

<b>10 July 2013</b>		<b>ITEM: 17</b> <b>01104229</b>
<b>Cabinet</b>		
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL VISION AND POLICY</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Victoria Holloway, Portfolio Holder for Environment		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All		<b>Key Decision:</b> Key
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> N/A		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To set the high level framework for the Council's work to deliver the Community Strategy priority for promoting and protecting our clean and green environment.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report outlines a new framework for the Council's cross organisational work on the environment by:

- Providing a new high level Environment Vision beneath the Community Strategy priorities
- Defining the scope of the Council's work under the green agenda
- Setting out the Council's internal environment priorities through a refreshed Council Environment Policy

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **1.1 That Cabinet adopts the vision and environment policy**

### **2. ENVIRONMENTAL VISION**

#### **2.1 In September 2012 the Council adopted a refreshed Community Strategy including the priority to promote and protect our clean and green environment. Beneath this are three objectives:**

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock's streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

In addition the Community Strategy recognises the importance of the environment to the growth and regeneration agenda with the inclusion of an environment objective under the priority to encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity:

- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock's physical environment

2.2 The environment is a cross cutting agenda supported and delivered by a wide range of Council department and services. The term "green" used in the Community Strategy priority can mean different things to different people and services. At a time of limited resources it is important that there is a shared understanding of the Council's role, a clear focus for delivery and an effective mechanism for cross Council working to maximise capacity and resources.

2.3 The Community Strategy has set Thurrock's vision as:

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

The proposal for a new Environment Vision builds on this:

**"To create a place of Green Opportunity, Green Enterprise and Green Excellence"**

2.4 An initial review of current work streams, priorities, service plans and partnership projects has identified a range of activities that sit beneath this ambition. These have been mapped to five categories of work which are being used to define the term GREEN.

- **G**rowth
- **R**egeneration
- **E**nvironmental Leadership
- **E**nergy and Climate Risk
- **N**ature and Landscape

The definition of these categories is outlined within the vision document in appendix 1.

### **3. COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT POLICY**

3.1 The Council currently has a Corporate Environment Policy, titled the Environment Commitment, which was adopted in May 2000.

3.2 Environment Policies are important for external funding and procurement. An organisational Environment Policy is required for some of the external funding applications that the Council makes.

The Council requires an Environmental Policy and/or Environmental Management System (EMS) from some of its suppliers and through its procurement procedures. The Council is supporting local businesses to

develop their own environment policy through the European Regional Development Fund Low Carbon Programme so they are in a stronger position to bid for public sector work. As part of the Council's role in environmental leadership it is important that its own policy is up to date and fit for purpose.

A refresh of the 2000 Policy has been developed with input from across the Council. It is based on existing department priorities and targets and focuses on the Council's own internal activities to support the environment and to meet its statutory obligations.

The Environment Policy is attached in appendix 2.

#### **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION:**

- 4.1 The Council has a clear mandate for environmental leadership. The adoption of the vision and policy is recommended to provide a simple framework for this role and a clear message to communicate to partners and the community.

#### **5. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

- 5.1 The policy and vision were reviewed through an internal workshop and consultation with representatives from internal departments. The policy and vision are focussed on the Council's internal role and bring together existing strategies which has undergone separate consultation.

#### **6. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 6.1 The proposed documents support the coordinated delivery of objectives from the Community Strategy Priorities to:
- Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity
  - Promote and protect our clean and green environment

#### **7. IMPLICATIONS**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: Mike Jones  
Telephone and email: **01375 652772**  
**mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk**

There are no direct financial implications from this report. The Council Policy encompasses existing service priorities and targets which are planned from existing resources. The adoption of a refreshed Environment Policy will support the delivery of external funding application.

##### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Alison Stuart- Principal Solicitor**  
Telephone and email: **01375 652 040**

**alison.stuart@bdtlegal .org.uk**

There are no legal implications from this report. The policy supports the Council role in delivering its existing statutory duties for the environment.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Samson De'Alyn**  
Telephone and email: **01375 652472**  
**sdealyn@thurrock.gov.uk**

The EqIA has not identified any direct diversity and equality implications from this report.

### **7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

The report supports the sustainability and environment agenda. It will also need to link with the Health and Well-being programmes to look at the correlation between tackling environmental and health inequalities and the access to recreation and open space to support tackling obesity.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):**

- Thurrock Environment Commitment 2000

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- Appendix 1 - Environmental Vision
- Appendix 2 - Draft Thurrock Council Environment Policy

### **Report Author Contact Details:**

**Name:** Clare Lambert, Environment Strategy and Sustainability Manager  
**Telephone:** 01375 652962  
**E-mail:** clambert@thurrock.gov.uk

## Appendix 1

### Thurrock Environmental Vision

Thurrock's vision is to be

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

Within this our vision for the environment is to create a place of  
**Green Enterprise, Green Excellence and Green Opportunity.**

We have five key environmental objectives within the Community Strategy vision

- Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity
- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock's physical environment
- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock's streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

To achieve this we will:

We will **make the most of our environmental assets**, celebrating what is special about Thurrock and protecting what is vulnerable.

We will **harness the special character**, resources and sense of place to create a place where people want to live and work.

We will **maximise our opportunities** for green technology and environmental skills to build the green and low carbon economy.

We will **minimise our environmental impact** to deliver our ambitious regeneration growth agenda, and efficient services, within the borough's environmental limits.

We will define the scope of the green agenda as

- **Growth**
- **Regeneration**
- **Environmental Leadership**
- **Energy and Climate Risk**
- **Nature and Landscape**

To deliver these priorities we will:

**Growth**

- Embed environmental protection and enhancement in the growth agenda through the Local Development Framework

**Regeneration**

- Embed environmental protection and enhancement through the Community Regeneration Strategy to maximise opportunities for environmental in our five growth hubs

**Environmental Leadership**

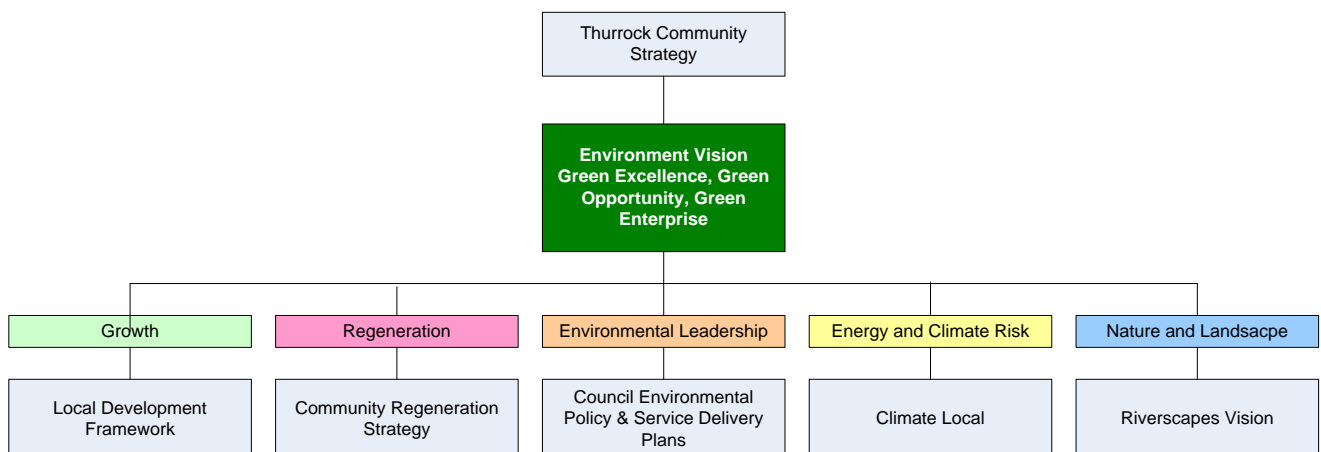
- Set the Council's own environmental policy and refresh its priorities every three years
- Maintain the delivery of a range of cost effective operational environmental services including waste and recycling, street cleansing and review these annually through the business planning process

**Energy and Climate Risk**

- Make a commitment to Climate Local and develop and deliver a climate change strategy

**Nature and Landscape**

- Develop a Riverscape vision for Thurrock's environment on a landscape or across borough scale and pursue external funding bids and partnerships to enable its deliver



## Appendix 2

### **Draft Thurrock Council Environmental Policy 2013**

Thurrock Council recognises the impact it has on the environment and commits to minimise this. Our goal is to protect, manage and enhance Thurrock's environment, and achieve real improvement, contributing to a better quality of life for our community.

We will lead by example ensuring that we comply with environmental legislation, incorporate a policy of waste and pollution reduction as an integral part of our work practices, continuously improve our resource efficiency and prioritise action on the activities that have the most significant environmental impacts.

To achieve this we will:

#### **Energy & Climate Change**

- Work to improve energy efficiency, minimise energy use and carbon emissions from council buildings, fleet and services, housing stock, private sector housing and local business through practical energy saving measures and external funding opportunities
- Make a commitment to the Climate Local Programme and set local target and actions for reducing climate change
- Strive to improve housing efficiency using the governments delivery framework

#### **Energy & Climate Change in Council Property and Service Delivery**

- Develop processes to monitor, evaluate, target and report energy use, costs and emissions in Council buildings
- Replace our green energy purchases approach with a programme of investment in on-site renewable generation where practical
- Work to eliminate the need to cool buildings through smarter design and deploying alternative technology
- Submit proposal for new Council buildings to Environment Board to ensure environment requirements are included in design and procurement where appropriate
- Aim to build all new Council buildings to BREEAM Excellent Standard where possible

#### **Procurement**

- Operate an ethical and environmentally sensitive purchasing policy that seeks to increase the use of recycled and sustainable products where appropriate
- Seek to green our supply chain by requiring environmental policies and emissions data from all our suppliers and contractors
- Make a silver pledge to the sustainable timber programme
- Consider life cycle costs as part of the procurement evaluation process on appropriate contracts

#### **Planning and Regulations**

- Protect and enhance Thurrock's listed buildings, conservation areas, riverside, ancient monuments and archaeological areas
- Work towards a carbon neutral growth by setting up a carbon offsetting fund, encouraging energy efficiency and the production of energy from renewable sources
- Provide expert advice to internal and external customers on pollution control, air quality, noise and contaminated land that impact on Thurrock's environment
- Regulate local permitted industrial processes to ensure they minimise their impact on the environment through suitable environmental management systems and best available emission control techniques
- Publish guidance on the minimum specification for all new buildings through the design and Sustainable Construction Supplementary Planning Document

- Promote renewable energy, including on permitted development, through planning policy and guidance

### **Pollution Control**

- Regularly review, monitor, model and report on air quality in Thurrock and designate air quality management areas where required
- Effectively regulate permitted industrial processes in Thurrock using the pollution prevention and control regime
- Work with the Environment Agency and industry to ensure best available techniques are used to reduce emissions
- Review contaminated land to statutory objectives and declare sites where necessary
- Provide expert advice to internal and external customers on noise in the environment
- Minimise our own impact by best quality fleet management and encourage transport alternatives

### **Natural Environment and Heritage**

- Proactively encourage access, education and appreciation of parks and open spaces
- Use our planning powers to protect and enhance natural environments.
- Work in partnership with local organisations to develop the Riverscapes programme and Greengrid improvements and pursue external funding opportunities to ensure their delivery
- Maximise the health and wellbeing benefits of green open spaces by promoting their use for recreation
- Work with partners to protect and increase biodiversity habitats and trial the use of biodiversity offsetting

### **Waste and Recycling**

- Work with other organisation to raise awareness of waste minimisation and recycling
- Work towards increasing reuse, composting and recycling levels in Thurrock to 47% and reduce municipal waste to landfill to below 25%.

### **Transport**

- Deliver a Local Sustainable Transport programme to promote alternative methods of transport to business and local residents and initiate green travel plans for Council staff.
- Provide expert air quality and noise consultation advice to the transport development, design and decision making process
- Work to reduce fuel consumption and increase fleet fuel efficiency year on year

### **Regeneration and Economy**

- Embed the environmental agenda within the delivery of the Council's regeneration programme
- Pursue opportunities for the development of the low carbon and green skills and economy

### **Community**

- Promote environmental sites and assets as part of the Celebrate Thurrock programme to increase pride in Thurrock
- Raise awareness of the environmental issues to encourage local people, businesses and other organisations to reduce their environmental impact
- Maximise the use of green open spaces as a community resource
- Encourage volunteering, friends of groups and other community participation through the development of an environment community engagement plan
- Embed opportunities for environmental improvements to residents through service transformation programmes such as Community Hubs