

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held at **7.00 pm** on **25 July 2018**

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

Membership of the Council:

Barbara Rice (Mayor)
Terry Piccolo (Deputy Mayor)

Qaisar Abbas
Tim Aker
Abbie Akinbohun
John Allen
Alex Anderson
James Baker
Clare Baldwin
Russell Cherry
Colin Churchman
Gary Collins
Mark Coxshall
Jack Duffin
Tony Fish
Mike Fletcher
Leslie Gamester
Oliver Gerrish

Robert Gledhill
Garry Hague
James Halden
Graham Hamilton
Shane Hebb
Victoria Holloway
Deborah Huelin
Andrew Jefferies
Barry Johnson
Tom Kelly
Cathy Kent
John Kent
Martin Kerin
Steve Liddiard
Susan Little
Sue MacPherson

Ben Maney
Bukky Okunade
Jane Potheary
David Potter
Joycelyn Redsell
Gerard Rice
Elizabeth Rigby
Sue Sammons
Angela Sheridan
Sue Shinnick
Peter Smith
Luke Spillman
Pauline Tolson
Aaron Watkins
Lynn Worrall



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

Agenda published on: 17 July 2018

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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	To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
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Name of Committee	Date
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Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	13 February 2018
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Future Dates of Council:

31 October 2018, 28 November 2018, 30 January 2019, 27 February 2019 (Budget), 20 March 2019 (Provisional)

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

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

Recording of meetings

This meeting will be recorded with the audio recording being published on the Council's website. The meeting will also be filmed and live streamed. Members of the public not wishing to be filmed the Mayor will give them the opportunity to leave the chamber. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

No speech may exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor [Rule 19.8], except for the proposer of any motion who shall have 5 minutes to move that motion (except on a motion to amend where the 3 minute time shall apply) [Rule 19.8(a)]			
All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C			
A.	A1 Motion is moved A2 Mover speaks A3 Seconded A4 Secunder speaks or reserves right to speak	[Rule 19.2] [Rule 19.8(a) (5 minutes)] [Rule 19.2] [Rule 19.3] (3 minutes)	
Then the procedure will move to either B or C below:			
B.		C.	
IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)		If NOT amended i.e. original motion	
B1	The mover of the amendment shall speak (3 mins).	C1	Debate.
B2	The seconder of the amendment shall speak unless he or she has reserved their speech (3 mins).	C2	If the seconder of the motion has reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.
B3	THEN debate on <u>the subject</u>.	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.	C4	Vote on motion.
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply.		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.		
B7	Vote on amendment.		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate.		

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

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100 Years in Memoriam

Remembering Thurrock's Fallen of World War One

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

July 1918

DATE	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	WARD	DIED
06-Jul	BARKER	ARTHUR	U/K	AVE	HOME
08-Jul	PAXMAN	SIDNEY HAROLD	19	G	BELGIUM
08-Jul	ROSE	HERBERT	36	AVE	FRANCE
12-Jul	PACEY	JAMES WABE	23	ORS	FRANCE
13-Jul	BRANDON	WILLIAM GEORGE	29	W/TH	IRELAND
19-Jul	MARSHALL	FREDERICK EDWARD	21	TIL	HOME
25-Jul	CLAYDON	HAROLD ALFRED	19	G	FRANCE
28-Jul	SMITH	GEORGE	27	S.OCK	FRANCE
29-Jul	PACEY	JOSEPH WOODLEY	21	ORS	FRANCE

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 June 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Barbara Rice (Mayor), Terry Piccolo (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Tim Aker, Abbie Akinbohun, John Allen, Alex Anderson, Russell Cherry, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Mike Fletcher, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Angela Sheridan, Sue Shinnick, Peter Smith, Luke Spillman, Aaron Watkins and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors James Baker, Clare Baldwin, Colin Churchman, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, Victoria Holloway, Andrew Jefferies, Sue MacPherson, Gerard Rice and Pauline Tolson

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services
Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

The Mayor invited Reverend Canon Darren Barlow to lead those present in prayer.

12. Minutes

The minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 23 May 2018 were approved as a correct record.

13. Items of Urgent Business

The Mayor informed the Chamber that she had received a request from Councillor Spillman to table an urgent item regarding the recent fire at George Tilbury House in Chadwell St Mary. The Mayor stated that this item would not be considered as an urgent item of business as the Deputy Leader would provide an update to Members in his announcements and members in the chamber did not have the factual information needed from the Fire and Rescue Services.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Hebb, stated the Essex Fire Service had responded to the recent fire incident at George Tilbury House in Chadwell St Mary on Tuesday evening in a sound way and he had been relieved that no casualties had been reported. Councillor Hebb stated the response from Essex Fire Service, South England Ambulance Service and the Council had been fabulous and had recognised the efforts made by all. Unfortunately some residents had sadly lost their homes and that it was now the priority of the Council to support those residents and to re-house them. Councillor Hebb stated that a review to define the details and understand the facts of the fire would be undertaken.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Hebb and stated that all Members agreed with the comments made.

14. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Duffin declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Motion 1 as he was a season ticket holder for East Thurrock United Football Club.

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

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

The Mayor stated that it had been a pleasurable experience as her first month as Mayor and had attended 22 functions already, with the Deputy Mayor having also attended a number of events in the borough. It had been a pleasure to see the good things that Thurrock had to offer and the unity within Thurrock.

The Mayor congratulated and presented a gift to Reverend Canon Darren Barlow on his 20 years of service as an ordained member of clergy.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Hebb, endorsed the Mayor's kind gesture to Reverend Canon Darren Barlow.

16. Questions from Members of the Public

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

17. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members that, in accordance with the Council's petition scheme, the requisite notice had been given by one Member of the Public who wished to present a petition at the meeting.

Ms Chantelle Dyson presented a petition to implement a protection mechanism to provide safety and prevent vehicle access to open green space by Rainbow Road and Felipe Road, Chafford Hundred.

18. Petitions Update Report

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

Councillor Kerin requested an update on Petition 498 submitted on the 27 September 2017 in relation to installing CCTV on a section of Seabrooke Rise.

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

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Hebb, informed the Chamber he had no further changes to make.

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

For Councillor C Kent to be appointed as member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Akinbohun.

Councillor Spillman, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group, informed the Council Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

For Councillor Aker to be removed from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Gamester to be removed from the Planning Committee and be appointed as a member on the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

For Councillor Sheridan to be removed from the Corporate Parenting Committee and be appointed as a member on the Planning Committee.

For Councillor Spillman to be appointed as a member on the Corporate Parenting Committee.

For Councillor Sheridan to be removed from the William Palmer Trust Outside Body.

20. Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report 2017/18

The Mayor referred Members to the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2017-18 as published in the Agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18 were noted.

21. Constitutional Amendments - Public Access to Committees

The Mayor referred Members to the report as published in the Agenda.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Council noted the non-constitutional initiatives that the constitution working group had endorsed.**
- 2. That Council agreed to reduce the timeframe for repeat questions being disallowed at Full Council from 12 months to 3 months.**
- 3. That Council agreed to reduce the timeframe to submit a question or statement at Overview and Scrutiny Committees from 3 working days to 2.**

22. Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Health

Councillor Halden, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, presented his Portfolio Holder report and stated that it was an honour and a pleasure to be presenting his third portfolio holder report. Councillor Halden updated Members on following achievements:

- That investment had been secured to build around 3,500 school places.
- That more children than before got their first choice of school.
- That the number of General Practitioners rated as good had improved from 2 in 2016 to 21 today.
- That the Children Service Reform had saved the Council millions of pounds.
- That the increase of eligible children for this service had risen by 6%.
- That the number of sessions delivered by Children's Services had increased by 34%.
- That young care leavers had been taken out of paying council tax.
- That the Tilbury Medical Centre and Harris Riverside Free School Projects had been saved.
- That 94% of Thurrock schools are rated as either good or outstanding.

- That £150 million had been invested on new education and health estates.
- That Thurrock now had an amazing foundation to build on.
- That the Mental Health Summit had been strengthened by schools and health providers, with Thurrock launching a brand new and national approach to strengthen mental health within Thurrock schools.
- That the Council would completely rebuild the Pioneer School in Purfleet.
- That the number of Integrated Medical Centres would increase.

Councillor Gerrish thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and agreed with the required continued improvements to schools in Thurrock. Councillor Gerrish stated that the Portfolio Holder's report made no reference to any education overspend. Councillor Halden stated that the inherited overspend Dedicated Schools Grant had now been closed and that funding in schools was up £3.4 million and that £70 million would be spent building brand new estates. Councillor Halden stated that the Administration would heavily invest in the future.

Councillor Spillman asked the Portfolio Holder to name three things in his portfolio that had not gone well and what the plans were going forward. Councillor Halden stated that building the four integrated medical centres had taken more time than expected and that two planning applications were soon to be processed. That there was no perfect model for mental health and a new initiative would be launched in schools. The Administration was reflective and intervened on issues and that was demonstrated where matters were being dealt with in all party wards.

Councillor Kerin thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and the good number of good or outstanding schools in the borough and questioned whether an impact assessment had been made with regard to grammar schools in the borough and what effect this would make on existing schools in the borough. Councillor Halden stated that work continued to build more school places which was a great foundation to build on. Councillor Halden also stated he was pro-grammar schools and was adamant that the Administration would receive a good part of the £50 million to be used to expand grammar schools and stated that a working relationship with a Grammar School in Essex would shortly commence.

Councillor Okunade thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and questioned whether the Council was adequately meeting the significant responsibility on supporting pupils who are permanently excluded. Councillor Halden stated that the number of fixed exclusions was down, in 2016 there were 450 where in 2011 it was 1000 pupils. That progress was being made in a tough situation with the Exclusions Units being created. There was no good reason why children at primary school age are permanently expelled and sent to other institutions. Councillor Halden stated that children belonged in schools and that this was the model that was being worked on with schools.

Councillor Duffin asked the Portfolio Holder to get the Council to publically apologise for the confusion made in a recent press release that stated all rugby pitches and facilities would be retained by the Council.

Councillor Halden summed up by replying to Councillor Duffin stating that the Council was going into the formal consultation stage but the positives of the scheme had to be looked at. There would still be a great future for the Rugby Club but delays would not be accepted and that formal agreements could be made at the planning stage.

Councillor Halden stated that the Children Services Reform registration was up by 6%, that sessions provided was up by 36% and that out of the savings 100% had been achieved with no corporate complaints.

Councillor Halden stated that Members could contact him if there were any further questions.

23. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that four questions to the Leader had been received and seven questions to Cabinet Members.

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

24. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no reports had been received.

25. Minutes of Committees

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

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

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

27. Motion submitted by Councillor Duffin

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

Thurrock Council should look into contacting all sports teams/clubs competing across the borough and ask them what support they need moving forward. Many need support with facilities and raising awareness that the Council can assist with without giving financial support.

Councillor Duffin stated that the Motion had been brought to Full Council to highlight that not enough positive news on sporting and club activities was

being shared with residents by the Council. There was insufficient information on the Council web-site about clubs, sporting facilities and events taking place in Thurrock. Big events were taking place with no promotion being undertaken and that the Council should be offering assistance and advice to these clubs on how best to support and promote them. Councillor Duffin stated that Members should be seen at such events and highlighting the good cause that these clubs do for residents of Thurrock.

Councillor Spillman endorsed the Motion and stated it was important that Members attended events being held in Thurrock. Using the recent Kanitha World Cup held at the Aveley Football Club as an example he stated the Council had looked discourteous by not welcoming visitors to this sporting event. Councillor Spillman stated that sport and culture are both important in bringing communities together.

Councillor Huelin thanked Councillor Duffin for submitting the Motion and reassured Members that steps were being taken and the Activity Strategy Plan that covered all the sporting activities in the borough and that supported the local plan would soon be presented. Councillor Huelin gave Members a guarantee that an interested engagement with the community was on-going and that the Administration listened to residents of the borough to ensure that the facilities were available and the offer of help available. The social clubs information on the Council web site would be reviewed and updated.

Councillor Redsell stated her support for the Motion and that work continued with the Sports Council and Active Essex to provide these facilities and that clubs should come together to ensure that the appropriate funding can be obtained.

Councillor Halden stated that there was only so much a Council could do in promoting more sports in schools and that this should be rolled out in a more considered way such as in the Activity Strategy Plan.

Councillor Hebb thanked Councillor Duffin for his well spirited Motion and referenced Members to the 2012 Olympic Legacy that the Council agreed in 2011.

Councillor J Kent stated his support for the Motion and stated that clubs in the borough did not feel loved. The Council should be more creative and use the education facilities available to achieve those goals. Councillor J Kent stated that the Council had to start getting better relationships with clubs and undertaking consultations in the borough correctly. That other clubs such as Cubs and Scouts were also concerned about increases to rents and that the Council should be helping and supporting these clubs.

Councillor Duffin summed up by thanking Members for their support and that good news stories should be shared more by the Council. Councillor Duffin attended a fair share of sporting events in the borough and encouraged other Members to do more. That more fans would generate more funds for these clubs and this could only be done when events are promoted.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

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

28. Motion submitted by Councillor Aker

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

This Council calls on Cabinet to commit to looking at each private contract and assess whether, or not, it could be fulfilled locally and begin a process of bringing private contracts back in-house as soon as possible so that the Council can maximise the benefits for Thurrock rather than multi-national corporations.

Councillor Aker stated that some of the services provided by the Council should be brought back in-house. Those opportunities should be made available for local companies to provide services rather than using larger out of borough companies. Councillor Aker stated that all opportunities should be addressed to ensure the betterment for residents of Thurrock.

Councillor Spillman stated that not all services should be in-house nor have any private provision but that all options should be available and be presented fairly to ensure fair decisions can be made to improve the service and save money.

Councillor Huelin stated that she would not be supporting the Motion as this process had been managed as part of the Council Spending Review where the Council monitored in-house those Thurrock companies tendering for contracts.

Councillor Halden made reference to the wording “multi-national companies” and stated the only Thurrock contract had with a multi-national company would be for Adult Social Care.

Councillor Duffin stated his support for the Motion and that this was an opportunity to support and promote small businesses.

Councillor J Kent stated he would proudly be supporting this Motion to ensure that best value was being maintained for residents and had the best interest for local businesses and the environment. Councillor J Kent questioned whether negotiations were being undertaken fairly and not behind closed doors and the Council should work together to maximise the use of small local businesses.

Councillor Huelin clarified negotiations were not being undertaken behind closed doors and that contracts formed part of the Council Spending Review.

Councillor Hebb stated he would not be supporting this Motion as engagement with small businesses was already taking place and Councillor Aker had not provided any data to state otherwise. As part of the Council Spending Review services were reviewed every 5 years with gap analysis undertaken and private, in-house and voluntary services had contracts with the Council.

Councillor Coxshall stated he would not be supporting this Motion as local businesses were already being used with hardly any contracts being with large companies.

Councillor Aker stated that views of Members had been made clear and called the Motion to go to the vote.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Upon being put to the vote, 25 Members voted in favour of the Motion with 14 Members against whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

29. Motion submitted by Councillor Gerrish

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

Thurrock Council notes the recent consultation which included the future of Orsett Hospital. Thurrock Council further notes the overwhelming opposition of Thurrock residents to the closure of Orsett Hospital. Thurrock Council calls on Cabinet to work with health partners to seek a solution which leaves Orsett Hospital open and retains all services in Thurrock.

Councillor Gerrish stated that a case to close Orsett Hospital had not been made and an alternative to benefit residents would be the Integrated Medical Centres but this was reliant on the centres being up and running before the hospital closed. Councillor Gerrish stated that this was a bad scheme and further consultation with residents would be required. So far the consultation had been poor with no concrete evidence on budgets or staffing and what and where services would be placed. Councillor Gerrish stated the Council had not done their job ensuring the best for residents of Thurrock and a previous Motion had been watered down by an amendment. He added that the past Thurrock Independent Leader had agreed to the closure of Orsett Hospital and facilitated that approach in the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Gerrish hoped that Members would consider the views of the residents and it was time to put residents first and politics second on whether Orsett Hospital should close.

Councillor Spillman stated that he would not be supporting the closure of Orsett Hospital until a further hospital was built in Thurrock. That Councillor

Gerrish had the opportunity to become the Administration in May and directly affect the result of the closure of Orsett Hospital.

Councillor Halden stated a Memorandum of Agreement had been sought from the National Health Service that Orsett Hospital would not close until the Integrated Medical Centres were open, these centres would offer those services currently available at Orsett Hospital. A consultation with residents had taken place and discussions had also taken place at the Health and Wellbeing Board at which no questions had been raised by the Opposition Parties.

Councillor J Kent stated that residents felt let down and uncertain as to what the future plans would entail compared to what residents had been promised. Further questions needed to be answered and that no guarantee could be given that services will be provided once Orsett Hospital closed. The proposed Long Lane Hospital site for minor injuries would not work with insufficient facilities and parking for residents. Councillor J Kent stated that the Memorandum of Understanding was a cover up for the Administration to sell off the National Health Service land.

At 9.21pm, Councillor Halden requested a Point of Order. Councillor Halden clarified that Basildon Hospital had stated only 47% of Hospital Orsett was not used, empty or simply a place host for non-clinical services such as records and yet the National Health Service had stated it would cost £10 million to bring Orsett Hospital up to scratch yet £80 million was being proposed to be spent on estate in the borough.

At 9.23pm, Councillor J Kent requested a Point of Order that Councillor Halden should listen to the Cabinet recording that reference the term “a collection of unused buildings”.

Councillor Kerin stated that the Council should continue to fight against the closure of Orsett Hospital as there would be no going back once it had closed.

Councillor Gerrish stated that Members knew the arguments that had been presented and that voting for the Motion would be the right result for residents and requested a requisition vote.

The Mayor called a requisition vote on the Motion.

A requisition vote took place, the result of which was:

For: Councillors Abbas, Aker, Akinbohun, Allen, Cherry, Duffin, Fish, Fletcher, Gamester, Gerrish, Hamilton, C Kent, J Kent, Kerin, Liddiard, Okunade, Potheary, Potter, B Rice, Sammons, Sheridan, Shinnick, Smith, Spillman, Worrall **(25)**

Against: **(0)**

Abstain: Councillors Anderson, Collins, Coxshall, Halden, Hebb, Huelin,

Johnson, Kelly, Little, Maney, Piccolo, Redsell, Rigby, Watkins
(14)

Whereupon the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

At 9.27pm the Mayor stated that it was the close of the meeting and that Members with Motions still to be heard could either speak on the Motion for no more than three minutes before the Motion will be put to the vote without debate or they may withdraw the Motion and resubmit for the next available meeting. Councillor Spillman stated he would like to speak on his Motion.

30. Motion submitted by Councillor Spillman

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor Spillman. The Motion read as follows:

Council requests that Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider adding to it work programme at its next meeting on 4 July 2018 research into the feasibility of building 8,000 council, housing association and low-cost homes within the next five years without such buildings threatening the character of any existing settlements within the borough and to seek to explore the extent to which Thurrock Regeneration Limited could input into such a target.

Councillor Spillman stated planning for the future was vital to solve the housing crisis in Thurrock. That it would be important for Thurrock to fund such changes and that the Housing Revenue Account and the Council be ready for any future big plans that arise and deliver a quick turnaround to any new Government policies. The Council should not sit back and abandon the duty of care to residents of Thurrock and work together with services. Councillor Spillman stated that the proposed 32,000 new homes would not deliver the affordable housing that Thurrock needed.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

The majority of Members agreed to the motion, the Mayor declared the Motion carried.

The meeting finished at 9.31 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 27 June 2018

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

3 questions were submitted from members of the public.

1. **From Mr Atkins to Councillor Johnson:**

I understand as part of the Council's housing allocation process Thurrock Council uses NowMedical to assess tenants who may have an extra medical need. Can you let me know how this private contractor can override professional medical consultants and GPs reports who may see their patients on a more frequent basis?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson can you please respond?

Councillor Johnson:

Thank you Mr Atkins. NowMedical were appointed in 2005 to this Council as an independent expert to provide specific medical advice on a case by case basis, to enable the council to continue with a robust fair and standardised assessment method, for households where the applicant or a member of the household has a medical need and maybe helped with alternative accommodation. The medical and healthcare teams used by NowMedical are all registered professional, and their advice to the council will consider all relevant information provided by the applicant and their medical healthcare professionals. NowMedical do not override any advice received from another medical or healthcare professional and they will base their recommendations on the on their assessment of the applicants housing needs only. To ensure the continued robustness the council will periodically review all arrangements it has with service suppliers including NowMedical, and regularly test the market to ensure Thurrock residents get value for money from these provided services. And as announce by myself at cabinet earlier this month, the council will be undertaking a wider review of the allocations process. And the procurement and application of independent medical advice will be included in this.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Johnson. Mr Atkins, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr Atkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor, Thank you Councillor Johnson. Follow up questions is, I'll be careful how I word this. Can you tell me how much does Thurrock Council pay NowMedical for their expert opinions?

Mayor:

Councillor Johnson would you like to respond?

Councillor Johnson:

Yes please Madam Mayor, thank you Mr Atkins. What I can say to you is that over the financial year 2017/18 it was a figure of between 8 and 10 thousand pounds paid to NowMedical. This will obviously fluctuate because we pay for the service, so if there is more service needed obviously we will pay them a different amount. But off the top of my head 8 to ten thousand pound was the amount we paid for 17/18. I hope that answers your question.

Mayor:

Thank you. Good evening Mr Perrin, pleasure to see you as always. Mr Perrin your question has been redirected to Councillor Coxshall as the portfolio holder for Regeneration, can you please read out your question to Councillor Coxshall.

2. **From Mr Perrin to Councillor Coxshall:**

The Leader of the Thurrock Independents Party has recently made public six tests he insists must be met by the Conservative Administration running Thurrock Council regarding the building of 32,000 new homes in Thurrock. In the first of the six tests he says he expects the Council to negotiate with the Government to attempt to reduce the figure substantially. He also says other Councils across the country have already secured massive reductions so far. Councillor Gledhill are you inclined to meet with Councillor Spillman's expectations?

Mayor:

Councillor Coxshall can you please respond, thank you.

Councillor Coxshall:

Thank you Mr Perrin, I will gladly respond to you. There is a requirement the council deliver housing target numbers. Using the methodology that's prescribed by national decisions. What that means actually is that they have got to number, and we have got to have a sensible discussion about the number which is coming forward in the next few weeks based on the national numbers. But with the other instances that you say, the only reasons, the reasons why they reduced the number was because the developable land was not available. Here that is not the case. But what I must move on though, is if we do actually have decide arbitrary, and the 49 of us after the negotiations and after the consultations actually physically to reduce that number for no arbitrary reason without any proof, we would be at serious risk of an interventionist body and the future of this borough and its homes would be put at a clearly tenable position because someone else would be running this and not us 49 Councillors.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Coxshall. Mr Perrin, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr Perrin:

I take it that the Council believes there is a demand for 32,00 new homes in Thurrock, indeed Thurrock's MP is on record supporting the building of more houses not less. The attitude of the Thurrock Independents has a touch of the

“I’m all right Jackie” about it. It is all very well for the Leader of the Thurrock of the Thurrock Independent Party, Cold Hand Luke, to advocate a reduction when, probably, he and his fellow party members are already owners of their own homes, or well on the way to paying off a mortgage, indeed some of them may even have a vested interest in their opposition in that they are landlords renting out properties of their own. Councillor Coxshall will you assure the Deputy Leader of the Thurrock Independents Party that if there is a demand for building more new homes in Thurrock the Council will do so?

Mayor:

Thank you. Councillor Coxshall

Councillor Coxshall:

I think I concur with everything there. What I would say is if we want to deliver a third good quality low cost houses to rent and buy, at a reasonable for the people, the children’s future, my child’s future is 18 now, then we have got to build a third, I say a third I’m not going to decide the number but say a third is a good number to get to, that means there’s 10,000 homes we can build that are actually to rent or to sell that are below the market value. And then the others will actually reduce the cost of this housing. We cannot go on, it’s an untenable position where we have, not enough housing and people are going with house price inflation going up, rents are going through the roof in Thurrock. We’ve got to build that, otherwise people will be living at home when they are 40 and not able to in their 30s, 20s get a home. And that is exactly what we should be doing here. And we are negating our responsibilities all 49 of us if we do anything different on that. What I can be clear, let’s be clear that the problem Thurrock here is poor and expensive housing, for too long. And I’m not going to put that responsibility or put that on the next generation. What I have done in place in the short term to the gallery, each week in week out, dog whistle politics and I’m not going to do that.

3. **From Mr Healy to Councillor Halden:**

There has been much disquiet in the local media recently over the proposed transfer of council land currently leased by Thurrock rugby club to South west Essex community education trust for a much needed secondary school. When and with whom at Thurrock rugby club did Thurrock Council consult on this matter please?

Mayor:

Councillor Halden, would you like to respond please?

Councillor Halden:

Thank you Madam Mayor. Firstly may I say what a pleasure it is to see former Councillor Healey again. It’s always nice to see that after you have retired you decide to come back and spend time with us, and the fact that I am the cause of that is a great pleasure for me.

There have been informal conversations between the Chief Executive Officer of the Education Trust and with the Chairman of the Rugby Club where they have been working on what the future can look like together. In terms of what

the council have done by approving the cabinet paper that we took earlier this month we are now beginning the consultation with the public which includes the Rugby Club on the disposal of the land. Those consultation responses will then be analysed and a decision is made. And then if a decision is made in that direction there will be further consultations with the public at large when it comes to the planning process. So there is a formal two stage consultation procedure that can happen now. But what I would say is that not only am I very optimistic and hopeful about the future, because we are not talking about a fly by night academy trust we are talking about William Edwards with long established roots in our community, outstanding rated by OFSTED a specialist sports college, I believe they will be able to create a terrific future working with the Thurrock Rugby Club. I think this is an incredibly positive piece of work and I am optimistic about what we can get out of it going forward, both for the school for local students for the local community and sports people.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Halden. Mr Healy, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Mr Healy:

Thank you Councillor Halden, I think actually there might be some learnings from this as Councillor Hebb would say. In terms of the committee, probably as a sitting tenant we discovered from Thurrock Independent, you know who have been keeping their beady eyes on the political scene here, that this was happening. We had no, I think you've obviously now said it, there has been no direct contact between the Council and the Committee. I will remind members, and there is a question Madam Mayor sorry, I will remind members of the council that we have leased this land since in the mid-1970s, we have about 300 youths active in the youth teams at the minute. They're the lifeblood of our organisations. We have many adult teams, and we are shocked as an organisation when this happened. There are a lot of very big men at the club that are probably very angry at the minute that this has happened. But I don't think the met are too bad, I think there are some women as well that are a whole lot better at rugby anyway up there. But the question is, what we do need now, the question Madam Mayor is no point having these informal conversations. This is a business event the South West Education Trust is a Business. Its, you know, public benefit. We are a community interest organisation, we have a wide reach in this community. We want to formally get a binding agreement whatever the outcome here, and I even looked at the Thurrock Independent.

Mayor:

Thank you. Councillor Halden

Councillor Halden:

Thank you Madam Mayor, flashback to the length of questions of the length of questions from the period 2010-2014, threats of big angry men aside. I think what I would point out is, you say you want a formal proper conversation that is what we have enabled by taking forward the Cabinet paper indicating the

council wishes to dispose of the land. That has kicked off a formal conversation, and in terms of precisely what community access will look like, these are issues that the Planning Committee can actually adjudicate and actually vote on and actually make binding through the planning process. So actually by taking these steps forward, we are actually enabling those formal conversations that you want to have.

I'm not going to get drawn onto the specifics of what the relationship should look like. The council has got a statutory obligation to provide school places. It is not our role to attempt run a rugby club. I am relaxed that the dialogue between an outstanding sports college and between the rugby club is something that is going to yield incredibly positive results. And we can't take our eyes off the ball for what it is we are trying to achieve here. Circa 20million pounds worth of investment creating 1200 outstanding school places to serve the local population, and to enhance the sports offer. This is a massive opportunity because former councillor Healy will know that the plan for the Harris Riverside free school in Purfleet, that was an announced plan when he was still an elected member here and the school is still not built. It took myself and Councillor Coxshall intervening to ensure it would be built. So we cannot allow the delays, we cannot dither around, formal conversations will now happen with the club and the community but we are getting on with this fantastic good news story and I am optimistic about what it's going to do for the community for the students and for sportspeople in the area.

Item 14 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 4 questions had been received to the Leader of the Council and 8 questions had been received to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Cherry to Councillor Hebb:

What are you and Thurrock Council going to do about the increase in drug use, gang activity and associated anti-social behaviour in Grays Town Park and elsewhere across Thurrock?

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb

Councillor Hebb:

Thank you Madam Mayor and thank you Councillor Cherry, an important question that absolutely needs to be discussed. We are going to talk a bit later about the wider Anti-Social Behaviour role that Councillor Gledhill has taken, but I'm going to take you through some of the stuff that we've talked about. Now we know that ASB and gang related problems and a degree of some drug taking issues. They are not just happening in Grays as you have said Councillor Cherry, they are also happening elsewhere across the borough, and we will talk a little bit about that now. The Leader informed me that a recent meeting with the Superintendent Craig Saunders that there are reassurances from Essex Police, because we must remember that it is Essex Police which are the principle enforcement authority. Our role is to very much engage and mobilise and direct them to the right places. Also do what we can in our own span of control as well, and I will come on to that shortly. There is some work going on that's going to get coordinated activity, certainly around Grays Town Park, Certainly around Grays. You'll understand that I don't want to say too much more because I'm not going to let any cats out of the bag. But obviously were anticipating the effectiveness of that.

One thing police have stressed to us in dialogues with the police an interesting enough at the weekend when I was having a discussion with a couple of the police officers in Stanford le Hope the subject are around data and intelligence, or indeed the degree of a lack of it is also part of the problem. So the police are encouraging resident's councillors you know community groups, or whoever's involved to report, whether it be through the councils reporting system of Essex polices reporting system to report into them. So they can build up the data. Because the more data they have the bigger the picture they have. And the bigger picture they have the more they can do about it. And there are a whole suite of ways you can do that. The one thing I would always say for myself and Councillor Halden recently discussing the success of the Youth Offending Service, which is something you know, one of the best in England. Councillor Halden, its something that council and everyone on it it, all 49 of us, need to be very proud of. And we need to

understand how much further the scope of that can go. Because often things like gang issues and drug taking can start at a young onset age, and it is critical that we look at that James. And I know James has already asked for that to happen. So we can build up a bigger scope our youth offending service can have. The community safety partnership clearly has a very big role in this. They are also looking to extend the current Public Spaces Protection Order, so as to not just include the Grays Town Centre, but also further out to Grays Park. There's also joint tasking operations. There is a number of other initiatives going on. One called gangs line. Obviously crucial to stuff that's happening in the schools. That's all to get into the education system where young people are coming through when there emerging, when they are potentially exposed to some of the things that we have talked about today. There is a lot more to do. I dare say you have a few suggestions for me. But hopefully that gives you a flavour on behalf of the leader as to what the current plan is around Anti-Social Behaviour.

Mayor:

Councillor Cherry do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Cherry:

Yes I do thank you madam mayor. So I brought this, I received this complaint with regards to the park from council employees who for ages have been feeding this information back into the council about the things they were seeing in the park when they were sometimes in there cleaning up. Now I visited it last full council, a month ago, to see for myself, and, I saw 15 to 20 youths openly smoking drugs. There were people dealing cannabis in front of me, beer cans around, drug paraphernalia, rubbish everywhere. I informed Councillor Gledhill of that last month, I want to know what the councillor has done in that last month because I have walked through there again this evening, the place is filthy, there's beer cans littering everywhere, it is a PSPO and it's the totally wrong atmosphere for what is our premier park. You know, it's used by children and their parents alike. And the place is an absolute, and I won't swear, it begins with S and ends in hole. What have you done in this last month to solve this problem, which needs to be designed out. If it's filthy, if it's more of an attraction to the youth that were hanging around there, they will take command of that park, they will take it from us. So what have you done in the last month to deal with it, because the PSPO notices have been vandalised, the place is a mess. Thank you.

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb do you wish to respond?

Councillor Hebb:

I absolutely shall. I've been slightly disingenuous and taken the leaders credit because obviously the leader has done most of the work. As I was saying already the discussions with the Superintendent and the campaigns that are emerging are specifically aimed to target that.

You asked what the council have been doing and it's a very good question. You'll know at a recent Cabinet meeting last year we announced £250,000 into our anti-social behaviour campaign fund, the Stop It campaign fund. We will talk a little about

that later. We have also announced up to £750K extra into that fund, so as to deliver a key Stop It campaign. Public Space Protection Orders absolutely are a critical role. We do need to widen it out, we do need to encapsulate the all the areas where there are problems. Furthermore we have all been vocal at one time or another, any member in and out of this chamber now have all called for more policing, and that is what our Police Commissioner has given us. When we get 12 new police officers here in September this year, I think it's around September when they are fully recruited trained and on the beat. They are the people that are going to be able to help us with this problem. You are right, what are the Council doing, I absolutely agree with you. This is one of those things where we have to make sure we have that partnership working because the police are the principle enforcement authority. Let me assure you we are at the table because we see this problem everywhere. It's not just Grays Town Park, and while I say it's out Lynch Pin Park, as a Sanford-Le-Hope ward councillor I don't know if I can totally agree with that. But we do have this problem everywhere, and that is where we are with it.

Mayor:

Councillor Cherry do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Cherry:

I agree the problems everywhere. But I must say that I was absolutely disgusted on that evening what I saw. And how they get away with it, I don't know. What I've said before is, what are the Council doing about it, what have you done about it, because I walked through there this evening and the place is a mess. You've done nothing in that last month I would tend to suggest. You've done a lot of talking, a lot of hot air, a lot of excuses. What we need is that park cleaned up, tidied up and owned by the Council. Owned by the people of Thurrock, and not owned by the drug dealing gangs that are associating there. Thank you.

Mayor

Do you wish to respond Councillor Hebb?

Councillor Hebb:

Well of course I do, because it's nonsense to suggest that we disagree. On this matter. We absolutely agree on nearly everything you just said. Nobody wants a park where it's owned by gangs or people that are taking drugs. I mean good lord I'm a father to a 7 year old, I don't want to go to Hardy Park, Ruskin Park, Runnymede park and have those discussions with her. No way. And we will all be the same, there's parents here and out there and we all want to make sure those parks are free and available to everyone. Councillor Watkins I can see has made some notes, I'm sure we will be looking at the cleanliness of that. We have to get to a point where enforcement matters and enforcement are happening. Those are the plans we have set out, you can call it hot air, we are calling it deliver. It will deliver. It hasn't got the results that we want yet. It will do. But I look forward to working with you in the coming months, and I'm sure the leader will as well by extension through his portfolio. We want this dealt with, absolutely. You and I are of no different mind. You've got that undertaking, keep challenging us, but let's talk out of here as well. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Mayor:

Councillors, we have had one question in eight and a half minutes. There is 11 questions on here tonight. May I suggest, as I've already done so this evening that we have succinct replies to specific questions. So that as many people can have their questions answered in this council chamber, because after 30minutes the questioning will cease. So can I please move on now to question 2. Councillor Fletcher please read out your question to Councillor Hebb.

2. From Councillor Fletcher to Councillor Gledhill

Our borough has recently seen frequent and sustained incursions by travellers on our open spaces. Redbridge has just successfully applied for a borough-wide injunction - is there any reason why Thurrock has not taken the same approach?

A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED.

3. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill

Can the Leader outline his priorities for his new portfolio?

Councillor Hebb

In my head when I said that I knew it didn't sound as weird, but it does now. Councillor Gerrish, thank you for rising what is clearly an important point. You don't have to knock on doors at election time to know this is a problem, we all live here we all know what the problem is. I am trying to be concise madam mayor. Councillor Gledhill's new ASB role is absolutely one of two hats. Its part going on what I was saying to Councillor Cherry earlier. Thurrock absolutely has a role at the table on the street doing something. And that is encapsulated in what is going to be called out stop it campaign. I will come onto that in a moment. But there is absolute necessity for that partnership working. If you look at Councillor Halden's role, who you know, Councillor Halden doesn't manage the NHS, he doesn't manage the Schools as such, but he has that absolute bond and partnership working, where we've gone from single digits of good rates schools to double digits in the 90s. This is where we've got to get to. You asked about the specific plans in Thurrock. We just talked about the cash value we are going to be injecting into the system. We are going to be increasing up to 1 million by the end of this financial year to enforce a number of things. But the point I want to specifically make now is around our enforcement team. We have to increase the capacity and operating hours of the enforcement team. I don't think anyone would disagree with that. The Monday to Friday 8-8 it whatever it currently is useless to man and beast, so I think it's appropriate to look to go to an out of hours operation. That's absolutely got to happen. We've talked about the youth offending service and that's absolutely part of the puzzle and we've got that synergy there. Councillor Gledhill has got a very specific focus on what some people see as minor, when they are looking at it from afar. But to them it means a lot. Things like graffiti, littering, vehicle racing, anti-social behavior and dog fouling. Some of his other priorities include tackling pollution in terms of noise and dust, preventing consumers from awful practices where they are being short changed through scams. Protecting individuals through adequate licensing, protecting people in food premises in terms of quality of food and so forth. One thing I would say is that the key collaboration that's critical is that

work and engagement with the safety partnership. We've got that investment going in. I've talked to you about one for the schemes that we will be going after during the bolstering of the enforcement team will add to a wide scope of activity in terms of enforcing. We are looking at the conversation around licensing and so forth. Hopefully that gives you a bit of a flavor but I dare say you have a few more questions for me.

Mayor:

Councillor Gerrish do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Gerrish:

Thank you madam mayor yes I do. I think, we would all acknowledge that with any addition work to be done it's important to understand the impact of that work and the impact of any additional budget. What new KPI's were considering to set or have set so residents will be able to judge whether or not we have been successful.

Councillor Hebb:

Good question Councillor Gerrish. As you know when we entered into administration we did a full deck review of the KPIs, it is something we seek to do on an annual basis. And it is a conversation we are about to have about the corporate KPIs internally as a Cabinet so we will be looking at that. I think what would be appropriate is actually if we get a bit of engagement, I'm not quite sure who the shadows are anymore across both parties, but we would like you to be involved with that potentially.

Mayor:

Councillor Gerrish a second supplementary quest?

Councillor Gerrish:

Thank you Madam Mayor. One thing that Councillor Gledhill said at his new cabinet meeting that he was not the new Sherif in town, I wonder if the deputy leader would agree with me that to some extent actually he does need to take on that very visible and high profile role of passing our concerns about law and order and crime in Thurrock to the police and making sure that he does act as a champion to draw the attention of the police to those issues

Councillor Hebb:

For me it's a dual pronged role, one is leading from the front doing what's in our span of control. I've talked a little bit about the up to 1 million the enforced enhancement team, youth offender service, the police coming- the 12 of them by September. They are things that have happened through either from lobbying or direct action by this council which have obviously secure and achieved that. There is partnership working, were not going to walk away from that, however we are going to imagine the portfolio. We have to have that partnership working. The police are the principle enforcement authority. We want to have more police unfortunately back in 2011 when we passed our alternative budget about having PCSOs and unfortunately that was never fulfilled by the previous administration. Perhaps we would be slightly better off with people on the streets in terms of police. But we are where we are, the

Conservatives are delivering, not just in this chamber but in Essex County Hall with our Police and Fire Commissioner who is bringing 12 more policemen to the streets of this borough and that is through the connections made by the leader of this council and its party here in Thurrock.

Mayor:

Thank you very much, moving on to question 4, Councillor Redsell can you please read out your question.

4. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Gledhill

In the light of recent traveller incursions on Blackshots playing field, which you will be aware is a major civic site. Would the portfolio holder advise what action the council proposes in order to deter further encampments?

Councillor Hebb:

Thank you Madam Mayor. There are a number of actions and most specifically, and I think this is what you are looking for Councillor Redsell, is there is going to be a degree of hardening and bollards put around the particular site that you refer to. We have seen that used very effectively in the rest of the borough, so that's coming. You will have seen the discussion around the Borough Wide injunction which the council was asked to begin preparations for last year. This "harlowesque" model if we want to call it that will give us genuine ability to enforce and manage that at a far more rapid speed of execution than historically. There is things coming and they are coming in the next couple of weeks.

Councillor Redsell:

The Injunction will hopefully be put in place which is already running in Beckshill and Harlow. Does he think that this will now deter Travellers from parking on fields and causing residents and surrounding areas mayhem that they have caused in the last five to six weeks.

Councillor Hebb:

I won't lie, I haven't knocked on the door and asked if they think it will deter them but I can assure you that our council and our council departments ie. legal and enforcement team and I think there is probably a wide ranging support for a similar action will have a significant impact. We've done 10 section 61 notices in 2 years, and that has been an important tool. In SLH West I can say when there was an incursion, by the time that the notice was served at 10 at night, by 9 am the next morning they had all been moved on. The problem obviously is migration to another location, so what's Stanford Wests gain is unfortunately might be somewhere else to suffer. The borough wide injunction is the right thing for Thurrock. I think there is probably significant public endorsement for the powers that it will enable us to levy and again that collaboration between the police and council will be absolutely critical Madam Mayor.

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

1. From Councillor Pothecary to Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor, could the Portfolio Holder provide an update on the proposed changes to Grays Town Centre traffic flow?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins please.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor for your question. Work has been carried out this year, which is on the modelling work, and traffic work, and data that has already been accumulated for that. There is more work to be done this year. There will be a report coming to Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee in September for all the members to have a look over, so please have a read over. I think fundamentally and most importantly, now I've obviously got this department, from the former Councillor Brian Little. Obviously there have been a lot of talk I believe, changes from before I was even a Councillor. I've heard it's been many, many years. I think it's about time we actually got something done on the ground, talk is cheap and actually actions mean more than words, so let's get something done.

Mayor:

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

Councillor Pothecary:

Yes, thank you Madam Mayor. I think Cllr Watkins may have had a bit of an idea of where I was going with this. So you talked about some delay, this is something we signed off as Cabinet in September 2015 with the funding allocated, the growth they'd put in. We won that and the first phase was put into the Works Programme and was completed. Since this administration has come to power, unfortunately nothing has happened. In July 2017 the Portfolio Holder told me that Phase 1 was complete, it wasn't, and it still isn't. The Portfolio Holder also said on that occasion that Phase 2A would be implemented in November 2017, not a sausage. I was assured this was a top priority and the Portfolio Holder said we were looking at a quick implementation, and I quote "not in two to three years' time". We're getting to that point now. In January 2018 he stated that over the next few months this will move into the final phase. We're now at the end of June and still nothing has happened. Can the new Portfolio Holder please explain why these plans, which were signed off by Cabinet in 2015 with funding in place, aren't even remotely anywhere near finished?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor for your supplementary. Obviously I can't speak about the conversations and what former Councillor Brian Little has said

in this Chamber, and obviously to yourself as well. All I can say is what I'm going to be going forward with this. As already stated, work has already been carried out this year behind the scenes. That work will be coming forward to Planning, Transport and Regeneration, as well as the work which continues to go on. I've already stated in my first response that, you know, talk is cheap, and I don't just want to stand here and waffle on about what may have happened in the past, you know. It's about time we actually got something done about it, so let's not talk about what happened in the past, let's talk about getting this done this year, and early next year, and actually get something done about it.

Mayor:

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

Councillor Potheary:

Yes, thank you Madam Mayor, I'm sure some of your colleagues, Cllr Watkins, would love to take that piece of advice. So, this is my problem. I have received repeated assurances throughout the time of this administration that this project is in hand and implementation is just around the corner, but for two years nothing has happened, literally nothing. Can I have a commitment here and now that firstly the funding is secure, because these things do tend to be time limited and I'd hate for us to have lost that amazing funding bid through inaction. And also, can I have a commitment that the first phase will be fully completed, and Phase 2A implemented by the end of 2018, so that we can end the misery that is Grays one-way system.

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you very much Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor for your questions. Again yes, as I've already stated, the implementations will go ahead. I don't just want to be receiving reports from officers, or from anyone, saying "we've done data, but we need to change what's happened etc." Obviously whatever comes forward, they are experts who do this work, need to ensure that any future models are safe and secure for people who drive through Grays, for people who use Grays, and obviously fundamentally the residents of Grays as well. We do know the traffic levels. But again, I've already said: yes the funding is there, so it can be there. If there's obviously any changes which do need to be made to the implementation of it going forward, then the Council will go back and obviously have these discussions. But the funding is there, and yes the phases will move forward very quickly.

2. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Holloway

Can you lay out the influence you have as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to prevent the closure of Orsett Hospital?

This question would be resubmitted for next Council meeting.

3. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Hebb

While the Council has made some progress in its short term and medium term investments please can you announce how many long term investments of over 5 years the Council has made since you took over the administration?

Councillor Hebb:

Madam Mayor this question did make smile. Never given it would be easy. When we talk about some investment, sorry some progress, I think we need some texture a bit. A child that is born today, will be in nursery before this Council hasn't got the surplus and the balanced budget that this Conservative administration achieved last year. Furthermore, every member of the Council who was elected in May this year, will not have a year where they're going into the next year without a concern of where we're funding next year's services. A four year balanced budget, let's be blunt, is unheard of for any unitary authority, but the investment and approach and strategy has delivered. What does that mean? Translated for people out in Thurrock, it means that the services you use and depend are safe for the next four years.

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb, thank you for being very brief with answering the question. There are many other people that want to ask questions this evening and time is running out.

Councillor Hebb:

So the simple answer, I can get there, is that there has been an investment for a period over five years, which you were all privy too, which was the Belmont Road TRL application. There is going to be a further increase of focus on TRL, we talked about that last year, and also we've done some work around the CCLA which is another route that we've used before. But yes that's where we are, we have taken out investments over five years. Been very successful, under five years as well, but yes we have made progress, what you call some, most of us call much. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Mayor:

Councillor Duffin, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

Councillor Duffin:

Come on Shane, I stood here last year and said nice things about what you've done and you've let us all down. Since elected you've made passionate speeches about how you want to plan for the long term but so far you're failing to deliver, and the answer you've given us is you've made zero long term investments, outside Thurrock Regeneration Limited. How can you be the party that spends so long banging on about the long term economic plan, when you've got no long term plan. When will we start seeing long term investments, there's other opportunities, in Grays, there's other opportunities. When will you start delivering, we can't have a borough that plans for the long term when you're scared to make long term investments.

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb.

Councillor Hebb:

Madam Mayor, Councillor Duffin, I love Councillor Duffin and he's a brilliant chap. Frankly, Jack hasn't been round long enough to remember what budgets were like once upon a time. When every year we were going into the next year having no...

Mayor:

Can we have an answer to the question.

Councillor Hebb:

The one thing I would say Madam Mayor, on the very specific point, is that there was a Council Review Spending meeting. At Cabinet, Madam Mayor, I gave a firm undertaking that each political party had a place at that table, and where we talked about long term investments, no one turned up apart from the Conservative Party. Madam Mayor, the olive branch is there, get to the table, get in the discussion and you can join us on our long term economic plan.

Mayor:

Councillor Duffin do you wish to ask a second supplementary question?

Councillor Duffin:

You know I was on holiday, and I had my apologies, so it was fair at the meeting. But the point is we all made the agreement in the last Council, we put forward motions. I put forward motions, everyone supported it, to build a long term plan so we can see a reduction in getting rid of Council tax in Thurrock .Everyone supported it and yet now we're seeing no long term investments. You can bang on however you want, when will you get over blaming Gordon Brown and the Labour administration for your own failings. You need to move with the times, so can you just get on with it and by the end of this year bring forward several long term plans because the current NTFS study show once we move past three, four years there's massive £5 million black holes that you can't just hope renew every three years. Let's have a long term strategy, rather than just keep sticking over plasters. Yeah they made mistakes, get over it. You've been in administration, start delivering.

Mayor:

Councillor Hebb, briefly.

Councillor Hebb:

I suggest at least this party has a chance of being able to deliver, Madam Mayor. We've just seen the Thurrock Independents political performance at the last May election. Madam Mayor, the olive branch is there, it remains. The Labour Party and Thurrock Independents will absolutely have a place at that CSR meeting. I want you there, we did that motion. You and I talked about far more than just in that motion. We all have that objective in mind, we did have discussions to talk about. I didn't realise you were on holiday, I put my hands up to that. You could have had a Deputy. There are a lot of capable people.

Mayor:

Councillor, can we please have the answer to the question. It's a question and answer.

Councillor Hebb:

You've got the answer to the question Madam Mayor. Simply, we are at the table and we want everyone to be at that table with us.

Mayor:

Thank you Councillor Hebb. We move onto question 4, Councillor Worrall can you please read out your question.

4. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor. Following the recent media coverage on the poor upkeep of the cemeteries could the Portfolio Holder advise us what steps he has taken to put this right and what he intends to do to keep them maintained to the expected standard?

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor. Thank you Councillor for your question, which I know is something we spoke about, back about a month ago, May Annual Council. Which is why I'm a little bit confused, to a degree, why this question has managed to make it here this evening. When as Chair of Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, you had the opportunity to ask a question, but that got cancelled. And why it's not in the agenda which has been published for next week's Cleaner, Greener Overview and Scrutiny Committee. If it was so much of an issue, why isn't it being raised where you're the Chair, and you have the ability to ask those questions.

Mayor:

Councillor, could you answer the question please. Would you like to pose a secondary question?

Councillor Worrall:

Well I'd like to ask that question, as I've only got one more so if he answers that question as the first one, please tell me what you've done as part of it, as it's obviously not a lot. I don't want to argue with you about it, I just want you to tell me what you've done to put it straight, and then I'll ask my second question as my third question which I wasn't going to ask.

Mayor:

Councillor Watkins, can you answer the question.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor, thank you Councillor for your supplementary. Meetings I've obviously been heavily engaged in, doing the job of the Portfolio Holder over the last six weeks, that's why I can safely say this evening we have received compliments about our cemeteries and our open spaces over the last few weeks. So, quite clearly, obviously the work I'm doing is the work the Portfolio Holder should be doing. Perhaps you need to get off Twitter and start doing your job as Chair.

Mayor:

Please keep to answering the questions and not to be rude across the Chamber. Would you like to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Worrall:

Absolutely Madam Mayor, and I shan't be trading insults with the Councillors. I've got a job to do, and that is we have a duty of care that when somebody dies and goes to our cemeteries, and we go to our cemeteries and we go and visit them, we shouldn't face piles of dirty brown grass, people standing around, and bins full. So I regularly go to the cemetery to visit my own father, and I find that the bins are overflowing. We've got these basket bins that you put two of these memorials in.

Mayor:

Councillor Worrall will you ask your question please.

Councillor Worrall:

I am going to thank you. But I bring mine home, so the questions are, it's got two parts: why are we using bins that once they've got a couple of memorials in them they are full up, and visitors have nowhere to put their flowers, so they have to pile them at the side or take them home. And why do we not have large bins so that residents can simply place plastic and silk flowers in regular bins and then add the compost and plants to the brown bins. This, I'm trying to help you here, this would solve problems to your recycling at target, and there's plenty of areas in these big cemeteries for you to have binned areas. Residents want to help you, and I want to help you, I don't want to trade insults with you.

Councillor Watkins:

Thank you Madam Mayor. I will obviously say that I share your sentiments. I have loved ones, loved ones that have sadly passed, in Corringham cemetery, grandparents and former friends so I obviously share your sentiments in regards to that. We've spoken in the past, over the last few weeks, of some of those isolated incidents where obviously bins were overflowing and we've managed to get that quickly on case. Hence the reason why, you're fully aware as well, we've got the dedicated resources in our larger cemeteries as well, Chadwell and Corringham being those two ones in particular. And obviously the cemeteries over the last few weeks, in particular in the run up to Father's Day, I hope you do share my sentiments that we're back to the standards which we expect it to be. As part of the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It strategy, which I'm very proud that this administration has continued to do. We are instigating some extra work in regards to the standards of which expect our cemeteries to be looking at, as well as the other work that's just kind of continuing the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It. In regards to the bins, absolutely, which is why last year I implemented the bin review, I know people found it the most boring thing in the entire world, but the reason I thought it was important is so it was easier to ensure we had the right bins, in the right places, in the right areas across the borough, including our cemeteries. That is one of the focal points of the bin review looking at what needs to be extra in our cemeteries. So thank you very much, and obviously as the Chair, which I will say, feed in to that review. Reports and updates will be coming back to you and you're more than welcome to feed in to it, so thank you.

Councillor Worrall:

Thank you, it'll be on Scrutiny, don't you worry.

Mayor:

Thank you very much. That brings us to the end of our question time and I hope that in our future meetings our questions are going to be a lot more concise, direct, and our answers the same, that we can get the full range of questions and answers in and do them justice. If I can just run through the questions that are remaining to ask if you'd like a written response, withdraw it or resubmit. Number five Councillor Gerrish.

5. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Coxshall

What preparations has the council made for the potential impact of Brexit?

A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED.

6. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Johnson

Is the portfolio holder concerned that the cuts to warden services in sheltered accommodation for older people has put the welfare, and indeed lives, of older residents at risk?

A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED.

7. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Johnson

Have the council cut keep fit services from sheltered accommodation for older people?

A WRITTEN RESPONSE WILL BE PROVIDED.

8. From Councillor Baldwin to Councillor Coxshall

Have the council cut keep fit services from sheltered accommodation for older people?

THIS QUESTION FELL IN THE ABSENCE OF COUNCILLOR BALDWIN

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are 3 questions from members of the public.

1. From Mr Healy to Councillor Halden

What assurance can Councillor Halden give on behalf of Thurrock Council that Thurrock Rugby Football Club training and fixture commitments during the season can be met for minis rugby on those pitches without restriction from the South West Essex Education Trust?

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Watkins

Can you tell me how many military graves there are in Thurrock and how much it costs the Council to maintain them?

3. From Mr Coleman to Councillor Gledhill

After yet another unauthorised Traveller encampment in Chafford Hundred, can the Council Leader outline what he is doing in his role as Cabinet Member for Public Protection to stop the increasing number of encampments in Chafford Hundred and across Thurrock please.

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Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 25 July 2018

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Status
507	To implement a protection mechanism to provide safety and prevent vehicle access to open green space by Rainbow Road and Felipe Road.	25 July 2018	Ms C Dyson	<p>The site was inspected on 23/06/2018 in respect of the open green space being subject to an unauthorised encampment. Following court action the site is now free from incursion.</p> <p>An inspection to protect the open green space was conducted, with the view to prevent as far as possible, further unauthorised entry by vehicles and caravans in the future.</p> <p>The open green space does have adequate protection around the perimeter of this open green space, which is protected by metal guard rails and a barrier which opens and closes by use of a secure padlock,</p> <p>It was identified that the footpath, leading to the children’s play area has an access which was wide enough for vehicles to be able to drive onto and out of the open green space. Protection measures by way of a bollard have now been implemented to ensure vehicles will not be able to gain access. This will still allow members of the public to gain access through this point.</p>

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25 July 2018	ITEM: 10
Full Council	
Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2)	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Cllr Mark Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration	
Accountable Assistant Director: Andy Millard, Assistant Director Planning, Transportation and Public Protection	
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director for Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The need for growth in housing and employment due to population and lifestyle changes and an evolving economy means that Thurrock and the wider South Essex sub-region will change considerably over the next 20-30 years. Having an up-to-date Development Plan is a key component in ensuring that the borough grows in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable with the necessary supporting infrastructure in place.

The preparation and publication of the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation represents a key stage in the plan-making process and provides local communities and stakeholders with the opportunity to influence how Thurrock should develop and grow in the future, and the types of locations where new developments should be located to meet housing needs.

It is important to note that at this stage in plan making the Council will set out the types of locations for development based on sites that have been put forward by developers and landowners through the call for sites process.

This consultation is not seeking the public's view on a preferred number of homes to be built nor where they should be built.

Consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) document will commence on Monday 30 July and end at 5pm on Friday 19 October.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Full Council:

- 1.1 Authorise the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation document (Appendix 1) for public consultation**
- 1.2 Authorise alterations to reflect factual changes that may arise (for example to the Lower Thames Crossing route boundary) and any other inconsequential alterations to the wording of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation document**
- 1.3 Endorse the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) – Engagement Strategy (Appendix 2)**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The need for growth in housing and employment due to population and lifestyle changes and an evolving economy means that Thurrock and the wider South Essex sub-region will change considerably over the next 20-30 years. Having an up-to-date Development Plan is a key component in ensuring that the borough grows in a way that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable with the necessary supporting infrastructure in place.
- 2.2 In February 2014 Cabinet gave approval to undertake a review of the Core Strategy and begin the preparation of a new Local Plan. It was intended at that point that the Local Plan would address both strategic and detailed planning issues relating to housing, employment, retail, infrastructure and the environment. Since then the situation across South Essex has emerged and there is increased recognition that there is a need to explore opportunities to develop a more coordinated planning approach across the wider area to better manage change and ensure that Local Plans being prepared by individual authorities are found sound by an Independent Planning Inspector and fulfil Duty to Cooperate requirements.
- 2.3 On 11 July 2018 Cabinet approved the following documents to enable the Council to pursue a coordinated approach to plan making:
 - South Essex Statement of Common Ground
 - Local Development Scheme – July 2018
 - Statement of Community Involvement (Draft) – July 2018

Key challenges to be addressed through the emerging development plan

2.4 In order for the emerging plan to be successful it needs to address a range of economic and social challenges that, left unchecked, will lead to long term decline and increased inequalities. These challenges include but are not necessarily limited to the need to:

- Reduce inequalities and create more balanced communities
- Allocate enough land to meet our housing needs in full in particular affordable housing that meets local needs
- Secure sustainable economic growth and create a wider range of local employment opportunities
- Ensure that our centres are vibrant and remain relevant to the communities they serve
- Create welcoming and engaging spaces and places for young people
- Plan for healthier places that encourage people to be active and have a positive effect on the mental wellbeing
- Deliver essential strategic and local infrastructure to support new development and regeneration
- Protect the integrity of the green belt

2.5 The challenges listed in this section have been identified using evidence from local strategies and technical studies, national policy, and responses received to the previous consultations. This list should not be seen as exhaustive and will be developed further as work on the emerging development plan continues.

2.6 Moving forward one of the most difficult challenges/issues to be addressed is surrounding the need for more housing (including affordable housing) and the lack of suitable sites to accommodate the level of housing required in the urban area.

Understanding how many homes we need

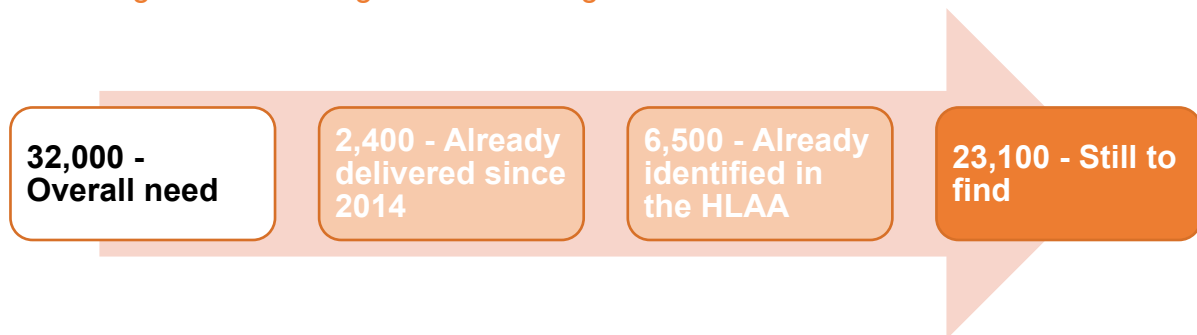
2.7 Thurrock is part of the South Essex Housing Market Area as such we need to work the other authorities in South Essex to assess how much housing and what types of housing are needed across the sub-region. In May 2017 the South Essex Authorities published an update to its Strategic Housing Market Assessment¹; this update used the 2014 population and household projections as well as the latest economic trend data to determine that 1,381 new homes per year are needed in Thurrock which is the equivalent of 31,763 over the plan period of 20 years. In broad terms, almost 70% of Thurrock's

¹ The methodology used to prepare the South Essex Strategic Housing Market was consistent with government guidance at the time of publication. This guidance is currently being reviewed as such the Council will need to commission a further update to the study in the coming year.

housing need is a result of demographic change within our communities. The remaining 30% is as a result of migration from South Essex, London and the wider area, principally as a result of economic growth and job creation.

- 2.8 The projections are expected to be updated later in 2018 and therefore likely to change. At this stage in the Local Plan process, the Council is not seeking views from the public about how the housing need is calculated or where specifically new homes should be built.
- 2.9 The latest draft of the Council's Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) has indicated that within the urban area there is only the capacity to deliver approximately 6500 new homes which would leave a shortfall of just over 23,000 to find – See Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Meeting our full housing needs



- 2.10 The urban area capacity could be increased but it would require the new Local Plan to look at including policies that promote higher density development and incentivise development through reducing development costs/planning obligations like a lower affordable housing target (which would improve the financial viability of the schemes). There could also be opportunities to increase capacity by identifying new sites and/or making it easier for sites in other uses like employment, retail and recreation to come forward for residential development. It is worth noting that even if all of these measures were implemented it would still be unrealistic to assume that the Borough's housing need could be met by sites just in the urban area which means that there is now a real need to explore different spatial options for development and look at how sites in the Green Belt can play a positive role in meeting our future housing needs and enhancing existing communities.

Plan making in Thurrock – The story so far

- 2.11 The emerging Local Plan is currently at the issues and options stage of plan making. This stage is all about finding out what the main challenges are and developing options for how these challenges can be addressed. The formal and informal consultation stages that have or will be undertaken in preparing the Local Plan are set out in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Key stages in preparing the Local Plan



2.12 In February 2018 the Council launched a series of ‘Your Place, Your Voice’ (YPYV) community planning events. These events were devised in response to comments that residents felt overwhelmed by the technical nature of planning consultations and the volume of Council consultations that all seem to ask similar questions. The community planning events were run on a drop in basis giving local communities the opportunity to feed into the Local Plan and other Council documents and strategies by participating in a range of informal and highly interactive consultation activities.

- 2.13 In total 17 events were held across the borough between February and April. Across all of the events there were a number of issues which were consistently raised including:
- Poor and failing infrastructure
 - Lack of affordable homes and homes for older people
 - Anti-social behaviour, drugs and crime
 - Neglected open spaces
 - Congestion and air quality
- 2.14 The information collected from individual events is still in the process of being organised/ inputted electronically, once this work has finished the Council will produce a findings report for each community and publish the information online so it can be used by the Council and other key stakeholders to inform emerging plans, strategies and projects including the emerging Local Plan. A series of follow-up YPYV events are planned for late summer / early autumn in order for local findings to be considered alongside the Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation.

Issues and Options (Stage 2)

- 2.15 The Council's current spatial strategy in the adopted Core Strategy focuses the majority of new housing development on previously developed land in the urban area. To meet some of the challenges set out earlier in this report the emerging Local Plan will need to look at the possibilities of a combination of denser urban developments and the potential of releasing Green Belt sites to meet our housing needs over the next 20 years. This approach would represent a significant change from the Council's current adopted planning policies.
- 2.16 The purpose of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation document is to seek views from communities and key stakeholders about how Thurrock should develop and grow in the future and where, in broad terms, new development should be located to meet identified needs. It is important to note that at this stage in plan making the Council will set out at all potential spatial options for growth without stating a preference or referring to specific sites.
- 2.17 In addition to looking at potential spatial options the consultation document will also look at policy options to address issues like housing for older people, hot food takeaways and the need to protect locally important green spaces and buildings. A full copy of the consultation document is included in Appendix 1.

- 2.18 To ensure that stakeholders are able to make an informed response to the consultation the Council will publish a range of supporting technical evidence documents alongside the consultation document. These together with the main consultation document will be made available on the Council's website and in hard copy at various locations across the Borough.
- 2.19 It is proposed that the consultation document will be subject to a period of public consultation which will commence on Monday 30 July and run until Friday 19 October 2018. Appendix 2 details the range of consultation activities proposed to be undertaken by the Council to support the process.
- 2.20 Following the conclusion of the consultation period all responses will be logged and reported back to Members as a precursor to the Draft Local Plan Consultation which will be held in September 2019. At that stage of the process the public will be consulted on the Council's preferred planning policies including its preferred development strategy.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Council's current spatial strategy in the adopted Core Strategy focuses the majority of new housing development on previously developed land in the urban area. The emerging Local Plan will need to look at a combination of denser urban developments and releasing several green belt sites to meet our housing needs over the next 20 years. This approach represents a significant change from the Council's current adopted planning policies.
- 3.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides for local authorities to plan for their areas through the preparation and adoption of Local Plans.
- 3.3 Where a local authority fails to meet these requirements, the Secretary of State may declare that the draft Local Plan is not sound. The Secretary of State also has the power to intervene and direct the review and/or preparation of a Local Plan which, depending on the circumstances, could be undertaken by another authority or jointly in partnership with surrounding authorities. In all instances the failing authority could be liable to pay the full or a proportion of the costs involved in producing the local plan. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites to meet the housing needs of the area for 5 years with a further supply of developable sites (or at least locations for them) for years 6-10 and, where possible for years 11-15. A Local Plan that does not meet the requirement could be found unsound through the Local Plan Examination process.

- 3.4 The Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' set out a series of proposals designed to increase the rate of housing delivery across the country. Further detail on a number of these reforms was set out in 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' in September 2017. This included proposals for the introduction of a Housing Delivery Test, whereby local authorities who fail to meet their housing targets by 2018/19 and provide a rolling 5 year housing land supply (plus 20% buffer) will effectively lose their ability to determine where development goes. To put this in context, Thurrock currently only has 1.2 years of its required five year rolling land supply and would therefore be liable to sanction under the proposed Housing Delivery Test.
- 3.5 For those authorities who fail the Housing Delivery Test there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development which would make it potentially easier for developers to get planning permission for housing development on appeal to the Secretary of State where it can be demonstrated that the Local Plan is either out-of-date or fails to allocate sufficient land to meet future housing needs. This could lead to sporadic development in the Green Belt and fail to maximise the benefits that future housing growth could bring to the local community.
- 3.6 In addition to the threat of intervention and possible sanctions from Government, an ongoing failure to adopt a sound and deliverable Local Plan would also:
- Lead to a whole generation of local people being put at risk of not being able to find decent or affordable housing in the Borough;
 - Undermine efforts by the Council to boost the supply of affordable housing through a lack of viable and deliverable sites for development;
 - Undermine opportunities to support the future regeneration and renewal of existing local centres and communities;
 - Prevent the provision of new community infrastructure which requires large sites including primary and secondary schools to meet existing and future needs due to the constraining nature of the Green Belt boundaries in Thurrock and a lack of suitable sites in the urban area;
 - Raise a serious risk that, without an adequate supply of housing to meet workers needs locally, firms could relocate or switch investment to other locations as workforce availability declines. Alternatively, if job growth continues without the necessary housing growth, increased levels of in-commuting is likely to result, thereby putting additional strain on existing transport networks.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 It is essential that the Council has an up to date Development Plan in place, to guide and support the sustainable growth of the Borough in a manner that appropriately balances economic, social and environmental needs.

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

- 5.1 Progress statements on the emerging Development Plan are regularly presented to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and the Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders. Reports are also regularly prepared for the Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and presentations made to Group meetings.

- 5.2 It was agreed at the Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 4 July 2018 that a Member-led body be established to support the production of the emerging Development Plan.

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

- 6.1 The Local Plan has an impact on the delivery of all of the Council's corporate objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: Carl Tomlinson
Finance Manager

There is a dedicated budget for plan making to cover the basic costs of preparing planning policy documents. This budget is supplemented by a separate YPYV consultation funding pot that was allocated to the service by Cabinet early this year.

Going forward, the Council will also explore the potential to secure additional funding and "in kind" assistance from key delivery partners, including the Government in order to assist in the development and delivery of key infrastructure requirements and an increase in housing delivery rates.

The Council will also be actively encouraging promoters of key/strategic sites to enter into a policy led planning performance agreement (PPA)². Policy PPAs would be used a project management tool which enable all parties to be clear about what is required of them at all stages of the plan making process. The cost of a PPA will depend on the scale of the proposed site, the resources required and input from officers for the project. It will be based on daily rates for officers, including overheads. We may need to bring in additional expertise or temporary staff, which will be funded by the site promoter.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: David Lawson
Assistant Director, Law and Governance

The current system of plan making is contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA) and the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Pursuant to section 19(2)(a) of PCPA 2004, the statutory scheme is supplemented by the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.

Section 17(3) of the PCPA 2004 provides that the Local Planning Authority's local development documents ('LDD') must (taken as a whole) set out its policies relating to the development and use of land in its area.

If any of the Authority's planning policy documents meet the definition set out within Regulation 5(1)(a)(i), (ii) or (iv) or 5(2)(a) or (b) of the 2012 Regs, they must be prepared as development plan documents ('DPD') and be known as a local plan. Any document produced by the Authority which provides for the development or use of land which the Authority wishes to encourage within a specified period, or allocation of sites or development management policies which are intended to guide development, is likely to fall within the statutory definition and therefore be part of the local plan and subject to the statutory procedure for preparation, examination and adoption of the local plan.

The Authority also has a statutory duty pursuant to Section 13 of the PCPA 2004 to keep under review matters which may affect the development of its area.

Under Section 17(6) PCPA 2004 the Authority must keep under review its LDD in light of any review of its policies.

² It should be noted that Policy PPAs and the process of undertaking the PPA will in no way prejudice or pre-judge the outcome of plan making in Thurrock and/or the wider South Essex area.

Through the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, the Government has enacted amendments to PCPA 2004. Key amendments are contained in sections 19 and 28A of PCPA 2004.

Section 19 of PCPA 2004 requires that each local planning authority must identify the strategic priorities for the development and use of land in the authority's area and that policies to address those priorities must be set out in the local planning authority's development plan documents (taken as a whole). In addition, section 28A of PCPA 2004 provides that the Secretary of State may direct two or more local planning authorities to prepare a joint development plan document.

Pursuant to section 19(2)(a) of PCPA 2004, in preparing the Local Plan (including a development plan document or any other local development document) the local planning authority must have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

The Secretary of State's powers pursuant to sections 27 of PCPA 2004 apply where they think that the Authority are failing or omitting to do anything necessary in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document. They may prepare or revise a plan or direct that the Authority or another do so.

In addition, under section 28A PCPA 2004, the Secretary of State has the power to direct that two or more local planning authorities prepare a joint development plan document. The purpose of that power is to enable planning across neighbouring authorities so as to address wider strategic matters such as planning for and meeting housing need.

Under the Council's Constitution and in accordance with the statutory provisions contained in section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, Full Council has the power to make decisions in relation to the preparation and adoption of the Development Plan..

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: Becky Price

Community Development Officer

The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment opportunities. The adoption of a new SCI will ensure that the consultation process associated with the emerging Development Plan will provide an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

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

There are no other implications associated with the report

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

- Cabinet Report on Development Plan Update – <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s21471/Appendix%20C%20-%20Development%20Plan%20Update.pdf>
- Local Plan Issues and Options – Engagement Strategy (Phase 1) - https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/local_plan_engagement_strategy_phase1.pdf

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation document
- Appendix 2 - Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) - Engagement Strategy

Report Author:

Sean Nethercott

Strategic Lead – Strategic Services



Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2)

JULY 2018

How can I have my say on this consultation document?

Consultation on the Local Plan – Issues and Options (Stage 2) document and the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) will commence at 9am on Monday 30 July 2018, with the consultation period closing at 5pm on Friday 19 October 2018. All responses should be made on-line via the Council’s interactive consultation portal. If you do not have access to the Internet, a paper comments form will be made available on request at the Civic Offices and in all libraries in the Borough.

If you need help with your representations or wish to discuss either the content of the consultation documents or how to submit your comments, please contact the Growth and Strategy team by email: growth&strategy@thurrock.gov.uk. There will also be opportunities to meet with members of the Growth and Strategy Team, face-to-face, at the ‘Your Place, Your Voice’ community planning days that are being held throughout the consultation period. Please visit our website for details on times and locations at www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan.

How will my comments be used?

We will acknowledge receipt of your comments and fully consider them, although the Council will not enter into individual correspondence with consultees. Comments will be published on the Council’s consultation portal in accordance with the Data Protection Act and the representations made will be used to inform the next stage of the plan making process.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

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What is the Thurrock Local Plan?

At the heart of planning and place-making is the need to plan positively for sustainable development and future economic growth. One of the most important ways that can be achieved is by having an up-to-date local plan to guide the development of the area and coordinate the provision of supporting infrastructure.

Thurrock Council is preparing a new Local Plan that will set out the amount and location of new development across the Borough in the period up to 2037/38.

The Local Plan will address Borough-wide strategic planning issues such as deciding which towns and villages should grow, and the quantity and type of new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure that are needed. The Local Plan will also cover detailed planning issues such as deciding which specific sites should be developed and what policies are needed to ensure that new development is well designed and that our built and natural heritage is protected and, where possible, enhanced.

In July 2018 the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) signed a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which is currently in the process of being agreed by the constituent authorities (Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea, and Thurrock). The SoCG sets out ASELA's intention to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to cover their administrative areas. The JSP will set out a wider vision and spatial strategy for the development of South Essex including a range of high level strategic policies which will establish the scale and distribution of new housing, employment, retail and town centre development across South Essex, together with supporting infrastructure priorities over the plan period to 2038.

Although the JSP will identify a range of broad strategic locations and priorities for new development and infrastructure delivery, it will not allocate specific sites for development which will continue to be determined locally through the Local Plan process and community involvement.

All development plans including the Joint Strategic Plan and the Local Plan must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with Government policy

set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Whilst the Council does have an adopted Local Plan in place, in February 2014, the Council decided to commence work on a new Local Plan in order to respond to a number of major challenges. These included:

- The need for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to co-ordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock
- The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs
- The need for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support economic growth
- A need to consider the possible impacts of a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)

What is this consultation about?

The first consultation on the new Local Plan, Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document (I&O1), was published in February 2016 and focused on thematic policy areas. The purpose of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) consultation is to seek your views about how Thurrock should develop and grow in the future and where, in broad terms, new development should be located to meet identified needs.

It is important to note that this consultation is not concerned about which specific sites should be allocated in the Local Plan for development. However, following this consultation and based on the responses received, a preferred broad spatial strategy for accommodating Thurrock's future needs will be developed and consulted on. This further consultation (likely to be in the summer of 2019) will strongly influence decisions about which sites should be developed.

How will the Local Plan be prepared going forward?

Preparation of the Local Plan must follow a number of stages to ensure that local people and stakeholders are fully engaged in the process and its content is based on robust evidence, the proper consideration and testing of alternative strategies and then finally, external examination by an independent planning expert appointed by the Secretary of State. These stages of work are summarised in Figure 1.

It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted by the Council in 2021. However, due to the nature of the work involved, the programme for preparing the plan will need to be kept under regular review as it cannot be submitted for examination and adoption until after the conclusion of both the adoption of the JSP and Lower Thames Crossing decision-making process.

For more details on the Local Plan work programme please see the latest Local Development Scheme (LDS), (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

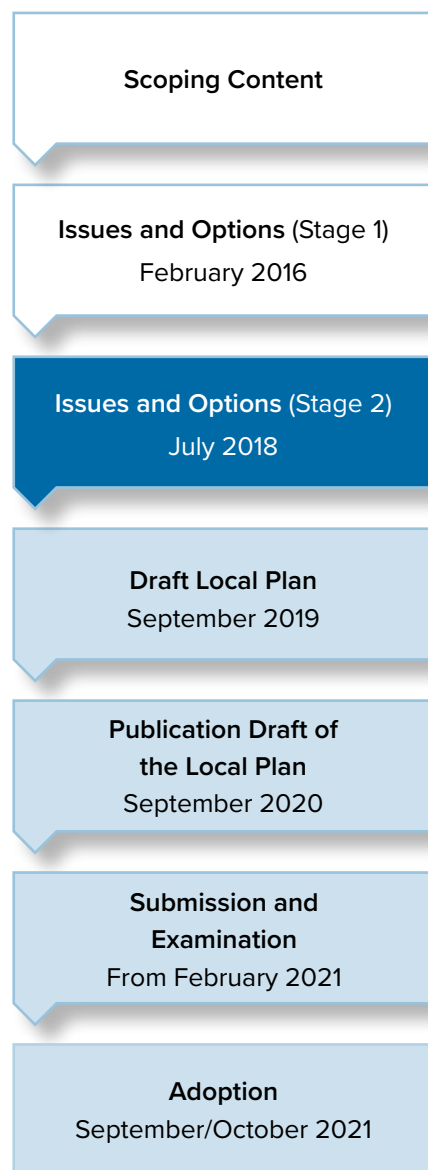


Figure 1: Local Plan Stages of Preparation

How will communities and key stakeholders be involved in the process?

Community and stakeholder engagement is an important and central feature of the planning system. The Council is keen to engage as many people as possible in the preparation of the Local Plan as it enables local people with local insight to become directly involved in place shaping in the Borough.

As part of the process, the Council will be preparing a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which will set out how all sectors of the community can become involved in the planning process and how the Council will maximise publicity of its planning documents.

Consultation mechanisms include, but are not limited to:

- Making consultation documents available on the Council's website;
- Providing hard copies of consultation documents for inspection at the Civic Offices in Grays and in libraries across the Borough;
- Continuing engagement through the Local Plan Residents Forum, Youth Forum, Developer Forum and Business Forum;
- Organising 'drop in' events via the 'Local Plan Roadshow' to allow people to come along and share their views in person;
- Setting up online polls to allow more people to have their say on the big questions;
- "Your Place, Your Voice" – Community 'Planning for Real' consultation events; and
- Duty to Cooperate Workshops for key stakeholders.

All consultation responses received, together with a summary of how they have been taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan, will be recorded in the Thurrock Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Statement, which will be submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the Local Plan Examination process. This document will be published alongside each stage of the plan-making process so that people can see how their views are helping to shape the development of the Local Plan.



i The Local Plan Forums run quarterly and have been created to ensure that the plan is influenced by local people, businesses and key stakeholders. Forum members will be involved throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, interrogating evidence and being party to the challenging decisions which need to be made at each stage of the plan-making process.

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

What information will be used to inform the Local Plan?

Local Plans must be based on robust evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Much of the evidence is of a technical nature and is not described in detail in this document.

Further information on how some of the emerging studies and their findings and conclusions are already helping to shape the plan-making process is described in more detail in the following sections of the Consultation Document. If you would like to read or obtain a copy of these technical studies and reports they can be found on the Council's Local Plan website - www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan.

Technical studies to be commissioned include:

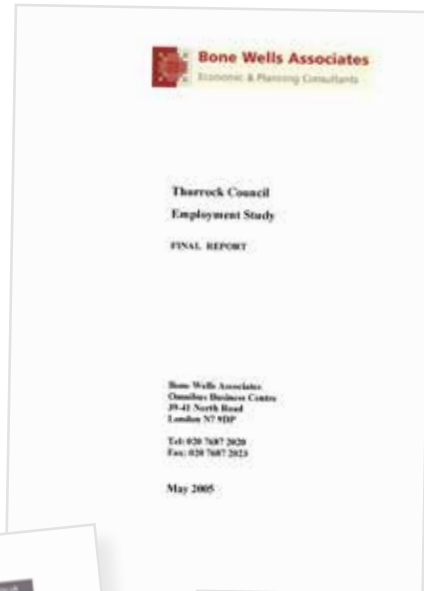
- Lakeside Area Development Framework Update
- Thurrock Transport and Infrastructure Baseline Study
- Thurrock Vision for Movement

Technical studies completed/commissioned include:

- South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2016
- South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment Addendum Report 2017
- Thurrock Housing Land Availability Report 2017
- Thurrock Green Belt Assessment 2017/18
- South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017
- Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment 2017
- South Essex Retail Study 2018
- Thurrock Town and Local Centre Health Check Assessment 2018
- Thurrock Active Place Study 2017
- Thurrock Whole of Plan and CIL Viability Baseline Study 2017
- Thurrock Development Capacity Study
- Thurrock Housing Opportunities Study
- Thurrock Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Update
- Grays Town Centre Area Development Framework Update
- Thurrock Integrated Landscape Character Assessment and Sensitivity Evaluation
- Thurrock Green Belt Stage 1 Assessment

QUESTION 1

As the development of the Plan progresses additional evidence will need to be prepared. What other evidence based studies do you think the Council needs to consider undertaking to ensure that the Plan is sound?





Land Availability Assessment

The starting point for identifying a development strategy and locations for growth is to look at the potential availability of land for development. Therefore, a key early stage in the plan-making process is the requirement for local authorities to undertake a formal ‘Call for Sites’, whereby landowners, stakeholders and the local community are invited to identify sites or broad areas of land for development.

Any locations identified through this process will then be assessed and considered further by the Council for allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

To date, the Council has undertaken three ‘Call for Sites’ exercises which has led to over 250 sites and broad locations being submitted for consideration as part of the plan-making process. This has been supplemented by a range of sites that have been previously considered in other plans or submitted as planning applications. This includes sites suggested for a wide range of uses to meet Thurrock’s future housing, gypsy and traveller, employment, retail, leisure, and waste and minerals needs. Figure 2 maps out the distribution of sites and the broad mix of uses which will be assessed through the plan-making process and considered for allocation in the emerging Local Plan.

Further information, including details on how to submit a site or broad location for consideration by the Council, can be found on the Council’s Local Plan website (www.thurrock.gov.uk)

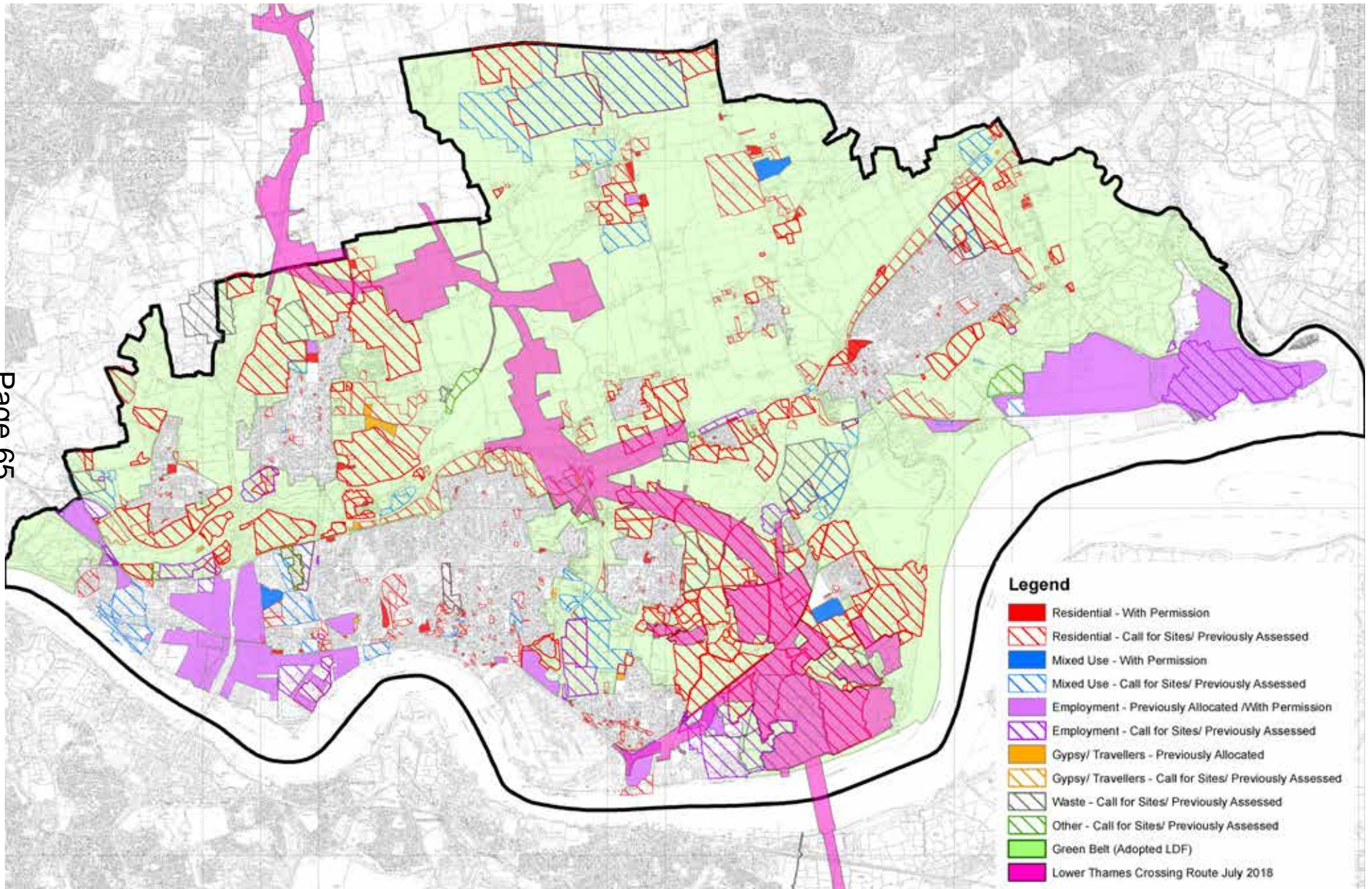


Figure 2: Map of sites to be assessed as part of the plan making process - Sites with developer interest

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

Partnership working and co-ordination of strategies are key features of the planning system. The Council is therefore liaising with relevant bodies who also prepare strategies which have an impact on the Borough.

This includes those organisations involved in the delivery of health, education, transport and environmental services together with those companies involved in the provision of public utilities. This is to ensure that the plans and strategies of all these key delivery partners are consistent and in broad alignment with the emerging local plan strategy, thereby ensuring the provision of necessary supporting infrastructure at the right time and in the right place to support Thurrock's future growth aspirations.

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

The Council is working jointly on strategic priorities with other authorities in South Essex, London and beyond. This is known as the Duty to Cooperate.

The Duty to Cooperate was created in the Localism Act 2011 and places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local and Marine Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters.

The Duty to Cooperate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination.

Local planning authorities must demonstrate how they have complied with the duty at the independent examination of their Local Plan. If a local planning authority cannot demonstrate that it has complied with the duty then the Local Plan will not be able to proceed further in examination.

Local planning authorities will need to satisfy themselves about whether they have complied with the duty. As part of their consideration, local planning authorities will need to bear in mind that the cooperation should produce effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary matters.

Thurrock forms part of the South Essex Housing Market Area and as such the Local Authorities already work very closely together on planning for housing, economic, transport, flood risk and infrastructure delivery and growth. By

virtue of its proximity to London and its strategic location next to the M25 and the Dartford Crossing, the wider geography for engaging through the Duty to Cooperate process also includes working with the London Mayor's Office and the Greater London Authority (GLA), together with local authorities across Essex and North Kent on a range of Duty to Cooperate matters, including housing, transport and minerals and waste issues.

Through the ongoing development of the Local Plan evidence base and discussions with the various Duty to Cooperate bodies the Council has identified a series of key cross boundary issues which both the wider strategic plan-making process and the Thurrock Local Plan will need to consider and address. These are summarised in Figure 3.

Figure 3 : **Cross Boundary Issues**

- Planning to meet future housing needs – the scale and distribution of development across South Essex
- Addressing the needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- Planning for economic growth – the scale and distribution of development and required infrastructure improvements
- Managing the development of the strategic network of centres – scale, distribution and phasing of growth
- Recreation and leisure provision
- Infrastructure planning and delivery – identification, funding and phasing of strategic and local infrastructure provision to support growth (transport, utilities, community, health, education, leisure and digital infrastructure)
- Training, skills and accessibility to employment opportunities
- Maintaining the integrity of the Metropolitan Green Belt
- Strategic Green Infrastructure – management, maintenance and protection of strategic assets
 - The River Thames
 - Protecting and conserving the historic and natural environment
 - Managing Flood Risk
 - Climate Change
 - Minerals and Waste – Thurrock’s future role in meeting local, regional and national needs
 - Potential Lower Thames Crossing
 - Potential Thames Tidal Barrier
 - Cross Rail 2

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QUESTION 2

Do you feel that all of the relevant cross boundary issues have been identified?

If not, please state what other key strategic issues the Council will need to consider and address with stakeholders and partners.

South Essex 2050 Ambition

“South Essex: the place to live, the destination to visit and the place for business to thrive”

In the Autumn of 2017, the Leadership of the South Essex Councils (Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford, Southend and Thurrock) embarked upon a programme of work which would lead to a shared ‘place ambition’, and greater collaboration on strategic priorities to support long term growth across South Essex. This was initiated in response to recognition that there were was a need to work more effectively on strategic planning matters across South Essex and maximise the, potentially significant, opportunities that strategic collaboration could bring to the area.

The ‘South Essex 2050 Ambition’ sets out how growth and development will be distributed across the sub-region and the positive effect it will have on the economy, together with a coherent framework for delivery of the right type and scale of infrastructure to support growth. Operating together, the South Essex strategic growth assets could provide the infrastructure for people and businesses to experience a fully connected place (nationally and internationally) where they can take advantage of the unrivaled potential

on offer in one area – business growth, employment opportunities, varied and interesting communities to live in and a rich diversity of cultural and recreational experiences to enjoy.

By 2050, the ambition is that all new development will be located in the most sustainable locations, will be of the highest quality, will support the emerging local industrial strategy priorities and will be well-connected by a fully integrated transport system and framework of green spaces.

The current estimated need for housing across South Essex is 90,000 dwellings over the next 20 years but with the right conditions to support growth, more could be achieved. As part of the consideration of long term spatial options, the authorities are therefore

exploring whether the development of new ‘Garden’ communities could offer a strategic solution to growth. The new communities could significantly enhance housing opportunities and community facilities for local people, and support new commercial and employment hubs, creating centres of business excellence within the sectors of industrial opportunity.

Implementation of the South Essex 2050 Ambition will be steered through the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and a number of inter-related workstreams have been initiated to do this. These cover strategic infrastructure priorities, a local industrial strategy, developing a ‘South Essex’ growth proposition and the development of a statutory Joint Strategic Plan.

The Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) sets out how the spatial strategy workstream will be implemented through a new local planning ‘portfolio’, with a Joint Strategic Plan providing the overarching framework within which more focused local development plans will be prepared (see Figure 4).

The JSP will also provide a reference framework for the preparation of a Strategic Transport Framework, to sit under the three current statutory Local Transport Plans (LTPs) and to form part of the JSP. The Strategic Transport Framework would be prepared by the three Highway Authorities for South Essex, namely Thurrock and Southend Unitary Authorities and Essex County Council, with partners including the local planning authorities.

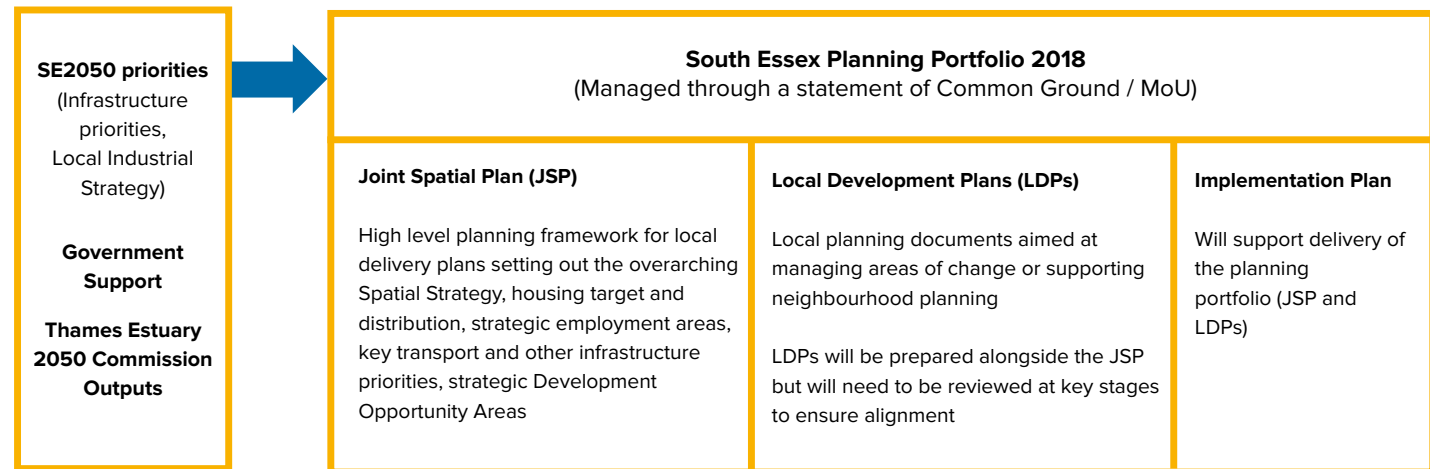


Figure 4: The South Essex Local Plan Portfolio

Scope and focus of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)

The South Essex 2050 Ambition will be delivered over the next 30 years, with some of it fully realised within the timeframe of the current South Essex JSP (period 2018-2038). Other longer-term components will be delivered beyond this timescale but will be included in future reviews of the JSP, as the plan's timeframe is rolled forward.

The JSP will provide the strategic context for the statutory development plan portfolio and will be prepared jointly by the South Essex Councils and Essex County Council. Its scope will therefore be focused on the strategic policy matters that are common across all six local planning areas as follows:

- **South Essex Spatial Strategy:** distribution of growth, strategic housing and employment development locations, town centre hierarchy and setting the long term extent of the Green Belt
- **Strategic Areas of Opportunity (SAO)** and the role of each

- **Cross-cutting themes:** including promoting social cohesion; healthy and inclusive growth; high quality development and design; supporting sustainable development; climate change
- **Overall levels of housing provision** to be provided throughout the plan-period (and to 2050)
- **Local industrial strategy priorities** and spatial implications (including what type of employment land is needed and where).
- **Strategic transport and infrastructure priorities**
- **Natural environment and resources,** including green and blue infrastructure, flood risk
- **Implementation and Monitoring Framework**

The South Essex Local Planning Portfolio will also rely on the policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and will therefore not duplicate any nationally set policies, unless there are specific local circumstances that justify a deviation from this. However, there may be a need for supplementary planning guidance in addition to the NPPF, to provide a local interpretation and implementation of national policy.

The strategic evidence base

In order to inform the preparation of the JSP, the South Essex Councils have commissioned a number of strategic housing, economic, retail, transport, infrastructure and open space technical studies. This includes the production of a Strategic Growth Locations Study which will set out a range of strategic options for meeting South Essex's future housing needs over the period to 2038 and beyond to 2050. The Study will identify potential strategic locations for growth and provide a high level assessment of the infrastructure needs, costs and delivery mechanisms associated with each of the broad locations identified for development as part of the preferred option set out in the JSP. It will then fall to each of the South Essex Council's to further develop and plan for their delivery through the Local Plan process.

Relationship of the Thurrock Local Plan to the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)

It is intended to submit the JSP for Examination in March 2020 with its adoption targeted for late 2020. In parallel, the South Essex authorities are also twin tracking the production of their own individual Local Plans which will need to plan for the delivery of the strategic development needs identified by the JSP at the local and site specific level.

Reflecting the decision to prepare the JSP, the Council is required to publish a new Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the suite of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which will be prepared to guide the future development of the Borough.

Published alongside this Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document, the Thurrock LDS July 2018 sets out the programme and key milestones involved in preparing the JSP, the Thurrock Local Plan, supporting DPDs and non-statutory Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Figure 5 sets out the proposed suite of DPDs and SPDs which it is proposed to prepare for Thurrock along with their anticipated commencement and adoption dates.

Both the evidence collected for the Thurrock Local Plan and the public responses received in respect of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation process will be used to help inform the development of the JSP. This will include the identification of broad strategic areas for development and any key supporting strategic infrastructure improvements required to support their delivery.

A copy of the Thurrock LDS 2018 is available to view on the Council's Local Plan website. (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

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

The Council adopted the Core Strategy in December 2011. The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the development of Thurrock.

Following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Council identified a number of policies in the Core Strategy which required updating to ensure that they were in full compliance with the NPPF. These policies were adopted in January 2015.

The policies within the Core Strategy will continue to be used in decision making until the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted. However, as work on the Local Plan progresses, emerging policies could start to influence decisions on planning applications. Once the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted it will replace the Core Strategy. All recently adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance documents, including the Thurrock Design Guide, will also be revised in parallel with the preparation of the Local Plan to ensure the proper alignment of policy across all planning documents.

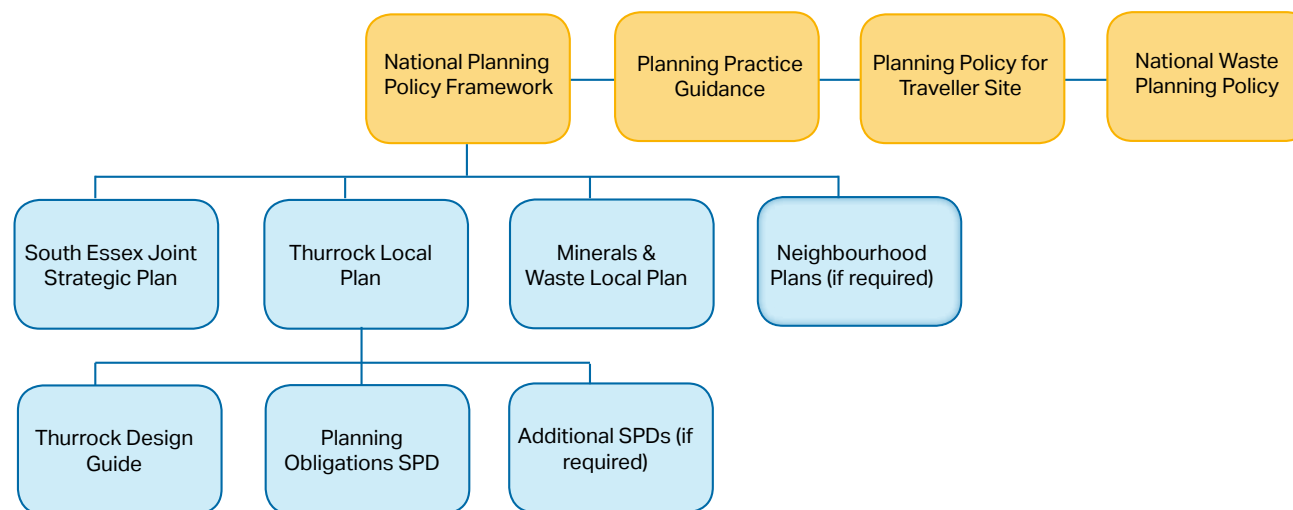


Figure 5: Proposed Thurrock LDS Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents

Minerals and Waste

As both a Unitary and Minerals and Waste Planning Authority (MPA), Thurrock is required to plan for the provision of an adequate and steady supply of mineral resource to meet future needs and the management of waste in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

At a local level, extant minerals and waste planning policy guidance is set out in the Thurrock Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (January 2015). However, it is recognised that there will be a need to up-date the existing policy approach to better align with future growth needs and changing national policy requirements. In order to address this, the Council is proposing to prepare a separate and stand alone Thurrock Minerals and Waste Local Plan as an alternative to the inclusion of new policy guidance within the body of the emerging Thurrock Local Plan. Adopting this approach would provide the Council with greater flexibility in order to better align the wider minerals and waste planning process across Essex.

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

The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape how their local areas develop and change by preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) or Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs). In Thurrock, only designated Neighbourhood Forums are able to produce an NDP and NDOs.

Through producing a Neighbourhood Plan, communities can take the lead on developing planning policies for their local area, as long as certain rules are followed and any Plans and policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies set out in the Local Plan.

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

If you or your local community are considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan, we would recommend that you speak to a member of the Growth and Strategy Team in the first instance. Contact details can be found on the back page of this document.



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

Undertaking a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Local Plan is an essential part of the plan-making process. The sustainability appraisal must address the legal requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive.

A failure to undertake the sustainability appraisal properly can expose the Plan to legal challenge.

The SA of the emerging Local Plan will be an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA). This will incorporate the requirements of the SA/SEA process and, in line with statutory requirements and best practice, will also include a:

- **Health Impact Assessment (HIA)** – an examination of the plan’s impacts on people’s health and well-being; and an
- **Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)** - an examination of the plan’s impact on different groups in the community.

SA is an iterative process which is closely integrated with the overall process of preparing a Local Plan. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the likely significant effects of the plan and the extent to which the plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help or hinder the achievement of relevant environmental, economic and social objectives. The staged approach to SA is designed to align with each key stage of the plan-making process.

In February 2016 the Council issued a Local Plan SA Scoping Report for public consultation alongside the Issues and Options (Stage 1) Consultation Document. The purpose of the Scoping Report was to set the context and objectives which would form the baseline for the SA and to determine the scope of the study.

Following the close of the consultation period, the Council has updated elements of the scoping report which are presented in the SA of the Plan. In addition to the requirement to undertake a SA of the Local Plan, the Council is also required to prepare a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) which will provide an examination of the plan’s impact on internationally designated sites for nature conservation (or ‘European sites’).



As required by legislation, an Integrated Sustainability Assessment (ISA) has been prepared to inform consideration of the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document. A copy of this document and the revised SA Scoping Report is available to view on the Council’s Local Plan website.

The Council also intends to set up an external Integrated Sustainability Assessment Stakeholder Reference Group to facilitate the wider involvement of prescribed Duty to Cooperate bodies and other organisations in the process of preparing the ISA. The Council would welcome nominations from all interested parties to become Members of the ISA Stakeholder Reference Group.

For further details on how to be involved please contact the Growth and Strategy Team using the details at the back of this Document.

What will happen if the Council doesn't prepare a new Local Plan and meet our future development needs?

The Government has legislated through the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 the requirement for all areas to be covered by a Local Plan.

Where a local authority fails to meet this requirement, the Secretary of State has the power to intervene and direct the review and/or preparation of a Local Plan which, depending on the circumstances, could be undertaken by another authority or jointly in partnership with surrounding authorities. In all instances, the failing authority could be liable to pay the full or a proportion of the costs involved in producing the Local Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Plans to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites to meet the housing needs of the area for 5 years, with a further supply of developable sites (or at least locations for them) for years 6-10 and, where possible, for years 11-15. A Local Plan that does not meet the requirement could be found unsound through the Local Plan Examination process.

The housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' set out a series of proposals designed to increase the rate of housing delivery across the country. Further detail on a number of these reforms was set out in 'Planning for the right homes in the right places' in September 2017. This included proposals for the introduction of a Housing Delivery Test, whereby local authorities who fail to meet their housing targets by 2018/19 and provide a rolling 5 year housing land supply (plus 20% buffer) will effectively lose their ability to determine where development goes.

The total housing requirement for the first five years of the Plan (2017 – 2022) is 11,400 homes. This takes into account the identified housing need (upper range of OAN), the shortfall of homes delivered between 2014 and 2017 against this figure, and the application of a 20% buffer (moved forward from later in the Plan period) due to the Council's historical record of persistent under-delivery against its housing targets. The Council has identified a current housing supply capable of delivering just 2,635 homes. This equates to a housing land supply equivalent to 1.2 years which means that the Council would be liable to sanction under the proposed Housing Delivery Test.

For those authorities who fail the Housing Delivery Test, there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development which would make it potentially easier for developers to get planning permission for housing development on appeal to the Secretary of State where it can be demonstrated that the Local Plan is either out-of-date or fails to allocate sufficient land to meet future housing needs. This could lead to sporadic development in the Green Belt and failure to maximise the benefits that future housing growth could bring to the local community.

In addition to the threat of intervention and possible sanctions from Government, an ongoing failure to adopt a sound and deliverable Local Plan would also:

- Increase the amount of local people who struggle to access decent or affordable housing in the Borough;
- Undermine efforts by the Council to boost the supply of affordable housing through a lack of viable and deliverable sites for development;
- Undermine opportunities to support the future regeneration and renewal of existing local centres and communities;
- Prevent the provision of new community infrastructure which needs to be delivered on large sites, such as primary and secondary schools, due to a lack of suitable large sites in the urban area and the constraining nature of the Green Belt boundaries in Thurrock;
- Raise a serious risk that, without an adequate supply of housing to meet workers needs locally, firms could relocate or switch investment to other locations as workforce availability declines. Alternatively, if job growth continues without the necessary housing growth, increased levels of in-commuting are likely to result, thereby putting additional strain on existing transport networks.

SECTION 2: PREVIOUS CONSULTATION RESPONSES

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In February 2016 the Council launched its first formal consultation on the emerging Local Plan. Since this consultation, the Council has undertaken a series of informal consultation activities with communities to deepen its understanding of the issues and opportunities that exist in the borough. A summary of these consultations and the issues they raised are set out in this section.

Issues and Options (Stage 1) – February 2016

The process for preparing and adopting Local Plans is set out in the Town and Country (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. When preparing a new Local Plan, Regulation 18 directs that a local planning authority should both invite, and consider, representations from specific consultation bodies, local residents or other persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area about what a local plan ought to contain.

On 24 February 2016, the Council undertook a 6 week public consultation on the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Document, the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report and the Draft Thurrock Design Strategy. The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views of stakeholders, local businesses and the community on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address in order to meet Thurrock's future development needs. In total, 70 organisations responded formally to the Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation raising 548 separate comments. An additional 500 comments were received from members of the community at events organised to promote the consultation. A summary of the key issues raised by respondents is set out in Table 1. A full record of the comments received and the Officers response to these representations is set out in the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation which is available to view on the Council's Local Plan website www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan

Table 1: Issues and Options (Stage 1) - Summary of key comments

Comments from Duty to Cooperate bodies	Comments from Landowners, Businesses and Developers
<p>The Local Plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider through the Duty to Cooperate process the need for Thurrock to contribute towards meeting any unmet future housing needs from other authorities, including London and Southend in particular; • Ensure that residential developments are supported by health facilities, in order to combat existing health inequalities experienced at a local level; • Consider the requirement for Thurrock to make additional provision to meet Basildon’s unmet Gypsy and Traveller needs; • Support the delivery of the Thames Vision which promotes the retention of riverside industry and employment locations, and the protection and enhancement of the distinctive riverscape in terms of water quality, wildlife and attractiveness as an open space; <p>Consider the impacts of any planned expansion or change to port facilities along the Thames within Thurrock on Medway’s port infrastructure;</p> <p>Safeguard wharfs in Thurrock for the importation of marine dredged and other mineral resources into the region;</p> <p>Consider the future role of Lakeside and the need to manage the scale and nature of its development in order to safeguard the viability and vitality of other strategic centres in South Essex, North Kent and East London;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise Thurrock’s future role in meeting London and the wider South East’s waste needs; • Consider the future implications of strategic transport improvements including the Lower Thames Crossing; and • Support the delivery of an enhanced public rights of way network accessible to all users (walkers, cyclists, equestrians and the disabled) including increased access to the Borough’s open spaces. 	<p>The Local Plan process must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the development of a new spatial strategy which goes beyond the current approach of focusing investment and development within the existing urban area and the established Economic Growth Hubs in order to meet Thurrock’s future development needs; • Undertake a full review of the Green Belt to identify additional land to meet future housing and employment needs consistent with the approach set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); • Consider the allocation of land to meet the future housing needs of London and neighbouring South Essex authorities in addition to meeting Thurrock’s own Objectively Assessed Housing Needs (OAHN) in full; • Consider reviewing the Borough’s retail hierarchy and the relative roles of Lakeside and Grays Town Centre in accommodating future strategic retail needs over the plan period; • Establish a “town centre first” policy approach to the location of town centre uses with a policy to resist further out of centre retail development to support the retail led regeneration of Grays Town Centre; • Plan positively for growth by supporting the transformation of Lakeside into a regional town centre with intu Lakeside providing the best location for new retail (comparison retailing) and leisure development in the Borough; • Ensure existing centres including Grays and intu Lakeside can provide for future shopping needs of Thurrock. Further development outside these centres is not required and identified needs should be focused on maintaining and enhancing existing centres; • Plan positively to maximise the economic benefits that will arise following the development of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing; • Support the future commercial viability and expansion of the ports through continued investment in new infrastructure, housing, education and skills development; • Identify additional sites for dedicated truck parks to meet future demand and reduce the environmental and transport impact of logistics related traffic growth on the Borough; • Recognise the importance of protecting the role played by the River Thames in supporting economic growth; • Allocate land for the development of new waste and renewable energy facilities which recognises Thurrock’s strategic location and the current availability of sites for new development; and • Recognise the importance and value of Thurrock’s green infrastructure and heritage assets in supporting the delivery of wider economic, environmental, health, community and transport objectives.

Comments from Local Residents and Community Groups

The Local Plan process will need to consider:

- The lack of affordable housing available to local people;
- The need for new homes to be built near transport hubs and existing community facilities and services like schools and doctors;
- The need for new homes to be built in areas where they can support the delivery of better community facilities and services;
- The preferred location for new homes should be on brownfield sites;
- The need for better health, education and community facilities to meet local needs;
- The need for more activities to be provided for young people;
- Addressing the adverse impact of lorry movements in residential areas;
- The need for industrial and residential areas to be segregated in order to minimise the impact of bad neighbour uses on local communities;
- The need for better parking provision in town and local centres;
- The requirement for improved standards of road maintenance and investment in Thurrock's roads;
- The need for better standards of design and a need to tackle the poor quality of the environment and badly maintained public open spaces;
- The provision of new public open spaces and sports and leisure facilities;
- Promoting the delivery of improved walking and cycling facilities; and
- How to address the health impacts of poor air quality on local residents.

Watch this Place Washing Line

Following on from the success of the Local Plan Roadshows and the burning issues board, the Council decided to host some additional Local Plan Roadshows over the summer months in 2016. These events piggybacked on existing festivals that were already being held across the borough. The Council ran an activity titled the 'Watch this Place Washing Line' at these events. The activity involved people writing the things they didn't like about their community/town on a pair of paper pants and the things they did like about their community/town on a paper top. In total this activity generated 462 responses. The majority of comments relating to things that people liked about their local area were focused on community and environmental assets like open spaces and play areas although there was a recognition that these facilities could and should be better maintained by the Council. In terms of things that people didn't like about their local area, maintenance of the highways and the issue of litter featured prominently. Issues relating to the lack of/ poor infrastructure provision were also notable.

Your Place, Your Voice Community Planning Events

The '*Your Place, Your Voice*' community planning events were devised in response to comments that residents felt overwhelmed by the technical nature of planning consultations and the volume of council consultations that all seem to ask similar questions. The community planning events were run on a drop in basis, giving local communities the opportunity to feed into the Local Plan and other Council documents and strategies by participating in a range of informal and highly interactive consultation activities.

In total 17 events were held across the borough between February – April 2018. The community planning events highlighted several borough wide and locally sensitive issues and opportunities that need to be considered in the context of the emerging Local Plan.

These include but are not necessarily limited to the need to:

- Ensure that the provision of infrastructure is appropriately phased in relation to new development;
- Plan for a range of housing types that address and respond to local needs and priorities – i.e. at the Corringham event it was noted that there was a specific local need for older person's housing;
- Focus on social infrastructure especially facilities for younger people;
- Protect and improve key green spaces within communities;
- Ensure that the integrity to the green belt is maintained;
- Plan strategically for the provision of health facilities across the borough; and
- Address issues relating to the movement of vehicles across the borough, including HGVs.

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The Council is in the process of preparing findings reports for each event area and will publish the full set of comments as online datasets. Both will be available to view on the Council's website in the coming weeks.



SECTION 3: CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

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Key Issues and Challenges

The first task in preparing the Local Plan is to identify the issues or challenges that Thurrock faces. The key issues that the Local Plan needs to address have been drawn out from evidence from local strategies and technical studies, changing national policy, and continued community engagement including the responses received to the previous Issues and Options (Stage 1) public consultation.

These sources of evidence have also been used to help develop the vision, identify the objectives and shape the choice of options set out in this consultation document. Figure 7 sets out the emerging key issues and challenges facing Thurrock.



Figure 7: Draft Key Issues and Challenges

- Page 79
- Reducing inequalities in the Borough;
 - Improving the attractiveness of the Borough as a place to live, work, visit and invest;
 - Securing sustainable economic growth;
 - Addressing the need for housing in the context of a probable shortfall across the South Essex strategic housing market area;
 - Addressing affordable housing needs across the Borough;
 - Providing the right type of housing across the Borough to meet specialist needs and a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites;
 - Estates and community regeneration;
 - Meeting the land and property needs of the business community and Thurrock's major employers;
 - Port and logistics development;
 - Maintaining vibrant and competitive town centres;
 - Provision of activities and spaces for young people;
 - Delivering the strategic and local infrastructure improvements required to support growth and the regeneration of existing communities;
 - Protecting the integrity of the Green Belt including key gaps between urban areas and settlements;
 - Maintaining and protecting the distinctive character and setting of the Borough's villages;
 - Preparing for any impacts of climate change;
 - Improving access to services, facilities and employment opportunities;
 - Relieving congestion which hinders the movement of goods and people;
 - Increasing accessibility and encouraging sustainable travel;
 - Providing sufficient waste management facilities and providing for future mineral and aggregate needs;
 - Improving health and well-being;
 - Improving air quality;
 - Preventing threats to the character and local distinctiveness of the Borough;
 - Protecting and enhancing the Borough's historic, built and natural assets;
 - Protecting the key role played by the River Thames as an economic and environmental asset;
 - Managing water quality and flood risk;
 - Mitigating the impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing; and
 - Maximising the economic, housing and accessibility benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing.

QUESTION 3

Are these key issues the right ones or are there any key issues that you think have been missed?

What do we want Thurrock to be like in 2037?

An important part of the Local Plan is its vision. This needs to set out our ambitions for Thurrock as a place and provide a clear picture of what we want the Borough to be like in 2037 and the role it plays as part of the wider 2050 vision for the development of South Essex.

Thurrock Council and its partners have an ambitious agenda to transform the Borough. Much has been achieved in recent years through the concerted efforts of our partners to increase prosperity and enhance the lives of those who live and work in the Borough but the agenda remains unfinished.

Preparing a new Local Plan has given us the chance to look afresh at what sort of place we want Thurrock to be in the future and to address the key issues and challenges set out in the preceding section.

A new vision for Thurrock needs to be developed which takes account of:

- Thurrock’s strategic location in close proximity to London, the M25 and as a Gateway to the World;
- The success of the Council and partners in laying the foundations for the development and implementation of an ambitious growth agenda for Thurrock;
- The scale and nature of the further opportunities for driving forward economic growth and the need to ensure that the benefits of increasing prosperity are shared by all sections of the community;
- The challenges of delivering a step change in the quality of Thurrock as a place and the need to change people’s perceptions of Thurrock as somewhere to live and work;
- The opportunity to harness the future scale and distribution of housing and employment growth to act as a powerful catalyst for transformational change and community regeneration;
- The need to address existing infrastructure deficits and support future growth;
- The need to plan for the economic, environmental, transport and social impacts of a possible Lower Thames Crossing;
- The long term priorities and strategies of the Council and its partners;

- Cross boundary issues such as the scale and distribution of housing, employment, transport and strategic infrastructure provision across South Essex;
- Changes to national policy, guidance and legislation since the adoption of the Core Strategy; and
- New challenges including a changing economic climate which have emerged since the adoption of the current Local Plan.

The starting point in developing the Local Plan vision is the Council’s corporate vision which is for Thurrock to be ‘an ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future’.

The draft vision for the Local Plan reflects, and elaborates upon the Council’s corporate strategy and will support its delivery.

Figure 6: Corporate Vision



Local Plan Vision

“By 2037 Thurrock will have grown into a more prosperous, attractive and sustainable place to live and work, with improved quality of life and thriving communities. Galvanised by a generation of planned investment in the Borough’s transport infrastructure and enhanced by continually improving educational attainment, the Borough will have secured its position as the economic powerhouse of South Essex with a flourishing economy driven by port related industries, the logistics sector, new technologies and innovation, recognised for and characterised by a highly skilled, inclusive working population.

The delivery of high quality, desirable housing, tuned to local need and demand, has greatly stimulated what is now a buoyant housing market. More sustainable patterns of living will have been achieved throughout the Borough as a result of the successful development and expansion of its economic hubs, the successful creation of new mixed use developments, sustained environmental enhancements and key improvements to the public transport network.

The inherent quality of Thurrock’s natural and built environments including the riverfront areas will have continued to be celebrated and enhanced, creating places that people can be proud of, that build on the Borough’s distinctive and unique character through bold, imaginative and inclusive design”.

QUESTION 4

Have we got the Local Plan vision right? Are there any changes you would like us to consider?

How do we get there?

To address the key issues and take forward the vision, a number of strategic objectives have been identified through the Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation and the various evidence base work that has been undertaken.

Draft Strategic Objectives

- Improve accessibility to employment, local services and facilities;
- Reduce congestion;
- Support integrated and well-connected public transport;
- Support the Borough's economic success;
- Reduce the Borough's carbon footprint;
- Provide an appropriate mix of high quality and affordable housing to meet the needs of all sections of the community;
- Ensure the delivery of an appropriate range of high quality community infrastructure and services;
- Deliver regeneration and reduce inequality and social deprivation;
- Provide a range and choice of employment opportunities;
- Promote, conserve and enhance the special character and heritage of Thurrock;
- Provide, improve and maintain a well-designed network of green places and open spaces;
- Identify and deliver sufficient suitable development sites to meet Thurrock's future housing, employment and other needs;
- Improve the health and well-being of the Borough's residents;
- Retain an effective Green Belt;
- Maintain and enhance the Borough's network of retail centres as a focus for shopping, leisure, business, housing and community activity;
- Protect and enhance the Borough's tranquil areas;
- Reduce waste and meet future needs;
- Conserve and enhance the Borough's built and natural environmental assets;
- Value and protect the role played by the River Thames as an economic and environmental asset; and
- Ensure new development is well designed and future-proofed to meet changing economic, social, technological and environmental needs.

QUESTION 5

Are the objectives the right ones? Are there any objectives that you think we have missed?

Policy Principles - How should development take place?

The key issues that the Borough is facing, the objectives to be pursued, and the choices for the broad approach to new development have been set out. The Local Plan will also need policies to make sure that new development contributes to the delivery of the objectives and Government policy requirements.

Policies dealing with the following principles which are common to each Option will be developed as part of the Local Plan Preferred Option.

a) Ensure the provision of the required supporting infrastructure

The delivery of new infrastructure is crucial to the development of Thurrock as an economically prosperous, attractive and healthy Borough. To achieve this, the plan-making process will need to be underpinned by the preparation of a comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which identifies the future transport and community infrastructure needed to support growth, together with the funding and implementation mechanisms needed to secure their delivery. Where large scale development is proposed, Master Plans and Delivery Frameworks will set out in more detail what infrastructure improvements are needed together with the phasing of their delivery. In preparing the IDP the Council will work closely with Government, infrastructure providers, the development industry and local communities to align investment priorities and strategies to deliver the right infrastructure, in the right place, and at the right time.

b) Meeting Housing Needs

Development should provide for the diverse housing needs of people, both living in and moving to the Borough, including affordable housing to meet local needs. Policies will identify the scale and distribution of new housing development together with the necessary supporting community and other infrastructure. The criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites will also be set out in the Local Plan and it will be necessary to identify strategic housing sites and Gypsy and Traveller sites. Where appropriate, Inset Plans and Master Plans will set out a more detailed planning, design and infrastructure framework to guide the future development of strategic housing developments.

c) Maintaining an effective Green Belt

In order to meet Government policy objectives, the Council will have to consider releasing land from the Green Belt to accommodate the number of homes and supporting community facilities required to meet Thurrock's development needs over the period to 2037/38. Policies will need to ensure that the green belt continues to be effective in protecting the character of the Borough and maintaining key gaps between urban areas and settlements.

d) Regenerating existing Local Communities and Centres

A key guiding principle underpinning the preparation of the new Local Plan is that, wherever possible, new development should be located alongside, or in close proximity to, existing communities where there is a clear need or opportunity to harness future investment in new homes to help fund the regeneration of existing centres and secure, where needed, the delivery of new shops, services, schools, health and community facilities to meet both current and future community needs. Where appropriate, Inset Plans and Master Plans will set out a more detailed planning, design and infrastructure framework to guide the future development of these regeneration areas.

e) Protecting and Delivering Quality in the Built Environment

All new development will be required to meet high standards and improve the overall quality of Thurrock as a place to live and work. The Council has recently adopted the Thurrock Design Strategy and, embedded within the Local Plan, will be a continued policy commitment to good design to aid the transformation of Thurrock.

f) Meeting Employment Needs

Policies will need to recognise the aspirations of major businesses in the Borough to develop and expand, whilst also ensuring that development occurs in the right locations to protect and enhance the attractiveness of the Borough and to make the best use of both existing and planned investment in new infrastructure, including digital technology.

Policies will also need to ensure that there is sufficient housing available to accommodate the needs of workers and that appropriate arrangements are put in place to ensure the availability of an educated and skilled labour force to, both meet the needs of employers, and ensure that the benefits of ongoing job creation are accessible to all sections of the community.

g) Ensuring that our Town Centres continue to thrive

Policies should enhance the accessibility, quality and vitality of the Borough’s network of centres as a focus for shopping, leisure, business and community activity. This includes the transformation of Lakeside into a regional town centre, the regeneration of the Borough’s traditional centres and the development of new centres in areas of proposed housing growth to create balanced and sustainable new communities.

A review of boundaries of the town centres and primary retail frontages will be undertaken and policies developed which will set out guidance on the proposed scale and distribution of new retail, commercial, housing and leisure related development. Where appropriate, Inset Plans and Master Plans will set out a more detailed planning, design and infrastructure framework to guide the future development of individual centres.



h) The River Thames

Thurrock's character and history is interwoven with that of the River Thames. In economic terms, the Port of Tilbury and the new deep water container port at London Gateway are of national significance and crucial to the economy of the Borough, London and the wider South East. The river is also important as a natural habitat which forms part of a wider and unique riverscape which hosts important heritage assets including Coal House Fort and Tilbury Fort which help contribute to defining Thurrock's identity and sense of place.

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It will remain an important principle that the Local Plan should continue to recognise and exploit the economic opportunities arising from Thurrock's location by the river, whilst also respecting the need to protect and enhance the distinctive riverscape and natural habitats. Going forward, priorities around the development of the river and its foreshore will vary from place to place, as individual areas will lend themselves to different opportunities, whether this is maximising the potential of the ports, promoting new high quality residential developments or opening up the riverfront for recreational purposes. The Local Plan will need to draw a careful balance between exploiting the presence of the river as a catalyst for growth with the need to protecting the environment and unique riverside biodiversity and ecology.

i) Managing Waste

Provision will need to be made for waste management facilities by identifying sites and/or a policy enabling the use of appropriate land to ensure that targets are met and that waste can be managed locally. Mineral resources in the Borough will be protected, and sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search identified for the extraction of sand and gravel, and other mineral infrastructure, in line with identified future needs. A separate Minerals and Waste Local Plan will be prepared to address these issues.

j) Minimising Carbon Emissions

Policies will seek to minimise carbon dioxide emissions from new development, contribute to longer term targets to reduce emissions and ensure that developments are protected from the impacts of climate change. Development should minimise the need to travel, and encourage accessible neighbourhoods using public transport, cycling and walking as a real alternative to car use.

QUESTION 6

Do you agree that these are the right policy principles? Are there any policy principles that you think have been missed?

Lower Thames Crossing

The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) is a proposed new road crossing of the River Thames east of London that will connect Kent and Essex. Following consultation on a series of route options, the Secretary of State for Transport announced in April 2017 that the Preferred Route would connect the A2 in Kent, east of Gravesend, to the M25 in Essex, south of Junction 29, crossing under the River Thames by means of two bored tunnels. Between the A2 and A13 Junctions, the route is currently proposed as a dual three-lane carriageway; north of the A13 the route would be a dual carriageway. The improvements would include widening of the M2/A2 and the M25 at each end of the route. The total length of the route, including junction widening, would be approximately 31km, with approximately 3.5km in tunnel.

On the north side of the river, the route would run to the west of East Tilbury and between Chadwell St Mary and Linford to the M25.

An indicative plan of the proposed alignment of the Lower Thames Crossing is shown on Figure 7.

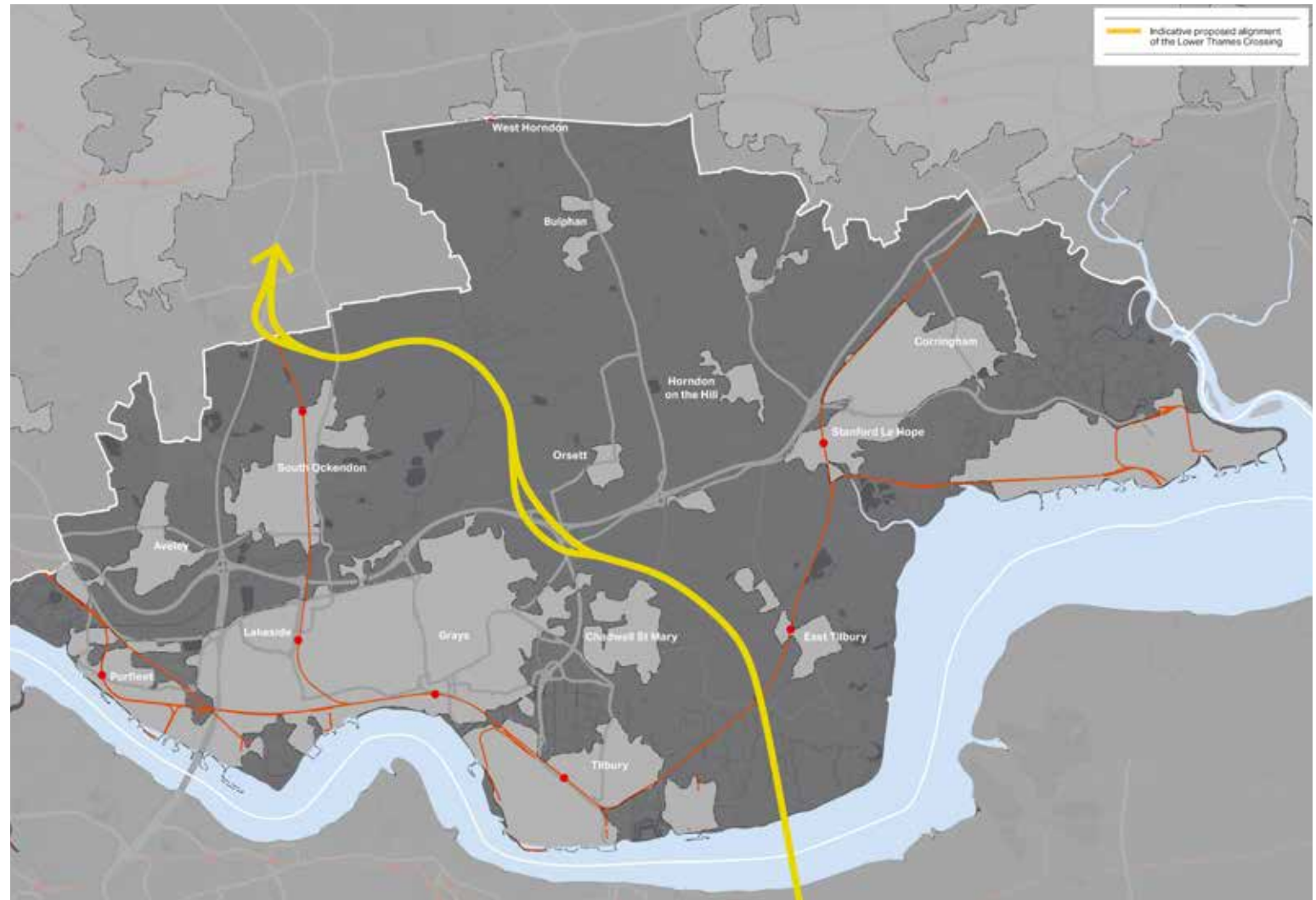


Figure 7 :indicative plan of the proposed alignment of the Lower Thames Crossing

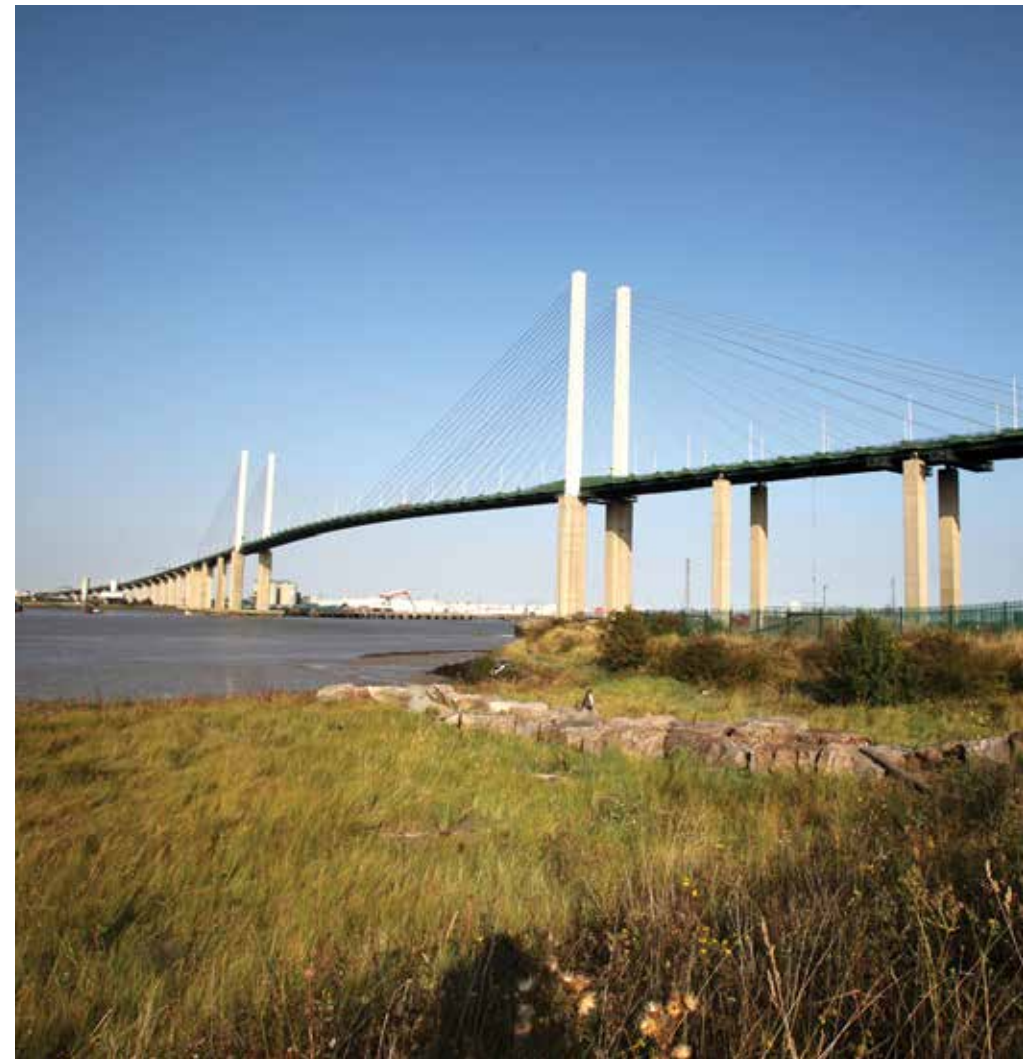
The Lower Thames Crossing is expected to open by 2027, subject to the necessary funding and planning approvals.

Notwithstanding the differing viewpoints on the merits or otherwise of the Government's proposals for a new Thames Crossing in Thurrock, the preparation of the Local Plan must take into account the significant economic, environmental and transport implications of any decision by the Government to move forward with the scheme. In this regard, the Local Plan must reflect and respond to the following land use and planning considerations by providing an effective planning policy framework which:

- Safeguards the alignment of the route including the location of junctions;
- Addresses the economic impacts of the proposal including the need to protect existing businesses and promote future economic growth;
- Helps mitigate the short, medium and longer term environmental impacts of the proposed crossing on existing communities, settlements and the Borough's historic assets and environmental infrastructure;
- Supports and does not constrain the ability of the Borough to meet its future development needs, including an increase in housing delivery;

- Addresses the need to ensure the beneficial restoration or reuse of land used in the construction of the project;
- Protects and enhances local access routes and reduces the negative impact of severance on local communities;
- Protects and improves transport connectivity both to, through, and within Thurrock for local businesses and residents; and
- Ensures that the cumulative environmental impacts (air quality, cultural heritage, landscape, biodiversity, geology and soils materials, noise and vibration, people and communities, rain drainage and water environment) of proposed Local Plan allocations and the LTC are properly assessed and mitigated where necessary.

Given the complex interrelationship that exists between the two processes, it should be noted that it will not be possible for the Council to submit the Local Plan for Examination until such time as a final decision has been made on the route and location of the Lower Thames Crossing.



SECTION 4: WHAT LEVEL OF GROWTH IS NEEDED - HOUSING?

One of the main purposes of a Local Plan is to set out how much housing is needed, including specific types of housing and where these homes should be located. Previously, housing targets for local authorities were set out in regional plans. However, following the abolition of the regional planning system, it is now the responsibility of each local authority to set its own housing target but this target must be based on sound evidence and discussed with neighbouring local authorities under the Duty to Cooperate process.

Following the decision by the South Essex authorities to strengthen the arrangements for strategic planning across the area, the process of formally agreeing the future scale of new housing development for Thurrock will now be made through the process of preparing and adopting a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).

In preparing the JSP, it will remain important that any strategic decisions regarding the scale and nature of future housing needs are fully reflective of the capacity of the individual local authority areas to support the levels of growth proposed, and that the scale and nature of the future housing provision being planned for meets local needs and supports wider economic, community and social policy objectives. In order to achieve this, it remains crucial that the evidence base being developed in support of the local planning process and the views of the community are used to inform the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan. This will help ensure that the policy approach set out in the JSP is realistic, deliverable and fully reflective of local needs and the opportunity to create attractive places to live, work and enjoy.

Understanding how many homes we need

Thurrock is part of the South Essex Housing Market Area and as such the Council needs to work with the other authorities in South Essex to assess how much housing and what types of housing are needed across the sub-region. In May 2017, the South Essex Authorities published an update to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which used 2014 based population and household projections, together with bespoke economic growth projections, to identify the need for 4,000 new homes across South Essex, per year, from 2014 to 2037. The SHMA also identified the housing need figure for each individual local authority within the housing market area.

The 2016 Strategic Housing Market Update and the 2017 Addendum to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment are available to view on the Council's website.

Thurrock's housing need figure in the 2017 SHMA update was assessed as being between 1,074-1,381 homes per year, which is the equivalent of 24,702 – 31,763 over the plan period. However, the lower figure does not reflect the projected rate of economic growth in the Borough over the Plan period and therefore the higher figure is considered to be a more realistic reflection of future housing needs in Thurrock. Figure 8 sets out a basic summary of how the annual housing need figure has been worked out.

Figure 8: Breakdown of Thurrock's objectively assessed housing need figure

Stage	Adjustment	Number of dwellings per annum
Starting point: 2014 population and household projections (Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS))	-	869
Demographic adjustment – for hidden needs such as older children still living at home. These people are not homeless or in urgent housing need but would like to rent or buy a home of their own.	+107	976
Market signals adjustment – house prices are much higher than local people can afford. Increasing supply should help lower prices and make it easier for people to rent or buy a home of their own.	+98	1,074
Economic growth adjustment	+307	1,381



National planning policy states that local authorities should ensure that Local Plans aim to meet their areas' objectively assessed need for market and affordable housing in full.

As such, the starting point for preparing the new Local Plan is that the Council should aim to allocate enough land to provide for 1,381 dwellings per year over the plan period to support future economic growth, and to boost the supply, range, quality and affordability of housing to meet the needs of local communities.

Setting a housing target lower than the objectively assessed need figure would require the Council to approach neighbouring authorities through the Duty to Cooperate process and through the preparation of the JSP to see if they are able to accommodate all or part of the unmet housing need. Initial discussions with neighbouring authorities indicate that, at present, this is unlikely to be the case.

Standardised Approach to Assessing Housing Requirements

On 20th September 2017, the Government published a new standardised methodology for assessing future housing needs for consultation. The Government believes that the adoption of a new standardised methodology will provide a more transparent and more consistent basis for Local Plan production. An assessment of housing need calculated using the standard methodology (based on 2014 based household projections and the 2017 affordability ratio) identifies a need for 1,173 homes per year in Thurrock. However, the standard methodology fails to consider whether any adjustments need to be made to the housing need figure to ensure that the provision of new housing addresses any imbalance between the available labour supply and the projected rate of job growth in the Borough. Therefore, if a decision is made by Government to enforce the use of a standardised approach when assessing housing need, it may be appropriate for the Council to carry out additional work to assess whether any further uplift is required to the housing figure to support the economic growth agenda for the Borough.

QUESTION 7

Do you agree that the Council should seek to allocate enough land to meet its objectively assessed housing need of 1,381 new homes per year (31,763 new homes over the plan period)?

Please explain your answer and reference supporting evidence (eg. physical factors, infrastructure) to justify your response.

It should be noted that the housing need figure identified will change over the course of the plan-making period due to the release of updated household projections and other datasets relating to housing affordability and economic projections. It is anticipated that the Office for National Statistics will release the next set of household projections in September 2018.

Planning for affordable housing

Affordable housing is social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market.

Thurrock has a significant need for more affordable housing. This need was calculated in the 2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and was updated in May 2017 in response to new demographic projections. The net annual affordable housing need for the next five years is 472 dwellings per year rising to 663 per year for the remainder of the plan period. If the identified annual requirement for affordable housing was applied to the overall annual housing need, it would mean that 48% of the total number of new dwellings built would need to be affordable.

In considering what percentage of all new residential development should be affordable, the Council has to consider a number of things including land supply, viability and the availability of alternative delivery models.

National policy states that pursuing sustainable development requires careful attention to viability and costs in both plan-making and decision-taking. Local Plans must be deliverable. Therefore, the sites and the scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and

policy burdens that the ability for them to be developed viably is threatened. The Local Plan Viability Baseline Report tests the current affordable housing target of 35% against several generic housing typologies and concludes that this level of affordable housing is generally only viable when looking at greenfield sites. This finding is consistent with delivery patterns over the last few years as the majority of sites in the urban area are supported by viability statements indicating that the required amount of affordable housing cannot be met on site without impacting the viability of the overall development.



i The Local Plan Viability Study Baseline Report also tests the level of developer contributions that could be achieved against different affordable housing targets. The report concludes that lower affordable housing targets might be appropriate in some areas where there is a particularly high requirement for developer contributions towards infrastructure and other forms of mitigation.

QUESTION 8

To help maximise the amount of affordable housing delivered over the plan period, which approach should the Council look to adopt?

Are there other options that should be considered?

Approach A – 35% Borough Affordable Housing Target

Set a borough wide affordable housing target of 35% that is reflective of the level of affordable housing that could be achieved on greenfield sites in the borough and continue to assess site viability on a case by case basis.

Approach B – 15% Borough Affordable Housing Target

Set a borough wide affordable housing target of 15% that is more reflective of the minimum affordable housing ask that could be achieved on the majority of sites in the borough and seek to achieve higher developer contributions towards key infrastructure improvements.

Approach C – Split Affordable Housing Target

Set a split level affordable housing target that sets a lower target of 15% for previously developed land to incentivise development in these areas and higher target of 35% on greenfield sites.

Meeting the needs of specific groups

When planning for how the Borough may change, it is important to consider the needs of specific groups and plan for a mix of homes and a range of sizes and types to meet both current and future housing needs.

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National policy encourages Local Plans to plan positively for a mix of housing based on an assessment of the type of people that live in the Borough both now and in the future. This includes providing a mix of homes to meet the needs of different groups such as families with children, older people, those with disabilities or particular support needs and those wishing to build their own homes.

As Thurrock is a part of the South Essex Housing Market Area, these needs have been considered on a sub-regional basis through the 2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This assessment notes that the housing needs of older people in particular need to be carefully planned for.



Housing Mix and Size

National policy highlights the importance of considering the size and type of housing required once an overall housing figure has been identified. The 2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment assesses the need for particular types of dwellings by looking at an area's existing housing stock and comparing that with anticipated housing needs based on population projections and an area's Housing Needs Survey. Figure 9 sets out the types of housing required in Thurrock over the plan period.

Figure 9 – Suggested Housing Mix

Overall Housing Need		1,381 (per annum)	31,763 (total)
Detached			
3 bed or less	7%	97	2,231
4 bed	4%	55	1,265
5 bed or more	1%	14	322
Semi-detached			
2 bed or less	9%	124	2,852
3 bed	23%	318	7,314
4 bed or more	4%	55	1,265
Terraced			
2 bed or less	9%	124	2,852
3 bed or more	22%	304	6,992
Flat			
1 bed	11%	152	3,496
2 bed or more	10%	138	3,174

QUESTION 9

In planning for a suitable mix of housing which approach/es should the Council look to adopt?

Approach A – No Specific Housing Mix Target

Requires all applicants for residential development schemes to demonstrate that they have considered the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment when planning their development.

Approach B – Borough Wide Housing Mix Target

Set a borough wide housing mix target that would apply to all new residential developments.

Approach C – Site Specific Housing Mix Targets

Incorporate site specific housing mix targets in site allocation policies.

In October 2015, the government introduced a new housing standard called the Nationally Described Space Standard. This new standard is designed to improve the quality of new-build housing by ensuring they are built to an adequate size. This standard can only be applied locally if it is adopted through the Local

Plan and the need for such a policy is appropriately evidenced. The Council is currently undertaking a review of recent planning applications to look at average dwelling sizes and how these compare with the Nationally Described Space Standard.

QUESTION 10

Should the Council seek to adopt the Nationally Described Space Standard in the emerging Local Plan?

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Consider some common minimum dimensions for a comfortable home



Housing for older people and people with specialist needs

National policy requires local authorities to meet the specific accommodation needs of older people and people with specialist housing needs. Offering attractive alternative housing choices for older people and vulnerable groups will assist in freeing-up family sized homes that are currently under-occupied.

There is, therefore, a need to provide suitable accommodation for various groups of people, including the elderly, people with disabilities and vulnerable people. This covers a range of housing types, from accessible and adaptable general needs housing to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

The Government's reform of Health and Adult Social Care is underpinned by a principle of sustaining people at home as long as possible. Therefore, accommodation for older people is moving towards more flexible forms of living and support, which seek to maintain people's independence; for example, a self-contained home within a site offering extra facilities. People who are unable to live independently require specialist residential or nursing care accommodation. This type of accommodation usually falls within the C2 Use Class.

Like many areas around the country, Thurrock has an ageing population and an increase in all types of accommodation options for older people and vulnerable groups will be needed over the plan period to meet their housing needs.

QUESTION 11

To help better plan for the needs of older people and those with specialist needs which approach/es should the Council look to adopt?

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Approach A: All Dwellings Built to M4 (2) Requirement

Ensure that all new homes meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.

Approach B: Built to M4 (3) Requirement on Large Residential Developments

Ensure that at least 10% of all new homes on large scale residential developments meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (3) 'wheelchair adaptable dwellings'.

Approach C: Allocate Specific Older Person Housing Sites

Allocate specific sites for older persons housing including dementia friendly developments.

Approach D: Allocate Specific Residential Care Sites

Allocate specific sites for residential care facilities.

Custom build housing

Self-build housing, also known as Custom Build, typically involves individuals and/or associations commissioning the construction of a new house from a builder, contractor, package company or physically building a house for themselves. Sometimes developers offer the option of a serviced plot where individuals can design and build their own home as part of a larger scheme.

The Council keeps a register of individuals and community groups who would like land for self-build and custom house building. The register is used as part of our evidence of demand for this type of housing, which we use for local planning. There are currently 33 individuals on this register. Whilst it is appreciated that this represents a relatively small proportion of the Borough's housing need, the need to allocate appropriate sites is still something that should be considered as part of the Local Plan process.

QUESTION 12

Should the Council seek to allocate specific sites for custom build housing?

Ensuring that the needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are met.

Local Planning authorities must assess the need for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation in their areas and, if a need is identified, look for sites to provide for that need.

The Council is still in the process of finalising the assessment of need for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople accommodation to conform with national policy. However, once the full need is identified, the Council will consider how, and in what locations, it can seek to meet the identified need through the plan-making process. Therefore, whilst the Call for Sites 2018 has now closed, the Council would welcome any submissions of sites that may be suitable for use by Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople as permanent or transit sites through the consultation process.

National policy sets out specific criteria guiding the location and design of Gypsy and Traveller sites, recognising their particular characteristics. These criteria recognise that sites may be located in rural areas, but that new traveller site development in the open countryside that is away from existing settlements should be very strictly limited.

Location of Housing Growth – Spatial Options

Housing Land Supply

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to prepare Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability, and the likely economic viability of developing land. It forms a key component of the Local Plan evidence base and assists plan-makers in choosing sites to go forward into the Local Plan to meet objectively assessed needs. It also allows local planning authorities to understand what the land supply is, and therefore, whether there are sufficient sites available to meet future housing needs.

In September 2016, the Council commissioned the preparation of an up-to-date Housing Land Availability Assessment that:

- Identifies sites/broad locations;
- Assesses the development potential of sites;
- Assesses the suitability, availability and achievability of sites.

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) requires that a wide range of sites and broad locations should be identified, and that sites should include information on constraints to show their potential for development.

The guidance also requires local planning authorities to issue a call for potential sites. This was undertaken by the Council in 2015, 2016 and 2018, and involved a wide range of groups, organisations, landowners, agents and developers. A total of 438 sites were identified for assessment, which included analysis of physical and policy constraints, together with a separate assessment of their development potential and economic viability.

The NPPF refers to sites being deliverable, developable or not currently developable. Sites that are deliverable are those that can come forward in the first 5 years of the plan period, and sites that are developable can come forward in years 6-10 and, where possible, years 11-15. Year 1 is the monitoring year April 2016 to March 2017. Therefore, sites under construction that had completions before this year were not included in the trajectory.

Figure 10 Indicative Trajectory (Base date 1st April 2017)

Typology (Dwellings)	Years 1-5	Years 6-10	Years 11-15	Total
Planning Permission: under construction	1,314	-	-	1,314
Planning permission: unimplemented	1,210	521	-	1,731
Sites without planning permission	-	2,072	1,250	3,322
Windfalls	111	-	-	111
Total	2,635	2,593	1,250	6,478

Source: Draft Interim Housing Land Availability Assessment

The first five years of the trajectory comprises planning application sites that are under construction and unimplemented planning permissions. The windfall allowance is included in years 1-5 as well, which is 111 dwellings (37 dwellings x3 years, to avoid double counting with sites that would likely have planning permission in the first two years of the trajectory).

In years 6-10, the majority of the development coming forward is from the Purfleet Centre, which is proposed for 2,850 dwellings and split between years 6-10 and 11-15. Also, there are some sites with planning permission that are unimplemented which, for example, are expecting revised applications. In years 11-15, aside from the final phases of the Purfleet Centre, there are no other developable sites available to contribute to the indicative trajectory.

A copy of the Draft Interim Housing Land Availability Assessment Report will be available to view at the Council's Local Plan website. (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan)

Meeting Objectively Assessed Needs

Thurrock's OAN (taken from the Addendum to the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment, 2017), is 1,381 dwellings per annum. Over the plan period (2014-2037) this translates into a need for 31,763 homes. The capacity of the deliverable and developable land identified in the Draft Interim Housing Land Availability Assessment of 6,478 dwellings over 15 years is insufficient, and falls significantly short of meeting the Borough's OAN. The guidance states that where there are insufficient sites, the assessment should be revisited to review the tests and constraints blocking sites; if this does not result in enough sites, the guidance states that it may be necessary to consider how housing needs can otherwise be met.

In order for the Local Plan to identify sufficient land to meet Thurrock's OAN, the plan-making process will need to consider whether it is possible to provide additional development capacity through the redevelopment of land in the ownership of the Council and through a change in planning policy which currently protects allocated employment sites and Green Belt land from housing development.

Land in Council ownership

It is important to note that the HLAA is intended to be a 'living document' and will be updated on an annual basis. The current version of the HLAA, therefore, only provides a snap shot of what land is currently available for housing development at the date of survey. The Council is currently undertaking a review of land in its ownership to identify additional sites for redevelopment for housing. It is anticipated that the outcome of the review will feed into the next version of the HLAA due to be published in autumn 2018. At this stage it is not possible to forecast with any accuracy what additional capacity will be derived from this source. However, given the nature of the Council's land portfolio and the suitability of these sites for housing, it is unlikely that the pool of available sites will lead to a significant increase in the Borough's overall housing land supply position.

Employment Sites

The Core Strategy includes several designations that protect employment land, with the main employment designation being Primary and Secondary Industrial and Commercial Areas, which protects sites for B1, B2, B8 and sui generis users. Both the Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Employment Land Availability Assessment studies generally concluded that the designated and non-designated employment sites in the Borough were occupied and in employment use and should therefore continue to be protected. A small number of employment sites in residential areas were also identified as having the potential for housing development, subject to suitable and viable alternative sites being found to accommodate the relocation of any affected businesses. However, given the scale and nature of these sites, their reallocation for residential use will only marginally increase the supply of housing land in the Borough and then only in the later stages of the plan period. This reflects the practical difficulties in assembling and remediating these sites for development.

Green Belt

Two thirds of Thurrock is designated as Green Belt. Development in the Green Belt is subject to Core Strategy Policy PMD6 (Development in the Green Belt) and national policy in the NPPF, which protects the Green Belt and recommends that boundaries should only be changed in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. Around half of the sites considered by the HLAA were in the Green Belt and, therefore, were considered to be constrained by planning policy and not available for development at this stage of the plan-making process. This means that if Thurrock is to meet its OAN in full, the Local Plan will need to consider the release of Green Belt land in order to meet the scale of development required.

Thurrock Green Belt Assessment

With the exception of the principal urban area of Thurrock, and the towns and villages, all of the land within the Borough is designated as Green Belt. Green Belt is a strategic planning policy designation concerned with the relationships between built and unbuilt areas and between settlements. Figure 11 identifies the land that is within the Green Belt within Thurrock.



Figure 11: Map of Green Belt

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states, in paragraph 79, that ‘the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence.’ The NPPF sets out 5 purposes of the Green Belt:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (first purpose);
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another (second purpose);
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment (third purpose);

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To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

National policy requires that once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and bio-diversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land.

Paragraph 82 of the NPPF states that if local planning authorities are proposing a new Green Belt, they should:

- Demonstrate why normal planning and development management policies would not be adequate;
- Set out whether any major change in circumstances have made the adoption of this exceptional measure necessary;
- Show what the consequences of the proposal would be for sustainable development;
- Show how the Green Belt would meet other objectives of the Framework.

Policy requires that, once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. At that time, authorities should consider the Green Belt boundaries having regard to their intended permanence in the long term, so that they should be capable of enduring beyond the plan period.

When drawing up or reviewing Green Belt boundaries local planning authorities should take account of the need to promote sustainable patterns of development. They should consider the consequences for sustainable development of channeling development towards urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary, towards towns and villages inset within the Green Belt or towards locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary.

The Council considers that given the acute shortage of land currently identified as being available to meet Thurrock’s full objectively assessed housing need over the plan period, that the exceptional circumstances required by the NPPF to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries can be clearly demonstrated.

The need for the Borough to consider amending the boundaries of the Green Belt in Thurrock is not new. In her Report on the adopted Core Strategy (December 2011) the Planning Inspector examining the plan identified the need for the Council to review the Borough’s Green Belt boundaries in order to identify sufficient land to meet the then Core Strategy housing target of 23,500.

Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in December 2011, not only has Thurrock’s future housing needs requirement increased to 31,763 homes over the Plan period, there has also been a corresponding reduction in the availability of land in the urban area as potential housing sites have been built out for housing or other uses, thereby worsening the housing land supply problem and increasing the need for the Council to consider amending the Borough’s Green Belt boundaries to accommodate future development needs.

In order to inform this process the Council has commissioned the preparation of a Green Belt Assessment to assess the whole area of Green Belt within the Borough. This study has been carried out in a number of stages:

- Identification of the study area;
- Identification of key constraints (i.e. those ‘high level’ constraints that are likely to prevent or severely limit the potential for development to occur);
- Identification of land parcels for assessment;
- Assessment of the parcels against the purposes for including land in the Green Belt; and
- Identification of the relative potential importance of the contribution of parcels to the Green Belt in the context of their suitability to accommodate a strategic level of development.

It should be noted that the Green Belt Assessment is a technical document and does not specifically identify any sites or broad areas of Green Belt for development as any decision on the need to amend the boundary of the Green Belt in Thurrock must be taken as part of the wider plan-making and evidence development process.

A copy of the Stage 1 Green Belt Assessment Report will be available to view at the Council’s website.

Housing growth options

As the Borough grows there will be a need to plan for new homes, the economy and associated infrastructure. What is clear is that there are insufficient brownfield sites in the urban area to accommodate the likely level of growth required so new locations for development will need to be found. There are options as to how this growth can be accommodated across the settlements in the Borough although all, either individually or collectively, must accommodate the overall scale of development required to match future needs and ensure that housing delivery can be sustained over the plan period.

Potential development opportunities and constraints

Options for the distribution of housing development within the Borough have been identified based on the evidence produced to support the preparation of the Local Plan. A number of strategic growth options are put forward for consideration which reflect the opportunities to:

- Deliver sustainable development;
- Re-use previously developed land;
- Increase levels of housing delivery;

- Offer housing choice and development opportunity;
- Maximise employment opportunity and accessibility;
- Make use of existing settlement size and access to services and community infrastructure;
- Maintain settlement identity and local distinctiveness; and
- Maintain the strategic integrity of the Green Belt.

In identifying potential locations for new development, it is important to recognise that much of the Borough is unable to accommodate development due to the presence of numerous planning policy, physical and environmental constraints.

In or adjoining much of the Thurruck urban area, development capacity is constrained by policies which preserve the area's historic assets and open green spaces, and also legislation designed to prevent development in unsafe locations, whether from proximity to hazards like stored explosive materials, over or underground utility cables or fuel pipelines, or land at risk of flooding. Figure 12 shows the key constraints affecting the development capacity of land within the Thurrock urban area.

Outside of the urban area the remainder of the Borough is covered by Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the Green Belt extensive areas of land on the urban fringe and beyond are constrained from development for a wide range of reasons, including the following:

- Flood Risk – all areas at risk of coastal or fluvial flooding as identified by the Environment Agency;
- Environmental Policy Designations – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ancient Woodland, RAMSAR sites, as defined by Natural England and Local Wildlife Sites that are all important for biodiversity;
- Community Assets – Country Parks and other local assets adjoining urban areas;
- Heritage Designations – Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas as defined by Historic England;
- Topography – Ridge and Slope features including land over 100m above sea level/local landmarks;
- Minerals and Waste and landfill areas –safeguarded sites and former/current landfill sites; and
- Energy Transmission Infrastructure – Overhead Powerlines /Underground Pipelines.

Figure 13 shows the key constraints affecting the development capacity of land within the Metropolitan Green Belt.

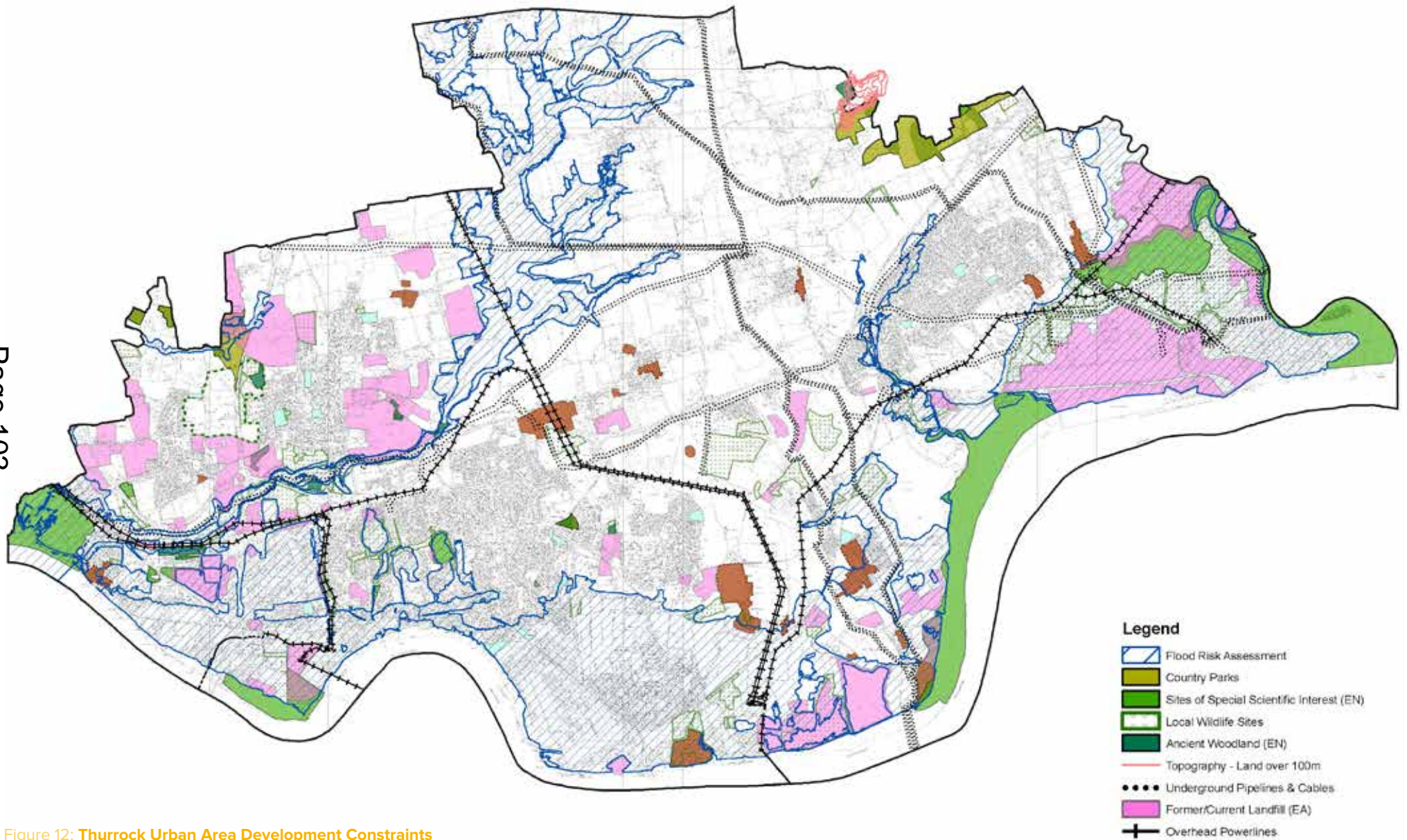


Figure 12: Thurrock Urban Area Development Constraints

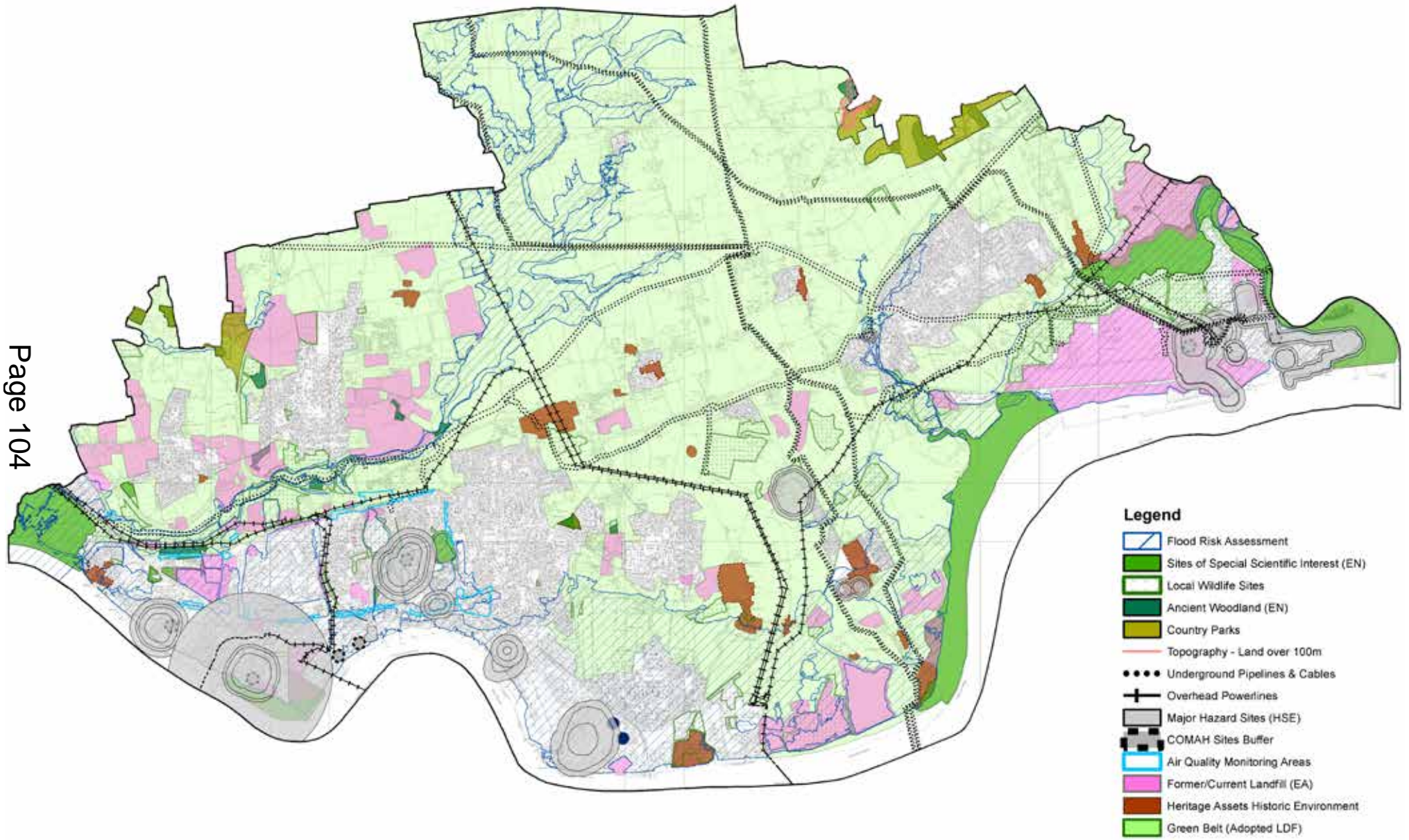


Figure 13: Green Belt Development Constraints

Lower Thames Crossing

The proposed Lower Thames Crossing will represent a significant constraint on development. Figure 14 shows the current proposal for the alignment of the route. Based on the current alignment and scheme configuration, the Lower Thames Crossing could have an adverse impact on the potential to bring forward sites for housing development along the length of its route for a range of reasons including the impact of noise, air-quality, severance, and flood risk considerations. The areas most affected include: land west of East Tilbury; land north of Chadwell St Mary; land in and around the vicinity of the proposed junction with the A13; and land north and east of South Ockendon.

The full extent of these impacts on the availability of land for development will need to be assessed in more detail through the plan-making process and the ongoing detailed design work and environmental impact assessment work associated with the Lower Thames Crossing. The outcome of this work will help inform decisions on whether the identification of broad locations for growth or specific sites for development can be taken forward as development plan allocations.



Figure 14: Lower Thames Crossing – Development Constraints

Spatial Options

The spatial options presented in this document represent the first stage of consultation, working towards formal identification of broad strategic development locations within the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan and as site specific allocations within the Draft Local Plan consultation stage.

The spatial options have been generated based on the evidence produced to support the production of the Local Plan. A key part of this evidence is the Housing Land Availability Assessment and the Call for Sites exercise, whereby sites are promoted for development by landowners, developers, and other interested parties. It is important to stress that whilst the spatial options presented in this document are primarily based on a market response to where new development should be located, the sites promoted for development have simply been taken at 'face-value' and have not yet been fully assessed in terms of their suitability. The inclusion of a site within a 'development option' is in no way an endorsement by the Council of the suitability of a particular site for development.

It should be noted that the spatial options are not mutually exclusive, as the selection of more than one of the proposed options will need to be considered in order to meet the entirety of the Borough's future development requirements. Although seven possible options are presented within this consultation document, the reality is that two or more of the options working in combination will be required to meet Thurrock's future housing needs and form part of the final preferred strategy.

It should also be noted that some individual development opportunities may also fall under more than one of the broad spatial options. Figure 15 shows the sites that are in the process of being assessed by the Council to determine their development potential and which have informed the spatial options presented for comment in this document. Figure 16 shows the various spatial options which are discussed in turn in the following sections.

The Council recognises that the choices to be made are not easy and will require careful consideration. Each of the options for future housing growth has different implications for individual settlements and consequential impacts on local infrastructure, market choice and, importantly, delivery.

At this stage the Council cannot specify what the precise implications may be arising out of each option, but it is keen to hear views from the local community and interested stakeholders on what broad options ought to be considered along with their potential impacts, appropriateness and deliverability.

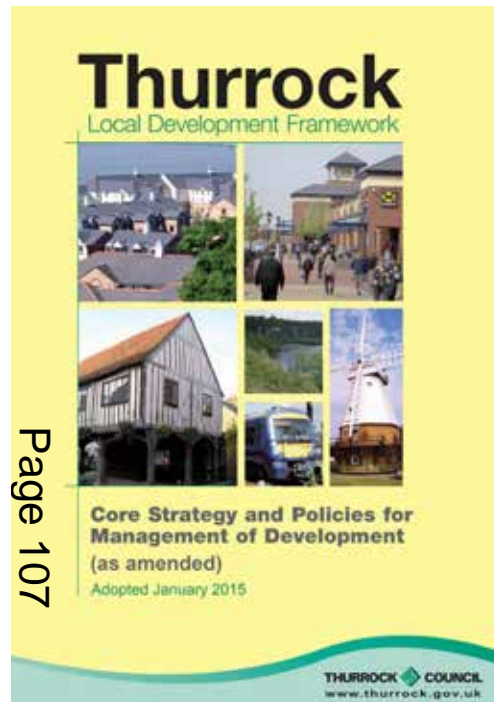
The Council will consider all representations received and undertake a detailed assessment of all the options, including new sites or broad locations submitted through the 2018 Call for Sites, through the process of sustainability appraisal and technical assessment. The outcome of this work will then be used to inform the development of a 'preferred approach' for public consultation at the Draft Plan stage.

The broad options for consultation are set out below and consist of a description of each of the options and a summary of both the opportunities and challenges associated with the development and delivery of each spatial option under consideration. This is provided to assist in assessing the appropriateness of each of the options. As part of this consultation, views are invited on whether there are any other opportunities or challenges that ought to be considered when assessing each option.

As mentioned previously, the sites being presented in this document are sites which have been promoted by landowners, developers and other stakeholders as being good locations for future development. As the authority works towards preparing a draft plan, it will be necessary for a more detailed assessment of these sites to take place. This assessment will include looking at issues relating to physical constraints, site accessibility to key services and market interest. The findings of this assessment will then need to be balanced alongside feedback from this consultation and other key technical documents as the Council works towards defining its preferred development option.

It is also worth noting that as the Local Plan process progresses more sites may be submitted to the Council for consideration through future call for sites and other means, including the inclusion of Council owned assets.

Baseline Situation – Current Core Strategy Approach



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In line with national planning policy, the spatial strategy underpinning the adopted Core Strategy seeks to focus new development within the existing Thurrock Urban area in order to maximise the use of brownfield land and promote a sustainable pattern of development, which makes an efficient use of historic capital investment in retail, employment, transport, and community infrastructure. However, continuing with this approach without looking for additional growth options to accommodate Thurrock's future development needs could lead to the following adverse impacts for the Borough and its residents:

- Based on the evidence in the HLAA, focusing development in the Thurrock urban area will only deliver approximately 6,478 new homes against an OAN of 31,763 homes, meaning that the Borough will fail to meet its identified housing need;
- Thurrock's current rolling 5 year land supply is less than 1.2 years placing the Council at risk of Government intervention or sanction under the proposed Housing Delivery Test;

- Under the presumption in favour of "sustainable development", planning permissions for development could be granted on appeal, leading to uncontrolled and sporadic development in the Green Belt against the wishes of the local community. This eventuality could also severely undermine the ability of the Council to plan for and deliver transformational change;
- The viability of many sites in the urban area for housing is constrained by their small size, high build costs and the economic values that can be achieved for other uses including retail and logistics related employment;
- The limited number of new homes that could be delivered under the current approach would fundamentally undermine economic growth in Thurrock, and potentially lead to increased levels of in-commuting and congestion on local roads, or the loss of future investment due to a lack of high quality and affordable housing for the future workforce;
- The limited viability of sites in the urban area means that developer contributions for affordable housing and the provision of new community facilities will be difficult to achieve and deliver;
- Additional housing development in the urban area could increase the strain on existing community facilities (schools and health) where there is already limited physical scope and capacity to meet existing needs; and
- Further development would increase transport movements within an already highly congested urban area leading to poorer air quality and adverse impacts on economic performance as journey time reliability declines.

For the reasons set out above, continuing with the current spatial strategy alone is not considered a realistic or viable option. To do so would lead to the production of a Local Plan which would ultimately be found unsound by an Inspector at Examination. Moreover, it would also constrain the future growth of the Borough and miss the significant opportunities to make Thurrock one of the most vibrant, exciting and economically successful places in the UK in which to live, work, and invest.

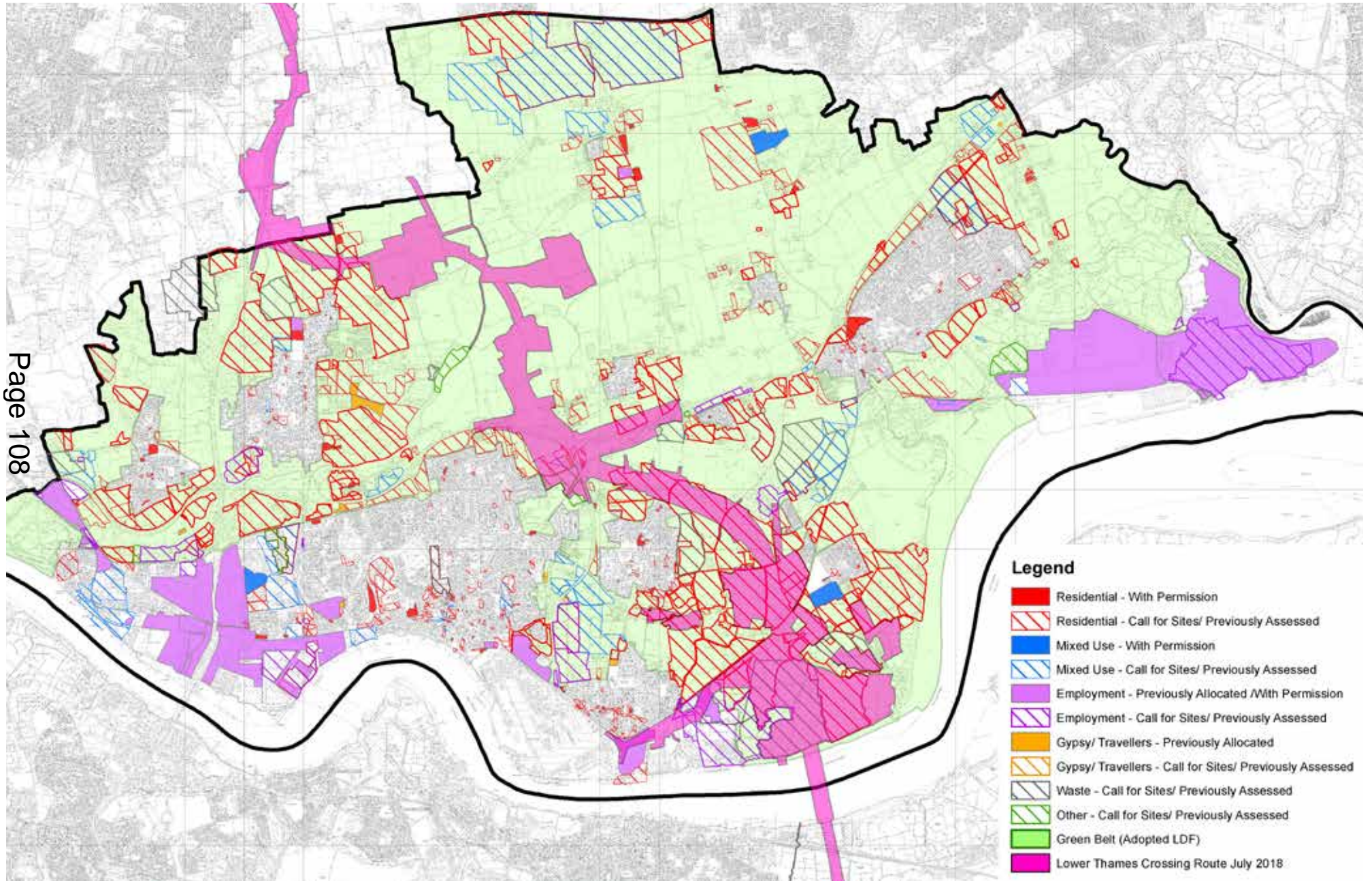


Figure 15: Map of sites to be assessed as part of the plan making process - Sites with developer interest

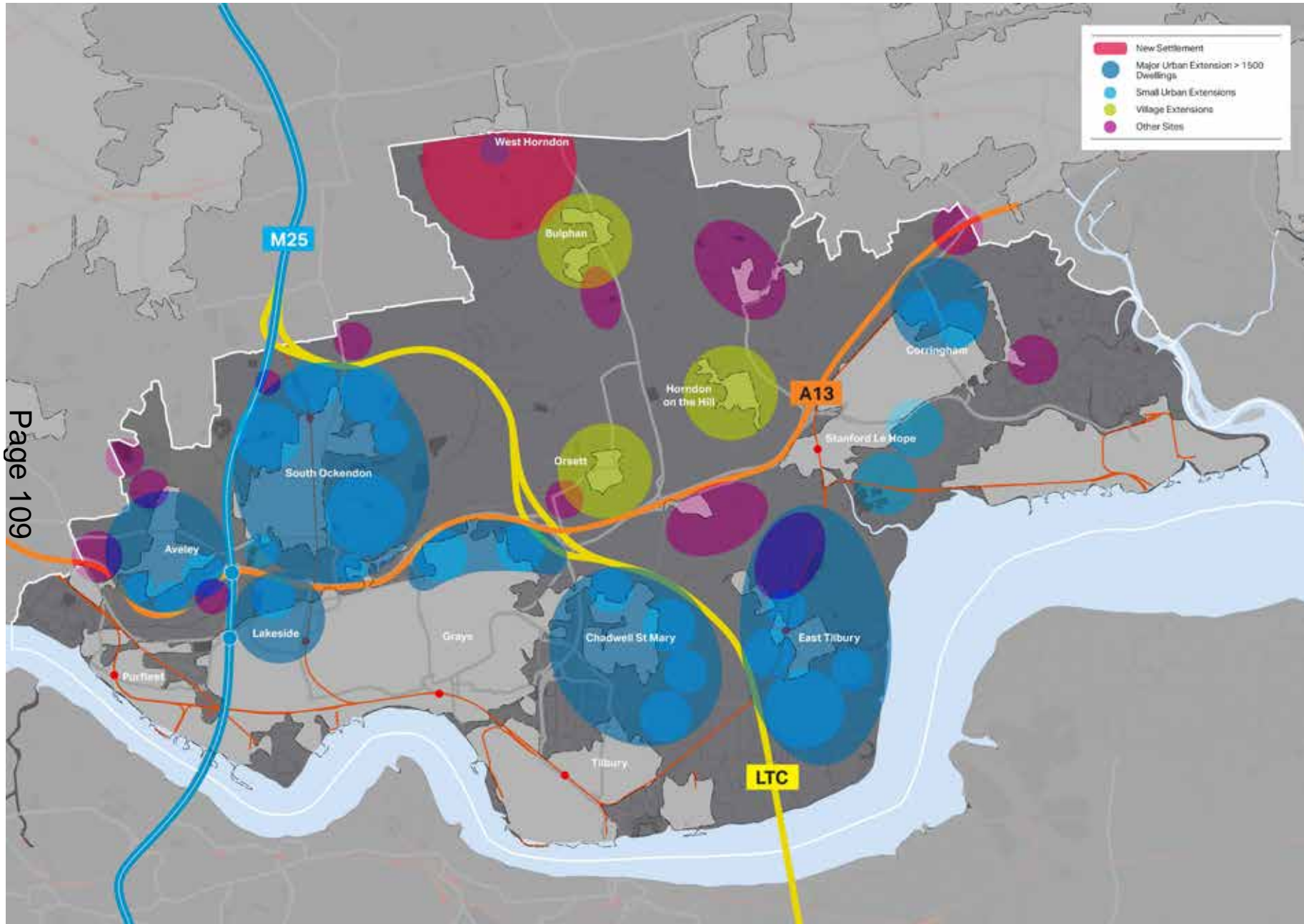


Figure 16: Map of sites to be assessed as part of the plan making process - Sites with developer interest

Option 1: Urban Intensification

Option 1 seeks to boost the supply of housing land within the built up area through the higher density development of urban sites. This could be achieved by

- The regeneration and re-configuration of existing housing estates;
- Reuse or redevelopment of vacant retail, office, commercial floorspace and car parks in town centres;
- Re-allocation of employment land, including the potential for the 'lift and shift' of non-conforming uses in residential areas; and
- The redevelopment of Urban Green Space.

Further work is required to identify the scale of new housing development which could be delivered through this Option and this will be taken forward as part of the ongoing HLAA process. However, given the characteristics of the Borough and the number and nature of the sites involved (typically small scale and located in or around town centres or areas in active employment use) it is not anticipated that this Option will contribute significantly to increasing the supply of housing land in Thurrock or in a manner that would improve people's quality of life.

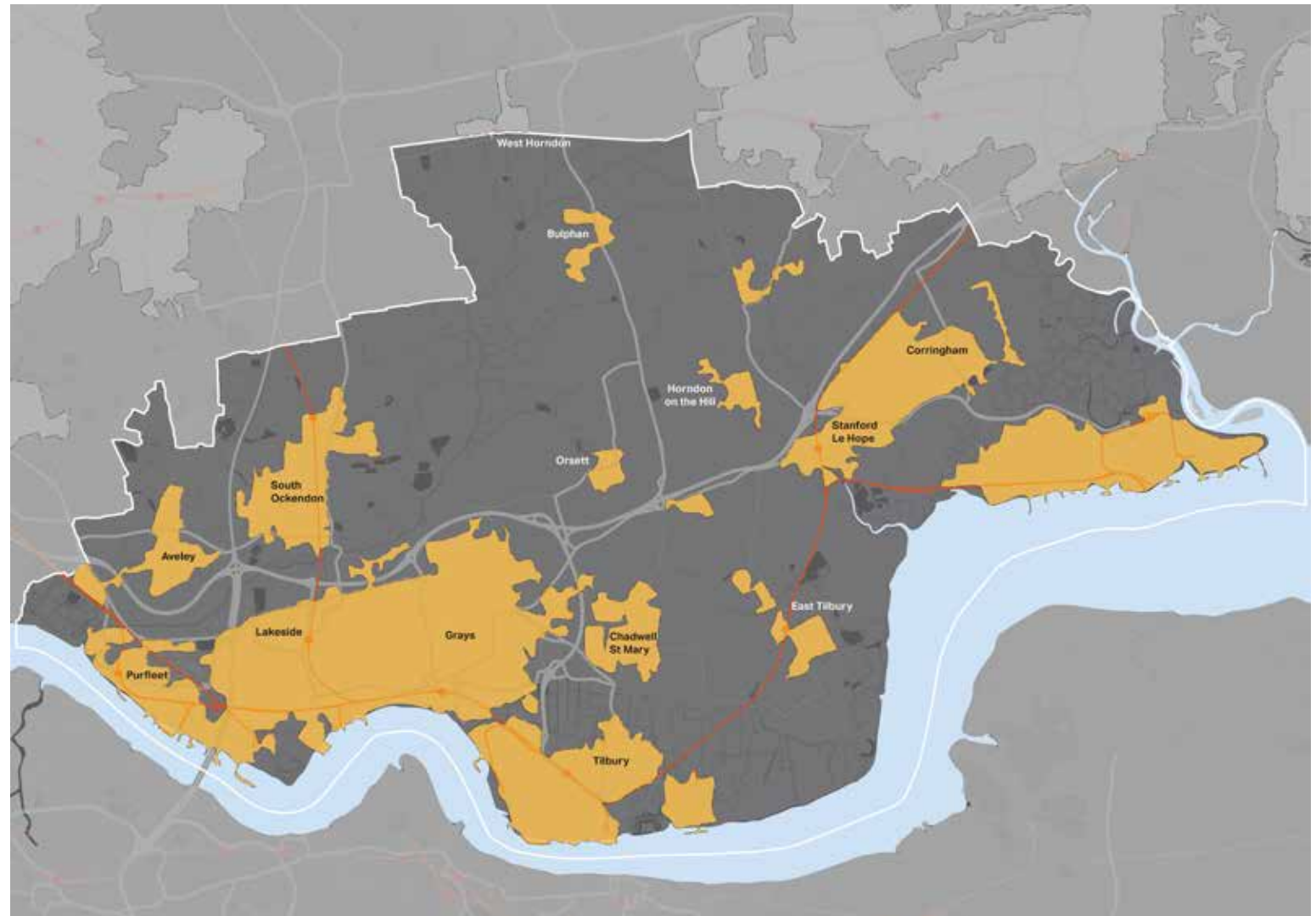


Figure 17: Map of sites existing urban areas

Opportunities

- Promotes a sustainable pattern of development which makes efficient use of historic capital investment in retail, employment, transport, and community infrastructure.
- Reduces the need for future Green Belt development.
- Enhances the viability and vitality of existing urban centres as a focus for shopping, leisure and community/ cultural activity.
- Supports regeneration and re-use of existing land and property in the urban area.
- Potential to improve the residential amenity of areas currently being affected by employment uses and associated HGV movements, through the relocation of 'bad neighbour' uses to alternative sites/premises.

Challenges

- Urban intensification would only marginally increase the supply of housing land due to the impacts of time, cost, viability and market considerations.
- Potential to increase levels of housing delivery in existing town centres constrained by a lack of currently available sites and the time and costs associated with the land assembly process to bring together viable development opportunities.

- Potential to increase levels of housing delivery at Lakeside constrained by the retailers preferred operational models (access/servicing arrangements and surface level car parking), market considerations and the high land values associated with retail development.
- Re-allocation of strategically important employment land for housing would have an adverse impact on economic growth and job creation.
- The scope for 'lifting and shifting' of existing employment uses will only have a limited impact on increasing the supply of housing land in the urban area due to the scale and nature of these sites and the complex and practical difficulties of finding/ providing alternative sites and premises and the viability of securing their remediation and redevelopment for housing.
- Higher density development within the urban area may not be viable given high build costs associated with flatted development.
- Higher density development could also have an adverse impact on the character and quality of the built environment and residential amenity.
- The potential loss of urban green space would further worsen existing standards of open space provision in the urban area with a consequential adverse impact on community health and well-being.

QUESTION 13

Urban Intensification

- Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration or, if not, why not?
- Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- What additional opportunities or interventions exist to increase the capacity of the urban area to accommodate a greater proportion of Thurrock's future housing needs?

Option 2: Duty-To-Cooperate

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and clearly reflected in individual Local Plans. Through joint working, local planning authorities should collaborate and work together to meet development requirements which cannot wholly be met within their own areas.

The NPPF requires that local authorities ensure that their local plan meets the full, objectively assessed needs for market and affordable housing in the housing market area, as far as it is consistent with the policies set out in the Framework; for example, policy constraints such as environmental designations or absolute constraints such as floodplains and land fill sites.

Thurrock has been working with the other South Essex authorities (Basildon, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend-on-Sea) to identify the level of need for new housing in the area through the preparation of the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The only way the Council will be able to plan for a lower figure than its objectively assessed need of 1,381 homes a year is if a neighbouring authority or authorities agree, through the Duty to Cooperate process and preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan, to accommodate all or part of the unmet housing need which currently stands at over 25,000 new homes.

Opportunities

- Potential mechanism to reduce the need for Green Belt development in Thurrock over the plan period to 2037/38.

Challenges

- Current indications are that neighbouring local authorities will be unable to accommodate any part of Thurrock's future housing needs due to planning policy and physical capacity considerations and constraints. Further technical work has been commissioned by the South Essex authorities to identify, on a consistent basis, the capacity of the sub-region to accommodate future housing and employment growth including broad locations for strategic development to boost the supply of land for development.
- A failure to meet all, or a significant part, of Thurrock's future housing needs within the Borough would adversely impact upon the quality of life of Borough residents, undermine the local economy, and lead to an increase in commuting, thereby further adding to congestion on the local road network.

QUESTION 14

Duty to Cooperate

- a) Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration or, if not, why not?
- b) Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- c) What additional opportunities or interventions exist under the Duty to Cooperate process and the preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan to accommodate a proportion of Thurrock's future housing needs within one, or more, adjoining local authority areas?

Green Belt Development Type 1: New Settlement (up to 10,000 homes)

The opportunity for developing one or more new settlements in Thurrock is severely constrained by the nature and character of the Borough and the existing pattern of spatial development and transport connectivity. Based on landowner/developer submissions to the Call for Sites process, the only potential location for bringing forward a new settlement of a significant scale lies in the expansion of West Horndon on land around the C2C Fenchurch Street - Shoeburyness railway line.

The development of a new settlement at West Horndon would require significant funding for new education, health and community infrastructure given the limited scale and nature of existing provision within the existing settlement.

The proposed development of a new Garden Village settlement to the east of West Horndon at Dunton Village in Brentwood also raises a number of issues in relation to the cumulative Green Belt and development impacts of both proposals on the integrity of the Metropolitan Green Belt (Urban Sprawl), and the ability of the A127 corridor to support the scale of development proposed without significant capacity improvements.

Master Planning and Transport/Infrastructure Delivery Planning will be required to inform the further consideration of this option in order to establish the capacity of the area as a broad location to accommodate substantial housing growth and to provide the wide mix of supporting uses and infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve the sustainable development of a new strategic settlement in this location.





Figure 18: **New Settlement (up to 10,000 homes) - Sites with developer interest**

Opportunities

- Potential to deliver a new free standing settlement/Garden Village of a significant scale, focused upon West Horndon, on land around the C2C Fenchurch Street to Shoeburyness railway line.
- Limited number of land owners involved would increase the deliverability of the project.
- Potential opportunities available to bid for Government funding to support the delivery of strategic infrastructure.
- Critical mass of development that will secure the infrastructure needed to support the development.

Challenges

- Given the visual, perceptual and functional separation of this broad location with the existing Thurrock urban area, it is questionable whether development at West Horndon would positively contribute towards meeting Thurrock's future housing needs with development in this location more appropriately located to meet the needs of Brentwood or Basildon.
- Development at West Horndon is not well placed to provide a range of market or affordable housing to meet the needs of the residents of Thurrock or support the future development of Thurrock's key Economic Hubs given the physical separation and poor north-south connectivity of the area with the Ports, Thames Enterprise Park and Lakeside. Development in this location could lead to increased north-south commuting and an increase in travel costs for people on low incomes.
- The development of a new settlement of a significant scale at West Horndon would require considerable public and private sector investment in order to provide supporting community infrastructure. In view of acknowledged constraints on the availability of public funding, there is no guarantee that this would not come forward at the expense of competing infrastructure needs and proposals adjoining the Thurrock urban area at Aveley, Purfleet, South Ockendon, North Grays, Chadwell St Mary, East Tilbury and Corringham.
- Significant development at West Horndon would further exacerbate recognised capacity issues on the A127 corridor and it is uncertain as to whether, and when, Government funding will become available to address these issues.
- Development of scale south of the railway line at West Horndon could have significant environmental implications in terms of impact upon the Metropolitan Green Belt landscape character, and flood risk considerations.
- Development in this location and potentially at the adjoining Dunton Village site could have an adverse impact on the ability of Thurrock Council to bring forward large scale development adjacent to the Thurrock urban area which would otherwise support the regeneration of existing local communities and provide new housing in a more accessible location.
- Development in this location would reduce the spin-off economic benefits for businesses located within the Thurrock urban area, with residents more likely to shop in Basildon or Stratford than Grays or Lakeside.

QUESTION 15

New Settlement

- Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration or, if not, why not?
- Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- Are there any other opportunities or broad locations within, or adjoining, Thurrock that you consider suitable for the development of a new settlement?

Green Belt Development Type 2: Major Urban Extensions (each over 1,500 homes)

Based on landowner/developer submissions to the Call for Sites process, seven key locations in the Borough have been proposed with the potential to accommodate at least 1,500 homes as sustainable urban extensions. Taken together the areas identified have the potential for approximately 25,000 homes with associated education, health, employment, retail and other supporting community uses.

In identifying these locations as possible areas for strategic housing growth the Council has had regard to the following considerations:

- Their location next to railway stations along high frequency transport corridors and/or accessibility by public transport providing direct access to key employment locations and retail and leisure destinations.
- Their co-location with areas in need of regeneration and investment in new and improved community infrastructure and local services to meet both existing and future need.
- Their location close to existing and expanding areas of employment growth including Lakeside, the Ports and Thames Enterprise Park.



The areas being considered include:

South Ockendon

South Ockendon has the potential to accommodate a strategic scale development through the comprehensive regeneration of the urban area alongside a large scale urban extension comprising an interlinked network of garden villages to the north and east of the existing urban area. Taken together the area has potential for 10,000 -12,000 new homes.

Lakeside

An urban extension on land at Arena Essex to the north of Lakeside has the potential to accommodate up to 2,500 homes and additional community, educational and/or health facilities to support residential development across the wider area including the potential development of up to 750-1,000 on land adjacent to the intu Lakeside Shopping Centre and retail parks.

Aveley

An urban extension to the south of Aveley has the potential to accommodate over 2,100 homes, the regeneration of Aveley centre, new education and community facilities, improvements to the A13 corridor and connections into an extension of the South Ockendon Country Park.

Chadwell St Mary

An urban extension at Chadwell St Mary has the potential to accommodate between 3,000-5,000 homes, the regeneration of Chadwell St Mary centre, new education and community facilities, upgraded transport links and generous strategic landscaping and open spaces.

East Tilbury

An urban extension at East Tilbury has the potential to accommodate between 3,000 – 5,000 homes, with a higher density core area focused on a new transport interchange and mixed use centre, with education facilities and generous strategic landscaping and open spaces.

Corringham

An urban extension at Corringham has the potential to accommodate over 1,500 homes, shopping, education and community facilities, a new railway station/transport hub (Corringham Parkway) together with significant areas of strategic open space with sports and recreation facilities.

North Grays

An urban extension to the north of Grays has the potential to accommodate approximately 1,500 homes with associated amenities, local centre enhancements and a linear park offering leisure and recreational opportunities for existing and future residents.

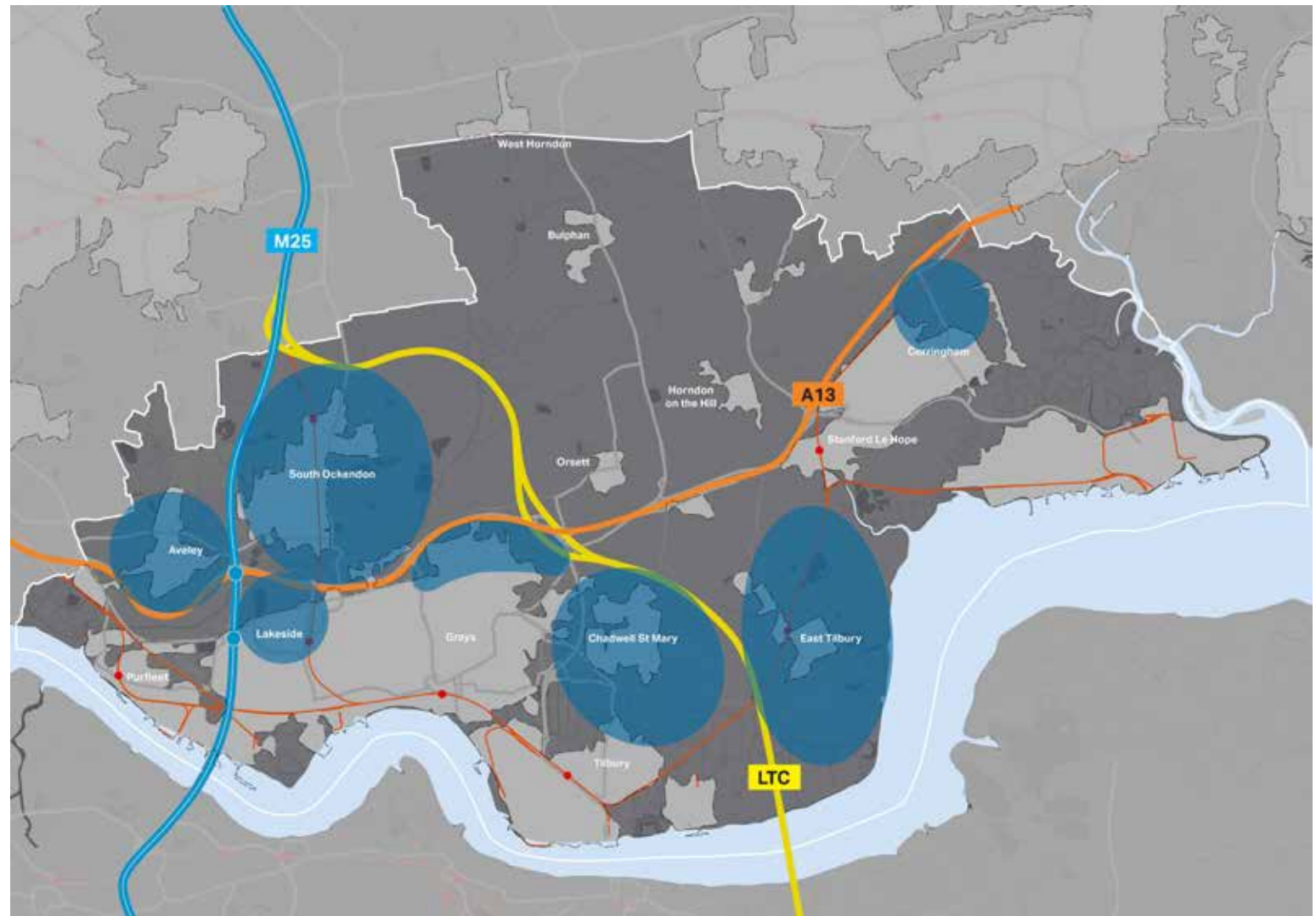


Figure 19: Major Urban Extensions (each over 1,500 homes) - Sites with developer interest

Opportunities

- A more concentrated pattern of larger Green Belt allocations would generate the critical scale and mass of development required to fund and deliver transformational change and support the regeneration of existing urban centres such as Aveley, South Ockendon, Lakeside, Chadwell St Mary, East Tilbury and Corringham.
- Large scale high quality developments also provide the opportunity to change people's perceptions of Thurrock as a place to live and work and to provide a wide range of different housing typologies to meet a variety of housing needs. This includes the ability to increase the financial viability of delivering significantly greater levels of affordable housing.
- Larger strategic developments can provide the critical mass of development or physical space needed to support the provision of the full range of community facilities (primary/secondary schools, primary health facilities and retail/service uses) required to create new sustainable communities and address identified deficiencies in existing community infrastructure.
- Makes good use of historic investment in strategic public transport infrastructure and will help reduce the number of journeys and use of the car, as the location of new housing lies in close proximity to existing or proposed employment locations, town or local centres and key public transport hubs.
- Preserves the integrity of the Green Belt at a strategic level and reduces the need for numerous incursions into the Green Belt at the local level including preventing urban sprawl and coalescence of settlements.
- Large scale housing developments are more likely to attract Government funding support to cover the cost of up front infrastructure provision.

Challenges

- Large scale urban extensions are more complex to bring forward and take longer to deliver as they may require the provision and forward funding of critical elements of strategic infrastructure.
- Co-ordinating the efforts of landowners, developers and infrastructure providers to ensure that the 'whole is greater than the sum of parts' will require the development of be-spoke delivery arrangements and funding mechanisms.

QUESTION 16

Major Urban Extensions

- a) Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration and if not, why not?
- b) Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- c) Are there any other opportunities or broad locations within, or adjoining Thurrock, that are suitable for considering the development of a large urban extension?

Green Belt Development Type 3: Small Urban Extensions(less than 1,500 homes)

Based on landowner/developer submissions to the Call for Sites process, a large number of small urban extensions have been proposed across the whole borough on a range of sites capable of accommodating approximately 50-1,500 homes each. These sites are typically in green belt urban fringe locations adjacent to the main urban areas in the borough. Further work is required to identify the scale of new housing development which could be delivered through this Option and this will be taken forward as part of the ongoing Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) and Integrated Sustainability Assessment processes.

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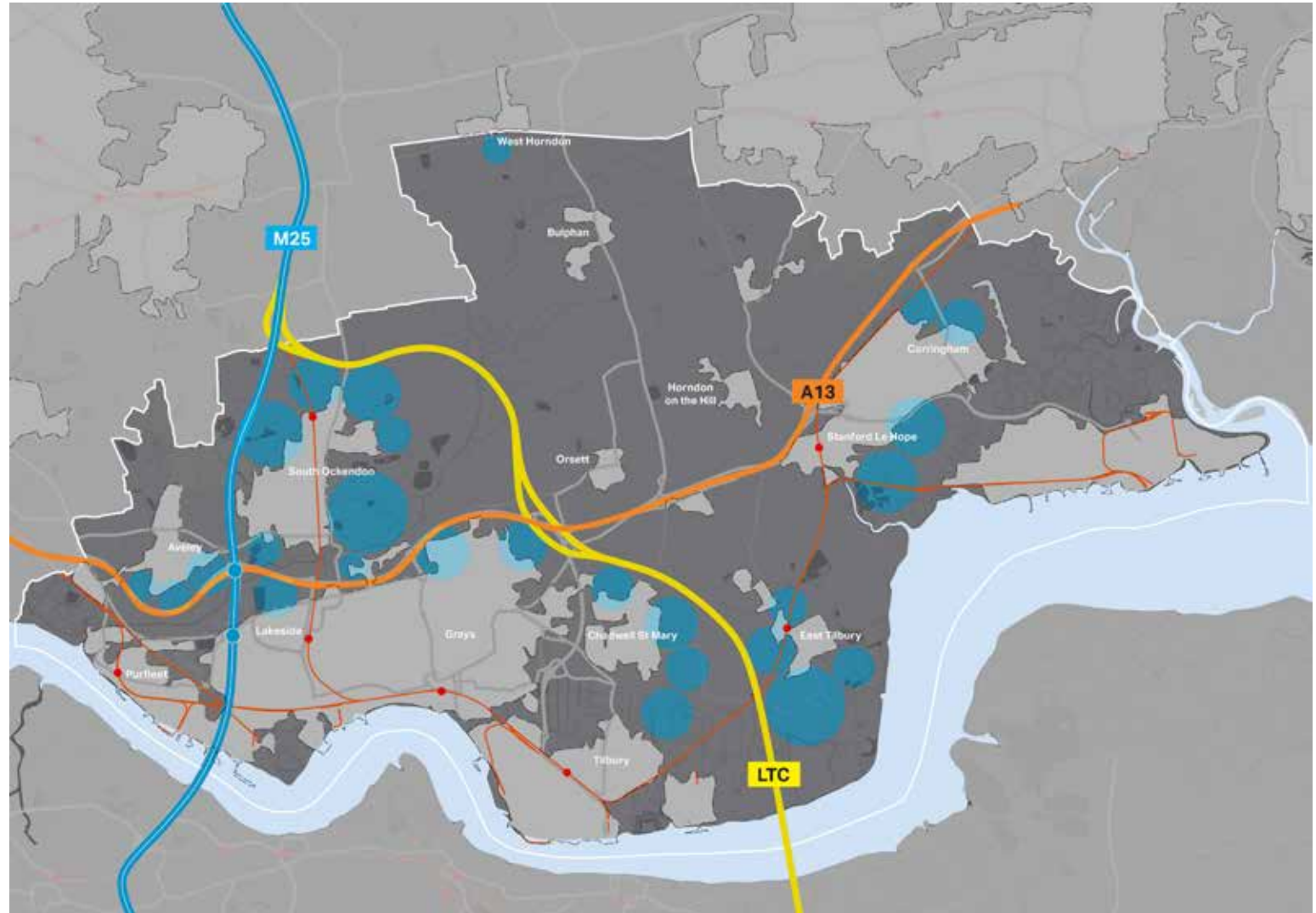


Figure 20: Small Urban Extensions(less than 1,500 homes) - Sites with developer interest



Opportunities

- Makes good use of historic investment in infrastructure and reduces/disperses the impact of new development and associated infrastructure burdens across a wider area.
- Could reduce the need for large scale strategic infrastructure provision that might otherwise be needed to support the development of major urban extensions.
- Reduces the need for, and impact of, significant incursions into the Green Belt that could occur from focusing on fewer but larger urban extensions.
- Provides the opportunity to increase the diversity of the Borough's housing offer by providing a variety of locations and settings for new housing development.
- Could potentially reduce the impacts of large scale development on the landscape by promoting smaller scale development more in keeping with the local context.
- Could support localised improvement and enhancement of spoiled countryside and provide access to new open space and recreational opportunities for those communities adjacent to the urban fringe.

Challenges

- A more dispersed pattern of development would be unlikely to generate the critical scale and mass of development required to fund and deliver transformational change and support the regeneration of existing urban centres and local communities.
- Dispersed development could have significant consequences at the local level in terms of the Green Belt and its function in preventing urban sprawl and the coalescence of settlements.
- Funding the delivery of necessary strategic infrastructure improvements will be more difficult to coordinate and achieve if development is spread across a larger number of small sites. This includes the ability to successfully bid for and obtain Government funding support.
- This option is likely to lead to an increased number of journeys and use of the car as the location of housing developments may not lie in close proximity to existing or proposed employment locations, town or local centres and key public transport hubs.
- A dispersed pattern of development may not provide the critical mass of development or physical space needed to support the provision of the full range of community facilities (primary/secondary schools, primary health facilities and retail/service uses) required to create new sustainable communities or address identified deficiencies in existing community infrastructure.
- Although the redevelopment of Previously Developed Land (PDL) can have positive benefits in terms of the reuse of vacant or spoiled land in the Green Belt, many locations are unsuitable for development due to their relative isolation and poor access to essential services, employment locations and public transport hubs.

QUESTION 17

Small Urban Extensions

- Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration and if not, why not?
- Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- Are there any other sites or broad locations within Thurrock suitable for considering the development of further small urban extensions?

Green Belt Development Type 4: Village Expansions (up to 1,500 homes)

Based on landowner/developer submissions to the Call for Sites process, further development scenarios around the villages of Bulphan, Orsett and Horndon on the Hill have been proposed in order to make the villages more self-sufficient and reduce the need for local people, both now and in the future, to travel to other larger centres in order to meet their shopping, employment and other needs. The range of homes proposed in the scenario varies considerably for each village.

- Bulphan - up to 1,500 homes
- Horndon on the Hill - up to 400 homes
- Orsett - up to 1,000 homes

The implementation of this approach would require significant local investment in new infrastructure (schools, health and community uses) to meet future demand. Additional retail development would also be required to upgrade existing provision.

Further work is required to identify the scale of new housing development which could be delivered through this Option and this will be taken forward as part of the ongoing Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) and Integrated Sustainability Assessment processes.

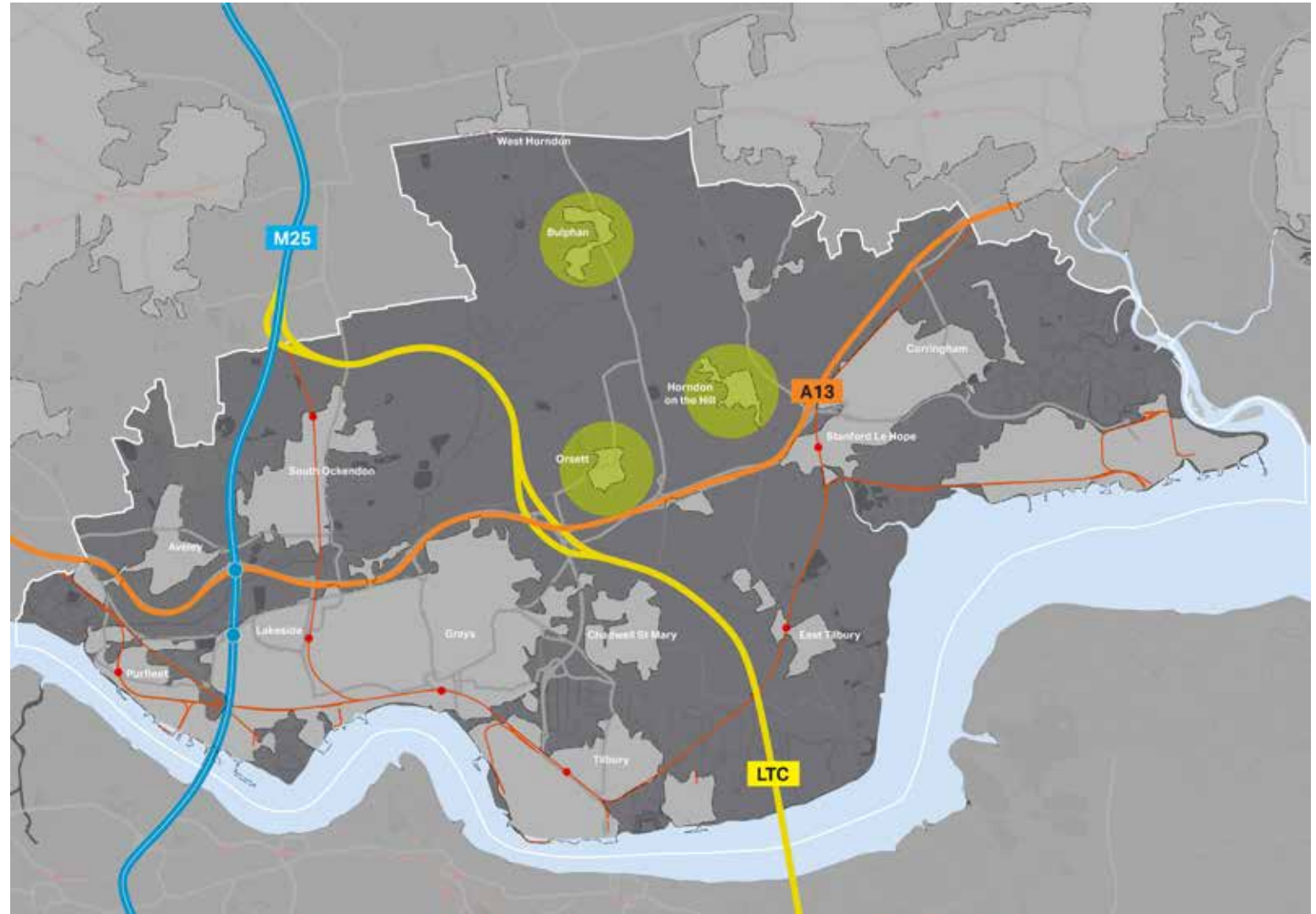


Figure 21: Village Expansions (up to 1,500 homes) - Sites with developer interest

Opportunities

- Critical mass of new development would support the provision of new retail, leisure, community, and local employment provision reducing the need for residents to travel outside the local area.
- An increase in the local population would raise the demand/viability of providing improved or new public transport services.
- Approach would support the provision of a wide range of housing types, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of the local population.

Challenges

- Large scale development both within and adjoining the villages of Bulphan, Orsett and Horndon on the Hill would have a significant adverse impact on the environmental quality and character of the villages.
- The scale of development envisaged under this option would go beyond the natural capacity of the villages and their setting to absorb growth and leading to irreversible damage to their character and the physical and natural environment.
- Large scale development in the vicinity of the villages would lead to a significant increase in local congestion as traffic movements exceed the capacity of the local network to accommodate the levels of growth being considered.
- Development of scale in these locations could fundamentally undermine the openness of the Green Belt surrounding Bulphan, Orsett and Horndon on the Hill as well as potentially leading to the coalescence of settlements (Orsett and Horndon on the Hill) contrary to national planning policy guidance.

QUESTION 18

Village Expansions

- a) Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration and if not, why not?
- b) What scale of additional development would be appropriate in these areas and what additional infrastructure would be needed to support housing growth in these areas?
- c) Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?

Greenbelt Development Type 5 : Isolated Site Allocations (typically under 500 homes)

Further development scenarios have come forward on somewhat isolated sites that do not easily connect with existing settlements. Unlike Green Belt Development Types 1 and 2 (above), these sites are not of a scale where they could realistically provide additional on-site infrastructure like retail, community and educational facilities.

Further work is required to identify the scale of new housing development which could be delivered through this Option and this will be taken forward as part of the ongoing Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) and Integrated Sustainability Assessment processes.

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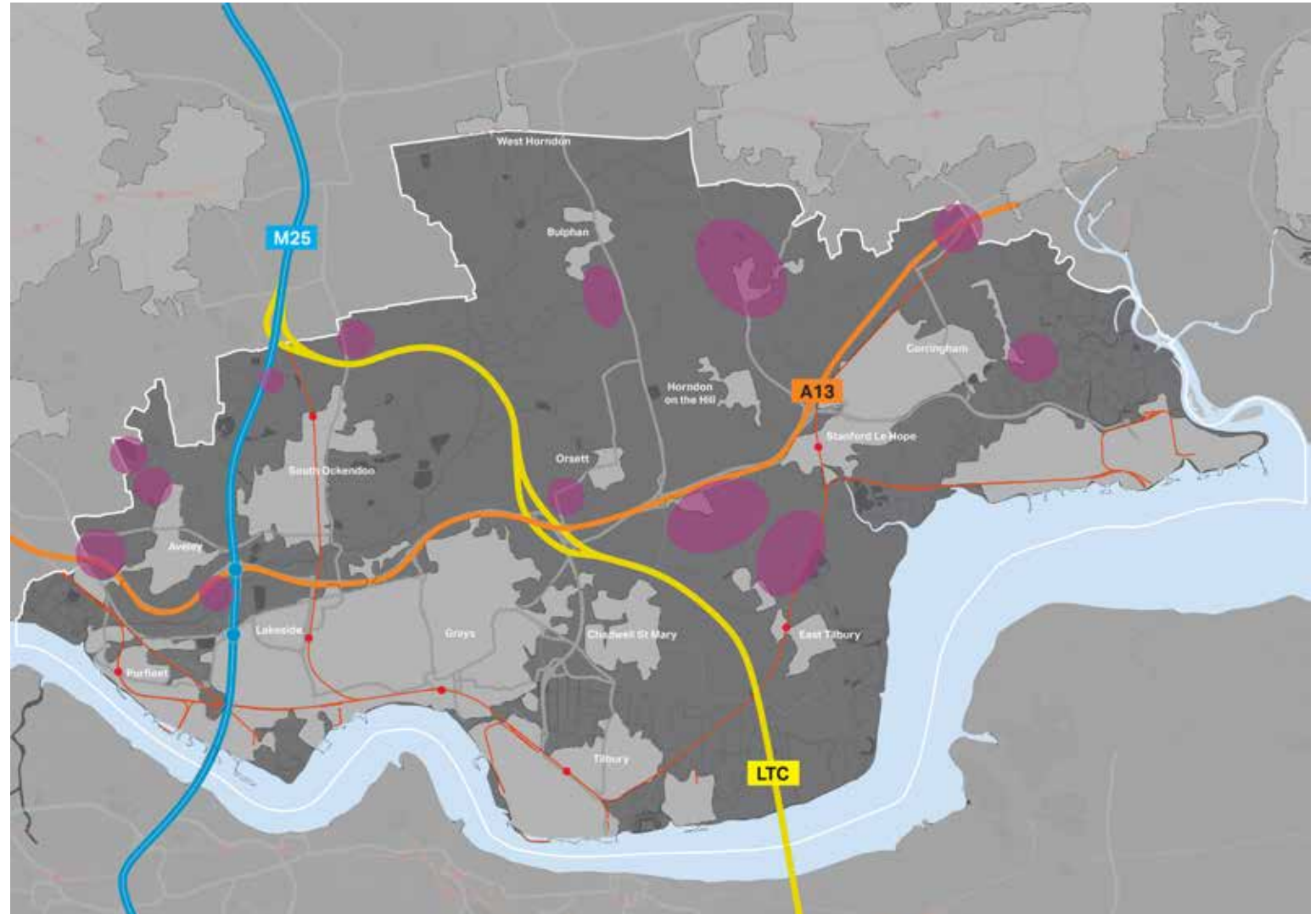


Figure 22: Isolated Site Allocations (typically under 500 homes) - Sites with developer interest

Opportunities

- Could contribute towards the reuse and redevelopment of previously developed land (PDL) in the Green Belt.

Challenges

- A more dispersed pattern of development would be unlikely to generate the critical scale and mass of development required to fund and deliver transformational change and support the regeneration of existing urban centres and local communities.
- At a strategic level isolated development could have significant adverse consequences in terms of the openness of the Green Belt and at the local level in terms of its function in preventing coalescence of settlements.
- Isolated sites not in close proximity to existing centres, employment locations or transport corridors and hubs would lead to an increase in journeys by car use.

QUESTION 19

Isolated Site Allocations

- a) Do you believe that adopting the approach set out under this option is an appropriate option for consideration, if not why not?
- b) Are there any other opportunities or challenges that you think ought to be taken into account in assessing this option?
- c) Are there any other free-standing previously developed sites which should be considered for development?

SECTION 5: WHAT LEVEL OF GROWTH IS NEEDED - EMPLOYMENT LAND?



In 2014, Thurrock's economy was estimated to be worth around £2.9bn with employment levels having recovered quickly following the economic downturn. Looking ahead, it is forecast that the Thurrock economy will grow by an average of 3.2% per annum between 2012 and 2030 and that total employment will grow by an average of 1.5% a year, equivalent to an increase of 21,200 jobs in Thurrock over the same period.

The main employment sectors in the Borough are transport and logistics, port functions and retail. The strength of these sectors reflects some of Thurrock's key locational advantages, such as its close proximity to London and international gateways (ports and airports), which make it an attractive proposition for continued inward investment and job creation.

Government policy is committed to building a strong and competitive economy in order to create jobs and prosperity. To help achieve economic growth, Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities are required to:

- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth;
- Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period;
- Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and, where possible, identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances;
- Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries;
- Identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement;
- Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit.

The Core Strategy approach is based on promoting and supporting economic growth and development through the provision of land, premises and supporting infrastructure in five Key Strategic Economic Hubs across the Borough. These comprise Purfleet, Lakeside/West Thurrock, Grays Town Centre, Tilbury and London Gateway. In preparing the Local Plan, the Council will need to consider whether this strategic approach remains appropriate or whether it needs to be revised to include, for example, Thames Enterprise Park at Coryton, as a sixth Strategic Economic Hub. Alternatively, a different spatial approach could be to reduce the number of Economic Hubs by amalgamating two or more of the existing Hubs to form three larger composite economic hubs – Thurrock West (including Purfleet, Port of Purfleet and Lakeside), Thurrock Central (including Grays Town Centre, Tilbury and the London Port of Tilbury) and lastly Thurrock East (including London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park).

Despite the challenging economic environment that existed at the time of the Core Strategy's adoption in 2011, the Plan has been instrumental in attracting significant inward investment into the Borough, leading to a faster rate of jobs growth in Thurrock than either the national or regional average. Testimony to this are the levels of private sector investment which has/will be generated by proposed or committed development at London Gateway, Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside, Purfleet and the Port of Tilbury.

Reflecting the comments made by stakeholders and local businesses in response to the previous Issues and Options (Stage 1) Public Consultation, the new Local Plan must identify an adequate and appropriate mix of land and property to meet forecast growth in jobs; the need to support efforts to diversify the Borough's unbalanced employment base; and to coordinate provision of essential supporting infrastructure - e.g. housing, transport, utilities, broadband/communications infrastructure. The consultation responses also pointed to the need to give further consideration to the allocation of additional land for development outside the identified hubs, particularly to meet the needs of SMEs and the logistics industry.

In preparing the new Local Plan, the Council will need to develop a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating within the Borough and wider Thames Gateway South Essex area. This will include an assessment of the need for additional land or floorspace for economic development, including both the qualitative and quantitative needs for anticipated types of economic activity over the plan period. In order to do this, the Council, on behalf of the South Essex authorities, commissioned the preparation of the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017 (EDNA), which provides an evidenced analysis of the economic and employment land opportunities and challenges for South Essex.

The study also identifies the future demand for employment land (B1, B2 and B8) and sets out a series of policy recommendations on how the South Essex authorities should plan to meet future employment land requirements across the area at both the district and sub-regional levels. In addition to the EDNA, the Council also commissioned the preparation of the Thurrock Employment Land Supply Availability Assessment 2017 (ELAA). This study provides an updated assessment of the availability and suitability of employment land across Thurrock. These two studies feed into each other, with the economic forecasting work undertaken as part of the EDNA informing the ELAA, and the ELAA's determination of the balance between employment supply and demand with its locally distinctive objective assessment of employment needs contributing to the strategic sub-regional conclusions set out in the EDNA.



Both the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017 (EDNA) and the Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment Update 2017 (ELAA) are available to view at the Council's Local Plan website (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

Key findings and conclusions

Figure 23 sets out the combined employment land requirements identified in the Economic Development Needs Assessment for Thurrock over the period to 2036 broken down into office (B1), manufacturing (B2) and warehousing (B8) uses. The analysis shows that two thirds of South Essex's future employment land

requirements are focused in Thurrock, with warehousing being the predominant sector of demand. The combined employment floorspace requirement for Thurrock is 1,050,397 sq m of new floorspace, which translates into an employment land requirement of 259 hectares to be provided to meet future needs in full.

In arriving at an overall requirement of 259 hectares of employment land over the period to 2036, the EDNA assumes that Thurrock could reasonably be expected to see a 40% uplift in future industrial activity as a result of the re-location of existing industrial activity from London, with a split of 30% industrial and 70% distribution. This reflects the expectation that Thurrock is well placed to accommodate a significant proportion of any displaced industrial activities, particularly distribution. Reflecting these considerations, the total future requirement of 259 hectares includes an allowance of 95 hectares to accommodate forecast London industrial land re-location requirements.

The EDNA also compares the existing employment land supply within each of the South Essex authorities with the projected future employment and requirements for each authority. As set out in Figure 24, it is estimated that the total supply of employment land currently available for development is 652 hectares which comfortably outstrips the projected

total employment land requirement of 259 hectares over the period to 2036. However, it should be noted that the majority of this available supply includes land at London Gateway (249.7ha), which has consent for 82,9700 sq m under the London Gateway Logistics Park Local Development Order; land at Thames Enterprise Park (180.8 ha), which is currently promoted for 320,000sqm of B1, B2 and B8 floorspace; and 126ha of land at the former Tilbury Power Station, which is also now the subject of a proposal for the expansion of the Port of Tilbury. Taken together, this equates to some 570.4 ha of the identified supply of employment land which has or is in the process of being master planned to accommodate future strategic employment needs. The capacity of these sites to accommodate residential development is also further limited due to the presence of constraints under the Health and Safety Executive Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations and Environment Agency Flood Risk Regulations which also serve to render these locations unsuitable for housing development.

Figure 23: EDNA – Thurrock Combined Employment Land Requirement to 2036

Floorspace (sqm)	Total	Office	Manufacturing/ Industrial	Warehouse
Thurrock	1,050,397	30,137	55,202	965,058
Total South Essex	1,564,375	358,438	159,042	1,046,824
LAND (ha)				
Thurrock	259	4	14	241
Total South Essex	345	44	42	260

Source: Draft South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017

Figure 24: Balance between Total Land Supply and Demand in South Essex

	Total Employment Land Supply (ha)	Total Employment Land Demand (ha) – Combined scenario	Total Employment Land Demand (ha) – Combined scenario with supply side adjustment	Employment Land Demand as % of Supply
South Essex	941	272	345	29% or 37%
Thurrock	652	244	259	26% or 28%

Source: Draft South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment 2017

Figure 25 shows the broad distribution of employment land in Thurrock, with West Thurrock hosting the largest single concentration of employment activity in the Borough. Noticeable also is the fact that much of the Borough's potential future employment land supply is focused on land at London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park.

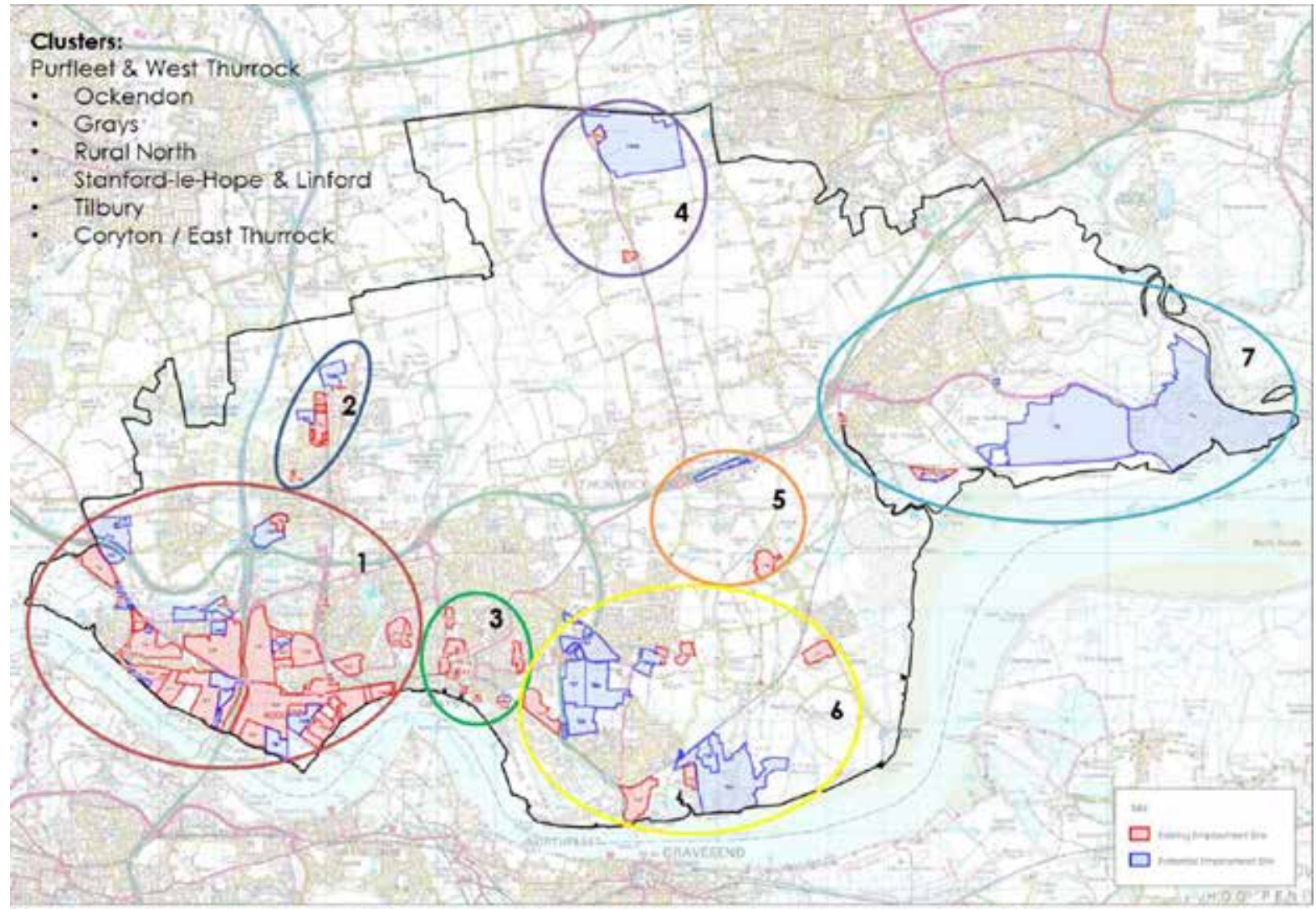


Figure 25 : EDNA Thurrock Overview Map: Existing and Potential Employment Clusters

Key issues

Based on the evidence and analysis set out in the South Essex Economic Development Needs Assessment, the Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment and the Issues and Options (Stage 1) Report of Consultation, the preparation of the Local Plan will need to consider and respond to the following issues:

- There is a significant oversupply of employment land in the Borough relative to future demand generated in Thurrock. However, much of this capacity is tied up in strategic land holdings at London Gateway, Thames Enterprise Park and Port of Tilbury related to ports and logistic development.

Although there is an identified oversupply of employment land to meet Thurrock's future needs, when seen in the context of South Essex, the Borough's employment land supply provides two thirds of the wider area's future strategic land supply.

- The concentration of future supply in a few large sites on land retained for port related logistics activity means there is little flexibility in the existing employment land portfolio to accommodate non-port related employment uses.

- With the potential for significant employment generation at London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park, there is also a need to deliver major improvements to their accessibility, particularly by public transport, and to ensure there is sufficient capacity for additional freight movements by rail.

- The lack of flexibility in the Borough's overall employment land portfolio means that a potential need exists to identify additional land for facilitating the 'lifting and shifting' of non-conforming employment uses out of residential areas and in supporting the growth and expansion of SMEs and start-up businesses.

- There is a need to consider what planning policy tools can be used to provide /maintain a portfolio of sites to meet the needs of SMEs. This could relate to the percentage of site or floorspace to be reserved for their development.

- The future role of the town centres and housing growth areas to accommodate SMEs and business start-up units should be considered as part of the plan-making process.

- Possible role for the Council in facilitating the direct provision of low cost accommodation to meet the needs of SMEs and support the 'lift and shift' process, as the Thurrock employment land market is dominated by demand for large B8 units and port-related uses.

- There is a perceived need for additional lorry parks but future provision should be accommodated on-site/within major developments.

- There is a need for further road, rail-freight and digital infrastructure improvements generally.

- It is not possible to predict the likely economic impacts of the Lower Thames Crossing until the scheme has been confirmed, including provision/location of junctions.

- Complementary policy support needs to be provided to attract businesses, which includes ensuring the presence of a skilled local workforce and suitable housing to attract and retain employees.

Thurrock has experienced a prolonged and steady increase in jobs and this is forecast to continue into the future through the expansion of existing businesses and development of new ones. Land will be required to meet these business development needs.

The Local Plan will need to consider the issues of how much employment land is required and, broadly, where it should be allocated, but there is more to employment land than simply the amount and where it should be located. The Plan will also need to consider what type of employment land is required (what type of end-user will occupy the land) and whether the provision of certain employment uses is appropriate in certain locations.

The following options (which are not mutually exclusive) consider these issues:

Option 1 - Allocate sites specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing needs. Larger sites would be allocated specifically for strategic distribution and warehousing uses, close to the strategic road network and with direct access to inter-modal facilities.

Option 2 - Allocate sites to encourage geographical clusters of specialist employment uses. New sites would be provided for specific employment uses where similar activities could concentrate. For example, a site or sites could be provided for forecast growth in emerging business sectors or for start-up businesses which may be compatible with residential uses in housing growth areas. Such an approach may require a more flexible range of uses being permitted than just business class use. It could also require a site specific policy rather than a single policy that deals with the employment land portfolio collectively.

Option 3 - Allocate all new sites for the range of B classes uses (business, general industry and warehousing). This option would allocate all employment sites for the range of business use, without identifying any sites for specialist employment uses as above, but a percentage of each site or broad location would be reserved in policy for SME and small scale start-up businesses.

Option 4 – Allocate employment sites specifically for non-B8 uses. This option would allocate sites for B1, B2 and sui generis uses in order to diversify the Borough's economic base and prevent an oversupply of B8 employment uses relative to future need and demand.

Option 5 - Identify additional town centre mixed use development sites. Land would be allocated in and around existing centres specifically for additional office uses. It would contribute towards the regeneration and re-use of brownfield sites. However, the Borough is not a significant office location, and evidence predicts that the demand for new office floorspace in Thurrock is likely to be limited.

QUESTION 20

- a) When considering how land should be allocated for employment sites, which policy options above do you think are the most appropriate for Thurrock and why?
- b) Are there any alternative options that you think are appropriate that have not been considered? If so, what are they?
- c) Should sites be specifically allocated for non-B8 uses to help diversify the Boroughs economic base? If so, where?
- d) Are there any specific sites or broad locations which should be identified for new employment uses? If so, where and why?
- e) What additional transport or other infrastructure improvements are needed in Thurrock to support future economic growth?
- f) Is there a need for additional lorry parks to serve business and industry in Thurrock? If so, where should they be located?

Existing employment areas

Alongside potential land allocations, there are significant existing employment areas in Thurrock which provide for a wide range of employment, business and commercial activities.

The existing Core Strategy employment policies are based round a 'tiered' approach that identifies different types of employment areas with some variation of uses permitted within them. There is a need to ensure that existing employment

areas and premises continue to meet a diverse range of business needs, and consider if it would be appropriate for them to allow alternative commercial needs beyond the traditional employment uses of business, general industry and warehousing. Since the Core Strategy was adopted in 2011, reform of the General Permitted Development order has resulted in a relaxation of the planning rules regarding changes of use from offices and warehousing to residential use, under certain circumstances.

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QUESTION 21

- a) What kind of protection should the Local Plan give to existing employment areas?
- b) Should the Local Plan seek to restrict the range of uses and activities in existing employment areas to B1, B2 or B8 uses, or designate selected employment areas in whole, or in part, for non-business class users?

The Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment identifies a number of locations across the Borough where existing concentrations of employment uses are located within primarily residential areas. There is evidence that their presence is having an adverse impact on the amenity of local residents, particularly as a result of the impact of HGV movements, road safety considerations and noise. Although the Council regularly takes enforcement action against persistent offenders, in many cases it is not the fault of the occupiers that these issues arise, with the problem often lying with delivery vehicles operated by other companies. Equally, many of the businesses in these areas provide a valuable source of employment and contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community and business in Thurrock. Any attempt to relocate these businesses against their will could potentially see the loss of local jobs and harm the local economy.

However, this does not mean that further action shouldn't be taken to reduce or eradicate the impact of bad-neighbour uses in residential areas.

As part of this process, the Local Plan can plan positively to secure the voluntary relocation of existing business occupiers to alternative locations, where their hours of operation and room for expansion/diversification of activity is unconstrained by the nature of the surrounding uses. In order to do this, it will be necessary for the Plan to identify a range of sites capable of accommodating the displaced uses in affordable and appropriate premises, and for the Council and other partners to develop a programme to assist existing business occupiers to relocate as necessary.

QUESTION 22

- a) What policy approaches should the Local Plan develop to deal with the problems caused by bad-neighbour uses in residential areas?
- b) Should the Council develop a programme for 'lifting and shifting' bad-neighbour uses to alternative locations? If so, what interventions are required for the successful delivery of this policy objective?





Digital infrastructure

In the Housing White Paper - Fixing our Broken Housing Market, the Government set out its intention (subject to consultation) to require local authorities to have planning policies which set out how high quality digital infrastructure would be delivered in their area. As part of this process, Government is considering how to capitalise on new developments and the digital infrastructure attached to them, to enhance broadband coverage for local communities and nearby residents.

In March 2018, the Government published draft revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework for consultation, including proposed guidance designed to support the provision of high quality communications. The NPPF noted that advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social wellbeing. To achieve these objectives, the draft text for consultation proposed that planning policies and decisions should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including next generation mobile technology (such as 5G) and full fibre broadband connections. In doing so, policies should set out how high quality digital infrastructure, providing access to services from a range of providers, is expected to be delivered and upgraded over time, with priority being given to full fibre connections to existing and new developments.

Reflecting the date of its 2011 adoption, the Core Strategy does not set out a strategy or planning policies for promoting the provision of high quality digital infrastructure. In preparing the new Local Plan it is therefore essential that the plan-making process takes into account the need to provide an effective policy framework to facilitate the roll out of improved digital infrastructure across Thurrock to support future economic growth and meet wider social and community needs.

QUESTION 23

- a) What is the scope and nature of the planning policy support required to facilitate the roll out of high quality digital communications infrastructure in Thurrock?
- b) What interventions or policy approaches does the Local Plan need to identify to assist in its delivery?
- c) Should future planning policy require the direct provision of full fibre connections to all new residential and business developments and should Section 106 or CIL contributions collected from all forms of new development be targeted at supporting the provision of enhanced digital infrastructure in Thurrock?

SECTION 6: WHAT LEVEL OF GROWTH IS NEEDED - RETAIL AND LEISURE?

Context

Town centres are at the heart of community life and play a key role in shaping people's perceptions of an area. Attractive, vibrant and prosperous town centres can act as an important catalyst for attracting growth and investment into the wider area. Equally, declining centres can have the opposite effect and serve to deter and undermine efforts to turn the economic fortunes of an area around.

Over the last five years, town centres have faced the challenge of major economic and social change which has had an impact on the way we shop, the development of new retail formats and changing patterns of retail development. This has been manifest in the rise in internet shopping, the rapid growth of discount retailers and the 'convenience' shopping concept, the consolidation and concentration of investment into fewer larger centres and an overall decline in the demand for town centre retail floorspace in all but the largest and most successful centres.

To ensure the vitality of town centres, paragraph 23 of the NPPF requires that 'planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres'. This includes a requirement that 'needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability'.

National policy also requires Local Plans to be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. In terms of a retail evidence base, paragraph 161 states that local authorities should assess:

- The need for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs, for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
- The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of the centres;
- The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development; and
- Locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action.

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

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

Identifying future retail and leisure needs

The NPPF and PPG place a duty on local planning authorities to cooperate on strategic cross-boundary planning issues including the provision of retail and leisure development.

In April 2016, Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) were instructed by the South Essex Authorities to provide a strategic retail evidence base for the South Essex sub-region. The objectives of this study included a requirement to assess the need for additional convenience and comparison retail floorspace and key high order leisure uses in the period up to 2037 and to recommend options for the spatial distribution of the assessed retail and leisure needs across the five authorities.



Key findings affecting Thurrock

The key findings and conclusions set out in the South Essex Retail Study in relation to Thurrock are summarised below:

- Across South Essex there is capacity to support an additional 82,445 - 185,485 sqm.net of comparison floorspace up to 2037.
- Long-term comparison capacity forecasts (post-2026) are significant but should be treated as indicative.
- Despite the existing large commitment at Lakeside (in the form of the consented Northern Extension) the majority of capacity emerges in Thurrock.
- Intu Lakeside shopping centre is the primary comparison retail destination within the South Essex area and exerts a significant influence over trading patterns across the wider study area.
- Within Thurrock there is capacity to support an additional 171,858 - 185,485 sqm.net of comparison floorspace up to 2037.
- Across South Essex there is no capacity to support additional convenience floorspace up to 2031. This is due to there being significant commitments for convenience floorspace in Thurrock and because growth in convenience expenditure is limited.

- Long-term convenience capacity forecasts (post-2031) are much lower than the comparison figures, with little or no capacity emerging in Thurrock, but should also be treated as indicative.
- Across South Essex there is capacity to support an additional 8,346 - 12,342 sqm.net of convenience floorspace up to 2037.
- Within Thurrock there is capacity to support an additional -1,632 to 131 sqm.net of convenience floorspace up to 2037.
- Thurrock is anticipated to see the biggest rise in leisure spending in South Essex over the plan period due to population increase and increasing strength/inflow of expenditure to Lakeside.
- A3-A5 uses account for approximately 70% of the total leisure spending growth in South Essex. Basildon, Southend and Thurrock experience the most significant levels of growth.
- Basildon, Southend and Thurrock all have committed leisure developments. It is possible that the A3-A5 and D2 leisure commitments in Thurrock will be sufficient to absorb the forecast expenditure. The majority of this development is proposed at Intu Lakeside Shopping Centre.
- With the exception of Basildon, there is capacity for cinema screens in all of the South Essex authorities. The most significant capacity is in Rochford, as it currently has no cinema screens.

A copy of the South Essex Retail and Leisure Study is available to view on the Council's Local Plan website. (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan)

QUESTION 24

- a) Based on the findings and conclusions set out in the South Essex Retail and Leisure Study, do you agree that Lakeside should continue to be the principal focus for new comparison shopping and leisure floorspace in Thurrock over the Plan period to 2037? If not, why not?
- b) In the absence of a strong quantitative need for additional convenience floorspace provision in Thurrock over the plan period to 2037, what steps should the Council take to seek a better alignment of current/future provision, in order to meet the shopping needs of the proposed housing growth areas and/or the regeneration of existing centres?

Future planning status of Lakeside

The principle of transforming the northern part of the Lakeside Basin into a sustainable, mixed-use regional town centre is established in policy through Policy CSTP7: Network of Centres, of the adopted Thurrock Core Strategy (December 2011).

Policy CSTP7 restates the former East of England Regional Spatial Strategy's policy intention to secure the designation of the northern part of the Lakeside Basin as a Regional Town Centre subject to progress being achieved against a series of planning policy and development pre-conditions.

In planning for the future development of Lakeside, the key issues the Local Plan will need to consider are:

- The need for any place-making criteria or triggers to create a viable, mixed-use regional town centre; and
- The policy choices and spatial options for managing development at Lakeside

In developing the Local Plan, it is the Council's intention to prepare an Inset Plan which will set out a detailed spatial strategy to guide the future development of the northern part of the Lakeside Basin. This will be informed by the preparation of an updated version of Planning for the future of the Lakeside Basin – A Framework to Deliver Town Centre Potential (2015).

A copy of Planning for the future of the Lakeside Basin – A Framework to Deliver Town Centre Potential (2015) is available to view on the Council's Local Plan website. (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).



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Place-making criteria

It is the clear intention of the adopted Core Strategy and the former East of England Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) that the future development of the Lakeside Basin should be progressed having regard to a range of place-making criteria for managing the development of a new sustainable mixed-use regional scale town centre.

Although the RSS has since been revoked, at the time of the Core Strategy's adoption it formed part of the statutory development plan for Thurrock. Policy ETG2: Thurrock Key Centre for Development and Change (from the revoked RSS) set out detailed place-making guidance on the changes required before the Lakeside Basin could achieve town centre status. Having regard to the policy approach set out

in RSS policy ETG2, the Thurrock Core Strategy provided further guidance on the steps that would need to be taken before town centre status could be achieved.

However, as Policy CSTP7 dates back to 2011, it is now considered to be largely out-of-date as it fails to reflect changes to national policy or the changing retail and market context within which any decisions on the future development of Lakeside must now be made. Reflecting these considerations and the importance of the Lakeside Basin to both the local economy and community, the Local Plan will need to provide an up-to-date and more relevant planning policy framework, which reflects the progress made over the last 7 years in diversifying the nature of the uses at Lakeside and the changing national policy context set out in the NPPF.



QUESTION 25

- a) Should the new Local Plan set out any pre-conditions limiting the future scale, nature, location and timing of additional retail development at Lakeside?
- b) With the addition of a wider range of uses and activities in recent years, including the provision of new leisure, hotel and food and drink uses, and with new residential development in the pipeline, should the northern part of the Lakeside Basin now be regarded as a fully fledged town centre?

Policy choices and spatial options for managing development at Lakeside

Paragraph 23 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires that planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period. In drawing up Local Plans, local planning authorities are asked to define the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas, based on a clear definition of primary and secondary frontages in designated centres, and set policies that make clear which uses will be permitted in such locations.

In view of the scale of the area included within the northern part of the Lakeside Basin, the Local Plan will need to define an effective boundary for the town centre and identify the primary and secondary shopping areas. The nature and extent of these areas will strongly influence decisions on future proposals for retail development and other uses, both within, and adjoining the areas covered by these policy designations.

Once these policy designations have been agreed it is intended that they will be set out in an Inset Plan covering the northern part of the Lakeside Basin



QUESTION 26

- a) How should the Town Centre Boundary at Lakeside be defined?
- b) How should the Primary and Secondary Shopping Areas at Lakeside be defined?

Grays Town Centre

Development context

Grays is the largest 'traditional' town centre in Thurrock and contains 66,300 sqm gross floorspace in total. Whilst the town centre's role as the dominant retail centre in the area has been superseded by intu Lakeside Shopping Centre, it is still the main administrative centre in the Borough and a focus for a number of services and cultural activities.

Today, comparison provision in the centre is limited and only makes up around a quarter of all floorspace in the town centre. This comparison provision is made up from national multiple retailers alongside small independent local traders. Currently there is little demand for comparison goods retailers or representation within the town centre.

The town centre has a stronger provision of convenience floorspace with a large Morrisons supermarket, an Iceland foodstore and an Aldi foodstore. The centre also contains a range of other small convenience stores and specialist foodstores. Demand exists for further convenience floorspace within the town centre from discount foodstore operators.

Policy CSTP7 of the Adopted Core Strategy provides a policy framework for the future regeneration of the town centre as a focus for cultural, administrative and educational functions, whilst providing retail development complementary in function to that available at Lakeside

Basin. In support of this objective, the plan identifies the opportunity to provide up to an additional 11,500 sqm net of comparison goods floorspace, together with a further 1,500 - 2,000 sqm net of additional convenience floorspace within the town centre over the period to 2026. In accommodating this growth, the plan states that development should be of an appropriate scale and be well integrated with the existing centre.

At present there is no evidence to suggest that sufficient market or retailer demand exists to support the scale of additional comparison goods floorspace development within the town centre as identified in Policy CSTP7. Moreover, there is also a lack of suitable and available sites within, or on the edge of the town centre, capable of physically accommodating the scale of development proposed for new convenience or comparison shopping floorspace.

A key issue for the Local Plan is whether the current policy approach needs to be amended to reflect the reduced scale of demand for new comparison goods floorspace within the town centre, whilst also recognising the increasing importance of consolidating retail activity within or adjoining the existing primary shopping area. At the same time consideration will also need to be given as to how the need for some flexibility to accommodate non-retail uses, where they will contribute to the vitality and attractiveness of the town centre, can be introduced without harming Grays retail function.

QUESTION 27

- a) Do you think that the Local Plan should plan positively for additional comparison or convenience shopping floorspace in Grays Town Centre through the specific allocation of additional sites for development or should the focus be on strengthening and consolidating retail activity around the Grays Shopping Centre and adjoining areas?
- b) Should the Council amend the current approach to managing the mix of permitted uses in Grays Primary and Secondary shopping frontages to provide more flexibility to accommodate non-retail uses?
- c) If further flexibility is required, what approach should be adopted to maintain an appropriate balance between retail and non-retail activity in the primary and secondary shopping areas?

Hierarchy of Centres

Retail facilities are an important part of people’s lives and an important sector of Thurrock’s economy. Achieving the right balance of quality, quantity and distribution of retail facilities is therefore extremely important and the Local Plan will need to ensure that development proposals are appropriate to their location. There are a number of shopping centres in the Borough which vary in size and the range of shops and ancillary services they provide. The current hierarchy of shopping centres in Thurrock is defined under policy Policy CSTP7 – Network of Centres of the adopted Core Strategy and is set out in Figure 26. This is based on a range of criteria, including the size of the centre, the quantitative and qualitative range of retail and other uses present, together with its role in meeting the wider economic, civic, social and cultural needs of the Borough’s residents and visitors.

The NPPF requires that local plans should define a network and hierarchy of town centres and promote their long-term vitality and viability by allowing them to grow and change in a way that supports a diverse retail offer, provides customer choice, allows a suitable mix of uses (including housing) and reflects their distinctive characters. In doing so, it is important to note that the role of individual centres within the hierarchy is not static, and is subject to change over time, reflecting wider economic and social trends, as well as proposals for new housing growth and changing community needs. It is likely that the retail and service role of several of the Borough’s Local Centres will need to be enhanced, given the scale of housing growth required to meet the Borough’s future housing needs. In addition, consideration will need to be given to the need for the development of one or more new centres in addition to Purfleet. Such changes will need to be planned for and reflected in a revised hierarchy of centres, with additional sites and locations for new retail and other town centre uses of an appropriate scale allocated in the Local Plan.

Figure 26: **CSTP7 Hierarchy of Centres in Thurrock**

Regional Centre	Lakeside
Town Centre	Grays
Local Centres	Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, South Ockendon, Tilbury, Aveley, Sockets Heath
New Centres	Purfeet, South Stifford
Existing Neighbourhood Centres	<i>Larger neighbourhood parades -</i> Chadwell St Mary, Stifford Clays, East Tilbury, Corringham, Grays, Little Thurrock, Chafford Hundred, Tilbury.
	<i>Smaller neighbourhood parades -</i> South Ockendon, Aveley, Grays, Tilbury, Linford, Stanford-le-Hope, Corringham, Purfleet

QUESTION 28

- a) Should the retail hierarchy for town centres and other shopping locations within Thurrock be revised to take into account both historical and future changes in their role including the need to plan for future housing growth?
- b) Are there any other centres that should be included or should any be omitted?

Town Centre Development

Good shopping centres offer a wide range of quality shops and services. They encourage shoppers to visit and develop a loyalty to the centre and the services it provides. The shopping offer, and the customers it attracts, contributes to increasing the vitality and viability of the shopping centre. It is important that Thurrock's town/shopping centres serve the needs of their catchment areas and that the local plan seeks to increase the number of houses in and around Borough centres to boost trade and enhance their prosperity and vitality. Some centres in Thurrock may have the capacity to include additional retail floorspace due to the number of people and available expenditure in their catchment area. Alternatively, some centres may have more shops than can be sustained by available expenditure and may need to contract or diversify.

The South Essex Retail and Leisure Study identifies the need/capacity for new provision within specific centres, having regard to forward growth and planned/emerging commitments within the district and wider sub-region. The new local plan provides an opportunity to review the level of provision in all centres across Thurrock and to develop a more be-spoke approach to maintaining their future viability and vitality.

The current policy approach relating to retail development, as set out in the Core Strategy, is to promote a sequential approach, whereby first preference should be for town centre sites, followed by edge-of-centre sites, district and local centres and only then out-of-town sites. This policy recognises the importance of town centres as locations for shopping, particularly for people without a car, and the importance of retailing as the dominant economic activity underpinning the social and economic life of town centres. It seeks to reinforce the role of existing centres as the foci of shopping activity by encouraging new retail development, redevelopment or refurbishment in these centres.

QUESTION 29

- a) What are your experiences of shopping in Thurrock? What centres do you visit and do they offer a good range of shops and services? Are there any deficiencies?
- b) Should any of the retail allocations and town centre boundaries identified in the adopted Core Strategy be amended in order to include areas/sites that would enable the centres to grow and accommodate retail or other town centre uses, including housing, or exclude areas that are no longer appropriate?
- c) Should any new retail areas be identified for centres without such a designation?

Other Town Centre Uses

Town centres have historically been the location for a wide range of uses, in addition to retailing, such as theatres, museums, libraries, markets, gyms, health clubs, bingo halls, bowling alleys, cinemas, hotels and eating and drinking establishments. The range and level of facilities tends to vary with the size of the town centre and its accessibility by car and public transport. With the retail role of some town centres in decline, the importance of encouraging a wider range of uses and activities within town centres has increased in importance, both as a means of maintaining their wider economic and social function but also in ensuring that their physical and environmental fabric does not decline due to a lack of investment.



QUESTION 30

- a) Are there any other facilities/ activities which should be promoted or accommodated in particular town centres?

Non-Retail Uses in Town Centres

Current policy in the adopted Core Strategy aims to ensure that changes of use within the shopping frontages of town centres take place without undermining their retail function. The policy recognises that space in shopping frontages can usefully be taken up by non-retail uses. Such uses can add to the variety, attractiveness and economic activity of

the centre, but only so long as they do not concentrate within primary frontages so that the retail character of the immediate area is not undermined and does not deter the movement of shoppers in a particular direction within the centre.

The Thurrock Town Centre Health Check Assessment Report (2018) is available to view on the Council's Local Plan website. (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).



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QUESTION 31

- a) Do you have concerns about non-retail uses in shopping frontages or the over concentration of particular uses in those centres that you visit?

Hot Food Takeaways

While it is recognised that hot food takeaways offer a popular service to local communities and have a significant role to play within town centres and other shopping areas, an over concentration of them can be detrimental, affecting the retail character and function of shopping centres. Hot food takeaways can affect local amenity through an increased incidence of litter, smells, anti-social behaviour, noise disturbance, parking and traffic problems. It can also create an imbalance in food choices available to the local community i.e. in areas with high concentrations of hot food takeaways, they form a disproportionate amount of the local food offer. Clustering of hot food takeaways can create 'hotspots' which attract increased numbers of customers, particularly in the late evenings and can lead to problems with noise disturbance, littering and anti-social behaviour. These matters have direct and indirect effects on the health and well-being of the local community and can affect the vitality and viability of shopping centres.

Evidence shows that both obesity levels and access to unhealthy food is an issue which needs to be addressed nationally. Studies have shown that there is also a correlation between childhood obesity and deprivation, deprivation and higher proportions of takeaways, and levels of overweight/obesity and the number of takeaways.

The prevalence of hot food takeaways increases the temptation/likelihood of people, particularly children, purchasing such food on the way to/from school or during leisure trips. Evidence shows that minimising these opportunities has a beneficial effect on levels of obesity.



QUESTION 32

- a) Should there be restrictions on the number and distribution of hot food takeaways in town/shopping centres to avoid over-concentration and clustering?
- b) Should there be restrictions on hot food takeaways near to schools, youth facilities and parks?

Transport and Access

Planning policy at all levels promotes the idea of sustainable transport choices through the reduced need to travel by car and improving accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling. Through the process of preparing the Local

Plan, there is an opportunity to identify proposals to carry out traffic management measures or public realm works that can improve traffic circulation and/or pedestrian movement. This could also include action to encourage more people to walk and cycle into town centres.



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QUESTION 33

- a) Are there any traffic management measures or public realm works that are needed in particular town centres?
- b) Are there any pedestrian or cycle routes that are needed in particular town centres?

Car Parking

The Core Strategy seeks to influence the demand for travel and the new Local Plan will also need to maximise the use of sustainable modes of travel (public transport, walking and cycling), and reduce the need to travel, by concentrating development in appropriate locations across the Borough's network of centres. Alongside this strategy, the Council will use various other measures/services to influence where and how people travel for shopping, leisure and other social activities. Car parking is an integral part of the town centre offer and its location, quality and management regime has a significant bearing on its attractiveness for shoppers, workers and visitors.



QUESTION 34

- a) Where could car parking be reduced?
- b) Is there a need for additional car parking provision in any locations? If yes, please specify if it would be for shoppers, visitors or workers.
- c) Where could long stay car parking spaces be transferred to short stay?

SECTION 7: DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

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Designing active places

Over 70% of adults are overweight or obese in Thurrock, which is significantly higher than the national average. At the age of 5, children in Thurrock have a similar rate of obesity to the national average. Yet, by the age of 10 and 11, 23.9% of children are obese and 37.9% have excess weight (are either overweight or obese), which is significantly higher than the national and regional averages. The Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on Whole Systems Obesity, which examines the reasons for high obesity levels in Thurrock, recommends that the Council seeks to embed active design principles in the emerging Local Plan.

In October 2015 Sport England supported by Public Health England launched an Active Design Guidance document to help support the creation of healthy places. The main principles outlined in the document are set out in Figure 26. These principles are based on national urban design best practice and can be applied to many different types of development, including the enhancement of existing places.





QUESTION 35

Should the Council seek to embed Sport England's Active Design Principles in the emerging Local Plan?

Please reference supporting evidence where possible.

Figure 26 : Active Design Principles

Ensuring that the health impacts of new developments are appropriately assessed

National policy recognises the need to understand and take account of the health status and needs of the local population, including expected changes and information about relevant barriers to improving health and well-being.

Health Impact Assessments assess the positive and negative effects of new development on local communities and/or individual population subgroups.

Requiring a Health Impact Assessment for large and/or sensitive planning applications will ensure that site promoters and developers have properly considered the impact of the development on communities and on the delivery of positive public health outcomes. For developments that are already required to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), it may make sense to integrate health impacts into the EIA as the methodology is similar and there is some overlap in the evidence gathered and used for both assessments.

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QUESTION 37

Should the Council seek to require a Health Impact Assessment to be submitted as part of large and/or sensitive planning applications?

Please reference supporting evidence where possible.



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Safeguarding local identity

Promoting high quality design and supporting local character and distinctiveness are strong themes embodied in national policy. In planning how an area might change and develop over the next 20 years, it is important to consider the things that make that place unique and are truly valued by its communities.

Local green spaces

Green infrastructure contributes to the quality and distinctiveness of the local environment. It creates opportunities for walking and physical activity and generally adds to quality of life. Green infrastructure is diverse in character and can include formal parks and gardens, informal grassed areas, linear paths, towpaths, sports pitches and other kinds of landscaped areas.

For many local communities, securing high quality green infrastructure in and around their neighbourhoods is important. National planning policy gives

local communities the opportunity to nominate important Local Green Spaces for special protection in Local Plans. If a space is formally designated as a Local Green Space in the Local Plan, it would effectively give that space the same protection from development as a Green Belt site.

In July 2016, the Council invited communities to nominate Local Green Spaces in their area that they felt meet the following criteria:

- Geographically close to the community it serves;
- Special to that community because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquility or richness of its wildlife etc;
- Local scale i.e. not an extensive tract of land.

This consultation only generated 34 responses. Therefore, the Council has decided to reopen the nomination process as part of this consultation.

QUESTION 38

Are there any local green spaces in your area that you feel are special to your community?

Please include information about the location of the space and the reason why you believe it should be allocated as a Local Green Space.



Local buildings of interest

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

Local Lists identify historic buildings and features that are valued by the local community but are not currently subject to enhanced protection (i.e. Listed Building status). These buildings and features make a place special for local people and they represent an area's history, traditions, stories and memories.

In July 2016, the Council invited communities to nominate local buildings and features of interest to be included on a Local List. This consultation only generated 3 responses. Therefore, the Council has decided to reopen the nomination process as part of this consultation.

To help us identify the buildings and features that are important in the Borough we need you to nominate buildings and historic features in your area that you think have architectural, historical and social significance. Once we have received all of the nominations, a panel of experts will review the nominations and determine which buildings and features should be included in the Local List.



QUESTION 39

Are there any local buildings or features in your area that you feel are of architectural, historical and/or social significance?

Please include information about the location of the building/feature and the reason why you believe it should be included on the Local List.







Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) - Engagement Strategy

In preparing a new Local Plan the Council is required by legislation to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the activities the Council must legally undertake when preparing a plan. This engagement strategy builds upon the basic requirements of the SCI and presents a comprehensive list of activities that will be undertaken during and following the public consultation period on the Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) document.

Public consultation period will commence at 9am on Monday 30 July and run until 5pm Friday 19 October 2018.

ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN DURING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
Activities designed to meet our statutory consultation requirements	Make document available Formal consultation document and comments form made available at libraries, online and at Local Plan events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A – Statutory consultation requirement.
	Duty to Cooperate workshop/s Formal workshop/s with Duty to Cooperate Bodies including adjacent Local Authorities and key infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that the authority fulfils its legal duty to cooperate with the relevant bodies/agencies.
	One to one duty to cooperate meetings with relevant bodies/agencies	

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
<p>'Your Place, Your Voice' Community Planning Events</p>	<p>Fill in the <blank> boards - Freestanding boards with a question on each side staggered so participants can snake their way through and vote for the options they think are right for their area.</p> <p>Sample question 1: We need more homes for <BLANK>? Potential options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older people - Young families - People who want to build their own home - Executives - Single person households - Other <p>Sample question 2: We need more <BLANK> in our town centre? Potential options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leisure activities - Variety of shops - Restaurants - Housing - Community uses - Other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider participation by people who wouldn't normally engage with planning • Promote discussion about how certain areas could develop and change over the plan period • To gain a deeper understanding of the types of development that are needed in an area • Promote a more open and transparent decision making process and create a sense of shared ownership of the plan

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
	<p>Development issues and opportunities model/map – Stylised map of the local area including where relevant spaces around settlements. Surrounding the map will be a range of development issues and opportunities cards. Participants will be asked to place cards down on the map in relevant locations. There will also be blank cards if the participant doesn't see any cards that are relevant to the comments they would like to make.</p> <p>Sample cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity for new live/work units - Opportunity for a small scale urban extension - Important strategic green space/park - Good location for a trim trail or outdoor gym - Good location for a new hotel - Need for a new primary school here - Need for a new bypass here - Opportunity for a new train station 	

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
	<p>What's stopping you... - Activity would be similar to the one which was used in the first stage of the YPYV events but will ask people what is stopping them from walking, cycling and using sustainable transport. There will be a card for each mode and people will have the opportunity to suggest improvements as well highlight potential issues.</p>	
	<p>Big idea video blog - Video recording booth asking people about their area and getting them to share a big idea for the future of the place. Questions will build on the place story board and focus specifically on how members of the community would resolve some of the borough wide issues mentioned in the previous YPYV events.</p>	
	<p>Community Hub Case – Large display panel with a suitcase on it and three options – need to have, nice to have and not needed. Participants will be asked to sort the suggested hub uses into the three options. This will help prioritise the types of facilities/services that need to go into the local hub.</p>	

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
	<p>2050 home for the future - Modelling activity with children and adults creating a mood board of what a 2050 home would look like and then modelling it. The models could be made out of junk materials or Lego. If using junk we could involve the play rangers and get them to coordinate a big model that could be moved across the Location Group. If using Lego you could set it up as a brick pit and use a polaroid camera or similar to take images of peoples models and attach the finished item to the mood board.</p> <p>There is no such thing as a silly question - Question submission box at each event. Questions grouped after the event and with a panel of Officers and Members created for each topic. School children will then be asked to read out the questions along with any new questions they may have to the panel for them to answer. These QA sessions will be recorded and put on YouTube.</p>	
Stakeholder forum	Local Plan Youth Forum – Knowledge and skill building session with young people aged 13-18. Invitations will be sent to youth cabinet and secondary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing knowledge and understanding about planning matters in core communities to enable them to respond to planning consultations more effectively

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
	<p>Local Plan Residents Forum - Knowledge and skill building session with local residents. Invitations will be sent to community forums and advertised through social media/other channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain a different perspective on key topics • Promote a more open and transparent decision making process and create a sense of shared ownership of the plan.
	<p>Local Plan Developers Forum - Workshop sessions to discuss the emerging plan and key evidence documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sense of shared understanding between the Council and the 'Market'
	<p>Infrastructure Providers Forum - Workshop sessions to discuss the emerging plan and key evidence documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining a 'real world' perspective in terms of viability, deliverability • Limit the number of unanticipated objections in later stages of plan making.
Online only	<p>The big question survey - Online only survey using some of the key questions put forward in the consultation document or at the events.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide an opportunity for people who are not able to attend an event to respond to some of the key elements of the 'Your Place, Your Voice' events and the consultation document without reading the need to read it in its entirety.
	<p>Big idea board – An online version of the corresponding YPYV activity</p>	
	<p>What's stopping you... – An online version of the corresponding YPYV activity</p>	

ACTIVITIES TO BE UNDERTAKEN FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
<p>'Your Place, Your Voice' community planning event</p>	<p>Place planning workshops – A series of workshops with residents in the main location groups looking at the findings of the YPYV events in more details and working with the Council and other key stakeholders to refine a preferred development option for their area in the context of the borough as a whole.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wider participation by people who wouldn't normally engage with planning • Promote discussion about how certain areas could develop and change over the plan period • To gain a deeper understanding of the types of development that are needed in an area • Promote a more open and transparent decision making process and create a sense of shared ownership of the plan
<p>Stakeholder forum</p>	<p>Local Plan Youth Forum – Knowledge and skill building session with young people aged 13-18. Invitations will be sent to youth cabinet and secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing knowledge and understanding about planning matters in core communities to enable them to respond to planning consultations more effectively • Gain a different perspective on key topics • Promote a more open and transparent decision making process and create a sense of shared ownership of the plan.

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
	Local Plan Developers Forum - Workshop sessions to discuss the emerging plan and key evidence documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sense of shared understanding between the Council and the 'Market' • Gaining a 'real world' perspective in terms of viability, deliverability • Limit the number of unanticipated objections in later stages of plan making.
	Infrastructure Providers Forum - Workshop sessions to discuss the emerging plan and key evidence documents.	
Activities designed to meet our statutory consultation requirements	Duty to Cooperate workshop/s - Formal workshop/s with Duty to Cooperate Bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the authority fulfils its legal duty to cooperate with the relevant bodies/agencies.
	One to one duty to cooperate meetings with relevant bodies/agencies	

Event type	Specific activity	Desired outcome/s
Local Plan Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) meetings	<p>Local Plan PPA meeting would be used as project management tool to enable all development partners/site promoters to be clear about what is required of them at all stages of the plan making process. These meetings would be chargeable and the cost of a PPA will depend on the scale of the proposed site, the resources required and input from officers for the project. It will be based on daily rates for officers, including overheads. We may need to bring in additional expertise or temporary staff, which will be funded by the site promoter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a sense of shared understanding between the Council and the 'Market' • Ensure that proposals being worked up by developers and site promoters address the local context and appropriately reflect the needs of local communities.

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25 July 2018	ITEM: 11
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Central Services	
Report of: Councillor Gary Collins, Cabinet Member for Central Services	
This report is Public	

Introduction by Cabinet Member

I am delighted to present to Council this report which details some of the many achievements and areas of work within my portfolio over the last 12 months, which I took over in May this year.

Officers have embedded three strategies which are key to the council transforming the way it works. The Digital Strategy, Customer Services Strategy and People Strategy complement one another to develop the capacity, confidence and culture within the workforce; modernise the council and the borough and deliver for our customers.

One of the primary areas of continued transformation is the digital interaction with residents via our web portal (also known as Channel Shift). By Mid-2018, 43% of households were managing their council tax online and 52% of claimants were managing their benefits online (100% of new benefit claims are made online).

To complement the externally accessed web portal you will have all seen some of the physical changes as you walked through our newly refurbished customer services face to face and reception area. These changes reflect key principles in the Customer Services and Digital Strategies to help residents self-serve online while continuing to provide support for the most vulnerable.

To promote the changes and ensure our residents are kept informed digital communication channels continue to grow - we now have 11,400 followers on Twitter, over 4,000 follows on Facebook and almost 13,000 subscribers to our e-newsletter, Thurrock News.

Within 2017/18, Member enquiries performance remained strong, despite timeframes reducing from 10 working days to 7 working days from the 1 September 2017. However the number of enquiries are increasing year-on-year and there are other alternative and more efficient ways that residents can resolve many of their issues. With this in mind, Members should be encouraging and/or assisting residents to report various concerns on-line. In-doing so we will support the council with its digital agenda.

IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Improvement Service incorporates the business improvement and recruitment teams. The primary focus of this service is to resource the organisation and to drive process improvements and cost efficiencies across the HR, OD & Transformation directorate and the council.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The business improvement element of the Improvement Service has developed well in the past year. Key achievements in this area include:

Improvement

- Our core management objectives were reviewed with a revised set put into place which align with the key strategic objectives of the Council, focusing on the key areas for people managers of sickness, staff engagement and effective management.

Resourcing

- The successful execution of year 1 of the apprentice strategy following the introduction of the apprentice levy with 40 new apprentice starts in the year.
- The council's managed service provider for agency staff (Matrix SCM) contract has been extended (with the new contract end date of December 2019) and continued to be robustly managed to drive compliance in ensuring agency staffing needs are monitored and managed with a continuous focus on driving down cost, usage and spend where possible. We are compliant with the Eastern Region Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) relating to children's qualified social work agency staff.
- Reduction in spend on agency staff of over £600k in 2017/18 compared to previous financial year.
- The recruitment team has built on the successful improvements made in the previous 12 months including the development of the online applicant tracking systems and system for electronic references helping to speed up onboarding processes for new starters. The approach being taken by the recruitment team is now one of 'direct sourcing', actively seeking the right talent for the organisation and reducing costs.
- The team have successfully on-boarded a number of long term agency workers, and work in Children's Services in relation to qualified social care recruitment has been particularly successful, with a corresponding reduction in agency staff in this area.

Wellbeing

- Occupational Health are critical to ensuring staff can remain at work and are supported to return to work. The team are triaging referrals received to ensure the process is timely and utilising occupational health placement students to strengthen resource and capacity.

- Managers continue to engage with HR and their staff to effectively manage staff wellness and enable them to access the right support which is in place. The development of the wellbeing programme across the last year has seen an increase in staff engagement with the initiatives put into place, a key success being the staff Choir. It has been well received by employees to date and has the support of Trade Union representatives too. This is part of the wider comprehensive programme to promote health and wellbeing in employees across the council.

▶ **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2017/18 Outturn	Performance	Direction of Travel
No of new apprenticeships started (incl. current staff undertaking new apprentice standards)	40	FAILED	BETTER

Despite missing the nationally set target of 2.3% of the workforce, performance over the first year of the levy was strong with 40 apprentice starts confirmed, of which 13 new starts were in the final quarter. We have seen an expansion in the types of apprenticeships, away from the traditional business administration apprentices into specialisms such as CIPFA and ACCA Accountancy, digital marketing and housing certificates. We expect to continue to see this trend grow. Work is ongoing with Children’s Services to promote apprentices to local young people in care.

▶ **FUTURE: IMPROVEMENT SERVICE**

Improvement

- The business improvement team will lead the People Board savings project over this year to further reduce absence, overtime costs and agency staff levels and achieve the savings allocated to the Board.

Resourcing

- The recruitment team’s focus is to ensure the Applicant Tracking System (ATS) is utilised to its fullest capabilities and working towards the successful implementation of the Oracle solution for recruitment. Work has continued on the council’s advertising strategy to ensure that we are attracting, and retaining, staff with the skills that Thurrock needs to deliver its ambitious agenda and priorities. The recruitment service is also developing a commercial focus, selling recruitment advertising to businesses and academies in the borough with the full recruitment offer sold, and being delivered to, Brentwood Council.
- The apprentice levy commenced in April 2017 and good success was seen in year 1 with work ongoing to ensure the council makes the most of its contribution and achieves the target number of apprentices set by Government. We will also continue to ensure they have a valuable and worthwhile apprentice experience and put Thurrock Council on the map as a provider of first-class apprenticeship opportunities. There is a focus on branching outside of the traditional business administration apprenticeship, with a view to ensuring we are workforce planning

effectively for the future, looking at planning, legal and social care apprenticeships to fill the hard-to-recruit areas and address any skill gaps. The first coordinated apprentice recruitment day took place on 10th July 2018 resulting in 16 offers. The council is continuing to develop the programme of support on offer to apprentices and their managers, ensuring they have a fantastic experience as an apprentice at Thurrock Council and considering the best ways to retain this talent at the end of their apprenticeships.

Wellbeing

- The employee assistance programme provider will continue to be managed effectively, ensuring staff across the council are aware of the support on offer. The wellbeing offer to staff is ongoing, aligning with areas in which the council has high sickness. The team is working towards achieving Safe, Effective, Quality, Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation for our occupational health service.

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2018/19

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Improvement Team	802,718	802,718	0

HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (HR OD)

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The focus of the HR OD service is to ensure the council has a confident, competent, high performing and customer focused workforce.

The Service comprises a People and Organisational Development team with a focus on delivering the people strategy and supporting the organisation to manage change effectively; an HR Advisory team with a focus on ensuring compliance with expected people management standards, policies, and legislation changes; and a payroll team which delivers corporate, schools and academy payrolls.

The service, structure and work delivered have been subject to a comprehensive service review as part of the council's transformation programme - the service has restructured resources and refocused work delivered ensuring support for managers is provided efficiently; processes have been reviewed which has ensured a smarter use of resources and capacity has been built to generate income.

Over 2017 / 2018 the service has achieved national recognition for excellence in the public sector by achieving Finalist status at the Personnel Today awards. The team were also finalists in April's PPMA Excellence in People Management awards recognising the standards of our in-house training provision, and the commercial achievements of the HR team.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The People Strategy for 2017-2020 serves as a framework for the organisation, describing the workforce we need to develop in order to meet the vision and priorities of the council and the needs of Thurrock residents over the next three years.

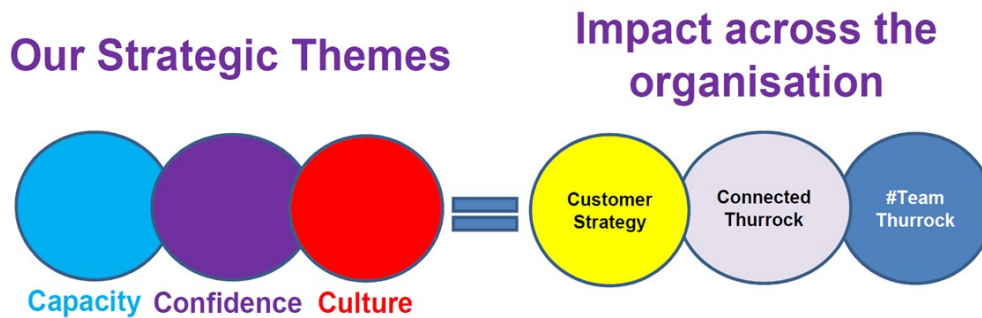
It is built around three strategic themes of **capacity**, **confidence** and **culture**.

Capacity - A customer first approach and a workforce that has the capacity to deliver what is required, multi skilled with flexible structures and agile working practices, our workforce are able to adapt to what is required

Confidence - A confident workforce who are free to innovate and take managed risks, clear on their value, taking new challenges in their stride, remaining resilient and able to adapt, working differently using modern tools and techniques

Culture - A 'one team' culture of inclusion and engagement where people are confident to challenge, resilient in the face of our transforming organisation and where high performance and the delivery of outcomes is the norm. Excellent leadership, management and trust drive a climate of continual improvement and effective use of resources

The actions to delivery these strategic themes has been closely planned and integrated with the themes within other key strategies which impact the way we need council officers to work:



Year 1 has seen the delivery of a number of key interventions – many of which provide the foundation for our future workforce

- Delivery of £700k savings – delivered through a combination of challenging our approaches to the use of overtime, how we manage sickness and supporting our people to return to work; whilst allocating agency reduction targets to Directorates, along with careful consideration of how we use agency and temporary additional support.
- Customer Services Skills Training Programme 'Right First Time'– designed and launched to an initial target group of Customer Service teams; this has been adapted to meet the needs of teams across the organisation. highlights are a focus on identifying vulnerable service users with the training underpinning an ethos of customer service excellence and 'right first time'; to date a pilot of 14 managers and 2 full sessions with 25 participants have taken place; feedback has been excellent
- Leadership and management development programme has been created to provide challenge and ensure the council has the required leadership capacity it needs. Time was spent on achieving the right combination of themes and with sponsorship from the Director chairs of the Strategic Boards the impact evaluations of the first cohorts were presented to Transformation Board in June
- Building confident people managers – time was spent to create a focused programme of sessions to build manager confidence across key areas to enhance people management practice; recruitment and their role; managing a remote workforce; managing absence. To date 26 sessions have been run with managers giving positive feedback that they feel confident and supported in their role.
- Behaviour Framework – a major piece of work was the establishment of a structured behaviour framework aligned to our ambitions for the workforce. Building upon the behavioural traits identified within the leadership and management programme, our Behaviour Framework has been structured to ensure alignment with our development programmes; it clearly sets out appropriate levels for the organisation and has been well received.
- April 2018 saw the launch of a full staff survey with analysis presented to Leadership group in June; with a 72% return rate the process of identifying issues to address and building action plans will be a key project for 2018/19 which will be supported by the whole service.

- Using the skills and expertise of the in-house team as an accredited Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) centre the broader programme of development, and a range of formal qualification are now embedded as part of the core workforce development offer. The team have also created an Aspiring Managers programme with the first cohort being oversubscribed.
- In the latter half of 2017 the team were successful in winning a three year contract to provide HR, Payroll and Training services to Brentwood Borough Council; pre implementation work began in November 2017 and the contract went live in April 2018. The Chief Executive at Brentwood was complimentary of our approach with establishing the contract and praised the team for considering the service needs, not only from a commercial viewpoint but also with a collaborative approach.

► **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2017/18 Outturn	Performance	Direction of Travel
Average sickness absence per FTE employee	9.95	FAILED	Better

The direction of travel for sickness is positive, however the targets of 9 days was not achieved. The project reported in the Improvement Service section will build on the positive direction of travel and is intended to drive further and faster improvements.

To support the People Strategy in tracking and measuring the impact of key work we established a People KPI Framework which was particularly helpful over 2017 / 18 in being able to align our priorities to the evidence shown within the framework – we now have a tracker that measures the following performance which is reviewed, monitored and challenged by People Board:

- Workforce Profile
- Workforce Diversity
- Workforce Health
- Workforce Development

|

► **FUTURE: HR & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM**

Looking ahead to respond to the plans for council and the changes needed as part of the wider transformation programme, we will focus on delivering the agreed People Strategy Year 2 priorities of:

- **Capacity** – Reward & Pay Review; Absence Management
- **Confidence** – Change Management and Agile Working (building skills and confidence)
- **Culture** – a focus on Values, Attributes and Behaviours
- **Workforce development** – building a strong Leadership group; a Customer focus of ‘right first time’; a Digital skills strategy with supporting programme of development

We will ensure the agreed £500k savings identified through People Board are delivered – these are focused on the key areas of absence reduction, agency spend and overtime activity.

In line with the People Strategy priorities consideration will be given to appropriate pay and reward methods to ensure the organisation has a modern and effective pay strategy; each directorate will consider specific people related issues, talent management and career pathways including the use of apprentices and how they will need to engage with the leadership and management programmes. Manager toolkits and digital resources will be rolled out across the organisation ensuring managers can access key information and guidance when needed.

► **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2018/19**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
HROD	2,104,108	2,104,108	0

CORPORATE PROGRAMME TEAM

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Corporate Programme Team is responsible for the delivery of the council's Transformation Programme initiatives. This ambitious programme ranges from enhancing the way citizens interact digitally with the council, via Thurrock On-Line, to implementing new ways for employees to work and deliver services more efficiently through more agile working. Primarily consisting of Project and Programme Managers supported by Business Transformation Analysts and Project Officers, the team is continuously delivering corporate changes that impact the whole organisation with regards the delivery of council services.

In a changing world, any organisation or business that cannot adapt to the new norms, will not survive. This is also true of local authorities such as ours which looks after the people, economy and environment of Thurrock. To help us deliver the best possible services the Corporate Programme Team are actively engaged in the Council's cross-cutting, or targeted, Service Reviews to look at doing things differently, helping employees work smarter not harder and driving continuous efficiency improvements throughout the whole organisation.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

Over the last twelve months one of our key transformational focus areas has been the continued effort to encourage citizens of Thurrock to utilise self-service and online facilities – known as Channel Shift. We can measure our success through monitoring individual/household registrations on our online portal called MyAccount. We currently have over 71,000 individuals/households registered with MyAccounts which absolutely proves that our residents are choosing to interact with us online and we will continue to mutually embrace such changes through our Digital Programme.

With such a high proportion of registrations we know we will have now started to reach areas of the population who are unable, unwilling, or unsure how to get online. To help support the conversion of remaining households to online we offer assisted self-service within the Civic Offices in conjunction with offering support at Libraries and Community Hubs to ensure we minimise online/digital exclusion.

Further, real-time, online assistance is also available now through a web-chat facility that has been introduced to key pages on MyAccount.

We already know that technology has transformed everything from social interaction and connecting with friends, family and businesses (social media platforms), banking (mobile applications) to parcel deliveries (online tracking systems) and will continue to do so. It is just as clear that online interaction with the Council is also choice that is highly preferred by our residents.

By Mid-2018, 43% of households were managing their council tax online and 52% of claimants were managing their benefits online (100% of benefit claims are made online).

► DIGITAL PROGRAMME: Completed elements

The Digital Council Programme focusses on exploiting new/existing digital technologies and combines them with new ways of working to enable the transformation of strategic operational areas of the council. This programme is designed to use technology to achieve optimum efficiency gains resulting in a more modern, effective and sustainable business that satisfies internal end-user and external customer needs by ultimately providing 24/7 access to key services where appropriate.

Thurrock On Line:

- Registrar appointments Single Sign On – improved user experience, allows user to use My Account log in details to access booking forms without the need to log in separately
- Registrars copy certificate ordering – order and pay for a copy certificates online
- Environmental reporting LIVE maps – improvements to product which lets user see existing reports on a LIVE map, reduces duplicate reports and allows transparency
- Bulky Waste booking product redesign- improved accessibility when used on mobile devices
- Web-chat support on key MyAccount pages went live in November 2017.
- In October 2017 Thurrock Council won a SOCITM award for Citizen Engagement based on the success of resident subscriptions to the on-line portal
 - Over 11,000 issue reports were made online in 2017 using www.thurrock.gov.uk/report
 - We now receive more reports via on-line channels than by phone contact.
 - Our online services are now the first choice for most of our customers

Business Improvement – Oracle EBS/Oracle Cloud:

- Further enhancements to the existing Oracle EBS system were completed that delivered:
 - Improved bulk uploading of data
 - Improved on-boarding processes for new employees
- Further protection of our investment in Oracle EBS has been maintained through a successful Oracle Cloud readiness assessment that ensured we are able to transition to a more modern Cloud based solution.

Data Modelling - phase 2:

- Early intervention alerts were made available directly into the Multi Agency Service Hub (MASH) to identify children/families that would benefit from early intervention assistance

Common Data Portal:

- In June 2017 a web page went live that contains a section reflecting useful Thurrock Facts and Statistics to (<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock-facts-and-statistics/overview>)

► **SERVICE REVIEWS:**

In January 2018 the Service Review programme changed from a cyclic Service by Service programme to a focused targeted or cross-cutting review process. This ensures that Services meeting specific criteria such as overspending, under-performing or having high staff attrition/sickness/agency costs are given priority. Recommendations and supporting evidence from Operational Boards regarding Services that meeting such criteria are evaluated at Service Review Board and decisions to progress are reported through Transformation Board.

As previously, each service review is still coordinated by a Senior Project Manager from the Corporate Programme Team and aligned with a Senior HR Advisor in conjunction with a Business Transformation Analyst and, of course, involves key stakeholders from the Service itself.

In 2017/18 the Service Review programme achieved efficiency savings across various services equating to £577k. The 2018/19 targeted and cross-cutting Service Review programme carries a target of £930k and reviews are initially being carried out in the following service areas:

- Children’s Services
- Business Resource
- ICT / Technology
- Transport
- Single View of Debt

It is anticipated that additional cross cutting or targeted reviews will be identified as we progress throughout the year.

► **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2017/18 Outturn	Latest Data	End of Year Target	Performance	Direction of Travel
No of people registered for MyAccount	67,978	71,344	60,000	ACHIEVED	Better

► **FUTURE AND IN-FLIGHT PROJECTS:**

Innovation and new ways of working are constantly on our radar in order to deliver the best possible services to the residents and businesses of Thurrock. Through the very active Service Review programme we will continue to strive for more operational efficiencies and increased productivity. Ground breaking projects such as using data modelling to predict, not only early help opportunities for our younger generation, but also giving valuable insight to Anti-Social Behavior triggers, potential homelessness and identifying optimal engagement with our most vulnerable residents will continue to dominate our appetite to transform the council and manage demand more effectively.

Other key initiatives that are currently under consideration, development or in early stages of project commencement are:

Business Improvement – Oracle Cloud

- Building on our investment with the current Oracle EBS system a plan to migrate to the next generation of feature-rich Oracle Cloud is already in progress.

Thurrock On-Line:

- Upgrade to v6.5 offering multiple feature rich enhancements to residents
- Single sign-on for resident requiring parking permits.
- Benefit claim evidence upload

Electronic Document and Records Management - phase 2:

- Continued integration with Line of Business Applications
- Continued bulk document scanning and archiving
- Enabling secure external partner access to selective electronic documents held internally

Agile working

A modern approach to agile working is already underway and this project is intrinsically linked to a property related project looking at the optimization of the Civic Offices workspace. Pivotal to the success of building an agile workforce are the technologies and culture within an organization. Pilot groups are being formulated to reflect changes in technology, the workforce and working regimes since the original New Ways Of Working project completed back in 2015. The output from these pilot groups will be used to shape a wider project that will commence in late 2018.

► **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2018/19**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Transformation	766,453	766,453	0

INFORMATION TEAM

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This team is responsible for ensuring compliance with information governance regulations and protection of the council's reputation, including information security (policies and procedures), data protection, Freedom of Information (FOI), Records Management, Complaints and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) including Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) / Local Street Gazetteer (LSG).

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

During 2017/18, the council processed 96% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the legal timeframe. This is based on 1056 FOI requests that were processed. 2017/18 has seen a slight increase in FOI requests received compared with 2016/17 (1046 received).

The council challenge and/or refuse requests when it is believed that the requestor has used a false name, where we have reasonable grounds to believe the applicant is acting as part of a campaign or in consort with others, or where their questions do not meet the other validity requirements for FOI. The council refuse requests where it is estimated that the time taken to process the request exceeds 18 hours.

During 2017/18 the council received 29 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection legislation. 83% of these requests were processed within the timeframe.

The Information Governance Team is continuing to ensure an increased amount of data is identified for routine publication online. This work forms part of the Transparency Agenda and aims to increase openness and accountability; whilst reducing unnecessary processing of FOI requests.

A review of the complaints procedure took place during 2017/18, which resulted in the timeframe for responding to member enquiries reducing from 10 working days to 7 working days. This took effect from 1 September 2017.

The number of complaints received for 2017/18 is 1714. For the same period last year the combined figure for concerns and complaints was 2890, therefore the reporting period represents a significant reduction which is positive.

There is an increase in the percentage of complaints upheld at 41%. Last year this figure was 38%. The corporate indicator is set at 35%. Detailed analysis on upheld complaints will be shown in the annual complaints report for Standards and Audit Committee.

The corporate indicator for responding to complaints within timeframe is set at 95%. A total of 83% of complaints were responded to within timeframe. This is below target however there was an improvement from October onwards.

A total of 3764 member enquiries were received, with 94% responded to within timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 5 days.

Prior to submitting any Members Enquiries into the council for consideration and action, Members should be encouraging and/or assisting Thurrock Residents to report various concerns on-line.

In doing so, will support the council with its digital agenda and channel shift work. If Residents are able to log it on-line, then they will receive notification of progress directly and they should also receive a quicker response from the council, as their issue is submitted into the service area (from the resident) and not passed between Members and Officers.

We know that many of our Residents are happy to communicate with the council online, it's quicker and more convenient.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect on the 25 May 2018 and the team ensured the Council was compliant with the revised legislation ahead of this date.

▶ **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2017/18 Outturn	2018/19 Target
% timeliness of response to all complaints	83%	95%
% of all complaints upheld (based on closed complaints)	40%	35%

▶ **FUTURE**

The focus for the team in 2018/19 will be on the following:

- To continue to drive forward a learning from complaints culture with robust learning action plans across council services
- To implement changes required as part of the General Data Protection Regulation

▶ **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2018/19**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Information Management	407,742	407,742	0

CUSTOMER SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This part of the portfolio includes all front line customer contact including contact centre, Careline, out-of-hours and the face to face on the ground floor of the Civic Offices.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

A major project within this part of my portfolio in 2017/18 was the commencement of delivery of the customer services strategy action plan following approval at Cabinet in April 2017.

The Customer Services Strategy action plan delivery is going very well with some key highlights such as a new contact centre telephony platform implementation in October 2017 and the commencement of the ground floor face to face customer services changes which will be finalised in July. Feedback has been excellent so far, even with the interim solution during work completion and customers are reacting extremely well to the new approach of utilising self-service wherever possible. This is enabling more time and dedicated resource to support our most vulnerable residents.

Our customer excellence right first time training is in progress with many service areas scheduled to attend over the next few months including housing and environment. This has been developed to include service specific scenarios and the flexibility to meet the needs of all services.

Our quality performance has again been recognised externally with the reaccreditation of the CCA (Customer Contact Association) Version 6 status in June 2018 where no non-conformances were reported and an excellent audit report from the British Standards Institute. This is an independent audit of our customer services operation against industry developed and approved requirements.

▶ FUTURE

The team is continuing throughout 2018/19 to deliver the customer services strategy action plan with a year of focused activities.

This includes the launch of the newly refurbished customer services face to face area and new delivery model and launching a new Customer Charter. We will also be launching a Right First Time internal campaign with a calendar of activities to ensure we maintain a high focus and momentum on providing good customer service and staff being an ambassador for the council.

Work is also underway to support our most vulnerable residents to ensure that all services can be aware of when people are facing particular challenges so that they can be supported in the most appropriate way with early intervention wherever possible. This work will involve exploring a single view of the customer and more efficient use of our systems and processes.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2018/19

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Customer Services	829,888	829,888	0

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Thurrock Council values the positive contribution that diversity brings to our borough. As a community leader, service provider and employer, we continue to work together with our partners to ensure that residents and employees have equal opportunity to fulfil their potential, and that our neighbourhoods are places where integration is supported. We will aim to eliminate intolerance and discrimination and to promote good relations between different groups of employees and citizens – this practice underpins the Council's priorities, strategies and practice.

Our Single Equality Scheme is currently being refreshed. This will set out our equality objectives, as well as our framework for ensuring that council meets its Public Sector Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010. This requires us to demonstrate 'due regard' when assessing the equality impact of its proposed or current policies and functions. Community Equality Impact Assessments (CEqIA) are used as a systematic process to consider each protected group covered by the Act in turn.

The Council is committed to a range of existing external validation assessments that measure our commitment to equality. All managers are aware of the specific requirements of these standards and how they relate to their areas through regular internal communications and additional briefings where relevant. Staff networks exist to support engagement relating to Multi-cultural, Disability, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual + (LGBT+), Mental Health, Women and Men. As well as supporting staff engagement, networks help to ensure the council is considering issues relating to best practice as well as linking with wider community networks where possible. This supports increased profile for equality in the Borough with recent events including International Women's Day and Raising the Rainbow Flag to celebrate Essex Pride.

COMMUNICATIONS

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This portfolio covers the council's communications functions including media liaison (proactive and reactive), social media, marketing campaigns, design and the council's website.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The communications team has been restructured to meet the demands of a modern local government communications environment and have recruited a multi-discipline team with experience across behaviour change campaigns, digital communications, regeneration projects, branding and marketing, media relations and internal communications.

Since the new team came into place in March, they have dealt with more than 200 media enquiries on a wide and diverse range of topics. In the last year we've run campaigns for the hugely successful Give a Gift campaign, and we've launched our new Discover Thurrock campaign this month, which aims to encourage those who live in Thurrock to make the most of the huge range of events and activities on offer in our borough during the summer months and beyond.

The council's fostering campaign generated 69% more enquiries than in the same time period in 2017, and has helped to recruit 10 new foster carers with eight more applications currently in progress. People may have noticed that all of our bin lorries are now carrying clear information and messages about what to recycle and how important it is to do so, as part of our work to support an increase in recycling rates.

Our digital channels continue to grow, with our posts on topics such as highways and waste and recycling, as well as human interest stories, regularly reaching thousands of people. For example, a recent post about the closure of the A13 for emergency repair works reached close to a quarter of a million people and was shared 2,677 times. We now have 11,400 followers on Twitter, 4,289 likes and 4,410 follows on Facebook and are hoping to rapidly grow the audience of our new Instagram account. Our main monthly e-newsletter, Thurrock News, currently has almost 13,000 subscribers and is one of a range of e-newsletters which includes Business Buzz and Thurrock Careers. We have started to revitalise our internal communications channels as well, with a new weekly staff e-newsletter which in its first few weeks has reached three times as many staff than previously.

We encourage all councillors and residents who use social media to follow or like our pages for up to the minute news about what Thurrock Council is doing.

▶ FUTURE

We'll be continuing with the delivery of the communications strategy, increasing the reach of our digital channels and working to make sure that our residents are kept well informed of all council services and new initiatives, as well as having a chance to have their say on major projects through our consultations.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2018/19

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Communications	457,396	457,396	0

LEGAL SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Legal Services directorate includes the legal services team, democratic services, Members' services and electoral services.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

LEGAL SERVICES

Following a joint review and a detailed consideration of available options the former shared legal service with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham (known as **BDT Legal**) was consensually discontinued at the end March 2018. This was to allow each Authority to address their legal needs with greater individual focus. The discontinuance is being managed in a controlled manner over a period of transition and, where continued or interim collaborations are necessary or beneficial these will be maintained in the interim subject to exploring wider cost-efficient collaboration opportunities with South Essex Authorities and others as appropriate.

The consequent restructure of Thurrock Legal Services has addressed as a high priority the introduction of: client aligned team structures, improved reporting lines and a reduction in the level of spend on locum or agency lawyers to build increased legal capacity, resilience and internal expertise and achieve significant savings.

The service is on course to reversing an agency level of 85% to a permanent officer level of more than 85 % by October 2018.

Joint Director of Law & Governance

The previous LBBD employed Joint Director of Law & Governance has been replaced with a Thurrock employed Assistant Director of Law & Governance who is also the Monitoring Officer with a consequent financial saving.

There are now 4 legal teams a short narrative description of this restructure and direction of travel would be as follows:

Regeneration Legal Team

- Managed by a Deputy Head of Law & Governance (Regeneration) with 3 sub teams of Contracts, Planning & Highways and Property law – the aim of this interdisciplinary approach being to create a centre of legal excellence in regeneration matters to reflect Thurrock' challenging agenda.
- This team of lawyers addresses the in-house legal requirements of the Authority in the fields of planning, highways, contracts, procurement, and property law. Once permanently recruited to this team will be positioned to assist smaller district authorities in the immediate estuary area, if desired, under business plan based and resourced on sustainable trading and / or collaborations.

Safeguarding Legal Team

- Managed by a Deputy Head of Law & Governance (Safeguarding) with no sub teams
- This team of lawyers addresses children and adult safeguarding and education law for the Authority. The team needed strengthening and had become too agency based due to failed recruitment attempts at Band 7 starting at £29k which did not reflect market reality. Two highly experienced and senior safeguarding lawyers are now in place with a view to increasing resilience and robust line management

Litigation & Housing Team

- The Assistant Director of Law & Governance manages this team (having been previously a Principal Litigation & Employment lawyer some years back) with the assistance of a Senior Lawyer / Team Leader.
- This team addresses criminal and civil litigation, employment, licensing and housing matters for the Authority.

Legal Practice Team

- This team is managed by a Legal Practice Manager and has successfully obtained Lexcel Accreditation for the past 11 years. It accepted by the legal profession that robust practice management is a key factor in delivering excellence in legal services, that and the retention of good legal talent.

Case management

- Thurrock Legal Services operate a case management system called IKEN which was and is dependent of citrix access to another Authority's server. A working team has been established with IT to migrate this core critical data to Cloud servers as the current configuration is not supportive of agile working.

Law Society / SRA regulation

- Thurrock Legal Services has held Law Society Lexcel Accreditation for 11 years. The discontinuance of the shared service likewise requires a rewriting of the legal practice mandatory office manual which is well in hand.

Governance & Office of Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner.

- The Assistant Director of Law & Governance currently covers the role of Monitoring Officer to both Thurrock Borough Council and the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and further exploratory discussions are underway regarding the provision of Monitoring Officer and governance services to the Essex Fire & Rescue Authority as part of a more focused South Essex / Essex collaborations.

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

The service continues to support all of the council's public committees. In the 2017-18 year there was the addition of the Joint Health and Well-Being Committee with Southend and Essex County Councils to consider the joint commissioning of hospital services, as well as the continuation of the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force. The Constitution Working Group also met to discuss the specific issue of public access and engagement with committees. The 2018-19 year has seen significant change within the team with three new staff members joining.

The Service has progressed with innovations on Member training, developing a greater online resource for Members which supports their learning and development throughout their term. This portal can be found on Inform at <https://inform.thurrock.gov.uk/zones/councillor/>.

ELECTORAL SERVICES

The statutory annual canvass commenced July 2017 and the statutory revised register was published on 1 December 2018.

Planning for the scheduled May 2018 elections commenced in December and plans were revised to incorporate the Ockendon by-election held in March 2018 following the resignation of a councillor. Both elections were implemented successfully.

The team continues to extensively 'data mine' on a monthly basis using other local authority data sources to keep the electoral register up to date and encourage residents to register to vote when they move or become eligible. This is a statutory duty of the Electoral Registration Officer.

The team has updated the Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer documents in line with new GDP Regulations and continues to review processes to comply with new regulations.

Planning is underway for the statutory annual canvass for 2018/19 which will commence in July 2018 and will result in the publication of the revised register on 1 December 2018 (unless there is an election during the canvass period).

The Electoral Services Manager is now responsible for managing Member Services and is working to provide support to the team, enhance the service they offer and mutually provide additional resources across both services.

A statutory Polling District and Polling Place review is due and must commence and be completed within 16 months of 1 October 2018. The team is currently considering the best time frame for the review period and consultation.

► FUTURE

Thurrock Legal Services will continue as an in-house team addressing principally the needs of Thurrock Council but will continue to explore potential collaborations with South Essex authorities where this would be cost efficient and build resilience without compromising the focus on Thurrock Council priorities and will in due course review the opportunities for developing sustainable traded income.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2018/19

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Legal Services	1,713,940	1,713,940	0
Democratic Services	198,886	198,886	0
Electoral Services	1,197,530	1,197,530	0
Total	3,110,356	3,110,356	0

DIGITAL / ICT SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

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

The scope of duties is aligned to the UK Government recognised Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and currently includes: the Chief Technology Officer; Operations; Change and Implementation; and Commercial.

▶ REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

Over the last 12 months the ICT service has completed a number of technology projects and application upgrades that forms part of the overall Council Digital Strategy. These include:

- Contact Centre telephony upgrade - which now provides a reliable modern solution and removes one of the key IT risks the Council had due to the age and supportability of the previous version;
- Disaster Recovery Link to Southend – a new 10GB data link has been installed between the 2 sites enabling ICT to host services from Southend and deliver DR capability for key applications;
- 2 in 1 Tablet rollout to Directors, some Members and the planning areas which enables great flexibility to officers and, in the case of planning, efficiencies in the way they work;
- Implementation of a new digital backup solution that removes the need for tape technology and will improve restoration times in the event of system failure;
- Implementation of a scanning solution for Customer Services that enables citizens to scan documents directly into the appropriate area in Objective which has greatly improved waiting times;
- Implementation of password strengthening as part of the Cyber Security Essentials to protect the Council from cyber-attacks;
- Meeting room technology upgrades – implementation of screens, projectors and conference phones in meeting rooms for 6 or more people;
- Enterprise monitoring – Upgrade to an enterprise version of Solarwinds that enable ICT to Monitor servers and applications and detect issues in real time; and
- Mobile phone and Good upgrade – Mobile phones upgraded and new Blackberry mobile software installed to improve connectivity for Officers whilst on the move.

Whilst there has been a new strategic and commercial emphasis within the team, our overriding priority is to ensure that the council's technology services are performant and fit for purpose. Our operational achievements for the year include:

- No change on the baseline of 41% in staff satisfaction in the Information Technologies provided by the council in this year's pulse survey; and
- No major IT outages between 1 August 2017 and 30 June 2018.

▶ PERFORMANCE DATA

There are no formal corporate performance measurements for ICT, however the service continue to track performance against a subset of the KPIs that were reported during the period of the Strategic Services Partnership.

▶ FUTURE: CITIZEN JOURNEYS

ICT are looking at rapid application development tools platform which will improve the way citizens interact with the Council. As part of this, and in support of the Customer Services Strategy, parking permits have been identified as the first process to be moved onto this platform and are due to go live in July 2018. Other processes that are under consideration for this platform include:

- A review of how the Council processes payments to provide a consistent user experience when interfacing with the Council;
- A central notification system to provide greater message consistency; and
- A single view of the debtor to assist in supporting those that are vulnerable.

▶ FUTURE: HIGH AVAILABILITY

Over the last year, officers have started to deliver some of the infrastructure that will support a digital council that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Digital Strategy sets an aspiration of achieving 99.9% availability – up from the current 99.5%. Key elements of this plan for 2018/19 include:

- **End User Computing** – Replacing the current equipment with modern “hyper-converged” technology. A contract has been awarded and work on delivering this solution starts in July 2018;
- **Datacentre Resilience** – ICT have been working with consultants to develop a fully costed business case that reviewed 4 possible options for improving data centre resiliency. The most cost effective solution is to build a new data centre on premise and a tender for this work will be issued in July 2018 with delivery of the new facility expected in Q2 2019;
- **High Availability Infrastructure** – A major shortcoming in our current set up is the limited ability to test changes before they are put live. New test environments will be created to cover the key areas of the infrastructure;
- **Cyber Security** – continuing the work started to meet the requirement for an industry standard accreditation for the council;
- **Corporate Wi-Fi** – The existing solution requires an upgrade to meet the Council’s current future requirements. A project is currently underway to deliver this improvement;
- **Windows 10 Upgrade** – With Windows 7 going out of extended support in January 2020 and new equipment no longer supporting this Operating System (OS) there will be a rollout of Windows 10 on all new devices. A scoping project that will include application compatibility with the new OS is currently underway;

- **Windows Server 2016 Upgrade** – With Windows Server 2008 going out of extended support in January 2020 ICT are planning to upgrade all application servers to Windows Server 2016 10. A scoping project for this major OS upgrade is currently underway; and
- **Single Points of Failure** – A number of single points of failure within the infrastructure have been identified and a schedule works to remove these and replace with resilient solutions is ongoing.

▶ **FUTURE: SMARTER WORKING**

- ICT will be updating the service desk software they use which will enable officers to log calls through a self-service port and will remove the need to for forms as part of the efficiencies that this technology will bring;
- Choose Your Own Device – A catalogue of devices that will better support the IT needs of officers is being developed; and
- Single Sign On – A proof of concept pilot for single sign on is scheduled for July 2018. This will enable officers to have a single password to login to multiple systems.

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25 July 2018	ITEM: 12
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance	
Report of: Councillor Shane Hebb, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	
This report is Public	

Introduction by Cabinet Member

I am pleased to report to Council, that the services to which residents use and depend on are safe for the next four years.

Our self-sufficiency objectives; our long-term economic plan, is working.

Members will be aware, that Revenue Support Grants across the United Kingdom have been reducing, as councils and public sector bodies took their share of repaying the national deficit, to save the national economy. Thurrock has been no exception in that.

From May 2016, we have embarked on a self-sufficiency objective – an objective where Thurrock would strive to become a council that lived within its means, and a council not reliant on national government for revenue funding.

The Council Spending Review replaced the Budget Review Panels; the primary effort is to look from the bottom-up, at building services up to the standard we are either expected to deliver, or the bar that we set ourselves. This was in contrast to a previous regime of top-down cuts, which failed to enable services to reform.

Fast forward to Summer 2018, and we are in the enviable position of being one – if not, the, first unitary council across the United Kingdom which has balanced its books for four years ahead.

We have increased the General Fund Balance – the so-called “reserves” – by 38%, from £8m to £11m.

We are projected to deliver a £10m surplus over those four years. A surplus that will be spent, penny-for-penny, on Thurrock as a place, on Thurrock’s people and on Thurrock’s future.

Furthermore, the Administration has overseen spending of so-called “ear-marked reserves” – which funds projects such as school building and other capital plans, or, money that the council held but then handed over when schools moved from council-maintained to academy schools. Taxpayers expect their institutions to have enough cash to fall back on in the event of a financial crisis, but conversely, not sit idly on their tax-levied funds. Thurrock Conservatives agree – thus our review of reserves to ensure the council doesn’t sit on council tax payers money for no reason. It is not right to set aside money for a purpose – classroom building, the new Integrated Medical Centres, as examples – and then not spend it as intended.

The Administration's approach to the council finances; a combination of the CSR and an investment approach, has also enabled the Cabinet to be able to increase some department budgets in the 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 municipal years. "Clean It, Cut It, Fill It" has been, and will remain funded, for all the while, a Conservative Cabinet leads this council. The Administration has announced its new "Stop It" campaign. This can only be achieved with sound finances; and we will be fighting the fight that residents of the borough want us to take on.

The municipal year 2017/18 was a successful year for the department, and I want to thank all members of the Finance and Commercial departments for their superb efforts in achieving what has been achieved.

As we move into the 2018/19 municipal year, our primary focus will be to continue our self-sufficiency economic plan.

We will build on the approach we constructed and successfully followed in the 2017/18 year, as we seek to make Thurrock not only a place to live of low-council tax, but also a council which aims to provide the highest-quality services through genuine reform and doing things differently, where it is necessary to do so.

The CSR is now in its third year, out of a three year cycle. That work will endure to ensure our services are best in class.

We will also begin key work streams through the 2018/19 municipal year, where we want to help all residents climb life's ladder – our #LifesLadder initiative. That work starts with the Fair Debt Summit in September 2018.

This portfolio report covers the following functions:

- Finance (including corporate finance, counter intelligence and fraud, insurance/risk management);
- Revenues and benefits teams;
- Digital;
- Procurement and Commercial Services; and
- The Vision and Priorities.

CORPORATE FINANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

Corporate Finance lead on the promotion and delivery of good financial management to ensure that the council's financial position is managed appropriately and public money is safeguarded.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M / PERFORMANCE:

Thurrock Council, like most other councils, continues to have to be innovative to meet the financial demands upon it. Having taken a more commercial focus, introduced a Council Spending Review, and including an ambitious investment strategy, the council was presented with a forecasted four year balanced budget in February. This is unprecedented across the country and sets the council on the path to becoming financially self-sufficient whilst also providing security and growth in those services that are important to our residents.

The 2017/18 financial outturn position was reported to Cabinet in June 2018, whereby we demonstrated that not only had Thurrock lived within its means for our second Administrative year, but also identified a surplus of £2.3m that was allocated to priority areas such as the environment, funds to tackle anti-social behaviour and support for the council's work in opposing a second Thames crossing in the borough.

Whilst the Housing Revenue Account balance has been maintained at £2.175m, the General Fund balance has been increased to £11m, a 38% uplift, honouring the Administration's commitment to increase this balance against economic and demand led risks.

► **FUTURE: COUNCIL SPENDING REVIEW**

In 2016, the Administration launched a different approach to setting the Council's budget, the Council Spending Review (CSR). This was to move away from the historic approach of top-slicing service budgets but, instead, concentrates on: reviewing bottom-up a service; a commercial approach; more or same for less; and reducing the level of growth on demand led services. This is underpinned by a comprehensive review of all services and an ambitious investment strategy.

The East of England Local Government Association's Finance Peer Review in June 2017, looking at the council's financial position and the CSR process, endorsed the CSR as good practice and so has been continued throughout 2017/18 with meetings scheduled throughout this current year as well.

The work carried out and planned under the CSR was presented to the Council in February of this year and showed a balanced budget for this and a further three years. As last year, surpluses are forecast and the use of these will be subject to future reports.

► **FUTURE: CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The capital programme has certainly changed under this Administration. The Environment Fleet has been replaced, an exciting concept for Integrated Medical Centres is being developed, new schools and school expansions, the widening of the A13, to name but a few, whilst further investing in our highways infrastructure and council homes.

► **FUTURE: NNDR REFORM**

The full scale of NNDR reform will not take place during this parliament although some progress towards change is likely to be implanted within the next three years. Council officers continue to work closely with the MHCLG and the LGA on this reform.

COUNTER-FRAUD & INVESTIGATION

► **SERVICE OVERVIEW**

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

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The Standards and Audit Committee received the annual report last week that sets out the many successes and partnerships that the counter fraud service has delivered whilst also receiving international recognition.

Key successes include:

- £3.1m of detected fraud last year, £24.5m since 2014;
- 2.04:1 ratio of detected fraud to cost;
- The safeguarding of 81 adults and children from harm;
- The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act and civil law to recover monies from fraudsters, over £3.4m has been recovered so far; and
- Launching the UK's first Cyber Resilience Service in local government, protecting Thurrock and other councils from cyber-crime.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Reports of fraud received and under investigation:

- Housing fraud 104, under investigation 79;
- Blue Badge 11, under investigation 5;
- Social Care 14, under investigation 8;
- Council Tax 88, under investigation 22;
- Other 26, under investigation 10;
- The unit have recovered 26 properties that were being fraudulently used; these have now been re-let to those in genuine need. The value of this fraud is £598,000; and
- Three right to buy applications have also been stopped, meaning that valuable social housing stock remains available and under the control of Thurrock Council

► FUTURE: FOCUSES, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The council received central government funding to expand its centre of excellence in fighting complex crime in local government and other agencies. This model has been further pursued since 2014, with over 25 public bodies accessing the specialist capabilities held in the Counter Fraud & Investigation team.

This support includes providing expertise to tackle the most serious crime including online child abuse, organised money laundering and fraud.

The team has developed a Cyber Resilience Service using its expertise in the investigation of cyber-crime to help other councils in that area too. Last year 76% of councils were affected by cyber-crime. This essential service will again strengthen Thurrock's defences further but also ensure other councils are protected too.

► NATIONAL INVESTIGATION SERVICE

Thurrock has taken an innovative approach to protecting the public funds entrusted to us. Our priority has always been to ensure that the council can provide the best possible services to our residents, visitors and businesses taking a strong stance against those who seek to abuse those services for criminal gain. Our development of our Counter Fraud & Investigation function has ensured that it is at the forefront identifying and pursuing those

who do attempt to commit crime. Our national capability has supported other likeminded councils all over the UK from here in Essex to Blackpool, London, Manchester and Dorset.

Our expertise was also called upon to assist the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in Malawi requiring tactical advice to economic crime casework. This remote support has seen support being given in the complex digital forensics and cyber-crime world that Thurrock has successfully operated in across the UK.

As Cabinet Member for this department, I am keen to enhance relations with other local authorities and public sector bodies where there is a benefit of doing so.

This team work hard, and effectively, to successfully recover monies deceptively taken from the taxpayer, and ensure accountability is levied with the support of evidence etc. We are doing this, for the hard-working taxpayers who get up in the dark, get home in the dark, work shifts, pay their dues – and deserve for their hard earned taxes to not be illegally taken from the services that they pay for. My stance on fraud is clear – and my view, which I articulated last year, hasn't changed at all.

The team continue to get world-wide recognition and calls for their services – that in itself is superb recognition, and I hope they are proud of the team that they have become.

RISK & INSURANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Risk and Insurance team aim to maintain appropriate risk management, insurance and risk financing arrangements for the council.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is refreshed annually and has been regularly reviewed/reported to Standards & Audit Committee, Directors Board and Performance Board in line with the Risk and Opportunity Management Framework.

► PERFORMANCE

The council uses the ALARM/CIPFA Risk Management framework to test the council's performance against good practice. For the 2017/18 review the Council attained Level 4 out of 5 (where 5 is best).

Internal Audit reviews of the Risk Management and Insurance functions were undertaken in the last year. The audit report on Risk Management Maturity was issued January 2018 and the Council judged at level 4 out of 5 (where 5 is best). The Insurance audit was completed March 2018 and a Green report issued.

These reviews provide assurance to the council that both the Risk Management and Insurance functions are adequate, effective and performing well.

► FUTURE

The service will look to further embed risk management into decision making and continue work on the insurance tender during 2018.

REVENUES & BENEFITS/COLLECTIONS

► HOUSING BENEFITS & COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT- REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The rollout of Universal Credit which commenced in Thurrock in March 2015 for single people progressed to full service in October last year. Under full service new applicants who are working age people with 2 children or less, are now required to claim support for housing costs through Universal Credit rather than Housing Benefits. Within Thurrock there are currently circa. 1,000 claimants who now receive support with housing costs under the Universal Credit system and 9,000 who continue to receive support through Housing Benefit.

The Governments latest estimate suggests that full migration to Universal Credit will not complete until 2023. Whilst Universal Credit is administered by the DWP, even once fully rolled out, the council will still play a key role in providing assisted digital support and budgeting support for Universal Credit. The Council will also maintain responsibility administration of Housing Benefit for people of pensionable age, those in temporary homeless accommodation, all claimants for Local Council Tax support and Discretionary Housing Payments for those in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, who require additional short term assistance to meet their Housing Costs.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Despite the additional workload the time taken to process Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support remains good with New Claims being processed in an average of 3 weeks and changes of circumstance in less than a week. This compares favourably to the current processing times for Universal Credit.

Complaints regarding the service have fallen with only 27 received in 2017/18 of which 33% were upheld. This is an improving result considering the service processed circa 3,000 new claims last year and in excess of 20,000 changes in circumstance.

► HOUSING BENEFITS - FUTURE

The service will continue to monitor developments and adjust service provision where possible to mitigate the impact of the roll out of Universal Credit and the wider benefit reform agenda.

► DEBT RECOVERY

Thurrock's collection results are now amongst the best in the country, however debt recovery can, by its nature, sometimes be a difficult and emotive subject. As with other councils Thurrock has to balance the duty to collect to ensure delivery of the services it provides whilst ensuring those in difficulties receive the support they require.

In line with these requirements I am committed to ensuring that whilst this council must take a firm approach to those that can pay but won't, residents that can't pay, but want to pay, are treated in a fair and appropriate way and are provided with the opportunity to access the support they need – including helping to educate young people emerging into adulthood from education and other pathways on the short-term, and long-term adversity, of getting into debt.

In order to support our service planning to maintain this direction of travel in 2017 the council commissioned a full and independent Service Review of Debt Management. The

service review consisted of 2 initial phases, commencing with an internal review followed by an independent external review by the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV).

Both reviews were wide ranging, incorporating scrutiny of our current debt procedures and systems, use of enforcement agents, support of potentially vulnerable, collection performance, complaints and service provision. Within the review, members, senior officers, staff and support organisations were interviewed. Accounts were randomly selected to ensure compliance with Policy, Legislation and good practice. Call recordings were also randomly sampled to review the way people owing money were treated.

The external review found that the council's debt team and processes were well managed and compliant in all areas with current policy and legislation. The IRRV noted that performance had significantly improved over the last few years and that the team operates a clear distinction between those that can't and won't pay.

With regards to recommendations the review supported the internal reviews findings to investigate technology to resolve issues created by the fragmentation of IT systems to create a single view of the debtor. Additional recommendations were made including that the council consider revising the fair debt policy, improve staff retention and invest in further training for staff in matters such as conflict resolution.

► **PERFORMANCE DATA**

Collection performance is included in each relevant service element below.

► **RECOVERY – FUTURE**

In order to progress this to the next stage I am in the final stages of organising a fair debt summit with cross party and multi-agency attendance to focus on 3 areas:

- (1) Firstly, we will look at our multi-agency approach to support those who want to pay, but can't;
- (2) Secondly, helping to provide resources and education to those emerging from education and the wider government system, into parenthood where access and over-use of credit can have a short-term and long-term detriment to quality of life; and
- (3) Finally we will look at the small segment of people who could pay, but won't pay.

► **COUNCIL TAX - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS**

Within Thurrock we currently send a Council Tax bill to over 67,000 properties for a net value of £78m. This income stream is critical to fund the services the Council provides and therefore it is vital that to support effective collection and customer service we maintain timeliness, accuracy of billing, processing and assessment of applications and query resolution.

I am pleased to report that whilst work volumes continue to increase in line with property numbers, operational costs have not been impacted. Timeliness of processing and accuracy levels also remain strong with most queries or applications resolved within the week they are received.

Of course combined with our duty to maximise income we also need to ensure that we are supporting those individuals or groups that need assistance with the amount they are charged.

In line with this, this year the Council introduced a Care Leavers Discount. This discount means that young people leaving care who have liability for Council Tax in Thurrock are now disregarded for Council Tax up to their 21st birthday and in exceptional cases until they are 25.

► **PERFORMANCE DATA**

For 2017/18 Thurrock maintained excellent collection rates for Council Tax to achieve an in year collection rate of 98.82%. Whilst we await publication of national results, it is envisaged these results will again place Thurrock among the top performing councils.

Complaints regarding council tax and business rates billing and collection have continued to reduce with 94 being received last year compared to 116 in the preceding year. Of the 94 received in 2017/18 35% were upheld. This is a low ratio when considering the 67,000 properties billed.

► **COUNCIL TAX – FUTURE**

The service continues to focus on encouraging residents to transact with the service through cheaper more efficient online channels.

► **NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NDR) - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS**

For business rates we bill in excess of 4,000 properties for a net value of £118m. Under current funding arrangements Thurrock keeps circa £36m of this amount.

Last year the Government introduced new measures and funding to assist businesses who had been worst affected by the revaluation.

Where the Council had discretion the scheme was designed to ensure that the maximum level of funding available was distributed to local businesses. For this scheme and for schemes where the criteria was set by the government the service undertook analysis to identify businesses that would potentially qualify and contacted each to encourage each business to apply.

► **PERFORMANCE DATA**

Regarding collection, Thurrock achieved an excellent in year collection rate 99.74% which again is expected to place Thurrock amongst the top performing Councils in the country.

► **NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NDR) - FUTURE**

The service is focused on maintaining this excellent performance whilst continuing to monitor the Government's plans to introduce 75% Business Rates Retention in 2020.

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

The team have continued to focus on streamlining processes and using the current functionality and existing reports in Oracle to increase efficiency and reduce manual workload.

► **PERFORMANCE DATA**

Income received through Sundry debt increased by £6m to £68.9m in 2017/18, with the net aged debt position improving by circa. £200k.

► SUNDRY DEBTORS – FUTURE

Future focus remains on reducing the manual input and administration required when processing invoices.

INTERNAL AUDIT

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

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

► REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The previous twelve months saw an increase in outputs due to the introduction of 2 new staff members in early 2017. This has resulted in reduced use of external contractors to support the completion of the annual plan. Whilst outputs have increased, there has been a requirement to provide training and additional supervisory support to these staff and it is anticipated that 2018/19 will see a significant further increase in outputs.

The Internal Audit team has provided regular progress reports to the Standards and Audit Committee on the work carried out and highlighted any key findings.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Internal Audit issued 28 Final Reports in 2017/18 and undertook a significant number of pieces of ad hoc work across the directorates. In addition, we worked closely with the counter fraud and investigation function and supported services through attendance at a number of project meetings to discuss internal controls.

► FUTURE

The 2018/19 plan was developed following meetings with Directors, Assistant Directors and other relevant senior staff and covers operations across all the Council's directorates. It takes into account the key risks identified within the council's Corporate Risk Register as well as the External Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report. New issues and potential emerging risks were also identified and discussed with senior management. The 2018/19 annual plan and 3 year strategy was discussed and agreed with members of the Standards & Audit Committee on 6th March 2018.

During 2018/19, the service is introducing automated internal audit software to provide a more efficient, effective reporting and follow-up process. Whilst there will be an initial period where staff familiarise themselves with the software, the benefits of the new system will result in reduction in time spent per audit, increased coverage and better reporting of performance indicators in the medium term.

FINANCE DIRECTORATE BUDGET CONTROL

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2018/19

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Finance	3,875,124	3,794,163	80,961
Total	3,875,124	3,794,163	80,961

► TREASURY – 2018/19

	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance £000
Interest & Fees Payable on External Debt	7,707	7,707	0
Interest Receivable on Investments	(19,183)	(19,183)	(0)
Net Interest	(11,476)	(11,476)	(0)
MRP	7,285	7,285	0
Total	4,191	4,191	(0)

COMMERCIAL & PROCUREMENT SERVICES

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Commercial Services team leads on the promotion and delivery of best practice in business development and procurement practices across the Council, continuing to build on the cultural shift within Thurrock Council whereby all departments are expected to cost-recover where possible, and where department external income is routinely forecasted; and delivered on by said departments

The service leads on all procurement processes across the Council providing a structure to support all areas in adopting a fair, consistent, transparent and robust approach to procurement, stretching every pound we spend to continue to deliver great value for money while at the same time delivering best possible outcomes for residents. Furthermore, I have asked the team for this municipal year to consider further the performance of all procured services, ensuring measurement is consistent, fair and value is being delivered on behalf of the taxpayer.

The service continues to be the key enabler for ensuring the delivery of existing income generating commitments, identifying income streams that are in line with agreed commercial principles.

The Commercial Services team consists of eleven officers at a cost £488k (17/18.) The team has generated income growth and procurement savings of £2.5m in the last 12 months. In view of the significant returns delivered by the team in both income generation and contract saving accrued, the team represents a positive annual return on investment (5.1 ROI.)

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

► External Income Monitoring

The Commercial Board, chaired by the Director of Commercial Services, monitor the performance of external income across all Council areas. This level of scrutiny and discipline has generated significant returns for the Council. In financial year 17/18, gross external income from fees & charges exceeded budget expectations. In addition, during year the Commercial Services team undertook a deep dive on all discretionary fees and charges to ensure alignment with Thurrock's commercial principles. The outcome of which has resulted in an external income target for 18/19 of £7.1m, a 6.7% growth.

► Gross External Income from fees & charges

Directorate £000's	Budget 17/18	Actual 17/18	Budget 18/19
Adults	335.7	320.9	337.5
Children's	1,181.6	958.6	1,173.6
Environment & Highways	1,898.7	1,997.8	2,309.5
Housing (GF)	378.5	264.6	413.2
Place	2,695.5	3,110.1	2,845.2
Corporate			25.0
TOTAL	6,490.0	6,652.0	7,104.0

► Procurement & Contract Management

Key outcomes for the year were:

- Creation of a Procurement Scrutiny Board
- Delivery of Thurrock's procurement principles
- Appointment of Category Managers for each Service Directorate
- Implementation of a full end to end e-tendering system (Intend)
- Appointment of a Contract Manager
- Better engagement with Children & Adult Commissioning Services

Strategic Procurement was a key theme for 2017, providing a framework to optimise value for money for every pound spent. The delivery of the procurement principles during the year ensure that:

- Contracts are procured to deliver the best economic value for the Council and, by direct extension, sound social return for our residents and communities
- Procurement activities are enhanced using proactive and collaborative planning to optimise the return on investment for the Council; and
- Opportunities are identified (and realised) for rationalisation, negotiation, lifecycle management, substitution, aggregation of demand and more to drive savings and efficiencies

The number of procurement exercises across the council is rising.

	2016	2017	2018 Forecast
PS Numbers issued	256	330	435

In the first four months of this year 145 PS numbers were issued, this is largely due to greater compliance across the Council of procurement procedures with the newly appointed Category Managers actively involved with Service Directorates.

The estimated whole life cost of procurement exercises has remained at £200m. The Category Managers now take considerably more responsibility for the planning and design element of the tender exercise, and the creation of a Procurement Scrutiny Board has ensured a forward plan is in place for large contract items

The team have worked actively with the Thurrock Business Board outlining the framework agreement opportunities that are in place for local businesses. To further support our engagement with local business the team will be launching a series of training programmes the 'what makes a winning bid' programme has been designed with local businesses in mind. The council's Procurement Principles has introduced a desire to see at least one local provider being part of the tender process.

At a forthcoming CSR meeting, officers will present an analysis on all services (including procured services outside of the council), for debate and discussion and input.

► Council Spending Review (Service Transformation)

The aim of the Service Review Programme is to transform and improve services across the Council supporting and contributing to the wider MTFS programme.

	Actual 17/18	Budget 18/19	MTFS 19/20	MTFS 20/21
MTFS Target	£577k	£930k	£920k	£800k

The change in Chair for the Board resulted in a shift in emphasis, rather than just service-by-service reviews, the CSR has evolved to also include strategic interventions on areas where support is needed to address concerns such as high costs or budget pressures, low level performance or customer dissatisfaction, high or increasing levels of demand, high levels of sickness or high agency spending. Reviews continue to follow the seven service design principles with the focus for 2018/19 being children’s social care, business resource, transport and ICT.

► **Digital Inclusion**

During 2017, the team liaised with Orsett & East Tilbury Community Forums to close the gap on the last 5% of residents without Superfast Broadband.

The Hyperoptic partnership has performed well this year with 662 premises now rolled out and 26% (173) of residents taking up the product offer. The aim is to continue to roll out across other housing sites throughout the year.

Both initiatives are key in ensuring that our commitment to digital inclusion is a reality for all residents in our borough. Thurrock Council is not the responsible agency for delivery Superfast Broadband across the borough, but it has volunteered to do its bit to enable communities without Superfast capability.

► **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**

	Budget 17/18	Actual 17/18	Variance
Commercial Services	£ 560,557	£ 488,033	£72,524

► **THE FUTURE**

► **Contract & Supplier Relationship Management**

Thurrock will continue to develop a Contract Management and Supplier Relationship Strategy to compliment the Procurement Strategy; the primary aim is to ensure that once a contract is awarded it continues to deliver value for money and the right outcomes. The strategy will establish and implement a standardised contract management process, ensure the proper level of focus to monitor and manage supplier performance and go beyond simply reviewing KPI’s, working with suppliers to extract the most value from contracts by fostering relationships with suppliers based on innovation and continuous improvement. I have asked for a framework for Service Level Agreement to be introduced into our processes at council, and that future tenders would review aggregate contract performance as a consideration in any future awarding of contracts.

► **Council Service Review (Service Transformation)**

There will be an increased emphasis on service reviews to reform services not just bring them into budget balance.

► #LifesLadder

Officers have been tasked to investigate a number of initiatives aimed at helping residents climb life's ladder. Such interventions could help address initiatives such as the costs of home fuelling, or signpost and help people build up the savings to enable purchase of their own home. These initiatives are being investigated, and if viable, more detail will emerge throughout the municipal year.

► Discretionary Services Fees & Charges

Work will continue on future year fees and charges, ensuring that all commercial principles become a reality and ensure that all discretionary services are cost neutral. This includes looking at introducing some tiered fees and charges, where residents have more choice in the type and quality of service they may wish to pay for, outside of the traditional services funded by council tax.

STRATEGY – VISION AND PRIORITIES

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

This portfolio covers the council's vision and priorities and branding.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

In February 2018, Full Council approved a new vision and priorities. This was the culmination of a wide-ranging piece of work, including feedback from many council, partners, community and resident groups and individuals. It was finalised through a dedicated, cross-party member working group.

The new vision is "an ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future". The new three priority headings are "People, Place and Prosperity".

The new vision and priorities better reflect the ambition for the council and Thurrock the place, to be more succinct and easy to communicate, and to articulate the new focus and priorities.

The new vision and priorities were developed alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This is in parallel to the work on the Council Spending Review (CSR) and, as such, they align with the move towards commercialism, transformation and an investment approach.

The vision and priorities will be delivered through key strategy action plans, service plans, objective setting and performance management tools.

The vision and "People, Place, Prosperity" will also be used to further enhance the council's branding and promotion of the place. All villages and towns had new signage installed earlier this year with boundary welcome signs to be rolled out shortly alongside a Transforming Thurrock campaign highlighting where the council is driving regeneration for the benefit of the whole community.

► FUTURE

The new vision and priorities have a stronger narrative around where the council is now, the direction of travel and ambition. This allows us to move forward with stronger messaging about Thurrock the place and celebrate and capitalise on the wonderful opportunities our borough has to offer.

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QUESTION TIME

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

There is 1 question to the Leader and 10 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER

1. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill

Could the Leader please update the Chamber on progress with dealing with Serious ASB issues and crime on the Garrison Estate in Purfleet?

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

1. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Holloway

Can you lay out the influence you have as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to prevent the closure of Orsett Hospital?

2. From Councillor Akinbohun to Councillor Watkins

There has been appalling service from c2c recently as we continue to see service disruptions on a regular basis. Many of my residents have lost money, lost jobs, some said their refund policy is very hard to follow. What is he doing to ensure c2c is aware of the discomfort the disruptions are causing and to make sure there are improvements?

3. From Councillor Fletcher to Councillor Watkins

The current weight restrictions in Belhus leave most of the ward at the mercy of HGVs - does the Councillor support a review of weight restrictions and HGV mitigation measures across the borough?

4. From Councillor Anderson to Councillor Watkins

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways please provide an update on the HGV issue along the Manorway in Stanford-le-Hope and Corringham?

5. From Councillor Fish to Councillor Watkins

Residents in Clarence Road have raised concerns with myself and my fellow Ward Councillors about the high volume of traffic and in particular HGVs in the road which is causing frequent damage to parked vehicles and risking further more serious damage to vehicles and road users. What does the Portfolio holder intend to do to alleviate the situation?

6. From Councillor Rigby to Councillor Watkins

Please can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways provide an update on our pot hole filling pledge?

7. From Councillor Jefferies to Councillor Watkins

Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways please provide an update on the bin review announced last year?

8. From Councillor Hague to Councillor Huelin

Could the Cabinet Member please update the Chamber on the Council's policy for the maintenance of play equipment in our parks and open spaces?

9. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Halden

Can the Portfolio Holder explain to the residents of Elm Road, Maple Road and the surrounding streets why they should lose their, much loved, six acre park?

10. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Watkins

What is the importance of parks and improving our open spaces for residents to enjoy?

Item 16 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 25 July 2018

Date	From	Motion	Status	Accountable Director
27/09/2017	Cllr Spillman	<p>Council calls on Cabinet to work with local arts and music groups to assist them in looking at options for establishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A not-for-profit community arts and music multi use venue open to all arts, crafts and music groups across Thurrock which will be able to secure relevant licenses that will allow the venue to be financially sustainable by raising revenue through ticketed music and performance events, and • A not-for-profit, open air, “Festival of Thurrock” to provide an opportunity for a wide range of artists and musicians in Thurrock to showcase their talents. 	<p>Preparation of the Cultural Strategy is ongoing. The new Portfolio Holder has been briefed and further work is underway which will involve local arts and heritage groups and partners.</p>	Steve Cox
25/10/2017	Cllr Gerrish	<p>Thurrock Council calls on the Government to provide the necessary resources and rule changes which would allow councils to build additional council housing at a scale proportional to need, in particular removing the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap. Council resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to the Prime Minister, Chancellor and DCLG setting out our concerns and seeking urgent action to enable the building of council housing at necessary volumes. • Write to Thurrock’s MPs seeking all possible Parliamentary support. • Request that the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider whether there are any additional local opportunities to increase our 	<p>Officers of the Council have met with officials from the MHCLG to press our case for a relaxation of the HRA borrowing requirements. In June 2018 the MHCLG issued its prospectus and guidance notes for applying to have HRA borrowing limits extended. This was following up the announcement of the extra £1bn in the budget last Autumn. The deadline for applications is 7 September 2018 and officers, in consultation with the PFH, will be submitting an application for Thurrock.</p>	Roger Harris

Item 16 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 25 July 2018

		supply of new council houses in Thurrock.		
27/6/2018	Cllr Duffin	Thurrock Council should look into contacting all sports teams/clubs competing across the borough and ask them what support they need moving forward. Many need support with facilities and raising awareness that the Council can assist with without giving financial support.	Thurrock Council recognises the importance of sports teams and clubs across the Borough and the significant contribution that they make to both the quality of life for residents and overall health and well-being. Support mechanisms for local voluntary sports clubs are in place and what more can be done will be explored. The Council's Communication Team will work with the service to encourage clubs to register on the Active Essex "Where Can I Get Active" Directory via the link on the Council's website to make it easier for residents to find local clubs and teams.	Julie Rogers
27/6/18	Cllr Aker	This Council calls on Cabinet to commit to looking at each private contract and assess whether, or not, it could be fulfilled locally and begin a process of bringing private contracts back in-house as soon as possible so that the Council can maximise the benefits for Thurrock rather than multi-national corporations.	An analysis is being undertaken for each service area to assess level of procured spend and whether the provider is a local business. The team actively work with the Thurrock Business Board and have outlined the framework agreement opportunities that are in place for local businesses. To further support engagement with local business the team will be launching a series of training programmes the 'what makes a winning bid' programme has been designed with local businesses in mind.	Sharon Bayliss
27/6/18	Cllr Gerrish	Thurrock Council notes the recent consultation which included the future of Orsett Hospital. Thurrock Council further notes the overwhelming opposition of Thurrock residents to the closure of Orsett Hospital. Thurrock Council calls on Cabinet to work with health partners to seek a solution which leaves Orsett Hospital open and retains all services in Thurrock.	The Joint Committee of the five CCG's in Mid and South Essex agreed at their meeting on 6 July 2018 that Orsett Hospital would close. The meeting also agreed that Orsett will not close until the 4 Integrated Medical Centres are up and running and no clinical services for Thurrock patients will move outside of Thurrock. This is consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding agreed between the Council and Health partners in 2017. Cabinet will receive a report in September on the progress with the development of	Roger Harris

Item 16 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 25 July 2018

			the IMCs and consider the next steps in light of the Joint Committee decision.	
27/6/18	Cllr Spillman	Council requests that Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider adding to its work programme at its next meeting on 4 July 2018 research into the feasibility of building 8,000 council, housing association and low-cost homes within the next five years without such buildings threatening the character of any existing settlements within the borough and to seek to explore the extent to which Thurrock Regeneration Limited could input into such a target.	This was considered at the meeting of Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 4 July and it was agreed to be included in the work programme for the committee.	Steve Cox

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor Spillman

Council requests that Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee urgently consider adding to its work programme at its next meeting on 2 October 2018 research into the feasibility of installing sprinkler systems in every high-rise tower block in Thurrock considering the extensive body of evidence highlighting the risks of not having sprinkler systems in such high-rise buildings.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority's area and for which the Authority has a relevant function. It is also noted that the Motion is phrased as a request.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no additional costs involved in researching the feasibility of installing sprinkler systems. Should the council decide to follow this course of action, any cost would have to be met from the HRA capital programme and prioritised against other required works.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 2

Submitted by Councillor Smith

Thurrock Council considers going further than their statutory duty regarding publication of Traffic Restriction Orders (TRO) by publishing them on the Council's social media and contacting residents through email where possible as well as the currently required public notices on lamp posts and in the local press.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority' area and for which the Authority has a relevant function. It is also noted that this Motion is worded as a request for the subject matter of the Motion be considered.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no financial implications as a result of this motion.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 3

Submitted by Councillor Redsell

This chamber recognises the valuable contribution that trees make to our local environment and calls on Cabinet and / or officers

- where practicable to consult Members prior to the removal of trees from local authority land within their respective wards, and
- where possible in accordance with the current budget to replace within a reasonable period all trees felled from local authority land including public areas; and
- to investigate availability of funding sources for the 2019 -20 budget to enable the Council to purchase replacement trees

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority' area and for which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

Any costs associated with this motion in the short term will have to be met from existing budgets. The motion asks for funding sources to be investigated - any council funding that is proposed will need to be considered against other budget priorities.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 4

Submitted by Councillor Gerrish

Thurrock Council calls for our asset disposal process to include an emphasis on:

- the importance of informal discussions with current occupiers of land and local residents.
- consultation with ward councillors.
- identification of multiple suitable sites to provide genuine choice.
- a more open and inclusive decision-making process.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority' area and for which the Authority has a relevant function. It is also noted that this is a " Call on" Motion

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no specific financial implications arising from this motion.

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

Yes

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