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

Cabinet

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **11 November 2020**

Due to government guidance on social distancing and COVID-19, members of the press and public will not be able to attend the meeting of Cabinet on 11 November 2020. The meeting will be available to watch online live at: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

Membership:

Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Aaron Watkins

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Agenda

Open to Public and Press

Page

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Minutes **5 - 12**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on 14 October 2020.

3 Items of Urgent Business

To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Declaration of Interests

5 Statements by the Leader

6 Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

7	**Petitions submitted by Members of the Public**	
8	**Questions from Non-Executive Members**	
9	**Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee**	
10	**Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report (Decision: 110534)**	**13 - 16**
11	**Waste Strategy Update (Decision: 110535)**	**17 - 60**
12	**Council Tax Exemption for Foster Carers (Decision: 110536)**	**61 - 68**
13	**Mid-Year/Quarter 2 (April-September 2020) Corporate Performance Report 2020/21**	**69 - 84**

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Lucy Tricker, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **3 November 2020**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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

↓

Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- **relate to; or**
- **likely to affect**

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 October 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Shane Hebb (Deputy Chair), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Aaron Watkins
In attendance:	Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Kenna-Victoria Healey, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed to YouTube.

40. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 September 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

41. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

42. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests to declare.

43. Statements by the Leader

The Leader of the Council opened by stating that many would have seen that Essex County Council had made an application to the Government to voluntarily increase its Covid alert level to High and be subject to tier 2 Covid restrictions. This would mean that residents would not be able to meet anyone outside of their household or support bubble in any indoor setting such as their home, pub or restaurant.

He continued by commenting he was sure everyone would recognise the impact this would have on certain businesses, especially the hospitality and entertainment venues and in addition would mean families across Essex would not be able to meet unless they are in that same bubble and restrict travel. The Leader highlighted it was already clear to see the impact this could have on those who already felt isolated and alone as well as the impact it may have on some residents mental wellbeing.

Councillor Gledhill, informed Cabinet Members that he had spoken to the secretary of State for Health at the weekend outlining why he felt Thurrock should not be subject to these extra restrictions requested by Essex County

Council and he would continue to resist any call for voluntary increase in restriction to Thurrock Residents. Members heard how Thurrock's MP Jackie Doyle Price also made clear at parliament that Thurrock should not be included in the County Council's call for more restriction, for which the Leader said he was truly grateful. He also thanked the Chief Executive and the Director of Public Health for their hard work including over the weekend in supporting the position that Thurrock should not be included in the Tier 2 restrictions.

The Leader moved onto Remembrance Day and commented that unfortunately this year Remembrance Day parades would not take place as usual. With the need for continued social distancing, avoiding crowds and maximum numbers of people in groups; the Council were exploring different options to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day as was done earlier in the year with VE Day.

He mentioned that private services and virtual tributes would replace traditional parades to commemorate and remember British and Commonwealth military and civilian men and women who paid the ultimate price in the two World Wars and later conflicts. A special red, white and blue light display would be put on the outside the Thameside Complex, Grays, to mark the occasion.

The Leader commented on the importance of wearing face coverings when in enclosed public spaces. It was also important to show respect for one another and the local environment and to remember some people were exempt from wearing face coverings, such as anyone with a physical illness, disability or mental health issue.

Councillor Gledhill moved on and stated last week a drug driver was convicted, fined and banned from driving for two years thanks to a joint initiative carried out between Thurrock Council enforcement officers and Essex Police. Members heard how he was just one of the people caught as a result of the joint initiative which took place between August and December last year to target people who litter the borough's car parks with nitrous oxide canisters.

The operation also resulted in 11 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for fly-tipping, 15 Fixed Penalty notices for anti-social behaviour including littering, urination and fly-posting, one man arrested for drug driving and possession,10 Community resolutions for cannabis possession and 30 Community Protection Warnings given for anti-social behaviour.

The Leader stated Thurrock Council would continue to work closely with Essex Police and would continue to get these kinds of results to make our borough a safer place for the residents who live here.

The Leader finished his statement by giving the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It Update since April 2020, and stated 1,776 potholes had been filled with every single one of them completed within agree timescales, 1,700 tonnes of litter had

been cleaned from Thurrock streets, 776 fly-tips had been cleared and 1,935 Fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour like spitting, littering and dropping cigarette ends had been issued.

Councillor Coxshall offered his thanks to Officers, the Chief Executive and the Director of Public Health for all their hard work in helping to keep Thurrock excluded from Essex County Councils voluntary request for further restrictions.

44. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

45. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions had been submitted from Non-Executive Members.

46. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

No matters had been referred to Cabinet for consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee.

47. Waste Strategy Update (Decision: 110532)

Councillor Watkins introduced the report to Cabinet Members and in doing so explained a cross-party working group was established in August 2019 to look at the Council's Waste Strategy, with the sole aim to increase recycling figures, and he thanked the group for their work. He continued by commenting Officers had been working to improve the Borough's recycling rate which had been decreasing since 2014, it was important to meet the government target of 50% . Many different schemes had been trialled over the last four years this included educating residents using a number of different outlets such as signage and leaflets.

Councillor Watkins explained the Borough wide consultation on the updated Waste Strategy commenced at the beginning of the year and following the report being presented to the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 1 October; Officers had received questions from Residents about the suggested changes and therefore requested the report be deferred to Novembers meeting of Cabinet.

The Leader thanked Councillor Watkins for his introduction and sought confirmation that he was seeking Cabinets agreement to defer the report to the November meeting. Councillor Watkins confirmed this was correct.

RESOLVED:

That the Waste Strategy Update is deferred to the November meeting.

48. Procurement of Electrical Services (Decision: 110533)

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and in doing so outlined the proposal for the re-procurement of the electrical services contract as the current contract was due to expire on 11 March 2021. It was the expectation that a new contract would commence on 12 March 2021 and proposed a contract term of five years plus an option to extend for a further five years if necessary.

The report included a timeline for the procurement and award of the contract and the Portfolio Holder commented he was pleased to advise that the Excellence Panel was to be invited to participate in the tender evaluation process.

Councillor Johnson stated the contracts aim was to meet corporate priorities to deliver high quality services, whilst ensuring best practice followed in line with regulations and the Council's Electrical Safety Policy.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. **Approve the re-procurement of Electrical Services Contract for a period of up to five years with an option to extend for a further five years.**

2. **Approve delegated authority for award of the above contracts to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.**

Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

49. Medium Term Financial Strategy Update & General Fund Budget Implications

Councillor Hebb presented the report and in doing so stated Councils across the country were presented with challenges as a direct and indirect result of COVID-19. He continued by saying recessions calibrate perceptions about wants and needs, what is really important or what is just desirable. What was important was how to achieve and secure what the Council needed to do.

He continued to inform Cabinet Members that Thurrock had a 'nest egg' of sorts, built up from prudent financial planning and policy. Its useable reserves position had increased by 131% since 2016 levels, as a direct result of the policy of reforming services and the member agreed investment approach.

Councillor Hebb continued by commenting the Council should be thankful, that they have a reserve to fall back on as it is something that most authorities do not have, however it will not solve the problem but would give a temporary lift. He stated that the collection fund losses were accounted for in the years

ahead and such a spike in reduced collections and increased benefit claimants would have to be paid.

Members heard how elements of the Capital Strategy had to be paused. Cabinet were in the process of working with Directors Board to review timescales of capital initiatives which had not yet started, re-planning for the life after scenario and unfortunately some plans would have to be cut altogether.

The Portfolio Holder continued in his address saying it was important for Members to remember where the investment market existed the Council would have longer to make reforms which would be at a more considered pace. New investments were not something the Council was looking to do as the market was not what it once was, this was for a number of reasons.

Councillor Hebb mentioned the plans to increase reserves to 'weather the storm' had allowed Members and Officers to tidy up the borough, allowed funds for mental health reform, allowed to invest in the children social care market and they had allowed funding for extra police within the borough. He continued to state spending commitments on the Police and investment in Environment and Social Care had been ring-fenced, as this was used to provide one of support helping them stabilise and operate at a high level.

Cabinet heard that the Council strongly believed in a regeneration lead objective to help stimulate spending and recovery, which was why cabinet had agreed to put £1 million into progressing with the housebuilding objective of the third stage of the Local Plan Refresh.

Councillor Hebb further advised that his portfolio holder peer group of finance portfolio holders across Essex had met a couple of weeks ago to shape the approach being put forward by local government in the Essex area to the Government. The Government had now announced a further £1 billion to support the local government pressures emerging from Covid-19 and Members across Essex waited for further details. In the meantime, action had to be taken and action had begun. As people left roles through retirement or moved on to new opportunities, vacancies which were less critical would not be replaced.

It was explained that an Assets Review had been completed in the spirit of a "few buildings better services". A rationalisation of the asset estate was something that had been required to be completed, spending taxpayers money propping up and maintaining estates which would be better utilised as identified under the Retain, Re-use and Release scheme was something that was needed.

Councillor Hebb moved on, commenting on Councillor Huelin's report from Full Council which attracted widespread coverage for her thanks to Council staff during the first 6 months of the pandemic and further commented that her comments were echoed by all Members across the council. Finally he

extended thanks on behalf of all Members to all staff of the Authority for their hard work.

Councillor Coxshall thanked for the Portfolio Holder for his report and commented on the importance to refresh the Assets Strategy which enabled updates on Corporate Policies and to be able to deliver better services for residents.

Councillor Hebb agreed with fewer buildings better services could be offered, an example of this was the children's centres whereby now a service was being used by 90% of residents/parents rather than the 60% before.

The Leader stated the children centres were a good example of showing how a change in services can work better for residents. He continued by thanking the finance team for their excellent work over the last couple of months on the local government reform.

Councillor Hebb closed the discussion by commenting on a question which was asked by those who did not work within local government, if there are reserves then why do we have to have efficiencies. He continued to say that the world was changing at such a pace that services may not be the same again, and we may need further support later down the line, whether it be in the social care market for example.

He commented that although it assisted with the issues that were ahead, it was important to be prudent with the reserve as there could be additional pressures coming that had not been forecasted.

The Leader of the Council agreed mentioning that an analogy would be if you have savings, you can only spend savings once. Likewise monies being put aside to complete a certain project.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. **That Cabinet support the approach to meeting the budget pressures in 2021/22 through short term measures; and**

2. **That officers bring reports to Cabinet, and the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as the proposals for next year (2021/22) are further developed.**

The meeting finished at 7.38 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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11 November 2020	ITEM: 10 Decision: 110534
Cabinet	
Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report	
Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** Key
Report of: Councillor Fraser Massey, Chair of the LTC Task Force	
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director - Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

In line with the Terms of Reference, the LTC Task Force is required to report to Cabinet on its work.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Cabinet notes the work of the taskforce

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Lower Thames Crossing Task Force has met on a monthly basis since September 2017. Cabinet received a previous update on 15 January 2020.

2.2 The Council remains opposed in principle to any new crossing in Thurrock and the task force has consistently sought to hold Highways England to account. The long-held concern regarding obtaining responses and key information continues to hamper the Council's ability to properly assess and scrutinise the scheme.

2.3 Highways England conducted a statutory consultation on the scheme which ended on 20 December 2018. Details of the Task Force's discussions following the consultation to date are detailed below. The DCO application Was submitted by Highways England on Friday 23 October 2020.

3. Task Force Meetings

3.1 All Task Force meetings are recorded and available on the Thurrock Council website. Since the impacts of COVID-19 the meetings have been held

as hybrid meetings on Microsoft Teams.

3.2 Full minutes of the meetings are also available on the website. Below is a summary of the discussions at each meeting:

February

3.3 Highways England presented on the proposed changes to the scheme following statutory consultation in 2018. Supplementary consultation commenced on 29 January 2020 and would run for eight weeks until 25 March 2020

3.4 The Chair ran through the Priorities list where questions of clarification were asked and addressed.

March

3.5 The March meeting of the Task Force considered the Council's draft supplementary consultation response in advance of the final report being considered at General Services Committee.

July

3.6 Councillor Massey was elected to the Chair with Councillor Gerard Rice as the Deputy.

3.7 Highways England were invited to present the Design Refinements Consultation materials. This consultation was taking place during the Covid 19 pandemic, was virtual only and was open for comments for a 30 day period only closing on 12 August 2020. Officer took notes of the concerns raised by the Task Force members to incorporate into the Council response given the short period within which to respond.

3.8 The Chair ran through the priorities list which had been reviewed by officers since the previous meeting.

3.9 **September**

Highways England attended and were requested to present on feedback to Design refinements consultation and provide further information in relation to the concerns expressed by the Task Force with regard to noise barriers, their locations, scale and size as well as materials. HE also confirmed proposals for worker accommodation to be provided on the main construction site but little other detail so as to understand what is proposed.

3.10 The Chair ran through the work plan.

3.11 **October**

Officers produced a report updating the Task Force Members on the health impact assessment. The discussion concluded that the work had not progressed as much as officers would have liked and there was still a lot of information to be reviewed once the DCO application was submitted. Highways England are expected to submit the DCO application on 23 October 2020 and Officers confirmed that notification had been received from the Planning Inspectorate.

3.12 Officers presented a further report relating to the emerging economic impact

phase 2 work and the summary mitigation list that had been worked up. Officers answered some questions of clarification and suggested any detailed feedback be sent through by email.

3.13 Officers discussed the next steps in the DCO process and the timing for registering as an interested party. Officers agreed to circulate a guidance note produced by the Planning Inspectorate that would be helpful for the Task Force members and residents to understand the next steps.

3.14 There was discussion regarding the submission of the DCO and the fact that moving into this next stage meant that the ability to change or influence the scheme is now much diminished.

3.15 Task Force members agreed to cancel the November meeting as Officers would be working on the Adequacy of Consultation response and reviewing application documents should the DCO be accepted.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 In line with the terms of reference the LTC Task Force will update Cabinet.

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

5.1 Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

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

6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**

Senior Management Accountant

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report and the work is funded from within existing budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**

Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This is an update report from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and there are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**

Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no diversity implications arising from this report.

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

None

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

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Anna Eastgate

Assistant Director – Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery

Place

11 November 2020	ITEM: 11 Decision: 110535
Cabinet	
Waste Strategy Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** Key
Report of: Councillor Aaron Watkins, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Leisure	
Accountable Assistant Director: Daren Spring, Assistant Director – Street Scene and Leisure	
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Council's Waste Strategy expires in 2020 and requires a refresh to ensure that it is in line with the National Strategy, as well as being forward looking and ambitious in its targets. As part of the strategy re-fresh, three streams of work have emerged that are inter-dependent:

- A Cross Party Working Group was established by Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the declining recycling levels and ways in which the current level of 34.76%, in the Borough, could be increased to meet the national target of 50% in 2020 and 65% in 2035. The other focus was understanding the national strategy and how it impacts on Thurrock, while contributing to the development of the new Waste Strategy;
- The suite of Waste Disposal Contracts required to be re-procured; and
- A review of Waste Collection options undertaken, while considering the required changes for implementation, including vehicle procurement.

This report seeks to provide an overview of each of the work streams, identifying the interdependencies and providing the necessary background and analysis of implications for decisions to be made with regard to the future configuration of the Waste Service.

1. Cabinet is recommended to:

1.1 Agree the new Waste Strategy, noting the input of the Waste Cross Party working group.

1.2 Review the options relating to potential changes in the Waste Collection Service as proposed by the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and agree an option from the table in 2.3.7 of this report.

1.3 Engage with Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a charged for garden waste service with a view that any recommendation be subject to a future report to Cabinet.

1.4 Delegate authority for the re-procurement and/or extension of the Waste Disposal contracts to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property and the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sports and Leisure.

1.5 Delegate authority for the procurement of waste containers, collection vehicles and communication materials to facilitate the change in collection to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property and the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sports and Leisure.

1.6 Consider and agree the recommendations of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee: -

1.6 a) that the Cross Party Working Group continue to have a role in reviewing the progress of the implementation of the Waste Strategy.

1.6 b) that Thurrock Council lead by example and act to reduce and where possible eliminate, single use plastics.

1.6 c) that Cabinet consult fully with the community before they enact the refuse collections in Thurrock.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Central Government published its "Waste, our Resources: A strategy for England" in December 2018. It identified a number of proposals designed to drive up recycling performance. The proposals include:

- Improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of dry recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from landfill by ensuring that every householder and appropriate businesses have a weekly separate food waste collection, subject to consultation;

- Improve urban recycling rates, working with business and local authorities.

2.2 The National Strategy has a number of statutory implications for the Council that requires implementing changes to the way that waste is collected and disposed of. These include:

- Provide residents with separate food waste collections by 2023 (subject to consultation);
- Vastly improve recycling rates to work towards the 2035 National Recycling Target of 65%, (Thurrock's recycling rate is currently 34.76%);
- Reduce the amount of municipal waste to landfill by 10%; and
- Ensure that dry recycling collections are consistent with Government's requirements and ensure that a cost effective collections system is in operation.

2.3 Cross Party Working Group - Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

2.3.1 The Cross Party Working Group Chaired by Councillor Mike Fletcher was established specifically to identify ways in which the recycling rate in Thurrock, which has been stagnant for some years, could be increased. The activities of the group were wide ranging and have been documented in the report prepared and presented at Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2020.

2.3.2 The report provided an overview of the work of that Group as well as recommendations based on their findings. It is important to note that the key purpose of the Cross Party Work Group was to identify ways in which the level of recycling in Thurrock could be increased to levels closer to the National target of 50%. The work of the party was informed by a review of activities and the successes at other authorities, the feedback from a public consultation and the direction of travel for Waste Services that is outlined in the new National Waste Strategy.

The recommendations detailed in the report were:

- To note the activities and research undertaken by the Cross Party Working Group.
- To comment on and support the refreshed Waste Strategy, recommending it to Cabinet.
- To propose that the Cross Party Working Group continue to have a role in reviewing the progress of the implementation of the Waste Strategy.
- To propose that Thurrock Council lead by example and act to reduce and where possible eliminate, single use plastics.

There was robust discussion at the Committee meeting. The following key areas were explored further:

- The need for broad thinking when consider Fleet Options.

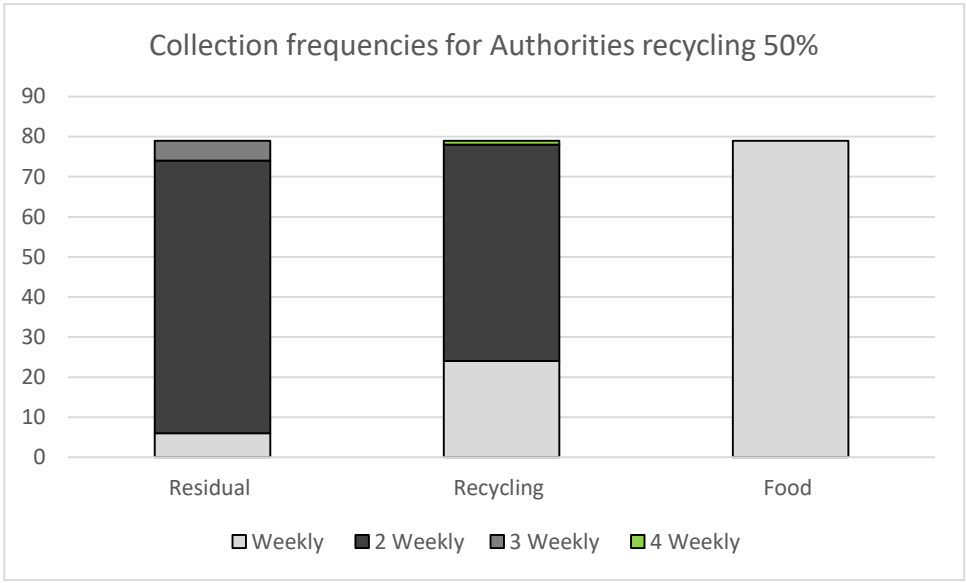
- Concerns regarding an increase in fly-tipping should residual waste collections be reduced to fortnightly.
- Concerns regarding the development of an energy recovery facility.
- The importance of consultation with communities.
- It was noted that Cllr J Kent did not agree with the recommendation to approve the Waste Strategy, all other CGS O&S members were in agreement.

2.3.3 In order for the recommendations of the Working Group to be put in context, it is helpful to review some of the information that was made available to them during their exploration of the waste service. This information included a review of the practises of other Councils. A close review of the collection regimes of Authorities that are currently achieving recycling rates greater than 50%, shows that in those areas, typical collection patterns include:

- Weekly Food waste Collection.
- Alternative weekly residual waste collections.
- Alternative weekly garden waste collections – with a split over whether these are subscribed or provided free of charge.
- Alternative weekly dry recycling collections.

The graphs and tables below provide additional detail and are based on recycling figures confirmed by DEFRA for 20219/20. Based on the evidence available, no clear link has been established between a reduction in the frequency of residual waste collections and the occurrence of fly-tipping.

	Weekly	2 Weekly	3 Weekly	4 Weekly	Total
Residual	6	68	5	0	79
Recycling	24	54	0	1	79
Food	79				79



The table below provides detailed information for the Authorities achieving recycling rates of 60% or more, using the equivalent or lower bin capacity than our residents receive on a weekly basis.

Authority Name	19-20 Recycling Rate	Residual collections	Recycling Frequency	Food Frequency	Food Separate from Garden Waste?
Three Rivers District Council	64%	2 Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Yes
South Oxfordshire District Council	64%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	63%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	No
Vale of White Horse District Council	63%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
St Albans City and District Council	63%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
Surrey Heath Borough Council	63%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
Derbyshire Dales District Council	62%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
Rochford District Council	61%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
North Somerset Council	61%	2 Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Yes
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	61%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	No
East Devon District Council	61%	Three weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Yes
South Northamptonshire District Council	60%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes
Stroud District Council	60%	2 Weekly	2 Weekly	Weekly	Yes

2.3.4. The recommendations of the Cross Party Working Group have been incorporated fully in the refreshed Waste Strategy, in summary the key proposals are:

- Replacing the residual waste collections with a new weekly food waste collection to all households, with the associated supporting containers, and an alternate weekly residual collection. The benefit of this change, which has been adopted successfully at many other Local Authorities, is that it encourages residents to consider more carefully what can be recycled and to ensure that they have capacity in their residual bins for items that can only be disposed of in that way;
- Retaining the weekly collections of co-mingled dry recycling;

- Retaining the fortnightly collections of garden waste, implemented during the Covid-19 response period;
- Redevelopment of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre;
- Review of Thurrock's waste collection fleet to ensure a reduction in carbon footprint and fuel usage whilst ensuring that maximum efficiency and effectiveness is achieved;
- Ensuring that any future waste disposal contract negotiations include the following principles:
    - Reduction in distance travelled to disposal sites;;
    - Identifying opportunities for additional recycling and re-use; and
    - Ensuring a reduction in waste sent to landfill;
- Reducing the occurrence of single use plastics within the Borough and within Council activities where the use of alternatives should be prioritised. This will require a detailed work programme covering all service areas and operations, with specific focus required from procurement and communications;
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a transfer station within Thurrock to support alternative disposal options; and
- Investigate the feasibility of building an energy recovery facility in the Borough as both a means of reducing disposal costs for residual waste and generating income.

2.3.5 The Cross Party Working Group initiated an investigation into the impact of service changes on the recycling rate. The Working Group were clear that the decisions they would make were purely in relation to linking to the national strategy and increasing recycling rates. No financial implications were presented, considered or discussed by the group and it is therefore important they are fully considered in this report.

2.3.6 The Council were asked to provide an outline of collection models that the top quartile high performing recycling authorities were using to drive up recycling rates. A number of options were discussed such as:

- Kerb side sorted collections – This was not progressed due to the number of containers required at each property.
- Three and Four weekly collection schedule.
- Paid for garden waste service – This was considered to be too much of a significant change for residents at this time.

2.3.7 The financial impact of COVID-19 and the impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan could not have been predicted when the Waste Working Group commenced this work; however, it cannot be overlooked when considering findings. The potential financial efficiencies available, whilst still maintaining a service equivalent, or better, than some of the highest performing recycling councils in the country cannot be overlooked at this time and should be considered when deciding on the various options. The table below provides the range of collection options considered in detail, the recycling potential and the high-level financial implications. This illustrates the change in both

collection and disposal costs and the potential efficiencies that could be realised:

Thurrock Council Cost Modelling

Note: all options, excluding Baseline, include flats recyling)	Baseline	Current Collection	Option 1	Option 2		Option 3	
				A	*B*	*A*	*B*
Refuse	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Alt. Weekly	Alt. Weekly	Alt. Weekly	Alt. Weekly
Recycling	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Alt. Weekly	Alt. Weekly
Garden Waste	Weekly	Alt. Weekly No Charge	Alt. Weekly Paid	Alt. Weekly No Charge	Alt. Weekly Paid	Alt. Weekly No Charge	Alt. Weekly Paid
Food Waste	Not offered	Not offered	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly

Collection Cost	£6,018,822	£5,997,174	£5,524,597	£5,709,843	£4,630,126	£5,370,995	£4,279,317
Change in Collection Cost		-£21,648	-£578,577	-£393,511	-£1,473,047	-£732,178	-£1,823,856
Change in Disposal Cost	£7,803,324	£7,538,459	£7,536,711	£7,288,439	£7,395,824	£7,313,242	£7,420,627
Change in Disposal Cost		-£264,865	-£1,748	-£250,020	-£142,635	-£225,217	-£117,832
Total Collection and Disposal Cost	£13,822,145	£13,535,633	£13,061,308	£12,998,281	£12,025,950	£12,684,237	£11,699,944
Change in Collection and Disposal Cost		-£286,513	-£580,325	-£643,531	-£1,615,682	-£957,395	-£1,941,688
Recycling Performance (Includes HWRC)	37.00%	38.20%	38.30%	54.30%	52.00%	50.50%	48.20%

Capital Investment							
Containers		£360,000	£360,000	£360,000	£360,000	£360,000	£360,000
Fleet included within modelling		£0	£2,800,000	£2,000,000	£2,000,000	£3,400,000	£3,400,000
Total		£360,000	£3,160,000	£2,360,000	£2,360,000	£3,760,000	£3,760,000

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The Working Group initiated a resident consultation with every household in the borough given the opportunity to participate.

3.2 The results of the survey provided insights that have informed thinking regarding adjustments to the collection service. It was noted, not unexpectedly, that residents are reluctant for services to change, with the exception of acceptance for a weekly garden waste collection. However, against that backdrop 83% of respondents identified as people who recycle, with the key barrier identified as a lack of knowledge. 64% of participants were willing to further separate waste to improve recycling rates. There was strong support (72%) for the separation of food and garden waste. The provision of a kitchen caddy to support food waste collection was considered to be an important factor. The results also revealed that with weekly collection, residual waste and composting bins are less than three quarters full for the majority of respondents. Recycling bins were reported to be almost full after a week.

3.3 The Cross Party Working Group also identified through research from other Councils and experience within Thurrock (The roll-out of 3 wheeled bins to households in 2009) that significant change in the collection service could be an essential stimulus to drive engagement in recycling with all residents. It was noted that only by making food waste and dry recycling bins the most frequently collected, that separation of materials by residents would be encouraged.

3.4 The Cross Party Working Group recommended to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny, 1st October 2020, option 2A from the table above in 2.3.7. The model indicates that it provides the highest level of quality recycling potential at 54.3%, whilst generating an efficiency saving of

£643,531. It is important to note that the focus of the Working Group was predominantly on improving recycling rates and not to consider cost efficiency for the service.

3.5 This model encourages residents to only use the residual waste bin when there is no other option available to them. Option 2A provides the following collection configuration:

Waste Stream	**Collection Frequency**
Food	Weekly
Dry Recycling	Weekly
Garden Waste (non charged)	Alternate Weekly
Residual Waste	Alternate Weekly

3.6 The changes recommended by the Cross Party Working Group are welcomed in facilitating increased recycling rates and the efficiencies this will generate at a time when the focus is on financial implications resulting from COVID-19.

3.7 Option 3B provides the greatest financial efficiencies with weekly food, fortnightly recycling, fortnightly refuse and a paid for fortnightly garden waste service. This will provide an annual cost saving of £1,941,688, however reduces the recycling potential to 48.2%. This still falls below the current government target of 50%. This option equates to a total of £1.3M more in annual savings and should be considered in light of the £34m budget deficit projected over the life of the MTFS

3.8 Option 2B is considered to be the most appropriate choice in current circumstances. Whilst maintaining the principles of the Cross Party Working Group, this option introduces a charged for garden waste service, retaining a recycling rate potential of greater than 50% (52%) and achieving a further saving potential of £1M per annum. Support for this option would enable the authority to have the opportunity to exceed the 50% national recycling target, whilst achieving a significant reduction in the annual cost of the waste service and reducing the impact on the MTFS.

3.9 Residents have benefited from a non-paid for weekly garden waste service for many years. A high proportion of Councils charge for the collection of garden waste at varying prices. A national survey conducted in 2017/18 indicated the average charge to be £42.50, whilst a benchmarking activity has shown prices as high as £72.60.

3.10 The model ‘B’ options in the table assume a 50% take up rate, with a very low annual charge of £30 per household, signing up for the service. The model takes into account, collection and disposal costs, as well as income generation. The annual fee is considered one of the lowest in the Country. This is proposed in order to make this an affordable transition for residents, while still supporting the need for efficiencies and will be reviewed annually as part of the fees and charges process. Residents can compost or take their

garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre if they do not wish to enrol for this charged for collection service.

3.11 The benefit to the Council of a paid for garden waste service is two-fold. A subscription model ensures that only residents who want and intended to make use of their garden waste bin receive the service. This means that the collection rounds can be designed to be more efficient and avoid roads or areas that have not elected to participate in the service. Additionally, the income for the subscription, supports the cost of disposal for that service.

3.12 The service is aware that with changes of this sort being proposed, a number of questions relating to waste collection and disposal will be raised. Rather than attempting to provide full written details in this report, a one page overview to cover topics such as; which bin, when and how often, where the waste goes once collected and the various policies that are already in place to support residents who have requirements other than those of the average household in Thurrock. This includes assisted bin collections, the provision of additional bins and support relating to the collection and disposal of clinical waste.

4. Waste Disposal Contracts and Capital Procurement

4.1 In December 2017, the Council entered in to several three-year contracts for various elements of waste disposal with options to extend to five years. These contracts were due to expire in December 2020, but have been extended by 9 – 12 months (depending on the contract). This was implemented to enable Thurrock's Waste Strategy to be written and adopted by the Council before the new contracts were procured.

4.2 The details of the contracts to be extended or re-procured are:

Type of contract	Contract start date	Estimated annual value of contract	Estimated value of a 5 year contract
Food Waste	September 2021	£300k	£1.5
Green Waste	September 2021	£400k	£2m
Wood Waste	December 2021	£30k	£250k
Residual waste (Reuse and Recycling Centre only)	December 2021	£600k	£3m
Mixed Dry Recycling	September 2021	£1.2 Million	£6m
Haulage & Disposal	December 2021	£300k	£1.5

4.3 The timing of the contract renewals and extensions will be determined following Cabinet's adoption of the waste strategy and a decision on the collection frequencies. This work will also need to be planned in terms of

timescales for the contract extensions and the procurement of new contracts to fit with the operational implementation of the new collection service. It is therefore, requested that delegated authority be given to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sports and Leisure to procure at the appropriate time within the values outlined in the report.

4.4 In order to support the waste collection changes, some of the waste fleet will need to be changed to incorporate food pods and/or split loaded vehicles, dependent on the option approved. Similarly, procurement of food containers and communication materials will be required to support the change. Capital expenditure has been outlined in the high level modelling, tabled at 2.3.5. The efficiency savings include the impact of borrowing on revenue. In order to expedite the changes as quickly as possible, it is requested that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property, the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Sports and Leisure to procure, at the appropriate time within the values outlined in the report.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 Since the Cross Party Working Group was formed, the Council's financial position has changed. The findings of the working group have been welcomed and it has been recognised that their proposal was to obtain the highest recycling rate possible. In view of the current financial situation it is essential to review all options available and given that the garden waste service is not a legislative requirement, option 2b is recommended. Whilst this isn't something the Council would have considered previously, this option will still see a significant increased recycling rate potential and offers efficiencies to assist with the gap in the medium term financial plan.

5.2 The Waste Strategy presented to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny on 1st October has been updated to reflect the recommendation of this report and is attached as Appendix 1.

5.3. Thurrock has a rare opportunity with the timing of the re-procurement of the disposal contracts and the strategic refresh to reconfigure the collection service to achieve greater levels of recycling and the reduction in costs.

5.4 The consideration of costs is not only important in light of the current circumstances, but also when considering the housing growth agenda in the Borough. A continuation of the current service provision with the increase in household numbers is likely to require an increase in vehicles and resources.

5.5 The implementation of the Waste Strategy will result in significant change for residents and the service. It is important that all options are fully considered and a clear path identified. This will allow for careful planning and timing of the changes, so that residents have an opportunity to understand the impacts and reasons for change, whilst the potential for disruption is mitigated.

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

6.1 The Cross Party Working Group commissioned a full public consultation on Waste in Thurrock between January and March 2020. This included capturing views on changes in collection regimes, disposal options, education and recycling.

6.2 Details of the Waste Strategy and Cross Party Working Group activities were considered by the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 October 2020.

6.3 Waste Service staff and their recognised trade unions have been kept updated of the work of the Cross Party Working Group, their recommendations and papers presented to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny and this Cabinet report.

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

7.1 The proposed changes in the Waste Collection regime is likely to result in improved levels of recycling (currently reported Nationally through DEFRA and corporately).

8. Implications

Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

Indicative high-level costings of all of the options highlight the savings potential. Option 2B and 3B provide the greater financial efficiencies and, in view of the recognised gap in the medium term financial strategy, option 3B would provide the greatest saving though the higher recycling rates achieved through 2B is recognised.

Members will need to consider the £300k difference between both of these options in light of the £34m budget deficit projected over the three year life of the MTFS.

The indicative figures also include an allowance for necessary capital expenditure to facilitate these changes. As a spend to save, Cabinet are able to approve this additional expenditure.

9. Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**

Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Legally, subject to a number of exceptions, the Council is required to arrange for the collection of controlled/household waste in its area. No charge can generally be made for the collection of household waste. However, whilst garden waste is household waste, the Council can, but does not have to, recover a reasonable charge for its collection from a person who requests the authority to collect it (section 45(3) Environmental Protection Act 1990 and regulation 4 of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012).

Any procurement activity relating to changes in service identified in the waste strategy and in the options set out in this report will be carried out in accordance with the Council's own internal governance, including its Contract Procedure Rules, and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Any 'refresh' of the Councils' Waste Strategy and changes in service identified in that or in the options would need to be consistent with relevant legislation, central Governments' 25 Year Environment Plan (published 11 January 2018, last updated 16 May 2019), its Resources and Waste Strategy (published 18 December 2018) and any subsequent relevant Government policy.

10. Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

A community and equalities impact assessment form has been completed; and there are no negative impacts identified on any parts of the community. Care will be taken to ensure all communications are accessible with an increased focus on education and empowerment. The assisted bin collection programme, for those unable to present their bins for collection, will be retained.

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

N/A

12. 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):

- Cross Party Working Group Report for CGS O&S
- Waste Strategy (Appendix 1)
- Thurrock Waste Options Report

- Waste Disposal Contracts Report

Appendices to the report:

Appendix 1 – Waste Strategy

Report Author:

Marcelle Puttergill
Performance and Support Manager
Environment Highways and Counter Fraud

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Municipal Waste Strategy for Thurrock 2021-2031

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2: THE CURRENT WASTE SITUATION

2.1 Introduction

2.2 The National Picture

2.2.1 The Strategy for England – A Brief Overview

2.2.2 Key Milestones for 'Resources and Waste Strategy for England'

2.2.3 Reasons for Change

2.2.4 Local Key Milestones

2.2.5 Best Practices – WRAP / APSE Guidance

2.2.6 Materials Collected by other councils

2.2.7 Collection Frequencies adopted by other councils

2.2.8 Changes to Collection Regimes by other councils

2.2.9 Promotion of Recycling used by other councils

2.2.10 Electric Collection Vehicles

2.3 The Local Picture

2.3.1 Current Collection Regime

2.3.2 Pilot Recycling Scheme in Flats

2.3.3 Household Waste Recycling Centre-Linford

CHAPTER 3: WHAT OUR RESIDENTS SAY

3.1 Analysis of Public Consultation

CHAPTER 4: HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

4.1 Our Strategy on a Page

4.2 Communications

4.3 Our Strategic Objectives

4.4 Waste Crime and Enforcement Options

4.5 Changes to the Collections Scheme.

CHAPTER 5: THE NEXT STEPS

5.1 Waste Disposal Contracts

5.2 Waste Strategy Implementation and Monitoring

5.3 Waste Strategy Review

5.4 Conclusion

Supporting Documents:

i. Waste and Resource Strategy for England-Overview
ii. APSE ‘State of the Market’ Report 2019
iii. Thurrock Strategy Timeline
iv. Public Consultation Summary
v. Electric Collection Vehicles
vi. Communications Strategy Overview
vii. Enforcement Options

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION:

Statement from the Chair of the Waste Working Group

The national Resource and Waste Strategy has set out a direction of travel that will guide councils in playing their part in the global responsibility to save our natural resources and work towards minimising the need for these resources, while maximising their lifetime usage through encouraging, promoting and supporting recycling and re-use by their residents, local businesses and themselves.

Thurrock Borough Council has a legal and moral obligation to increase recycling and re-use rates in order to mitigate waste-related environmental problems, and has committed itself to reaching this goal. Thurrock are fully committed to improving their recycling performance and in doing so aim to become a leader in this area, as much by its actions as its policies. This strategy lays out the path Thurrock will take to engage with and encourage our residents to actively contribute, by ensuring our waste services are the best they can be so that together we can reach this goal.

It will be through education, awareness and support for residents that they will be able to provide high quality recyclables for us to collect. Our disposal choices will ensure we make the most of the materials we collect and through the continued provision of a top class collection service will improve our recycling performance and will become a high-performing council.

This Waste Strategy for Thurrock is a ‘living document’ that will require our continual nurturing and attention in order to fulfil its aim. It is also the tool with which we will improve and increase our recycling performance, to meet and exceed national targets.

CHAPTER 2 - THE CURRENT WASTE SITUATION

2.1 Introduction:

This section summarises the current situation in Thurrock in terms of the existing waste collection and disposal regimes, quantities of waste being managed, the services provided and current performance against statutory recycling and composting targets. It begins with an overview of the National Picture and notes which aspects of the Waste Strategy for England will directly and indirectly influence the Waste Strategy for Thurrock. The report also identifies how this influence may be exerted. This includes the areas being open to public consultation across the wider industry, gauging opinion on how best to deliver the national strategy to improve on recycling, galvanise the various elements of the industry and generate a closed-loop economy that makes best use of the natural resources still available to us.

2.2 The National Picture:

In the National 'Resources and Waste Strategy' published in 2019 the Government make their direction of travel very clear:

"To preserve our stock of material resources by minimising waste, promoting resource efficiency and moving towards a circular economy. At the same time minimise the damage caused to the natural environment by reducing and managing waste safely and carefully, and by tackling waste crime". The Strategy combines actions to be taken now with firm commitments for the coming years and gives a clear longer term policy direction in line with their 25 Year Environmental Plan. In the 25 year Environment Plan, the Government pledged to leave the environment in a better condition for the next generation.

"The plan is to become a world leader in using resources efficiently and reducing the amount of waste we create as a society. We want to prolong the lives of the materials and goods that we use, and move society away from the inefficient 'linear' economic model of 'take, make, use, throw'.

The National Strategy	Thurrock Strategy	Locally We Can…
Sustainable Production: Invoke 'Polluter Pays' principal - full costs of disposal for packaging they place in the market.	Communications strategy: Change the attitude and behaviour of local businesses on the issues around single use plastic and unnecessary packaging	Build on the exiting plastics recycling campaign to encourage businesses, residents and council staff away from using single use plastic • Emphasise the importance of recycling plastics properly • Educate residents and council staff of which packaging should be avoided and the harm it can do to our local environment • Educate residents on the excellent alternatives which exist and emphasise their use i.e. bags for life; reusable straws, reusable water bottles etc. • Take the lead as a corporate entity, ensuring our own practices are an exemplar for businesses across Thurrock
Helping consumers take more considered actions: Incentivise consumers to purchase sustainably. We want to help consumers to be able to recycle the materials products contain and dispose of them in the most environmentally sensitive ways.	Increase reuse from the Household Waste and Recycling Centre and support the Third Sector	Emphasise the reuse of many items which might be thrown away, but with the right skills and outlook, could be returned to use in a new home Consider and build on closer relationships with craft-trade and community groups

Resource recovery and waste management: Improve recycling rates by ensuring a consistent set of recyclable materials is collected from all households and businesses	We will work to increase recycling rates across Thurrock by the introduction of Alternate Weekly Collections to drive up recycling rates.	Increase recycling rates by ensuring our collection scheme reflects national guidance and making collections easy for residents to participate
Tackling waste crime: Create a 'Joint Unit for Waste Crime' with tougher penalties for waste criminals.	We will consider the case for adoption of civil enforcement measures to aid the satisfactory resolution of non-compliance with requirements of a revised collection regime	Strengthen Intelligence-sharing and engagement across neighbouring authorities to tackle illegal activities.
Enough is enough - cutting down on food waste: We are fully committed to reducing food waste, reducing our carbon footprint and also meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goal to halve global food waste at consumer and retail levels by 2030.	To establish and provide a weekly 'separated' food-waste collection service from households within the Thurrock area.	Localised promotion for the distribution of excess food to local homeless facilities etc.
Global Britain-International Leadership: Promote the goals of our Resources and Waste Strategy internationally and drive international political commitments through the ground-breaking Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance.	*This element of the Waste and Resources Strategy for England raises the profile of issues of a global nature; while they warrant awareness and monitoring they are not within the remit of the Waste Strategy for Thurrock*	
Research and Innovation: In some areas we are seeking transformative change, our knowledge, data or technology has yet to match our ambitions.		Thurrock LDF actively promote and encourage local investment in such technologies etc.
Measuring Progress: data, monitoring and evaluation: High quality data, information and insights are essential for effective policymaking, so we will work with our partners and stakeholders to develop a shared vision and bold new approach to data on resources and waste		Measure collections, tonnages data and participation Key Performance Information feeds into Waste-Data-Flow (Defra)

2.2.2 Key Milestones in the 'Resources and Waste Strategy for England'

A number of key milestones have been identified within the Resources and Waste Strategy for England, in terms of necessary changes to legislation, the potential for mandatory adjustments to local authority collection regimes and the introduction of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging, plastics and electronic waste. All of these will impact council service delivery and should be considered as part of the Thurrock Waste Strategy to ensure compliance and appropriate inclusion from the outset.

- There is an ongoing debate around the introduction of taxation on packaging materials that do not contain a minimum of 30% of recycled materials. At Budget 2018, government announced that from April 2022 it would introduce a world-leading new tax on the production and import of plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content, subject to consultation. Plastic packaging accounts for 44% of plastic used in the UK, but it produces 67% of plastic waste, and over 2 million tonnes of plastic packaging is used each year. The vast majority of this is made from new, rather than recycled plastic.

- Defra launched the consultation on 'Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) in England', in conjunction with the devolved administration in Wales and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland. The aim of a DRS would be to reduce the amount of littering, boost recycling levels for relevant material, offer the enhanced possibility to collect high quality materials in greater quantities and promote recycling through clear labelling and consumer messaging.

- The proposed roll-out of a 'Deposit Return Scheme' (DRS) would also have an impact on local recycling collections and it is broadly anticipated that there would be a shift from domestic kerb-side collections to more from 'reverse-vending' machines and their subsequent centralised collection points. Councils would likely be responsible for the collection and transportation of materials collected by the scheme and would be allowed to claim the collected tonnages against their own recycling targets.

- This when added to the increased amount of recyclables collected from businesses across the borough (as they are expected to recycle similar waste streams to domestic properties), may further increase the burden for councils. It is widely acknowledged that recycling from businesses is more costly, and that businesses experience difficulties around additional storage space for multiple recycling containers which limit the number of different streams that can be presented for collection.

- Greater collection of glass separately from paper and separate food-waste collections would also help to improve quality, increase revenue for local authorities and ensure more packaging can be recycled in closed-loop applications (e.g. cans to cans or paper to paper). As commercial waste collections are included in the councils overall waste-arising, any opportunities to aid in the reduction of residual waste should be considered.

Some of the planned changes such as the EPR would not directly affect the council or its activities, however it does have the potential to influence waste and recycling collections. Changes to the types of materials used for product-packaging may increase or decrease the amount of materials presented for recycling and collection dependent upon the council's scope of collected recyclable streams. While it is anticipated that the 'producer-pays' approach will shift the financial burden, the onus for collections remains with the council.

2.2.3 The Reasoning for Change

Thurrock Borough Council has a legal and moral obligation to increase recycling rates in order to mitigate waste-related environmental problems, and has committed itself to reaching this goal. Thurrock's recycling performance has not improved over the past six years and has seen a steady decline to stagnation since 2014/15.

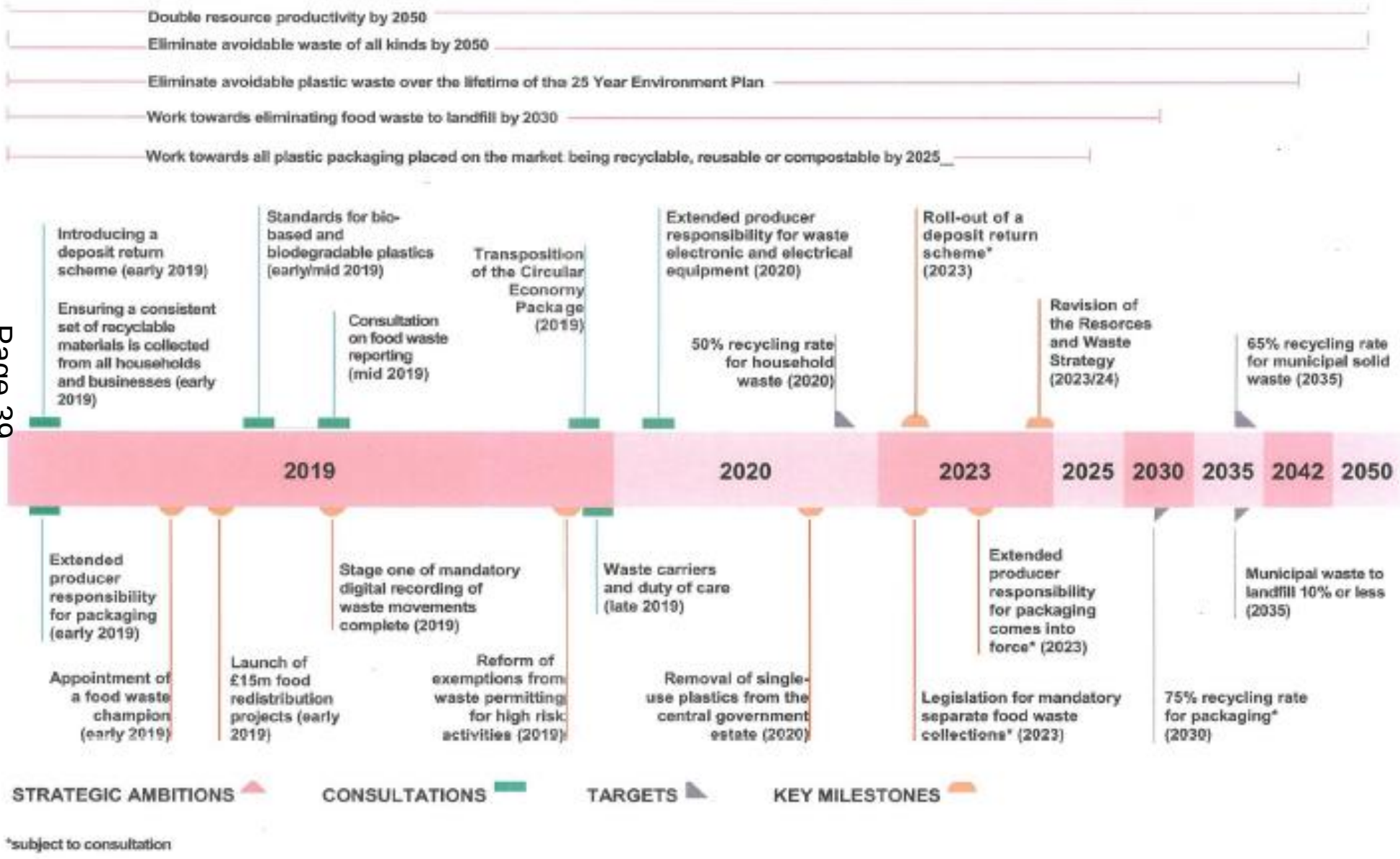
The Council's various waste disposal contracts are due for renewal in the coming year, which presents an excellent opportunity to adopt a revised waste collection regime that helps us to capture a wider range of recyclable materials at kerbside and generate an income from higher quality materials. Wherever possible these disposal contracts should be flexible enough to allow subtle changes within our waste collection regime to add to and change the waste-streams being collected; this will allow us to reflect the changing needs of the commodities-markets and shifts in public perceptions around the waste-streams they generate in their homes.

Targeting core recyclables with the potential to generate a revenue stream for the council (as opposed to a disposal or material-handling fee) raises the opportunity to design a waste collection and disposal regime in Thurrock that contributes to funding itself and eases the financial burden from this statutory service. The Government is already considering the mandating of a source-separated collection regime and this offers an opportunity to be ahead of the curve while improving on the quality of recyclable materials we collect. It also has the potential, when combined with suitable disposal contracts and facilities, to generate an income to offset treatment costs.

Alongside this consultation on core recyclable materials the Government are also consulting on establishing a greater consistency in household recycling in England. Targets for rationalisation include fewer collection and sorting systems to aid residents in participating and a common container-colour system that reduces confusion where residents move from one council area to another.

KEY MILESTONES

Pre-Covid? Is 2020's 50% target under threat?



2.2.4 Local Key Milestones

The Waste Strategy for Thurrock needs to reflect and take into consideration the milestones set by the Resource and Waste Strategy for England. Key dates for change must be acknowledged and factored into this strategy to ensure sufficient time and resources are available to prepare the council's services for compliance where statutory changes take effect.

2.2.5 Best Practice – WRAP/APSE

Organisations including WRAP (Waste Recycling Action Programme) and APSE (Association of Public Sector Excellence) carry out studies and prepare reports on the many aspects of waste collections including operating costs analysis, recycling performance, transport operating costs analysis and State of the Market reports.

APSE's 'State of the Market' report (*Annex Document*) published in August 2019 evidenced a number of statistics that included the numerous and varying ranges of materials that were collected by local authorities for recycling.

Thurrock Council makes use of both organisations to benchmark its own activities.

2.2.6 Materials Collected by other authorities

As councils continually strive to increase their level of recycling, increasingly diverse materials are collected in an effort to further remove and reduce materials sent to landfill. Materials ranging from the widely-collected 'paper, card, cans, plastics, garden-waste and glass' to less widely-collected 'food-waste, textiles, batteries and bulbs' all contribute to the continual drive to improve recycling figures.

Some materials however, such as textiles and batteries, while relatively simple to collect, have been removed from collection regimes by a number of councils due to the relatively poor financial returns offered by end-markets. The 'used-textile' industry for example has a thriving e-trade in clothing, which is affecting both local authority collections and charity shop donations.

With regards to local authority food-waste collections, for the second year running there has been a slight decrease in the number of authorities collecting this material (down 5%). This is surprising, given the significant tonnage that can be collected to add to the recycling rate. In addition, where food waste is collected there is a 7% increase in councils collecting it fortnightly as opposed to weekly (which was the norm in the past).

Glass is now recorded as not being collected by 8% of councils that responded to the survey, which is a slight increase of 1% on 2018 figures.

While many authorities continue to collect recycling via co-mingled collections (i.e. all recyclables in a single container) as we currently do in Thurrock, many continue to operate a source-separated method using a number of individual containers and multi-compartment collection vehicles. Both methods have merit and can be efficient, dependent upon access to an appropriate disposal outlet.

‘Source-separated’ collection allows for the separation of streams which is known to considerably improve the quality of materials collected as contamination can be easily seen and potentially removed before being loading into collection vehicles. This method can be attractive to materials-processors as there is minimal further processing required before any onward sale to end-users. This on-vehicle separation allows for a level of quality pre-checking by the crew and therefore minimal intervention by processors, which keeps costs down.

However this method is historically more expensive for the authority to collect as either only one or two waste streams can be collected at a time, requiring more vehicles across the wider range of collections, or requires multi-compartmented collection vehicles which have reduced capacities per stream and require more vehicles to collect the wider range. This can be offset to some extent by improved revenue per materials which is more financially efficient. In addition a good and robust regimen of education and awareness for residents is crucial in order to minimise the non-target materials being put out for collection. This also does mean more waste containers to be stored at residents’ homes and presented for emptying out on our streets.

2.2.7 Collection Frequencies used by other councils

Many authorities offset this need for more collection vehicles by increasing the time between collections. This allows for the use of a vehicle on a number of suitable waste streams by collecting for example; paper & card on one week, then plastics, cans & glass the following week, with both streams presented in identical container types such as recycling-boxes or wheeled bins as the vehicle can be used to collect either type. This allows potential for a weekly-recycling collection to be provided while balancing the vehicle load-capacity as fewer materials are in each bin.

2.2.8 Changes to Collection Regimes by other councils

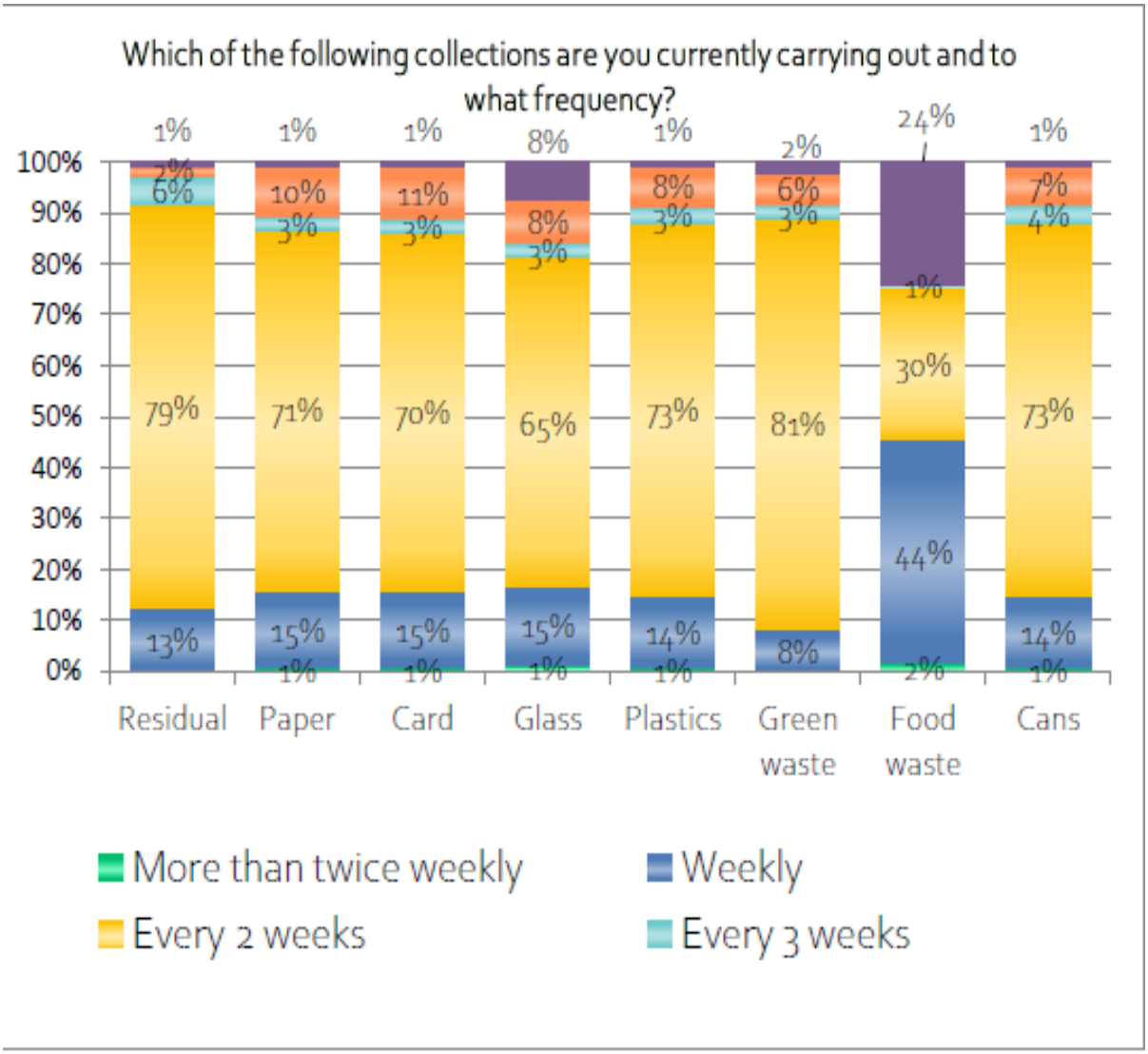
Over 75% of local councils across England have already taken the decision to move away from the once traditional approach of emptying refuse bins every week, towards local solutions that work to actively encourage residents to make more informed choices as to how they manage their waste at home.

Changes have included measures such as the introduction of a separated food-waste scheme which removes food waste from the residual bins and diverts it away from landfill and towards recycling targets. Where councils choose to change the collection of landfill bins from weekly to fortnightly, the main concern of residents is that food-waste creates potential pest and rodent problems.

Such changes are made to compliment the recycling collections that operate alongside refuse collections. Recyclables can be collected in various ways, including:

- source-separated recycling which puts the onus on residents to sort their recyclables into a number of different containers for the council to collect
- co-mingled' collections such as Thurrock currently use, which allows all different materials to be put into the one container and onto collection vehicles, for sorting by recycling processors further down the line.

Table: Collection Frequencies

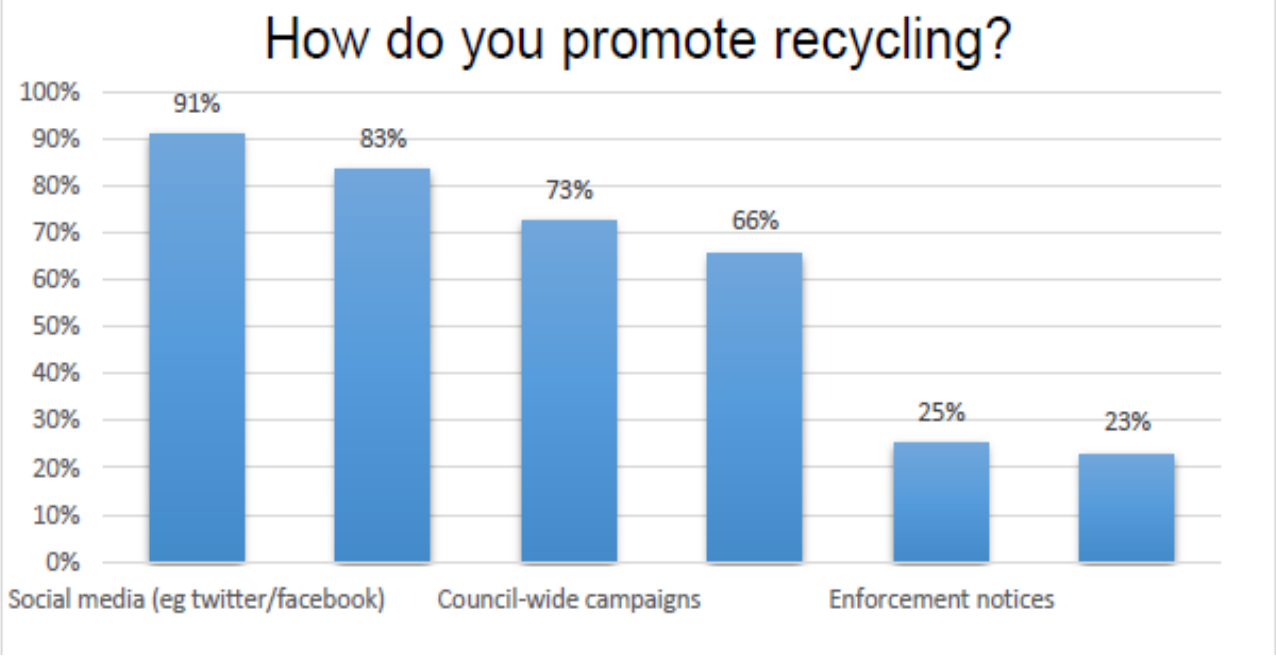


2.2.9 Promotion of recycling methods used by other councils

Active promotion of recycling is critical to the success of the scheme. The use of behavioural-change techniques through leafleting, school visits and social media are still the most popular methods used to promote recycling, and it is notable that social media in particular is continuing to grow in popularity as a means to promote recycling.

Where a significant change to behavior is required it is crucial that this is clearly explained and is understandable to residents for them to become engaged with the process and to help and guide them into breaking the ingrained behaviour of previous collection regimes.

Table: Methods of promoting recycling used by councils



2.2.10 Electric Collection Vehicles

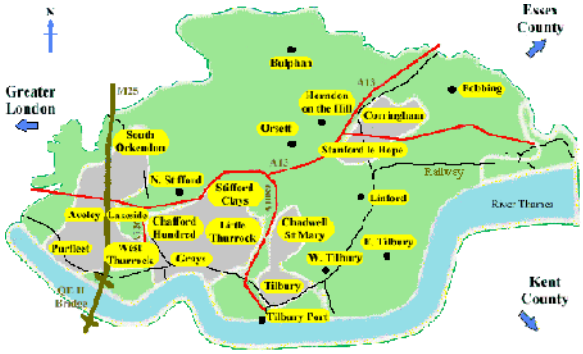
Almost every waste collection round in the UK relies on refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) that are powered by diesel-fueled internal combustion engines. As local authorities become increasingly alert to the dangers of climate change and air pollution, and the urgent need for action, the days of 'dirty' diesel vehicles seem likely to be numbered. While there are several alternative technologies that might replace diesel, one of the best developed is battery-powered electric propulsion, recharged from the electricity grid. Municipalities around the world have adopted electric RCVs (e- RCVs), and in the UK the City of London is the first to start the process of implementing a new electric fleet. Meanwhile, several other UK local authorities are trialing them (*Annex Document*).

2.3 The Local Picture

Location:

Thurrock is situated 25 miles east of the City of London on the River Thames, with over 18 miles of riverfront. It covers an area of 64 square miles, over half of which is green belt.

The M25 and A13 act as a crossroads of national importance. Regular rail services operate between London and Southend-On-Sea, serving seven stations and the Channel Tunnel Rail Link passes through the Borough. The Ports of Tilbury and Purfleet provide international connections for both passengers and freight.



Thurrock's Population:

In the financial year 2018/19 Thurrock's population was approximately 172,500 and consisted of c: 69,000 households. The current population is expected to grow and reach 207,200 by 2033, a projected increase of 25%.

The majority of the population live in the main conurbations of Aveley, Grays, Purfleet, Stanford-le-Hope & Corringham, South Ockenden & Belhus, Tilbury and the developing community of Chafford Hundred.

2.3.1 What currently happens to Thurrock's Waste?

As a unitary authority, Thurrock is responsible for both the collection and disposal of municipal solid waste, as well as being the waste planning authority. The Municipal Waste Strategy for Thurrock will set out six key aims for a long-term municipal waste strategy, namely:

- **Deliver the principles of the waste hierarchy** which is the mandatory way in which all waste should be dealt with to get the most from our natural resources

and best serve the environment

- **Deliver the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill** which aims to prevent waste that rots down and creates greenhouse gases, such as food-waste, from going to landfill.
- **Ensure that Thurrock recycling complies with statutory recycling targets** to help us improve upon our recycling figures and help save the environment
- **Ensure that Thurrock recovers sufficient value from residual waste to comply with statutory recovery targets** which we can do through sending waste that isn't recyclable to 'Energy Recovery' facilities rather than simply to landfill
- **Ensure that any procurement activities are in line with best value principles and achieve efficiency savings**, to help ensure our 'Waste does not go to waste'
- **Work towards achieving top-quartile positioning with respect to waste management provision in the UK** which simply means we will work to improve our recycling performance and aim to be one of the best-performing councils.

The council currently provide a weekly collection of refuse, recycling and garden & food waste from around 69,000 households in the borough. This in-house service is operated from the council's Environment and Highways Depot at Oliver Close in Grays.

Over 205,000 individual bins are emptied every week and 77,524 tonnes of household waste were produced in 2019/20, of which only 37% was recycled or composted.

Thurrock also have a successful commercial/trade waste collection from which the waste-tonnages collected contribute to the council's overall targets and tonnages. For

this reason a number of local authorities over the years have decided to sell off their commercial waste businesses in order to reduce their overall waste tonnages. In Thurrock commercial waste is a good revenue stream for the council. The planned focus by the government on ensuring commercial businesses are able to recycle the same types of materials as domestic households offers an opportunity to consider expansion to our commercial recycling service to further boost recycling in Thurrock.

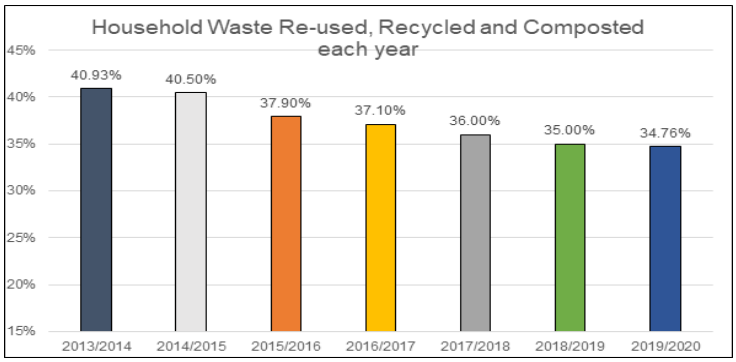
Households have traditionally been provided with 240-litre wheeled bins for refuse, but all new-build properties and any replacement containers are now 180-litres in an effort to reduce the amount of waste being generated by residents and sent to landfill. The impact of this reduction in capacity is limited as the roll-out to new-builds affects a relatively small number of households. As replacement bins are chargeable this too has minimal impact.

The Council are committed to a number of waste disposal contracts with a number of suppliers, and end-disposal locations that are situated over a considerable area; these

contracts have varying end-dates. Of the three separate waste streams the council collects, both residual and garden/food waste are disposed locally to a waste transfer station near to the depot. Recycling waste is disposed of in East London, and as a result vehicles are brought into the Oliver Close Depot loaded, parked until the evening then driven into East London for emptying. This methodology is restrictive in that recycling collection rounds are limited to the capacity carried on a vehicle; furthermore it does not allow further collections after tipping, as do residual or garden/food collection rounds. There is opportunity to redress this as part of the disposal contracts renewal process over the coming year.

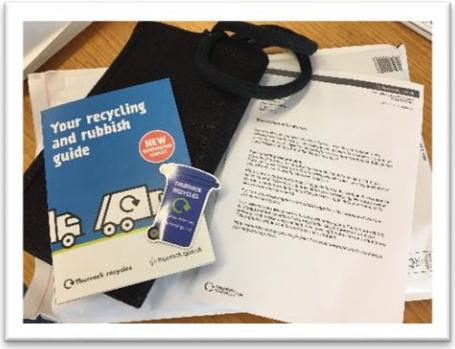
2.3.2 Pilot Recycling Scheme to Flats

At present, a considerable number of Thurrock's residential communal buildings lack the facilities to recycle. Encouraging residents of communal buildings to recycle has proven to be a challenge for many local authorities, both nationally and internationally, as recycling contributions from these properties are generally lower than other households. The introduction of increased recycling opportunities in communal buildings could have a considerable effect on the overall recycling rate.



Thurrock's current recycling rate is approximately 35%, and has seen a decline over the last five years. This is lower than both the 2020 national target of 50% and the average recycling rate in England, which is currently approximately 45%. Cost of recyclable waste disposal is considerably lower than the disposal costs of residual waste. An increase in recycling would therefore not only benefit the environment, but would also realise financial benefits for Thurrock Council and its residents.

After extensive literature research, two versions of a newly designed recycling scheme were trialled at two sites in Grays: The Echoes and Worthing Close. Residents of these sites had in the past expressed an interest in recycling. Both sites are of similar size, and have similar characteristics. The pilot went live on 28 August 2019.



Residents were involved early in the process and received an introductory letter approximately one month before the launch of the pilot, with a follow up 'recycling welcome pack' several days before the launch. The welcome pack included a second introduction letter, a recycling guide, a fridge magnet, and two rolls of single use recycling sacks (Worthing Close) or a reusable recycling bag (The Echoes). Guides were designed keeping in mind the fact that some residents may not read or speak English. Graphics were used as much as possible in order to minimise this potential barrier.

For two months, both sites were closely monitored in order to determine whether the proposed arrangements were functioning as intended and whether residents were recycling as a result of these arrangements. Results showed that recycling bins were used effectively, with very low levels of contamination. Contamination levels were slightly higher at Worthing Close, with plastic carrier bags being the most common type of contamination. This might have been caused by the fact that plastic carrier bags closely resemble the single use recycling sacks (as opposed to the reusable bags), making residents more likely to resort to plastic carrier bags as an alternative.

Initial resident feedback from one-to-one interviews and online surveys shows that residents of both pilot sites rate the user-friendliness of their pilot scheme as high, and communications as effective. Overall, residents are pleased with the new arrangements. Although response rates for the online survey were relatively low, results show that residents of The Echoes were generally more positive about their reusable bag than residents of Worthing Close about their single use bags.
Actual tonnages from the project are not known as materials were combined with other locations, however crew feedback on participation and overall low-contamination levels have been very positive.

The Pilot Scheme has demonstrated that with the appropriate education, infrastructure and support recycling collections from communal locations can be both well received and productive, contributing positively towards raising the recycling rates across Thurrock. A capital bid was submitted and approved for the roll-out across the borough. This will be carried out in two phases over the following 18 months, planned to start in mid-September 2020, with Phase I focused on Council Housing locations and Phase II on private housing locations.

The first phase of the roll-out will introduce a further 300 recycling containers into the scheme and will bring the recycling collection service to around 2000 more council residents.

2.3.3 Household Waste Recycling Centre-Linford

The Council have approved a capital project that will bring about the redesign and expansion of the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Linford. This will allow for improved access for residents, the potential expansion of materials that can be collected at the site and a safer working environment for our operating staff. This project has also allowed the Council to consider accepting commercial tipping by local businesses and tradesmen, while offering the opportunity to generate a revenue stream by doing so.

CHAPTER 3: WHAT OUR RESIDENTS SAY

3.1 Analysis of Public Consultation

In February 2020, the cross-party Waste Strategy Group formed to investigate ways in which the level of recycling in Thurrock could be increased, commissioned a consultation with all residents of the Borough. The consultation (Annex Document) was publicised under the strap-line of “Talking Rubbish” and was available to residents online or as a paper survey accessed through libraries and community hubs. The

consultation was advertised through postcard sent to all households, social media and a further letter to households that included an educational sticker for use on recycling bins.

The consultation covered 4 key areas:

1. Recycling
2. Education
3. Collection regimes
4. Waste processing options

The survey explored public opinion about the council's recycling collection service in terms of ease of use, education and the breadth of recyclables collected. In addition questions were posed around how often residents presented their waste for collection and how often they used the service.

A number of responses demonstrated the potential for some level of collection-schedule changes on the grounds that they would not adversely affect residents' capacity for storage of waste between bin-collections.

Another area of interest was the perception of how the council delivered messages relating to the collection service and the apparent confusion about which types of materials we include. This will be a learning point for communications and educational materials going forward.

When asked about future waste disposal options for Thurrock and the potential for us to further explore the Energy from Waste (EfW), Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) and Composting Facility options, there was strong support for Thurrock to consider building our own waste processing facilities to:

- Separate and process dry recycling
- Process compostable materials – both food and garden waste
- Generate energy through incineration

A small number of respondents however were opposed to further investigation or consideration of options.

Public consultation supports the aspiration of the Waste Strategy Group to introduce a separated food waste collection. This may be a desirable first step in achieving the goal of raising recycling tonnages. It will also put us ahead of the Resource and Waste Strategy for England, which will see the mandatory separation of food-waste introduced by 2023. In tandem with a weekly recycling collection and fortnightly refuse collections, this strategy has the potential to increase recycling tonnages and raise the recycling figure from a static 35%, to reach and even exceed national targets.

The proposed changes to recyclable collections offer have the potential to not only increase recycling levels but to generate a revenue stream where supported by appropriate recycling disposal-options and contracts. It must be said that residents may believe the removal of weekly refuse collections to be a reduction in service; however, waste will still be collected each week, it is the nature of the waste collected that changes.

CHAPTER 4: HOW WILL WE GET THERE?

4.1 Our Strategy on a Page

The delivery of the strategy and the waste hierarchy (Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Recover, Dispose) should be through the ‘three E’s approach’ – Empower, Engage and only then Enforce.

REDUCE

Educate
- Staff, Suppliers, Residents

Empower
- Led by example

Enforce
- Extended Producer Responsibility – producer pays for disposal

Your Actions
- Think before throwing items away

REDUCE

Aim:
Eliminate single use plastics

REUSE

Educate
- Re-use, repair and repurpose workshops
- Love Food – Hate Waste

Empower
- Re-use Partnerships with Charities
- Collaboration between Supermarkets and Food Banks
- Plant Fruit Trees

Enforce
- Re-use considered before disposal

Your Actions
- Support charities and use options such as Free-cycle

REUSE

Aim:
Promote Re-use

RECYCLE

Educate
- Accessible guidance
- Food waste collections
- Clear collection schedules
- Engagement

Empower
- Recycling for Flats
- Reliable collections
- Review of collections and bins

Enforce
- Reduce contamination levels
- Targeted and proportionate enforcement

Your Actions
- Make sure that the right materials are going into bin

RECYCLE

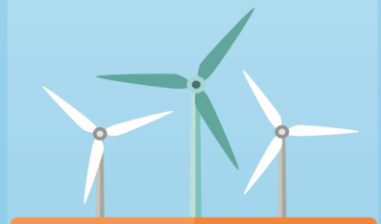
Aim:
Increase recycling rate

RECOVERY

Educate
- Clarity on what goes in each bin

Empower
- Create opportunities for re-use, re-purpose and recycling before disposal

Enforce
- Effective Contract Management



RECOVERY

Aim:
Waste not re-use or recycled sent for Energy Recovery

DISPOSAL

Educate
- Promote principles of the waste Hierarchy

Empower
- Review Disposal arrangements

Enforce
- Support reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery before disposing of waste

DISPOSAL

Aim:
Limit waste to landfill

Reduce CO2 emissions from waste collection

thurrock.gov.uk

4.2 Communications

Nationally there has been a shift towards favouring sustainable products and this will be a focus for a communications strategy to engage both residents and local businesses with more sustainable waste management. These messages will be supported by education on the use of for example, plastic-alternatives. This will help drive the aim of eliminating the use of single-use plastics, which are not always easily recycled.

We will actively promote ways to reuse and repurpose waste by taking everyday items normally thrown away and reusing them in new and inventive ways. This will be done through embracing national campaigns such as 'Love Food, Hate Waste' and involving local crafters and community groups.

The focus of messaging will be our core objective of increasing Thurrock's recycling to 45% by 2025 and to 50% by 2030. We will also continue to explain how Thurrock waste that cannot be repurposed or recycled will be diverted away from landfill and to Energy from Waste wherever possible. This will be supported by clear messaging on the importance of residents putting the right waste in the right bins.

A strong, targeted and robust communications strategy will be critical to our success. We will make information easy to understand, targeted to the right audience and delivered in a manner that is easy to engage with. We will ensure that residents and businesses understand how to participate, which materials we want to collect and most importantly why we are making the changes.

4.3 Our Strategic Objectives

Objective 1 - To eliminate unnecessary Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) and unnecessary packaging from the waste stream.

How will we achieve this?

- We will help to educate our residents with regards to SUPs, creating a 'Plastic Pact' that residents and businesses, education facilities alike can sign up to and commit to reducing the use of SUPs.
- We will work with local businesses and join existing forums that focus on the elimination of SUPs, so that Thurrock Council is a local leader with regards to eliminating this unnecessary waste stream.
- We will lead by example and work with our supply chains, satellite-buildings and procurement channels to ensure that the Council does not buy products which cause unnecessary waste.
- We will support the enforcement of this by responding to the Government Consultations on the Plastic Tax and Extended Producer Responsibility.

Additionally we will support the objectives of the Government's 25-year Environment Plan, and the work of WRAP who aim to eliminate all unnecessary SUPs by 2025.

How will we measure this?

- Support the work of WRAP who are leading and monitoring this project to remove unnecessary SUPs by 2025
- Monitor the impact on waste-arising within Thurrock, with particular reference to Kgs produced per head.
- Observe the number of signatories to the 'Plastic Pact'.

Objective 2 - To minimise the production of waste and to create an awareness amongst our residents about the impact of waste

How will we achieve this?

- Work towards setting up a Re-use Partnership, with a local charity or community group, to reuse or repurpose waste that has been brought into the Household Waste & Recycling Centre (HWRC)
- Redevelopment of the HWRC to include a Reuse area or facility to encourage and facilitate the reuse of materials and items.
- Support the 'Love food, hate waste' campaign
- Work and support existing re-use groups
- Support partnerships between supermarkets and food banks

How will we measure this?

We will monitor the following KPIs:

- Kgs per head
- Total Waste arising
- The tonnage reused from the Reuse partnership and HWRC.
- We will monitor the budget, and report any impacts that the reduction in waste has.

Objective 3 - Increase our recycling rate to 50% by 2025

How will we achieve this?

- Provide separate food waste collections, and reduce the amount of residual waste that is collected.
- Ensure that we comply with the Government's Consistency Agenda, and collect the required materials from the kerbside.
- Redevelopment of the HWRC, and investigate best-practice to make recycling easier and a more attractive option to landfill
- Provide clear collection schedules
- Better utilise the 'Bartec' In-Cab Data System in the vehicles to enable real time reporting
- Provide clear information and infrastructure for residents in Flats to recycle

- Support Government proposals for a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS)
- Reduce contamination in recycling bins through targeted communications
- Targeted and proportionate enforcement.

How will we measure this?

- We will monitor the percentage of household waste recycled
- Monitor the percentage of municipal waste recycled
- Monitor the recycling rate at the HWRC

Objective 4 - Ensure that waste collection and waste disposal is carried out in the most carbon-efficient way.

How will we achieve this?

- Investigate the use of Electric Refuse Collection Vehicles (E-RCV's)
- Ensure that we have long term waste treatment contracts in place, that offer the best possible environmental solution for residual waste
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a Waste Transfer Station in Thurrock, to enable our operational team to function more efficiently and to provide a facility for commercial waste disposal.

How will we monitor this?

- Percentage of household waste to EfW
- Percentage of municipal waste to landfill
- Carbon calculation through reduced vehicle mileages on Collection Rounds and onward Disposal Transportation.

Objective 5 – To become an Authority that wants to send zero-waste to landfill

How will we achieve this?

- Procurement of value for money contracts which avoid sending waste to Landfill
- Education of residents regarding the impact of landfill and the environmental benefits of waste reduction
- Leading by example in the materials we use and the processes we follow

How will we monitor this?

- Percentage of household waste to landfill
- Percentage of municipal waste to landfill

4.4 Waste Crime and Enforcement Options

Thurrock Council's Environmental Enforcement Team have a very good record of dealing with criminal acts of fly-tipping across the borough and such incidents are addressed through enforcement powers available.

Similar enforcement powers are available for the 'Civil Offences' that fall under the 'Environmental Protection Act (EPA) of 1990 under 'Section-46' 'Receptacles for household waste'. While enforcement should be an option of last resort, the ability to address individuals who are unwilling to act responsibly exists within the Council's toolbox.

However easy and simple a waste collection scheme may be for many residents, it may be challenging to others, or a minority may simply not care or wish to participate. Recyclable materials collected by councils may be an important revenue stream that falls under waste contracts; where incorrect materials are found in volume, this may lead to penalties. These incorrect materials, or contamination, generally come either from the resident simply not knowing any different (education scenario) or through a deliberate act (enforcement scenario).

There are several ways of addressing such matters, however it should always be the goal to rectify unacceptable behavior and any form of financial penalisation should be considered a last resort. The rectification of any unacceptable behaviour should then encourage willful and positive participation. A robust program of education and awareness to ensure all residents are able to participate, along with the ability for officers to carry out visits on residents to support them in areas of the collection scheme where they may be unsure or not understand is vital to the success of any recycling collection scheme.

Where such measures of rectifying unacceptable behaviour are unsuccessful Councils have the authority, obligation and ability to address it, as well as a duty of care under the Environmental Protection Act of 1990, and may use civil enforcement to do so.

The range of enforcement powers for both criminal and civil waste crimes are evidenced within the annex documents.

4.5 Proposed Changes to Waste Collections in Thurrock

The Waste Strategy Group have spent considerable time in discussion with council officers, have visited the materials recycling facility where Thurrock's recyclable waste is taken and long debated how best to change the waste and recycling collection regime in Thurrock to ensure it is able to achieve the main objective of this strategy for both improving recycling rates for the residents & businesses in Thurrock and enable us to meet and exceed the National Recycling targets over the life-span of this strategy.

Consideration to the national Resource & Waste Strategy for England with its proposals for the mandatory separate collection of food-waste and the source-segregation of some recyclable materials such as glass from paper by 2023 and the reduction of municipal waste to landfill to below 10% by 2035 has led the group to determine that a significant change to the collection regime in Thurrock is necessary to meet these challenges.

In order to meet these challenges the Council will:-

- Progress with the roll-out of the Flats recycling program to both council-owned and private locations and integrate them into the collection service.

- Retender and procure new waste disposal contracts which will support the changes proposed to the waste collection regime in Thurrock

- Carry out a comprehensive re-optimisation of all waste collections to ensure the service is efficient and fully inclusive to all its residents.

- Introduce and roll-out a weekly separate food-waste collection service that will divert food from the residual waste stream, contribute to the recycling rates and reduce spending on landfill disposal costs.

- Maintain a weekly dry-recycling collection service that will continue to support and encourage residents in recycling, and will be able to include the roll-out of Flats-recycling across the borough.

- Introduce a subscription service for the collection of Garden waste with a charge of £30 per year. This service will be provided on a fortnightly basis.

- Revise residual-waste collection to a two-weekly service in order to further encourage residents to recycle their waste

These changes to waste and recycling collections work together and continue to provide a waste collection every week by tasking residents to sort, separate and present their waste for varying collections.

CHAPTER 5: THE NEXT STEPS

5.1 Waste Disposal Contracts

Thurrock Council currently has a suite of various waste disposal contracts in operation.

The table below sets out the current contractual information for waste disposal.

Type of contract	Contractor	Contract Start date	Term of contract	Contract extension	Tonnage
Residual Waste	FCC	Sept 2015	8 years six month	No extension	44,000
Organic Waste	BIFFA	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 9 months have currently been requested with a variation for garden waste only	12,000
Mixed Dry Recycling (MDR)	Bywaters	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 9 months have currently been requested	13,000
Reuse & Recycling Centre (RRC) residual disposal	Veolia	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 12 months have currently been requested	5,000
RRC-Wood disposal	Suez	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 12 months have currently been requested	2,500
Disposal and transport of recyclables	Aherns	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 12 months have currently been requested	10,000
RRC – Green Waste disposal	Veolia	Dec 2017	Three years	24 months 9 months have currently been requested	600

5.2 Waste Strategy Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation of the Waste Strategy for Thurrock will involve a number of different elements across a period of time. This will require the following to take place:

- The successful roll-out and integration of recycling collections to Flats and Communal properties across Thurrock

- A clear, concise and ongoing communications programme to ensure our residents fully understand what it is we are asking them to do and why we need their help, to increase the recycling rates within Thurrock.
- A structured and workable Route-Optimisation of existing waste collection rounds that includes all properties for collection and that maximises efficiency of the waste collection fleet.

- Specify and procure suitable waste-collection vehicles that will allow maximum flexibility to incorporate changes to collections where alternate waste streams are considered, in order to further increase recycling levels.

- Procure and deliver food-caddies for food-waste collections

- To procure and ensure that cost effective waste disposal contracts are in operation.

- Continually engage with key stakeholders to ensure that they are kept aware of planned changes within the Service, and where appropriate seek input and feedback on operational considerations.

5.3 Waste Strategy Review

In light of the changes proposed in the Resources and Waste Strategy, it is imperative that we continue to review Thurrock's Municipal Waste Strategy to ensure that we are able to comply with changes to National policy and legislation.
The 'Strategy Timeline' (*Annex Document*) shows the key dates within the National Strategy, with which we will need to comply. This means we will have to continually review our own strategy to ensure compliance.

As the national strategy changes and adapts to further increase recycling figures and protect our natural resources it will become necessary to review and determine how we can incorporate changes and ensure continued compliance while providing our service to the Public and keeping spending within budget.

The commodities markets for recyclable materials is ever-changing and demand levels for materials is fluid, which in turn affects fees and charges from disposal and treatment providers. This fluidity should be built into disposal contracts where possible to allow the council every opportunity to benefit from the recyclables we collect and again keep budget-spending to a minimum.

Review of the strategy should be regular and operational service plans adjusted where required. As the borough's population grows over the coming years and households

added to collection rounds it is good practice to regularly review collection rounds to incorporate new properties and maintain maximum efficiencies across the service.

5.4 Conclusion

The Waste Strategy for Thurrock needs to be considered a 'living document' that will require continual nurturing and attention in order to fulfil its aim. It is also the tool with which we will improve and increase our recycling performance, to meet and exceed national targets. The strategy will be dependent upon a number of critical factors for it to succeed.

We must firstly fully **engage with our residents** to encourage them to participate in providing as much recyclable materials as possible. This participation will be fully reliant upon our providing and delivering a **collection service** that can be relied upon every week, is as efficient as possible to ensure continued best-value and to resolve service issues quickly and maintain engagement. We will need to provide **information and education** to residents to encourage inclusion in a service that reaches every household across the borough, providing us with high quality recyclables and minimum contamination. The continued **engagement with our front-line staff** will be vital in ensuring they are informed, motivated and engaged to deliver the changes to our collection regime that are necessary to achieve our goal of increased recycling.

We will look to provide our front-line staff with the **necessary tools** to maximise these efficiencies, while allowing the service to be flexible and facilitate subtle changes to collection methods where the recycling markets may require us to adapt and change. By providing **waste collection vehicles** that allow us to implement changes more quickly we will maximise the available resources and minimise the number of vehicles on our roads.

Finally, **continual reviews** of both the national strategy and this document will ensure we are in the best position to evaluate, plan for and react to our ever-changing needs and ensure we reach the targets we have set ourselves.

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11 November 2020	ITEM: 12 Decision: 110536
Cabinet	
Council Tax Exemption for Foster Carers	
Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** Key
Report of: Councillor James Halden – Portfolio Holder Childrens and Adult Social Care	
Accountable Assistant Director : Joe Tynan - Interim Assistant Director for Childrens Social Care and Early Help	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy - Corporate Director of Childrens Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposal for implementing a Council Tax exemption scheme for Thurrock Council's internal foster carers and connected persons / kinship carers who live in Thurrock.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 For members to recommend that the introduction of a Council Tax exemption scheme starting in April 2021 (2021/2022 financial year) as outlined in section 3 in this report is considered by Cabinet.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Council Tax Benefit is means tested and generally has the same conditions to qualify as Housing Benefit (HB). Any fostering allowances are not eligible when making a claim for Council Tax Benefit and this includes any reward element that a foster carer is paid for their services. If a sole foster carer is caring for a disabled child, then they may also qualify for a Disability Reduction in their council tax bill of up to 50%.

Council Tax deduction schemes have been implemented within a small number of Councils with a reported positive impact on current foster carers, the recruitment of new foster carers and the transfer of foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs). Upon analysis of the yearly cost of external placements for children and young people, it is evident that Local Authorities are able to save a significant cost by reducing Council Tax

payments from in-house foster carers if the in-house cohort is increased and the IFA placements reduced.

2.2 Liverpool is an example of an authority offering council tax exemption. They identified that they needed to recruit 10 additional foster carers to offset the cost of introducing an exemption of council tax for foster carers. Liverpool Council had 8 foster carers from IFA's transferred across to them within the first year of introducing the scheme, therefore almost hitting their target with IFA foster carers alone. The overall positive outcome from introducing this scheme Liverpool Council identified was the positive boost to foster carer's morale after receiving an indirect payment, reflecting the amazing work they do protecting and supporting the City's most vulnerable children and young people. Liverpool Council looked to change their offer to make sure that foster carers only received an exemption once they had a placement, as they experienced carers who did not take a placement but received the exemption.

2.3 Thurrock is proposing that to receive the exemption foster carers will need to have consistently had placements for 26 weeks in the first and subsequent year following approval. The following arrangements for council tax exemptions or discounts for foster carers have been identified:

- Cheshire East Council – Full exemption
- Camden Council – Full exemption for those who live in Camden
- Waltham Forest Borough Council – 66% off council tax bill if foster carers live in Waltham Forest or a payment is given
- Redbridge Council – discounted bills for foster carers
- Wokingham Borough Council - Full exemption
- Islington – Full exemption
- Liverpool – Full exemption

2.4 In terms of neighbouring authorities, Southend, Essex, Barking and Dagenham and Havering who are our nearest competitors for foster carers, do not currently offer an exemption for Council Tax.

2.5 Thurrock Council has invested significantly to support the recruitment and retention of foster carers in Thurrock through the development of a recruitment team and the recent review of payments to foster carers. The proposals within this report aim to build on this investment by improving our offer to Thurrock based foster carers, making us an attractive option and therefore increasing our internal fostering capacity. This would set us apart from competing Local Authorities and Independent Fostering Agencies.

2.6 When children are placed in-house with Thurrock carers, our Fostering Team have a good knowledge of their carers' abilities and due to this, know that the children and young people will be provided with stability and good care resulting in good outcomes.

2.7 With a council tax exemption we would be sending a message that we value the work Thurrock foster carers do in making a difference to children's lives. If

we can support more people to foster, this will ultimately benefit everyone in Thurrock by reducing costs for expensive out-of-borough care and enabling children to be placed in their home community.

2.8 Council Tax Bands in Thurrock

Valuation band	Council tax 2020/21
Band A	**£1,070.22**
Band B	**£1,248.59**
Band C	**£1,426.96**
Band D	**£1,605.33**
Band E	**£1,962.07**
Band F	**£2,318.81**
Band G	**£2,675.55**
Band H	**£3,210.66**

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 Thurrock currently has 58 fostering households who are approved by and living in Thurrock. The average council tax cost per annum based on Band D is £1605.33. The proposal is to develop an offer which will help to attract and retain our own foster carers by exempting Thurrock based foster carers from paying council tax whilst looking after children who are resident in their households.

3.2 The average cost of an in-house placement for children in Thurrock is £24,544 per annum. The average cost of placing a child in an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placement per annum is £44, 408.

3.3 If we were to apply a council tax exemption to the 58 fostering households based on Band D it would cost the authority £93,109. If we had an increase of 20 households per year over the next three years that would be an additional cost of £32,107 each year (£96,321 over three years). These figures are a maximum projection and are based on all households that meet the criteria being eligible for a 100% exemption. The additional costs incurred will be offset by reducing Independent Fostering Agency purchases and associated costs through the use of in-house Foster Carers. This proposal will also have the added benefit of creating capacity for more Looked After Children to retain their local links and support networks.

3.4 In April 2020, we had 110 active IFA placements with an estimated spend of £92,010 per week. If IFA placements were to remain at this level each year, the approximate spend per year on IFA's would be £4,784,520. The spend for the same number of children placed in-house based on average placement costs would be £51,920 per week (£2,699,840 per annum) a difference of a little over two million pounds per year.

3.5 The table below identifies what additional capacity our recruitment team would need to achieve in order to offset the costs of exempting our current foster carers from paying council tax and a projection over three years to:

Period	Maximum Households eligible	Maximum cost to the LA	Additional built-in fostering capacity	Cost avoidance of not placing with IFA
Current Year	58 households	£93,109	6 children	6 children £119,184
Year 1	20 additional households eligible	£32,107	2 children	2 children £39,728
Year 2	20 additional households eligible	£32,107	2 children	2 children £39,728
Year 3	20 additional households eligible	£32,107	2 children	2 children £39,728
TOTAL by year 3	119	£189,430	12	£238,368

3.6 Recruitment of foster carers is a lengthy process, which can be impacted upon by a number of events such as receiving health checks and DBS checks. The recruitment team actively pursue applications following an expression of interest. Once an application is received an initial visit is carried out with the prospective household. From this appointment to approval can take between 4 and 6 months. Over 50% of assessments are completed within 4 months, inside the national guidelines of 6 months.

3.7 **Who would be eligible?**

3.7.1 The scheme would not be open to foster carers registered with another agency or local authority, temporary approved foster carers or those in receipt of a zero balance Council Tax bill. Council Tax benefit entitlements will not be impacted upon. This will mean that if a foster carer is already entitled to a 50% reduction in their Council Tax Bill the scheme will cover the other 50%.

The scheme will be open to in-house foster carers who live in Thurrock and;

- are actively fostering
- is actively available to foster
- is a newly registered foster carer following their first placement
- Having reached an average of at least 26 weeks placements for at least one child in a year
- who enter into a 'staying-put arrangement' until the young person reach the age of 21

3.7.2 Thurrock Council cannot exempt foster carers living in other local authority areas from paying their local council tax. However, we wish to match the reward to these carers who are currently registered as Thurrock Foster Carers

who live outside of the Borough and have consistently provided placements, in recognition of their valuable contribution to the care of Thurrock children. This is a transitional arrangement for these foster carers who currently approved to foster by Thurrock. Based on the current numbers and a band D rate in Thurrock, this could potentially have a maximum impact of an additional £46,555 and would be subject to their meeting the criteria. A Financial Relief Payment would be provided to assist with the payment of other local authority Council Tax in line with Thurrock's Council Tax rates.

In exceptional circumstances and in the interest of meeting the needs of a child, payment may be made outside of the circumstances described above. This can only be agreed by the Director or delegated officer in their absence on an individual basis and in order to achieve permanency for that child. In making the decision to continue payments the following will be taken into account:

- The permanency planning for the child.
- The length of time the child has been in placement with the foster carer.
- The child's relationship with the foster carer(s) and the carer's ability to provide permanency for the child throughout their childhood.

The tables below set out how this cost will be met based on the current calculations and the number of foster carers who will be eligible for an exemption/relief payment. The figures below are based on a maximum financial commitment. It is likely that some foster carers will be receiving a percentage discount if they are in receipt of benefits.

A. Current situation ;

In-House Fostering Households		
Living in Thurrock	58	£93,090
Living outside of Thurrock	29	£46,555
Total in-house Fostering Households	**87**	**£139,645**

B. Minus

Completely exempt from Council Tax	2	£3210
Entitled to single person discount	12	£4815
Unlikely to exceed 200 days fostering within the last financial year	28	£44,950
Total		**£52,975**
Total cost for all in-house carers = A – B		**£86,670**

Benefits of implementing Council Tax exemption to in-house carers residing in Thurrock	Risks of implementing Council Tax exemption to in-house carers residing in Thurrock
• Possible transfer of foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies who do not offer an exemption on Council Tax. • Transferring of external agency foster carers will mean experienced foster carers may transfer. Narrowing the IFA payment fee gap. • Unique selling point, which IFAs do not match or compete with. • Positive publicity. • Foster carers will feel valued by the local authority and their morale will be boosted. • Excellent retention method. • Retention rate will improve. • Placements of local authority children locally maintaining links with family network and community. • Cost avoidance if this contributes to an increase of in house carers. • Reduction in number of children placed at distance and through other agencies. • Some fostering households will already have an exemption or reduction in their Council Tax payment.	• Complaints/ disruption from future in-house foster carers who live outside of Thurrock and feel they are not being treated fairly. • Possible complaints/disruption from external agency foster carers living in the local authority who also have children placed by Thurrock. This is a lesser risk as there will be an opportunity for these carers to join Thurrock. • Possible, but less likely, complaints from the general public.

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

None

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

None

6. Implications

6.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**

Strategic Lead Finance – Children's, DSG and School, Corporate Finance

The Financial implications for providing an exemption to foster carers is set out in the table at 3.5 and 3.7.3. The report sets out the maximum financial implication based on all in-house foster carers living in Thurrock requiring 100% council tax relief and the financial commitment for all in house carers based on current known circumstances. The table further identifies potential for offsetting the payment over the next three years.

6.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**

Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)

Under Section 13A(c) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1991 a billing authority may reduce the council tax a person is liable to pay in respect of a chargeable dwelling in the borough. This is power permits the reduction of liability to nil and can be reserved for specific groups. This would cover an exemption for foster carers. This is separate to the scheme for Council Tax Reduction Scheme for people in financial need.

Any provision to provide support to foster carers who live out of borough would need to be provided by way of a fostering allowance.

6.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**

Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The Service is committed to practice which promotes inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy.

In order to ensure fairness for all existing foster carers, it is proposed that all existing Thurrock foster carers, regardless of whether they live in the Borough, will be offered this exemption/relief payment in recognition of their contribution to caring for Thurrock children. However, in the future newly recruited foster carers will be offered the exemption only if they live within the Borough, in order to promote the recruitment of local carers for Thurrock children. As described in 3.7.2 consideration will be given on an individual basis to making this payment to in-house foster carers who live outside of the Borough in the interest of children and their permanency plan.

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

None

7. Background papers used in preparing the report

None

8. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Joe Tynan
Interim Assistant Director for Childrens Social Care and Early Help

11 November 2020	ITEM: 13
Cabinet	
Mid-Year / Quarter 2 (April to September 2020) Corporate Performance Report 2020/21	
Wards and communities affected: All	**Key Decision:** Non-key
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin, Cabinet Member for Central Services and Communities	
Accountable Assistant Director: n/a	
Accountable Director: Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications & Customer Services	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This is the mid-year corporate performance monitoring report for 2020/21 covering April to September 2020.

This report provides a progress update in relation to the performance of those KPIs, including a focus on some specific highlights and challenges. It details the statistical evidence the council will use to monitor the progress and performance against the council's priorities.

At this unique and unprecedented time, this report shows that three quarters of indicators are currently achieving target and 55% are better than or the same as the previous year. Many indicators have been directly or indirectly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and the enforced changes to council services in line with government guidance during this period. The report also highlights how Covid-19 has disrupted or changed performance and/or priorities and demand levels across a number of services.

This report was presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 November 2020, feedback from which will be raised at this meeting.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note and comment upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are off target and the impact of Covid-19.

1.2 To identify any areas which require additional consideration.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. The performance of the priority activities of the council is monitored through the Corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework. This provides a mixture of strategic and operational indicators.

2.2. The indicators have been chosen to be as clear and simple to understand as possible, whilst balancing the need to ensure the council is monitoring those things which are of most importance, both operationally and strategically.

2.3. This reflects the demand for council services increasing and being ever more complex, not least due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and the need for a holistic approach to monitoring data and intelligence. Analysis of performance and internal processes at service level by Directors continued monthly throughout 2019/20 and will continue throughout 2020/21.

2.4. These indicators will continue to be reported to both Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis, throughout 2020/21.

2.5. In line with the recommendation from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2019, throughout 2020/21, where performance is below target, commentary will be included to show the intended improvement plan. This is included in Section 3.6 as the “Route to Green”.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

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

3.1 Summary of Corporate KPI Performance

Quarter 2 2020/21 Performance against target	
Achieved	76.7% (23)
Failed	23.3% (7)

Direction of Travel compared to 2019/20	
↑ **BETTER**	34.5% (10)
→ **STATIC**	20.7% (6)
↓ **WORSE**	44.8% (13)

3.2 **Impact of Covid-19**

3.2.1 The Quarter 2 (April to September 2020) overall outturn of 76.7% is back in line with the 74% overall percentage of KPIs achieving target at the end of 2019/20. Most indicators are now being able to be reported, however there are several indicators where the profiling for the quarterly targets for the first part of this year have been adjusted, in the hope that performance in the second half of the year can mitigate any reduced service level rates earlier, as a result of the impact of Covid-19 earlier in the year.

3.2.2 Several indicators, however, continue to be affected by Covid-19. The narrative in section 3.6 highlights where performance has been affected during the first 6 months of 2020/21 in both the height of the 'lockdown' and subsequent restrictions or changes to service demand or delivery.

3.2.3 In some cases data is still not available either because the data is not currently being recorded due to other priorities e.g. for Public Health or because that service/activity is not currently operating in line with government guidance. This is summarised in section 3.7.

3.2.4 In most cases the targets for 2020/21 have been set based on "normal" circumstances. This is likely to mean that more indicators will not "perform" as well as they did in 2019/20, and/or the rate of improvement will not be as great. The decision to keep most targets comparable with last year is to more clearly analyse the impact of the disruption caused by the pandemic. Where an indicator has failed to reach its target during the year, the commentary provided will identify clearly whether this is related to Covid-19 impacts.

3.2.5 It is impossible to predict accurately how long and to what extent service delivery in some areas will continue to be impacted. This will be kept under close monitoring and in some cases, targets for 2020/21 will need to be reviewed.

3.2.6 Any targets for health and social care indicators which are part of the Better Care Fund are yet to be confirmed as these conversations with NHS partners and the Department of Health have been delayed due to Covid-19 priorities.

3.3 **On target performance**

Three quarters of available corporate KPIs achieved their targets.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 1 Target	2020/21 Target
Permanent admissions of older people (aged 65+) to residential and nursing care homes per 100,000 population	Cllr Halden	*739.7 per 100,000*	87.3 (21)	162.1 (39)	203.6 (49)	261.8 (63)	261.8 (63)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	374.0 (90) (prov)	739.7 (178) (prov)
Number of applicants with family commitments in Bed & Breakfast for six weeks or more (ie those presenting as homeless who have dependent child(ren) or are pregnant)	Cllr Johnson	*3*	0	0	0	0	0	ACHIEVED	BETTER	0	0
% of repairs completed within target	Cllr Johnson	*98.3%*	99.5%	99.2%	98.7%	98.4%	99.1%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	95%	95%
% of potholes repaired within policy and agreed timeframe	Cllr Maney	*99.33%*	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	98%	98%
% occupancy of council-owned business centres	Cllr Coxshall	*91%*	90%				93%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	80%	80%
Proportion of older people (65+) still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/ rehabilitation	Cllr Halden	*87.40%*	93.1%				89.6%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	86.3% (prov)	86.3% (prov)
No of placements available within council for volunteers	Cllr Huelin	*225*	205				230	ACHIEVED	BETTER	230	210
% of young people who reoffend after a previously recorded offence	Cllr Halden	*11.0%*	13% (Q4)				3% (Q1) quarter in arrears	ACHIEVED	BETTER	13%	13%
% Initial Health Assessment (IHA) completed within 28 days (20 working days) of child becoming Looked After	Cllr Halden	*69.2%*	66.7%				85.7%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	80%	80%

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 1 Target	2020/21 Target
% of Minor planning applications processed in 8 weeks	Cllr Coxshall	*100%*	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	90%	90%
Overall spend to budget on HRA (£K variance)	Cllr Johnson	*£0*	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	£0	£0
% Rent collected	Cllr Johnson	*98.5%*	88.9%	89.4%	91.9%	93.4%	93.4%	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	92%	98%
% of primary schools judged “good” or better	Cllr Jefferies	*92.0%*	92.3%				92.3%	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	426 days	92% (prov)
% of secondary schools judged "good" or better	Cllr Jefferies	*new KPI*	63.0%				63.0%	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	426 days	63% (prov)
Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments	Cllr Halden	*35.4%*	36.6%	36.4%	37.2%	34.7%	34.7%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	34%	34%
% of Major planning applications processed in 13 weeks	Cllr Coxshall	*100%*	89%	100%	100%	100%	94%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	90%	90%
Tenant satisfaction with Transforming Homes	Cllr Johnson	*86.9%*	83.3%	100%	85.7%	81.3%	85.3%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	85%	85%
Number of new Micro Enterprises started since 1 April 2020	Cllr Huelin	44	5				10	ACHIEVED	WORSE	0	20
% of volunteer placements filled within council	Cllr Huelin	*96%*	100%				92%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	92%	96%
Successful completion of treatment in Young People’s Drug & Alcohol service (YTD)	Cllr Mayes	*88%*	78%				80%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	70%	70%
Value (£) of council owned property disposals	Cllr Coxshall	*£470k*	£350k				£350k	ACHIEVED	WORSE	No target	No target
% occupancy of commercial properties	Cllr Coxshall	*92%*	88%				88%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	88%	88%
Number of events and activities that support engagement in a range of cultural, social and learning opportunities to support well-being and strengthen community connections (total sessions provided in quarter)	Cllr Huelin	*new KPI*	0				104	ACHIEVED	N/A	100	300

3.4 **In focus highlight for Quarter 2**

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
% Rent collected	Cllr Johnson	*98.5%*	88.9%	89.4%	91.9%	93.4%	93.4%	ACHIEVED	IN LINE	92%	98%

The Rents Team have surpassed their profiled target for rent collection of 92% collecting 93.35% of rent due at the end of September as well as supporting a large number of tenants through financial inclusion.

This is despite, the Coronavirus pandemic resulting in some significant challenges for the Rents Team in 2020/21. The Rents team have had to make all contact with tenants by telephone and letter as home visits have been suspended.

So far in 2020/21 there has been a 21% increase in tenants claiming Universal Credit from 2317 at the end of March to 2812 at the end of September with rent arrears for tenants claiming Universal Credit increasing by a margin of 52% over the same period. There has also been a 10.21% reduction in income from Housing benefit on the same period last year.

Financial Inclusion Officers' work has also been adversely affected due to the pandemic and have only been able to support tenants over the telephone as all outreach work in hubs, libraries and children's centres have been suspended due to closure. Over the first three months of the pandemic, Financial Inclusion Officers were mainly carrying out welfare calls offering advice to new Universal Credit claimants as well as tenants who were furloughed and experiencing financial hardship due to the pandemic. They also contacted tenants who were in rent arrears offering debt advice.

At the end of September, Financial Inclusion Officers have supported a total of 668 tenants, an increase of 54% on the same period last year, and have generated additional income of £174,967 which represents an increase of 35% on the same period last year.

Financial Inclusion Officers look to maximise tenants' income by advising and assisting tenants with any claims they are eligible for such as PIP, Council Tax support, Discretionary Housing Payments and any other grants they may be eligible for. They also offer food vouchers and assist with clothing, furniture and white goods.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
Number of events and activities that support engagement in a range of cultural, social and learning opportunities to support well-being and strengthen community connections (total sessions provided in quarter)	Cllr Huelin	*n/a – new KPI*	0				104	ACHIEVED	n/a - new KPI	100	300

Before Covid-19, this indicator was targeted for 600 events (150 per quarter) by year end. With the temporary closure of libraries and community hubs during the Covid restrictions, all face to face events and activities were and continue to be suspended. On that basis, earlier in the year it was agreed to profile the first two quarters at 0 and reduce the targets for quarters 3 and 4 provisionally to 100 events but keep this under review as the degree of the impact of the restrictions was clearer.

However, the service has been successful in delivering a diverse programme of virtual events in the last few months. In total since June they have delivered 104 virtual community engagement sessions including online job club, powerpoint and excel training, under-fives story and rhyme sessions, and book promotions.

On that basis, the service have increased the target again to 300 events by year end. This is less than the pre-Covid target but is a significantly improved digital offer, which in the absence of any face to face events being able to be delivered, is a much needed and welcomed resource for residents.

3.5 **Off target indicators**

At the end of quarter 2, 7 of the available indicators failed to meet their target.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 YTD	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
% Household waste reused/ recycled/ composted	Cllr Watkins	*33.23%*	31.80%	33.73%	33.90%	33.94%	33.86%	FAILED	BETTER	44.37 (46.05% YTD)	41%
This indicator is running below target. Some core contributors to the lower than expected recycling rate include the closure of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre for a period of time at the beginning of the year due to COVID restrictions. The site has a significant impact on recycling levels. In order to ensure that core residual waste collections were maintained during lockdown, the garden waste collections were suspended for a period and then re-introduced on a monthly then fortnightly basis. At this time of the year, garden waste makes up a sizeable proportion of the recycling tonnage. The disruption to collections has impacted performance significantly. With the impact being as great as it was, this indicator is likely to continue below target for the remainder of this year.											
Route to **GREEN**											
A revised Waste Strategy has been reviewed by the Cleaner and Greener Overview and Scrutiny Committee and is due to be considered by Cabinet. This outlines proposals from the Waste Cross Party Working Group for actions that could be taken that will positively impact recycling levels in the borough. The proposed timeframe for implementation is around 12 to 18 months.											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
% General tenant satisfaction with neighbourhoods/services provided by Housing	Cllr Johnson	*74.9%*	75.5%	70.9%	78.5%	68.7%	74.1%	FAILED	IN LINE	75%	75%

So far in 2020/21, 984 tenants have completed a telephone satisfaction survey which represents around 10% of all tenants. Whilst 74.1% of tenants have said they were satisfied with the service they receive, 12% of tenants gave a neutral rating and 13.9% of tenants said they were dissatisfied with the service they received.

Analysis of tenants' responses to all of the perception measures in the wider satisfaction survey demonstrates that the most prevalent drivers of dissatisfaction with the overall Housing service in 2020/21 are: listening to tenant's views, understanding tenants needs and the ease of dealing with Housing.

Route to **GREEN**

Listening to tenant's views and understanding tenant's needs was already identified as a clear priority for 2020/21 for which a new tenant satisfaction telephone survey has been implemented with specific questions on these subjects as well as a wide ranging postal satisfaction survey which was sent to all tenants. This allows the service to collect data on a much larger number of questions than the telephone satisfaction survey currently allows. This will result in broader insight through analysis, will demonstrate the Housing service's willingness to listen to tenant's views and will allow the Housing team to build a far better understanding of tenant's needs.

In addition to this the service have also begun measuring customer effort across a number of our transactional satisfaction surveys with more planned for later in the year. This aims to measure how easy it was for the tenant to deal with us at each particular touchpoint or transaction, for example getting a repair completed, having a boiler serviced or an interaction with a Tenancy Management Officer. The feedback collected from tenants as part of this will allow us to identify particular processes or touchpoints where tenants find interacting with Housing difficult in order to make improvements to make the service easier to use.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
Average time to turnaround/re-let voids (in days)	Cllr Johnson	*25.6 days*	61.17 days	72.70	39.50	47.80	54.40	FAILED	WORSE	28	28

Due to the impact of COVID-19, choice based lettings were suspended for a period of time earlier in the year which meant the properties which were void during that period of suspension remained void for a much longer period of time than usual with only a small number of lettings through direct offers taking place in May. As these affected voids are let, re-let times will be much higher than usual.

Route to **GREEN**

When all affected voids have been let, average re-let times are expected to return to usual levels and we have seen evidence of this already. Void re-let time performance is now beginning to recover and properties which became void after choice based lettings were re-instated are now being let within usual timescales with average re-let times for properties which became void in June and July only marginally worse than target and August and September were better than target.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
Number of health hazards removed as a direct result of private sector housing team intervention	Cllr Johnson	*1,000*	8	86	72	46	212	FAILED	WORSE	500	1000

Non-urgent property inspections and re-inspections ceased during the pandemic following government guidelines therefore numbers of category 1 and 2 health and safety hazards in dwellings that were identified were very small during Quarter 1. This has picked up in Quarter 2.

Route to **GREEN**

Easing of government restrictions allowed Environmental Health and Licensing Officers to carry out HHSRS inspections in August 2020 to remove hazards following the completion and agreement of appropriate risk assessments with Public Health and Health and Safety. Non–urgent property inspections took place in September and are scheduled throughout October, subject to no further changes in government guidelines.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
No of new apprenticeships started (inc. staff undertaking apprenticeship)(exc. LA maintained schools)	Cllr Huelin	*69*	2	0	3	6	11	FAILED	WORSE	12	61

This indicator missed the target by just one person. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the council was unable to hold the usual apprenticeship recruitment events and this has had a huge impact on recruitment numbers thus far this year.

Route to **GREEN**

The council has an online event planned for 5 November. This has been advertised internally and externally including on the council's website to ensure the number of apprentices the council provides increases.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
Payment rate of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)	Cllr Gledhill	*55.97%*	52.19%	51.09%	47.31%	53.00%	50.52%	FAILED	WORSE	70%	70%

There has been a considerable increase in representation and appeals received linked to FPNs issued during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many recipients are claiming to either be on furlough or out of work and in financial difficulty, therefore unable to pay. The council has offered a number of extension periods to individuals to give them the opportunity to pay and avoid prosecution action. Many have taken the offer and paid, some several months later. This has resulted in a lag in payments and impacted this indicator.

Route to **GREEN**

Further visits to recipients of FPNs who have not paid are planned in order to offer the payment extension opportunities and subsequently increase payments. However, this type of fixed penalty notice is a criminal offence. People have the right not to make payment and instead choose to go through the court process. A large number of the FPNs have remained unpaid and this has resulted in an increase in court files. Therefore the decrease in the FPN payment will be reflected in the increase in prosecution files.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 2 Target	2020/21 Target
% of refuse bins emptied on correct day	Cllr Watkins	*98.91%*	97.01%	72.89%	98.23%	97.31%	95.27%	FAILED	WORSE	98.5%	98.5%

August and September, have showed a significant improvement, just below the in-month targets, but rates of collection earlier in the year have meant that the year to date figure is below target.

One of the impacts of the lockdown was a delay in the Waste Service being able to recruit and induct collection staff, whilst ensuring that all were able to work safely. The impact of resource availability was managed through adjustments to the frequency of garden waste collections and the collection target was met for the first two months of the year. In June and July however, annual leave and delays in recruitment resulted in some rounds not being collected on schedule although weekend work was undertaken to reduce the impact on residents.

With more people working from home, even now that the strict lockdown measures that were experienced from March are no longer in place, the service has seen a significant increase in tonnages being collected. With the recycling stream this has resulted in some capacity issues. As the tipping point is some distance from Thurrock, the trucks can only hold one load a day. When the trucks are full and there are still roads to be collected, there is not capacity in the service to collect those as recycling, therefore, currently, those properties have to be prioritised for collection the following day. This is having an on-going impact on the collection figures.

Route to **GREEN**

The recruitment and induction of agency staff has helped ease the situation, however collection rates will take some time to resume to normal service. The structured fortnightly collection cycle for garden waste has also contributed to the significantly improved performance in August and September and the service anticipates rates to increase going forward.

A project is underway to review and rebalance the recycling collection rounds ensuring they are achievable by collection crews. Additionally as the seasons change, capacity from the garden waste stream can be re-allocated to support recycling collections.

3.6 Other key indicators

Throughout the year the council also monitors some other indicators as part of the corporate scorecard which, whilst not performance related, are important to keep under review

Demand Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	*2019/20 Outturn*	Qtr 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Qtr 2	Direction of Travel since 2019/20
Number of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance	Cllr Johnson	*1,934*	348	168	147	181	844	LOWER
No of homeless cases accepted	Cllr Johnson	*107*	72	11	15	13	111	HIGHER

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 places a duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, or relieve homelessness where this is not possible. The number of approaches include all who have approached the council for housing assistance. A number of these cases were prevented and homelessness has been relieved.

The service prevents homelessness by negotiating with landlords and excluders* to keep the applicants in the property they are approaching us from. Conversely, we could find them alternative accommodation before they become homeless, thereby preventing their homelessness.

The acceptances are low in comparison to approaches because the service deal with a greater number of the cases before we reach the “main duty” stage, which is the stage at which we make a formal homelessness decision as is traditionally known. This is the stage at which acceptances are recorded.

*An excluder is someone the applicant currently lives with, eg a parent, friend or resident landlord who has asked the applicant to leave their property.

Performance indicators for which data is not currently available due to Covid-19 disruption

Number of delayed transfers of care (DTOC) - days from hospital (attrib. to NHS, ASC & Joint)	The collection and publication of official DToC figures have been suspended for the rest of the year by NHS England.
Number of GP practices with automated screening protocol in place for depression and anxiety amongst LTC (long-term conditions) patients	Data not currently available from GP practices
Average time (in days) for a child to be adopted (3 year average) (ie time between entering care and moving in with adoptive family)	Due to Covid-19 disruption, Q2 return is delayed.
Forecast Council Tax collected	Covid-19 impact is ongoing and is still being assessed. This is being regularly reported to

Forecast National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected	members alongside separate financial reporting.
Contact Centre - Face to Face average waiting times (minutes)	Face to Face has not been operating since 23 March due to Covid-19 lockdown.
Contact Centre - Face to Face - no of visitors	

*Overall spend to budget on General Fund (% variance against forecast) and Total gross external income (fees & charges) (based on sales forecast) will be reported to Cabinet as part of the separate financial reporting in December.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The corporate priorities and associated performance framework are fundamental to articulating what the council is aiming to achieve. It is best practice to report on the performance of the council. It shows effective levels of governance and transparency and showcases strong performance as well as an acknowledgement of where we need to improve.

4.2 This report highlights what the council will focus on during 2020/21 and confirms the governance and monitoring mechanisms which were in place to ensure that priorities are delivered.

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

5.1 Performance against the corporate priorities was monitored through Performance Board, a cross-council officer group of performance experts representing each service. Performance Board will continue to consider the corporate KPIs on a monthly basis, highlighting areas of particular focus to Directors Board.

5.2 Each quarter a report will continue to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and finally reported to Cabinet.

5.3 This report was presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 November 2020, feedback from which will be raised at this meeting.

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

6.1 The vision and priorities cascade into every bit of the council and further to our partners, through key strategies, service plans, team plans and individual objectives.

6.2 This report will help decision makers and other interested parties, form a view of the success of the council's actions in working towards achieving the vision and priority ambitions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jo Freeman**

Finance Manager

The report provides an update on performance against corporate priorities. There are financial KPIs within the corporate scorecard, the performance of which are included in the report.

Where there are issues of underperformance, any recovery planning commissioned by the council may entail future financial implications, and will need to be considered as appropriate.

The council is still assessing the full financial impact of Covid-19 and this is being regularly reported to members.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**

Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, where there are issues of underperformance, any recovery planning commissioned by the council or associated individual priority projects may have legal implications, and as such will need to be addressed separately as decisions relating to those specific activities are considered.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Leader – Community Development and Equalities

The Corporate Performance Framework for 2020/21 contains measures that help determine the level of progress with meeting wider diversity and equality ambitions, including youth employment and attainment, independent living, vulnerable adults, volunteering etc. Individual commentary is given throughout the year within the regular monitoring reports regarding progress and actions.

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

The Corporate Performance Framework includes areas which affect a wide variety of issues, including those noted above in the body of the report. Where applicable these are covered in the appendix.

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

N/A

9. Appendices to the report

None

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