

12th November 2015	ITEM: 7
Health and Wellbeing Board	
Online Data Portal - Proposal	
Report of: Maria Payne, Health Needs Assessment Manager	
Accountable Head of Service: N/A	
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Director of Public Health	

Executive Summary

This report outlines the request and rationale for creating an online data portal or repository to publish Thurrock Council and Health data. Due to the increased digital agenda both within the Council and nationally, more and more people are turning to web services for information and data sources. The creation of a shared information portal to collate and publish a range of Council and Health data indicators should result in assurance that accurate and validated data sources are used to inform decision making, support the integrated commissioning principles by encouraging closer work between local authority and health colleagues, and ensure Thurrock's alignment to the future digital agenda.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1** An online data portal to be built – by existing IT provider or external contractor
- 1.2** This project to be included in the Council's Digital Transformation workplan and aligned to *Thurrock Online*.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** There are a large number of sources of data and evidence used by agencies in Thurrock. However these can be hard to find and it can be difficult to ascertain the most current and robust source.
- 2.2** Historically there has been a reliance on lengthy strategies and needs assessment documents to provide the most current information. Whilst many of these are still required due to legislative policies, the process to update each document can be lengthy and data within the documents is often out of date fairly quickly.
- 2.3** There is increasing pressure on public sector organisations to ensure that the decisions they make are based on the most robust and current evidence

available, particularly when there are financial decisions involved. It is therefore paramount that processes are established to ensure the data and evidence required is easily accessible and understandable, to facilitate its inclusion in relevant decision-making procedures.

- 2.4 An increasing amount of data is being published in the public domain, and there is an appetite for this to develop further. Many other agencies have developed an increased digital presence and this facilitates the ongoing maintenance of their data and information.
- 2.5 Thurrock Council has been rolling out a Digital Transformation Programme, which is aiming to encourage use of online services and reduce reliance on paper-based procedures. There has been significant investment into a refresh of the Council website, but this has not focussed on improving the presentation of data or intelligence sources.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Having an accessible data repository or portal is becoming increasingly common across local authorities in the UK. Having undertaken some preliminary research into approaches adopted elsewhere, there appears to be a mixture of separate websites, visualisation tools and downloadable content available in other local authority areas. Below are some examples of data repositories established in other areas with favoured examples highlighted:

Area	URL	Site Type	Comments
Medway	http://www.medwayjsna.info/index.html	Standalone website	This has sections for thematic JSNA sections but also a data inventory section to enable downloads of more data and a page of external useful links.
Nottingham	http://www.nottinghaminsight.org.uk/	Standalone insight website	This has sections for thematic JSNA sections, and separate mapping website.
Norfolk	http://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/	Standalone site – “Norfolk Insight”	Opportunity to download own data but also contains thematic-based reports
Surrey	http://www.surreyi.gov.uk/mainmenu.aspx	Standalone Insight website – contains JSNA section within	Separate sections for content which could be downloaded separately. Number of other infographics which look really visual.
Peterborough	http://www.peterboroughjsna.org/	Standalone site – very technical	Provides visual mapping and shows overlays of different data indicators for the same areas. Complex and required a large investment.
Suffolk	http://www.suffolkobservatory.info/Default.aspx	Two sites – data observatory and JSNA site.	Data located on Suffolk Observatory. Good section headings, ability to manipulate by various geography types.

Devon	http://www.devonhealthandwellbeing.org.uk/jsna/	General Health and Wellbeing website	Not particularly innovative
Essex	http://www.essexinsight.org.uk/mainmenu.aspx	Standalone insight website.	Functionality to upload documents but not particularly visual and difficult to navigate despite recent refresh to site.
Cornwall	https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-and-research/data-by-topic/	Part of Council website	Split off sections about context to JSNA and uploads of PDF docs. No interactive or visualising content.
Southend	http://www.southend.gov.uk/info/200441/southend_insights	“Southend Insights” – part of Southend Council website	Textual stats divided by themes, no graphs or downloadable information
Milton Keynes	http://www.mkiobservatory.org.uk/	Appears to be three different sites – Mki Observatory, “My Milton Keynes” for mapping, and a JSNA part of council website	Functionality to view/visualise a lot of information, but tricky to navigate round.

Expected Benefits of an online data portal

3.2 Some of the identified benefits to creating and maintaining a portal in Thurrock include:

- A robust, continually updated data repository will ensure accurate and validated sources of data are used to inform decisions
- All Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) products can be published on the data repository, increasing access to, and use of them across and beyond the council to support evidence based commissioning
- Increased transparency of data
- A data repository provides *one version of the truth* for all local agencies to access.
- A data repository can be used by statutory and third sector agencies in Thurrock to find data on local need to support external funding/grant applications, potentially increasing revenue.
- It could support non-analytical staff to increase their understanding and use of data sources, and subsequently increase capacity for specialist analysts to undertake more complex tasks
- It will be quicker and easier to find sources of information
- It will lead to improved joint working between Local Authority and CCG colleagues
- It will enable those who live and work in Thurrock to have a better understanding of their borough

- The ability to refresh publically-released data more regularly may result in strategy documents needing to be fully updated on a less-frequent basis.

Potential Risks

3.3 If no agreement is given to establish and maintain a data portal, risks may include:

- Ongoing dependence on specialist data analysts to perform simple data research enquiries. This reduces capacity to focus on developing innovative products which could be particularly useful pieces of commissioning intelligence.
- Council and CCG data remains separate, making integrated commissioning much more difficult
- Potential use of outdated/inaccurate data for informing decisions.

Estimated Cost

3.4 Based on knowledge of the costs for developing the full Thurrock Council website, and costs obtained from other areas that have already set up similar portals, the estimated cost to set up a data portal would be approximately £80k. The Council would need to factor this cost into the appropriate budgets.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 Support should be given to creating this data portal due to the reasons set out previously. By creating a *one-stop shop* for data and intelligence across the Council and potentially other partners, this unites multiple sources of information and facilitates the process of finding the information required, resulting in productivity gains and therefore cost savings in terms of time spent.

4.2 It is envisaged that Public Health would hold responsibility for coordinating the uploading of data to this site, and work closely with the analytical leads of other departments to ensure the portal contains the most useful and relevant information.

4.3 Provided there is full support given to ensuring the maintenance of this portal across all directorates, there can be assurance that the data available on this site is the most robust and current, and also ensures that a consistent set of data indicators are used across different work areas.

4.4 Inclusion within the work plan of the existing Digital Transformation Programme will ensure alignment with the other systems already developed, including the content management system *Objective*, and enable the

provision of a robust offer of data and intelligence to inform commissioning decisions.

- 4.5 The report was presented to the Council's Directors' Board on the 3rd November who gave the proposals broad support. The Board also agreed that Public Health lead the development of a business case to go to the Council's Digital Board for funding to be found from digital transformation monies.

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

- 5.1 The concept of an online data portal has been explored with a number of internal colleagues, including the Head of Strategy and Communications and the in-house Web Management team, Adults Directorate Management Team and the Council's Performance Board.
- 5.2 A paper suggesting the future establishment of an online process for maintaining Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) products was presented to Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny on 13th January 2015 and the idea was well-received by Members. JSNA products would be hosted on this portal and become more accessible and easier to maintain.

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

- 6.1 Establishment of an online data portal as a mechanism for enabling a shared information resource will strengthen the work of the Council by facilitating access and use of accurate data to evidence decision-making. This in turn will result in better outcomes for residents, as the services delivered will be driven by this data.
- 6.2 It will also enable colleagues in other Thurrock organisations (e.g. third sector organisations) to have a better understanding of the health and social care needs of our residents, and potentially strengthen their service offer too.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Kay Goodacre**
Finance Manager

The costs associated with the creation and ongoing maintenance of an online data portal are contained within the body of the report. However, a partnership approach to establishing this portal could reduce some of the costs. If the portal is maintained and well-utilised, cost-savings could be seen in use of specialist analyst officer time to deal with routine data enquiries and also potentially reduce the time taken to answer Freedom of Information requests.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Dawn Pelle**
Adult Care Lawyer

There are no legal implications for the following reasons:

- The Portal is being considered to ensure accuracy of data
- To enable the authority and Health to work in an integrated way as envisaged by Care Act 2014
- Will provide data to support applications for funding etc.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Price**
Community Development Officer

The creation and maintenance of an online data portal would enable residents to explore variation in outcomes within their local area and develop understanding of how the Council has come to make its decisions. The authority must endeavour to ensure information is available and accessible to all sectors of the community.

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

None

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

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Maria Payne
Health Needs Assessment Manager
Public Health