

Annual Equality Report 2014

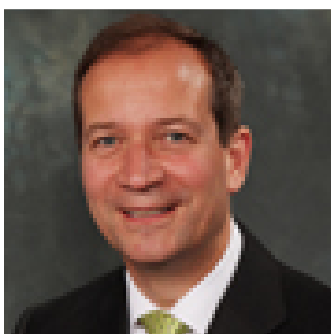
Equality Matters



Foreword



Councillor Richard Speight
Portfolio Holder
for Communities &
Regeneration



Graham Farrant
Chief Executive
Thurrock Council

Thurrock is changing fast with great opportunities for growth and regeneration taking hold. Within this exciting and changing landscape, it is even more important for us all to ensure Thurrock is a place which is seen as fair, welcoming and where people get on well together. It goes without saying a fair and cohesive community is central to our vision and priorities.

This report sets out our progress and achievements in 2014 and highlights these core fundamental principles in all aspects of our work.

Partnership working remains central to our success in ensuring we deliver the right services. The financial pressures that we face as a result of austerity measures make it more important than ever that we engage with people who use our services, our staff, and partners including the voluntary sector and communities. Only by talking, listening and working together can we meet these challenges.

Our services are driven by the principles of equality and fairness and some excellent examples of this continual focus are highlighted in this report.

Learning and improving our performance, responding to new legislation and meeting the changing needs of our developing communities remains a priority for the Council in the year.

We are aware of the major challenges we have ahead – not least ensuring that the economic growth we expect benefits everyone in our community and not just the few. But we are confident we have the skills, expertise and partnerships in place to ensure fairness remains at the heart of our work.

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It was once said that a rising tide lifts all boats but with inequality growing nationally this isn't necessarily the case. As a council we must ensure that the economic growth we expect in Thurrock benefits everyone and serves to reduce pre-existing inequalities.

CLlr Richard Speight
Portfolio Holder for
Communities & Regeneration



Part One: Introduction

Valuing diversity involves developing and maintaining an organisation that is genuinely open to the creativity, insights and experience of people of different race, religion, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability and other backgrounds amongst our staff, volunteers and the individuals and organisations with whom we work. It means dealing with prejudice and discrimination where it exists and recognising that we have to work hard to realise the benefits of diversity.

For us, valuing diversity means much more than simply complying with the law. It means working with individual needs in mind and ensuring that all of our communities are able to access and influence the services we provide.

Our Vision for Thurrock Council

Our Community Strategy was approved in September 2012 following extensive consultation with our communities culminating in the following vision for Thurrock:

"Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish"

The five enabling strategic priorities were refreshed in January 2015:

- Create a great place for learning and opportunity
- Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
- Build pride, responsibility and respect
- Improve health and well-being
- Promote and protect our clean and green environment

Due to the unprecedented challenges and the consequential changes that are facing public services, the priorities were refreshed to better reflect the ambition and focus for the borough as well as the changing relationship between the Council and the community, and the Council's role in place shaping and enabling community leadership.

Our relationship with partners and the community is changing, and the Council wants to enable increased community leadership across the borough for groups and individuals. This can be achieved by working with the voluntary, community and faith sectors to build pride, respect and cohesion and also by building resilience in local communities; supporting active citizens, local assets and neighbourhood networks including community led development and management of community hubs. This will create a place that better supports community well-being and healthy lifestyles.

Statutory Equality Framework

There are a number of legislative requirements relating to equality and human rights. These include the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, statutory codes of practice, the Public Sector Equality Act 2011, and the Specific Duties Regulations 2011, supporting regulations and statutory codes of practice. These legislative provisions place a number of requirements on organisations relevant to both employment activity and service provision. A key aim is to ensure that principles of fairness and eliminating discrimination become a fundamental part of the fabric of public sector organisations, by ensuring consistency in what organisations must do to comply with the law.

Part Two: Overview

Our Place: Thurrock

Thurrock lies on the River Thames immediately to the east of London, and is home to some of the most exciting opportunities in the country. Thurrock hosts two international ports, London Gateway and Port of Tilbury, which are at the heart of global trade and logistics and is strategically positioned on the M25 and A13 corridors, with excellent transport links west into London, north and east into Essex and south into Kent.

There are many opportunities for growth and the current regeneration programme will once again change the landscape, including the expansion of the retail and leisure offer at Lakeside, the creation of the biggest container port in Europe at London Gateway, and the creative and cultural hub at High House Production Park which hosts the Royal Opera House production facilities to name a few. All of these developments have and continue to bring new jobs and fresh opportunities for Thurrock's communities.

How people feel about where they live, how they feel about their public services and how they feel about themselves will be central to creating a collective sense of identity and direction. One in which people aspire for themselves and for their families to do well in their education, are equipped to take on the new and different types of jobs available, have the best possible quality of life and are proud of where they live.

Demographic Profile

The borough is changing fast with the influence of migration from London boroughs an important component in its growing diversity.

The 2011 census showed a 10.2% increase in Thurrock's population from 143,100 to 157,700. Our communities are representative of this change, with the number of black and minority ethnic residents between 2001-2011 increasing to 19.1% of the population (from 7.2% in 2001) within which our white Gypsy or Irish traveller communities formed twice the national average at 0.2%.

Certain age groups have increased in number and percentage substantially more than the borough average. This is especially the case for 0 to 4 year olds, 16 to 19 year olds, 60 to 64 year olds and particularly people aged 85 years plus, alongside the number of people living with life-long and long-term conditions in Thurrock.

Each ward is very different and has its own unique characteristics. In depth analysis of some key characteristics taken from the 2011 census has been completed by Thurrock Council and can be found within detailed ward profiles prepared in December 2013. A link to the ward profiles can be found here:

http://www.thurrockccg.nhs.uk/our-key-documents/doc_download/698-ward-profile-summary-with-maps-dec-2013

Thurrock Council: Progress

Examples provided in this report demonstrate how our commitment to equality is embraced within all of our policies and working practices, including recruitment. However, as this report highlights there are also areas where we need to focus our attention in the future to ensure equality, fairness and cohesion remain a priority. The work of the fairness commission will also be vital in setting out areas which will require our attention in future years.

The Report Headlines

The Community Development and Equality Team has worked to build links with communities and residents to strengthen our ability to tackle social exclusion, and create communities in which everyone can participate. In September 2014 the team launched a refreshed Communities and Equalities Impact Assessment template and guidance, enabling a greater focus on the wider impact of council policies, strategies and savings. Within this assessment there is now more synergy with community engagement and links with voluntary, community and faith partners

A whole scale review of staff forums has taken place. A revised staff forum model was successfully launched in December 2014 with a strong underpinning corporate governance model now in place to ensure we support diverse groups of staff to play a greater role in influencing the future shape of the council.

Service specific examples include the transformation within Adult Social Care. Since the last Annual Equality Report, the Care Act has confirmed Thurrock's direction of travel with regard to transformation and reaffirmed the approach to co-production and user-led services. In addition, a successful pilot of Local Area Co-ordinators has led to investment to secure coverage across the Borough, supporting the use of community strengths and assets to support people to live fuller lives including supporting individuals who were previously not engaged in the community for example, due to race or cultural issues.

Similarly in Children's Services, throughout 2014/15 the provision of Children's Centres and access to early education services have reduced the risk of inequality for young children and then continuing support through for children and young people of school age where attainment continues to improve especially for some of those most at risk of poorer outcomes. A particular focus in 2014/15 has been on the 'voice of the child' to ensure that children and young people can express their views on the support they are receiving.

The changes to the local area are a focus for services to ensure that as communities change, those most in need of support are able to access the services needed when they need them. Many of the priorities set as a part of the Children's Plan will continue as they are focussed on the long term work needed to reduce for example, socio economic or educational inequalities.

A Housing example is the Vulnerable People Protocol joint working practice which, with a number of agencies, has continued to support residents in maintaining their tenancy and increase their independence at home through the housing adaptation works. Housing has also commissioned a new service South Essex Homelessness Assessment and Reconnection Team (SEHART) to improve outcomes for single homeless people.

A number of key events have helped to build cohesion by bringing people from different backgrounds together in 2014. These include Holocaust Memorial Day (January); International Women's Day (March); The Big Lunch and T Fest (July), World War I Centenary Event (August) and Black History Month (October 2014).

The council's volunteer programme has been widely promoted in 2014 using a range of measures including the council's website and at local community events including those organised by the voluntary sector. Over 250 volunteers supported the delivery of council services through 2014. Close working with the voluntary sector led to the launch of a Time-banking scheme in Thurrock in November 2014. This provides an opportunity to match skills to a range of flexible volunteer opportunities, often helping other people in the community.

Thurrock Council has a good record for positive engagement with Thurrock's voluntary, community and faith sector. The sector is underpinned by a commitment to equality and diversity. Local organisations rooted in our borough are often best placed to help identify emerging issues and advocate the needs of residents who may otherwise struggle to have an effective voice. In 2014 Cabinet adopted a Social Value Framework and a Commissioning, Procurement and Grant Funding Strategy with the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector. The principles and commitments outlined in each policy document have the potential to strengthen the sector's ability to tender for contracts whilst helping to mitigate the impact of savings and reduction in budgets as a result of pressure on budgets.

In the summer of 2014 the council started a process to identify over £37m in savings. The scale of savings was unprecedented and led to a cumulative impact on the voluntary sector. Engagement with the sector through a special Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided a positive and effective opportunity to review initial proposals. CVS proposed an alternative budget – many of the alternative recommendations made were agreed and resulted in a reduction to the proposed savings impact of £249,000, an outcome welcomed by the sector. The process itself provided an opportunity to reflect on the benefits the sector bring to Thurrock and how local organisation are well placed to support residents, often with multiple needs.

Finally, elected members have embraced a position of leadership on issues of inequality by endorsing the report 'Fairness in Thurrock Review'. Ratification was given to the setting up of an independent Fairness Commission for Thurrock and 2014 saw the launch of a nomination process to appoint commissioners to support this work.

The following section of this report provides examples from across services to highlight the progress we are currently making.

Part Three: Service Reports

Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

'Our aim is to build cohesive communities and create opportunities for individuals by putting equality at the heart of growth, regeneration and community development. We also enable and support all council services by providing an overall strategic policy framework to ensure services are fair'.

Steve Cox
Assistant Chief Executive

The Chief Executive's Delivery Unit (CEDU) sits at the heart of the Council to support, enable and drive coherent and integrated service delivery through its Strategy and Communications, Regeneration and Asset Management functions. In addition to helping teams to deliver across all corporate priorities and objectives the directorate has a key role in the direct delivery of projects, programmes and new initiatives.

Throughout 2014, the directorate has worked to support communities and residents through stronger joint working with our community partners. This has strengthened our ability to tackle social exclusion, and support communities in which everyone can participate. A strong example of this is demonstrated by the corporate leadership role the directorate has taken through working with communities, the wider public and voluntary sector to maintain and extend the community hubs programme in Thurrock.

Achievements this year include the opening of a community hub – the Chadwell St Mary Centre in June, the advance of plans to create additional hubs from 2015 and input to shape a future business model to support the sustainability of community hubs overall. In November 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government awarded Thurrock a grant of £550k to support the hub programme. This grant will help the Council to take the next step in preparing Hubs, training residents and helping our service providers change the way they work. Furthermore, the grant is demonstration that the success of Hubs is recognised nationally as well as in Thurrock.

A review of staff forums, in conjunction with a council-wide staff survey, was supported in the early part of 2014. Outcomes from the review included the creation of an additional staff forum to focus on mental health and the development of a series of online discussion groups for both new and existing interest groups for women, disability, BME and LGBT. A revised staff forum model was successfully launched with a strong underpinning corporate governance model now in place to enable forums to play a greater role in influencing the future shape of the council. Recognised as a priority in the 2013 Annual Equality Report, Thurrock is now actively working with Stonewall to ensure we improve our engagement with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community (LGBT). We completed the Stonewall Workplace Equality

Index in 2014 and we will use feedback from this as a benchmark to improve in this area over the coming year.

A refreshed Communities and Equalities Impact Assessment template was launched by the team in September 2014 enabling a greater focus on the wider impact of council policies, strategies and savings proposals. This new approach enables the organisation to have a full understanding of potential positive and negative impact to all communities, in addition to those with protected characteristics, and put in place early plans to either mitigate impact or maximise benefits arising from the delivery of services, strategies, policies and savings.

A number of key events have helped to build cohesion by bringing people from different backgrounds together in 2014. The Big Lunch was one of the best attended yet and provided a free opportunity for communities to come together to enjoy Grays Town Park. In August a number of events were held to commemorate the anniversary of the First World War, including a Civic event at Tilbury Fort.

In January 2014, Thurrock Council was able to support the sixth visit by 30 young people from 5 schools to Auschwitz-Birkenau, so that they may learn first-hand the importance of fairness and equality. Local young people had raised money to erect a permanent memorial to the Holocaust. With much appreciated support from stonemasons Madstone Ltd, a plaque was erected stating: "In remembrance of the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides throughout the world we honour the survivors from regimes of hatred and challenge ourselves to use the lessons of their experience to inform our lives today." The plaque was unveiled on Holocaust Memorial Day at the annual memorial event which was well attended by councillors, officers and residents.

The service leads one of the largest and most diverse regeneration programmes in the country; delivered through securing significant growth within six defined 'hubs' – Purfleet, Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury, London Gateway and Thames Enterprise Park – to create 18,500 new homes and 26,000 new jobs by 2021. At its heart, the regeneration programme seeks to use the growth agenda to address historic issues relating to low investment in the physical, social and economic fabric of the Borough. Together with other interventions, these developments will provide homes and jobs which will increase opportunities for residents across Thurrock and beyond. Plans are now also in place to implement activity set out in the Riverscapes plan and emerging Arts, Culture and Heritage strategy to promote, connect, enliven and enhance Thurrock's natural environment for the benefit of local people, wildlife and the local economy.

The service also supports business development and inward investment as a key partner to a prosperous Thurrock.

The council's volunteer programme has been widely promoted in 2014 using a range of measures including the council's website and at local community events including those organised by the voluntary sector. Over 250 volunteers supported the delivery of services through 2014. Of these, approximately 30% were men and 70% women with an equal split of all volunteers across the recorded age ranges (under 16-over 64). The majority of our volunteers (80%) are White British with no representation from the traveller communities or mixed heritages recorded in 2014. 5% of those choosing

to disclose information identified themselves as disabled with the highest proportion overall (30% of disabled respondents) choosing not to disclose the nature of their disability.

Close working with the voluntary sector led to the introduction of a Time-banking scheme in Thurrock in November 2014 affording flexible terms and an opportunity to match skills to a range of volunteer opportunities according to the circumstances of the individual. Efforts to link the council's volunteer programme with the Time-banking initiative commenced this year and are expected to culminate in 2015.

Chief Executive's Office

HR, Organisational Development and Transformation

'We are very proud that Thurrock Council received Gold in its Investor in People Assessment 2013. Diversity underpins our work with staff and residents, ensuring equality of opportunity for all'.

Jackie Hinchliffe

Head of HR, Organisational Development and Transformation

The team consists of Human Resources and Organisation Development, Corporate Transformation Team, Information Management, GIS, Complaints, Executive Support, Internal Communications and Workforce Planning and Development.

Equality is an integral theme of our Organisational Development strategy which aims to ensure that we support and promote a fair and equitable working environment. Our OD strategy delivers a range of workforce interventions that seek to promote equality of opportunity in all areas of employment, through the delivery of fair and equitable employment policy, the development of employees and by ensuring their health and wellbeing.

Feedback from our bi-annual employee survey provides the council with information on the levels of engagement across the workforce, enabling us to measure the impact of our strategy on the performance and motivation levels of our staff. We obtained the Investors in People Gold award in 2013 where our approach to equality & diversity was a main theme. This (externally validated) process confirmed that we have met a number of core workforce indicators. We received successful feedback regarding our approach to equality from this award and have subsequently developed a continuous improvement plan.

The theme of diversity sits at the heart of our transformation agenda. We are delivering on this theme by making sure our services and systems meet the needs of local residents and our employees. This is particularly evident in the ongoing development of improved customer access through community hubs and Thurrock Online. This included research and analysis of preferred access methods and generic delivery as well as scoping work to increase our awareness and insight into the profile of Thurrock residents and by ensuring these new office spaces and working practices consider the needs and requirements of our employees.

Thurrock Council has become a dementia friendly council leading the way in engaging the community and the workforce in this key agenda. We supported this work through a broad range of training across the council and into the community during 2014 and will continue to ensure that this programme is a central activity for the coming year.

The Corporate Induction programme has been revised and as a result has much stronger links with the diversity challenge programme, new starters are much clearer in their understanding of equalities as they relate to the work setting. The Diversity Challenge programme has been re-commissioned following feedback and observation to strengthen the delivery and impact for participants. Providers of the corporate programme are now asked to evidence how they will include unconscious bias into the delivery plan.

Equality-related complaints received will be investigated fully, with our Community Development and Equalities Manager being made aware of such complaints to facilitate learning across the council.

Legal Service

'We must ensure that the council makes informed decisions that enable us to meet our legal responsibilities and provide our communities with the opportunities they need to thrive and prosper free from discrimination'.

Fiona Taylor
Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

The Legal service provides advice and assistance to all council directorates on a wide variety of issues conducting litigation and acting on behalf of the Council to defend legal challenges in a wide range of areas that often include Equality and Human Rights issues.

The service has continued to support a wide range of corporate activity through 2014 ensuring that the Council's policies and procedures adhere to current legislation and local priorities identified in the corporate equalities framework.

Finance & Corporate Governance Service

'We must ensure value for money and efficiency balanced with equality and fairness in all financial decisions taken by the council. At the heart of each decision should be a regard for the needs of all our residents'.

Sean Clark
Head of Corporate Finance and Section 151 Officer

The Welfare Benefits Reforms Task and Finish Group was established to look at the impact of welfare benefits reforms on local residents. The process involved looking at the impact of people with disabilities and other protected characteristics and this is supported as necessary by corporate finance.

Since then, the welfare reforms project has met and worked with representatives from different council departments and community and voluntary organisations e.g. Thurrock Citizens Advice Bureau and Thurrock Centre for Independent Living to ensure that any issues are addressed and that there is support for people to claim benefits and receive the right information. We have also worked with Members and the CAB to improve debt collection processes through the early identification of vulnerable residents.

As part of ensuring access to all, the Essential Living fund has trained “approved providers” from Community and Voluntary organisations to ensure that communities at risk of disadvantage are supported to claim ELF and made aware of the online and telephone claim process. Furthermore, the Benefits and Housing teams have also visited people at home to provide advice about benefit changes and to help with claims forms. The Benefits Service has rolled out the On Line Benefit Application Form but recognise the need to assist when help is needed with completing forms, but for many the ability to complete on line will be more convenient.

Training was provided to volunteers and staff at the South Ockendon and Chadwell St Mary Community hubs on welfare benefits and how to access online claim forms when supporting people who find it difficult to claim.

Children’s Services Directorate

‘Equality is at the heart of everything we do. We collect robust data to ensure we target services where there is the greatest need and measure outcomes to ensure we are making a difference where it is most needed.’

Carmel Littleton
Director of Children’s Services

The Children and Young People Plan, a multi-agency plan, sets the key priorities for the Directorate in line with both the Corporate Priorities and the main aims of partner organisations.

In planning services, the importance of understanding the needs of different communities and groups through service evaluations, consultations and mechanisms such as the Children in Care Council and the Thurrock Youth Cabinet are vital.

The use of data to identify inequalities provides a sound basis to service planning and the use of resources and our commissioned offer increasingly involves service users in evaluating the impact of the service.

During 2014 the commitment to reducing inequality and the success of the work to support this has been evidenced through an improvement in outcomes and improved access to services.

In 2015 we will be launching our refreshed Child Poverty Strategy, building on the work already undertaken in our previous plan. A key driver of our strategy is to embed the strong partnership arrangements and develop the work with local communities in

building resilience to support the reduction of the number of families with children living in poverty.

A range of socio-economic factors has meant that the demand for school places continues to rise, with significant levels of inward migration to Thurrock from other parts of the country and overseas giving rise, in particular, to increase in-year demand. Thurrock's fair access arrangements have worked effectively to ensure that, despite the pressure for places, new arrivals are placed in a timely manner and that the individual needs of those new to the country are met.

Children's Services has prioritised the needs of vulnerable pupils and has undertaken work across the directorate to ensure that all children missing education are tracked and placed. The work of the Education Welfare Service has been reconfigured so as to provide challenge to schools on the basis of their attendance data for vulnerable pupils and, in particular, those in receipt of the pupil premium.

Children's Centres across the Borough offer support and services for families with young children. The overall core purpose of the centres is to improve outcomes for young children and their families to reduce inequalities with a focus on four key areas: school readiness, parenting, parent aspirations and health & wellbeing.

Access to early education for two year olds is focussed on the reduction of inequalities targeting those groups most at risk of not accessing early education and therefore at risk of poorer educational outcomes at age five. The programme targets socio economic inequality by supporting families on low incomes and other inequality for children who are looked after and children who have a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan.

The take up of this entitlement by eligible families is monitored to ensure that action is taken to address any inequalities and this has shown that there is good take up for both girls and boys. As our local population changes the take up of early education for two year olds is also starting to reflect this with an increase in take up by families in the 'white other' category from 1.7% in 2013 to 6.8% in 2014 and also an increase in take up of entitlement by black African families from 10.3% in 2013 to 12% in 2014.

There is also a slight increase in take up from the Asian community although it should be noted that take up nationally is reported to be low for this group. The highest % take up is by white British families. Access by the Travelling community remains low and is a priority for 2015. Overall 72% of two year old children eligible for early education access their entitlement and this was amongst the highest in the region. Access to early education for three and four year olds is available to all children and take up has increased from 92% in 2013 to 95% in 2014. The team regularly review take up and have identified that access by four year olds is in line with national levels at 98% and they are targeting access by three year olds which increased from 91% in 2013 to 94% in 2014 against a national take up rate of 96%.

The Early Years team completed an analysis of Ofsted reports where practice to support pupils with English as an additional language had been highlighted as a key issue. This information was then used to target support and training to improve practice.

It was identified through the regular monitoring visits to early years providers and through support requests that additional training was needed to support individual settings with strategies to support children with additional needs and training was provided to address this. A six week course was written specifically for providers to look at the new SEN Code of Practice, the different areas of need and strategies to overcome barriers to learning and this is being delivered throughout 2015.

Training has been delivered to early years practitioners regarding how to implement an Early Years Single Equality Scheme with key elements of this training focussing on current legislation and the impact of discrimination on learning and development. Equality is a key area of the monitoring process for all early years providers and is audited by the team throughout the year.

The percentage of Early Years settings judged as good or better by Ofsted has increased from 71% to 74%, this includes child-minders, pre-schools and day nurseries ensuring that even more children are able to access 2, 3, and 4 year old funding and the provision is improved for all groups of children.

Data collected shows that the percentage of children at risk of delay in speech, language and communication has been reduced by almost 50% in the settings that have participated in the Every Child a Talker project.

The percentage of children achieving a good level of development in early years is 6% above the national figure and the gap between the percentage of boys and girls reaching a good level of development has been significantly reduced (8%) with 6% more boys achieving a good level of development than last year. The percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development in all groups has significantly increased in 2014 with those in receipt of pupil premium increasing by 14%, Looked After Children increasing by 40%, children with Statements of Special Educational Needs increasing by 18%, children where English is an additional language increasing by 8% children who are from a black and minority ethnic group increasing by 10%.

Closing the gender gap in attainment has been a key issue for Thurrock. Key Stage 1 data shows that schools across Thurrock have improved outcomes for all groups to be above national and that the gap between boys and girls has significantly reduced in all areas over a three year period.

In 2014 pupils at aged 11 (Key Stage 2) are achieving in line with their peers nationally. Schools have worked hard to close the gender gap resulting in closing the attainment gap in reading, writing and maths at age 11 between boys and girls by 3%. Outcomes for boys have improved across all areas at age 11 by 6% and at higher levels by 4%.

The progress that children have made by age 11 for the following groups has improved; boys, pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils living in areas of disadvantage, pupils for who English is an additional language and children with statements of special educational needs. The gap between the percentage of girls and boys making expected and more than progress has reduced across all areas. The percentage of pupils achieving more than is expected for their age in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased since 2013 in maths by 5%, grammar, punctuation

and spelling by 2% and writing by 1.5%. The figures compare favourably with national especially maths and writing which are above national.

Increasing of numbers of young people aged 16 have achieved the equivalent of 5 GCSE's including English and maths (Level 2) as a result of strong partnership work in schools. In Thurrock 87.2% of young people achieve level 2 qualifications compared to 84.9% nationally; this is an area that has improved significantly over recent years. An apprenticeship programme that supports young people to progress to Level 3 qualifications (equivalent to A levels) has been implemented in recognition that for some of young people an academic pathway does not offer them to best opportunity for them to engage in the community of learning.

As a local employer, the local authority has developed its apprenticeship programme to support young people and has promoted this to other employers resulting in an increase in opportunities available for young people in the local area.

We have recognised that there is a gender imbalance in access to apprenticeships with girls and boys often accessing stereotypical industries for example with very few girls entering the logistics industry. To address this we have been working closely with the college and employers and have seen evidence that this pattern is starting to change.

In Thurrock 52.8% of young people achieve a Level 3 qualification compared to 56.2% nationally, to address this we have built on the success of our Level 2 apprenticeship programme to develop a range of opportunities for young people to progress to a Level 3 qualification.

When young people are not in education, employment or training they are at a high risk of socio economic inequality, the Thurrock Careers team work with all young people to reduce this risk. The service is in contact with all young people and identifies key issues and barriers to accessing training and employment and works with young people to remove these.

The introduction of the new Special Educational Needs and Disabilities reforms set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 has brought in a wide range of new opportunities to support disabled children / young people and their families. Thurrock has introduced new system of unified Education Health and Care Plans for children aged 0-25 years which emphasises the outcomes for the children and young people and have a clear focus on the child /young persons, carers and parent's perspective. This focus is ensuring that there are new opportunities and greater engagement and control over the support in place for children and families who have SEND. In Thurrock we have made good progress across all areas of the reforms to develop these new opportunities for children and young people. Other developments supporting the opportunities for disabled children and their families have included the publication of the Local Offer setting out all information in relation to supporting children and young people with SEND including that from Education, Health and Social Care agencies.

We have recently commissioned Disabled Go to complete a full survey of accessibility for all our local schools to ensure parents and children have good access to the information concerning accessibility of our schools and to support schools in relation

to developing this further. Our Special Schools and Mainstream Resource bases continue to provide very high quality support to our pupils with both of our special schools being rated by Ofsted as Outstanding and very positive reports being given to our mainstream resource bases as part of their inspections.

The implementation of the Multi Agency Safeguarding hub and the Early Offer of Help continued in 2014. Both ensure that there is access to services for those most in need of support.

The Early Offer of Help seeks to reduce inequalities by providing access to services and support at an earlier stage with the aim of reducing the risks of needs escalating. Support is offered through a range of services including through universal services such as schools and health providers alongside more targeted services such as Children's Centres and the Troubled Families team. In addition there is a commissioned offer of services to provide additional support.

In 2014 the take up of services in both directly delivered and commissioned services was monitored and this information will be used to identify any inequalities in access for example from particular areas or ethnicities but also against gender and disability. As this is not a universal service the take up may not represent the demographic profile of the general population however it can be assessed against other indicators such as child protection and child in need cases and can also be used to identify any key trends and correlation of additional needs by particular groups. The current review and analysis of data will be used to identify the key priorities for 2015.

The Early Offer of Help commissioned programme was designed to ensure it was accessible to all families and to break down some of the barriers to accessing services. Equality of access by specific groups who were identified as a priority was included in the specifications. There have been many successes in this area that have been identified through contract management.

Our provider of parenting support has worked hard to engage dads in parenting programmes. It can be the case that dads do not play a strong role in families that have been identified for early help. They can feel excluded from these types of programmes due to traditional stereotypes around maternal parenting. Nationally, our parenting provider Coram has broken this trend and engages dads very effectively. The picture in Thurrock is the same and they have around 30% of their attendees being dads.

Our domestic violence prevention programme has successfully engaged some men from groups that previously had low attendance such as from the travelling community. Attendance rates have been higher than average nationally for these and other men on the group, exceeding national rates by around 30%.

Recognising the increase in the Polish population in Thurrock, our domestic abuse provider took action to promote its universal services to this community by publicising it in prominent locations and by translating its literature as it was recognised that referrals from this community were increasing and that women from these communities not only face the difficulties that any woman faces in accessing services safely, but also have the added language barriers.

Over the coming year the commissioning team will continue to monitor the progress of providers in making services accessible. Furthermore the team will be monitoring the rate of identification of child sexual exploitation. Young girls are disproportionately affected by child sexual exploitation and this monitoring will help to ensure trends amongst service users working with our families are better identified.

The profile of the young people that the Youth Offending Service is working with shows that 83% are male and the proportion of those from black and minority ethnic groups is higher than the general Thurrock population. This identifies that preventative support for young men, particularly those most at risk is a priority.

One of the key strategies to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people is the Diversity in Apprenticeships Programme which works with care leavers, young offenders and other vulnerable young people.

Of 61 care leavers, identified by referring teams as ready for the programme, 31 have engaged effectively. Of the 31 engaged, 16 secured apprenticeships, 4 secured employment with training, 10 secured part/full time education – including one young parent into Higher Education, 3 are working hard in preparation for work experience/volunteering.

Of the 31 that engaged effectively, 20 are female. Of the 30 that have not engaged effectively to date, 16 are female.

16 previous offenders have joined the programme. Since joining, 6 have re-offended. One male has worked hard to achieve Level 2 qualifications whilst in prison.

Through its membership and activities the Youth Cabinet is committed to equality and diversity. The membership reflects the diversity of the local area and members run a number of events throughout the year to engage diverse groups (e.g. youth conference, outreach events, joint sessions with the Thurrock Children in Care Council). A number of Youth Cabinet members have trained as Hate Crime Ambassadors and are committed working in this area. In 2015 the Youth Cabinet will take part in the newly formed Thurrock Fairness Commission.

The Children's Commissioning Service works to support the commissioned offer across Children's Services and ensures that this is underpinned by a needs analysis for each service where possible. This identifies the key issues and barriers to access along with areas or groups where services may be a priority, this information is then included in service specifications. In addition the service monitors and evaluated commissioned services across a range of indicators including equality.

Where consultations take place in the Directorate the Children's Commissioning Service supports these ensuring that they are in plain language and that they are planned to maximise access across key groups.

Children's Services Equality and Diversity Priorities for 2015/16:

- Continue to implement and monitor Admissions Fair Access arrangements to ensure that they meet the needs of the changing demographic profile of

Thurrock.

- Further develop the use of attendance data for vulnerable pupils, in particular those in receipt of pupil premium, to identify trends and priorities for service delivery.
- Continue to increase the take up of services in Children's Centres with a particular focus on targeted groups.
- To ensure that the number of registrations in Children's Centres by families with children with SEN and learning difficulties increases and is in line with local population data.
- Increase the take up of early education for two year olds to ensure that at least 80% of eligible children are accessing their entitlement.
- Increase access to early education by young children from the traveller community and Asian community.
- Continue to increase access to early education to ensure that at least 97% of three year olds access their entitlement.
- To increase the number of children from targeted groups achieving a 'good level of development' at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Embed strategies to narrow the gap between boys and girls at all key stages and target resources to ensure all children make expected progress during their primary school years.
- To complete a review of access to Early Offer of Help support through direct referrals (CAF) and through commissioned services and agree priorities for improving access for those most in need of support.
- To analyse referrals to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub mapped against child protection and child in need cases to identify any inequalities and plan how to reduce these.
- To ensure that youth work programmes work to reduce the risk of young people committing offences.
- To develop the work with local communities in building resilience to support the reduction of the number of families with children living in poverty.
- To ensure that all children's services commissioned in Thurrock sign up to tackling child sexual exploitation.

To ensure that all commissioned services have equalities monitoring within the contract monitoring process, enabling outcomes to be tracked more easily.

Housing Directorate

‘Access to good quality housing plays a major part in supporting a person’s life chances. We are committed to providing housing services that meet the needs of our tenants, tackle any problems in the private rented sector and connects with wider communities. All residents are encouraged to shape their service and will be treated with dignity and respect’

**Barbara Brownlee
Director of Housing**

The Housing Directorate has recently commenced a building programme to develop affordable housing units in the borough. Integrated into the procurement and contract arrangements is an expectation that local employment opportunities are created. All the staff employed in the construction of 53 affordable rent 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties at Seabrook Rise due to be completed by October, lived within 40 miles of Thurrock. Gloriana – Thurrock’s own housing development company - has two further sites currently planned to potentially provide 216 homes. These will develop affordable housing to lifetime homes standards and conform to wheelchair accessibility. This way, our residents will have accessible homes and improved quality of life as they grow older.

The Vulnerable People Protocol joint working practice has continued to support vulnerable residents in maintaining their tenancy, by bringing all relevant professionals together. Building on this, this protocol will continue to be embedded throughout the council. Housing is embedded into the councils’ MASH (Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub) initiative that improves information sharing and decision making in cases involving children at risk. A Housing and Mental Health Forum meets monthly through the year, consisting of professionals from a number of agencies including, Housing, SEPT, Mind, PoWHER, Open Door, TRUST and SERICC. The forum shares information, training and best practice and builds up good working relationships between professionals. Individual cases are referred to the forum, where joint discussions and actions helped to prevent homelessness, determine support needs and achieve the best outcomes for clients with mental health issues.

Housing continued to provide resources to TRUST to fund a housing advisor who specifically worked with BME groups on housing issues, giving them advice and ensuring greater access to services.

To assist vulnerable residents, our allocations team continue to hold an ‘Assisted Bidding List’ for housing applicants with a medical priority and who need to move home. Bids are placed on their behalf on suitable properties. We also offer the assisted bidding service to other residents who cannot easily place bids themselves.

Housing continues to work in partnership with Thurrock Coalition, Social Care and Community Solutions, giving support to all residents in the borough to increase their independence at home through housing adaptation works. Residents assisted have reported that their independence has increased and feel better able to cope with their disability.

We provide assistance to tenants to minimise financial hardship through its downsizing scheme to assist tenants move to more affordable accommodation, which better meets their need. Tenants also received benefit advice from the Financial Inclusion Officer to reduce their outgoings and maximise their income.

The council continues to utilise the allocated funds for Discretionary Housing Payment, which limits tenant's risk of going into arrears. The Rents Team assist those at risk of tenancy failure, ensuring Housing Benefits claims are in place and liaises with many support agencies including Family Mosaic. Through the Essential Living Fund, we have also assisted vulnerable Thurrock residents from becoming homeless.

The Housing Directorate has broadened access to housing advice through an online tool which improves the accessibility of advice and support. 'My Account' – Thurrock's online portal now allows for online rent payments and enables residents to report instances of fly tipping, ASB or housing fraud. Housing Benefit applications are now only able to be made online, speeding up the application and payment process.

Continuing on from the successful South Ockendon 'hub', a second Community Centre opened in June at the Chadwell-St-Mary Library. Local volunteers have supported those residents with limited IT skills to access online services, with Estate Officers holding housing surgeries twice weekly, enabling less mobile tenants to explore their housing options and discuss tenancy issues.

The Well Homes Project is making steady progress with over 200 private households having had a Well Homes assessment completed, identifying any potential risks to their health or wellbeing present in their homes. In the private rented sector over 50 service requests for owner occupied properties have been raised with the Private Housing Service. These service requests have been followed up so both private tenants and owner occupiers alike can feel safe, secure and warmer in their homes by the removal of hazards that have the potential to cause ill health or accidents. In addition numerous referrals have been made to a range of other services to improve quality of life e.g. help with stopping smoking, free NHS health checks and debt advice. The scheme has proved popular with private residents and has been shown to make a big improvement to their health and wellbeing. As an example, as a result of the project one couple in their 80's have had their benefits increased, their property made more secure, and disabled adaptation made to enable them to remain safely in their home.

A new service, South Essex Homelessness Assessment and Reconnection Team (SEHART), aimed at helping those sleeping rough across South Essex was launched in October. Thurrock and eight other Local Authorities have commissioned the service to improve outcomes for single homeless people and the service works closely with partner agencies and council housing teams across the region. Since the launch, there has been a rise in referrals made by the public reporting rough sleepers. A dedicated Outreach worker searches for rough sleepers and tries to engage with those found to help them find accommodation based on their needs. Thurrock Council also carried out a rough sleeper's count in November, a number of volunteers including staff and police assisted on the night of the count. A total of 10 rough sleepers were found and offered advice and assistance.

The Housing Directorate has launched a new Repairs Policy which will enable the council to deliver a differentiated and improved service for vulnerable residents. There is also a proposal for the 'handyman' service currently available to sheltered housing complexes, to be extended to include vulnerable residents, offering a significant impact on the lives of these tenants offering support for tasks such as fitting shelves or repairs to fencing.

Environment Services

'Our aim is to promote and protect our clean and green environment, working with all communities to take pride in our Borough.'

Mike Heath
Interim Director of Environment

The Environment Services Department provides a range of front line services across the borough. These services touch the lives of all residents and visitors to Thurrock and are designed to be as accessible as possible. Whenever we alter or amend our service arrangements we carefully review the new arrangements to ensure that the new delivery methodology has considered the diverse needs of the users.

The core frontline services of the Department include:

- Household waste and recycling collections
- Bulky waste and special collections
- Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Linford
- Grounds Maintenance and Parks and Open Spaces Provision
- Sports Pitches
- Play Area maintenance
- Cemetery Maintenance and Burials
- Country Parks
- Tree and arboriculture Works
- Highways and Footpath repairs
- Gulley Cleansing
- Gritting and winter maintenance
- Street Cleansing including mechanical and manual sweeping, emptying of litter and dog waste bins.
- 24/7 emergency call out service
- Graffiti Removal

The Refuse and Recycling Services provide assisted collection arrangements for those residents with disabilities whereby the collectors will go onto properties to collect and return bins to the normal storage point eliminating the need for these service users to manoeuvre their bin to the kerb side to await collection. Leaflets associated with the service are translated into a range of community languages and all new bins are now marked in the RNIB approved manner to allow visually impaired residents to take part in the Councils recycling programme. We have also been working with our colleagues in the Health Services to ensure that special clinical waste collections are

available and accessible to any resident that may need to dispose of this type of material.

The Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Linford has staff that are trained to assist any visitor who may need assistance disposing of or recycling any items that they wish to deposit there reducing the risk of personal injury or accessibility difficulty. As play areas have been re-developed they have been re-modelled to take into account the needs of all children ensuring that the play equipment has the widest possible usage whilst still retaining the element of excitement that is essential to a child's development. All of our newly refurbished play areas are wheel chair friendly. We have also introduced a range of adult outdoor gym equipment making exercise machinery available to a broader cross section of the public and encouraging older residents to keep themselves fit and healthy.

Our Cemeteries are designed with access in mind and the knowledge that a significant number of visitors will be frail and have mobility constraints. We have therefore instituted a programme of creating new pathways and lawned areas of graves (free of extended plinths and flowered areas) are used to enable ease of access.

Our Rangers team have once again delivered the Santa in the Woods programme to over 1000 children and adults using a wholly wheelchair accessible route through the Country Park at Langdon Hills Country Park. Despite being an outdoor event in an area not typically noted for ease of access, by utilising carefully designed routes the function has been made accessible to both wheelchair and visually impaired visitors and as in previous years was a sell out with all tickets snapped up very quickly.

The Public protection team has worked alongside the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to implement a number of targeted activities as directed by the Equality Impact Assessment of the CSP delivery plan.

Public Protections Taxi Licensing Policy promotes the provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles as taxis, the number of wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriages has increased to 17% of the fleet and Licensing is working closely with the Private Hire trade to increase provision in that sector.

Our trading standards team maintain a vulnerable marker for their protocols when dealing with individuals. If they are disabled, elderly or otherwise vulnerable we will provide extra assistance. Working with safeguarding adults Operation Lollipop has seen joint visits to the elderly and financially vulnerable which has resulted in a number of individuals being advised and given further support.

Trading standards have also recently entered into a contract with a telephone interpretation service. This enables them to deal effectively with individuals who have English as a second language and ensure they have the opportunity to understand our officers before any action is taken. This is an excellent service and has significantly improved the way we are able to deal with foreign nationals and ensure that our service is accessible to all.

The Community Safety Partnership has ensured that equalities are respected within each of our priorities. Public protection, housing and adult safeguarding terms are key

partners within the locality action groups to address anti-social behaviour and hate crime. In the last year they have supported 29 cases involving vulnerable victims, 23 cases of racial hate crime, 6 cases of disability hate crime and 5 cases of hate crime related to the persons sexuality. We have commissioned victim support to provide a service for victims of hate crime and ASB. There is a working group in place to address an increase in hate crime in Tilbury, this has included hosting a family activities day where we promoted community and raised the profile of reporting hate crime. We have worked with Essex voluntary service and Police to implement the Stop The Hate campaign, including implementation of 3 hate incident reporting centres and training up hate crime ambassadors.

We continue to champion the actions to end violence against women and girls agenda adopted by Thurrock Council. This has included further training for professionals on Honour Based Abuse and forced marriage, and the drafting of a modern day slavery action plan which has identified our communities most at risk.

Public protection and the community safety team continue to work with the Local safeguarding Children's Board to protect young people in our community. This has included programmes in schools to raise awareness of online exploitation, commissioning a high risk behaviour project alongside troubled families, championing child sexual exploitation, in particular within licensing following the Rotherham report.

We are providing crime prevention advice to the vulnerable through stay safe workshops for the learning disabled, older people, MIND and those with sensory impairments. Neighbourhood watch are taking referrals from adult social care and visiting vulnerable residents to provide crime prevention advice.

The community safety team continue to support the Independent advisory group to the Police ensuring that we have strong links to minority groups within the community and provide support and advice as required e.g. crime prevention advice to the Sikh community during Diwali.

Adults, Health and Commissioning

'Our vision is that all people in Thurrock will have the opportunity to enjoy independent, rewarding and healthy lives in communities that are welcoming, inclusive, safe and secure'.

Roger Harris
Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning

The focus for Adults Services continues to remain in finding ways of supporting people who are vulnerable and marginalised to achieve the best possible outcomes for themselves.

Our ageing well programme Building Positive Futures has already had a number of successes in the past year that reflect Thurrock's vision for the future of health and social care and establishes a new relationship between citizens and the public sector.

Our transformation journey continues with the further development of Cariads, our Carers Advice, Information and Support service. This has been in place now for almost a year and has been very well received and significantly increased the voice of Carers in Thurrock. With the implementation of the Care Act in April 2015, Cariads is set to take a lead role in supporting carers to have assessments in their own right and to be directed to appropriate support. Cariads is a positive example of a collaborative approach by the voluntary sector as it is jointly managed by Mind, Thurrock Lifestyle solutions and Thurrock Centre for Independent Living.

Thurrock Lifestyles Solutions (TLS) is now well established after its transfer from the Council. It provides a range of options for people to increase their independence, support them to be part of their local community and develop skills to support volunteering or employment opportunities. TLS have also made a positive contribution to the health agenda for people with learning disabilities by being a champion for learning disability health checks, a key part of the agenda to build community resilience.

Since the last Annual Equality Report, the Care Act has confirmed Thurrock's direction of travel with regard to transformation of services and reaffirmed the approach to co-production and user led services. The Building Positive Futures agenda focuses on resilience of the individual and the community, Thurrock have developed a Market Position Statement for adult social care which highlights the need to create the infrastructure to support the community, focusing on the individual being able to commission their own services. The Market Position Statement also gives clear focus for existing and new providers about the need profile of Thurrock, services required and a clear approach to partnership working. Engagement with those who use services, who may use them in the future and the wider community is central to the approach.

There has been development of 'strength based' approaches such as the introduction of Local Area Coordination (LAC) with full coverage across the Borough after a successful pilot. We introduced Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) which is a strengths based model of community development and mirrors our person based approach with individual service users. The LAC and ABCD initiatives have driven cultural change in practice which now, more than ever, moves away from focusing on what someone cannot do (their needs) which encourages dependence, towards a focus of what they wish to achieve utilising their strengths.

The Local Area Coordination programme has proved very successful. The Local Area Coordinators are using a variety of preventative strategies and reaching people and communities that we previously had little involvement with, such as the homeless or people with drug and alcohol issues as these groups were previously either not eligible for assistance or did not wish to engage with the statutory services.

The programme has a far broader contact with communities now through initiatives such as volunteering; there are currently 31 volunteer workers providing support in their community. The LAC's local presence has helped to strengthen community networks and it has supported individuals who were previously not included in the community for example, through race or cultural issues. We have recently published an evaluation report which provides strong evidence of the successful community initiatives that this programme has delivered.

The development of community hubs have also proved a success – a community based and community run initiative which allows individuals to receive the information, advice and support they need and ensures people living in Thurrock’s communities remain connected.

We continue to work with Housing colleagues to provide and develop suitable accommodation to support older adults as they age. Early successes include a ‘HAPPI’ standard (Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation) specialised housing scheme in Derry Avenue, South Ockendon, where 25 flats for older people are being developed. We have also received approval for Government funding for another HAPPI scheme in Tilbury.

The Safeguarding Team are embarking on Making Safeguarding Personal which means that safeguarding interventions are geared to being person led and outcome focussed. The expressed wishes of vulnerable adults should, where possible be paramount to the decision making process, with all available means being used to facilitate the expression of those wishes. This also means that even where someone has limited capacity, the individual should be encouraged to engage with the safeguarding process to maximise their involvement, choice and control. However, there will remain a fundamental duty to balance the person’s right to autonomy with their, or the public need for protection. This is a further example of the inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable groups in Thurrock.

The service user involvement boards (Disability Partnership Board, Older People’s Parliament and Mental Health Service User Forum) continue to meet regularly and provide a formal opportunity for involvement and co-production. Recently the Disability Partnership Board has agreed a process to enable a more robust evaluation of all policies and strategies produced by the Adult Social Care department using an Equality Impact Assessment approach. Terms of reference have been agreed and volunteers are now being recruited. The group plan to meet quarterly and review all relevant new documentation ensuring that representatives from all protected groups are able to input in to the process.

Although public health is located within Adult Social Care and Health, the services we deliver impacts across all areas within the Council for example Children services, Trading standards, planning and Environmental services. Our data intelligence service is accessed by many other service areas requiring accurate, up-to-date information needed to carry out service reviews.

During the past year we conducted a series of reviews across many services including sexual health, 5-19 school nursing, drug and alcohol, adult weight management, NHS health checks, parenting and breastfeeding, and smoking and tobacco control services. We used a range of methods to ensure that we actively engaged with different communities including those groups which were difficult to engage sometimes called “hard to reach” or “seldom heard”. We have carried out a number of on-line consultations, paper questionnaires, workshops and focus groups. We made a special effort to engage disabled people via the disabled people’s network, older people by visiting the Thurrock Over Fifties Forum (TOFFS). Children and young people were engaged via the youth cabinet, Children in Care Council and directly through schools and head teachers. We work closely with and support the local area

coordinators to ensure that individual needs within the community are identified and referrals are made to address public health prevention.

We have listened to stakeholders and responded to evidence gathered in consultation by using some of the public health grant to deliver public health and wellbeing projects. These projects have been developed by local community groups to address issues such as weight management, obesity, physical activity and mental health issues such as dementia, depression, and anxiety.

Over the past year we have worked in partnership with other agencies to review the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). The first JSNA was more data focused providing an overarching view of the population of Thurrock. We will be producing separate JSNA documents for key population groups which will inform services and needs. These documents will also be very useful to other services not just public health because not only will they identify specific needs, the document will also capture what we are doing locally to address needs and move further towards an asset –based approach. We will shortly be releasing two JSNA documents in particular. The first will focus on the demographic needs in Thurrock particularly the characteristics of the local population highlighting significant differences. The second JSNA document will focus solely on the needs of children and young people in Thurrock.

Planning and Transport Directorate

‘Planning and Transportation has a key role to play in the development of a fair and cohesive community in Thurrock. As we grow as a Borough, our services will be increasingly important to ensure fair access to sustainable travel, homes, jobs and leisure opportunities for all our residents wherever they live.’

David Bull
Director of Planning and Transportation

Within the Planning and Transportation Directorate the Strategic Planning, Growth and Strategy, Development Management and Building Control Teams have a key role to play in the development of a fair and cohesive community in Thurrock.

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At the heart of this process is the need to promote the development of strong, healthy and inclusive communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

The planning system also must take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and have regard to these in creating a shared vision with communities for the development of their area. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the

community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning.

The Core Strategy is the key strategic planning document for the Council and sets out the principal policies for the future development of Thurrock over the plan period to 2026. It also provides the basis for the determination of planning applications with all decisions required to be taken in accordance with the development plan.

In February 2013 the Council commenced preparation of a new Local Plan for Thurrock to replace the Core Strategy. The Local Plan will have a key role to play in driving forward the future growth and regeneration of Thurrock and in securing the maximum local benefit from this growth in terms of employment, community facilities and infrastructure.

In Thurrock the plan-making process is underpinned by the preparation of Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) which fully embed the use of Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) to inform the development of policy and the allocation of land, sites and infrastructure to meet community needs.

An integral part of the plan-making process is the need to fully reflect and respond to the views of the local community in shaping the future development of Thurrock. To achieve this, the emerging Local Plan will be subject to extensive public consultation at each stage of the plans development. This is a statutory requirement and reflecting this obligation the Council will prepare and publish a new Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Document which will set out how the Council intends to engage with stakeholders, delivery partners and the local community throughout the process of preparing the new Local Plan. This will ensure that the consultation process provides an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

The Equality Impact Assessment approach is also used to inform the development of non-statutory planning documents and strategies including the production of Supplementary Planning Documents and Master Plans such as those currently being prepared for Lakeside and Grays Town Centre.

The Directorate is also responsible for preparing the Thurrock Transport Strategy (TTS) sets out the Council's transport policies and priorities for the period 2013-2026.

The TTS sets out a strategy for managing congestion, improving accessibility and road safety, and addressing climate change objectives in support of the Council's overarching aspirations for the future growth of Thurrock. The TTS provides a clear transport vision for Thurrock and identifies priorities for action supported by a series of projects, programmes designed to deliver improvements across the transport networks serving the Borough.

The annual Highways and Transport Programme (HTP) provides further detail on how the Council will prioritise resources and funding to improve the delivery of transport services and infrastructure in Thurrock. This includes proposals for improving accessibility both to and by public transport to key community facilities and centres, together with recognition of the importance of good design in the location and

development of new transport infrastructure in order to provide equality of opportunity and access for all users.

The Council is leading the way in promoting the use of sustainable transport modes through the delivery of an integrated package of Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Schemes. These focus on encouraging increased levels of travel by sustainable transport modes supported by the provision of improved walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, together with the development of promotional and educational campaigns designed to raise awareness of the benefits and availability of non-car modes of travel. In developing the LSTF programme the Council has sought to ensure that it meets the needs of all transport users of all ages, abilities and gender thereby enabling all sections of the community to benefit from future planned investment in new transport provision.

The Council is also involved in developing area wide transport and access strategies designed to improve access for all sections of the community to the new housing, employment and educational opportunities being created by proposals for new investment in Purfleet, Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury and London Gateway – Thames Enterprise Park. These studies are focusing on how to remove barriers to access by sustainable transport and on the delivery of targeted interventions to encourage greater use of walking, cycling and public transport.

The Council has consulted widely with the local community in developing its transport plans and strategies in order to ensure that they fully reflect and address the transport needs of the whole community. This includes the use of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that diversity and equality issues are properly considered throughout the process of strategy development and the identification of supporting transport policy and interventions.

Part Four: Workforce Report

The Equality Act 2010 requires that all listed organisations with more than 150 employees publish prescribed data sets on equality within the workforce. As part of the Annual Equality Report we have reported on a number indicators required by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). This section aims to provide for public scrutiny the progress which the council is making with respects to equality across the organisation.

Workforce Profile

Workforce count

As at 31 December 2014, data on the workforce profile shows a total of 1,838 employees in 2014. This is 50 (or 2.5%) fewer staff than in 2013. 43% of employees are now aged over 50 (compared with 38% last year) and the proportion of employees aged 16-24 remains at 4%.

The profile shows 67% of the workforce is female and 33% male. The number of white staff has gone down from 87% to 84%, and BME employees have increased from 5% to 7%.

The number of women working part-time has increased from 48% to 53%, however the number of men working part-time remains low at 18%.

Fig. 1. Number of part time/ full time staff by protected group as at 31/12/2014

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
Full Time Staff	583	47	497	82	0	1080	928	95	57	26	47	173	409	428	23	724	11	2	343	414	4	2	2	8	1	235	404	10
Part Time Staff	650	53	108	18	0	758	621	42	95	12	34	88	293	283	60	407	4	1	346	255	0	0	0	0	1	147	350	5
Council Total	1233		605		0	1838	1549	137	152	38	81	261	702	711	83	1131	15	3	689	669	4	2	2	8	2	382	754	15

Pay banding by protected groups

Broadly speaking, women have a greater representation on lower pay bands, although this needs to be contextualised with two thirds of the workforce being female.

Bands 1, 3, 5, and 6, have significantly higher proportion of women than men;

Bands 9 and 10, and the senior manager grades have a higher proportion of men.

Fig. 2. Pay Gap for Protected Groups as at 31/12/2014

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
Apprentice	6	43	8	57	0	14	14	0	0	2	13	1	0	0	0	11	1	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	11	1	0
Band 1	94	93	7	7	0	101	84	1	16	0	4	7	52	33	5	51	0	0	50	25	0	0	0	0	0	30	44	2
Band 2	59	58	42	42	0	101	84	1	16	4	2	4	24	51	20	54	0	0	47	33	0	0	0	0	0	13	54	1
Band 3	236	78	66	22	0	302	257	25	20	3	21	37	100	127	17	184	3	0	115	121	1	0	0	0	0	52	126	2
Band 4	146	53	131	47	0	277	252	13	12	5	19	37	98	115	8	180	0	1	96	96	0	0	0	3	0	71	103	4
Band 5	194	72	76	28	0	270	236	23	11	4	8	56	89	105	12	184	2	0	84	119	0	0	0	0	0	56	94	1
Band 6	183	71	76	29	0	259	217	24	18	6	9	44	114	85	7	173	2	1	83	107	0	1	1	1	0	49	99	1
Band 7	106	65	58	35	0	164	136	23	5	7	0	30	77	55	2	111	1	0	52	59	1	0	1	1	1	43	56	2
Band 8	65	60	44	40	0	109	93	11	5	4	0	10	56	42	1	73	1	0	35	39	2	1	0	1	1	23	41	1
Band 9	17	45	21	55	0	38	31	5	2	0	0	3	18	17	0	29	1	0	8	16	0	0	0	1	0	9	11	1
Band 10	9	41	13	59	0	22	19	0	3	1	0	3	9	10	0	11	1	1	9	9	0	0	0	1	0	4	8	0
Senior Mgt Grad	6	35	11	65	0	17	15	1	1	1	0	1	7	9	0	15	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	5	7	0
Other	112	68	52	32	0	164	111	10	43	1	5	28	58	62	11	55	2	0	107	38	0	0	0	0	0	16	110	0
Council Total	1233		605		0	1838	1549	137	152	38	81	261	702	711	83	1131	15	3	689	669	4	2	2	8	2	382	754	15

New starters and leavers

72% of new starters in 2014 were women and 28% were men, which is slightly higher for women than the gender workforce profile of 67:33 but comparable.

The numbers of BME new starters fell from 10% to 2%, and disabled new starters fell from 2% to 1%.

The largest numbers of starters came from the 35 to 49 age group, and most leavers were aged 35 to 64. 64% of leavers were women and 36% were men, which is slightly lower for women than the gender workforce profile of 67:33 but comparable.

Fig. 3. Total New Starters and leavers for calendar year 01/01/2014 - 31/12/2014

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other	
New Starters	171	72	65	28	0	236	133	18	85	3	55	56	89	32	4	115	1	0	120	68	1	0	0	0	0	2	43	121	1
Leavers	188	64	108	36	0	296	224	40	32	7	38	45	100	92	21	171	3	1	121	113	0	0	1	0	3	50	127	2	

Other reasons for termination

Similar numbers of women and men retired from the council in 2014.

In addition, 5 were made redundant compulsorily (4 men and 1 woman) and 33 accepted voluntary redundancy. Given the gender workforce profile of 67:33 this is comparably higher for men than women.

Fig. 4. Other reasons for termination e.g. redundancy or retirement for calendar year 01/01/2014 - 31/12/2014

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other	
Retirement	14	52	13	48	0	27	27	0	0	2	0	0	0	17	10	15	1	0	11	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	1
Compulsory redundancy	1	20	4	80	0	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	4	1	0	3	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Voluntary redundancy	20	61	13	29	0	33	28	4	1	1	0	1	6	23	3	21	0	0	12	15	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	12	0
Council Total	35		30		0	65	58	5	2	3	0	1	10	41	13	39	1	0	25	30	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	23	1

Grievances, disciplinarys and dismissals

A total of 17 grievances were reported in 2014, compared to 12 in the previous year. A disproportionate percentage of men were disciplined. All the grievances relating to harassment and bullying were made by women, however, with only 3 incidences this is too small a cohort from which to determine any trends. A higher % of BME staff and those aged 35-49 were disciplined.

Fig. 5. Grievances including reported incidents of harassment & bullying (H&B)

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other	
Grievances	14	82	3	18	0	17	16	1	0	1	2	1	7	7	0	11	0	0	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	6	0
Grievances related to H&B	3	100	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Disciplinary	15	41	22	59	0	37	29	8	0	0	0	5	14	18	0	27	0	0	10	19	0	0	0	0	0	7	10	1	
Dismissals	9	64	5	36	0	14	12	2	0	0	3	1	5	4	1	7	1	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	

Length of service

The only point of interest regarding the length of service data is that 7% of male employees have worked for the council for over 30 years, compared to only 1% of women.

Fig. 6. Length of service

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
0 - 1 year	132	71	53	29	0	185	112	16	57	3	36	44	75	26	4	102	2	0	81	59	0	0	0	0	0	43	83	0
1 - 5 years	323	62	196	38	0	519	420	52	47	10	43	114	195	148	19	351	6	0	162	167	0	1	0	2	0	97	251	1
6 - 10 years	302	68	140	32	0	442	385	38	19	6	2	80	183	162	15	261	3	1	177	148	4	0	2	2	2	106	173	5
11 - 20 years	343	75	113	25	0	456	418	23	15	12	0	23	202	206	25	275	1	2	178	192	0	1	0	3	0	88	166	6
21 - 30 years	120	67	60	33	0	180	161	7	12	6	0	0	43	121	16	111	2	0	67	80	0	0	0	1	0	35	62	2
31 - 40 years	12	26	35	74	0	47	44	1	2	0	0	0	4	41	2	26	1	0	20	21	0	0	0	0	0	9	17	0
41 years +	1	11	8	89	0	9	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	2	5	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	2	1
Council Total	1233		605		0	1838	1549	137	152	38	81	261	702	711	83	1131	15	3	689	669	4	2	2	8	2	382	754	15

Time on pay grade

Analysis of this data indicates a healthy level of career progression for all categories of staff, with only 1% of employees remaining on the same grade for over 10 years.

Fig. 7. Time on pay grade

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
0 - 1 year	221	72	86	28	0	307	206	24	77	4	48	71	117	63	8	165	3	0	139	90	1	0	0	0	2	63	149	2
1 - 5 years	577	59	403	41	0	980	837	76	67	21	32	161	390	357	40	626	9	2	343	335	3	1	2	7	0	207	418	7
6 - 10 years	424	80	109	20	0	533	489	37	7	13	1	28	187	283	34	332	3	1	197	236	0	1	0	1	0	110	179	6
11 - 20 years	10	67	5	33	0	15	14	0	1	0	0	1	6	7	1	5	0	0	10	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0
21 - 30 years	1	33	2	67	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Council Total	1233		605		0	1838	1549	137	152	38	81	261	702	711	83	1131	15	3	689	669	4	2	2	8	2	382	754	15

Performance Assessments

The data on performance ratings shows that staff achieved higher ratings in 2014:

67% were received a 2 rating (compared to 62% in 2013)

8% received the highest rating of 1 (compared to 6% in 2013).

Fig. 8

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
1 rating	87	63	52	37	0	139	130	6	3	6	2	35	55	44	3	101	1	1	36	62	0	0	2	0	0	35	38	2
2 rating	820	67	408	33	0	1228	1097	89	42	21	30	142	469	537	50	797	7	2	422	476	3	2	0	8	1	265	462	11
3 rating	11	55	9	45	0	20	15	5	0	0	0	0	8	9	3	15	0	0	5	8	0	0	0	0	0	3	9	0
4 rating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not rated	182	67	88	33	0	270	198	20	52	8	21	41	92	92	24	130	4	0	136	66	0	0	0	0	0	45	157	2
Joined after review period	133	73	48	27	0	181	109	17	55	3	28	43	78	29	3	88	3	0	90	57	1	0	0	0	1	34	88	0
Council Total	1233		605		0	1838	1549	137	152	38	81	261	702	711	83	1131	15	3	689	669	4	2	2	8	2	382	754	15

Success rates of job applicants

Job application data from external applicants will become available from next year. In 2014, 29 employees were promoted. Women and staff aged 35-49 were most likely to be promoted.

Fig. 9

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	Other
Number of internal promotions	24	83	5	17	0	29	25	1	3	0	5	6	10	8	0	18	0	0	11	6	0	0	0	0	0	9	14	0

Contract workers and public office holders

The performance data shows that 70% of public office holders were men, and 63% of them were aged 50 or over. We do not collect data on contract workers.

Fig. 10

	Women	% Women	Men	% Men	Transgender	Total	White	BME	Ethnicity not given	Disabled	Age 16-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-49	Age 50-64	Age 65+	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Sexual orientation not given	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Judaism	Muslim	Sikh	No Religion	Religion not given	
Public office holders	17	30%	39	70%	0	56	10	2	44	0	1	8	12	23	12	1	0	0	55	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	56

The high number of public office holders not disclosing their ethnicity, sexuality and religion suggests that more information needs to be provided to explain the relevance of collecting such information. Men are disproportionately represented at 70% compared to 30% of women. The highest age group for public office holders is 50-64 at 40% with only one person under 24 years.

Thurrock Council Equality Report Definitions 2014

This section provides a comparative analysis with data published in 2013

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
Number of part time / full time staff by protected group		
The split between full time and part time working for women was quite equal as 49% of women are full time and 51% are part time.	The split between full time and part time working for women is quite equal as 47% of women are full time and 53% are part time.	This shows a swing of 2% change
The split between full time and part time working for men was 80% of men working full time and only 20% working part time.	The split between full time and part time working for men remains quite wide with 82% of men working full time and only 18% working part time	This shows a swing of 2% change
The ethnicity split at the Council was 87% white, 8% BME and 5% not known.	The ethnicity split at the Council is currently 84% white, 7.5% BME and 8.5% not known.	Marginal change
70% of the Council's BME employees were full time as opposed to white employees at 59%	69% of the Council's BME employees are full time as opposed to white employees at 60%	Marginal change
39% of employees were in the 35-49 age group and 38% are in the 50-64 age group. These 2 age groups accounted for 77% of the workforce. However the 16-24 age group contained the highest number of full time workers at 64% and the 65+ age group contained the highest number of part time workers at 77%	38% of employees are in the 35-49 age group and 39% are in the 50-64 age group. These 2 age groups account for 77% of the workforce. The 50-64 age group contains the highest number of full time workers at 60% and the 65+ age group contains the highest number of part time workers at 72%	Main change is that more full time workers are now in 50-64 bracket than 16-24 year bracket
A high proportion of Thurrock Council staff were heterosexual at 62.8%, however a	A high proportion of Thurrock Council staff are heterosexual at 61%, however	Slight reduction in number of heterosexual staff

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
further 36% of staff did not declare their sexual orientation.	a further 37% of staff have not declared their sexual orientation.	
65% of heterosexual staff were full time.	64% of heterosexual staff are full time.	Marginal change
Gender pay gap information		
Band 1 had the highest proportion of women at 93%, followed by Band 3 at 76% and Band 5 at 70%.	Band 1 has the highest proportion of women at 93%, followed by Band 3 at 78% and Band 5 at 72%.	Marginal change
Band 9 had a 51% male and 49% female split	Band 9 now has a 55% male and 44% female split	The split has swung slightly and now shows a 4% increase for men and 4% decrease for women in Band 9
Pay gap for other protected groups		
In proportion to the overall diversity profile of the workforce Bands 1, 4, 10 and Senior Managers had a disproportionately high level of white employees. Bands 6, 7 and 8 had a disproportionately high level of BME employees and Band 1, 2, 10 and Senior Managers had the smallest proportion of BME employees. The other bands were broadly comparable with the overall diversity profile.	In proportion to the overall diversity profile of the workforce Band 4 had a disproportionately high level of white employees and Bands 7 and 9 a disproportionately high level of BME employees. Bands 1, 2 and 10 had the smallest proportion of BME employees. The other bands were broadly comparable with the overall diversity profile.	Some change
Band 6 had the highest proportion of disabled employees at 16% and 4% of disabled employees were in the Senior Management band	Band 7 now has the highest proportion of disabled employees at 18% and 2% of disabled employees are in the Senior Management band	Band 7 now sees the highest number of disabled employees whilst the senior management band has decreased by 1% (equivalent of 1 person)
The 16-24 age group had more people in Band 3 than any other band at 28%	The 16-24 age group has more people in Band 3 than any other band at 26%	Marginal change
The 25-34 age group had more people in Band 5 than any other Band at 24%	The 25-34 age group had more people in Band 5 than any other Band	Marginal change

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
The 25-49 age group had more people in Band 4 than any other Band at 15%	at 21.5% The 25-49 age group has more people in Band 6 than any other Band now at 16.2%	Band 6 is now highest proportion
The 50-64 age group has more people in Band 4 than any other Band at 17%	The 50-64 age group has more people in Band 3 than any other Band now at 18%	Band 3 is now highest proportion
The 65+ age group had more people in Band 3 than any other Band at 21%	The 65+ age group has more people in Band 2 than any other Band at 24%	Band 2 is now highest proportion
The highest proportion of all staff and all Bands is overwhelmingly Christian or religion not given with very smaller proportions of other religions spread across the Bands	The highest proportion of all staff and all Bands is overwhelmingly Christian or religion not given with very smaller proportions of other religions spread across the Bands	No change
Total new starters and leavers		
66% of new starters last year were women as opposed to 34% of men	72% of new starters this year have been women as opposed to 28% of men	An increase of 6% in female new starters and a decrease of 6% in male new starters
10% of new starters were from the BME community	7.6% of new starters have been from the BME community	A 2.4% decrease
2% of new starters have declared a disability	1% of new starters have declared a disability	A decrease of 1%
The 35-49 age group has seen the highest number of new starters at 33%	The 35-49 age group has seen the highest number of new starters at 37.7%	Increase of 4.7%
44% of new starters are heterosexual whilst 55% did not disclose their sexuality. 1% are gay/lesbian or bisexual	49% of new starters are heterosexual whilst 51% did not disclose their sexuality. 0.4% are gay/lesbian or bisexual	4% change
27% of new starters are Christian, 19% of	29% of new starters are Christian,	Marginal change

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
new starters have no religion and 52% chose not to disclose their faith.	18% of new starters have no religion and 51% chose not to disclose their faith.	
Other reasons for termination		
An equal split of 50% of women and men either took voluntary redundancy, retirement or were made redundant	Of those who took voluntary redundancy, retirement or were made redundant 54% were women and 46% men	4% change
The 50-64 age group saw the highest number of staff who either took voluntary redundancy, retirement or were made redundant	The 50-64 age group saw the highest number of staff who either took voluntary redundancy, retirement or were made redundant	No change in 2014
Grievances including reported incidents of harassment, plus disciplinary and dismissals		
A total of 16 grievances have been reported this year and 3 of those have been in relation to harassment & bullying	A total of 17 grievances have been reported this year and 3 of those have been in relation to harassment & bullying	1 more grievance in 2014
0 grievances which relate to harassment and bullying have been reported from the gay/lesbian community	0 grievances which relate to harassment and bullying have been reported from the gay/lesbian community	No change in 2014
33% of grievances have been raised by BME staff in relation to harassment and bullying amounting to 1 case	No grievances were raised by BME staff	Reduction as noted.
Rates of return to work of women on maternity leave		
Thurrock Council had 21 staff reported as being on maternity leave. Of these, 7 have returned to work at 6 months, 9 at 9 months and 5 at 12 months. No women for this period have decided not to return to work.	26 staff reported as being on maternity leave. Of these, 1 returned after 3 months, 4 have returned to work at 6 months, 10 at 9 months and 9 at 12 months. 2 women have decided not to return to work.	On average maternity leave lasted longer in 2014 than in 2013

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
Length of service		
The 1-5 years category has the highest number of women at 28% of the whole female workforce and the 1-5 years category has the highest number of men at 36% of the whole male workforce	The 11-20 years category has the highest number of women at 28% of the whole female workforce and the 1-5 years category has the highest number of men at 32% of the whole male workforce	The highest number of women is now seen in the 11-20 years category whereas similar pattern for the length of service of men
The gender profile of the whole workforce of 66:34 is broadly reflected in all length of service brackets until 31-40 years and 41+ years where the profile is reversed to 24:76 and 13:87.	The gender profile of the whole workforce of 67:33 is broadly reflected in all length of service brackets until 31-40 years and 41 years + where the profile is reversed to 26:74 and 11:89 respectively	Slight change.
Overall there is a disproportionately higher prevalence of white employees with service over 11 years and a disproportionately low for BME staff over 11 years. There is a disproportionately high prevalence of BME staff with under 10 years' service.	Overall there is a disproportionately higher prevalence of white employees with service over 11 years and BME employees with service under 10 years.	Slight change.
30% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff are equally in the 1-5 years and 6-10 years categories	40% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff are in the 1-5 years categories	A change from last year with the highest number of staff from this group now being exclusively in the 1-5 years category
Time on pay grade		
This shows that 54% of staff stay on the same pay banding for between 1-5 years	This shows that 53.3% of staff stay on the same pay banding for between 1-5 years	Marginal change
This is consistent across all the equality strands, with 55% of white staff and 54% of BME staff staying on the same band for between 1-5 years and 59% of heterosexual and 65% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff	This is consistent across all the equality strands, with 54% of white staff and 55.5% of BME and 55% of heterosexual and 61% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff staying on the	1-5 years' service continues to hold the highest numbers of staff across all the groups

Data Definition 2013	Data Definition 2014	Comparison
staying on the same band of between 1-5 years	same band of between 1-5 years	
Performance Assessments		
The highest performance rating across all strands is a 2 rating. This is demonstrated with 61% of women, 61% of men, 65% of white employees, 60% of BME employees, 70% of heterosexual and 50% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff all receiving this rating.	The highest performance rating across all strands is a 2 rating. This is demonstrated with 66.5% of women, 67.4% of men, 70.8% of white employees, 64.9% of BME employees, 70% of heterosexual and 50% of gay/lesbian and bisexual staff all receiving this rating.	This is mainly consistent with the last year
Success rates of job applicants		
We are unable to report on the equality breakdown of applicants to Thurrock Council. However applicants for internal promotions recorded show 87% were women and 13% were men, 85% were white and 15% were BME.	We are unable to report on the equality breakdown of applicants to Thurrock Council. This data will be available from 2015 However applicants for internal promotions recorded show 82% were women and 18% were men, 86% were white and 3% were BME.	Largely similar pattern except for internal promotions within the BME group
Contract workers and public office holders		
We are unable to report on contract workers within this report.	We are unable to report on contract workers within this report.	
For public office holders, 35% are women and 65% are men.	For public office holders, 30% are women and 70% are men.	5% reduction on women in public office positions
The highest age group for public office holders is 50-64 at 33%	The highest age group for public office holders is 50-64 at 40%	Increased by 7%

Part Five: Summary and next steps

This annual report has been conducted in compliance with section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010. This requires the council to set out an annual report demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act. The objective of this annual report is to show how the council has achieved compliance with its statutory equality duties and the extent to which services have taken steps to improve equalities. The approach taken for this review was a systematic audit of the following:

- Review of service plans and discussion with service leads
- Actions from the various equality plans, and corporate equality framework.
- Equality impact assessments, and relevant statutory requirements
- Statutory requirements relevant to section 149(1) of the Equality Act Guidance on reporting and data sets required by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

This year has been a challenging year for the council. Austerity and the need to make unprecedented savings have highlighted the scale of challenges we face as a borough but progress has been made. There has been cross council leadership across a range of activities and issues. This includes strong promotion of equality issues and genuine engagement with partners to develop shared responses to the issues we face. This annual review has also highlighted progress in many areas.

A review of the Community and Equality Impact Assessment framework has supported officers to access relevant and effective support when considering equality impact. We will continue to embed our inclusive approach to community and equality impact assessments by developing a training programme which will be available to all staff.

Using appropriate data analysis to set priorities is evidence in many service reports and will continue to influence future work to improve outcomes for different protected characteristics. Individual service priorities are contained within the previous reports. In 2015 we will promote the business case for more accurate equality data to be collected – especially in relation to lesbian, gay and bisexual data so that we can more accurately meet the needs of staff and residents. In addition, job application data from external applicants will become available from next year. Diversity training will include unconscious bias in future sessions.

The continued commitment to an asset based approach to community development has grown throughout 2014 and is key to future work. A key component of this involves analysis of what is positive or strong in an area, as well as what is wrong or seen as in need of improvement. Initiatives in 2015 will provide a greater opportunity to map the assets or strengths of communities in Thurrock and examine areas including physical assets, community associations, skills, knowledge and aspiration for change. It is evident that knowing and valuing an area's strengths can help foster a more positive approach to tackling inequalities.

The success of the funding bid to Department for Communities and Local Government who awarded Thurrock a grant of £550k to support the hub programme demonstrates the success of Hubs is recognised nationally as well as in Thurrock. The Community Hubs programme is committed to utilising the best of shared resources in all sectors collectively to support communities help themselves with support and guidance from trained volunteers within neighbourhoods. Plans to develop a further three hubs will progress in 2015 ensuring partnership working remains at the heart of our service delivery.

The staff survey was well supported with a 73% response rate. The results of this survey have shaped a number of actions to help improve staff engagement. The Staff Forums review was a great success. The refreshed forums will support the organisation in developing a further understanding of the issues impacting on different protected characteristics.

Elected Members commitment to a Fairness Commission demonstrates equality and fairness remains at the core of our business. The report of the Overview and Scrutiny task and finish group to Cabinet provided strong evidence about the kind of deeply-embedded inequalities that remain in our communities. The evidence collected included submissions from community groups and charities that detail how access to services and opportunities continues to be unfairly distributed. The work of the Fairness Commission throughout 2015, and its future recommendations, will inform our equality objectives for future years.

Statutory Equality Framework

Legislation	Description
Antisocial Behaviour Act	The Act provides powers for local authorities and those working with them to tackle antisocial behaviour in local communities. It is designed to ensure that the police have the appropriate powers to deal with serious antisocial behaviour.
Childcare Act 2006	An Act to make provision for the powers and duties of local authorities and other bodies in England and Wales in relation to childcare and the development and well-being of young children; to make provision for information to parents and other persons about the regulation and inspection of childcare and connected facilities.
Employment Act 1990 (amended)	An Act making it unlawful to refuse employment, or any service of an employment agency, on grounds related to trade union membership.
Equality Act 2010	An Act making it unlawful to discriminate on grounds any grounds relating to Race, Disability Gender, Religion, in employment or provision of services. It prohibits direct and indirect discrimination, victimisation, instructions to discriminate and harassment.
Equal Pay Act 1970 (Amended)	This document is an amended version of the Equal Pay Act 1970, which incorporates amendments to the Act as at 24th February 2005.
Equality Act 2006	The main provision of the Act is the establishment of a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights by 2007. The Act introduced a positive duty on public sector bodies to promote equality of opportunity between women and men and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion or belief.
Equality Act 2004	An Act to amend the Employment Equality Act 1998, Pensions Act 1990 and Equal Status Act 2000 for the purpose of making improved provision in relation to Equality of treatment in the workplace and elsewhere.
Human Rights Act 1998	The Act applies directly to public authorities and incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. The European Convention on Human Rights and its protocols do not incorporate all the rights and fundamental freedoms.
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001	An Act which seeks to enable more people with special education needs to be integrated into mainstream education and protects disabled students in all aspects of their studies including access to university facilities and services
Care Act 2014	The Care Act 2014 builds on recent reviews and reforms, replacing numerous previous laws, to provide a coherent approach to Adult Social Care in England. Part 1 of the Act (and its Statutory Guidance) consolidates and modernises the framework of care and support law; sets out new duties for local authorities and partners; and new rights for service users and carers.

Further information on the Equality Duty can be obtained by contacting the Community Development and Equalities Team.

Telephone on 01375 652930,
email: diversity@thurrock.gov.uk.

Alternatively, please write to:
Community Development and Equalities Team,
Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, Grays, Thurrock, Essex, RM17 6SL

