

23 October 2019

ITEM: 13

Council

Report of Cabinet Member Report for Environment, Sports & Leisure

Report of: Councillor Aaron Watkins, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Leisure

This report is Public

Introduction

In this third annual report for Environment and Leisure, we continue to strive and thrive across the service, ensuring we continue to deliver the best service possible for our residents, refresh and invigorate where needed and improve where required.

Thurrock in many areas continues to buck the national trends. We continue to deliver services our residents pay for and ensure they can get the best service possible. Over the past year, to name a few things the following has been achieved:

- Within Leisure;
 - Equipment in parks has been refreshed with dedicated officers working with community groups to embed support for and appreciation of the parks.
 - They are providing opportunities for energetic outdoor play during school holidays.
 - The Sports Strategy that is being developed will further ensure that we are ensuring that residents have all the support and infrastructure at hand to be fit and healthy. It is important that we have the best sports facilities for our sports groups and residents and ensure we are futureproofing Thurrock.
- Within Air Quality;
 - While working and seeing success with the 2017 Air Quality strategy and the actions taken are documented within this report, this work has been ongoing throughout 2018 and 2019 so far.
 - We have re-opened the strategy, creating a brand-new Air Quality and Healthy Thurrock Strategy, working to improve the 2017 strategy.
 - We are working with Environmental partners to tackle environment issues and ensuring that the Council remains robust in defending and standing up for residents where there could be issues and concerns.
- Within Environment;
 - Continued improvements in the standards of general maintenance within the Borough, which is looking much Cleaner and Greener with the continuation of the Cut It, Clean It campaign.

- Plans for enhancing our gateway roundabouts and creating wildflower meadows are an exciting next step now that the basics are being delivered so well.
- Ensuring we are delivering the best service, whether it be on the streets, collecting waste or ensuring cemeteries remain clean, tidy and respectful.
- The re-invigorated Enforcement Team has been working to address the issues of fly tipping, littering and abandoned vehicles and anti-social behaviour.

Focus has also been on ensuring we are achieving our KPIs and ensuring we have robust plans in place where we are not. Within waste collection, we knew the importance of ensuring we achieved our KPI but also ensuring residents were getting the service they expect. The waste collection service has shown a marked improvement in performance with the target for bins to be collected on schedule being achieved for 10 out of the 11 months since October 2018. This is a performance standard that has not been achieved for many years.

Another area where we are striving for improvements, is within our recycling and overall green policy. The reliability of the waste service means that we can focus attentions on improving the rate of recycling. Many new schemes are in-place, ensuring we can give residents the tools and information to recycle, educate where needed and invigorate where required. One we are proud to see launch is the pilot at two sites to re-introduce recycling collections to flats. The initial feedback from residents is positive, with the recycling being collected from the sites uncontaminated.

Clean It, as ever is a focus for this council making sure our streets and roads are clean and tidy. Several changes to the service have taken place over recent months and are due to take place to ensure that the service remains refreshed, we ensure KPIs are met and we take valuable learnings from Keep Britain Tidy to improve the service.

Air Quality improvements remains a large focus for me, ensuring we can improve Air Quality across Thurrock and ensure, working with Health partners, we have a healthier Thurrock. Much has taken place over the last year, but as times change so should our policies and the refresh to this strategy which is currently being worked on, will play a pivotal role in improving air quality, tackling pollution and protecting our home, the Earth.

My report will consider the achievements for each of the services within my portfolio and outline our plans and show where we need to do more.

As ever, I would like to thank all my teams across Environment and Leisure and to everyone whom volunteers to get people involved in sports and leisure to those who help clean and tidy their local areas. I thank you all for ensuring we have a better Thurrock.

1. Portfolio Overview

1.1 The last year has again seen changes to my Portfolio role that now focuses on the areas outlined below:

- Waste and Recycling - including domestic and commercial waste collections and the Household Waste and Recycling Centre
- Clean and Green – which encompasses street sweeping, litter picking, grass cutting and other general maintenance of the Borough, including Parks, Open Spaces and Cemeteries
- Air Quality
- Sports and Leisure Development

2. Air Quality

2.1 Although an Air Quality & Health Strategy is in use, which was approved in 2017, we are re-developing Air Quality and Healthier Thurrock Management Strategy, which will be stronger and more robust. This will drive the implementation of projects and other interventions required to tackle Air Quality issues and improve health across Thurrock. Tackling air pollution, protecting the environment, reducing net emissions and tackling climate change is important, and the refreshed strategy will tackle each of these. This will be one of my key priorities over the next 9 months.

2.2 The Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the Air Quality and Health Strategy in 2017 which highlighted the following key aims and objectives for Thurrock, which were appropriate at the time:

- Implement measures for managing air quality throughout the Borough to prevent new AQMAs from arising;
- Implement measures contained within the action plans for existing AQMAs; and
- Work with external bodies to reduce background pollution from inside and outside of the Borough.

2.3 The strategy adopted four policies in order to facilitate decision-making on air quality issues and work to prevent new AQMAs from arising wherever possible. Those policies are as follows:

AQS1 - Tackling Transport Emissions

AQS2 - Tackling health inequalities

AQS3 - Thurrock Clean Air Zones / Low Emissions Zones

AQS4 - Future Developments and Planning

2.4 These policies have been translated into actions and measures that are Borough-wide, including specific actions within the existing AQMAs where pollutant concentrations are highest.

2.5 I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made over each of the policy areas.

Progress made under AQS1 - Tackling Transport Emissions

- 2.6 Thurrock has 18 AQMAs and a range of schemes have been progressed to ameliorate the air quality issues that arise from HGVs, notably in Tilbury, Grays, Purfleet and Aveley.
- 2.7 In addition to specific targeting of AQMAs, we have established a programme of borough wide initiatives to address air quality and health inequalities. These are summarised below:
- 2.8 **South Essex Active Travel (SEAT)** – the Council, along with Southend-on-Sea and Essex County Council are delivering a £3.3m programme which targets people in a transitional stage of life to encourage sustainable travel options.
- 2.9 **Weight Restrictions and HGV Management Schemes** – implemented schemes include the completion of Towers Road HGV routing scheme (phase1), Rectory Road width restriction scheme, Stifford Road Aveley Width restriction scheme, Ship Lane Freight Management Scheme and feasibility options for London Road, Purfleet Freight Management Scheme.
- 2.10 **Improvements to Walking and Cycling** – the Council continues to deliver an extensive programme of walking and cycle infrastructure improvements secured as part of planning consents, grant funding from Public Health and the Cycle Infrastructure Development Programme (CIDP).
- 2.11 **School and Workplace Travel Plans** – the Council secures travel plans and monitoring provisions as part of development consents. 35 out of 51 schools in the borough are actively working on their School Travel Plans. Workplace travel plans have been adopted at numerous locations across the borough (including London Gateway, Amazon and intu Lakeside) which help to assess and mitigate the negative transport impacts of development and promote sustainable travel behaviour.
- 2.12 **Road Safety** - The Road Safety team continue to deliver a wide-ranging programme of educational and practical initiatives with focus placed on encouraging and enabling sustainable travel choices for future generations. The initiatives include road safety walks in all schools, Bikeability training, roadside activities and road safety campaigns to promote safer & sustainable journeys to school/colleges. Engine switch-off zones at schools continue to be supported in 2019.
- 2.13 **Highways Development Management** – the Development Management and Traffic team continue to deliver a programme of work which supports the Council's Air Quality and Health objectives.
- 2.14 **Freight Quality Partnership (FQP)** – the Council has re-established its Freight Quality Partnership to help manage the impact of HGVs in Thurrock.

This group will focus upon the emerging Freight Strategy and to discuss issues arising from the Council's Road User Group and Congestion Task Force.

- 2.15 **A13 East facing Slip roads** - Following the announcement by the Secretary of State in October 2018 in support of the delivery of the East Facing Slips schemes, officers have been developing a process to move the scheme forward to ensure it can be delivered to the appropriate timescales. This scheme will provide relief to the road network in West Thurrock and Lakeside and will remove traffic flows from areas such as London Rd, Chafford Hundred and A1306.
- 2.16 **Vehicle Fleet** - The Council's Environment and Highways directorate have now completed the replacement of over 100 vehicles across all directorates. This process has now moved the council to almost a 100% euro 6 fleet which is the cleanest emission technology at this time for standard vehicles. The council have also steered away from diesel where possible using petrol alternatives in populated areas. During the next round of procurement for new waste and Environment and Highways vehicles, we will be exploring the reliability of electric vehicles with a possible pilot being implemented.
- 2.17 **Variable Message Signing (VMS)** – The council has acquired three (3) VMS signs that have been deployed at strategic locations on the network. The VMS are used as a traffic management tool, which supports minimising traffic impacts arising from incidents in the borough and at Dartford Crossing.
- 2.18 **Electric Vehicle Charging** - Progress has been made in developing a partnership approach, with a suitable EV charging provider, to replace and enhance the on-street EV charging offer across the borough. Progress has been made in relation to the Council advising on the requirement for EV charging and car clubs (using EVs) within larger development proposals. Local bus operators are also adopting cleaner fleets with both Ensign and First using hybrid buses on selected routes.

Progress made under AQS2- Tackling Health Inequalities

- 2.19 The Council's Public Health, Air Quality, Planning and Transport Development teams are working collaboratively to identify the areas of highest need in order to deliver focussed measures, initiatives and events to improve air quality and health. Recent examples include the creation of the Tilbury Bike Hub, healthy walks initiatives, cycle training and a comprehensive communication and education programme.
- 2.20 Public Health continue to be pivotal in the screening of pre-application and full applications of planning in the borough through continued presence at the Housing, Planning Advisory Group. Air Quality mitigation measures such as Active travel, greener open space, Public Rights of Way (PROW) continue to be part of the dialogue with planning and the developers.

Progress made under AQS3 - Tackling Health Inequalities

- 2.21 Officers continue to monitor air quality throughout the Borough and oversee the implementation, delivery and success of the Air Quality Action Plans in terms of improvements to air quality within AQMAs.
- 2.22 The main pollutant of concern in Thurrock is nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and to a lesser extent particulate matter (PM₁₀); both of these pollutants arise from road traffic emissions.
- 2.23 In 2016 the Council undertook a detailed modelling assessment to determine the extent of NO₂ & PM₁₀ exceedances over most of the borough and including all 18 AQMAs. This assessment found that 8 AQMAs could be revoked if additional motoring data supported this.
- 2.24 In 2018 the Air Quality Team introduced additional monitoring sites using NO₂ diffusion tubes in 6 AQMAs. This has enabled additional data trends to be understood so that revocations can be explored on the basis that monitoring shows that they are well below the annual mean objective limit of 40 ug/m³ for NO₂. In addition to the potential revocation of some AQMAs, other AQMAs may be reduced in size.
- 2.25 I am pleased to report that we are going in the right direction. However, we do not want to remove any AQMAs unless there is robust supporting data and justification for doing so. The Air Quality Team intend to review data through to 2020 in order to confirm which AQMAs can be revoked.
- 2.26 In addition to monitoring of AQMAs, Officers have, and will continue to quickly react to any air quality issues as they are identified across the borough.

Progress made under AQS4 Future Developments / Planning

- 2.27 **Major Developments** - The Council's Highways Development Management team play a key role in ensuring that new development mitigates its impact on the highway network and wider communities. This is achieved by utilising a range of development management tools such as travel plans, development contributions for highway improvements and the provision of construction management plans where construction traffic is significant enough to impact the highway network.
- 2.28 **Sustainable, energy efficient buildings** - Through the application of Core Strategy policies by the Planning Service, the Council is directly tackling emissions by driving the use of renewable energy sources for new development. In September this year, the Council obtained planning permission to extend the civic centre and I am proud that the scheme has been designed to have a BREAM rating of 'Outstanding'. In my view, the Council should wherever possible lead the way in becoming a green centre of excellence and set the bar for the development industry to follow. The Civic

Centre project represents a vital part of the regeneration of Grays and is a prime example of this approach.

- 2.29 **Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)** – The LTC consultation material puts a strong reliance on developing a Code of Construction Practice in order to control environmental impacts during construction. Technical meetings continue with Highways England and Thurrock Council in order to identify how construction impacts will be addressed and designed-out from the outset to ensure that adverse environmental issues are not only being mitigated, but avoided entirely where possible.
- 2.30 **Local Plan** - The Council is presently working on a new Local Plan and air quality will be a key thematic area of the Plan. Through growth and investment and development partnerships we will adopt a more holistic approach which recognises the importance of improving air quality and tackling health inequalities in Thurrock.
- 2.31 **Tilbury** – The Council continue to work with relevant enforcement agencies regarding dust experienced in Tilbury. There are numerous potential dust sources in this area, some of which can be deposited from transboundary locations. The Environment Agency and London Port Health Authority officers monitor dock based companies who may contribute to the dust in this area. Dust mitigation measures continue to operate around sites within the dock. The steering group of professionals are meeting frequently on this subject and the relevant attending agencies monitor the situation and take action where required. Specialist dust monitoring equipment was deployed by the Environment Agency at the end of June 2019 and data collection is underway.
- 2.32 The extensive list of actions, measures and initiatives set out within this section of the report identify the comprehensive approach that we are taking to addressing air quality issues and health inequalities.

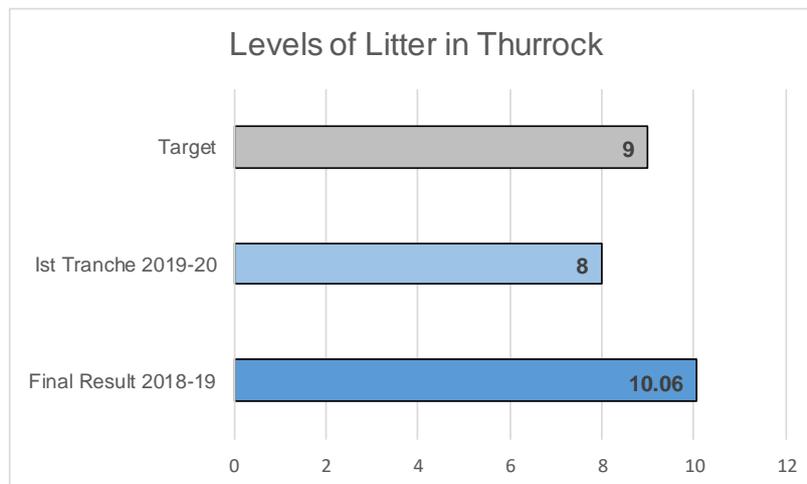
3 Fleet Management

- 3.1 The Fleet Management service continues to provide key support to Environment and Highway teams. Since the vehicles replacement programme began in February 2018, Fleet have renewed 131 council vehicles across all directorates, with only 5 vehicles still to be delivered to complete the project. Two new gulley suckers have been funded by revenue surpluses and new street sweepers have recently been delivered. The new vehicles all meet euro 6 conditions and are ULEZ compliant. This means that they can travel into London and the ultra-low emission zones.
- 3.2 The waste vehicles implemented last year, have experienced some minor manufacturing faults. Good contract management has led to a further year of manufacturers guarantee for the areas of concern.

- 3.3 In response to the growing numbers of blocked access, the team trialled a narrow access vehicle, which did not meet expectation and we continue to research an alternative vehicle.
- 3.4 Vehicle tracking systems have been fitted to all new vehicles and the entire fleet is now monitored weekly/monthly regarding driver behaviour, environmental impact and effective utilisation of our assets. This monitoring has had a positive impact on fuel usage and increased the standards of driving across all services

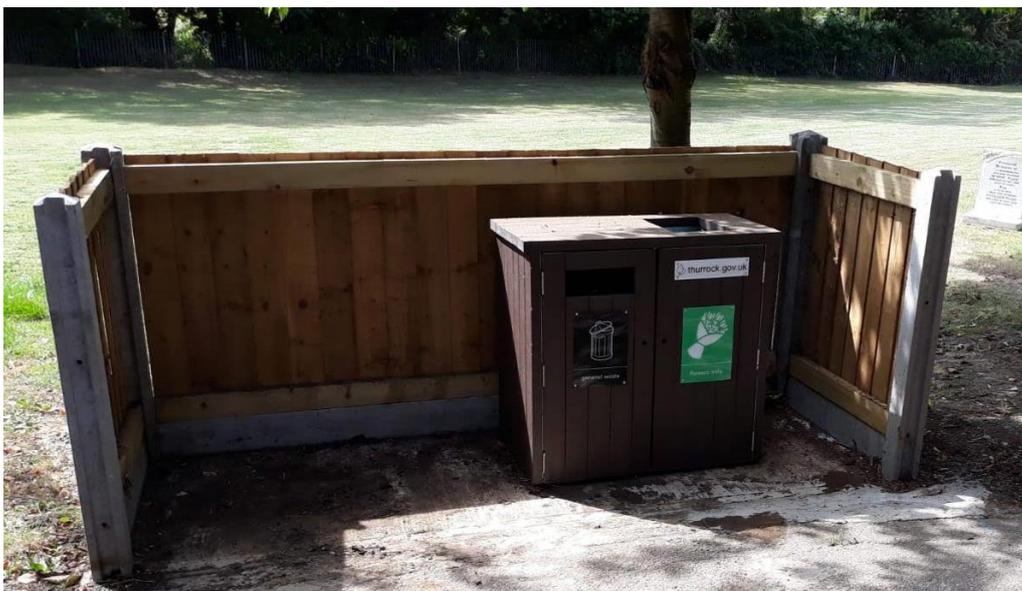
4 Clean and Green

- 4.1 The work of the Street Services teams is predominantly focussed on delivering the very successful Cut It, Clean It Programme. Cabinet were keen to ensure Thurrock have stretch key performance indicators (KPIs) and whilst Street Cleanliness had an excellent Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) result of 10.06%, above the national average, the end of year score fell slightly short of the target we have set ourselves. We continue to review feedback from KBT and part of our “route to green” will be to focus on areas which are not currently meeting standards, predominantly industrial areas and major routes. Further investment of £120k per annum has been built into revenue budgets for a major routes team, due to be implemented in October 2019.

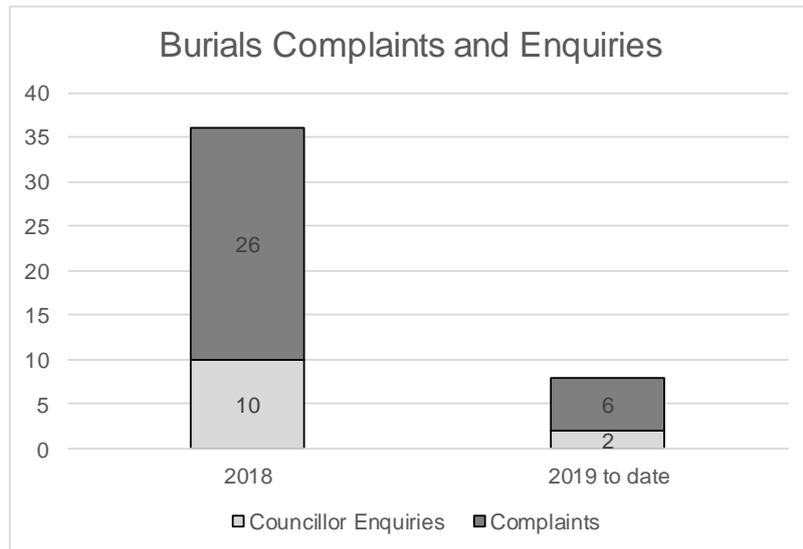


- 4.2 Since the beginning of this financial year, there has been a move to East and West teams, which has worked well ensuring a better coordinated Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance function for each area and Tranche 1 KBT scores of 8%. The teams are managed by a Team Manger with a number of Team Leaders reporting to them. The Team Leaders are the front line management of either Grounds Maintenance or Street Cleansing teams within smaller geographical areas, in the respective halves of the borough. There is also the Technical Clean and Green Team with the responsibility for Parks, Play and Cemeteries, with training having been conducted to refresh, increase and ensure they have the appropriate levels of qualifications within their respective fields.

- 4.3 The level of cleanliness of the streets within the Borough is assessed by KBT against a nationally recognised standard, with three tranches of inspections being undertaken each year. Litter levels within the Borough continue to achieve excellent performance, which is higher than the national benchmark.
- 4.4 To maintain high standards and to strive to achieve the stretch targets, KBT training was scheduled in September for our frontline staff. This “Frontline Focus” will teach our staff to recognise the impact street cleansing roles have on public perception and satisfaction, differentiate between the different standards of cleanliness in accordance with legal requirements – COPLAR and the A – D grading levels used in assessing the level of cleanliness. This will empower staff to identify and resolve issues whilst carrying out their daily tasks as part of our “small changes, big improvements” campaign. Training has also been scheduled in October to provide key staff with the knowledge and practical skills required to assess, grade and monitor standards of local environmental quality in line with the KBT standard. We will then carry out reciprocal inspections with another local authority, increasing the number of inspections per year, enabling a clearer understanding of performance and the ability to address hotspots more effectively, while sharing best practises.
- 4.5 Another initiative aimed at improving the overall cleanliness of the Borough is the bin replacement programme. This project is nearing completion, with the final delivery of bins expected September. All street bins are currently being mapped and will be individually numbered, rescheduled for checking and emptying, providing accurate and easily interrogated records of work completed. Numbering of bins will ease resident reporting and reduce uncertainty when describing locations.
- 4.6 We have installed new bin areas and bins in Chadwell St Mary and Stanford Le Hope cemeteries, these are a trial to see if there are any issues caused by this design. We intend to roll out this style of bin and enclosure once we have given the time to evaluate and receive feedback.



4.7 Cemeteries were, on occasion, falling below the presentation standards we expect and in order to improve a new Technical Team have been given responsibility for grass cutting in our cemeteries, ensuring compliance with the maintenance schedule, resulting in an improved appearance of our burial grounds. The improvements are evidenced by the sharp drop in the numbers of complaints and enquiries that have been received by the service.



4.8 Now that grass growth has slowed the team have capacity to carry out other tasks including the removal of small self-seeded trees and the epicormics growth on larger trees. As part of the fleet replacement programme, we have invested £62k in new and smaller diggers are soon to be delivered which will improve the productivity of this team.

4.9 With confidence that the underlying services for both Cut it and Clean it are being well delivered, work is underway on a land strategy aiming to improve the aesthetics of our roundabouts and verges. Options are being explored which include feature trees, public art and low maintenance but attractive shrubs and wild flower meadow planting.

4.10 Building on the success of last year's winter maintenance programme, work will continue this year on the larger roundabouts. "Treacle Mine" and "Daneholes" roundabouts were opened up to improve visibility, improving access for litter picking and reducing fly tipping and anti-social behaviour.

4.11 Following on from the excellent work delivered in 2018, scheduled inspections and maintenance of all of our war memorials has become an all year round activity. Residents paying their respects at any time of the year will see a well maintained memorial befitting its meaning.

4.12 The Tree Strategy was adopted this year and we are in the process of surveying and cataloguing onto a new database all public trees. Additional funding for trees has seen 32 planted so far this year with plans for an additional 34 to be planted during the autumn. As with the 9 trees that were

lost in recent storms, we will ensure a like for like replacement in the same location.

- 4.13 The team are also researching funding opportunities and considering appropriate locations to plant additional trees to improve the environment as part of air quality plans.

5 Sports and Leisure Development

- 5.1 The Sports Development team have been proactive in managing the relationships and engagement with sports clubs in the Borough. The team have met with most sports clubs and are supporting their varied needs, including empowering clubs to become self-managed and maintain their own facilities, improving their individual clubhouses, pavilions and enhanced pitch provision, where there is a desire to do so. As part of this work, the team are encouraging partnerships between different groups to enable positive opportunities for Thurrock residents, an example is the Sail Thurrock project where Thurrock Yacht Club partnered with Grangewaters to offer sailing to local residents. This also encouraged increased public interest in the club and new members.
- 5.2 Thurrock continues, bucking the national trend, to invest in parks and open spaces and is engaging with our local communities, providing them with the opportunity to inform what equipment they would like in their parks to ensure increased usage.
- 5.2.1 The Park Engagement Team have delivered a wide ranging programme of activities, commencing Easter Holidays 2019, across Thurrock and engaged with over 1100 children, young people and adults. They have engaged with local community forums, local schools and delivered outreach. During the school holiday's they have delivered sessions across different parks and during term time have a fixed 10 week programme of delivery.
- 5.3 The objective of the Park Engagement Officers is to encourage "getting people active" and use of the parks and open spaces, supported by the programme of parks improvements.
- 5.4. Play equipment at Horndon-on-the-Hill has been refreshed for the first time in 30 years as a result of close collaboration with communities and school children to ensure facilities met their needs, leading to increased community use and a sense of custodian of the space. Similar transformation is under way at Gobions Park with the installation of a skate park and consultation is underway for water play at Grays Beach, where a new Tots corner has been installed. Grays Town Park has benefitted from new toddler play equipment and replacement of safety surfacing. Orsett Recreation Ground has benefitted from the introduction of outdoor gym equipment. Grays Phoenix Riverside received a full update with a toddlers play areas and junior and adult gym areas. The Park Engagement Officers will have a major role to play in

engaging with the community when further park improvements are made in the future.

Parks to be transformed in 2020 include:

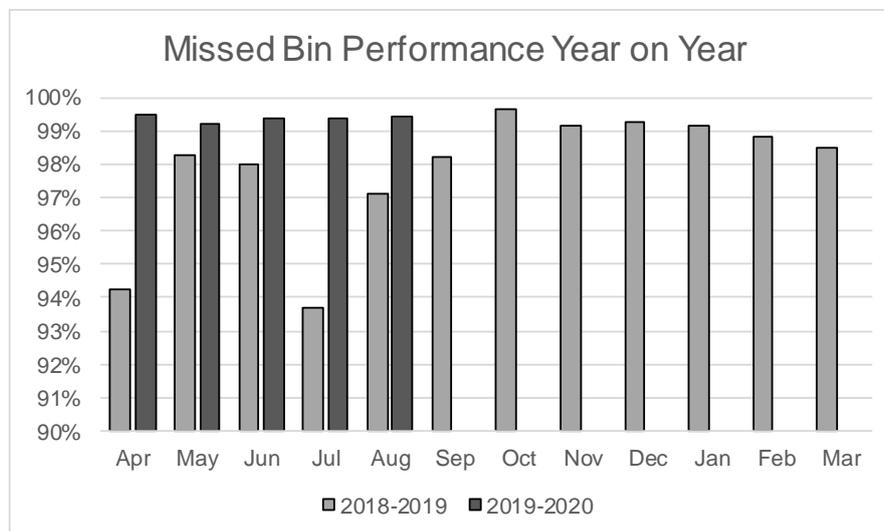
- Purfleet Garrison
- Delafield
- Koala Park
- West Thurrock Memorial Recreation Ground
- South Ockendon Recreation Ground
- Aveley Rec
- Corringham Town Park

- 5.5 Thurrock Council manages Langdon Hills Country Park and Coalhouse Fort, the two sites have higher level stewardship agreements with Natural England and both have areas that are listed as SSSI. There are some very rare species of bees at Coalhouse Fort, and the Bluebells at Langdon Hills are infamous. Three Rangers operate the country parks and are supported by volunteers, without whom it would be very difficult to keep the large sites in working order.
- 5.6 The combined work of the country parks team and Park Engagement team have seen the introduction of World Rangers Day activities this year and will re-introduce the extremely popular Santa in the Wood, which has been missed by our residents over the last four years
- 5.7 Park Engagement Team also work with community groups to develop informal recreation opportunities by utilising the existing facilities within our parks and open spaces. Groups have been supported to start up Volleyball and use the fitness equipment available across the borough. The Park Engagement Officers provide supported and encourage groups to upskill themselves by attending training so that they are able to continue the activities on their own.
- 5.8 Despite being well managed and maintained, some of Thurrock's main sports and leisure facilities are inevitably showing the signs of their age. The Council is therefore working closely with the National Governing Bodies of Sport and Sport England to develop a new ambitious Sports and Leisure Strategy. This strategy will be driven by the aspiration of creating new, modern facilities that will meet the needs of both sports and recreational users and encourage more residents to enjoy being physically active.
- 5.9 The Sports and Leisure strategy will include an assessment of the quality and quantity of existing facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, sports pitches, tennis courts and bowls facilities and compare this to anticipated future demand and need.
- 5.10 In addition to working with the National Governing Bodies of Sport, local sports groups will be consulted with to ensure that there is a clear understanding of current issues, recent trends in membership and their own aspirations for the future.

5.11 When complete the evidence base for the new sports and Leisure Strategy will put Thurrock in a strong position to seek funding to deliver high quality buildings that meet modern sports designs and standards.

6 Waste and Recycling

6.1 The waste collection service configuration has remained largely unchanged since my last report, with three wheeled bins being collected from every household each week. The bins enable the service to separate residual waste, dry recycling and kitchen and garden waste. The service has significantly improved its collection rates, when comparing the same period last year with the KPI for collections exceeding 98.5% target consistently since October 2018, in all but one month, which was 0.03% under target. The table below provides a comparison of the year on year performance to date.



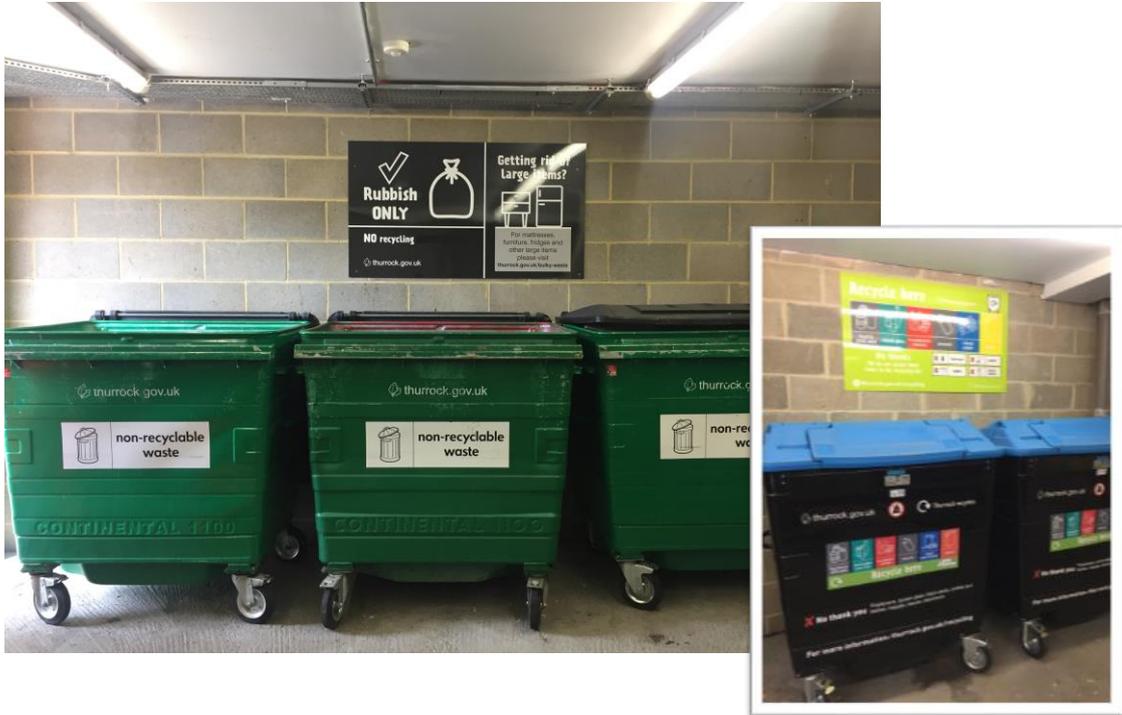
6.2 Work within the Service to address the impact of the national shortage of HGV drivers, particularly during the summer period has taken place to ensure staffing levels have been sufficient to deliver a full collection service, while allowing staff holidays, particularly during the peak holiday period. Consistent and robust management with focus on issues that affect the service such as staff and resources and sickness-absence management have contributed to this improvement.

6.3 Also new for this year, is the introduction of a night shunter service that utilises two HGV drivers during the evening to 'shunt' loaded recycling-vehicles to the Bywaters recycling facility in Bow, East London. This allows up to eight vehicles to be taken for emptying over night when the traffic along the A13 route is considerably lighter than during usual working hours. High levels of traffic and congestion had created issues around drivers' overtime, and work being left incomplete as crews stopped their rounds at a point to allow sufficient time to make the round-trip to tip the vehicles during the day. The current method of making the journeys during the evening has resulted in the dry recycling stream being completed each day with empty vehicles ensuring

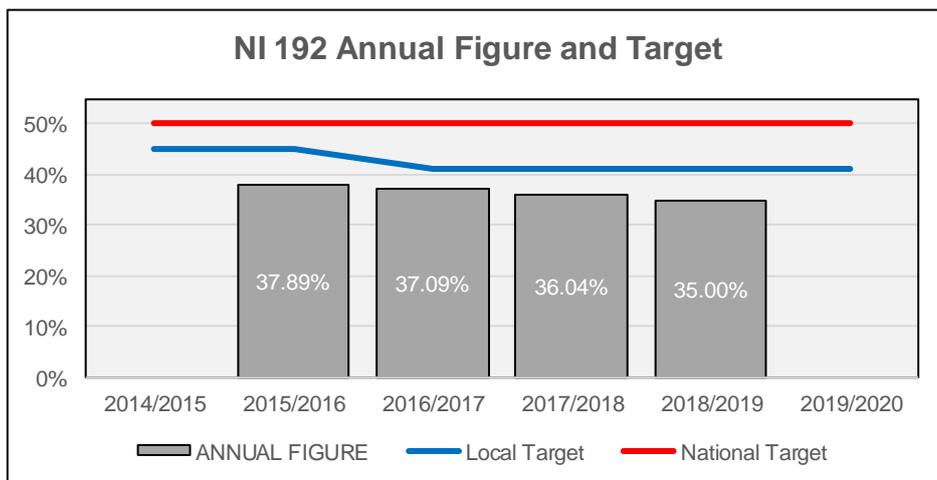
that the stream can operate efficiently the following day. The service continually review rounds for optimum efficiency and to take into account any new developments becoming occupied.

- 6.4 Another important development for the waste collection service has been a large recruitment initiative. The waste collection service have been carrying a number of vacancies for a period of time. A recruitment process was undertaken to fill the vacancies and during September, the collection service will see 13 new Waste Collection Assistants and Eight Waste Collection Round Leaders (Drivers) join the team on a permanent basis. The recruitment of permanent staff also works to ensure that teams are consistent and well skilled for the work they are doing. Both of which have a positive impact on performance.
- 6.5 The Waste Collections crews have started using in-cab technology units to report on the completion of their work. The Collective system has now been rolled out to the recycling and residual waste crews, with the kitchen and garden waste crews planned to join them in early October. The benefit of the system is that Waste Team Managers are able to receive real time information about the collection service, from bins that have been left unemptied due to contamination, to confirmation of collection of previously missed bins and the level of completion of the rounds. Next steps for this project will be linking data to the call centre, to enable call centre operatives to advise residents on the day of reporting why bins haven't been collected, e.g. contaminated recycling bin, blocked access.
- 6.6 This year has also seen an increase in the communication activity relating to recycling. During the course of the year communications have issued regular information to residents about recycling through social media. National Recycling Week towards the end of September, sees the launch of a dedicated campaign focusing on plastics with specific messaging relating to plastic products from the bathroom that are commonly disposed of as residual waste. This will be followed by a further dedicated campaign increasing awareness of the metal household items that can be readily recycled. New materials have been produced for the recycling in flats campaign (see section 6.8), trialling higher levels of imagery which if successful will lead the way for future campaigns. The new flytipping campaign with eyes being used, "we are watching you" in relation to hot spot areas and on environmental vehicles used to clear such waste.
- 6.7 The messages have been supported with renewed engagement with schools, with a number of school visits having been undertaken sharing recycling information with pupils. With the support of Bywaters, some of the visits include pupils having an opportunity to use virtual reality goggles to explore what happens to materials that are collected in our blue bins.
- 6.8 A pilot looking at options for supporting recycling in flats within the Borough has also been launched this year. Traditionally recycling in flats has had high levels of contamination and been difficult for residents. New recycling bins,

tidied bins stores and clear signage have been introduced to enable residents in flats to more easily separate their waste into the correct streams. The pilot is due to end in October with plans already in place for rolling the scheme out to other sites across the borough. Early feedback is very positive from residents and waste crews have identified high quality recycling, low contaminants and increased recycling being presented.



6.9 The recycling KPI and Thurrock’s performance in relation to recycling, as measured through NI 192 (Household waste re-used, recycled and composted) has remained largely stagnant and below target for the past four/five years as detailed in the graph below:



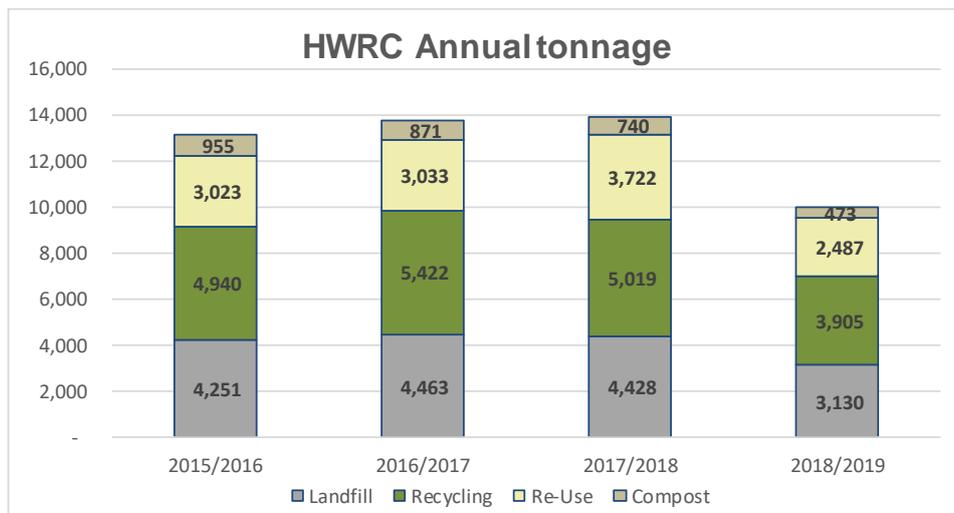
- 6.10 The need to address this and also to consider options for waste collection, with the planned increase in homes in the Borough over the next ten years, has resulted in a cross party Waste Management Working Group, Chaired by Cllr Fletcher, consisting of members and officers being formed. Central Government released a new Waste Strategy in December 2018, the aim of the group is to consider the strategy and the implications for Thurrock, while considering the new Thurrock Waste Strategy, due to be refreshed in 2020. The group will give consideration to current and future waste service arrangements from collection through transfer, processing and disposal and potential commercial operating solutions for Thurrock.
- 6.11 The group commenced their activities with a planned visit to Bywaters Recycling facility, observing Thurrock waste recycling being processed and learning about end destinations and reuse for different materials. The group is tasked with producing a vision statement for the Waste Strategy by February 2020.
- 6.12 From the beginning of August additional bulky waste collections have been made available to residents. This is in response to the clear demand and also as a means of testing whether the service will be able to provide support with a planned reduction of Household Waste and Recycling Centre capacity when the re-development of that site commences in December 2019.

7 Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC)

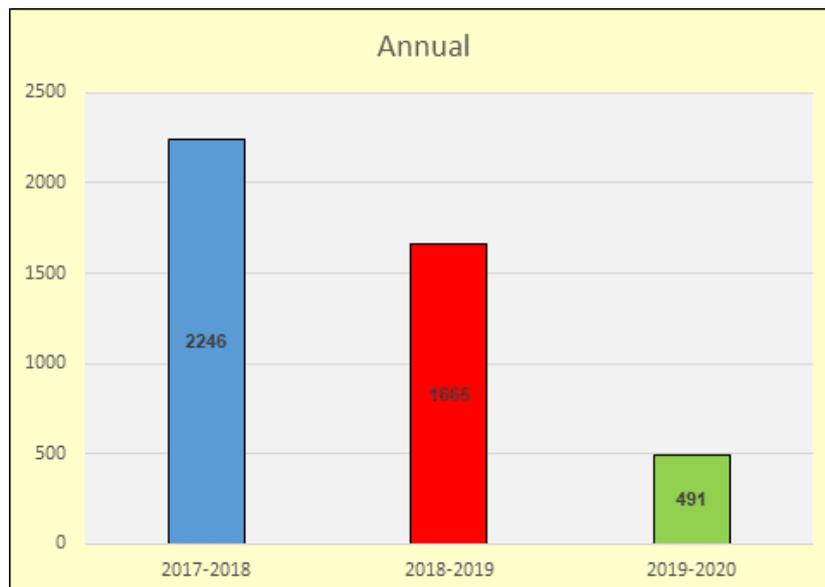
- 7.1 The planning and preparation for redevelopment of the HWRC is progressing well, with an expectation that the contract for the building and site development will be awarded before the end of 2019. Dependent on weather conditions, work could start as early as January. Alternative temporary HWRC sites are being assessed in line with the guidance received from the Environment Agency as a contingency should the developer be unable to assure safety of our residents for a reduced service at the existing site, while construction takes place.
- 7.2 Whilst the planning for the re-development is under way, improvements at the current site continue with clearer signage and systems that allow staff on site to simply and efficiently direct users who need assistance. Working with our current disposal contractor, we have been able to ensure that mattresses and hard plastics received at the site are now recycled.
- 7.3 Since the beginning of 2019, we have had 48,611 visits to the site.
- 7.4 The service continuously explores new innovations, in conjunction with our waste disposal contractor, to increase reuse and recycling, the most recent introduced includes the recycling of hard plastics, which have now been diverted from landfill, and mattresses are now recycled through MAT UK.
- 7.5 A partnership has been established with the Active Travel Cycling Team to provide unwanted bikes from the HWRC. The main purpose of the cycle hub

is to help people get active, assist with affordability and support residents to get to and from their place of work, education or job interviews, whilst encouraging sustainable travel. This is a not for profit scheme with any income being reinvested in the scheme to replenishing stock of spare parts etc.

7.6 The permitting process implemented in 2018 continues to work well with 1,135 permits issued this financial year. Most importantly the permits are continuing to discourage the inappropriate disposal of commercial waste at the site. The graph below shows the reduction in disposal tonnages since the scheme was introduced.



7.7 Most importantly, the introduction of the scheme has not been linked to an increase in fly-tipping. The graph below demonstrates the drop in incidents of fly-tips of the size of a small vanload or greater, year on year from 2018, which is when the HWRC permits were initially introduced. These are the fly-tips that are most likely to have resulted had a vehicle been denied access to the HWRC.



- 7.8 The commercial waste service continues to grow and provide an excellent and flexible service to businesses in the Borough. As the graph below shows, customer numbers have more than doubled in since April 2017.



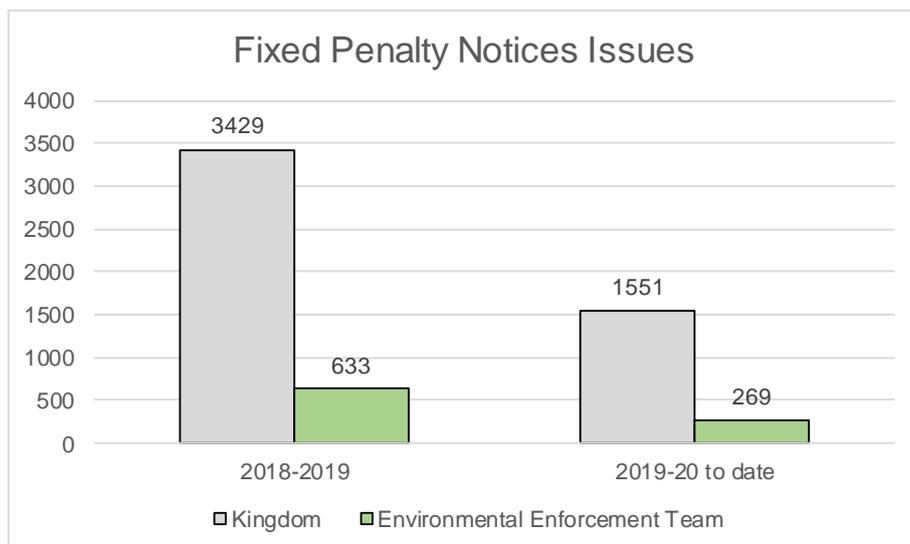
- 7.9 The team continues to explore and investigate other options for income generation and actively encourages commercial customers to recycle.

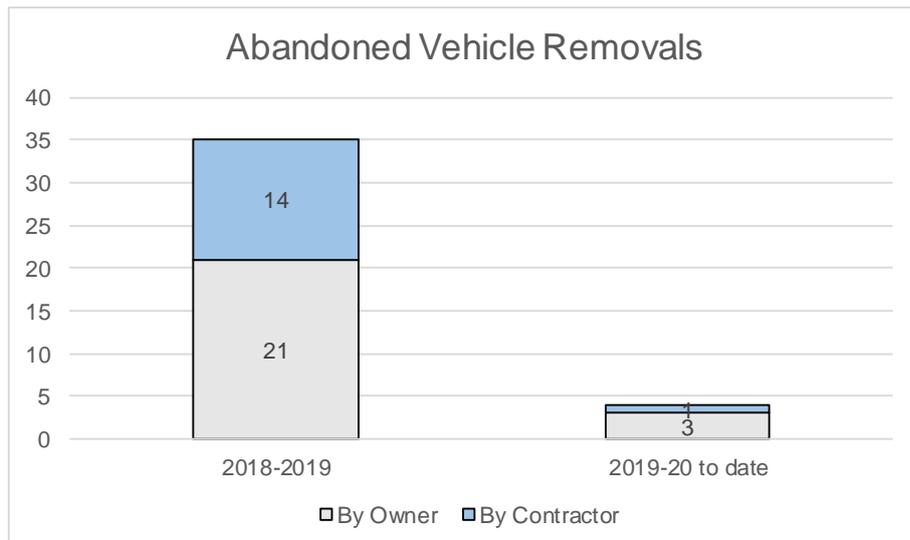
8 Environmental Enforcement

- 8.1 Although covered in greater detail by the Cabinet Member for Public Protection in his January 2019 report, it seems appropriate given the timeframe to revisit some core areas specifically in relation to fly tipping and littering fixed penalty notices, both of which have an impact on overall levels of cleanliness within the Borough.
- 8.2 Following restructure and recruitment of the Enforcement Operations Manager, Senior Environmental Enforcement Officer and the fixed term position of the Enforcement Projects Manager the service has broadened scope and a number of successes have been delivered including:
- Application of first hearing at the High Court in respect of obtaining authorisation to issue defendants with evidence as part of the process to obtaining a borough wide injunction for unauthorised encampments.
 - High Court granting of the interim injunction on both public and private land for named and unnamed individuals, including the powers of arrest.
 - Increased joint partnership patrols between the Council and the Police
 - Seizure of vehicles used in the commission of fly tipping offences.
 - Increase in joint partnership operations to tackle ASB and Enviro-crime such as the unlawful deposit of litter namely nitro dioxide, gas canisters also known known as laughing gas
 - Implementation of the single justice process, which streamlines process for prosecution
 - Distribution of intelligence between internal and external partners [police] regarding offenders on a daily basis

- Streamline processes in educating and enforcing breaches of waste duty of care by commercial businesses across the borough
- Target hardening, protecting vulnerable land from unauthorised encampments across the borough
- Working with partners promoting the engine idling campaign for improved air quality around schools
- Application to the Home Secretary for permission to adopt further powers to issue FPNs under the Highways Act 1980, in accordance with Section 8, schedule 4, London Local Authorities & Transport for London Act 2003 as amended and unlicensed Street Trading.
- Operation Abercombe which is identifying known criminals “tags” and working with the Police to identify the individuals and take legal action for Criminal Damage thereby improving the environment and reducing the broken window effect.

8.3 Figures for Fixed Penalty Notices issued and actions relating to Abandoned Vehicles are detailed in the tables below. It is noteworthy that the number of abandoned vehicle reports have dropped from 1,240 in 2018-19 to 288 received for the year to July





- 8.4 In partnership with Essex police, following the introduction of the Town Centre teams, joint working aims and objectives of the teams are to:
- Combat ASB and disorder within the town centre
 - Educate officers in the processes of how to understand and enforce the PSPO
 - Conducting visible and engaging patrols, which include joint patrolling
 - Working with the council and all key partners within the town centres to run joint operations and working approaches to all problems

8.5 There are further joint partnership operations planned in relation to youths causing ASB, littering and spitting. Additionally there are planned high visibility Patrols in the area of the schools and delivery of talks at the Schools in relation to issues raised.

8.6 The joint partnership patrols have resulted in requests to deliver talks in relation to Best Practice of canister operations by the chair of Love Essex littering campaign in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy (KBT).

9 Budget

9.1 For this financial year these core services have again benefitted from investment. The list below is a summary of the additional funding that has been made available to ensure that services can continue to provide a high standard of service whilst accommodating growth within the Borough.

Variations are as a consequence of medium term financial strategy growth and movement of budget between services. Environment and Community Safety have a higher income target this year of £182K due to high performance last year.

Service	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20
Clean and Green	4,033,165	4,784,004
Environment and Highways Management Team	910,128	763,768

Performance and Support	402,469	523,076
Recreation and Leisure	923,399	994,053
Waste Services	12,604,467	12,609,663
Air Quality	33,100	33,000
Env Enforcement and Community Safety	408,141	226,083
	19,314,869	19,933,647

9.2 In a similar vein, a number of capital projects have been initiated. Further commentary on those have been included in the body of the report. A summary list of key programmes includes:

- Household Waste and Recycling Centre site re-development
- New vehicles and cleaning equipment
- Parks improvements
- Litter bin replacements

Summary

While a lot has been achieved over the previous year, as we continue to work on the successes since May 2016, but as ever, there is more to do. For the remainder of 2019/2020 and moving into 2020/2021, there are several important projects ahead and the focus will be on ensuring that we continue to deliver the services residents pay for and expect. We will continue working on improving refreshing and improving our Air Quality & Health Thurrock Strategy and developing and finalising our new Sports & Leisure Strategy.