

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **11 July 2023**

Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Martin Kerin (Chair), Jack Duffin (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, Valerie Morris-Cook, Georgette Polley and Lynn Worrall

Substitutes:

Councillors Paul Arnold, Aaron Green, John Kent, Sara Muldowney and James Thandi

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 February 2023.	
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 March 2023.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.	
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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

Agenda published on: **3 July 2023**

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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.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services

3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 February 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), James Thandi (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Adam Carter, Victoria Holloway, and John Kent

Councillor Qaisar Abbas, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities

In attendance: Gerard McCleave, Assistant Director Economic Partnerships and Growth
Gareth Moss, Interim Chief Finance Officer
Jonathan Wilson, Acting Director of Finance and S151 Officer
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present we're advised at the meeting was being recorded and live streamed, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

24. Minutes

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 29 November 2022 were approved as a true and correct record.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022 were approved as a true and correct record.

25. Items of Urgent Business

No items of urgent business had been received.

The Chair explained that one briefing note regarding the Asset Disposals Review and Strategy Update had been received. Councillor Kent stated that the report to Cabinet in July 2022 had proposed disposing of assets worth up to £100m, including scout huts, community halls and other community assets. He asked what the current approach was for disposal, in the context of the Council's financial crisis, and how these disposals would be recorded. He asked that any future proposed disposals be presented to the relevant overview and scrutiny meeting. The Chair explained that these questions and comments would be sent to the Director for a response.

26. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

27. Draft General Fund Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update

The Acting Director of Finance introduced the report and stated it usually gave Councillors a firm indication of the proposed budget, but highlighted that this report only gave a budgetary indication for this point in time, due to the impact of the S114 notice and the request to government for exceptional financial support (EFS). He stated that the budget position of the Council was still fluctuating and would need reassessment during the 2023/24 financial year. He highlighted appendix 1 of the report, which outlined the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the request to government for EFS, which had reduced from £184m to £182.5m following further assessment. He explained that the MTFS brought together all elements of the Council's budget, for example council tax income, inflation, and levels of growth. He added that the Council could be affected by rising costs and inflation, including the rising cost of energy, and growth pressures in Adults and Children's Social Care. The Acting Director of Finance clarified that £160m of the Council's deficit stemmed from issues regarding the Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) and investments, but £20m was an operational deficit, which did not include £8m of departmental savings already made. He stated that he would be producing an S25 statement regarding the robustness of the budget and reserves, however the budget remained flexible as the government had not given an indication regarding the level of support they would provide, or the possibility of raising council tax above referendum limits. He confirmed that the proposal of raising council tax above referendum limits had not been included in the budget, as a final position on this had not been decided.

The Acting Director of Finance explained that the committee were being asked to comment on the budget, whilst considering the context of the reliance on government for EFS. He stated that the S25 statement would not be issuable without government intervention and conversations were still ongoing. He added that although the budget was currently not certain, he hoped for a response regarding the levels of council tax, and how this could affect the level of EFS granted, and this would be presented to the appropriate committees when ready.

The Acting Director of Finance highlighted section 3 of the report, which set out his assurances for the budget and the context of the financial situation. He added that separate reports on the Treasury Management and Capital Strategies were also included on the agenda for the meeting, and these would discuss the Council's debt in more detail. He added that the Council were working to divest investments, which would reduce the MRP charge, and could be critical to the future financial sustainability of the Council. The Acting Director of Finance clarified that Thurrock would be unable to resolve its financial issues without support from central government, but selling investments would help to reduce the need for EFS, and this was understood by central government. He stated that the 2023/24 budget could only be delivered with EFS, and the S25 statement would confirm this, whilst examining the budget, reserves, and savings proposals. He described how the Council had to make tough decisions to deliver savings, and these would be subject to Cabinet approval. The Acting Director of Finance highlighted that some savings within the Council had already been made and this had

helped prove the Council were taking decisive actions. He added that all savings proposals were now accompanied by a delivery risk assessment, which was led by the corporate transformation team alongside commissioners. He added that work continued to identify further savings, and these would be outlined in the in-year budget.

The Acting Director of Finance moved on and explained that the Council would be maintaining a level of general fund reserves, which would help allow for operational delivery. He added that transforming the Council would need resources to support delivery and reserves could help with these short-term capacity needs. He added that these needs would be identified through the Best Value Inspection (BVI) and with commissioners. He felt hopeful that all directives from the government had now been released, but as only interim findings had been issued, more directives could still be given. He confirmed that the BVI report was expected in late February, and would be presented to the appropriate bodies and committees. He added that the budget also included monies to help deliver transformation and fund the intervention. He highlighted the commissioner statement which commented on the progress of the Council and noted that further actions, for example a full review of fees and charges, and the pay policy, would be expected. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the government's directives had referenced the MTFS and Treasury Management Strategy, and he felt that the new Treasury Management Strategy was compliant with this directive. He added that work would be ongoing with this strategy, and this would be outlined in future reports.

The Acting Director of Finance detailed the council tax comparators listed in the report, as this showed that Thurrock was on the lower end of the council tax scale, and would remain there unless there was a change. He added that there was risk in the overall budget as there were lots of moving parts, such as the delivery of savings, inflation, the divestment of investments, and interest rates on borrowing. He added that officers were working to take actions on these risks, and would work to ensure transformation through Spend Panel monitoring and other processes.

The Chair queried why the request for EFS had reduced from £184m to £182.5m. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the budget was created based on assumptions at a point in time, and the outline of savings made last year had changed. He explained that savings now went through a more rigorous and robust assessment process, which meant additional savings could be made and the level of EFS requested could be reduced. He added that there were still wider savings to be made, which would go through the assessment process, and this could affect the level of income and financial settlement from the government. He added that there was currently movement in all areas of the budget, for example there had recently been a pay award in line with NJC recommendations.

Councillor Holloway highlighted that Cabinet had already identified and signed-off on savings in different service areas. She asked if more detail could be provided on these savings, as the report presented to committee was

broad and lacked some detail. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the savings proposals would go to Cabinet for approval, and these would also be brought to the relevant scrutiny committees. He stated that this budget had been presented in short timescales, but as the process moved on, there would be more time to assess savings proposals.

Councillor Kent stated that savings targets in previous years had been missed, and asked how targets would not be missed moving forward. He queried how robust the savings process would be. He also highlighted that income generation targets in previous years had been missed, and asked how these would be achieved. The Acting Director of Finance explained that in previous years, savings had sat within directorates. He clarified that now, although savings still sat with directorates, these were managed through a delivery risk assessment process carried out by the corporate transformation team. He stated that their role was to challenge and monitor delivery of savings. He added that the commissioners were also involved in the savings process, who were experienced in this field, and all savings were accompanied by timescales. He added that the finance team were now more involved in directorate savings and budgets, and were made aware of issues earlier, compared to in previous years where the corporate finance team had to deal with issues retrospectively. Councillor Kent echoed Councillor Holloway's concern regarding the lack of detail in the report, and asked to see more detailed information regarding specific directorate savings proposals. He highlighted section 5.4 of the report which outlined the Council's key ambitions. He asked how these had been developed. He also highlighted the short timescales for publication of the Cabinet and Council reports, and asked if these deadlines would be met. The Acting Director of Finance explained that officers had already prepared the Cabinet and Council budget reports, but were waiting on feedback from government before these could be published. He stated that conversations with government were ongoing, although there was no certainty regarding an outcome. He confirmed that the key ambitions had been underpinned by the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP), and each ambition was the responsibility of the Senior Responsible Officer, usually the director. He added that the IRP would be presented to all Members once it had been agreed by government and commissioners, along with the BVI report.

The Chair queried the timescales for divesting the Council's investments. The Acting Director of Finance stated that work had already begun to divest some investments, for example the solar asset which was approximately 65% of the Council's portfolio, was currently going through the divestment process. He explained that a team had been assigned to enable the sale, and work was ongoing to clarify ownership. He stated that the solar asset was critical to divest and release funds due to the size of the asset. Councillor Kent sought clarity that Thurrock Council were the only creditor of the solar asset. The Acting Director of Finance confirmed that there was no indication of other creditors, but the team needed to undergo due diligence and assess the asset.

Councillor Arnold highlighted 5.1 of the report and asked if the S25

statements published in 2018-2022 had been inadequate. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the S25 statements published in this period had been made based on assumptions at the time, for example the MRP and value of investments. He stated that the Council now knew there had been inaccuracies in these budgets, but the S151 officer at the time had been working with different figures. Councillor Arnold highlighted 3.8 of the report and asked if other Councils were also in difficulty regarding their operational budgets. The Acting Director of Finance explained that some unitary Councils were currently concerned with their operational budgets due to increased inflation, interest rates and social care growth. He felt that many Councils were finding it difficult to manage their budgets.

Councillor Kent thanked officers for their hard work during this time, as they were dealing with many moving parts and complicated processes. He queried how the Council would deal with the longer-term financial issues, as problems would continue and worsen after six years of EFS. He also asked how the £20m operational deficit was allowed to grow, as he felt that the investment income had been relied upon and not used as a buffer to reduce this deficit. He felt concerned that not all savings were listed in the report. Councillor Kent also questioned how the Council would be able to transform quickly to be able to meet the key ambitions listed at 5.4 of the report. He felt that although the Council needed to be financially sustainable, residents still needed services to continue so these demands needed to be balanced carefully, particularly if council tax increased. He sought assurance that there was hope for Thurrock Council in future, as he did not feel optimistic. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the Council were responding to directions from the Secretary of State, which stated that the Council must first address its core financial issues. He added that the S114 notice also placed strict rules on the Council regarding financial spending, and the Council had to be compliant with these. He explained that officers did have consideration for residents when making decisions, but needed to work with the government's directives. He explained that officers were currently working on the proposal for the council tax increase above referendum limits, whilst also having conversations about how the impacts from this could be mitigated for vulnerable residents. He added that the IRP would be specific on how the quality of services provided to residents could be improved within the context of the S114 notice and EFS request, and officers would continue to navigate these issues through detailed conversations with Councillors and government.

Councillor Kent highlighted recommendation 11 and felt that even though the budget process would continue to develop in 2023/24, with in-year savings proposals, he asked officers for assurances that any savings proposals would go to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee before decisions were made.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Commented on the proposed updates to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy including the deficit positions set out in each year.

2. Noted the paper assumes a council tax increase of 2.99%, as per paragraph 9.6 but also notes that this is not the final position of the Council, pending further conversations with government.
 3. Supported a 2% Adult Social Care precept increase as per paragraph 9.6 and noted that this will be used to fund increased demand and provider fees within older people care services.
 4. Noted the council tax requirement of £79.421m as per section 8.
 5. Noted the net cost of services requirement is £319.837m as per paragraph 8.1.
 6. Noted the proposed savings as per section 12 and noted these are insufficient to address the funding gap without the need to seek exceptional financial support from government.
 7. Noted that exceptional financial support is required to balance the 2023/24 budget and that discussions with central government are ongoing, as per Appendix 3.
 8. Noted the budget has been set based on the assumption that the request for exceptional financial support in respect of the 2022/23 budget is granted.
 9. Noted a further review of the Capital Programme will be conducted in 2023/24 to ensure the requirements of the Section 114 notice are met, as set out in section 14.
 10. Noted the Dedicated School's Budget is set at £51.258m as per paragraph 15.13.
 11. Commented on the draft budget proposals within this report to inform the final budget proposals to be presented to Cabinet at its February meeting, ahead of Full Council on 22 February 2023.
 12. Noted further reviews have been commissioned into the fees and charges policy and the pay policy as per paragraph 9.23 and 10.4 respectively.
 13. Noted the Council's position on reserves, recognising the unique situation the Council faces and a need to revisit the adequacy of reserves as savings and service transformation are effected during 2023/24.
 14. Noted that work on the budget will continue during 2022/23, with more savings required to council services.
28. Report of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities

The Chair agreed to bring forward the report in the agenda.

Councillor Abbas introduced the report and stated that the Council was currently facing difficult financial challenges, so the report needed to be considered in this context. He added that his Portfolio had also been extended and now included the Community Safety Partnership. Councillor Abbas explained that his Portfolio had faced many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, but most services had returned to normal in May 2022. He explained that the museum had reopened, and their focus was to digitise their collection by June 2023 and work closely with other local museums to diversify their exhibitions. He stated that the Thameside Theatre required ongoing works due to the life of the building, but the Council had recently increased the seating capacity and undertook maintenance to the vent system. Councillor Abbas clarified that although the Council received grant funding from different organisations for the Thameside Theatre, these were not enough to cover running and maintenance costs.

Councillor Abbas moved on and explained that the Council also ran a Community Led Local Development (CLLD) scheme, which helped to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups in the borough, whilst trying to decrease the level of unemployment. He stated that 1000 SMEs had been contacted as part of the scheme, and 150 residents contacted regarding employment, with 70 of these helped to return to work. He added that he had met with a variety of community groups and voluntary groups during his Portfolio, including those from diverse communities who were harder to reach. He stated that the team had helped link these groups with Council services during the interfaith marketplace which had taken place in the Town Hall. He added that a new Hindu place of prayer had been established within Thurrock, as well as a new Muslim burial site and Gurkha burial site at West Thurrock Cemetery. Councillor Abbas explained that the team had recently been running cost-of-living events to assist residents and businesses with advice and support during the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Abbas moved on and stated that the Purfleet Hub had reopened in March 2022 and were now holding classes, had a community fridge and pantry, and a school uniform bank. He thanked officers and volunteers for their hard work at the Purfleet Hub. He added that Grays Library had joined the Library Consortium in April 2022, which allowed members of Grays Library to access 7.3million books, magazines, newspapers, and documents online. He added that Grays Library had also been a deposit for Lower Thames Crossing consultation documents and was now a Barclays Bank hub. He added that in November 2022 libraries had also introduced wi-fi printing and were supporting residents to access mobile phone SIM cards. He added that in March 2023 the public health team would be running a session to upskill the libraries team to ensure better health outcomes for residents.

Councillor Abbas explained that the registrar team had recently moved to the Town Hall, and a simplified process for registering had been implemented. He stated that this meant the team had exceeded their income target and were providing residents with an efficient service. He summarised and stated that

he had recently become the Portfolio Holder for the Community Safety Partnership, whose main focusses for 2023 would be tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and modern-day slavery and human trafficking. He explained they would also be working to reduce hate crime, anti-social behaviour, drug and drunk driving, gangs, and offensive weapons. He stated that they had recently begun a safe street scheme which would work through community engagement.

Councillor Carter thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report and asked how many people were attending the Hindu place of prayer, and if it remained popular. Councillor Abbas confirmed that services remained ongoing every third Sunday of the month and the community were grateful to have the space in Thurrock. Councillor Arnold questioned if the Portfolio Holder was considering a strategy to ensure larger productions were encouraged to come to Thurrock, either at the Thameside or other locations. Councillor Abbas felt that the Thameside was important for art and culture within the borough, but could be impractical as it was laid out over two floors and did not have a big enough stage for travelling productions. He wanted to take the arts and culture offer to different communities across Thurrock, rather than focus on one building.

Councillor Holloway explained that Harlow Council had recently applied for, and were granted, a £20m grant for arts and culture projects from the levelling up fund. She asked why Thurrock Council had not applied for this bid. Councillor Abbas explained that Thurrock had secured arts funding through the Arts Council, which had been allocated to community groups such as Coda Dance Club and Arts Outburst. Councillor Kent echoed Councillor Holloway's question and asked if the Portfolio Holder had directed officers to apply for the bid. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships explained that officers did consider applying for the bid, but the decision was taken not to bid because Thurrock was identified as a priority 2 place, behind other priority 1 places who had been allocated capacity funding to support their bids. He added that to bid would have required significant investment from the Council upfront to put a bid together, and increased capacity to deliver that the Council did not currently have. Councillor Holloway felt that the Thameside Theatre was important to develop arts and culture with children and young people and asked if the Portfolio Holder would meet with them to discuss the future of the theatre. Councillor Abbas stated that he regularly visited the Thameside and would be happy to meet with any groups or forums to discuss the theatre and consider their recommendations.

Councillor Arnold highlighted improvements to the registry service outlined on page 43 of the report and asked what further improvements were planned. Councillor Abbas explained that the team had worked to introduce new technology into the registry office, meaning weddings could be video streamed to people who could not attend in person, and a simplified website now made it easier for people who needed to use the service.

Councillor Holloway asked for the list of groups that had met with Councillor Abbas to be sent to the Committee. She also queried how the Portfolio was

planning to make the required £90,000 of savings, and if the Committee could also see those proposals. She sought assurances that the Portfolio Holder was not planning to close any Thurrock libraries, and that funding given from Thurrock Council to local women's and domestic abuse survivors groups would not be stopped. Councillor Abbas agreed to send the list of groups he had met with to the Committee. He also confirmed that there were no current plans to close the libraries, but if this was proposed then it would need to go consultation and the relevant scrutiny committee. He added that all services would need to be transformed due to the current financial issues, but the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be kept updated and the process would be transparent. He added that he was in touch with the voluntary sector and spending panels to assess all funding. He stated that he was committed to protecting women and girls that had suffered from domestic abuse and violence, and they would be provided with appropriate support.

Councillor Kent stated that the proposed Cultural Strategy and Plan for Culture would be the third time in six years this had been developed, the last one being in 2019 when consultants had been brought in to assist. He asked if the Committee could see the outcomes from the previous Cultural Strategies, and how the Portfolio Holder would ensure this version was completed and implemented. Councillor Abbas confirmed that the previous strategies and consultations would be shared with the Committee. Councillor Kent also questioned when Thurrock Museum would be accredited with the Arts Council. Councillor Abbas replied that the Council remained committed to accreditation and had made a bid to the Arts Council. He explained that this bid had been withdrawn at the suggestion of the Arts Council in 2021 due to the uncertainty of the future of the Thameside Complex.

Councillor Kent added that the People and Place Bid had now been granted, but required £10,000 per year funding from Thurrock Council and free usage of the libraries and theatre. He asked if this funding would continue given the Council's financial situation. The Assistant Director Economic Partnerships and Growth confirmed that the current position of the Council was to continue with this funding and free usage of the buildings. Councillor Kent summarised and commented that although the Thameside Theatre was small, it had the capability to hold professional productions. He felt that arts and culture needed a base in Thurrock, and productions would be unable or unwilling to travel and hold shows in venues such as village halls and schools. He stated that productions had previously been held in venues such as the Tilbury Cruise Terminal and a marquee in Blackshots, but these had been expensive to run. Councillor Thandi queried the Violence Against Woman and Girls Strategy project in Grays. Councillor Abbas replied that the team had organised pop up events and engaged with the community to raise awareness of the issue.

The Chair sought assurance that any updates on the Thameside Theatre would be brought back to the Committee, and Councillor Abbas agreed.

Councillor Abbas left the meeting at 8.26pm.

29. Treasury Management Strategy 2023/24

The Acting Director of Finance introduced the report and stated that three elements of the government directives linked to the Treasury Management Strategy, and these were: the requirement to update the Treasury Management, Capital, and Investment Strategies; the commitment to reduce the MRP linked to debt; and the requirement of an MRP policy refresh. He explained that the Treasury Management Strategy linked to the capital programme, investments, and how the Council could deliver financial sustainability. He stated that the report presented a holding position which was driven by several assumptions outlined on page 2 of the appendix including the request for EFS, asset disposal, and divestment of investments. He explained that borrowing levels were based on these assumptions and outlined the accounting treatments in the past and moving forward. He stated that the report summarised the changes to investment write-down and divestment, and how this strategy would be delivered. The Acting Director of Finance explained that further reports would be brought back to Members as the level of borrowing may need to increase due to changes with investments, EFS and capitalisation directives.

The Acting Director of Finance explained that the Council's portfolio of investments had been reassessed and a breakdown of these investments was outlined at table 2, including their impairments and full assessment. He stated that all investments were under constant review, and a new committee was being developed to inform Cabinet and the wider investment group. He added that the team were looking into legal actions to help resolve issues, but these could not be outlined until they had been developed further, as they were still in the early stages of discussion.

The Acting Director of Finance highlighted paragraph 42 in the appendix which set out the current issues, assessments, and proposed actions, and formed a key reset of the strategy. He added that the Strategy would drive how the Council managed future risk and would complement the Capital Programme to ensure appropriate resources and financial sustainability. He described how the report also provided historic financial context, such as the replacement of debt with Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans. He added that the MRP policy statements also showed how the Prudential Code had developed, and the Council were now compliant. He added that paragraph 76 of the appendix showed the 20-year life of the capitalisation directives, and how cashflow would be managed to enable a reset of debt in the future. He summarised and stated that the team had taken quick action to completely replace and rewrite the Treasury Management Strategy, whilst seeking advice from commissioners and experts, to ensure the Council met the government's directives and reduced debt as quickly as possible.

The Chair highlighted paragraph 77 of the appendix and asked why the Council had not applied MRP to its capital investments in previous years. The Acting Director of Finance explained that in previous years the MRP had not factored in issues and impairments with assets, such as the solar farm, and therefore the Council had no protection when the MRP was set on that basis,

and was fully exposed. He stated that the MRP now covered issues and impairments, and this reduced the Council's exposure. The Chair queried if the Council had ever applied MRP to its capital investments in the past. The Acting Director of Finance explained that Thurrock Council had been compliant with the first iteration of the Prudential Code that allowed for Council's to invest, as without that policy Council's would not have been allowed to invest. He explained that the second iteration of the Prudential Code had called for a partial change to MRP provisions to reduce exposure for the Council, which the Council had not been compliant with. The Chair queried when the second iteration of the Prudential Code had come into force. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the second iteration had been implemented in 2018/19, but only mandated that an MRP change was made. He explained that the Council were waiting for a new Prudential Code to be announced, which was expected in 2024/25, and the Council were ensuring that they would be forward compliant ahead of the introduction of this Code. He commented that a change to Prudential Codes presented a difficulty for many Councils, who subsequently had to adapt and change their procedures.

Councillor Kent questioned why the MRP was now being paid down over the course of an assets life, and asked if this approach would be successful. He also queried if previous advice given to Members on the MRP had been accurate. The Acting Director of Finance explained that the Council were now pursuing an asset life method of MRP, which meant that debt was written down over the life of an asset, and therefore running in parallel with the asset as a percentage of the debt was written off every year. He explained that in previous years this approach had not been undertaken, which had reduced the capital finance requirements but had not managed risk. He stated that the previous approach had written down an asset's debt in one go, at one time, and had offered the Council little protection. The Interim Chief Financial Officer echoed these points and stated that a thorough review process for assets was now in place, and this was being supported by the Commissioners. Councillor Arnold queried what advice had been received from external consultants, and what new knowledge and skills was being applied to the MRP. The Acting Director of Finance confirmed that the Council had received advice on the Treasury Management Strategy, but confirmed that the Council did not have any future investments planned. He stated that Thurrock had appointed Link as Treasury Management advisors and training sessions had been provided to Members to give a broader overview and understanding of the sector. He explained that the BVI would focus on the finer points of how decisions regarding investments were taken, and the team would consider these findings in detail when they were released.

Councillor Kent summarised and felt that the report was important as the Council needed to ensure it did not repeat past mistakes. He stated that in 2023/24 debt repayments would cost approximately £49m, which was 3.5x the cost of emptying all bins in Thurrock and two thirds more than the Public Realm budget.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Commented on the 2023/24 Treasury Management Strategy for consideration by Cabinet at their meeting on 15 February 2023.**
- 2. Considered the current assumptions (set out on page 3 of the Strategy) underpinning the Treasury Management Strategy and noted that this will be subject to further updates in 2023/24.**
- 3. Considered the strategy in the context of the directions issued by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and specifically the need for a strict debt reduction plan.**
- 4. Noted the increase in the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) in 2022/23 as a result of the expected support from DLUHC in the form of a capitalisation direction, as set out in section 3.16.**
- 5. Noted the divestment of investments and the scale of property assets are required to repay the Exceptional Financial Support from DLUHC and this is a key assumption supporting the strategy.**
- 6. Noted the Council's borrowing level will exceed the CFR in 2022/23 but is planned to be managed within this from 2023/24 and onwards, as set out in section 3.16.**
- 7. Noted the Prudential indicators included within the strategy that show commercial capital investments are generating net losses to the Council in the context of the revised MRP charges and current and projected interest rates, as set out in section 3.6.**
- 8. Noted that the borrowing strategy supporting the commercial investment portfolio will be reset alongside wider revisions to the strategy in 2023/24.**

The Committee adjourned at 8.52pm

The Committee reconvened at 8.58pm.

30. Capital Bids and Capital Programme Update

The Acting Director of Finance introduced the report and stated that an updated version of the paper had been provided to Members, which amended the second paragraph on the first page of the report. He read the updated paragraph verbatim:

The total cost of the draft Capital Programme in 2023/24 is currently projected to be £62.158m, broken down as £37.043m relating to the General Fund and £25.115m relating to the HRA. The HRA capital programme is part funded by borrowing, grants and reserves and the associated revenue costs are managed from within the HRA budget envelope. The General Fund projects require prudential borrowing of £19.859m and the associated revenue impacts are also budgeted.

The Acting Director of Finance explained that the capital programme was currently under review, and the report presented a holding position which was supported by the S114 notice. He stated that the team were currently assessing whether spend on capital programmes should occur, but the Council would not break contractual agreements whilst considering new spend and borrowing. He explained that projects utilising third party funding had more flexibility, for example the school capital programme was grant funded and therefore did not present a wider risk to the Council. He added that a wider piece of work to review the programme and manage spending and borrowing was taking place, and this included removing or reassessing capital programmes. The Acting Director of Finance confirmed that some capital programme projects, such as the Grays underpass and Stanford-le-Hope Interchange, were currently on hold given the current financial context, and these would be reassessed considering the necessity, inflation, and construction costs. He explained that the capital programme would continue to evolve, and more clarity would be presented to Members in further reports. He added that officers were working to increase the transparency of the Capital Programme report and were working on introducing a mechanism for Member feedback.

The Chair highlighted 5.2 of the report and asked how S106 agreements could be used for 'spend to save' projects. The Acting Director of Finance explained that some projects, such as new streetlighting, could save the Council money after an initial outlay, for example by using more energy efficient bulbs or having more control over when streetlighting came on and switched off. He stated that grant-funded projects could continue, but all 'spend to save' projects would be challenged through Directorate Management Team meetings, the corporate transformation team, and Cabinet. Councillor Kent highlighted appendix two of the report and questioned the proposed river development project. He also questioned why Investment Portfolio 'spend to save' project funding increased dramatically between 2023/24 and 2024/25. The Acting Director of Finance replied that he did not have the detail of these projects, and would respond outside of the meeting.

Councillor Kent summarised and felt pleased that the Treasury Management and Capital Programme report had been separated, as this made it easier to understand for Members and residents.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the charges to the capital programme as set out in this report and associated appendices.**
- 2. Noted the impact of new Prudential Borrowing on the debt levels of the Council as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 3. Noted the programme will be subject to a further review as set out in the report and following the issue of a Section 114 notice.**

4. Noted the projected revenue impact of the MRP costs as set out in Section 5.2.

5. Commented on the proposed delegation to Cabinet to approve additions to the programme based on the criteria set out in section 5.2.

31. Coalhouse Fort Update

The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships introduced the report and stated that Coalhouse Fort was an important heritage asset and believed it was important to maximise its potential for residents and visitors, and preserve the scheduled monument. He stated that Coalhouse Fort had been closed since 2020. He explained that as the Council's place directorate evolved, it was an opportune moment to consider the Coalhouse Fort, and this would begin with a review and updating of the maintenance and health safety plans. He added that the Council were also planning to undertake a wider review and condition survey for the Fort, and would consider different management options. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships stated that the individual tasks needed to be undertaken for the Fort were outlined in the report, which included a feasibility study, but this would be dependent on, and in the context of the IRP and S114 notice, cost and funding.

Councillor Carter highlighted that a refreshed condition survey would be undertaken, and asked for the timescales for this piece of work. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships stated that they would begin to explore this work over the next three to four months, and a steering group would be put in place, which would be formed of local interest groups and other interested parties. He stated that this was subject to costs, funding, and the IRP, but would hopefully run for six to twelve months. Councillor Kent highlighted the table in the report which listed potential members of the steering group, which did not include local community groups and sought reassurance that they would be included. Councillor Kent added that the process for local community bids could take some time, as the Thameside community bid process had now been ongoing for twenty months. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships explained that community bids for the site had already been received, and the list of steering group members in the report were examples and this would be expanded to include local community groups. Councillor Kent questioned how the Council had advertised for local community bids, and if advertising would continue. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships explained that a process would be developed through the feasibility study and options study to ensure all interested parties had the opportunity to submit a local community bid if they wished. He added that local groups and forums would also be included through consultation as part of the new Cultural Strategy.

Councillor Arnold questioned the outcome if the health and safety and maintenance costs of Coalhouse Fort were too high for the Council. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships replied that if this

were the case, the Council would look at other funding opportunities, for example from Natural England, Historic England, and the Lower Thames Crossing. He added that the Council had already received interest from local groups and private individuals to take over the site, and these would be included in the feasibility study. Councillor Thandi questioned what redevelopment the site would need. The Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships stated that the team were currently unsure of what redevelopment was needed, and this would not be known until the health and safety survey was completed and a clear preferred option identified.

The Chair proposed monthly email updates to the Committee on the work of Coalhouse Fort, and the Committee agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

- 1. Noted the current position relating to Coalhouse Fort.**
- 2. Noted the proposed approach/next steps for Coalhouse Fort.**
- 3. Noted that further updates will be provided as key tasks are actioned/completed.**

32. Work Programme

Members did not have any items to add to the Work Programme.

The meeting finished at 9.27 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**

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 March 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Fraser Massey (Chair), James Thandi (Vice-Chair), Paul Arnold, Adam Carter, Victoria Holloway and John Kent

In attendance: Mark Bradbury, Director of Place
Gerard McCleave, Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Partnerships
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

33. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

34. Declaration of Interests

Councillor John Kent declared a non-pecuniary interest for Item 10 as he was employed by Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions (TLS).

35. Thameside Centre

The Chair stated that three public questions had been received and these would be heard in the order they had been submitted. He invited Mr Neil Woodbridge to read his question.

Mr Woodbridge raised a point of clarification that the building was named the Thameside Complex, rather than the Thameside Centre as stated in the report. He added that the Thurrock International Celebration of Culture (TICC) was a community interest company, and this had been omitted from the report. Mr Woodbridge moved on and read his question as follows:

“Our proposals indicated a partnership-based approach with the Council, assuming that the Council would wish to not only share risk but also reward to enable the asset to remain a public asset. Will you still consider any partnership based models that assume Council participation in your call for new proposals, or is the Council seeking to completely divest itself of the Thameside entirely with no stake in it at all as a public asset?”

The Director of Place responded that the Council's position for the proposals of the Thameside had changed over the life of the process, and highlighted that earlier in the process Mr Woodbridge had received guidance that a

partnership process would be appropriate. He stated that he had met with Mr Woodbridge and TLS/TICC at the end of 2022 to discuss the changes to the approach and had expressed concern that the bid may require council support. He explained that the bid needed to show a reduction in financial dependence, and needed to consider the effects of the S114 notice. He added that the proposed recommendation was to consult on a cultural model, which could provide more time to amend proposals and demonstrate that the TLS/TICC bid was financially sustainable. The Director of Place confirmed that the report did not include a decision to dispose of the Thameside building, and the team would consider any revised proposals in light of the S114 notice and the need for financial sustainability.

The Chair invited Mr Woodbridge to ask a supplementary question. Mr Woodbridge highlighted the potential capital cost of £20m which was listed in the original report, and included investment of £300,000 in year one of a ten-year proposal. He stated that many things on the Thameside Complex red list had already begun, and felt that the building did not require as much investment as the Council had listed. The Director of Place responded that the council had considered investment over the lifecycle of a thirty-year lease, and this had included some of the immediate health and safety compliance work that had already been undertaken. He felt that there would be differing opinions over the works that would need to be carried out at the Thameside, but this would need to include replacing lifts, vent maintenance, electrical maintenance, and internal/external decoration.

The Chair invited Ms. Sam Byrne to read her question as follows:

“TICC & TLS applied for a Community Asset Transfer; we submitted our bid in March 2022. We have asked several times in writing for the process and procedures that the bid would follow and never received this information.

We were promised the opportunity to give a full business plan presentation with a Q&A session with a group of officers and councillors, this never happened. Why may I ask 12 months after our bid was submitted were we informed, only in this report that was published last week that our bid is not sustainable?”

The Director of Place responded that he had first met with TICC and TLS in August 2022 when he had recently joined the Council, but the process had begun before this time. He stated that he had met with TLS/TICC again in November 2022 to discuss finances and what changes would need to be made to submit a revised bid. He added that he had also explained the process of submission to officers, the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet. The Director of Place added that he had then met with TLS/TICC on 27 February 2023 to talk through the report being presented to the Committee and explain the rationale behind the recommendations. He felt he had communicated with TLS/TICC throughout the process and had outlined the Council’s intentions, but could not comment on the process which had been undertaken before he had joined the Council.

He stated that he was happy to meet with TLS/TICC again to discuss ways forward.

The Chair invited Ms. Byrne to ask a supplementary question. Ms Byrne stated that she had requested the formal process of bid submission, as well as the Asset Transfer Policy, in writing, and this had not yet been received. She felt that the report should not be presented to Cabinet until the necessary processes had been completed regarding the TLS/TICC bid. Ms Byrne stated that she had been advised to reconsider the finances of the bid, but felt that more information should be provided by the Council to support TLS/TICC in revising their bid and updating their financials. The Director of Place explained that the report would be presented to Cabinet, but it would be their decision whether to accept the recommendations.

The Chair invited Mr. Vic Gray to read his question as follows:

“Following the commissioners findings that the council has been ‘unconsciously incompetent’, has the handling of our bid not followed any council guidelines on a prescribed process?”

The Director of Place stated that he could not comment on processes that had been followed before he joined the Council, but since he had started in his role he had followed the processes outlined in the Asset Disposal Policy, which considered the finances, socio-economic, and cultural value of an asset before potential disposal. He explained that if the proposed disposal was over £500,000 in value it had to be presented to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and Cabinet.

The Chair asked Mr. Gray if he wished to pose a supplementary question. Mr Gray felt that negotiations at the beginning of the process had been professionally managed, but felt that since July 2022 no due process had been followed, and questioned if Cabinet could amend the asset disposal procedures. The Director of Place responded that Cabinet Members would need to consider and update the Asset Disposal Policy if they felt it was appropriate.

The Chair thanked the public speakers for their attendance, engagement, and questions to the Committee. The Director of Place introduced the report and explained that since the publication of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee report, the recommendations of the Thameside Centre Cabinet report had been amended. The Committee requested that hard copies of the updated Cabinet recommendations be circulated, and the meeting be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 7.26pm.

The meeting reconvened at 7.36pm.

The Director of Place outlined the updated Cabinet recommendations, which included separate recommendations for each of the proposed consultations,

as each consultation had to follow different processes, for example the library consultation would be a statutory consultation. He added that the recommendations also sought delegated authority to the relevant directors to undertake the consultations, and a final recommendation had been added which noted the money within the capital programme for relocation.

The Director of Place moved on and explained that the Thameside building was approximately 50 years old and required investment over the next 30 years such as internal refurbishment and updated electrical and mechanical systems. He stated that the building had been declared surplus in July 2021, and following public engagement and roundtable meetings with interested community members, a further decision was made by Cabinet in January 2022 to continue with discussions, and a business case that could see community interest organisations take over the running of the building, including related cultural services. He added that many references were made during this time to the financial sustainability of the business case. The Director of Place explained that internal and external consultation had been carried out during this period, but felt that further consultation was necessary before a decision could be made. He outlined the five options for the Thameside which had been listed in the report, and stated that options 1,4, and 5 were not being recommended as part of the report, and options 2 and 3 were being considered but were not currently financially sustainable. The Director of Place highlighted that option 2 currently stated that the building would be transferred as part of a 25-year lease, but explained that this was a 30-year lease, and this had been amended for the Cabinet report.

The Director of Place highlighted the reasons for the recommendations and stated that the TLS/TICC bid required unconfirmed funding, and if this could not be found and running costs were not met, the responsibility for the building would fall back on the Council. He added that the Waltham International College (WIC) bid had recently received an Ofsted inspection rating of 'inadequate' and further work was needed on their business case. He felt that the concerns regarding the TLS/TICC bid could be resolved moving forward, but at this current stage, the Council could not recommend this option. He explained that the recommendation was to undertake detailed consultation regarding the services within the Thameside, and this would also allow both TLS/TICC and WIC time to further strengthen their business cases. He added that the alternative option was to relocate the services currently in the Thameside, and money could be found within the capital programme for this.

Councillor Kent questioned what cultural and event provision within the borough could look like moving forward, and if cultural provision would be moved away from Grays. The Director of Place explained that Grays was the primary centre for culture and events, as the town contained a mix of retail, housing and leisure facilities, but if other alternatives were presented then these would not be excluded. He added that culture had a wide definition and could range from street art to a new theatre building. He felt that cultural arts and activities should look beyond the Thameside building to a range of locations and events across Thurrock, and his team were open to suggestions

on how arts and culture should be delivered. Councillor Kent queried who would carry out the proposed consultations, how much these would cost and when they would begin. He also asked if there would be three separate consultations on the three different areas. The Director of Place explained that there would be overlap between the three consultations as they would be on the same digital platform, but they would be separate and would contain different questions and discussions. He added that any roundtable meetings between the Council and community interest groups as part of the consultation would include a third-party facilitator, as this had been shown to be best practice. He added that there was no firm budget for the consultations, but the main expenditure would be on the third-party facilitator, as the consultations would be run by existing staff members. Councillor Kent asked if the library relocation fell under statutory consultations and regulations. The Director of Place confirmed that it was a statutory duty and would have a separate consultation.

Councillor Kent moved on and highlighted point 2.3 of the report. He asked if the construction costs quoted included removing the roof of the Thameside to be able to raise the height of the building, and if the contingency figure of £2.2m listed in previous reports was still accurate. The Director of Place commented that no detail was included in the construction costs as different building uses, specifications and operators would have different construction needs and budgets. He felt that significant investment was required to ensure the future sustainability of the Thameside, but other organisations may have a different viewpoint. He added that the team had considered recommendations from the Best Value Inspection (BVI) regarding the level of contingency funding. Councillor Kent highlighted points 3.9 and 3.10 of the report and asked if staff would be made redundant, and if so, how many. The Director of Place explained that the staffing implications mentioned in the report could mean changing job roles or relocation, as well as redundancy, but stated that no redundancies were planned as a result of the report. He explained that once a decision had been made regarding the future of the Thameside, a formal consultation on staffing implications would be undertaken, but this would separate from the consultations planned on the cultural offer in Thurrock. Councillor Kent sought confirmation that the date within the report for potential relocation of the library to the Civic Offices of March 2024 remained feasible, and if this included time for the consultation. The Director of Place stated that this date remained feasible, but could be challenging and depended on the outcome of consultation. He added that some work had already been undertaken on the relocation of the library following the decision in July 2021 to declare the Thameside as surplus, but this had not been progressed due to the January 2022 Cabinet report. He added that preliminary plans for the library relocation to the Civic Offices had been drawn up, and these would form part of the consultation documents. Councillor Kent asked if the Council could spend approximately £500,000 to £1mn on the relocation of the library, given the S114 announcement in December 2022. The Director of Place explained that the library was a statutory requirement, but needed to demonstrate a good service and best value under the S114 notice and a business case would be required. He added that as a library was a statutory duty, he felt it unlikely that any decision regarding libraries would

not include a central library in Grays. Councillor Kent queried how much money the telecommunications equipment on the Thameside roof delivered. The Director of Place stated that the equipment brought in approximately £27,000 per year. Councillor Kent asked if the current tenants of the building had rights. The Director of Place commented that the tenants were protected under statute. He explained that there were currently two tenants in the building, one of whom was currently in the process of renegotiating their lease. He added that there were other organisations within the Thameside, but they hired rooms and therefore were not classed as tenants and did not have the same protections.

Councillor Arnold queried if the Council would be liable for ongoing costs of the theatre if they did nothing. The Director of Place confirmed that the Council would be liable, as well as being liable for planned maintenance and the required investment. He stated that if the Council leased the building but retained occupation, the Council could introduce service charges and sinking funds, but it would be the tenant's responsibility to maintain the building. Councillor Arnold asked if the team had undertaken a comparative exercise to determine the cost and availability of other office spaces in Grays. The Director of Place explained that the team had undertaken an assessment of office space value in Grays, although the values ranged significantly based on specification, facilities, and area. Councillor Thandi questioned if a break clause could be included if the building was leased out. The Director of Place explained that this could be included, but stated that the team would be unable to begin a lease without a financially viable business plan being put in place. Councillor Thandi asked if the complex would remain open whilst the consultations were running. The Director of Place stated that the Thameside would remain open as usual, and bookings had been accepted until the summer of 2023. He stated that no changes would be implemented until a decision had been made.

Councillor Holloway expressed her concern that the updated Cabinet recommendations had not been circulated to the Committee in hard copy before the meeting. She also sought reassurance that the consultations would be thorough, and not simply a tick box exercise. She felt that Grays library was an important facility for those in the area, as it held sessions for a variety of people such as those with disabilities, community groups, and children who were home-schooled, as well as lending books. She added that the theatre helped inspire children and the museum helped encourage learning in the borough, and asked if the cultural value of the Thameside building had been considered. The Director of Place confirmed that there was no proposal to close or downsize the library, and the team were working hard to maintain and improve the museum. He stated that the Council had to consider the financial sustainability of the Thameside building, but there remained an opportunity to work with the community interest groups on their bids.

Councillor Carter thanked the members of the public for their questions. He asked if a question-and-answer session could form part of the consultation. He wanted to see engagement continue with TLS/TICC and WIC on their proposals. Councillor Kent felt concerned that the arts in Thurrock were not

being invested in, and stated that the borough needed to have a Cultural Strategy in place. He felt that Thurrock needed a theatre building, but felt that the report leaned towards the option of closing the building. He stated that it would be good to see consultation on culture and arts in the borough, but sought reassurance that that would include the Thameside.

Members agreed to a recorded vote on each recommendation, including the individual Cabinet recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

1. Noted the options considered for the future of the Thameside building and the analysis of those options set out in the report.

This recommendation was agreed by all Committee Members.

2. Commented on the following recommendations for the future of the Thameside Centre that will be considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 15 March 2023:

1.1 Cabinet notes the bid from Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions/Thurrock International Celebration of Culture and Waltham International College and thanks them for their efforts to try and offer a financially sustainable alternative for the future of the building.

All Committee Members agreed with the recommendation.

1.2 Cabinet notes the significant concerns regarding both proposals and that neither is recommended as a financially sustainable alternative for the future of the building.

Committee Members sought to amend the recommendation as below:

1.2 Cabinet notes the significant concerns regarding both proposals and that neither is recommended, in its current form, as a financially sustainable alternative for the future of building. Cabinet agrees that negotiations and discussions will continue with TLS/TICC to try and facilitate a financially sustainable bid.

All Committee Members agreed with the amended recommendation.

1.3 Cabinet authorises the Director of Place to undertake consultation on alternative options for the delivery of cultural activities and events in Grays.

Committee Members sought to amend the recommendation as below:

1.3 Cabinet authorises the Director of Place to undertake consultation on all options for the delivery of cultural activities and events in Grays and the wider borough.

All Committee Members agreed with the amended recommendation.

1.4 Cabinet authorises the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health to undertake consultation on the relocation of the library from the Thameside Building to the Civic Offices.

FOR: 0

AGAINST: 3 (Councillors Massey, Holloway and Kent)

ABSTAIN: 3 (Councillors Thandi, Arnold and Carter)

As the Chair had the casting vote, this recommendation was not agreed.

Committee Members sought to amend the recommendation as below:

1.4 Cabinet authorises the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health to undertake consultation on the relocation of the library from the Thameside Building to the Civic Offices. A report on this recommendation to be brought back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on completion of the consultation.

FOR: 3 (Councillors Thandi, Arnold and Carter)

AGAINST: 3 (Councillors Massey, Holloway and Kent)

ABSTAIN: 0

As the Chair had the casting vote, this recommendation was not agreed.

1.5 Cabinet authorises the Director of Place to undertake consultation on the relocation of the museum from the

Thameside Building to the Civic Offices with a view to achieving Accredited Museum status.

The Committee sought to amend the recommendation as below:

1.5 Cabinet authorises the Director of Place to undertake consultation on the future of the museum with a view to achieving Accredited Museum status. A report on this recommendation to be brought back to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on completion of the consultation.

FOR: 3 (Councillors Thandi, Arnold and Carter)

AGAINST: 3 (Councillors Massey, Holloway and Kent)

ABSTAIN: 0

As the Chair had the casting vote, this recommendation was not agreed.

1.6 Cabinet notes the allocation of £1.2million in the Capital Programme agreed at Council on 1st March 2023, funded from asset sales, for the relocation of the library and museum.

All Committee Members agreed with the recommendation.

The Director of Place left the meeting at 9.08pm.

36. Greater Essex Devolution

The Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth introduced the report and stated that the devolution proposal was in response to the Government's White Paper and framework in 2022. She explained that the report outlined the opportunities, as listed in the White Paper, as well as wider opportunities for Thurrock outside of the framework. She stated that Appendix 2 contained the Expression of Interest, but the purpose of the report was to start a conversation between local authorities in Essex with Government and did not decide upon a deal. She explained that any potential deal would take approximately six months to negotiate, and would require member agreement and public consultation. She commented that the report would be going to Cabinet next week and would present two options: the first being support the Expression of Interest; the second being to play no further part in Greater Essex Devolution moving forward. She explained that similar devolution reports had been through Cabinet at Essex County Council and Southend-on-Sea City Council, who had both supported the Expression of Interest. She stated that Southend City Council had not supported the level three option,

but had supported level two. Councillor Coxshall added that the conversation regarding devolution was also being discussed by the borough's MPs, and felt it was important to engage in the process.

Councillor Kent agreed that Thurrock should be part of a devolution deal, but did not agree that Greater Essex devolution would be right for Thurrock. He felt that the differences between north and south Essex were too great, as Thurrock was drawn closer to London than other parts of Essex. He expressed concern regarding the role of Essex County Council, as Chelmsford was far from Thurrock and Thurrock collected more business rates than elsewhere in Essex, and felt that this should not be distributed across the county. He also felt concerned regarding the mayoral model and accompanying council tax precept, as he felt this would add another level of government. He questioned when the all Member briefing session had been held, and if Thurrock Members had been invited. The Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth replied that two all Member briefings had been arranged in January by Tendring Council, and all Essex Councillors had been invited. Councillor Coxshall shared some of Councillor Kent's concerns, but felt that Thurrock needed to be involved in the conversation. He stated that a south Essex devolution deal was not currently being proposed, but this may be a viable option in future. He also shared concern regarding the impact devolution could have on the Thames Freeport, as the devolution deal would mean two Freeports in one combined authority area, which could be difficult to deliver. Councillor Kent added that as Essex also contained two major airports, the taxes of which would be hypothecated across the county. He also felt the Expression of Interest could be more ambitious in that regard.

The Chair sought clarification regarding the different devolution levels proposed. The Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth explained that level two devolution did not include a mayor, but level three had a mayoral model and therefore a mayoral council tax precept. The Chair summarised and stated that he could see the challenges of devolution, but felt that the Council needed to engage. The Committee supported being part of the discussions with Government through the Expression of Interest submission.

RESOLVED: The Committee:

1. Considered and commented on the Expression of Interest and submission to Government to begin a dialogue for a Greater Essex devolution deal and understanding the benefits it might bring to the residents of Thurrock, or whether to take no further part in the process at this time.

The meeting finished at 9.23 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**

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Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference	
Appointed by: The Council under section 21, Local Government Act 2000	Number of Elected Members: Six, of whom none may be Cabinet Members
Chair and Vice-Chair appointed by: The Council	Political Proportionality: The elected Members shall be appointed in accordance with Political Proportionality
Quorum: Three elected Members	Co-opted Members to be appointed by Council: None
<p>Functions determined by Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council's overall performance 2. The Council's overall Budget and Value for Money 3. Council's strategic risk management 4. Local Strategic Partnership, other partnerships and community forums 5. Community Leadership, Community Engagement and Community Empowerment 6. Ethical governance matters in conjunction with the Standards and Audit Committee 7. Internal and external communications 8. External and European Funding 9. Resources, including human resources and asset management 10. Information and communications technology 11. Procurement 12. Monitor Councillor Call for Actions 13. Monitor and steer the overall direction of the overview and scrutiny function 14. Any other issues not covered by the six Overview and Scrutiny Committees 	
<p>Functions determined by Statute:</p> <p>All the powers of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.</p>	

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11 July 2023	ITEM: 7
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Fees and Charges Review 2023/24	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Jonathan Wilson - Assistant Director – Finance	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson - Assistant Director – Finance	
Accountable Director: Steven Mair - Director of Finance	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

As is well known the Council faces unprecedented financial challenges and is reviewing and revising all of its financial plans as a consequence. One element of this is income from Fees and Charges. This report begins to address that by:

- designing and proposing the adoption of a new Fees and Charges policy
- undertaking stage 1 of a three-part review of Fees and Charges
- arising from that recommending several increases in charges/new charges, effective from 1 October, to potentially generate £114k increase in income in a full year
- noting that subsequent stages will take this work further

1. Recommendations:

- a. **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed Fees and Charges policy, Appendix 1, in particular agreeing the commitment to full cost recovery and annual CPI inflation increases as the default.**
- b. **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed Fees and Charges increases for the material areas, Appendix 2.**
- c. **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the proposed new Charges in section 8 of this report.**
- d. **That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the requirement for a further detailed review & analysis of remaining Fees and Charges by Quarter 4 2023/24.**

2. Background

Thurrock's financial position is exceptionally challenging as 35.2% of its 2023/24 budget, £180m, is financed by an indicative capitalisation direction. A non-recurrent form of potential exceptional funding which must be replaced by asset or investment sales, reductions in the capital programme and revenue budget reductions (expenditure) or increases (income).

This report deals with the start of a Fees and Charges review which will assist in increasing the Council's income.

Due to the magnitude of the task, the review has been split into three Phases.

➤ Phase 1:

- create a new policy for Fees and Charges, enclosed as Appendix 1.
- begin the gathering of benchmarking data to start to enable Thurrock's charges to be compared against other local authorities, enclosed as Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c.
- identify material areas for Fees and Charges.
- analyse if inflation and/or other up-lifts have been applied to the Council's material income areas over the past 5 years to inform opportunities.
- investigate and propose immediate price increases for existing services.
- investigate any new charges which could be implemented by October 2023.
- explore the possibility of a semi-automated workflow process for Fees and Charges via Thurrock's embedded 4me system to add further transparency and improved reporting functionality to the process.

➤ Phase 2:

- review further Fees and Charges.
- analyse inflationary increases across all remaining Fees and Charges.
- begin implementation of the workflow system in 4me.
- further analysis of the benchmarking exercise to identify opportunities to expand Fees and Charges further, including any unique services Thurrock offer.
- support services to identify commercial opportunities.
- complete the annual Fees and Charges process with a paper to Cabinet in February 2024.
- implement increases for 1st April 2024.

➤ Phase 3:

- undertake a review of all service's financial recovery – identifying the cost recovery position, the financial opportunities, and the timescale to achieve completion of this.

3. Thurrock Fees and Charges Policy

A revised policy for Fees and Charges has been prepared and is enclosed as Appendix 1.

The policy deals with the following:

- sets out the purpose of the policy
- highlights the financial context of the Council
- explains why the Council levies Fees and Charges and factors that must be considered
- proposes a default approach to charging of full cost recovery and annual minimum inflationary increases
- highlights the categories of charge and the legal basis
- sets out roles and responsibilities
- also, the category of charge and the Council's commercial and pricing principles
- advises on the timetable for reviews
- notes key administration issues and
- sets out the basis for charging and cost calculation and provides a structured framework for future work in this area

4. Benchmarking Data

To enable a comparison of Thurrock's Fees and Charges against those of other boroughs initial data has been gathered. This requires much greater work including full reviews and business cases before any decisions are taken on the matters below, but it does provide a start for exploration. The high-level analysis indicates that:

- On average Thurrock have less Fees and Charges than those the Council benchmarked against as at 2022/23:
 - Thurrock - 1099
 - LBBD - 1209
 - Basildon - 1318
 - Havering - 1397
 - Medway - 1464
 - Southend - 1518Please see Appendix 3a, 3b, 3c.
- This indicates that Thurrock has the potential to expand its Fees and Charges offering with a view to increasing Thurrock's income. Noting as above the need for full reviews and business cases in all instances. In addition, during the initial work the following have been identified as areas for further review. At this stage these are simply areas to be considered in the future:
 - Culture parks and outdoor spaces
 - Events and hiring
 - Exhibition spaces an area which Thurrock's comparable authorities charge for which Thurrock do not
 - It is also known from previous benchmarking exercises that Thurrock's registrars' services could be expanded to generate more income subject to appropriate investment.

This also confirms that in some areas Thurrock's charges are significantly less than that of its neighbouring boroughs. For example, Thurrock have the lowest cost Resident Parking Permit Prices of its comparative boroughs, by way of example for the 1st Resident Permit Thurrock the charge is £15, whereas Maldon charge £54, Brentwood and Basildon charge £34, Table 1 below. This matter will be explored further in stage 2.

Table 1 – Resident Parking Permit Comparison

Residents Permits 22/23	1 st	2nd	3rd	Rank	% > TC
Thurrock (Agreed 23/24)	£15	£15	£15	1st	0%
Southend	£15	£25	£50	2nd	0%
Chelmsford	£26	£26	£26	3rd	73%
Medway	£31	£31	£31	4th	107%
Basildon	£34	£34	£34	5th	123%
Brentwood	£34	£34	£34	6th	123%
Havering	£35	£60	£85	7th	133%
Rochford	£50	£50	£50	8th	233%
Castle Point	£52	£52	£52	9th	247%
Maldon	£54	£54	£54	10th	260%

Ranking based off 1st permit pricing

There are other examples which will also be explored further in stage 2 of the review.

5. Material Income Areas

Budgeted total income for 2023/24 is £51.805m as per the budget report presented to Full Council on 1st March 2023. Of this income, £7.462m is due to be generated through the levying of Fees and Charges for council services.

The material areas identified within this are set to contribute £4.242m (57%) of the budgeted Fees and Charges revenue:

Table 2 – Material Income Areas

Key areas:	2023/24 Indicative budget £'000
<i>Planning</i>	(1,180)
<i>Parking</i>	(523)
<i>Street works</i>	(480)
<i>Environment Enforcement</i>	(317)
<i>Licensing</i>	(314)
<i>Burials & Cemeteries</i>	(305)
<i>Registrar</i>	(303)
<i>Music Service</i>	(284)
<i>Theatre sales</i>	(269)
<i>Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre</i>	(265)
Total of key areas	(4,242)
% Of 23/24 F&C budget	57%

Please see link below for full details:

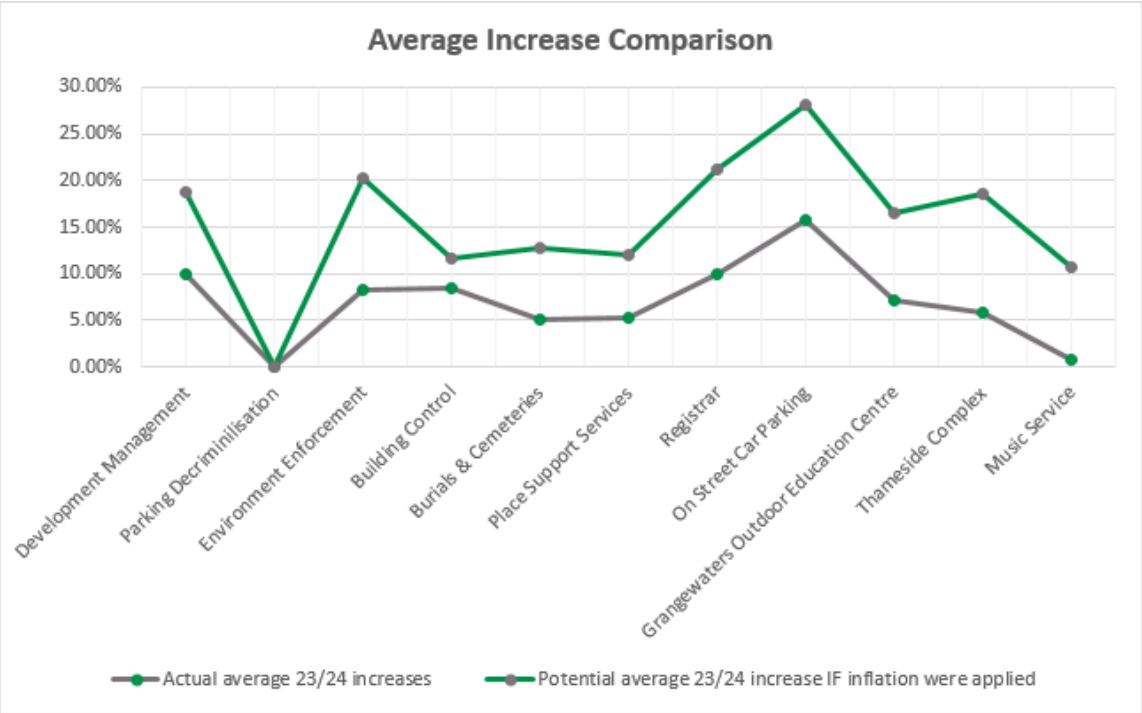
[\(Public Pack\)Item 16 - Appendix 2 - Budget Proposals 2023-24 Agenda Supplement for Council, 01/03/2023 19:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

6. Inflation Comparator

After an assessment of the material areas over the past 5 years, it was identified that in some instances, the rate of inflation was not previously applied to each fee.

The review indicates that if these prices had increased at the rate of inflation over the past 5 years, income could potentially have increased for 9 out of the 10 areas (see graph 1 below) therefore potentially provided additional income. As a consequence of this, it is planned to address these issues further in the coming stage 2 of the review.

Graph 1 – Average Increase Comparison



7. Proposed Prices Increases

Using the above as a base, price increases are proposed in 8 of the 10 areas, via 153 fees which we are proposing to increase from 1st October. These increases range from £0.10p for additional parcels for personal searches, to £600 within pre-application fees. If demand remains unchanged, Thurrock services could potentially generate £37k for 2023/24, circa £74k full year effect.

The full list of suggested charges can be seen in Appendix 2.

8. Identifying Initial New Charges

As part of the review the following new fees were identified and are proposed to be implemented alongside the other increases:

- **Bikeability Level 3** – This will expand the service offering and promote the service beyond its current level, enabling schools to offer further development of skills, this can be advertised on Thurrock’s services to school’s website to encourage take up and could potentially generate income of £45 per pupil grant funding, plus £5 per pupil Thurrock charge. Currently it is estimated that 83 pupils can be trained in the next 6 months, providing an income generation of £4,150, however the more that are trained, the higher the yield; therefore, in future years the service will promote this in order to generate more income year on year.
- **Request for bus stop suspension** - This was previously capped at 2 days (£350), however whilst reviewing the fees, it was identified that in some instances bus stops were being decommissioned for 12+ months, it is now proposed that a monthly charge of £300 be applied. This should not only generate additional income but also incentivise third party utility companies to carry out the works in a timelier fashion, which will cause less disruption. A recent example of this is the latest suspension of Bus Stop 1 located at Grays station whereby C2C have requested to decommission Bus Stop 1 in order for them to carry out works to the station for approximately 14 months. This would equate to £4,200 of income compared to the previous capped charge of £350 giving us an increase of £3,850 for this one application.
- **Visitor Parking Vouchers** – Previously Thurrock gave the first 20x 5-hour visitor vouchers free of charge, this would equate to 100 hours of free parking, which is a value of £9 per household if charged at the existing 45p per 5 hours fee. As per previous years demand for visitor vouchers, the proposal is to no longer give the free 100 hours as this would generate additional income for the Council. This could potentially generate an additional £31,500 annually as previous year demand has shown a demand of 3,500 visitor vouchers.

In addition to the newly identified fees, other areas of potential opportunities and/or efficiencies will be explored subject to the preparation of full business cases/completion of ongoing work with other colleagues.

9. Continuous Improvement and Automation

The Business Development team have explored opportunities to improve the process of Fees and Charges and to date several improvements have been made which are:

- improved the calculations of the master data
- added change analysis
- identified statutory vs non-statutory and specifically those fees that can be increased.
- streamlined the communication process
- further engaged with services and finance officers
- raised the profile of Fees and Charges
- most importantly an increased understanding and in-depth knowledge of the complexities and legalities regarding Fees and Charges

The latest initiative is the implementation of a semi-automated workflow process for Fees and Charges via the Council's embedded 4me system. 4me is a CRM self-service change portal. This will enable the Council to attain further transparency, improve reporting functions and provide a superior audit trail whilst minimising the administration for Fees and Charges. This will allow for the automation of the approvals process and reduction in administrative duties when capturing updates from service areas within the annual process, via the use of an embedded approval hierarchy. The system will also capture any mid-year requests for amendments to fees and ensure they have gone through the correct approval process and generate reports and statistics whilst holding all this data securely in a central location minimising the risk of data corruption

10. Conclusions

As a result of the Fees and Charges review – Phase 1, it has been identified that there is potential to generate in excess of £114k per annum, this was established by the proposed increases in the material areas and the identification of new charges. Given this additional income in the initial phase 1 of the review it is reasonable to conclude that there is potential to generate further income as part of Phase 2 by reviewing the remainder of the Fees and Charges and identifying further opportunities to expand Thurrock's fees and charges offering.

11. Reasons for Recommendations

The setting of appropriate Fees and Charges will enable the Council to generate essential income for the funding of Council services. The approval of reviewed Fees and Charges will also ensure that the Council is competitive with other service providers and neighbouring councils. The ability to vary charges within financial year will enable services to more flexibly adapt to changing economic conditions.

The granting of delegated Director authority will only apply to legal or regulatory changes. If there is a need to alter fees during the financial year to enable the Council to better respond to commercial challenges, additional reports may be brought to Cabinet for approval.

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

Consultations will be progressed where there is a specific need. However, with regard to all other items, the proposals in this report do not affect any specific parts of the borough and have been seen via their retrospective Overview and Scrutiny committees and commentary is included within the Appendix of this report. Fees and Charges are known to customers before they make use of the services they are purchasing.

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

The changes in these Fees and Charges may impact the community; however, it must be taken into consideration that these price rises include inflation, and no profit will be made on the running of these discretionary services.

14. Implications

14.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jo Freeman**
Finance Manager

Thurrock's challenging financial position is set out in the opening paragraph of this report.

Budgeted income from fees and charges for 2023/24 is £7.462m. The income from fees and charges helps to manage demand and cover costs for providing services. Changes proposed to fees and charges set out in this report are anticipated to deliver an additional £0.114m in a full year. The total amount of income generated through fees and charges will depend on price as well as volume/service take up. Any changes to service delivery or use of assets will also impact the ability to realise the £0.114m in full.

14.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Principal Solicitor Contracts Team

Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 ("LGA 2003") and guidance issued in 2003 pursuant to section 96(3) of the Act, empowers the Council to charge for discretionary services related to a Council function if the recipient of the service has agreed to its provision.

Discretionary services are those services authorised by statute that the Council is not required to provide but may do so voluntarily (section 93(1)(a), LGA 2003).

However, the Council cannot charge for mandatory services or services it has a duty to provide. Further, the section 93 charging power does not apply where there is a power to charge for a particular service elsewhere in other legislation (section 93(2)(a), LGA 2003).

The section 93 charging power cannot be used to charge for a service if other legislation expressly excludes an authority from charging (section 93(2)(b), LGA 2003). For example, the Education Act 1944 prohibits a local authority from charging for basic education; this prevents section 93 being used to circumvent a local authority's statutory duty to provide basic education for free.

The Council can set the level of charge for each discretionary service. However proposed charges must have regard to the 2003 statutory guidance. [General Power Best Value \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/101224/2003-Statutory-Guidance-Local-Government-Act-2003-Section-93-Discretionary-Services.pdf)

Where the introduction of new fees and charges require consultation of affected service user this needs to be undertaken prior to the proposed changes taking effect and consultation responses considered as part of the decision-making process. Also, any relevant statutory provisions must be complied with prior to the introduction of new fees and charges.

The Council is under a general duty to secure that, from one financial year to the next, the income from charges for services does not exceed the costs of provision (section 93(3), LGA 2003). This approach allows a local authority greater flexibility to balance their accounts over a period of time and recognises the practical difficulties for a local authority in estimating the charges for a discretionary service at the outset.

The Council must offset any surplus or deficit in income because of any over or under recovery of charges when setting future charges for the discretionary service. This ensures that over time the income generated by the discretionary service equates to the cost of providing the service.

However, the Council does not have to recover the full costs of providing the service if there are policy reasons for limiting the charges in relation to a particular user of the service e.g., to the disabled, the unemployed or those in receipt of benefit. It must be able to justify its reasons for doing so.

Alongside the section 93 charging power, the general power of competence for local authorities under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (LA 2011) also confers a power on the Council to charge individuals for discretionary services. The section 1 charging power has similar requirements of the Section 93 LGA 2003 charging power as referred to above.

These charging powers are not intended to provide a new income stream for the Council and cannot be used to generate a profit. It does enable the Council to recover the costs of providing services or improvements to services that it might not otherwise have been able to justify providing or been able to provide. These powers also enable the Council to spread the cost of providing an existing service or a new discretionary service,

Taking the decision set the fees and charges is an executive function of the Council. The report to Cabinet supporting the recommended course of action should contain all the necessary and relevant information to enable members to take an informed decision on the proposed scheme and to satisfy themselves that the proposed charges are fair and reasonable.

In reviewing and setting fees and charges, the Council will need to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The issuing of a s114 Notice by the Council's Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) means by law the Council must stop all expenditure with the exception statutory services and pre-existing commitments. The recommendations set out in the report contribute to the financial recovery of the Council.

14.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring officer

The Council is responsible for promoting equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. Decisions on setting charges and fees are subject to Community Equality Impact Assessment process and the Council's wider

decision-making structures to determine impact on protected groups and related concessions that may be available. A CEIA has been completed to assess the impact of the changes detailed within this report.

Council's pay and display charges have been benchmarked to ensure they are either below or in line with other local authorities and are applied fairly and consistently across all car parks in Thurrock that are the subject of pay and display measures.

Council's overarching Parking Policy and Strategy and Parking Enforcement Strategy was the subject of consultation in November 2020, and each are the subject of Community Equality Impact Assessment. Feedback from this consultation and other individual projects is used to support ongoing monitoring and review of CEIA and the implementation of the related policy and strategies.

14.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health Inequalities, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder and Impact on Looked After Children

Not applicable

15. 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

16. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges – Policy.
- Appendix 2 – Fees and Charges - Schedule of Material Areas - Proposed charges.
- Appendix 3a – Additional Data - Benchmarking Summary.
- Appendix 3b – Additional Data - Resident Parking Permit Comparison.
- Appendix 3c – Additional Data - Building Control Comparison.
- *Appendix 4 – This is not included in this report as this will form the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees & meetings*
- Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary.

Report of

Jonathan Wilson

Assistant Director – Finance

Fees and Charges Policy

POLICY AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE
SETTING OF
FEES AND CHARGES ACROSS
THURROCK COUNCIL

Contents

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1 BACKGROUND

Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- highlight the financial context of the Council
- explain why the Council levies fees and charges and factors that must be considered
- propose a default approach to charging
- highlight the categories of charging and the legal basis of charging
- set out roles and responsibilities
- clarify the Council's commercial and pricing principles
- advise on the timetable for reviews
- note key administration issues
- set out the basis for charging and cost calculation

Financial Context

Thurrock's financial position is exceptionally challenging as can be seen from the table below which highlights that 35.2% of its 2023/24 budget is financed by an indicative capitalisation direction. A non recurrent form of potential exceptional funding which has to be replaced by asset or investment sales or revenue budget reductions (expenditure) or increase (income)

Table 1 – Council Income 2023/24

Budget	£m	£m	%
Local Income		181	35.4
Business Rates	47		
Income	52*		
Council Tax	82		
Capitalisation Direction		180	35.2
Specific Grants		132	25.8
Government Grants		11	2.2
Collection Funds		7	1.4
Total		511	100.00

Why the Council Charges for Services

The level of funding Councils receive from Government through core grants has steadily declined and there is an increasing reliance on local income sources – council tax, business rates and other income being key in this.

Many Local Authorities have recognised the importance of income generation in addressing the financial challenges with which they are now faced. Fees and charges form one part of the other income, and while relatively small, are still a vital source of funding for Councils, enabling them to balance their budgets. and by doing so enable important local services to be sustained and provided. As can be seen from Table 1 this is especially the case for Thurrock with its current dependence on the capitalisation direction which must be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

- Of this £52m £7.5m comes from fees and charges

In addition fees and charges:

- are an important source of income providing vital funds to deliver essential public services
- assist in achieving the Council's objectives for better outcomes for residents
- can be used as a tool to manage demand or influence behaviour, through encouraging/discouraging the use of services and/or the patterns of use of services to help or benefit residents
- are an important driver of efficiency as an appropriate and strategic approach to fees and charges requires the Council to have a robust understanding of the costs of the services it provides, as well as local economic and market factors.
- ensure that users pay directly for some, or all of the costs as opposed to taxpayers in general subsidising individual users which can have consequences for the funding of services in general, and/or cause levels of taxation to be higher than they would otherwise be.

Factors to be Considered when Setting Fees and Charges

The following considerations are to be observed by the Council in setting fees and charges for the services that it provides:

- some categories of income will be influenced by wider factors such as the general level of economic activity
- the level and structure of charges already being made by the Council may limit the potential to generate additional income
- increasing fees and charges may have a regressive effect
- public or commercial competitors may develop resentment if the Council has a monopoly on providing the service. Compliance with this policy will enable assurance to be provided that fees and charges have been properly calculated
- end users may feel as if they are being subjected to double taxation, namely through Council Tax (which is visibly high) and the additional charge in question. This is a not infrequent misconception and users can be advised more fully
- the risk to the Council of making a loss must be considered when deciding whether the service should be provided
- the long-term risk of not providing a service, especially if that service is a preventative service must be considered. For example, would this result in greater costs or increased risk in the medium to long term if we stopped providing this service? Or is there a greater risk of harm or reputational damage if the Council does not provide a service which later results in a more costly resolution.

Policy Proposal

To ensure the best possible value for money and establish the fairest possible approach to charging and cost recovery, this Policy proposes that **charges for discretionary services will be set in order to fully recover their costs**, unless there is a specific decision on the part of the Cabinet to subsidise the service provision for policy reasons.

At the same time the Council will aim to support vulnerable groups as far as it can, encourage equal access and will for all charges give due consideration to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 by considering the impact on individuals/groups who share a protected characteristic.

Categories of Charges that the Council May Apply

As with all Local Authorities Thurrock has different types of fees and charges:

- **Charges set by statute law which are fully outside the Council's control** - These are set by Government or in line with statutory guidance. These include planning and building control applications, some adult social care services, such as residential care.
- **Charges set by statute law where the amount charged must be within certain parameters** - These are set by Government or in line with statutory guidance.
- **Charges that are fully within the Council's control in determining the amount that should be charged** – These are Discretionary charges that are fully or partially within the Council's control in determining the amount that should be charged. These are services that the Council is not mandated or under a duty to provide but that instead chooses to provide for the benefit of the residents.

Legal Basis

The Council will ensure that any charge that is implemented for the services that it provides will meet the current legal requirements.

As outlined above, the legal basis for implementing a fee or charge is arrived at either through a specific statutory legislation relating to the particular service, or through the employing of the Council's discretionary powers under the Localism Act 2011 or s93(1) Local Government Act 2003. Where a service specific legislation does not empower charging then the Council can rely on the above legislation to charge for discretionary services.

Additional guidance will be sought with regard to the specific requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and s93(1) Local Government Act 2003, and the following summarises the main limitations which will be taken into consideration before introducing or amending a charge when the Council employs its powers to charge for a discretionary service:

- there must not be a legal restriction on charging.
- the charging powers only apply to discretionary services against which there is no pre-existing power to charge
- if the power is to be used to operate a service commercially on a traded basis then it must be provided through a UK registered company or cooperative.
- charges for discretionary services not operated commercially must be set so that income does not exceed the cost of provision. This must be calculated, in taking one financial year with the next, the income from discretionary charges must not exceed the cost of provision. The intention of the power is not that local authorities make a profit, rather that they are able to recover their costs.
- in setting discretionary charges, the function may charge only some service users and may make different charges to different groups of service users, provided that the cost recovery limitation is observed.
- the service user must have agreed to the charge before it can be applied. Where charges are to be collected after services have been provided it is important that evidence of customer consent is obtained, otherwise any outstanding debt may be unenforceable. This can be done by the display of signs or through agreements.
- finally, an important point to note with regard to the powers to charge and trade is that whilst these are limited to discretionary services, where a service is being provided under statutorily defined limits, any enhanced provision beyond statutory requirements could be considered to be discretionary and can therefore be charged for in line with the requirements of this policy

This policy will be effective from July 2023 following approval from Cabinet

2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Service managers are responsible for ensuring fees are set in accordance with this Policy. For reviews to be effective, managers will need to consider relevant market information e.g. changes in legislation, patterns of service use, benchmarking data, price sensitivity, or opportunities to introduce or extend charges. It is important that areas not currently charged for (but which could potentially be) are also considered.

Service managers must review all charges for which they are responsible for on at least an annual basis as part of the budget process. There must be continuous and full engagement with Finance and Business Development teams throughout this process.

Directors should ensure that their service area has completed this task prior to the completion of the Council's annual fees and charges setting process.

Directors should ensure that their service area has completed this task prior to the completion of the Council's annual fees and charges setting process:

- **Analyse** – service has reviewed and identified new charges and amended existing charges, including both commercial and statutory charges.
- **Engage** - engaged and sought support from key stakeholders for proposed changes.
- **Action** – incorporated the proposed charges into the planned budgets for the coming year and the fees and charges process.
- **Communicate** – communicated the proposals at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny meetings.
- **Approve** - Changes to be approved on an ongoing basis as necessary or as part of the budget setting process, then via all appropriate committees and boards as per the timeline in table 3, section 4.

3 CHARGES – CATEGORIES, COMMERCIAL AND PRICING PRINCIPLES

3.1 Charging Categories

It is proposed that fees and charges for discretionary services as a default are set in order to **fully recover the cost of delivery**, unless there is a specific decision by Cabinet to subsidise the service provision for policy reasons.

All charges should be identified as belonging to one of the categories in Table 2 below. In determining the appropriate charging category proper consideration should be given to the wider equalities implications which may be involved affecting accessibility of all groups to Council services.

Table 2 - Approaches to fees and charges and corresponding strategic objectives

Approach	Objective
1. Full cost recovery	The Council wishes to make the service generally available, but there is no policy rationale for providing a subsidy from general taxation. This Policy proposes that full cost recovery is the default approach to establishing fees and charges. Charging for discretionary services will fall into this category unless otherwise agreed.
2. Full cost recovery with concessionary discounts	The Council wishes to make the service generally available and is prepared to subsidise the service to ensure priority groups have access to the service, and/or other Council priority objectives are met
3. Subsidised	The Council wishes to make the service widely accessible and therefore provides a subsidy from general taxation, however users of the service are expected to make some contribution to the cost.
4. Nominal	The Council's Policy is to make the service fully available and "free at the point of delivery". The service is funded from general taxation
5. Statutory	Charges are set in line with legal obligations and appropriate legislation.

3.2. Commercial Charging Principles

The Commercial Charging Principles establish the Council's key philosophies in relation to charging, these principles should be adhered to by all. Any deviations from the charging principles set out will require appropriate approval. Such principles are reflected in any local, service-based charging policy. This policy sets out several principles that are considered to be those which are most relevant. It should be noted that these principles will generally apply to services for which the Council has discretion over the level of charging rather than services where charging is prevented or where charges are required to be set within statutory limits.

The standard principles that will be applied to all fees and charges set by the Council will be as follows:

- fees and charges will be set to recover the full cost and to maximise income streams, where this is likely to lead to a higher yield.
- costs of any subsidies provided for provision of services must be clearly identified and reviewed as part of the budget setting process and minimised.
- where possible payment will be sought in advance of the supply of goods or services using the most appropriate payment channels.
- any new charges must be developed in the context of the council's strategic agenda
- the impact of new charges must be worked through in sufficient detail prior to implementation
- the development of new charges must follow the council process set out in this Policy

- benchmarking will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed level of fees and charges can be justified against other, similar providers and/or Authorities.
- fees and charges will be subject to at least an annual review in accordance with the agreed corporate timeline and budget setting timetable.
- fees and charges will be subject to a local equalities impact assessments where appropriate.

If a local service seeks approval to deviate from these principles, a local policy statement will be prepared, setting out the basis and reason for any such variations. This will include an equalities impact assessment covering the fees and charges, the policy, in each local service area and the financial impact of the proposal. This will then allow the option to be fully considered.

3.3 Pricing Principles

Rather than a blanket increase across all service lines, when considering the pricing strategy some key questions must be considered:

- where can we apply a tiered/premium pricing structure
- how sensitive are customers to price (are there areas where a price freeze is relevant)
- what new charges might we want to introduce for this financial year
- how do our charges compare to neighbouring boroughs and private sector competitors (particularly in those instances where customers have choice)
- how can we influence channel shift
- can we set charges to recover costs
- what do our competitors charge
- how sensitive is demand to price
- statutory services may have discretionary elements that we can influence.
- do we take deposits, charge cancellation fees, and charge an admin fee for duplicate services (e.g., lost certificates)
- how do proposed price increase compare to inflation which must be the minimum starting point

3.4 Charging Exemptions

All services provided by the Council will be charged for unless prevented by statute, or detailed as exempt, evidence of this should be provided during the annual fees and charges process.

4. Timetable

The Council must keep its schedule of fees and charges under regular review to ensure the most appropriate fees and charges are applied.

All charges and the scope for charging will be reviewed at least annually within the service area, though charges within the same service area can be reviewed at additional times. All reviews will include those services which could be charged for, but which are currently provided free of charge and all reviews will be undertaken in accordance with the policy.

Table 3 – Example of Committee and Board Timeline

Committee	Meeting Date	Report Submission	O&S Imps Submission Deadline	ICB	ICB Report Submission	SLT	SLT report Submission	Commercial & Budget Sign Off
Cabinet (February)	08/02/23	26/01/23	N/A	20/01/23	15/01/23	11/01/23	05/01/23	02/01/23
Housing O&S	22/11/22	09/11/22	01/11/22			02/11/22	27/10/22	22/10/22
Cleaner, Greener, Safer O&S	08/11/22	25/10/22	18/10/22			19/10/22	13/10/22	07/10/22
Children's O&S	17/11/22	03/11/22	27/10/22			26/10/22	20/10/22	15/10/22
Health & Well-being O&S	03/11/22	20/10/22	12/10/22			12/10/22	06/10/22	02/10/22
Planning, Transport & Regen O&S	06/12/22	21/11/22	10/11/22			16/11/22	10/11/22	05/11/22
Corporate O&S	01/12/22	17/11/22	07/11/22			13/11/22	07/11/22	03/10/22

**Example 22/23 dates for illustrative purposes only – will be amended when 2023/24 timetable issued*

5. Administration

Charges should be simple to understand and to administer. They should be easily located by service users through the Council's website, through any other form of literature provided, or directly from Council services. Reasonable notice should be given to service users before any new or revised charges are implemented. Methods of payment should be flexible, convenient and consider the needs of those on low income and people's ability to pay. The easier it is to pay, the more likely it is that payment will be made. Consideration should be given to:

- payment in advance: which should be the preferred means of recovery if possible
- frequency of payment: having regard to the budgetary patterns of those reliant on benefits or low incomes
- format of payment: including alternatives to cash. The costs of collection should be evaluated. Potentially, they may make the charging proposal uneconomic or require charges to be raised further. Costs of collection must be identified and budgeted for
- the corporate charging policy will need to follow corporate and service policy and financial procedure rules regarding the collectability of the income and debt recovery strategy.

A schedule of all fees and charges is managed and supporting documentation is maintained by the Business Development Team. These schedules include, identified separately:

- any charges that are Statutory
- the increase/decrease from the previous year
- the charge categorisation of that fee
- which committee this fee relates to and
- the schedule records the date of the last review.

The date of any relevant political decision and the minutes of that Committee are also made available alongside the schedule.

6. CHARGING AND COST CALCULATION

Adopting a method of full cost recovery means that the total cost of delivery, including the appropriate level of VAT, together with an apportionment of department and corporate overheads is calculated and charged to the service user. It involves analysing the whole process and ensuring that all the stages involved are considered

Table 4: Costs of Provision to Inform Fees and Charges

1. Employment costs

- Costs of staff who deliver the service
- Salary plus all other on-costs to employer (e.g. pension)
- Allocation of pension back-funding

2. Departmental costs

- Costs incurred by the Department to deliver the service, for example:
 - Travel and distribution costs incurred
 - Specialised equipment required
 - Administration and management at the Departmental level
 - Insurance costs paid at the Departmental level
 - Advertising and marketing costs paid at the Departmental level

3. Corporate costs and overheads

- Costs incurred by other corporate services to ensure the service is provided, including:
 - Accommodation, IT and Insurance
 - Back office support services such as Treasury and Finance, Human Resources, Legal, Business Operations (e.g. payroll, accounts payable)
 - Democratic costs (e.g. costs of democratic decision-making/governance processes relevant to the service, if and as appropriate)
 - Insurance costs paid corporately
 - Marketing and advertising costs paid at the corporate level

4. Financial costs

- Depreciation
- Costs of capital
- Interest on loans
- Costs of payment collection fees
- Debt collection and bad debt write-off

Appendix 2 - Schedule of Material

Material areas	Name of Fee or Charge (Inceasable)	Inceasable	Mid Year Review Increases			
			Current 23/24 Charge	Proposed (MYR) Charge	Proposed Incr. £	Proposed Incr. %
Development Management			* All amounts are rounded			
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - written only	Y	£ 69.50	£ 76.00	+ £6.50	+ 9.35%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- written with 1/2 hour meeting	Y	£ 111.00	£ 120.00	+ £9.00	+ 8.11%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- proposales in conservation areas/works to listed building inc. 1/2 hour meeting (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder- single dwelling (replacement and residential annexe) inc. 1/2 hour meeting	Y	£ 209.00	£ 225.00	+ £16.00	+ 7.66%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - single dwelling (replacement or residential annexe) in conservation are or listed building, inc. 1/2 hour meeting (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 489.00	£ 530.00	+ £41.00	+ 8.38%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Householder - Alterations to listed building (whether residential or commercial) inc/ 1/2 hour meeting, (with planning officer and conservation officer)	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Minor development inc. 1 hour meeting	Y	£ 625.00	£ 645.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.20%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 10-49 Units	Y	£ 2,100.00	£ 2,300.00	+ £200.00	+ 9.52%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 50-99 Units	Y	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,300.00	+ £300.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 100-499 Units	Y	£ 4,800.00	£ 5,300.00	+ £500.00	+ 10.42%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Major development - 500+ Units	Y	£ 6,000.00	£ 6,600.00	+ £600.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 1,000 to 4,999 sq.m	Y	£ 2,100.00	£ 2,300.00	+ £200.00	+ 9.52%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 5,000 to 9,999 sq.m	Y	£ 3,000.00	£ 3,300.00	+ £300.00	+ 10.00%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 10,000 to 29,999 sq.m	Y	£ 4,800.00	£ 5,300.00	+ £500.00	+ 10.42%
Development Management	Pre application fees - Non-residential Major schemes based on floorspace - 30,000+ sq.m	Y	£ 6,000.00	£ 6,600.00	+ £600.00	+ 10.00%
Environment Enforcement						
Environment Enforcement	Abandoned Vehicles - Administration charge for removal of vehicle from private property when directed by Management company or Private Landowner	Y	£ 100.00	£ 112.00	+ £12.00	+ 12.00%
Burials & Cemeteries						
Burials & Cemeteries	The following Burial charges are applicable to residents of the Borough of Thurrock. Non Residents are required to pay double the Burial fees set out below, also included is the charge for non residents aged 5 and under.					
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Lawn Section	Y	£ 930.00	£ 990.00	+ £60.00	+ 6.45%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Traditional grave where available	Y	£ 1,900.00	£ 2,025.00	+ £125.00	+ 6.58%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - In a grave - Person aged 16 year and over	Y	£ 755.00	£ 820.00	+ £65.00	+ 8.61%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - In a grave - Cremated remains in full size grave	Y	£ 381.00	£ 408.00	+ £27.00	+ 7.09%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Additional interment of ashes and replacement plaque for further 7 years where original subscription has: Less than 4 years to run	Y	£ 264.00	£ 282.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.82%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Additional interment of ashes and replacement plaque for further 7 years where original subscription has: More than 4 years to run	Y	£ 187.00	£ 201.00	+ £14.00	+ 7.49%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Cremated Remains Section - Exclusive Right of Burial for a forty year period	Y	£ 390.00	£ 420.00	+ £30.00	+ 7.69%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Cremated Remains Section - Interment of Ashes	Y	£ 381.00	£ 414.00	+ £33.00	+ 8.66%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Erection of memorial plaque only for 7 years (no ashes to inter)	Y	£ 225.00	£ 243.00	+ £18.00	+ 8.00%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Includes plaque for 7 years & loose interment of ashes	Y	£ 291.00	£ 309.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.19%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Renewal of 7 year subscription - With existing plaque	Y	£ 148.00	£ 160.00	+ £12.00	+ 8.11%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 Memorial Gardens Section - Renewal of 7 year subscription - With replacement plaque	Y	£ 225.00	£ 243.00	+ £18.00	+ 8.00%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 2 - Kerb Plaque - replacement	Y	£ 87.00	£ 95.00	+ £8.00	+ 9.20%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - For the right to erect or place on a grave in respect of which an exclusive right of burial has not been granted: a tablet not exceeding 20' x 18' x 6' base	Y	£ 187.00	£ 201.00	+ £14.00	+ 7.49%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - The fees indicated for Part 3 include the first inscription, for each inscription after the first	Y	£ 93.00	£ 100.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.53%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - Permit for Lawn Grave Memorial	Y	£ 216.00	£ 231.00	+ £15.00	+ 6.94%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Monuments, Gravestones, Tablets & Monumental Inscriptions - Permit for Traditional Grave Memorial	Y	£ 264.00	£ 282.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.82%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 3 Other Burial Fees - Permit to Work on a Headstone	Y	£ 89.00	£ 96.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.87%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Additional Plaque	Y	£ 206.00	£ 225.00	+ £19.00	+ 9.22%

Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Memorial bench	Y	£ 1,970.00	£ 2,150.00	+ £180.00	+ 9.14%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 5 Other Burial Fees - Memorial tree (New trees no longer available) Interment of second set of ashes for existing memorial trees only	Y	£ 381.00	£ 408.00	+ £27.00	+ 7.09%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Transfer of grant of exclusive right of burial fee for registering the transfer and endorsing the deed	Y	£ 89.00	£ 96.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.87%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Transfer of grant of exclusive burial where a Statutory Declaration is required	Y	£ 120.00	£ 129.00	+ £9.00	+ 7.50%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 4 Other Burial Fees - Search Fees for Historical records	Y	£ 28.50	£ 32.00	+ £3.50	+ 12.28%
Burials & Cemeteries	Burial Grounds - Part 1 Interment - Exclusive right of Burial - In a full size grave-Muslim grave where available	Y	£ 1,900.00	£ 2,025.00	+ £125.00	+ 6.58%
Place Support Services						
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - commercial	Y	£ 55.00	£ 58.50	+ £3.50	+ 6.36%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - personal search	Y	£ 10.00	£ 10.10	+ £0.10	+ 1.00%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Additional parcel - residential	Y	£ 42.00	£ 45.00	+ £3.00	+ 7.14%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Cancellation fee for Con29 search	Y	£ 29.00	£ 30.00	+ £1.00	+ 3.45%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Charges for a copy of the local land charges search	Y	£ 23.00	£ 25.00	+ £2.00	+ 8.70%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Con290 - Per question	Y	£ 41.00	£ 44.00	+ £3.00	+ 7.32%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Copy of building regulation decision notice	Y	£ 16.00	£ 18.40	+ £2.40	+ 15.00%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Electronic Format - Con29R Search - commercial	Y	£ 216.00	£ 231.00	+ £15.00	+ 6.94%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Electronic Format - Con29R Search - residential	Y	£ 159.00	£ 170.00	+ £11.00	+ 6.92%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Form LLC1 Only	Y	£ 46.00	£ 48.50	+ £2.50	+ 5.43%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Assisted Personal Search (ranged based on no. questions)	Y	£33 - £44	£40 - £50	+ £6-7	+ 16.88%*
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Expedited Search	Y	£ 82.00	£ 87.00	+ £5.00	+ 6.10%
Place Support Services	Local Land Charges - Expedited Residential search including Con 29 (Cannot include extra CON290 questions)	Y	£ 285.00	£ 303.00	+ £18.00	+ 6.32%
Registrar						
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Deposit for all ceremonies at Approved premises	Y	£ 110.00	£ 124.00	+ £14.00	+ 12.73%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Re-Schedule of Appointment/ Ceremony	Y	£ 40.00	£ 43.50	+ £3.50	+ 8.75%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration -Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 590.00	£ 610.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.39%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration -Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Saturday)	Y	£ 645.00	£ 665.00	+ £20.00	+ 3.10%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration -Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership (Sunday, Bank or Public Holiday)	Y	£ 700.00	£ 760.00	+ £60.00	+ 8.57%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration -Fees for superintendent Registrar attendance at Register Office for Naming Ceremonies/ Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) Saturday	Y	£ 390.00	£ 430.00	+ £40.00	+ 10.26%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 355.00	£ 384.00	+ £29.00	+ 8.17%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Saturday)	Y	£ 410.00	£ 445.00	+ £35.00	+ 8.54%
Registrar	Residents Services - Fees for Superintendent Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) (Sunday)	Y	£ 465.00	£ 470.00	+ £5.00	+ 1.08%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Monday to Friday)	Y	£ 288.00	£ 330.00	+ £42.00	+ 14.58%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Saturday PM)	Y	£ 420.00	£ 490.00	+ £70.00	+ 16.67%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre (Saturday AM)	Y	£ 350.00	£ 393.00	+ £43.00	+ 12.29%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Postage and Packing Charge (1st Class Recorded)	Y	£ 3.60	£ 4.40	+ £0.80	+ 22.22%
Registrar	Residents Services - Registration - Private Citizenship Ceremony (Monday to Saturday)	Y	£ 200.00	£ 216.00	+ £16.00	+ 8.00%
Registrar	Resident Services - Registration - Postage and Packing Charge (Special Delivery 24hr Guaranteed)	Y	£ 10.00	£ 11.60	+ £1.60	+ 16.00%
Registrar	Administration Charge to complete PD2 / Proof of Life Confirmation forms	Y	£ 40.00	£ 44.50	+ £4.50	+ 11.25%
On Street Car Parking						
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - Per Month thereof	Y	£ 45.00	£ 50.00	+ £5.00	+ 11.11%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - Per year	Y	£ 400.00	£ 450.00	+ £50.00	+ 12.50%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Business Permits - for 6 months	Y	£ 230.00	£ 249.00	+ £19.00	+ 8.26%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - NHS Permits	Y	£ 120.00	£ 151.00	+ £31.00	+ 25.83%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Non Commuter Car Parks / On Street Long Stay Only	Y	£ 500.00	£ 635.00	+ £135.00	+ 27.00%

On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - Annual	Y	£ 200.00	£ 207.00	+ £7.00	+ 3.50%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 6 month	Y	£ 100.00	£ 110.00	+ £10.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 3 month	Y	£ 70.00	£ 77.00	+ £7.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking permits - Contractor permits - 1 month	Y	£ 50.00	£ 55.00	+ £5.00	+ 10.00%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Operational Permits	Y	£ 130.00	£ 149.00	+ £19.00	+ 14.62%
On Street Car Parking	Parking Permits - Residents Permits - Per year - 3rd Permit per Household	Y	£ 15.00	£ 75.00	N/A	N/A
On Street Car Parking	Tempory Permit	Y	£ 13.00	£ 13.40	+ £0.40	+ 3.08%
On Street Car Parking	Annual Country Park Parking Season Pass - Up to 3 hours	Y	£ 75.00	£ 82.00	+ £7.00	+ 9.33%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre						
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - Club Use of Site - Grangewaters Working Newfoundlands (Per dog, per visit)	Y	£ 6.50	£ 6.80	+ £0.30	+ 4.62%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 2 children (Full day, 4 sessions)	Y	£ 346.00	£ 381.00	+ £35.00	+ 10.12%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 2 children (Half day, 2 sessions)	Y	£ 197.00	£ 217.00	+ £20.00	+ 10.15%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Full day, 4 sessions)	Y	£ 359.00	£ 396.00	+ £37.00	+ 10.31%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Half day, 2 sessions)	Y	£ 215.00	£ 237.00	+ £22.00	+ 10.23%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters VIP offer - Up to 2 adults and 4 children (Single session)	Y	£ 122.00	£ 134.00	+ £12.00	+ 9.84%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters - School Holiday Periods Only - Activity Sessions (per session per person charge)	Y	£ 10.00	£ 11.00	+ £1.00	+ 10.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Accommodation only (per person per night)	Y	£ 20.00	£ 22.50	+ £2.50	+ 12.50%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Training Lodge / Dining Cabins - Full Day Charge	Y	£ 89.00	£ 92.00	+ £3.00	+ 3.37%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Training Lodge / Dining Cabins - Half Day Charge	Y	£ 49.00	£ 50.00	+ £1.00	+ 2.04%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Celebration Groups up to 10 people - Single Activity	Y	£ 175.00	£ 189.00	+ £14.00	+ 8.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Celebration Groups up to 10 people - Double Activity	Y	£ 310.00	£ 336.00	+ £26.00	+ 8.39%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 1.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 58.00	£ 62.50	+ £4.50	+ 7.76%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 3 Hour Session	Y	£ 100.00	£ 107.00	+ £7.00	+ 7.00%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - First Person - 4.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 126.00	£ 140.00	+ £14.00	+ 11.11%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 1.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 31.50	£ 34.00	+ £2.50	+ 7.94%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 3 Hour Session	Y	£ 50.50	£ 56.00	+ £5.50	+ 10.89%
Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre	Learning and Universal Outcomes - Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre - Private Tuition - Additional Person - 4.5 Hour Session	Y	£ 68.50	£ 76.00	+ £7.50	+ 10.95%
Thameside Complex						
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Performance Surcharge	Y	£ 205.00	£ 243.00	+ £38.00	+ 18.53%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Room Hire - Third Floor Foyer Monday to Saturday only	Y	£ 20.00	£ 22.00	+ £2.00	+ 10.00%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Gallery Booking Deposit	Y	£ 25.50	£ 30.50	+ £5.00	+ 19.61%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Surcharge for staff and bar with Foyer booking	Y	£ 55.00	£ 61.00	+ £6.00	+ 10.92%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Extra Staff - For technical or Front of house work. Charged per hour.	Y	£ 24.00	£ 26.00	+ £2.00	+ 8.33%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Radio Microphone System Price per 4 microphones	Y	£ 31.00	£ 35.00	+ £4.00	+ 12.90%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Museum as additional dressing rooms - Only available after museum closing times 5pm-11pm	Y	£ 74.00	£ 82.00	+ £8.00	+ 10.81%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Digital Cinema Projector	Y	£ 71.00	£ 80.00	+ £9.00	+ 12.68%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Set up and Remove Stage in Foyer	Y	£ 71.00	£ 80.00	+ £9.00	+ 12.68%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Standard block 18:00 to 23:00	Y	£ 81.50	£ 87.00	+ £5.50	+ 6.75%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Standard Fee per hour between 09:00 to 18:00	Y	£ 351.00	£ 396.00	+ £45.00	+ 12.82%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Off Peak Tariff - Commercial Organisations Mondays and Tuesdays in January, February and August only. Additional hour after 23:00	Y	£ 186.00	£ 210.00	+ £24.00	+ 12.90%

Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period 18.00 to 23.00 - Saturday - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 845.00	£ 950.00	+ £105.00	+ 12.43%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period per additional hour after 11pm Mon-Thurs - 1) Thurrock Council services and DFE funded schools and academies	Y	£ 155.00	£ 174.00	+ £19.00	+ 12.26%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges - Standard fee Period per additional hour after 11pm Mon-Thurs - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 186.00	£ 210.00	+ £24.00	+ 12.90%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges -Standard fee per hour 08.00 to 18.00 - Saturday - 1) Thurrock Council services and DFE funded schools and academies	Y	£ 110.00	£ 124.00	+ £14.00	+ 12.73%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 1 - Thurrock based non profit organisations, members of Thurrock Arts Council and Thurrock Schools and Colleges -Standard fee per hour 08.00 to 18.00 - Saturday - 2) Thurrock based non-profit organisations and members of Thurrock Arts Council	Y	£ 131.00	£ 148.00	+ £17.00	+ 12.98%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Monday to Thursday	Y	£ 270.00	£ 303.00	+ £33.00	+ 12.22%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Saturday	Y	£ 441.00	£ 495.00	+ £54.00	+ 12.24%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Friday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 206.00	£ 231.00	+ £25.00	+ 12.14%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Monday to Thursday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 198.00	£ 225.00	+ £27.00	+ 13.64%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Saturday per hour 08.00 to 18.00	Y	£ 226.00	£ 255.00	+ £29.00	+ 12.83%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Friday	Y	£ 1,160.00	£ 1,310.00	+ £150.00	+ 12.93%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Saturday	Y	£ 1,580.00	£ 1,780.00	+ £200.00	+ 12.66%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Friday	Y	£ 297.00	£ 336.00	+ £39.00	+ 13.13%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Additional hours after 23.00 - Sunday	Y	£ 441.00	£ 495.00	+ £54.00	+ 12.24%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Standard Fee per period - 18.00 to 23.00 - Monday to Thursday	Y	£ 725.00	£ 820.00	+ £95.00	+ 13.10%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Services - Thameside Theatre and Central Complex - Tariff 3 - Commercial organisations - Sunday per hour 09.00 to 23.00	Y	£ 267.00	£ 300.00	+ £33.00	+ 12.36%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Bronze Technical Package	Y	£ 107.00	£ 121.00	+ £14.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Silver Technical Package	Y	£ 150.00	£ 169.00	+ £19.00	+ 12.67%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Gold Technical Package	Y	£ 172.00	£ 194.00	+ £22.00	+ 12.79%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Platinum Technical Package	Y	£ 321.00	£ 363.00	+ £42.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Foyer Party Package	Y	£ 321.00	£ 363.00	+ £42.00	+ 13.08%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Outdoor events Package	Y	£ 1,030.00	£ 1,160.00	+ £130.00	+ 12.62%
Thameside Complex	Cultural Service - Thameside Theatre - Indoor Events Package	Y	£ 1,030.00	£ 1,160.00	+ £130.00	+ 12.62%

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F&C 22/23 - Benchmarking	Thurrock	Havering	Southend	Basildon	LBB	Medway
	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees	Fees
Service Categories	1,099	1,397	1,518	1,318	1,209	1,464
Advertising	1	4	-	-	-	-
Bereavement Services	28	214	218	51	61	220
Commercial Matters/ Properties	12	-	-	-	-	-
Culture, Parks & Outdoor Spaces	224	260	283	512	364	315
Allotments	2	1	8	8	2	5
Events/ Hiring	5	164	64	185	99	100
Grounds Maintenance	1	16	-	10	4	1
Heritage	8	-	-	-	124	51
Library Services	81	58	57	-	44	19
Parks	20	4	22	109	44	-
Sports & Leisure	44	17	132	69	47	65
Theatre	63	-	-	131	-	74
Environmental Health	115	119	5	9	46	20
Catering	1	4	-	-	-	-
Environmental Enforcement	36	38	-	-	14	-
Environmental Protection	78	77	5	9	32	20
Highways	63	21	126	-	50	46
Housing	68	13	24	9	41	36
General Housing	21	1	-	-	34	-
HMO	24	9	-	7	7	-
Housing Offences	9	-	-	2	-	-
Private Housing	13	3	24	-	-	36
Sheltered Housing	1	-	-	-	-	-
Legal Services	75	53	-	86	-	-
Regulatory	410	616	690	628	583	529
Building Control	1	27	135	110	26	-
Licensing	191	211	266	241	177	180
Local Land Charges	22	48	8	20	12	73
Planning	59	44	32	152	40	85
Parking	38	108	157	40	299	84
Public Protection	51	112	25	10	4	79
Registrars	48	66	67	55	25	28
Services for Adults	46	28	9	-	17	44
Adult Education	17	-	-	-	-	44
Adult Social Care	20	19	9	-	6	-
Court Protection	9	9	-	-	11	-
Services for Children	22	41	-	-	5	-
Childcare	19	-	-	-	5	-
Music Services	3	41	-	-	-	-
Transport	30	-	15	-	16	69
Waste	5	28	12	8	26	6
Unique Service Categories (Aggregated into service areas)			136	15	-	179
Archives	-	-	-	-	-	31
Exhibition Spaces	-	-	47	-	-	-
Interpretation Services	-	-	-	-	-	118
Photography/ Filming	-	-	11	15	-	-
Pier & Foreshore	-	-	66	-	-	30
Education	-	-	12	-	-	-

Sources shown in 'Summaries' tab

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Residents Permits 22/23	1st	2nd	3rd	Rank	% > TC
Thurrock (Agreed 23/24)	£15	£15	£15	1st	0%
Southend	£15	£25	£50	2nd	0%
Chelmsford	£26	£26	£26	3rd	73%
Medway	£31	£31	£31	4th	107%
Basildon	£34	£34	£34	5th	123%
Brentwood	£34	£34	£34	6th	123%
Havering	£35	£60	£85	7th	133%
Rochford	£50	£50	£50	8th	233%
Castle Point	£52	£52	£52	9th	247%
Maldon	£54	£54	£54	10th	260%
<i>Ranking based off 1st permit pricing</i>					

Residents Permits	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th+
Barking & Dagenham	Table - Emissions (CO2) g/km				
Band 1: 0 to 50*	£0 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 2: 50 to 100	£18 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 3: 101 to 140	£36 - Up to 2		£45	£54	£63
Band 4: 141 to 160	£45 - Up to 2		£56.25	£67.50	£78.75
Band 5: 161 to 180	£51 - Up to 2		£63.75	£76.50	£89.25
Band 6: 181 to 255	£80 - Up to 2		£100	£120	£140
Band 7: Over 256	£140 - Up to 2		£175	£210	£245
<i>* Hybrid or Electric vehicle</i>					

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Fee Comparison Full Plans 2023/24	< 30sqm	2 Storey	Loft ext.	Rank
Castle Point	£656	£754 (£806 between 40 and 100sqm)	£718	1st
Brentwood	£667	£778 (£865 between 40 and 100sqm)	£643	2nd
Thurrock	£694	£815	£676	3rd
Colchester	£737	£760 (£1003 between 40 and 100sqm)	£832	4th
Southend	£745	£902 (£980 between 30 and 100sqm)	£824	5th
Epping	£745	£745 (£1170 between 40 and 100sqm)	£790	6th
Havering	£754	£1,039	£754	7th
<i>Ranking based off cheapest < 30sqm cost</i>				

Fee Comparison Building Notice 2023/24	< 30sqm	2 Storey	Loft ext.	Rank
Castle Point	£720	£804 (£828 between 40 and 100sqm)	£758	1st
Thurrock	£729	£885	£729	2nd
Brentwood	£735	£855 (£951 between 40 and 100sqm)	£707	3rd
Epping	£745	£745 (£1170 between 40 and 100sqm)	£790	4th
Havering	£754	£1,039	£754	5th
Colchester	£767	£813 (1034 between 40 and 100sqm)	£882	6th
Southend	£785	£941 (£1020 between 40 and 100sqm)	£863	7th
<i>Ranking based off cheapest < 30sqm cost</i>				

% > TC
-5%
-4%
0%
6%
7%
7%
9%

% > TC
-1%
0%
1%
2%
3%
5%
8%

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Grangewaters – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Children’s Services – Mid Year Fee Increase Grangewaters
Lead Officer	Michele Lucas
Contact Details	mlucas@thurrock.gov.uk

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?

The current financial position of the council has meant we have to give consideration to an in-year price increase linked to our current fee and charges. Grangewaters is an outdoor education centre which covers its running costs year and year and has over the past two years made a profit, Grangewaters offers the local communities of Thurrock the opportunity to participate in outdoor learning programmes. Its unique selling point is the work it undertakes with children and young people who have special education needs and this attracts customers from both within and outside of Thurrock. It is one of the key providers for the government's national holiday activities programmes.

1. Community impact (this can also be used to assess impact on staff although a cumulative impact should be considered)

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities and workforce?
 Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		x	x	The price increases are in line with the increased running costs.	The in-year increases have been considered in line with the local competitors and we do not believe they will have a negative impact on the bookings for a proportion of our local residents

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

					Some of our local residents will struggle to pay any in year price increase due to the current rate of inflation – we will continue to seek external funding to ensure vulnerable children are not disadvantaged due to the in-year price increases.
Age			x	The new price increases directly impact on children and young.	This in year price increases will be monitored and considers – external funding will be sought to mitigate the price increase.
Disability			x	Grangewaters offers a range of programmes specifically targeting children and young people with disability any increase in costs will place additional challenge on parents/carers.	Holiday Activities programme supported children and young people on free school meals we will undertake further targeted information to families with children with a disability.
Gender reassignment				N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership				N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity				N/A	N/A
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)			x	Please refer to above due to vulnerability of children and young people related to cost increases.	Please refer to above further external funding to be sought.
Religion or belief				N/A	
Sex				N/A	
Sexual orientation				N/A	

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

<p>Any community issues identified for this location? <i>See above link to ward profiles.</i> If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?</p>				<p>The in-year price increase will impact on all areas on communities within Thurrock</p>	<p>All work within the Children’s Services is monitored via our Brighter Futures Strategy which is focussed on outcomes for children and young people.</p>
<p>Workforce</p>		<p>x</p>		<p>The current workforce are trained to deliver high quality outdoor learning activities</p>	<p>We appoint a number of apprentices into the team to ensure that we are growing our workforce and supporting both young people and adults with apprenticeship roles in outdoor learning</p>

2. Consultation, data and intelligence

2.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g., on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk
This is a vital step

The new in year increases will cause some concern re local residents however we have undertaken some market testing and feel they can be increased from October 2023. A further review of all fees and charges will be undertaken over the summer to ensure that we can increase fees from April 1st 2024.

2.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

Grangewaters continually looks at what other local outdoor learning sites are charging for similar programmes – we have had to ensure that we remain competitive as this is cost neutral to the council and provides much needed activities for families across Thurrock and SEND children and young people. We will undertake further investigations over the summer to enable to consider price increases from April 2024. As outlined in the document we do believe we can increase some of the charges from October 2023 this are outlined document that was sent across.

3. Monitoring and Review

3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?
These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.

<p>Action</p>	<p>Page 70</p>	<p>By when?</p>	<p>By who?</p>
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3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?

*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

Children’s O&S approve the in-year increase of charges	June 2023	TBC
Communication sent to all current customers to inform them of the price increase from October 2023.	1 st August 2023	
The new fee structure will be in place from October 2023.	1 st October 2023	

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
We will continue to monitor the impact from October to April re the price increases we are looking to introduce from October 2023, and this will enable us to have a secure picture of the price increases from April 1 st 2024. We will continue to identify external funding opportunities to support families who would not be able to afford any price increase and use our funded places to support disadvantaged children and young people.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Head of Service who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Michele Lucas	Assistant Director	10 th May 2023

Parking and Enforcement – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Parking services and Environmental Enforcement
Lead Officer	Phil Carver
Contact Details	Pcarver@thurrock.gov.uk

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
Proposed increase in Fees & Charges

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk

This is a vital step

We also have completed notices regarding car park charges.

We also plan to use the council website and use comms.

This is also published within the annual Fees & Charges report which is uploaded online

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

The table below shows a comparison of Thurrock’s proposed charges compared to that of our neighbouring boroughs and surrounding areas, Thurrock are still drastically lower than any of our neighbouring boroughs

Residents Permits 22/23	1st	2nd	3rd	Rank	% > TC
Thurrock (Proposed 23/24)	£10	£20	£80	1st	0%
Southend	£15	£25	£50	2nd	50%
Chelmsford	£26	£26	£26	3rd	160%
Medway	£31	£31	£31	4th	210%
Basildon	£34	£34	£34	5th	235%
Brentwood	£34	£34	£34	6th	235%
Havering	£35	£60	£85	7th	250%
Rochford	£50	£50	£50	8th	400%
Castle Point	£52	£52	£52	9th	420%
Maldon	£54	£54	£54	10th	440%

Ranking based off 1st permit pricing

Residents Permits	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th+
Barking & Dagenham	Table - Emissions (CO2) g/km				
Band 1: 0 to 50*	£0 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 2: 50 to 100	£18 - Up to 2		£45	£45	£45
Band 3: 101 to 140	£36 - Up to 2		£45	£54	£63
Band 4: 141 to 160	£45 - Up to 2		£56.25	£67.50	£78.75
Band 5: 161 to 180	£51 - Up to 2		£63.75	£76.50	£89.25
Band 6: 181 to 255	£80 - Up to 2		£100	£120	£140
Band 7: Over 256	£140 - Up to 2		£175	£210	£245

** Hybrid or Electric vehicle*

Barking & Dagenham offer a reduced rate for permits to residents driving low emission vehicles to help reduce their carbon footprint, this was an option that Thurrock proposed in 2021 but was not taken forward at that time

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?
Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	x			This will allow the upkeep of maintenance such as lines, signs and resurfacing	We have a robust approach to monitoring as it is a part of officers duty to review the standards of locations. Inflation has been considered in the Increases
Age	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Disability	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Gender reassignment	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Marriage and civil partnership	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Pregnancy and maternity	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.
Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in ‘local communities in general’ above.

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Religion or belief	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Sex	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Sexual orientation	x			the impact applies to all regardless of protected characteristics	the same applies as detailed in 'local communities in general' above.
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?				This is borough wide, paying fair rates for the upkeep as detailed in the Local communities in general above	
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)	x				
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.			x	This may have a negative impact on the health & Wellbeing of residents as they may not be able to afford to pay which in turn may cause stress and upset as well as not being able to access facilities due to increased charges that aid in health and wellbeing e.g. parks and open spaces,	
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.			X	Those living on a low income may have their ability to access services and amenities reduced or restricted.	This is mitigated by keeping increases low in comparison to other neighbouring boroughs
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.	x			paying fair rates for the upkeep as detailed in the Local communities in general above	

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
To undertake regular quality monitoring visits during officers patrols ensuring quality standards at locations	Patrolled daily	CEOs & EEOs
To carry out consultation with residents and other stakeholders to gather intelligence to further inform this CEIA and assess if the assumed impacts are accurate or need amending.		

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole. Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
<p>Paying fair rates for the upkeep will allow quality standards of maintenance such as lines, signs and resurfacing. Quality standards prevent trips and falls, less damage to vehicle and public confidence to pay and use locations</p> <p>There is no consultation for parking increases. Information is provided as per point 1 above. Fees and Charges are reviewed yearly, proposed changes are put before members to support or oppose.</p>

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
Phil Carver	Strategic Lead	5 th May 2023

Registrars- EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Registrars
Lead Officer	Tracie Heiser
Contact Details	07766 206658

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
<p>Following the mid year review of fees and charges for the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrar attendance at approved premises for Marriage/Civil Partnership • Registrar attendance at Register Office for Naming Ceremonies/ Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) • Registrar attendance at Approved Premise for Naming Ceremonies/Renewal of Vows/Commitment Ceremony (Civil Ceremonies Ltd Partnership) • Ceremonies held in Thameside Theatre • Postage and Packing Charge (1st Class Recorded) • Private Citizenship Ceremony • Postage and Packing Charge (Special Delivery 24hr Guaranteed)

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk <i>This is a vital step</i>
<p>As this is an optional service for customers, they can choose whether to use the service or not with the fees and charges clearly displayed on our website.</p> <p>We do provide different options at varying prices to ensure that our service is available to a range of customers. For example with Citizenships they do have the option to attend a free group ceremony or they can pay for the private ceremony.</p> <p>The annual fee increase is discussed with customers when they contact us to make a booking especially when the requested date falls into a new financial year.</p> <p>Any changes to the fees and charges are updated on the website within the Registrars area along with the annual Fees & Charges report which is also available.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the service and inline with other local authorities and private venues, annual price increases are common.</p>

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

A benchmarking exercise has been carried out to compare with other local authorities. Fees and charges are provided for Registration services on local authority websites which allows the comparison to be made.

It is difficult to compare the charges for ceremonies as the venues and facilities do vary, however our fees are lower than other local authorities.

We are proposing higher fees for postage and private citizenships, compared to others but we do also have the other pricing options available.

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		*			
Age		*			
Disability		*			
Gender reassignment		*			
Marriage and civil partnership			*	Negative – higher costs	
Pregnancy and maternity		*			

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)		*			
Religion or belief		*			
Sex		*			
Sexual orientation		*			
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?			*	New citizens who would like a private citizenship may not be able to afford this due to the increase.	Group citizenship ceremonies are available free of charge as the cost is in the Home Office application fee.
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)		*			
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.		*			
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.		*			
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.		*			

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Monitoring customer feedback	March 2024	Jenny Osborne
Review of income to see if customers continue to use these services with us or book elsewhere.	March 2024	Tracie Heiser and Jenny Osborne

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact
<p>These fee increases relate to services which are optional to our residents, there are alternatives available.</p> <p>The impact would be that residents may choose to use services outside of Thurrock.</p>

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date

Land Charges – EIA

Community Equality Impact Assessment

The Equality Act 2010 states that public bodies must have “due regard” to a variety of Equalities objectives (Equality Act 2010, Section 149) and consequently, Equality Analysis must be carried out to demonstrate that decision-makers are fully aware of the impact that changes may have on stakeholders.

The concept of ‘due regard’ was reinforced in 2012 during the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which “requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities”

‘Due regard’ is dependent on the relevance and potential impact of the decision being considered. The greater the relevance and impact, the higher the regard due.

As an authority, we have made a commitment to apply a systematic screening process to new policy, strategy, functions or service development including reviews or changes to existing policy, strategy, functions or services.

This is to determine whether the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on different groups within our community.

This process has been developed, together with [full guidance](#), to support officers in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

In addition, the guidance supports officers to consider our commitments set out in the [Thurrock Joint Compact](#) with the voluntary sector.

As well as supporting you to look at whether there is, or will be, a significant impact, the guidance will also consider ways in which you might mitigate this in the future.

About the service and reason for the development or review process

Name of service	Land Charges
Lead Officer	Anthony Fletcher
Contact Details	A.FLETCHER@THURROCK.GOV.UK

Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development/review needed?
A corporate decision has been made to review all material fees and where possible increase them mid-year (October 2023). Land charge fees fit into this category

1. Consultation, data and intelligence

<p>1.1 Please highlight the steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult the whole community or specific groups affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review e.g. on-line consultation, focus groups, consultation with representative groups? For further guidance please contact: consultations@thurrock.gov.uk</p> <p><i>This is a vital step</i></p>
<p>Benchmarking is regularly completed against other local authorities and national unitary authorities and the fees increases still keep us in line. Our searches are submitted by search agents (The same 10 – 15) who we will discuss the changes with for comment via individual consultation</p>

1.2 Please also provide details on the sources of data or intelligence you have used to inform your assessment of impact and how they have helped you to understand those that will be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service development/review outlined?

Benchmarking among other local and unitary authorities indicated that fees are still consistent with other unitary and local authorities.

The average house price in Thurrock is £400,000.00. The impact of increasing our fees in the total cost of purchasing a house is minimal – accounting for under 0.0006%.

Although we compete over 4000 searches a year. Many submitted by the same 10 – 15 search agents who pass cost on to applicante.

2. Community and workforce impact

1.1 What impacts will this policy, strategy, function or service development/review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents? Look at what you know? What does your research tell you?

Consider:

- National and local data sets – please see guidance
- Complaints
- Consultation and service monitoring information
- Voluntary and community organisations
- The Equality Act places a specific duty on people with ‘protected characteristics’. The table below details these groups and helps you to consider the impact on these groups.

	Positive	Neutral	Negative	What are the positive and negative impacts?	How will benefits be enhanced and negative impacts minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general		X			
Age		X			
Disability		X			
Gender reassignment		X			
Marriage and civil partnership		X			
Pregnancy and maternity		X			

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Race (including Gypsies, Roma and Travellers)		X		
Religion or belief		X		
Sex		X		
Sexual orientation		X		
Any other community issues identified for this location? If the project is based in a specific location please state where, or whether Borough wide. Please include any detail of relevance – for example, is it an area with high unemployment, or public transport limited?		X		
Workforce of Thurrock Council (e.g. in the case of service change/s)		X		
Health and wellbeing of residents Please see guidance.		X		
Socio-economic outcomes Please see guidance.		X		
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces Please see guidance.		X		

3. Monitoring and Review

<p>3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? <i>These actions should be developed using the information gathered in Section 1 and 2 and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.</i></p>		
Action	By when?	By who?
Land Searches are completed during the process of a house sale, to understand the history of the land to inform the buyer before purchase. There will be no impact on community or equality as a result of the fee change.	N/A	N/A

3.1 How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented?

*These actions should be developed using the information gathered in **Section 1 and 2** and should be picked up in your departmental/service business plans.*

4. Next steps

It is important to ensure that the information gathered is used to inform any council reports that are presented to Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny committees. This will allow members to be furnished with all the facts in relation to the impact their decisions will have on different equality groups and the community as a whole.

Take some time to précis your findings below. This can then be added to your report template and the Equality and Diversity Implications section for sign off by the Community Development and Equalities team at the consultation stage of the report cycle.

Implications/ Customer Impact

The increase in fee is still in line with what is charged at neighbouring authorities and unitary authorities. Our searches have a statutory target of 20 working days, Thurrock average 7.2 working days so the service is high. The average house price in Thurrock is £479,231. Our fees are as a % the least costly part of the whole process, but the accurate information provided is incredibly important.

5. Sign off

The information contained in this template should be authorised by the relevant project sponsor or Strategic Lead who will be responsible for the accuracy of the information now provided and delivery of actions detailed.

Name	Role – for example, project sponsor, head of service)	Date
A.FLETCHER	Head of service	09.05.2023

Development Management – EIA

Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Development Management
Lead officer name	Leigh Nicholson completing on behalf of Louise Reid (Strategic Lead)
Lead officer job title	Assistant Director, Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Lead officer email address	lnicholson@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Development Management pre-application fees and charges
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
The Council is seeking to increase fees and charges across all services.

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage
There is a corporate expectation that fees and charges will be increased in 23/24. No consultation has been carried out with customer groups, though previous benchmarking has found that Thurrock’s fees are within the upper / lower limits of those set by other LPAs in Essex.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used
See above.

2. Community and workforce impact

- 2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increased pre-application fees could deter residents with fixed incomes from engaging in the pre-application process.	Not possible to address this issue if fees are to be increased. It should be noted that pre-app is a discretionary service.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Increased pre-application fees could deter residents with fixed incomes from engaging in the pre-application process.	Not possible to address this issue if fees are to be increased. It should be noted that pre-app is a discretionary service.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The pre-application process tends to make the planning process smoother, with better designed built development at the end of the process. Increasing fees for pre-app could discourage residents from seeking advice, resulting in avoidable refusals. +	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not relevant / applicable	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To review the number of pre-application submissions made	This data is collating on a rolling monthly basis	Business Improvement team – PTPP.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

The pre-application process is provided to help residents / applicants shape development proposals before making a formal application. It allows residents to ‘dry run’ their proposals through the relevant teams to ensure the scheme stands the best chance of approval and is the best design to suit their needs and the location.

Previous benchmarking has indicated that Thurrock’s pre-app charges fall within the upper / lower limits of other LPA’s in Essex. Nonetheless, residents in Thurrock are facing increased Council tax charges and other pressures. Increasing fees for pre-app at this time runs the risk of deterring residents from engaging in the process. This could result in applications being refused with the time and costs of re-submissions (which are free to the applicant) and potential costly appeals.

If increased, the number of pre-application submission received would be monitored.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Thameside Theatre – EIA

Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Thameside Theatre
Lead officer name	Dianna Ferry
Lead officer job title	Theatre Manager
Lead officer email address	dferry@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Thameside Theatre – Fees and Charges Policy
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Thameside Complex, Grays
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
<p>As a result of the S114 notice and financial position of the Council all services have been asked to review fees and charges with a view to increasing them to, as a minimum, reflect the cost of inflation over the past 5 years.</p> <p>The Thameside Theatre is one of the services that charges for services. In general fees and charges have increased in line with inflation except during the pandemic years. There is no legal reason why they should not be increased in line with inflation.</p> <p>On that basis an in year review of fees and charges has taken place in line with the corporate approach.</p>

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

All fees and charges will be considered by Members through relevant overview and scrutiny committee(s) prior to final decision. A final decision will be taken by Members through Cabinet / Council (Kelly to confirm).

The information provided to hirers and promoters will clearly explain the costs associated with use of the venue and the services it provides.

The decision to increase fees and charges has been taken corporately as a result of the S114 notice.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The decision to increase fees and charges in line with inflation has been taken corporately as a result of the S114 notice.

An increase in line with inflation will result in fees and charges that are in real terms the same as those charged five years ago. Some of the increases appear higher than others because charges were not increased through the COVID pandemic.

Data including bookings from previous years and anecdotal information from hirers suggests there will be an impact on hirers and promoters hoping to use the theatre as charges will be higher than previously expected. This may have an impact on the number and type of bookings.

The area we expect to be most affected will be the subsidised hire costs available to schools and community groups already struggling financially.

Given decisions taken on the Thameside Complex and the possibility it will close it is unclear whether the theatre will be able to continue to trade in the medium / longer term.

2. Community and workforce impact

1.3. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Increased hire charges will mean costs are passed on to performers and customers which may reduce the number and type of activities at the theatre and therefore reduce income.</p> <p>However increased fees and charge may help address the Council's financial position.</p>	The Theatre will work with hirers and promoters to market shows and demonstrate value for money.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The theatre hosts smaller events for groups with disabilities. These groups are stretched financially and may no longer be able to afford the cost of using theatre space and services.	Wherever possible the theatre will work with groups to try to reduce their costs or increase income to offset the additional charges.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	LGBT+ group meets regularly at the theatre. They have secured funding for the short term but an increase in costs may impact on their use of the theatre space once external funding ceases.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residents may be unable to afford tickets if prices increase. There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating how engagement with cultural activity improves health and wellbeing.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local dance schools hire the theatre as an affordable space for their shows. Any increase in price could result in dance schools being unable to afford hire which will have an impact on their businesses.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

1.4. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
Monitor impact on number and type of bookings and compare to previous years	Ongoing	Theatre Manager

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Gather anecdotal evidence from hirers and promoters	Ongoing	Theatre Manager
Monitor income and compare to previous years	Ongoing	Theatre Manager
Gather evidence from other local venues to ensure the theatre is competitive in the local market	Sept to January 2024 when prices are set for the next financial year	Theatre Manager
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

2. Next steps

- 2.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact
<p>An increase in fees and charges could impact on the number and type of bookings received from hirers and promoters. There may be particular impact on organisations already struggling with cost of living and reductions in funding such as schools and community groups. Impact will be monitored and, if appropriate, recommendations made when fees and charges are reviewed for the next financial year.</p> <p>Thurrock has a low participation rate in cultural activity compared to other local authorities across the country. The increased fees and charges are likely to result in increases to ticket prices which could reduce numbers using the theatre. As a result numbers participating in cultural activity could fall. Again impact will be monitored and, if appropriate, recommendations made to amend fees and charges to maximise income and audience numbers.</p>

3. Sign off

- 3.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:
- the accuracy of the information
 - making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Dianna Ferry	Theatre Manager	10/05/2023
Stephen Taylor	Strategic Lead – Economic Development	10/05/2023
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Burials – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Clean and Green – Burials
Lead officer name	Vincent Taylor
Lead officer job title	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green
Lead officer email address	vtaylor@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Fees and Charges for Burial Services
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
There is an annual review of fees and charges in this service area, this CEIA review is needed as an additional review of the fees and charges is being conducted.

1. Consultation and supporting information

1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? This is a vital step.

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage
There are no specific groups affected by this change. The fees and charges are in line with other local authorities

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used
The registrar of burials conducted a recent benchmarking exercise looking at the fees charged by neighbouring local authorities for these services and ensured that those charges by Thurrock are comparable to others.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To monitor the uptake in the services offered by the council and to see if there is an increase in complaints	January 2024	Sue Newton – Registrar of Burials
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

The charge for these services are in line with those offered elsewhere, our core burial services are only being increased in line with inflation, and those that are at the discretion of the service user are able to be increased in line with commercial demand.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Vincent Taylor	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green	10/05/23
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Abandoned Trolleys – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Clean and Green – Abandoned Trolleys
Lead officer name	Vincent Taylor
Lead officer job title	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green
Lead officer email address	vtaylor@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Fees and Charges for Abandoned Trolleys
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
There is an annual review of fees and charges in this service area, this CEIA review is needed as an additional review of the fees and charges is being conducted. In addition this is a new charge following a Cabinet Decision to adopt the Abandoned Trolley Cost Recovery Policy

1. Consultation and supporting information

1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? This is a vital step.

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

There are no specific groups affected by this change. This charge will be on the Supermarkets that allow their trollies to be abandoned and blight the environment

This has gone through Overview and Scrutiny, Cabinet and has had a public consultation that was overwhelmingly positive

1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The policy was written looking at the charging made by other Local Authorities and taking into consideration what was needed for cost recovery.

2. Community and workforce impact

2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

3. Monitoring and review

3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
To monitor the number of trollies where fees for abandonment was needed and the uptake in the service offered by the authority to take back trollies to the stores, and to see if there is an increase in complaints	January 2024	Vincent Taylor – Strategic Lead Clean and Green
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact
This charge will be on the supermarkets, and will not have an impact on equalities / communities.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Vincent Taylor	Strategic Lead – Clean and Green	10/05/23
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Overarching Parking Strategy – EIA

Thurrock Council Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Planning, Transportation and Public Protection
Lead officer name	Navtej Tung
Lead officer job title	Strategic Transport Manager
Lead officer email address	ntung@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
<p>Parking Policy and Strategy;</p> <p>Parking Design and Development Standards</p> <p>Parking Enforcement Strategy</p>
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Click or tap here to enter text.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?

It is important to ensure that the Council’s approach to vehicle parking is in accordance with national and local policy and objectives. As part of the new Local Plan, it is necessary to develop an up-to-date Parking Policy and Strategy document and new Parking Standards to respond to current transport trends and demands and also to positively shape new development proposals, ensuring homes and businesses are supported by the right level of parking provision.

The Parking Policy and Strategy document has been developed to assist the Council to oversee the provision of parking across the borough now and in the future, as the borough looks to accommodate growth and to incorporate emerging vehicle technologies and infrastructure (namely electric vehicles and charging requirements). It includes a number of overarching objectives and principles covering how the Council will manage parking demand in the future and how decisions on parking arrangements can be taken across Thurrock.

The Parking Design & Development Standards document has been developed to clearly set out the parking requirements for new developments. It provides detail on the design and standards that will be applicable throughout the Borough. This includes details such as the number, size and location of parking stock for all types of vehicles. This will also become an important tool for Officers to use when discussing development proposals with developers.

The Parking Enforcement Strategy document has been developed to set out the processes and procedures for undertaking enforcement of inappropriate and illegal parking across on roads under the responsibility of the Council across the borough.

1. Consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by this development or review? **This is a vital step.**

Steps you have taken, or plan to take, to consult or engage

The Parking Policy and Strategy, Parking Design & Development Standards and Parking Enforcement Strategy have been developed as a result of community and stakeholder engagement with relevant parties and stakeholders.

A six week public consultation programme was undertaken between 2 November 2020 and 14 December 2020 to enable local residents, businesses, interest groups and key stakeholders to provide input and comment to shape the documents. The consultation was undertaken via the Thurrock Council consultation portal, with the published page and supporting documents available to view on the following web address - <https://consult.thurrock.gov.uk/parking-strategy-2020>.

In total, there were 358 visits to the Parking Strategy consultation page, which resulted in 31 individuals responding to the page via the survey. The survey consisted of 18 questions, with a mix of pre-populated (e.g. yes/no) and open ended/free choice questions.

Based on the responses received, where questions asked whether respondents supported or opposed the documents, they were generally in favour of the documents.

When reviewing the open text questions, there was, as expected, a wide variety of answers and priorities for respondents. The mix of responses do not sway support for nor against the policies and documents. However, there is a predominant ask for a greater level of enforcement against poor parking, parking on verges and the blocking of footpaths, as well as more enforcement within residential areas and those areas outside town centres. Additionally, the emotive nature of parking has resulted in some responses identifying factors outside the remit of the strategy and policy documents, such as routing of traffic and learner HGV routes. This is being addressed through an increase in the number of Civil Enforcement Officers deployed by the council, with the recruitment of an additional ten officers.

Following the completion of the consultation, there has been no identified changes to the policies or standards themselves, but it has been necessary to amend the structure and information within the documents. The changes are not material to the nature or purpose of the documents and would not invalidate the outcome of the public consultation, but they are considered necessary to make the documents more easily accessible.

- 1.2. What data or intelligence sources have you used to inform your assessment of the impact? How have these helped you understand who will be affected by the development or review?

Sources of data or intelligence, and how they have been used

The development of the parking strategy undertook a review of existing data sources and includes a key summary of the existing picture within the borough related to parking. No specific external sources have been consulted to further inform the EQIA, though feedback from the consultation has helped to identify key themes which were identified, along with the details within the policies.

2. Community and workforce impact

- 2.1. What impacts will this development or review have on communities, workforce and the health and wellbeing of local residents?

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Local communities in general	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate parking policies will help control how vehicles are parked across the borough, within designated areas. Haphazard parking, or a lack of control creates dangers for all road users, and impacts users in need of parking controls – such as blue badge holders, the most.	By providing appropriate parking mechanisms, with appropriate provisions and backed up by enforcement, all members of the community are able to best enjoy the built environment, whether vehicle users or not.
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The policies specifically focus on disabled persons with blue badge parking provision with specifications for parking provision for blue badge holders and sizing specification for spaces within new developments. Policies TPP 10, 11 and 12 are specific to support disabled people entitled to a Blue Badge to have accessible parking in key locations and destinations. Blue badge parking provisions are generally identified through national guidance and legislation.	New developments are required to show and commit to disabled parking provision through the Development Management Process and the standards in this policy set a minimum level of provision. Enforcement of these are undertaken on the public highway by the council's team of enforcement officers in line with legal provisions.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Location-specific impact, if any	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The suite of policies are borough wide, and not specific to any one community. However some parts of the borough are more likely to be impacted than others, such as locations where there is a high demand for destination parking – such as town centres or near transport hubs.	Controls of parking are best managed by the council’s enforcement team, to ensure the best balance between quality of life for residents and access to parking.
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The strategies identify measures to restrict free parking across all parts of the public highway. Typically, where there is a high demand for parking by workers, such as town centres or near railway stations, there is likely a need to balance the need for residents to have parking near their properties against access to parking for all.	Enforcement by CEO’s allows for the right people to have access to the right parking zones. Enforcement ensures that where applicable, permit areas are adhered to as well as P&D Zones that are implemented

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The parking strategy suite of documents is produced to support the provision of parking to create fairness and a balance for all users. While many residents will be car owners, not all residents have a private space to keep their vehicle, and when in using their vehicles will need somewhere to park when away from home. Conversely the public highway need to be passible, and inappropriate parking and levels need to be managed, so that the highway and footways remain accessible, and provision for blue badge holders can be maintained.	N/A
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is an economic impact of parking and the management of parking, though effective land provision and management. There are also charges associated with parking, such as for parking permits, or for charged parking at key destinations and locations or in off-street parking at popular destinations.	N/A
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

3. Monitoring and review

- 3.1. How will you review community and equality impact once the policy, strategy, function or service has been implemented? These actions should be developed using the information gathered in sections 1 and 2 and included in your service area's business plans.

Action	By when	By who
Review the Parking Strategy suite of papers every 3 years or in extraordinary circumstances, ensuring data and strategy comply with legislation and current work trends, feeding a review of the CEIA	3 years or in extraordinary circumstances	Transport Development
Reporting and escalate any concerns with street furniture, to ensure community impacts are low	constant action	Parking Enforcement
Review of best practise guidance for parking enforcement	3 years or in extraordinary circumstances	Parking Enforcement
Continue to review restrictions to further inform this CEIA and assess if the assumed impacts are accurate or need amending	3 years	Parking Enforcement
To consider any alternative parking solutions that are available	Yearly	Transport and Development
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

4. Next steps

- 4.1. The information gathered must be used to inform reports presented to Cabinet or overview and scrutiny committees. This will give members a necessary understanding of the impact their decisions will have on different groups and the whole community.

Summarise the implications and customer impact below. This summary should be added to the committee reports template in the Diversity and Equality Implications section for review and sign-off at the consultation stage of the report preparation cycle.

Summary of implications and customer impact

Appendix 5 – EIA (Equalities Impact Assessments) & Legal Commentary

The report was presented to Planning, Transportation and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2021 and again in February 2022, before being presented for adoption to Cabinet in March 2022.

The key implications of the policies, and standards identifies that disabled persons are directly identified within the policy to be supported with parking provision to help meet their needs, in line with national guidance and policy. The policy identifies minimum parking requirements for new developments off the public highway, and where blue badge holders can and cannot park on the public highway. The policy identifies how these users can also access a disabled bay within an appropriate distance from their home.

Other persons with protected characteristics are not directly impacted specifically due to their protected characteristics. However, the policy does identify the opportunity to impose restrictions in key locations which may not currently exist. These new restrictions would not exclude disabled persons from accessing the appropriate provisions as provided in the policy.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

- the accuracy of the information
- making sure actions are undertaken

Name	Role	Date
Navtej Tung	Strategic Transport Manager	19/05/2023
Mat Kiely	Strategic Lead for Transportation Services	19/05/2023
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Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

Legal Commentary

It was lovely meeting with you both this afternoon and I appreciate the time that you spent in reiterating your instructions and providing myself and Kevin with context regarding the same.

In the meeting this afternoon we discussed the basis in which the Council is able to increase the fees and charges for some of the services that it provides in line with carrying out its functions. I advised that it is standard practice for fees and charges to be subject to an annual inflation uplift but the Council may deviate from this having provided reason. Ultimately the Council is to decide whether the inflation uplift is appropriate in each circumstance when reaching a decision to increase a charge.

You mentioned that at this stage in particular your focus is with a segment of the services that are provided by the Council that arise from the Council's discretionary powers to increase fees and charges. I advised that where a discretionary power exists (under the Local Government Act 2003, Localism Act 2011) the Council is to ensure that the charge that it decides to set is reasonable and in any event is a fee that does not exceed the costs of the provision of the service.

I will undertake the required work on the draft policy and return to you as soon as possible.

Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Year: 2023/24

Dates of Meetings: 11 July 2023, 5 October 2023, 7 December 2023, 1 February 2024

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
11 July 2023		
Provisional 2022-23 Financial Outturn Report	Jonathan Wilson / Jo Freeman	Officers
Terms of Reference	Democratic Services	Officers
Fees and Charges Review 2023/24	Jonathan Wilson	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
5 October 2023		
Finance Update – Quarter 1 2023/34 - tbc	Jonathan Wilson	Officers
Portfolio Holder Annual Report: Finance	Jonathan Wilson/Cllr Graham Snell	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
7 December 2023		
Local Council Tax Scheme - tbc	Andy Brittain/ Jonathan Wilson	Members
Portfolio Holder Annual Report: Central Services	Cllr Jack Duffin/Jackie Hinchliffe	Members
Financial Update – Quarter 2 2022/23 - tbc	Jonathan Wilson	Officers

Work Programme

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
Fees and Charges Report	Jonathan Wilson / Stephen Mair	Officers
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
1 February 2024		
Draft General Fund Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy Update - tbc	Jonathan Wilson	Officers
Capital Programme 2024/25 - tbc	Jonathan Wilson	Officers
Capital Strategy 2024/25 - tbc	Jonathan Wilson	Officers
Portfolio Holder Annual Report: Culture and Communities	Cllr Qaisar Abbas	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item

Updated: May 2023

Clerk: Jenny Shade