Design Charter

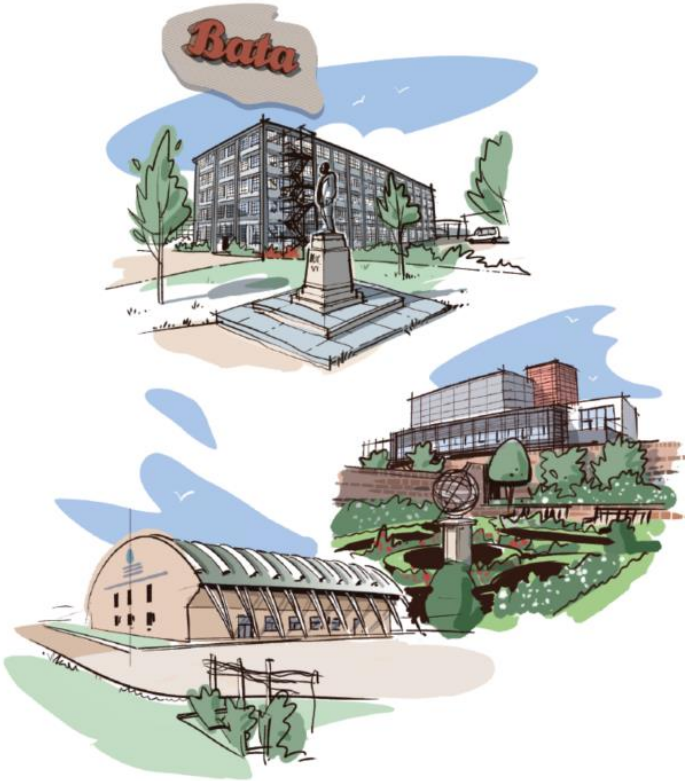
Local Plan Task Force – July 2023

What is the Design Charter?

- A charter **setting out Thurrock's vision for quality places and development,** outlining the importance we place on good design
- Links into the **Local Plan** and acts as **a vision document to a forthcoming Thurrock Design Code**
- Will **replace the existing 2017 Design Strategy** SPD
- **Aligns design expectations** between stakeholders, developers, investors and communities, including within Council teams

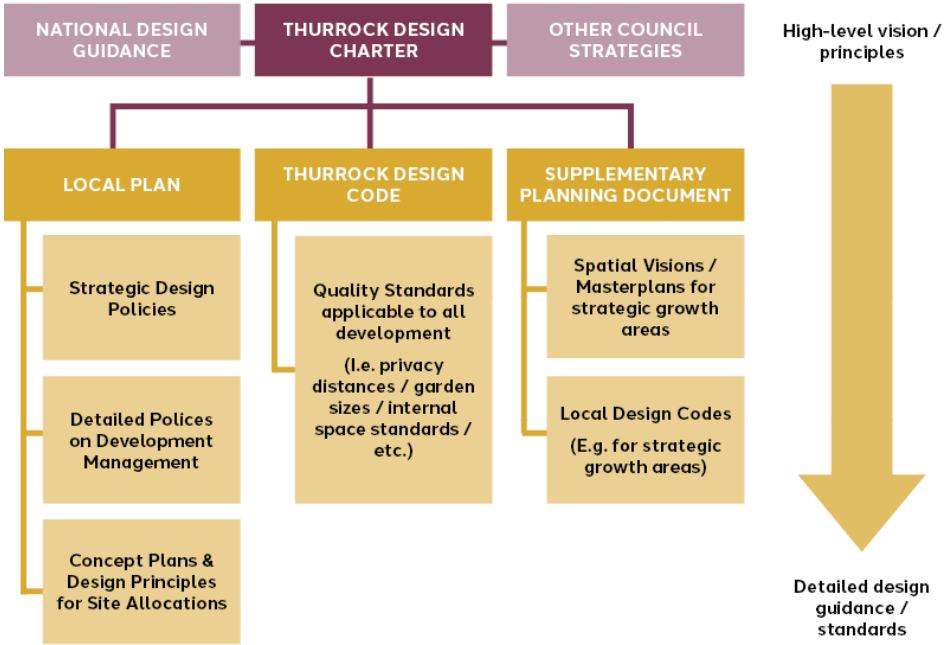
Why is this needed?

- Increasing importance given to design quality in national policy (**NPPF, National Design Guide & Code**)
- Forthcoming Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will **place a statutory duty** on local planning authorities **to prepare a design code** for their whole area
- Existing design strategy is **out-of-date**, lacks policy hooks for the **Local Plan**, and is of limited use in **development management**
- **Our ambitious growth relies on well-designed places** that are sustainable and popular with residents and investors
- **Setting clear design expectations speeds up delivery** by providing clarity to applicants, as well as efficiencies within the Development Management process



How will it work?

- The Charter sets out a **vision and high-level principles for design**, informed by national guidance, best practice, and other Council strategies.
- The Charter informs the **Local Plan** through strategic / detailed design policies / principles for site allocations
- The Charter sets the **vision for the Thurrock Design Code**, setting clear parameters and expectations for all development in the borough
- The Charter informs **future guidance for strategic growth areas**, with could have their own **local design codes** to help ensure quality and accelerate delivery.



Document Contents

The Importance of Good Design for Thurrock

- Benefits of good design
- Aims & purpose of the Charter
- Role & status of the Charter

Understanding Thurrock

- A brief summary of Thurrock's key places, characteristics
- Highlighting major issues and opportunities for design and place quality

Design Principles for Thurrock

- Pride in Thurrock
- Healthy Places for All
- Connecting to Opportunity
- Resilient & Sustainable Futures

Key Design Ideas for Thurrock

- The Thames
- Neighbourhoods
- The Countryside
- Co-locating different uses
- Town Centres
- Employment Areas
- Landscapes & Ecosystems

Making it Happen

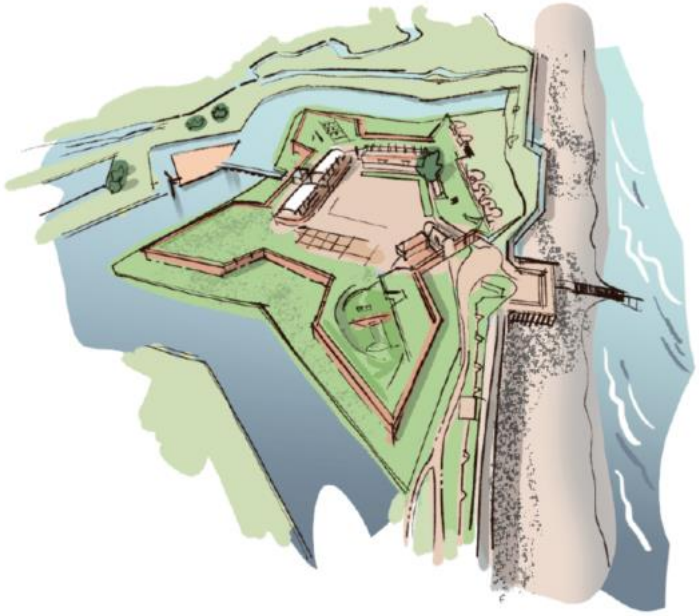
- Working together to deliver good design
- Planning & Design Support Services
- Putting Communities at the Heart of Places

Understanding Thurrock

- The Charter emphasises **the importance of starting with a deep understanding of Thurrock's places and communities**, based on a robust context appraisal and continuous engagement with communities
- Brief summaries of the following topics highlight some of the **unique characteristics of Thurrock**, as well as **issues and opportunities for design and place quality**. These topics are:

- **Nature**
- **Water**
- **Countryside**
- **Green Spaces**
- **Ports & Infrastructure**
- **Connections**
- **Heritage & Culture**
- **Towns & Villages**
- **Communities**
- **Health & Well-being**

Key Design Principles for Thurrock



1 **Pride in Thurrock**

2 **Healthy Places for All**

3 **Connecting to Opportunity**

4 **Resilient & Sustainable Futures**

The Charter sets out:

WHY each principle is important to Thurrock

OUTCOMES that are expected from good design in each principle

Pride in Thurrock

1

1.1 Engaging widely and considering everyone

- Embedding consultation with Thurrock communities throughout the design process

1.2 Distinctive places, informed by their context

- Responding to local character and setting a clear vision for places

1.3 Designed for the long-term

- Considering long-term maintenance and community stewardship

1.4 Delivering wider benefits for Thurrock's communities

- Considering the wider ambition of the area, delivering benefits to existing communities

1.5 Celebrating our heritage and culture

- Respond to the history & culture of Thurrock to establish a sense of place

1.6 Beautiful buildings with well-integrated built form

- Visually attractive development with high-quality architecture
- Design-led density, optimising land while responding sensitively to local character

Healthy Places for All

2

2.1 Enabling and encouraging daily physical activity

- Accessible and inclusive public realm, designed for active travel, embedding sports, leisure and play opportunities within public spaces

2.2 Access to high-quality green spaces & public realm

- Quality open green spaces that serve local communities, designing healthy and safe streets that integrate landscape features

2.3 Homes for all ages and needs

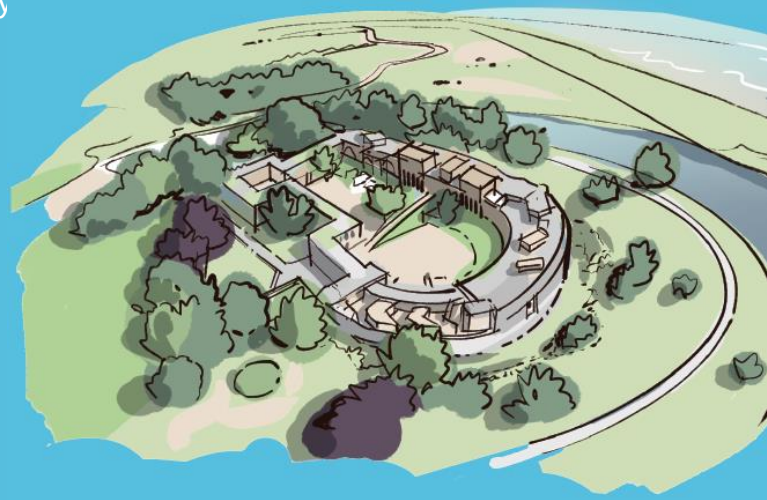
- Tenure-blind developments, with adaptable and accessible homes designed for a range of users including older persons

2.4 Growing communities

- Integrating opportunities for local food growing in developments

2.5 Infrastructure and facilities first

- Early delivery of social & community infrastructure to support new communities



Connecting to Opportunity

3

3.1 Connecting to services and facilities

- Ensuring local facilities are a short walk or cycle from people's homes

3.2 Connecting to nature

- Connected green infrastructure woven through all new developments

3.3 Connecting to jobs & opportunities

- Integrating new employment in mixed developments, and supporting good public and active travel between homes and employment areas

3.4 Connecting to culture & leisure

- Embedding culture within new developments, using temporary and meanwhile uses to activate spaces throughout the day and evening

3.5 Connecting across barriers

- Addressing the severance of major infrastructure

3.6 Walkable, compact forms of development

- Promoting density around transport connections, making efficient use of land and supporting viable local services

Resilient & Sustainable Futures

4

4.1 Delivering a net zero carbon future

- Promoting retrofit / reuse of buildings, requiring energy efficient design

4.2 Resilient and future-proofed development

- Adaptable and flexible buildings that can respond to changes of use, and that emphasis passive design solutions to minimise energy use

4.3 Space for nature and biodiversity

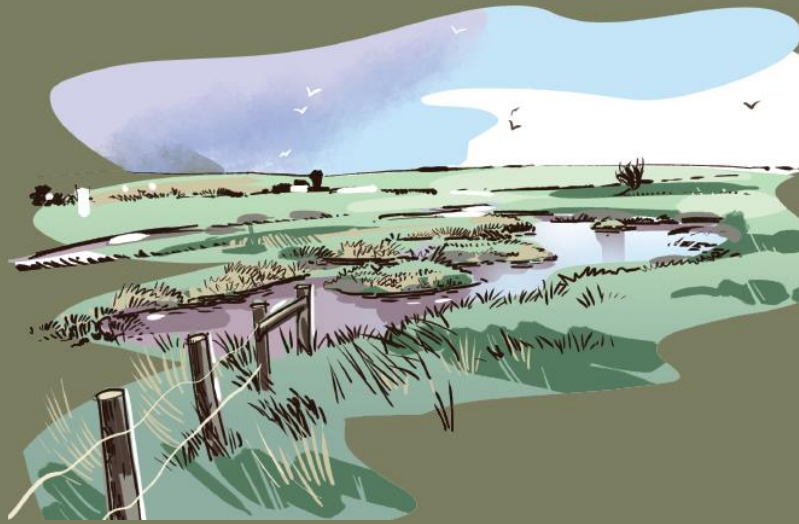
- Creating and enhancing habitats, and delivering biodiversity net gain

4.4 Nature-based solutions

- Promoting natural solutions to flood resilience, water management and remediation, creating benefits of simpler maintenance

4.5 Embedding circular economies

- Promoting local material procurement, recycling, and efficient low waste construction practices



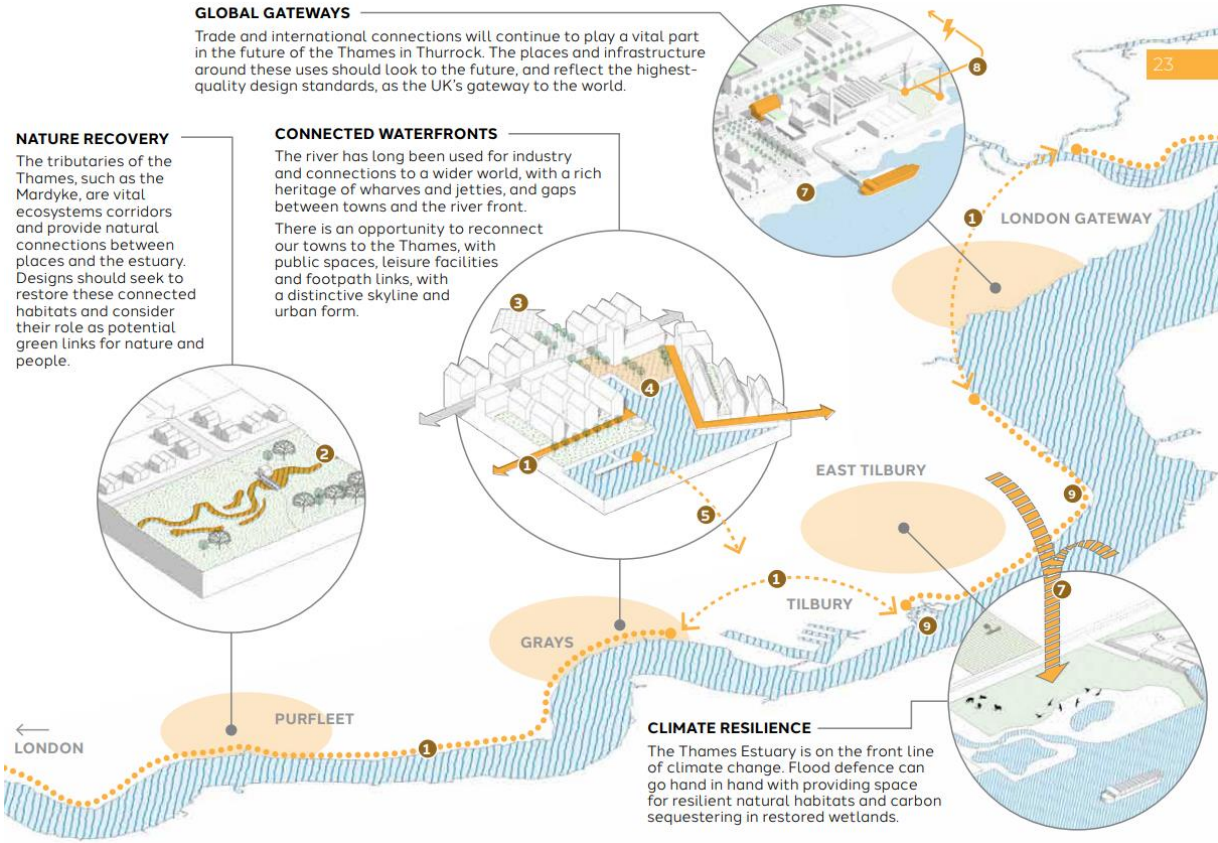
Design Opportunities

Illustrations of **potential design opportunities** across seven strategic themes, where a step change in design quality could deliver **wider benefits to quality of place, growth, and community prosperity**

- **The Thames** – Celebrating the river in the future design of places
- **Neighbourhoods** – Improving the quality of our homes & neighbourhoods
- **Countryside** – Relating sensitively to the Thurrock landscape
- **Good Neighbours** – Considering the edges between different uses
- **Town Centres** – Vibrant, accessible, and well-connected centres
- **Employment Areas** – Creating places for growth for prosperity
- **Landscapes** – Ecosystem connections between nature, landscape, and people

The Thames

- Proposals should **recognise and respond to the profound effect the River Thames** has on Thurrock, and make the most of its opportunities to create exceptional designs and **a distinctive sense of place**
- Opportunities to provide **further and better public access to the Thames** and its tributaries such as the Mardyke
- Opportunities for **nature recovery and ecological restoration**, with **nature-based solutions to flood mitigation**



N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

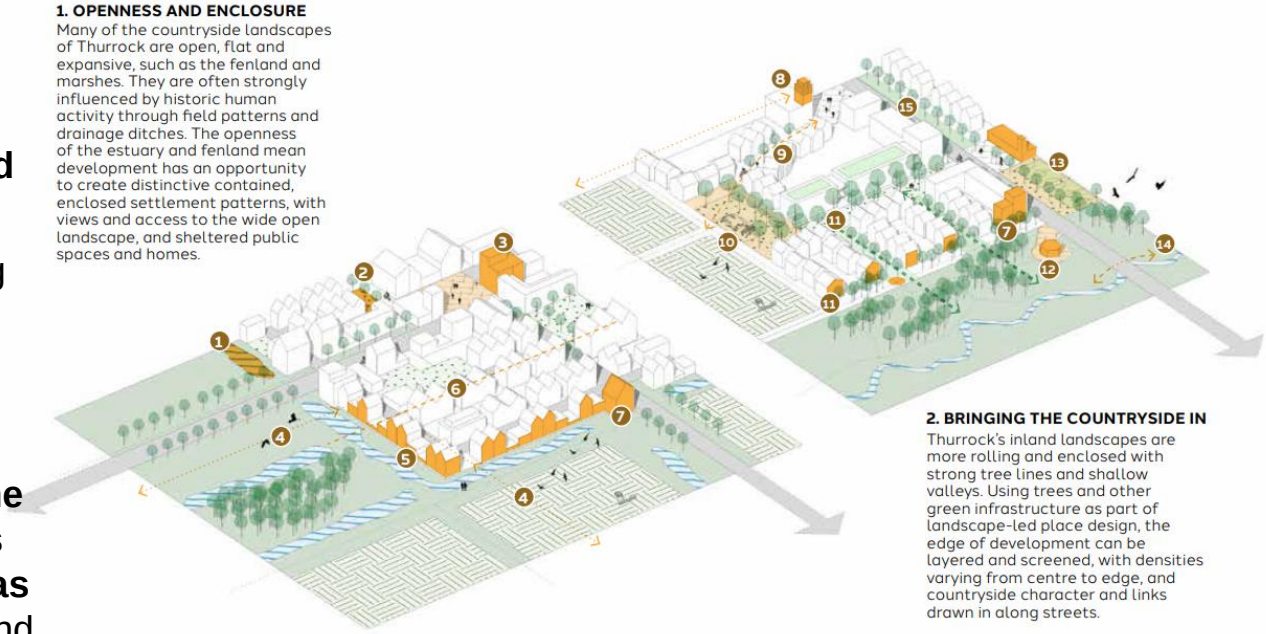
Neighbourhoods

- Bringing services, facilities, nature and green space **closer to people's homes**, offering everyone **greater choice and a healthier lifestyle** through active travel.
- **Existing residential areas** can be transformed over time **through creative interventions to offer a richer mix of facilities**, reducing inequalities and enhancing quality of life and access to opportunities

N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

Countryside

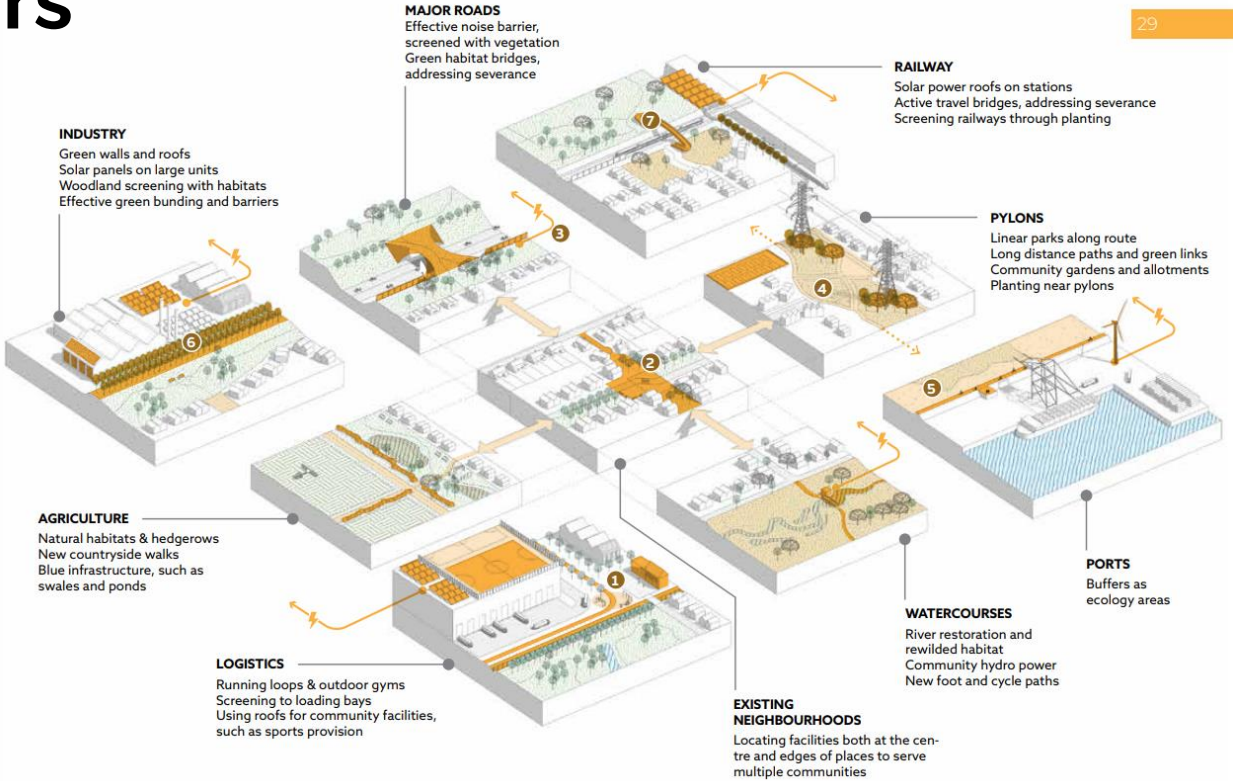
- **Development proposals should not only preserve, but enhance the quality and access to the Green Belt**
- Design has a role in ensuring new development in or at the interface of the countryside forms **attractive edges to settlements, facilitates better access and use of the countryside,** and **considers local landscape character as well as strategic views** in and out of places.



N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

Good Neighbours

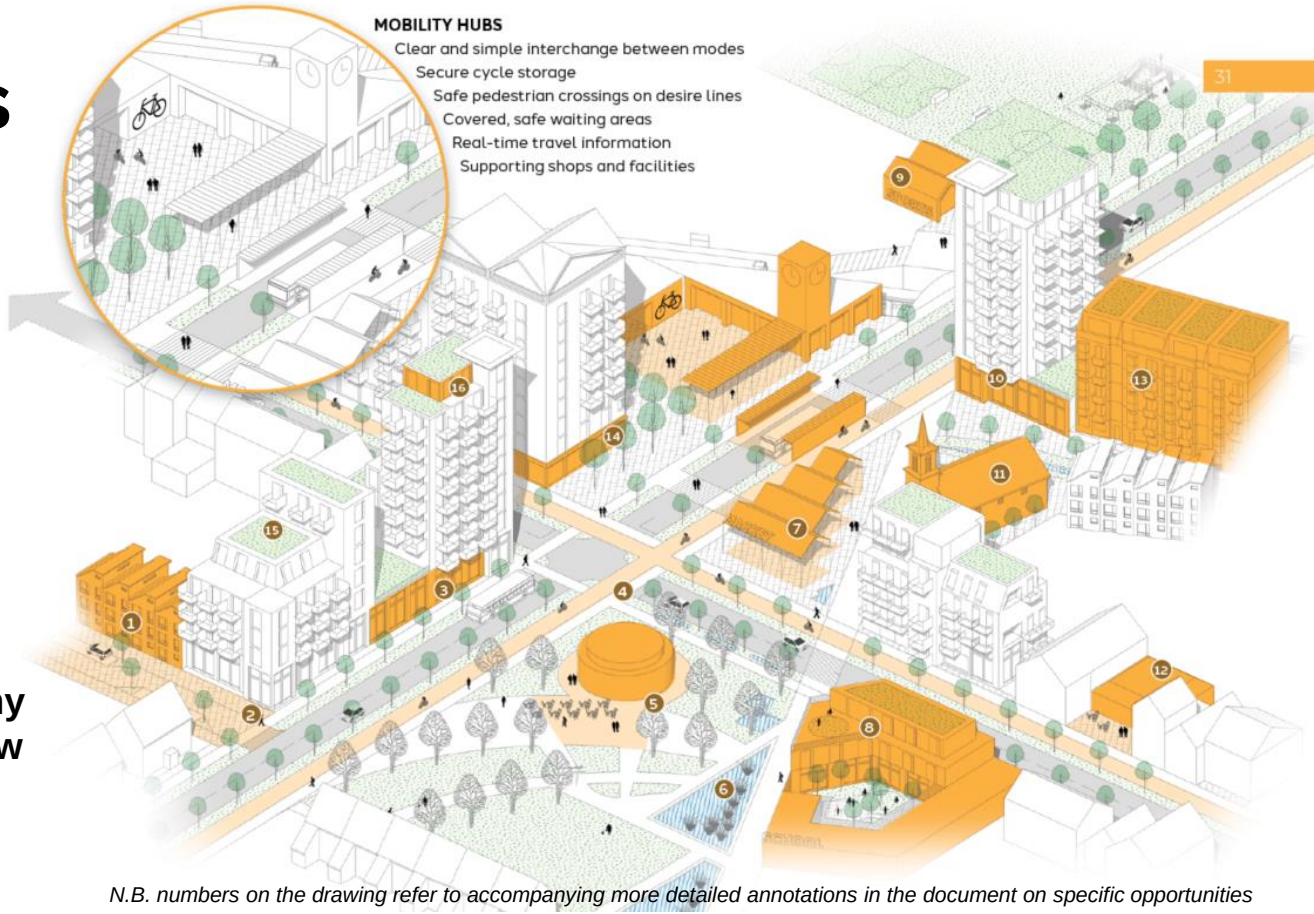
- Challenges around how different land uses relate to one another, particular **where industrial / infrastructure uses abut sensitive residential neighbourhoods,** with **opportunities to think creatively about how different uses meet and how they co-locate,**
- Opportunities to better **address the severance** of major infrastructure
- Ensuring buffers to noisy uses and infrastructure are designed to be **effective screening**.



N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

Town Centres

- Creating **denser, walkable, more compact centres** based around active travel, public transport, and the co-location of new facilities, urban sprawl can be limited and the countryside better protected.
- These approaches help increase footfall and local population, **supporting the vitality of the local economy and its ability to deliver new uses,** including evening and night-time uses, cultural and community functions.



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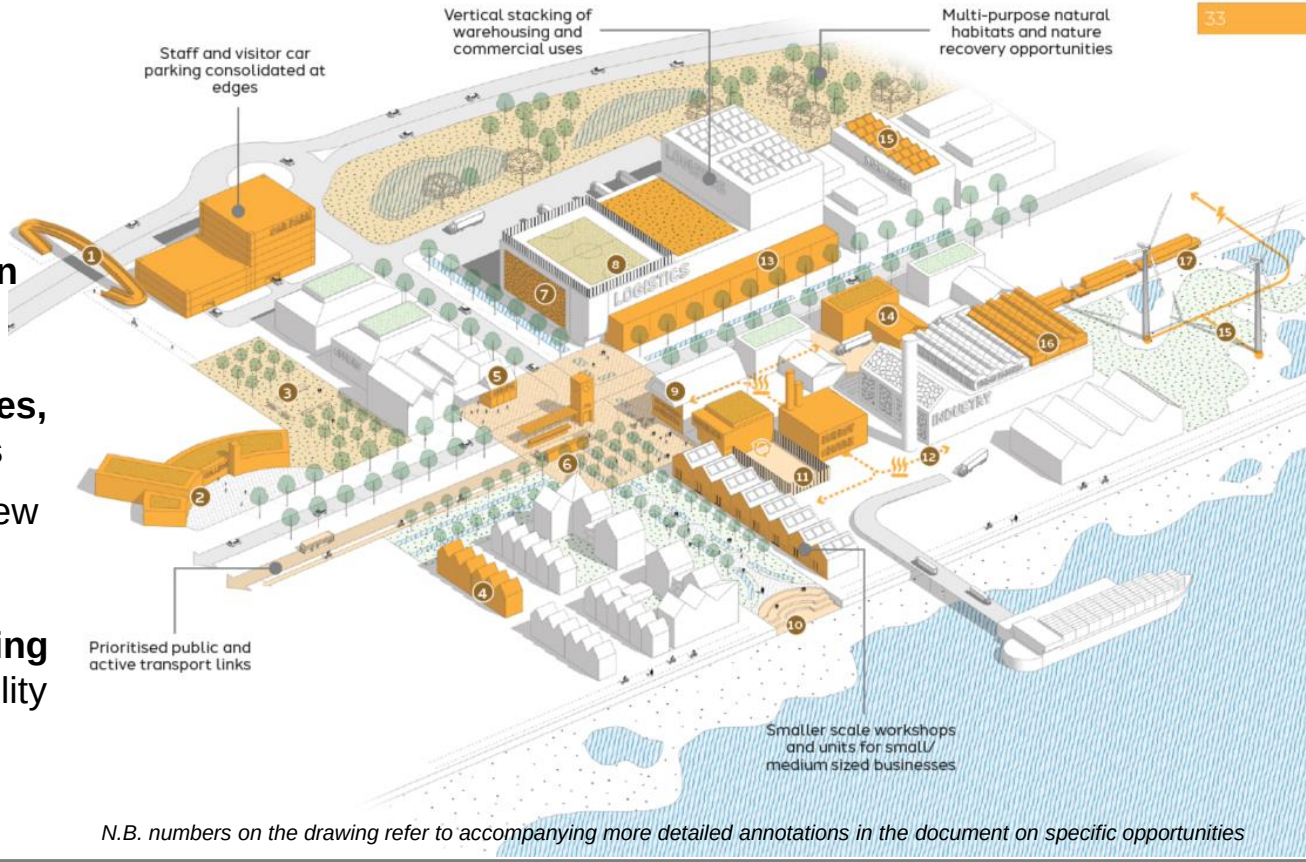
Employment Areas

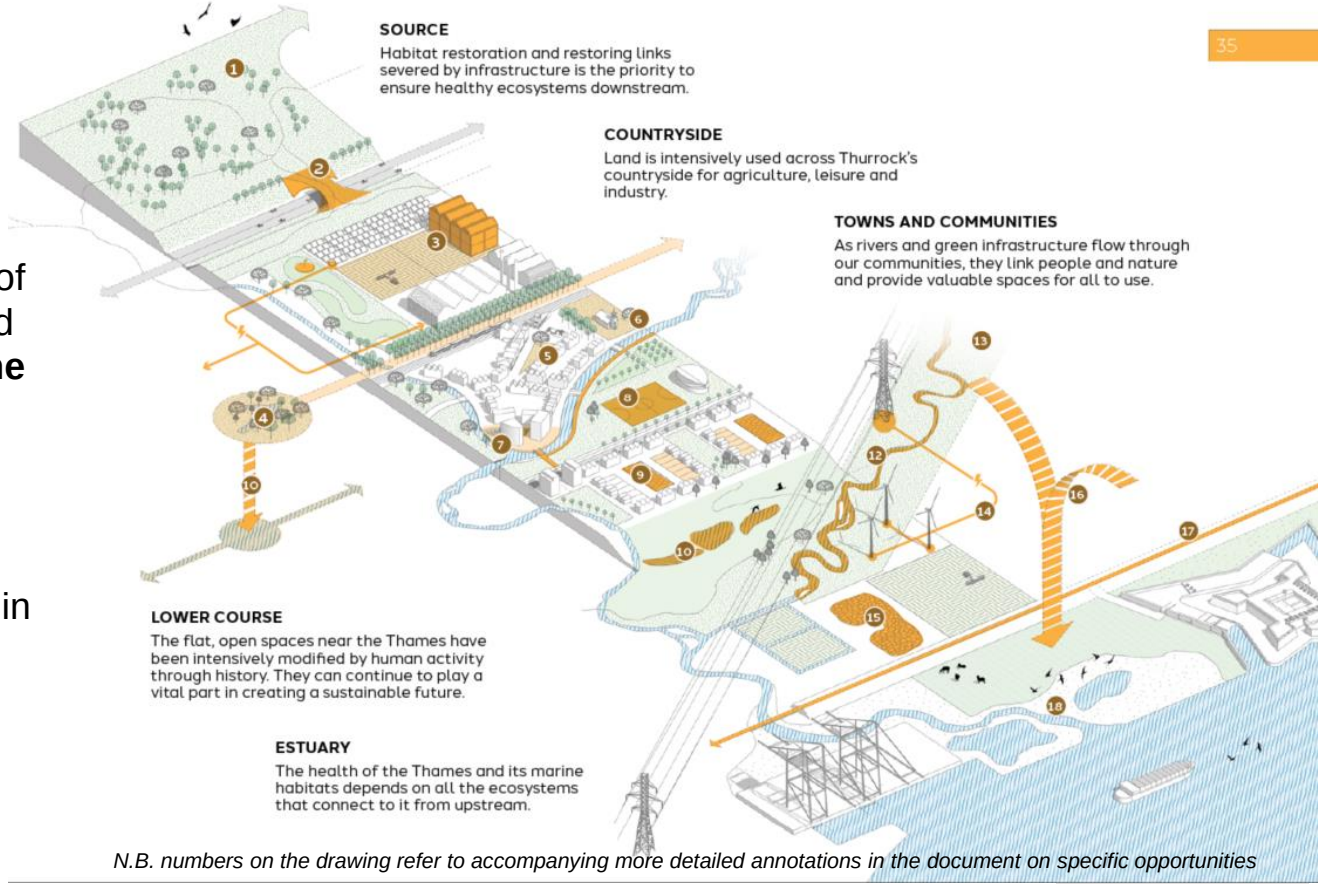
- Employment areas should be efficient places, where **design adds value to economic growth, well-being, better integration with communities, and environmental benefits**
- Designs should respond to new **creative approaches to vertical stacking, shared freight, mobility and servicing strategies**, as well as the ability to **provide a range of employment spaces** for a diverse local economy



N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

Landscape

- The connected ecosystems of Thurrock must be considered as a **fundamental part of the design of places**, and all opportunities to connect and enhance them taken.
- Incorporating **nature-based solutions and habitats** within towns and urban areas, as well as in the countryside.



N.B. numbers on the drawing refer to accompanying more detailed annotations in the document on specific opportunities

Making it Happen

- The final section of the Design Charter sets out how applicants and the Council can **all work together to produce better quality design outcomes**, through engagement and better marrying the planning and design process together.

- **Working Together to Deliver Good Design –** setting out clear expectations as to what the Council would like to see within a comprehensive design process as part of any development proposal. This includes:
  - Getting the right project team in place
  - Site and context appraisal as the starting point of design
  - Engagement with Thurrock's communities at all stages of the process
  - Following a clear, structured, iterative and robust design process
  - Demonstrating how proposals deliver on the Charter's principles

Making it Happen

- **Planning & Design Support Services** – outlining the services and strategies the Council offers to applicant and developers to help secure better design outcomes. These include:
  - The emerging Local Plan and Design Code
  - Pre-application Advice
  - Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)
  - Design Review

- **Putting Communities at the Heart of Places** – providing advice on involving communities and stakeholders within the design process, including:
  - Using engagement and local knowledge to inform the initial brief and feasibility studies
  - Using a design and project team that reflects the diversity and experiences of the local communities where development is proposed
  - Co-design, workshops and digital tools
  - Testing options with communities and stakeholders
  - Considering long-term community stewardship of new places
  - Demonstrating how engagement has shaped proposals

Next Steps

- For the draft Design Charter to progress through internal scrutiny, with the expectation to go out for **public consultation** with the draft Regulation 18 Local Plan, given the synergies between the two documents.
- The public consultation will focus on **scoping the subsequent Thurrock Design Code**, **understanding communities concerns around the more specific detail of design issues** to ensure they are covered in the more important and detailed Design Code
- Following consultation and update, to publish the Charter as a **corporate vision document for design**
- To begin development of the subsequent **Thurrock Design Code** in line with the Regulation 19 Local Plan, and to be adopted formally to provide real weight in planning decisions

Emerging Thurrock Design Code

- The Thurrock Design Code is intended to be a **borough-wide** document, setting out **basic quality standards for all development** in Thurrock
- To ensure compliance with best practice and national policy, the Design Code will follow the content and process set out in the National Model Design Code, including **co-design and significant engagement with the community and stakeholders at multiple points**
- Viability assessment will be integrated within the development of the Thurrock Design Code to ensure it is a **tool to speed up the delivery of high-quality development** in the borough
- It is expected that the Thurrock Design Code would **develop in tandem with the Regulation 19 Local Plan** and follow a similar timeframe given the synergies between the two documents

‘A design code is **a set of simple, concise, illustrated design requirements** that are visual and numerical wherever possible **to provide specific, detailed parameters for the physical development of a site or area**.’

(para 5, National Model Design Code)

Local Plan: Update

Local Plan Taskforce – July 2023 (UPDATED)

Current system

- Existing policies are becoming increasingly out of date – changes to the national planning system and changes to local needs/priorities
- There are no site allocations in the current plan so growth is coming forward in a very piecemeal and uncoordinated way with limited scope to consider cumulative impacts
- Housing delivery has been very low in the last few years which means that we are now subject to the 'presumption in favour of' policy within the National Planning Policy Framework – this gives us less control/influence over proposals for new housing developments

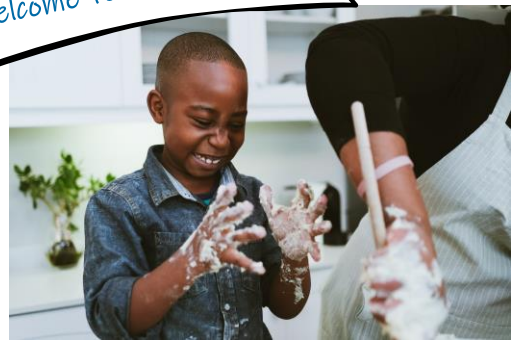
Why we need a new Plan

- Using outdated policies means that we are not always able to influence developments in the way that we want. There is also a risk we could lose planning appeals as our policies may not hold full weight.
- Local people are struggling to access/afford the right types of housing in the places they want to live
- In some places people are unable to access key services and facilities and are forced to either travelling further than they should to access them or are going without
- Our highstreets and shopping areas are under more pressure than ever and we need to have a clear plan to help make them fit for the future

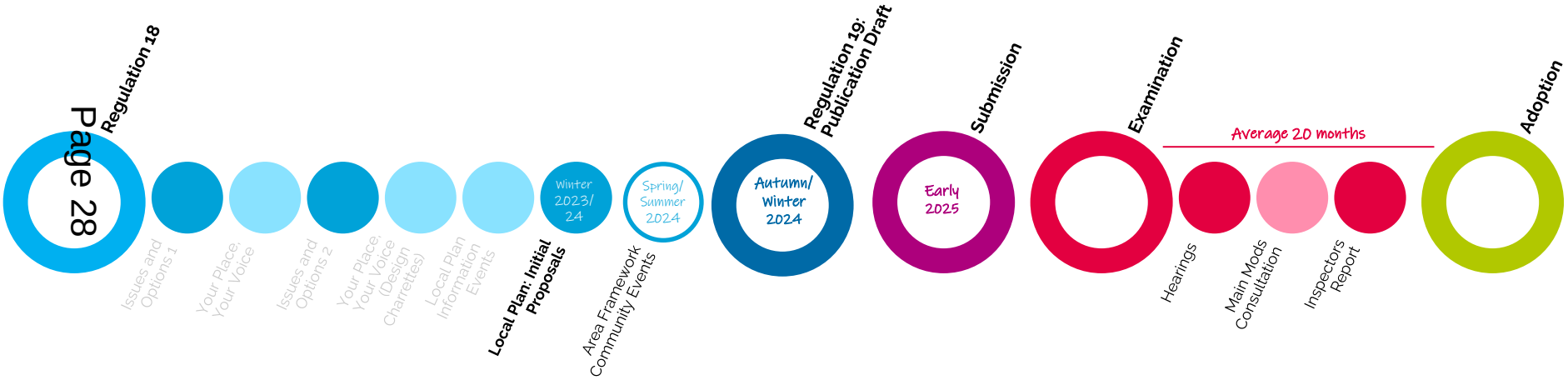
Thurrock's new Local Plan will help create the right conditions for places to change, adapt and grow.

What is the process for preparing a new Local Plan?

Welcome to our Kitchen



Local Plan Development Timeline (suggested)



Technical Evidence (Stage 1)

Housing and Economy

- South Essex Housing Needs Assessment
- Interim Housing Site Assessment Study*
- Thurrock Economic Development Needs Assessment
- Thurrock Employment Land Availability Assessment

Transport and Infrastructure

- Infrastructure Baseline*

Environment and Place Making

- Landscape Character Assessment
- Princes Foundation – Design Charrette Outcomes Report
- Thurrock Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy

*studies received and currently being reviewed officers; all other studies are completed

Technical Evidence (Stage 2)

Housing and Economy

- Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment**
- Buckles Lane – Housing Assessment**
- Grays Centre Study**

Transport and Infrastructure

- Draft Transport Strategy*
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Stage 1)*
- Flood Risk Catchment Studies for the Mardyke and Tilbury

Environment and Place Making

- Draft Design Charter*
- Health in All Policies**
- Rural Settlements Study
- Local Green Spaces Study*
- Local Wildlife Sites Review*

*draft studies received and currently being reviewed by officers
**studies finalised and due to be published on our website in the coming weeks

Initial Proposals - Insights

It is not a draft Plan and we expect things in the plan to change between now and the final formal consultation. Document will set out initial proposals and realistic alternatives – it has been shaped by what we know to date. The consultation will help add to our knowledge base and understanding.

Purpose of the Initial Proposals document

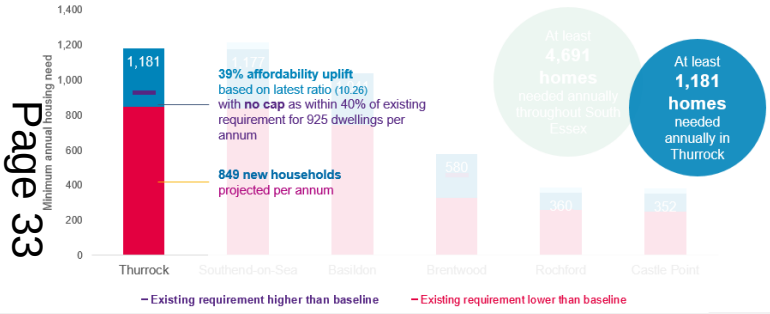
To enable a more focussed conversation with communities and other stakeholders like local businesses and statutory consultees* about how they want to see the borough change, adapt and grow over the next 15-20 years.

*Historic England, Environment Agency, Natural England etc.

Growth Strategy – How much growth do we need?

23,320 new homes

Standard Method in Thurrock



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27,000+ new jobs

Ensuring an appropriate supply of employment land

We need to make sure that there is enough employment land to meet future growth. The Economic Development Needs Assessment looks at future demand and the Employment Land Availability Assessment assesses land already in employment use or sites being promoted for that use.

Table 6.10 Summary of Employment Land (ha) Requirements 2020-40

Scenarios	E(g)(i-iii)	B2	B8	Total
Employment-led (Baseline)	6.3	7.7	29.2	43.2
Higher Growth Scenario (+ Baseline)	11	82	250	342
Labour Supply Scenario	11.35	17.06	65.20	93.6
Past Trends Completions	4.3	31	151	187
ELAA Past Trends Take-up				344

Source: Hatch

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At this stage in preparing the Plan the focus is not on ‘targets’ for new homes, employment floorspace and other commercial uses are. That is because development targets are not just based on what is needed, they also need to be based on the amount of suitable land available for those uses and deliverability factors.

Growth Strategy – where should that growth go?

Land being promoted

Settlement	Baseline	Baseline + Low	Baseline + Medium	Baseline + High
Aveley	19	1000	2000	2700
Bulphan	2	50	450	2500
Chadwell St Mary	123	1500	3500	5500
Corringham	62	750	2500	5000
East Tilbury (and Linford)	217*	700	2000	3750
Fobbing	188	200	300	550
Grays (inc. Chafford, Little Thurrock, Stifford Clays)	366	1000	2000	2800
Horndon on the Hill	1	75	300	900
Langdon Hills	181	181	181	181
North Stifford	0	0	80	280
New Horndon/North Stanford/Lower Langdon (potential new town)	0	0	0	4000
Orsett	6	220	675	1400
Purfleet-on-Thames	2850	2850	2850	3200
Southfields	0	0	600	1500
South Ockendon	94	2600	6000	9000
Stanford-le-Hope	257	800	1800	2500
Tilbury	229	300	600	600
West Horndon (settlement within Brentwood)	0	0	1500	7000
West Tilbury	0	0	0	0
West Thurrock (inc. Lakeside)	78	1000	1500	4000

Low, medium and high growth figures are based on land that is being actively promoted.

These do not factor in suitability and phasing considerations. As such, the numbers are still subject to change.

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Proposed Spatial Options

These options will be tested through a range of different studies looking at sustainability, infrastructure, transport/movement and potentially centre hierarchy/catchments.

Focus on locations that are currently the most connected
- Existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area
- High growth in settlements with good connectivity – rail and bus
- Urban extension at West Horndon
- Low growth in all other areas

Increased development in locations that have direct access to key services and facilities
- Existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area
- High growth in well serviced settlements and those with good connectivity
- Low growth in the smaller villages and W.Horndon

Increased development in the smaller villages
- Existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area
- High growth in small village locations – inc. Fobbing, Southfields and North Stifford
- Medium growth in all other areas – Low growth W.Horndon

New town at West Horndon
- Existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area
- New town at West Horndon
- Medium/low growth in settlements that are well serviced and/or have good connectivity
- Low growth in the smaller villages

New towns at 'West Horndon' and 'North Stanford'
- Existing commitments and brownfield sites in the urban area
- New town at West Horndon
- New town at 'North Stanford'
- Low growth in all other areas

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Growth should be focussed on the places where it can help improve connectivity and help facilitate infrastructure improvements that would make places more resilient and sustainable in the future. We also recognise that new place typologies could still help to deliver much needed new homes in the borough and if designed right could create compact, more walkable, and sustainable communities.

Settlement	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Aveley	1000	2700	2000	2000	1000
Bulphan	50	50	2500	50	50
Chadwell St Mary	1500	5500	3500	3500	1500
Corringham	750	5000	2500	2500	750
East Tilbury (and Linford)	3750	3750	2000	2000	700
Fobbing	200	200	550	200	200
Grays (inc. Chafford, Little Thurrock, Stifford Clays)	2800	2800	2000	1000	1000
Horndon on the Hill	75	75	900	75	75
Langdon Hills	181	181	181	181	181
North Stifford	0	0	280	0	0
New Horndon/North Stanford/Lower Langdon (potential new town)	0	0	0	0	4000
Orsett	220	220	140	220	220
Purfleet-on-Thames	3200	3200	2850	2850	2850
Southfields	0	0	150	0	0
South Ockendon	9000	9000	6000	6000	2600
Stanford-le-Hope	2500	2500	1800	1800	800
Tilbury	600	600	600	600	300
West Horndon (settlement within Brentwood)	1500	0	0	7000	7000
West Tilbury	0	0	0	0	0
West Thurrock (inc. Lakeside)	4000	4000	1500	1000	1000
	31,326	**39,776**	**32,061**	**30,976**	**24,226**

Table 4.1: Summary of likely sustainability effects of spatial options for distribution of growth in the Borough

IIA objective	Spatial Option 1	Spatial Option 2	Spatial Option 3	Spatial Option 4	Spatial Option 5
1: Housing	++	++	++	++	++
2: Health, wellbeing and safety	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	++/-?	++/-?
3: Community cohesion	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	+/-?	--/+?
4: Access to services and facilities	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	++/-?	++/-?
5: Equalities	+/-	+/-	--/+	+/-	+/-
6: Education and skills	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	++/-?	++/-?
7: Economy and employment	++/-	++/-	--/+	++/-	++/-
8: Transport	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	++/-?	++/--?
9: Air quality	++/--	++/--	--/+	++/-	++/--
10: Soils	++/--	++/--	--/+	--/+	--/+
11: Resource consumption and waste	+/-?	+/-?	--/+?	--/+?	--/+?
12: Water resources and quality	-?	-?	-?	-?	-?

IIA objective	Spatial Option 1	Spatial Option 2	Spatial Option 3	Spatial Option 4	Spatial Option 5
13: Climate change and energy	++/-?	++/-?	--/+?	++/-?	++/--?
14: Flood risk	--	--	--	--	--
15: Biodiversity and geodiversity	--/+?	--/+?	--?	--?	--?
16: Historic environment	--?	--?	--?	--?	--?
17: Landscape, townscape and visual impacts	++/--?	++/--?	--/+?	--/+?	--/+?

DRAFT FINDINGS

Spatial Options Integrated Impact Assessment

High level assessment as it's purpose was to inform decision making

- ❑ Options 1 and 2 appear to generate the greatest benefit/least harm
- ❑ Option 3 – least benefit/greatest harm
- ❑ Options 4 and 5 are mixed in terms of results

Route forward – refining Option 2 further and exploring new town typologies in more detail

Indicative Contents

Successful Places

- ❑ Placemaking
- ❑ Climate adaptation and resilience – resource management
- ❑ Flood risk and water management
- ❑ Riverside Strategy
- ❑ Natural environment
- ❑ Green belt
- ❑ Heritage and culture

Places people live (Neighbourhoods)

- Homes – mix of units, specialist housing (including older people, gypsies and travellers, self/custom build), affordable housing
- Local services – neighbourhood centres, corner shops, health and community facilities, primary schools and early years facilities

Places people work (employment areas)

- Inclusive economy principles
- Jobs and skills
- Freeport
- Existing employment areas we want to protect/enhance – intensification principles, complementary uses, design principles
- New employment areas

Places people visit (bigger than local catchment)

- Town centres
- Larger health and education infrastructure
- Strategic green and blue infrastructure – country parks etc
- Visitor accommodation
- Sport, leisure and cultural facilities

Moving around places (goods and people)

- ❑ Overall approach to movement
- ❑ Active travel
- ❑ Sustainable travel
- ❑ Road network

Focus on the local

What does this mean for specific communities?

Strategy for individual settlements

- Vision
- Defining local priorities in terms of development and design principles and infrastructure needs
- Identifying Opportunity Areas – places which we think have potential to grow, change and adapt in the next 15-20 years
- Safeguarding/protecting particular uses including employment and open spaces
- Allocating land for new neighbourhoods, employment areas and infrastructure

Next steps for Initial Proposals document

- ❑ Finalise Integrated Impact Assessment
- ❑ Finalise Engagement Strategy
- ❑ Further conversations with Infrastructure Providers
- ❑ All Member meetings to discuss the proposals and give them a chance to feedback on emerging policies/sites
- ❑ Full Council in November
- ❑ Consultation commence in December with in person events in January and February

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill:

Plan-making reforms: consultation on implementation

Local Plan Taskforce – July 2023

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The Government's ambition is that new local plans are **simpler, shorter and more visual,** showing more clearly what is planned in local areas so users can engage more easily.

To help achieve this aim, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill sets out parameters for the content of new-style local plans and minerals and waste plans. They will focus on locally specific matters and have more weight in decision making.

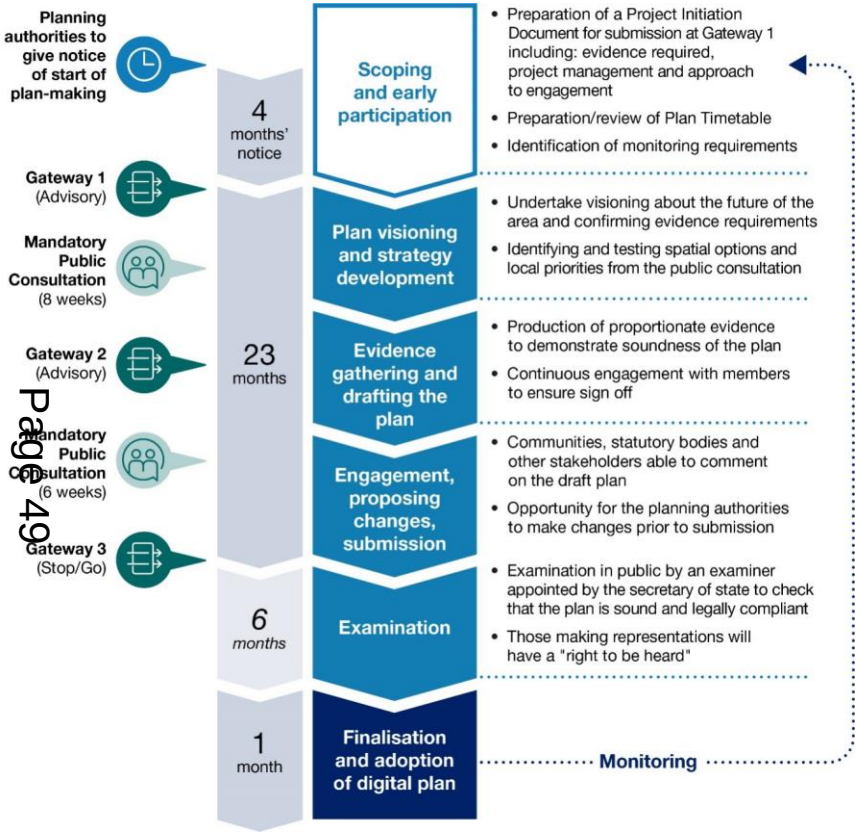
This consultation focuses on:

- ❑ Plan content
- ❑ New 30 month plan-making timeframe
  inc. gateway assessments and community engagement
- ❑ Digital plans/tools
- ❑ Approach to technical evidence and tests of soundness
- ❑ Supplementary Plans
- ❑ Community Land Auctions
- ❑ Implementation of the new system
  inc. transitionary arrangements

Consultation is open until 18th October 2023

Plan form and content

- The use of a digital Local Plan template to ensure a consistent structuring, drafting and appearance
- Locally distinct vision which will anchor the plan, provide strategic direction for the underpinning policies and set out measurable outcomes for the plan period
- Sustainable development will continue as a ‘golden thread’ through local plans, with growth being directed to suitable locations and supported by required infrastructure and good design
- Streamlined Local Plan content through limiting local DM policies, noting the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill provides for the creation of a suite of National Development Management Policies (NDMPs), which will be consulted on separately



'30' month Plan Making process

Purpose of the gateway assessments

- ❑ Ensuring the plan sets off in the right direction – right tools and resources to deliver, scope of the plan and associated supporting information and evidence is appropriate, and that key risks are identified with suitable mitigation proposed
- ❑ Ensuring compliance with legal and procedural requirements and (wherever possible) supporting early resolution of potential soundness issues
- ❑ Monitoring and tracking progress

Digital plans and tools

LURB introduced an ambition for a digital planning system underpinned by standardised and open planning data. To achieve this ambition, the Government have introduced legislation which will allow them to prescribe a common format based on standardised data across plan-making. Legislating for data standards and publication will help to ensure that open, standardised data can drive an improved local plans system.

Emerging tools and products:

- Visualisation of plans, policies and spatial data
- Templates, checklists and step-by-step guides to provide clarity and efficiencies
- Standardisation of data for consistency, access and use dashboards and platforms for transparency and communication
- search tools to better access information
- automation tools and AI to process and report
- the sharing of best practice via case studies and blogs

Scoping and technical evidence

- The consultation proposes a scoping stage to front load engagement which is to be completed prior to the start of the 30 month preparation of the local plan. A Project Initiation Document (PID) would be prepared which defines the scope of the local plan and contains information on the approach to project management, governance, engagement and local issues. It will inform the development of the vision and strategy of the local plan.
- Evidence will continue to be an important part of plan making and monitoring but it will be streamlined with clearer expectations on what evidence is needed through national policy and guidance.
- There will be increased standardisation of key evidence and data and there will be a ‘freezing’ of data and evidence once certain points in the plan making process are reached. This is aimed at reducing the need to revisit evidence at later stages of plan making and during examination.
- Support on evidence will be provided at each stage of the gateway assessments and planning authorities will be required to prepare a ‘statement of compliance with legislation and national policy’ which will set out how the evidence addresses matters of national policy.

Supplementary Plans

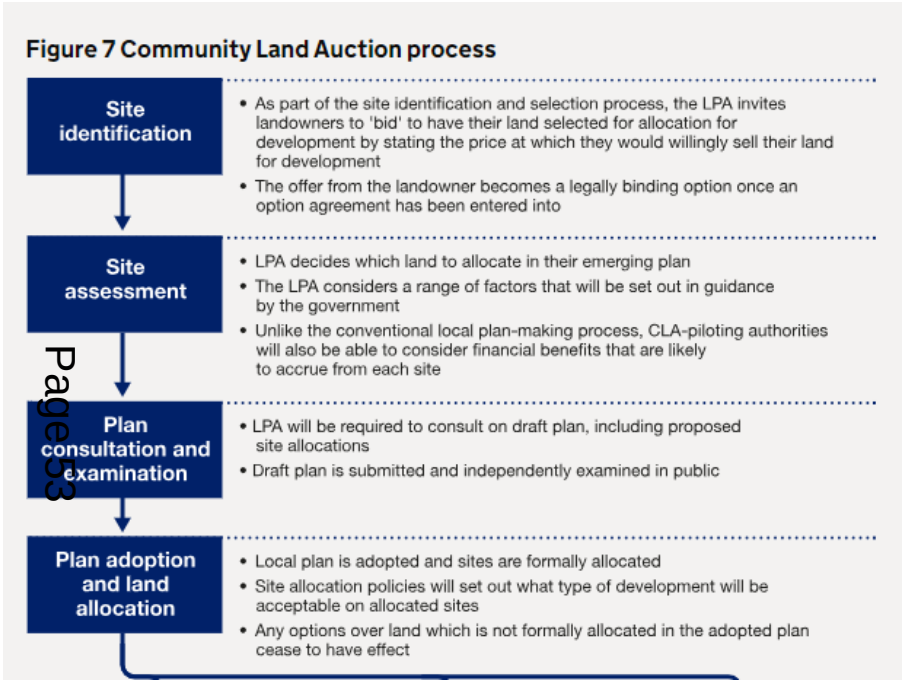
Reforms suggest the removal the role of Supplementary Planning Documents and Area Action Plans. The introduction of supplementary plans will help to provide clarity and simplify the development plan framework.

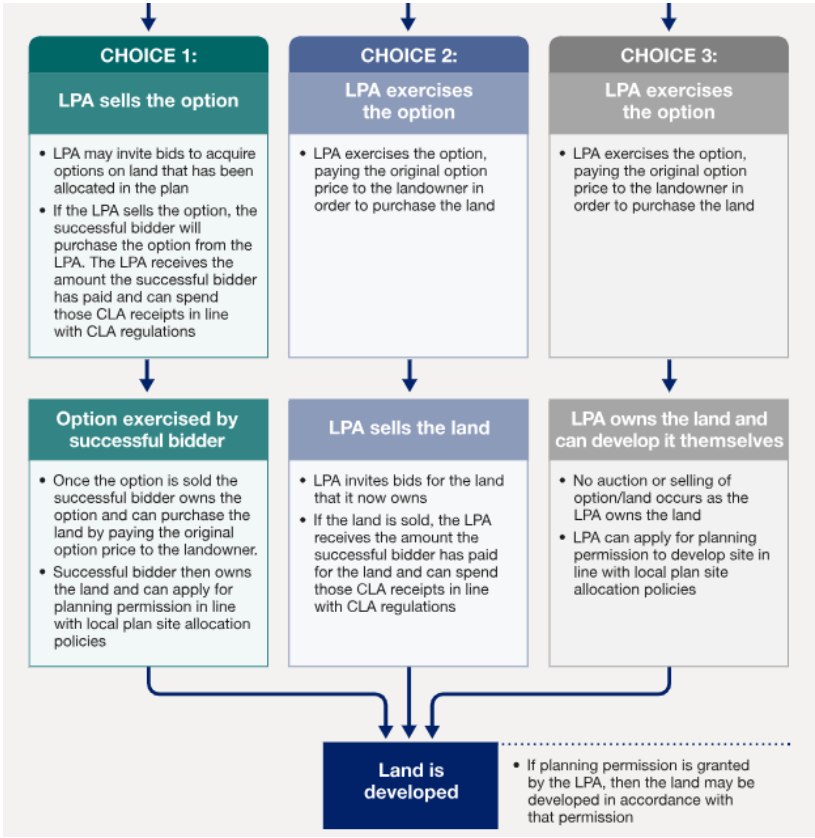
Supplementary plans will have the same weight as a local plan and other parts of the development plan

Community Land Auctions

Seek to provide an alternative approach for identifying land for allocation for development which should improve land value capture for the benefit of local communities.

Figure 7 Community Land Auction process





Transitional Arrangements and Roll Out of New System

- Proposed deadline for the submission of Local Plans for examination under the existing system is 31st June 2025.
- Expectation is that the new system, backed by the necessary regulations, policy and guidance will be in place by Autumn 2024.
- A phased roll out of the new style plan preparation is proposed with ten planning authorities being in the first wave. This will then be followed every 6 months thereafter in waves of 25 planning authorities starting the process.
- To protect planning authorities against speculative development the government are proposing to extend the period that adopted Local Plans are considered up-to-date until 30 months after the point that they commenced preparation of their new Local Plan.