to working with our residents on managing debt issues and pressures.
SERV-2017-07	Service Review	HR & Payroll & OD	30	HR, Payroll and OD services are currently focused on delivering mainly internal services, with some schools buying payroll. The service review has identified opportunities to realign resources, and increasing the use of digital systems to provide the capacity to offer a range of services externally – this will include HR advice and support, training programmes and payroll services.
SERV-2017-08	Service Review	Corporate Programme Team	20	The service review will identify current FTE vacancies in conjunction with similar skilled employees that may be currently deployed within other Services to eradicate duplication of roles. Plus, evaluate the potential for the cross-selling of existing project/programme delivery skills externally and develop plans to maximise this opportunity.
SERV-2017-09	Service Review	Customer Services	20	Additional savings from the implementation of the Customer Service Strategy above and focus on channel shift/digital reducing resources required overall.

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**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme
2016/17**

Dates of Meetings: 21 June 2016, 20 September 2016, 22 November 2016, 18 January 2017 (Budget) & 14 March 2017

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
14 March 2017		
Budget Update	Sean Clark	
Qtr 3 Corporate Performance Report 2015/16	Sarah Welton	
Council Counsultations Report	Karen Wheeler	Members
Thurrock's Digital & Information Technology Strategy 2017-20	Chris Stephenson	Officers

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