

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 **10 March 2021**

Due to government guidance on social distancing, members of the press and public will not be able to attend this meeting. The meeting will be available to watch 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

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 20
To approve as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on 10 February 2021.	
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: 110557)	21 - 24
11	Memorandum of Understanding - Local Government Reorganisation (Decision: 110558)	25 - 32
12	Financial Update - Quarter 3 2020/21 (Decision: 110559)	33 - 66
13	Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2021/22 and Highways Maintenance Allocation and Programme 2021/22 (Decision: 110560)	67 - 84
14	Contract Renewal for Litter Enforcement (Decision: 110561)	85 - 98
15	Procurement of Housing Capital Programme Delivery	99 - 108
16	Housing Re-Procurement of Concierge Contract (Decision: 110562)	109 - 118
17	A Fresh Start for our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - Re-Procurement Outline (Decision: 110563)	119 - 136
18	Backing Thurrock: A Roadmap for Economic Recovery, Resilience and a Return to Growth (Decision: 110564)	137 - 162
19	Asset Disposals (Decision: 110565)	163 - 200
20	Quarter 3 (April-December 2020) Corporate Performance Report 2020/21	201 - 218

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **2 March 2021**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Due to current government guidance on social-distancing and the COVID-19 virus, council meetings will not be open for members of the public to physically attend. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch council meetings live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

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

Recording of meetings

This meeting will be live streamed and recorded with the video recording being published via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

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

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

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

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

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 10 February 2021 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 22 February 2021 at 5.00pm

Present: 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

Councillor Joycelyn Redsell, Chair of Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

93. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

94. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

95. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Maney declared an interest regarding Item 15 (Active Travel Tranche 2) as he lived near one of the proposed development sites. Councillor Huelin also declared an interest regarding Item 15 (Active Travel Tranche 2) as she lived near one of the proposed sites. The Monitoring Officer thanked the Members for declaring their interests, and stated that as there was currently no detail regarding the scheme, they could still take part in the discussion and vote.

96. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement by describing how COVID-19 cases across the borough had continued to fall. He urged residents to continue to follow the rules regarding lockdown, to only go out if necessary, and to always follow the 'hands, face, space' guidance, even if you had received the vaccine. He stated that the major incident that had been declared across Essex had now

been lifted as the NHS was no longer under such immense pressure, due to falling case rates. He commented that all residents should still follow the rules, and not try to find loopholes, as this would increase the number of infections and delay the end of lockdown.

The Leader then moved on and discussed how Thurrock was seeing a good take up in the number of people getting the vaccine, and described how the borough was ahead of the curve in administering the vaccine to the four highest priority groups. He stated that they were now working on an accelerated timeline and were following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation guidelines by now offering the vaccine to disabled young people and their carers. He stated that the NHS were still delivering the vaccine to those residents who were housebound in priority groups 1-3, but this process took time due to logistics. He urged residents in priority groups 1-3 to contact their GP surgeries if they had not yet been offered the vaccine. The Leader then stated that Thurrock currently had three vaccination centres: Stifford Clays, Chadwell St Mary, and Thurrock Community Hospital. He thanked the volunteers and staff at the centres for all their hard work, particularly during this cold period. He encouraged all residents to get their vaccine once they had been offered it, and to visit the Essex COVID vaccine website if they had any concerns. He summarised and stated that there were also a number of vaccination scams, whereby residents were being contacted and asked to pay for their vaccine. He urged people to stay alert for these scams and reiterated that the vaccine was free to everyone.

The Leader then stated that the Thames Freeport bid, which had been backed by Thurrock Council and private companies such as Ford Dagenham and the Port of Tilbury, had been submitted to government on 5 February 2021. He explained that if the bid was successful, the new Freeport would lead to 20,000 new jobs across the borough, billions of pounds of private investment, new training opportunities for residents, and increased wages. He felt that there would be lots of long-term benefits and positive change if the bid was successful.

The Leader then highlighted the amount of rain that had recently fallen across Essex, which had led to increased surface water and flooding risk. He explained that private properties had the responsibility for any flooding that occurred on their land, and management companies often had responsibility for potential flooding risks in blocks of flats. He stated that the Environment Agency managed the local waterways and rivers and residents should report any issues they had directly to them. He commented that if residents had issues with blocked gulleys along highways that could cause flooding, then they should contact Thurrock's highways team. He summarised and described how the Environment Agency had introduced a flood warning system, which people could sign up to, who would then receive emails regarding potential flooding in their area.

The Leader then stated Thurrock Council had received £120million in COVID support from central government, which included £30million in business grants. He stated that Thurrock had also distributed £6.7million of support to

840 local businesses to help them during the pandemic. He explained that a further £2.4million had been distributed to 375 businesses and 184 hospitality businesses as part of Thurrock's discretionary grants and top-up fund. He felt that Thurrock were working hard to make the pandemic easier for businesses, and stated that grants were still being distributed to businesses that needed them.

The Leader summarised by explaining the latest COVID figures across the borough up until week ending 4 February 2021. He stated that two weeks ago Thurrock had been the 42nd highest local authority regarding COVID cases, but this had fallen to 86th out of 149 local authorities. He explained that last week there had been: 47 cases in residents aged under 18, a fall from 76 cases the week before; 203 cases in residents aged 18-49, a fall from 325 cases the week before; 58 cases in residents aged 50-59, a fall from 89 cases the week before; 17 cases in residents aged 60-69, a fall from 38 cases the week before; and 30 cases in residents aged over 70, a fall from 475 the week before. He stated that overall there had been 355 total positive cases in the week leading up to 4 February 2021, which had been 575 positive cases in the week before that. He summarised and stated that Thurrock had given out 5493 tests in the week leading up to 4 February 2021, and there were currently 201.9 cases per 100,000 across the borough.

97. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Coxshall stated that the Tilbury Town Fund bid had been submitted to central government last week. He explained that if the bid was successful then Tilbury would receive £25million of investment, which would fund a new youth centre, new jetty, new hub entrance, new car park for Tilbury Fort, and a new beach. He explained that the bid for the Grays Town Fund would be submitted later this year, which if successful would help fund a new beach in Grays, as well as other projects. He stated that if the bid was successful then the monies would need to be spent by 2025, so new services would appear in Tilbury within the next few years. The Leader thanked Councillor Coxshall for his hard work on the submission, and was pleased to see youth provision had been included as 83% of Tilbury residents had requested additional youth services during the 'have your say' consultation.

Councillor Watkins stated that due to the levels of snow across the borough, waste collection services had been temporarily closed to ensure the safety of staff. He mentioned that the staff had been redeployed to other services across the council, and stated that the service would be up and running again as soon as it was safe to do so. He commented that next week side waste would be collected alongside bins due to the temporary closure, and urged residents to follow Thurrock's social media which would outline any new updates. The Leader also mentioned that roads were being gritted regularly and vaccine centres were also being cleared of snow.

98. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

99. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions had been submitted by members of the public.

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

The Leader stated that Councillor Redsell was attending this Cabinet meeting, in her role as Chair of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would be asked to read her statement at the relevant item.

101. Draft General Fund Budget & Medium Term Financial Strategy Update (Decision: 110550)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that the report had originally been brought before Cabinet in January, before being submitted to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their review. He explained that the Council had a statutory duty to balance the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and this had been balanced since 2016 when the Conservatives had formed a minority administration. He explained that before this point, the Council had been in deficit, but the three main political parties had worked together during this period to balance the budget. He stated that since 2016 reserves had been trebled, and many years had seen budget surpluses which had helped to fund areas such as adult social care and mental health.

Councillor Hebb explained that due to the events of 2020 and the winding down of the investment strategy over the next 2-8 years, the Council would now have to work hard to balance the budget. He explained that all 49 members had previously agreed with the investment strategy, which had brought many benefits and investment to Thurrock. He then moved on and explained the commentary that had been received at the scrutiny meeting. He explained that the first comment the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made related to the need to seek funding from central government, to ensure Thurrock had continued support. Councillor Hebb explained that central government had already provided Thurrock with £140million of support, £30million of which had been distributed to businesses as grants. He added that central government had also spent billions of pounds on the furlough scheme to ensure people could keep their jobs throughout the pandemic. Councillor Hebb stated that central government funds still came from the taxpayer, but the Council had been submitting their accounts to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) monthly throughout the pandemic. He explained that as reserve levels had now trebled, part of the 'rainy day' fund would be expected to be used to balance the budget and fund services. He explained that Thurrock did continue to have conversations with central government surrounding funding and support, as well as through mechanisms such as the LGA, cross-borough Finance Portfolio Working Groups, and the IRRV.

Councillor Hebb then moved onto the second point raised by the Corporate O&S Committee, which concerned the rise in council tax. He explained that Thurrock had frozen council tax for some years, whilst other neighbouring councils had risen their levels dramatically, such as the London Mayor who had raised council tax by 31%. He explained that officers had been instructed by all elected members to increase investments to reduce council tax. Councillor Hebb outlined that 70% of the borough would only pay an additional 99p per week in council tax, with the remaining 30% of borough paying an additional £2 per week. He stated that support would be available for those residents who may struggle to pay their council tax. He highlighted that the majority of the council tax raise would help to fund adult social care and relieve pressure and vulnerability within the sector.

Councillor Hebb addressed the issue raised by Corporate O&S surrounding wider opportunities for commercial income. He stated that the finance team constantly worked to assess the fees and charges level, and ensure market driven decisions were made. He commented that Thurrock were also considering other ways of working, such as sharing resources with other councils, and working with the voluntary sector and private sector to deliver certain services. Councillor Hebb then addressed the final point raised by Corporate O&S Committee regarding the acceleration of service reform. He stated that the Council had worked hard on the service review since 2016 to ensure that services did not have to make hard and fast cuts quickly, but due to the investment strategy ending, the service review would need to be accelerated.

Councillor Hebb moved on and outlined the capital programme for 2021/22. He stated that £19million of projects and programmes had been evaluated and postponed or cancelled due to the pandemic. He explained that the Council would still be supporting infrastructure goals such as housebuilding and communities, for example by investing £1million into the Local Plan, and supporting the Thames Freeport bid. He explained that this work could help support businesses and residents, and therefore increase council tax and business rate collection. He stated that other projects would also continue to be funded, such as the A13 widening scheme, East Facing A13 access, the Purfleet regeneration scheme and the Stanford-le-Hope Interchange project, as well as HRA and highways infrastructure.

Councillor Hebb summarised and stated that difficult changes lay ahead for the Council, but he felt that Thurrock could navigate through the crisis and find positive outcomes.

Councillor Redsell then read her statement. She thanked Cabinet for allowing her to comment on fees and charges, as well as the sporting strategy. She apologised for the delay, but wished to put her views as CGS Chair, as well as the Committee's thoughts before Cabinet, on behalf of all clubs and sporting venues that had to pay fees and charges. She thanked the government for the help they had given to sports clubs through grants, and hoped that the Portfolio Holder would ensure help continued to be given to

sports clubs that needed it. She encouraged the Portfolio Holder to meet and engage with sports clubs, to ensure that young people and coaches across Thurrock continued to thrive. She felt that sports clubs coaches needed support, which would help Thurrock achieve its aims regarding increasing exercise opportunities for young people. She also felt that sports would be needed more than ever once the pandemic had ended, and thanked those who worked hard to maintain their clubs. Councillor Redsell summarised and felt that the fees and charges for sports clubs needed to be fair to all, and thanked Cabinet for listening to her statement.

The Leader thanked Councillor Redsell for her statement, and stated that a response would be provided at the fees and charges report item.

Councillor Watkins thanked Councillor Hebb and the finance team for their hard work on the budget. He stated that the environment team had seen benefits from previous budgetary surpluses, as these surpluses had helped fund schemes such as Clean It, Cut It, Fill It and Kerb It. He added that the Keep Britain Tidy scores had also improved since 2016 and were now regularly above average. He felt that these improvements in the department had been due to the investment strategy, which had brought money into the council and had been supported by all members. Councillor Watkins highlighted the Waste Strategy, which he felt had been agreed by a cross-party group and then criticised by opposition members, and he felt that all political parties should now work together to help the borough through the pandemic crisis. He stated that the environment team would continue to work to deliver and manage services. He also thanked Councillor Redsell for her comments, and stated that he would address these during Item 12 on fees and charges.

The Leader also thanked Councillor Hebb and the team for their hard work on the budget. Councillor Halden highlighted that before 2016 when the Conservatives had formed a minority administration, the Council had had little reserves, which he felt would have exacerbated the current COVID budgetary issues. He also added that it was good to see investment continuing in Tilbury, such as the redevelopment of the Manor School, the new Tilbury IMC, and the Tilbury Town Board, which would help to regenerate the area and showed that the budget covered the entirety of the borough. The Leader agreed and stated that lots of money had been invested in the borough during the pandemic, which included 67% increase in adult social care, and this would be partly funded through the additional 99p per week council tax increase for the majority of residents. He added that the rise in council tax would help those most vulnerable during lockdown, and would increase opportunities in the borough. He explained that the investment strategy would also start to wind down, but highlighted that this strategy had been agreed by all members and had been supported by organisations outside the council. He stated that the investment had helped Thurrock fund services, and any borrowing had always been paid back on time plus interest, which had helped the councils who had invested in Thurrock improve their own services too. The Leader added that every local authority had been affected by the pandemic, and local authorities were now more cautious with investments and

loans.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Considered the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 12 of the report.**
- 2. Supported the proposed council tax increase of 1.99%.**
- 3. Supported a 3% Adult Social Care precept increase.**
- 4. Recommended to Full Council the capital proposals set out in this report and appendices.**
- 5. Endorsed the Early Years Funding Formula for 2021/22, as shown in section 9 and Appendix 5.**
- 6. Noted the proposed updated to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the remaining deficits in future years.**

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

102. Capital Strategy 2021/22 (Decision: 110551)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that it outlined the mechanisms and instructions through which officers could undertake investments, such as through the Treasury Management Provision. He stated that last year Thurrock had announced the investment strategy would finish, and explained that this paper represented the beginning of the end. He said that the approach had helped fund services such as additional policing, increased funding for adults and children's social care; education; and mental health in schools. He explained that central government was now less supportive of councils being entrepreneurial in this way, and there was no longer the same accessible market, so investments that matured would not be renewed. He explained that this wind-down of the strategy would lead to a reduction of borrowing by £350million. Councillor Hebb then outlined that an Investment Shadow Board had been constituted in autumn 2020 to consider investments and provide democratic oversight, and described how this would continue, and the Terms of Reference would be agreed in May 2021. He explained that a summary of the Investment Strategy would also be published on the Council's website as an easy reference for residents to understand the process. He summarised and stated that the report had been agreed by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and had been made available at the Investment Shadow Board. He added that there were no new emerging recommendations, contrary to what officers had presented at the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2021.

Councillor Halden again thanked Councillor Hebb for his work on the report.

He felt it provided residents with an accurate summary of the investment approach. He stated that Thurrock had worked hard to pay off debt, but still had to pay off longer-term, hard-core debt which had been accrued before 2016. Councillor Coxshall questioned how much hard-core debt had been inherited. Councillor Hebb responded that approximately £280-300million hard-core debt had been inherited, and this was hard to pay off as it was almost irredeemable. He explained that Thurrock would continue to work through this debt and pay it off as quickly as possible, where possible. Councillor Hebb also explained that the level of borrowing set out in the table in the report was the top-level figure and borrowing would not always go up to this figure. He then drew Cabinet's attention to the table on page 48 which highlighted the difference in interest payable and interest receivable, and compared it to the graph from the previous agenda item, which outlined that the gap between spending power and spending requirement had now increased.

The Leader stated that the majority of borrowing which had been undertaken was short-term debt and had been repaid plus interest. He added that Thurrock had also invested in renewable energy, which remained stable throughout the pandemic, unlike other local authorities which had invested in shopping centres. He explained that the investment strategy had helped Thurrock earn money, which had been spent on services and residents, such as work on the A13, increased policing, and Clean It, Cut It, Fill It.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet recommended to Full Council:

- 1. The approval of the Capital Strategy for 2021/22 including the approval of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement for 2021/22.**
- 2. The approval of the adoption of the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 3. Noted the revised 2020/21 and 2021/22 Treasury Management projections as set out in Annex 1, paragraph 2.32.**
- 4. Noted the comments from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 5.**

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

103. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2021/22 (Decision: 110552)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and explained that the Council ran a number of services which were operated through the payment of fees and charges. He stated that this provided a small component of Thurrock's spending power and highlighted point 3.3 of the report, which articulated the questions asked during the review of fees and charges. Councillor Hebb

stated that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had encouraged new lines of enquiry, and this report showed these enquiries. He described how the team looked at market considerations when discussing fees and charges, and how they wanted to ensure that services could be self-sufficient, particularly during the pandemic.

Councillor Halden stated that the care market was at the heart of the adult social care fees and charges, and these proposed increases would help pressures within the service, as well as protecting the market. He stated that domiciliary care fees had been frozen for the previous four years, and felt that the system had become too reliant on income from other areas and was no longer self-sufficient. He stated that the increase in fees would be phased, and highlighted that the majority of residents would continue paying nothing, or only a proportion, as the system would remain means-tested. He explained that domiciliary care fees would increase from £13.06 to £17 and then to £18 over the course of the next three years, which would mean a 5.8% pay-rise for care providers in 2021/22. He felt this would help to stabilise the market and encourage carers to work for Thurrock Council. Councillor Halden then moved on and discussed the increase in fees in care homes, and explained that the cost would rise from £486 per bed to £532, which would help to boost the market.

Councillor Halden explained that the budget still included a council tax cut for foster carers, which was equivalent to £1600 in a Band D property, as he felt this would encourage more Thurrock residents to become foster carers and reduce the £2million spend on foster agencies. He hoped that this figure would half over the next three years as more residents became approved foster carers. He then explained that Thurrock were the lowest spending unitary authority in terms of adult social care, and the third lowest higher tier authority, which meant that the service was already cost efficient. He stated that there was currently a £1.5million social care fund, as well as a £19million general fund, and as well as the proposed 3% adult social care precept increase, this would help to improve flexibility in the service.

Councillor Watkins replied to the comments made by Councillor Redsell and assured her that he wished to improve sports across the borough, and had been a key priority in his annual Full Council report. He explained that he regularly met with sports teams to discuss their concerns, and this would continue as the sporting strategy developed. He stated that he was aware of the concerns raised by the CGS Committee, but felt that the team had strived to balance fees and charges amongst all areas, whilst making sure that sports clubs could be self-sustaining. He thanked Councillor Redsell for her hard work regarding sports clubs and the Sports Council, as well as for her hard work finding external funding for clubs. He explained that funding could be found in numerous ways, including external grants, and the Council could help clubs fill in these funding application forms. Councillor Redsell agreed that sports clubs could raise money in other ways, such as through external funding, and felt it was good to see some clubs were beginning to find external funding streams. She thanked Councillor Watkins for opening a dialogue with sports clubs, and felt that sports could help young and old

people once the pandemic had finished.

Councillor Johnson noted the comments from the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee as listed in Appendix 3 of the report, and stated that some recommendations they had made had been taken on board, for example regarding carbon monoxide reports. He explained that the Housing O&S Committee had considered the fees and charges report at their meeting on 19 January 2021, and had accepted that the service charge increase would maintain the current level of services. He felt that the approach outlined in the report was the fairest way as it covered the service cost without stopping some important services running.

The Leader thanked Councillor Redsell for her attendance, and felt pleased to see that a scrutiny Chair had attended a Cabinet meeting. He summarised and stated that some fees and charges were set by central government, such as planning application costs, and hoped that local authorities would be able to set their own rates in these areas soon, as this would promote expansion and improve the local economy.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed the proposed fees and charges, including those no longer applicable, as per Appendices 1 and 2.

2. Approved the delegated authority to allow fees and charges to be varied within a financial year, in response to commercial requirement, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property and the relevant Portfolio Holder.

3. Cabinet note the feedback from all Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings as per Appendix 3.

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

**104. Housing Revenue Account: Business Plan and Budgets 2021/22
(Decision: 110553)**

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and stated that this updated the HRA 30 year business plan to ensure that there was a sufficient income to pay for services. He stated that the proposed increase in rent would help to maintain the current level of service, and would ensure all residents lived in good quality housing. He outlined that the projects in Claudian Way and the Tops Club had now been finished, and the Calcutta Road project was almost finished. He added that the HRA New Build project, using return on right to buy receipts would increase the council's housing stock by 70 homes. He explained that the 1.5% proposed rent increase would lead to £462,000 additional monies for the HRA, which would be used to continue the Council's statutory duties, as well undertaking projects residents had wanted during the

consultation survey, which included the external decoration programme. He stated that the rent increase would equate to an average increase of £1.35 per week for residents, but would be covered by Universal Credit and housing benefit for those residents who were on it. He added that the money would also be used to help manage fire safety, tower block refurbishment and carbon neutral properties.

The Leader thanked Councillor Johnson for his report and highlighted that the proposed increase in rent would help maintain the current service level, and would provide, safe and secure housing for tenants. He stated that some tenants still lived in poor quality, old housing stock, which would need investment to keep up with modern lifestyles, such as working and teaching from home, which put a strain on older houses. He explained that he was aware of some residents with damp and mould issues, which would be tackled through investment. He added that plans were currently in place to increase the number of council houses in the future, and the housing team were currently looking at alternative buildings, which would require less maintenance and repairs.

Councillor Redsell added that she had received feedback from residents near the new Chadwell housing site, who had felt that the new accommodation looked lovely.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Agreed the changes in the base budget for 2021/22.**
- 2. Agreed an increase in domestic rent of 1.50% from 5 April 2021, in line with the 30-year HRA business plan.**
- 3. Agreed the increase in service charges to reflect the costs of running each service, in line with the 30-year HRA business plan, from 5 April 2021 (detailed in table 5).**
- 4. Agreed the charges for garage rents (paragraph 3.10).**
- 5. Considered the recommendation made by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee set out in section 7.**

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

**105. Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) Update
(Decision: 110554)**

The Leader introduced the report and stated that Thurrock had been part of ASELA for three years, and all six local authorities who were part of the group had worked hard to implement cross-boundary working and improve infrastructure for all south Essex residents. He stated that ASELA had already

received £24million in funding from central government for the digital connectivity full-fibre project, as well as strategic planning. He added that ASELA had also received central government funding for infrastructure, transport studies and difficult brownfield site development. He explained that £20million of funding had also been received for a South Essex University which would focus on apprenticeship degrees, and would be the first in the country. He added that ASELA had received £5million in funding for a South Essex Estuary Park, which would be shared across the proposed Joint Committee. He stated that ASELA also had longer term goals such as super-fact broadband connectivity, which had already begun work. The Leader highlighted that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council had chosen a different method for fibre connectivity, which he felt proved that each individual council could undertake their own projects outside of the ASELA framework. He explained another long-term project was for £250million of funding for pipeline infrastructure, which would help deliver housing on sites which had planning permissions but no infrastructure. He added that ASELA also wished to improve economic development across the whole of South Essex, through increased employment, construction and through the support of key sectors. He explained that ASELA had also been endorsed by the Thames Estuary Growth Board who felt that the group removed arbitrary local authority borders for cross-party working.

The Leader highlighted that this report did not create an ASELA council, or remove current governance processes. He added that the report also did not insist that all government housing targets be located within one authority, and Thurrock would not lose planning powers. He stated that each local authority within ASELA would be considering the report which proposed a joint committee to help improve the south Essex economy and bounce back from the pandemic.

He summarised and stated that a Memorandum of Understanding would be brought to Cabinet in March, which would consider the merger of Basildon and Thurrock Councils into one, larger unitary authority. He stated that this would not happen immediately, and each Council would closely examine the implications of a merger, as well as the impact it could have on adult social care, transport and waste. He explained that government wished to see local authority reform, and although this had been paused due to the pandemic, he felt it would be good to have improved local governance consensus.

Councillor Halden thanked the Leader for his report and felt that it demonstrated the good work that ASELA had undertaken, as well as their future plans. He outlined that the future Memorandum of Understanding would not create a unitary authority, but would open the conversation, and would highlight how the proposal could benefit both authorities. He felt that one, larger unitary authority could have benefits for both parties, but stressed that the proposal coming to Cabinet in March would not be a commitment. The Leader added that the announcement due in March would also not cease the work of ASELA, as ASELA looked at the whole of South Essex in a collective way.

Councillor Coxshall felt that the Memorandum of Understanding would show residents the benefit of merging the authorities, for example on projects such as the A13 widening which could be continued on into Basildon, and the East Facing Access on the A13. He felt that a merger would increase synergy between the two authorities and reduce competition. He added that the government had proposed the largest local authority in fifty years and felt it would be good for Thurrock to be leading on this. The Leader added that local government reform was also a Conservative party manifesto pledge, which ensured local sovereignty continued and people's views were heard. He felt that Thurrock and Basildon created a natural economic corridor, with the A13 and A127 running through both. He stated that the proposed Joint Committee outlined the report would show collegiate working to central government and improve the levels of funding given.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the updates provided in the report.**
- 2. Approved the establishment of a joint committee, under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972, to oversee ASELA and provide enhanced transparency and accountability in the new delivery stage of its work programmes.**
- 3. Approved the governance arrangements of the joint committee as set out in Appendix 1 and the related Joint Committee Agreement and Terms of Reference.**
- 4. Appointed the Leader of the Council to represent the Council on the Joint Committee with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning as substitute.**

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

106. Active Travel Tranche 2 (Decision: 110555)

The Leader and Cabinet voted to extend standing orders.

Councillor Maney introduced the report and stated that it provided an update on the national allocation of funding to support active travel schemes. He drew Cabinet's attention to point 3.4 which outlined the active travel plans, and highlighted that public engagement would help to shape the delivery of the programme. He stated that the active travel scheme had been devised by central government during the pandemic to increase cycling opportunities and improve footpaths, to ensure people could access more sustainable travel. He explained that Thurrock had submitted their bid last year, and the Secretary of State for Transport had agreed to give Thurrock £690,000 in tranche 2, on top of the £280,000 which had already been received during tranche 1. He explained that the schemes listed only included an indicative cost, which was

very approximate, as no design work or consultation had been undertaken. He added that the schemes listed in the report exceeded the government funding allocation, but explained that this was deliberate as the Council could then present a broad range of schemes to the public, which could then be funded through a Section 106 Agreement or other funding streams if necessary. He summarised and stated that government were also considering a tranche 3 of the scheme, and any additional schemes outlined in the report could potentially be funded through later tranches.

Councillor Halden stated that he was a ward councillor in Homesteads and felt pleased to see that £250,000 investment could come to his ward. He felt pleased to see that the scheme provided space for a cycling route which would make roads less obstructed and improve safety for cyclists. He thanked Councillor Maney and the team for their hard work on the report, and questioned whether the Branksome Avenue project would be funded through tranche 2. Councillor Maney highlighted point 2.3 of the report which explained how the team had arrived at the proposed schemes, which included through resident and cycling groups comments, and ward councillors feedback. He thanked Councillor Halden and Councillor Collins for their dedication to their ward, and to the Branksome Avenue scheme, which would be funded through tranche 2 if it approved by residents, officers and the Portfolio Holder.

The Leader felt it was good to see a bank of schemes in draft, which could be ready to go if further funding became available. He felt that if some of the projects within the scheme were funded through a Section 106 agreement, this report would increase Section 106 transparency.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Approved the approach to develop and implement a programme of Active Travel Tranche 2 schemes.**
- 2. Approved the engagement and consultation process required to inform the Tranche 2 programme.**
- 3. Approved the requirement to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the Active Travel Tranche 2 programme taking into account local views and priorities.**

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

107. Adoption of the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document and Partnership Agreement (Decision: 110556)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that it formed part of government legislation to mitigate against coastal erosion, which included a

small charge on new house builds until 2038 to offset any potential erosion. He stated that only 500-600 new homes would be affected by the charge over the period of the scheme, and the charge would help fund park rangers, for example in Langdon Hills, to ensure the protection of birds and wildlife. He stated that this report formed part of Thurrock's 'play' strategy as it would protect the coast and open spaces. He added that the report was a statutory duty in partnership with Chelmsford City Council, which would help both councils save money, and would be monitored through a Steering Group.

Councillor Halden thanked Councillor Coxshall for his work on the report, as he felt that climate change could cause serious erosion along Thurrock's coast, and the new scheme would help to protect birds and wildlife. The Leader supported the work being undertaken to protect against erosion, and felt pleased to see that it was a collaborative effort with Chelmsford City Council.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Adopted the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) 2018-2033 (January 2019) as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Adopted the Essex Coast RAMS Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (June 2020), as set out in Appendix 2.**
- 3. Adopted the RAMS Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, as set out in Appendix 4.**
- 4. Authorised the Director of Place to join the Essex Coast RAMS Partnership on behalf of Thurrock Council, via a Partnership Agreement with the 11 Essex Authorities and Chelmsford City Council, as the Accountable Body (for the first item) and put into place operational processes to implement, collect, monitor, and pay the tariff contributions collected in the Thurrock Borough to the Essex Coast RAMS Accountable Body.**

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

The meeting finished at 9.31 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

10 March 2021	ITEM: 10 Decision: 110557
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 11 November 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. A new team at Highways England has meant that in recent months there has been a greater level of information sharing and improved collaboration between the parties

2.3 Highways England conducted a statutory consultation on the scheme which ended on 20 December 2018 and two subsequent consultations in 2020. Details of the Task Force's discussions following the consultations to date are detailed below.

2.4 Highways England submitted its Development Consent Order (DCO) application in October and the Council submitted an adequacy of consultation response at the request of the Planning Inspectorate. As a consequence of issues with the application and consultation, Highways England took the decision to withdraw its application.

3. Task Force meetings

- 3.1 All Task Force meetings are audio recorded and available on the Thurrock Council website. Since the impacts of Covid-19 the meetings have been held as either hybrid or virtual meetings on teams.
- 3.2 Full minutes of the meetings are also available on the website. Below is a summary of the discussions at each meeting:

December

- 3.3 A verbal report was provided in relation to the next steps given Highways England's withdrawal of the DCO application and officers ran through the Planning Inspectorate note of its 'minded to refuse' letter.
- 3.4 The emerging mitigation list from the Economic Impact Report Phase 2 work was discussed and commented upon.
- 3.5 A verbal update on the A303 scheme and the likely judicial review was provided and a review of the work programme undertaken.

January

- 3.6 Matt Palmer, the Executive Director for LTC at Highways England came to the meeting to introduce himself and answer questions.
- 3.7 The LTC team gave a presentation on design elements of the scheme to the members and answered questions.
- 3.8 An update on the mitigation list was provided and some questions clarified with members as to the next steps.

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 Legal & 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, and Impact on Looked After Children)

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

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021	ITEM: 11 Decision: 110558
Cabinet	
Memorandum of Understanding – Local Government Reorganisation	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Anti-Social Behaviour	
Accountable Assistant Director: Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Council intends to enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Basildon Borough Council to investigate the benefits of becoming one unitary council in support and preparation for the government’s forthcoming devolution white paper.

The Councils will jointly look to explore all aspects of merging, both benefits and risks, to develop proposals in advance of the Governments Devolution White Paper. It is also intended to support the most advantageous form of long term governance for the residents and businesses of South West Essex.

The MOU does not determine the future shape of arrangements but will explore options including the creation of a new unitary Council for the area. Future decision making will assess the merits of the proposals.

1. Recommendation:

1.1 That Cabinet agree to enter into a Memorandum in the form at Appendix 1 with Basildon Borough Council.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 At the meeting of Cabinet on the 10 February 2021 the Leader announced the intention to bring forward a report to the March meeting of Cabinet to consider entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Basildon Borough

Council to pursue joint working on proposals around Local Government reform linked to the potential formation of a new unitary council.

- 2.2 Under the then Secretary of State, Government announced a forthcoming White Paper on Local Government and Devolution to be published in Autumn 2020. This paper has been delayed and is now expected in Spring/Summer 2021 although as yet there is no clear timeline. The emphasis on the White Paper, whilst potentially still including reference to devolution, may focus primarily on recovery although the detail will only be clear on publication.
- 2.3 The work proposed under the MOU will enable the two Councils to explore options in order to prepare for the release of this white paper. This will include considering opportunities for reform for the two areas with a view to maximising the economic and social benefits for residents and businesses across the two Boroughs. By developing this work in advance of the white paper it will help the two authorities to take control over the decisions made about the two boroughs and develop robust proposals for the future ensuring that neither residents nor businesses are disadvantaged by any future proposals.
- 2.4 The MOU anticipates work to assess the merits of a potential proposal for the creation of a South West Essex Unitary Authority. Although based on the two Boroughs initially there is no fixed view on the final proposed geography of potential reform and the proposed MOU specifically enshrines the principle that the proposals will be developed in consultation with neighbours. It should be noted that any proposal would under current rules need the support of Essex County Council and any Districts / Unitary Authorities impacted in order to proceed.

What is not covered by the MOU:

- 2.5 This MOU does not in and of itself determine the future direction of the Council. There are a number of stages of decision making and consideration, if indeed the proposals are to be taken forward. The MOU does not directly impact on current service delivery, budgeting and Council Tax or staff structures at this time.
- 2.6 Thurrock Council's commitment to continuing its joint work across the whole of the South of Essex within the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) is not diminished and the Council intends to take an active part in that work including the setting up of the Joint Committee approved at Cabinet on the 10 February 2020.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Structural reform in Local Government is regulated through legislation and is subject to specific frameworks. Whilst the potential Devolution White Paper may change details within this the current framework is set out for context.

- 3.2 The procedure for the creation of a unitary authority can be found in sections 1-7 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The Secretary of State can 'invite' a proposal from a local authority to make a proposal for a county or district, or group of districts, to become unitary. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) can be, but need not be, asked for advice on any matter related to the proposal.
- 3.3 Regulations may be made covering how local authorities should go about preparing their proposal. The Secretary of State may then make an order implementing the proposal, or s/he may reject the proposal.
- 3.4 If accepted by the Secretary of State the change must be implemented by way of statutory regulations which must be approved by both Houses of Parliament.
- 3.5 The usual process for forming a new authority under these proposals follows the following steps:
- Invitation for Proposals to the Secretary of State is issued.
 - All councils within an area develop proposals which assess the impacts for residents, business and the sustainability of the new Council. This step usually engages with residents and business.
 - Submission of proposals to Secretary of State
 - If the Secretary of State is minded to pursue these proposals they may:
 - Invite the LGBCE to consider proposals (which may involve public consultation)
 - If there has been inadequate consultation at the earlier stages undertake (or direct that) consultation with residents and businesses.
 - Approval of proposals by the Secretary of State
 - Consideration of regulations by Parliament
 - Formation of a new Shadow Council (this usually runs for 12 Months)
 - Elections to the New Council
 - Formal transfer of functions and termination of the existing Councils.
- 3.6 At this point in time there has been no invitation for proposals within the meaning of the regulations, however there is precedent that where an area comes forward with proposals the Secretary of State can display the invitation stage.
- 3.7 The regulations provide that the proposals have to have the consent of all relevant authorities (in the present proposal Thurrock and Basildon Borough Councils and Essex County Council) who would be impacted in order to proceed. A previous section which allowed the Secretary of State to proceed where only some of the authorities consented expired on the 31 March 2019.
- 3.8 In this context it has to be recognised that whilst Thurrock is a Unitary Authority, Basildon Council is a District Council. Accordingly either there needs to be consent from Essex County Council or the Government would need to legislate that their consent is not required. An understanding of the

demand on services Essex County Council manages will be critical for the understanding of the viability of any proposed new unitary authority, without this information there would be substantial risks to any analysis and the potential new authority, in that there may be significant unbudgeted and unexpected demands which may impact the ability to deliver on proposals.

- 3.9 Any proposals which are developed would need to be approved by the Council prior to submission, this would ensure there is an opportunity for full scrutiny and review by Members.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To enable the entering into of a Memorandum of Understanding which will allow the Councils to explore the opportunities for local government reorganisation in the future.

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

- 5.1 The proposals have developed from political discussions between the Council Leaders. The memorandum of understating commits the Council to looking at potential proposals rather than defining a structure at this point.

- 5.2 This report is scheduled for pre scrutiny on the 9 March at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 5.3 This future work will necessitate engagement with Members, residents and partners to fully understand the implications of any proposals and to ensure that these are adequately consulted on.

- 5.4 Any future formal proposals for changes to the Councils governance and structure would require relevant formal statutory consultation.

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

- 6.1 The proposals are an opportunity to consider a potential for a structural change. In considering the opportunity the Council will have to assess the benefits of the proposals against the three core priorities of People, Place and Prosperity. Proposals will ideally seek to maximise the benefits to residents and local businesses.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

This report does not create direct financial obligations. The initial phase of work can be met within existing budgets. It should be recognised that there is currently no dedicated resource to undertake this work, therefore it will require the diversion of senior management time and effort to input into the detailed work and proposals, and this represents an opportunity cost.

Should there be future proposals for structural change the financial implications of this would need to be included in the wider appraisals of the proposals at that time. Full consideration will need to be given as to the robustness of any proposals particularly if they are not based on detailed information.

7.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director Law and Governance, and
Monitoring Officer**

Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding in this context is within the powers of the Council under both s111 of the Local Government Act 1972 and s1 Localism Act 2011.

The report addresses the legal implications of Local Government Reform.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
**Team Manager - Community Development and
Equalities**

The decision to work with Basildon Council on these proposals does not create a direct impact on Diversity or Equality. In developing proposals for any form of structural change the full impact of the diverse communities we serve and the equality impact for workforce and residents would need full consideration. In line with the Council's commitments to work with communities in developing proposals any structural change would need community engagement and involvement.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

Any formal change to the Council's governance and structure has the potential to have impacts in all the domains the Council operates within. This could include staff, given the area over which they would be operating could change. At this point in time there is no indication what impacts this could have and the work envisaged under this memorandum of understanding would be key to understanding any potential impacts. If the work indicates that

there is a need for changes this would in line with normal protocols involve full discussion with staff and trade union bodies.

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

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Memorandum of Understanding.

Report Author:

Ian Hunt

Assistant Director of Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer

Appendix 1

Local Government Reform

Memorandum of Understanding

between

Basildon Borough Council

Thurrock Borough Council

1. Core Purpose and Aims

- 1.1 Both authorities remain supportive of, and committed to actively participating in ongoing collaborative work being undertaken by local authorities across Greater Essex to realise the benefits of joint working and the potential for Local Government Reform and hope that work undertaken under this MOU may support other local authorities to unlock proposals for local government reform in their areas of Essex.
- 1.2 This joint working approach is highlighted by the work of both Authorities within the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA).
- 1.3 This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agrees that the two authorities will work together to maximise the economic and social benefits for residents and businesses across the two Boroughs and specifically the extent to which the local authority areas might be likely to provide a meaningful geographic and economic area, and fulfil other criteria and requirements in the context of future local government reform.
- 1.4 This work may include joint working and the potential for a combined approach to wider Local Government Reform, and specifically considering the creation of a new South West Essex unitary authority which encompasses both local authority areas.
- 1.5 This MoU does not indicate a fixed view on the geography of local government reform in South West Essex. We intend to assess a range of potential options and consult positively with our neighbours to seek their input to the process
- 1.6 A key principle of this MoU is that signatories are equal partners but will bring the best of their experience and capabilities to the work

2. Term and Termination

- 2.1. This MoU shall commence on the date of the signature by each Authority, and shall expire if either party gives notice to the other.

3. Variation

- 3.1. The MoU can be varied by written agreement of the Authorities.
- 3.2. The MoU allows for other local authorities to join as the process develops if appropriate by mutual agreement

4. Charges and liabilities

- 4.1. Except as otherwise provided, the Parties shall bear their own costs and expenses incurred in complying with their obligations under this MoU and agree to split equally all jointly incurred costs.

5. Status

- 5.1. This MoU cannot override the statutory duties and powers of the parties and is not enforceable by law. However the parties agree to the principles set out in this MoU.

Signed by

Local Authority	Leader of the Council	Chief Executive	Date
Basildon Borough Council			
Thurrock Borough Council			

10 March 2021	ITEM: 12 Decision: 110559
Cabinet	
Financial Update – Quarter 3 2020/21	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Shane Hebb, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director Finance, Corporate Finance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This report covers the first nine months of the municipal year 2020/21 and includes updates on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the forecast outturn positions in respect of revenue budgets and the delivery of the capital programme. It is not a report on future budgetary matters; but a backward look at the current year, year-to-date.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

Cabinet has been presented with regular updates on the overall projected financial position over the next 3 years, with the most recent report being on 10 February 2021.

The funding gap next financial year, in 2021/22, has been addressed through additional funding and a number of temporary interventions. These include Central Government further one-off support alongside the use of reserves and capital receipts to achieve a balanced budget.

While this addresses the pressures arising in-year, growth is still required in future years within the MTFs where it is considered there is a need to meet ongoing demand, in particular, in both adults' and children's social care.

General Fund Revenue Monitoring Q3 2020/21

The General Fund revenue position at the end of December 2020 is a breakeven position. This position has improved since the Quarter 2 report presented to Cabinet, largely due to additional funding of £3.485m awarded by Central Government to help

mitigate the financial impact of Covid-19. Tight control over recruitment and non-essential spend have also reduced pressure on the core budget allocation.

Member priorities which were originally earmarked for spend against the budgeted surplus of £4.074m have now either been deferred, or cancelled altogether and this surplus has been included in the overall position to fund in-year pressures.

As at 31 December 2020, Thurrock has received funding from Central Government to the value of £14.242m to mitigate costs associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and has been reflected in this report. The report also reflects forecast additional support of £1.800m from MHCLG to partially offset income losses and forecast Job Retention Scheme income (furlough) of £0.300m. Returns continue to be submitted to MHCLG highlighting the ongoing financial risks in the current year which continue to evolve as national restrictions continue. The impact of Covid-19 has been identified and separated from the core budget monitoring and this is set out in Section 2 of the report.

The significant pressure within core services continues to be the projected increased costs in Children's Social Care relating to an increase in high costs placements. This pressure is projected to be £0.851m and actions are in place which are expected to reduce this forecast position by year-end.

The Covid-19 pressures £0.656m are split between:

- 1) Increased spend as a result of Covid-19 emergency response; and
- 2) Income losses as a direct result of Covid-19.

The wider impact on Council Tax and Business Rates relating to 2020/21 will be managed through further government support mechanisms but there remain concerns over the impacts in subsequent years as the wider economic impacts of the pandemic become clearer.

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is projecting a breakeven position. There has been a limited impact from Covid-19 to date but this continues to be monitored and there remains concern over the stability of rents in future years.

Dedicated Schools Grant

The DSG position is indicating pressures of £1.617m. The position reflects the increased pressure in the high needs block and additional demand for school places in Thurrock. In common with the wider sector a 3 year deficit recovery plan is being developed in consultation with the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

Capital Monitoring

This forecast position at the end of quarter 3 is that expenditure on General Fund schemes will be £93.009m against a planned budget of £109.092m.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That Cabinet comment on the MTFFS and the forecast outturn position for 2020/21.

2. Medium Term Financial Strategy

2.1 The current MTFFS is included at Appendix 1.

2.2. The MTFFS has consistently shown a deficit of £33.673m over the three year period 2021/22 to 2023/24, with an initial £19.318m deficit in 2021/22. This was based on a number of assumptions including the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a pause to the investment strategy, notably new investment activity, and the start of phasing out of investment income as bonds mature.

2.3. There is now certainty on balancing the 2021/22 position through a combination of £8.136m of sustainable funding changes and £11.152m of short term measures. The sustainable changes include the use of the full Adult Social Care precept and a further £5.656m identified from the savings review undertaken which reflect a combination of departmental efficiencies, a temporary suspension on recruitment to all non-essential vacant posts and a review of staff allowances above baseline contractual terms and conditions. The balance will be met from the use of some reserves allocations, flexibilities relating to capital receipts, to support transformation and growth, and additional grant funding.

2.4. Further details can be found in the recent report on the MTFFS and budget which was agreed by Council on 24 February 2021.

General Fund Quarter 3 Monitoring

3. Introduction and Background

3.1. In February 2020 Council agreed the 2020/21 budget in line with the balanced MTFFS. This was, at the time, supported by an investment approach and the delivery of savings targets via service reviews. The investment approach is now not planning to take out any new investments, or replace investments when existing arrangements conclude, while other savings targets have been delayed by the urgent response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2. The financial reporting includes the impact of the pandemic which has required a wider range of responses from the Council and continues to be a significant source of uncertainty. This report sets out the latest assessment of the financial impact on 2020/21 and incorporates the associated MHCLG funding announced to date. The longer term economic impacts continue to be monitored to enable accurate estimates to be made for the 2021/22 council tax and business rate bases. There remains significant risk in this area.

3.3. Any perceived risks associated with the EU Exit Process continue to be monitored. Additional funding of £0.500m has been received to help mitigate

potential cost pressures that may arise in both the current financial year and providing further flexibility into 2021/22.

- 3.4. The report sets out the latest forecast position for 2020/21 across the main revenue accounts – the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated Schools Grant and Public Health grant.
- 3.5. A quarter 3 update to the Capital Programme is included in Section 3 of this report.

4. The Overall General Fund position is set out in detail in the table below:

Directorate	Full Year Budget	Month 9 Forecast	Less Covid-19 income losses	Month 9 Adjusted Directorate Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Adults, Housing and Health	43,513	44,006	(640)	43,366	(147)
Children's Services	40,648	42,821	(1,322)	41,499	851
Commercial Services	988	803		803	(185)
Environment & Highways and Counter Fraud	30,714	31,504	(790)	30,714	0
Finance, Governance and Property	18,234	18,711	(700)	18,011	(223)
Housing General Fund	1,817	1,817		1,817	0
HR, OD and Transformation	5,145	4,762		4,762	(383)
Place	5,356	6,386	(1,030)	5,356	0
Strategy, Communications & Customer Service	3,175	2,984	(218)	2,766	(409)
Corporate Costs	(737)	(737)		(737)	0
Central Financing	(117,055)	(117,055)		(117,055)	0
Treasury	(30,769)	(26,856)		(26,856)	3,913
Unachievable savings	(1,027)	0	(1,027)	(1,027)	0
Service Total	0	9,144	(5,726)	3,418	3,418
Covid-19 costs	14,242	11,273	5,726	16,998	2,756
Covid-19 funding	(14,242)	(14,242)		(14,242)	0
Job Retention Scheme & Income compensation	0	(2,100)		(2,100)	(2,100)
Covid-19 impact	0	(5,069)	5,726	656	656
Month 9 Total	0	4,074	0	4,074	4,074
Budgeted Surplus					(4,074)
Grand Total					0

Section 1 – Directorate Outturn position

The following section sets out the directorate outturn position, excluding the impact of Covid-19 (this is detailed separately in section 2 of this report).

Analysis by Service Area:

5. Adult Social Care

Service	Full year budget	Adjusted Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Assistive Equipment & Technology	599	627	28
Commissioning & Service Delivery	2,494	2,707	213
Community Development	1,985	1,808	(177)
External Placements	27,343	27,372	29
Fieldwork Services	4,128	3,985	(143)
Provider Services	6,965	6,868	(97)
Total	43,513	43,366	(147)

- 5.1. The directorate outturn position is currently projecting a forecast underspend of £0.147m.
- 5.2. The department is able to finance the budget pressures, which are not as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, within the overall service budget allocation. These are costs that occur during the running of front line operations of social care and safeguarding activities.
- 5.3. There remains some pressure within the Commissioning & Service Delivery service. This is currently due to a delay in the planned implementation of service changes due to COVID-19 which impact on the associated planned cost savings. In addition there is forecast overspend on legal costs.
- 5.4. Community development variance against budget arises from staff savings caused by the delay of the implementation of a planned restructure, and staffing costs forming part of the COVID allocation as they relate to operation shield works.
- 5.5. Fieldwork work service is underspent due to a delay in recruitment in the service.
- 5.6. Although contained within the overall position, essential premises and maintenance costs continue to be incurred within Collins House until longer term capital projects are undertaken. There are also pressures within the provider bank budget which is necessary to support front line staffing requirements in the delivery of homecare and residential services.

6. Children's Services

Service	Full year budget	Adjusted Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Business Support	218	218	0
Children and Family Services	31,492	32,965	1,473
Head Start Housing Service	887	878	(9)
Learning & Universal Outcomes	5,496	4,678	(818)
School Transport	2,555	2,760	205
	40,648	41,499	851

6.1. The overall Children's Services forecast outturn position is £0.851m overspent.

Children and Family Services

6.2. Within the overall reported pressure placement costs remain the key area of risk. In respect of support for looked after children and young people subject to child protection plan there is a pressure of £1.848m primarily as a result of large sibling group placements.

6.3. The original budget was based on 288 looked after children. Placement numbers continue to fluctuate around 288 yet the profile of placement type is the key driver impacting the budget as demonstrated in the below table:

Placement Type	Budgeted number of placements	Dec-20 Actual number of placements	Variance	20/21 Revised Budget	Month 6 forecast	Variance
				£'000	£'000	£'000
Placed with Parent/Prison	5	4	(1)	0	0	0
Internal Fostering	134	118	(16)	2,478	2,513	35
Supported Accommodation	31	21	(10)	820	619	(201)
External Fostering	94	120	26	4,216	5,251	1,035
External Residential	24	25	1	3,909	4,659	750
Secure Placement	0	0	0	0	229	229
Total	288	288	0	11,423	13,271	1,848

6.4. Underspends in the running of the fostering & adoption and the children with disabilities services are helping to mitigate some of the above pressures, and a focus on enabling more internalised foster carer arrangements through tax exemption is being piloted, to gauge improvements on people outcomes, and less dependency from the authority on Independent Fostering Agencies.

6.5. The number of agency staff is now 30 FTE workers engaged as at 30 December 2020. This cost is managed within existing staffing budgets.

- 6.6. The Directorate continue with a number of actions to address the projected deficit. These need to be considered in the context of COVID-19 which has restricted the range of actions available. These include:
- The continued review of all high cost placements with an annual cost of £0.130m and over; and
 - A review of the engagement of the Families Together Team in respect of children who have become looked after in February/March to consider the level of engagement at this time with the families and identify further actions to address as Covid-19 restrictions lift.

Learning and Universal Outcomes

- 6.7. The service are reporting a projected underspend of £0.818m; through delays in filling vacant posts, the non-recruitment to vacant posts, a reduction in full time equivalents and non-enrolment in the Superannuation scheme.

7. Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud

- 7.1. The overall position for the directorate is forecast to be breakeven after adjustment for the income losses relating to Covid-19.

Service	Current Budget	Adjusted Forecast	Reported month 6 variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Counter Fraud & Enforcement	168	479	311
Emergency Planning and Resilience	430	414	(16)
Environment and Highways	1,442	1,108	(334)
Highways, Fleet and Logistics	9,052	9,008	(44)
Street Scene and Leisure	19,622	19,705	83
Total	30,714	30,714	0

Counter Fraud & Enforcement

- 7.2. The Traded Services income for the Counter Fraud team has been forecast to budget based on external work that has been agreed with MHCLG during 2020/21 to review the financial support that has been awarded to local businesses during the lockdown period. This income is expected to mitigate other budgeted income that is no longer expected from work carried out with other Local Authorities – however it is important to note that there will also be additional costs associated with this activity which has also been reflected in the overall position. At the time of writing this report Thurrock has started to receive payment in respect of these contracts.

- 7.3. Additional agency staff costs have been included in the forecast for the wider enforcement function and this resource continues to be regularly reviewed alongside potential alternative funding sources.

Environment & Highways

- 7.4. Close control of staffing costs and vacant posts have led to a forecast underspend of £0.334m. A number of staff have appropriately been charged to the capital budgets assigned to the projects they have been supporting.

Highways, Fleet & Logistics

- 7.5. The service is set to underspend by £0.044m but there remains potential movement within winter maintenance budget which will be dependent on the severity of the weather and gritting requirements over the remaining quarter of the year.

Street, Scene & Leisure

- 7.6. Waste services continue to forecast risk against their allocated budget as there remains a variable cost per tonne element within the Recycling contract. The quarterly price has, however, decreased from £105.04 per tonne to £100.55 per tonne for quarter 4. Alongside this, the Energy from Waste contract has had an increase of approximately 600 tonnes per month compared to last year. Both of these contracts will continue to be closely monitored as part of the usual budget monitoring arrangements.

Energy From Waste	SEP	NOV	DEC
2019/20 tonnages	3,242	3,572	3,499
2020/21 tonnages	3,965	3,987	4,181
Increase year on year	724	415	682

8. Place

Service	Current Budget £'000	Adjusted Forecast £'000	Reported month 6 variance £'000
Delivery and Strategy	580	580	0
Economic Development	524	524	0
Lower Thames Crossing & Transport Infrastructure Service	141	141	0
Place Delivery Service	341	341	0
Planning; Transportation and Public Protection	3,719	3,719	0
Total	5,306	5,306	0

- 8.1. Although a balanced position has been forecast at month 9 it should be noted that this continues to be dependent on a plan to mitigate in-year pressures

identified across the directorate to the value of £0.147m being implemented within the required timescales.

Delivery & Strategy

- 8.2. Finance have reviewed staffing support to a number of regeneration capital projects to ensure relevant associated costs are not borne by the General Fund. This approach alongside a reduction in non-essential spend should allow for a breakeven position in this area.

Place Delivery

- 8.3. The Regeneration team have pressures related to the difference in cost between agency staff and the budget for the Regeneration Manager posts. All further non-staffing budgets continue to be reviewed to mitigate this pressure.

Planning, Transportation & Public Protection

- 8.4. Previously forecast overspend position of £0.063m is expected to be fully mitigated by close scrutiny of all project work budgets and non-essential spend will now be scaled back to ensure spend is within the allocated resource.

Planning Delivery Fund

- 8.5. The Planning Delivery Fund is money that is being held as part of a partnership arrangement across seven local authorities. The seven local authorities are Basildon, Brentwood, Castlepoint, Essex, Rochford, Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock. The money is due to be spent across these local authority areas.
- 8.6. This funding was carried forward from 2019/20 to be spent in 2020/21.

9. Finance, Governance & Property

- 9.1. Careful management of staff costs in a number of service areas has led to a forecast underspend of £0.223m particularly within Electoral Services and the Revenue and Benefits team.

Service	Full year budget	Adjusted Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Assets	5,443	5,443	0
Cashiers	65	125	60
Chief Executive	1,000	1,000	0
Corporate Finance	2,415	2,415	0
Democratic Services	234	219	(15)
Electoral Services	506	285	(221)
ICT	3,575	3,700	125

Legal Services	1,899	1,899	0
Members Services	801	753	(48)
Revenue and Benefits	2,295	2,171	(124)
Total	18,234	18,011	(223)

Assets

- 9.2. While the overall forecast position is breakeven there remain financial challenges. The Corporate Landlord function is forecasting to overspend by £0.102m reflecting a number of buildings have transferred to the service with budgets limited for the works required. This continues to be managed within the revenue and capital resources available. This pressure has been offset by managing of vacant posts and agency staff.

Electoral Services

- 9.3. The local elections were delayed in May 2020 and hence there is a cost saving against budget. The expectation is the May 2021 elections will progress and any required funding will be allocated to supporting this process.

ICT

- 9.4. All core service costs are being managed within existing budgets. There remains a £0.125m traded services income pressure that will need to be revisited as part of the wider income targets linked to services with schools and other authorities.

10. Housing General Fund

Service	Current Budget	Adjusted Forecast	Reported month 9 variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Homelessness	1,229	1,229	0
Hostel Provision	209	209	0
Private Sector Housing	326	326	0
Travellers Sites	53	53	0
Total	1,817	1,817	0

- 10.1. The Housing General Fund financial outturn is projected to be delivered within the agreed budget level. The impact of COVID-19 remains significant risk in respect of homelessness claims in the final quarter of the year and going forwards into 2021/22. This is discussed further in section 2 of this report.

11. Strategy, Communications & Customer Service

Subservice	Full year budget	Adjusted Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Communications	514	454	(60)
Customer Services	1,132	904	(228)
Social Care Performance	1,209	1,101	(108)
Strategy Team	320	307	(13)
Total	3,175	2,766	(409)

- 11.1. The overall Strategy, Communications and Customer Services directorate forecast variance at the end of quarter 3 is £0.409m underspend.
- 11.2. Customer Services is forecast to be underspent by £0.228m once the loss of income anticipated for the Registrars service is adjusted for.
- 11.3. The wider underspend is due to vacant posts across a number of the services and the tight management of resources overall. Any decisions regarding the reinstatement of face-to-face services may result in changes to the financial position but the option to redeploy staff will be reviewed.

12. HR, OD & Transformation

	Full year budget	Adjusted Forecast	Variance to budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
HR OD Team	4,237	3,911	(326)
Occupational Health & Counselling	147	153	6
Corporate Training & Development Budget	180	110	(70)
Information Management	581	588	7
Total	5,145	4,762	(383)

- 12.1. The Directorate forecast an underspend of £0.383m for 2020/21. This is through managing the funding of staff on relevant capital and transformation projects.
- 12.2. Furthermore events scheduled to take place throughout the year have been delayed or delivered in alternative virtual formats therefore the project budget allocations have not been utilised in full.

Treasury & Financing

- 12.3. The reported position of £3.913m reflects a pause to the investment strategy, including TRL.
- 12.4. The Council has also taken action to stabilise cash-flow in light of increased demands arising from the response to the pandemic. The Council projects to utilise increased fixed term borrowing in 2020/21 which has a higher associate interest rate than borrowing in the local authority market. During the current financial period, a further proportion of the Councils overall debt was re-financed.

12.5. Housing Revenue Account

Service	Revised budget	Forecast Outturn	Directorate Outturn Variance	Covid-19 Impact	Adjusted Forecast	Reported Month 9 Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Development	217	217	0	0	217	0
Financing and Recharges	24,440	24,775	336	0	24,775	336
Rent and Income	(50,254)	(49,725)	529	529	(49,725)	529
Repairs and Maintenance	12,021	12,021	0	0	12,021	0
Operations and Management	13,575	12,711	(865)	0	12,711	(865)
Total	0	0	0	529	0	0

- 12.6. Overall, the HRA is forecasting a balanced position at the end of financial year. Expenditure within this service is more manageable in certain respects as activity levels can be adjusted accordingly, to remain within financial constraints.
- 12.7. The economic impact of the pandemic is being seen to have a direct adverse financial impact on the HRA. This is reflected in the table above to demonstrate a forecast loss related to expected increases in the level of bad debts relating to existing rents.
- 12.8. In addition, there has been a delay in hand over time of the new build properties at Topps Club and Claudian Way. Therefore the anticipated reduction in the level of rent and service charge has been reflected.
- 12.9. There are currently a number of vacant posts across the directorate which will mitigate the in-year impact of reduced income levels and the requirement to increase the bad debt provision.

13. Dedicated Schools Grant

- 13.1. The DSG 2020/21 projected outturn position is a deficit of £1.617m, as a result of continued demand within the High Needs Block that exceeds the budget available.

DSG 2020/21	Funding Settlement	Academy Recoupment	Final DSG	Forecast Outturn	Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Schools	126,839	(119,290)	7,549	6,650	(899)
Central Services	1,850	0	1,850	1,804	(46)
High Needs	26,021	(5,376)	20,645	23,207	2,562
Early Years	12,699	0	12,699	12,699	0
Total	167,409	(124,666)	42,743	44,360	1,617

Schools Block

- 13.2. The growth fund allows officers to ensure sufficiency of places within Thurrock schools for all children of school age. Based on current commitments and historic level of spend there is a forecast underspend of £0.899m.

Central Services Block

- 13.3. A projected underspend of £0.046m through a combination of a delays in recruitment within School Admissions to September 2020 and savings in venue hire as Schools Forum meetings are held virtually in 2020/21.

High Needs Block

- 13.4. This is the significant area of financial risk and can be broken down into four key areas:
1. The continued increase in the number of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans. Additional costs of £0.734m are forecasted in maintaining pupils within Thurrock schools or other Local Authority mainstream schools and academies.
 2. Post 16 costs – Increased pupil numbers are forecasted with additional cost of £0.400m.
 3. There is a forecast an overspend of £1.128m in relation to residential and non-residential non-maintained and independent placements. This reflects the higher level of complex cases and out of borough placements.
 4. The increase in supplying tuition packages for pupils not in school with a projected additional cost of £0.300m.
- 13.5. A review of the local offer and commissioned places available in Thurrock continues. The need to challenge schools on the use of their Notional SEN budgets and the requirement to progress to an Education Health and Care Plan remains.

- 13.6. A breakeven forecast is currently shown in the Early Needs Block. Officers continue to review the financial implication arising from the use of the spring 2021 Census. This has implications for both 2020/21 and 2021/22.

DSG Reserve

- 13.7. The DSG has a carried forward deficit of £1.978m into 2020/21. The 2020/21 in year position will increase the deficit to £3.595m. There remains wider discussion with the Education Skills Funding Agency on the approach to addressing deficits in the longer term.

14. Public Health

- 14.1. The Public Health Grant increased by £0.735m in 2020/21 with the full allocation for the year being £11.485m. The increase has been allocated to inflationary increases against existing contracts with external health providers in line with the national Agenda for Change (AFC).
- 14.2. The Public Health Grant distribution focuses on key areas of delivery including drug and alcohol, sexual health and Healthy Families. Within these contracts the delivery of face to face services were suspended for some time due the pandemic and these staff were redeployed to help contain the outbreak. Demand has reduced compared to the allocated budget and currently predicting a forecast underspend of £0.432m. Each contract is continuously monitored and reviewed by the service in line with GP practices and health care providers as limited service continues to operate in current restrictions. All uncommitted funds will be placed into a ring-fenced reserve and utilised against appropriate Public Health related activities in 2021/22.
- 14.3. The direct financial implications arising as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic are being funded by central government and set out in Section 2 of this report.

15. Section 2 Corporate Covid-19 impact:

- 15.1. The overall position is set out in the table below:

Service	Income received	Month 6 Forecast Costs/Losses	Forecast local impact
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Covid-19 Government funding	14,242		
Income loss compensation	1,800		
Furlough Income	300		
Total	16,342	16,998	656

- 15.2. Expenditure and income losses attributable to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for each directorate are broken down in the following table:

Directorate	Additional costs	Income loss	Total	Key areas of spend/income pressures
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adults, Housing and Health	4,169	640	4,809	External care market support, internal care provision, increased demand, temporary suspension to charging & review process
Children's Services	2,415	1,322	3,737	Anticipated increase in referrals, delays to legal proceedings, Head Start Housing, school transport
Corporate costs	491	0	491	Operation Shield, food stock/delivery, staff overtime and temporary mortuary facilities.
Environment and Highways	2,041	790	2,830	Bus subsidy, PPE, HRWC, HGV hire, enforcement staffing costs and temporary mortuary facilities. Loss of income for parking & enforcement, commercial waste
Finance, Governance and Property	656	700	1,356	ICT costs for home working, loss of rental income on commercial properties
Housing General Fund	1,500	0	1,500	Increased Homelessness (post landlord eviction amnesty), temporary accommodation
Place	0	1,030	1,030	Planning income, Thameside Theatre closure, licencing, business centre income losses
Strategy, Communications & Customer Services	0	218	218	Restrictions placed on the registrars service, loss of advertising and Film Office income
Unachievable savings	0	1,027	1,027	Delay to savings built into base budget
Total	11,273	5,726	16,998	

15.3. Further detail is set out below in respect of the impact on Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Housing General Fund and Public Health:

Adult Social Care

- 15.4. The following costs have been included in the position to support the financial resilience of providers, facilitate hospital discharges and support internal care provision and are all as a direct consequence of the pandemic:

Covid-19 Direct Response	£'000
External Market Support	
10% resilience Payments across ASC providers	1,779
Increase Home Care rates to 5% uplift	136
Ongoing increase in demand for provision (not covered by HDI)	607
Internal Care provision	
Additional equipment - Oak House & Piggs Corner	30
Specialist Dom Care Teams - enhanced payments	165
Telecare - installation, additional equipment & 7 day service	26
PPE	30
Voluntary Sector contracts	137
Staffing costs - residential care/libraries/shielding	750
Provider Services	510
Total	4,169
Hospital Discharge	
Net expenditure	1,119
Offset Against CCG Income (not yet received)	(1,119)
Total	0

- 15.5. Adult Social care departments nationally received a further allocation of grant funding – the Infection Control Grant, in order to address specific issues within the sector. This is ring-fenced for these purposes and reported outside of the position detailed above.

Direct Service intervention to the external market:

- 15.6. Regarding Financial resilience payments, the Council has provided a temporary financial resilience payment of 10%. This was agreed to be paid out for the first 16 weeks of the year and is based on the budgeted level of spend for each provider. This is available to all service providers and is in response to higher levels of dependency, staff sickness rates and absenteeism and overall volatility. A further payment was agreed in December 2020.
- 15.7. The emerging situation with regards to residential care is of particular concern; with an increase in the number of voids resulting in higher unit costs for providers in an already fragile market. The current estimates in the forecast assume a continuation of the measures in place for the first sixteen

weeks of the year but there remains the potential for additional financial risk. This has been reflected in the ongoing care costs of £0.606m.

- 15.8. The Service has increased the uplift on domiciliary care providers from £16.25 to £17.06. This has been done to ensure one of the most vulnerable markets, who themselves, care for the boroughs most vulnerable, are able to operate financially
- 15.9. It is for the reasons noted above that Members are reminded that reserves positions are finite and, once used, are no longer available to use on one-off stimuli. This is why a long-term view is necessary on reserve positions.

Internally managed care provision (Provider Services)

- 15.10. Internally managed care provision, namely through Collins House residential home and Thurrock Care at Home domiciliary care has faced significant additional costs during the pandemic. This largely equates to the following:
- Increased level of overtime and usage of provider bank staff to cover staff sickness and absenteeism;
 - Increase demand for PPE in order to undertake duties safely; and
 - Specialist domiciliary care teams implemented to provide care for clients who have tested positive for Covid-19.
- 15.11. The Covid-19 pandemic is starting to change the way in which Adult Social Care services are delivered. A legacy of the recent events could see a permanent reduction in the demand for residential care services, with a greater emphasis on domiciliary care and people being looked after in their own homes, or cared for at a home of a family member who themselves are now able to work from home on a more permanent basis. This represents a significant ongoing economic and financial risk to this sector of the market. An increased number of voids, and reduction in demand will require a different financial strategy in future years.
- 15.12. There will also be a requirement to undertake a high level of both care and financial assessments when previous legislation is reinstated. This could result in additional costs in order to secure the required level of care resources.

Hospital Discharge process

- 15.13. In response to the Covid-19 Crisis and to ensure timely discharge the NHS and Local Authorities are required to work together to:
- provide free out of hospital care and support to people discharged from hospital;
 - provide free care and support to people requiring additional care to avoid hospital admission (in line with national guidance at the time and during the COVID-19 crisis);

- remove barriers to discharge and transfers between health and social care to get people out of hospital and either home or into an alternative care setting quickly;
- work together to maximize the funding available including putting relevant funds into a pooled budget to cover costs of discharge support and removing room for debate at this time; and
- Provide support to the care market through the Covid-19 emergency period

15.14. The Council is working closely with Thurrock CCG in order to deal with people who are being discharged from hospital during the pandemic.

15.15. Further guidance has now been issued in relation to the hospital discharge scheme. In summary, the Council needs to ensure that people discharged from hospital before the 31st August 2020 will need to be assessed in a reasonable timeframe, and if continuing social or health care is needed, this will be a cost directly to the Local Authority or CCG as applicable.

15.16. The current cost of the people where this is applicable is £0.165m per month, and the potential on-going cost included in the table above represents the staged approach the reduction of health care funding over the next four months.

15.17. The directorate continues to work closely with colleagues across Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) on this complex issue to agree a pragmatic approach.

Income adjustments

15.18. There has been a reduction in the forecast level of income that will be achieved in the financial year to the value of £0.640m. This is as a direct result of the Covid-19 situation, and relates to the following areas:

Detail	Income Loss
	£'000
Temporary suspensions to charging and review processes	272
Closure of Libraries, Hubs, Day Care centres and Café	158
Internal residential care facilities operating on a reduced occupancy level	210
Total	640

Children's Services

15.19. The following Covid-19 related costs have been incurred by Children's Services (or are anticipated to cause an increase in costs in the coming months):

Detail	Additional costs
	£'000
Education IT equipment and video	49
Head Start Housing	400
Increase in Child Protection referrals/Delayed Care Proceedings/Block placement purchasing	1,475
Early Years support	232
Schools Transport	259
Total	2,415

Increase in child protection referrals & delayed care proceedings

- 15.20. An allowance has been made for potential increased costs within children's social care and this is a nationally recognised issue. Most referrals are made by schools and health professionals who identify safeguarding concerns; the number of referrals fell significantly during the first lockdown period. With children and young people returning to school in September and then a further period of lockdown, an increase in referrals is anticipated
- 15.21. Cllr Judith Blake, Chair of the LGA's Children and Young People Board, said: 'The impacts of the pandemic will be far reaching for some children, young people and their families. As this becomes clearer, more children and their families are likely to need support and councils expect to see a significant rise in referrals to children's social care and demand for wider children's support services'. Some children and their families will need significant interventions, but others will just need some extra help to get through a difficult period. It will be essential that the right services can be there to support them and help them cope.
- 15.22. The position on all forecast impacts remains under review.

Head Start Housing

- 15.23. Increased Head Start Housing costs have resulted from the increased use of properties required for young adults who were shielding as part of continued lockdown restrictions.

Home to School Transport

- 15.24. A significant risk is Home to School Transport due to Covid-19 and the continued increase in demand for service and social distancing measures required. Initial projections, based on invoices paid to date and current contract values, show a potential additional costs of £0.259m.

Income adjustments

Detail	Income loss
	£'000
Admissions and Welfare	28
Adult college	112
Grangewaters	140
Head Start Housing	9
Income from Catering	450
Music Services	117
Nursery	154
Sunshine Centre	18
Traded Income	294
Total	1,322

- 15.25. A number of services ceased during the national lockdown periods and fees for these services have been negatively impacted; Grangewaters, Adult College, Music services.
- 15.26. Both of the day nurseries, Neptune and Little Pirates, are reporting a combined overspend of £0.154m due a reduction in fee income recovery. The provision was limited to only delivering a service to children of key workers during the national lockdowns.
- 15.27. The catering income reduction reflects the associated reduction in demand from schools since the start of the pandemic.

Housing General Fund

Detail	Additional costs
	£'000
Homeless Incentive Payments	59
Increased Homelessness (post landlord eviction amnesty)	624
Rooms at Thurrock Hotel	818
Total	1,500

Homelessness

- 15.28. One of the major routes into homelessness is as a result of landlords imposing eviction measures. These measures were on hold until the 20 September 2020 and landlords could not progress their possession claim through the courts. However the tenant eviction ban has been reintroduced at the end of 2020. While evictions remain possible where there is a breach of the tenancy agreement a six month notice period remains in place until the end of March 2021.

- 15.29. The concern is that once eviction actions can commence there is expected to be an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless. In addition as the wider economic impacts of the pandemic are felt this may further increase pressure on the service and hence there is a forecast pressure which remains under review and will impact both the current year and future periods.
- 15.30. From the outset of the pandemic there were 32 people identified as rough sleepers who were housed in short term emergency accommodation since the onset of the pandemic. The average cost of this is in the region of £70 per day, per person, for this level of short term temporary accommodation. The full year effect of this is reflected in the level of anticipated spend in the corporate forecast at £0.818m, but the service are reviewing this cohort of people to find alternative, longer term housing solutions. There is a varying degree of need, vulnerability and suitable accommodation provision across the demographic, ranging from the ability to place people in HMO's through to supported accommodation placements.

Test and Trace

- 15.31. On 22 May 2020, the UK Government announced its expectation that every top tier local authority would create a Local Outbreak Control Plan by the end of June 2020,

The seven key themes are as follows:

1. Planning for local outbreaks in care homes
2. Identifying and managing outbreaks in high risk places, locations and communities
3. Identifying methods for local testing capacity
4. Contact tracing in complex settings
5. National and local data integration including local surveillance and monitoring of outbreaks
6. Supporting vulnerable local people to self-isolate
7. Establishing governance structures including a local DPH led Health Protection Board and elected member led Engagement Board

- 15.32. Thurrock Council has been awarded a central government grant to the value of £1.052m to develop and implement its plan, including local testing and contact tracing arrangements and this is separate to the funding listed above. It is the intention to fully spend this allocation within the current financial year, however discussions are ongoing with Central Government as there may be a need to fund ongoing activities into 2021/22.

Control Outbreak Management Fund

- 15.33. In November 2020, the Government awarded another tranche of financial relief to upper tier authorities to help contain the Covid-19 outbreak. The fund was specifically given to contain the spread of the virus in areas with the highest rates of infection as the country moved into further restrictive measures.

15.34. The total allocation received to date is £2.005m and funding has been allocated to a number of initiatives such as enforcement, enhanced testing, communications and assisting the voluntary sector, in line with the conditions of the grant.

15.35. Currently the Control Outbreak Management Fund must be spent by 31st March 2021 and hence any unallocated funds by this date will be transferred back to Central Government for reallocation of resources.

16 Section 3 Capital Monitoring 2020/21 Quarter 3

General Fund Schemes

16.1. The current position for General Fund schemes for 2020/21 is summarised below:

	Latest Agreed Budget	Projected Outturn to 31/03/2021	Variance against budget
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure:			
Children's Service ¹	11,266	10,436	(830)
Adult, Housing & Health	4,674	2,700	(1,974)
Environment and Highways	19,007	14,797	(4,210)
Place	52,413	48,003	(4,410)
Finance and IT	12,045	7,451	(4,594)
HR, OD & Transformation	9,386	9,386	0
Customer Services	283	218	(65)
Commercial Services	18	18	0
Total Expenditure	109,092	93,009	(16,083)
Resources:			
Prudential Borrowing	(53,432)	(42,871)	10,561
Capital Receipts	(51)	(51)	0
Reserves	(71)	(71)	0
Government Grants	(22,746)	(17,818)	4,928
Other Grants	(29,127)	(29,077)	50
Developers Contributions (S106)	(3,665)	(3,121)	544
Total Resources	(109,092)	(93,009)	16,083
Forecast Overspend in Resources	0	0	0

¹ The schools capital budget is designed around academic years and officers are confident that this will be defrayed in full within the current academic year

Capital Programme – Projected Outturn as at Month 9

16.2. This illustrates a projected outturn at the end of the financial year of £93.009m, which is £16.078m less than the latest agreed budget for the year. This forecast variance is further analysed below.

	Re-profiling of expenditure at Month 9	Capital schemes requiring additional funding	Completed Projects	Forecast variance against budget at Month 9
Expenditure:	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Children's Service	(830)	0	0	(830)
Adult, Housing & Health	(1,974)	0	0	(1,974)
Environment & Highways	(4,205)	0	(5)	(4,210)
Place	(4,410)	0	0	(4,410)
Finance and IT	(4,594)	0	0	(4,594)
HR, OD & Transformation	0	0	0	0
Customer Services	(65)	0	0	(65)
Commercial Services	0	0	0	0
Total	(16,078)	(0)	(5)	(16,083)

16.3. This shows that the forecast underspend is principally due to slippage/budget re-profiling on current schemes (£16.078m). Consequently the funding remains allocated to specific current schemes.

16.4. There are no schemes exceeding their capital budgets projected to the end of the current year. However work continues to assess the final forecast position on the A13 widening works project as a whole and as reported to the Standards and Audit Committee and the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee, the last project forecast was expected to be within the range of £114m to £120m. This remains under assessment as the project continues and further project and financial risks continue to be managed.

16.5. A list of schemes where the variance is greater than £1m is shown in Appendix 3.

16.6. A number of capital schemes are also expected to complete construction in future years with expenditure totalling £67.029m. Budgets for these schemes have been profiled accordingly.

16.7. In addition, following the review of the capital programme by Officers and Members, a number of projects have been put on hold, pending further reviews. These projects totalling £18m are also reflected in future year budgets, subject to the review.

16.8. Schemes that are at a feasibility or at an earlier stage of development have been excluded from the reported position. The total projected budgets of

£100.1m include school improvement works, the A13 East Facing slip road, Grays South development and the 21st Century Care Home.

17. Housing Revenue Account Schemes

- 17.1. The current position for Housing Revenue Account schemes for 2020/21 is summarised in Table 4.

HRA Capital Programme – Projected Outturn:

	Latest Agreed Budget	Projected Outturn to 31/03/2021
	£'000's	£'000's
Expenditure:		
Transforming Homes	23,041	16,688
Housing Development	6,651	5,850
Total Expenditure	29,692	22,538
Resources:		
Prudential Borrowing	(8,865)	(5,423)
Capital Receipts	(9,543)	(6,611)
Reserves	(744)	(744)
Government & Other Grants	0	0
Major Repairs Reserve	(10,540)	(9,760)
Total Resources	(29,692)	(22,538)
Forecast Overspend in Resources	0	0

- 17.2. The budget for Transforming Homes in 2020/21 is £23.041m and the forecast spend is currently £16.688m. Some schemes have experienced delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this has resulted in slippage to the expected spend in 2020/21.
- 17.3. The revised budgets for 2020/21 for HRA New Build Schemes are set out below. The current forecast is £5.850m against a budget of £6.651m. These projects will utilise receipts held under Right to Buy sharing agreement between the Council and the MHCLG.

HRA New Build Schemes

	Revised Budget	Spend YTD	Forecast	Variance from Revised Budget	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
Calcutta Rd	5,590	2,186	4,919	(671)	(12%)
Claudian Way	672	502	548	(124)	(18%)
Tops Club	377	312	371	(6)	(2%)

Prince of Wales Dev	12	12	12	(0)	(0%)
Total	6,651	3,012	5,850	(801)	(12%)

18. Reasons for Recommendation

- 18.1. The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget annually. This report sets out the budget pressures in 2020/21 along with actions to mitigate these pressures and deliver a breakeven position.

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

- 19.1. This report is based on consultation with the services, Directors' Board and portfolio holders.

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

- 20.1. The implementation of previous savings proposals has already reduced service delivery levels and the council's ability to meet statutory requirements, impacting on the community and staff. There is a risk that some agreed savings and mitigation may result in increased demand for more costly interventions if needs escalate particularly in social care. The potential impact on the council's ability to safeguard children and adults will be kept carefully under review and mitigating actions taken where required.

21. Implications

21.1. Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**

Assistant Director Corporate Finance

The financial implications are set out in the body of this report. Council officers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the Council can contain spend within its available resources. Regular budget monitoring reports continue to come to Cabinet and be considered by the Directors Board and management teams in order to maintain effective controls on expenditure during this period of enhanced risk. Measures in place are continually reinforced across the Council in order to reduce ancillary spend and to ensure that everyone is aware of the importance and value of every pound of the taxpayers money that is spent by the Council.

21.2. Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**

**Assistant Director Law and Governance, and
Monitoring Officer**

There are no specific legal implications set out in the report. There are statutory requirements of the Council's Section 151 Officer in relation to

setting a balanced budget. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Section 114) prescribes that the responsible financial officer “must make a report if he considers that a decision has been made or is about to be made involving expenditure which is unlawful or which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency to the authority”. This includes an unbalanced budget.

21.3. **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**

**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

The Equality Act 2010 places a public duty on authorities to consider the impact of proposals on people with protected characteristics so that positive or negative impacts can be understood and enhanced or mitigated as appropriate. Services will be required to consider the impact on any proposals to reduce service levels through a community equality impact assessment which should seek to involve those directly affected.

21.4. **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

There are no other implications arising directly from this update report.

22. **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)

There are various working papers retained within the finance and service sections.

23. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1: Medium Term Financial Strategy

Appendix 2: Summary of 2020/21 Capital Programme

Appendix 3: General Fund Schemes

Report Author

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

Appendix 1 MTFS as at 30 December 2020

Narrative	2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	£ 000's			£ 000's	£ 000's
	Non Covid	Covid	Total		
Council Tax Position	(1,301)	2,191	890	(1,081)	(1,500)
Business Rates Position	(395)	51	(345)	(51)	(665)
Government Resources Position	202	0	202	797	784
Net Additional (Reduction) in resources	(1,495)	2,242	746	(335)	(1,381)
Inflation and other increases	5,714	0	5,714	4,515	4,665
Treasury	6,758	0	6,758	7,221	4,948
Corporate Growth	1,959	3,022	4,981	2,314	2,314
Commercial Income	0	1,089	1,089	(1,089)	0
Internal Position	14,431	4,111	18,542	12,961	11,927
Core Budget Deficit before intervention	12,936	6,353	19,288	12,626	10,546
Savings Departmental	(756)	0	(756)	(3,341)	(1,635)
General Staffing	(4,800)	0	(4,800)	(100)	(2,000)
Cross Cutting	(100)	0	(100)	(1,250)	(200)
Wider Funding	0	0	0	(250)	(200)
Internal Core Budget Savings	(5,656)	0	(5,656)	(4,941)	(4,035)
Core Budget Deficit Position	7,280	6,353	13,632	7,685	6,511
Additional Core Budget Savings					
Adult Social Care Precept 3%	(980)	(1,500)	(2,480)	0	0
11. Other funding (not affecting baseline)					
Utilisation of Capital Receipts	(3,000)	0	(3,000)	3,000	0
Use of reserves 2021/22	(3,300)	0	(3,300)	3,300	0
Capital receipts 2022/23	0	0	0	(2,000)	2,000
Use of reserves 2022/23	0	0	0	(2,000)	2,000
Covid Grant	0	(4,853)	(4,853)	4,853	0
	(6,300)	(4,853)	(11,153)	7,153	4,000
Overall Budget Working Total	0	0	0	14,838	10,511

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend	% Spend against
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	(Dec-20)	CY Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Childrens Service	11,266	400	0	10,436	1,231	0	7,304	69.99
Adults; Housing and Health								
Provider Services	500	20	0	500	20	0	573	114.60
Better Care	2,151	805	0	744	1,563	648	240	32.00
Community Development	1,632	1,309	0	1,150	1,591	200	685	60.00
Housing General Fund	391	100	35	306	100	120	18	6.00
	4,674	2,234	35	2,700	3,274	968	1,516	56.15
Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud								
Highways Infrastructure	1,051	0	0	1,051	0	0	-281	-26.74
Highways Maintenance	10,015	3,630	2,450	8,810	4,441	2,845	4,471	51.00
Resident Services	320	1,827	0	320	1,827	0	239	75.00
Environment	7,371	1,030	0	4,366	4,030	0	826	19.00
Counter Fraud & Investigation	250	0	0	250	0	0	12	5.00
	19,007	6,487	2,450	14,797	10,298	2,845	5,267	35.60
Place								
Place Delivery - Highways Major Projects	38,405	31,214	0	38,373	31,243	0	27,600	71.93
Place Delivery - Regeneration	8,104	18,311	5,846	7,354	19,061	5,846	2,792	37.97
Planning and Transportation	5,904	5,096	790	2,276	7,935	1,580	844	37.08
	52,413	54,621	6,636	48,003	58,239	7,426	31,236	65.07
Finance, Governance and Property								
Information Technology	8,330	585	80	4,871	3,680	445	2,024	41.55
Corporate Assets	3,715	7,114	240	2,580	5,720	2,768	679	26.32
	12,045	7,699	320	7,451	9,400	3,213	2,703	36.28
HR, OD and Transformation	9,386	4,128	0	9,386	4,128	0	3,127	33.32
Customer Services	283	19	0	218	84	0	104	47.71
Commercial Services	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	0.00
Total Expenditure - General	109,092	75,588	9,441	93,009	86,654	14,452	51,257	55.11

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	<i>Not yet started</i>	18	0	0	0	18	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	8,899	0	0	8,899	0	0	6,490	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	15	0	0	15	0	0	14	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	566	0	0	566	0	0	495	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,768	400	0	956	1,213	0	305	
Total: Childrens Service		11,266	400	0	10,436	1,231	0	7,304	69.99
	<i>Not yet started</i>	874	648	0	74	800	648	5	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	559	0	0	297	263	0	14	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	215	0	0	215	0	0	215	
	<i>On hold</i>	873	1,050	0	750	1,170	0	639	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,599	536	35	810	1,041	320	185	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	554	0	0	554	0	0	458	
Total: Adults; Housing and Health		4,674	2,234	35	2,700	3,274	968	1,516	56.15
	<i>Not yet started</i>	60	0	0	60	0	0	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	250	0	0	250	0	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	3,930	0	0	930	3,000	0	7	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	11,605	2,757	2,050	11,020	3,343	2,050	4,263	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	232	0	0	7	0	0	7	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	64	0	0	64	0	0	0	
	<i>On hold</i>	1,450	3,434	400	830	3,659	795	621	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,416	296	0	1,636	296	0	369	
Total: Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud		19,007	6,487	2,450	14,797	10,298	2,845	5,267	35.60
	<i>Not yet started</i>	3,940	5,385	4,974	1,991	6,527	5,764	34	
	<i>Design stage</i>	2,106	4,035	0	1,697	4,466	0	976	
	<i>Contract formation</i>	131	0	0	0	131	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	40,121	31,802	900	40,059	31,862	900	28,505	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	393	0	0	359	29	0	283	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	161	0	0	161	0	0	12	
	<i>On hold</i>	1,600	11,315	762	1,350	11,565	762	1,101	
	<i>Demand led</i>	3,146	2,084	0	2,136	3,094	0	233	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	815	0	0	250	565	0	92	
Total: Place		52,413	54,621	6,636	48,003	58,239	7,426	31,236	65.07

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	<i>Not yet started</i>	1,590	488	50	100	1,613	415	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	30	200	0	30	200	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	37	0	0	37	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	8,690	120	30	6,470	2,340	30	2,390	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	145	1,000	0	145	1,000	0	127	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	125	0	0	125	0	0	17	
	<i>On hold</i>	534	5,838	240	5	3,883	2,724	0	
	<i>Demand led</i>	894	53	0	539	364	44	169	
Total: Finance, Governance and Property		12,045	7,699	320	7,451	9,400	3,213	2,703	36.28
	<i>Not yet started</i>	70	0	0	70	0	0	18	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	9,080	3,698	0	9,080	3,698	0	3,152	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	-77	
	<i>Demand led</i>	236	430	0	236	430	0	34	
Total: HR, OD and Transformation		9,386	4,128	0	9,386	4,128	0	3,127	33.32
	<i>Work commenced</i>	278	0	0	213	65	0	99	
	<i>On hold</i>	5	19	0	5	19	0	5	
Total: Customer Services		283	19	0	218	84	0	104	47.71
	<i>Work commenced</i>	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	
Total: Commercial Services		18	0	0	18	0	0	0	0.00
Total Expenditure - General Fund		109,092	75,588	9,441	93,009	86,654	14,452	51,257	55.11

Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
Adults, Health and Housing	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Provider Services	6,651	2,014	155	5,850	2,131	155	3,013	
Better Care	23,041	0	0	16,688	6,353	0	7,547	
Total Expenditure - HRA	29,692	2,014	155	22,538	8,484	155	10,560	46.85

Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	<i>Design stage</i>	12	0	0	12	0	0	13	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	29,303	1,890	155	22,155	8,360	155	10,235	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	377	124	0	371	124	0	312	
Total Adults, Health and Housing - HRA		29,692	2,014	155	22,538	8,484	155	10,560	46.85

GENERAL FUND SCHEMES**Appendix 3**

Scheme Reprofileing	Reprofileing £000's	Reason
Redevelopment of Household Waste & Recycling Centre (Linford) (N0280)	(3,000)	Reprofile of budget to align with expected spend.
LFFN / WAN Upgrade	(1,970)	Project progressing well, re-profiling of budget to match expected spend.
Kerb It - Highways (E1870)	(1,000)	Project placed on hold due to COVID-19.
A126 Improvements	(907)	Government funding expected Mar-21, with works expected to start in 2021/22. Re-profile of budget to match anticipated spend.
Ship Lane Day Room	(800)	Reprofile of budget to align with expected spend.

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021	ITEM: 13 Decision: 110560
Cabinet	
Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2021/22 Highways Maintenance Allocation and Programme 2021/22	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Ben Maney – Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport	
Accountable Assistant Director: Leigh Nicholson – Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection Julie Nelder – Assistant Director – Highways, Fleet & Logistics - Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard – Director of Place Julie Rogers – Director of Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud - Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out how the Transportation Service within the Place Directorate will prioritise funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme (ITB) to enhance transport infrastructure and service provision within the Borough in 2021/22.

The report also sets out the DfT Block Allocation Programme for the Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud directorate in 2021/22. This programme is prioritised in alignment with Thurrock Council Highways Assets Management Strategy and Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.

1. Recommendations

1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the following recommendations:

- 1.2 Approve the ITB Capital Programme, policy and prioritisation direction for the DfT ITB Block funding under the key Policy areas of Road Safety Engineering, Safer Routes to School, Area Intervention Programme and EV charging programme.

- 1.3 Approve the Highways Maintenance Block Allocation Programme (as detailed in Appendix 4) for 2021/22.**
- 1.4 Approve delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the ITB programme (and additional funding allocations that may arise) taking into account local views and priorities.**
- 1.5 Approve delegated authority to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the DfT Maintenance Block Allocation programme.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The DfT annual settlement provides the allocation for ITB schemes. The total ITB capital programme allocation for Thurrock in 2021/22 amounts to £971,000.
- 2.2 The ITB programme has the ability to deliver an extensive range of transport improvements which reflect the vision and aims set out within the Council’s long term Transport Strategy (2013-26). Tackling congestion, delivering accessibility, improving air quality and making Thurrock’s roads safer are core elements of the Transport Strategy which support sustainable growth and regeneration in the Borough.
- 2.3 It is important that the ITB programme is closely aligned with the emerging Local Plan and new Transport Strategy so as to make the most effective use of the funding available to deliver necessary improvements to the transport network. To achieve this, it is important for the programme to have a clear policy direction. There already exists agreed approaches to policy, priority and budget allocation for the Road Safety Engineering and Safer Routes to Schools programmes and a similar approach is required for the ITB programme.
- 2.4 The report also sets out the 2021/22 DfT Block Allocation Programme which is prioritised in alignment with Thurrock Council Highways Assets Management Strategy (covered in more detail in Section 5). This is the key document which ties into the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.

3 Update and Analysis – Policy, Priority & programme

- 3.1 The ITB funding is currently allocated to various programmes and projects. The table below illustrates the allocations from 2019/20:

Road Safety Engineering	£250,000
Safer Routes to School	£250,000
Freight Management	£175,000
Minor Works	£125,000

Parking Restrictions (including disabled parking bays)	£71,000
Passenger Transport	£50,000
Walking & Cycling	£50,000
TOTAL	£971,000

- 3.2 Much of the programme is based upon historic allocations and as can be seen from the above table, nearly 40% of the ITB budget has not been allocated to specific highways improvement schemes and a large proportion of the work programme has been largely driven by ad hoc requests. It is considered more appropriate to direct funds to areas that need it the most, based upon statistical data. A new policy (TD4) is therefore proposed be developed to underpin a new Area Intervention Programme (AIP). Detail of the proposed policy is provided in Appendix 3.
- 3.3 The new programme is proposed within the 2021/22 ITB allocations. To allow for a robust policy approach to AIP, it is proposed to reduce the Minor Works and Parking Restrictions budgets and by removing the Freight Management budget in its entirety.
- 3.4 The introduction of the AIP builds upon the adoption of policy led approaches to other projects (in July 2019, an exercise was carried out to refresh the policies underpinning the Road Safety Engineering and the Safer Routes to School programmes, which has led to targeted interventions based upon accident statistics).
- 3.5 In light of the above, it is considered necessary and appropriate to adjust the allocations in the 2021/22 ITB programme as follows:

Road Safety Engineering TDP1	£250,000
Safer Routes to School TDP2	£250,000
Area Intervention Programme TDP4	£250,000
EV Charging Facilities TDP3	£75,000
Emergency Minor Works and Parking requests	£46,000
Passenger Transport	£50,000
Walking & Cycling	£50,000
TOTAL	£971,000

- 3.6 The allocation for each project heading is identified in Appendix 1 and is based on the policy criteria. The allocation of £50k into Passenger Transport and Walking & Cycling is considered necessary to ensure improvements in those two areas, but may be accommodated through underspend to enable additional funds to be allocated elsewhere across the ITB programme. The provision of £50k into the Emergency Minor Works and Parking Requests is proposed in the event that there is a severe adverse impact on the network that needs to be addressed.

Variation

- 3.7 Notwithstanding the proposed introduction of policy TD4 and the revised allocations the Council is likely to continue to receive regular ad hoc requests for improvements to be carried out on the transport network. Whilst there is limited flexibility within the programme once agreed, in some cases requests will need to be implemented within the current financial year rather than held pending a future programme. This might include works to protect the public from risk of injury or where serious deterioration on the network may have occurred.
- 3.8 The responsibility to authorise variations to the allocations is delegated to the Director of Place and the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.
- 3.9 Similarly, delegated authority can be used if additional Government funding (such as Safer Roads Funds and Active Travel) is allocated with little notice and if ITB schemes are subject to cost changes as a result of increasing scope or unforeseen revisions to schemes.

4 Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud Maintenance Block Funding

- 4.1 The DfT annual settlement provides the funding for the Maintenance Block Allocation, depending on the HMEP banding achieved. The total funding allocation for Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud is expected to be £1,938,000.
- 4.2 Members are advised that the allocations are not 'ring fenced' for spend in the specific areas set out within the programmes therefore, Local Authorities have some flexibility to manage these allocations. As a result, the funding allocations may be amended within the total allocation to meet local needs on the network in accordance with the maintenance strategy. Appendix 4 provides a summary of how the DfT Block Allocation is allocated across the Council's maintenance programme.
- 4.3 The Maintenance Programme is built around the good practice principals set out in the Code of Practice for Well Managed Highway Infrastructure. The Council's adopted approach to this is via the Highways Maintenance Strategy, which focuses on maintaining and prioritising the asset in the most efficient way. Not just focusing on the financial element, but also the end user. It is therefore generated using a data lead approach.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 Approving the recommendations set out in this report will enable the ITB Capital Programme and the Maintenance Block Allocation programme to be implemented to ensure ongoing improvements to transport infrastructure, service provision and to ensure ongoing improvements are undertaken to the borough's adopted highway network.

- 5.2 Recommendation will also allow the SRF programme to be delivered within a revised delivery programme covering 2021/22 – 23/24.
- 5.3 Supporting/endorsing a clear policy approach for ITB projects provides a level of assurance and consistency for the policy approach that is taken to identify, prioritise and deliver key elements of the ITB programme in relation to Council priorities.

6 Consultation

- 6.1 The ITB Capital Programme has been developed in line with the priority areas identified and agreed in the Council's Transport Strategy, following extensive community and stakeholder engagement.
- 6.2 This report was considered and endorsed by PTR Overview and Scrutiny on 9 February with relevant comments and amendments applied as required.
- 6.3 Local residents, interest groups and key stakeholders (including Community Forum input from Chair & Vive-Chair, Bus User Group, Local Access Forum and Your Place, Your Voice etc.) have been influential in providing regular input for the evidence base that has informed the development of the ITB Capital Programme. Input and feedback from these groups has also supported the direction of the Safer Roads funding submission. A renewed focus on Community Forum engagement allows increased engagement and understanding of local issues. Ward Members will be advised of works affecting their respective wards.
- 6.4 The Maintenance Block Allocation Programme has been developed in line with the priorities identified and set in the Council's Highway Maintenance Strategy.
- 6.5 Once approved, the nature and time frames for delivery of the maintenance schemes will be shared with residents and stakeholders accordingly, with further, more detailed communications being carried out in advance of the works starting.

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

- 7.1 The ITB Capital Programme, Safer Roads Fund and Maintenance Block Allocation Programme will help improve and enhance the transport network across the Borough making it safer, less congested and more accessible, thereby promoting and supporting People, Place and Prosperity within Thurrock.

8 Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mark Terry**
Senior Financial Accountant, Corporate Finance

The Council will be allocated £971,000 ITB capital and £1,938,000 Block Allocation for Maintenance for 2021/22.

The DfT funding allocation of £2,488,792 from the Safer Roads Fund is expected to be received in advance of the 2021/22 financial year. Further information is available at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/road-safety-recent-progress-and-future-work>

The cost of implementation will be contained within the funding announced by Government or built into future capital programmes.

8.2 **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer

The legal implications are included in the body of the report.

8.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

Transport interventions should support improved quality of life in the Borough and its social and economic regeneration. Transport priorities for congestion & CO2 mitigation, accessibility, safety, air quality and climate change adaptation will aim to have positive impacts on the community. A CEqIA will be completed to assess the impacts.

Access to services and the safety of residents have been highlighted and will be addressed throughout the plan period. The ITB and Safer Roads programme takes account of specific areas of the borough and population where implementation will be prioritised to improve road safety, air quality and access to services, taking account of legislative considerations such as the Equality Act. These have been applied to the capital programme.

8.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

None

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

- Thurrock Transport Strategy
- DfT Safer Roads funding application

10 Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – 2020/21 ITB Capital Programme
- Appendix 2 – Safer Roads budget schedule
- Appendix 3 – Area Intervention Programme criteria and spread sheet
- Appendix 4 - Highways Maintenance Programme

Report Author:

Mat Kiely

Transportation Services Strategic Lead

Transport Development

This page is intentionally left blank

Integrated Transport Block funding 2020/2021 -Appendix 1

Budget Code	Main funding type	Project Name	Type	2021/22 ITB budget (£)	Carry over 2020/21 ITB (£)	External funding (£)	Total budget (£)	Comments
TDP1 - Road Safety Engineering (RSE)								
	ITB	Bus Lane Camera Enforcement	SLA and Build	-	130,923		130,923	4 x locations; awaiting SLA from legal
	ITB	A128 safety improvements	Build	240,000			240,000	
	ITB	RSE priority location 1	Design	5,000			5,000	
	ITB	RSE priority location 2	Design	5,000			5,000	
	ITB	Fort Road Bus Lane	Design		50,000	-	50,000	
Sub-Total				250,000	180,923	0	430,923	
TDP2 - Safer Routes to School (SRTS)								
	Capital Bid	A1013 Treetop	Design and build			1,800,000	1,800,000	
	ITB & S106	Mayflower Road - 3 x Harris Academy schools	Design and build	60,000		57,764	117,764	
	ITB	East Tilbury School	Design and build	80,000			80,000	
	ITB	Deneholm Primary School	Design and build	20,000			20,000	
	ITB	School site No. 4	Design and build	40,000			40,000	
	ITB	School assessments	Design	50,000			50,000	
Sub-Total				250,000	0	1,857,764	2,107,764	
TDP3 - EV charging facilities								
	ITB & OLEV	EV charging upgrade and expansion	Ad-Hoc requests	75,000	-	225,000	300,000	indicative OLEV funding for scheme
Sub-Total				75,000	0	225,000	300,000	
TDP4 - Area Intervention Programme (AIP)								
	ITB	Location 1	Feasibility, Design & Consultation	250,000			250,000	
Sub-Total				250,000	0	0	250,000	
Emergency Minor Works and Parking Schemes								
	ITB	Parking Management	Ad-Hoc requests	8,000		-	8,000	
	ITB	Minor Works	Ad-Hoc requests	38,000		-	38,000	schemes less than £5k only
	ITB	Disbalded Parking Bays	Ad-Hoc requests from Thurrock First	-	16,033	-	16,033	
Sub-Total				46,000	16,033	0	62,033	
Developer funded schemes								
	DfT direct fund	Node 4 - North Stifford Interchange signals	Build			302,258	302,258	awaiting HE works to complete
	DfT direct fund	A126 DfT grant fund bid Year 1 schemes	Design			800,000	800,000	To be provided
	S106	B186 Bus & Cycle Lane(s)	Design	-	-	1,196,278	1,196,278	S106 pooled resource
	S106	South Road / Stifford Road Junction Improvements	Feasibility and design			190,012	190,012	on hold - pooling S106 monies
Sub-Total				0	0	2,488,548	2,488,548	
Highways Department allocation								
	ITB	Passenger Transport Allocation		50,000			50,000	
	ITB	Public Rights of Way Allocation		50,000			50,000	
Sub-Total				100,000			100,000	
Grand Total				971,000	196,956	2,082,764	3,250,720	

This page is intentionally left blank

This page is intentionally left blank

Transport Development Policies for Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding allocation

The Council does not enforce speed limits, being a moving traffic offence and enforced by the Police. Neither is it the Council's role to dictate how the travelling public should use the Adopted Highway, seeking to only guide the public to the most appropriate route and is only responsible for ensuring that the Public Highway is safe for use for the travelling public. To achieve this, it actively seeks to reduce the number of Personal Injury Accidents (PIAs) on its network as the key performance indicator.

In order to achieve this, the Highways authority has developed a number of policies to provide treatment on the network to reduce PIAs on a data led approach and prioritised in accordance with the number and severity of accidents being the main consideration.

In July 2019, the Council's Cabinet approved the introduction of two policies that sought to address 2 accident problems on the network under the headings of TD Policy No.1 - Road Safety Engineering (RSE) and TD Policy No. 2 - Safer Routes to School (SRtS). RSE was identified to treat main routes in the borough (level 1 and 2 routes in the Council's Road Network Hierarchy), with SRtS focussing on roads around all of the boroughs 52 schools. The introduction of these programmes has however, identified a significant proportion of the highway that would not be reviewed as it was either classified as a low category road or away from nearby schools. As such, a new policy is required to include these roads within an assessment and priority procedure, whereby action can be taken to redress any safety risk for the travelling public.

TD Policy No. 3 - Area Intervention Programme (AIP) Policy

This policy is designed to treat roads that fall within the Level 3 Residential Street Classification of the Road Network Hierarchy or not within the TDP1 and TDP2 policies. These roads tend to be low trafficked routes that serve a residential access and individually tend to not see a significant amount of issues in relation to congestion and safety.

However, collectively a number of residential streets in an area may see an increase in issues, particularly if main routes become congested resulting in drivers seeking alternative routes. This can have a negative effect on these routes, which often sees drivers "rat-running" in a manner that is not in keeping with the area, such as speeding. Often this causes conflict due to high levels of on-street parking causing localised congestion and safety conflicts with other road users arise as a result.

As stated, these individual low cat roads do not see high levels of accidents upon them; however, it is often that in these locations even a fairly minor incident will have significant impact on the local area. Where major routes would likely have clusters of accidents in a single location, lower category roads would see a spreading of accidents over a collection of roads that would not identify a requirement for intervention. Nevertheless, when assessing these accidents under an area investigation process, there can be correlation that could result in intervention being an appropriate and proportionate response.

It is also noted that these roads tend to be designed to not support higher levels of traffic flow and may require intervention to remove conflicts and reduce the impact of vehicle movements. This

requires assessment to include other improvements such as parking provision, access, public transport, etc. rather than solely focussing on direct accident remediation.

Priority locations

In much the same way the RSE programme identifies key routes to focus allocation of resources, this programme will seek to “package up” Level 3 roads that are in proximity to each other to define assessment areas.

The plan, in appendix 1, identifies the proposed areas (minus the RSE defined roads). A full list of roads included into each area is provided in Appendix 1 that accompanies the plan and will be reviewed annually to include any additional new roads adopted by the Highways Authority. All privately maintained highway will be excluded from the assessment. In total, there will be 28 areas within the assessment criteria

Assessment criteria

It is appropriate to utilise the Police CRASH data for the priority ranking, to ensure consistency with other policies and to ensure the data led approach is a prominent feature. However, it is identified that the defined areas are not similar in geographic size and some areas will see positive or negative bias. In order to eliminate this and to ensure that each area has a fair weighting, the accident analysis will provide assessment on PIAs / kilometre. There should still be a ranking system depending on severity of accident and it is identified that Fatalities should carry significantly more weighting than serious and slight accident classifications; i.e. fatality accidents are multiplied by a factor of 8, with serious by x4 and slights by x1.

Therefore the equation that will be applied is: $R = \left(\frac{3F+2Se+1Sl}{L (Km)} \right) \times 1000$

Where: R = Area accident score; F = No. of fatalities; Se = No. of Serious casualties;

Sl = No. of Slight casualties; L = Kilometres of road in area

It is also identified to utilise a 5 years data set from the Police database to determine the priority list for treatment. This will be in the form of the latest data collated by the Police and it is identified that each area will use the same date parameters during investigations process. This is crucial to the delivery of scheme in a timely manner, but at the discretion of the Assistant Director, additional accident data could be included in the priority area if determined is appropriate for the need of the investigation and development of schemes.

Review and consultation

The review of the accidents may require further study to understand the issues within each area that may be unique to that particular area. As such, an extensive investigation programme will be made that will involve community engagement processes. It is envisioned that consultation will be invaluable to ascertain a local perspective of issues, so that solutions can be worked on accordingly.

As this process can take some time to complete, it is identified that feasibility and design will take up to 12 months to complete, with implementation programmed in accordingly thereafter. Some measures can be implemented quickly, with other measures demanding longer development time to complete. As such it is identified that the whole project life for each area will take between 18 and 36 months to fully be implemented.

Appendix 3

Area	Area Treatment	Ward	Total length of roads (metres)	Avg accident (every m)	Fatal	Factor	Serious	Factor	Slight	Factor	Total	Total Factor	Score	Comments
60 - Grays Centre 3	Area 20	Grays Riverside	973.81	324.60	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	6	6.161375833	
52 - HOTH 2	Area 06	Orsett	1,585.57	792.78	0	0	1	4	1	1	2	5	3.153449945	
11 - Chadwell 2	Area 11	Chadwell St Mary	2,969.62	989.87	0	0	2	8	1	1	3	9	3.030693543	
17 - Tilbury 1	Area 12		17,923.25	814.69	1	8	8	32	13	13	22	53	2.957052501	
43 - Aveley 4	Area 26	Aveley and Uplands	4,227.06	845.41	0	0	2	8	3	3	5	11	2.602283928	
33 - South Chafford 2	Area 21	South Chafford	1,173.13	391.04	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	2.557258729	
26 - Grays Riverside 1	Area 20	Grays Riverside	4,297.73	716.29	0	0	1	4	5	5	6	9	2.094129454	
44 - Ockendon 1	Area 27		12,895.87	991.99	1	8	2	8	10	10	13	26	2.016149974	
46 - Ockendon 3	Area 27		9,512.11	951.21	0	0	3	12	7	7	10	19	1.99745315	
15 - Stifford Clays 1	Area 17		10,543.19	958.47	0	0	2	8	9	9	11	17	1.612414952	
28 - Grays Riverside 3	Area 14	Grays Riverside	10,019.78	1,001.98	0	0	2	8	8	8	10	16	1.596841295	
04 - SLH 2	Area 04	Stanford-Le-Hope West	16,129.04	1,008.07	0	0	3	12	13	13	16	25	1.549999006	
25 - Grays 3	Area 19		15,124.39	1,260.37	0	0	3	12	9	9	12	21	1.388485795	
07 - East Tilbury 1	Area 05	East Tilbury	8,169.80	1,633.96	0	0	2	8	3	3	5	11	1.346421764	
38 - Purfleet 2	Area 25	West Thurrock and South Stifford	6,836.59	1,139.43	0	0	1	4	5	5	6	9	1.316446073	
32 - South Chafford 1	Area 21	South Chafford	17,717.37	1,181.16	0	0	2	8	13	13	15	21	1.185277169	
48 - Ockendon 6	Area 28		7,788.26	2,596.09	0	0	2	8	1	1	3	9	1.155585413	
02 - Homesteads	Area 02	The Homesteads	14,783.77	3,695.94	0	0	4	16	0	0	4	16	1.082268094	
10 - Chadwell 1	Area 10	Chadwell St Mary	9,633.55	1,376.22	0	0	1	4	6	6	7	10	1.038039106	
19 - Tilbury 3	Area 13		6,924.98	2,308.33	0	0	1	4	2	2	3	6	0.866427928	
16 - Stifford Clays 2	Area 18		12,043.98	1,720.57	0	0	1	4	6	6	7	10	0.830290303	
57 - South Chafford 3	Area 22	Chafford and North Stifford	13,542.84	1,692.85	0	0	1	4	7	7	8	11	0.812237529	
20 - Tilbury 4	Area 13	Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	1,415.49	1,415.49	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.70646937	
01 - Corringham	Area 01	Corringham and Fobbing	6,261.40	6,261.40	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	4	0.638834871	
12 - Chadwell 3	Area 11	..	1,692.23	1,692.23	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.590935228	
27 - Grays Riverside 2	Area 14	Grays Riverside	6,902.35	1,725.59	0	0	0	0	4	4	4	4	0.57951264	
24 - Grays 2	Area 15		6,942.80	6,942.80	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	4	0.576136296	
05 - SLH 1	Area 04	Stanford-Le-Hope West	1,868.16	1,868.16	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.535287318	
03 - SLH East and Corringham	Area 03	Stanford East and Corringham Ward	24,604.47	2,460.45	0	0	1	4	9	9	10	13	0.528359288	
14 - Little Thurrock 1	Area 16	Little Thurrock Blackshots	3,949.73	1,974.87	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0.506363507	
54 - North Stifford	Area 23	Chafford and North Stifford	2,017.70	2,017.70	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.495613703	
40 - Aveley 1	Area 26	Aveley and Uplands	4,456.59	2,228.30	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0.448773274	
13 - Chadwell 4	Area 10	Chadwell St Mary	11,388.80	2,277.76	0	0	0	0	5	5	5	5	0.439027667	
39 - Purfleet 3	Area 25	West Thurrock and South Stifford	2,421.45	2,421.45	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.412976425	
53 - Bulphan 3	Area 07	Orsett	2,628.15	2,628.15	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.38049537	
56 - Ockendon 4	Area 28		7,957.01	2,652.34	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	0.377026049	
35 - West Thurrock 2	Area 24	West Thurrock and South Stifford	2,681.67	2,681.67	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.372902552	
36 - South Chafford 3	Area 24	West Thurrock and South Stifford	2,846.28	2,846.28	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.351335722	
18 - Tilbury 2	Area 13	Tilbury Riverside and Thurrock Park	3,367.61	3,367.61	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.296946705	
50 - Bulphan 1	Area 07	Orsett	0.00	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
06 - SLH 3	Area 04	Stanford-Le-Hope West	2,649.06	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
08 - East Tilbury 2	Area 05	East Tilbury	1,372.56	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
09 - East Tilbury 3	Area 05	East Tilbury	1,291.28	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
31 - HOTH 1	Area 06	Orsett	3,922.12	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
51 - Bulphan 2	Area 07	Orsett	579.32	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
29 - Orsett 1	Area 08	Orsett	3,787.43	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
30 - Orsett 2	Area 08	Orsett	1,736.21	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
49 - Orsett 3	Area 09	Orsett	2,875.29	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
59 - Grays Centre 2	Area 14	Grays Riverside	294.72	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 - Little Thurrock 3	Area 15	Little Thurrock Rectory	1,992.28	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58 - Grays Centre 1	Area 15	Grays Riverside	102.31	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21 - Little Thurrock 2	Area 16	Little Thurrock Rectory	1,745.75	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
22 - Grays 1	Area 16	Little Thurrock Rectory	2,028.96	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
34 - West Thurrock 1	Area 24	West Thurrock and South Stifford	1,261.55	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
37 - Purfleet 1	Area 25	West Thurrock and South Stifford	3,305.05	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41 - Aveley 2	Area 26	Aveley and Uplands	1,583.34	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

42 - Aveley 3	Area 26	Aveley and Uplands	4,004.58	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
45 - Ockendon 2	Area 27		730.33	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
55 - Ockendon 7	Area 27	Belhus	1,738.44	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
47 - Ockendon 5	Area 28	Ockendon	671.53	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
61 - Ockendon 8	Area 28	Belhus	643.33	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Area Treatment Totals														
Tilbury	Area 12		17,923.25	814.69	1	8	8	32	13	13	22	53	2.957052501	
Grays Riverside	Area 20		5,271.54	1,040.89	0	0	2	8	7	7	9	15	2.845469898	
Chadwell	Area 11		4,661.85	2,682.11	0	0	2	8	2	2	4	10	2.145071093	
Ockendon	Area 27		24,876.75	1,943.20	1	8	5	20	17	17	23	45	1.808917951	
Stifford Clays	Area 17		10,543.19	958.47	0	0	2	8	9	9	11	17	1.612414952	
South Chafford	Area 21		18,890.51	1,572.20	0	0	3	12	15	15	18	27	1.429289391	
Grays	Area 19		15,124.39	1,260.37	0	0	3	12	9	9	12	21	1.388485795	
SLH	Area 04		20,646.26	2,876.22	0	0	3	12	14	14	17	26	1.259308213	
Grays	Area 14		17,216.85	2,727.57	0	0	2	8	12	12	14	20	1.161652479	
The Homesteads	Area 02		14,783.77	3,695.94	0	0	4	16	0	0	4	16	1.082268094	
East Tilbury	Area 05		10,833.64	1,633.96	0	0	2	8	3	3	5	11	1.015355788	
Aveley	Area 26		14,271.57	3,073.71	0	0	2	8	5	5	7	13	0.910902074	
HOTH	Area 06		5,507.68	792.78	0	0	1	4	1	1	2	5	0.907823245	
Stifford Clays	Area 18		12,043.98	1,720.57	0	0	1	4	6	6	7	10	0.830290303	
South Chafford	Area 22		13,542.84	1,692.85	0	0	1	4	7	7	8	11	0.812237529	
Purfleet	Area 25		12,563.08	3,560.88	0	0	1	4	6	6	7	10	0.79598309	
Chadwell	Area 10		21,022.35	3,653.98	0	0	1	4	11	11	12	15	0.71352624	
Tilbury	Area 13		11,708.08	7,091.43	0	0	1	4	4	4	5	8	0.683288704	
Ockendon	Area 28		18,155.24	5,248.42	0	0	2	8	4	4	6	12	0.66096602	
Corringham	Area 01		6,261.40	521.78	0	0	1	4	0	0	12	4	0.638834871	
SLH/ Corringham	Area 03		24,604.47	2,460.45	0	0	1	4	9	9	10	13	0.528359288	
North Stifford	Area 23		2,017.70	2,017.70	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.495613703	
Grays	Area 15		9,037.39	6,942.80	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	4	0.442605569	
Bulphan	Area 07		3,207.48	2,628.15	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.311771664	
West Thurrock	Area 24		6,789.50	5,527.95	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0.294572649	
Little Thurrock	Area 16		7,724.44	1,974.87	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	0.258918475	
Orsett	Area 08		5,523.64	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orsett	Area 09		2,875.29	0.00	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Highways Maintenance Capital Works Programme 2021-22			
Allocations	DfT Maintenance block allocation	DfT	582,000
	Incentive fund Band 3 Block	DfT	1,356,000
	Total Maintenance		1,938,000
	TOTAL		1,938,000
Cost Code	Project	Funding Source	Budget
10022	LTP Maintenance - Bridges		
	Derby Road - Vehicle incursion		50,000
Sub Total			50,000
10155	LTP Maintenance - Principal Maintenance (Resurfacing / Reconstruction)		
	St Andrews/Ferry Road, Tilbury		
	Brentwood Road A128, Bulphan		
	Clarence Road, Grays		
	Dock Road, Little Thurrock		
	Hogg Lane, Grays		
	Marshfoot Road, C.S.M.		
	Devonshire Road, Chafford Hundred		
Patching	PRE-PATCHING		
Jointing	JOINTING		
Sub Total			550,000
10156	LTP Maintenance - Classified (Resurfacing / Reconstruction)		
	South Hill, Horndon on the Hill		
	Derby Road, Grays		
	Mill Road, Aveley		
	Southend Road, Corringham		
	Station Road, West Tilbury		
Sub Total			300,000
10157	LTP Maintenance - Unclassified (Resurfacing / Reconstruction)		
	Shannon Way, Aveley		
	Mayflower Road, Chafford Hundred		
	Laird Avenue, Stifford Clays		
	Giffords Cross Road, Corringham		
	Whitmore Avenue, Stifford Clays		
Sub Total			298,000
10051	LTP Maintenance - Footway & Cycleway Maintenance		
	Windsor Avenue, Stifford Clays		
	Bellmaine Avenue, Corringham		
	Carnach Green, South Ockendon		
	Arthur Street, Grays		
	Brentwood Road, C.S.M.		
	Hathaway Road, Grays		
	Princess Margaret Road, East Tilbury		
	Victoria Road, S.L.H.		
	Long Lane, Stifford Clays		
Sub Total			240,000
10153	LTP Maintenance - Streetlighting		
	Boroughwide - Structural column replacement		100,000
Sub Total			100,000
10097	LTP Maintenance - Other infrastructure (drainage)		
	Fairview, SLH		
	Saladin Drive, Purfleet		
	Burnley Road, W Thurrock		
	Chestnut Avenue, Grays		
	Riverview, C.S.M		
	Mollands Lane, South Ockendon		
	St Andrews, Tilbury		
	Manorway, Coryton		
Sub Total			150,000
10180	LTP Maintenance - Traffic Signals		
	Spiral Roundabout Refurbishment		
	PSTN removal phased programme (4G)		
Sub Total			100,000
10192	LTP Maintenance - Other Road Markings		
	Boroughwide		50,000
Sub Total			50,000
10141	LTP Maintenance - Other Safety Barriers		
	Boroughwide		100,000
Sub Total			100,000
	MAINTENANCE TOTAL		1,938,000

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021		ITEM: 14 Decision: 110561
Cabinet		
Contract Renewal for Litter Enforcement		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour		
Accountable Assistant Director: David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Investigation & Enforcement		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In December 2016, the Council entered into a pilot scheme to determine the viability of using contracted Environmental Enforcement Services. This pilot was a proven success, and in December 2017, the Council entered into a 4-year contract with the current supplier for the provision of Environmental Enforcement Services on a cost neutral model.

The Council has a small internal team of Environmental Enforcement Officers who respond to a large number of service requests from the public and Councillor Enquiries each year for suspected environmental crime and some aspects of Anti-social behaviour. The purpose of that team is to manage large complex environmental crime issues and respond to the volume of service requests.

The objective of the contracted-out Environmental Enforcement Service is to support and deliver a proactive visible uniform service offering littering and dog fouling enforcement on a cost neutral basis.

Feedback from the initial pilot was taken into account and amendments to the range of services; level of fines levied and the publication of successful prosecutions was implemented and supported upon the commencement of the contract.

The Environmental Enforcement Services contract expires in December 2021.

This report provides an update on the performance of the contract to date and details future projections based on known comparatives and requests permission to progress the report's recommendations with Cabinet's agreement.

1. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is recommended to:

1.1 Note the content contained within the report; and

1.2 Agree to delegate the authority for the tender and subsequent award of a new contract for Environmental Enforcement Services on a payment by results basis to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in conjunction with the Director of Finance, Governance & Property and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour, based on Option 3 (3.3 of the report) as recommended by Cleaner, Greener and Safer O&S Committee.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The cleanliness of the environment has a significant impact on the quality of life, enjoyment and perception of those who live, visit and work in the borough. The Council has committed to taking a zero tolerance approach to those who commit environmental crime in the borough with formal enforcement action being taken where appropriate.

2.2 Legislation provides the Council with the powers to take formal enforcement action including the issue of fixed penalty notices (FPN's) and prosecution of those who commit environmental crime and some aspects of Anti-social behaviour.

2.3 The Council has a small internal Environmental Enforcement Team consisting of 4-day shift officers that are responsible for responding and taking appropriate action for the 4,000 service requests, 50 complaints and 450+ Councillor Enquiries received on average each year.

2.4 The Council have recently expanded and introduced a Twilight Enforcement Team comprising of 3 Environmental Enforcement Officers on a 2 year fixed term contract. The objective of the twilight team is to focus on environmental offences and some aspects of Anti-social behaviour occurring during the night-time economy

2.5 The size of the day team restricts activity to being a purely reactive service, prioritising larger complex investigative casework. In order to deliver a highly effective service to complement the existing in house service there is a need for a proactive enforcement solution resolving simple high volume cases.

2.6 In order to deliver this resource; in December 2017, the Council entered into a contract providing external enforcement resources to support the proactive

enforcement of environmental offences. The scope of the contract was initially limited to Littering and Dog Fouling Offences; however, this was extended to include the enforcement of the Grays Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO), which came on-line in April 2017.

2.7 Since the commencement of the contract, period covering 06/12/2017 to 30/11/2020 there have been 10,877 FPNs issued. All FPN data from the commencement of the contract to date has been provided below, along with a breakdown of the annual FPN and income data.

2.7.1 **Total for Contract Life: 06/12/2017 to 30/11/2020**

Number of FPNs Issued	10,877
Number of FPNs Paid	6,946
FPN Payment Rate	64%
Overall Income from FPNs	£997,545
Income to Current Supplier	£458,750
Income to Thurrock Borough Council	£538,794
Total FPN's in the prosecution stage	1,343
Number of FPN's in the administration process	469

2.7.2 **Year 1: 06/12/2017 – 30/11/2018**

Number of FPNs Issued	3,563
Number of FPNs Paid	2,391
Refunds	24
FPN Payment Rate	68.7%
Overall Income from FPNs	£309,345
Income to Current supplier	£151,427
Income to Thurrock Borough Council	£157,917
Number of FPN's in the prosecution and prosecution evaluation stage	338

2.7.3 **Year 2: 01/12/2018 – 30/11/2019**

Number of FPNs Issued	3,792
Number of FPNs Paid	2,413
Refunds	21
FPN Payment Rate	70.3%
Overall Income from FPNs	£363,820
Income to Current supplier	£161,160
Income to Thurrock Borough Council	£202,660
Number of FPN's in the prosecution and prosecution evaluation stage	457

2.7.4 **Year 3: 01/12/2019 – 30/11/2020**

Number of FPNs Issued	3,522
Number of FPNs Paid	2,142
Refunds	1
FPN Payment Rate	61.3%

Overall Income from FPNs	£324,380
Income to Current supplier	£146,163
Income to Thurrock Borough Council	£178,217
Number of FPN's in the prosecution and prosecution evaluation stage	548
Number of FPN's in the administration process	194

2.8 The tables are all based on 3 years of actual FPN data, since the commencement of the contract. The term of the contract is 4 years. The average annual FPN data has been detailed in the table below along with the projected income for the full term of the contract (4 years).

2.8.1

Average FPNs Issued per year	3,625
Average FPNs paid per year	2,315
Average overall Income from FPNs per	£332,515
Average annual Income to Current supplier	£152,916
Average annual Income to Thurrock Council	£179,598
Projected overall income from FPNs over 4 years (term of contract)	£1.3m
Projected overall income to Current supplier over 4 years (term of contract)	£611,664
Projected overall income to Thurrock over 4 years (term of contract)	£179,598 x 4 = £718,392

2.9 At present the contract is reporting a surplus. This is used to fund the prosecution of non-payers with any remaining income supporting additional enforcement activity. The initial objective of the Council's pilot was to deploy enforcement officers on the ground to enforce against those committing environmental crime and to dissuade others from committing environmental offences on a cost neutral basis, income is not a priority. Prevention is a priority, a reduction in the number of environmental crimes committed will reduce the burden on cleansing and wider environmental services as well as improving the appearance of the borough.

2.10 The current payment rate at **64%** is resulting in a positive financial position. If the payment rate dropped below **40%**, this would mean the contract was making a loss. To prevent a drop in payments this Council is committed to prosecuting non payers and publicising those cases that result in a successful prosecution against offenders. The Council have an effective prosecution process in place and have passed over 1200 cases of non-payment for prosecution, resulting in an increase in the estimated 60% payment rate and a successful prosecution rate.

2.11 The intention is to continue to pass all appropriate cases for prosecution to the Magistrate's court. As cases are tried and successful, prosecutions will

then be publicised with an expectation that payment rates will subsequently increase.

- 2.12 The approach follows best practice identified in the Government’s 2017 Littering Strategy for England to *‘Promote transparency and accurate reporting of enforcement action against littering, so that offenders know they will be fined for environmental offences.’*

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Option 1: Do not continue with a Litter Enforcement service

3.1.1 The current in-house environmental enforcement service consists of four permanent day shift officers and 3 twilight shift officers on a 2 year fixed term contract. The level of environmental crime in the borough including the increase in large scale fly-tipping means that the service, in its current form is resourced to deliver a reactive service prioritising investigations concerning the most high-harm incidents. The additional contracted-out service supports the council’s intention to provide targeted proactive enforcement, dealing with simple high volume environmental offences such as littering and dog fouling.

3.1.2 To withdraw the additional proactive service would increase the levels of litter in the borough. The council was recognised for environmental excellence following independent review in keep Britain Tidy inspections. To stop further enforcement in this area would likely to damage the council’s strong reputation in providing a safe and clean environment to our residents and visitors, leading to an escalation in the number of more serious waste crime offences. The current contract has been delivered on a cost neutral basis and with the issue of over 10,000 FPNs in the first 3 years has proven to be a success with a visible positive impact on the local environment.

3.2 Option 2: Deliver an in-house proactive high volume enforcement service

3.2.1 The estimated cost of delivering an in-house comparative service per annum is **£236,648** per year. The below table details the staffing costs inclusive of salary, on costs, equipment and transport.

Staffing Budget				
Resource	Scale (midpoint)	PPE/ Equipment	Salary	Total cost
Supervisor	Band F	£1500	£52,426	£53,926
Enforcement Officers	Band E	£4500	£126,990	£131,490
Admin Officer	Band D	N/a	£35,232	£35,232
Vehicle	N/A	N/A	£16,000	£16,000
Total			£230,648	£236,648

3.2.2 In-house comparative

Assumed Expenditure	
Number of working days	222
Number of Issuing Enforcement Officers	4
Total number of FPNs Issued per year	222 x 16 = 3,552
Projected service costs	236,648
Projected income	(340,950)

Assumed Income	
Total Number of FPNs Issued per year	3,552 x £150 = £532,800
Payment rate	64%
Number of FPNs Paid	2,273
FPN Level	£150
Contract Income PA	2,273 x £150 = £340,950

	£
Annual Service Expenditure	236,648
Annual FPN Income	(340,950)
	(104,302)

3.2.3 A payment rate of 64% values a £150 FPN at £96. In order to achieve a financial break even position, based on a 64% payment rate the number of FPNs that the service would need to consistently issue per year is 2,466 (2466 x £96 = £236,736).

3.2.4 Although potentially achievable, this represents a financial risk to the authority. Should the payment rate drop below **64%** or the FPN figures fall below 2,466 this service would make a loss for the Council.

3.2.5 In house risks to consider:

- Increased financial risk
- Resilience and management of staff sickness, absence, conduct, capability and appraisals
- Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions
- Training and equipment maintenance costs
- Staff retention
- Redundancy costs
- Responsible for the day to day supervision and deployment
- No resilience provided either within an in-house team or elsewhere in the council to cover any in-house staff member being absent
- There would be no default process therefore loss of revenue through officer error or contractor faults

- 3.2.6 The payment by results model during the current 4 year contract has demonstrated no financial risk to the Authority.
- 3.2.7 In addition, investment in handheld computer systems and back-office automated systems would also be required. The Council would need to research, specify, procure and implement comparable software during a period the council is facing significant financial pressure. Those figures are unknown therefore are not included in the calculation above. A suitable and effective ICT solution is unlikely to be in place by the end of the contract in December 2021.
- 3.3 **Option 3: Procure a Contracted Environmental Enforcement Service on a payment by results basis. *The recommended option***

3.3.1 ***Current external enforcement services supplier contract***

<i>Assumed Annual Expenditure</i>	
<i>Number of working days</i>	232
<i>Number of Issuing Officers</i>	4
Total number of FPNs Issued per year	$232 \times 16 = 3,712$
Estimated Contract costs	$3712 \times \pounds 42.50 = \pounds 157,760$

<i>Assumed Income</i>	
Total Number of FPNs Issued per year	$3,712 \times \pounds 150 = \pounds 556,800$
Payment rate	64%
Number of FPNs Paid	2,375
FPN Level	£150
<u>Contract Income PA</u>	$2,375 \times \pounds 150 = \pounds 356,250$

	£
Annual Service Expenditure	157,760
Annual FPN Income	(356,250)
	(198,490)

- 3.3.2 In April 2018, the council increased the value of the littering FPN from £80 to the maximum £150. The current supplier did not increase their charge from £42.50, therefore the council currently receive £107.50 per paid FPN. This equates to 71.6% of the overall FPN value.
- 3.3.3 The current supplier have confirmed they do not have any other contract offering a return rate over 70% in favour of the local authority. Therefore they would be looking to negotiate the shared values in any future contract bids in line with the procurement specification and in line with other existing contracts.

- 3.3.4 A benchmarking and soft market testing exercise has concluded the option for the council to secure any similar contract is no longer viable. The soft market testing exercise was unable to identify another contract consistent to the council. It is clear all councils have bespoke contracts in support of their own specific needs, demographics, delegated powers and priorities.
- 3.3.5 The tender process will deliver the most competitive value from the market place and assist the council to scope the alternatives available across the whole market.
- 3.3.6 Whilst a new contract would continue to provide an income stream to the authority, any change to the percentage in favour of the contractor would make it more challenging for Enforcement to meet the budgeted income target, which forms part of their budget.
- 3.3.7 The projected net income based on the current contractor income is £198,490 per annum and the projected net income for an in house contract based on an identical enforcement model is £104,302 per annum. A breakdown of the comparative annual income and estimated contract value is provided below:

Comparison	Annual income from FPNs	Annual Net income to TBC	Annual Expenditure	Estimated contract value (over 4 years)	Risk
Current Contractor (£107:50 per FPN) (See 3.8)	£356,250	£198,490	£157,760	£1,425,000	No cost – No risk’ financial mode
In House (£150:00 per FPN)	£340,950	£104,302	£236,648	£1,363,800	Potential financial risk *

- 3.3.8 With over 10,000 FPNs issued in the first 3 years of the contract with the current supplier, it has proven to be a success in enforcing against those who commit environmental crime.
- 3.3.9 The contract has been delivered on a **‘No cost – No risk’ financial model** and has demonstrated that, providing that it is closely managed, it can deliver excellent results and generate significant income for the council at minimal financial risk to the authority.
- 3.3.10 It is recommended that the Council enters into a formal EU compliant process to procure a contracted Environmental Enforcement Service on a payment by results basis similar to that employed for the previous contract. The service will invite bids from experienced, suitably qualified contractors for the provision of high volume simple enforcement functions.

3.3.11 The contract is intended to complement the existing in-house team who will continue to focus on resolving complex serious environmental offences.

3.3.12 The Council will invite bids for a range of simple enforcement functions including non-investigation offences such as witnessed graffiti, flyposting and fly tipping that complement the current littering and PSPO enforcement. The proposed range of services is detailed in 4.1.

3.3.13 The contract is intended to deliver a professional and consistent enforcement approach, which meets the standards expected of a Council Environmental Enforcement Officer.

4. Proposed Contracted Environmental Enforcement Service

4.1 Scope of Contracted Environmental Enforcement Service

The proposed scope of the Contracted Environmental Enforcement Service is as follows:

Enforcement Activity	Description of Service
Littering	Pro active patrols across the borough enforcing against those committing littering offences.
Dog Fouling	Pro active patrols across the borough enforcing against those committing dog fouling offences.
Fly Posting	Pro active patrols across the borough enforcing against those committing fly posting offences.
Graffiti	Pro active patrols across the borough enforcing against those committing graffiti offences.
PSPO Enforcement	Pro active patrols enforcing against those breaching the Grays Town Centre PSPO.
Commercial Waste Duty of Care Enforcement	Enforcement of duty of care compliance on a scheduled basis to support the in-house enforcement service.
Fly-tipping	Enforcement against fly tipping offenders on an ad-hoc basis to support the in-house enforcement service.
Other Environmental / Anti-social behaviour offences	Enforcement in the case of Environmental Crime/Anti-social behaviour, which will also include any new powers which come into force as appropriate

4.2 The contract will require the contractor to complete the end to end process for all enforcement actions including Fixed Penalty Notice issues, collecting payment, administering representations, issuing reminder notices and compiling prosecution files.

5 Proposed charge for FPNs relating to Environmental Crime and some aspects of ASB as enforced by internal and contracted Environmental Enforcement Services.

5.1 All FPNs for Environmental Crime and some aspects of ASB and related offences are set at the maximum permissible level and that charges are increased as legislation is amended to uplift the maximum permissible level. This will act as a deterrent to those who commit environmental crime, contribute towards the contracted enforcement service and will support the Council's zero tolerance approach to Environmental Crime and ASB.

Offence	Current FPN charge	Early repayment FPN charge
Littering	£150	No discount
Dog Fouling	£80	No discount
Fly Posting	£150	No discount
Graffiti	£150	No discount
Fly Tipping	£400	No discount
Commercial Waste Duty of Care	£300	No discount
Commercial Waste Receptacle Offences	£110	No discount
Domestic Waste Receptacle Offences	Not currently used.	Not discount
Breach of Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)	£100	No discount
Breach of CPN	£100	No discount

6 Publicising information relating to those who are successfully prosecuted for committing Environmental Crime or to aid in obtaining identification of offenders.

6.1 In order to prevent and dissuade potential offenders from committing environmental crime, the Council intend to publicise the outcome of successful prosecutions through the Council's communication channels and in the local press. By releasing the details of offenders and the crimes that they have committed the Council will demonstrate its commitment to taking action against offenders and reassure the local community that action is being taken against those who choose to spoil the environment.

6.2 The Council are proposing the use of communication channels and local press outlets to obtain information that could lead to the identification of those committing environmental crime. In cases where the identity is unknown or where false details are given, information including pictures will be published in order to appeal for information pertaining to the identity of the offender. Section 29 of The Data Protection Act allows for 'data to be used for prevention and detection of crime, or, apprehension or prosecution of

offenders' are exempt from the first data protection principle (principle 1 – data shall be processed fairly and lawfully).

- 6.3 The current payment rate of 64% is enough to provide an operating surplus to fund the prosecution phase however; the authority should be aiming for a payment rate of 75% in line with DEFRA best practice. Key to achieving an improved payment rate will be to ensure that prosecutions take place in the event of non-payment and that successful prosecutions are communicated to the public.

7. Proposed Contract Value

- 7.1 The contract will be let in line with the payment by results method similar to the existing contract. Potential contractors will be required to enter a formal bid into the tender process detailing the amount that they will charge for the issue of fixed penalty notices. All income deriving from FPN payment and awarded to the Council as a result of the prosecution will be retained by the Council.
- 7.2 To date the contract has demonstrated that this model is cost neutral, which also generates funding for increased operational activity and any additional prosecution costs. Based on the data gathered from the contract, the proposed contract value over the 4 year period be £1.3 - £1.4 million. The approach already taken in the management of the budget would continue. All surplus monies will continue to be ring-fenced to deal with the on-costs including co-ordinated multi-agency operations and criminal litigation in contested cases.
- 7.3 At a payment rate of 64% the expected income per annum will be £340,000-£360,000 resulting in a net income to the Council of £104,000 - £198,000 per annum dependant on the agreed terms of contract.

8. Reasons for Recommendation

- 8.1 Enforcing against those who commit environmental crime reduces offending rates and improves the appearance and standard of cleanliness of the borough. A cleaner environment contributes towards the public's pride in the borough and creates a positive quality of life for our residents, businesses and visitors.

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

- 9.1 This report was presented at the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 February 2021.
- 9.2 The report shared the proposal for the Council to re-tender for the brought-in support services that assist the Council in meeting the objectives to improve the environment and neighbourhoods for Thurrock residents.

9.3 An overview on the performance and required standards of the contract to date and the detailed future projections based on known comparatives were discussed and consulted with O&S, with the agreement to progress the report's recommendations to Cabinet.

9.4 The Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. Noted the content contained within the report; and
2. Recommended that Cabinet delegate the authority for the tender and subsequent award of a new contract to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in conjunction with the Director of Finance, Governance & Property and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Ant-Social Behaviour, on a payment by results basis.

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

10.1 N/A

11. Implications

11.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

This is an options report and there are no direct financial implications arising from it.

11.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer / Manager- Contracts Team

The Council have a duty with regards to ensuring a clean Environment for the Health and wellbeing of its residents and This duty extends to protection of the Environment and Prosecution of offenders who flout environmental laws and regulations. As this report is an update report seeking Cabinet approval for its recommendation, there are no direct legal implications, however any tender for the contract must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure rules. Legal Services will be on hand to advice on any issue arising from this report as and when required.

11.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**

Strategic Lead, Community Development and Equalities

There are no diversity and equality implications arising from this report.

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

N/A

- 13. 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

Report Author:

Phil Carver

Strategic Lead for Environmental Enforcement

Environment Highways and Counter Fraud

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021	ITEM: 15
Cabinet	
Procurement of Housing Capital Programme Delivery	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report of: Councillor Barry Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Housing	
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest, Assistant Director of Housing	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Housing Capital Programme invests in the long-term integrity of the Council's assets and brings significant improvements to the health and wellbeing of our local residents through improvements to their living conditions and reduces fuel poverty through improved energy efficiency.

This report sets out the proposals for the procurement of two contract packages that will further improve the quality of homes for Council Housing tenants.

The first contract package will upgrade the heating provision for three tower blocks in Chadwell St Mary. The second contract package will refurbish properties of a non-traditional construction in the housing stock.

This report details options for the procurement of these contract packages using pre-approved public sector frameworks in order to generate cost efficiency and resource time savings.

- 1. Recommendation(s):**
 - 1.1 Approve the procurement of two new contracts for major works delivery programmes.**
 - 1.2 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.**
- 2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 There is an ongoing need to invest in our existing council stock to ensure the integrity of the asset is maintained and that the Council fulfils its duty to provide residents with affordable warmth in homes and future proofed facilities.

We want everyone in Thurrock to have a warm home, with heating systems that are reliable and affordable. In October 2019 the Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency and to take urgent action to reduce its carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030. One of the largest emitters of carbon in Thurrock is domestic heating and hot water. We need to ensure the heat sources that supply homes in our borough are increasingly low and zero carbon.

Heating Upgrade for Three Tower Blocks in Chadwell St Mary Ward

- 2.2 This programme of work will replace the current end of life heating systems in place in George Tilbury House, Gooderham House and Poole House in Chadwell St. Mary with a new renewable heating solution that will ensure the resident has the cheapest running cost which will lift our residents out of fuel poverty.
- 2.3 The 273 properties in these blocks currently are heated with electric storage heaters the majority of which are over 30 years old. These storage radiators are now at the end of their technical life expectancy due to their age, this means they are less efficient and have limited controls for the residents to operate meaning they are inefficient for both running costs and sustainability.
- 2.4 Different options for their replacement have been considered and we are now presenting this option for a new ground source heat pump solution to be installed. This preferred option has been fully informed by detailed site investigations and geological surveys.
- 2.5 Residents in the blocks have also been consulted about the cost and effectiveness of their current heating system. This has demonstrated that currently residents in these blocks are experiencing varying levels of fuel poverty across the three tower blocks. Fuel poverty has many negative impacts on physical and mental health. Fuel poverty creates a harsh choice for our residents to choose between a warm home or food. It is our priority to install a system that addresses this financial exclusion by delivering a reduction in annual costs for residents on their heating bills. The data collected up until the week ending 18th December 2020 is set out in the following table. At this stage 67 residents across the three Chadwell Tower Blocks had engaged with the Council to undertake a fuel poverty assessment.

Number of Properties Assessed	Estimated Annual Fuel Costs per household	Percentage of Households in Fuel Poverty.
67	£1,429.00	50.7%

Out of the 67 participants of the fuel poverty assessment just over 50% of the residents met the threshold of fuel poverty based on the Low Income High Cost (LIHC) Indicator.

- 2.6 The average running costs of the proposed ground source heating systems for the two bed Chadwell tower blocks have been calculated to be in the region of £477.00 per annum depending on individual usage. Therefore, when considered against the figures above it is clear this would deliver significant savings to our residents living in these properties. This would in turn remove a majority of residents from fuel poverty.
- 2.7 The system that is proposed to be installed in a low carbon heating system which utilises renewable heat which is freely available underground. This can be accessed by using Ground Source Heat Pumps (GSHP) connected to a network underground of pipes extracting ambient heat from the ground. This system provides 300% efficiency and is powered by electricity from the resident's own meter. The GSHP system that is proposed will provide a separate hot water cylinder in each dwelling and radiators. Residents will remain free to choose which energy provider they engage for provision of electricity, however the cheaper their electricity tariff the more they will save on their heating cost. We will ensure this is communicated to our residents through our resident liaison teams to make sure the residents on this estate achieve the maximum benefit possible. Over the life cycle of this install based on 40 years, the lifetime saving of heat pump and ground array is estimated save 7,080 tons of CO2 emission this is the equivalent of taking 1540 cars off the road, this is based on carbon factor obtained from SAP 10.1, published 8/11/19.
- 2.8 Ground source heat pumps are able to deliver heating and hot water in the same way as a conventional heating system via radiators and hot water tanks which are controlled using a simple time clock and central thermostat. Individual room control will be provided by the Thermostatic Radiator Valve (TRV) fitted to the radiators so each tenant has the ability to control temperature on a room-by-room basis. The simplicity of this set-up means control is straightforward and the heat can be delivered as required throughout the day ensuring tenant comfort.
- 2.9 It is estimated the cost of this installation will be approximately £5.4m. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan as reported to Cabinet in February 2020 included £23.18m for Tower Block Refurbishment between 2021/22 and 2022/23 and this sum includes provision for this work.

3. Non-Traditional Property Refurbishment

- 3.1 The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budget Report of 12 February 2020 outlined a budget of £7.3m to invest in the refurbishment of the properties of Non-Traditional construction in the housing stock between the years of 2021/22 and 2023/24.
- 3.2 The term non-traditional generally refers to prefabricated building systems, frames and construction methods that known as Prefabricated Reinforced Concrete (PRC) properties. They were mostly constructed post-war up between 1945 and 1951 and were only envisaged to last 10 years, but such was the durability that many are still standing today. Within the Thurrock housing stock we have over 200 of these non-traditionally constructed properties all of which are tenanted family sized homes. These properties are designated defective within the meaning of the [Housing Defects Act 1984](#), now part of the [Housing Act 1985](#), because they have the potential for corrosion of the embedded steel reinforcements and are generally considered by lending institutions not to be mortgageable.
- 3.3 If left in their original state these non-traditional properties offer extremely poor thermal efficiency making them expensive for the tenants to heat. This poor thermal insulation can leading to problems with condensation and mould and impact on the internal fixtures and fittings.
- 3.4 The Council have now having carried out extensive surveying of these properties and have planned a programme of refurbishment based on property condition that will prioritise those in urgent need of improvements.
- 3.5 The works to the properties will aim to make them both structurally safe and achieve improved standards of thermal comfort. Improvements will be tailored to the different build types and will incorporate measures such as new external wall insulation, new windows and doors, sustainable heating systems and sustainable energy sources. These will both improve the energy efficiency ratings of the properties providing more comfortable and economical homes for our residents and will be in line with the Councils climate change agenda.

4. **Possible Grant Funding**

- 4.1 It is also the Council's intention to apply for grant funding to support these projects under one of the following schemes. The funding landscape is changing rapidly and projects will be appraised individually at the time of investment decisions. There have been many funding announcements to support green jobs and the COVID-19 economic recovery plan and we will engage a contractor that can help us to identify the best funding routes.
- 4.2 **Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (NDRHI)** policy. This supports residential district heating installations. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has confirmed that an individual ground source heat pump at each property, linked to a communal ground array, qualifies as a district heating system.

However the current NDRHI scheme closes on 31st March 2021 and to apply installations would need to be completed and commissioned with as built EPC's provided as part of the application. For projects that cannot complete prior to this deadline, there are currently options set out in the consultations launched by BEIS in April 2020 to apply for a Tariff Guarantee by the end of March 2021. It is unlikely that it will be possible to access this funding for this project due to limited time frames imposed.

4.3 Clean Heat Grant

Scheduled for commencement in 2022 the CHG is the government's successor scheme to the RHI. Under recent consultations the government have indicated the possibility of an upfront capital grant of up to £4,000 per property installed with a new heat pump. We await detailed outline of eligibility and funding application process in due course.

4.4 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

A total of £3.8 billion has been allocated to this fund over the next 10 years to support social landlords to retrofit social housing at scale. Individual projects will need to be appraised for eligibility and potential collaborations will be required. We will look to identify opportunities to maximise the use of this fund where possible.

4.5 Energy Company Obligations Round 3

ECO3 is the latest stream of ECO. It mainly focuses on low income and vulnerable households, helping to meet the Government's fuel poverty commitments. This grant is intended to fund renewable technology and replace expensive, broken, inefficient fossil fuelled systems or non-centrally heated systems. As a funding stream, ECO3 is based on the cost savings between the old and new heating and hot water systems. This grant applies to district heating schemes and social housing installations, however the properties must have a registered Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of E, F or G to be eligible.

4.6 It is important to note that full provision has been made within the HRA Business Plan to cover the delivery of these two projects. If successful in applications for any of the above schemes, the grant received would be offset against the overall cost which would then release investment for further improvements to other properties within the housing stock.

5. Procurement Route Recommendation

5.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet to request the approval to proceed with the procurement for two contracts for the major works delivery packages outlined in this report. These procurements are each valued above the Corporate Directors threshold of £750k.

5.2 Due to the size and scale of service provision, the Council is required to procure these contracts through the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and to also comply with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules. Officers have considered a number of options for re-procurement via either a full OJEU process or using purchasing consortium frameworks.

5.3 Given the likely level of interest in the work packages and the limitations of the market, the recommended option for the procurement routes is a mini competition through a purchasing consortium framework. This will enable the selection from a list of providers who have already demonstrated their suitability to provide the type and quality of services required. It will enable the evaluation of the mini competition tenders on the basis of key criteria on quality, price and added social value.

6. Timetable for Procurement and Award

6.1 Tower Block Heating Replacement

Action	Date
Leaseholder Consultation	35 days April 2021
Issue Tender	Mid May 2021
Tender Return	End June 2021
Evaluation Period Ends	End July 2021
2 nd stage Leasehold consultation	August 2021 - 35 days
Standstill Period Concludes	Mid-August 2020 Should this be Mid-September
Award of Contract	September 2021
Contract Commencement	End September 2020

6.2 Non-Traditional Property Refurbishment

Note: No leaseholders are affected by this programme so statutory consultation periods are not applicable.

Action	Date
Issue Tender	April 2021
Tender Return	Mid May 2021
Evaluation Period Ends	June 2021
Standstill Period Concludes	June 2021
Award of Contract	July 2021
Contract Commencement	August 2021

7. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Design Specifications

- 7.1 The Council has invested in detailed feasibility and design for both refurbishment projects which have fully appraised the different options and product specifications applicable to these types of works. All works will be delivered to meet the applicable regulatory standards.

8. Reasons for the report

- 8.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet in order to outline the two packages of work as part of the Housing Capital Programme which are designed to bring substantial improvements to the quality and comfort for residents living in these homes for approval to procure these work packages.
- 8.2 Cabinet are asked to approve the procurement of these work packages and to approve the delegated authority for the award to Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

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

- 9.1 This report was considered by Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in January 2021. The Committee fully supported the proposals.
- 9.2 This proposal for the refurbishment of the heating systems in the Chadwell St Mary Tower blocks will be subject to Section 20 Leaseholder Consultation at all stages.
- 9.3 Once approval to proceed is in place the refurbishment proposals will be consulted on with the local residents affected.
- 9.4 Members of the Resident Excellence Panel will be invited to participate in the tender evaluation process. Members of the Resident Excellence Panel have been trained in the evaluation process and have provided positive contributions when previously involved in evaluation processes.

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

- 10.1 The improvement of the Council's housing assets supports the Council's key priorities through the provision of quality housing and estates people are proud to live on.
- 10.2 The Council's strategic priorities have been and will continue to be an integral part of the social value tender documents and bidders will be required demonstrate how they will generate added value for local communities, support the local economy through opportunities for local businesses and provide local job opportunities.

10.3 **Clean Growth Strategy**

This UK government strategy sets out a comprehensive set of policies and proposals that aim to accelerate the pace of 'clean growth', decreased GHG emissions and a commitment to phasing out fossil fuels off the gas grid in the 2020s. The roll out of low carbon heating is an essential part of this strategy and heat pumps have a pivotal role to play in helping social housing providers to decarbonise their housing stock.

10.4 **Electrification of Heat**

Electrification of heat is a key part of the government's strategy for achieving net zero carbon by 2050. Heating homes and businesses makes up a significant proportion of the UK's emissions and therefore has to be tackled, moving the country away from burning gas is a significant part of the challenge. The pace of increased supply of renewable energy to the UK power grid provides an opportunity to decarbonise heat in the next 30 years and rapid installation of heat pumps can support mass decarbonisation across our Thurrock homes.

10.5 **The Future Homes Standard**

The Future Homes Standard will require new build homes to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and world-leading levels of energy efficiency; it will be introduced by 2025. Whilst these standards are for new homes to be substantially improved in order to future-proof new builds with low carbon heating, existing buildings will have to undergo significant improvements/ deep retrofitting to meet the challenge of decarbonisation.

10.6 **Carbon Reduction and Climate Emergency**

In October 2019 the Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency and to take urgent action to reduce its carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030. Over 34% of all emissions in the UK are attributed to the provision of heat. Ground source or Air source heat pumps provide local authorities with a solution to fully decarbonise heating in social housing assets coupled with the provision of clean energy.

11. **Implications**

11.1 **Financial**

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead, Finance

The procurement of these works is in line with the budget investment profile for years 2020/21 to 2023/24. The estimated spend shown in this report is in line with the HRA Business Plan provision for the contract period.

11.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer / Manager – Contracts & Procurement Team

The Council have a statutory duty to provide for the Health and Wellbeing of its residents through improvement to their living conditions and this could be by way of improving the Council's housing stock via procurement of programmes of works as proposed in this report with the ultimate outcome of improving the Wellbeing of its local residents. Legal Services will be on hand to advise on any issues arising from the proposed procurement of the works programme.

11.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

A full community equality impact assessment has been undertaken of the implementation of the Housing delivery of the investment programmes.

Residents in these homes are experiencing high levels of fuel poverty. Fuel poverty has many negative impacts on physical and mental health. Fuel poverty creates a harsh choice for our residents to choose between a warm home or food. The installation of energy efficiency measures and heating systems is intended to address this financial exclusion by delivering a reduction in annual costs for these residents on their heating bills.

The significant investment made through these improvements in the housing stock represents a real opportunity to provide additional social value to the local communities in the borough. It is therefore important that the commissioning and contract management approach continues to support a framework for social value delivery to support training and employment opportunities for our communities and maximise spend in the local economy.

11.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

The installation of the low carbon heating systems are expected to provide 70%+ reduction in carbon emissions. The system being proposed for the Chadwell Towers has been verified by BEIS studies and the Energy Saving Trust to be the cheapest to run and the lowest carbon heating system. It is expected that the infrastructure to be installed underground will have a life of 100 years. This creates a sustainable supply of heating to be supplied to those residents for the foreseeable future.

- 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): -

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and Budgets 2020/21 - report to Cabinet February 2020.

- 13. Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author

Alastair Wood

Technical Services Delivery Manager

10 March 2021	ITEM: 16 Decision: 110562
Cabinet	
Housing Re-Procurement of Concierge Contract	
Wards and communities affected: Grays, Grays Riverside, Chadwell St Mary	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Barry Johnson Portfolio Holder of Housing	
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest, Assistant Director of Housing	
Accountable Director: Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing & Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposal for the re-procurement of the Housing concierge contract under delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in conjunction with Portfolio Holder of Housing to award this contract for 2 years with an extension of 1 year, subject to performance and funding.

The current contract has been extended up to a maximum end date of 31 August 2021 and a new contract will be put in place with a start date on or after 1 September 2021.

The current service operates at Chadwell St Mary High Rise blocks in Godman Road, Chadwell St Mary and Piggs Corner, Sheltered Housing Scheme, Southend Road, Grays. Funding for this service is recovered from tenant and leaseholder service charges in the Housing Revenue Account.

The Housing concierge contract provides the following services to residents to live in a safe and secure environment.

- 24/7 controlled entry monitoring all visitors to the building,
- Closed circuit video surveillance in and around the blocks,
- Reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour, repairs and fire safety to the relevant authorities.

A further council site is now being added onto the Housing Concierge contract. This is Brook House, Brook Road, Grays Riverside. Funding for this service is contained

within the General Fund Account. This site has come into the Council's ownership since the original contract was let.

Housing tenants and leaseholders living at the High Rise tenanted blocks have been consulted of how to improve the service. 64.8% respondents to the December 2020 concierge survey wanted the service to continue and improve its value for money. The proposed new contract has a revised specification to reflect those priorities including Social Value for the local community and current objectives with financial penalties for non-compliance. This delivers better resident services and excellent customer care.

1. Recommendation(s):

1.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the available options as set out in section 3 of the report.

1.2 Agree the re-procurement of the Housing concierge contract for a period of up to 3 years [2 years plus 1 year extension subject to performance and funding].

1.3 Approve delegation to award the contract to the Corporate Director, Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing in order to ensure service continuity.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Council delivers a commissioned concierge service to the high rise tower blocks in Chadwell St Mary and at the Extra Care Facility at Piggs Corner. This covers a total of 362 properties through a service contract with Kingdom Security.

2.2 The concierge contract provides residents a 24 hour controlled entry, mobile estate patrols, CCTV monitoring, reception and information desk and anti-social behaviour and crime and repair reporting.

2.3 This service has been in place for the last 5 years. The original term of the existing contract completed on 30 June 2019 and was extended twice, subject to performance and has just been extended for re-procurement to 1 September 2021.

2.4 Spend on the current concierge contract is £294k per annum. Funding for this service was contained in the Housing Revenue Account and forms a service charge to tenants and leaseholders of the affected blocks.

2.5 Brook House, Grays Riverside, is a temporary accommodation hostel that caters for priority homeless households providing a total number of 10 self-contained rooms. Temporary Accommodation Officers provide support to households and there is a requirement for a concierge service to monitor and

control access, and deal with contractors, incidents and emergencies outside of office hours. Spend on the current contract is £70k per annum. This is budgeted for within the General Fund and collected as a tenant service charge.

- 2.6 The re-procurement of the housing concierge contract provides an opportunity to improve our contract specification and expand the service to keep vulnerable residents safe.
- 2.7 As of the December 2020 concierge survey, 64.8% of respondents wanted to continue with a concierge service and 33.6% of respondents believed the service offered value for money. The contract specification and Key Performance Indicators [KPI] were revised to refocus the service on resident priorities, with the purpose of delivering higher value for money and service quality satisfaction levels going forward. Where there are failures in meeting any KPI and the contractor fails to rectify this, a financial penalty will be awarded for noncompliance.

3. Options

3.1 Re-procure the contract

- 3.1.1 The housing service will benefit from an updated concierge contract to reflect current service objectives to residents such as fire safety inspections to ensure areas are free of rubbish, parcel delivery, update notice boards, disseminate information about emergency works, and assist vulnerable residents and mobile patrols.
- 3.1.2 The resident consultation survey identified some of the aforementioned areas for continuing the service. They did not favour housing to reduce or stop the service altogether. The survey asked this question to understand appetite to reshape the service going forward.
- 3.1.3 A competitive re-procurement exercise will provide current market rates of the housing concierge service and may offer financial savings to the council.

3.2 Extend the current contract

- 3.2.1 There was provision to extend the current contract but this extension ends on 31 August 2021. Therefore our current contract cannot roll forward beyond 1 September 2021.
- 3.2.2 The decision to procure cannot be deferred.

3.3 In house management of concierge staff

- 3.3.1 An in house concierge team gives greater control to shape the service. However, this concierge model would be expensive for tenants and leaseholders who receive a service.

- 3.3.2 Affected tenants and leaseholders paying a concierge service charge will incur higher costs each year for the council to recover the cost of reintegrating the service, consisting of staff costs and pension contributions of TUPE'd staff.
- 3.3.3 This is recoverable from tenants and leaseholders of the affected blocks to pay a service charge for the relevant period.
- 3.3.4 The council is responsible to recover the costs of services provided to each property, block or estate every year.

3.4 Analysis of Options

- 3.4.1 The December resident consultation survey 2020 supported the housing concierge service to continue with changes to the contract specification.
- 3.4.2 The preferred option is re-procurement of the housing concierge contract that includes financial penalties for noncompliance.
- 3.4.3 The council has to comply with contract regulations and be transparent with its procurement and so a full, open procedure procurement will be carried out.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report is submitted to Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure rules to seek approval to proceed to tender for a contract with a whole life cost valued above £750K.
- 4.2 The total estimated value for this contract over 3 years period is c.£1.2m based on historical spend plus the additional requirement for Brook House.

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

- 5.1 Sheltered Housing residents will continue to receive a 24/7 concierge service, so the resident consultation which sought in part to understand views on a different service was not extended to them. In addition no complaints are received about the service at Piggs Corner, this is not the case for Chadwell so the focus of the consultation was there.
- 5.2 Housing residents in Chadwell St Mary were consulted about the current concierge service quality and shaping the future of the service.
- 5.3 A total of 134 respondents took part in the council's telephone and online survey between November and December 2020. The results showed 64.8% respondents wanted the service to continue. A revised contract specification and KPIs will refocus on the role of value for money and service quality in customer satisfaction

Table 1

Measure	CSAT Rate
Polite	82.5%
Friendly	79.8%
Helpful	59.7%
Overall Satisfaction With Current Concierge Service	40.9%
Satisfaction With Value For Money Of Service	33.6%
Future Preferences - Continue Service	64.8%
Future Preferences - Reduce Service	7.2%
Future Preferences - Stop Service	28.0%

6. Timetable for Procurement and Award

KEY EVENT	ESTIMATED TIMELINE
ITT Publication	1 st April 2021
Deadline for clarification requests	23 rd April 2021
Closing date for Tender submissions	30 th April 2021
Notification of result of evaluation	21 st May 2021
Standstill period	10 days
Leaseholder Consultation (Section 20)	35 days
Expected date of award of Contract	23 July 2021
Contract Commencement	1 st September 2021
Contract End	31 st August 2023

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

- 7.1 The concierge contract and its partnership work will support Housing and the Police to manage and tackle crime and disorder on estates and improve the health and well-being of residents to live in a safe and secure environment.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

The current concierge contract ends on 31 August 2021 and is budgeted for within the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund 2021/22.

The cost of the service is recoverable from tenants and leaseholders in receipt of the service, through service charges under the terms of their tenancy agreement/licence/lease conditions respectively.

A competitive re-procurement exercise will aim to secure enhanced performance delivery outcomes, including maximising social value to the local community and value for money for residents in awarding a contract.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
Principal Lawyer/ Manager – Contracts & Procurement Team

This report sets out proposal for the re-procurement of the Housing Concierge contract and any re-procurement must comply with the provisions of the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

The costs of the building security and concierge service may be recoverable from leaseholders and tenants by the way of a service charge. The Council must also undertake consultation with the tenants with regards to the Service charge.

However the council must take into account relevant cost in determining the amount of a service charge payable for a period only to the extent that they are reasonably incurred and where incurred in the provision of services, the services are of a reasonable standard as provided by Section 19 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Demands for service charges to tenants as Landlord by the Council must comply with the obligations under Section 47 & 48 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1987 including limitation of service charges and time limit for making demands as provided by Section 20B of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Legal Services will be on hand to advise on any issue arising from the re-procurement of the Housing concierge contract.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement & Project Monitoring Officer

The re-procurement of the Housing Concierge contract does not involve any changes to service delivery of operational practices.

The service remains front line aimed at enhancing the quality of life on estates which will benefit all equality and diversity groups and particularly address these who may feel vulnerable in their home and environment.

The procurement process will establish a suitable list of tenderers who can evidence their commitment to the council's social value priorities and demonstrate excellent practice in employment including equal opportunity, recruitment, training and staff terms and conditions.

8.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

The contract is a tool to reduce anti-social behaviour in the High Rise tenanted blocks with an effective concierge security solution and support housing residents to live in a safe and secure environment. Therefore, the concierge service aims to have a positive impact on communities with more residents reporting satisfaction with their neighbourhood and the housing services provided by the council.

There are no direct staffing implications for the council arising from this report although there is potential for TUPE between concierge contractors.

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

- Re- procurement of the Housing Concierge Contract, 9 December 2015, Cabinet Report

10. Appendices to the report

- Housing Concierge Contract Key Performance Indicators

Report Author:

Dulal Ahmed

Housing Enforcement Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 1

Indicator	Target	Measurement
No of unauthorised visitors refused/stopped entry into the block	10 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
% of residents satisfied with the overall service provided by the concierge service	75%	Resident Satisfaction Survey
% of residents satisfied with the concierge VFM	75%	Resident Satisfaction Survey
Number of complaints received	2 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
% of complaints upheld	Info only	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of ASB video packages reported for resident safety	10 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of Enviro crime packages reported to identify, apprehend and prosecute offenders	5 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of Safeguarding incidents logged to protect resident from harm	12 per year	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of fire hazards reported to Responsible Person and unsafe item removed in common parts	5 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of communal Health and Safety repairs reported	4 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of major emergencies logged [fire/flood/evacuation] and escalated to Responsible Person	Info only	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of cleaning hazards logged to make sure the block and their surroundings are clean and tidy	5 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting
No of subletting/illegal occupations reported to identify tenant[s] not occupying a property	1 per month	KPI/Monthly meeting

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021	ITEM: 17 Decision: 110563
Cabinet	
A Fresh Start for our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - Re-Procurement Outline	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Cllr Alan Mayes, Cabinet Member for Health and Air Quality and Cllr James Halden – Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Adult Social Care	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michele Lucas – Assistant Director, Education and Skills	
Accountable Director: Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director Children Services	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock has a clear ambition to improve our mental health and emotional wellbeing services for children and young people. While improvements have been made by a dedicated partnership, we acknowledge that the current system is at times slow to respond, overly clinical, and not sufficiently accountable locally. This is the first step to change this.

This report sets out the requirement to procure our Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Services for Children and Young People in Thurrock. The current contract has been in place since 2015 delivered through a Collaborative Commissioning Approach between the 7 Clinical Commissioning Groups and 3 Local Authorities across the Greater Essex footprint. The current contract ends on the 31 January 2022.

The delivery of Mental Health Services for Children and Young People are a priority within the NHS Five Year Forward View for Mental Health published by NHS England and produced by the Independent Mental Health Taskforce in February 2016. The NHS Long Term Plan published in 2019 makes a renewed commitment to improve and widen access to mental health care and support for children and adults.

The new specification, a tailor made “Thurrock rollout” plan, for the collaborative Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service for children and young people is clearly focussed on the principles of access and equitable services for all young people ensuring services reach those young people who are particularly vulnerable.

The specification, which allows for local determinants, supports our own developing strategic response through our Brighter Futures Strategy for children and young people and will form part of the integrated pathway for child and adolescent mental health services. The Collaborative Commissioning Forum is supportive of our approach in developing a model that brings together our universal service responses to ensure that children and young people can access and be directed to support whenever it is needed, the aim of an integrated service will be to prevent escalation along the pathway wherever possible but to ensure the right level of service is accessed for each child and young person. The new model will be developed under the guidance of Brighter Futures in collaboration with all partners', young people and their families.

The Chair of the Collaborative Commissioning forum has confirmed support for the Thurrock approach as follows:

“As mentioned at the recent CCF, I do not think that the ambition for the future CAMHs SET contract and the strategy for children in Thurrock, as describes within Brighter Futures, are incompatible or incongruent at all. The SET geography covers a huge area, towns and localities that sit within the same footprint but are physically and culturally different. Equally all localities within the SET footprint will have aspects of strength and areas that need to be developed and improved; the SET area is too big and too diverse for us to impose ‘one model’ upon a county that is the size of greater Essex. Thus our focus upon and agreed set of improved outcomes for young people, across the entirety of Essex means that these local nuances can be catered for through adaptation and that local strengths that exist already, can be built upon and amplified. And I personally see no reason why these principles cannot equally be applied to a specific strategy within Thurrock. A collaborative commitment to a collective cause should mean that the future CAMHs contract overseen by the CCF should be able to make a greater contribution to the Brighter Futures strategy, and be able to ‘run alongside’ this work.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you as a valued partner within the CCF as we all make every effort to collectively improve outcomes for all children across Essex.”

The core elements of the Thurrock specific plan include

- 1) Seconded workers from EHWB's into Brighter Future to ensure greater integration and accountability.
- 2) Local governance via Brighter Futures, inclusive of local schools, to ensure Thurrock assets such as Inspire are deployed as a part of EWMH's decision making to avoid an overly clinical approach to support.

It is recognised that there are significant challenges in meeting the increasing demand for emotional wellbeing and mental health services as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions. The work to transform how mental health services are offered that has already commenced will provide the opportunity to take a whole systems approach to delivery that will better help ensure that we make best use of the resources available.

The current collaborative commissioning arrangement has led to an improved single point of access and seamless access to services in different tiers of need. This is particularly the case for access to tier two and tier three services which were previously accessed through different referral systems, often resulting in delays for children and young people in receiving support. The current commissioned service ends on the 31 January 2022 and this report outlines the proposals for the collaborative re-procurement of this service to ensure we have continued support for children and young people in place.

The provision of a Greater Essex Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service brings together the budgets of the three local authorities and seven Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) totalling £21 million per annum.

It is recommended that Thurrock Council continues to work as part of the Collaborative Commissioning Forum to re-commission an integrated Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service to be in place from 1st February 2022, thus ensuring we continue to provide a strong strategic overview across Thurrock, Essex and Southend, economies of scale and the collaborative understanding of the view of all three local authorities and seven CCGs.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Cabinet agrees to the continuation of the collaborative commissioning arrangements and support the financial contribution from Thurrock Council as set out in this report;**
- 1.2 That Cabinet agrees to the re-procurement of the tier two and tier three Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service through the collaborative commissioning arrangements;**
- 1.3 That Cabinet agrees the development of a local service response through the Brighter Futures strategy to address the mental health and emotional needs of young people in Thurrock in collaboration with partners and the Collaborative Commissioning Forum, encompassing the core elements of the Thurrock specific plan listed above:**
- 1.4 That Cabinet agree that the contract award is delegated to the Corporate Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Adult Social Care in line with the current procedures.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Prior to 2015 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMH's) were not delivered collaboratively and young people's experience of services was very disjointed. A joint decision was made with all partners to collaboratively commission those services and it became the Emotional Well Being and Mental Health Service delivered by the successful bidder North East London**

Foundation Trust (NELFT) delivered across the Greater Essex footprint. This arrangement has been in place since 2015 and has led to an improved single point of access and seamless access to services in different tiers of need.

- 2.2 The current commissioned service ends on 31 January 2022 and this report outlines the proposals for the collaborative re-procurement of this to achieve delivery commencement at the end of the current contract.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There has been universal acknowledgment in policy over the past ten years of the challenges experienced by children and young people in developing resilience and psychological wellbeing. For those children and young people with diagnosable mental health problems and their families/carers and the agencies that support them, the challenges are greater. It is known that 50% of lifetime mental illness (except dementia) begins by the age of 14 and 75% by age 18. While improvements have been made by a dedicated partnership, we acknowledge that the current system is at times too slow, overly clinical, and not sufficiently accountable locally.
- 3.2 The provision of a Collaborative Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service brings together the budgets of the three local authorities and seven CCG's and as such enables larger economies of scale.
- 3.3 It is proposed that there is a continuation of the collaboratively commissioned approach for the delivery of children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health services.
- 3.4 This proposal is based on a detailed options appraisal, an analysis of the current contract and the learning from that together with the integrated approach in Thurrock that builds on the excellent work of the Schools Well Being Service and the joint working across all services. The options appraisal looked at 4 potential procurement options. Option 1 a Thurrock only procurement, option 2 procure only part of the service, option 3 procure with a local authority outside Greater Essex and option 4 remain in the collaborative commissioning forum.
- 3.5 Option 1 would isolate Thurrock from the wider service, the MSE footprint will mean that the CCG are unable to jointly commission on a Thurrock only locality, there would be no direct connection to wider specialist services that are Greater Essex wide and currently accessible for Thurrock children and young people and limited opportunities to achieve economies of scale such as a single point of access and 24/7 crisis support.
- 3.6 Option 2 would mean a significant risk of Children and Young People facing delays in accessing services due to removal of an integrated pathway monitoring performance is challenging due to complications of Children and Young People moving between pathways and different systems.

- 3.7 Option 3 would be very difficult at this time if the Local Authority was outside the Greater Essex footprint as health systems would be different and so services would be fragmented.
- 3.8 Option 4 which is remaining within the current commissioning arrangement gives stability, access to a wide range of services and an integrated tier 2/3 pathway for children and young people. Within the specification there is provision for a local team, single point of access, crisis support, access to specialist services and flexibility for Thurrock focused services with local performance reporting. However, given the acute need for improvement, Option 4 is ONLY possible with the inclusion of the Thurrock Specific plan detailing how the Contract will be deployed locally for us.

It is also key that strong links are maintained with the Schools Well Being Service to ensure seamless services and integrated responses for children and young people.

Although the first 3 options were carefully considered it was felt that the best option for Thurrock is to remain an active participant in the Collaborative to ensure a flexible and responsive service for children and young people.

The proposal also supports our own emerging thinking about our local service provision, which is supported by the Collaborative Commissioning Forum, to embed the 7 principles of service delivery

1. Holistic – treatment approaches that take a whole family approach and treat both the young person and the family taking into account the environment in which the young person lives.
2. Responsive – help is available when required and to all who need it.
3. Integrated – EWMHS service delivery is embedded into a single integrated model of children’s emotional health and wellbeing and other community assets including schools and INSPIRE rather than being delivered separately or in parallel.
4. Preventative – will seek to intervene at the earliest possible opportunity to prevent mental ill health issues becoming worse
5. Resilient and capacity building – helps to support a resilient service model by building capacity through training and education.
6. Evidence Based Practice- takes into consideration local & national evidence as part of service development
7. Able to provide a single point of access – offers swift seamless navigation and support for children, parents and professional throughout the service model and system.

Together with what are determined as essential for the delivery of high quality Child and adolescent mental health services

- Involving children, young people, families and carers
- Collaboration between different organisations and services
- Innovative ways of providing person-centred care
- Improving access to services

- Education and training for staff, children and young people and their families

We will be developing a model that brings together our universal responses to ensure that children and young people can access and be directed to support whenever it is needed and to support children, young people and their families while they wait for tier 2 and tier 3 intervention

- 3.9 There is no requirement to enter into partnership agreement under section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 for Local Authorities as there is no pooled funding or delegated statutory duties.
- 3.10 The proposal for the term of this contract is seven years with the option to extend for a further three years. This is in line with the scale and size of the procurement.
- 3.11 The contract covers a minimum of 35% of children in Thurrock to have access to the service, this is the same access rate for all locality areas covered by the service specification.
- 3.12 The proposed specification requires the following key principles are factored in to the delivery of the service:
- 3.12.1 An integrated responsive and evidence based Tier 2 and Tier 3 Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service across Thurrock, Essex and Southend to all children and young people aged from 0 until their 18th birthday, or 25th birthday for those service users with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, including those with Education Health and Care (EHC) plans, and who require longer term mental health support (these may involve adult services where applicable and appropriate). Ensure those children and young people aged 18 years needing long term mental health support receive appropriate provision to meet their needs and have a smooth transition to adult mental health services where they meet the criteria for acceptance into adult services.
- 3.12.2 Equitable service provision for those children and young people from the more vulnerable groups, prioritised based on their mental health clinical presentation.
- 3.12.3 To provide assessment and treatment compliant with national and local standards for children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health disorders who meet the acceptance criteria for the service, who also present with complex physical health needs including learning disability, autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, to improve access and multi-agency intervention.
- 3.12.4 Children and Young People Misusing Substances and/or with a gambling addiction to work in partnership at appropriate levels and where clinically specified for mental health treatment.

- 3.12.5 CCG locality based Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services through the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service – including a team working in Thurrock.
- 3.12.6 A single point of access to carry out screening and appropriate directing and/or signposting for those that do not meet the acceptance criteria into other appropriate services for emotional wellbeing and mental health needs.
- 3.12.7 Out of hours and emergency care available 24/7, 365 days per year. A crisis intervention and intensive support team, which aims to prevent hospital admission for those children and young people whose mental health state requires an urgent response within 24 hours.
- 3.12.8 Offer a first appointment to all children and young people who meet the referral criteria. This first appointment, unless in unscheduled or urgent care, should be as soon as possible and no later than 4 weeks.
- 3.12.9 Provide interventions and treatments, where required and agreed with children, young people and families/carers, as soon as possible, and no later than 18 weeks from first referral, with the median experienced wait for treatment being no longer than 12 weeks.
- 3.13 The recommendation is that Thurrock agrees to continue to work as part of the Collaborative to re-commission an integrated Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service from 1st February 2022 with a strategic overview across Thurrock, Essex and Southend. This provides economies of scale and the collaborative understanding the view of all three local authorities and seven CCGs whilst retaining local support. This will be the further development of the Thurrock service.
- 3.14 The changes in the health landscape being considered across Thurrock, Essex and Southend with place based commissioning being at the forefront mean that a collaborative commissioning agreement will support the ability to work across these systems. Place based outcomes via the locality teams will allow for:
- A strengthening of place-based clinical leadership
 - Accountability and quality of local health services
 - Development of relationships with local public and third sector
 - Delivery of education and training opportunities to interested parties such as GPs, schools
 - Working with key strategic partners in the locality areas
- 3.15 The ongoing provision of emotional wellbeing and mental health services for children and young people will support the work to transform the offer and better offer a seamless pathway between adult and children's support where appropriate. The work to transform mental health services through a whole

systems approach that is already underway includes a focus on these aspects.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This recommendation provides the opportunity to:

- Continue to work collaboratively across all three local authorities and seven CCGs.
- Continue to build on the successes and learning of the collaborative since 2015 and look at the legacy of the work already undertaken to support children and young people.
- A joined up and integrated service for children, young people, families and other professionals in the system, with a single point of access and well-connected system of support.
- Economies of scale due to being part of a collaborative of ten partners and further enhance and refine delivery models.

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

5.1 This report has been submitted to Children's Overview and Scrutiny on the 2 February 2021 prior to presentation to Cabinet.

5.2 The proposal has been discussed across the Collaborative Commissioning Forum, and with the Children's Directorate Management Team. Local work to transform the Mental Health offer through a whole system approach is ongoing and this will include a focus on the pathway between children's and adult services. As this work develops, discussion will be held at the Brighter Futures Board and Health and Wellbeing Board as appropriate.

5.3 If agreed, the joint approach will include consultation with children and young people locally, especially those from vulnerable groups throughout the procurement process.

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

6.1 This commissioning supports the following corporate priority:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This supports delivery of:

- 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.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **David May**
Strategic Lead Finance – Children’s Services

The costs of providing safe and effective interventions associated with supporting children and young people in the community with crisis support or outreach can be considerably less than those associated with inpatient care. The provision of mental health services through a collaborative approach brings economies of scale and provides a wider range of access to services. Earlier access to services and the reduction of delays in access prevents longer term need and therefore a reduction in costs.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**
**Principal Lawyer / Manager – Contracts
Procurement Team**

The Council have a statutory obligation to provide for the Health and wellbeing of its local residents and the proposals in this report reflects that duty and obligation.

The NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019, restated the Government’s commitment to deliver the recommendations in The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health and set out further measures to improve the provision of, and access to, mental health services for children and young people.

Whilst the recommendations in this report support the delivery of mental health support for children and young people, it is noted that Legal services will be on hand to advise on any issues arising from the recommendations as and when required.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer**

Under the Equalities Act 2010 Local Authorities and CCGs have a duty to have regard to the need to:

(a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful.

(b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

(c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The initial community and equalities impact assessment completed as a part of this exercise indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. A full community and equalities impact assessment will be completed as a part of the procurement process.

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**

- Appendix 1 - Procurement Approval to Proceed to Tender – Stage 1 Form

Report Authors:

Catherine Wilson

Strategic Lead – Commissioning and Procurement

Adults, Housing and Health

Sue Green

Strategic Lead – Integrated Commissioning and Transformation

Children's Services

This page is intentionally left blank

PROCUREMENT STAGE 1¹ – APPROVAL TO PROCEED TO TENDER

This form must be completed for all procurements above the tender threshold (£75,000 - Services and Supplies and £500,000 - Works)

If contract value is over Cabinet approval threshold (£750,000) this form shall be appended to the Cabinet report. This form will be “open” for publication.

1.	INTRODUCTION	
1.1	Contract Title	Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service
1.2	Reference	<i>For completion by Procurement Services</i>
1.3	Directorate	Children’s Services
1.4	Contract Cost	Thurrock Council’s contribution is £2,050,000 (total cost across the collaborating parties is £218,650,000)
1.5	Description	The proposed contract is for the delivery of an Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service (EWMHS). Thurrock Council is proposing to commission collaboratively with Essex County Council, Southend Council and the Essex CCGS (North East, West, Mid, Thurrock, Southend, Castle Point & Rochford and Basildon & Brentwood) to continue with an integrated, joined up service.
1.6	Contract Term	7 years + 3 years extension

2.	BUSINESS CASE	
2.1	Business Case	<p>The current services to support children and young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health in Thurrock are provided through a collaborative commissioning arrangement across Thurrock, Essex and Southend. This arrangement has led to an improved single point of access and seamless access to services in different tiers of need. This is particularly the case for access to tier two and tier three services which were previously accessed through different referral systems, often resulting in delays for children and young people in receiving support. The current commissioned service ends in 2022 and the proposal is for the collaborative re-procurement of this service to ensure we have continued support for children and young people in place.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the best way to provide support to children and young people however any change to commission as an individual authority will reduce the availability of a seamless service and single point of access due to the level of funding available by the local authority.</p> <p>It is recommended by the commissioner that Thurrock agrees to continue to work as part of the Collaborative to re-commission an integrated Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service from 2022 with a strategic overview across Thurrock, Essex and Southend. This</p>

¹ Docusign Version, April 2019 onwards

		<p>provides economies of scale and the collaborative understanding the view of all three local authorities and seven CCGs whilst retaining local support.</p> <p>The provision of a pan Thurrock, Essex and Southend Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service brings together the budgets of the three local authorities and seven Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).</p> <p>It is proposed that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to work collaboratively across all three local authorities and seven CCGs • continue to build on the successes and learning of the collaborative since 2015 • offer a joined up and integrated service for children, young people, families and other professionals in the system, with a single point of access and well-connected system of support • achieve economies of scale due to being part of a collaborative of ten partners
2.2	Contractor Employment Status ²	N/A
2.3	Award Criteria	The evaluation criteria will be a combination of price and quality based on the specification due to the specialised nature of the service.
2.4	Social Value	There will be an opportunity for local employment due to their being a hub in Thurrock however it should be noted that the posts are highly specialised.
2.5	Previous Contract	The previous contract was held as part of a Collaborative Commissioning Forum with West Essex CCG taking a lead role for the management of the project. As there is no delegation of commissioning functions to the lead for the proposed project, West Essex CCG, from Local Authorities or CCGs, there are no pooled funds created. There is no requirement to enter into partnership agreement under s75 of the NHS Act 2006 for Local Authorities

² Use online self-assessment tool: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-employment-status-for-tax>

3.		FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS					
3.1	Previous Contract Cost	The cost remain broadly in line with the previous contract costs from 2015 at £205k per annum					
3.2	Scope Changes	Is there any increase / decrease in scope that could impact costs?	Yes - there is an increase in scope				
3.3	Annual Cost	Year	21/22 £000's	22/23 £000's	23/24 £000's	Later £000's	Total £000's
		Total Spend	£34.1	£205	£205	£1,605.9	£2,050
3.4	Funding Breakdown Identified	Revenue Budget	£34.1	£205	£205	£1,605.9	£2,050
		Capital Budget	-	-	-	-	-
		Other (-)	-	-	-	-	-
		Other (-)	-	-	-	-	-
		Total Funding	£34.1	£205	£205	£1,605.9	£2,050
3.5	Budget Code(s)	CA013					
3.6	Unsupported borrowing	N/A					
3.7	Other Financial Implications	This is part of a wider project costing £218,650,000 of which £2,050,000 is from Thurrock Council					

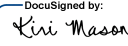
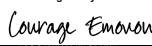

4.		PROCUREMENT ROUTE
4.1	Procurement Route	EU Open Tender
4.2	Procurement Route Rationale	Due to size and length of tender. Please note that the procurement will be led by West Essex CCG on behalf of the Collaborative Commissioning Forum
4.3	Does the contract require a waiver?	No
4.4	Single Source justification	N/A - not a single source
4.5	Waiver Rationale	N/A



5.		PROCUREMENT TIMETABLE	
5.1	Procurement Timetable	Publish Contract Notice	April 2021
		Selection Questionnaire Return	-
		Invitation to Tender Issue	April 2021
		Invitation to Tender Return	May 2021 - June 2021
		Notification of Result	July 2021
		Standstill Period	August 2021
		Expected Award Date	September 2021
		Contract Commencement	February 2022

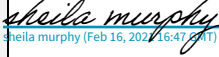
6. RISKS, CONSULTATION AND MANAGEMENT						
6.1	Tender Process Risks	Risk Level			Negative Impact	Mitigation
	Reputational risk if procurement fails	D - Low Likelihood	II - Significant Impact	DII - Low Risk	Impact on service delivery	Soft market testing and stakeholder / service user engagement undertaken to maximise success.
	Risk of one or more of the partners pulling out	D - Low Likelihood	II - Significant Impact	DII - Low Risk	Service model would need to be adjusted	Ensure adherence to collaboration agreement, which sets out responsibilities and liabilities.
	Reduced service provision by current providers, during the re-procurement process.	D - Low Likelihood	II - Significant Impact	DII - Low Risk	Reduced service provision	Provider/Employee engagement in the service design. Active Contract Management. Clear and open communications throughout the procurement process.
6.2	Contract Performance Risks	Risk Level			Negative Impact	Mitigation
	New Service Model not appropriate to the service user's needs.	D - Low Likelihood	II - Significant Impact	DII - Low Risk	Service does not meet the needs identified	User / stakeholder engagement in development of Service Model. Outcome based service model based on the User's needs. Change control (for minor changes) and termination clauses in the contract. Finances to secure any new implementation to be obtained via each organisation.
	-	N/A	N/A	N/A	-	-
6.3	Contingency	The overall management of the procurement process has been centralised through the West Essex CCG. This reduces the risk of issues that may arise from the process being managed through multiple organisations. Should this fail one of the remaining nine partners would take on this role.				
6.4	Consultation	Consultation with elected members has taken place through the Overview and Scrutiny process. An outcome based specification has been developed based on user's needs.				
6.5	Project and Contract Management ³	Tier 2 - Medium Level Contract Management				
		The contract management has been delegated to the West Essex CCG who will provide regular reports to each of the partners. In Thurrock, updates will be provided to the service and the Brighter Futures Board.				

³ Refer to the contract management framework or your category manager for guidance

6.6	Procurement Implications	Procurement agrees with the approach set out and notes that the procurement process will be led and carried out by West Essex CCG.
-----	--------------------------	--

7.	LEGAL, FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT APPROVAL	
7.1	Procurement	I confirm that I have been consulted and agree with the information contained in this report in so far as it relates to Procurement implications
		Name Kiri Mason
		Signed 
		Date 18 January 2021
7.2	Legal	I confirm that I have been consulted and agree with the information contained in this report in so far as it relates to Legal implications
		Name Courage Emovon
		Signed 
		Date 29 January 2021
7.3	Finance	I confirm that I have been consulted and agree with the information contained in this report in so far as it relates to Financial implications
		Name David May
		Signed 
		Date 18 January 2021

8.	APPROVAL TO PROCEED	
8.1	Approval Level	Over £750,000 - Cabinet
8.2	Responsible Officer	I confirm that this procurement will be carried out in accordance with Rule 5 of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules (Chapter 9, Part 2 of the Constitution) and in particular the following duties have been met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance will occur with all regulatory or statutory provisions and the Council's decision making requirements The Contract will be included on the Council's Contract Register Value for Money will be achieved Advice has or will be sought from the Director of Finance and Corporate governance as to an appropriate security bond or guarantee Document Retention Policy has and will be complied with Financial Evaluation will be made of all the proposed tenders including the recommended bidder Advice has been and will be sought and followed from Procurement, Legal and Finance as necessary
		Name Catherine Wilson / Sue Green
		Signed  
		Date Feb 24, 2021 Feb 2, 2021
8.3	Assistant Director	In accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, I confirm the accuracy of the information contained within this form and authorise this request to Proceed to Tender including, where relevant, the permitting of a Waiver from the Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Rule 13.
		Name Michele Lucas

		Signed	
		Date	
8.4	Corporate Director	In accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, I confirm the accuracy of the information contained within this form and authorise this request to Proceed to Tender including, where relevant, the permitting of a Waiver from the Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Rule 13. I confirm that the Portfolio Holder has been consulted as required	
		Name	Sheila Murphy
		Signed	 <small>sheila murphy (Feb 16, 2021 16:47 GMT)</small>
		Date	Feb 16, 2021
8.5	Director of Finance and IT (If waiver required)	In accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, I confirm the accuracy of the information contained within this form and authorise this request to Proceed to Tender including, where relevant, the permitting of a Waiver from the Contract Procedure Rules in accordance with Rule 13.	
		Name	-
		Signed	
		Date	
8.6	Cabinet	Minute Number	TBC
		Date	10/03/2021
Now send complete form to Procurement Services signed and scanned			

10 March 2021		ITEM: 18 Decision: 110564
Cabinet		
Backing Thurrock: A Roadmap for Economic Recovery, Resilience and a Return to Growth		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Cllr Mark Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Planning		
Accountable Assistant Director: Gerard McCleave, Assistant Director Economic Growth & Partnerships		
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

Backing Thurrock is a roadmap for economic recovery, building resilience and a return to growth. It is an important part of the Council's response to the COVID pandemic and, alongside the Local Plan, forms the strategic framework to drive a return to growth that is infrastructure led, community driven and of high quality.

The strategy has been developed in two parts. Cabinet approved formal consultation on the first part in September 2020. The consultation is now complete, a final version of the roadmap has been prepared and is now presented for approval.

The second part of the strategy is the Action Plan which summarises the vision and goals and sets out priorities for the next 12 months. A first draft of the Action Plan has been prepared using information gathered through the consultation and from discussions with representatives of public, private and voluntary sector organisations in Thurrock. The Action Plan will be a live document that will flex and adapt as opportunities arise, actions are implemented and new ideas and initiatives are developed.

1. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

1.1 Note the outcome of the consultation on the Backing Thurrock Roadmap;

- 1.2 **Approve the final version of the Backing Thurrock Roadmap;**
- 1.3 **Approve the draft Backing Thurrock Action Plan which will be a live document subject to further engagement with anchor public, private and voluntary organisations to refine actions and agree delivery mechanisms;**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thurrock has a dynamic trading economy well placed to support economic growth and generate prosperity for residents and local businesses. However the COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on the economy with some sectors being particularly badly hit, the claimant count more than doubling and many businesses and individuals relying on temporary Government support.
- 2.2 Thurrock's determination to drive growth that benefits local people and businesses is as strong as ever but the strategic framework needs to be refreshed in light of the pandemic and the impact it has had on the economy.
- 2.3 Backing Thurrock is an important part of that strategic framework – a roadmap for economic recovery, building resilience and a return to growth focussing on people, place and prosperity in Thurrock. The strategy has been developed in two parts – the Roadmap and then the associated Action Plan. In September 2020 Cabinet approved the draft Roadmap for formal consultation. That consultation has now concluded and the results have been used to inform the final version of the Roadmap together with the draft Action Plan appended to this report.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The draft Roadmap presented to Cabinet in September 2020 included:
 - A snapshot of the local economy;
 - Some immediate actions to help the local economy during the pandemic;
 - A new approach to collaborating with our anchor public, private and voluntary groups to deliver market led growth;
 - Some themes to explore to improve resilience and support a return to growth in the medium and longer term.
- 3.2 Cabinet were supportive of the approach and agreed the recommendations in the report. There was particular interest in the proposal to expand collaboration between public, private and voluntary sector anchor organisations with an interest in and commitment to Thurrock. The proposals in the Roadmap reflect an approach being increasingly used elsewhere and involves working together to facilitate growth and generate wealth within the borough that benefits Thurrock in the long term. Building on existing initiatives and developing the collaborative approach is reflected in the priorities for the next 12 months in the draft Action Plan.

3.3 The formal consultation on Backing Thurrock began in October 2020. Given the ongoing COVID restrictions a number of different methods were used to share the strategy and gather feedback. The methods used to engage residents, businesses and key stakeholders included:

- Publication on the Council Consultation Portal and notification to subscribers: The consultation was formally launched at the beginning of November and ran until 10 January;
- Publicising the consultation online in various ways including to the more than 2,500 subscribers to the Business Buzz newsletter in Thurrock;
- Presentation of the roadmap and discussion at meetings of private, public and voluntary stakeholders including Thurrock Business Board, Economic Development an Skills Partnership, Joint Strategic Forum, Economically Vulnerable Taskforce;
- One to one discussions with representatives of key businesses, public institutions and voluntary sector partners;

Our online analytics shows that in total 248 viewed at least the first page of the consultation, of those 142 viewed more than one page included 91 who downloaded the document. There were 21 responses to the consultation via the portal. In addition a further 14 responses were received via one-to-one discussions and the group discussions, engaging around 49 people.

3.4 In general there was support for the approach outlined in the roadmap however a number of points were raised which resulted in some amendments. The main changes made include:

- An updated and expanded snapshot of the economy and overview of the economic impact of COVID;
- Highlighting the role of the Council in promoting and championing investment in Thurrock;
- Increased focus on factors other than COVID that will influence the return to growth in the longer term such as opportunities for Thurrock from green growth and EU exit;
- More focus on our important key sectors such as the Ports (and related activities) as well as recognising the potential of sectors forecast to grow significantly in the coming years like the creative industries, which continue to be one of the UK's fastest growing sectors and is worth over £115 billion to the UK economy;
- Greater focus on economically vulnerable groups and on working across Council and with partners to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from our economic success;
- Some changes and amendments to the themes around building resilience and a return to growth in the medium and longer term;
- An update to the next steps to reflect the consultation and development of the draft Action Plan;

The Roadmap forms Appendix 1 to this report.

Action Plan

- 3.5 The second part of the strategy is the Action Plan. The Action Plan is a live document that will flex and adapt as issues and opportunities arise, actions are implemented and new ideas and initiatives are developed. Our focus will be on delivering actions at pace and in partnership with Thurrock anchor organisations in order to maximise resources available and achieve the greatest impact.
- 3.6 A draft Action Plan forms Appendix 2 to this report and summarises our vision for growth in Thurrock: for Thurrock to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic and return to good growth that benefits our residents, businesses and the borough as a whole. We will work collaboratively with our anchor organisations and groups to consider new thinking, new ideas and new approaches to strengthen and grow our economy so that it is sustainable and inclusive, making Thurrock a more resilient place and positively contribute to securing the well-being of everyone in our community.
- 3.7 The draft Action Plan then sets out the three goals from the strategy, together with a number of priorities for the next twelve months:
- Enabling Economic Recovery focuses on understanding the pandemic and supporting businesses and residents to adapt and enable economic recovery to begin. Priorities include provision of advice, guidance and financial support to eligible businesses, helping people upskill and reskill and find work and supporting the reopening of the economy as restrictions ease;
 - Building resilience focuses on building a stronger economy where residents and businesses are helped to focus on their strengths and adapt to take advantage of new opportunities as growth resumes. Priorities include implementation of specific projects focussed on green growth and broadband, supporting the proposal to create a Thames Estuary Freeport and working to help the most vulnerable in the community tackle issues, develop their skills and find work;
 - Return to Growth which focuses on building new ways of working with our key businesses, stakeholders and anchor organisations to grow an economy that benefits everyone in the long term. Priorities include finding new ways of working with our anchor organisations to collaborate and generate wealth that stays in Thurrock, working with priority and growth sectors and with major developers to secure growth that benefits local businesses and creates jobs.
- 3.8 Greater collaborative working in the implementation of the actions will be important to maximise the positive impact of the plan. The draft Action Plan is subject to further engagement with anchor organisations, key stakeholders and within the Council to agree the lead partner for the implementation of

each action , how actions will be delivered, who will need to be involved and the timeframe within which delivery will take place. Conversations with Thurrock Business Board and other partners have already begun. The Council has a vital role at the centre of a 'whole system approach', acting as an agent of change to lead or support delivery of the priorities, coordinating activity among partners and ensuring the integration of actions and alignment of priorities to improve Thurrock's overall economic performance.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The strategic approach to drive growth in Thurrock needs to be refreshed in light of the COVID pandemic and the Council's determination to drive growth that is infrastructure led, community driven and of high quality.
- 4.2 The Backing Thurrock strategy has been prepared to refresh the approach to economic development. It includes some immediate actions that are already underway to support people and businesses in the short term and sets out a collaborative approach to building resilience and support a return to growth in the medium and longer term.

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

- 5.1 Initial discussions took place with Thurrock Business Board and with other key stakeholders to inform development of the draft Backing Thurrock Roadmap. The draft strategy was presented to Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to Cabinet for consideration before the formal consultation began in October 2020. .
- 5.2 The consultation is now complete. It involved posting the strategy on the Council Consultation Portal and promoting the consultation via email, on the Council website and to more than 2500 contacts on the Council's business newsletter database. Thurrock Business Board, Economic Development and Skills Partnership and representatives from anchor public, private and voluntary sector organisations and from other parts of the Council were also consulted.
- 5.3 Using the information gathered through the consultation process the roadmap has been amended and is now presented as a final document. The consultation process has also informed the objectives identified in the draft Action Plan. The Action Plan is subject to further engagement with Thurrock Business Board, anchor institutions and within the Council. It will be a live document that will flex and adapt as opportunities arise.
- 5.4 Both the Roadmap and the draft Action Plan were presented to Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February 2021.

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

- 6.1 The Backing Thurrock roadmap will support the Council's vision and priorities with a particular focus on prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations.
- 6.2 There will be an impact on other policies and priorities across the Council and appropriate links have been or are being made to other areas of work.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

It is anticipated that the roadmap and draft Action Plan will be managed within existing budgets and using external funding. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities

The roadmap and draft Action Plan clearly set out an intention to support the whole community including the most vulnerable and hardest to reach. The focus on a collaborative approach to market led growth is to be welcomed as a way to generating and retaining wealth in Thurrock and ensuring that all views are considered to ensure that challenges facing individuals and communities are overcome.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)

The Backing Thurrock Strategy should have a positive effect on other priorities including addressing health and wellbeing, education and skills, community development and civic pride.

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

- <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>
- <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>
- www.gov.uk
- www.obr.uk
- www.bankofengland.co.uk/

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Backing Thurrock: A roadmap for economic recovery, resilience and a return to growth
- Appendix 2: Draft Backing Thurrock: Action Plan

Report Author:

Stephen Taylor

Strategic Lead

Economic Development

This page is intentionally left blank

Backing Thurrock

A roadmap for economic recovery, resilience and a return to growth.

Appendix 1

Part 1: The Roadmap

Introduction

Thurrock is a place of opportunity and entrepreneurship.

Our motto translates as 'By Thames to all peoples of the world' and it tells our story. At the heart of the Thames Estuary to the east of London Thurrock is a dynamic trading economy, with natural advantages including its 18 miles of riverfront and proximity to the big UK markets in the capital and wider south-east as the basis to support growth.

Given our location it is unsurprising that sectors such as wholesale and retail, transportation and storage and construction are particularly important to the local economy. It is these sectors, alongside administration, education, health and social work that generate a significant number of our jobs. We continue to attract private sector investors who are looking for a place with potential to grow. We have a 'can do' attitude and an entrepreneurial spirit. In recent years we have seen high numbers of people who can work in work – either as employees or setting up their own businesses.

Snapshot of the Local Economy

There is a wealth of economic data available that can be used to shape the actions set out in the Action Plan that forms the second part of this document. The information in this section pulls some key indicators together to draw broad conclusions about Thurrock before, during and after the COVID pandemic.

Before COVID

In recent years Thurrock's economic prospects have been looking up:

- The economy has been growing: In 2013 the GVA (Gross Value Added) of the Thurrock economy was around £2.8billionⁱ. This has increased to around £4.1billion in 2019ⁱⁱ.
- The number of enterprises in Thurrock has been rising: The number of enterprises has grown from around 5,000 in 2015 to nearly 7,000 in 2020ⁱⁱⁱ. Over these five years the number has increased much faster than for Great Britain or the East of England^{iv}. The proportion of adults self-employed has also increased from 7.9% in 2015 to 10.5% in 2019^v.
- There have been growing numbers of residents who are working: In 2014/15 there were around 80,000 residents in employment. This has increased to nearly 85,000 in 2019/20^{vi}. In the meantime the number of workless households dropped from 15.2% (7,800 in 2015) to 11.3% (5,900 in 2019)^{vii}.
- The number of jobs in Thurrock has also increased from 68,000 in 2014 to 78,000 in 2018 and the jobs density increased from 0.64 to 0.72 – still lower than the East of England or Great Britain but increasing at a faster rate than in those areas^{viii}.
- The vast majority of businesses in Thurrock are small businesses employing fewer than 9 people. In 2015 there were 4,500 and by 2020 the number had increased to more than 6,300. At more than 92% of total businesses this is a higher proportion than for the East of England or Great Britain as a whole^{ix}.

- Pay has been improving both for residents and for all people working in Thurrock.
 - Gross weekly pay for people working full time in Thurrock has increased by nearly £90 per week over the past 5 years to over £571. The figure is broadly in line with the average across the East of England (£575)^x.
 - Thurrock residents have also been earning more wherever they work. Residents working full time have increased earnings from £563 to £632 per week over the same period which is higher than the average for the East of England and Great Britain as a whole^{xi}.
- There has been huge investment in Thurrock: Thurrock is benefitting from investment in homes, jobs and infrastructure. This includes some high profile private sector schemes including the expansion of the Port of Tilbury, the development of the DP World London Gateway and Logistics Park, Purfleet-on-Thames, expansion at Lakeside and at Thames Enterprise Park. There is potential for significant further investment and expansion.

Like many other local economies there were areas of concern. For example:

- The claimant count was increased - from 2.1% in Jan 2015 to 3% in Jan 2020. The claimant count was broadly in line with Great Britain as a whole but higher than the East of England average^{xii}. One reason for this might be changes in the benefits system and an expectation that more people will work.
- Thurrock has some areas that are among the most deprived in the country and in need of levelling up.
- The UK is widely recognised as having low productivity compared with similar economies elsewhere. In addition Thurrock has a productivity gap compared to the UK as a whole. The productivity gap is driven by factors such as skills levels, working practices, connectivity and infrastructure^{xiii}.
- Skill levels are lower and numbers working in managerial, professional and technical occupations are lower than across the East of England and Great Britain.

In summary the Thurrock economy was growing with employment and the number of businesses increasing along with wages (at least for full-time employees). There was significant interest in Thurrock as a place of opportunity and a determination to create a business friendly environment ready for continued investment and growth. On the other hand skill levels are lower than across the rest of the country, there is a productivity gap and relatively low numbers of people employed in what are traditionally seen as more secure and better paid jobs in management and professional occupations.

Economic Impact of the COVID Pandemic

Then the COVID-19 Pandemic hit. The full economic impact of the COVID pandemic will not be known for some time and there are many different forecasts about the severity and duration of the downturn, the impact it is having on particular businesses and on jobs and, most crucially, how long the impacts will last. However certain points are clear:

- There has been a significant contraction in the economy. The economy entered a deep recession in the first half of 2020. While there was a bounce back over the summer the last

quarterly estimate of GDP from the Office for National Statistics suggested GDP remains 8.6% lower than a year ago^{xiv}. Forecasts suggest that there will be growth in 2021 but not enough to offset the losses caused by the pandemic^{xv}.

- The claimant count has increased significantly. In January 2020 the claimant count for Thurrock stood at about 3% (just under 3,300 people). By November 2020 the figure had increased to 7.0% or more than 7,600 people. This is significantly higher than the claimant count for the east of England (5.4%) or for Great Britain as a whole (6.3%). Jobs in Thurrock have been less resilient to the economic shock^{xvi} and groups who have traditionally found it harder to access jobs could be disproportionately affected.
- Certain sectors have been particularly badly hit. Different sectors of the economy have been impacted in different ways. Retail, hospitality, culture and the arts, leisure and aviation are some sectors that have been badly hit. The most resilient parts of the economy are those where workers are most able to work from home.
- Some sectors and businesses have grown during the pandemic. The move to online retail and impact on the distribution industries are of particular note to Thurrock.
- Many businesses and workers are dependent on Government schemes designed to keep the economy afloat. There has been unprecedented action to support businesses and the workforce through the lockdown. Many staff remain furloughed and businesses are accessing Government grants. Freelancers and the self-employed are among the groups who have been particularly hard hit and sometimes struggled to access Government support.
- Some parts of Thurrock have particular issues with broadband connectivity making it more difficult for businesses and for employees to work remotely. There are relatively low rates of home working.
- Restrictions are likely to continue well into 2021. Restrictions have been subject to frequent changes in an effort to contain the virus and are expected to continue well into 2021. While a rebound in the economy is forecast for later in the year the ongoing impact on consumer behaviour and economic activity is unknown.
- There are likely to be lasting changes to the way the economy works. For example it seems likely that office based staff will continue to work remotely more often as businesses look to reduce expensive office space. The purpose and look of the high street has probably changed for the long term as people shop more online and high streets find a new purpose as the focus for a vibrant community - areas for people to live, where creative and cultural, hospitality and leisure businesses are to be found.

It won't be possible to save every job and every business and the economy is likely to work differently in the long term. Such a shock requires a different approach to economic development. A proactive and collaborative approach where decisive action is taken to make best use of resources available and help shore up the economy, protect business, key sectors and jobs in the short term.

Other Factors

While the focus is on recovery from COVID at the moment there are other factors that will influence a return to growth in the medium and long term, including:

- EU Exit. Now the UK has left the EU new opportunities will emerge, particularly for Thurrock - the 'UK Ports Capital' as the trading relationship between the UK and other places develop. Thurrock is uniquely positioned geographically and with its economic infrastructure to take advantage of new opportunities such as Freeport status.
- Levelling Up. Levelling up the economy is an important policy commitment for Government and will mean changes across the public sector that seek to rebalance the economy and 'level up' those areas that have been left behind in previous years. While the media has tended to focus on the implications for the north of England there are areas across the country that are particularly deprived and in need of support and investment. A number of parts of Thurrock have been recognised as in particular need which is why both Grays and Tilbury are eligible for investment from the Towns Fund.
- Green Growth. The Government has made a particular commitment to champion green growth and address climate change including legislation for net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. To meet the target there will be fundamental change in the economy and business opportunities arising from finding ways to reduce emissions to promoting new energy sources such as hydrogen.

Role of the Council

The Council has a vital role to play in leading work to support recovery, improve resilience and help the economy return to growth. The Council can:

- **Act as an analyser**, understanding the underlying state of the local economy, assessing the implications and using that information to share with others and to drive decision making.
- **Use its own clout as a major employer and business** to help drive economic recovery and growth through, for example, initiatives to drive up local recruitment and procurement of services from local businesses.
- **Act as an agent of change, helping to link the approach to interconnected priorities** such as addressing poverty, ill health, social isolation, resilience in the voluntary and community sector among others to drive better outcomes for local residents and the economy.
- **Promote and champion investment** in projects that improve the business environment and achieve Government objectives such as levelling up communities left behind in recent years.

This isn't something that the Council can or should do alone. As a key anchor institution with a responsibility for Thurrock as a whole the Council has a role as a leading organisation to encourage and facilitate a wider approach with stakeholders to support and grow the economy.

In recent years Thurrock has developed a proud tradition of co-designing services with stakeholders. From the 'your place your voice' consultation informing the Local Plan to the Stronger Together Thurrock partnership the value of developing a shared vision and acting together is well recognised. We need to take a similar approach working with key businesses, with public sector institutions like DWP and the NHS and with the voluntary sector to harness the power of collaboration to shape and deliver this plan.

We have to recognise that there are no easy answers, that resources will be tight and that intervention may need to be long term but the fundamentals haven't changed – Thurrock is a fantastic location, has good access to markets for goods and services, boasts an entrepreneurial culture and a large number of people who are committed to working life.

There are opportunities out there and we need to be brave, work together and grab them with both hands. In short this plan is a call to work together and back Thurrock.

Recovery: Our immediate actions

In the short term we need to focus on rescue and recovery.

The Council has been working hard throughout the pandemic to support the borough and its residents, from help for the most vulnerable in the community to making use of Council resources and Government initiatives to support businesses in Thurrock.

The immediate actions that the Council has taken to support the economic rescue and recovery include:

- Delivering financial support
 - Since the start of the pandemic the Council has been responsible for distributing many of the Government grants available to support the business community. So far more than £25m has been given to businesses across Thurrock who have been adversely impacted.
 - The Council has also implemented the business rate reliefs for eligible businesses and deferred payment of business rates until new bills could be sent early in the pandemic.
 - Implementing its own initiatives including deferral of rental payments on commercial property owned by the Council for three months.
- Gathering data to understand impact and to raise issues with Government. Working closely with local businesses including Thurrock Business Board to understand the impact on the local economy and to inform discussions with Government.
- Providing easy access to advice and guidance for local businesses. Sending regular updates to more than 2500 local businesses who have signed up for the business newsletter, promoted advice and guidance and opportunities for support via social media and tried to help businesses asking for information.
- Supporting the reopening of the High Street in the summer – introducing signage, reviewing queueing systems and talking to local business contacts to find out if and when they plan to reopen.
- Protecting the public, businesses and their employees by:
 - employing staff to help maintain social distancing measures at particular pinch points
 - helping businesses understand and comply with guidance on reopening
 - taking action to encourage and enforce the rules when required
 - helping businesses find the wellbeing advice and support they need to help their employees

This is a positive start, but there is more we can do and will do to help. We need to work with our residents, our business community and our voluntary and community sector to:

- Invest in gathering economic intelligence and insight so it can identify and respond to developing issues.

- Planning for local outbreaks. The Council's public health team have developed a Local Outbreak Control Plan working with partners to ensure there are effective systems in place to identify the source of an outbreak, to track and trace people who may be affected, to shut down the problem and protect local residents and the rest of the local economy.
- Help people find work. Being in work is important for financial reasons but can also have a big positive impact on health and wellbeing. Vulnerable groups like care leavers and those with long term health conditions are particularly at risk as unemployment rises and therefore an immediate focus should be on connecting local people to local jobs. Promoting and expanding initiatives like Thurrock Opportunities – www.thurrockopportunities.co.uk – to help people find local jobs, apprenticeship opportunities and training courses, using initiatives like Kickstart to help people find work should be an immediate focus.
- Support our local economy. We need to work together to develop new systems that help us all to buy locally, recruit locally, supply locally and to train locally.

We will continue to monitor and explore other opportunities to help our economy recover from the pandemic.

This is something that everyone can help with.

We all want to see our local businesses recover and new business emerge. We all want to see our family, friends, neighbours and colleagues in good quality jobs. We all want to see the wealth created in Thurrock spent in Thurrock, levelling up to benefit us all.

We have seen the community in Thurrock pull together and support each other through the lockdown, from the volunteers who have helped their vulnerable friends and neighbours to the fantastic key workers who have kept everything running.

Everyone needs to do their bit to help the local economy recover.

Our Vision and Approach

In the medium to longer term we need to reframe our approach to economic development and growth. In these unprecedented times we need to realise the potential of local Government to act as an agent of change and a leader of place and collaborate with others to reshape our local economy, address the challenges we face and realise the fantastic growth potential we have.

Our Vision for Growth

Thurrock's motto – 'By Thames to all peoples of the world' reflects our comparative strengths and unique selling points.

Our prime position next to London and the markets of the south east, our great transport links, our scope to export and import through our ports, our employment land availability all point to Thurrock having fantastic potential to grow in a way that benefits everyone. Initiatives like the development of Freeports and the drive to accelerate delivery of the Local Plan are opportunities to drive growth in a way that will benefit residents.

The area has already seen significant private sector investment in recent years and there is commitment to much more at our major Ports, Thames Enterprise Park, Purfleet-on-Thames and other places across the borough. We are part of the system that is already delivering for the UK economy and point to our strengths as a place to do business.

Thurrock's level of ambition and determination to drive growth that benefits local people is stronger than ever. However we do not want to see growth for the sake of it. We are determined that growth in Thurrock is infrastructure led, community driven and of high quality. It must deliver real benefits for our residents and for our business community who have shown a commitment to Thurrock by investing in the area.

Physical change and infrastructure requirements including new homes and amenities in the borough will be guided by development of the new Local Plan, policy changes and the regeneration projects led by the council and other organisations across the borough. It will be important to ensure that there are close ties between these plans for physical change in the borough and the Backing Thurrock Action Plan.

This plan is about people, place and prosperity. It focuses on how the Council and its partners can help residents find good jobs with opportunities to progress, how we help our businesses adapt to new technology and to changes in demand, how we help our economy to become more productive and resilient, greener and wealthier. Most of all we need to work with our businesses to help them take advantage of the opportunities that are out there.

These are laudable aims in themselves but we also want to drive growth because of the positive impact on other priorities we all share: Improving the health and wellbeing of residents, helping to reduce poverty, tackle debt and to level up our communities, supporting investment not only in roads and rail but also in homes, schools, health, cultural amenities and green spaces. Most importantly we want to support proud, vibrant communities.

Alongside our immediate work to recover from COVID we need to focus on:

- **Resilience:** Building an inclusive economy, helping people and businesses to plan for and adapt to changes in the economy, providing tailored support for vulnerable groups, support the levelling up agenda and take advantage of opportunities as they arise

- **Returning to growth:** Strengthening our key sectors and taking advantage of new opportunities created by long term changes in the economy such as green growth

What we do and how we do it will need to be defined with our partners. We want to collaborate with our businesses, our partners and our residents and develop a collaborative approach to driving resilience and growth. We want to work with the other anchor institutions in the borough to understand market needs and to facilitate growth and wealth creation that will benefit local people.

In short, we want to work together to Back Thurrock.

Collaborating to facilitate market led growth

We want to collaborate with other public sector institutions, private businesses and the voluntary sector – Thurrock’s anchor institutions that are rooted in our borough, unlikely to move and are committed to Thurrock. Our Thurrock anchor institutions have a vested interest in Thurrock and we can work collectively to facilitate growth and benefit the whole economy.

There are five areas that we particularly want to explore:

- **Recruitment** - good quality jobs with prospects: by working together with key anchor institutions in Thurrock can have a defining impact on the prospects for local people – recruiting from local areas, particularly more deprived communities and building progression routes in work. We also want to explore how we can best help the most vulnerable and those hardest by the pandemic.
- **Collaborative procurement:** working together we can explore developing local supply chains that will support businesses, the voluntary and community sector, social and micro-enterprises and employment, helping local people benefit more from the economy. Many organisations, including the Council are looking at how they can adapt procurement policies and use social value frameworks to support the local economy and secure wider benefits.
- **Nurturing and supporting local businesses.** We can focus on nurturing locally owned businesses including social and micro enterprises that are more likely to employ, buy and invest locally.
- **Investing in Thurrock.** Active promotion of Thurrock as an area for investment - focused on key sectors and the responsible businesses we want to attract to contribute to the local economy.
- **Using assets to enable the economic recovery:** whilst recognising the importance of return on assets considering how land and property assets held by anchor institutions can be best used to enable economic recovery and growth.

By collaborating we can achieve more than the sum of the parts. Through our intervention we can facilitate the market and generate jobs and growth that creates wealth within Thurrock and that stays invested in the area we can also reduce demand for public services through positive early intervention before needs become acute.

Through collaboration we want to identify needs and develop actions around the foundations of economic growth.

The Foundations of Growth

We have identified five foundations for economic growth.

- **Business Advice and Support**

We want to work with the business community and business service providers to disseminate information and advice, address gaps in provision, strengthen networks between businesses and support collaboration in areas of shared interest such as developing supply chains.

Through our business advice and support we need to promote and improve productivity. The UK is less productive than comparator economies and as a result the country is poorer than it might otherwise be. Before COVID addressing the productivity gap was the key thrust of the Government's industrial policy.

We also need to support and help businesses better understand the changes resulting from leaving the EU – both in terms of the changing relationship with Europe but also to help gear up and take advantage of opportunities to generate future export-led growth.

- **Skills Training and Employment**

We want to develop opportunities for lifelong learning, addressing skills gaps and encouraging ongoing learning to develop an adaptable resilient business community and workforce.

We also want to help local people find good jobs. We need to work together to promote local employment opportunities and to help drive local recruitment. We need to understand and overcome the barriers to employment and to work with particularly vulnerable groups such as care leavers and those with health conditions to help them realise their potential. Any initiatives for these groups should be integrated into and reflect the wider changes happening in their lives as they make the transition into adulthood.

We also need to recognise that work is about more than financial benefit. There are clear links between work and improving health and wellbeing, just as there are wider consequences of unemployment and deprivation such as exploitation, offending and the most vulnerable losing out.

- **Sectors and supply chains**

As the economy moves from recovery and returns to growth key sectors that have growth potential, high value, are resilient and offer clean growth should be targeted with public intervention to facilitate market led growth and to attract inward investment. We have data on our most important and key growth sectors already but exploring potential with people already working in these sectors and understanding how we can best support them to grow is key.

For example: -

- The Government's Freeports initiative is a real opportunity to work with our Ports and play to our strengths as an area to attract new investment, to level up our left behind

communities and generate jobs growth in the area.

- Working with our neighbours on initiatives like the Thames Estuary Production Corridor and Creative Estuary programme are an opportunity to showcase the potential for growing sectors like creative and cultural industries to invest in Thurrock. While parts of the sector have been hard hit by COVID other areas like film, TV and gaming are booming.

Alongside a targeted approach to key sectors developing strong local supply chains to service particularly those larger businesses with growth potential will further encourage and support growth in the borough. Working through supply chains there are also opportunities to influence adaption to new technology, enhance training and assist with other objectives like social inclusion.

- **A cleaner, greener economy**

Responding to climate change and reducing carbon emissions will be of continued importance to individuals, businesses and to Government. It is likely that national initiatives will drive the response to climate change but locally we can focus on the opportunities created for green growth. However addressing climate change is a real opportunity for the local economy – to innovate, adapt and to develop new businesses and markets.

There will need to be a close relationship with the Local Plan and with other initiatives in the Council and elsewhere to develop the infrastructure required to develop a cleaner and greener economy.

- **Civic Pride and Community Engagement**

Civic Pride in Thurrock's growth story and support from the local community will be essential to deliver on our ambitions and create the vibrant, dynamic society that helps everyone to realise their potential. If we want businesses and residents to feel ownership and to support the local economy we need to use approaches like those described in the collaborative communities framework to review and build upon our ways of engaging to bring people in to influence our work.

Building Resilience and a Return to Growth

In the medium and longer term we need to focus on building resilience to change and a return to growth.

Resilience

Resilience is key to ensuring that individuals and organisations in Thurrock are in a position to adapt to change and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by Thurrock's location and the significant investment there is in the area.

It is also key to ensuring we have an inclusive economy, that people left behind have the opportunity to benefit from work, that businesses embrace new technology and improve productivity, that areas left behind are in a position to take advantage of changes and new opportunities and have the chance to 'level up'.

Over the lifetime of this strategy we want to work with colleagues across the public, private and voluntary sectors to explore some of the issues associated with building a resilient economy including:

Resilience among individuals:

- Helping to address skills shortages – both generic (like digital skills) and job specific, preparing local people for the jobs available in Thurrock now and that will be created in the coming years in our growth sectors.
- Linking local people to local employment opportunities and help career progression within Thurrock.
- Joining up services to take a holistic approach to address multiple issues. Linking skills and jobs with debt management, tackling offending, housing opportunities, health and wellbeing services, childcare provision.
- Paying particular attention to our most vulnerable residents such as care leavers and those with health issues so they can realise their potential and find rewarding work.

Resilient businesses:

- Helping local businesses to network and trade with each other.
- Working with local businesses to improve productivity, embrace new technology, improve digital connectivity and prepare for changes to the way we work such as automation and decarbonisation.
- Helping business identify where they can add value and persuade local people to buy locally, making sure that more of the wealth generated in Thurrock is retained in Thurrock.

Resilient economy:

- Improving infrastructure to support the economy - transport links, digital connectivity.
- Taking advantage of opportunities arising from public policy changes such as leaving the EU or the creation of Freeports or the drive for green growth to support and grow our economy.
- Taking advantage of opportunities arising from the levelling up agenda so everyone has the opportunity to benefit from growth.
- Building pride in what Thurrock has to offer – recognising what we're good at and focussing on the sectors with most potential.

A Return to Growth

The significant investment in the economy in recent years shows the confidence of private investors and public institutions in the potential of the area.

While the pandemic has resulted in a marked downturn Thurrock is well placed to weather the storm and to return to economic growth. Some of the themes we want to explore around the return to growth over the lifetime of this strategy include:

- Building the case for investment in public infrastructure to help the economy to grow.
- Taking advantage of our position on the river and the opportunities afforded by the Ports to drive growth.
- How we can support businesses in our key sectors and those in growth sectors with the most potential to grow in Thurrock.
- What we can do to promote green growth and encourage our local businesses to reduce their carbon emissions.
- Addressing the productivity gap, adapting to new technology and automation while ensuring our workers have the transferable skills to find new jobs.
- Promoting Thurrock and selling ourselves as a location for higher value businesses that will support the local economy and create good jobs.
- Building an economy where more wealth generated in Thurrock is spent in Thurrock.

Next Steps: a call to action

This document sets out the context and the approach we want to take to address some immediate priorities and to build resilience and a return to growth in the medium and longer term.

Working with our anchor institutions, businesses and with our stakeholders the vision and approach set out in this document will be used to form goals, objectives and actions set out in the Action Plan - the second part of this strategy. The Action Plan will be a live document, flexing and adapting as issues and opportunities arise. Given resources are tight it will need to prioritise and focus on areas where there is an opportunity to have most impact.

A first draft Action Plan has been prepared and is appended to this document. The plan reflects the initial priorities and opportunities identified during and through the consultation process. Further conversations will help shape and sharpen this first draft and a more fundamental review of priorities and actions will be carried out on an annual basis as opportunities arise.

Delivery of actions in the plan begins immediately.

In the meantime there are things we can all do to help rebuild our economy:

- We can buy from local businesses, we can try to recruit locally, and we can look for local suppliers of goods and services. All these things will help local businesses and jobs and ensure that wealth created in Thurrock stays in Thurrock.
- We can make sure we comply with social distancing rules and guidance, we can quarantine ourselves if we have COVID symptoms and we can support local track and trace services to help minimise the risks.
- We can start using our most vulnerable local facilities and businesses again as they are able to reopen. We can begin to eat out, enjoy a drink, watch a film, get a haircut and see a show. Guidance needs to be followed but as the economy starts to reopen we can support it.

Let's back Thurrock together.

ⁱ Paragraph 3.2, Thurrock Economic Growth Strategy, Shared Intelligence, 2015

ⁱⁱ Page 12, South Essex 2050, Work Advance and Oxford Economics, 2020

ⁱⁱⁱ NOMIS Local Authority Profile Number of Enterprises Time Series – taken from Inter-departmental business register (ONS)

^{iv} NOMIS Local Authority Profile Number of Enterprises Time Series – taken from Inter-departmental business register (ONS)

^v NOMIS, Local Authority Profile, Economically Active Time Series – taken from ONS Annual Population Survey (ONS)

^{vi} NOMIS Local Authority Profile, Economically Active In Employment Time Series – taken from ONS Annual Population Survey (ONS)

^{vii} NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Workless Households Time Series – taken from ONS Annual Population Survey (ONS)

^{viii} NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Jobs Density Time Series – taken from ONS jobs density (ONS)

^{ix} NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Micro Enterprises Time Series- from Inter departmental Business Register (ONS)

^x NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Earnings by Workplace Time Series – from ONS annual survey of hours and earnings

^{xi} NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Earnings by Resident Time Series - ONS annual survey of hours and earnings resident analysis

^{xii} NOMIS Local Authority Profile – Claimant Count Time Series – from ONS claimant count

^{xiii} Oxford Economics SE2050 Analysis

^{xiv} www.ons.gov.uk

^{xv} HM Treasury Forecasts for the UK economy – a comparison of independent forecasts December 2020

^{xvi} NOMIS Claimant Count Statistics

Backing Thurrock

A roadmap for economic recovery, resilience and a return to growth.

Appendix 2

Page 161

DRAFT

Our Vision: is for Thurrock to recover from the economic impact of the pandemic and return to good growth that benefits our residents, businesses and the borough as a whole. We will work collaboratively with our anchor organisations and groups to consider new thinking, new ideas and new approaches to strengthen and grow our economy so that it is sustainable and inclusive, making Thurrock a more resilient place and positively contribute to securing the well-being of everyone in our community.

Goal 1: Enabling Economic Recovery

We want to enable recovery by understanding the impact of the pandemic and providing advice and support to help residents to find work, to help our businesses adapt and our economy to reopen safely

Goal 2: Building Resilience

We want to build a stronger economy where residents and businesses can help themselves adapt to change, focus on their strengths and take advantage of new opportunities

Goal 3: A Return to Growth

We want to build on our strengths, collaborate with our anchor organisations and the community to tackle inequalities, generate wealth and ensure people have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from our economic success

Our priorities for the next 12 months are...

1.1 Continue to gather information to understand the impact of COVID, provide a stronger evidence base for actions and for monitoring progress and impact.

1.2 Provide information, advice and guidance to our business community directly and through the local Growth Hub to help them adapt and survive the pandemic.

1.3 Make prompt payments to businesses entitled to financial support and promote early invoice payment to help businesses through the COVID pandemic.

1.4 Help protect the community and local businesses from COVID by encouraging COVID safe practices, introducing local track and trace systems and supporting the vaccination programme.

1.5 Help local people, particularly those from vulnerable groups or who have lost jobs through the pandemic, to re skill and upskill and find work.

1.6 Developing and implementing new initiatives that support the reopening of the economy and encourage residents and organisations to buy locally, recruit locally, supply locally and to train locally.

2.1 Help people understand and access careers advice and opportunities to retrain - building on the You Train You Gain initiative.

2.2 Promote the safeguarding and development of apprenticeships to support particularly young people and vulnerable people.

2.3 Take a holistic approach to supporting the most vulnerable in the community, tackling inequalities and integrating skills and employment projects with for example DWP, NHS, criminal justice, wellbeing and support services.

2.4 Promote business networking opportunities and identify new initiatives to encourage business to business sales.

2.5 Explore a work place wellbeing programme to support companies

2.6 Deliver the LOCASE scheme to help businesses reduce their carbon emissions.

2.7 Improve access to fast broadband and to digital skills training for businesses and for residents through LFFN and other initiatives.

2.8 Support the development of a bid to form a Thames Estuary Freeport.

3.1 Work with our Business Board and anchor institutions to establish new ways of working together by building on our strengths and collaborating to increase local recruitment, develop local supply chains, attract public and private inward investment and make best use of assets.

3.2 Working with our key growth sectors to develop sector specific action plans to help address challenges and encourage growth.

3.3 Examine the need for a refreshed employability programme specific to the needs of Thurrock.

3.4 Work with neighbouring local authorities and with ASELA to develop and implement growth initiatives across south Essex.

3.5 Work with partners to identify strategic interventions in Thurrock and develop a project pipeline ready to submit bids for funding as opportunities arise (e.g. Towns Fund).

3.6 Promote publicly funded business growth initiatives and grants programmes with our local business community.

3.7 Work with developers to secure benefits for local businesses and jobs for local residents.

10 March 2021	ITEM: 19 Decision: 110565
Cabinet	
Asset Disposals	
Wards and communities affected: All Wards	Key Decision: Key decision
Report of: Councillor Mark Coxshall, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning	
Accountable Assistant Director: Michelle Thompson – Acting Assistant Director of Property	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark – Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This report sets out proposals for the disposal of property assets during the next 12 month period. It is government policy that local authorities should dispose of surplus and under-used land and property wherever possible.

The Council generally has fairly wide discretion to dispose of its assets (such as land or buildings) in any manner it wishes. When disposing of assets, the Council is subject to statutory provisions, in particular, to the overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for the disposal. This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

The way the Council manages its land/property assets can have a significant impact both on the quality of services delivered to the public and the local environment. Effective asset management is essential in bringing 'agility' to land and property assets so that the delivery of the Council's visions and objectives are realised in a sustainable manner, at the right time and on budget.

The Council has commenced an Asset Review of all Council Assets under the broad headings of Operational, Community and other assets categorised under a 3R's approach Reuse, Retain and Release.

The assets reviewed represent a mix of locations, uses and a variation of those that could be short, medium or long term as well as being disposed of by private treaty, public auction or tender.

The Asset Review considers the business case for disposing of any assets that are no longer of any use to it and is unlikely to be in the future or which provides only a benefit that is proportionate to the opportunity cost of the capital tied up in the asset. Each asset disposal is treated on its own merits and nothing in this report will bind the Council to a particular course of action in respect of a disposal.

This report brings forward the first nine assets for disposal whilst also setting out a policy to inform disposal and a draft process when considering assets suitable for meeting the local and national priority of additional housing.

1. Recommendations:

1.1. That Cabinet approve the disposal policy as proposed in Appendix 1;

1.2. That Cabinet approve the immediate release and declare surplus the properties as shown in Appendix 2;

1.3. Subject to agreement to release assets in Appendix 2, delegate authority of the disposal to Corporate Director of Finance Governance and Property in consultation with the Leader and the completion of a delegated authority decision report to permit disposal; and

1.4. That Cabinet note the approach towards identifying the route to additional housing as set out in Appendix 3.

2. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

2.1. In considering any disposal the Asset Review would have to consider the assets against the table below to consider the rationale for Reuse, Retain or Release.

WEIGHTING	1	2	3	4	5
Type of Asset	Core Business	Operational	Strategic holding	Investment	For Disposal
Operational Fit	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
Utilisation	Very High	High	Reasonable	Poor	Inadequate
EPC	A/B	C/D	E	F	G
Condition	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
Occupation Costs	Economical	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Uneconomical
Best use value	Yes	Partly	50 -50	No	Inappropriate
Good neighbour	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Bad
Cost to vacate	Low	Affordable	Marginal	Unaffordable	High
Market demand	Strong	Good	Probable	Unlikely	
Others					

2.2. This report sets out the options available for the council's portfolio that are

then assessed as surplus or under-used assets.

2.3. All assets for potential release would require further scrutiny by the Property Team, property occupiers (where appropriate/applicable) and Members. Further scrutiny would result in the “release list” being evaluated and prioritised according to factors such as:

- Cost of holding;
- Potential value from disposal;
- Ease of /or constraint on sale;
- Site preparation considerations/de-risking and associated costs; and
- Any wider economic or social benefit of retaining.

2.4. Once this has been assessed further disposals of assets maybe brought forward.

3. Option 1: Do nothing – Retain the assets, Business as usual, little need or opportunity for change identified

3.1. These assets have been assessed as needing to be retained to support Council business in their existing position. However, this is not say that no further work is required on these premises. They will continue to be maintained and in some instances will require improvement or refurbishment at some future stage. Furthermore, as the review process is established within the Council, their continuing use and occupation will be subject to periodic review and their status

4. Option 2: Reuse – For different services or more intensive or changed use

4.1. Many of the assets within this category are subject to ongoing review by the occupying service directorate and it is envisaged proposals will either come forward at the conclusion of those reviews (e.g. leisure, environmental) or through further discussion between the Service and Corporate Property.

5. Option 3 Release - Dispose of the site immediately or develop for housing

5.1. A review has been undertaken of the properties listed in Appendix 2 and it is recommended that they are released.

5.2. A rationalisation programme to continue with the reviewing of assets, releasing those no longer required in a structured manner to realise capital and or support wider regeneration or housing via affordable housing requirements.

5.3. Release in some instances will free the Council from poor performing properties from a compliance, economic and statutory requirement.

6. Housing Delivery

- 6.1. Appendix 3 sets out the options for disposal when the assets would be suitable for housing delivery. The main options include:
- Straight disposal to the private sector;
 - Joint venture with a private or public sector partner;
 - The Housing Revenue Account; or
 - Thurrock Regeneration Delivery.
- 6.2. The process for determining the chosen route will be subject to further reports to Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet on Housing Delivery.

7. Reasons for Recommendation

- 7.1. The sites listed in Appendix 2 have been considered against the set criteria above.
- 7.2. The assets recommended for disposal are in the freehold ownership of Thurrock Borough Council. The assets are not required for future service provision or regeneration initiatives and would therefore provide an opportunity for the Council to realise a capital receipt.
- 7.3. The capital receipts will support and assist towards any funding gaps in the MTFS.

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

- 8.1. There has been consultation with services on the proposed assets in Appendix 2. This report will also be considered by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 9 March 2021.

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

- 9.1. Assets that are not required for the delivery of council services directly will add benefit to the residents through alternative ownership be it for additional housing or a community facility.

10. Implications

- 10.1. Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
**Corporate Director of Finance, Governance
and Property**

There are two distinct financial benefits from the disposal of surplus assets. Firstly, assets can incur running costs and so this creates a saving. Secondly, income received from disposal, a capital receipt, can be used to meet the costs of transformational activity and also pay for capital expenditure, thus avoiding the need for prudential borrowing and the associated revenue costs.

The disposals included within this paper will contribute towards the target set out within the budget papers for 2021/22.

10.2. **Legal**

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director of Law and Governance,
and Monitoring Officer**

The Council is generally empowered to dispose of assets which are underperforming or surplus to requirements. Each asset will need to be checked to ensure its formal ownerships and appropriation enable general disposal with terms to be confirmed. The policy in Appendix 1 sets out the most common restrictions on the management of Council assets and highlights these areas.

A final analysis of the legal title and terms of disposal will be included in the disposal decision report.

10.3. **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
**Team Manager – Community Development and
Equalities**

The Asset Disposal Policy sets out considerations for bringing agility to land and property assets so that the delivery of the Council's goals and objectives are realised in a sustainable manner, at the right time and on budget. The policy itself will be the subject of a Community Equality Impact Assessment to mitigate the risk of negative impact on citizens and communities. Where community assets are identified for disposal, the process set out for the implementation of the CAT Policy and principles of the Collaborative Communities Framework will be applied, this includes the completion of CEIA's on a case by case basis, engagement with the voluntary and community sector, and an assessment of social value that includes support for Thurrock's recovery from COVID-19 and building resilience within communities and voluntary sector networks.

10.4. **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, and Impact on Looked After Children)**

Assets are used for a range of purposes including direct service delivery, use by community groups and residents.

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

- There are various working papers within the property and service sections.

12. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Disposal Policy
- Appendix 2 – Properties considered for immediate disposal
- Appendix 3 – Housing Delivery Options

Report Author:

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property

**POLICY ON
THE DISPOSAL OF SURPLUS & UNDERUSED LAND & PROPERTY
OWNED BY THE COUNCIL**

1. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- 1.1. It is government policy that local authorities should dispose of surplus and under-used land and property wherever possible. The Council has fairly wide discretion to dispose of its assets (such as land or buildings) in any manner it wishes. When disposing of assets, the Council is subject to statutory provisions, in particular, to the overriding duty, under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, to obtain the best consideration that can be reasonably obtained for the disposal. This duty is subject to certain exceptions that are set out in the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.
- 1.2. The way the Council manages its land/property assets can have a significant impact both on the quality of services delivered to the public and the local environment. Effective asset management is essential in bringing 'agility' to land and property assets so that the delivery of the Council's goals and objectives are realised in a sustainable manner, at the right time and on budget.
- 1.3. The Council considers the business case for disposing of any assets that are no longer of any use to it and is unlikely to be in the future or which provides only a benefit that is disproportionate to the opportunity cost of the capital tied up in the asset.
- 1.4. Each asset disposal is treated on its own merits and nothing in this Policy will bind the Council to a particular course of action in respect of a disposal. Alternative methods of disposal not specifically mentioned in this Policy may be used where appropriate, subject to obtaining the necessary authority (see section 9 below).
- 1.5. This Policy:
 - sets out the procedure to be adopted in connection with the disposal of surplus and under-used assets and ensures that requests to purchase Council owned assets are dealt with in a fair and consistent manner and that any person who may have an interest in making an offer to purchase, has the opportunity to do so in circumstances no less favourable than anybody else; and
 - distinguishes requests for small areas of land that may be considered for sale by private treaty and larger areas with development potential that should be sold on the open market.
- 1.6. Although this Policy will normally be followed, there will be occasions where the procedure may need to be changed, particularly for larger, more complex land/property sales.

2. THE 'SURPLUS' TEST

Land/property will be deemed surplus to the Council's requirements where:

- (a) it makes no contribution to the delivery of the Council's services, strategic or corporate objectives;
- (b) an alternative site has been identified which would be more cost effective in delivering the Council's services, strategic or corporate objectives;
- (c) it has no potential for strategic or regeneration/redevelopment purposes in the near future;
- (d) it will not contribute to the provision of a sustainable pattern of development;
- (e) it makes no contribution to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, including making no contribution to helping to improve biodiversity.

The Council is required to publish details of land/property which it has declared surplus to requirements¹.

3. THE 'UNDER-USED' TEST

Land/property will be deemed to be under-used if:

- (a) part of the site is vacant and is likely to remain vacant for the foreseeable future;
- (b) the income being generated from the site is consistently below that which could be achieved from:
 - (i) disposing of the site and investing the income;
 - (ii) an alternative use; or
 - (iii) intensifying the existing use;
- (c) only part of the site is used for service delivery and this could be delivered from an alternative site;
- (d) It makes no contribution to protecting and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment, including making no contribution to helping to improve biodiversity.

In the case of open spaces, amenity areas and similar sites, the under-used test should also consider the 'community value's set out in the Localism Act 2011 and specifically Community Right to Bid legislation*, in addition to visual amenity and not be limited solely to income generation or whether the site is vacant etc.

¹Local Government Transparency Code 2015

*The Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 (further info for author here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2012/9780111525791/contents>)

The Council is required to publish details of land/property which it has deemed to be under-used².

4. MEANING OF DISPOSAL

For the purposes of this Policy, a disposal means any freehold disposal, by sale or exchange, of Council owned land/property (including buildings) and any disposal by the granting of a lease or licence for a period greater than seven years. Leases of seven years or less or assignment of a term which has not more than seven years to run are not covered by this Policy, as they are exempt from the statutory requirement to obtain best consideration.

Disposal takes place at the time of completion and not exchange³.

5. MEANING OF BEST CONSIDERATION

‘Best consideration’ means achieving maximum ‘value’ from the disposal, not just maximum price. Disposal at less than market value will incorporate assessment of social value and specifically the ‘promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area’ [see section 1.2 of Appendix 1].

Unlike private and commercial landowners, a local authority is in the position of a trustee in relation to the land that it holds on behalf of the community and has a statutory duty to sell land at the best price reasonably obtainable. The Council will only be able to demonstrate that it achieved the best consideration by obtaining an appropriate valuation of the land.⁴

6. MEANS OF IDENTIFYING SURPLUS OR UNDER-USED LAND/PROPERTY

Surplus or under-used land/property may be considered for disposal:

- (a) following an asset review;
- (b) following the identification of development opportunities;
- (c) through a corporate property portfolio review;
- (d) through the declaration of specific sites as being surplus to requirements;
- (e) through the Local Plan designation;
- (f) following a direct approach from an interested party;
- (g) where the disposal helps to deliver other Council objectives e.g. the provision of housing in the borough;
- (h) where management of the land/property is considered suitable for community ownership or has been determined as an ‘asset of community value’.

²Local Government Transparency Code 2015

³Section 128(2) Local Government Act 1972 and R (on the application of Structadene Ltd) v Hackney LBC [2001] 2 All ER 225

⁴(Whitstable Society v Canterbury City Council [2017] EWHC 254 (Admin) (15 February 2017))

*Where an under-used asset is generating an income, a cost/benefit analysis must be carried out to establish whether it is in the Council's best interests to dispose of the site.

7. DISPOSAL CRITERIA

7.1. **Open space (including, parks, playing fields & informal open spaces (excluding amenity land on Council housing estates) of 'public value' whether or not there is public access to it**– assets in this category are considered to be valuable community resources, to be enjoyed by the wider community. Open space also enhances the quality of urban life, the character of residential areas, the environment etc. There will be a general presumption against declaring these assets as surplus/under-used unless:

1. alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made in the locality; or
 2. the area in question no longer provides a valued opportunity for sport, recreation or leisure; or
 3. there is an excess of provision taking into account the long term recreation and amenity value of such provision; or
 4. sport, recreation and leisure facilities can be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;
 5. there is over provision in the area;
 6. the asset is required for the regeneration of the area.
- (a) The Council is required by law to advertise the disposal of land designated as 'public open space' in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and to consider any objections received. No final decision about the disposal will be made until any objections have been considered by Cabinet, as the response may be material to the decision. Public response may also be an important factor in any determination by the Secretary of State of an application by the Council for specific consent to the disposal.
- (b) There will be a general presumption against disposal of land designated as 'Green Space' through the Local Plan.

Unlike private and commercial landowners, a local authority is in the position of a trustee in relation to the land that it holds on behalf of the community and has a statutory duty to sell land at the best price reasonably obtainable. The Council will only be able to demonstrate that it achieved the best consideration by obtaining an appropriate valuation of the land.⁵

72. **Amenity land** - certain rights, environmental or economic conditions may preclude the sale of amenity land for example:

- (a) the land is subject to rights of way over it;

- (b) the land is a landscaping feature of the local environment, or designated public open space;
- (c) sale of the land would incur additional costs for the Council (for example, the re-siting of lamp posts or telephone cables) unless the applicant is willing to finance the additional costs (payable in advance);
- (d) the land has been identified for future regeneration or development by the Council;
- (e) following a request to purchase amenity land, a review identifies future regeneration or development opportunities for the Council;
- (f) the sale of the land may prejudice future development by the Council;
- (g) there are management or other issues that would cause inconvenience to the Council if the land was to be sold.

Approaches from private individuals to buy Council owned amenity land (e.g. green space land on council housing estates) to benefit their existing residential property will be considered where:

- there is a broader community benefit to the disposal e.g. a rationalisation of small parcels of 'backland' open space, either rarely used or often misused; or
- there are management/financial issues for the Council e.g. the land is costly to maintain; or
- the applicant has extenuating circumstances e.g. there are health grounds in relation to the applicant and/or their family and the sale of the land would improve their quality of life and would not adversely affect the quality of life of others in the neighbourhood – (the applicant will need to provide evidence to support and justify the application to purchase).

Where the Council considers that amenity land has development potential and agrees to dispose of the land, the valuation will reflect this. An overage clause may be applied and/or restrictive covenants placed on any future development.

The Council as landowner may, through a development agreement, engage a developer to carry out the development of the site on its behalf. Arrangements may comprise a grant of a lease of the whole site with the developer receiving a fee based partly upon the development value. In circumstances where there is a development agreement or the grant of a lease associated with the disposal, this may trigger the need for an appropriate tendering exercise [see Appendix 1, section 1.9].

⁵ (Whitstable Society v Canterbury City Council [2017] EWHC 254 (Admin) (15 February 2017).)

Disposals of amenity land will normally be by private treaty. However, where the Council considers that the amenity land may be of interest to persons other than the applicant, the Council may dispose of the land on the open market.

The procedure for the disposal of amenity land is detailed in Appendix 2.

73. Commercial Properties - There will be a general presumption against declaring the following categories of assets as surplus/under-used:

1. units designed to meet the needs of new and developing small businesses where there is anticipated to be demand for such units from different occupiers in future;
2. offices/rooms within business centres that have communal reception areas, facilities and services;
3. shop units where there is a community need for continued retail occupation, or where the integrity of a building or parade of shops might be adversely affected by the sale of individual units;
4. sites in industrial estates and sensitive locations where management control by the Council is required to ensure that amenity is maintained;
5. land or property which provides revenue income for the Council where disposal would adversely impact on the Council's revenue budget.

74. Allotments

Where land has been purchased or appropriated by the Council for use as statutory allotments, the Council cannot, without the consent of the Secretary of State, sell, appropriate, use or dispose of the land for any purpose other than use for allotments⁶.

The Council will consider the disposal of an allotment against the following criteria, having regard to the Secretary of State's guidance on allotment disposal:

1. The allotment in question is not necessary and is surplus to requirement;
2. The number of people on the waiting list has been effectively taken into account;
3. The Council has actively promoted and publicised the availability of other sites and has consulted the National Allotment Society; and
4. the implications of disposal for other relevant policies, in particular, the local plan have been taken into account.

⁶ Section 8 Allotments Act 1925

75. Assets of Community Value

Every town, village or neighbourhood is home to buildings or amenities that play a vital role in local life. They might include community centres, libraries, swimming pools, village shops, markets or pubs. Local life would not be the same without them, and if they are closed or sold into private use, it can be a real loss to the community.

In line with the council's Community Asset Transfer Policy – the Localism Act 2011 (Section 88 (1) and (2)) has been used to define an asset of community value in Thurrock as:

A building or other land in the local authority's area that:

(a) Has an actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use, furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, and;

(b) It is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

(c) Has furthered the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community in the recent past, and which it is realistic to consider will do so again during the next five years.

The Council maintains a list of land and buildings which may from time to time be nominated by the local community as an 'asset of community value'.

In reviewing the future of any asset, the Council will assess all the options, to be sure that it obtains best value. Options include using the asset in a different way, disposing of it on the open market or transferring it to a voluntary or community organisation at less than best consideration to achieve wider social benefits in line with the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

The Council may either advertise all community asset transfer opportunities or consider transfer requests from organisations which currently manage a property, without seeking other bids.

A community asset transfer should contribute to the Council's policies and targets. Where there are competing interests, the Council will consider which of the proposals put forward are viable and sustainable in the long term. The Council will deal with competition for a specific asset by identifying its social value, key objectives in that area, using, for example, deprivation indices, local priorities and the current mix of buildings and services in the area and assess which bid best meets those objectives.

8. MARKETING STRATEGY

Where applicable, the valuer, in consultation with the relevant Director, will determine the marketing strategy for the disposal of surplus or under-used land/property. The marketing strategy may be conducted either in-house or through an external agent. Costs should be recovered from the eventual purchaser.

9. VALUATIONS

91. Although there is no particular prescribed route to achieve the best price reasonably obtainable, there may be circumstances in which an actual sale to the market is the only way to achieve it as opposed to one particular sale at a price according to an independent valuation.
92. Before disposing of any interest in land for a price, which may be less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable, the valuer will ensure that a realistic valuation of that interest is obtained. This will apply even for disposals by means of formal tender, sealed bids or auction, and irrespective of whether the Council considers it necessary to make an application to seek the Secretary of State's specific consent. By following this procedure, the Council will be able to demonstrate that it has adopted a consistent approach to decisions about land disposals by carrying out the same step by step valuation process on each occasion. Supporting documents will provide evidence, should the need arise, that the Council has acted reasonably and with due regard to its fiduciary duty.
93. The return from any disposal is to be maximised unless there are over-riding factors identified by Cabinet, that take precedence over the receipt of capital e.g. preferred use or preferential purchaser.
94. In accordance with the General Services Committee 17 October 2019 there are presently no scheme of delegations to officers and all decisions must be made by Cabinet with the exception of disposals up to £200,000 that are delegated to the Leader of the Council.
95. Ward Councillors will be notified prior to the presentation at Cabinet of a disposal release report to enable them to provide timely commentary on any particular disposal.
96. Except with the consent of the Secretary of State, the Council cannot dispose of land otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.
97. Disposals of land/property by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained, will only proceed on the specific authority of Cabinet justifying the reasons for disposal at less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.
98. The Council is required by law to advertise the disposal of land designated as 'public open space' in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks and to consider any objections received. No final decision about the disposal will be

made until any objections to the disposal have been considered by Cabinet [see section 6.1.(a) above].

99. The disposal of assets of community value will follow the process set out in the Community Asset transfer Policy.
- 9.10. The marketing strategy for sites identified by the relevant Director as being 'strategic', will require Cabinet approval.

⁸The grant of a term not exceeding seven years, or the assignment of a term which at the date of the assignment has not more than seven years to run

10. MEANS OF DISPOSAL

1. **Private Treaty** – a sale of land/property negotiated with one or a small number of interested parties either through a direct approach from an individual(s) or through a marketing exercise.

A private sale without marketing the land may be justified where for example:

- (a) the land to be disposed of is relatively small in size and an adjoining or closely located landowner is the only potential or likely purchaser;
 - (b) the Council's corporate objectives and best consideration can best be achieved by a sale to a particular purchaser;
 - (c) the purchaser has a particular interest in purchasing the land or a particular association with the land;
 - (d) the nature of the Council's land ownership and that of the surrounding land ownership is such that the land must be sold to adjoining or surrounding landowners if best consideration is to be obtained;
 - (e) the Council's land is part of a larger area of land that is proposed for development, redevelopment or regeneration and the nature and complexity of the proposed development of the overall site is such that the Council's corporate objectives and best consideration can only be achieved by a sale to a purchaser with an existing interest in land in the area.
2. **Public Auction** – a sale of land/property by open auction available to anyone. The sale will be publicly advertised in advance. A binding legal agreement is created upon the acceptance of a bid by the auctioneer. Reasons justifying sale by this method and how the reserve price is determined must be recorded in writing.
 3. **Formal Tender** – a sale of land/property by a process of public advert and tenders submitted by a given date. This is a suitable mechanism where there are identified development proposals. A fair and transparent tender process will

need to be adopted.

4. **Exchange of Land** – a transaction involving the exchange of Council owned land with another land owner. The land acquired by the Council will meet at least one of its corporate objectives and will be 'equal' in commercial worth to the land exchanged whether from the value of the land itself or where a payment is made in addition to the land exchanged.
5. **Informal Negotiated Tender** – a transaction involving a public advert that requests informal offers or bids that meet a given specification or set of objectives. The Council may then negotiate further or more detailed terms with one or more individuals who submitted the most advantageous bid or bids.

11. TIMING OF DISPOSALS & DUE DILIGENCE

- 11.1. The **timing** of any marketing/disposals will need to be considered against the background of the current market conditions, potential for the site value to increase in the future, whether there is a need to raise capital receipts and current planning policies.

In order to properly assess the likelihood of and business case for disposal, the asset holding department in consultation with Legal Services and/or the valuer will carry out early **due diligence** on land/property identified as surplus or under-used. In particular, the asset holding department will consider the following issues which have the potential to prohibit disposal or influence the sale price:

- 11.2. **Reviewing the title** - Once surplus land/property has been identified and a prima facie business case made for its disposal, the title is reviewed to identify whether there are any title issues, which may impact upon the disposal process.
- 11.3. **Unregistered land** - If the land and property identified for disposal is unregistered, then it is important that the title deeds are located as soon as possible and checked for evidence of the Council's title. This can be achieved through a voluntary application to the Land Registry to register the land/property before it is put on the market.
- 11.4. **Restrictive covenants** - The land/property may be subject to restrictive covenants, which limit or restrict its use or the extent to which development can be carried out on it. Whether these are a concern will depend upon the likely use of the land/property following disposal, particularly where surplus land/property is being sold for re-development. A restrictive covenant against a certain type of development may have a significant adverse effect on the land value.
- 11.5. It is possible to apply to the Lands Tribunal under section 84 of the Law of Property Act 1925 for the release or modification of restrictive covenants in some circumstances. This can be a time consuming process and it is usually better undertaken before the land/property is placed on the open market. Alternatively, it is often possible to obtain restrictive covenant indemnity insurance against future losses for breach of a restrictive covenant and a policy with an adequate limit of indemnity cover will satisfy most purchasers.

- 11.6. It is very important that no negotiations are carried out with any adjoining or

nearby owners who may have or claim to have the benefit of the relevant covenant, prior to receiving legal advice. If negotiations do take place, then it could materially prejudice the Council's ability to obtain insurance cover against breach of the covenant.

- 11.7. **Ransom strip** - It will generally be sensible to resolve ransom strip issues prior to offering the property to the open market. It is crucial if the property is to achieve full value on the open market that it has adequate access rights. If development is anticipated, then access may need to be by a different route than that used historically, either because of a physical aspect of or defect with the existing access or for planning purposes or as a consequence of intensification of use. By whichever route access is obtained, a title review should be carried out to establish whether any ransom strips are present.
- 11.8. A ransom strip is an area of land which is owned by someone other than the Council. If access is only possible via a ransom strip, then the person with title to that strip will hold the key to unlocking the development potential of the land and that may involve payment to the ransom strip owner, either in return for a formal right of way or transfer of ownership of the strip. The conventional approach to valuing ransom strips has been to offer the ransom owner one- third of the uplift in value of the land/property released by unlocking it for development. However, any agreement will ultimately depend on market conditions and the specifics of the land/property and its locality.
- 11.9. **Rights of way and other easements** - It is important to establish the nature of any easements benefitting the land/property, so that any that are missing can be addressed, if possible. As well as access rights, the property may benefit from rights to run services over adjoining land, rights to light, rights of support or other property specific rights. It is also useful to check whether the land/property is subject to any rights which might adversely affect the proposed disposal and subsequent development, for example, public or private rights of way or rights of support.
- 11.10. **Retaining rights over adjoining land** - It may be the case where surplus land/property is being disposed of, that the Council will be retaining adjoining land. In that case, the Council will consider whether it needs to reserve any rights over the land/property being disposed of for the benefit of that adjoining land, most commonly, access to the public highway or mains utilities.
- 11.11. **Outline planning consent** - Assessing whether an application for a change of planning use might have the potential to increase the value of the surplus land/property. If the change of use is obtained by the Council, it removes an element of risk and uncertainty for potential buyers, which may lead to an increase in the purchase price that they are willing to pay.
- 11.12. **Development agreements** - The Council as landowner may, through a development agreement, engage a developer to carry out the development of the site on its behalf. Arrangements may comprise a grant of a lease of the whole site with the developer receiving a fee based partly upon the development value. In circumstances where there is a development agreement or the grant of a lease associated with the disposal, this may trigger the need for a tendering exercise

[see Appendix 1, section 1.9].

12. OTHER STEPS TO FACILITATE THE DISPOSAL PROCESS

- 12.1. When due diligence in accordance with section 11 of this Policy has been completed, there are a number of other steps that can be taken by the valuer to facilitate the disposal process and maximise the value received for the surplus or under-used land/property. The following will be considered:
1. Having regard to legislation and Secretary of State guidance governing the disposal process;
 2. Having regard to general guidelines which are applicable, for example, the Crichton Down rules which apply to most disposals by the Council of property acquired using compulsory purchase or under threat of compulsory purchase. Where the rules are applicable, there is an obligation to offer the property back to the original owner before it can be placed on the open market;
 3. Carrying out a site inspection to establish what specific issues there are on the ground, for example, drainage, boundary problems or illegal occupiers. It will also assist when instructing legal advisers or other professionals, who may only have seen the property on plans or in photographs. For some disposals, it may be appropriate for the various professionals to undertake a site visit;
 4. Producing a sales pack to circulate to interested parties, including title information and replies to standard pre-contract enquiries. The documents referred to in pre-contract enquiries such as copy planning consents, any asbestos surveys etc. should also be enclosed. In the case of large disposals, consider including a full set of standard property searches;
 5. Considering the most appropriate pricing structure. In some cases, it may be appropriate to use an overage arrangement whereby the Council receives future payments representing any uplift in value of the land/property once it has been developed or once it has been developed and sold on. Overage provisions and negotiations can be complex, so it would be sensible to discuss the preferred structure with the legal adviser and valuer prior to agreeing terms for the disposal of the land/property. A calculation of the overage that the Council is likely to receive and the likelihood of that sum being correct given changing market conditions will be important pieces of information in assessing the business case for disposal of surplus/under-used land/property.
 6. Considering whether the transaction is caught by the public procurement rules.
 7. Considering whether the transaction is caught by the State Aid rules.

13. OPTIONS

- 14.1 Where the Council wishes to grant an option, or an option holder wishes to exercise their option on land, which the Council holds, the Council will consider whether the consideration for either the grant or exercise of the option results in a discount. In relation to the exercise of an option, this will depend on the valuer's assessment of whether, if the option were to be exercised, the terms

would be likely to require the Council to accept less than the best price that could reasonably be obtained for that interest at the time of disposal and, if so, whether that would fall within the terms of the General Consent.

- 14.2 The matters which would need to be considered by the valuer are covered in paragraphs 20 and 21 of the Technical Appendix to Circular 06/2003. If, as a result of the valuer's advice, the Council wishes to seek specific disposal consent, it will provide the Secretary of State with full details of the terms of the option agreement which is to be entered into or implemented.

APPENDIX A

1. LEGAL POWERS

Section 123 - Local Government Act 1972

- 1.1 In general, the Council is required to achieve the **'best consideration reasonably obtainable'** when it is disposing of land⁹. Section 123 imposes a duty on the Council to achieve a particular outcome (namely the best price reasonably obtainable): it is not a duty to conduct a particular process (e.g. to have regard to particular factors).

If the disposal is under the 1972 Act, there is neither express power to include covenants on a disposal, nor a prohibition. Where the disposal is a lease, that lease will contain terms and similarly, on the conveyance/transfer of freehold property or on the assignment of a lease, covenants may likewise be included by virtue of section 111 of the 1972 Act.

Under Section 123(2A), the Council must follow certain statutory requirements to advertise the disposal of land that consists of or forms part of an **open space**.

General Consent

- 12 If the Council seeks to dispose of land or buildings at less than the market value, then it has to obtain the consent of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. However, the Secretary of State has issued a number of 'general consents' i.e. a set of conditions which, if they apply to a particular transfer, means that the Council does not need to obtain specific permission to transfer at an 'undervalue'. However, the under value itself still needs to comply with 'normal and prudent commercial practices, including obtaining the view of a professionally qualified valuer'¹⁰.

The most important of these consents is the General Disposal Consent 2003¹¹ ('the General Consent') which permits the Council to dispose of land at less than its market value¹², without the need to seek specific permission from the Secretary of State, provided that:

⁹ For the purposes of Section 123, the only consideration to which regard may be had is that which consists of those elements of the transaction of commercial or monetary value, capable of being assessed by valuers: *R v Pembrokeshire CC ex p Coker* [1999] 4 All ER 1007; *R v Hackney LBC ex p Lemon Land* [2001] EWHC Admin 346 [2002] JPL 405

¹⁰ Circular 06/2003

¹¹ Annexed to Circular 06/2003

¹² 'Market value' means 'the best price reasonably obtainable for the property'. This is equivalent to the definition of 'market value' in the RICS Appraisal and Valuation Manual (the 'Red Book'), but including any 'Special Value' (i.e. any additional amount which is or might reasonably be expected to be available from a purchaser with a special interest like a former owner)."

- the purpose for which the land is to be transferred is likely to contribute to the 'promotion or improvement' of the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the area; and
- the difference between the market value of the land and the actual price paid for the disposal (if any), is not more than £2,000,000.

The General Consent has been issued to provide local authorities autonomy to carry out their statutory duties and functions and to fulfil such other objectives as they consider to be necessary or desirable. The General Consent does not require the Council to undertake a tendering process i.e. to market test a disposal. However, when disposing of land at an undervalue, the Council remains aware of the need to fulfil its fiduciary duty in a way which is accountable to local people. The Council will not divest itself of valuable public assets, unless it is satisfied that the circumstances warrant such action.

In justifying a disposal of land/property at undervalue, the Council will have regard to the following:

- what community benefits will be realised by the disposal;
- how the interests of local people will be better served by the disposal;
- the financial viability of the Council's plans for the land;
- the State Aid implications of the disposal;
- the Council's future plans for the land;
- the market value of the land and the difference between that and the proposed disposal value.

Allotment Acts 1908 to 1950

- 13 For disposal of land held under these Acts, the Council must obtain the consent of the Secretary of State for disposal other than for use as allotments.

Charities Act 2011

- 14 The Council is trustee of charitable land and property originally gifted to it under the terms of a trust deed. Here, the Council has additional responsibilities which arise from its role as trustee and will be subject to the more onerous disposal requirements set out in the Charities Act 2011.

It is for the Deed, Trust and Obligations Committee to consider whether charitable land/property is surplus to requirements/under-used in accordance with the requirements of the legislation, any directions issued by the Charity Commission and professional advice. The Committee must operate in a way which is in the best interests of the charities.

Housing Act 1985 (as amended)

- 15 Under s32 the local authority has the power to dispose of land and dwellings held for housing purposes. Secretary of State consent will be required unless the disposal is covered by one of the General Consents relating to the disposal of:

- vacant dwellings for owner occupation;
- occupied dwelling houses to secure tenants;
- dwellings to tenants who have the right to buy acquiring with others;
- dwellings on shared ownership terms;
- housing authority land; and
- reversionary interest in houses and flats.

Disposals are to be at market value, but discounts may be applicable to qualifying applicants.

Local Government Act 1988 – Section 25

- 1.6 The Council may provide a Registered Social Landlord with any financial assistance or gratuitous benefit of land for development as housing accommodation. This includes:

- land for development or access, easements and rights;
- dwelling houses for refurbishment;
- financial assistance for prevention of homelessness; and
- loans to RSLs.

The aggregate value of financial assistance or gratuitous benefit provided by the disposal or grant must not exceed £10 million.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 – Section 233

- 1.7 The disposal of land **held for planning purposes**, follow principles similar to those of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and its requirement to obtain best consideration reasonably obtainable. However, it must be noted that the General Consent does not apply and a specific consent from the Secretary of State will be required if the Council is considering disposal at an undervalue.

Under s233(2), the Council must obtain the consent of the Secretary of State to dispose of **common land**, which may involve the requirement to provide land in exchange.

State Aid

- 1.8 All land/property disposals need to comply with State Aid rules¹³. When disposing of land 'at less than best consideration', depending on the nature of the transaction, the Council may be 'subsidising' the purchaser. Where this occurs, the Council must ensure that the nature and amount of subsidy complies with the State Aid rules, particularly if there is no element of competition in the disposal process. Failure to comply with the rules means that the aid is unlawful, and may result in the benefit, with interest, being recovered from the recipient.

Public Procurement

- 1.9 A straightforward disposal of land/property for a market value price will not be

caught by the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 rules. However, when disposing of land the Council is involved in determining the scope of the future development of its land and its intention is to impose on the purchaser certain obligations as to the nature of the development and also perhaps the standards to which the works must be constructed (usually through a development agreement or grant of a lease associated with the disposal), then where the values involved trigger the threshold, it is likely that such an arrangement may be construed as a public works contract triggering the need for a tender exercise

The applicability or otherwise of the public procurement rules will depend on the particular nature of the transaction, how it is structured and its detailed provisions. As a general rule, the risk will be higher the more the Council specifies its requirements for any full development and conversely will be lower the more the Council is willing to take a 'hands off' approach. The Council must therefore give due consideration to the possibility of public procurement rules applying to any particular disposal of land and obtain case-specific legal advice before entering into any agreement.

APPENDIX B

AMENITY LAND DISPOSAL

1. Approaches from private individuals to buy Council owned amenity land to benefit their *existing* residential property will be considered where:
 - there is a broader community benefit to the disposal e.g. a rationalisation of small parcels of 'backland' open space, either rarely used or often misused; or
 - there are management/financial issues for the Council e.g. the land is costly to maintain; or
 - the applicant has extenuating circumstances e.g. there are health grounds in relation to the applicant and/or their family and the sale of the land would improve their quality of life and would not adversely affect the quality of life of others in the area – (the applicant will need to provide evidence to support and justify the application to purchase).

2. Is it Council owned land?

Before applying to purchase land in accordance with section 11 below, please check that the land is owned by the Council. You can do this by contacting the Land Registry on 0333 880 1108 or email www.landregistry.gov.uk

3. Sale price

- 3.1 The Council is obliged by law to obtain the best price for any property, or parcel of land, which it sells.

- 3.2 The sale price is dependent on a number of factors. The price will be negotiated through the Council's valuer. You may seek your own independent advice. If you do so, please let us have the contact details of your appointed agent.
- 3.3 Even if one or more of the criteria in section 1 above apply, there may be other restrictions imposed on the land (such as restrictive covenants or planning policies) which result in the Council making a decision not to sell.
- 3.4 Where open space land is concerned, it may also be necessary for the proposals to be advertised and any objections considered.
- 3.5 Before any sale is approved, the Council's strategic priorities and planning policies will be considered and a recommendation to proceed will only be made if the sale has no adverse impact on the Council's priorities, policies etc.

4. Fees and other charges

- 4.1 Following the initial internal consultation process, should your application progress to the next stage, before we can start work on your application, you will need to pay the valuer's fee to offset the costs in processing your application e.g. inspection of the site, consideration of any restrictive covenants, Council policies and historical background, valuation of the site and production of a report.

Payment of the fee will not guarantee that your application is approved.

- 4.2 If the valuer agrees to the disposal and you wish to proceed, you will need to pay the Council's legal fees in advance of any legal work on your application.
- 4.3 As fees are reviewed on 1st April each year, please check the Council's fees and charges schedule on the website www.thurrock.gov.uk for the applicable fee
- 4.4 Any costs associated with making an application to the Secretary of State for consent and where applicable, advertisement costs, may be charged to you.
- 4.5 Fees and other costs must be paid in advance and are non – refundable. If the sale proceeds, on the completion date, you will also have to pay the agreed purchase price.
- 4.6 There are no exemptions to the payment of fees and ancillary costs. You will be provided with an invoice detailing the payment method.

5. Open market sale

The Council is obliged by law to sell land for the best price reasonably obtainable. This means that in some cases if the valuer considers that the land you have asked to purchase could be of interest to other parties or could be sold for development land, the Council must advertise it for sale on the open market. In such circumstances, you will be sent sales details once prepared and will be able to make an offer for the land along with any other interested party. Costs will be recovered from the eventual purchaser.

6. 'Right to buy' rules

The 'right to buy' rules only apply to Council house tenants who wish to purchase their Council house. These rules cannot be used to purchase additional parcels of land.

7. Legal advice

The Council's Legal Services cannot provide you with legal advice. We advise you to seek independent legal advice on your proposals. If you do so, please let us have your legal adviser's contact details. If you appoint a legal adviser, we will then deal with them direct. You are responsible for your legal adviser's fees.

8. Planning, building regulations and restrictive covenants

- 8.1 Planning consent may be required for change of use or development of the land, or for other matters such as fencing and boundary treatment. . It is likely that land not previously used for garden purposes, building extensions or parking etc. will need planning consent for a change of use. You are responsible for finding out if planning consent is required and you should make your own enquiries about this aspect of your proposals with Development Control, by contacting Planning:- Planning.Applications@thurrock.gov.uk
- 8.2 It is your responsibility to ensure that any consents required are obtained at your cost. Should you submit a planning application to include the Council's land, you must serve the appropriate notice addressed to Property & FM Services, Thurrock Borough Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Thurrock, Essex RM17 6SL. Please note that the Council's role as land owner is different to that of its role as local planning authority. Therefore, although you may be granted planning consent, this does not guarantee that your application to purchase Council owned land will be approved by the Council (as landowner).
- 8.3 When carrying out work on buildings, there are two issues that need to be considered - whether planning permission is required and whether building regulations consent is required. Work on buildings requiring building regulations consent may also require planning permission. Similarly, applications requiring planning permission may also require building regulations consent. You can do this by contacting Building Control:- Building.Control@thurrock.gov.uk
- 8.4 Any decision by the Council to sell the land to you is separate from any decision by the Council on your planning or full plan or building notice application. You must not assume that planning permission or building regulations consent will be granted automatically if for example you are intending to change the use of the land. It is your responsibility to check the planning status of the land and building regulations.
- 8.5 Planning and building control regulation fees are payable by you and are in addition to the Council's valuer's and Legal Services fees and other applicable costs charged under this Policy.
- 8.6 We will disclose any restrictive covenants relating to the land you wish to purchase.

9. Vehicular access

If you are proposing to access the land across the highway, please consult Thurrock Borough Council Highways Highways@thurrock.gov.uk

10. Complaints

10.1 There is no appeals procedure against a decision to refuse to sell you the land. However, if you feel that you have additional information, or justification to support your application that has not already been considered, or if you amend your application in some way, we may be able to process your application again, based on the new information. Please note that we reserve the right to charge further fees.

10.2 If you consider that the Council has not followed its procedures, you may raise a complaint through the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure details of which are on the Council's website www.thurrock.gov.uk If you remain dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

11. How to apply

11.1 You can either complete an application form (see www.thurrock.gov.uk) or write to the Council. Your application must be accompanied by a sketch plan identifying the area of land you wish to purchase. Please detail as much information as possible, including the approximate dimensions of the land.

The requirement for applications to be submitted in writing, must be read in conjunction with the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement on the Council to make reasonable adjustments. An example of this would be in assisting you if you have a disability that prevents you from making your application in writing. In such cases, the Council may need to transcribe a verbal application and then produce a written copy for your approval.

The Council will also consider what support should be made available to you, where English is not your first language.

11.2 On receipt of your application, the Council will decide if it wishes to dispose of or keep the land/property you have requested to purchase. This involves an internal process of consultation with Council Officers before a decision is made and before any negotiations can take place. If at this stage, a decision is taken not to sell you the land/property, you will be notified in writing, with reasons.

If, following the initial internal consultation stage, the matter goes forward to the next stage, the valuer will ask you to pay a non-refundable fee plus VAT before he/she can start any work on your application.

Your application will not be progressed, until the valuer's fees have been paid.

11.3 Address your application to:

Property & FM
Thurrock Borough Council
Civic Offices
New Road
Grays
Essex
RM17 6SL

Or email

propertyfm@thurrock.gov.uk

12. Council valuer's decision

- 12.1 Providing your application meets the criteria referred to in section 1 above and the valuer's fees are paid in advance, within three months of receipt of the valuer's fee, the valuer will:
- (a) undertake any due diligence checks, inspect the site and value the land;
 - (b) write to you or your appointed agent, confirming whether the disposal is approved; and
 - (c) if approved, detail the terms for the disposal of the land and the price payable.

If the timescale cannot be met, the valuer will notify you.




- 12.2 If the disposal is approved by the valuer, it is for you to form a view on any restrictive covenants, the planning/building regulations position and the suitability of the land for your intended purposes. You proceed at your own risk.
- 12.3 If the disposal is not approved by the valuer, you will be notified of the decision in writing with reasons.

13. Land transfer process

- 13.1 Your acceptance of the valuer's terms and price payable for the land need to be confirmed in writing, addressed to the address above with payment in advance, of the Council's legal fees. The land transfer process will not be started, until the legal fees are paid. The Council's legal fees are in addition to any fees your solicitor may ask you to pay. Your solicitor's fees are your responsibility.

- 132 The transfer documentation will be prepared by the Council's Legal Services. Providing you have paid the Council's legal fees, the date for completion of the sale will vary depending upon the complexity of the matter and the type of searches and enquiries that are made by you or on your behalf but the process may take up to approximately 3 months from the date you notify the Council in writing, that you accept the terms and price to be paid for the land. If we require longer to process the transfer documentation, we will notify you.
- 133 Generally, the sale of the land is completed with no prior contract or deposit payment. You will pay the purchase price on completion.
- 134 Completion of the sale of the land ends the Council's involvement in the process. You will however need to deal with land registry registration and SDLT (stamp duty land tax) post completion.

This page is intentionally left blank

Property	Town	Post Code		Title No	Size	Method of Disposal
Community						
Belhus Boxing Club, Darenth Lane	South Ockendon	RM15 5LJ		EX25346	0.399 Acres, 1,617 Sqm	Private Treaty – Tenants in situ
3R's Page 195						
Teviot Avenue Ground Lease	Aveley	RM15 4QL		EX26234	2,603 Acres, 10,534 Sqm	Private Treaty – Tenants insitu
Lumen House	Corringham			EX107656	0.018 Acres, 76 Sqm	Private Treaty – tenants insitu or Auction

<p>Hogg Lane, adj Rates garage</p>	<p>Grays</p>	<p>RM17</p>		<p>EX889685</p>	<p>1.61 Acres, 6,552 Sqm</p>	<p>Private Treaty – Tenants in situ</p>
<p>64-82 Argent Street</p>	<p>Grays</p>	<p>RM17 6BS</p>		<p>EX860560</p>	<p>0.319 Acres, 1,293 Sqm</p>	<p>Auction or Formal Tender</p>
<p>Page 196 3 Clarence Road</p>	<p>Grays</p>	<p>RM17 6QJ</p>		<p>EX190121</p>	<p>0.035 Acres, 144 Sqm</p>	<p>Auction</p>
<p>Land Dell/Orsett Road</p>	<p>Grays</p>			<p>EX857022</p>	<p>1.49 Acres, 6,055 Sqm</p>	<p>Auction or Formal Tender</p>

<p>Purfleet Industrial Park Units 40-43</p>	<p>Purfleet</p>	<p>RM15 4YA</p>			<p>7.72 Acres, 31,265 Sqm</p>	<p>Release</p>
<p>Kerneos</p>	<p>West Thurrock</p>			<p>EX813271</p>	<p>14.70 Acres, 59,516 Sqm</p>	<p>Release</p>

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 3 - PROPOSED APPROACH TO HOUSING DELIVERY AND ASSET RATIONALISATION

Starting point— officers to prepare the release options of all land (general and HRA) for sale, community transfer, housing, or for the HRA. To be inclusive of any MTFS impacts from rental incomes etc.

Informal cabinet consider officer case i.e. is this release sound in terms of loss of revenue or utility - is there a clear service assessment and consistent with “fewer buildings better services”

RELEASE OPTION — COMMUNITY TRANSFER: “Community assets” like Village Halls and such released to community trusts for nominal fee, but with a capital kickback if sold, or “social value” assets such as NHS or Educational venues first offered to schools etc., again for a nominal value with a kickback if ever sold - **unless** there is a strategic reason for council to take alt view in a formal, public cabinet paper

RELEASE OPTIONS
Market testing conducted so cabinet can make a route decision based on assessed value and viability in a formal, public cabinet paper.

Option 1

Straight sale as not fit for housing

Option 2

Partner found and joint venture progressed

Option 3

Sold to HRA

Option 4

Partner not found, so asset reverts to reformed TRL, or sent there with cabinet consent

JV progressed with Cabinet oversight board, with the main development partner (X2 seats), Regeneration officer, legal officer and the Cabinet Member for Planning.

HRA plan progressed with Cabinet oversight board - Director for Housing, Director for Regeneration, the Cabinet Members for Planning and Housing

Reactivated TRL Board (Membership to be decided)

What does this model achieve?

- Ensures a transparent path so members and the public can see actions and rationale before any release so they can make representations
- Ensures there is an expedient way to reduce council liabilities rising from a massive asset base
- Ensures we have a robust pipeline for private, council and social care housing
- Ensures housing delivery options have clear member oversight and professional capacity

This page is intentionally left blank

10 March 2021	ITEM: 20
Cabinet	
Quarter 3 (April to December 2020) Corporate Performance Report 2020/21	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Cllr Deb 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 quarter 3 corporate performance monitoring report for 2020/21 covering April to December 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 two thirds of indicators are currently achieving target and 55% are better than or the same as the previous year. This is a similar picture to that in Quarter 1 which also coincided with a period of national lockdown/significant restrictions. Whilst performance improved during quarter 2, when restrictions eased, the worsening COVID situation during late autumn and running up to Christmas has had another adverse impact, and is likely that this will continue to the end of year outturns.

Many indicators have been directly or indirectly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic - for example, the increased demand on adult social care teams with redeployment to the highest priority areas at the same time as significantly reduced capacity due to staff sickness and self-isolation - and the enforced changes to council services in line with government guidance during this period – for example the temporary suspension of choice based lettings in the first national lockdown impacting the re-let times of void council houses. 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 9 March 2021.

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".

3.1 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

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

3.2 Summary of Corporate KPI Performance

Quarter 3 2020/21 Performance against target	
Achieved	66% (23)
Failed	34% (12)

Direction of Travel compared to 2019/20	
↑ BETTER	29.4% (10)
→ STATIC	14.7% (5)
↓ WORSE	55.9% (19)

3.3 Impact of COVID-19

- 3.3.1 The Quarter 3 (April to December 2020) overall outturn of 66% is similar to the overall percentage of KPIs achieving target experienced in Quarter 1 (April to June 2020) which was impacted by the first national lockdown. In Quarter 2 (April to September 2020), coinciding with the easing of national restrictions, the overall outturn on target went up to 75%. The Quarter 3 data overlapped with the tiered system of restrictions and in November the national partial lockdown, including when Thurrock was placed in Tier 4. It is anticipated that, due to the current national lockdown, COVID impact and other winter pressures throughout January, February and potentially in March, several of the indicators will end this year under target.
- 3.3.2 The narrative in section 3.6 highlights where performance has been and continues to be affected during 2020/21. In several cases, it is unlikely that, because of the ongoing pandemic, these indicators will improve sufficiently to reach their target by the end of the year, and commentary is included later in the report.
- 3.3.3 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.
- 3.3.4 As confirmed in the mid-year report, 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. This is highlighted by there being 56% of indicators this quarter where the direction of travel is shown to be worse than last year. 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 clearly identifies if this is related to COVID-19 impacts.
- 3.3.5 It is impossible to predict accurately how long and to what extent service delivery in some areas will continue to be impacted, although it is now likely that where indicators have not reached their in year targets due to COVID impacts, that they will not be able to reach their end of year targets, given the ongoing challenges. This is being further affected by the need to mitigate against the wider capacity and financial pressures which COVID has brought about, including the need to hold vacant posts and the ongoing recruitment restrictions. This is likely to have an increasingly significant impact on service delivery going into 2021/22. This will be kept under close monitoring.
- 3.3.6 Any targets for health and social care indicators which are part of the Better Care Fund have not been agreed with NHS England as this process is currently suspended due to COVID-19 priorities. These targets can be taken as confirmed unless notification is received from NHS England that the targets need to change.

3.4 On target performance

Two thirds of available corporate KPIs achieved their targets.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 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)	261.8 (63)	336.6 (81)	394.8 (95)	436.4 (105)	436.4 (105)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	561.0 (135)	739.7 (178)
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	0	ACHIEVED	BETTER	0	0
% of potholes repaired within policy and agreed timeframe	Cllr Maney	99.33%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	98%	98%
% of repairs completed within target	Cllr Johnson	98.3%	99.5%	99.1%	97.9%	96.7%	97.3%	98.5%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	95%	95%
Average time (in days) for a child to be adopted (3 year average) (ie time between entering care and moving in with adoptive family)	Cllr Halden	426 (2017-20)	426 (Q4 2019-20)	426 (Q1)				341 (provisional Q2)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	426 days	426 days
% of young people who reoffend after a previously recorded offence	Cllr Halden	11.0%	13% (Q4)	3% (Q1)				7% (Q2)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	13%	13%
% of primary schools judged "good" or better	Cllr Jefferies	92.0%	92.3%	92.3%				92.3%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	92% (prov)	92% (prov)
Street Cleanliness - a) Litter	Cllr Watkins	6.56%	3.67%	5.00%				5.17%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	9%	9%
% Initial Health Assessment (IHA) completed within 28 days (20 working days) of child becoming Looked After	Cllr Halden	69.2%	66.7%	85.7%				80.0%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	80%	80%
% of Minor planning applications processed in 8 weeks	Cllr Coxshall	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	ACHIEVED	STATIC	90%	90%
Overall spend to budget on HRA (£K variance)	Cllr Johnson	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	ACHIEVED	STATIC	£0	£0
% occupancy of commercial properties	Cllr Coxshall	92%	88%	92%				92%	ACHIEVED	STATIC	88%	88%
Overall spend to budget on General Fund (% variance against forecast)	Cllr Hebb	0	(£2.2m)	(£2.67m)				£0m	ACHIEVED	STATIC	0	0

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Number of events and activities in libraries that support engagement in a range of cultural, social and learning opportunities to support well-being and strengthen community connections (total sessions provided YTD)	Cllr Huelin	<i>n/a – new in 2020/21</i>	0	104				219	ACHIEVED	N/A	200	300
% of secondary schools judged "good" or better	Cllr Jefferies	<i>n/a</i>	63.0%	63.0%				63.0%	ACHIEVED	N/A	63% (prov)	63% (prov)
Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments	Cllr Halden	36.2%	36.6%	34.7%	35.0%	34.5%	35.6%	35.6%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	34%	34%
% of Major planning applications processed in 13 weeks	Cllr Coxshall	100%	89%	94%	100%	100%	100%	97%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	90%	90%
Tenant satisfaction with Transforming Homes	Cllr Johnson	86.9%	83.3%	85.3%	100.0%	76.9%	85.7%	85.7%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	85%	85%
No of placements available within council for volunteers	Cllr Huelin	225	205	230				223	ACHIEVED	WORSE	200	210
% of volunteer placements filled within council	Cllr Huelin	96%	100%	92%				94%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	94%	96%
Successful completion of treatment in Young People's Drug & Alcohol service (YTD)	Cllr Mayes	88%	78%	80%				85%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	70%	70%
Number of new Micro Enterprises started since 1 April 2020	Cllr Huelin	44	5	10				15	ACHIEVED	WORSE	10	20
% occupancy of council-owned business centres	Cllr Coxshall	91%	90%	93%				83%	ACHIEVED	WORSE	80%	80%
Value (£) of council owned property disposals	Cllr Coxshall	£470k	£350k	£460k				£460K	n/a	WORSE	no target	no target

3.5 In focus highlight for Quarter 3

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Tranche 1	Tranche 2	Tranche 3	Overall	Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Street Cleanliness - a) Litter	Cllr Watkins	6.56%	3.67%	5.00%	5.17%	4.61%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	9%	9%
Street Cleanliness - c) Graffiti	Cllr Watkins	4.67%	6.00%	1.33%	3.67%	3.67%	FAILED	BETTER	3%	3%

These indicators measure the proportion of land which had unacceptable levels of litter and graffiti. This is assessed independently by Keep Britain Tidy.

Over the last year, the litter scores from the Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) inspections have been well within the target set. Since 2018/19 when the score was 10.06%, the results have shown a consistent improvement with 2019/20 being 6.56% and the latest result of 2020/21 being 4.61%. This shows that the cleanliness of our borough has improved. Over this time, the service has trained team leaders and staff in the standards that are used by KBT. This has meant that staff understand what is required to attain the highest standards in street cleansing. Part of this is litter-picking further back into the verge or hedge and removing all of the litter that can be seen. The service have also worked closely with the local community litter picking groups and will be looking to build upon this further in the next year.

The graffiti score for this year was 3.67% and whilst we missed the target of 3%, there has been a dramatic improvement in the amount of graffiti within the borough especially from the first tranche score of 6%. There have been a small number of prolific “taggers” who have been defacing the borough and this has disproportionately affected the score. The service has been working closely with the enforcement team to achieve positive results which has included a successful prosecution of a graffiti tagger and will continue to work with the enforcement teams to provide evidence for further action to be taken. The Clean and Green teams have been carrying out large scale clearances of graffiti, most notably in Tilbury where the local community were really pleased with the work conducted and the improvement in the appearance of the area. The team will continue to carry out large scale clearances into the next financial year.

3.6 Off target indicators

At the end of quarter 3, 12 of the available indicators failed to meet their target.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
No of new apprenticeships started (including staff undertaking apprenticeship) (excluding LA maintained schools)	Cllr Huelin	69	2	9 (11)	4	3	5	12 (23)	FAILED	WORSE	24	61
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the ability of the organisation to offer new apprenticeships or have the capacity to upskill staff via apprenticeships. The council had to establish new virtual processes for recruitment and interviews and was unable to hold the usual face-to-face apprenticeship recruitment events in July which has had an impact on the process and numbers. However, a virtual event was held in November 2020 and a number of apprentices successfully recruited. Services have understandably been more cautious about offering apprenticeships wanting to ensure they have the capacity to fully support them to succeed. This is especially the case for those areas directly involved in the ongoing COVID response and where services have had to close or significantly change working practices significantly.</p>												
Route to GREEN												
<p>Quarter 4 will be a stronger quarter with the start of those apprentices who were successful at our recruitment event in November, a cohort of 8 LGV driver apprentices, 2 new social worker apprentices and a number of apprentices moving on to new level 3 apprenticeships after successfully completing their level 2 qualification. However further recruitment of new apprentices is expected to be stunted compared to previous years. This is in line with what is being seen nationally with apprenticeship levels down 20% on the previous year.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Total gross external income (fees & charges) (based on sales forecast)	Cllr Hebb	£8m	£5.2m	£5.1m				£5.4m	FAILED	WORSE	£7.5k	£7.5k

This is being monitored and reported to members on a regular basis as part of the COVID-19 impacts. Please refer to separate financial reports reported to this committee for full detail.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
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%				85.7%	FAILED	WORSE	86.3%	86.3%

Performance is only 0.6% under target and is still performing well against the latest England average (82.0%) and regional average (84.7%). Out of 56 older people discharged from hospital to reablement in the period, 48 were at home on the 91st day. Of the 8 individuals who were not at home, 4 had passed away, 3 were in hospital and 1 had moved to residential care. The average age of those not at home was 84 years old.

COVID has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the reablement service as more individuals, particularly older people, are likely to be unwell and require hospital/residential care admissions or unfortunately pass away. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the teams involved that the figure is only just below target given the increased demand coupled with significantly reduced capacity in services due to COVID (higher levels of staff sickness and self-isolation) and the ongoing fragility of the home care market.

This has resulted in the reablement services being unable to carry out as much reablement as usual and have been required to provide increasing amounts of home care in order to meet demand. In addition, the Joint Reablement Team has seconded staff to Oak House, the council's designated care home for COVID-positive patients which has further reduced capacity in the team. The Bridging Service, which also provides some reablement, is primarily a hospital discharge service and therefore has been concentrating efforts on discharging patients from hospital to ease pressure on the NHS rather than focusing on reablement.

Whilst reablement aims to improve independence to keep individuals at home for longer, some individuals have health conditions that might mean that full independence is not possible. Individuals can also have a loss of independence after reablement has taken place due to new conditions or changes in circumstances. Therefore even though some individuals may not be at home on the 91st day, this is not necessarily a reflection of the effectiveness of the service.

NB for the purposes of the national indicator only Quarter 4 (as a snapshot) is taken as the final year-end position for 2020/21.

Route to GREEN

The service will continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and use the resources including the Joint Reablement Team and Bridging Service in the most effective way possible to facilitate hospital discharge, meet demand and support individuals. Work continues to further stabilise the care market which has included extending the Bridging Service and the identification of new home care providers that Thurrock can offer spot contracts to. Monitoring of reablement will continue to take place to review the impact the current situation is having on the services.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Spring Term	Summer Term	Autumn Term	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
% of places accessed for two year olds for early years education in the borough	Cllr Jefferies	73.0%	72.6%	61.8%	71.3%	FAILED	WORSE	73% (prov)	73% (prov)

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the take up of the Two Year Entitlement. Some parents have either declined or delayed accessing their funding. Although there was a short lockdown during this term, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare offers remained open. Towards the end of term there was an increased impact of available placements at settings where either staff or children tested positive for COVID. Take up for the autumn term during the previous three years was increasing steadily – 77% for 2017; 85% for 2018 and 88% for 2019 (please note that these are end of term figures). By the end of autumn term 2020 claims had been made for a total of 580 children. This equates to 71.34% take up when measured against 813 families on the August 2020 DWP list. Although a significant drop, take up for the East of England is 71%; statistical neighbours 67%; England 69%.

Route to GREEN

Once COVID restrictions are no longer impacting the take up rates, it is anticipated that these will rise again. The service will continue to monitor and manage impact of COVID.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Payment rate of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)	Cllr Gledhill	55.97%	52.19%	50.52%	52.6%	47.9%	48.8%	49.86%	FAILED	WORSE	70%	70%

Payment rates are low as recipients of FPNs are either stating that they are unable to pay due to being furloughed with lower income or recently being made unemployed. The council has also received a significant amount of requests for extensions to payments which are being approved. Where fixed penalty notices are not paid, these are processed through the court.

Route to GREEN

The situation is being closely monitored with plans to revert to the processes relating to chasing payments for FPN's as soon as the pressures of COVID 19 and longer term financial impacts of the pandemic have settled. In the interim the service continue to sensitively chase payment, and ultimately progress the cases to court when payment terms are not met.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
% Household waste reused/ recycled/ composted	Cllr Watkins	33.23%	31.80%	33.86%	29.76%	29.55%	25.98%	28.43%	FAILED	WORSE	37.45%	41%

Through-put levels at Linford Housing Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) have been lower than seasonally expected as residents have not been visiting the site as much in response to the continued national and local lock-down measures in place. The HWRC is a key source of recycling materials. Additionally, both refuse and recycling collections continue to see increased presentation levels and weights as residents continue to remain at home through the lock-down periods. Whilst tonnages of both waste streams have increased, the rate and quality of the recycling materials being collected from households has not kept pace with the increase in residual waste, adversely impacting performance against this indicator.

Route to GREEN

The renewed Waste Strategy that was approved in 2020, outlines a number of changes to the service, as well as non-collection related initiatives, such as the development of a re-use centre, that are all planned specifically to address the low recycling rate in Thurrock. Some of the key work that is already underway relates to the introduction of recycling facilities for those residents living in flats. In addition, garden waste collection - which has been temporarily suspended since Thursday 7 January in order to concentrate on providing the weekly refuse and recycling collections – is hoped to be able to resume on 8 March.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
% of refuse bins emptied on correct day	Cllr Watkins	98.91%	97.01%	72.89%	98.38%	97.10%	99.37%	98.28%	FAILED	WORSE	98.50%	98.50%
<p>The continued impacts of COVID-19 on staff-availability levels e.g due to the need to self-isolate, has contributed to the teams experiencing difficulties in maintaining delivery of service, which has seen KPI levels below expected levels. This, in turn, resulted in the temporary forced suspension of garden waste collections until such time as resource-levels return. The intention being to preserve the standard of service delivery for residual waste and recycling collections.</p> <p>Furthermore, with residents working from home during the lockdown, there has been an increase in presentation rates and the weights of bins. These increased tonnage levels impact on the available capacity within the service which in turn results in roads not being collected on the scheduled collection days.</p>												
Route to GREEN												
<p>The project reviewing the waste rounds to ensure that they are balanced and achievable has commenced and will have a long term impact on the stability and resilience of the service. In the short-term staff levels continue to be closely monitored with all options available in a time of lockdown being considered to ensure that collection rates stabilise.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Number of health hazards removed as a direct result of private sector housing team intervention	Cllr Johnson	1,000	8	212	151	93	66	522	FAILED	WORSE	750	1,000
<p>COVID-19 continues to affect property inspections in private rented homes despite the service following MHCLG guidance for local authorities to enforce standards in private rented properties and carrying out Housing Health and Safety Rating System part 1 inspections to keep rented properties safe. The service has received fewer complaints overall about private landlords during this period, which anecdotally is partly due to residents worries about COVID. Some tenants are preferring housing staff to carry out inspections by telephone, photographic evidence and video calls.</p>												

Route to GREEN

The Private Housing Service is continuing to monitor housing conditions digitally and carrying out essential HHSRS inspections when we find the most serious category 1 hazards. The council has powers of entry which it can use to gain access to properties and carry out inspections where there is imminent harm to the tenant's health due to a serious hazard and there is a duty to inspect.

With COVID restrictions continuing to impact service delivery, it is unlikely that this indicator will reach its target by year end. However, the service will keep monitoring closely and mitigate where possible.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
Average time to turnaround/re-let voids (in days)	Cllr Johnson	25.6 days	61.17 days	54.4 days	47.07 days	42.21 days	35.8 days	50.04 days	FAILED	WORSE	28 days	28 days

Owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resulting period of national lockdown and the associated restrictions standard void re-let times have been critically affected. This was because choice based lettings were suspended for a number of months, coinciding with the first national lockdown. This meant the properties which were void before or during the period of suspension could not be let and remained void for a much longer period of time than usual, with only a very small number of lettings through direct offers taking place in May. Therefore, following the re-instatement of choice based lettings in June, all new lets showed a longer void period than usual which impacted the average figures significantly. Therefore void re-let times have been considerably higher than usual. This has been the main issue which has impacted the year to date outturn.

Since choice based lettings were re-instated re-let times for general needs voids, which account for around 90% of the housing stock, have steadily improved with an average re-let time for general needs voids in December of 26.3 days. However sheltered housing voids are currently taking much longer to re-let and are proving difficult to let in the current climate.

Route to GREEN

In order to improve void re-let times, a number of actions have been taken:

- The service is preparing an action plan for hard to let sheltered housing voids which includes actions on downsizing, advertising and communications.
- Operational voids data has been analysed in order to identify bottlenecks in the voids process. This has identified several parts of the void process where time efficiencies can be made which has been communicated to the relevant team managers.
- New dashboards have been developed which provide team managers involved in the voids process which granular performance information on the most important parts of the void process enabling them to have a better handle on performance on a more regular basis.
- Going forward, data on voids performance will be presented at operational void meetings within the service.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
% Rent collected	Cllr Johnson	98.5%	88.9%	93.35%	93.26%	95.08%	95.3%	95.3%	FAILED	WORSE	96%	98%
<p>Rental income received during December was lower than normal, but this is partly due to Christmas office closures impacting payment processing (only 3 working days during Christmas week and 2 working days the following week). In addition to this, the ongoing pandemic and increase in positive cases meant that many tenants were either suffering from COVID-19 or were forced to self-isolate.</p> <p>The service also continues to see an increase in tenants claiming Universal Credit and this results in a delay of rent payments of 5-6 weeks, which is also impacting the data.</p>												
Route to GREEN												
<p>Prior to Christmas, the Rents Team carried out a 'Christmas campaign' in conjunction with the Communications team. This was a daily message advising tenants if they were struggling to pay their rent during the Christmas period or needed any financial support to contact the Rents team. The team have sent additional text messages to tenants who have been identified as missing payments over the Christmas period.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2019/20 Outturn	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2019/20	Quarter 3 Target	2020/21 Target
% General tenant satisfaction with neighbourhoods/services provided by Housing	Cllr Johnson	74.9%	75.5%	74.1%	78.0%	75.2%	76.2%	74.9%	FAILED	STATIC	75%	75%
<p>Tenant satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing has been on target for the last 3 consecutive months and was 76.5% for quarter 3. This has improved the year to date position from 74.1% at the end of quarter 2 to 74.9% at the end of quarter 3 and is only 0.1% under the 75% target. Whilst 74.9% of tenants are satisfied, 12.2% of tenants gave a neutral rating and 12.9% of tenants gave a dissatisfied rating. Analysis of the response data from those dissatisfied with the overall service provided by Housing demonstrates there are 3 measures which are clear drivers of dissatisfaction - that the Housing service listens to tenants' views, understands tenants' needs and is easy to deal with.</p> <p>During Q3 the results and data from the STAR postal survey became available. The results have been benchmarked against Thurrock's regional peer group which includes 40 organisations in Thurrock's geographical vicinity including Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Barking and Dagenham and Havering. This shows for satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing, Thurrock's service is performing above the benchmark median and performing in the second quartile. However analysis of the response data shows a similar picture to the analysis of telephone survey data - that the measures which correlated most strongly with negative satisfaction with the overall Housing service are listening to tenants views, understanding tenants needs and keeping promises. A report containing details of the results of this survey were taken to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2021.</p>												
Route to GREEN												
<p>The outturns from quarter 3 demonstrate that this indicator is currently on the route to green with a 0.8% net gain on the YTD satisfaction rate since Q2 and on target performance month on month in Q3. The data collected from the STAR postal satisfaction survey has enabled a much greater level of insight through analysis from a greater amount of quantitative data. This has enabled the Housing service to build a far better understanding of tenants needs. The Housing management team have reviewed and discussed the results and initial analysis of the data which has identified some actions to address some of the dissatisfaction expressed by tenants and have begun to formulate an action plan. This is an ongoing process and will evolve based on the results of further data analytics and intelligence and will be built on further over the coming months.</p> <p>Some of the initial actions include overlaying the free text feedback from our telephone surveys with postal survey data, exploring options to increase car parking where possible in response to this being identified as the single biggest neighbourhood problem for tenants, exploring the possibility of mystery shopping in order to identify areas and touchpoints during the process of reporting an anti-social behaviour complaint which could be improved and the ambition to introduce cross-divisional working to ensure staff are able to answer tenants' queries even if the query relates to another service area amongst others. A report containing details of the initial action plan was taken to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2021.</p>												

3.7 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	Qtr 2	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Qtr 3	Direction of Travel since 2019/20
No of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance	Cllr Johnson	1,934	348	844	162	144	128	1,278	LOWER
No of homeless cases accepted	Cllr Johnson	107	72	111	18	11	27	167	HIGHER
<p>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. In a number of these cases the service was able to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>The service prevents homelessness by negotiating with landlords and excluders* to keep the applicants in the property they are living in. Conversely, we could find them alternative accommodation before they become homeless, thereby preventing their homelessness.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>*An excluder is someone the applicant currently lives with e.g. a parent, friend or resident landlord who has asked the applicant to leave their property.</p>									

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
Forecast Council Tax collected	COVID-19 impact is ongoing and is still being assessed. This is being regularly reported to members alongside separate financial reporting.
Forecast National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected	
Contact Centre - Face to Face average waiting times (minutes)	Face to Face has not been operating since 23 March 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdown.
Contact Centre - Face to Face - no of visitors	

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. This report was presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9 March 2021.

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: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

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, and Impact on Looked After Children)

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 report.

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

- N/A

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Sarah Welton
Strategy Manager

This page is intentionally left blank