

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 **8 December 2021**

Training Room, The Beehive Community Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Membership:

Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Luke Spillman

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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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: **30 November 2021**

Information for members of the public and councillors

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

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 November 2021 at 7.00 pm

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

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Luke Spillman

Councillor Fraser Massey, Chair Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Task Force

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

Apologies: Councillors Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader)

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded and the recording would be uploaded to the Council's website.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 September 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

3. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

4. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement by outlining the local rates of COVID-19. He explained that Thurrock's COVID rate had been decreasing steadily, with a large drop being seen during the previous week, which could partly be explained by the beginning of half term in schools. He urged residents to take up the vaccine when offered and thanked residents for taking the necessary precautions, as well as protecting and supporting their local communities. He stated that Thurrock's current COVID rate was 278 per 100,000, which had dropped from 359 per 100,000 the previous week. He explained that this meant Thurrock was 124th out of 144 upper tier local authorities.

The Leader continued and explained that Thurrock's Freeport had been agreed and included within the budget statement. He stated that operations on the Freeport would begin later this month, and the Right Honourable Ruth Kelly had been chosen as Chair. He commented that the Freeport would bring £4.5 billion in investment as well as over 20,000 jobs, and health and cultural benefits for local residents. The Leader then explained that anti-social behaviour was still being seen in local high streets across the borough, but the Council would be working closely with the police to tackle this issue. He urged residents to report anti-social behaviour through either 999 if urgent, or 101 by phone or online if non-urgent.

Councillor Redsell arrived 7.05pm

The Leader stated that a new Shop Safe scheme had recently been introduced which linked local shop owners together, as well as with the police in real time. He commented that the vast majority of shops had registered with the scheme and was beginning to be regularly used. He added that the police met with shop owners every third Friday of the month to discuss local problems. The Leader moved on and stated that tomorrow was Remembrance Day, and a number of events would be held across Thurrock to remember the fallen, including an event on Sunday at Grays Memorial. He thanked Reverend Cannon Darren Barlow for his support and dedication in planning Remembrance Day events, and stated that Reverend Cannon Darren Barlow was still seeking volunteers to help at the Remembrance event on Sunday.

The Leader moved on and stated that he had recently taken a tour of the new Civic Offices building, and felt that lots of thought had gone into the building and the design, and provided good views over the area. He explained that the ground floor contained a specialist reception area for those homeless residents, as well as other dedicated work spaces. He explained that the ground floor also contained a large, open plan registrar's area to allow weddings to take place, and this would be connected via video link to allow family and friends of the bride and groom that could not attend in person to still take part and view the celebration. He stated that the new building was almost completed and the inaugural meeting would be January's Full Council meeting.

Councillor Coxshall added that the registrar area was the first purpose built registrars area since Thurrock had become a unitary authority, and would provide a full service including weddings. He added that the design had been thought out, for example there was a separate, private entrance for the bride and could be laid out for small or large weddings.

5. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Jefferies stated that the environment team had recently produced new posters for parks and open spaces that encouraged people to use the bins, take home their litter, and outlined that those littering would be fined. He

stated that these had been trialled in Bonnygate Park, which had remained mostly tidy due to the new posters on bins. The Leader stated that last year Thurrock had been in the upper quartile following the Keep Britain Tidy assessment, and areas such as Grays had become noticeably tidier. He thanked residents for putting their rubbish in bins or taking their rubbish home with them.

Councillor Spillman stated that two new HUSK houses had been built and were now being lived in by local residents. He explained that he had met those residents now in the HUSK houses, who had previously been living in houses that were not suitable for their mobility needs. He commented that the team had also been undertaking a piece of work on homelessness, and trying to find education, employment or training for people who had become homeless. He stated that an announcement would be made soon on this piece of work, and thanked the team for their hard work on the project. The Leader felt it was good to see Portfolio Holder's working together on a variety of projects. He felt that Thurrock was a place that people wanted to live, work and play and thanked officers and Members for their hard work.

6. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

7. Questions from Non-Executive Members

There were no questions submitted by Non-Executive Members.

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

Other than those items already contained within the agenda, no items had been referred to the Cabinet for their consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee.

9. Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report (Decision: 110588)

Councillor Massey, as Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Task Force introduced the report and stated that it was a brief summary of the Task Force meetings between June and September, during which time the Community Impacts Consultation took place, and Highways England rebranded to become known as National Highways. He explained that in June the Task Force had considered the 57 mitigation items, as outlined in the Hatch report, and heard which items could be secured, and which could not be taken forward, for example LTC hypothecation and legacy housing. He stated that concern was raised by Task Force Members in relation to these points, particularly surrounding legacy housing as Thurrock would need to shoulder the burden of the increased need for properties in the area to house the LTC workforce. He explained that the Task Force, and Council, would continue to

engage with National Highways to see if progress on this mitigation item could be made.

Councillor Massey moved on and commented that in July, National Highways had virtually attended the Task Force meeting and had given a presentation on the Community Impacts Consultation, during which they had stated that they would be aiming to submit their Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2021. Councillor Massey highlighted that the Community Impacts Consultation had included Ward Impact Summaries, which included detailed information about how the scheme could affect each ward in the borough. He stated that Members had raised concern that areas such as Stanford-le-Hope and Chadwell St Mary had not been included as areas for consultation events, but after the meeting National Highways had agreed to add these as locations for events. He described how the consultation took place as the country unlocked from the pandemic, and Members would have liked to have seen more in-person events, with material available for those without internet access. He added that during the meeting in July, the Task Force had also discussed the Health and Equalities Impact Assessment (HEqIA), and the consultant had explained that Thurrock were putting forward changes to the methodology of the HEqIA, and hoped that National Highways would consider these. He stated that they had also discussed the issue of COPD along the route, and how populations clustered around the proposed route would be affected.

Councillor Massey continued and stated that National Highways had also attended the August meeting of the LTC Task Force, during which Members shared their concerns that the consultation was being held during the summer holidays. He stated that National Highways had been satisfied with the consultation as it was running for 8 weeks rather than the statutory 28 days. He stated that 1900 responses had been received up until the date of the meeting, which was higher than both previous consultations when looking at the same timeframe. Councillor Massey explained that the Task Force had submitted 25 questions to National Highways on varied topics such as housing, employment, tunnel safety, historic landfill, watercourses and site working hours. He explained that National Highways responded to all of these questions, and the minutes of this meeting could be found online.

Councillor Massey explained that the September meeting of the LTC Task Force was held in the Beehive, with the only substantive item being the Thurrock Council Consultation response, which included a 17 page short summary, a 100 page overall summary, and approximately 500 pages of technical appendices. The Task Force had listened to the senior consultant who had explained that Thurrock Council had determined the route would negatively impact local connectivity, reduce the ability for housing development in the area, and would have a large impact on the local road network. He added that not enough detailed mitigation had been included in the consultation in relation to the increase in traffic, both during the construction phase and route opening. Councillor Massey added that Thurrock Council were still waiting on data from the traffic models, and a discussion was also taking place in relation to the peak travel hours used for

this data. He highlighted that 2,700 people had completed the consultation, and thanked residents for taking part. Councillor Massey summarised and stated that October's meeting was postponed as a mark of respect to the late Sir David Amess MP, and the next meeting would be held on 15 November 2021.

Councillor Coxshall echoed Councillor Massey's comments regarding legacy housing and felt disappointed that National Highways had not agreed the mitigation measure regarding this issue. He stated that the LTC workforce would need homes, and wanted to see proper homes built, rather than containers or caravans on site. He stated that National Highways should look to the London Olympics as a model to build sustainable homes that could be used for the community once the workforce had left, and would not be as unsightly as temporary container accommodation. The Leader thanked residents for their consultation responses and hoped that National Highways would take these responses on board.

Councillor Coxshall asked if the Task Force could look into the connectivity of the scheme with the local road network, particularly the junction with the A13. He stated that as there would currently only be a westbound junction this could cause delays at Stanford-le-Hope, particularly with the development of the Freeport. The Leader added that the Council did not want a repeat of the East facing slip road with the A13 at Lakeside. Councillor Massey replied that he would go back to the Task Force and discuss the A13 junction with the LTC.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the work of the Task Force.

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

10. Clean and Green Service Savings Proposals (Decision: 110589)

Councillor Jefferies introduced the report and stated the street scene and leisure service had identified two areas of savings which were outlined within the report. He stated that the team had reviewed how, when, and the frequency of town centre and green space cleaning. Councillor Redsell explained that the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee had discussed the report in detail. She queried if staff who would be made redundant could be retrained or redeployed in other areas. She also questioned what other areas of savings had been considered. Councillor Redsell and the Committee had felt that street cleaning was an important area, which all residents would notice. She sought reassurance that roads, paths and green spaces would remain clean and up to their present standard. She added that although the Committee had felt that wildflower planting could be good in some areas, they did not want this to be at the detriment of parks and green spaces. She also queried what the team were doing to tackle

nuisance motorbikes on green spaces, and if new fencing could be used to stop them accessing these areas. The Leader stated that he had met recently with the environment team to discuss the problem of motorbikes on green spaces. He explained that during this meeting he had suggested deadwood hedging, which utilised coppiced material and deadwood to stop motorbikes entering certain areas, as well as providing a sanctuary for wildlife. Councillor Jefferies thanked Councillor Redsell and the Committee for their comments and questions, and assured them that the proposed savings would not see standards fall. He agreed that clean and green services were important for residents and the teams would continue to ensure the highest standards. He stated that he did not know which specific posts would be made redundant, but assured Councillor Redsell that these redundancies would follow all the necessary employment laws, and the HR team would work with those affected people to support them where possible. He stated that street cleaning now utilised machinery that was more efficient, and the team had developed a strategy which concentrated on cleaning parks and open spaces after they had been busy, for example on weekends. He added that officers were now considering the frequency and type of cleaning undertaken in parks and open spaces, and this would be amended where appropriate. Councillor Jefferies commented that they did not want areas to become overgrown, but felt that wildflower planting would enhance certain areas, such as road verges. He explained that roads currently had to close when they required cleaning or grass maintenance, which could cause delays and problems for road users. He stated that wildflower areas did not require maintenance as often and looked better than grass. He explained that the team were also considering wildflower planting in small verges between footpaths and roads, as well as considering ground covering that did not grow and therefore did not require as much maintenance.

Councillor Redsell asked if the Portfolio Holder could look into how street cleaners and housing stock street cleaners worked together to ensure all areas were being cleaned efficiently. Councillor Jefferies replied that work was currently ongoing to ensure that street cleaners and housing stock street cleaners worked together efficiently. Councillor Spillman added that the housing service had become leaner and more efficient, but continued to perform well. He felt that savings could improve services and provide value for money for taxpayers. Councillor Coxshall stated that he had shared the concern of Councillor Redsell and the Committee regarding job losses and if this would affect the service. He highlighted 3.21 and 3.22 of the report which outlined that a number of the posts marked for potential redundancy were already vacant or filled by agency staff, and had been this way for a long time, so would have a limited impact. He stated that the Council were committed to ensuring a better service for residents whilst making savings, and officers had been working hard on this area for a number of years.

Councillor Redsell highlighted an issue with bin collections that had been reported to her, particularly regarding bins in fields and parks that relied on solar power technology to inform the team when they were full. She stated that she had received reports that these bins were positioned under trees, so were not communicating efficiently to officers when they needed emptying,

and therefore were overflowing. Councillor Jefferies responded that he would ask officers to look into this issue.

The Leader thanked Councillor Redsell for her attendance, and stated that scrutiny Chairs would always be welcome to attend Cabinet meetings, as it was good to hear scrutiny comments first hand.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Considered and approved the proposals outlined in the context of the current MTFS position.

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

The meeting finished at 7.47 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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8 December 2021		ITEM: 10
		Decision: 110590
Cabinet		
Financial Update – Quarter 2 2021/22		
Wards and communities affected:	Key Decision:	
All	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 Resources & Place Delivery		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report covers the first six months of the municipal year 2021/22.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council is managing a funding gap of £34.339m over 2022/23 and 2023/24 as reported to Cabinet in July 2021.

Officers have consistently reported that the Council operates from a low financial base in terms of core funding. The Council had the third lowest band D council tax compared with other unitary councils (only Windsor & Maidenhead and Isles of Scilly were lower, who themselves have a unique local financial context in terms of receivable income and spending requirements) and the average band D council tax in Essex in 2020/21 was £1,503.10 compared with the Thurrock position of £1,332.81 (lowest in Essex). 70% of Thurrock properties are in bands A to C and so raise significantly less than a Band D level. The amount raised from Council Tax in 2020/21 was £69.2m compared with the nearest Unitary neighbour Southend of £84.8m; and in 2020/21 Thurrock projected to raise £120.1m of business rates but was only allowed to retain £36.3m or 30% of the amount collected in the area.

A range of actions have been taken to address the deficit and the remaining funding gap is now £3.888m (subject to the delivery of further staff savings of £6.522m) over the 2 year period for 2022/23 and 2023/24. Risk remains in both delivering the identified savings and addressing the remaining funding gaps, and this is an effort that senior officers are presently working on.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities announced the headline sector position but will not confirm final settlement positions by local authority until mid-December 2021. Confirmed allocations will be part of the budget report to Cabinet at the meeting on 12 January 2022.

General Fund Revenue Monitoring Q2 2021/22

The forecast at the end of September 2021 is an in-year pressure of £0.721m. This position is supported by the planned use of reserves previously agreed, capital receipts generated from the approved asset disposals as previously agreed and savings arising from a managed approach to recruitment. Work continues to address the remaining pressure in the second half of the year.

There is a significant pressure within core services relating to looked after children with increases in the number, type and complexity of cases which has significantly raised the average cost of support/placement packages. This pressure cannot be understated in terms of the challenge at hand. This is consistent with the wider experiences in the sector across the country as the longer term impacts of the pandemic manifest themselves. The current projected overspend in Children's Services is £2.978m after the application of wider mitigations, and the planned use of reserves and grants.

There remains ongoing uncertainty on the full impact that Covid-19 will have on wider services with specific impacts expected to develop further in the Adults and Children's Social Care sector and in terms of potentially increased levels of homelessness. These concerns are part of a national discussion across the sector.

The wider impacts of the pandemic on local funding streams remain under consideration as the support mechanisms in place to support both residents and local business are reduced or come to an end and the longer term economic impacts of the pandemic become clearer. The indications are that these income streams remain resilient in the current year

Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is projecting a breakeven position. There has been a limited impact from Covid-19 to date and the stability of rental income continues to be monitored alongside the reduction in Covid-19 support mechanisms (and particularly the furlough scheme).

Dedicated Schools Grant

The Dedicated Schools Grant is currently forecasting an overspend of £0.510m in 2021/22. This reflects additional High Needs Block funding received in 2021/22, consideration of the 2020/21 outturn position along with the latest sector information available. The projected overspend reflects the higher level of demand for the statutory services required to support pupils with special educational needs.

Capital Monitoring

This forecast position at the end of quarter 2 is that expenditure on General Fund schemes will be £103.645m against a planned budget of £106.213m. Schemes in the Housing Revenue Account are projected to meet the budgeted expenditure.

Treasury Management

The Council continues to manage the portfolio of the now-historic approach and the associated debt to support the ongoing delivery of core services. The net debt of the Council is £428.3m which includes HRA debt of £160.9m and the balance supporting historic capital projects.

1. Recommendations:

- 1.1 That Cabinet comment on the forecast outturn financial position for 2021/22; and**
- 1.2 Agree that Thurrock's 2022/23 Schools funding formula be implemented as stated in section 6. This being consistent with Cabinet's decision made for 2020/21 and 2021/22 schools funding formula; and**
- 1.3 Agree to accept the Highways England designated funding of £0.750m and add the first phase of the (SEE) Park project to the capital programme.**

2 General Fund Quarter 2 Monitoring

- 2.1 In February 2021 the Council approved the 2021/22 budget. The funding of the budget has been supported by confirmed ongoing sources including council tax increases and government grant alongside one off solutions to create further space to develop and implement sustainable savings. The funding can be summarised as set out below:
 - Council Tax Increase – permanent – a 1.99% increase - £1.65m;
 - Adult Social Care precept – a 3% increase – £2.48m;
 - Government grant of £4.853m – one off – government support for Covid-19;
 - Use of Capital receipts for Transformation Activity –£3m one off - subject to disposals;
 - Use of Reserves – £3.3m - one off;
 - Reduction of Allowances - £0.800m;
 - Vacant Post savings (one off) - £4m equates to approximately 100 posts; and
 - Income loss contingency - £1.300m.
- 2.2 The financial reporting includes the ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic which has required a wider range of responses from the Council and continues to be a source of uncertainty. This report sets out the latest assessment of the financial impact on 2021/22 and incorporates the associated funding announced to date by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities.
- 2.3 The Authority will continue to utilise the Control Outbreak Management Fund and the Infection Control Fund to support care providers and local businesses to deliver their services in a Covid-19 secure manner.

- 2.4 The budget allocation also reflects the restructure to the Senior Leadership Team, the deletion of the standalone Place Directorate and the reallocation of Place functions integrated into other Directorates.
- 2.5 The report sets out the latest forecast position for 2021/22 across the main revenue accounts – the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Dedicated
- 2.6 The Overall General Fund position is set out in detail in the table below:

Directorate	2021/22 Current Budget	M6 Forecast	M6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Adults, Housing and Health	46,625	46,225	(400)
Children's Services	41,781	44,759	2,978
Housing General Fund	1,818	1,818	0
HR, OD and Transformation	8,906	8,556	(350)
Public Realm	35,315	34,902	(413)
Resources & Place Delivery	16,562	15,856	(706)
Strategy, Engagement & Growth	3,791	3,392	(399)
Financing & Corporate Costs	(154,798)	(154,787)	11
	0	721	721

3 Directorate Outturn position

Analysis by Service Area:

Adults, Housing and Health

Service	2021/22 Current Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
Assistive Equipment & Technology	649	649	0
Commissioning & Service Delivery	1,030	917	(113)
Community Development	2,101	1,876	(225)
Fieldwork Services	4,671	4,376	(295)
Provider Services	7,508	7,352	(155)
External Placements	30,667	32,709	2,042
Operational Budgets Total	46,625	47,878	1,253
BCF Reserve		(400)	(400)
Hospital Discharge Programme		(548)	(548)
Expenditure relating to Containment Outbreak management		(705)	(705)
Total non-recurrent funding		(1,653)	(1,653)
Total	46,625	46,225	(400)

- 3.1 There is a forecast underspend of £0.400m. This is largely due to a delay in the recruitment of social worker posts across Fieldwork Services. Although the overall value of all vacant posts for the current financial year is estimated to be £0.854m (as per table in paragraph 4.2), these include essential front line service posts which need to be recruited to, but for 2021/22 are being used in part to offset demand pressures in wider services, and specifically, external placements.
- 3.2 The position is heavily reliant upon one-off funding as demonstrated in the above table. The 2021/22 Adult Social Care precept provided £2.5m in additional funding, £1.9m of this was used to uplift provider fees due to fragility of the care market. A further £2.1m met the ongoing cost of increased demand and complexities within Learning Disabilities and Mental Health placements. Hence, the directorate faced an underlying structural deficit of £1.5m at the beginning of 2021/22.
- 3.3 Additional demand pressures of £1.4m, largely in Older People's Residential and Domiciliary Care have increased during 2021/22, now meaning that the structural deficit has increased to over £3m.
- 3.4 The below table shows the external placements budget broken down by care category:

External Placements	2021/22 Current Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Older People	6,971	8,455	1,484
Learning Disabilities	15,111	15,510	399
Mental Health	4,447	4,595	148
Physical Disabilities	3,515	3,571	56
Respite Care	622	577	(45)
Total External Placements Budgets	30,666	32,708	2,042

- 3.5 Cost drivers within the Older People budget reflect unprecedented additional demand in the wider health and care system as a result of Covid-19. Changes to hospital discharge practices and increased numbers of discharges into residential care increase the likelihood of longer term funding pressures.
- 3.6 Hospital discharge funding through Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group initially provided £1.644m of funding and supported 1,213 clients. Of the cohort of clients identified in 2020/21, a significant number have remained under the care of the Local Authority permanently and a number of homecare cases have subsequently transferred to more expensive residential settings following assessment of more complex needs.
- 3.7 In 2021/22 a further 804 clients presented through the hospital discharge route to the end of September. This highlights the increased demand in the system that has arisen from the impact of Covid-19
- 3.8 Hospital Discharge only provides a level of free care for the first 4 weeks, after that the full cost reverts to the LA, net of any client contributions then receivable, which is circa 25% of the cost on average.

Children's Services

Service	2021/22 Current Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
Children and Family Services	32,237	36,408	4,171
Education & Skills	5,953	5,284	(669)
Head Start Housing Service	848	1,502	654
School Transport	2,743	3,444	701
Operational Budgets Total	41,781	46,638	4,857
Transformation funding		(160)	(160)
Children's Reserve		(400)	(400)
Covid-19 Grant		(1,019)	(1,019)
Other Grants		(300)	(300)
Total non-recurrent funding	0	(1,879)	(1,879)
Total	41,781	44,759	2,978

3.9 The overall Children's Services forecast outturn position is a gross overspend of £4.857m before any mitigation is applied. The position relies on the use of one-off funding and reserves to reduce the pressure back down to £2.978m in 2021/22. There is concern that these pressures will affect the directorate's ability to contribute towards identified savings in future years and this will remain under assessment.

Children and Family Services

3.10 The below table shows that placements within the Children and Family Service are reporting a gross overspend of £3.650m as a result of increased case numbers, increased complexity of need and large sibling groups. Legislative changes regarding unregulated placements and an increase in remand related cases are causing further budgetary pressures:

Placement Type	Budgeted Placement numbers	September Actual Placements	Variance	Budgeted Average Cost per week	Current Average Cost per week	2021/22 Current Budget	Month 6 forecast	Month 6 Variance
				£	£	£000	£000	£000
Placed with parent/Adoption	9	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Internal Fostering	133	105	(28)	951	470	3,038	2,391	(647)
Supported Accommodation	21	28	7	875	1,143	396	596	200
External Fostering	105	128	23	3,650	912	4,550	5,484	934
External Residential	25	27	2	0	4,300	4,853	6,714	1,861
Secure Placement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unregulated	0	3	3		16,473	0	1,008	1,008
Education contribution	0	0	0			(258)	(500)	(242)
Remand	0	4	4	4	4	30	566	536
Total LAC	293	306	13			12,609	16,259	3,650

Fostering

3.11 The internal and external fostering placements are not in line with the levels set in the budget. The higher level of external cases creates a pressure a pressure of £0.287m. Thurrock has competitive rates and in the previous year introduced new council tax exemptions for new and existing foster carers. However, the level of new internal carers has not been as projected and retention of existing carers remains difficult. The internal fostering service are reviewing recruitment and advertising campaigns to attract new foster carers to the internal service. The service have recently advertised in the national press for new foster carers and will soon be advertising on national television. A number of other recruitment campaign proposals are under discussion and awaiting approval.

Residential & Unregulated placements

3.12 In September 2021, the Government implemented a ban on Local Authorities placing children under 16 in unregulated independent or semi-independent placements, helping to ensure the most vulnerable young people are cared for in settings that best meet their needs. Therefore, Thurrock's unregulated placements need to be converted to alternative residential provision. There are currently three such placements with an associated overspend of £1.008m.

- 3.13 Across the sector it is becoming more challenging to place looked after children in appropriate settings at the budgeted cost levels. This is due to supply issues with associated cost impacts and the average cost of a residential placement has generated a budget pressure of £1.861m
- 3.14 The Directorate, as part of regular placement panel meetings review all high cost settings. There are currently 10 high cost residential placements with an annual cost per placement exceeding £0.130m. High cost placements account for circa 20% of total forecast placement spend.

Remand

- 3.15 All children remanded to secure accommodation automatically become looked after children by their home local authority. If they were looked after prior to going into youth detention accommodation, they continue to receive services under the Children Act 1989, and children not previously looked after acquire this status.
- 3.16 Thurrock currently has four young people in remand placements following an increase in criminal and gang-related activity within the borough and this adds a pressure of £0.536m in 2021/22.

Delayed Legal Proceedings

- 3.17 The cases subject to ongoing legal proceedings have been delayed by the impact of Covid-19 on the legal system. This means care plans will be resolved over a longer timescale and the estimated costs associated with supporting cases within the legal system are causing a further pressure for the service of £0.365m

Head Start Housing

- 3.18 The Head Start housing (HSH) scheme offers a range of accommodation for young people leaving care with the intention of developing independent living skills before going on to take up a tenancy of their own.
- 3.19 The service purchased three properties and all required modification/improvement works to be made before care leavers could occupy. Of the three properties, only one is currently in use and is almost at full occupancy. The remaining two properties were expected to be operational in October; however there are still delays resulting in the need for additional properties to respond to demand.
- 3.20 A key pressure point is the demand for additional support within the accommodation. Twenty-one young people are currently accessing this provision, which is forecast to cost an additional £0.614m. The majority of these cases developed during the pandemic and cases developed in terms of increased complexity. The support element is procured on a spot purchase basis and it is hoped merging accommodation with support will deliver a more cost effective option going forward.

3.21 It remains difficult to advance tenants to social housing for a number of reasons, including insufficient progress in their study, poor mental health and established networks. HSH and the After Care personal assistants are supporting each tenant to address their concerns and meet their individual needs.

Home to School Transport

- 3.22 Home to school transport are projecting an overspend of £0.701m. The forecast is based on current routes at full cost and this area remains under review to consider opportunities for further cost reduction.
- 3.23 The service is experiencing significant increase in demand for transport services, with twenty-two new children in Independent settings and forty-eight additional children being transported to specialist provision within Thurrock. This is linked both to the increase in pupils in Thurrock and an increase in those receiving support through an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- 3.24 From September 2021, Treetops accounted for thirty-eight of the new students linked to specialist settings due to the expansion linked to the new Treetops Free School that is scheduled to open in spring 2022. This is phase one of a three year expansion of numbers. Pupil Numbers are to increase by forty in each of the next two academic years.
- 3.25 The service is to review all transport to consider options to reduce expenditure and demand. A key consideration will be the review of adherence to eligibility criteria and the use of Passenger Assistants and if this provision is necessary in all circumstances.

Public Realm

Service	Revised 2021/22 Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Emergency Planning & Resilience	442	447	5
Environment & Highways	1,599	1,492	(107)
Fraud & Enforcement	(116)	(845)	(729)
Highways, Fleet and Logistics	9,369	9,335	(34)
Street Scene and Leisure	20,065	20,214	149
Planning, Transportation & Public Protection	3,955	4,258	303
Planning Delivery Fund	0	0	0
Total	35,314	34,901	(413)

3.26 The overall Public Realm position is forecast to underspend by £0.413m.

Counter Fraud & Enforcement

- 3.27 The Counter Fraud team are in the process of securing contracts for external work with the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The work is generating additional income and there is the potential for further improvement. The position will be monitored and adjusted as further information becomes available.
- 3.28 There is a £0.292m expected loss of parking income this year based on projected parking volumes following the pandemic. Quarter 1 losses will be partly offset by funding from Central Government.

Street, Scene & Leisure

- 3.29 There is a forecast overspend position at month 6 of £0.149m and there remains the ongoing risk related to the waste disposal contracts, which is the directorate's largest and most volatile budget. There are variable elements to the contract which can be impacted by demand and levels of contaminated recycling wastes.
- 3.30 Contained within this position is the cost of responding to the industrial action of £0.109m; this includes the additional costs of setting up and running the nine bring sites offset by the reduction in staffing costs.

Planning, Transportation & Public Protection

- 3.31 Pressures to the value of £0.303m have been identified at month 6. This is largely related to the reductions in planning income against budgeted levels. Losses relating to the first quarter will be partly offset by central government support funding.
- 3.32 Reliance on the use of agency staff and increased overtime within the Environmental Protection Team has led to pressures of £0.085m.

Resources & Place Delivery

Service	Revised 2021/22 budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Chief Executive	409	412	3
Corporate Finance	5,515	5,426	(89)
Delivery and Strategy	249	240	(9)
Democratic Services	235	230	(4)
Electoral Services	486	390	(95)
Legal Services	2,244	2,173	(71)
Lower Thames Crossing & Transport Infrastructure	751	751	0
Members Services	804	789	(15)
Place Delivery	353	353	0
Property	5,516	5,091	(425)
Total	16,562	15,856	(706)

- 3.33 The Resources & Place Delivery directorate forecast variance at quarter 2 is £0.706m below budget.

Corporate Finance

- 3.34 There are a number of vacancies being held within the team while a wider review of staffing level versus service delivery takes place. Collection levels for council tax and NNDR remain high and needs to be monitored as the mechanisms for recovery action become available and cases are progressed. This will impact on staffing levels and the volume of income that is collected. Corporate Overview & Scrutiny recently approved an approach to ensure that a target group of habitual, long-term, intentional non-council tax/business rate payers will be taken through new elements of the available processes, including the committal process.

Lower Thames Crossing

- 3.35 The forecast assumes the reserves held will cover the cost of activity above the levels already allocated within the base budget. The approach to be taken with regards to any opposition and public consultations will determine whether increase in resources is required in this area.

Property Services

- 3.36 The cost of running a number of buildings is lower than the business as usual budget due to the restricted services being offered during the first quarter coupled with the wider flexible working arrangements.
- 3.37 The service are also running with a number of vacancies within Assets and Facilities Management whilst a restructure exercise takes place.

- 3.38 The notice period required for business tenants in the Purfleet Regeneration has been delayed and not expected to affect 2021/22. The notice period is six months and the budgetary impact related to the loss of income will be realised in the 2022-23 financial year.
- 3.39 Corporate landlord responsibilities are being delivered through a combination of revenue and capital funding as appropriate supporting the management of this budget.

Housing General Fund

Service	2021/22 Budget	Month 6 forecast	Month 6 variance
	£000	£000	£000
Temporary Accommodation – Homelessness	1,427	1,682	255
Refuge	116	116	0
Traveller Sites	53	53	0
Private Housing and Adaptations	222	278	56
Operational Budget total	1,818	2,129	311
Covid-19 Grant Allocation		(255)	(255)
Private housing Reserve		(56)	(56)
Total non-recurrent funding		(311)	(311)
Total	1,818	1,818	0

- 3.40 The main pressure and risk within the financial position of the directorate remains the demand on homelessness and temporary accommodation (TA). The below table shows a further breakdown of this budget:

Service	2021/22 Budget	Month 6 forecast	Month 6 variance
	£000	£000	£000
Hostel Provision (External)	237	275	38
Brook House Hostel	1	18	17
General Fund Homelessness	1,184	1,409	225
HRA Furnished Lets used by TA	6	(19)	(25)
Total TA Homelessness	1,428	1,683	255

- 3.41 One of the major routes into the homelessness service is as a result of landlords imposing eviction measures. These measures became operational again from July 2021. The concern is that there will be an increase 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 the assumed use of reserves in this area.
- 3.42 For 2022/23, a plan is in place to acquire additional housing stock through a combination of directly purchasing stock, additional use of the Phi leasing scheme and repurposing decommissioned sheltered housing accommodation. This is forecast to make significant savings to the General Fund.

Homelessness Budget through reduced use of private sector landlords and the need to make top up payments.

- 3.43 The services under the housing general fund remit are those that have been significantly impacted by the pandemic.

Private Sector Housing

- 3.44 The private sector housing service has an income requirement to achieve circa 50% of its overall net costs built into the base budget. One of the key income streams is from the inspections of privately let accommodation. Social distancing measures have meant a restriction in the level of work permitted, which is projected to have a directly detrimental effect on the overall budget position and is supported by the reserve.

Strategy, Engagement & Growth

- 3.45 The overall Strategy, Engagement & Growth directorate have a forecast underspend at period 6 of £0.399m.

Service	Revised 2021/22 Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Economic Growth & Partnerships	542	580	38
Social Care Performance	1,230	1,010	(220)
Strategy; Communications & Customer Services	2,020	1,803	(217)
Total	3,792	3,393	(399)

- 3.46 Customer Services have a forecast underspend due to the reduced levels of face-to-face service and the focus on telephony and online functions. There are a number of vacant posts being held by the teams in line with the council's overall approach to vacancies and recruitment.
- 3.47 The Registrars service has been able to resume their function without restrictions from July. The level of demand will affect the final position and income levels, detailed work will be carried out as part of the ongoing monthly monitoring.
- 3.48 The overall position for the directorate supports the planned savings to be achieved in 2022/23 within the Social Care Performance and Customer Services teams.

HR, OD & Transformation

Service	Revised 2021/22 Budget	Month 6 Forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
HR, OD and Transformation	5,242	4,937	(305)
ICT	3,664	3,619	(45)
Total	8,906	8,556	(350)

- 3.49 The directorate is managing increased demand within available funding and the use of capital and transformation funding resulting in a forecast underspend of £0.350m. Vacancies are being held where possible and support the delivery of the planned permanent savings for 2022/23.

Financing & Corporate Costs

- 3.50 Core Financing and Corporate Costs are projected to be within budget for the financial year 2021/22 with treasury income offsetting pressures in corporate costs. The most significant pressure relates to the delay to the implementation of the next phase of the pay review.

Housing Revenue Account

Service	2021/22 Current Budget	Month 6 forecast	Month 6 Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Development	235	235	0
Financing and Recharges	24,175	24,175	0
Rent and Income	(50,272)	(50,272)	0
Repairs and Maintenance	12,097	12,097	0
Supervision and Management	13,765	13,765	0
Total	0	0	0

- 3.51 Overall, the HRA is forecasting a balanced position at the end of financial year. At present there are no adverse variances identified within repairs and maintenance or operational activities.
- 3.52 Rent collection levels remain in line with the budgeted forecast, but there remains a potential risk of bad debts and arrears as economic impacts of the pandemic develop.
- 3.53 Funding from the 2020/21 outturn position has been earmarked in a reserve to help with any associated decant costs upon the completion of the Calcutta Club properties later on in the year

4 Dedicated Schools Grant

	Funding Settlement	Academy Recoupment	Funding Block transfer	Final DSG	Month 5 Forecast	Month 5 Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Schools	140,936	(135,263)	(673)	5,000	5,000	0
Central Services	1,783	0	(200)	1,583	1,610	27
High Needs	28,266	(5,678)	873	23,461	24,199	528
Early Years	12,877		0	12,877	12,832	(45)
Total	183,862	(140,941)	0	42,921	42,921	510

- 4.1 The Dedicated Schools Grant is currently forecasting an overspend of £0.510m in 2021/22. This reflects additional High Needs Block funding received in 2021/22, consideration of the 2020/21 outturn position along with the latest sector information available. This information will be subject to changes at the start of the academic year once the movement in school places is confirmed.
- 4.2 The High Needs Block is the significant area of financial risk and linked to the continued increase in the number of EHCPs. A full review will be undertaken to understand the financial implications once changes for the new academic year are confirmed. In common with wider education authorities in the sector work continues with the Education and Skills Funding Agency to address the financial sustainability of the DSG.
- 4.3 A review of the local offer and commissioned places available in Thurrock continues. The need to challenge schools on the use of the Notional SEN budget and the requirement to progress to an EHCP remains. This will be subject to change once changes for the new academic year are announced.

5 DSG Allocations 2022/23

- 5.1 In July, the Secretary of State for Education announced details of the provisional Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2022/23.
- 5.2 The table below shows the provisional information received and includes the 2021/22 allocation for the Schools Block Growth fund and the Early Years Block. These amount along with the final DSG allocations, updated to reflect the Oct-21 School census, will be published in December 2021.

DSG Funding Blocks	Funding Settlement 2021/22	Provisional Settlement 2022/23	Provisional Increase 2022/23
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	140.936	144.664	3.728
Central Services Block	1.783	1.673	(0.110)
High Needs Block	28.266	31.382	3.116
Early Years Block	12.877	12.877	0.000
Total	183.862	190.597	6.734

5.3 The key changes made by the ESFA to the National Funding Formula (NFF) in 2022/23 are:

- The core factors in the NFF will increase by 3%;
- The funding floor will ensure that every school is allocated at least 2% more pupil-led funding per pupil compared to the 2021/22 allocation; and
- The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase by 2%. This will mean that, next year, every primary school will receive at least ££4,265 per pupil and every secondary school will receive at least £5,525 per pupil. These have been discussed and agreed with the Schools Forum in November 2020.

5.4 In 2022/23, each local authority will continue to set a local schools funding formula, in consultation with local schools. Thurrock's funding formula will implement the following principles consistent with the decision made by Cabinet for 2020/21 and 2021/22:

- National Funding Formula values to be applied;
- Growth fund to be retained to support sufficiency of school places; and
- Any unallocated funding will be applied to the Basic Entitlement values.

These principles have been discussed with both the Schools Forum and Schools in meeting held during September 2021.

5.5 The Schools Forum are to discuss the transfer up to 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support increase demand for Specialist placements and Education, Health and Care Plans at its meeting in November. This is a decision for the Schools Forum to make.

6 Public Health

6.1 The Public Health Grant was increased by £0.101m in 2021/22 with the full allocation for the year now being £11.585m. The increase has been largely allocated to reducing waiting lists for sexual health and weight management services. A number of functions could not be delivered whilst the national restrictions were in place and the team are committed to ensuring these services are once again available and working to improve the health of the local population.

- 6.2 Other schemes such as the Thurrock 0-19 Brighter Futures Healthy Families Service will continue to be funded through the grant and provide targeted support and a range of interventions for children, young people and their families across the borough.
- 6.3 The month 6 forecast is an underspend of £0.100m which will be placed into a ring-fenced reserve and allocated in 2022/23 to deal with the anticipated longer term effects of the pandemic on the local population and increased demand for local primary services.

7 Capital Monitoring – 2020/21 Quarter 2

General Fund Schemes

- 7.1 The current position for General Fund schemes for 2021/22 is summarised below and further detail can be found at Appendix 1.

	Latest Agreed Budget	Projected Outturn to 31/03/2022	Variance against budget
	£000	£000	£000
Expenditure:			
Children's Service ¹	3,820	3,297	(523)
Adult, Housing & Health	3,476	3,056	(420)
Public Realm	23,551	22,400	(1,151)
Resources & Place Delivery	56,477	56,425	(52)
HR, OD & Transformation	18,567	18,145	(422)
Strategy; Engagement & Growth	304	304	0
Commercial Services	18	18	0
Total Expenditure	106,213	103,645	(2,568)
Resources:			
Prudential Borrowing	(80,135)	(79,081)	1,054
Capital Receipts	(841)	(841)	0
Reserves	(0)	(0)	0
Government Grants	(16,315)	(15,278)	1,037
Other Grants	(7,815)	(7,528)	287
Developers Contributions (S106)	(1,107)	(917)	190
Total Resources	(106,213)	(103,645)	2,568
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

- 7.2 This illustrates a projected outturn at the end of the financial year of £103.645m, which is £2.568m less than the latest agreed budget for the year. This forecast variance is further analysed below.

Analysis of forecast variance

	Re-profiling of expenditure at Month 6	Capital schemes requiring additional funding	Completed Projects	Forecast variance against budget at Month 6
Expenditure:	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children's Service	(520)	0	(3)	(523)
Adult, Housing & Health	(420)	0	0	(420)
Public Realm	(1,145)	0	(6)	(1,151)
Resources & Place Delivery	0	0	(52)	(52)
HR, OD & Transformation	(422)	0	0	(422)
Total	(2,507)	(0)	(61)	(2,568)

- 7.3 This shows that the forecast underspend is principally due to slippage/budget re-profiling on current schemes (£2.507m). Consequently, the funding remains allocated to specific current schemes.
- 7.4 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, which will be reported to the Standards and Audit Committee and the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee in due course.
- 7.5 A number of capital schemes are also expected to complete construction in future years with expenditure totalling £41.639m. Budgets for these schemes have been profiled accordingly.
- 7.6 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 £74.877m include school improvement works, the A13 East Facing slip road, Grays South development and the 21st Century Care Home.

Addition to the Capital Programme – phase 1 SEEPark

- 7.7 On 22 July 2020, Cabinet, considered a report from ASELA that provided an update on progressing the economic agenda for the South Essex region. At that meeting, Cabinet agreed to support a collaboration with South Essex Authorities to deliver regeneration across South Essex.

- 7.8 Since that date, ASELA has developed a number of detailed work programmes and is engaging directly with government to promote the development and regeneration of South Essex with the aim of increasing prosperity and quality of life for residents.
- 7.9 The South Essex Estuary (SEE) Park is one of the 5 anchor programmes in progress. Borne out of the Green Blue Infrastructure Study delivered in 2019, it ensures that 30% of the green space across South Essex remains protected, thus delivering on the government’s commitment to protect 30% of UKs land in a boost for improved and recovering biodiversity. Strategically, SEEPark is placing nature at the centre of South Essex economic regeneration and it will deliver significant place-making benefits. Environmentally, by mitigating climate change and flooding, creating nature recovery networks and enhancing biodiversity. Socially, by providing better access to green space for all residents and allowing improved inter-connected active travel. Economically, by increasing eco-tourism, creating green tech jobs and providing a local opportunity to carbon offset at scale for local business.
- 7.10 The first stage of programmed works is described as the ‘Central Thames Marshland’; 40 miles of connected coastal pathway, that will run from Coalhouse Fort in the West to Leigh on Sea in the East. The first phase of capital works will start from Coalhouse Fort and finish at Fobbing Marsh, and will act as a showcase for future ASELA Green Blue ambitions. Design work has been undertaken during 2021, and the intention is to build and deliver in 2022.
- 7.11 The council has been offered a total of £750,000 through HE Designated Funds to develop and deliver the first phases of the ASELA SEE Park project. Funding will be spread over the current and 2022/23 financial years and will incorporate consultancy and build work.
- 7.12 Consequently it is recommended that Cabinet accept the funding and include an addition to the capital programme for the first phase of the SEE Park project

Housing Revenue Account Schemes

- 7.13 The current position for Housing Revenue Account schemes for 2021/22 is summarised below:

HRA Capital Programme – Projected Outturn

	Latest Agreed Budget	Projected Outturn to 31/03/2021
	£000	£000
Expenditure:		
Transforming Homes	38,496	31,059
Housing Development	3,227	3,227
Total Expenditure	41,723	34,286

	Latest Agreed Budget	Projected Outturn to 31/03/2021
Resources:		
Prudential Borrowing	(29,837)	(22,094)
Capital Receipts	(1,346)	(1,652)
Reserves	0	0
Government & Other Grants	0	0
Major Repairs Reserve	(10,540)	(10,540)
Total Resources	(41,723)	(34,286)
Forecast Overspend in Resources	0	0

- 7.14 The budget for Transforming Homes in 2021/22 is £38.496m and the forecast spend is currently £31.059m. Much of the expected slippage relates to the Tower Block Refurbishment project, where a revised programme is currently being developed. Spend, as at 30 September 2021 was £12.906m.
- 7.15 The revised budgets for 2021/22 for HRA New Build Schemes are set out below. The current forecast is the £3.227m budget will be delivered. These projects will utilise receipts held under Right to Buy sharing agreement between the Council and central government.

HRA New Build Schemes

	Revised Budget	Spend YTD	Forecast	Variance from Revised Budget	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	%
Calcutta Rd	2,838	2,104	2,838	0	0%
Claudian Way	202	1	202	0	0%
Tops Club	117	0	117	0	0%
Prince of Wales	70	58	70	0	0%
Total	3,227	2,163	3,227	0	0%

8 Treasury

- 8.1 This section is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code and presents details of treasury management activity for the 6 months to 30 September 2021.

Borrowing

- 8.2 The Council's borrowing position as at 30 September 2021 is summarised in the table below:-

Source of Loan	£m
Long Term Market Loans	29.0
Long Term PWLB	196.3
Long Term Market Loans re Investments	95.0
Long Term PWLB re Investments	483.3
Temporary Market Loans Re Investments	348.9
Other Temporary Market Loans	307.1
Total Debt	1,459.6
Total Investments	(1,031.3)
Total Net Indebtedness	428.3

- 8.3 The net indebtedness (borrowing less investments) of the council is £428.3m, made up of £160.9m of PWLB long-term debt relating to the HRA and £267.4m of long and short-term debt relating to historic capital funding.
- 8.4 The Council continues to fund the £84.0m ex-PWLB debt on a temporary basis. Interest rates fell to 0.10% in March 2020 due to the Pandemic and forecasts predict that the rate will remain at this level for the time being although there has been recent speculation of increases to the base rate late in 2021 and early in 2022.
- 8.5 This forecast would suggest that further interest savings should still be accrued for future years compared with the costs of borrowing longer-term debt. However, predictions for the bank base rate are open to change depending on government responses to market events and developments and continue to be closely monitored by officers with appropriate action taken as necessary. The bank base rate, whilst indicating a direction of travel, does not directly impact on the council's borrowing that is largely through other public sector bodies.
- 8.6 The council's PWLB debt portfolio currently consists of six elements, one of £160.9m of loans taken out with regards to the HRA settlement undertaken on 28 March 2012 and the others of £25m at 1.89%, £93.75m at 1.77%, £150m at 0.68%, £100m at 0.80% and £150m at 0.87% all on a two year EIP repayment plan to replace short term borrowing.
- 8.7 Officers repeatedly assess the council's LOBO loans for any early repayment opportunities but the premia involved of approximately £29m and the high refinancing costs again make it unfavourable to currently undertake any rescheduling. Officers will continue to monitor the council's debt portfolio for any rescheduling opportunities.
- 8.8 The council has also borrowed funds to facilitate the building works carried out by Thurrock Regeneration Ltd at the St Chads site in Tilbury. Officers are continuing to investigate opportunities to raise long-term funds to finance these

works but, as short-term rates are currently low and predicted to remain there for the foreseeable future, the council will continue to borrow on a short-term basis until the long term funds become attractive in comparison. All interest costs are met by Thurrock Regeneration Ltd with the council benefiting from an interest rate premium.

Investments

8.9 The corresponding figures for investments are set out in the table below:-

Source of Investment	Balance at 30/9/21 £m
Overnight Cash Investments	20.0
Short Term Cash Investments (2 to 365 days)	1.3
Repayable Capital Investments	823.2
Repayable Non Capital Investments	82.8
Fund Manager Investments- Repayable on demand	104.0
Total Investments	1,031.3

8.10 A proportion of the internally managed investments are held for very short time periods in order to meet day to day cash requirements.

8.11 The Council maintains its investment in the CCLA Property Fund and, has also only increased its capital/non-capital investments in line with pre-agreed commitments. No new investments have been made.

8.12 Investment activity has allowed the council to achieve a surplus of circa £115m over four years – this is after costs such as debt interest payments.

8.13 Internally held balances currently stand at £21.3m and will remain around that level at the financial year-end. These investments are mainly held with Banks and Building Societies on a fixed term basis ranging from overnight to 3 months in duration.

8.14 All investments made have been with organisations included on the "List of Acceptable Counterparties and Credit Limits" within the 2021/22 Annual Treasury Management Strategy and the total sums invested with individual institutions have been contained within the limits specified therein.

9 Reasons for Recommendation

9.1 The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget annually. This report sets out the budget pressures in 2021/22 along with actions to mitigate these pressures and deliver a breakeven position.

10 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

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

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

11.1 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.

12 Implications

12.1 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. 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.

12.2 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.

12.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by:

Natalie Smith

**Strategic Lead - Community
Development and Equalities**

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.

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

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

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)

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

14 Appendices to the report

Appendix 1: Summary of 2021/22 Capital Programme

Report Author

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

Summary of 2020/21 Capital Programme

Summary of the 2021/22 General Fund Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Sep-21)	% Spend against CY Forecast
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
Childrens Service	£'000 3,820	£'000 1,500	£'000 0	£'000 3,297	£'000 2,020	£'000 0	£'000 1,129	34.24
Adults; Housing and Health								
Community Development	1,120	1,000	0	950	1,170	0	128	13.47
Provider Services	242	15	0	242	15	0	5	2.00
Better Care	810	969	0	560	1,219	0	197	35.00
Housing General Fund	1,304	1,483	0	1,304	1,483	0	818	63.00
	3,476	3,467	0	3,056	3,887	0	1,148	37.57
Public Realm								
Highways Maintenance	17,779	6,034	2,238	17,034	6,778	2,238	3,617	21.23
Resident Services	105	0	0	105	0	0	0	0.00
Environment	5,209	6,150	0	4,803	6,550	0	143	3.00
Counter Fraud & Investigation	458	0	0	458	0	0	360	79.00
	23,551	12,184	2,238	22,400	13,328	2,238	4,120	18.39
Resources & Place Delivery								
Corporate Assets	4,430	500	0	4,378	500	0	884	20.19
Highways Major Projects	39,864	16,103	0	39,864	16,103	0	18,388	46.13
Regeneration Projects	12,183	4,197	887	12,183	4,197	887	902	7.40
	56,477	20,800	887	56,425	20,800	887	20,174	35.75
HR, OD and Transformation	18,567	270	30	18,145	691	30	6,756	37.23
Strategy; Engagement & Growth	304	63	0	304	63	0	26	8.55
Commercial Services	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	0.00
Total Expenditure - General	106,213	38,284	3,155	103,645	40,789	3,155	33,353	32.18

Table 6 – Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Sep-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	18	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	9,271	0	0	9,270	0	0	5,117	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	18	0	0	15	0	0	14	
	<i>Demand led</i>	2,168	0	0	1,768	400	0	154	
Total: Childrens Service		11,475	0	0	11,071	400	0	5,285	47.74
	<i>Not yet started</i>	69	0	0	69	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	559	0	0	559	0	0	4	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	108	0	0	103	0	0	103	
	<i>On hold</i>	1,920	0	0	872	1,049	0	474	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,716	380	35	1,716	380	35	24	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	533	0	0	533	0	0	160	
Total: Adults; Housing and Health		4,905	380	35	3,852	1,429	35	765	19.86
	<i>Not yet started</i>	21	0	0	21	0	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	2,930	0	0	2,930	0	0	-7	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	11,334	2,758	2,050	11,334	2,757	2,050	2,302	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	485	0	0	476	0	0	9	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	19	0	0	19	0	0	0	
	<i>On hold</i>	5,125	970	200	1,450	3,485	400	429	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,511	200	0	1,416	296	0	261	
Total: Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud		21,425	3,928	2,250	17,646	6,538	2,450	2,994	16.97
	<i>Not yet started</i>	73	190	0	23	240	0	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	4,733	1,823	0	2,511	4,046	0	467	
	<i>Contract formation</i>	131	0	0	131	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	33,708	11,391	5,084	33,420	34,462	13,116	16,732	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	129	0	0	129	0	0	100	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	161	0	0	161	0	0	10	
	<i>On hold</i>	7,520	6,158	0	1,600	11,315	762	624	
	<i>Demand led</i>	4,210	0	0	2,126	2,084	0	89	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	815	0	0	815	0	0	15	
Total: Place		51,480	19,562	5,084	40,916	52,147	13,878	18,037	44.08

Table 6 – Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Sep-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	<i>Not yet started</i>	1,913	465	50	1,890	488	50	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	230	0	0	30	200	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	37	0	0	37	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	7,848	120	30	7,848	120	30	1,437	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	184	1,000	0	136	1,000	0	23	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	125	0	0	125	0	0	17	
	<i>On hold</i>	3,888	2,724	0	534	3,354	2,724	0	
	<i>Demand led</i>	938	44	0	929	53	0	88	
	<i>Scheme Removed</i>	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total: Finance, Governance and Property		15,173	4,353	80	11,529	5,215	2,804	1,565	13.57
	<i>Work commenced</i>	8,875	2,903	0	8,081	3,698	0	859	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	
	<i>Demand led</i>	630	0	0	236	430	0	-34	
	<i>Scheme Removed</i>	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total: HR, OD and Transformation		9,542	2,903	0	8,317	4,128	0	825	9.92
	<i>Work commenced</i>	277	0	0	278	0	0	99	
	<i>On hold</i>	25	0	0	5	19	0	5	
Total: Customer Services		302	0	0	283	19	0	104	36.75
	<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		114,320	31,126	7,449	93,632	69,876	19,167	29,575	31.59

Table 7 – Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Sep-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Adults, Health and Housing								
Provider Services	6,651	2,014	155	6,651	2,014	155	1,361	
Better Care	23,041	0	0	23,041	0	0	3,291	
Total Expenditure - HRA	29,692	2,014	155	29,692	2,014	155	4,652	15.67

Table 8 – Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Sep-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	12	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	29,303	1,890	155	29,303	1,890	155	4,328	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	377	124	0	377	124	0	312	
Total Adults, Health and Housing - HRA		29,692	2,014	155	29,692	2,014	155	4,652	15.67

8 December 2021	ITEM: 11 Decision: 110591
Cabinet	
Adult Social Care - Provider Services Transformation	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin – Portfolio Holder Adults and Communities	
Accountable Assistant Director: Les Billingham, Assistant Director of Adult Social Care and Community Development	
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock Council Adult Social Care is responsible for meeting the care and support needs of older and vulnerable people throughout the borough. Most care work is commissioned, and provided by external providers but the Council retains an internal team known as Provider Services. The current service includes Day Care and the meal delivery service.

Adult Social Care, in co-operation with health and the voluntary sector, has been delivering a transformation programme, which has resulted in new initiatives such as Local Area Co-Ordination, Community Led Support and Well Being Teams.

Well Being Teams’ provide home care but work in place-based, small, autonomous teams that develop links within the local community to offer a more holistic care service – a new model of care. Reviews have shown improved outcomes for residents resulting from greater control and autonomy for both service users and staff.

Having successfully piloted the Wellbeing Teams approach in Tilbury and Chadwell, Provider Services will now move towards implementing the same approach across our directly delivered care services, upskilling the workforce to deliver more flexible and holistic care to residents with fewer handoffs between professionals.

Day Care services are currently delivered from three centres within the borough. Plans to improve the service offer will involve consolidating into one centre at Cromwell Road in Grays delivering a significantly enhanced service offer.

The meal delivery service has traditionally delivered hot meals to people across the borough. The proposal is to close this service and meet the needs of service users through alternative solutions within the community.

A paper was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny board on 17 June 2021 for members to comment on the proposals in this report.

Subsequently, the committee recommended that the services should not cease until a consultation had been held and individual plans for those currently receiving the service were designed through a collaborative approach with service users and their families/carers.

Consultation has been undertaken and the results are outlined in the report below.

In summary, through these innovative transformation proposals, a better and more comprehensive and more bespoke service offer can be delivered to residents at a cheaper cost.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1.1 Approve the plans for the service transformation, specifically:

- **Roll out of the Well Being Teams across Provider Services**
- **Rationalisation of day care to deliver a better offer from a single site**
- **New arrangements for meal delivery**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Adult Social Care has a statutory duty under the Care Act 2014, to provide social care support to all eligible people within the local authority area. This includes residential and home care for older people and adults with a physical or learning disability, and adults who have a mental health diagnosis.
- 2.2 There is also a requirement that Adult Social Care meets the nutritional needs of people at risk as defined within the Care Act 2014.
- 2.3 The vast majority of care and support in Thurrock is outsourced to external providers but the Council does retain a number of services in-house. These services are grouped together as Provider Services and include residential care, extra care, home care, day care and the meal delivery.
- 2.4 The Council has an overarching strategic direction of travel for Adult Social Care, with a vision for all the main social care and health organisations to be working together to improve how support is provided to people in our communities. This is supported and driven through the Better Care Together in Thurrock Strategic Board.

- 2.5 This means providing better outcomes that are closer to home, holistic and that create efficiencies of support within the health and care system.

To achieve this better standard of care the following is required:

- Collaborative working with partners such as the NHS, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
 - Providing choice, control and independence to all service users;
 - Encouraging client defined solutions and empowerment for service users;
 - Looking for more holistic solutions
- 2.6 Initiatives, including Local Area Co-Ordination and Community Led Support, have already been implemented and are seeing results that enable more self-determination for residents, and greater community involvement.
- 2.7 Well Being Teams deliver a new model of home care and support based on the Buurtzorg¹ model. Teams are small and self-managed, focusing on the client's perspective to provide care solutions that bring more independence and a better quality of life. The teams are upskilled to include healthcare tasks, and are more autonomous in nature, which makes for a more interesting role for staff. Service users are at the centre of the model allowing them to determine how and what care is provided.
- 2.8 Well Being Teams have been piloted in Tilbury and Chadwell for almost two years and current evaluation indicates a seven-fold reduction in GP appointments, a three-fold reduction in unplanned hospital admissions and high levels of client satisfaction. In summary, the Well Being Teams are providing better outcomes to service users.
- 2.9 Provider Services plan to move to this Well Being Team approach – moving away from large traditional service areas to smaller, agile teams that can more readily adapt to meet the service users changing needs. This will involve a restructure of the service.
- 2.10 The service also plans to transform the way Day Care services are delivered and this will involve consolidating the current three centres into one, but with a greatly enhanced offer and more options for those who cannot, or prefer not to, attend a day care centre.
- 2.11 Provider Services took over the “Meals on Wheels” service from the Royal Voluntary Service two years ago and has continued to run the service in its traditional format. However, the number of service users has been steadily diminishing making each meal more costly. There are alternative solutions available within the community and subsequently the plan is to cease this

¹ <https://www.buurtzorg.com/about-us/buurtzorgmodel/>

service in its current format and to look for better solutions that are bespoke to the users' needs.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Day Care Service Transformation

- 3.1.1 Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Day Care services ran out of three centres Cromwell Road, Bell House and Kynoch Court, with 85% of attendees transported to one of the centres via a Council minibus.
- 3.1.2 Bell House is a converted shop within a parade of shops in South Ockendon. It has no outlook to the front except to the shopping precinct, and the back leads out onto a loading bay. Above the shop are Council flats and there are other shops either side. This restricts the natural light to the building and prevents any garden/outdoor activities. It is unsuitable as a 21st century day care facility.
- 3.1.3 Kynoch Court is a sheltered housing scheme; Day care services are run from one of the communal lounges. Space is limited meaning activities are confined to a small space.
- 3.1.4 Cromwell Road is a much larger purpose built site with a number of rooms suited for a variety of activities. It has parking on site for minibuses, outside garden areas that could be further developed, and disabled facilities. Almost 50% of Day Care attendees already use this site.
- 3.1.5 All three sites have remained closed since March 2020 in line with COVID-19 safety requirements, and to protect the most vulnerable residents who attend them. In the interim, alternative arrangements have been made so that staff offer respite within the service users' home. This has been much appreciated, opening up opportunities to involve service users in different activities including linking in with others via online social media such as Face Time.
- 3.1.6 Moving forward, it is proposed to rationalise all day-care services on the Cromwell Road site. This will allow maximum use of the facilities at Cromwell Road and the continued operation of new respite and outreach activities outside the traditional 9am- 4pm period. A new increased menu of activities will be developed, alongside opportunities for informal carers and other community groups to meet and support service users and each other. Improved plans would include intergenerational opportunities – for example encouraging local schools/nurseries to take part in activities with the service users. The new programme will include support for people who would not traditionally have attended a day centre, through a Virtual Friendship Club.
- 3.1.7 By reducing the number of centres, resources can be concentrated into the one centre and around the new virtual offer. This will produce savings, which are incorporated into the overall restructure.

3.1.8 The Cromwell Road site requires some adaptations and refurbishment, which when completed, will to create a more welcoming environment. Plans include:

- The removal of admin and other staff not involved in the work of the Day care centre
- Extending the kitchen area to allow more accessible space for service users to be able to cook and prepare food
- Dedicated rooms within the building for activities such as a pamper room, IT suite, quiet room and art & crafts room
- Landscaping and improving the gardens to enable more accessible space
- An outdoor gym area to allow rehabilitation activities.

3.1.9 There will also be greater emphasis on support for informal carers and opportunities for support groups and other activities to be developed. In this new model of day care, all current and future service users can be fully accommodated and the more flexible choice of service provision will again lead to much better outcomes for service users, ultimately giving them personal choice over their care in line with our collaborative communities approach.

3.1.10 During July and August 2021, a consultation with service users was undertaken and previous users of the day care centres were contacted. Their future needs and view on reopening the service was discussed with them – the results are outlined in Appendix 1.

3.1.11 The consultation clearly highlights the value of the increased “sitting service” which provided support to many people, both during the lockdown and ongoing. This involves staff providing support to service users in their homes allowing respite to their carers; activities undertaken during the visit encourage cognitive stimulation and increased mobility. The transformation programme will enable this service to expand. A new dedicated activity co-ordinator will assist residents to access the virtual day care offer by supporting with ICT. This will open up more opportunities for service users to mix and match activities and enable an increased focus on choice and holistic, person centred support.

3.2 Meal Delivery Service

3.2.1 It is a requirement that Adult Social Care meets the nutritional needs of people at risk as defined within the Care Act 2014. For many years, this duty was discharged through a contract with the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) who have traditionally run the “Meals on Wheels” services across the country for many years. However, there is no statutory requirement to meet the nutritional needs of people in this way. RVS handed back their contract to Thurrock Council in April 2019, as they no longer provide this service; Thurrock was the last site operated by RVS in the country and today there are only a handful of services left which continue to be operated by local authorities.

- 3.2.2 The Council has continued to run the service in the same format for the past two years. The service operates out of a purpose built Council owned building in Corran Way, South Ockendon that needs a large refurbishment investment to meet required standards. However, it is in use for only 4-5 hours per day and not suitable for adaption to other use, therefore it does not represent a good use of resources.
- 3.2.3 Service users pay a fee of £4 per meal but the cost of providing the meal is much higher; based on the total number of meals delivered in 2020-21 the cost to the Council is around £9 per meal. The service is therefore heavily subsidised with current overall costs of around £190K per annum.
- 3.2.4 The high cost of delivering the service is mainly due to its declining popularity, with fewer than 90 regular service users. This represents a reduction of 26% in service users over the past six years and is likely to be the result of newer and more desirable options being available including online food services and improved supermarket delivery of “ready meals”.
- 3.2.5 During July and August 2021 a consultation exercise was carried out whereby every service user was contacted by a social worker to carry out a review of their nutritional needs and individual circumstances. The outcomes are shown in Appendix 1
- 3.2.6 The consultation has identified that of the existing 89 users at the time only 24 had no alternative support in place. Each of the 24 will be individually assessed and suitable alternative solutions will be sought through community solutions or provision within the other services thus ensuring the council still meets its statutory requirement to relevant service users. There are private services available including micro-enterprises and community groups.
- 3.2.7 In the unlikely event that no other alternatives can be sourced or in the case of an emergency, a meal could be delivered from the Friendship Café at Piggs Corner or day care services at Cromwell Road, or from Collins House. Additionally, service users will be encouraged to attend the Friendship café where possible. This means that no service user is left without an alternative means of receiving a daily hot meal.

3.3 **Financial impact**

- 3.3.1 The move to the proposed new model of care to deliver a more holistic and integrated approach based around smaller teams has an additional advantage of delivering savings through a more efficient model of service delivery based on long term preventative relationships. However, this proposal is about transforming outcomes for service users and was not driven by efficiencies.
- 3.3.2 It is estimated that £349,000 of efficiency savings can be delivered through the new integrated teams approach and transformation of Day Care services, whilst delivering better care outcomes to service users. £190,000 of savings will be delivered by decommissioning the meal delivery service, and re-letting

the shop at Bell House will provide a further £15,000 of income per annum. This combined effect of the proposals will be to deliver a total of £554,000 whilst delivering better care outcomes for residents.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 New, transformed ways to provide more integrated and holistic care, with fewer hand offs, will provide a service than can deliver significantly better care outcomes for some of the most vulnerable service users in the borough.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Consultation with affected service users has been undertaken. The results are outlined at Appendix 1.
- 5.2 Consultation with staff is ongoing as part of the formal consultation programme.
- 5.3 The Council's Health and wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny have been presented with two reports – on 17 June 2021, an initial report outlining proposals, and 4 November 2021, outlining the consultation results.

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

- 6.1 **People** – *a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.*
 - 6.1.1 The new service and model of care provides a higher standard of service to older and vulnerable residents through the provision of a more holistic service, which allows them greater control over their lives. It will build on partnerships with community groups and greater integration between Health and Social Care.
 - 6.1.2 It will encourage a “right first time” principal through greater empowerment of service users in making decisions about their future.
- 6.2 **Place** – *a heritage-rich borough that is ambitious for its future.*
 - 6.2.1 A number of buildings will be vacated because of the restructure. These can be better utilised to meet the ambitions of the Council to use fewer public buildings whilst providing better services.
- 6.3 **Prosperity** – *a borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations*
 - 6.3.1 Increased training and self-managing opportunities for staff will be an attractive opportunity alongside opportunities to upskill. This will encourage aspirations and provide opportunities for self-improvement.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

Reductions in staffing in the new structure will result in annual savings of around £339k. Current vacancies and assimilations will reduce the need for redundancies; however, it will not be possible to completely avoid redundancies.

Closing the meal delivery service will result in annual savings of £190,000 i.e. annual cost of running the service including staffing.

A reduction in the use of buildings will be achieved. Bell House Day Care is accommodated in a shop in South Ockendon that, if vacated, could be let commercially. The meal delivery services operates from a building at Corran Way sits on land that could be developed or sold. Both buildings are assets maintained by the General fund and once vacated will be handed back to the Assets team. Additional savings are achieved through the reduction in building maintenance & utilities.

The savings identified will be included as part of the Council Medium Term financial strategy, and form part of the Department savings target.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
**Corporate Governance Lawyer &
Deputy Monitoring Officer**

Under the Care Act 2014 the Council has a duty to meet a person's eligible needs. In addition the Council has a general duty to ensure it promotes an individual's wellbeing, and to prevent and delay the development of needs for social care.

The services proposed to be transformed are non-statutory services, however the alternative measures proposed to be undertaken will ensure that the Council complies with its general duties and any statutory duty is met e.g. the provision of nutrition can be met through alternative options within the community or other existing services.

The Council has a duty to consult with service users, carers, providers and other stakeholders that are likely to be affected by the proposals. The consultation must take place at a time when the proposals are still at their formative stages. The Council must provide the consultees with sufficient

information to enable them properly to understand the proposals being consulted upon and to express a view in relation to it. The Council must give conscientious consideration to the responses received from the consultees before making its final decision on the proposals.

As part of the decision making process, the Council must have “due regard” to its equalities duties under Section 149 Equality Act 2010. The Council in exercise of its adult care and support functions, must have “due regard” to the impact of the proposals on the equalities groups covered by the 2010 Act and consider how the proposals impact on them and the steps to be taken to mitigate any negative impact.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

A full Community Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this proposal and has identified that people with the protected characteristics of age and disability will be disproportionately impacted. A separate report at Appendix 2 details the impact on service users specifically.

An assessment of the impact on workforce was also completed as part of the formal consultation process.

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

Increased use of the Cromwell Road site could affect parking and neighbours since the Centre sits in a busy residential street and has already been in use as a day centre for many years. It has a small car park but parking for staff is also available in a small Council carpark next to the Theatre just a few minutes’ walk away, whilst parking for minibuses will remain on site. The centre is self-contained and outside activities such as gardening will only be carried out during the day. The longer opening hours proposed will not be beyond 9pm. Therefore, it is unlikely there will be any extra noise impact for neighbours.

Health & Safety requirements for the building. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in new measures regarding social distancing and other requirements in workplaces. Health and safety requirements in a setting for older and vulnerable people will need to be even more stringent. An initial visit from the health and safety team has indicated there is sufficient space for the service to run but extra precautions around infection control will be vital. Advice from infection control specialists will be sought prior to opening, and ongoing training and monitoring of compliance will be essential. The Council’s health and safety team, public health and Directors Board will be required to sign off the proposals before the building can re-open in line with current practices.

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):

- HOSC Report – Provider Services Transformation, 17 June 2021
- HOSC Report – Consultation feedback on the meal delivery and day care services, 4 November 2021

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – HOSC Report 4 November 2021 – Consultation Feedback on the meal delivery and day care services
- Appendix 2 – Community Equality Impact Assessment

Report Author:

Dawn Shepherd

Strategic Lead – Provider Services

Adult Social Care

Consultation Outcomes – Meal delivery service and day care

1. Introduction and Background

At a meeting of the Health & Wellbeing Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 17 June 2021, proposals were discussed regarding the transformation of the Council's Provider Services. These proposals included the expansion of the successful and popular Wellbeing Teams pilot, closure of the Council's meal delivery scheme and the consolidation of the three existing day care centres into one at Cromwell Road.

Rationalising the three day-care sites into a single site at Cromwell Road will allow us to create a much more comprehensive offer at Cromwell Road including a refurbished building, longer opening hours and better services. It will also allow the council to retain the highly popular 'sitting service' that commenced during COVID-19 lockdowns as an alternative to day care. The sitting service provides an out of hours' flexible service that fits better with how residents live their lives.

Limited information was available at the time of the June report regarding service users' needs and the most appropriate alternatives. Members requested further consultation with users of the services to ascertain better the impact on an individual basis.

Subsequently, a consultation process started in July 2021 involving face-to-face and telephone discussions with all service users and their families where appropriate. This consultation was undertaken by staff who were independent of the service involved, including an independent social worker.

This report provides details of the survey results and indicates that:

- Out of the 47 service users who attended the two closing day care centres only 5 would not be willing to attend Cromwell Road centre because of the distance but all 5 had alternative support in place;
- Out of the 89 service users receiving meals from the delivery scheme, only 24 had no alternative support in place. Each of these 24 people will be assessed and options identified to provide a bespoke alternative solution.

2. Day Care Services

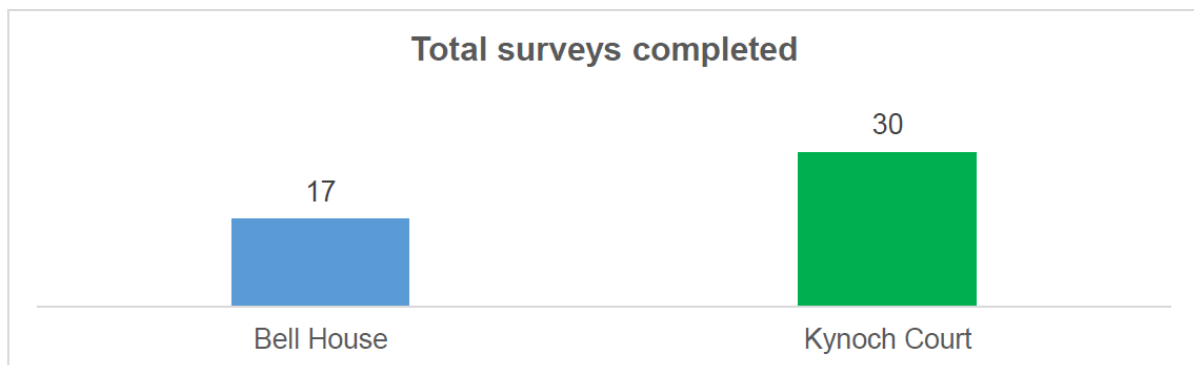
Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic there were 54 people attending the day care centres at Bell House and Kynoch Court.

Seven people were unable to take part in the consultation

- 3 had passed away
- 3 were in residential care, respite or hospital
- 1 was uncontactable

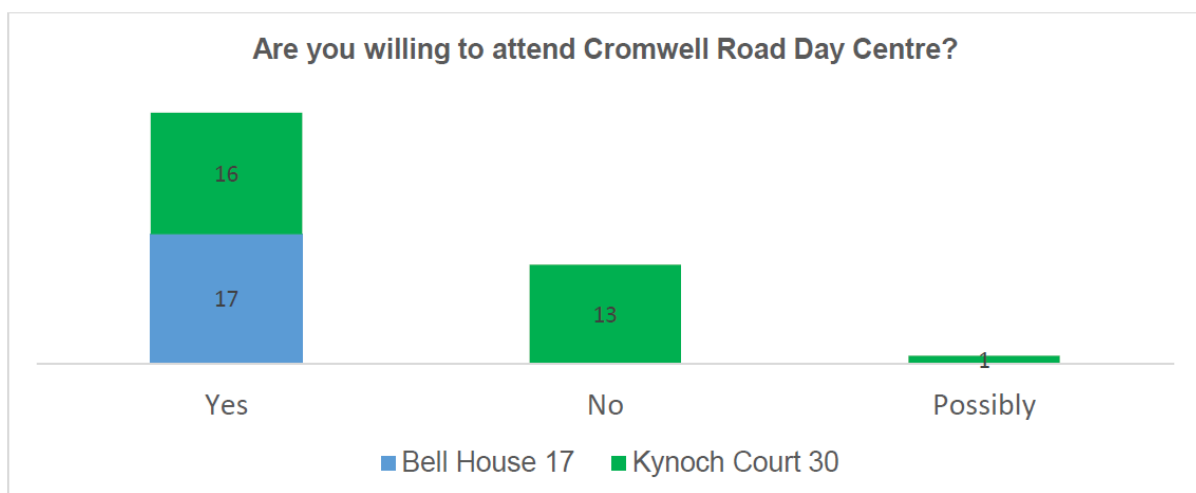
Subsequently, forty-seven people did participate

Total Surveys Completed



Service users were asked if they would be willing to attend the Cromwell Road site if their existing centre were no longer available. The results are shown below and indicate that 13 people (24%) would not return to Cromwell Road, whilst 76% would.

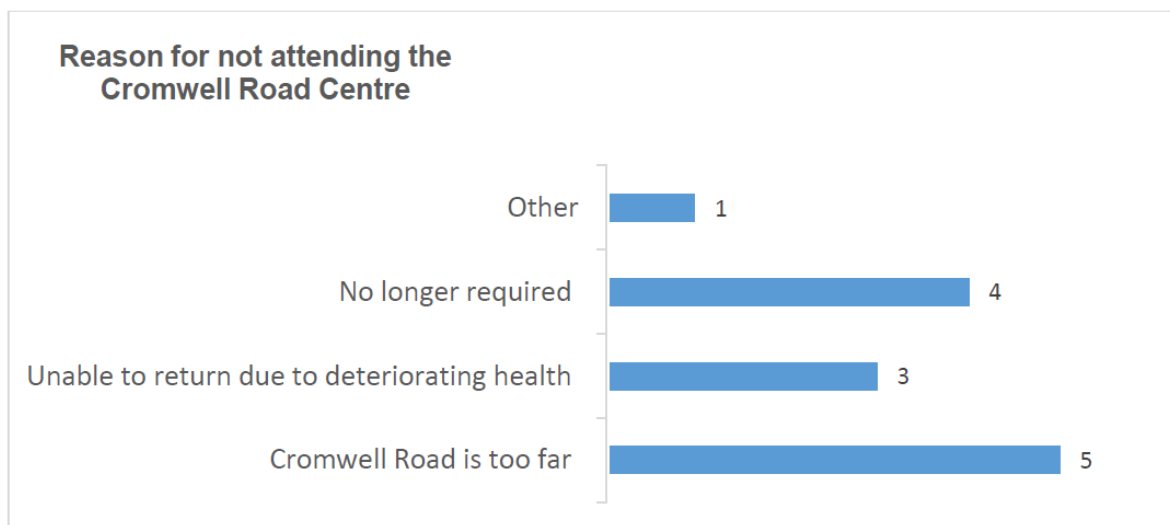
Numbers of Service Users Willing to Attend Cromwell Road



The 13 people who answered “no” are all from the Kynoch Court Centre.

Eight residents who stated that the service was no longer required or they were unable to return due to deteriorating health or other reason, all wished to continue with the Sitting Service instead.

Reasons Given For Not Wishing to Attend Cromwell Road



Only five people (9%) indicated that their reason for not returning was due to the distance. They had various additional reasons for not attending or receiving the service as follows:

1	Does not wish to return now as in a new routine	Lives at home with family who say that since lockdown a new routine has been developed and they are happy with this and no longer require day care	Support provided by family who are happy to continue
2	Previously tried Cromwell Road but didn't like it and does not wish to go there	Now living in Residential care	Support provided in residential care
3	Lost friends who used to meet with and now visits others instead	Lives at home with spouse but visits other friends as well – feels the service is not suited for her anymore	Supported by family and friends who are happy to continue
4	Only attended because spouse wanted him to – not a sociable person and doesn't wish to attend day care – but may do so in the future	Lives with spouse	Supported by family who are happy to continue
5	Grays is too far to travel to and friends have now passed away	Lives with spouse who provides care and says they have a very supportive family	Supported by family who are happy to continue

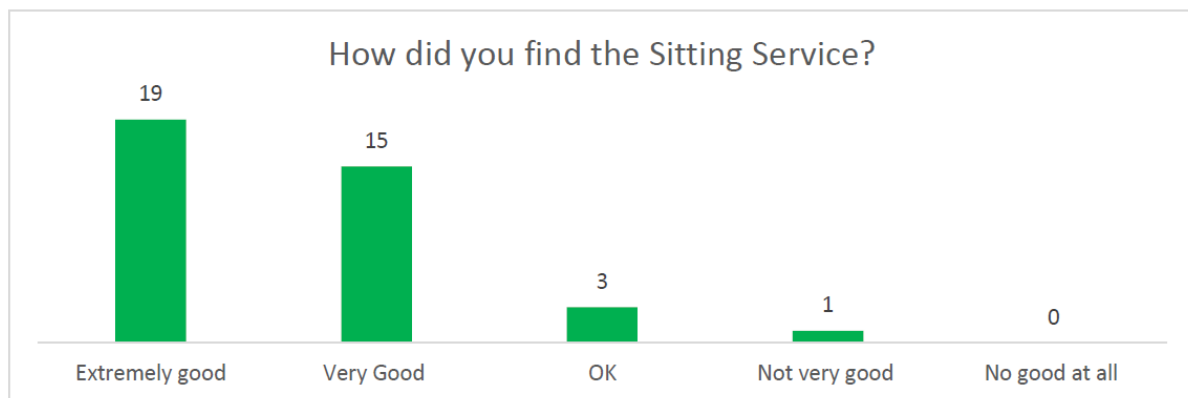
Subsequently, although people indicated they were disappointed, no concerns were identified regarding a lack of care and/or support if the two centres were consolidated into Cromwell Road.

Overall, most people reported feeling isolated and lonely during the pandemic and for many their health had deteriorated:

Mobility has deteriorated	Physical Health has deteriorated	Mental Health has deteriorated
49%	43%	64%

People were asked how they had found the increased Sitting Service provided during the pandemic. 38 of the 54 people in the survey had used this service and their response to the provision is shown below, indicating that 89% had found this to be extremely or very good. Many indicated it had been a lifeline for them.

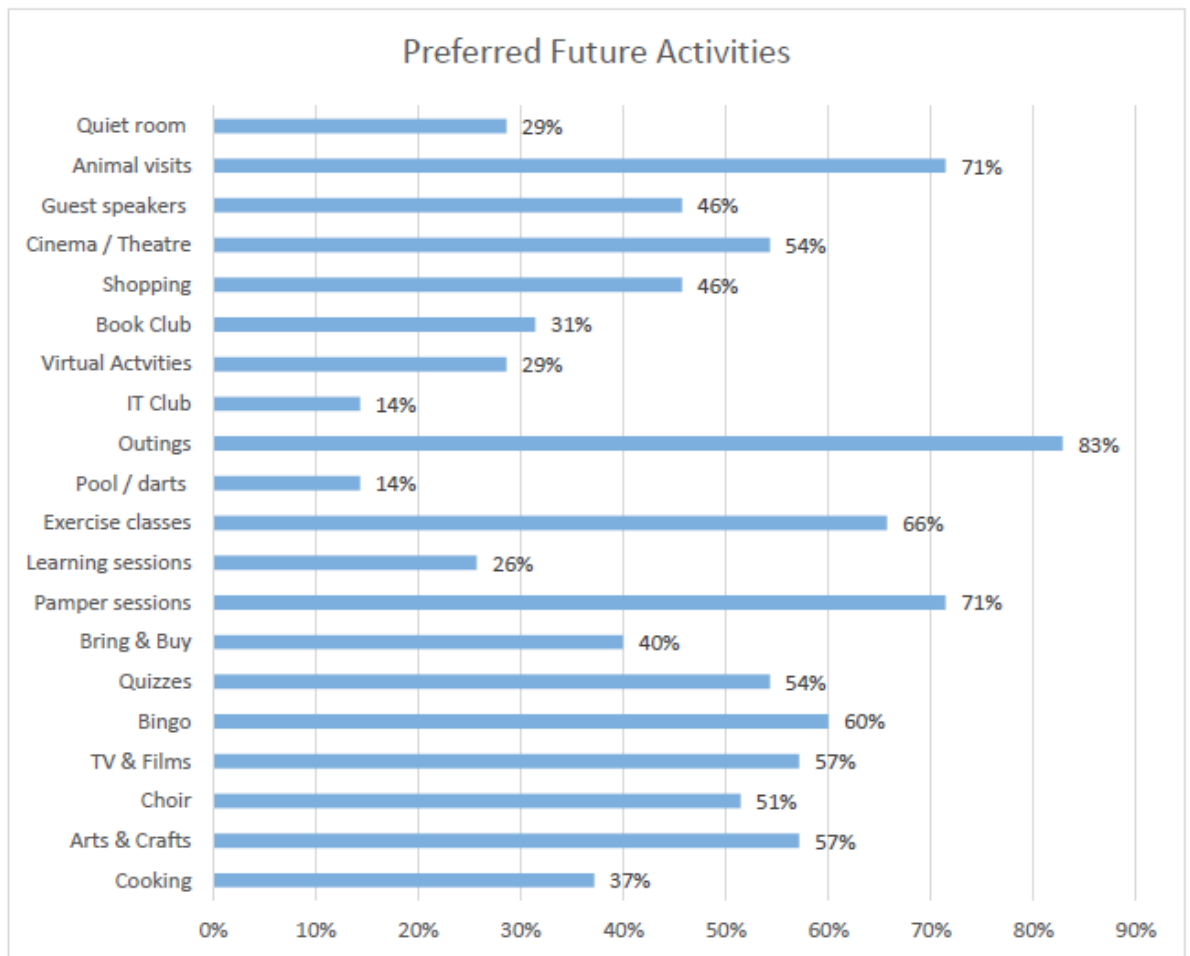
Experience of the Sitting Service



The majority of people are very keen to get back to a centre and excited about the new plans for Cromwell Road.

The survey included a question about which activities service users would like to engage in; the results will enable the service to design a new menu of activities around the service users' preferences. The results are in chart 5.

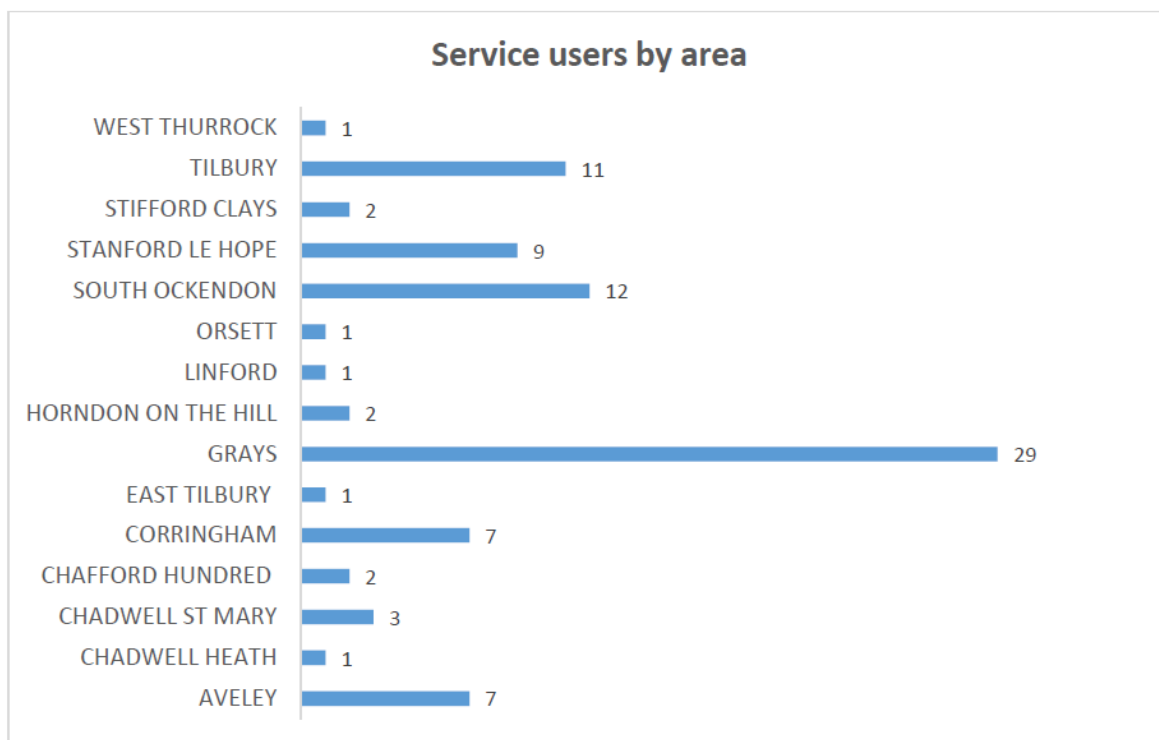
Preferred Future Activities



3. The meal delivery scheme

At the time of the survey there were 89 regular service users – broken down by area as shown in chart 6.

Location of Service Users in Receipt of the meal delivery Service



All of the service users were contacted for an initial assessment of their needs. At the end of each assessment, one of the following recommendations was identified:

- The service user is able to buy and cook their own meal

Some had already decided they did not need the meals any longer and have subsequently cancelled. Others discussed alternative private suppliers and brochures were provided to these people to make their own arrangements. These people were able to heat up their own meals and had the ability to (or someone else who could) purchase the meal.

- The service user already has a package of care and support

This group of service users were already in receipt of care – some with carers attending three or four times a day. Some even had carers on site when the meals were delivered and others could have their care adjusted to ensure that someone could be available to assist with the meal. This group have been referred to the Adult Social Care Reviews team to carry out the adjustments. The team will make contact with service users and their providers to ensure a sufficient package is in place. They will also consider other options which are discussed below.

- The service user does not receive any other care and requires a Care Act assessment

This group consisted of people who currently do not receive any other care. They have been referred to the Review team to look at alternative options including community options discussed below.

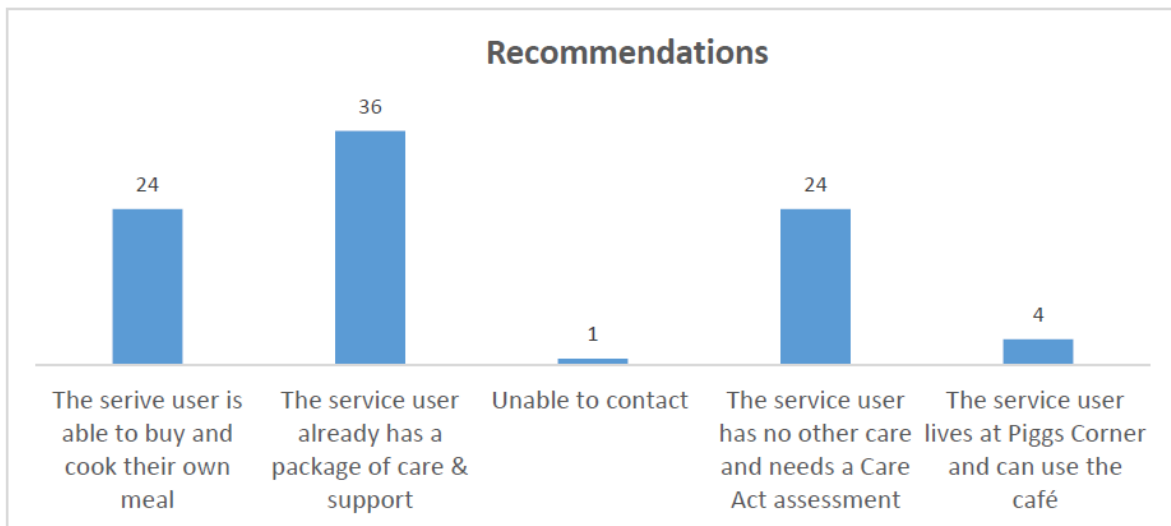
Appendix 1

- The service user lives at Piggs Corner and can use the Café

The Café at Piggs Corner provides a hot lunchtime meal for residents Monday to Friday; where necessary it will provide a meal for the weekend that carers on site can heat up. For the residents living at Piggs Corner this is a good alternative as it also offers the option to meet up with others in the dining room if wished rather than having the meal delivered to the flat, which is still an option. The Café is also available to non-residents and may provide a good alternative for people in the Grays area.

The resulting recommendations are shown below

Recommendations



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Appendix 2 - Diversity & Equality Implications

1. Introduction

Personal care, Day care and the meal delivery services are provided to people who are older and/or disabled, therefore the impact of making any changes to these services will disproportionately affect people with the protected characteristics of age and disability.

The extent to which they will be affected by the changes outlined in the report depends on the service used:

For people receiving care in their own homes, residential or extra care services, the new models of care will enable them to receive a more holistic service with greater choice and ability to determine the type of service that is important to them. The impact will therefore be positive.

2. Day care

People using day care services will be impacted by the reduction in day care centres, resulting in a reduced choice of venue for some service users and possibly longer travel times. A consultation with those affected by the change in venue was undertaken in July and August 2021.

2.1. Choice of venue

The breakdown in centre usage is as below, which indicates that almost half (49%) already attend the Cromwell Road centre.

	Total	Approx.
Bell House	18	17%
Cromwell Road	50	49%
Kynoch Court	36	35%
Total	104	

Therefore, the new proposals affect around 54 people who would need to attend a different centre from the one they attended previously. Unfortunately, seven of these people are no longer able to participate in day care leaving 47 people affected.

Due to the pandemic and forced lockdowns, many older and vulnerable people have deteriorated in both their physical and mental health. This has been recognised by many studies including Age Concern UK¹ who state:

¹ <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2020/10/age-uk--research-into-the-effects-of-the-pandemic-on-the-older-populations-health/>

“Months of being cooped up at home have led to muscle weakness – ‘deconditioning’ as clinicians term it - and sometimes a reduced sense of balance, increasing the risk of falls.

The research also found evidence of new and emerging cognitive decline. In some cases, this might have happened anyway, but families told the Charity they feared it was exacerbated by the very difficult, often isolated conditions in which their loved ones were living, due to the pandemic.”

Whilst carrying out home visits during the pandemic Thurrock Council staff have reported that many service users have experienced the effects indicated in the Age UK report. Providing extra visits has enabled them and their carers to remain linked in, and many have expressed the wish for this to continue even when the service re-opens.

The consultation in July and August indicated that 33 (70%) of those attending Kynoch Court and Bell house would be willing to attend another centre meaning that 14 (30%) indicated they would not or were not sure.

Of these 14, 8 were either no longer able, or no longer wished, to attend a centre Only 5 people indicated that the distance was too far and all had alternative supportive arrangements in place.

Individual needs assessments and conversations will need to be held with service users to determine a tailored plan to suit the individual. If people do not wish to attend the Cromwell Road site then other opportunities, including the virtual day care offer can be offered.

Moves to increase social outreach and linking up with virtual groups and connections will enable many to engage without having to physically attend the centres.

2.2. Travel

Prior to the pandemic around 85% of service users travelled to a centre using one of the Councils minibuses. The minibuses collect people from around the borough to attend their nearest centre. If there were only one centre open, that could mean increased journeys for those people who live further away from Grays. This could affect up to 55 existing service users plus any new users in future.

The chart below indicates pre Covid-19 service users who would need to change centres and the difference in mileage to be travelled.

Ref	Existing centre	Distance to existing centre from home (miles)	Distance to Cromwell Rd centre from home (Miles)	Difference
66364	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
34139	Bell House	1.5	4.4	2.9
87713	Bell House	2.4	7.6	5.2

33011	Bell House	0.4	5.3	4.9
34006	Bell House	0.6	5	4.4
38169	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
3980	Bell House	0.4	4.9	4.5
30155	Bell House	0.7	4.7	4
3949	Bell House	0.5	4.4	3.9
17124	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
16636	Bell House	1	3.9	2.9
14515	Bell House	2.1	4.4	2.3
8354	Bell House	2	3.8	1.8
90515	Bell House	0.4	4.4	4
18909	Bell House	1.7	4.8	3.1
78245	Bell House	1.7	4.2	2.5
22411	Bell House	4.1	2.6	-1.5
1253	Kynoch Court	4.1	3.2	-0.9
69167	Kynoch Court	5.9	1.2	-4.7
29736	Kynoch Court	0.3	5.9	5.6
19466	Kynoch Court	1.7	6.5	4.8
960	Kynoch Court	3.9	4.6	0.7
36799	Kynoch Court	3.4	4.1	0.7
82048	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
88088	Kynoch Court	1.4	7	5.6
29758	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
67439	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
92523	Kynoch Court	1.3	7.1	5.8
37204	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
69436	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
76248	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.7	5.9
82943	Kynoch Court	2	7.8	5.8
86848	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.8	6.2
85440	Kynoch Court	1.6	7.4	5.8
P177253	Kynoch Court	2.3	7.6	5.3
75465	Kynoch Court	1.4	7.2	5.8
88800	Kynoch Court	1.8	7.4	5.6
75020	Kynoch Court	1.2	6.7	5.5
74661	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.8	5.5
87781	Kynoch Court	1.3	6.9	5.6
89221	Kynoch Court	1.5	7.1	5.6
80839	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.5	5.6
84660	Kynoch Court	2	7.5	5.5
22634	Kynoch Court	1.9	7.8	5.9
31135	Kynoch Court	3.3	9.2	5.9

The differences range from a reduction of 1.5 miles to an increase of 6.2 miles.

The average is an increase of 4.7 miles for Kynoch Court and 3.3 miles for Bell House service users. At an average speed of 30 miles an hour, this will add an average of less than 10 minutes to each journey, although with traffic this could be considerably more.

Many service users enjoy the bus ride to and from the centre and view this as an extension of their time together with others.

The proposed changes to how day care services will run from Cromwell Road will help to mitigate this impact. Plans include extending the hours into weekends and evenings – this will allow the minibuses to make an increased number of shorter journeys.

An extended programme of activities will mean that service users can choose a morning, afternoon or evening session rather than having to attend for the whole day. This improved menu will run alongside the virtual offer enabling a “Mix & Match” approach so that more choice is available.

3. The meal delivery service

The service has been running for more than 25 years and is largely delivered in the same format i.e. a driver delivers a hot meal and dessert to the service user and checks on their welfare and 89 service users regularly have a daily meal delivered.

In a recent survey, (August 2021) 73% of current service users indicated that they could make their own meal or are already receiving a service which could be adapted to enable someone else to do it for them.

A report of all service users indicates that 24 people (27%) have no other services commissioned from the Council. There is a danger that this group of people could be particularly disadvantaged, however, plans are underway to assess all service users and assist them to either move to an alternative provider or to review their existing care package to cover meals.

8 December 2021	ITEM: 12 Decision: 110592
Cabinet	
Highways Term Maintenance and Street Lighting Contract Procurement	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Ben Maney - Portfolio Holder for Highway and Transportation	
Accountable Assistant Director: Julie Nelder - Assistant Director of Highways, Fleet and Logistics	
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers - Director of Public Realm	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The current Term Maintenance Contract which expires on the 31 March 2023, provides a delivery method for works derived from the Highways Infrastructure and Transport Development Teams within the Public Realm Directorate.

This report sets out the proposed way forward for procuring a new Term Maintenance Contract for the delivery of highway works and a separate Street Lighting Maintenance Contract to deliver revenue and capital works over an 8 year period commencing 1 April 2023.

1. Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 **Delegate authority to the Director of Public Realm, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation to decide the appropriate procurement route for the delivery of the Transport & Highways works for the next eight years commencing 1 April 2023.**
- 1.2 **Approve the process to commence procurement of Transport & Highways works for a seven year period commencing 1 April 2023 which will be compliant with applicable Public Procurement Regulations, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules.**

- 1.3 **Delegate authority to the Director of Public Realm, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation, to award any contracts necessary for the delivery of Transport & Highways works for an eight year period commencing 1 April 2023.**
- 1.4 **Delegate authority to the Director of Public Realm, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation, to progress TUPE arrangements for any staff members affected by award of Contracts.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The current Term Maintenance Contract which expires on the 31 March 2023 provides a delivery method for works derived from the Highways Infrastructure and Transport Development teams within the Public Realm Directorate.
- 2.2 These works programmes consist of the Department for Transport (DfT) Maintenance Block Allocation, DfT Integrated Transport Programme, Highways Infrastructure Revenue Allocation, Section 106 contributions and internal and external bid awards.
- 2.3 The current contract allows the highways and transportation services within the Public Realm directorate to gain efficiencies on reduced administration and procurement costs. There are also efficiencies in scale which can be achieved for the service provider resulting in reduced costs being passed down through competitive rates for the Authority.
- 2.4 This approach has allowed the Authority to demonstrate good practice with respects to efficient highway service delivery and meeting the objectives set out in the Incentive Fund application via the DfT Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP) and the Authority obtaining level Band 3 funding which is the maximum achievable.
- 2.5 Historically all work types have been combined with all work streams being delivered via the Term Maintenance Contract and whilst across the board it provides good competitive value, it is considered that as street lighting is a specialist area this service area would attract better value as a standalone contract. The justification for this is that there are a large number of street lighting only contractors that historically haven't submitted a tender for this service as they have been unable to fulfil the other requirements of the specification for service delivery. It is therefore considered for street lighting only, that better value would be obtained if this area of work was procured via a standalone contract over an 8 year period to match the Term Maintenance Contract.
- 2.6 Street lighting has an annual revenue allocation which is then matched with a variable annual capital allocation. This funding provides the mechanism for maintaining our Street Lighting stock which consists of over 27,000 assets. It is considered that a duration of 8 years should be applied to ensure a consist approach to the management of these assets. This contract enables us to

fulfil our statutory duty under the 1980 Highways Act with respects to the maintenance of street lighting assets.

2.7 The provision of the new Street Lighting Contract will enable the Authority to continue to manage the investment already made into lighting stock with the LED switch out programme. This resulted in approximately £354,822 worth of saving based on current electricity costs, in addition to 1,336 tonnes of CO² savings.

2.8 As part of the Council's ongoing efficiency drive and review, consideration has also been given to testing the market for externalising the delivery of some or all of the highway services that are currently delivered in house. To enable the Authority to accurately test the market and ensure the current delivery method of reactive works is the most efficient, the proposal is to tender the following Lots so that an assessment can be made of the viability and efficiency of some or all of the services being delivered by an external contractor, outside of the Council.

- **Lot 1** – Planned Works consisting of Highway Maintenance and Improvements works
- **Lot 2** – Winter Gritting Service
- **Lot 3** – Out of Hours emergency response service
- **Lot 4** – Reactive Maintenance works (excl potholes)
- **Lot 5** – Reactive Maintenance potholes
- **Lot 6** – Gulley cleansing

The value of Lots include all estimated costs of works currently delivered via the external Term Maintenance Contract (Lot 1) and those delivered via the in house Highways Operational Maintenance team (Lots 2-6). The Lots / type of work currently delivered by the in house team are to be included in the tender exercise for the purpose of bench marking delivery costs and to ensure the current delivery method is the most efficient and effective. There is no commitment to award any of the Lots from 2-6 to an external bidder.

2.9 As a result of earlier initial market testing, it is considered that to enable the cost comparison to be undertaken and for the Winter Gritting Service to be commercially viable for an external supplier, a minimum contract duration of 8 years would be necessary as this allows for the procurement and payment of the specialist gritting vehicles that an external supplier would be required to provide. A shorter term duration makes it less commercially viable for a supply chain to provide the services and this would likely result in no tenders being submitted and therefore remove the ability for the delivery cost comparison to be undertaken. Therefore the recommendation for the Contract is for 8 years.

2.10 The Lots specified are not dependant on one another and will be compared with current delivery costs on an individual basis. Lot 1 will be an automatic renewal due to the specialist nature of the work and the size of the projects. Unless it is clear that efficiencies would be achievable by delivering some or

all of the remaining Lots externally, the tender exercise will provide a valuable benchmarking activity.

- 2.11 Subject to approval and a decision on the most appropriate procurement route, the procurement timetable below is proposed for both contracts.

Works Contract – Procurement Timetable

KEY EVENT	DATE
Issue of ITT	1 st July 2022
Deadline for clarification requests re ITT	31 st July 2022
Closing date for tender submissions	30 th September 2022
Notification of result of evaluation	30 th November 2022
Standstill period	10 days
Expected date of award of contract	19 th December 2022
New contract start date	1 st April 2023

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Thurrock Council, as the Highway Authority has a statutory duty under the Highway Act 1980 to maintain the Highway. This forms part of the defence when defending the Authority from claims. To enable the Highways service to fulfil this requirement, provision needs to be made to allow the delivery of works in a safe and expeditious way and in line with the relevant maintenance policy documents.
- 3.2 There is therefore a requirement for the procurement of a new works contract to avoid the risk of any challenge. Any new procurement routes will have to comply with applicable Procurement Regulations, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules.
- 3.3 The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 thresholds for Works and Services are as follows:
- For works contracts £4,733,252
- 3.4 Thurrock is continuing to seek further funding from sources such as the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, National Highways (formerly Highways England) and internal capital bid process.
- 3.5 Depending on the outcome of the market testing exercise for the delivery of internal highway services there would be a need to consider TUPE Regulations. This preserves employees' contractual terms and conditions when a business or undertaking, or part of one, is transferred to a new employer. Therefore delegated authority to the Director of Public Realm

would be necessary, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to take this element forward if proven to be a cost effective method of future delivery.

- 3.6 The Council's Social Value Framework will be set out in the tender documents and bidders will be asked to propose added value initiatives that will enhance their bid and which will be subsequently incorporated into the contractual requirements. Typically with this type of service provision apprenticeships and using local suppliers would feature in the evaluation criteria, as would green initiatives and evidence to show a commitment for the reduction in the carbon footprint.
- 3.7 In order to deliver various Council projects within the timescales, it is recommended that the Director of Public Realm be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transportation, to determine and develop the procurement route for the Highways capital works programme and street lighting, followed by a tender process and subsequent delegated award.
- 3.8 Any procurement process will be undertaken in accordance with applicable Procurement Rules, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To enable the Public Realm Directorate to continually deliver highways schemes and planned works, it is essential that there is sufficient provision in place via a Term Maintenance Contract and Street Lighting Contract. It will also enable the Authority to further explore and test the market for the delivery of highway services through a supply chain partner.

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

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with colleagues from the Procurement team in the writing of this report and the rationale for including services currently delivered by the in-house teams has been discussed with all members of the operational team that could potentially be affected, should Lots 2-6 be considered for delivery by an alternative provider. There is no commitment to award any of the Lots from 2-6 to an external bidder.
- 5.2 This report was presented to Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Committee on the 7th December 2021 for their review and information.

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

- 6.1 This report and recommendations comply with Thurrock Council's policies, priorities and community impact. In particular it complies with the Thurrock Constitution and Procurement governance.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

This report recommends the procurement of an 8 year Highways Term Maintenance and Street Lighting Contract. These procurements will maximise cost efficiencies in the delivering of Transportation Development and Highway Infrastructure schemes within the borough.

7.2 Legal

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

This report outlines proposals for procurement of a new Term Maintenance Contract for the delivery of highway works and a separate Street Lighting Maintenance Contract to deliver revenue and capital Works over an 8 year period commencing from 1st April 2023. The Council has a statutory duty to maintain the Highway and procurement as proposed in this report falls within scope of that duty.

The value of the proposed procurements being considered are estimated at above the Procurement threshold for Works contract and requires such works contracts to be tendered competitively. Subject to Cabinet approval any procurement process will need to comply with applicable Public Procurement Regulations, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Councils Contract Procedure Rules.

Any TUPE implications identified will be subject to the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006.

The Public Service Social Value Act 2012 imposes a duty on Local Authorities to take into consideration the promotion of economic, social and environmental well-being when procuring services.

Social value must be considered when the Council procures public services contracts.

The contracts to be procured must comply with applicable Public Procurement Regulations, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Legal Services will be available to advice on any issues arising from the proposed procurement.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

This report and recommendations deals with the procurement of a Works and Street Lighting contract. Social value benefits must be considered when the Council procures public services contracts in line with the Council's Social Values Framework. Given the projected spend on these procurement it is seen that robust social value benefits can be achieved.

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

Whilst there may be no impact for staff as a result of the tender process, the Human Resources team have been advised of the potential impact for staff currently delivering Lots 2-6. Any impact on staff will be determined / dependent on the bids received during the tender process and staff will be fully consulted accordingly. There is no commitment to award any of the Lots from 2-6 to an external bidder.

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:

Peter Wright
Strategic Lead – Highways Infrastructure
Public Realm

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8 December 2021	ITEM: 13 Decision: 110593
Cabinet	
Public Land Maintenance Strategy	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Andrew Jefferies – Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Leisure	
Accountable Assistant Director: Daren Spring – Assistant Director for Street Scene and Leisure	
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers – Director for Public Realm	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock’s public land and open spaces should enrich the quality of resident’s lives, have a positive environmental impact and contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. The Public Land Maintenance Strategy sets out guidelines as to how we will change some of the current delivery methods to increase efficiency and help improve and maintain our public land in the future.

1. Recommendation:

1.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption of the Public Land Maintenance Strategy and its recommendations as shown within this report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This Public Land Maintenance Strategy has been prepared to ensure that all of the boroughs public open spaces are effectively maintained in the most efficient and cost effective way possible. This should decrease the amount of maintenance required in some areas and allow resources to be redirected and targeted in other areas, where more frequent and specialised maintenance is required, increasing resilience.

2.2 The Strategy will also inform future action plans and projects for the delivery of improvements to existing open spaces and new open spaces triggered by development. This enhances the opportunity to secure funding both internally and externally for the improvement and maintenance of Thurrock’s public

open spaces, including possible S106 developer contributions, or match funding from other organisations.

3. Delivery Options

3.1 This Public Land Maintenance Strategy has key methods of delivery, these include

- Working with and developing “Friends of Parks” groups and Community Volunteers
- Long Grass Regimes / Wildflowers / meadow planting
- Low maintenance schemes
- Tree Planting
- Planned Parks Improvement Programme
- Supporting the progress of the Council’s Local Plan

3.2 It is important to increase the biodiversity and habitats within the borough, by not mowing certain areas of grass or to use the terminology “no mow” areas and leaving grass to grow. This has now become a more widespread and accepted concept to encourage wildlife. Some areas will benefit from planting wild flower areas to also help enhance this. It is therefore recommended where possible that this is the approach taken by the Council.

3.3 The strategy sets out plans for site specific action plans to be conducted for the Council’s cemeteries, parks and open spaces. This is to ensure that these areas are fit for purpose and to identify any need to replace and repair the infrastructure within these areas.

3.4 Going forward, all green open spaces that the Council are responsible for maintaining, will be categorised by their typology, these being:

- Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces
- Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces
- Typology 3 – Amenity Space and Urban Open Spaces
- Typology 4 - Grass Verges and Roundabouts
- Typology 5 - Cemeteries
- Typology 6 - Outdoor Sport

Each typology is then broken down further by Zones, these being:

- High amenity (high maintenance)
- General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)
- Low amenity (low maintenance)

This will provide a clear understanding of how we maintain these areas to the proposed maintenance standards.

3.5 Each piece of land will also be identified in terms of which pieces of equipment will be used to maintain these spaces. This will be applied to each typology so that there is a clear and published understanding of what land is maintained by Thurrock Council, and how it is maintained.

3.6 A communication plan will be devised to inform the public of any changes to the maintenance programme and the reasons why these changes are being trialed or implemented.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The Public Land Maintenance Strategy provides a clear guide on how to maximise the opportunity to present the borough, increase biodiversity and wildlife habitats. To help maintain areas that require more frequent maintenance regimes and improve air quality.

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

This report was presented to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7 October 2021. The committee recommended that Cabinet adopt the Policy.

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

6.1 This relates to the corporate priority – Green Environments that everyone has reason to take pride in.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

This report does not impact upon the revenue budget, however to deliver the full infrastructure improvements will require developer and/or capital funding.

7.2 Legal

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

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Appropriate checks for land ownership and compliance with relevant legislation will be need to be assured, taking legal advice as necessary, in due course.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**

Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

Consultation and engagement will take place across the borough including working with community forums and ward members to inform a Community Equality Impact Assessment for the Public Land Maintenance Strategy

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

When considering designs we will consult with the Community Safety Partnership Manager to ensure we are aiming to design out antisocial behaviour.

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**

- Appendix 1 – Public Land Maintenance Strategy

Report Author:

Vincent Taylor

Strategic Lead – Clean and Green Services

Public Realm



Contents

1. Introduction

2. Key Methods of delivery

- A. Planned Parks Improvement Programme
- B. Working with and developing “Friends of Parks” groups and Community Volunteers
- C. Long Grass Regimes / Wildflowers / meadow planting
- D. Low maintenance schemes
- E. Tree Planting
- F. Supporting the progress of the Council’s Local Plan

3. Land Type / Typology

- Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces
- Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces
- Typology 3 – Amenity Space and Urban Open Spaces
- Typology 4 - Grass Verges and Roundabouts
- Typology 5 - Cemeteries
- Typology 6 - Outdoor Sport

4. Zones

- High amenity (high maintenance)
- General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)
- Low amenity (low maintenance)

5. Strategy by Land Type

- Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces
- Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces
- Typology 3 – Amenity Space and Urban Open Spaces
- Typology 4 - Grass Verges and Roundabouts
- Typology 5 - Cemeteries
- Typology 6 - Outdoor Sport

New Areas

Conclusion / Recommendations

Appendix 1 – Proposed Maintenance Standards

1. Introduction

Thurrock's Public Land and open spaces enrich the quality of our lives, have a positive environmental impact and contribute towards a healthy lifestyle. They help define and add to the character and history of a place as well as provide vital green infrastructure for wildlife, biodiversity, water, tranquillity, recreation, play, food production, improved air quality and safe off-road pedestrian and cycling routes. This strategy covers Thurrock's current provision of parks, amenity greenspace (includes highways verge and roundabouts), natural and semi-natural greenspace and cemeteries and covers the period 2021 - 2027.

This strategy has been prepared to:

- Ensure that all of the boroughs public open space is effectively maintained in the most efficient and cost effective way possible.
- Inform future action plans and projects for the delivery of improvements to existing open spaces and new open spaces triggered by development.
- To facilitate the securing of funding either internal or external for the improvement and maintenance of Thurrock's public open space
- Increase biodiversity and habitats

This strategy impacts on Thurrock Councils priorities, People, Place and Prosperity. Well managed and attractive land and open space has a positive influence:

People

- Provide a space for recreation and play
- Promote community cohesion and social inclusion, as a place to meet
- Improve physical health through exercise
- Contribute to good mental health and well being
- Fostering civic pride through sense of space

Place

- Encourage biodiversity
- Provide wildlife habitat
- Promote education
- Create a natural amenity
- Provide safe, sustainable transport routes
- Assist in alleviating flood risks
- Regulate microclimates supporting local air quality

Prosperity

- Attract economic development and local investment
- Increase land and property values
- Encourage revenue streams through tourism
- Improve the image and standing of an area
- Influence location decisions for both employers and employees.

2. Key Methods of delivery

To improve the quality of our public land and open spaces we will ensure;

- A. **Planned Parks Improvement Programme**- A rolling programme of individual plans developed for the sites prioritised on the basis of quality and value findings from the Parks and Open Space needs assessment.
- B. **Working with and developing “Friends of Parks” groups and Community Volunteers**. We currently have a good working relationship with a number of these groups and we will look to build upon this in the future helping these local groups improve the parks and maximise the impact of their efforts.
- C. **Long Grass Regimes / Wildflowers / meadow planting** – Where appropriate, the use of allowing our grass to grow alongside wildflower and meadow planting will increase biodiversity and these areas will provide important habitats for insects and pollinators and provide new wildlife havens that are crucial to the development of our parks and open spaces and the wider environment.
Many factors need to be taken into consideration when introducing these areas, such as highway safety, site levels and underground services. They will be developed on a trial basis with a view to making them a permanent part of our landscape. This should decrease the amount of maintenance required, allowing resources to be targeted in other areas where improvements are required

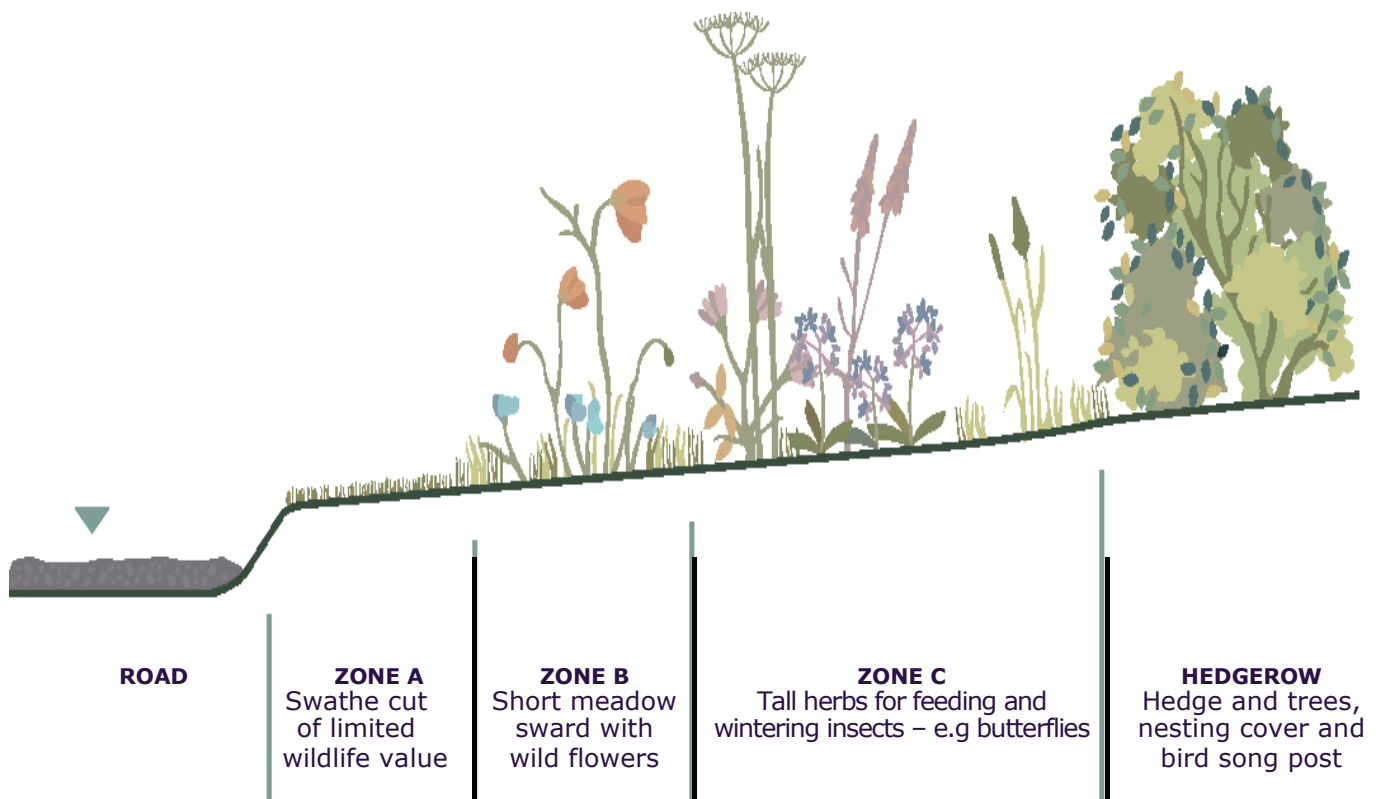
Maintenance schedules would be set to allow the wild flowers to be able to complete their full lifecycle – i.e. grow, flower and set seed, prior to them being cut. This replenishes the seed bank and allows populations to be maintained cost-free and indefinitely. Cutting too early and too frequently swiftly eliminates many species, reducing diversity and the value of the road verge. Cutting after flowers have set seed in late summer allows visually striking displays of wild flowers and a rich source of pollen and nectar for pollinators. Wild flowers take roughly six to eight weeks from flowering to setting seed.



Cutting these areas twice a year is the **management approach** that is suggested for suppressing coarse grasses and encouraging wild flowers, so reducing management burden over time.

Management option		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
One cut									full cut				
Two cuts	Summer and autumn cutting							partial cut		full cut			
	Late winter and autumn cutting		full cut						full cut				
	Dry verges (short vegetation)	regular cuts							regular cuts				
	Species-rich verges with mown edge		1m strip						full cut				

Below is the idealised management zones across the width of a roadside verge



D. Low maintenance schemes –

Where grounds maintenance is difficult and requires traffic management, (including roundabouts) the design of low maintenance schemes enhancing and improving the presentation of the asset.

One way of achieving this is the use of low growing ground cover (as shown), the use of this type of planting not only enhances the appearance of the land, upon which it is grown, but also aids biodiversity and provides habitats. In addition to planting there are options to hard landscape and design out the maintenance burden.



- E. Tree Planting** – The planting of appropriate trees, where it is possible to do so and where they will have a positive impact on the environment, this will include Council owned parks, informal open space, verges and where appropriate roundabouts throughout the borough, ensuring the replacement planting of trees that have been removed.

The Council has responsibility for the ongoing maintenance and management of over 26,000 trees (this includes the trees in parks and open spaces). As part of that responsibility approximately 150 trees could potentially be removed per year to incurable disease or tree failure, these will be replaced in line with the tree planting strategy. The Tree Strategy commits Thurrock Council to be ambitious and plant more trees than those removed. Funding bids will be submitted maximising opportunities, developers and our own development schemes are actively encouraged to optimise tree planting. Increased tree planting will increase biodiversity and habitats and also help to improve local air quality.

- F. Supporting the progress of the Council's Local Plan** - To ensure well designed, quality public spaces are delivered through new development proposals and appropriate management / maintenance arrangements are secured. Recognising that one size will be unlikely to fit all scenarios, a range of management options should be considered, i.e. developer contributions / private management companies, commuted payments.

3. Land Type / Typology

All Council managed green spaces can be divided into Six typologies based on the broad land type and function. Maintenance standards are then set according to each typology based on a range of maintenance tasks. The main typologies are:

- Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces
- Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces
- Typology 3 – Amenity Green Space
- Typology 4 - Grass Verges and Roundabouts
- Typology 5 - Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Typology 6 - Outdoor Sport

Typology 1 - Formal parks and spaces

High profile areas of open space, publically accessible, close to public transport links and providing a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. This includes urban parks and formal gardens (e.g. Grays Town Park). They are the most labour intensive and require a regular schedule of grounds maintenance tasks to maintain the standards.

Typology 2 - Natural / Semi-natural Greenspace

Informal and natural green space provides the opportunity to promote meaningful and safe recreation. Covering a wide range of uses including woodland areas, informal country parks (for example Oak and Ash Plantation, pictured below) and accessible wetland areas.

Typology 3 – Amenity Green space

Most commonly, but not exclusively, in residential areas including informal recreation spaces, green space in and around housing and village greens. This may also include playing fields where outdoor sport is not the primary use e.g. there are no marked out pitches and goals.

Currently most amenity green spaces are cut regularly between April and October on a cut and drop basis. This is generally carried out on a fortnightly basis, although periods of inclement weather may delay operations. Extra cuts may be added before or after these dates as necessary. Grass clippings that encroach on paved areas adjacent to the grassed areas are dispersed by the use of blower machines. Growth around obstacles in the grass such as fence lines, are controlled by strimming or selective use of herbicide spraying.

Typology 4 – Grass Verges and Roundabouts

Areas of greenspace adjacent to the public highway. There are a large network of verges throughout the borough, from urban town and village centre locations to rural roads and sections of high-speed roads. These are currently cut routinely throughout the grass cutting season.

Typology 5 – Cemeteries and Churchyards

Publically accessible churchyards and closed cemeteries, these are areas for reflection and tranquil contemplation, we currently cut every 3 weeks and are strimmed at the same time.

Typology 6 - Outdoor sports

Outdoor sports are played at parks and recreation grounds, specific playing fields and sports grounds across the borough. Sports pitches are maintained to promote true, safe, even, free draining surfaces and to provide pitches which are presented in optimum condition for use.

4. Zones

These will be used within the Typologies to set the maintenance standards, this is shown in Appendix 1. A set of three zones have been selected to group maintenance standards under specific descriptions.

They are as follows:

1 – High amenity (high maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected for high profile areas such as in formal parks and bowling greens. The tasks within this zoning include regular mowing of fine Turf areas, floral display maintenance including watering, dead-heading, pruning, weeding and fertilising.

2. – General/medium amenity (standard maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected in areas where there is a high level of general use/activity, sites such as recreation areas. The tasks within this zoning include regular mowing of park, urban grass verges, grassland and sports playing fields, grass playing pitches, including, scarification, aeration, irrigation, renovation after play and season end, informal hedge maintenance, informal shrub and non-ornamental seasonal bedding maintenance.

3. – Low amenity (low maintenance)

Maintenance standard expected in natural areas including countryside parks, rural spaces and rural grass verges. The tasks within this zoning include mowing of grass verges, highway gateways, roundabouts, meadows, rural and natural hedges.

Strategy by Land Type / Typology

Typology 1 - Formal parks and spaces



Aim – To increase use and amenity of the parks. Achieved through improved aesthetics, enhanced maintenance of formal areas (new memorial and formal beds at Grays Town Park as shown) and increasing biodiversity & habitats through the inclusion of tree and wildflower planting, and long grass regimes in other areas. Thurrock Council will seek to achieve “Green Flag” status for formal parks.

Actions

- Work with the friend of groups to identify their key priorities for their park and to jointly create an action plan specific to each park.
- Identify areas within our parks where biodiversity and habitats can be encouraged
- Enhanced cultivation of beds and planting in areas to create more formal sections
- Produce a site specific maintenance programmes

Typology 2 - Natural / Semi-natural Greenspace



Example Semi-natural Greenspace - Oak and Ask Plantation

Aim – To ensure areas are accessible to the public. Achieved through well maintained and regularly inspected assets, increased biodiversity & habitats, the inclusion of tree and wildflower planting where appropriate.

Actions

- Identify areas where further planting would support biodiversity and habitats
- Identify areas where we can plant more trees
- Carry out an audit of all of our assets within the space and put in place an appropriate inspection regime
- Look at the resource and equipment requirements for the maintenance of these areas, and what cutting regimes best suit each area, this will be replicated across all of the Typologies so that we can ensure that we have the right equipment and resources to best present the borough.

Typology 3 - Amenity Green space



Example the Delafield

Aim – To ensure that identified areas are accessible to the public. Achieved through well maintained and regularly inspected assets, reducing ongoing maintenance through wildflower planting where appropriate, increasing biodiversity & habitats through the planting of native trees and where possible orchard planting to provide free food.



Example of vehicle protection to Amenity Green Space

Actions

- Identify areas where further planting or the use of long grass regimes would support biodiversity and habitats
- Identify areas where we can plant more trees
- Carry out an audit of all of our assets within the space and put in place an appropriate inspection regime

Typology 4 – Grass Verges and Roundabouts

Verges



Example of Roadside verge

Aim – To preserve the physical integrity of the verge and have well maintained verges and assets. Achieved through disruption of parking on the grass by target hardening with fencing, planting of trees / shrubs or replacing with an alternative surface through the “Kerb It” programme, seeking to protect or replace verges that are damaged by vehicle parking.

Well maintained verges and assets, regularly inspected, increased biodiversity & habitats through inclusion of long grass regimes, tree and wildflower planting where appropriate. Creation of wild meadow areas, re-introduction of native plants as plug plants & seeds, encourage nectar-rich plants and providing cover for wildlife.

Research suggests that common plants, often thought of as 'weeds' such as dandelion, ragwort and cow parsley can provide a critical food source for pollinating insects, log piles and long grass also provide cover and nesting sites for bumblebees.

Actions

- Identify areas where further planting or the use of long grass regimes would support biodiversity and habitats
- Identify areas where we can plant more trees
- Conduct a full survey of the verges that we as a local authority are responsible for including those under both Public Realm and Housing to ensure that they are all categorised against the Zones and also with which piece of equipment that they will be maintained with, this will be done with each typology so that there is a clear and published understanding of what land is maintained by Thurrock Council, and how it is maintained.



Example of roadside wildflower planting (Not Thurrock)

Roundabouts

Essentially a type of highway verge and a “Gateway” into Thurrock. Given their visual prominence and accessibility key roundabouts require an increased presence and should give a warm welcome into the borough. They should communicate visually to travellers they are entering a new location and should represent the community and Thurrock as a whole. It is important they provide the right first impression and one of welcome.

Aim – To improve all “gateway” roundabouts into Thurrock, ensuring when people drive into Thurrock, they provide a memorable welcome. Achieved through aesthetic improvements, while reducing ongoing maintenance. Recognising the established communities in Thurrock and the differences they promote, essential community engagement and consultation will be required in informing design schemes for each “Gateway” roundabout.

There are a wide range of options including hardy perennial planting, feature trees (i.e. flowering cherry, monkey-puzzle), public art instillation (as can be seen on the Purfleet roundabout), different surfacing and wild flowers, including the use of low growing ground cover, should additional funding be secured. This also maximises commercial opportunity through the sale of advertising.



Current feature roundabout maintained by Thurrock Garden Centre

Actions

- Carry out an audit of all of our roundabouts to identify options for either hard landscaping or low maintenance planting to reduce the maintenance burden.
- To identify and work with local community groups to co-design any improvements to the roundabouts.
- On larger roundabouts, especially on the M25 and A13, Identify areas where further planting or the use of long grass regimes would support biodiversity and habitats

Typology 5 - Cemeteries and Churchyards



Example – Corringham Cemetery

Aim –. Cemeteries are a place of peace, memories and reflection, it is essential that the environment is well maintained and is welcoming and tranquil.

Actions – The Environment will be improved and enhanced (subject to securing capital funding) by:

- Conduct an assessment of our cemeteries and prepare action plans for each one.
- Identify areas where further planting or the use of long grass regimes would support biodiversity and habitats, whilst still providing a respectful environment

Typology 6 – Outdoor Sports

Aim – To maintain our outdoor sports area to the required standards, whilst looking to see where biodiversity and habitats can be accommodated. Sports maintenance charging in line with commercial rates to sports clubs unless where the council decides to subsidise this



Example of a football pitch being left to long grass out of season

Actions

- Work with the relevant sports clubs and Thurrock Councils sports development team to ensure that all of our outdoor sports areas have an action plan and maintenance schedule in place and are therefore effectively maintained and ready for play when required
- To allow for biodiversity and habitats out of season where possible (See previous picture)

New areas

The adoption of new public open space from development is undertaken by the council's Planning department. There is of course a financial implication to the Service if there is no income linked with this adoption.

The Environment service will be included on any pre adoption inspection, to ensure that the land and associated infrastructure, including Play Areas, planting, and trees. This is to ensure that the area is in a fit condition for adoption.





Aim - Where possible the allocation of funds from the developer to maintain the land for a fixed period would be beneficial (this would be calculated using a schedule of rates). If developers contributions are not available it would be preferable that another vehicle for the maintenance of the land be agreed i.e. a Management Company.





Conclusion / Recommendations


1. We should look to increase the biodiversity and habitats within the borough, whilst this may have proved to have been a contentious issue in the past, “no mow” areas and leaving grass to grow has now become a more widespread and an accepted concept, This should decrease the amount of maintenance required in some areas allowing resources to be targeted in other areas where improvements are required it is therefore recommend where possible that this is the approach taken by the Council
2. To agree the proposed maintenance standards.
3. That all green open spaces that as a local authority we are responsible for maintaining including those under both Public Realm and Housing to ensure that they are all categorised against the Zones. Also with which piece of equipment that they will be maintained with, this will be done with each typology so that there is a clear and published understanding of what land is maintained by Thurrock Council, and how it is maintained.
4. That a communication plan is put in place to inform the public of any changes to the maintenance programme and the reasons why these changes are being trailed or implemented.

Appendix 1 – Maintenance Standards by Land Typology




Typology 1 - Formal Parks and Spaces

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	General Standard	Example
Grass cutting	1 - High amenity (high maintenance)	Fine quality turf areas in high profile sites, generally adjacent to ornamental features e.g. flowerbeds	Grass cut short with a uniform with a striped finish and cuttings collected or fly cut as appropriate.	
	2 - Amenity	Reasonable quality turf areas in the remainder of parks and gardens	Grass Routinely cut throughout the season to give a surface conducive to public use	
	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Meadow grass and wildflower areas generally situated in areas of amenity grass	1 – 3 cuts per year dependant on area,.	
Hedge maintenance	1 - High amenity (high maintenance)	Hedges pruned to a specific form in high profile areas generally adjacent to ornamental features	2 cuts per year Dependant on bird nesting season	





	<p>2 - Amenity</p>	<p>Good quality hedge features forming boundaries in the remainder of the parks and gardens</p>	<p>1 cut per year</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Shrub Maintenance</p>	<p>1 - High amenity (high maintenance)</p>	<p>Colourful shrub beds in high profile areas of the park, generally used to complement floral planting and bedding</p>	<p>Winter pruning once per year, define edge to border, spot treat weeds up to three times per year</p>	
	<p>2 - Amenity</p>	<p>General shrubberies providing backdrops to the remainder of parks and gardens</p>	<p>Winter cultivation, pruning once per year, spot treat weeds up to three times per year</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Border Maintenance</p>	<p>1 - High amenity (high maintenance)</p>	<p>Seasonal bedding and floral planting in high profile areas, complementing adjacent ornamental features and structures</p>	<p>Bed preparation and planting twice per year, fortnightly hand weed/deadhead, irrigation, if required</p>	

	2 - Amenity	Seasonal bedding and rose gardens in less high profile areas of parks and gardens	Bed preparation and planting twice per year, monthly hand weed/ dead head, irrigation if required	
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Typology 2 – Natural and Semi-natural Open Spaces

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	General Standard	Example
Grass cutting	2 - Amenity	General grass areas (including verges) that define pathways and ensure sites are accessible and suitable for recreational use	Grass Routinely cut throughout the season to give a surface conducive to public use	
	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Meadow sites and areas of long grass that run alongside general grassed areas	1 or 2 cuts per year, timed according to species	
Hedge maintenance	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Hedges bordering natural spaces shall not cause obstructions	1 cut per year during the winter programme	





Typology 3 – Amenity Green Spaces

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	General Standard	Example
Grass cutting	2 – Amenity	This standard of maintenance ensures we can provide useable and attractive recreational areas for residents	Grass Routinely cut throughout the season to give a surface conducive to public use	
Hedge maintenance	2 – Amenity	Good quality hedge features that form boundaries in the majority of amenity open spaces	1 cut per year during the winter programme	
	2 – Amenity	Field hedges bordering amenity green spaces and rural areas, often located on the urban fringe	1 cut per year during the winter programme	
Shrub maintenance	2 - Amenity	This maintenance regime ensures shrub beds are kept tidy and add character to the area	Pruning once per year, spot treat weeds up to three times per year	




Typology 4 – Highway Verges and Roundabouts

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	General Standard	Example
Grass cutting	2 – Amenity	General grass areas (including verges) that define pathways and ensure sites are accessible and suitable for recreational use	Up to 12 - 15 cuts per year (approx. every 3-4 weeks),	
	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Areas of long grass that run alongside the carriageway	1 or 2 cuts per year, timed according to species with arising removed or fly cut at the correct time	
Hedge maintenance	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Hedges bordering natural spaces shall not cause obstructions	1 cut per year during the winter programme	
Roundabouts	Various	All roundabouts to be assessed and maintained to the appropriate schedule	Maintenance / Cuts will be dependent upon the scheme for each roundabout	

Typology 5 - Cemeteries and Churchyards

Zoned Tasks	Zone	Definition	General Standard	Example
Grass cutting	2 - Amenity	Good quality grass areas surrounding important memorials and entrances to some churchyards	Up to 12 -15 cuts per year (approx. every 2-3 weeks)	
	3 – Low amenity (low maintenance)	Areas within cemeteries identified as biodiversity or wildlife habitats	1 or 2 cuts per year, timed according to species with arising removed or fly cut at the correct time	Example – Not Thurrock 
Hedge maintenance	2 - Amenity	Good quality hedge that denotes a boundary or previous screening	1 cut per year during the winter programme	
Shrub Maintenance	2 - Amenity	Shrubberies to be kept tidy and provide suitable backdrops to cemetery areas	Winter cultivation, pruning once per year, spot treat weeds up to three times per year	

Typology 6 – Outdoor Sports

Zoned Tasks	Task	Example
Bowling Greens	Bowling greens require a significant range of tasks to be undertaken on a regular basis to uphold standards. These tasks include cylinder mowing, aeration using a range of solid, hollow, slit and sarrel tines; top dressing; over seeding; fertilising; rolling; scarification; verticutting; dragbrushing; irrigation; and the application of fungicides, worm suppressants, moss killers, insecticides and wetting agents.	
Cricket Pitches	Outfields will generally require regular mowing, aeration and marking out. The maintenance regime required to uphold standards on cricket squares is more comprehensive and includes: cylinder mowing; marking out; selective herbicide and fertiliser application; scarification; solid tining; top dressing; irrigation; rolling; over seeding; renovation works; and the application of fungicides, worm suppressants, and moss killers.	
Football & Rugby Pitches	The maintenance of football and rugby pitches is significantly less complex than that of cricket squares and bowling greens. Regular tasks will include grass cutting; aeration using slit tines; marking out; application of fertiliser; application of herbicide; overseeding; and the forking and sanding of goal mouths.	

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8 December 2021	ITEM: 14
Cabinet	
Quarter 2 (April to September 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Councillor Jack Duffin, Cabinet Member for Central Services	
Accountable Assistant Director: n/a	
Accountable Director: Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This is the second corporate performance monitoring report for 2021/22 covering April to September 2021.

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 statistical evidence the council will use to monitor the progress and performance against the council's priorities.

During the first three months of the financial year, the country was preparing to open up slowly in line with the government's roadmap, but there were still a number of restrictions in place. Moving into quarter 2, some indicators are still being directly or indirectly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic during this period although national restrictions have now significantly reduced. The report highlights how COVID-19 has disrupted or changed performance and/or priorities and demand levels across a number of services during the year and in some cases continues to have a lasting effect.

Despite the impact of COVID, the report shows that 71% of indicators are currently achieving target and 59% are better than the previous year which is a positive position overall half way through the year.

This report was also presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2021, feedback from which is included at 5.3.

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. 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.

2.2 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 2020/21 and will continue throughout 2021/22.

2.3 These corporate indicators will continue to be reported to both Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis, throughout 2021/22.

2.4 In line with the recommendation from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2019, throughout 2021/22, where performance is below target, commentary will be included to show the intended improvement plan. This is included in Section 3.5 as the “Route to Green”.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

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

3.1 Summary of Corporate KPI Performance

Quarter 2 2021/22 Performance against target		Direction of Travel compared to 2020/21	
Achieved	71.43% (25)	↑ BETTER	59.4% (19)
Failed	28.57% (10)	→ STATIC	21.9% (7)
		↓ WORSE	18.7% (6)

3.2 Impact of Covid-19

- 3.2.1 The Quarter 2 (April to September 2021) overall outturn is 71% of indicators achieving their target which is higher than the outturn for 2020/21 of 63%. However, given the significant impact and disruption this time last year at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to make a meaningful comparison. This report covers April to September 2021, the first three months of which saw the country still in various phases of lockdown. Whilst most restrictions have now eased, it is as yet, too early for some of the indicators and services to predict how performance levels will be impacted over the full course of the year. This will continue to be closely monitored throughout the year.
- 3.2.2 In most cases the targets for 2021/22 have been set based on “normal” circumstances to more clearly analyse the impact of the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is likely to mean that more indicators will not “perform” as well as they did before COVID, and/or the rate of improvement will not be as great. Where an indicator has failed to reach its target during the year, the commentary provided will identify clearly whether this is related to COVID-19 impacts or other factors impacting on performance.
- 3.2.3 It is difficult to predict accurately how long and to what extent service delivery in some areas will continue to be impacted. Some will continue to be affected during the remainder of the year. 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 as well as transformational changes to the way services are delivered. This is likely to have an increasingly significant impact on service delivery going forward through 2021/22.
- 3.2.4 Despite the impact of COVID, the report shows that 71% of indicators are currently achieving target and 59% are better than the previous year which is a positive position overall half way through the year.

3.3 On target performance

71% of available corporate KPIs achieved their targets. (Brackets show actuals where appropriate).

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Tenant satisfaction with Transforming Homes	Cllr Spillman	86.5%	90.3% (56)				90.3% (56)	ACHIEVED	↑	85%	85%
Number of new Micro Enterprises started since 1 April 2021	Cllr Huelin	20	4				16	ACHIEVED	↑	10	20
% of volunteer placements filled within council	Cllr Huelin	96%	90% (135)				93% (181)	ACHIEVED	↑	92%	96%
Number of events and activities (provided from hubs/libraries) that support engagement in a range of cultural, social and learning opportunities to support well-being and strengthen community connections	Cllr Huelin	437	99				290	ACHIEVED	↑	180	360
Successful completion of treatment in Young People's Drug & Alcohol service	Cllr Mayes	90%	100%				95%	ACHIEVED	↑	70%	70%
% of young people who reoffend after a previously recorded offence	Cllr Johnson	17.0%	17% (Q4)				3% (Q1)	ACHIEVED	↑	20%	20%
% occupancy of council-owned business centres	Cllr Coxshall	71%	75%				75%	ACHIEVED	↑	75%	80%
Value (£) of council owned property disposals	Cllr Hebb	£460k	£537k				£2.797m	ACHIEVED	↑	£1m	£3m
% of refuse bins emptied on correct day	Cllr Jefferies	97.31%	99.87%	99.95%	99.97%	99.95%	99.96%	ACHIEVED	↑	98.5%	98.5%
% of potholes repaired within policy and agreed timeframe	Cllr Maney	98%	99% (1,472)	100% (520)	100% (258)	100% (141)	100% (2,391)	ACHIEVED	↑	98%	98%
% of Major planning applications processed in 13 weeks	Cllr Maney	97%	100% (9)	100% (1)	100% (2)	100% (4)	100% (16)	ACHIEVED	↑	90%	90%
No of new apprenticeships started (incl. staff/ excluding maintained schools)	Cllr Duffin	56	10	5	11	7	33	ACHIEVED	↑	30	62
Street Cleanliness - a) Litter - % of areas surveyed with unacceptable levels of litter	Cllr Jefferies	4.61%	Tranche 1 6.17%					ACHIEVED	↑	9%	9%

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
% Rent collected	Cllr Spillman	98.3%	89.5%	89.7%	91.7%	93.1%	93.1%	ACHIEVED	➔	93%	98%
Overall spend to budget on General Fund (% variance against forecast)	Cllr Hebb	0%	0%				0%	ACHIEVED	➔	0%	0%
Number of applicants with family commitments in Bed & Breakfast for six weeks or more (ie with dependent child(ren) or are pregnant)	Cllr Spillman	0	0	0	0	0	0	ACHIEVED	➔	0	0
Forecast Council Tax collected	Cllr Hebb	97.96%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	ACHIEVED	➔	98.0%	98.0%
Forecast National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) collected	Cllr Hebb	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	ACHIEVED	➔	96.8%	96.8%
% of Minor planning applications processed in 8 weeks	Cllr Maney	100%	100% (43)	100% (15)	100% (18)	100% (15)	100% (91)	ACHIEVED	➔	90%	90%
Overall spend to budget on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£K variance)	Cllr Spillman	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	ACHIEVED	➔	£0	£0
No of placements available within council for volunteers	Cllr Huelin	224	150				194	ACHIEVED	⬇	165	190
Permanent admissions of older people (65+) to residential and nursing care homes per 100,000 population	Cllr Huelin	618.3 per 100,000	178.4 (43)	257.3 (62)	311.2 (75)	336.1 (81)	336.1 (81)	ACHIEVED	⬇	373.5 (90)	738.7 (178)
% of repairs completed within target	Cllr Spillman	98.3%	97.2% (7,967)	93.4% (2,735)	92.0% (2,558)	95.2% (2,754)	95.3% (16,014)	ACHIEVED	⬇	95%	95%
% of GP practices who have received 1 visit to discuss COVID recovery in relation to GPs Quality of Outcome Framework (QOF)	Cllr Mayes	<i>new KPI</i>	26% (7)				59% (16)	ACHIEVED	n/a	50%	100%
% of GP practices who have received a second visit to review outcomes of first and discuss the cancer quality improvement work	Cllr Mayes	<i>New KPI</i>	This measure, which is a follow up from the indicator above, will be available at year end.								

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days) (rolling 12 months)	Cllr Johnson	<i>new KPI</i>	378				375	ACHIEVED	n/a	426	426

3.4 Off target indicators

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

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Proportion of older people (65+) still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/ rehabilitation	Cllr Huelin	86.40%	91.9%				84.0%	FAILED	↓	86.3%	86.3%
<p>Performance is 2.3% under target. Although under-performing, Thurrock is still performing 4.9% above the latest national average (79.1% 2020/21) and 2.7% above the regional average (81.3% 2020/21). Please note that for the purposes of the national indicator only Quarter 4 (as a snapshot) is taken as the final year-end position for 2021/22. Out of 81 discharges from hospital to reablement in the period, 68 were at home on the 91st day. Of the 13 not at home, 8 had passed away and 5 were in hospital. 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.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
Continue to monitor the performance of the reablement services to ensure people are re-abled as much as possible, thus increasing the potential for individuals to remain at home.											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments	Cllr Huelin	34.4%	33.1%	30.9%	30.9%	31.5%	31.5%	FAILED	↓	33%	33%
<p>This indicator is 1.5% under target. Although under-performing against target, Thurrock is still performing 4.9% above the latest national average (26.6% 2020/21) and 6.4% above the latest regional average (25.1% 2020/21). Out of 1,405 long term community services in place at month end, 443 were direct payments.</p> <p>In order to support hospitals during COVID, new national measures were put in place to provide up to 6 weeks free care (4 weeks from July) to anyone being discharged from hospital, funded under the national Covid Hospital Discharge Policy. As such, individuals leaving hospital were placed in free commissioned services (such as home care). As a consequence, for those individuals who require ongoing care beyond the free period, most are staying with the home care provider they are already receiving support from, rather than moving to a direct payment where they would be required to make their own care arrangements.</p> <p>In addition, the pandemic resulted in fewer personal assistants and other independent services being available, causing difficulties in individuals sourcing their own care, resulting in more individuals moving to council commissioned services.</p> <p>Following the ending of the Section 75 agreement with Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT), all of the cases being transferred back into the local authority are being reviewed and some cases have been identified where the direct payments are no longer current. This has resulted in a reduction in the overall number of people receiving direct payments.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
<p>Analysis was undertaken of the reduction in direct payments during the Covid period to understand the reasons (as described above).</p> <p>The council continues to ensure that everyone eligible for a direct payment is offered the choice during the assessment and support planning process. Managers are authorising the commissioning of new services to ensure the option of direct payments have been explored with individuals before a commissioned service is authorised. There will be a promotional campaign from January 2022 to improve take up of direct payments after the pressures and continued issues resulting from the pandemic have eased.</p>											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
% General tenant satisfaction with neighbourhoods/services provided by Housing	Cllr Spillman	75.5%	72.8% (361)	72.9% (121)	74.0% (114)	76.8% (126)	73.6% (722)	FAILED	↓	75%	75%
<p>During 2021/22 between April and September 980 tenants have completed a telephone satisfaction survey and have given a rating for satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing. Of these 980 tenants, 722 tenants gave a "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" rating which makes up the satisfaction rate of 73.7%. Of the remaining 259 tenants, 111 (11.3%) gave a neutral rating of "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" which means that 147 (15%) tenants gave a dissatisfied rating of "fairly dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".</p> <p>A number of dissatisfied ratings were accompanied by qualitative feedback relating to refuse collection, street sweeping, Council Tax and Housing Benefit - particularly in April and May. Whilst these are not services delivered by Housing, this has had a negative impact of 1.5% on the satisfaction rate over the year to date.</p> <p>Satisfaction with repairs as a perception measure correlates strongly with overall satisfaction with Housing through key driver mapping which has been undertaken. During July and August, repairs performance was under target which had a negative effect on both repairs perception satisfaction and overall satisfaction with Housing. Repairs performance has recovered in September and is now on target and satisfaction with repairs perception has risen as a result alongside overall satisfaction with Housing which was on target in September.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
<p>Tenant satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing in September was 76.8% and on target, recovering from lower satisfaction levels in July and August. Tenant satisfaction data is routinely analysed and insight is regularly shared at both an operational and a strategic level which identifies common themes for dissatisfaction from the qualitative feedback tenants provide during the survey. This insight enables the Housing service to understand and take action to address specific themes to improve satisfaction with Housing overall.</p> <p>Data analytics are also used to establish whether there is a strong statistical relationship, or correlation, between satisfaction with individual measures and overall satisfaction which enables the Housing service to identify the most effective measures and areas of the service to focus on in order to improve satisfaction overall through key driver mapping.</p>											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Average time to turnaround/re-let voids (in days)	Cllr Spillman	47.5 days	30.2 days	35.3 days	29.5 days	34.4 days	31.5 days	FAILED	↑	28 days	28 days
<p>Performance against this indicator is made up of both general needs and sheltered housing voids. General needs voids account for 74% of the overall voids over the year to date and the average re-let time for this void type at the end of quarter two is 27.9 days and on target.</p> <p>Sheltered housing voids account for 26% of the overall voids and the average re-let time for this void type at the end of quarter two is 41.7 days and over the target of 28 days. However there is a clear disparity in performance between sheltered housing voids with an entrance door on the ground floor and those with an entrance door on the first floor or higher (which are harder to let) – with average relet times at end of quarter 2 being 26.9 days and 57.8 days respectively. Sheltered housing voids with an entrance door on the first floor or higher is the clear driver of void re-let time underperformance.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
<p>In order to address the issue with difficulties letting sheltered voids with entrance doors above the ground floor, the service will be engaging with neighbouring local authorities to determine whether this is a problem for other local authorities and to identify any best practice. The service is also undertaking a review of the lettings criteria and exploring the possibility of amending the criteria for these particular properties to make them available to a larger pool of potential bidders.</p>											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Number of health hazards removed as a direct result of private sector housing team intervention	Cllr Spillman	746	212	33	39	171	455	FAILED	↑	504	1,000
<p>Whilst this has increased significantly in September, over the course of the year to date private landlords have been reporting challenges in carrying out property improvement works following the lifting of COVID restrictions nationally.</p> <p>Some landlords have requested more time to remove hazards and carry out remedial works due to financial or operational difficulties caused by the pandemic in completing works. This includes building material shortages impacting on timescales to remove hazards, material prices causing financial difficulties for some landlords and a shortage of contractors to carry out works. This is assessed and considered on a case by case basis and the latest government advice for local authorities to enforce standards in rented properties. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities continue to recommend a pragmatic approach to support landlords and tenants.</p> <p>Routine Part 1 property inspections were not carried out during the national lockdowns for Category 1 and 2 hazards. Essential inspections were only carried out where there is an imminent risk to a tenant's health due to a serious hazard. Following government advice, routine inspections commenced in May 2021, subject to tenants not self-isolating or refusing to allow access.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
<p>A total of 171 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards were removed in September which has brought the year to date outturn within 45 of the quarter two profiled target of 500 and represents significant progress towards the year-end target of 1,000 HHSRS hazards removed. The private sector housing team are working closely with landlords and tenants to ensure standards in rented properties are maintained.</p> <p>The private housing team is taking formal action when they find the most serious 'category 1' hazards and made aware that a tenant is vulnerable. This includes works in default when a landlord refuses or fails to carry out repairs.</p>											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter-2	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Of the children who reached their 28th day in care within the reporting period; % that had an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within 20 working days (28 calendar days) NB definition amended 2021/22	Cllr Johnson	57%	85.2% (23)				61.2% (30)	FAILED	n/a – new definition	80%	80%
<p>The primary reason this has not reached target in Quarter 2 is because of the number of cases where consent has not been agreed by either the young people or the families for the request to be made to our health colleagues (this is due within 5 working days). Where this is the case a court order is required. Any delay to the request being made in timescale negatively impacts the ability to meet the assessment completion within 20 days. For example in Quarter 2, 17 Initial Health Assessment (IHA) requests were made, 9 were made within 5 working days, of the 8 out of time 5 of those were because parental consent was not provided.</p>											
Route to GREEN											
<p>The service is ensuring that the paperwork (where there is consent) is sent within 5 days to health colleagues. The initial appointments for children within Thurrock are usually within the 20 days. There are capacity issues for all health authorities in England for IHAs. Delays are addressed through the weekly IHA meeting and escalated where necessary. There is regular consultation with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and reviews of the data. This is ongoing. There is a renewed focus on the IHA and seeking consent from parents, agreeing with foster carers that they cannot re-arrange appointments and for social workers to attend with the carers.</p>											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Payment rate of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)	Cllr Gledhill	49%	45.49%	48.64%	52.84%	46.34%	49.31%	FAILED	↑	70%	70%

The payment rate of FPNS has been below target for some months. This is due to factors that are outside of the control of the service, including the financial and emotional impact of COVID on residents who are fined. The service has received a high level of representations and appeals over the last 12 months with requests for extended payment periods. The service continues to adopt a supportive approach, agreeing payment plans on a case by case basis.

Route to GREEN

The service have been offering extended periods to pay fines to increase payment compliance as residents emerge from the pandemic and the assisted supported benefits offered by the Government. The service are increasing revisits to offending residents which is assisting in payment compliance, alongside checks to confirm offender's details at point of issuing fixed penalty notices.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Street Cleanliness - c) Graffiti % of areas surveyed with unacceptable levels of graffiti	Cllr Jefferies	3.67%	Tranche 1 3.33%					FAILED	↑	3%	3%

Whilst the target was missed this was an improvement over Tranche 3 from last year and the second best score that the council has ever achieved. The team continues to carry out small clearances on street furniture with all operatives carrying out cleansing duties having a small graffiti removal kit. The service also carry out large graffiti clearances when needed.

Route to GREEN

In addition to ongoing vigilance and cleaning of graffiti by the street cleansing teams, Environmental Enforcement Officers are continuing with an ongoing operation [Abercrombie] and recording graffiti offences. This has seen a reduction in offending and the arrest and prosecution of one offender.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
Total gross external income (fees & charges) (based on sales forecast)	Cllr Hebb	£6.4m	£6.6m	£6.6m	£7.1m	£7.1m	£7.1m	FAILED	↑	£8m	£8m
The position reflects the current projection of fees and charges in the context of the ongoing pandemic.											
Route to GREEN											
It is expected a proportion of the expected reduction will be met from central government funding and there will be some cost reductions associated with specific income losses that further mitigate the overall position. This continues to be closely monitored as part of the wider budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) monitoring with regular reports to Cabinet.											

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Summer Term 2020/21 (Latest data)				Quarter 2 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 2 Target	2021/22 Target
% of places accessed for two year olds for early years education (2YE) in the borough	Cllr Johnson	70%	71.68% (562)				FAILED	↑	73%	73%
There has been a marked improvement in take up for the summer term in comparison to this time last year. Parents have more confidence in allowing their children to access two year old entitlement to early education (2YE) funding. And the service has received positive feedback from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding the level of take up.										
During the summer term changes were introduced by the DfE in relation to data protection rules which could impact take up of the 2YE going forward. The process for checking parental eligibility is now more explicit and complicated which has had implications for the direct approach that Thurrock (and many other authorities) have previously developed. This may reduce the take-up. Monitoring of take-up and targeted communications are also more difficult due to the new requirement to delete the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) list of eligible families within 8 weeks of receipt.										
Route to GREEN										
The service continues to monitor closely and is reviewing how the new changes to the system brought in by the DfE impact take up in the short to medium term to determine what mitigations can be made.										

3.5 Other key indicators

3.5.1 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	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	In month July	In month Aug	In month Sept	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	Direction of Travel since 2020/21
Number of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance	Cllr Spillman	1,826	440	144	155	170	909	HIGHER
No of homeless cases accepted	Cllr Spillman	211	35	21	14	31	101	LOWER

At the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2021, the committee sought further clarification that the families not accepted as being at risk of homelessness had been helped in other ways.

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

The acceptances are low in comparison to approaches because the service deal with a greater number of cases by preventing and relieving homelessness before they reach the "main duty" stage, which is the stage at which acceptances are recorded.

The council primarily uses the private rented sector to source accommodation for applicants which is secured through regular contact with landlords and estate agents. Tenancy Sustainment Officers and Financial Inclusion Officers then work with the tenant to ensure that the relevant benefits are applied for to enable them to sustain their tenancy. In addition to this, the council also utilises the services of the Community and Employment Support Officer to support applicants into training and employment.

The service also prevents homelessness by negotiating and working with landlords and excluders (someone the applicant currently lives with who has asked the applicant to leave their property) to keep the applicants in the property they are approaching us from or negotiating a planned move into suitable accommodation.

3.6 KPIs for which data is not currently available due to COVID-19 impact

Number of delayed transfers of care (DToC) - days from hospital (attrib. to NHS, ASC & Joint)	The collection and publication of official DToC figures continue to be suspended by NHS England due to COVID-19 and new Hospital Discharge Policy.
% of primary schools judged "good" or better	No inspections have taken place since the start of COVID-19 pandemic
% of secondary schools judged "good" or better	

3.7 Feedback from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2021

At the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2021 where the Quarter 1 2021/22 Corporate Performance report was considered, there were a number of questions and comments which required further consideration.

3.7.1 Total number of homes permitted through Planning

The committee asked for clarity regarding the target for the number of homes permitted through planning indicator, which totalled 195 in 2020/21 and queried if this year's target of 950 homes permitted through planning was achievable.

The 950 target is based on the target set to meet the housing delivery test - an annual measurement of housing delivery in the area of relevant plan-making authorities. The 950 target was set at the same as last year which although impacted by COVID, is still in line with the longer term national expectation. It is not yet clear for how long COVID will impact the house building market. As with many other indicators affected by COVID, the decision was taken to keep this target to more clearly analyse the disruption caused by the pandemic, where this has had a contributory impact.

3.7.2 Average gross full-time weekly wage in Thurrock

The committee asked for clarification as to whether the indicator related to the wage for Thurrock residents or for Thurrock jobs.

There are two main national indicators which measure average earnings in an area. One measures the average earnings by place of residence, and one by place of work. The indicator being monitored here is by place of residence – ie for people who live in Thurrock. The target for this year is £631.70 which is for the value to not decrease from the latest published data by the Office of National Statistics at time of target setting.

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 is focussing on during 2021/22 and confirms the governance and monitoring mechanisms which were in place to ensure that priorities are delivered.

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

- 5.1 Performance against the corporate priorities was monitored through Performance Board, a cross-council officer group of performance experts representing each service. Performance Board will continue to consider the corporate KPIs on a monthly basis, highlighting areas of particular focus to Directors Board.
- 5.2 Each quarter a report will continue to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and finally reported to Cabinet.
- 5.3 This report was presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2021. Members of the committee asked questions relating to:
- Older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation
 - Average time to turnaround/re-let voids
 - Children who have had Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days
 - Payment rate of fixed penalty notices (FPNs)

Where answers could not be provided in full at the meeting and required more information, these will be provided to members of the committee outside of the meeting.

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

- 6.1 The vision and priorities cascade into every bit of the council and further to our partners, through key strategies, service plans, team plans and individual objectives.
- 6.2 This report will help decision makers and other interested parties, form a view of the success of the council's actions in working towards achieving the vision and priority ambitions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Joanne 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: **Gina Clarke**

Corporate Governance Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation of this report. However under s3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999, local authorities have general duty to obtain Best Value by making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In relation to this general duty, the focus is not simply to achieve best value, but also to strive for continuous improvement. The best value duty also extends to obtaining best value to all aspects of local authorities operation.

Effective KPIs are useful in ensuring and monitoring the level of service delivery of the Council's services and activities. 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 2021/22 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 Inequalities, 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 appendix.

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

N/A

9. **Appendices to the report**

N/A

Report Author

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