

<b>22 July 2015</b>	<b>ITEM: 14</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Cabinet Member Report – Communities and Public Protection</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Terry Brookes, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection	
This report is public	

I am delighted to be presenting my portfolio report to Council for the first time.

This portfolio covers a very wide range of statutory services, the overall aim of which is to protect the public and develop the community in Thurrock. Teams in Communities and Public Protection continue to work hand in hand with many other agencies including the Government Departments, Other Councils, the Police and the Fire Brigade to achieve this aim.

I will outline the work of the teams that deliver this activity on behalf of the Council and update members on the changes that have been made in light of budget reductions and the changing regulatory landscape we are operating in. Our teams continue to provide a professional service in the face of financial challenges and I would like to take this opportunity to thank officers for their continued hard work.

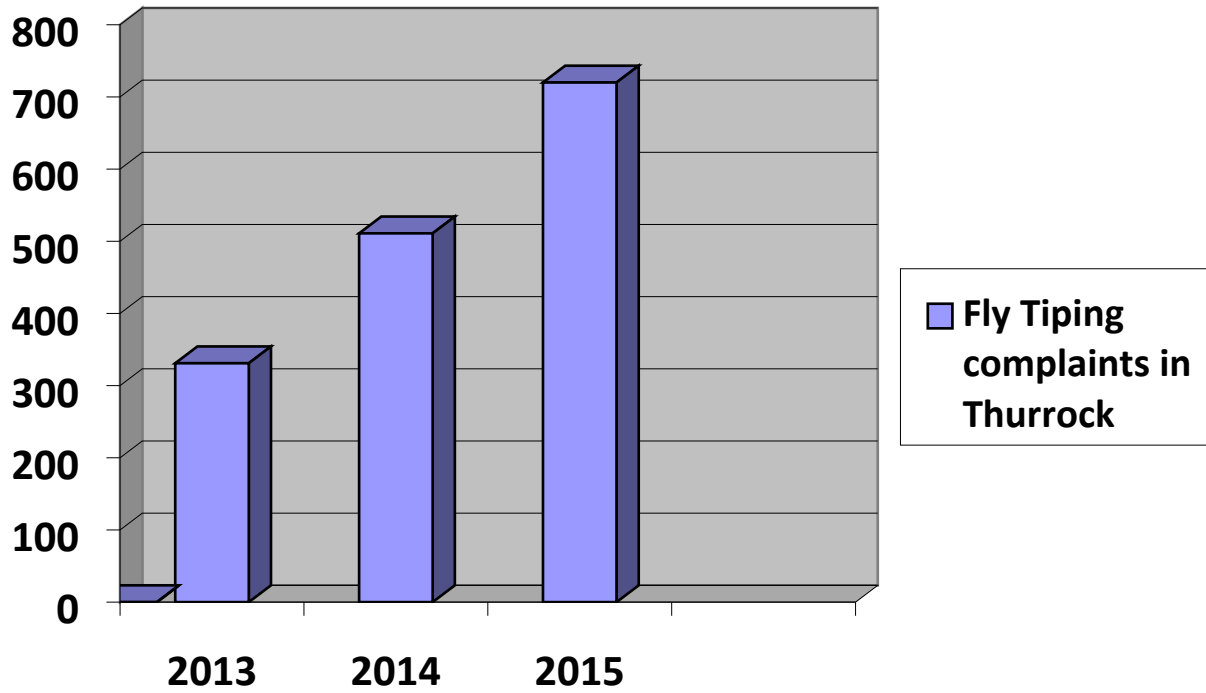
### **Environmental Crime**

The Community Protection Team that previously undertook work on environmental crime has now been dis-banded, the remaining two officers undertaking this work have been moved to report to the Team Leader for Environmental Protection.

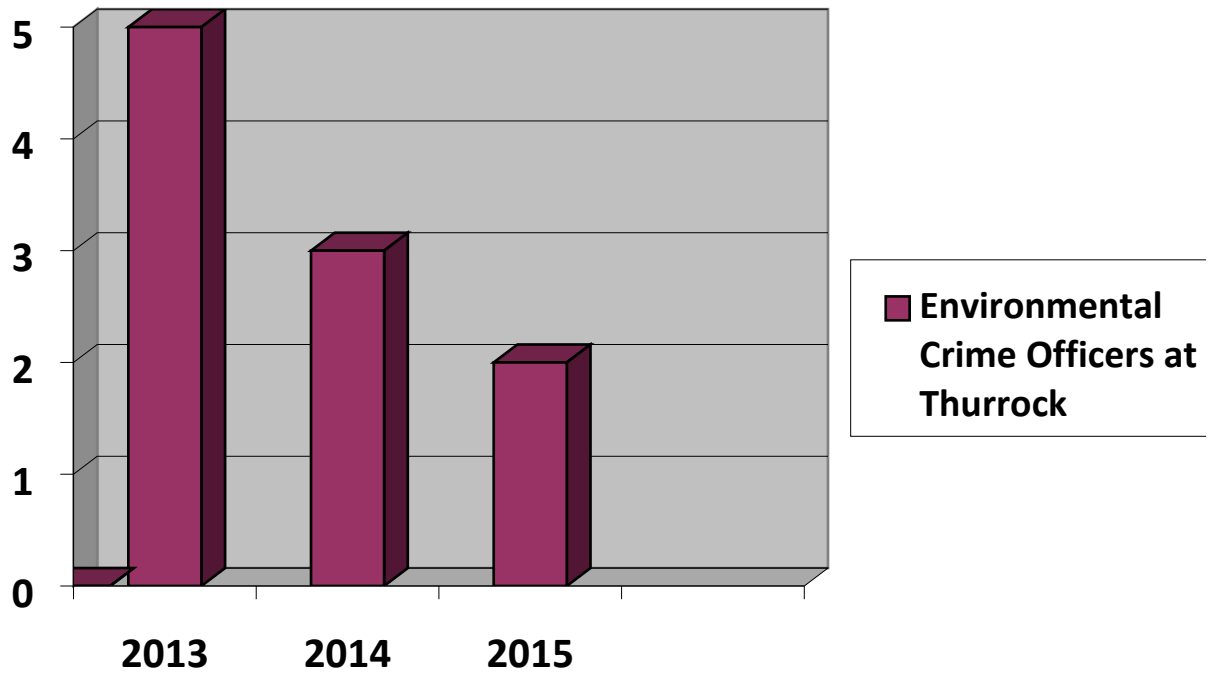
These officers have nevertheless continued to address environmental crime issues across Thurrock on a priority basis. One area of particular activity this year has been the pursuit of fly tippers. This has resulted in the prosecution of five individuals for waste offences so far this year and further prosecutions are in progress or in the pipeline. As members will be aware from the considerable press coverage surrounding this issue, fly tipping is an increasing problem in Thurrock and in most local authority areas in the Country. We know that fly tipping is a major area of concern for our residents and so we have concentrated the efforts of our remaining environmental enforcement officers on this area of work, in particular where evidence can be obtained for prosecution of offenders. In the first quarter of this year we have received 720 complaints about fly tipping from Thurrock residents, this is 41% more than during the same period last year and represents an increase of 117% since 2013. Unfortunately during this same period the number of officers available to deal with all aspects of environmental crime including fly tipping has reduced from five to two. The following charts illustrate the trends in fly tipping

complaints from residents and in staffing to address these complaints.

Fly-tipping complaints in Thurrock 2013-15 (1st Qtr)



Staff dealing with Environmental Crime in Thurrock 2013 -15



## Environmental Protection

The work of the Environmental Protection (EP) Team encompasses the areas of pollution control and statutory nuisance. The team have dealt with 4601 service requests since 1<sup>st</sup> July 2014.

They operate the out of hours noise service and have had considerable success in the last year in reducing the exposure of residents to noise at night that would otherwise disturb their lives.

The team have used a combination of informal intervention and formal legal action, including the service of abatement notices to achieve results.

In the last year the out of hours noise team dealt with 632 requests for service, which included evidence gathering visits.

Other areas of EP enforcement work include high hedges, light nuisance, odour nuisance investigation and consultation work on large scale planning applications to promote good environmental compliance on development.

EP Officers completed all 69 statutory industrial process inspections. Works continue to reduce the impact of these processes on the wellbeing of residents.

The team achieved 100% DEFRA statistical data return rate for their Local Authority Pollution Control Duties.

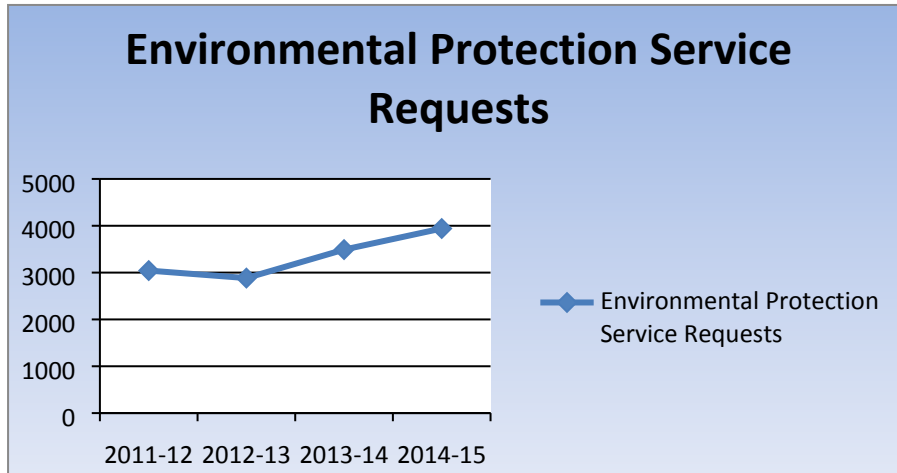
The team provided expert acoustic and pollution control advice to 158 planning and licensing applications over the year.

The team implement the Air Quality Management Regime in Thurrock and monitor 16 designated Air Quality Management Areas.

The team maintain and collect data from scientific monitoring equipment at 5 sites in

the borough.

The team dealt with 86 Contaminated Land (CL) enquiries over the year. The review and re-write of the CL strategy for Thurrock was completed and approved by cabinet in March 2015.



In order to accommodate the 15-16 budget reductions some areas of service have unfortunately had to be discontinued from the start of this year, these include dealing with unsecure premises, filthy and verminous property, rubbish accumulations and pests. These and the other changes to provision made by the team have contributed 96k to the savings achieved by Public Protection.

## Licensing

The Licensing Team are responsible for a wide range of licences. Premises Licence (Alcohol and Entertainment), Taxis, Gambling, Sex Establishments, Animal Welfare (e.g. Pet shops, Boarding Kennels), Charity Collections and Scrap Metal.

Last year saw the team processing over 1400 applications for all types of licences. In addition to the application processing, the team have taken part in numerous multi agency operations with partner agencies around Scrap Metal; the Thurrock Community Alcohol Project; Taxis/Limo's enforcement and the night time economy, as well as general enforcement of licences and their conditions.

The inclusion of Scrap Metal Dealing within activities that require a licence happened in the last months of 2013. The rationale behind the legislation was to introduce a regime to regulate the commerce in scrap metal and disrupt the sale of stolen metal by thieves. Members will recall that metal theft from highways and railways was causing considerable inconvenience and risk to the public in Thurrock and more widely.

Since the introduction of the licensing regime metal theft has declined considerably and the continued efforts of our licensing officers working with the local police to check local scrap dealers is helping to protect the public and businesses from the risks arising from this activity.

To date only one scrap metal dealer has had to have their licence revoked in Thurrock. The majority of local scrap metal dealers have complied with licensing requirements.

The team continues to support the Licensing Committee and is currently undertaking a review of all licence fees and reviewing the policies around the fitness to hold a taxi drivers licence in relation to previous convictions; as well as implementing the changes to both alcohol and entertainment licensing, and taxi licensing brought in by the by the Deregulation Act 2015. These changes allow venues to provide much of the previously licenced entertainment, such as live and amplified music, up until 11pm without a licence. This represents a relaxation of the licensing regime and only time will tell whether this is a welcome reduction in bureaucracy or a recipe for increased neighbourhood disturbance.

There have been numerous Licensing Sub-Committees where decisions have been made over a variety of taxi and alcohol licensing matters, with any appealed decisions being successfully defended at court. I would like to thank Licensing Members for their continued work on the committee and at the many sub-committees that have been held so far this year. Without the dedication of these Members, the operation of an effective licensing regime at Thurrock Council would not be possible.

We have continued to support the borough wide Pubwatch and Behave Or Be Banned Scheme (BOBB), and are actively participating in the Community Alcohol Project in Purfleet which is targeting access to alcohol in the Purfleet area by young people, as well as promoting the messages around the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the Prevent Agenda with local licence holders.

Thurrock Safety Advisory Group is administered and chaired through the Licensing Team which continues to review large events in the Borough providing support, guidance and regulation, ensuring that the community attending those events remain safe and that those organising the events have access to the skills and resources of all partner agencies.

### **Community Safety Partnership**

The Council is a statutory member of the Community Safety Partnership along with the Police, Community Rehabilitation Company, National Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Group, and Essex Fire and Rescue. The responsible authorities who form the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in a local government area are required to work together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area and to have in place a partnership plan for that area, setting out the CSP's priorities;

The partnership must have due regard for the police and crime objectives set out in the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) police and crime plan

Community Safety Partnerships were set up under the 1998 Crime and disorder Act to ensure joint working between partners including councils to reduce crime and promote public safety in a locality

The overall picture in relation to crime in Thurrock is, Crime has decreased in the year ending March 2015 with a 2.1% reduction to 10,956 crimes.

Domestic burglaries remained in line with last year at 809 (+15 burglaries)

Vehicle crime reduced by 14% to 1,522 crimes.

There were increases in violence against the person of 14% to 2,648 crimes and serious sexual crime was up 42% to 196. This is in response to positive campaigns encouraging the reporting of domestic abuse by victims and the national headlines with regards to historical sexual abuse.

In order to address local crime issues and assist in addressing emerging issues around the radicalisation of groups the partnership has set itself priorities for the year ahead, these are:

1. **Reduce Youth offending and re-offending of adults & young people**  
This will address volumes crimes of: Domestic burglary; Most serious violence; Personal robbery and drug offences
2. **To reduce harm to and safeguard vulnerable victims** from: Domestic abuse; Sexual offences including rape; Child sexual exploitation; Serious Youth Violence; Hate crime; Anti-social behaviour; Cyber bullying; Honour based abuse and Serious Organised Crime encompassing Modern day slavery & Fraud where victims are vulnerable
3. **Violent extremism:** Delivering the Governments counter terrorism strategy – Prevent locally

In order to deliver these priorities the partnership will take a multi-agency approach to tackle operational issues around crime, offenders and anti-social behaviour continue to deliver improvements in community safety for our residents, continue to work closely with colleagues in adult social care and the voluntary sector to raise awareness of violence against women, raise awareness and encourage the reporting of hate crime through our hate incident reporting centres and work with the PCC for Essex to help reduce crime, and disorder and improve support for victims within our communities. We host multi-agency locality action groups to provide response to individuals impacted by either ASB or hate crime in their community, as well as attending fortnightly police tasking meetings.

The Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Bill came into force on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2014, with part of the Bill being implemented in January 2015. There is still considerable work for the CSP to scope out the impact and ensure maximum benefits are realised for Thurrock residents.

The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015 and places a duty on local areas to, as a minimum, understand the local threat and judge whether activities underway are sufficient to meet it. It also places a duty on educational establishments “to have due regard to the need to prevent people from

being drawn into terrorism". To support with this we have offered train the trainer WRAP training to all schools, have provided guidance on inclusion within their safeguarding policies and have shared the advice being given by the Home Office with regards to travelling to Syria. We are working with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) on ensuring that it is included within on-line awareness training.

## **Civil Protection**

The work of Civil Protection impacts on every resident, commercial enterprise and Council department. The team produce plans which inform the Councils' response to a range of emergencies and disruptive occurrences that could arise in Thurrock.

The Civil Protection team work hard to co-ordinate resources in an emergency incident, operating a 24/7 on call duty system. They were recently involved in co-ordinating the initial response to the sink hole that appeared in Hogg Lane. The majority of this work involves pre-planning and monitoring the high risks in Thurrock e.g. for our potentially hazardous industrial sites designated under the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) and flood risk such as the potential for an east coast tidal surge.

This year the team are:

- exercising the plan for the Thurrock Council Incident Control room at the end of July involving staff from all council directorates, volunteers and management from Public Protection so as to be ready to get the emergency control room up and running if it is required to respond to an incident;
- reviewing, exercising and finalising our major incident and recovery plans before the end of January 2016;
- undertaking school critical incident management planning to ensure the schools who choose this service are more resilient in dealing with any incidents, such as the coach crash in Belgium, whereby the incident was across social media and the news before the parents could get any information;
- training duty officers from the 24/7 on call system to ensure the knowledge and ability to deal with an incident is current;
- continuing co-ordination with all stakeholders (emergency services, industrial partners, health agencies, government and voluntary agencies etc.) to ensure response and recovery is appropriate for each of the industrial sites.

We have pre-arranged mutual aid agreements with neighbouring Councils to help strengthen our response and recovery arrangements in the provision of control centres should we not be able to access the civic offices, as well as for equipment / resources if required. We have also recently agreed a memorandum of understanding with Grangewaters for the temporary provision of accommodation for any evacuees in an emergency incident, therefore utilising Council resources in a cost effective way.

The team are working with Thurrock Faith Matters and other local voluntary organisations to ensure community resilience is strengthened and to ensure that help can be provided to those who need it during and in the aftermath of an

emergency.

Internal business continuity was coordinated by the team until March 2015, this area of work has now been devolved to managers across the Council. Placing the focus on business continuity back into the services who are best placed to know their critical functions and requirements and simultaneously realising a saving to the Councils budget.

## **Trading Standards**

Trading Standards enforce consumer protection legislation to bring about a fair, safe and equitable trading environment within Thurrock. The work of Trading Standards impacts on every resident and commercial enterprise in the area. It also has the potential to impact upon other individuals and organisations external to Thurrock.

### Ports work

The team are involved in the, National Trading Standards Board, Safety at Ports Project. They receive funding in order to enable them to undertake safety checks on consumer goods coming into the UK at Thurrock's two main ports, London Gateway and Port of Tilbury. The team use various sources of information to identify containers of potentially unsafe consumer products for examination and testing. These sources range from national and international data about product types to local knowledge from the officer's own expertise.







From April 2013 to date, 9,809 carcinogenic skin lightening creams have been intercepted at Tilbury and Gateway ports

For the year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 14 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 15:

At London Gateway and Tilbury Ports

We have stopped 16 Consignments for being unsafe entering the UK, these consignments included 10,206 unsafe products and these were prevented from potentially harming UK consumers.

We have identified 77 non-compliant consignments including a total of 499,757 products. In most of these cases the matter was referred to the importers local Trading Standards to work with them to rectify problems. Where this was not possible goods were destroyed or placed under suspension notices prohibiting them from being supplied until they were made compliant.

In June 2014 we received a letter of thanks from Lord Toby Harris, chair of the National Trading Standards Board.



In 2014 we embarked on a number of significant counterfeit prosecution cases. Most of which will be in court in 2015. These cases have the potential to generate significant Proceeds of Crime Act Orders (POCA) once the defendants have been found guilty.

Following our success in getting a £300k POCA order in December 2014 against a trader in a counterfeit DVD case we are hoping to get a one off award to fund further casework in this area. This could help to offset some of the effects of budget reductions in Trading Standards that have unfortunately meant that counterfeit work will not be routinely done going forward.

Other ongoing prosecutions include illegally imported puppies, underage sales, illegal clamping, a rogue mechanic who was ripping off consumers large sums of money but not actually doing any work and overloaded vehicles.

Of particular note among these are cases involving illegally imported puppies, not only do many of these puppies exhibit health problems that mean that owners are faced with unexpectedly high vets bills but they are often not correctly vaccinated against rabbies and so have to be quarantined to prevent in the introduction of rabbies into the UK.

### **Travellers Encampment Work**

Thurrock continues to have significant numbers of unauthorised encampments, continuing the trend seen last year. Between 1.3.14 and 28.2.15, there were 57 such encampments in our Borough, of which 18 were on private land, the remaining 39 were responded to, on behalf of the Council by the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit (ECTU), of which the Council is a subscribing member. (£7,200 p.a.). This year, since 1.3.15 to 16.6.15, there have been a further 20 unauthorised encampments, of which 2 were on private land and the remaining 18 on public or Council-owned land, these were also dealt with by the ECTU.

The staff of the ECTU have a target to effect the removal of all unauthorised encampments within 10 working days. They hit this target on every occasion, often getting the removal within 7 or 8 days. Furthermore, the annual subscription for all participating Councils was reduced by 10% this year.

## **Health and Safety**

The main focus this year has been moving to a self service model for internal health and safety management. This has involved the updating of the Councils Health and Safety Policy Statement and the development of internal procedures and documentation to assist managers across the organisation to manage health and safety compliance within their areas of responsibility on behalf of the Council.

This process has been completed and the revised policy and procedures have been to the Corporate Health and Safety Board for approval. The next meeting of this board will provide the opportunity for service representatives to comment on the revised policy and procedures and for the chair of the board, the Chief Executive to determine any further work required. The adoption of a self service model has allowed for the required staff reductions in health and safety to keep within budget.

The work of the teams external health and safety inspectors has involved participation on projects and investigation of accidents in the workplaces in Thurrock.

A number of enforcement actions are in progress in relation to these accident investigations, including several prosecutions.

## **Food Team**

The Food Team has continued to undertake its statutory duties to ensure food safety in Thurrock. They have carried out food hygiene and standards inspections in approximately 1,300 premises from manufacturers, packers, cold stores, import/exporting companies, restaurants and takeaways to schools, care homes and retail stores.

While the team supports businesses wherever possible, the team has served 19 food hygiene improvement notices, undertaken a voluntary closure and issued 153 written warnings for breaches of food hygiene legislation. The team also has a prosecution for alleged food hygiene offenses being heard in Court this month.



The team were successful in receiving grant funding from the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to undertake advisory visits to food businesses to encourage the display of food hygiene ratings at their premises in places where consumers could easily see them.

The project demonstrated a significant uptake in the display of hygiene ratings which made the scheme more visible to consumers and increased competition between businesses.

The project acted as an additional incentive for businesses to improve, and consumers are already starting to question and draw their own conclusions if they don't see a sticker on display. The data gained as part of this project has assisted the FSA for pressing the case for mandatory hygiene rating display in England.

The team also carry out investigations into food and food premises complaints from residents, allegations of food poisoning, unsafe drinking water and notifiable infectious diseases including legionella.

Food is regularly sampled from businesses across the borough to ensure food safety and accurate labelling (to prevent contamination by allergens and food contamination). The team undertakes a programme of sampling each year which concentrates on known high risk foods, local manufacturers and national surveys. This has proved to be an efficient and effective method to identify food safety risks in food prior to complaints or notifications of illness. One of the areas currently being focussed on is food substitution where meat and fish will be substituted for cheaper meats or other ingredients. Tests to establish the proportion of meat and fish of the correct type in products is undertaken.

A slimmed down food sampling programme will be undertaken this year maintaining as far as possible this valuable area of protective work whilst recognising the realities of the reduction in sampling budgets required to meet savings targets.

The volume of imported and exported food stored, transported and sold within the borough continues to increase, including the import of nuts, seeds, spices, fruit and vegetables and the export of similar foods. The food team provide export health certificates to enable Thurrock companies to sell their food outside the EC, including margarine and baby milk powder going to China.

The team also operate Thurrock Council's Street Trading Consent scheme, which licenses mobile food vehicles across the borough. This is to prevent nuisance to residents and reduce risks to road users, in addition to ensuring food safety.

## **Parking Services**

Parking Services enforces on-street traffic regulation orders and manages off-street car parks; Controlled Parking Zones and Permit Parking Areas across the Borough to support the Council's obligations in relation to traffic management and road safety. In a typical year, the civil enforcement team issues around 11,000 penalty charge notices for parking contraventions.

2014/15 showed a steady increase in pressures from commuter parking. In response, the Council:

- extended South Ockendon Permit Parking Area
- introduced Badger's Dene Permit Parking Area
- extended Stanford-le-Hope Controlled Parking Zone, and
- converted the Controlled Parking Zone in Seabrooke Rise to a Permit Parking Area
- progressed the introduction of a new controlled off-street car park at Station House
- Free weekend parking was again provided during December 2014 in all on and off-street pay-and-display parking places.

The operational surplus on the 2014/15 car parking account is £182,704. This is published in the Annual Parking Report for 2015.

## **Community Development**

Community development helps ensure that residents can come together to improve local life. This may be through taking voluntary action in a neighbourhood, engaging residents in decision-making or helping to improve someone's life.

Invariably, much of the team's work depends on a close relationship with the voluntary, community and faith sector as conduits into communities. In July 2012 Cabinet agreed that management of the Voluntary Sector Development Fund - which is the management of grants to the voluntary sector – should pass to CVS. The total value of the fund is £432,600. Thurrock CVS took on administration of the fund in recognition of their role in being best placed to develop the sector, and to help inform the best investment decisions in partnership with the Council. I look forward to working with the grants panel to ensure that future awards invest in local initiatives to improve life in Thurrock, whilst looking to ways we can grow the funds available to support community led action in Thurrock. As the council faces increasing challenges to public sector budgets, we have to look at innovative and creative ways to ensure that we preserve and nurture the offer made by the voluntary and community sector which adds to the quality of life in Thurrock

The Joint Strategic Forum meets on a quarterly basis and provides an opportunity to hold strategic discussions with the voluntary sector about how we can work closer together in the interests of our residents. I look forward to working with the JSF on this agenda and I am particularly keen to ensure the principles of Thurrock's Joint Compact underpin our work.



The development of Community Hubs demonstrates how working differently can unleash the passion and skills inherent within communities to bring people together and make a difference to local people. Thurrock was fortunate to secure £550k funding from Government to support the development of Hubs from April 2015. Funding will support five hubs directly in South Ockendon, Stifford Clays and Blackshots, Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and Aveley. A training and development programme will support the development of volunteers and a charitable company to develop hubs. In addition, a number of exciting opportunities are being explored to see how services can be delivered differently through hubs so they are more relevant to local people whilst helping to make savings and be more efficient in the future.

Connecting people is a key ambition of the Stronger Together partnership. Stronger Together looks to share best practice and encourage communities to be able to help themselves using the assets and informal associations around them first and before traditional service models. The ambition is that communities can do all they can for themselves without having to rely on statutory services to improve communities. Stronger Together is underpinned by 5 common themes, they are: place based, strength based, relationship driven, citizens in the lead and social justice. Stronger Together will be hosting an event on 10<sup>th</sup> August to help inspire new ways of working within communities and to help support those who can best connect people where they live. I encourage all councillors as community leaders to think about how they can support stronger communities in their wards and to attend the event on 10<sup>th</sup> August – more information is available via [www.strongertogether.org.uk](http://www.strongertogether.org.uk). Stronger Together embraces Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as a concept to underpin our approach to community development and engagement. I am particularly encouraged to see how ABCD has helped to speak up Thurrock – recognising our assets and strengths as a foundation for the future.

Strong relationships must underpin our work with communities – if we are to truly encourage people to take action to improve their own lives, they must feel confident that the Council is there to support and recognise this effort. The council is extremely proud of the 250 volunteers who give their time to support council services in a wide range of roles across Thurrock museums, libraries, youth offending and children centres to give just a few examples. In June 2015 we marked Volunteers' Week by thanking volunteers for their time, and recognising their contribution through certificates awarded by The Mayor. As a council we are always looking for new ways in which to capture the enthusiasm of residents to volunteer with us. When an appropriate placement is not available, we are lucky to have a thriving Volunteer Centre in Thurrock based at ngage.

As Portfolio Holder for Communities my role also includes liaison with the armed forces. Thurrock was the first council in Essex to develop a Veterans' Charter, and we signed the Essex Community Covenant in 2013. In June Thurrock launched the Veterans' Information Portal - or the VIP Portal – as part of its Flying the Flag ceremony to mark Armed Forces Day. The portal has been developed through the Essex Military Civilian Partnership and Thurrock is pleased to be part of this initiative, encouraging services to promote it through the web site and encouraging veterans to register by using their service number.

The World War One Commemorative Group enjoys cross party membership as well as a rich contribution from many service and heritage groups active in Thurrock. Following the very successful commemorative event at Tilbury Fort in 2014, I very much look forward to this year's commemorative event at Coalhouse Fort on 24 August 2015. These events provide a unique opportunity to remember the sacrifices made in previous conflicts so that we might enjoy the freedom and choice we enjoy today.

Another key event I look forward to later this month is The Big Lunch. This event is now established in the annual calendar as a day when families can get together and enjoy a wide range of activities at no cost. From next year this event will be organised by The Grays Riverside Big Local group. Such events would not be possible without the strong partnerships we enjoy in Thurrock and I extend my thanks to all who are helping to contribute to this and other events over the summer period.

The Community Development and Equalities Team continues to support our communities and residents through stronger joint working between our community partners and this has strengthened our ability to tackle social exclusion, and create communities in which everyone can participate. The team have supported the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) through attendance at the Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and supported active partner working in relation to hate crimes, as well as supporting the Prevent agenda in Thurrock across communities. They have also secured support from the national Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA) programme to develop a local approach to Community Asset Transfer in Thurrock. A partnership of council and voluntary sector groups has now been formed and will be taking this agenda forward through 2015/16.

The framework for Equality Impact Analysis (EqIA) is now well established and will continue to be used as a tool to inform new policy arrangements, key decisions and budget savings proposals.

This year the council will review it's Translation and Interpreting service considering how we can best work with our communities and partners to understand the demand for provision and how we might achieve a more focussed and efficient service in the future.

Following a full relaunch in December 2014, the council now has over 100 staff forum members engaged with six interest groups for Mental Health, Disability, BME, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT), Women and Men. Underpinned by a strong governance model the issues and actions arising from forums are prioritised and progressed with the support of People Board and a wider network of Corporate Champions. Staff forums play a key role in developing internal and external partnerships – for example, the LGBT forum is leading the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index review for the Council, and the women's forum is supporting the CSP around domestic abuse policy.

In April 2014 Cabinet agreed to establish a Fairness Commission for Thurrock based on a great deal of evidence into levels of inequality in the borough. The

priorities for the commission include ensuring fair access to services and opportunities, ensuring equal life chances, building stronger and cohesive communities and involving residents and listening to their views on fairness in Thurrock. The Fairness Commission is currently holding a 'Summer of Listening' to help understand people's perceptions of fairness. By understanding how people experience life in Thurrock, the Commission will be better placed to reflect on our opportunity to ensure that current regeneration opportunities benefit the whole borough, and tackle historic examples of inequality. Councillors can help to promote the work of the Commission to bring a new focus and influence to the equalities agenda so that Thurrock can truly be a fair place of access to opportunity, enterprise and excellence where all individuals, communities and businesses flourish.

The Council's Consultation Portal is an online engagement tool which is mostly utilised for online consultation with Thurrock Residents. Members of the public can also use the system for submitting petitions. The Community Development & Equalities Team continues to maintain and monitor the system as well as supporting other departments to carry out consultation and engagement exercises. There are currently over 3000 residents signed up to the portal, this means that an automatic alert will be sent to them when a new consultation is listed. A group training session for council staff has been scheduled for August to enable more people to use the system for online engagement. To view current and past consultations and petitions click on 'Have my say' on the [thurrock.gov.uk](http://thurrock.gov.uk) homepage.

### Public Protection Financial Information – Overview

The overall net budget within Public Protection is £1.695m. Below is the financial summary of the services, with the annual budget assigned to each individual area.

#### 2015/16 Revised Budget

Service	Revised Budget	Budgets to Date	Actuals To Date	Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Environmental Health Food Safety	210	52	46	(6)
Environmental Protection	301	75	75	(0)
Licensing	(51)	(2)	24	26
Trading Standards	331	82	70	(12)
Public Protection	236	93	71	(38)
Health & Safety	309	85	70	(15)
Public Protection Service Management	49	(7)	(7)	0
Community Protection	80	0	(37)	(37)
Community Safety	21	3	0	(3)
Civil Protection	151	34	36	2
CONTEST	0	0	0	0
Safer Communities	18	(35)	(35)	0
Domestic Violence	40	0	0	0
	<b>1,695</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>(83)</b>



## Financial information – Forecast 2015/16

The service is expected to achieve a breakeven financial position at the end of the financial year. The service finished the 2014/15 with a small budget surplus, but as part of the 2015/16 base, the following savings need to be achieved:

### 2015/16 Budget Savings

Public Protection efficiencies.	169.5
Reduction in Corporate Health and Safety team (self-service provision going forward).	37.5
Removal of Corporate Health and Safety fund.	50.0
Food Safety - reduction in food sampling programme.	4.0
Cessation of Council funding to Thurrock Community Safety Partnership.	50.0
Trading Standards cessation of work on <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• trade-marks</li><li>• counterfeiting</li><li>• animal welfare</li></ul>	40.0
Environmental Protection – Cessation of work in relation to: noxious matter accumulations pests filthy and verminous premises unsecured premises pollution permit inspections.	96.0
Civil Protection – cessation of business continuity planning (self- service provision).	14.0
<b>Total Reduction</b>	<b>461.0</b>

There is no adverse pressure that the service is forecasting to have a detrimental effect on the outturn position for 2015/16, outside of those that could be demand lead or unforeseen.

### Community Development and Equalities Financial Information

The Community Development and Equalities team is within the Strategy team in the Chief Executive's Delivery Unit.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Budgets to Date</b>	<b>Actuals To Date</b>	<b>Variance to Date</b>
<b>Strategy Team</b>	<b>728,387</b>	<b>98,780</b>	<b>102,809</b>	<b>4,029</b>
<b>Community Development Projects</b>	<b>50,900</b>	<b>8,475</b>	<b>2,779</b>	<b>(5,696)</b>
<b>Voluntary Grants</b>	<b>432,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1,211,887</b>	<b>107,255</b>	<b>105,589</b>	<b>(1,667)</b>

There are no significant variances to the budget that are forecast at this stage.

#### Strategy Team DA500

This code includes salary and non-salary budgets for the Strategy Team including corporate and service planning, performance management, research and intelligence which are outside of this portfolio area as well as community development and equalities within it.

There are four posts supporting Community Development and Equalities. The remaining budget funds one Strategy post and covers all other service costs and recharges.

#### Community Development DA501

This code is used to support specific projects undertaken by the team, for example The Big Lunch and World War One Commemorative events. The base budget is supplemented by external funds – for example a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund in spring 2014 to support the WW1 event at Tilbury Fort. There has been an increase in the amount available to support community projects through reviewing and realigning non salary budgets.

#### Voluntary Grants DA502

The code is used to pay the funding agreements administered via CVS to support voluntary sector development and delivery