

Thurrock Local Plan

Issues and Options (Stage 1)



February
2016

INFORMATION

How can I have my say on this consultation document?

Consultation on the Local Plan - Issues and Options (Stage 1) document and the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report will take place between 9am Friday 26 February and 5pm Monday 11 April 2016. We strongly encourage responses to be made on-line via the Council's interactive consultation system, however, you can submit your comments in any of the following ways:

- On-line by following the links from our web-site: www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan
- By e-mail: growth&strategy@thurrock.gov.uk
- By post: Growth and Strategy Team, Planning and Transportation, Thurrock Council, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Comments forms are available on request at the Civic Offices and in all libraries in the Borough. A printable PDF version of the form can also be downloaded from the Local Plan page on the Council's website.

How will my comments be used?

We will acknowledge receipt of your comments and fully consider them, although the Council will not enter into individual correspondence. Comments received will be published on the Council's consultation portal in accordance with the Data Protection Act and used to prepare the next stage of consultation on the Stage 2 Issues and Options Document.

If you need help with your representation or wish to discuss the content of document, please see the details on the back of this document. There will also be opportunities to meet with members of the Growth and Strategy Team face-to-face, at public drop-in exhibitions to be held throughout the consultation period. Please visit our website for details on times and locations at www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan.

Contents

Section 1: Introduction	5
What is the Thurrock Local Plan	5
How will the Local Plan be prepared	5
How are communities and key stakeholders going to be involved?	6
What information will be used to inform the Local Plan?	7
How will the Local Plan relate to other plans and strategies in the area?	7
How will the Local Plan relate to plans by neighbouring authorities?	8
How will the Council assess the environmental impacts of the emerging Local Plan?	9
What is the status of the Core Strategy and other planning documents now the Council is preparing a new Plan?	9
What are Neighbourhood Plans and how will the Local Plan affect them?	10
Section 2: Thinking forward	11
Promoting a clear vision	11
Determining an appropriate timeframe	12
Section 3: Key policy areas	13
Making the most of our location	13
New homes	15
Job creation	19
Shopping and leisure opportunities	21
Healthy and active communities	23
Accessibility	27
Environmental quality	29
Climate change	33
Minerals and waste	36
Section 4: The power of placemaking	39



Section 1: Introduction

What is the Thurrock Local Plan?

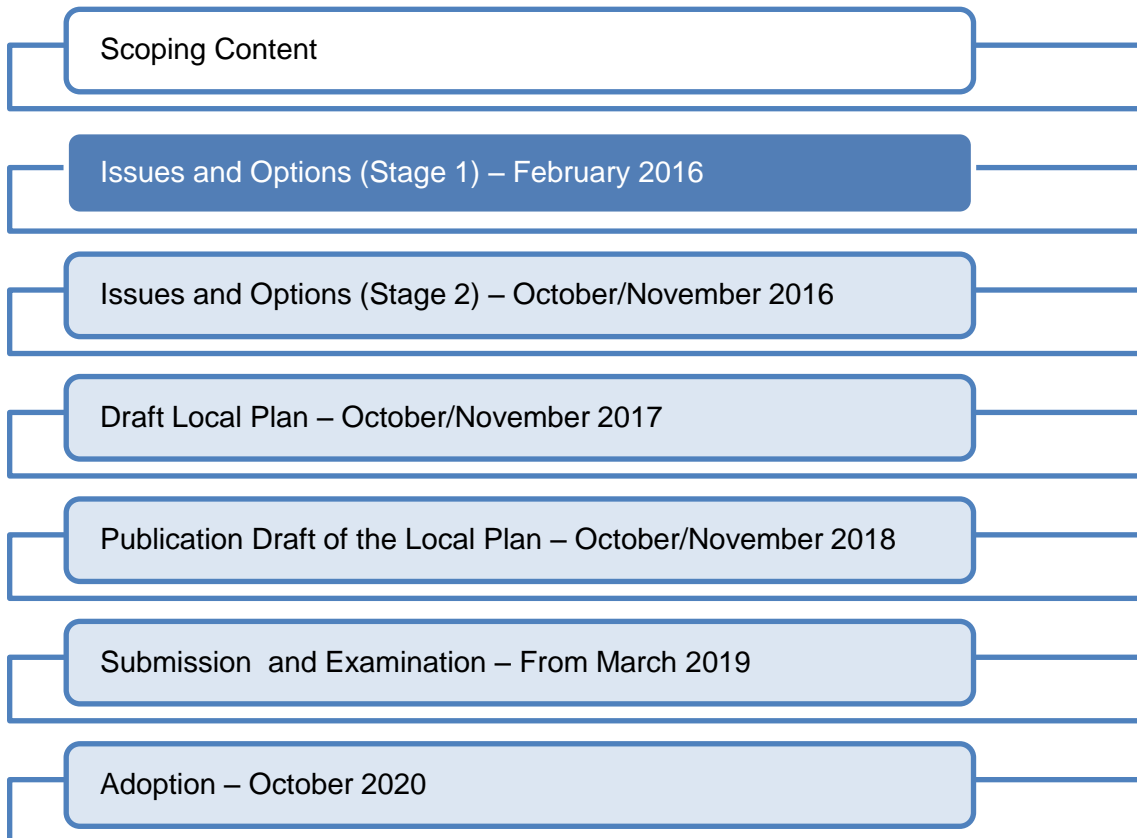
- 1.1 The Local Plan is used to guide decisions on planning applications for development as well as set out the strategic direction of the area on social, economic and environmental matters. All Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan setting out planning policies for their area.
- 1.2 Local Plans include targets for the number of homes and jobs to be provided together with the infrastructure needed to support them. They identify sites for development as well as areas of land which should be protected. They set out who needs to work together to deliver the plan and a timeline for its delivery.
- 1.3 Local Plans must be positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the national Planning Practice Guidance online resource (PPG).
- 1.4 In February 2014 the Council decided to commence work on a new Local Plan for Thurrock to respond to a number of major challenges. These included:
 - The need for a more up-to-date statutory planning framework to co-ordinate the delivery of the Council's ambitious growth strategy for Thurrock
 - The revocation of the East of England Plan and the requirement for local planning authorities to undertake a fresh assessment of their future development needs
 - The need for the Council to identify a deliverable five year housing land supply and bring forward more sites for development to support economic growth
 - A need to plan for the possible impact of a decision by Government on the route and location of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)
- 1.5 This Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation document is an important step in producing the Thurrock Local Plan. It allows people to input their views on the issues affecting the Borough. These comments will be used to identify the Plans priorities and develop policy options.
- 1.6 The Council is intending to produce a Stage 2 Issues and Options consultation document in October/November 2016 to look in more detail at specific policy options and site allocations. It should be noted that for some issues there may not be an option or limited options for how that issue is addressed. This is because the NPPF and PPG set the ground rules and represent the main starting point for determining the direction of policies in the Local Plan.

How will the Local Plan be prepared?

- 1.7 Preparation of the Local Plan must follow a number of stages to ensure that local people and other stakeholders are fully engaged in the process and that its contents are based on robust evidence, testing of alternatives and then external examination by

an Inspector. These stages of work are summarised in Figure 1. It is expected that the Local Plan will be adopted by the Council in 2020, however due to the complex nature of the work; the programme will be kept under regular review. For more details on the Local Plan work programme please see the latest Local Development Scheme (www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan).

Figure 1 – Local Plan Stages of Preparation



How are communities and key stakeholders going to be involved?

- 1.8 In preparing a new Local Plan the Council is required by legislation to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI sets out the activities the Council must legally undertake when preparing a Plan along with setting out what the Council may do. These include making consultation documents available on the Council's webpage and in hard copy of the Civic Offices, Grays and in all of the Borough's libraries.
- 1.9 The Council is keen to engage as many people as possible in the development of the Local Plan and is achieving this by building upon the basic requirements of the SCI and promoting range activities which go above and beyond the legal requirements including, but not limited, to:
 - The creation of a Local Plan Residents Forum, Youth Forum, Developer Forum and Business Forum.

- Organising a series of drop in events across the Borough to allow people to come along and share their views in person.
- Setting up an online poll to allow more people to have their say on the big questions.

INFORMATION

The Local Plan Forums have been created to ensure that the plan is influenced by local people and businesses. Forum members will be involved throughout the preparation of the Local Plan, interrogating evidence and being party to the difficult decisions needed through each stage.

If you are interested in joining one of the Local Plan Forums please contact a member of the Growth and Strategy Team using the details on the back of this document.

- 1.10 All engagement and how it has influenced the Plan at each stage will be recorded in the Local Plan Consultation and Engagement Statement, which will eventually be submitted to the Inspector for consideration as part of the examination. This document will be published in sections alongside each stage of Local Plan preparation so that people can see how their contribution is helping to shape the Plan.

What information will be used to inform the Local Plan?

- 1.11 Local Plans must be based on robust evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. Much of this evidence is of a technical nature and is therefore not described in detail in this document. Key pieces of evidence currently being prepared include:

- Active Place Strategy
- Accessibility Mapping
- Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Essex Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2016 Update)
- Employment Land Availability Assessment
- Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Local Plan and CIL Viability Study
- Landscape and Seascape Character, Seascape and Capacity Assessment
- South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment

QUESTION 1

As the Plan progresses more evidence will be need to be prepared. What other evidence documents do you think the Council will need to commission or produce to ensure that the Plan is sound?

How will the Local Plan relate to other Plans and strategies for the area?

1.12 Partnership working and co-ordination of strategies are key features of the planning system. The Council is therefore liaising with relevant bodies that prepare strategies affecting the Borough's future, including health, transport, housing, employment, and the environment. This is to ensure that Plans and policies are as closely aligned as possible and that strategies support each other. Some of the policies in the Local Plan will rely on actions by other parties, so it is important that they are engaged early on in the process and agreement reached on who does what.

How will the Local Plan relate to Plans by neighbouring authorities?

1.13 The Council is working jointly on strategic priorities with other authorities in South Essex, London and beyond. This is known as the Duty to Cooperate. Thurrock forms part of the South Essex Housing Market Area and as such the Local Authorities work very closely together particularly when planning for housing, the economy and infrastructure needed to support growth.

1.14 The development of the Local Plan evidence base so far and meetings held as part of the Duty to Co-operate identified a number of issues which need to be discussed at a strategic level. Figure 2 sets out the high level issues that will need to be discussed.

Figure 2 – Cross Boundary Issues



QUESTION 2

Do you feel that all the key cross boundary issues have been identified? If not, then please state any other issues that we should be working with our partners to address.

How will the Council assess the environmental impacts of the emerging Local Plan?

- 1.15 Undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the Local Plan is an essential part of the plan-making process. The sustainability appraisal must address the legal requirements of the EU Directive (2001/42/EC) known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (or SEA) Directive. A failure to undertake the sustainability appraisal process properly can expose the Plan to legal challenge.
- 1.16 The sustainability appraisal being undertaken for the Local Plan adopts an integrated approach and also includes a health impact assessment, an equalities impact assessment and a Habitats Screening assessment as required under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- 1.17 The first stage in the Local Plan sustainability process is the preparation of a Scoping Report. This will explain the context in which the Plan is being prepared, identify sustainability objectives and the proposed approach of the assessment and identify relevant environmental, economic and social issues. The final scope of the appraisal will need to be determined through consultation with, English Heritage, Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- 1.18 The Council is now consulting on the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report which is now available to view on the Thurrock Local Plan website. Your comments on the scoping report are welcomed and will be used to help inform the preparation of the Sustainability Appraisal as we move forward with the plan-making process.
- 1.19 The Council also intends to set up an external partner Sustainability Appraisal Stakeholder Reference Group as a mechanism for facilitating the wider involvement of key organisations and prescribed Duty to Co-operate bodies in the process of developing the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Framework. The Council would welcome nominations from all interested parties to sit on the Sustainability Appraisal Stakeholder Reference Group.

What is the status of the Core Strategy and other planning documents now the Council is preparing a new Plan?

- 1.20 The Council adopted its Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development Local Plan (Core Strategy) in December 2011. The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision, spatial strategy and core policies for the development of Thurrock.

- 1.21 Following the publication of the NPPF, the Council identified a number of policies in the Core Strategy which requires updating to ensure that they were in full compliance with the NPPF. These updated policies were adopted by the Council in January 2015.
- 1.22 The policies within the Core Strategy will continue to be used in decision making until the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted. However, as work on the new Local Plan progresses, emerging policies could start to influence decisions on planning applications. Once the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted it will replace the existing documents.
- 1.23 Work on documents previously in preparation, including the Sites Allocations Local Plan, has now been suspended indefinitely. Relevant comments received on these documents will be considered in the preparation of the Local Plan.

What are Neighbourhood Plans and how will the Local Plan affect them?

- 1.24 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape how their local areas develop and change by preparing Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP) or Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDOs). In Thurrock only designated Neighbourhood Forums are able to produce NDPs and NDOs.
- 1.25 Through producing a Neighbourhood Plan communities can take the lead on developing planning policies for their areas, as long as certain rules are followed and any Plans and policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan.
- 1.26 Although the Council already has a series of adopted strategic policies (Core Strategy) the wording of these policies and their strategic direction may need to be re-examined and updated as work on the emerging Local Plan continues.

INFORMATION

At the time of publication the Council has not received any formal applications by community groups to be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum and/or received any official requests for support.

If you and your local community are considering producing a Neighbourhood Plan we would recommend that you speak to a member of the Growth and Strategy Team as soon as practical. Contact details are on the back page of this document.

Section 2: Thinking Forward

Promoting a clear vision

- 2.1 Thurrock has a unique location, benefiting from large areas of green open space and riverfront whilst being in close proximity to the nation's capital. Thurrock's position by the River Thames has long since made it a strategic location and hub for industrial growth. The area's riverside location and vast natural resources are the key to its past as well as its future development and success.
- 2.2 Over the decades new communities have developed in Thurrock in response to major business growth. Tilbury was designed and expanded to provide homes for people working in the Port, East Tilbury Bata estate developed to support the Bata shoe factory, which came to Thurrock from Czechoslovakia and cottages were developed through Purfleet to support the riverside industries.
- 2.3 The Borough has often been described as a place of contrast and it is home to a number of paradoxes with busy towns and picturesque villages framed by an established industrial backdrop along the Thames.
- 2.4 Thurrock Council's corporate vision is 'to create a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish'. The Local Plan vision needs to expand upon this and explore key questions, including: What Thurrock as a place will look like in the future?; Where will people be living and working? and; What will they be doing in their spare time?
- 2.5 The Core Strategy vision was based on targets set at regional level and talked about the creation of 23,000 new homes and 26,000 new jobs. It focussed on the redevelopment and regeneration of the five main growth areas as a way of meeting these targets. These areas are:
 - Purfleet
 - Lakeside/West Thurrock
 - Grays
 - Tilbury
 - London Gateway
- 2.6 A number of the aims and ambitions of the vision set out in the Core Strategy are now coming to fruition. However, some have wavered as a result of the national economic crisis and others may need rethinking (e.g. as a result of any government decision on a Lower Thames Crossing).
- 2.7 In creating the Local Plan vision it is important to revisit our previous goals and reflect on the successes and challenges, but ultimately we must move forward if we want the Borough to become an even greater place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence.

QUESTION 3

What would you like Thurrock to be like in the future and what do you think should be the key economic, housing, environmental, social, community and health outcomes that the Local Plan should help to deliver?

QUESTION 4

Do you believe that the vision and approach set out in the Core Strategy of focusing development within Thurrock's urban area and major growth hubs remains the most appropriate option for meeting the Borough's future development needs?

Determining an appropriate timeframe

- 2.8 National policy states that Local Plans should preferably plan for a 15 year time horizon. If the Plan is adopted in 2020 as programmed, this would mean it would need to have an end date of 2035. However some of the background evidence, especially that which relies on national data sets, may have a longer lifespan. There may also be ambitions in the vision which may not be able to be delivered by 2035.

QUESTION 5

Do you think that the plan period of 2015-2035 is appropriate? If not please suggest a more suitable plan period.

Section 3: Key policy areas

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR LOCATION

THE LOCAL AREA

- 3.1 Thurrock's close proximity to London and excellent strategic transport links together with its role as international gateway represent major drivers for positive change and regeneration in the Borough. However, more needs to be done at the local level to ensure that the benefits of economic growth are fully shared by all sections of the community.
- 3.2 Whilst there is much to celebrate in terms of major new developments and jobs that have been created, there are also areas of Thurrock which have not seen much investment in recent decades and are now in need of renewal and regeneration. These include many older housing and industrial areas across the Borough as well as some district and local shopping centres where the quality of the environment and condition of buildings has begun to deteriorate. Equally, declining levels of investment or changing economic circumstances have meant that some areas no longer have easy access to an adequate range of services necessary to meet their needs.
- 3.3 In most cases, the size and function of a settlement affects the amount of services and facilities available to the people that live or work there. If these services and facilities are close by, it reduces people's need to travel. In some parts of the Borough there are examples of settlements which are large in size but residents do not have access to the range and type of services, shopping and community facilities needed. In other parts of Thurrock smaller settlements are not large enough to support the retention of key local services much to the detriment of these areas and their future.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.4 Although the Core Strategy focusses primarily on the redevelopment and regeneration of the five main growth areas it also identified the need for the Council and its partners to develop and implement a range of strategies to secure the comprehensive regeneration and renewal of Thurrock's older housing, employment and shopping centres. Also identified as a priority is the need to bring forward improvements to a number of Council housing estate's where problems of social deprivation remain a concern.

QUESTION 6

Policies in the Local Plan can seem very high level but at their heart they are all about creating better places to live, work and play. What would you change in your local neighbourhood to make it a better place to live?

RIVER THAMES

- 3.5 The Borough's character and history is interwoven with that of the River Thames and it will continue to be important that the Local Plan is embedded in a strategy which recognises and exploits the economic opportunities provided by Thurrock's location by the river but also respects the need to protect and enhance the distinctive 'riverscape' along the southern edge of the Borough which plays a vital role in the region's economy. Key amongst these are Tilbury which is currently the busiest port on the river and the growing new deep sea container port at London Gateway.
- 3.6 The river is also important as a natural habitat and a unique and important riverscape, including heritage assets such as Coalhouse and Tilbury forts.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.7 The Core Strategy recognises that whilst there is a strong need to protect industry and support the regeneration of Thurrock riverside in the broadest sense, the river and its setting needs to be accessible and visible, capitalising on the landscape and environmental improvements that will be realised for the future.
- 3.8 Going forward, priorities around the development of the river and its foreshore will vary as individual areas will lend themselves to different opportunities. Whether that is the maximising the potential of the ports, promoting and protecting the environment, creating an attractive place to live or encouraging people to travel by river.
- 3.9 In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to consider whether there is a need to amend this approach to reflect any new opportunities for accommodating development in areas adjoining the river and in improving the appearance and environmental quality of a number of riverscape and surrounding areas. Improving access to the river will also need to be considered but care will also need to be taken to ensure that this is balanced with the need to protect and enhance key environmental and ecological assets along the river.

QUESTION 7

The River Thames is one of the Borough's biggest assets but has been somewhat neglected over the years. Going forward we need to ensure that the river and the areas around it are developed in the right way. How would you make the best use of the River Thames and its foreshore?

NEW HOMES

- 3.10 The population of Thurrock is relatively young with a large proportion of the population of working age. Nearly a third of households are families and lone parents with dependent children. With the current housing market, this means more young people are living at home for longer and unable to move on from the family home. The older population, in particular, is projected to grow significantly in the next twenty years, moving more in line with the national average, placing additional pressures on housing and social care services. The majority of new growth in the Borough is anticipated to be as a result of natural change, i.e. existing families growing and people living longer.
- 3.11 The Government has a strong agenda to increase the supply of housing in order to meet the national housing shortage. Planning is a key focus for the Government in addressing the housing shortage.
- 3.12 National policy tells us that we should seek to plan to meet our Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) for housing in full. The OAN is determined by looking at a range of secondary data sources like the Census and government housing and employment projections, as well as more localised indicators of need.

The Core strategy says...

- 3.13 The housing target set out in the Core Strategy is to deliver a minimum of 18,500 new dwellings between 2001 and 2021. This target was determined by the then East of England Plan. This regional tier of planning has now been removed by the Government leaving Councils to determine their own housing requirements. However setting a new target is not as easy as just selecting a number we feel comfortable with.
- 3.14 With a growing population, an ageing population and changes in household make-up, the need for housing is high and increasing. New development is an important responsibility that we have in order to help ensure that future generations can find homes of their own in the future. Preventing further growth and development is not an option that we have as we must seek to plan for our full OAN over the plan period.

QUESTION 8

Have you ever experienced any difficulty in trying to find a suitable property in the Borough? If yes what were your biggest challenge?

DECIDING WHERE NEW HOMES SHOULD GO

- 3.15 National policy states that the Plan should seek to encourage sustainable patterns of movement which means that we should make sure that new housing is properly serviced by existing or new infrastructure.
- 3.16 National policy also encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), an approach that is also promoted through the

Core Strategy. However, it is not always possible to build on this land and/or there is not enough of this land available to accommodate the number of new homes needed.

- 3.17 In late 2014/early 2015 the Council undertook a Call for Sites exercise to help inform its emerging Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA). Over 170 sites were submitted during this call. Since the last call for sites Officers have been identifying a number of other potential development sites using the methods suggested in national guidance. A report documenting all of the sites and drawing conclusions about each will be published in summer 2016. It is important to remember that the HLAA report is only a technical evidence document and it does not allocate sites for development

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.18 The Core Strategy prioritises the development of brownfield sites and seeks to focus the majority of new housing development (10,010 dwellings) into the Thurrock Urban Area (Purfleet, Lakeside, Grays, Tilbury, Chadwell St Mary). A further 2100 dwellings were set to be allocated in the outlying settlements to the north of the A13 with the remaining dwellings provided in the outlying settlements to the south of the A13.
- 3.19 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would allocate individual sites for development. Work on that document has commenced but was suspended in favour of putting together an integrated Local Plan.
- 3.20 Since 2006, 2,366 net additional dwellings have been built resulting in an under build of 6,184 dwellings. This under build is a result of several factors including the economic recession of recent years. Going forward we will need to make sure that our approach is flexible enough to respond to changing markets.

QUESTION 9

National policy states that the Council should prioritise the development of redundant brownfield sites that have good access to existing services for new housing. What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites to meet its housing need?

INFORMATION

If you know of any brownfield sites which could be considered for use as housing land please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document. Please note that we may not be able to include sites submitted after this deadline in the 2016 Housing Land Availability Assessment.

DECIDING WHAT TYPES OF HOMES TO BUILD

- 3.21 Housing should be of a high quality, sufficient quantity, affordable and of the type needed in order to create successful communities. It is important to plan for a mix of homes and a range of sizes and types to meet both current and future housing needs.
- 3.22 National policy encourages Local Plans to plan positively for a mix of housing based on an assessment of the type of people that live in the Borough both now and in the future. This includes providing a mix of homes to meet the needs of different groups such as families with children, older people, those with disabilities or particular support needs and those wishing to build their own homes.
- 3.23 Two thirds of households in Thurrock live in semi-detached and terraced houses. The majority own their own home but Thurrock has nearly double the regional and national averages renting from the Council, with a small number renting from Registered Providers.
- 3.24 Thurrock's housing situation reflects the national situation, with house prices outstretching average earnings meaning that many cannot afford to buy or even rent a home.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.25 In terms of general housing mix the Core Strategy promotes the use of lifetime/accessible housing and suggested that dwelling mix be determined by the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment. The Council is currently in the process of updating its Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 3.26 With regards to affordable housing the Core Strategy currently seeks a minimum of 35% affordable housing on new housing developments. Although there is still a strong need to provide more affordable housing in the Borough this has to be balanced against the viability of individual sites.

QUESTION 10

National policy encourages Local Plans to plan positively for a mix of housing based on the type of people that live in the Borough both now and in the future. What types of housing do you think will be most needed in the Borough over the coming years?

QUESTION 11

The costs of developing some sites and the risks involved can mean that some sites which are suitable for housing cannot come forward due to viability issues. Should the Council explore the potential for variable affordable housing targets and approaches so that difficult higher risk sites can be developed?

INFORMATION

The Government has published the Housing and Planning Bill 2015 setting out its proposals to increase home ownership and boost levels of house building. A key component of the Bill is the creation of a new duty on all Local Authority Planning departments to promote the supply of starter homes in their area. Starter homes are exclusively for first time buyers under the age of 40, for sale at 20 per cent below normal market prices.

MAKING SURE THE NEEDS OF GYPSIES, TRAVELLERS AND TRAVELLING SHOW PEOPLE ARE MET

- 3.27 Definitions for Gypsies and Travellers vary across pieces of legislation. The definition used in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites is: “Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their families or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age has ceased to travel temporarily or permanently”.
- 3.28 The National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites document requires all Local Authorities to set targets for new pitches and plots. Local Authorities must also identify and maintain a five-year supply of sites in order to meet their targets for both new permanent residential and transit pitches.

The Core strategy said...

- 3.29 The Core Strategy set a target to provide 87 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2006 and 2021. This target was determined by the former East of England Plan. This regional tier of planning has now been removed and Councils need to determine their own requirements through undertaking a thorough assessment.
- 3.30 The most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed in September 2014. At the time of production the 2014 Essex GTAA was prepared in full conformity with the then national policy and assessed both current and future pitch requirements. In August 2015 national policy was updated meaning that the GTAA now needs to be updated. Work on updating the Essex GTAA is now underway.
- 3.31 With regards to meeting the needs of Travelling Show People the Core Strategy safeguarded the existing sites within the Borough and set out locational criteria to assess applications for new sites/pitches.

QUESTION 12

National policy states that the Council should prioritise the development of redundant brownfield sites that have good access to existing services for new housing which includes pitches for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people. What should the Council look to do if it cannot find enough suitable brownfield sites for new pitches?

INFORMATION

If you know of any suitable brownfield sites which could be considered for use as use as Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People pitches please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document.

JOB CREATION

- 3.32 In 2013, Thurrock's economy was estimated to be worth around £2.8bn with employment levels having recovered quickly following the economic down turn. Looking ahead, it is forecast that the Thurrock economy will grow by an average of 3.2% per annum between 2012 and 2030 and that total employment of will grow by an average of 1.5% a year, equivalent to an increase of 21,200 jobs in Thurrock over the same period.
- 3.33 The main employment sectors in the Borough are transport and logistics, port functions and retail. The strength of these sectors reflects some of Thurrock's key locational advantages which include its close proximity to London and international gateways (ports and airports) which make it an attractive proposition for continued inward investment and job creation.
- 3.34 Government policy is committed to building a strong and competitive economy in order to create jobs and prosperity. To help achieve economic growth Paragraph 21 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities are required to:
- Set out a clear economic vision and strategy for their area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth
 - Set criteria, or identify strategic sites, for local and inward investment to match the strategy and to meet anticipated needs over the plan period
 - Support existing business sectors, taking account of whether they are expanding or contracting and where possible identify and plan for new or emerging sectors likely to locate in their area. Policies should be flexible enough to accommodate needs not anticipated in the Plan and to allow a rapid response to changes in economic circumstances
 - Plan positively for the location, promotion and expansion of clusters or networks of knowledge driven, creative or high technology industries
 - Identify priority areas for economic regeneration, infrastructure provision and environmental enhancement
 - Facilitate flexible working practices such as the integration of residential and commercial uses within the same unit

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.35 The Core Strategy approach is based on promoting and supporting economic growth and development through the provision of land, premises and supporting infrastructure in five Key Strategic Economic Hubs across the Borough. These comprise Purfleet, Lakeside/West Thurrock, Grays Town Centre, Tilbury and London Gateway. In preparing the Local Plan the Council will need to consider whether this strategic approach remains appropriate or whether it needs to be revised to include, for example, Thames Enterprise Park at Coryton as a sixth Strategic Economic Hub.
- 3.36 Despite the challenging economic environment that has existed at the time of the Core Strategy's adoption in 2011, the Plan has been instrumental in attracting significant

inward investment into the Borough leading to a faster rate of jobs growth in Thurrock than either the national or regional average. Testimony to this are the levels of private sector investment which has/will be generated by proposed or committed development at London Gateway, Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside, Purfleet and the Port of Tilbury.

- 3.37 In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to develop a clear understanding of business needs within the economic markets operating within the Borough and wider Thames Gateway South Essex area. This will include an assessment of the need for additional land or floorspace for economic development, including both the qualitative and quantitative needs for anticipated types of economic activity over the plan period, including retail and leisure development.
- 3.38 Alongside the need to ensure the availability of appropriate land and property to meet forecast growth in jobs, the Local Plan will also need to support efforts to diversify the Borough's unbalanced employment base which is dominated by the transport, logistics, port functions and retail.

QUESTION 13

What are the main barriers to growth that need to be addressed in the Local Plan to ensure that all sections of the community have access to the benefits of future employment creation in Thurrock?

QUESTION 14

Do you think there is a need to identify additional land for employment and what other employment uses outside of the port, logistics and retail sectors should the Local Plan support and promote?

INFORMATION

If you know of any sites which could be considered for use as employment land or that are currently used for employment but could be used for other uses please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document. Please note that we may not be able to include sites submitted after this deadline in the 2016 Housing or Employment Land Availability Assessments.

SHOPPING AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.39 Town centres are at the heart of community life and play a key role in shaping people's perceptions of an area. Attractive, vibrant and prosperous town centres can act as an important catalyst for attracting growth and investment into the wider area. Equally, declining centres can have the opposite effect and serve to deter and undermine efforts to turn round the economic fortunes of an area.
- 3.40 Over the last five years town centres have had to face the challenge of major economic and social change which has had an impact on the way we shop, the development of new retail formats and changing patterns of retail development. This has been manifest in the rise in internet shopping, the rapid growth of discount retailers and the 'convenience' shopping concept, the consolidation and concentration of investment into fewer larger centres and an overall decline in the demand for town centre retail floorspace in all but the largest and more successful centres.
- 3.41 To ensure the vitality of town centres Paragraph 23 of the NPPF requires that 'planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres'. This includes a requirement that 'needs for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses are met in full and are not compromised by limited site availability'.
- 3.42 National policy also requires Local Plans to be based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence about the economic, social and environmental characteristics and prospects of the area. In terms of a retail evidence base, paragraph 161 states that they should assess:
- The need for land or floorspace for economic development, including both the quantitative and qualitative needs for all foreseeable types of economic activity over the plan period, including for retail and leisure development;
 - The role and function of town centres and the relationship between them, including any trends in the performance of the centres;
 - The capacity of existing centres to accommodate new town centre development;
 - Locations of deprivation which may benefit from planned remedial action

The Core Strategy says....

- 3.43 The Core Strategy defines the hierarchy of centres in Thurrock and sets out the Council's commitment to supporting the transformation of the northern part of the Lakeside Basin into a new regional centre through the plan-making process and the preparation of an Inset Plan for the area. Policy CSTP7 also sets the Council's support for the regeneration of the remainder of the Borough's network of centres with particular reference to the need to promote Grays town centre as a focus for cultural, administrative and educational functions, whilst providing retail development that is complementary to the Lakeside Basin.

3.44 Since the adoption of the Core Strategy in 2011 the retail landscape has changed dramatically with far reaching implications for the demand for retail and leisure development both across the UK and within Thurrock. In preparing the new Local Plan the Council will need to review the existing policy approach and to identify the need for additional guidance on the scale, nature of location of new retail and leisure development across the Borough. Consideration will also need to be given to the need to prepare more detailed town centre development and regeneration strategies to co-ordinate, prioritise and implement a range of measures to maintain the viability and vitality of the Borough's wider network of Town, District and Local Centres.

QUESTION 15

What do you think are the key challenges facing Thurrock's retail centres and how can the Local Plan maintain and enhance their role?

QUESTION 16

What improvements would you like to see in those centres that you visit regularly and what would make you visit them more often? Please state the name of the centre in your response.

QUESTION 17

What are the best locations for new retail and leisure development in the Borough and how can future development be harnessed to support the delivery of wider regeneration and economic growth needs and objectives?

QUESTION 18

Is there a need for the development of retail, leisure and other town centres uses in locations outside the existing established retail centres and if so where?

HEALTHY AND ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

- 3.45 In Thurrock, the general health of the population is good and with a below average number of residents experiencing long term health conditions or disabilities. However, at the local level there are clear health inequalities, with life expectancy in the most deprived areas more than eight years lower for men and seven for women compared to those living in the least deprived locations.
- 3.46 There is a high rate of obesity for both children and adults prevalent in Thurrock, compounded by poor levels of healthy eating and low levels of participation in sport. This has health implications in both the short and long term and can impact on a child's development and educational attainment.
- 3.47 Planning can play an important role in creating healthy, inclusive and active communities. For example, positive planning can lead to reductions in health inequalities, by improving access to healthy food, through offering choices in the local market and reducing obesity by encouraging physical activity through the inclusion of open-spaces and leisure facilities. Planning can also facilitate social interaction which in turn can lead to improvements in mental health and general well-being.

OPEN SPACES AND SPORT FACILITIES

- 3.48 Leisure, sport and open spaces are of prime importance to improving and maintaining the quality of life in the Borough, by encouraging an active and healthy community. Thurrock has a wide range of existing public open spaces, parks, and recreational areas, from Country Parks to amenity green spaces, with a range of equipped play spaces and natural play areas. These spaces provide varied opportunities for formal and informal active and passive recreation.
- 3.49 National policy recognises the important role open spaces play in local communities and indicates that in developing a Local Plan, Local Planning Authorities must assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas.
- 3.50 To help protect green spaces which are important to local communities, national policy has introduced the ability to designate such land as Local Green Space. National policy considers that this special protection would not be appropriate for most open space and should only be used under the following conditions:
- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves
 - Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a local significance, for example because of its historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife
 - Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.51 The Core Strategy states that the Council and Partners will support the delivery of a physically active, socially inclusive and healthy community through the provision of high quality sports and leisure facilities and appropriate open spaces for those that live, work, and visit the Borough.
- 3.52 In the past open spaces were often planned to meet a single purpose, such as sport or flood protection. However, today it is recognised that open spaces can frequently combine several functions including:
- Informal recreation and relaxation
 - Children's play
 - Outdoor sports provision
 - Countryside access and tourism
 - Conserving wildlife habitats and creating wildlife corridors
 - Protecting landscapes
 - Managing water resources and flooding
 - Producing useful products, such as timber, bio-crops and local food
- 3.53 At the end of 2015 the Council sought to find out from residents what types of open spaces they use, how regularly they use them, how they get there, and any ideas they may have on how things could be improved. This information will be used by the Council to help form new standards for open space. Going forward it is essential that all new developments continue to contribute to and improve the provision of open spaces so that local needs are met.

QUESTION 19

What new sport and leisure facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?

QUESTION 20

National policy gives Councils new powers to protect valued open spaces by designating them as a Local Green Spaces. Are there any open spaces that are special to your local community which should be designated? If yes, please provide details of the open space, its location and the reason why it is special to you and your community.

EDUCATION FACILITIES

- 3.54 In recent years the education system has been overhauled with the introduction of Free Schools and Academies. There are currently 39 state maintained primary schools in Thurrock:
- 22 Academies
 - 9 Community Schools

- Voluntary Aided Schools
- 1 Voluntary Controlled
- 1 Foundation
- 1 Free School

3.55 Each Academy, Free School and Voluntary Aided-School is its own Admissions Authority. The Council is the Admissions Authority for Community Schools and Voluntary Controlled Schools. The number of school places required in Thurrock is regularly reviewed as new data becomes available and an annual plan is published. Pupil forecasts are based on live birth data, information on proposed housing developments, pupil numbers on roll at Thurrock schools and other demographic data.

3.56 New residential developments and population increase will inevitably bring an increased demand for school places. Although some local schools have extra capacity, there may be a need for more places to be made available or for completely new education facilities to be built.

The Core Strategy says...

3.57 The Core Strategy sets out a comprehensive strategy to enhance educational achievement and skills in the Borough. The approach suggested included things like promoting the integration of schools into multi-functional hubs with linkages to key facilities such as sports and leisure facilities, health and social care and working with key partners to transform post-16 routes.

QUESTION 21

What new educational facilities do think are needed in the Borough to support existing and new communities?

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

3.58 With a growing and ageing population, the provision of health and community facilities/services in the Borough is going to become even more important in the future than it already is now. Thurrock CCG and the NHS are currently in the process of reviewing the way in which health care is provided which, in the future, could involve more care being provided in the home, better online 'self-help' services and the creation of a smaller number of health hubs with sufficient doctors to serve a greater number of patients and facilities on site for undertaking a range of minor procedures.

The Core Strategy says...

3.59 The Core Strategy recognises the need to provide health care facilities that meet existing and future community needs, including those needs arising from the new housing and employment that will be developed in the Borough over the lifetime of the Plan.

- 3.60 Going forward, the Council needs to continue planning positively to meet needs for social, recreational, cultural facilities and services. Successful health and community facilities/services are integral to the vibrancy of communities across the Borough. Good community facilities provide opportunities for interaction between people, the chance to get involved in activities and to have increased accessibility to basic services. This benefits the social prosperity of communities across the Borough, whilst providing knock-on benefits for health and well-being, sustainability and the economy.

QUESTION 22

What new health and community facilities do you think are needed in the Borough to support both new and existing communities?

QUESTION 23

Buildings in community use are a valuable local resource. Displacing them by redevelopment or change of use makes it far more difficult to return them to community use. What kind of things could the Local Plan do to protect these valuable community assets?

POLLUTION AND AIR QUALITY

- 3.61 There are 18 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Thurrock. AQMAs are areas where the Council monitors air pollution levels from roads, industry, and property. Traffic emissions, especially from heavy goods vehicles, are the major contributor to poor air quality in most of these areas.
- 3.62 National policy makes clear that Local Plans can affect air quality in a number of ways, including through what type of development is proposed and where and the encouragement given to sustainable transport.
- 3.63 The Borough has a history of incompatible land uses, with housing having been developed next to heavy industries. This has resulted in some poor living environments. The Council's aspiration is to break from previous trends and to minimise pollution, enhance local amenity and provide safe and healthy environments for communities.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.64 The Core Strategy recognises the need to locate more sensitive land uses, especially housing, schools and health facilities away from areas of high pollution. The Plan also requires assessments to accompany planning applications where it has reasonable grounds to believe that a development may breach standards relating to pollution and air quality.

QUESTION 24

What approach could the Local Plan take to ensure that issues relating to pollution and air quality are minimised?

ACCESSIBILITY

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CHOICES

- 3.65 Sustainable transport choices can play a significant role in improving health and well-being. Walking and cycling have obvious health benefits and people who use public transport are more likely to walk for part of their journey than those who drive.
- 3.66 Thurrock benefits from a good location in terms of transport. Regular rail services operate between London and Southend on Sea, serving seven stations. The Port of Tilbury provides international connections for both passengers and freight.
- 3.67 Thurrock also has an extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways with just over 170km of Public Rights of Way providing valuable access to the countryside, local parks and open spaces, helping to promote healthier lifestyles.
- 3.68 National policy focuses on the importance of sustainable transport choices and the wider role that this can play in achieving sustainability and health objectives as well as reducing congestion. It also states that new development should be located where it is accessible by public transport. This is particularly important for developments with high trip generation. This is more difficult to achieve in rural areas and consideration needs to be given as to how new development can encourage the provision and use of public transport and how the solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.69 The main focus for the transport and access policies in the Core Strategy is to encourage a modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport, particularly in the urban areas.
- 3.70 In July 2011, Thurrock Council was successful in securing £5m from the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). This funding was primarily used in the Borough's main urban area to encourage a modal shift away from car use. The key components of the programme included smarter choices measures, walking, cycling and public transport improvements, and freight measures.

QUESTION 25

There is a growing need to deliver the infrastructure required to support sustainable transport choices. What kind of things could the Plan do to help you make more sustainable transport choices?

QUESTION 26

Are there any specific sustainable transport projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail about the project.

GETTING AROUND BY ROAD

- 3.71 Thurrock is well-situated in the South East of England and is considered to be a strategic transport and distribution hub serving London and the wider region. With its three strategic ports feeding into the M25 and A13 trunk road network, this has increased opportunities for commercial and industrial development to be located within the Borough.
- 3.72 This high proportion of commercial and industrial development also brings with it a number of transport and health related challenges. This includes the need to effectively manage traffic issues caused by industrial and commercial development such as parking, HGV routing and provision of welfare facilities.
- 3.73 Increased residential development in the Borough over the plan period will bring different challenges including placing an increased burden on both the local and strategic road network, especially at key junctions. Although the Council will always seek to promote sustainable transport options by putting in place the physical infrastructure to enable a behavioural change, it cannot force it to happen.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.74 The Core Strategy supports the delivery of additional highway capacity where modal shift alone was insufficient to address congestion. Priority was given to routes that provide access to strategic employment sites and regeneration areas.
- 3.75 Policy CSTP17 specifically addresses freight movement and access to ports. This policy seeks to support economic growth by ensuring sustainable and reliable freight access to the ports and other key employment locations, whilst minimising the adverse impacts such activity may have on people, the environment and the transport system.

QUESTION 27

Are there any specific road transportation projects that the Council should be promoting in the Local Plan? If yes, please provide some detail on the project, its location and the reason why you believe it is necessary.

QUESTION 28

It is likely that port-related and freight activity will continue to be a main feature of the Borough's economy over the plan period. What kind of things can the plan do to reduce the adverse impacts of freight movements?

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

HIGH QUALITY DESIGN

- 3.76 High quality design is fundamental to the creation of high quality places by both enhancing appearance and functionality. High quality design has a significant impact on quality of life. It influences safety and security and encourages economic investment as well as fostering community cohesion and inclusion. It can encourage greater levels of walking and cycling, to address health and wellbeing, as well as addressing the causes and effects of our changing climate.
- 3.77 High quality design is crucial if the settlements throughout the Borough are to maintain and enhance their valued local distinctiveness and emerge as more sustainable, higher quality environments that thrive economically, socially and culturally.
- 3.78 National policy reinforces the principles of good design. It states that Local Planning Authorities should:
- Create a high quality built environment
 - Secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity
 - Promote mixed use development
 - Take account of the roles and characters of different areas
 - Plan positively for high quality and inclusive design, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and the wider area
- 3.79 Going forward the Local Plan will need to find a way to make sure that existing assets such as buildings, streets and spaces, green infrastructure and community facilities are managed imaginatively and that new developments are designed intelligently.

INFORMATION

The Council is currently consulting on a draft Design Strategy. The Design Strategy sets out the Council's core design principles ensuring that future development in the Borough is of the highest design standards. Once adopted, the Design Strategy will be used as a tool to inform and assess proposals within existing locations, at all scales. For more information on the draft Design Strategy and the consultation please visit the Local Plan page on the Council's website:

www.thurrock.gov.uk/localplan

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

- 3.80 The historic environment has a powerful influence on people's quality of life in terms of promoting civic pride and a sense of local identity. Important local architectural, archaeological and landscape features such as the forts, the medieval parish churches

and Bata village all highlight the area's unique history. In terms of designated heritage assets the Borough has:

- 7 Conservation Areas
- 243 Listed Buildings
- 17 Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- 1 Park/Garden of Special Interest
- 23 Ancient woodlands

3.81 Protecting and enhancing the historic environment is an important component of national planning policy. National policy encourages Local Planning Authorities to promote a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in their Local Plans. It goes on to state that the strategy put forward should recognise that conservation is not a passive exercise and that Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

3.82 National policy also seeks to promote the idea of locally listed heritage assets. Around half of all local planning authorities have produced lists of locally important buildings and sites, although not all of these have adopted the list as part of their development plan.

The Core Strategy says...

3.83 The Core Strategy sets out a plan to preserve and enhance Thurrock's historic environment. The strategy includes preventing the loss of key heritage assets and seeks use them as a catalyst for regeneration in the wider area. Priority assets identified in the plan included Tilbury and Coalhouse Forts and the Bata Factory Complex.

QUESTION 29

What things could the plan do to protect and enhance the Borough's listed building and conservation areas?

QUESTION 30

Are there any buildings of significance in your local community which should be included on a local heritage list? If yes, please provide details including its location and the reason why it is special to your community.

LANDSCAPE

3.84 The landscape forms the context for people's lives. Its character and quality is key to maintaining a strong sense of place. Thurrock exhibits a mixture of markedly contrasting landscapes, from open and relatively tranquil and undeveloped farmland in the rural parts of the Borough to the north, to the contrast of the densely developed urban areas and industrial development, adjacent to the openness of the grazing marshes along the Thames riverside. Within the Borough there are two Special

Landscape Areas classified for their landscape importance in a regional and countrywide context, the Mardyke Valley and Langdon Hills.

- 3.85 National policy requires local authorities to take a criteria based approach to protecting the landscape. This approach requires an understanding of landscapes that are valued and an understanding of the significance of particular landscapes and their components rather than just carrying out a crude check whether the landscape is designated or not.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.86 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's intention to protect, manage and enhance the Character of Thurrock. It also promotes the need to create a multi-functional landscape with clear connections between environmental assets.
- 3.87 The Council is currently in the process of updating its work on landscape and seascape character and its sensitivity to change. This work will be a key tool for guiding decisions around site selection, meaning that decisions affecting the landscape and views will therefore be judged not only on its designation but also on the value and the significance of the landscape, its features and the degree of harm caused by any proposed development.

QUESTION 31

What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's landscape, seascape and its key features are protected and where possible enhanced?

QUESTION 32

How should the Local Plan use the information from the landscape and seascape capacity and sensitivity study?

NATURE CONSERVATION

- 3.88 Thurrock has a variety of habitats for both animal and plant life, many of which are protected under European or English Law. Sites designated for their wildlife importance within Thurrock include:
- 1 Ramsar site
 - 1 Special Protection Area (SPA)
 - 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
 - 12 Wildlife Corridors
 - 11 Habitat Chains/clusters
 - 2 Local Nature Reserves
- 3.89 There are also other sites contributing to the network that have considerable biodiversity value but which are not statutorily protected, including 70 Local Wildlife

Sites. A number of these local sites are on brownfield land which has biodiversity value and species of principal importance.

- 3.90 National policy expects Local Planning Authorities to include criteria based policies in their Local Plan against which the impact of development proposals on or affecting protected biodiversity and geodiversity can be considered. It also requires distinctions to be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites. This is so that protection afforded to these sites is proportionate with their status and appropriate weight is given to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks. It also states that Local Plan Authorities should plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.91 The Core Strategy sets out a range of policies which seek to conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity network and green assets through appropriate design and management.
- 3.92 The Core Strategy also identifies several key areas could be enhanced through working with our partners. These areas are East Thurrock Marshes, the Mardyke Valley Project, Local Wildlife Sites and 'Living Landscapes Sites'.
- 3.93 The Local Plan needs to maintain and improve the natural environment and will include policies to ensure that development proposals minimise negative impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible.

QUESTION 33

What approach should the Local Plan take to ensure that Borough's natural assets are protected and where possible enhanced?

CLIMATE CHANGE

- 3.94 Minimising our contribution to climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a key consideration, but we also need to take measures to respond to the already inevitable effects of climate change in order to minimise the impact they have on the Borough. Climate change is expected to continue during the plan period. Hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters are expected together with an increase in frequency of intense rainfall events. This has implications for flooding, ground stability and the need to heat and more commonly, cool buildings.

MANAGING THE RISK OF FLOODING

- 3.95 Thurrock has suffered the consequences of flooding in recent years and it has been estimated that there are more than 11,000 properties across the Borough at risk of flooding. The majority of the flood risk to urban areas is located along the Thames Estuary. However, the presence of flood defences means that the risk of flooding in this area from fluvial and tidal flooding is low.
- 3.96 Flooding is likely to become a more frequent event due to climate change and the scale of flood events may also increase in the future. The cause of the increase in flood events would be wetter weather throughout the year contributing to surface water flooding through the overloading of the existing drainage systems, as well as river flooding through increased catchment runoff.
- 3.97 National policy requires that new development is located in sustainable locations, at the least risk of flooding, taking into account vulnerability to flooding. Appropriate mitigation should be provided where necessary to ensure that development remains safe, resilient to the impacts of flooding and does not increase flooding elsewhere.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.98 The Core Strategy recognises that due to the location of the main settlements in Thurrock and the nature of flood risk in the Borough, it is not necessarily possible to locate all new development in areas of least flood risk. However, development in these areas would need to be carefully planned in line national guidance.
- 3.99 Policy CSTP27 also mentions the need for strong partnership working with the Environment Agency and other main stakeholders in ensuring that all flood risk, including the risks posed by surface water, is appropriately managed.

QUESTION 34

In planning for new development, how much weight should the Local Plan give to flood risk relative to other objectives (including sustainability, regeneration, local need and the local economy)?

IMPROVING WATER EFFICIENCY

3.100 Recent changes to national policy mean that the Councils can no longer require new developments to meet a particular level in the 'Code for Sustainable Homes'. However, the Government has maintained the ability to set a water efficiency requirement for new residential properties through the introduction of 'Optional Technical Housing Standards'. Guidelines for when and how these optional standards can be applied are set out in national policy. These guidelines state that local authorities must demonstrate a clear local need to adopt these standards.

The Core Strategy says...

3.101 Several policies within the Core Strategy encourage new development to incorporate energy and water efficiency into design.

QUESTION 35

Should the Plan seek to promote higher water efficiency standards by adopting the Government's Optional Technical Housing Standards?

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

3.102 The construction process for any new development utilises a significant amount of resources and generates waste and spoil. It is therefore important that as well as designing developments to be sustainable when completed, developments should take account of the principles of sustainable development during the construction process. The term renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment. Low-carbon technologies are those that can help reduce carbon emissions. It also includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity.

3.103 National policy states that Local Planning Authorities may wish to establish policies which give positive weight to renewable and low carbon energy initiatives which have clear evidence of local community involvement and leadership. The Government's Community Energy Strategy also states that:

- Government wants to see all authorities showing leadership to help deliver community energy projects.
- Government urges all local authorities to fully explore partnership and investment opportunities for community energy in their local area.

The Core Strategy says...

3.104 The Core Strategy actively promotes the idea of renewable and low carbon energy generation. It highlights the fact that Thurrock presents unique opportunities for encouraging additional standalone, large-scale renewable or low-carbon energy generation projects. The Core Strategy states the Council's intention to promote the

delivery of renewable and low-carbon energy developments utilising technology such as solar panels, biomass heating, small-scale wind turbine, photovoltaic cells, Combined Heat and Power and other methods.

QUESTION 36

How should the Local Plan take account of and encourage community owned renewable energy schemes?

QUESTION 37

Which renewable technologies do you think are most suitable for large scale proposals in the Borough? Please provide additional information as to why you deem these to be suitable.

MINERALS AND WASTE

MINERALS

- 3.105 Minerals are a finite and important resource both nationally and locally. Unlike most other forms of development mineral extraction can take place only where the mineral is found. Therefore it is important to protect areas where it is known, or suspected, that commercially valuable minerals exist.
- 3.106 The unique geology of Thurrock means that sand, gravel, chalk and London Clay can be found in the Borough. Sand and gravel is located throughout the Borough except to the north east and central fens. Clay is found in the north and west, and chalk in the south-west.
- 3.107 The River Thames is also a strategic transshipment location and a major route for the import and distribution of aggregates including the landing of hard rock and marine dredged aggregate. This material has been and continues to be distributed throughout Thurrock, London and the wider region.
- 3.108 National policy places importance on facilitating the sustainable use of minerals and asks local authorities to include policies relating to the extraction, prior extraction of minerals and for reclamation and restoration. It also recognises the need to set out environmental criteria and to define Mineral Safeguarding Areas.

The Core Strategy says...

- 3.109 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach towards maintaining a supply of minerals throughout the plan period. It suggested that this could be achieved by providing for appropriate sites assistance in meeting the sub-regional apportionment and encouraging a more sustainable and prudent use of mineral resources.
- 3.110 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would set out specific development policies for minerals and waste and allocate individual sites for development. Work on this document has now been suspended in favour of putting together a new, integrated, Local Plan.

QUESTION 38

How can the Plan ensure that enough minerals are available for development and also protect resources for the future?

WASTE

- 3.111 As a Unitary Authority Thurrock must plan for the management of waste by setting the planning framework for an adequate supply of waste treatment and disposal facilities. Waste is produced by a wide range of domestic, commercial and industrial activities, sometimes in large quantities.

3.112 A new National Waste Planning Policy was published in October 2014 and provides the specific national framework for waste planning. It operates alongside the Waste Management Plan for England and National Policy Statements for Waste Water and Hazardous Waste. The new policy requires that Local Plans:

- Help drive waste up the waste hierarchy
- Deliver sustainable development and resource efficiency
- Provide appropriate infrastructure
- Enable businesses and communities to take more responsibility for their own waste without harming human health or the environment

The Core Strategy says...

3.113 The Core Strategy sets out a waste strategy for the Borough and encourages reducing waste and maximise the use of recycled materials. It also recognises that the Council still needs to find new and alternative methods to manage and dispose of the remaining waste arising.

3.114 The Core Strategy was intended to be supplemented by a further Local Plan document which would set out specific development policies for minerals and waste and allocate individual sites for development. Work on this document has now been suspended, in favour of putting together a new, integrated, Local Plan.

QUESTION 39

What should the Local Plan do to ensure that waste management facilities are located, designed and operated to minimise impacts on climate change, local amenity for residents, and the natural and built environment?

INFORMATION

If you know of any sites which could be considered for used for waste management purposes please complete a 2016 Call for Sites Form and submit it to the Growth and Strategy Team by Monday 11 April 2016 using the contact information on the back page of this document.

Section 4: The power of placemaking

- 4.1 Placemaking is a process and way of thinking aimed at achieving better quality places. Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of new development and spaces, as well as the protection and enhancement of existing assets. It is fundamentally about responding to the context of a place, through an understanding of its evolution, its functionality and its impacts.
- 4.2 It is the Council's view that the production of an integrated Local Plan which provides strategic policies alongside more detailed policies and allocations will help to create successful places and facilitate the delivery of high quality, sustainable and well located development supported by the timely provision of infrastructure.
- 4.3 For the Local Plan to create successful places it needs to be developed in a collaborative way with those who live and work or have an interest in Thurrock to discover what their needs and aspirations are and how these can be addressed through the Local Plan.
- 4.4 The policies and allocations in the Local Plan need to be shaped by communities, which is why we need you to get involved. The only way we will know what you think is if you tell us and the more people who have their say, the more likely it is that the final Plan will be a true reflection of local views.

QUESTION 40

This document sets out the issues that need to be addressed through the new Local Plan. There may be matters that have been missed or that are not covered by the other consultation questions. Are there any matters you think also need to be considered at this stage and why?

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Planning and Transportation

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**The consultation on this document runs from
Friday 26 February to 5pm Monday 11 April 2016**

