

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

Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held **on rise of the Extraordinary Meeting to be held at 7.00pm on 27 September 2017**

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership of the Council:

Tunde Ojetola (Mayor)
Michael Stone (Deputy Mayor)

Tim Aker
John Allen
Chris Baker
James Baker
Jan Baker
Clare Baldwin
Russell Cherry
Colin Churchman
Gary Collins
Mark Coxshall
Jack Duffin
Tony Fish
Leslie Gamester
Oliver Gerrish
Robert Gledhill
Garry Hague

James Halden
Graham Hamilton
Shane Hebb
Clifford Holloway
Victoria Holloway
Deborah Huelin
Roy Jones
Tom Kelly
Cathy Kent
John Kent
Martin Kerin
Steve Liddiard
Brian Little
Susan Little
Sue MacPherson
Ben Maney

Bukky Okunade
Terry Piccolo
Jane Potheary
David Potter
Joycelyn Redsell
Barbara Rice
Gerard Rice
Sue Sammons
Angela Sheridan
Peter Smith
Graham Snell
Luke Spillman
Pauline Tolson
Aaron Watkins
Kevin Wheeler



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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4	Declaration of Interests	
	To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
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	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
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	The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.	

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In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

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Name of Committee	Date
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Planning Committee	22 June 2017
Licensing Sub-Committee	16 May 2017
General Services Committee	3 May 2017
Planning Committee	27 July 2017
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	19 April 2017
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Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 July 2017
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Future Dates of Council:

26 October 2016, 30 November 2016, 25 January 2017, 22 February 2017, 29 March 2017, 24 May 2017 (Annual Council)

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Information for members of the public and councillors

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If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

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- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

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- Access the modern.gov app
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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

No speech may exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor [Rule 19.8], except for the proposer of any motion who shall have 5 minutes to move that motion (except on a motion to amend where the 3 minute time shall apply) [Rule 19.8(a)]

All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C

- | | | | |
|-----------|----|--|----------------------------|
| A. | A1 | Motion is moved | [Rule 19.2] |
| | A2 | Mover speaks | [Rule 19.8(a) (5 minutes)] |
| | A3 | Seconded | [Rule 19.2] |
| | A4 | Secunder speaks or reserves right to speak | [Rule 19.3] (3 minutes) |

Then the procedure will move to either B or C below:

B.		C.	
IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)		If NOT amended i.e. original motion	
B1	The mover of the amendment shall speak (3 mins).	C1	Debate
B2	The seconder of the amendment shall speak unless he or she has reserved their speech (3 mins).	C2	If the seconder of the motion has reserved their speeches, they shall then speak
B3	THEN debate on the subject .	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak	C4	Vote on motion
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply		
B7	Vote on amendment		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate		

Vision: Thurrock: A place of **opportunity, enterprise and excellence**, where **individuals, communities and businesses** flourish.

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

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100 Years in Memoriam

Remembering Thurrock's Fallen of World War One

Each month during the centenary period of the First World War, Thurrock Council will pay tribute to the 834 local residents known to have lost their lives due to causes associated with the war and their service. At each meeting of Council until November 2018, the 100th anniversary of signing of the Armistice with Germany, a Roll of Honour will be published with the agenda detailing the casualties from that month 100 years ago to commemorate the sacrifice made by Thurrock residents.

September 1917

DATE	SURNAME	FIRST NAME	AGE	WARD	RANK	SERVICE	DIED
03-Sep	BENSON	JOHN	25	G	STKR	ROYAL NAVY	HOME
07-Sep	STILLAWAY	ALFRED CHARLES	22	G	FMN	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
07-Sep	STILLAWAY	ARTHUR GEORGE	17	G	TRIMR	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
07-Sep	FROST	WILLIAM JOHN CLARK	45	SLH	A/DKYMN	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
07-Sep	ABBOTT	HENRY JOSEPH	62	TIL	AB. SEA	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
07-Sep	FINN	JAMES	50	TIL	GREASER	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
07-Sep	HIGGS	GEORGE WILLIAM	36	TIL	FMN	MERC. MARINE	ATLANTIC
12-Sep	BUNN	ARTHUR JAMES	22	AVE	PTE	ESSEX - 6	IRAQ
16-Sep	BOND	THOMAS	26	AVE	DRIVER	RFA	U/K
18-Sep	TRUELOVE	EDGAR LEWIS	24	PUR	PTE	ESSEX - 9	FRANCE
18-Sep	PAYNE	FRED ALBERT	28	STIFF	GUNNER	RGA	BELGIUM
18-Sep	WAKEFIELD	AMOS ALBERT THOMAS	24	STIFF	PTE	ESSEX - 9	FRANCE
19-Sep	BARNESS	WILLIAM	U/K	TIL	PTE	ESSEX - 9	FRANCE
20-Sep	MICHELL	REGINALD ERNEST	34	G	L/CPL	KRRC - 11	BELGIUM
20-Sep	PRENTIS	SAMUEL THOMAS	23	G	L/CPL	MGC	BELGIUM
20-Sep	JENNINGS	FREDERICK	24	SLH	PTE	WEST KENT - 11	BELGIUM

20-Sep	FARROW	WALTER	23	AVE	PTE	R/FUS - 26	BELGIUM
21-Sep	KNIGHT	FREDERICK	34	W/TH	PTE	EAST SURREY - 12	BELGIUM
22-Sep	KING	WILLIAM GEORGE	22	G	PTE	AIF - 23	BELGIUM
22-Sep	GILSON	JOSEPH HENRY	26	G	PTE	ASC	BELGIUM
22-Sep	YEOMANS	ROBERT MONK	38	MUCK	PTE	WEST SURREY - 10	BELGIUM
22-Sep	LINCE	CHARLES WILLIAM JOHN	U/K	TIL	PTE	MIDDLESEX - 23	BELGIUM
23-Sep	SMITH	BERT	25	E/TIL	PTE	ESSEX - 1	BELGIUM
23-Sep	COLLINS	THOMAS HENRY	22	L/TH	2/COOK	MERC. MARINE	CHANNEL
24-Sep	LEACH	FREDERICK	20	G	CPL	S.AFRICAN F	S.AFRICA
24-Sep	EVANS	DAVID	28	G	LT	NORTHLAND FUS - 1	BELGIUM
24-Sep	WADE	EDMUND	22	SLH	PTE	MIDDLESEX - 1	BELGIUM
26-Sep	PARKER	CHARLES	31	G	PTE	HANTS - 14	BELGIUM
26-Sep	TOOLEY	WILLIAM	26	G	SAPPER	RE	BELGIUM
26-Sep	FACER	FRANCIS WALTER	34	G	L/CPL	AIF - 29	BELGIUM
26-Sep	ROBINSON	CYRIL	U/K	CORR	RFMN	LONDON - 9	BELGIUM
29-Sep	HICKS	ALFRED CHARLES HENRY	28	L/TH	PTE	CAMBRIDGE - 1	BELGIUM
30-Sep	STEER	ISAAC	38	G	GUNNER	RGA	BELGIUM
30-Sep	MALIN	HARRY	31	ORS	PTE	BUFFS - 7	BELGIUM

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Tunde Ojetola (Mayor), Michael Stone (Deputy Mayor), John Allen, Chris Baker, James Baker, Jan Baker, Russell Cherry, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Leslie Gamester, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, James Halden, Graham Hamilton, Shane Hebb, Clifford Holloway, Victoria Holloway, Deborah Huelin, Roy Jones, Cathy Kent, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Steve Liddiard, Brian Little, Susan Little, Sue MacPherson, Ben Maney, Bukky Okunade, Terry Piccolo, Jane Potheary, David Potter, Joycelyn Redsell, Barbara Rice, Gerard Rice, Angela Sheridan, Peter Smith, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman, Aaron Watkins and Kevin Wheeler

Apologies: Councillors Tim Aker, Clare Baldwin, Garry Hague, Tom Kelly, Sue Sammons and Pauline Tolson

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

The Mayor invited Reverend Ruth Cartwright to lead those present in prayer.

30. Minutes

Councillor Jones requested that Appendix A referred to in the minutes be made available to Members.

Councillor Okunade's comment on Page 21, Item 29, Motion submitted by Councillor Spillman should read "Councillor Okunade stated that as Chair to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and her involvement in Corporate Parenting that it was paramount that no child should suffer and that Members should be assured that authorities have the right processes in place. Based on this Councillor Okunade would be unable to support the Motion".

Following the above amendment, Members approved the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 28 June 2017 as a correct record.

31. Items of Urgent Business

The Mayor informed the Council that he had not agreed to the consideration of any items of urgent business.

32. Declaration of Interests

Councillor C Kent declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was an Outside Body representative on the Essex Fire Authority.

Councillor Watkins declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was an Outside Body representative on the Essex Fire Authority.

Councillor Redsell declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a Member on the Essex Police and Crime Panel.

33. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

The Mayor invited all those present to reflect on and remember Thurrock's fallen of World War One.

The Mayor thanked Thurrock MPs Jackie Doyle-Price and Stephen Metcalfe, along with Councillors Halden, Jones, Okunade and Coxshall and the numerous residents who attended the Civic Service held on the 2 July 2017. The Mayor stated that the event had been well attended by Mayors from nearby boroughs and thanked Reverend Barlow, Laosun and Ruth Cartwright for officiating the service.

The Mayor stated how impressed he had been with the Thurrock 100 events that had taken place over the last month, with 23 schools participating in an art competition with the results proudly being displayed at the Thurrock Thames Art Studio in Mucking. These artists had agreed to display their work in the Mayor's Parlour in the future.

The Mayor referenced the first graduation of the National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries that had been held in July with Thurrock leading the way on the level of training and that he looked forward to seeing the new students accommodation building.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, updated Members on the following:

On Monday 31 July, a commemorative event will take place at the Grays War Memorial from 11.00am in respect of the Battle of Passchendaele which began 100 years ago.

Councillor Gledhill stated that since the introduction of Clean It, Cut It the Council had collected 57,183 bags of litter, 333 litter bins had been emptied, over 1550 fly-tips had been collected which had equated to 345,627 kilograms, over 27,500 hectares of grass had been cut and from 79 parks and green spaces approximately 17,200 bags of rubbish had been removed from these sites.

Councillor Gledhill stated that 2,082 pot holes had been filled since April 2017 having acquired extra money from Government.

That 1858 fixed penalty notices had been issued for rubbish and dog fouling with 35 individuals being successfully prosecuted with £8394.00 in fines, £8574.00 in costs and a £1134.00 victim surcharge. Councillor Gledhill encouraged residents not to ignore a fine, pay up and stop dropping rubbish on Thurrock streets.

Councillor Gledhill stated that from 24 July 2017, the first phase of gas works in London Road, Grays would commence and apologised to residents for the inconvenience this may cause.

Councillor Gledhill confirmed that no London Borough would be bulk purchasing properties in the St Chads development with two thirds of the properties in phases one and two being fully let and social housing properties being available soon.

Councillor Gledhill formally announced the change of Portfolio Holder for Environment to Councillor Watkins who would be responding to questions later this evening.

34. Questions from Members of the Public

At 7.15pm, Councillor Collins requested a Point of Order in relation to Rule 14.12, Questions without Notice. He asked the Monitoring Officer to clarify whether Council Members had sight of public questions before any decision had been made to accept or reject them. The Monitoring Officer, David Lawson, confirmed that when Member or Public questions were received they were regarded as strictly confidential. Once questions had been approved they were forwarded to the relevant Officer for response with a very strict understanding that questions received from Members or the Public should never be shared with other Members or the Portfolio Holder until after the deadline to receive questions had passed.

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed under the relevant meeting date at <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock> and are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.

35. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members that in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme no notices of petitions had been received.

36. Petitions Update Report

Members received a report on the status of those petitions handed in at Council Meetings and Council Officers over the past six months.

Councillor Redsell requested an update on Petition 487 with regard to double yellow lines on the access road to 36-72 Lodge Lane, Grays.

Councillor Duffin requested an update on Petition 480 with regard to parking in Limeslade Close; Petition 481 with regard to parking in Plashet Close and Southend Road and Petition 484 with regard to insufficient parking in Plaistow Close.

Councillor Duffin stated that the process for dealing with Petitions should be reviewed.

37. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The Mayor enquired whether Group Leaders wished for any changes to be made to the appointments previously made to Committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Chamber that he wished to make the following changes:

Councillor Collins to become a permanent Member on the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins be removed as Substitute Member on the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Redsell to become a permanent Member on the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Snell, Leader of the UKIP Group, informed the Council Chamber he had no further changes to make.

Councillor Gerrish, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Council Chamber he had no further changes to make.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Councillor Collins be appointed as Member of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2. That Councillor Watkins be removed from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

3. That Councillor Redsell be appointed as Member of the Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

38. Lower Thames Crossing

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Council, stated that this was the first opportunity to present the report to Council on events following the Secretary of State's announcement on the 12 April 2017 of a preferred route for a Lower Thames Crossing. That the purdah period had prevented debate and that the announcements were required so that Thurrock could move forward onto the next stage. Councillor Gledhill stated the decision on the route had been the wrong one and that Members and the public would also agree that this decision was the wrong one.

The report had been presented at Full Council to maintain the Council's continued stance that it was opposed to any new river crossing and associated new road in Thurrock. As the Council continued to oppose the principal of the new crossing it had to be recognised that any damage it may do to the borough should be minimised as far as possible. In a statutory role, the Council will continue to engage with Highways England and to ensure that the responses put together are backed up with solid facts and figures from independent air quality testing.

The voices of Thurrock will continue to be heard as Thurrock residents would feel the negative impact of this scheme whilst everyone else would get the potential benefits. To ensure that Thurrock residents got a fair representation as the process continued, the Council had agreed a £50,000 budget each year to help residents get the best deal from the decision. Councillor Gledhill stated that this figure should be matched by Highways England and not be reliant on one authority to pay for work needed to get the best for the residents that it affected the most.

A clear time table had been set by the Council to ensure that Highways England informed the Council of any advance notices and details of any information, events or correspondence relating to the crossing.

Councillor Gledhill agreed to endorse the amendment to recommendation 1.6 as proposed by Councillor Gerrish and that became the substantive recommendation. The amended recommendation 1.6 read as follows:

That General Services Committee be invited to establish a cross party Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and to agree its Terms of Reference at the next General Services Committee meeting; or alternatively consider a change to the constitution to include a new overview and scrutiny committee to look expressly at the Lower Thames Crossing and if agreed bring a report to Full Council as to its possible Terms of Reference, the financial and legal implications including any impact on political balance calculations and payment of special responsibility allowances.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that all Members should have the opportunity to take part in this debate.

Following this Full Council meeting, the Secretary of State will be contacted on how the Council want to take this proposal forward. It would be equally important that the three Group Leaders meet with Highways England to discuss the next steps.

Councillor Gledhill stated that the Council had some challenging decisions to make but agreed that the Council was here for the whole of Thurrock and it would be in the residents' interests that the Council agree to the recommendations.

Councillor Gledhill commented that residents had been very forthcoming with views and that it was absolutely right that they should continue to do this but this should be facilitated as best as it could be.

Councillor B Rice stated that she spoke on behalf of the residents and that it was a shame that not all public questions were heard. The Council should stand united and represent the residents of Thurrock that there are no more crossings in Thurrock. Councillor Rice was in agreement with the amendment that it was important that such a specialised committee be set up and that the Council should be ready for any legal challenges it may face.

Councillor Jones echoed Councillor Rice's comments and that Thurrock had the worst air quality in the country and that fully independent air quality tests should be undertaken.

Councillor B Little stated that with heavy heart he agreed with the recommendations but had been opposed to the proposed crossing for the last eight years fighting for residents of his Orsett Ward. Efforts had been made to further other proposals and that this option would not be the solution to the current congestion issues. The Chair of the Highways England should communicate more with the Council, Road User Groups and the public so that they can understand the timings and the proposals being put forward.

Councillor Spillman stated that the Council should, where legally possible, prevent any new further crossings in Thurrock in the future.

Councillor Gerrish reaffirmed the opposition of the Labour Group to the new Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock and had been consistent in both administration and opposition in arguing that the crossing would be wrong for Thurrock. That the details of the route are incorrect and damaging and that the Council should continue to fight the plans and step up on the responsibilities of fighting for this specific route. Councillor Gerrish stated that there was now some urgency for the Council to respond to the proposal and that the proposed Task Force Group or Overview and Scrutiny Committee would ensure that the pressure be kept on and to escalate the fight. Either of these groups should allow residents input to ensure that outside opinions are heard.

Councillor G Rice stated that the Council will continue to fight as this decision would affect the whole borough and that full independent air quality tests should be undertaken so that facts and figures would be made available when requested.

Councillor Fish accepted the amendment and that it was important that the proposal received the proper scrutiny that it deserved that gave all Members and the public the opportunity to contribute and get involved.

Councillor J Kent stated that the Council should remain united and remain opposed to the crossing and stated that this report had come too late, it should have been presented either at the June Full Council or a Special Meeting of Council during April or May 2017. Councillor J Kent had concerns not only with the damage the crossing will have on Thurrock but also with the infrastructure and housing associated with the crossing that will be developed over time. Improvements had to be made to the Highways England consultation and this Council must hold them to account.

Councillor Duffin questioned whether recommendation 1.3 should include all data not just the data that made it into the report. Thurrock Council should stand opposed to the proposal and continue to fight and get the best deal for residents.

Councillor Piccolo stated he had been opposed to the proposed crossing from the start but working with Highways England could enable the Council to have some inside knowledge as to what was being proposed and how best the Council could fight against any decisions.

Councillor Allen stated that Thurrock Council should continue to oppose the proposed crossing and do everything in its power to fight and challenge it.

Councillor S Little had campaigned since 2008 for any further crossings in Thurrock and stated that this proposal would not sort out the current congestion issues. Councillor S Little had concerns that communications from Highways England was very unacceptable in letting residents know what was happening and that this had to be improved, as had the Council's communication efforts.

Councillor Redsell agreed it was good that all Members were in agreement and that the public be made more aware that they can ask questions at overview and scrutiny committees.

Councillor Wheeler stated that the UKIP fought hard against the Lower Thames Crossing as part the general election campaign.

Councillor Hamilton stated that further independent assessments should be carried out by those with no vested interests.

Councillor V Holloway stated that she would be supporting the amendment but questioned what more could be done to stop the decision made by the Secretary of State and asked what influence the two Thurrock MPs were having on Government. The Council needed to work with residents and fight more to say no to the proposed crossing.

Councillor Okunade supported joint working against this crossing and would continue to vigorously fight for residents.

Councillor Smith commented that it was a shame that the passion and anger demonstrated in the Chamber tonight had not been reflected in the recommendations.

Councillor Snell stated he had stood opposed to the crossing from day one. That Highways England should be challenged more as to the intention of the data received and that early engagement and challenge was vital. The participation of the public at overview and scrutiny committees and Members on outside bodies was vital to ensure the voice of residents could be heard.

Councillor Gledhill thanked all Members for their comments and support and agreed that residents had the right to speak and that participation at overview and scrutiny committees was vital.

Councillor Gledhill stated that the Council were not resigned to the proposed crossing but full structured answers based on facts had to be prepared and ready for representation. That data from independent assessments would need to be undertaken as part of this.

Councillor Gledhill agreed that the Council should stand united which in turn would result in a much stronger argument.

The process to make the Council's voice heard by those Members who had been elected to represent every resident, would start today by approaching Highways England to ensure that the process started to get proper engagement, proper information and proper data.

Councillor Gledhill stated that a direct mail would be sent to all 160,000 Thurrock residents to ensure that everyone had the right to comment.

The Mayor adjourned Full Council at 8.14pm due to a general disturbance making orderly business impossible.

Councillor Coxshall left the Chamber.

Full Council reconvened at 8.20pm.

On a Point of Order, Councillor Redsell stated that swearing was unacceptable in the Chamber and that Councillor Wheeler should stand up and apologise. Councillor Wheeler responded by apologising for the bad language used.

At 8.22pm, Councillor Jones requested a Point of Order that Councillor Coxshall had behaved disrespectfully to Members and members of the public by laughing throughout the disturbance.

Councillor Coxshall returned to the Chamber.

The Mayor called a vote on recommendation 1.6 as amended and the Leader stood to confirm this had been accepted by him as the new recommendation.

Upon being put to the vote, 39 Members voted in favour of the recommendations with 4 Members against, whereupon the Mayor declared the recommendations carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Thurrock Council maintains its opposition to any new river crossing and associated new road in Thurrock and that any engagement by the Council with Highways England does not constitute acceptance of the overall scheme.**
- 2. That the Council utilises Highways England's scheme development process in order to continue its opposition to the scheme, fulfil its statutory responsibilities as a planning and highway authority, as a consultee and as a landowner, and to protect the interests of residents in Thurrock.**
- 3. That the Council ask Highways England to jointly establish with the Council a process for independent air quality testing and to provide the Council with access to all data used to reach decisions.**
- 4. That the Council request financial support from Highways England or Government in order to meet its responsibilities and to represent the interests of Thurrock's residents.**
- 5. That Highways England be informed that the Council requires at least 1 weeks advanced notice and details of any information, events or correspondence relating to the Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock.**
- 6. That General Services Committee be invited to establish a cross party Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and to agree its Terms of Reference at the next General Services Committee meeting; or alternatively consider a change to the constitution to include a new overview and scrutiny committee to look expressly at the Lower Thames Crossing and if agreed bring a report to Full Council as to its possible Terms of Reference, the financial and legal implications including any impact on political balance calculations and payment of special responsibility allowances.**

- 7. That the three Group Leaders write to the Secretary of State for Transport setting out the Council's position following full Council and that Highways England be invited to meet with the three Group Leaders as soon as possible.**

39. Questions from Members

At 8.24pm, Councillor Coxshall requested a Point of Order that Members should not be named whilst they were not present in the Chamber.

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 2 questions to the Leader of the Council had been received and 5 questions to Cabinet Members.

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

40. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

Councillor Ojetola invited Members to the Annual AGM of the Thurrock Community Leisure Limited/Impulse Leisure Limited on the 23 August 2017 and that previous AGM minutes would be sent to Members for information.

41. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of Committees as set out in the Agenda were received.

42. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

Members received an information report updating the progress in respect of Motions received at Council over the last year.

43. Motion submitted by Councillor C Kent

At 9.00pm, the Mayor moved a motion to suspend Council Procedure Rule 11.1 to allow the meeting to continue beyond the 2.5 hour time limit until 9.30pm. Members indicated their agreement to the proposal.

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor C Kent and seconded by Councillor C Holloway. The Motion read as follows:

This Council urges the Essex Fire Authority and the Police Crime Commissioner to urgently review the crewing of all special appliances such as the Aerial Ladder Platform by recruiting full time firefighters so these appliances are available whenever they are needed.

Councillor C Kent explained that a proposed amendment had been received by Councillor Watkins and read as follows:

This Council urges the Essex Fire Authority and the Police Crime Commissioner to urgently review the crewing of all special appliances in Thurrock.

Councillor C Kent confirmed that in the spirit of Members working together she would accept the amendment and stated that the Motion had been submitted to ensure the safety of Thurrock residents. Councillor C Kent stated that the Aerial Ladder Platform was a specialised piece of apparatus that was crucial in any fire incident but would be crewed by firefighters outside of Grays. Pressure should now be put on the Police Crime Commissioner that all crew be trained to ensure that the Fire Service are ready if the worse should happen.

Councillor C Holloway stated that this was a practical motion addressing the correct use of apparatus and regard should also be given to the dangers of fire at all infrastructures in the borough. Practical risk assessments should be undertaken to understand where the demand for apparatus fell.

Councillor Watkins thanked Councillor C Kent for agreeing to the amendment and that her passion for the Fire Service was very evident. Councillor Watkins stated that he would fully support the Motion and fully support the Fire Service but stated a full review should be undertaken with the Fire Service to understand the history of events, the statistics and operational requests made by the Fire Service for such apparatus.

Councillor Jones stated that he would be supporting the Motion and that it was vital that industrial infrastructures in the borough should form part of any review undertaken by the Fire Service.

Councillor Piccolo agreed that the Fire Service should undertake a wider review on all specialist and vital firefighting apparatus.

Councillor C Kent thanked Members for their support and stated that the Fire Service had been very close to her heart and thanked all the firefighters in Essex who continued to keep residents safe.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion as amended.

Following a clear majority in favour, the Mayor declared the Amended Motion carried.

The Mayor declared the Motion was carried.

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 26 July 2017

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

Two questions were submitted from members of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill, as Leader of the Council, are you and your administration fully committed to facilitating and encouraging questions from members of the public at meetings of Council Committees and meetings of Full Council?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mr Perrin for your question. Yes, I and my Administration are fully supportive of encouraging and facilitating public questions at Full Council and other committees, as I am sure all other groups are. In line with the procedures and guidance agreed by Full Council in its Constitution in the last 12 months 21 public questions have been received of which 4 questions were rejected. All rejections were based on repetition according to the rules of the constitution. As I have mentioned before I started to answer questions long before I became a councillor in the way that you do and it is the right think for members of the public to ask questions and I encourage that but as the Monitoring Officer said it does need to go through a process and I don't see anything until he has approved them.

Mayor

Thank you. Mr Perrin, do you have a supplementary question.

Mr Perrin

No Thank you, Mr Mayor. I am meeting with the Monitoring Officer next week.

2. From Mrs Callender to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader of the Council believe that sheltered housing in Thurrock is good value for money?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mrs Callender for your question.

Yes I do. We have 1,256 tenants in our 30 sheltered complexes across the Borough and there is a waiting list of people wanting to move into sheltered accommodation when it comes free. I have regular meetings with tenants through the Tenants Excellence Panel. The feedback we receive is very positive especially for the work of the Sheltered Housing Officers this seems to be increasing. We currently employ 18 Sheltered Housing Officers this was reduced down to by half to 18 nearly by the previous administration but they are doing a fantastic job to supply the services. Following the recent consultation exercise over service charges we have developed our Sheltered Housing Improvement Plan which is responding to the comments received from tenants – Sheltered Housing Officers mobile numbers are now available to all tenants; clearer timetables when staff are available are now in all the complexes; repairs reporting arrangements have been much more improved.

Mayor

Thank you. Mrs Callender, do you have a supplementary question.

Mrs Callender

Well Councillor Gledhill do you consider this to be good value for money. Our warden comes about 12 o'clock each day to make phone calls to people that need them. When we have meetings she said I have logged that. To issues that we raise we never hear the outcome of them. My husband as key holder, he lets all the workmen into the complex if there is work to be done, as the warden is never there. He opens and shuts the hall. Do you consider that as a good service for us? And Councillor Gledhill you have an older persons charter.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Mrs Callender for that. Obviously, as I said the previous administration did cut down the number of sheltered housing officers which does put a strain on the services there. There shouldn't be a situation where a resident has to open up for the workmen to come in that will be addressed by the assistant director of housing directly after this meeting. And you should always receive come back from any communication you have with your sheltered housing officer. Again if this is not happening I will apologise for that and will take up with the assistant director of housing straightaway. Yes, we do have an older person's charter, everybody in the council not just the councillors should be looking to deal with that. If you have any specific problems or any specific issues please feel free to contact the council and be asked to be put through to the leader's office and we can discuss that in person.

Item 13 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that 2 questions had been received to the Leader of the Council and 5 questions had been received to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Gledhill

What steps have been taken to target-harden Thurrock's vulnerable green spaces from illegal encampments and fly tipping please?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Collins. Target hardening of all green spaces in the borough is a challenge and one that we take very seriously. There is a balance to ensure our green spaces are welcoming for our residents but to also act as a deterrent for inappropriate usage.

In order to fully target harden all sites we would need to consider erecting substantial fencing or all other methods around all of our green spaces, not only would this be very costly, it would promote the wrong appearance of Thurrock.

Whilst target hardening every site may not be possible we have identified, vulnerable sites and ensured that they have received some form of target hardening, examples include:

- Gating order and installation of heavy duty gates at Rainbow Lane.
- CCTV installed, I am not going to say exactly where.
- Installation of heavy duty gates at Greenacres Farm (off the A13).
- Low Level Fencing at Billet Field on the A128A1014 Manorway. A bund has been introduced on the curve of the slip road high enough to stop vehicle accessing it but not interfering with the small layby provision.

Further works are planned over the next 12 to 18 months through capital works schemes to identify and protect more additional sites, including more use of camera monitoring and promotion of enforcement activity.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Collins, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Collins

Where target hardening is removed or damaged to gain access what action does the Council or the Police take please.

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Mister Major. A two point question, obviously one of which I can answer directly on behalf of the Council, the other one we would have to leave for the police and crime commissioner to give a full response to. However, the Council will repair as swiftly as possible once the travelling community have moved on in the case of unlawful encampment. In the case of fly-tipping the area will be removed and replaced. To give you an example of this during the election period a boat was fly-tipped by North Stifford cross walk from the Harvester to North Stifford. That involved someone moving a large amount of concrete to dump a boat. Possibly the most bizarre item of fly-tipping I have seen. The Council removed it replaced it and obviously made the area more secure. As for the Police if this is seen, or seen on CCTV, obviously the police have the ability to prosecute for criminal damage as and where criminal damage has occurred or indeed start to put in their section 61 powers to remove them for causing a disruption to the area to obtain access.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Collins, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Collins

Finally are there any other steps the Council can take or is taking to help protect our green spaces from these unlawful incursions.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Collins. Yes it doesn't always have to about the physical. We saw that Harlow introduced an order to stop a particular group of families with unlawful incursions which had a dramatic drop of incursions in their area. It was one of the many options we looked at and we are also looking at public protection orders, we are looking at changing the terms and conditions of our car parks. We are trying absolutely everything we can to stop the unlawful incursions. There will be other things that come forward from the local plan as well but this is taken very seriously and sometimes we just need to look beyond the obvious to come up with the answers the works for everybody swiftly.

2. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader support the principles in the Thurrock Council Charter for older people?

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish. The short answer - Yes, I fully support the Charter for Older People. It was adopted unanimously by this Council after some excellent joint work between Councillors Halden and Barbara Rice. For which we thanked them at the time and continue to thank them now. We have made great strides in delivering the commitments within the Charter and one of those the one at the very bottom is that we commit to review and develop the charter with older people on a regular basis. We have all agreed there should not be such a think that a charter sits there on the wall that gathers dust. So if there are any amendments that need to be made, need to discuss this to ensure they work for the older residents but just the work how we think they are going to work.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Gerrish

Thank you Mister Mayor, I do. I think this continues to be a very good document. One of the tenants in it is that we give older people the voice and the opportunity to shape services. Mister Mayor in the last few months we have seen tory proposals to bring in the dementia tax, cut off the winter fuel allowance, break the triple lock on pensions, and raised more quickly the retirement age and the cherry on the top to hit residents in sheltered housing with a new £500 tax. Does the Leader appreciate that many of the elder residents in Thurrock feel like they are under attack from the conservative party.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish for your supplementary. Obviously I can't speak for what the party does nationally however I do remember the queen's speech but can't recall anything that you have mentioned in it. I am going to speak about what you call Tory's tenant tax. A tax is something that you levy on everybody. This is not service charging and is levelled on those that pay for those services. There are 2500 residents in council properties that are over the age of retirement that do not live in sheltered accommodation. They pay a tax that you and your party especially your deputy leader was quite happy to continue of a £100 a year to support those people in sheltered accommodation. That is not fair. That is taxation without any representation. So are they under threat. That is a point of view. Are they under threat from you and your administration and the

previous administration taken any action, no. No they weren't getting fair value across the board but they will be now.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Gerrish

Thank you Mister Mayor. I am sure that will be interesting news for those residents facing these increases in charges. Could I ask what he intends to do to go out to meet with residents to understand the impact in more detail once they have had a chance to come in and see the effects they have on residents.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Gerrish for your supplementary. As I have mentioned before, 70 per cent of the residents in sheltered housing accommodation are on full or partial housing benefit. Those that are on partial will get to full as this is an extra amount added as part of the housing benefit scheme so they will not be directly affected in their pockets. Everybody else is in sheltered accommodation signed an agreement that they needed the services that are supplied there. They didn't just say oh let's just move there they wanted to go there because they chose to go there. The services they receive there which they need to pay for. It's as simple as that. The fact that we never used to charge them directly for the services, we used to charge everyone indirectly those services let's get back to what I said earlier, that's a tax. We can't support that any longer. People need to pay for the service they get and get good services they pay for.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor B Little

Could the Portfolio Holder provide an update for members and residents on the planned changes to traffic flow in Grays Town Centre and changing the one way section of Orsett Road into two way traffic flow?

Mayor

Councillor Brian Little

Councillor Brian Little

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Potheary for your question. At its meeting of September 2015, Cabinet approved a phased

implementation programme to improve traffic flows in Grays Town Centre. This involved the implementation of a package of measures, delivered through the phases below:

Phase 1a of the Grays Town Centre Scheme consisted of:

- Widening Stanley Road between Clarence and Crown Roads to allow two-way bus movements.
- Improving the traffic signal layout at Stanley/Clarence Road junction to allow all vehicle movements.
- A left turn facility for vehicles turning onto Crown Road from the multi-storey car park.
- Relocating the bus stops and constructing new lay-bys at the northern end of Stanley Road.

This phase, Phase 1a has been implemented and is under review, with monitoring and review for this phase to be completed by September 2017. Phase 1b of the Grays Town Centre Scheme is the Bridge Road priority working upgrade, which entails the installation of traffic signal control and changes to New Road access. The design and approval of signal scheme for Phase 1b is being progressed. Implementation of this scheme is projected for November 2017. The final phase, Phase 2, well there may be other phases, of the Grays Town Centre Scheme involves Stanley Road Orsett Road junction improvements and two way provision between Stanley and Thameside theatre junctions. Phase 2 designs will commence in August 2017. Detailed proposals will be presented to Planning Transportation Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November for possible inclusion in the 2017/18 Highways Capital Programme.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Potheary

Thank you Councillor Little that was a very detailed answer to what is going on, that has been really really helpful. I would just like to contradict you on one small point is that the bus laybys down Stanley Road have not happened, they are particularly crucial as the buses, yes as anyone who uses this system, is that the buses do sit there for quite a while and they unnecessarily clog up the traffic. So I don't think those have been implemented so if we could get any further information from officers for when that will be implemented, if that will be implemented as part of phase 2a or 2b that would be brilliant. Thank you. What I would like from you Councillor Little is just a bit of reassurance that this is still a top priority for the Council as you have said this was agreed September 2015 cabinet, we have had phase 1 which happened in 2016 was completed I am just a little bit concerned that there is

any kind of urgency, it does feel like there is any urgency that we need for a project like this. Grays town centre does get so chocked up and it's my residents on London Road and its other parts of the system, around that area, that are suffering so I really want a commitment from you and some kind of reassurance that yes we really want this and we are really really push for it.

Councillor Brian Little

Thank you Councillor Potheary. The bus layby situation, I will look into that although my words haven't got bus layby just layby. The other item you mentioned in terms of are we really going to be doing this, is there any urgency. The dates that you see in front of you or I have spoken to you about September 2017, November 2017 are not 2 or 3 years' time they are pretty immediate. I think everyone recognises that Grays town centre is a bit of a nightmare in terms of traffic going around it and it has been for a number of years and there have been a number of projects that have applied over the years one way, not one way, changing directions and other things and I think now, hopefully, with the phased introduction of a scheme and if there are things are not working with each phase of that scheme they get amended to make it better for the residents and the travellers within Grays town centre and outward. I hope and I am committed to making something work not just delivering phases.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Potheary

Yes please, just a very quick one. Councillor Little I am sure you will do this but could you keep the ward members sort of apprised of the details and of all of the stages we would really really appreciate that. Thank you.

Councillor Brian Little

Thank you for that. I think it would be useful if we do anything similar like we have done with the road widening to get this out to quite a lot of people as there are quite a lot of users who do not live locally so we can start to spread something like that about. I take your point, I will do that.

2. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Halden

Can the Portfolio Holder give reasons why the Purfleet Health hub is gaining priority whilst Tilbury was seen as having the worst health issues?

Mayor

Councillor Halden

Councillor Halden

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Liddiard. Well it isn't, the Tilbury Medical Centre bring in new better bigger new medical facilities to Tilbury has never been closer obviously we had several years where between the CCG and the Council there was discussion of an estate plan and then a discussion of health hubs which simply never occurred, there were never any planning applications written, there were never any capital plans written, there were never any designs written, there was nothing. Over the course of this month, both I and Councillor Coxshall have attended the planning transportation and regeneration committee as well as the health and wellbeing overview and scrutiny committee presenting our paper that went to this month's cabinet which is to procure the design team for the very first hub. That very first hub is Tilbury so you can't possibly say that any area is getting priority over Tilbury as myself and Councillor Coxshall went to great personal lengths to present our paper to overview and scrutiny before it eventually went to cabinet, passed cabinet which kicks off the process of procuring the design team that will hopefully eventually see us spend between 10 and 20 million pounds in the heart of Tilbury to build the new medical facilities that we need. Councillor Coxshall has said on a number of occasions, I don't need prompting from the portfolio holder for regeneration, he has said on occasions that Tilbury requires some love, you can buy an awful lot of love as I understand with 10 and 20 million pounds. We said we are going to do it. We are going to do it and what I would say to Councillor Liddiard is if, I am not particularly sure why you are concerned that Councillor Gerrish's ward has gazumped you. If you are concerned about the process that is going on in Tilbury or in deed if any other member is concerned about the process going on in Purfleet or other areas I am more than happy to meet you to discuss these issues.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Liddiard, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Liddiard

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Halden for your reply. Would you say you are getting towards a formal legal agreement yet or is it sort of imminent or this year?

Councillor Halden

Well as the report is set out there are a number of processes and risks that we need to mitigate. The point of procuring the design team is making sure we do three things. Firstly of all that we build a building that is future proof ie that just doesn't suit the current demography of Tilbury or Grays or Corringham or Purfleet. It is going to fit the future demand. It will also make sure that the design is in keeping with what the CCG and what other health partners want to do with us to ensure that we have the revenue streams that

go into those buildings that will keep them going and that is when we can have those exciting conversations about what type of community facilities are hosted. That work is ongoing. The reality is that we started from a poor base because for years this council has spoken about health hubs and for years it had moved beyond rhetoric but we have finally got a paper together. It has been passed. A design team is being procured and I would hope to have something very concrete for you certainly this side of Christmas.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Liddiard, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Liddiard

No thank you Mister Mayor.

3. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Watkins

In recent weeks, I have been contacted by a number of residents of private flats in Grays Riverside who have experienced an extremely poor communal recycling collection since Easter. As the former Portfolio Holder highlighted at last Full Council, boosting recycling rates is very important. The residents have been working hard to recycle and are now concerned that flats may no longer receive this service. Can the new Portfolio Holder for Environment please put their minds at rest and confirm that communal recycling collections have not been abandoned?

Mayor

Councillor Watkins welcome on board.

Councillor Watkins

Thank Mister Mayor and thank you councillor for your question which I will happily answer. You are quite right the former portfolio holder who I would like to put on record bit an amazing job in the last year whilst she was serving for us, she did an amazing job clearing up the mess which was obviously left for her when she came here in 2016. And you are quite right she did say the environments rates are important and they are very important something that we shall be working on. It is very interesting when you look at extra recycling rates and what they done over the recent years. When you go back to 2010 when the then Conservative administration actioned the three bin system the recycling rates went up to 44.52 per cent but then they fell under the Labour administration in 2015 to 37.90 per cent that is quite a big drop despite the three bin system still remained and weekly bin collections remained as well, so very interesting to see but you are quite right the recycling numbers are not where they need to be and more will be done and yes I will be actioning that. In regards to communal recycling the collections continue across the borough and also in Grays Riverside as well. There have been issues in the past with

contaminated waste which is perhaps the reason why sometimes bin collections have not been for recycling as you will be aware of. But I can confirm tonight that one of the first things I did as I entered into the portfolio I spoke to the team, I spoke to comms as well said that we need to talk to residents, work how we are going to communicate with them, how we can get recycling rates up, let us find out what they need to see, what information do they need to get to understand and what goes into recycling bins, what doesn't go into recycling bins, lets contamination down because fundamentally if we can get contamination down we are actually improving the service and saving money. People may not realise this but it costs a lot of money for contaminated waste for the borough so if we can get that down we are saving a lot of money and improving the service. And I would ask on the record that please could residents follow what is available to them please use the recycling bins is to put the correct stuff in the recycling bins as well. Thank you.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Potheary

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Watkins. I am sure we all enjoyed the slight deviation through history but I am glad you got to my question at the end. So what we have is a situation that in fact since Easter, between Easter and now these flats have received a very very poor service it has been particular acute in Bridge Court on Bridge Road but I have also received complaints from people in flats in Curzon Drive and areas around that area. My residents and, sorry but I pre-empted slightly you on this, but my residents and their management company staff who have been on the ground maintain that there was no contamination when the bins were not collection. Indeed one of my residents, called Bob, actually sorted through to make sure there wasn't any contamination. He actually takes this on himself and I have residents here in the public gallery tonight who are trying to make sure the bins are not contaminated. It hasn't been an isolated incident which is giving me some concern. It is not the contamination these were just missed. Could I ask you to just have a look into why this might actually have happened rather than falling back on the idea of contamination which I don't think is actually correct.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. Obviously I will take that back to the team and send me those details as well I would be happy to reply back to you and meet with some of your residents to go through those issues that you are experiencing. I would like to thank those residents as well if they are going through those bins and checking for recycling, fantastic and that is good work and a good example for the rest of the borough as well. Thank you. Again as I say we will look into this and I

would reiterate though as well a further point that a lot of the time when bins are collected for recycling bins is due to contamination waste and if it is deemed that there is constantly a high contamination waste in certain bins then sometimes you will see the refuse trucks pick those up as unfortunately there is no point in trying to send it to the depot in order to send it for recycling as it will just be rejected and sent to refuse anyway so this could be the reason why. In relation to the possible issues that you are experiencing it may be related to individual problems with reoptimisation, reoptimisation which is a massive thing that has gone across the borough and can happily say as well that we are getting collection rates of over 99 per cent which is fantastic to see we are stepping in the right direction with a lot more to do. But again I will take your concerns on board and speak to me afterwards.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Potheary, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Potheary

Thank you Councillor Watkins that is really reassuring and I think reoptimisation may have placed a bit of a part in this and I am not criticising reoptimisation. Ok so my question is a further question that one of my residents asked me to ask which is about the process of those bins which are contaminated because my residents were told that their bins were contaminated and they contacted the council to complain that they had either hadn't been emptied or they had been emptied into the general waste. No notices had been left, no leaflets, no communication and my understanding was that normally if a bins, recycling bins were contaminated some sort of notice is put on that bin. So I just want to double check that firstly if that policy is still in play which I am hoping it is and also can we double check if it is actually being done.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and that you again Councillor for your supplementary I am quite happy to take that and find out what is happening with that as I don't know off the top of my head unfortunately. But this very much to the case that bins which are contaminated would have a notice on them and as said in my opening statement that in relation to recycling rates and in relation to what people are recycling, not recycling and contamination we will be working on a new comms strategy to consider we will be working with residents to find out what information they need to get from the council in order to improve recycling and understand what they need to do better.

4. From Councillor Collins to Councillor Watkins

Can the new Portfolio Holder tell me what the his programme is for the next 12 months of the Cut It, Clean It, Fill It campaign in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. I can't talk about the Fill It part of it but I am happy to talk about the Clean It and Cut It part of it. I think we can all agree Clean It Cut It Fill It has been a highly successful programme which this administration undertook to clean up the years of neglect that we saw under the former administration. The Leader tonight has already mentioned some of the numbers just for clarification I will go back through that we have seen in April we have cut over one thousand hectares of grass from park spaces to green spaces our teams have collected over 31 tonnes of rubbish, we have filled over two thousand pot holes and from litter picking we have actually picked up to 22 thousand bags of litter which is an incredible number actually when you think about it. This is just a small example of the amount of work carried out and what the additional investment we put in has brought to this borough. Over the years, obviously over the last year, this has come on leaps and bounds but there is more to do and more will be done. I really do look forward to working with Keep Britain Tidy which will be going on this year in order to find out they will be analysing our own works, but sometimes its wrong to mark your own homework, and they will be telling us their good expert advice on what we can do to make things better and will be taking this advice on board and look forward to working with them. In the year we have been moving towards a new electronic scheduling system for those that don't know this will provide a greater transparency for residents across the borough, basically they will know when their grass will be cut, which is something that we should have had a long time ago and I am really looking forward to this coming in. If there are any changes to the services at that point of time will be notified as well so residents can keep a constant eye on when they will see their local grass will be cut. Additional training will be provided for staff and I will also be asking the team as what additional training and qualifications can our staffs has as well to make their daily lives a little bit easier and better. As you already know we are replacing the waste vehicles in the New Year with a seven million pound investment. We will also be looking at what equipment needs to be replaced across environmental team and also we will be looking at what street signs need replacing and cleaning as well. Alongside the parks the parks review which was discussed at the previous and former cleaner greener and safer community. As you already know that review is already going through and I will be doing a little bit more of that as well. I want to be working with schools, resident community groups to get an understanding as to what they need in our parks including as well sport provisions so I will be working with Councillor Halden with that as well. As I have already mentioned we will be continuing to improve enforcement across the borough maintaining a zero tolerance to littering, fly-tipping and breaking of the PSPO orders and will be working with our teams on further target hardening to prevent unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping cross the borough. And Clean It Cut It Fill It will be involving to not only will we be just cleaning our streets we will also be looking at cleaning

the air. It is a priority of mine to work with other cabinet colleagues to clean up this borough's air and help tackle rising air pollution. Clean It Cut It Fill It continues to show this is an administration which is making positive moves for Thurrock which is an administration which is investing into our services and make sure we have a clean and tidy borough. There is a lot to do, more to improve but this is a main priority of mine to get it done.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Collins, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Collins

I have Mister Mayor. At the moment across the borough there are a lot of our litter bins that may be construed as being in the wrong place, or in the need of repair or tender loving care. Have your considered what can be done about this please.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your supplementary. You are quite right and this is something that I am happy to announce that we are looking at based on a ward by ward basis which I have conducted which does not have the most glamorous name unfortunately which will be the street bin review. What we will be doing is looking at what the strategic location of the bins are, the types of bins they are, the conditions these bins are in and what current needs they have in that area. We will then follow up following from the feedback what we need to do next. The reason I have requested this is to fundamental help improve the service and to help residents experiences when walking down the streets. I have seen it across the borough many times when we have a bin next to another bin. No reason why that bin is there just that there are two bins together or it can be seen as the opposite in which is completely ruined and one bin replaced by the bin right next to it but that former bin has not been removed. This is something that we will be looking at. Again as I say as part of that review we will be looking at where we need those bins as well, strategic places where we are missing bins where the litter is quite high go in to see what can be done there. This review is showing proactive nature of this administration and hopefully what you see from me it is a desire and willingness to change the service for the better. Additionally to this we will be having the big-belly-bins coming in the new year which are really really good and was at the LGA a couple of weeks ago basically they are going to have solar powers and have the ability to have Wi-Fi in the future as well. They tell us when they need to cleared so that our teams can clear them as we know they are full. You may find this boring but this will help improve everyone, but will be coming in the New Year, in a few weeks' time and these will be strategically placed across the borough.

5. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Watkins

Will the new Cabinet Member for Environment outline his priorities for the Portfolio?

Mayor

Councillor Watkins.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor, I will try and be as brief as I can. I won't reiterate the points we have already made this evening so you can already understand some of the service implementation changes we are going to be making. The main service change which we will be making across the next year and my main priorities is to actually change the environmental service plan, its strategies and some of its policies which were updated in 2011 and before that. So I and the team and my counter colleagues will be going to see what more could be done. I have already highlighted that air pollution is going to be under that banner and will also be a strategy and policy going forward for green energy and green strategy for the borough for the council itself which is something that is incredible important we need to make sure we are ready for 21st century and we are ready for going forward. We will also be looking at municipal waste strategy, fees and charges and commercialisation as well. So there is a lot that will fall under that Clean It Cut It Fill It and everything else that corresponds with that will fall under that and more of that will come out.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Gerrish

Thank you Mister Mayor. I will welcome firstly Councillor Watkins into his new role and it is clear that he will be bringing some enthusiasm into that role and look forward to working with him. Environment is clearly crucial to Thurrock and where we can work constructively together and we will aim to do that as we have tried to do so far. Mister Mayor, last year three major environment KPIs were missed on the proportion of household waste recycled, on the cleanliness of our streets and the percentage of bins emptied on time. Mister Mayor what does the portfolio holder see himself doing differently from the previous portfolio holder to address those issues.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor. Actually I would like to say that the former portfolio holder did an amazing job and is grossly unfair so I would like to see those comments taken back actually. I have already stated tonight that I will be working with the teams to improve the KPIs and recycling rates as an example. I have already said where we are failing where it is not good enough and we will do better. As already mentioned that in the last two weeks and I

can give you the numbers if you like. The week 16 of the municipal year, 18 July, we had a collection rate of 99.7 per cent, week 17, 23 July we had a collection rate of 99.3 per cent. So 99 per cent is incredible high and I am sure it is much higher than we ever saw under your administration.

Mayor

Thank you. Councillor Gerrish, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Gerrish

Thank you Mister Mayor. I am slightly surprised by that if he is making such strong progress I wonder if he can tell us why the direction of travel for cleanliness in the borough in the administration's own corporate report is that it is getting worse not better.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor. Well the truth of the matter is that we don't hide behind stats like your administration did. The first thing we got rid of was the green amber red model which if you look at your performance reports which we were doing this afternoon most were amber so actually most of them were failing under your administration as well. As I have already highlighted tonight there has been a vast improvements made to the service in the last year and there are more changes going to be made. Waste service are going to be replaced, we are looking at replacing equipment. If we go back to a year ago I believe we only had one working tractor thanks to your administration. The former portfolio holder came in and sorted that out so of course would be badly on KPIs in that scenario because we did not have the grass cutting equipment there because you cut it.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There are 6 questions from members of the public.

1. From Mr Atkins to Councillor Gledhill

Can the Leader of the Council tell me if Council residents are liable for the upkeep and maintenance of the water tanks that are in their property?

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Gledhill, in a letter signed by you, dated 25 August 2017, you notify me, and other Council Tenants, that Thurrock Council has made the decision that from 2 October 2017 service charges will be introduced for those tenants receiving each service. One of the four services you will be charging me for is an item titled "Grounds Maintenance" at £5.00 per week. Councillor Gledhill can you please tell me what weekly "grounds maintenance" the Council will be carrying out on my premises which justifies such a charge?

3. From Mr Akhigbe to Councillor Gledhill

Which areas in my ward, Little Thurrock, have an PSPO in force, if any, and which such zones have CCTV for enforcement and are there any pending PSPOs for the area?

4. From Mr Kankiya to Councillor Gledhill

As a resident in South Chafford, one of the biggest issues facing residents in the area is the constant sound of the cruisers in the lakeside area which has a detrimental effect to residents living nearby. My question is what has happened to the PSPO that was meant to be in the area and would the council consider implementing speed restrictions to deter these cruisers from continuing to behave this way?

5. From Ms Towlson to Councillor B.Little

In light of a question on Low Emission Zones submitted to Full Council in September 2016, Can the Portfolio Holder for Transport make a full statement as what actions are being undertaken to reduce all forms of Pollution, including Pollution from Traffic?

6. From Mrs Imamzade to Councillor Gledhill

In a street with 1 council owned, 1 private rented and 1 privately owned property how is it fair that a grass verge that is open to public use and spans the full length of all properties should suddenly become the

responsibility of one tenant to pay for its up keep. How is that a fair and just charge?

Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 27 September 2017

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Portfolio Holder	Status Full copies of the responses may be obtained from Democratic Services
490	Object to the tory-led Thurrock Council's proposal to introduce and extend service charges of up to £405 a year for all Council tenants. We call on the Tories' to abandon these unfair and unaffordable charges.	30 March 2017	Cllr Gledhill	The July Cabinet agreed to proceed with the service charges extension from October this year. The sheltered increase will be capped at £10 pw from 1 April 2019.
491	Concerned citizens urge our leaders to act now to push for the removal of these Double Yellow Line Road markings on specific parts of the Phase 1 build at Persimmon Homes site Village@Aveley and for engagement in dialogue between the residents and the relevant authorities in a fair and detailed consultation.	30 March 2017	Cllr B Little	Following visits with residents and site observations to ascertain the requirements for refuse vehicles we have drafted the proposals waiting restrictions. Officers are in the processes of drafting traffic orders which are due to be finalised by the end of September.
492	Road(s) known as Kersbrooke Way, Elmstead Close and Fernside Close located in Thurrock, Essex, do hereby petition Thurrock Council, and make known our objection and constant dissatisfaction to the current use and constant noise of the garages off Kersbrooke Way, which are currently being used for purposes outside of the planning agreement and existing deeds. We call on Thurrock Council and the owners of the garages to ask for something to be done.	13 April 2017	Cllr S MacPherson	The enforcement case on this site was closed on 25 April 2017 with no further action required. The garages are privately owned and went up for auction on the 24 May 2017. The tenants were required to vacate the garages on the 7 May 2017.

Item 8 : Petitions Update Report – 27 September 2017

493	Changes that will calm the traffic on Flint Street, Grays, RM20 3HA	28 June 2017	Cllr B Little	A speed and volume count is being undertaken on Flint Street to determine whether there is indeed a speeding issue or whether this is a perceived speeding issue. The results of this survey will be known by the end of September.
494	To the clearing of the alleyway between Salisbury Road and Kent Road	28 June 2017	Cllr Tolson	Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee will considered a report on this matter at their meeting to be held on the 13 July 2017.

27 September 2017	ITEM: 10
Council	
Recruitment of Director of Environment and Highways	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report seeks the agreement of Council to recruit a new Director of Environment & Highways.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To approve in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Pay Policy Statement:

Subject to the outcome of formal consultation, General Services Committee to make arrangements for the recruitment of a Director of Environment & Highways.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Consultation on a revised senior management structure commenced on the 18 September 2017 and concludes on 16 October 2017.

The proposed changes are intended to provide essential capacity for the delivery of the Council's strategic Place ambitions whilst simultaneously aligning accountability for the public realm priorities within a single new directorate.

The Senior Management restructuring in 2015 provided the foundation for the delivery of the council's ambitious transformation programme to meet the financial challenges and protect service delivery.

2.2 The Place agenda is huge in Thurrock. The new Local Plan, currently being refreshed, will develop this further. External review in the form of the LGA Peer Review team in 2016 agreed that our agenda was exciting and sound. But they also fed back that in order to maximise the benefits

and deliver the agenda, we needed to ensure we have the necessary capacity, behaviours and skills.

Thurrock has possibly the largest and most ambitious growth programme in the country. £6bn is being invested by the private sector in Thurrock. We have seen 7,000 new jobs created and 1,170 new businesses in the borough in recent years, in particular in ports and logistics, retail and creative industries. We anticipate the creation of a further 20,000 new jobs in the next 20 years and up to 30,000 new homes. Growth sits hand in hand with enhancing the place of Thurrock as a location to live and work. In particular ambitious plans for Purfleet, Grays and Tilbury will transform those places with a clear focus going forward on implementation and delivery. The 20 year vision for Thurrock's growth will be set out in the Local Plan.

'Clean it, Cut it, Fill it' is a key priority for members as issues around litter, unkempt green spaces and potholes have been a consistent cause of complaint from residents. The 2016 Residents Survey clearly stated that the highest priority for residents is the quality of the roads. Other key priorities for residents were a high quality Waste & Recycling service and the overall cleanliness of the borough. An additional £1m has been made available in 2017/18 to deliver the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it agenda – focusing on improving the borough's environment and highways.

The Lower Thames Crossing is the Council's top cross-party priority and with the agreement to have a task force to allow the flexibility to react to announcements whilst planning for future, supporting this is going to need additional capacity for many years to come.

While the Council remains opposed to any new crossing in the Borough, it has agreed to established a cross-party LTC task force including residents and businesses supporting the task force, ensuring the Council fulfils its planning and highways responsibilities, and protecting the interests of residents requires additional Senior capacity for many years to come.

- 2.3 In recognition of this the Council's senior management structures have been reviewed and the Chief Executive Officer has undertaken informal consultation with a wide range of officers. The outcomes of those discussions propose the creation of the following posts.

Key elements of the Proposal

- Create a new Director for Environment & Highways to bring together the operational elements of existing service areas to deliver a more cohesive and comprehensive service for residents. This post will report directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

- Delete the roles of Assistant Director, Environment and Assistant Director, Transportation & Highways.
- Create a new Assistant Director, Place Delivery to put in place the expertise and resources necessary to achieve the delivery programme including master plans for Grays, Tilbury and Purfleet and to ensure the Council delivers a new homebuilding programme to help meet the needs of residents. This post will report directly to the Corporate Director, Place.
- Create a new Assistant Director, LTC to lead the Council's programme management of the high profile Lower Thames Crossing in Thurrock. This will ensure the new crossing and road supports Thurrock's place making and growth priorities. This post will report directly to the Corporate Director, Place.

2.4 The restructuring proposals are cost neutral as the new Assistant Director roles will be met from capital scheme budgets and Highways England contributions. The balance of revenue funding from the two existing Assistant Directors roles will be utilised in the sub structure for the new Directorate.

2.5 Pay levels for the new roles will be assessed in accordance with the Council Pay Policy and Senior Manager pay scales.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 General Services Committee has responsibility for the discharge of employment functions including the selection of Chief Officers Roles.

3.2 The Council's Pay Policy requires Council approval to commence recruitment to Chief Officer posts.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To ensure the arrangements for the implementation of the new senior structure are not delayed it is recommended that General Services Committee progress the selection process.

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

5.1 None

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

6.1 None

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Director of Finance and IT

The proposal is that two Assistant Director posts currently funded from revenue are deleted and replaced with two new Assistant Director roles that will be largely be met from capital projects and HE contributions. The revenue funding freed up from these two posts will be utilised for the new Director post and providing additional support.

On this basis, the financial impact is cost neutral to the revenue budget.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Monitoring Officer and Deputy Head of Legal Services

General Services Committee may discharge the final decision on the appointment of Chief Officers (except statutory Chief Officers/ Directors where the final decision on appointment shall be by Full Council upon recommendation of General Services Committee)

Additionally pursuant to the Authority' Pay Policy Statement prior agreement of Full Council is required for a recruitment exercise for "any new permanent, Chief Officer Role."

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

Recruitment will be in accordance of the Council's policies

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

None

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

None

9. Appendices to the report

None

Report Author:

Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

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27 September 2017	ITEM: 11
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Finance & Legal	
Report of: Councillor Shane Hebb, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Legal	
This report is Public	

Introduction by Cabinet Member

12 months ago, I set out a new direction of travel, which this report will aim to review and close the loop on.

Detailed below are the three overarching focuses my team and I have worked on since the Conservative administration was formed in May 2016. Included with these focuses are the key achievements made between then and now.

(1) We will stabilise the ship, and chart the course for a 30 year journey

- This focus was about ensuring that we lived within our means and started to chart to course to being a self-sufficient local authority
- Thurrock has lived within its means – we delivered £10m savings in 2016/17 and balanced the books; still protecting key front-line services
- Our General Fund Balance (Reserves) will increase by 0.460m, and further increase to a total of 9.26m by 2020/21
- A Finance Peer Review was completed – our pathway has been given the green-light in our self-sufficient aspirations
- Our External Audit has just passed our previous work, and our future intentions, with an unqualified outcome; similarly, with our Value for Money Assessment – our aspirations are standing the financial tests of the most reputable of due diligence bodies
- Thurrock’s first bottom-up assessment of council services started and is now one year in – the Council Spending Review. This has a view of determining the spend required in each department to deliver the services we legally have to, or decide as a borough, we want to if we can afford to do so

(2) We will be unashamedly pro-revenue growth –

- Commercial services – a notion rejected previously - has generated income growth and procurement savings of £2.5m in one year (representing a cost recovery ratio of 4.6 for the commercial services team)
- Money earned is money that does not have to be found from existing budget lines to balance the books, so we become withstanding to significant market changes in the future
- Each department that provides discretionary services now has “external income targets” to achieve. Just because we are a public body, it does not mean we should just explain away a lack of expected revenue at theatre venues etc. No, we must be tenacious as is the private sector – each pound coin lost, is a pound we have to find elsewhere

- We will review our “discretionary services” fees – are we charging what we should be; what the market is charging; are we over/under charging?

(3) We will enable this council to focus on the right things:

- This focus has been less about making us sufficient, but serving our customer’s needs in the way we rightly expect. Some may see Thurrock Council as a “provider”; this administration sees it from a different angle - we see residents as our “customers”. Our financial stewardship has retained weekly bin collections across the whole borough, for all three bin types
- Circa £1.5m has been found since the Conservatives took administration, by stretching MTFs saving targets, looking for more
- That £1.5m saved has been spent discretionally on our “Clean It – Cut It – Fill It” programme – we promised to clean Thurrock up, and are attending to what was neglected for too many years
- We have offered Thurrock residents a voice on the way Thurrock councillors are elected to represent them
- We have intensified coverage hours, and personified our communications presence through digital communications such as Twitter; expanded use of Facebook etc
- We have increased our digital offer for lowest paid and most vulnerable through securing broadband coverage at our local authority housing estates, where residents can benefit from good rates (better than market)

Renewal is key – we have to raise the bar intensely and frequently, so we get to where we want and need to be.

Therefore, I can also announce the following work streams, which are my department’s priority for the forthcoming time of the municipal year:

- (1) SELF-SUFFICIENT DESTINY:** We will eliminate the government-funding deficit of £20m by 2020 (plan for our council to be self-sufficient, and not dependant on government funding in the form of the Revenue Support Grant). Being truly self-sufficient means living within our means, reviewing our customer offer and aligning it to the needs of the borough, being commercial at core and unashamedly pro-revenue and making wise investments with sound return on investment. By achieving “£20m by 2020”, Thurrock could be in a position to look at self-funding parts its capital plan; increasing reserves, and being truly in command of its own destiny.
- (2) FUND THE RIGHT PRIORITIES:** this administration will continue the Council Spending Review, and will continue to reach for more savings in its efforts to generate member choice in future policy decision making. Following the Finance Peer Review in June 2017, we will take on board the learnings, and ensure a more robust, open and engaging process for all members, of all parties, to contribute to the formation of the “£20m by 2020” plan. We will also ensure that key desirables, such as investment in our green spaces etc. are made manifest by being “prudent with the pennies”, and putting money back into frontline initiatives – such as Clean it, Cut it, Fill it; Integrated Medical Centres etc.
- (3) BRINGING A BETTER BROADBAND TO OUR BOROUGH:** we will continue to work to close the gap on the last 5% without Superfast Broadband, and begin planning for borough-wide Hyperfast Broadband.

I will take the opportunity to acknowledge the work carried out by officer teams, including all members of staff across the entire organisation, who have played a part in ensuring Thurrock lives within its means. Financial management does not just come from one department – like Health & Safety, it is everyone’s problem! Every employee of this council is playing his or her part and it is with that I thank you. I do take this moment to thank the council’s Leadership Team who have shown incredible passion and pride over what they do. Thank you for your support too.

Politics in Thurrock is never dull – but last year saw some exceptional collaboration between political groups. This year we have some new faces at the table – my commitment to you is that the CSR will be inclusive, engaging and responsive as we move our borough forward.

My portfolio report covers the following functions:

- Finance (including corporate finance, counter intelligence and fraud, insurance/risk management)
- Revenues and benefits teams
- ICT and Digital
- Procurement and Commercial Services
- Legal (including members services, electoral services and democratic services)
- Strategy & Communications

CORPORATE FINANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

Corporate Finance lead on the promotion and delivery of good financial management to ensure that the council's financial position is managed appropriately and public money is safeguarded.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M / PERFORMANCE:

Thurrock Council, like most other councils, continue to have to be innovative to meet the financial demands upon it. Significant savings have been delivered in previous years and the council continues has one of two pathways to consider moving forward (1) a Council Spending Review and a commercial focus, or (2) service cuts, top down.

The 2016/17 financial outturn position was reported to Cabinet in July 2017, whereby we demonstrated that Thurrock had lived within its means for our first Administrative year. As noted in the report, the council managed a number of financial pressures such as demand-led social care pressures and pressures in waste collection. Furthermore, the Cabinet were aligned in the need for an injection of spending on improving the environment and road network around the borough – we injected a discretionary £0.6m into our “Clean It – Cut It – Fill It” programme, and furthermore this programme was formalised and made permanent under our watch, with £1m being made available for 2017/18. Thus demonstrating our Cabinet commitment to improving Thurrock as a Place, and by funding it appropriately.

The Housing Revenue Account balance has increased to £2.175m. General Fund balance was maintained at £8.0m and furthermore, the administration believed - following significant assessment - that our General Fund balance (reserves) needed increasing. Our proposal was implemented as of this year, increasing our reserves balance to £8.420m in 2017/18, with further rises planned of +420K in 2018/19 and 2019/20 – leaving a total figure of £9.26m by the end of the 2019/20 municipal year.

The most significant service pressure again related to Children's Services. Positive action has been taken through appointing iMPower to review Children's Social Service processes and cases with the aim of improving early intervention and thus reducing more costly placements. The £4m overspend we inherited in 2016/17, is down to a £1m overspend in 2017/18. Well done to all involved.

The council delivered a balanced position through a combination of service underspends and treasury management.

► FUTURE: COUNCIL SPENDING REVIEW

In 2016, the Administration launched a different approach to setting the Council's budget, the Council Spending Review (CSR). This was to move away from the previous approach of top-slicing service budgets but, instead, concentrates on: a commercial approach; more or same for less; and reducing the level of growth on demand led services. This is underpinned by a comprehensive review of all services.

The East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) carried out a Finance Peer Review in June of this year, looking at the council's financial position and the CSR process in particular. I am pleased to say that the review was positive and supported the process that we have put in place. There were some key recommendations that we will implement

including: making the process more consistent and transparent; the need to maximise the use of investment opportunities; and ensure that all Members are provided training covering local government finance and the budget setting process.

The key message is that we need to CONTINUE on our defined path, START a few new activities – but STOP nothing that we are currently doing. We are on the right path.

This year we intend to go further than ever before in identifying the budget options for the next three years – the period of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Lead in times need to be considered and more of a focus, and flexibility towards, investment opportunities. Further reports setting these approaches out will be forthcoming; the CSR will play a large role in this work.

► **FUTURE: CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

In February, the Council received not only the standard capital programme, but also a schedule of future and aspirational projects along with a development budget to bring forward costed business cases to develop schemes that have often been discussed but not progressed through to approval. Members will receive these over the coming months as part of the budget setting process.

► **FUTURE: NNDR REFORM**

Further specific details of the NNDR reforms, which we have heavily contributed to, were absent from the Queens Speech of the current parliament. Thurrock recognises that the reforms are a critical activity, and we continue to engage, inform and contribute to the proposals, that will come forward over the life cycle of the project.

► **FUTURE: CASHLESS SYSTEMS**

Our administration favour digital transactions over cash and cheque. While older forms of payment are still accepted, our work has been to encourage the use of digital techniques and methods in the first instance. A key focus is to pilot a migration to a cashless Parking Meter system; making full use of chip-and-pin and contactless systems. Most other councils that we will visit have already migrated to a variant of this, and so will we.

COUNTER-FRAUD & INVESTIGATION

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The service delivers the council's annual counter-fraud strategy, working across the different directorates to improve business processes and better educate staff on the fraud risks the council faces. The service operates a trading model selling specialist crime fighting services to other public bodies.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

The Standards and Audit Committee received the annual report last week that sets out the many successes and partnerships that the counter fraud service has delivered whilst also receiving international recognition.

Key successes include:

- 3.81:1 ratio of detected fraud to cost
- The provision of the national specialist capabilities service
- The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act to recover monies from convicted fraudsters, over £128,000 has been recovered, with a further 3 cases awaiting an outcome
- The use of the Proceeds of Crime Act to restrict assets held by suspected fraudsters in order to maximise recovery during the court process
- Providing digital forensic expertise to police forces to successfully investigate 454 Electronic devices involved in online child abuse

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Reports of fraud received and under investigation:

- Housing fraud 316, under investigation 48
- Blue Badge 11, under investigation 10
- Social Care 6, under investigation 2
- Council Tax 97, under investigation 6
- Other 41, under investigation 25
- The unit have recovered 17 properties that were being fraudulently used; these have now been re-let to those in genuine need. The value of this fraud is £306,000; and
- Three right to buy applications have also been stopped, meaning that valuable social housing stock remains available and under the control of Thurrock Council

► FUTURE: FOCUSES, PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

The council received central government funding to expand its centre of excellence in fighting complex crime in local government to other agencies. This approved model of providing support to councils and law enforcement agencies is continuing well. The last year has seen the function provide specialist expertise to 12 councils and three police forces around the United Kingdom.

This support includes providing expertise to tackle the most serious crime including online child abuse, organised money laundering and fraud.

National Specialist Capabilities Service

The national function that Thurrock provides not only positions Thurrock as the centre of excellence in complex crime reduction but means that in instances where criminals seek to attack Thurrock Council our response is the best it can be. The counter fraud manager has also spoken at the international Fraud & Corruption conference in Brisbane, Australia as a keynote speaker on the work Thurrock Council is leading on around the UK. Although the speech was delivered via Skype, the feedback from the conference attendees recognised the innovative work the section delivers.

As Cabinet Member for this department, I am keen to enhance relations with other local authorities and public sector bodies where there is a benefit of doing so.

My team work hard, to recover monies deceptively taken from the taxpayer, and ensure accountability is levied with the support of evidence etc. We are doing this, for the hard-working taxpayers who get up in the dark, get home in the dark, work shifts, pay their dues – and deserve for their hard earned taxes to not be illegally taken from the services that they pay for. My stance on fraud is clear – that people are individually responsible for the actions they take, and therefore accountable for doing so.

Well done to the team for getting the world-wide recognition they deserve.

RISK & INSURANCE

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Risk and Insurance team aim to maintain appropriate risk management, insurance and risk financing arrangements for the council.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

The Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is refreshed annually and has been regularly reviewed/reported to Standards & Audit Committee, Directors Board and Performance Board in line with the Risk and Opportunity Management Framework.

The council's contract for insurance has also been extended for two further years. At a time when premiums are generally increasing officers have negotiated a reduction that met targeted savings agreed through the Procurement Board.

► PERFORMANCE

The council uses the ALARM/CIPFA Risk Management framework to test the council's performance against good practice. The framework resembles the European Foundation for Quality Management model (EFQM) and breaks down risk management activity into seven strands with five focussed on enablers and two focussed on results.

For the 2016/17 review the Council has attained Level 4 - Embedded and integrated for the Enabler criteria and Level 3 - Working for the Results criteria.

► FUTURE

The service will look to further embed risk management into decision making and start the preparation towards a full insurance tender during 2018.

DIGITAL / ICT SERVICES

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

The ICT service is responsible for the delivery of digital, information and communication technologies (including telephony) for the council.

The scope of duties is aligned to the UK Government recognised Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) and currently includes: the Chief Technology Office; Operations; Change and Implementation; and Commercial.

► REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

Over the last 12 months the ICT service has completed restructuring and is now positioned more strategically and commercially than when the function transferred to council stewardship at the end of 2015. The management team is in place and key achievements include:

- Publication of the “Connected Thurrock” Digital and IT Strategy;
- Successfully reduced the ICT revenue spend by £500k through driving efficiencies in resource cost, rationalisation of systems, and review of existing contracts; and
- Expanded our income generation targets from £150k per annum to £230k.

Whilst there has been a new strategic and commercial emphasis within the team, our overriding priority is to ensure that the council’s technology services are performant and fit for purpose. Our operational achievements for the year include:

- An improvement on baseline of 29% in staff satisfaction in the Information Technologies provided by the council in this year’s pulse survey;
- No major IT outages between 1 August 2016 and 31 July 2017. Our Capital Plan work on improving IT infrastructure has been locked down and secured;
- Replaced all interim contract resources covering business as usual duties with permanent staff. As part of this process we have created 2 apprentice positions;
- Replaced email filtering and archiving systems with a new cloud based solution. As well as enhancing the council’s cyber defences, this solution also allows the lifting of restrictions on mailbox sizes, which has been a significant problem for some; and
- Replaced the Multi-Function Device estate, improving performance and reducing overall costs.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

There are no formal corporate performance measurements for ICT, however the service continue to track performance against a subset of the KPIs that were reported during the period of the Strategic Services Partnership.

The following table shows the average of monthly performance against those measures in the period August 2016 to June 2017.

Title	Target	2015/16	2016/17
The availability of all servers and specified critical / core applications and services - AVAILABILITY OF NETWORKS	99.50%	98.95%	99.76%
The aggregate percentage of up time for Libraries connected to the LAN within working hours	99.50%	95.97%*	99.10%*
The availability of all servers and specified critical / core applications and services - AVAILABILITY OF SERVERS	99.50%	99.86%	99.89%
Percentage of Helpdesk tasks to be resolved within agreed priorities/targets	85.00%	89.23%	91.77%
Customer Satisfaction on Helpdesk service	6.00	6.50	6.63
*The red measures against libraries were attributable to the vandalism of East Tilbury Library, and a power cut at Stanford Library that impacted the whole site.			

► ACTION PLAN FOR “FAILED” PERFORMANCE MEASURES 2015/16

The “missed” measures are because our monitoring systems make no distinction between planned outages (e.g. where a site is being refurbished) and unplanned outages. Improved monitoring capability is scheduled to be delivered as part of the strategic infrastructure programme

► FUTURE: CITIZEN JOURNEYS

Last year ICT committed to delivering a new Contact Centre telephone system. A replacement solution has been sourced that is fully digital and provides capability to integrate with email and web chat technologies, thus providing a platform to deliver the multi-channel aspirations of our customer services strategy.

► FUTURE: HIGH AVAILABILITY

Over the last year, officers have been developing a plan to deliver an infrastructure that will support a digital council that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Digital Strategy sets an aspiration of achieving 99.9% availability – up from the current 99.5%. Key elements of this plan include:

- **Back up and Disaster Recovery** – the council’s offsite disaster recovery capability (currently hosted at Southend Council) will be upgraded to ensure that in the event of a catastrophic failure, at least 50% of users will be able to access 100% of services within 24 hours. The existing tape based back-ups will be replaced by a modern disc based solution
- **End User Computing** – ICT are looking to replace the current equipment with modern “hyper-converged” technology. An internal pilot has been run and the results indicate that the new infrastructure will yield significant improvements in log in times and day to day performance
- **Datacentre Resilience** – the existing Civic Offices server infrastructure will be moved into a newly fitted out space, with modern power distribution and air conditioning. There are dependencies on the wider strategic plans for the ground floor refit
- **Enterprise Monitoring** – The implementation of advanced monitoring will allow for a problem to be identified as soon as it occurs without having to wait for someone to report it. It will also allow for individual components to be monitored against performance thresholds, allowing officers to take pre-emptive action before a full failure can occur

- **High Availability Infrastructure** – One major shortcoming in our current set up is the inability to test changes before they are put live. New test environments will be created to cover the key areas of the infrastructure
- **Cyber Security** – Awareness of cyber security has increased this year through a number of high profile attacks on public institutions. Our infrastructure is being designed to be compliant with the government’s cyber essentials plus accreditation. Specific areas we are focussing on are managing the application of security patches, as well as improving our intruder detection capability

Work is already underway on the Monitoring and Cyber Security areas as these provide the quickest operational benefits. It is expected that all the strategic infrastructure work will be completed by the end of 2019

► **FUTURE: SMARTER WORKING**

- Following this year’s successful trial, services are starting to adopt new generation “2 in 1” machines which can be used as laptops or tablets. Officers continue to explore other devices that could form part of the “Choose Your Own Device” catalogue, and are starting to review the infrastructure changes that these devices force (such as improved access to wifi)
- Capital funding was also secured in 2017/18 to fit all meeting rooms in Civic Offices that can accommodate 6 people or more with full web and voice conferencing capability. This project is currently underway and when complete will reduce the need for officers to physically attend site for meetings; and
- A refresh of the council’s mobile phone estate has commenced, and new devices are being issued with enhanced data plans to facilitate mobile working

► **FUTURE: CONNECTED PLACE**

The Connected Thurrock Digital and IT Strategy recognised for the first time the Council’s potential role in delivering a local digital offering as part of a wider place making responsibility. If the council is going to become more digital it is essential that residents are not excluded from accessing services – in fact, we see residents, businesses, volunteer groups and public sector bodies as one family who would want to move forward together; alongside each other, on this matter.

The administration have a key focus; the pockets of the borough that do not yet have access to Superfast Broadband – noticeably significant parts of East Tilbury and Orsett. Officers in ICT and Commercial Services, at request, have been exploring a number of options with commercial providers to resolve this problem and have set a target of the end of the calendar year to have a solution secured.

This is in addition to the innovative work we have implemented at some of our local authority housing stock estates – the HyperOptic partnership. HyperOptic will install broadband infrastructure in a number of sites, allowing local residents to benefit from comparable broadband connection speeds; at a competitive cost. All this, with no spend from the council – this has been a cost-neutral, collaboration between interested parties and partners, and will increase superfast broadband speed coverage across the borough. This will support the social digital inclusion needs of residents on low incomes in being able to access high speed, affordable and future proof broadband services – making Thurrock truly

a borough which works for everyone. The programme went live 24 August 2017 at Marine River Court with residents already actively choosing to take up the offer.

In addition, officers have been looking to the future and are developing plans for a borough wide public digital infrastructure that will underpin the delivery of all public services, but also act as a catalyst for developing Thurrock as a “Smart Place”, ready for the new wave of technologies that are due to emerge in the next few years, including assistive care technologies, advanced environmental monitoring, traffic management, connected vehicles, and pay as you go environmental charging. That is not to say that all of these capabilities will be required in Thurrock, but we will be in a position to adopt them if they are.

REVENUES & BENEFITS / COLLECTIONS

► COUNCIL TAX - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The service aims to maximise income through efficient billing, better detection of fraud and error and firm but fair recovery. In order to support this, the team has been undertaking various activities to increase the detection of fraud and error within the base and have recently completed an exercise with ‘Capacity Grid’ to identify accounts where single person discounts were being incorrectly claimed. The review resulted in the removal of over 600 single person discounts, generating an annual saving of £300k.

I recognise that life is busy, and some people may have forgotten to update their records. They are encouraged to use our online MyAccount service to update records. Residents should note that they are liable for full payment of council tax – it is always best to update records as soon as possible; hence why our MyAccount service offers 24/7 access, so to give those who cannot make contact in normal “office” hours, the chance to do so.

In terms of reducing operational costs, the team has further enhanced the E-services available with the introduction of e-billing in September 2017. Currently we have 5,066 Council Tax payers who have opted for e-billing with a total of 15,000 registered with my account.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

For 2016/17 Thurrock collected further improved its collection rates for Council Tax to achieve an in year collection rate of 98.94%. Whilst we await publication of national results, it is envisaged these results will again place Thurrock among the top performing councils.

► COUNCIL TAX – FUTURE

The recent Debt Service Review service focused on how we can maintain the excellent collection rates whilst further improving efficiency and targeted advice to those people experiencing genuine difficulties. As a result of the initial findings a further piece of work has commenced to investigate the Business Case for technology enhancements to enable a single view of debt across council services and to provide a process that can better differentiate between those that “Can’t pay” and those who “Won’t” pay – including outreach ability to make discussions between council and residents who are not up to date easier, more fluid, and less formal.

Further to this we are engaging with external organisations such as Citizens Advice and the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation to review current practices and consider recommendations for further enhancements.

I believe in “compassionate collections” – people owe council tax, and some who “can’t” pay, can benefit from discretionary components of our collections services, and I encourage them to make contact ASAP, as confronting an issue quickly stops things from becoming a bigger debt burden later on.

In regards to those who “won’t” pay, you have the same services and options to use as those who “can”. Note that I have asked my officer team to explore in more detail the potential use of the “Committal” process for those that won’t pay, those who habitually do not pay their council tax dues. This could have an end result of prison sentences for those who chose not to pay and evade the system. Holding back council tax means we cannot fund bin emptying; social service care packages; grass cutting. Everyone has to pay their dues – it is not fair that most do, while a few others do not. However, my officers do recognise those that have financial pressures and I have asked officers to review the Fair Debt Policy to ensure that it is still fit for purpose and offers the appropriate support and protection. I want there to be cross-party input on this entire piece of work.

► NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR) - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The business rates revaluation came into effect on 1 April 2017 and re-assessed all business properties in England and Wales based on rental value as at 1 April 2015. It has been a full seven years since business rates were last assessed. All bills were issued in accordance with the list and the transitional scheme applied to all businesses where applicable. In conjunction with this the government introduced new initiatives to support businesses:

- The Small Business Rate Relief threshold was increased from £6,000 to £12,000 with a tapered relief from £12,000 to £15,000. This meant that sole traders with a rateable value below £12,000 would pay no business rates; and
- Businesses with a rateable value of £51,000 or less will benefit from having their rates payable calculated on the lower multiplier

These changes were implemented at the time of annual billing.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Regarding collection, Thurrock achieved an excellent in year collection rate 99.74% which again is expected to place Thurrock amongst the top performing Councils in the country.

► NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR) - FUTURE

The Government has introduced 3 further schemes to support those businesses that have felt the impact of the revaluation more than others. These changes have required both guidance to be issued and software changes and so are expected to be delivered in the second half of the year.

The 3 new schemes are as follows:

- Supporting small business – The relief will ensure that the increase per year in bills of qualifying ratepayers is limited;
- Public House relief – This provides a relief of £1,000 for one year only for eligible public houses who have a rateable value of less than £100,000. Initial reports have identified 45 pubs that will potentially qualify and these are being contacted to submit an application; and
- Discretionary business rate relief scheme – the government has made available a discretionary fund of £300M over four years from 2017/18 to support businesses that face the steepest increases in business rates as a result of revaluation. Thurrock’s allocation of this funding is £632K, apportioned over the next 4 years as follows:

2017/18 £368K	2018/19 £179K	2019/20 £74K	2020/21 £11K
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In line with government guidelines, officers are in the process of designing a draft scheme that will support those businesses and locations within the borough that are in greatest need.

By 1 April 2018 all business ratepayers will be able to have the option of E-Billing thus they can receive an electronic bill rather than paper.

► SUNDRY DEBTORS - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The team have been focusing on streamlining processes and using the current functionality and existing reports in Oracle to increase efficiency and reduce manual workload. This has led to a reduction in posts / cost saving.

► SUNDRY DEBTORS – FUTURE

Future focus is on reducing the manual input and administration required when processing invoices.

► HOUSING BENEFITS - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) implemented the next phase of the Benefit Cap which reduced the total amount of Benefits unemployed households can claim to £385 per week for a household with children and £258 per week for single claimants.

As a result the number of claimants in Thurrock affected by the cap increased by approximately 270 to currently stand at to 332.

In order to provide assistance to families affected by the reforms the Government increased the amount it provides in respect of Discretionary Housing Payments by £130k to provide a total allocation for the current year of £533k

Despite the increased workload associated with the reforms performance remains strong with New Claims being processed within an average of 18 days and changes in circumstance in under 5 days.

► HOUSING BENEFITS - FUTURE

The roll out of Universal Credit, which commenced in Thurrock on 16 March 2015 for single people of working age, will proceed to full rollout in October.

This next phase will see working age families with less than 3 children moved to Universal Credit when they either make a new claim for unemployment support or submit a change in circumstance. The Government has stated that the migration of existing Working Age claimants will be completed by 2022.

It should be noted that whilst the DWP will administer Universal Credit the Thurrock Benefits team will still be responsible for processing claims for Local Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit for pensioners and some other groups.

INTERNAL AUDIT

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

Internal Audit is an independent assurance function that primarily operates in accordance with best practice professional standards and guidelines. It reviews on a continuous basis, the extent to which the internal control environment supports and promotes the achievement of the Council's objectives, and contributes to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources

► REVIEW OF PREVIOUS 12M

The previous twelve months saw a review of the section resulting in a move from contracting in support to increasing the establishment by two FTE that has resulted in an additional 400 audit days.

The Internal Audit team has provided regular reports to the Standards and Audit Committee on the work carried out and key findings.

► PERFORMANCE DATA

Internal Audit issued twenty Final Reports in 2016/17 and supported sections and the counter fraud functions in a number of areas.

► FUTURE

The 2017/18 plan was developed following meetings with relevant Directors and Heads of Service and covers operations across all the Council's directorates. It takes into account the key risks identified within the Council's Corporate Risk Register as well as the External Auditor's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, the Annual Governance Statement and the Annual Governance Report. New issues and potential emerging risks were also identified and discussed with senior management. The 2017/18 annual plan and 3 year strategy was discussed and agreed with members of the Standards & Audit Committee on 28 February 2017.

FINANCE AND IT DIRECTORATE BUDGET CONTROL

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Finance	3,770,241	3,909,241	139,000
IT	3,840,791	3,542,633	(298,158)
Total	7,611,032	7,451,874	(159,158)

► TREASURY – 2017/18

	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance £000
Interest & Fees Payable on External Debt	4,113	4,113	0
Interest Receivable on Investments	(5,538)	(6,703)	(1,165)
Net Interest	(1,425)	(2,590)	(1,165)
MRP	4,562	4,562	0
Total	3,137	1,972	(1,165)

COMMERCIAL & PROCUREMENT SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Commercial Services directorate, is a relatively new inception, designed primarily to secure income generation from a range of services, and to do business and collaborate with others, so to provide a positive outcome for Thurrock, its residents, and our general fund.

Commercial Services lead on the promotion and delivery of best practice in business development and procurement practices across the Council, building on the cultural shift within Thurrock Council to create a commercially astute Council that delivers innovative and entrepreneurial outcomes. The service leads on all procurement processes across the Council and is the key enabler for ensuring the delivery of existing income generating commitments and identifying additional income streams in line with agreed commercial principles.

In April 2017 the Commercial & Procurement Services team changed reporting line to the Director for Commercial Services. It has been moved to the remit of the Director of Commercial Services specifically so that competition and a good deal is forthright in all decision making and impartiality of process is maintained. It consists of a team of eleven officers at a cost of £549k, in view of the significant returns delivered by the team in both income generation and contract saving accrued, this represents a positive annual return on investment

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

Thurrock Council commenced its commercial journey in 2016, and there has been a step change in mind-set across the Council. The newly launched Commercial and Procurement Board, chaired by the Director of Commercial Services identified an additional £1.03m of income growth for 17/18 and continues to explore and monitor commercial opportunities. In addition, the Commercial Board oversees delivery of the council's annual external income (£10.4m for 2017/18.)

During the year, commercial design principles have been created under the guidance of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and during the year each service area was assessed against the principles to consider the most commercially effective method of delivery. The commercial principles now contribute to the wider Thurrock Service Transformation Programme that is currently underway across the council, which is part of the wider Council Spending Review programme (CSR).

The Commercial Services' service review was completed in April 2017 and the restructure concluded by 1 July 2017. Key outcomes from the service review were:

- Extend service remit to provide comprehensive oversight and supervision of the contract management process across the council
- Implement a category management structure to provide further value to all service directorates
- Procure & implement a full end to end e-Tendering and contract management system across the council and improve the efficiency of procure to pay processes and set up
- Action and report a suite of Key Performance Indicators for both procurement and commercial operations

- Creation of a contract management post to further manage the value and effectiveness of contracts post award

During the year, 305 discrete procurement exercises were carried out compared to 273 the year before (11% increase.) It is worthy of note that there were zero challenges from bidders of suppliers during this period.

The HyperOptic partnership has been a cross-collaboration not just between Thurrock and HyperOptic, but also between departments. The Commercial and IT departments have collaborated and executed this work in a great display of effectiveness; and I want to pay specific congratulations to both teams for achieving what was set out to be done.

▶ PERFORMANCE DATA

With regard to Commercial Services “managed” procurement the following savings during the previous 12 months are to be noted and represent a cost recovery of the Commercial Services team of 2.7

- £1.2m per annum (25% reduction) for the Healthy Families contract from September 2017. This has been achieved through a competitive tender exercise using a specification that supported innovation and change but maintains high quality outcomes for children and families
- £154k per annum (12.5% reduction) for the Adults Integrated Substance Misuse Treatment services from April 2017. Using a competitive process and revised specification officers are confident of a high-quality outcome
- £150k per annum (20% reduction) for the Healthy Lifestyles Contract from April 2017. Using a Lead Provider Model where the management and assessment of need is carried out centrally, but support services are additionally provided in various locations can by different groups/organisations. This delivers better value and ensures that services are targeted to the right individuals without duplication. Furthermore, the contract operates on a payment by achievement model.

▶ EXTERNAL INCOME MONITORING

As at the end of July 2017, the full year forecast for external income is reporting a £109k shortfall – although note that some departments have exceeded expectations at this stage.

Directorate	Actual 2016/17(£k)	Budget 2017/18(£k)	Forecast at P4 2017/18 (£k)	Variance (£k)
Adults, Housing and Health	308	217	255	(37)
Children’s Services	4,395	5,017	4,858	159
Environment & Place	5,273	5,107	5,049	58
Housing (GF)	149	79	149	(70)
Legal	3	92	93	1
TOTAL	10,129	10,512	10,403	109

Monthly scrutiny of the external income forecast is undertaken by the Commercial & Procurement Board to investigate further, review income expectations and close down gaps. This is a new focus for council under the Commercial arm.

▶ FUTURE

▶ Procurement Strategy & Principles

To complement the work already undertaken with regard to the commercial principles, a programme of work will commence to create a set of procurement principles for the council.

▶ Delivery of a Commercially Oriented Digital Strategy

The Commercial Services team will continue to work closely with the ICT team to embed and progress Connected Thurrock, the council's Digital and IT strategy. Key projects that are of note are summarised below:-

- The team are working with external partners to ensure that the last 5% of residents in rural areas have access to broadband coverage (as detailed further in the IT section of this report)
- Discussions are underway with external companies to award a concession contract for small cell and Wi-Fi infrastructure. The anticipated income for the award is circa £50 - £70k per annum
- Ultrafast Thurrock: In addition, a business plan is in progress with a view to go to market at the end of 2017 to ensure ultrafast broadband is a reality within Thurrock

▶ Deep Dive of Fees & Charges 2018/19

During the summer/autumn of 2017 a deep dive of all of Thurrock's fees and charges will commence and fee setting for all discretionary charges will be assessed against the council's commercial principles.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Commercial Services	548,679	548,679	0
Total	548,679	548,679	0

STRATEGY & COMMUNICATIONS

► SERVICE OVERVIEW

This portfolio covers the council's corporate strategy and communications functions including vision and priorities, media liaison (proactive and reactive), social media, marketing campaigns, design and the council's website.

► REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12M

Our approach to communications has changed over the last year in line with the council's overall approach to digital and channel shift in the new Digital and Customer Services strategies.

Media/press releases are issued proactively to celebrate good news, communicate important messages to residents and share key decisions after meetings such as Cabinet and Council. 130 releases were issued between 1 April and mid - August 2017. The team also responds to enquiries from the media on a daily basis. The team has seen a significant increase in the number of media enquiries over the last few months. Between 1 April and end of August 2017 the team responded to approximately 180 media enquiries – averaging at eight a week, with approximately 50 enquiries in August alone.

The Communications Strategy, which was approved at Cabinet, was subject to a Call-In to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny. This was discussed at the most recent meeting of the committee held on 19 September 2017.

To support members, the team offered media training sessions to Cabinet members, Chairs and Vice Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and Planning and Licencing Committees. This included media awareness as well as practical interview training led by nationally recognised journalists.

A number of priority communications campaigns have taken place including:

- Clean it, Cut it, Fill it
- social worker recruitment
- route optimisation
- Thameside Theatre events
- My Account
- Fostering

Social media use has increased in recent months with a proactive approach including posting press releases, campaign information, events, and sharing both promotional and emergency information from partners such as health and police. This has seen an increase in people engaging with the council's pages.

- 10,500 Twitter followers
- 3,000 Facebook likes
- 2,000 LinkedIn followers

I believe that social media is a key pathway into busy lives – we recognise that people do not have the time to be sitting at home on the internet browsing what is happening in Thurrock anymore. Therefore, we have introduced bite-sized updates and information which can be read during a spare five minutes on Facebook, Twitter etc. Permeating busy

lifestyles is difficult – this is one of our approaches to providing useful information in real-time.

Thurrock News, a monthly e-newsletter, was introduced in October 2016 as an additional communication channel to complement the use of other channels. This is now a regular email communication that 12,000 residents have signed-up to receive, and again, displays and provides basic information and news relevant to our borough.

The first resident survey in six years was undertaken in November 2016 and feedback from the 1,000 responses we received has fed into the ongoing work on refreshing the vision and corporate priorities. Furthermore, this survey allows us to do a “You Said, We Did” comparison, year on year. Elections are not the only gauge of public mood, and it is key to sense-check performance at a corporate level to ensure that priorities are being moved forward.

► FUTURE

The current vision and priorities are in the process of being updated to reflect the uniqueness of Thurrock, where we are now, our ambition for delivery and balancing the need for growth with quality of life. The Vision and Priorities Working Group includes members from across the political parties as well as representatives from voluntary sector, tenants, business and partners, and with their backing, I hope to recommend an updated vision and set of priorities to Council later this municipal year. The Working Group that has been set-up has been useful thus far and we will be sharing the latest draft for wider engagement shortly.

The team is looking at possibilities for generating income. £70k income is anticipated in 2017/18 from the roundabout sponsorship scheme, which has been very successful since its launch in January 2017. Additional opportunities are being considered around income from filming in Thurrock. This is currently done on an ad hoc basis, but a business case is being developed to put in place arrangements to maximise the diverse range of locations Thurrock can boast.

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £000	Full Year Forecast £000	Variance £000
Communications	404,837	404,837	0
Total	404,837	404,837	0

LEGAL SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Legal Services directorate includes the shared legal services team, democratic services, members' services and electoral services.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

▶ LEGAL SERVICES

The Legal Shared Service (**BDTLegal**) has now been successfully established for over 6 years. The team continues to enhance Thurrock's region wide reputation through building increased legal capacity, resilience and internal expertise which has resulted in both significant savings and – even more importantly – become the first successful generator of traded income for the council.

A joint Legal Services Manager was recently recruited in order to improve services, build in extra capacity and responsiveness and to help drive forward our commercialisation and income generation agenda, in full alignment with our commercial focus as set from the 2016/17 municipal year.

The Legal Service is now into its ninth year as a top performing Legal Service by The Law Society for Lexcel Accreditation, which recognises legal practices who meet the highest management and customer care standards and show excellence in areas such as client care, case management and risk management. Furthermore, the team were finalists in the MJ Awards Legal Team of the year against strong competition.

We are providing bespoke legal services on a traded basis to a range of public sector clients, such as East London Waste Authority and Brentwood Council, generating income of £500,000 for 2016/2017.

We have responded to the ongoing change and efficiency drive by creating an agile and resilient multi-disciplinary team with a strong blend of public sector and commercial expertise. The key distinguishing features are:

- an alliance of teams to create a single cross-boundary force of excellence in practice, competence and capability
- built in resilience with a lower cost base and profits reinvested in the public sector
- collaboration with clients and staff to deliver a programme of transformation, development and training

▶ PERFORMANCE EXAMPLES

Within children's legal safeguarding, a specialist team has been created with three dedicated advocates ensuring 95% of advocacy is covered in house, saving the council approximately £200,000. This enabled:

- expansion to support neighbouring boroughs' child care hearings
- reduced external legal spend
- increased retained income in the public sector

The contracts procurement team has assisted with Thurrock's legal contracts and procurement and has advised on a wide range of matters, spanning all directorates within the council, including:-

- a number of innovative adult social care contracts
- Shared Lives
- completion of a grant agreement with a not-for-profit organisation which specialises in providing domestic energy efficiency advice and packages
- council's corporate cleaning contract

The litigation, housing, education & adults Team has assisted with:

- home to school transport policy review
- Ongoing assistance with Special Education Needs cases, which are becoming more complex
- A significant increase in planning prosecutions
- Successful pursuit of historic debts in adult social care debt
- Continued support to HR function has resulted in few employment tribunal claims

The property & regeneration team have been involved in the following notable matters over the last year including:

- Assisting tenants to become home owners through Right to Buy scheme. There have been more than 126 completions of freehold and leasehold properties since September 2016
- Completing the lease for the Treetops Special Educational Needs School, enabling the school to fulfil its wish to convert to academy status
- A number of planning agreements including the intu northern extension 106 agreement that will lead to 1,700 temporary construction jobs and 2,900 net additional jobs at intu Lakeside
- Leases of council property including Grays Beach Café and Seabrooke Rise Community House

The governance team continues to build its regional reputation and income generation with its regular briefings on key developments, training courses and governance advice. The team continues to publish in national legal journals, and maintains a regional presence with our annual Governance Conference being attended by over 50 delegates from 33 authorities.

"Excellent. The course was very useful. They clearly know their stuff. Presentation and venue good". **Delegate feedback on governance course run by BDT on 16 May 2017**

"We have worked with BDT Legal over the years on their excellent contributions to our editorial content relating to subjects of governance practice and consultation. They have looked at new developments such as the law relating to drones." **Phillip Holt, Editor, Local Government Lawyer Magazine**

This and the development of other initiatives such as public facing website, setting up and chairing a Thames Estuary Special Interest Group of lawyers from 15 authorities north and south of the Thames and developing a supportive third sector legal offer to local charities and the voluntary sector as well as developing a webinar programme of training courses and pilot for will drafting service.

Traded Services

The Legal Shared Service Team is now into its fourth year of providing a full legal service offer to Brentwood District Council. This includes legal support across the full range of a district council's responsibilities. This work has been undertaken on a fee traded basis and has now been extended into next year 2018 with a view to a long term contract.

The team has also successfully provided legal services to East London Waste Authority, Westminster, Lea Valley Regional Park and Redbridge councils on a fee traded basis and continue to be approached by a range of other authorities interested in learning lessons on shared working, especially in Essex.

▶ DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Democratic Services continues to provide support to public committees at the council. From August 2017 the team will be back to a full staff complement. In addition to the day to day work, the team is progressing a number of longer term projects including the introduction of a fully online Member Training Portal, which could also be developed to provide traded income from other councils wishing products such as Members webinars.

Since last year one further member of staff has completed their professional qualifications in Democratic Services.

The team are continuing to introduce new ways of working to improve efficiency within the committee system.

▶ ELECTORAL SERVICES

Following the busy election period of May and June 2016, Electoral Services undertook the statutory annual canvass and published the revised register on 1 December 2016. 2017 was a planned fallow year and in the first three months of 2017 the team undertook to:

- prepare for forthcoming elections in 2018
- audit, prepare and replace equipment for elections within the budget
- prepare for elections in 2018

The team also extensively 'data mined' using other local authority data sources to keep the electoral register up to date on a monthly basis and encourage residents to register to vote when they move or become eligible.

The team also successfully delivered the poll for the Parliamentary (General) Election on 8 June 2017. Between 1/5/2017 and 30/06/2017 the team dealt with:

- over 2,500 telephone calls directly into the elections office
- 3,464 new electors were added to the register specifically for the General Election
- 1,631 duplicate applications
- 1,718 new postal vote applications
- 298 proxy vote applications

The team began planning for the statutory annual canvass in June and revised the commencement date due to the Parliamentary Election. This will not impact on the

completion of the project which began in August and will result in the publication of the revised register on 1 December 2017 (unless there is an election during the canvass period).

Following the programme of work I articulated in June 2017, and following the subsequent motion alternative that was agreed by Full Council the following month, Thurrock Council has written to HM Government to call upon the Government to introduce legislation to provide for a right of recall of local government councillors, alongside Thurrock Council also exploring the possibilities to introduce its own recall scheme.

If changes were implemented – then should a councillor fall foul of an agreed set of criteria – like not attending meetings, conviction of a crime or breaching the members code of conduct - voters would have the choice to recall their representative and go to the ballot box to choose another candidate. Thurrock is leading on this piece of work, and we will work with DCLG to realise our aims over the coming months.

Planning for the elections in May 2018 will run consecutively with the annual canvass and polling stations and essential bookings are already taking place in preparation.

Earlier this year, we undertook a consultation which asked Thurrock whether or not the borough should change its model for electing councillors – to either change from 2018 to a “four yearly” model, or to retain the status quo. The arguments presented by this council were equally balanced and articulated the positives and negatives of each model. The outcome of this work, and specifically a recommendation to migrate to the “four yearly” model would have been heard by the time this report is put to Full Council for discussion; thus setting the pathway for the 2018 elections, of which either outcome is accounted for in the logistical arrangements being put in train.

► FUTURE

The shared service with the LB Barking & Dagenham continues to deserve full and proper recognition for its early embracing of the need to become financially self-sustainable. This report again provides details of the income generated by the Legal team in terms of income versus cost to the council.

The next steps on the road to a full commercial arm and approach, where income generation potential is no longer restrained to merely traditional local-government practice are:

- Embedding the new formal collaboration agreement that has formalised the shared arrangement with a detailed strategic business development plan
- Continuing to aggressively to identify trading opportunities through a robust marketing plan and a greater use of available legal powers to target new public sector clients and a wider public service by expanding non-regulated legal services to residents such as will drafting and employment law advice
- And finally building on a proven nuanced and commercial approach to increase traded income

The Democratic Services team are continuing to introduce new ways of working to improve efficiency within the committee system and generate traded income.

► FINANCIAL INFORMATION – 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £	Full Year Forecast £	Variance £
Legal Services	1,565,621	1,565,621	0
Democratic Services	186,169	186,169	0
Electoral Services	435,377	435,377	0
Total	2,187,167	2,187,167	0

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27 September 2017	ITEM: 12
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Performance and Central Services	
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin, Cabinet Member for Performance and Central Services	
This report is Public	

Introduction by Cabinet Member

I am delighted to present to colleagues this report which details some of the many achievements and areas of work within my portfolio over the last 12 months. Colleagues will be aware that as of the Cabinet meeting earlier this month, the functions within my portfolio have changed. For clarity, this report covers those areas which were within my remit up until this month.

My teams have agreed and started to embed three new strategies which will be key to the council transforming the way it works. The Customer Services Strategy, Digital Strategy and People Strategy complement one another to develop the capacity, confidence and culture within the workforce and working practices.

Our approach has been endorsed externally with the council retaining Investors in People Gold status and by winning a number of national awards during the year including the industry-standard CIPD Best Employee Relations Award for the transition of Serco staff back to the council, and Skills for Care National Accolade for social worker recruitment and retention. The information governance team also won Gold Performance Award in the Geo Place Awards for the management of address and street data.

I know that some colleagues attended the Staff Awards last December where eight officers or teams were awarded for their over-and-above- the-call-of-duty commitment to their work. 263 nominations were received which highlights the incredible standard of many of our officers. This year's fully-sponsored Staff Awards has now been launched and I would encourage colleagues to consider nominating officers that they have worked with.

A new process was recently agreed which reduced the timeframes in which officers must reply to members enquiries. The previous guidelines stated that officers had 10 working days to respond. From 1 September 2017 this was reduced to 7 working days. However, in order for this streamlined process to work, please can I remind colleagues that all members enquiries must be sent direct to membersenquiries@thurrock.gov.uk.

I have also recently developed a useful checklist to make it clearer to member colleagues how and to whom to report particular issues. This is attached as Appendix 1.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This part of my portfolio is primarily concerned with ensuring the council is delivering against its objectives through the corporate performance framework.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

During 2016/17, I instigated a full and thorough review of the Corporate KPI (Key Performance Indicator) framework and other performance tools in line with recommendations made by Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2015/16.

The review took into account feedback and intelligence the council receives from residents and other stakeholders. Results from the resident survey which took place in November/December 2016 also fed into this review.

The purpose of the review was to make the performance framework as clear and simple to understand as possible, whilst balancing the need to ensure the council is monitoring those things which are of most importance, both operationally and strategically. This reflects the demand for council services increasing and being ever more complicated and the need for a holistic approach to monitoring data and intelligence. This review also looked closely at target setting.

The increased analysis of internal processes at service level by Directors, which has been embedded throughout 2016/17, will continue. This includes a monthly review of service indicators by Directors and each portfolio holder.

Corporate performance indicators have, for a full year, been reported simply as having “Achieved” or “Failed” to meet their target. This has proved to be much clearer than the previous Red, Amber or Green (RAG status). At the end of 2016/17, 60% of key performance indicators achieved their target and half of them improved since the previous year.

Another change during 2016/17 was to give Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to scrutinise performance reports before they are presented to Cabinet. This has provided good cross party scrutiny and challenge and will continue throughout 2017/18.

▶ FUTURE

Greater focus is being applied to the actions being taken to address failed performance. In addition to this, there will be closer scrutiny of any indicators which are currently achieving their targets, but where their direction of travel shows that they are worse than previously reported.

This monitoring will be at both officer and member level, starting in the individual teams, before being presented to monthly, cross-council officer led Performance Board, then escalated to Directors Board and Portfolio Holders.

Once the work of the Vision and Priorities Working Group has been concluded, the corporate performance framework will be reviewed again to ensure that it is aligned.

Another large piece of work being undertaken by a cross-council group of officers is focusing on how to use research and customer intelligence to better support those services which are demand led, such as children's and adult social care.

▶ **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Strategy and Performance	402,043	402,043	0
Performance, Quality and Business Intelligence (Children's and Adults)	882,025	882,025	0
Total	1,284,068	1,284,068	0

IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Improvement Service incorporates business improvement, recruitment team and the Executive Support Hub. The primary focus of this service remains to drive process improvement and cost efficiencies across the HR, OD & Transformation directorate and the council.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The business improvement element of the Improvement Service has developed well in the past year. Key achievements in this area include the re-procurement of the council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which provides 24/7 wellbeing and counselling services for all employees. Occupational Health also sits within this area; the team are triaging referrals received to ensure the process is timely and utilising occupational health placement students to strengthen resource and capacity.

Managers continue to engage with HR and their staff to effectively manage staff wellness and enable them to access the right support which is in place. The implementation of Neyber, a financial wellbeing offer for employees, went live in October 2016. It has been well received by employees to date and has the support of Trade Union representatives too. This is part of the wider comprehensive programme to promote health and wellbeing in employees across the council.

Additionally, the council's managed service provider for agency staff (Matrix SCM) contract has continued to be robustly managed to drive compliance in ensuring agency staffing needs are monitored and managed with a continuous focus on driving down cost, usage and spend where possible. We are compliant with the Eastern Region Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) relating to children's qualified social work agency staff. The additional pressure introduced by revised IR35 legislation has been successfully managed and mitigated.

The recruitment team has built on the successful improvements made in the previous 12 months. The approach being taken by the recruitment team is now one of 'direct sourcing', actively seeking the right talent for the organisation and reducing costs.

The team have successfully on-boarded a number of long term agency workers, and work in Children's Services in relation to qualified social care recruitment has been particularly successful, with a corresponding reduction in agency staff in this area. The team have also gained 'disability confident committed' accreditation in the disability confident employer scheme in relation to recruitment practices and will work toward achieving the highest level accreditation possible in the coming months.

The Executive Support Hub provides dedicated support to the Chief Executive, Directors and Assistant Directors. The remit of the team has expanded in the last few months to adapt to the changing needs of senior management.

► **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance
Average no. of calendar days from successful applicant form to start date to fill vacant roles (incl. DBS* and non-DBS)	52.7	51	50	Failed

*DBS = Disclosure Barring Service (formerly known as Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check)

An online DBS system was introduced recently which has helped to streamline the process and improve on-boarding times. An enhanced online applicant tracking system (ATS) has been implemented and work remains ongoing to ensure the full functionality of this is utilised and integrated with our existing HR systems to streamline and digitalise the recruitment and on-boarding process to ensure a first class service is provided to future employees. Direction of travel is positive for working to achieve target.

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance
No of agency FTE staff - whole council	248	252	Reduction	Failed
£ Spend on agency staff -whole council	£9,828,491	£2,509,486	£2,137,500	Failed

Work is ongoing to reduce number of and spend on agency staff across the council. This is monitored monthly at People Board and Performance Board with quarterly reports scrutinised at Directors Board. Robust spend targets have been set and services have support from the improvement team to achieve these.

This has been and will continue to be a key focus for senior officers and the situation is starting to improve. The most recent data (Month 4) is showing a year on year reduction in spend as Directors work towards minimising our use of agency staff to achieve the agreed saving, whilst retaining the flexibility non-permanent staff provide.

Spend on agency in the first quarter is higher than target due to a number of unforeseen circumstances. These include the need to bring some consultancy spend on contract due to revised IR35 legislation, additional staff needed in environment frontline services to fulfil the 'Clean it, Cut it, Fill it' agenda and pressures within commissioned domiciliary care services meaning critical staff have had to transfer directly to the council as agency workers.

Permanent and fixed term staffing opportunities are being used at every opportunity to reduce spend and usage and the aim is to ensure agency staff are only utilised to fill essential requirements in services.

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance
No of new apprenticeships started (incl. current staff	n/a	8	10	Failed

undertaking new apprentice standards)				
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The apprentice levy commenced in April 2017 so performance in Quarter 1 of 2017/18 was expected to be low, however June 2017 shows the positive trend that is commencing as managers are engaging with the levy project and working with the business improvement team to utilise the opportunity that the levy presents.

► **FUTURE: IMPROVEMENT SERVICE**

The business improvement team will continue to work with FirstCare and Matrix SCM to ensure absence and agency staff, respectively, are addressed and monitored on an ongoing basis with managers. The new employee assistance programme provider will also continue to be managed effectively, ensuring staff across the council are aware of the support on offer. The wellbeing offer to staff is ongoing, aligning with areas in which the council has high sickness. The team are working towards achieving Safe, Effective, Quality, Occupational Health Service (SEQOHS) accreditation for our occupational health service.

A review of the council's people performance management process is also commencing shortly. Reviewing our standard management objectives to ensure they are fit for purpose and ensuring that the way managers' manage performance and reward is in line with best practice and engages staff in the process.

The recruitment team's focus is to ensure the new Applicant Tracking System (ATS) that is utilised to its fullest capabilities to help achieve our time to hire KPI. Work has continued on the council's advertising strategy to ensure that we are attracting, and retaining, staff with the skills that Thurrock needs to deliver its ambitious agenda and priorities. The recruitment service is also developing a commercial focus, selling recruitment advertising to businesses and academies in the borough with the full recruitment offer to be developed to generate income.

The apprentice levy commenced in April 2017 and work is already ongoing to ensure the council makes the most of its contribution and achieves the target number of apprentices set by Government (2.3% of headcount which accounts to 53 for Thurrock), whilst also ensuring they have a valuable and worthwhile apprentice experience and put Thurrock Council on the map as a provider of first-class apprenticeship opportunities. We are focusing on branching outside of the traditional business administration apprenticeship, with a clear focus on ensuring we are workforce planning effectively for the future looking at planning, legal and social care apprenticeships to fill the hard-to-recruit areas and address any skill gaps.

The Executive Support Hub will continue to work with senior management to ensure the service provided is first class and remains flexible to any changing needs or requirements. A business resource review is underway, considering how the council can best use its administration and personal assistant (PA) support services, with efficiencies and process improvements a focus.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Improvement Team	764,174	764,174	0

HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (HR OD)

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The focus of the HR OD service is to ensure the council has a confident, competent, high performing and customer focussed workforce.

The Service comprises a People and Organisational Development team with a focus on delivering the people strategy and supporting the organisation to manage change effectively; an HR Advisory team with a focus on ensuring compliance with expected people management standards, policies, and legislation changes; and a payroll team which delivers corporate, schools and academy payrolls.

The service, structure and work delivered have been subject to a comprehensive service review as part of the council's transformation programme - the service has presented proposals to both restructure resources and refocus work delivered to modernise the service, ensure a smarter use of resources and to provide capacity to generate income.

Over 2016/2017 the service has achieved national recognition for excellence in employee relations by winning both the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development award and the Personnel Today award. The team were also finalists in April's PPMA Excellence in People Management awards recognising the standards of our in-house training provision and the training we give to our volunteers across the borough and working from our Community Hubs. This work has also been recognised by Personnel Today Awards 2017 - winners will be announced in November.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

The People Strategy for 2017-2020 was agreed in April 2017. The strategy serves as a framework for the organisation, describing the workforce we need to develop in order to meet the vision and priorities of the council and the needs of Thurrock residents over the next three years.

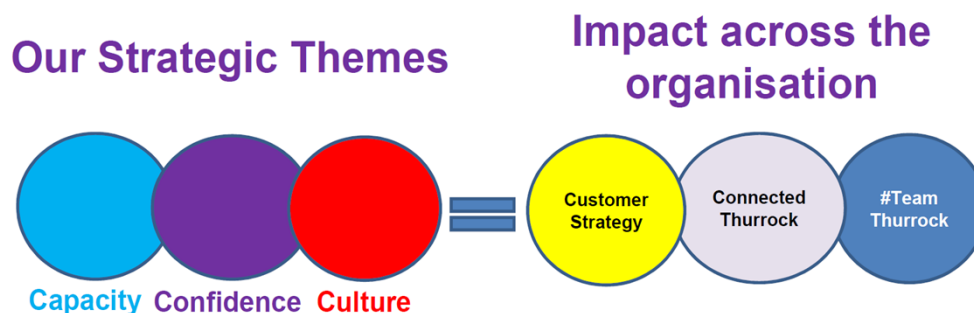
It is built around three strategic themes of **capacity**, **confidence** and **culture**.

Capacity - A customer first approach and a workforce that has the capacity to deliver what is required, multi skilled with flexible structures and agile working practices, our workforce are able to adapt to what is required

Confidence - A confident workforce who are free to innovate and take managed risks, clear on their value, taking new challenges in their stride, remaining resilient and able to adapt, working differently using modern tools and techniques

Culture - A 'one team' culture of inclusion and engagement where people are confident to challenge, resilient in the face of our transforming organisation and where high performance and the delivery of outcomes is the norm. Excellent leadership, management and trust drive a climate of continual improvement and effective use of resources

The actions to delivery these strategic themes has been closely planned and integrated with the themes within other key strategies which impact the way we need council officers to work:



Good progress has already been made on embedding customer services skills training and digital skills. The investment in our workforce has continued with our continuing professional development programme, including a bespoke leadership and management development programme, which ensures we are attractive as an employer to our residents.

There has been a promising level of interest from other local authorities on buying some of our training and this will further inform the re-shaping of the team and our training offer and the services we trade to others as we continue through 2017/18.

Following the high levels of engagement with our staff survey in 2016, a Pulse Survey ran across April. This demonstrated improved results across all priority areas. Follow up workshops with directorates identified local actions and the corporate wide action plan has been refreshed; progress on delivery of this action plan is being monitored and reviewed as we progress through 2017/18.

In line with the People Strategy priorities for 2017 a bespoke leadership and management development programme has been created to provide challenge and ensure the council has the required leadership capacity it needs.

The People and OD team have created a tailored change programme to support teams undertaking their service reviews and change management skills is embedded into the core programme. To ensure managers can support career development for their staff the in-house team are now an accredited Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) centre and are able to offer a broader programme of development, resulting in formal qualifications. This also provides an opportunity to offer these services externally as the year progresses. The team have responded to particular development needs within services and have provided tailored programmes to meet these needs. The bespoke customer services programme for the waste team is being used as a model for others.

The HR Advisory team has made good progress on challenging current processes to ensure the most efficient working practices are in place; employees are directed to the intranet to help support our drive towards digital solutions; work with managers has focused on building their confidence in people management skills to support key areas like managing sickness.

A project team from across the whole service and some line managers from People Board has been established to deliver the actions in the council wide managing absence action plan. This will continue as a major priority for this year.

Payroll processes have been reviewed to drive efficient working practices and the team has spent time to promote their services to schools and academies. From April to August 2017 Payroll has taken on payroll services for three academies and E2BN (a regional broadband consortium). This has generated an income stream for the service.

► PERFORMANCE

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance	Direction of Travel
Average sickness absence per FTE employee	10.43	2.32	2.25	FAILED	Better
% of sickness which is long term	n/a	68.83%	50%	FAILED	n/a – new calculation
% staff turnover	12.3%	11.63%	n/a	n/a	Lower

It is recognised that average sickness absence rates continue to be slightly above the KPI target. HR are working closely with managers in respect of raising the profile of timely intervention in terms of those individuals meeting a trigger point with particular emphasis on stage 1's being completed as soon as trigger has been reached. There is ongoing work with Occupational Health to ensure referrals are fast tracked where required. There is also a robust process in place for escalation.

Sickness absence is a key priority for People Board and as such the managing absence action plan is regularly monitored to ensure that the key deliverables are on target. This includes targeted action and support to managers for staff who are on long term sickness.

Staff turnover rates, whilst not targeted, are monitored monthly to ensure they remain in line with similar organisations and previous trends. A turnover rate of 10-12% is widely considered as healthy in an organisation of this size and type.

► FUTURE: HR & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Looking ahead to respond to the plans for council and the changes needed as part of the wider transformation programme, we will continue to refine the corporate training provision and specific tailored programmes for our leaders and managers to ensure we continue to build the capacity needed; focused change management workshops will ensure the organisation are supported through the changes for their teams; and further income generation opportunities will be scoped and developed.

Directors will be supported by their HR Business Partner who will work to understand the specific needs, requirements and direction for each directorate in order to shape

the most appropriate support from across the HR service to meet their needs. This will ensure that directorates have one key relationship holder to work with them.

In line with the People Strategy priorities each directorate will consider specific people related issues, talent management and career pathways including the use of apprentices and how they will need to engage with the leadership and management programmes. Manager toolkits and digital resources will be rolled out across the organisation.

Payroll will continue to shape its services to schools and academies and work to promote the benefits of our services for a reasonable cost.

► **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
HROD	2,008,574	2,008,574	0

CORPORATE PROGRAMME TEAM

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

The Corporate Programme Team is responsible for the delivery of the council's Transformation Programme initiatives. This ambitious programme ranges from enhancing the way citizens interact digitally with the council, via Thurrock On-Line, to implementing new ways for employees to work and deliver services more efficiently. Primarily consisting of Project and Programme Managers supported by Project Officers the team is continuously delivering corporate changes that impact the whole organisation with regards the delivery of council services.

In a changing world, any organisation or business that cannot adapt to the new norms, will not survive. This is also true of local authorities such as ours which looks after the people, economy and environment of Thurrock. To help us deliver the best possible services the Corporate Programme Team are actively engaged in a three year council-wide Service Review programme, to look at doing things differently, helping employees work smarter not harder and driving continuous improvement throughout the whole organisation.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

Over the last twelve months one of our key transformational focus areas has been the continued effort to encourage citizens of Thurrock to utilise self-service and online facilities – known as Channel Shift. We can measure this through monitoring individual household registrations on our online portal called MyAccount. We currently have over 56,700 households out of a possible 66,000 registered which equates to an impressive **86%** of all households. As we increase the percentage of households that have MyAccounts the velocity of new sign-ups becomes increasingly slower.

We are now starting to reach areas of the population who are unable, unwilling, or unsure how to get online. To help support the conversion of the remaining 14% of households to online we offer assisted self-service within the Civic Offices in conjunction with offering support at Community Hubs to ensure we minimise online/digital exclusion. Further real-time online assistance will soon be available when web-chat is introduced to key pages on MyAccount.

Other initiatives that deliver broadband access to areas of the borough not currently serviced by mainstream suppliers are also being supported by the Council as part of our Connected Thurrock Digital Strategy.

We already know that technology has transformed everything from interaction and connecting with friends, family and businesses (social media platforms), banking (mobile applications) to parcel deliveries (online tracking systems) and will continue to do so.

The potential efficiencies are significant. The average cost of a digital interaction is 15p. This is much lower than the average cost of dealing with a query via telephone (£2.83) and a face to face meeting (£8.62).

So how do we know this approach is working for Thurrock's residents? Well, since the Thurrock On-Line programme commenced back in 2013 we've seen a significant reduction in call volumes to the Contact Centre relating to key services that have moved online:

BENEFITS calls	down 47%
COUNCIL TAX calls	down 29%
ENVIRONMENT calls	down 45%

More and more of our residents are choosing to interact with us online and we will continue to mutually embrace such changes through our Digital Programme.

▶ **DIGITAL PROGRAMME: Completed elements**

Thurrock On Line:

- The school admissions single-sign-on was completed in Aug 2016 and proved highly successful
- Planning portal payment integration was completed October 2016
- My Account's integrated benefit change of circumstance product deployed
- Council tax mover integration
- Council Tax eBilling went live in 2017 allowing residents to receive electronic Council Tax bills rather than receiving paper ones

Business Improvement – Oracle

- Improved management reporting for budget holders
- Improved payroll bulk data upload capability in Waste & Recycling team
- Improved HR 'new post' creation process
- Improved organisational hierarchy data structure and related workflows
- Implemented external payroll capability to take on academy payrolls

EDRMS phase 2:

- Further integration with Line of Business Applications
- In November 2016 Thurrock won a Document Management award for Public Sector project of the year for its deployment of the Objective EDRMS system

▶ **SERVICE REVIEWS:**

The three year service review programme began in July 2016 to improve efficiencies across the council. There are currently 58 service reviews on the programme with 24 reviews going through the process following 7 service review design principles. These principles underpin every review and form the basis of checks and challenges to ensure every service is running as efficiently as possible.

Each service review is coordinated by a Senior Project Manager from the Corporate Programme Team and aligned with representatives from HR in conjunction with a Business Analyst and an independent Critical Friend from a separate service to provide an element of additional, independent, check and challenge.

► **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Latest Data	End of Year Target	Performance	Direction of Travel
No of people registered for My Account	51,201	56,700	56,000	ACHIEVED	Better

► **FUTURE:**

Innovation and new ways of working are constantly on our radar in order to deliver the best possible services to the residents and businesses of Thurrock. Through the very active Service Review programme we will continue to strive for more operational efficiencies and increased productivity. Ground breaking projects such as using data analytics to predict early help for our younger residents and assistive technology to help support and care for our older residents will continue to dominate our appetite to transform the council and manage demand more effectively.

Other key initiatives that are currently under consideration, development or in early stages of project commencement are:

Business Improvement – Oracle

- Semi-automated on-boarding process for new staff
- Improved bulk payroll data upload capability in Collins House residential team
- Improvements to employee self-serve capability
- Improvements to on-boarding of external payroll and other associated traded service capabilities

Thurrock On-Line:

- Web chat (currently in test/training phase)
- Registrar appointments single-sign-on
- Single view of debt
- Adult Social Care resource allocation system
- Licensing
- Benefit claim evidence upload
- Carers assessment – self assessment of care
- AD Insight – a My Account management information tool
- Registrar copy certificate ordering service

Electronic Document and Records Management - phase 2:

- Digital mailroom (inbound mail) proof of concept
- Continued integration with Line of Business Applications
- Bulk document scanning and archiving

Information Portal

The ongoing development of a citizen facing Information Portal to publish a variety of facts and statistics in order to reduce/speed up the response to FOI requests and provide a central point for self-service access. Released earlier in 2017 the aim is to

further broaden the information available on this portal as and when it becomes available. The portal is at www.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock-facts-and-statistics/overview

Agile working

A refreshed approach to agile working is also underway. This will ensure that the council's staff have opportunity to work wherever it allows them to be the most productive whilst maximising the use of office space in the most efficient way possible.

▶ FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Transformation	729,104	729,104	0

CUSTOMER SERVICES

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This part of the portfolio includes all front line customer contact including contact centre, Careline, out-of-hours and the Face to Face on the ground floor of the Civic Offices.

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

A key success for this part of my portfolio in 2016/17 was the launch of the Customer Services strategy (agreed by Cabinet in April 2017) and the work of the Customer and Demand Management Board.

The Customer Services Strategy sets out where the council wants to be and how it will get there. It provides a strategic overview that will lead the direction of travel through service plans and other council documents and procedures. The strategy is part of a wider programme of projects and links closely to the Digital and People Strategies. It creates a comprehensive plan of how we will improve service to our customers across all access channels.

The quality of the customer service team is well regarded and the performance data shows consistent achievement of targets. This has again been recognised externally with the reaccreditation of the CCA (Customer Contact Association) Version 6 status. This is an independent audit of our customer services operation against industry developed and approved requirements.

▶ PERFORMANCE

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance	Direction of Travel
No of phone calls made to the Contact Centre	384,700	97,954	n/a	n/a	Fewer
Customer Service call quality	97.68%	97%	85%	ACHIEVED	In line
No of Face to face visits to Civic Offices	101,913	19,960	n/a	n/a	Fewer
Average waiting time for Face to Face (mins:sec)	6:53	8:07	<10:00	ACHIEVED	Worse
No of emails received	8,811	3,499	n/a	n/a	More
% of emails responded to within 2 days	100%	100%	100%	ACHIEVED	In line
No of phone calls made to Careline	162,000	39,662	n/a	n/a	Fewer

▶ FUTURE

One of the key priorities for this team over 2017/18 is the delivery of the customer services strategy. The action planning is being aligned very closely with the delivery plans for both the digital and people strategies.

Part of this plan includes the development and delivery of some bespoke customer services training and support for front line services.

Other initiatives include a council wide review of external letters and making the best use out of the expertise of the dedicated telephony staff within the contact centre. The implementation of this strategy is also linked with delivery of savings as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

▶ **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Customer Services	851,986	851,986	0

INFORMATION TEAM

▶ SERVICE OVERVIEW

This team is responsible for ensuring compliance with information governance regulations and protection of the council's reputation, including information security (policies and procedures), data protection, Freedom of Information (FOI), Records Management, Complaints and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) including Local Land & Property Gazetteer (LLPG) /Local Street Gazetteer (LSG).

▶ REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS

During 2016/17, the council processed 97% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the legal timeframe. This is based on 1046 FOI requests that were processed. 2016/17 has seen an increase in FOI requests received compared with 2015/16 (980 received). However 388 requests were refused and/or part supplied by the council.

The council challenge and/or refuse requests when it is believed that the requestor has used a false name, where we have reasonable grounds to believe the applicant is acting as part of a campaign or in consort with others, or where their questions do not meet the other validity requirements for FOI. The council refuse requests where it is estimated that the time taken to process the request exceeds 18 hours.

During 2016/17 the council received 47 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection legislation. 83% of these requests were processed within the timeframe.

The Information Governance Team is continuing to ensure an increased amount of data is identified for routine publication online. This work forms part of the Transparency Agenda and aims to increase openness and accountability; whilst reducing unnecessary processing of FOI requests.

A review of the complaints procedure took place in 2016/17, which resulted in the removal of the concerns stage and shorter timeframes for responding to complaints across all stages. These changes were introduced from 1 August 2016.

The combined total of complaints and concerns received for 2016/17 is 2890. The combined total for 2015/16 was 4506.

During 2016/17, 38% of complaints were upheld. This is an improvement compared with 2015/16 which identified 50% of complaints as being upheld.

For the reporting period, 90% of complaints were responded to within timeframe. Performance has dipped compared to the previous year (98%) and is due to a combination of shorter complaint timeframes that were introduced on the 1 August 2016 and the introduction of the requirement for a senior officer sign for complaints within certain areas.

A total of 752 MP/MEP enquiries were received, of which 97% were responded to within the timeframe.

A total of 4065 members enquiries were received, of which 97% were responded to within the timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 5 days.

▶ **PERFORMANCE**

KPI Title	2016/17 Outturn	Qtr 1 YTD	Qtr 1 Target	Performance	Direction of Travel
% timeliness of response to all complaints (all services except social care)	90	79	95	FAILED	Worse
% of all complaints upheld (based on closed complaints)	38	37	35	FAILED	Better

▶ **FUTURE**

The focus for the team in 2017/18 will be on the following:

- To continue to drive forward a learning from complaints culture with robust learning action plans across council services
- To implement changes required as part of the General Data Protection Regulation
- Align and embed statutory complaints process changes to improve the end to end process
- Reduce manual records storage costs with the delivery of the corporate wide manual records project

▶ **FINANCIAL INFORMATION 2017/18**

Service Area	Full Year Budget £0	Full Year Forecast £0	Variance £0
Information Management	608,133	608,133	0

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Reporting Checklist for Members

This checklist is your guide to reporting a variety of issues to the correct teams in the council.

A wide range of reporting options are available through My Account. It's quick, simple to use and you can access the service whilst on the move as well as track the progress of your reports.

If you haven't signed-up already, go to thurrock.gov.uk/getmyaccount

Problem / Concern	The process
Missed waste collection Fly-tipping Overgrown grass or plants Littering (pavement or park needs cleaning)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log into thurrock.gov.uk/myaccount • Under 'Environmental reporting' click 'Add a report' • Choose relevant category • Provide a description of the issue • Submit the report
Pot holes Defective street lights Traffic signal / signs Drainage / flooding etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to highwayreport.thurrock.gov.uk to report a highway problem • Plot the area on the map of Thurrock before completing a description of the problem
Unauthorised encampments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check thurrock.gov.uk/travellercamp to see if the problem has already been reported • Call 101 – if you see an unauthorised encampment in Thurrock • Call 999 – if you witness someone in the act of using force to enter land or a building <p>Reports can also be made to the ECTU - who deal with unauthorised encampments on council land - directly online thurrock.gov.uk/travellercampreport or by calling 03330 131427</p> <p>Reports should be made to the police and not directly to council officers. Essex Police will contact the relevant officers at the appropriate time.</p>
Anti-social behaviour We deal with ASB where the person causing the problem is a council tenant or it affects a council tenant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to www.thurrock.gov.uk/asb • There you will find a number of ways to report ASB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>report it online</u> - <u>contact the estate officer</u> - <u>contact the police</u> - <u>call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111</u>

Emergency housing - homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to thurrock.gov.uk/finding-somewhere-to-live/emergency-housing-if-youre-homeless • You will find more information or you can call the Homelessness Prevention team on 01375 652 820
Problem / Concern	The process
Claiming benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to www.thurrock.gov.uk/benefits • Housing benefit or council tax support can be claimed online through My Account • Universal Credit is paid by the government, not by Thurrock Council. Applications for Universal Credit can be made online at www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit
Planning breach (alleged)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to thurrock.gov.uk/planning-enforcement • Click 'Report alleged planning breach' <p>Supporting documents or images can be uploaded that might help investigate the alleged breach</p>
Members' enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email membersenquiries@thurrock.gov.uk with full details of the issue. <p>We aim to deal with all members enquiries as quickly as possible and you should receive a full response within 7 working days from day of receipt. However please note that some enquiries may take longer to respond/close off.</p>
Complaints	Email complaints@thurrock.gov.uk with full details of the complaint.

QUESTION TIME

Questions from Members to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee in accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

There are 14 questions to the Leader and 8 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

1. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill

Would the Leader explain to Members and the residents of Thurrock what measures are this Conservative administration putting into place to combat the rising crime rates and ASB in the Borough?

2. From Councillor G Rice to Councillor Gledhill

Please will the Leader of the Council confirm that every Council resident living outside a grass verge will be charged £5 per week for grass cutting, does this mean a weekly cut will take place?

3. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

To date how much has the 1% cut in social rents cost Thurrock Council and how much is it estimated to cost in total by 2020?

4. From Councillor Spillman to Councillor Gledhill

A year ago I questioned the portfolio holder on whether he believed enough new dwellings were likely to be built to meet the needs of Thurrock's growing population. After 15 months of this Conservative administration what action has been taken to try to improve the situation and has this action been successful?

5. From Councillor Jones to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Portfolio Holder for Housing believe that tenants in general needs Council properties, who will soon be liable to pay a service charge were adequately consulted?

6. From Councillor Allen to Councillor Gledhill

Can Council explain why so many residents in general needs housing that are without any communal areas are receiving letters telling them they need to pay a service charge?

7. From Councillor Fish to Councillor Gledhill

I have received many complaints from residents on Seabrooke Rise about youth nuisance. Can the Portfolio Holder tell me what steps the administration is taking to deal with this?

8. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader agree that Thurrock Council lacks the managerial leadership to deliver big or transformational projects?

9. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Gledhill

Does the Leader believe that the new tenant service charges makes Thurrock fairer or less fair?

10. From Councillor Smith to Councillor Gledhill

Would the Portfolio Holder confirm that all communal residencies in the housing stock meet the full and latest fire safety requirements, in particular fire escapes and entry and exit fire doors?

11. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Gledhill

At Full Council in March I submitted a petition on behalf of the residents of Seabrooke Rise and the six Grays high rises against introducing new tenant service charges. What consideration was given to this petition by the Portfolio Holder in making the decision to push ahead with plans for new tenant service charges?

12. From Councillor Collins to Council Gledhill

Is the Leader able to outline what the £2 million he expects to raise from the new service charges will be used for?

13. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Gledhill

Could the Leader outline the actual cost of building council homes agreed under Labour?

14. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Gledhill

Can the Leader outline what the housing rent levels are now and what they would have been had Labours 2015 plan been adhered?

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Duffin to Councillor Hebb

Will the Council be pushing ahead with the Communications Strategy as agreed at Cabinet?

2. From Councillor Liddiard to Councillor Coxshall

Would the Portfolio Holder please update members and inform the residents of Tilbury what action will be taken to mitigate and compensate for disruption due to the upcoming 10 years of misery caused by three developments of national importance i.e. Lower Thames Crossing, Tilbury 2 and the replacement Electricity Generating Station.

3. From Councillor Stone to Councillor B Little

Could the Council liaise with Highways England as to why the 50 mph restriction between Grays and Wennington on the A13 are still in place even though the carriage works have finished?

4. From Councillor Smith to Councillor Watkins

Earlier in the summer, Council notified residents of unusual vehicular breakdowns with the refuse vehicles. Over the past 6/8 weeks Aveley residents have continually had missed bin collections, suggesting the problem maybe wider than the "6 vehicles broken down". Would the Portfolio Holder be able to offer an explanation for those missed collections and consider offering an apology to Aveley residents for the inconvenience they have experienced together with an assurance going forward that they will receive a first class service?

5. From Councillor V. Holloway to Councillor S. Little

Can the Portfolio Holder reassure Councillors and residents that adequate social care services are available at all times?

6. From Councillor V. Holloway to Councillor B. Little

Parking in Angle Road, South Stifford is a major problem. Can the Portfolio Holder for Transport outline what could be done to assist residents?

7. From Councillor Maney to Councillor Coxshall

Given the history of reported planning infringements associated with Buckles Lane in South Ockendon does the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration agree that it is high time the council took action to address the situation there?

8. From Councillor Maney to Councillor Watkins

Would the Portfolio Holder confirm that it remains this council's policy to prohibit horse grazing during winter months on local authority owned land in the Mardyke Valley? Further, to ask that the Portfolio Holder takes steps to ensure the said policy is enforced now that summer has passed?

Item 15 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 27 September 2017

Date	From	Motion	Status	Accountable Director
26/10/2016	Cllr Collins	This Council condemns in the strongest possible terms, the horrific practice of Female Genital Mutilation and will support all health, welfare, civil and criminal enforcements to eradicate it from our Thurrock and the rest of the World.	Councillor S Little was pleased to announce The Centre has now received a further grant for £1.7 million from the Wave 2 DfE Innovations Programme to extend its reach into high prevalence areas, and its remit to include other harmful traditional practices, particularly breast ironing or flattening, and abuse linked to faith or belief. The National Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Centre will also continue to work in Thurrock. Looking ahead in Thurrock, the National FGM Centre's full-time FGM specialist social worker will extend her remit to other harmful traditional practices, and the National FGM Centre will provide additional training for children's services staff, and further community work with affected communities. It will also expand the range of information, tools and research included on its knowledge hub.	Rory Patterson
30/11/2016	Cllr Duffin	This Council supports the need to reduce and eliminate fuel poverty for Thurrock residents who struggle to heat their homes. Council requests that Cabinet investigate what options, including creating a fuel poverty grant that may exist for the Council to support the community by working with residents and providers.	Officers have been in discussion with energy providers to identify any possibly benefits that could be secured. Reviewing other support that is already offered by the sector and approaches from other authorities. Will be added to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny workplan.	Sean Clark
25/1/2017	Cllr Watkins	That Thurrock Council supports the government's position on introducing an oath to British Values, and will look into the options for creating a local one for Thurrock.	The Motion has been to Governance Group who have recommended that perhaps now is not the right to time to proceed with a local option with the possibility of a national initiative coming forward.	David Lawson
22/02/17	Cllr J Kent	The Thameside Theatre is held in great affection by residents across Thurrock. Therefore the sudden announcement that the theatre is likely to close by April 2019 is causing real concern in many quarters.	Work is ongoing to review what is currently provided at the theatre and what can be done to improve its future financial viability. In parallel, work is continuing to look at options for new theatre provision in Grays in the	Steve Cox

Item 15 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 27 September 2017

		Council is of the collective view that the Thameside Theatre should remain open until a new civic theatre for Thurrock, situated in Grays, has opened.	context of work on the wider Grays masterplan. The commitment remains to theatre provision continuing in Grays to support an evening economy. The theatre will not be closed until there is a replacement.	
22/02/17	Cllr Snell	In order to demonstrate transparency on its policies, implementation of its policies and overall performance and further to Gloriana Limited willingness to co-operate with such scrutiny from Members, Thurrock Council believes that Gloriana Limited should: provide an Annual Report to the Council; provide regular quarterly updates to our General Services Committee, voluntarily submit to the full democratic scrutiny of Full Council and General Services Committee on the thoroughness of its Business Plan and funding requirements. This is not to seek to inappropriately discuss the specific merits of any material planning considerations or predetermine the quasi-judicial decision properly within the remit of our Planning Committee on the current part heard planning application.	The motion agreed by Council has been raised and discussed with Gloriana Thurrock Ltd (GTL). GTL welcomes the continued scrutiny of its activities, business planning and funding requirements by Council, including producing an annual report and quarterly reports to its shareholders forming part of the General Services Committee. GTL is working with the Council to formalise how this will be implemented at the next Gloriana Board meeting and ahead of a report to the next general meeting of GTL Shareholders planned for May 2017. GTL welcomes the reassurance provided in the motion with regard to Members of the Council which also form part of the Planning Committee.	Steve Cox
29/03/2017	Cllr Hebb	Thurrock Council resolves to thank HM The Queen, for her selflessness and grace as monarch of the United Kingdom for 65 years, and it thanks her for her years of dedicated public service and advocacy of our great nation. In the spirit in which HM The Queen has herself taken with the Sapphire Jubilee, this council also seeks to recognise the memory of our former monarch George VI, for his unwavering patriotism during our nation's darkest hours. This council therefore resolves to rename a suitable park within the borough to be identified after public consultation - to the George VI Memorial Park in honour of the former King and his years of service to our country.	A process of public consultations is being prepared in order to identify a suitable park to be renamed.	Steve Cox

Item 15 - Update on Motions agreed by the Council – 27 September 2017

29/03/2017	Cllr B Rice	Council note consultation has begun on a £15 per week service charge on sheltered homes. This Council believes this is an unfair charge against some of our most vulnerable residents. Council calls on Cabinet to scrap this unfair proposal.	July Cabinet agreed to proceed with the service charges increase although at a modified rate. For Sheltered Tenants this will now be at a maximum of £ 10 and will be introduced at £5 from the 1 October this year rising to £ 8 on 1 April 2018 and £ 10 1 April 2019.	Roger Harris
28/06/2017	Cllr Gerrish	Council calls on the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct a full review of fly tipping in private alleys, in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the scale of the issue across the borough. - Review the impact on residents of the council's policy on fly tipping in private alleys. - Evaluate potential policy responses, including understanding the cost to the council of taking action and exploring new, more innovative solutions. - Make recommendations on the best approach to improving the situation. 	Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee will considered a report on this matter at their meeting to be held on the 13 July 2017.	Steve Cox
28/06/2017	Cllr Halden	Thurrock Council would oppose any closure of Orsett Hospital until new and modern facilities are put in place first to ensure that clinical services are maintained and improved in Thurrock and urges that Council resist attempts to move clinical resources or capacity from Orsett Hospital out of Thurrock.	We are awaiting details from NHS England on when the consultation will commence but we expect it to be sometime during the Autumn. The Council, with its NHS partners, is proceeding with its plans for the four Integrated Medical Centres and is out to tender for the design team for the Tilbury IMC.	Roger Harris
26/07/2017	Cllr C Kent	This Council urges the Essex Fire Authority and the P.C.C to urgently review the crewing of all special appliances in Thurrock.	This motion will be taken to the Community Safety Partnership.	Steve Cox

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Motions Submitted to Council

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor B Rice

This council calls on the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex to fully review and evaluate Police numbers in Thurrock in light of the serious nature of crimes that are we are experiencing in the Borough.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority's area and have for which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no financial implications for Thurrock Council arising from this Motion.

Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution

Motion 2

Submitted by Councillor Spillman

Council calls on Cabinet to work with local arts and music groups to assist them in looking at options for establishing:

- A not-for-profit community arts and music multi use venue open to all arts, crafts and music groups across Thurrock which will be able to secure relevant licenses that will allow the venue to be financially sustainable by raising revenue through ticketed music and performance events, and
- A not-for-profit, open air, "Festival of Thurrock" to provide an opportunity for a wide range of artists and musicians in Thurrock to showcase their talents.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority's area and have for which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

The motion in itself does not give rise to any additional financial implication but, instead, officer time.

Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution

Motion 3

Submitted by Councillor B Rice

Members in this Council Chamber to call on the Cabinet to re-evaluate the need for £5 per week charge for grounds maintenance to Council tenants as this will cause many residents further hardship.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The Motion relates to a matter which affects the Authority or the Authority's area and have for which the Authority has a relevant function.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

After Cabinet approval to this charge, £0.846m has been included within the current year budget and this increased to £1.692m in 2018/19. Some 48% of tenants receive full or partial benefit towards this payment. This additional income, combined with other service charges, has been factored into the overall HRA budget to meet: Additional investment in boiler and loft insulation; growth within the repairs budget; and the impact of rent reductions. Any subsequent changes would require equal reductions in expenditure.

Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?

Yes

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