

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

Cabinet

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **10 January 2024**

Council Chamber, CO3, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Deputy Chair), Adam Carter, George Coxshall, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney and Graham Snell

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 14
To approve as a correct record the minutes of Cabinet held on 13 December 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.	
4 Declaration of Interests	
5 Statements by the Leader	
6 Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues	
7 Petitions submitted by Members of the Public	
8 Questions from Non-Executive Members	
9 Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee	

- 10 Delegated Decisions taken since the last meeting**
- 11 Progress on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery (Decision: 110687) 15 - 54**

Exclusion of the Public and Press

Members are asked to consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of an agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 or it being confidential for the purposes of Section 100A(2) of that Act.

In each case, Members are asked to decide whether, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption (and discussing the matter in private) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- 12 2024/25 Revenue Budget Savings Proposals (Decision: 110688) 55 - 130**
- 13 Thames Freeport Accountable Body Decisions (Decision: 110689) 131 - 156**
- 14 Re-Commissioning of Public Health Contract - Healthy Families Service (Decision: 110690) 157 - 170**
- 15 Gas Services Contract Modification Report (Decision: 110691) 171 - 180**

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **2 January 2024**

Information for members of the public and councillors

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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 Cabinet held on 13 December 2023 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Thursday 28 December 2023 at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Andrew Jefferies (Chair), Deborah Arnold (Deputy Chair), Adam Carter, George Coxshall, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney and Graham Snell

Apologies:

In attendance:

Mark Bradbury, Interim Director of Place
Claire Demmel, Interim Director Public Realm
Asmat Hussain, Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Alix MacFarlane, Communications Advisor - Intervention and Improvement (Interim Director)
Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer
Dr Dave Smith, Chief Executive and Managing Director
Commissioner
Paul Southall, Assistant Director Street Scene and Leisure
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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

202. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8 November 2023 were approved as a correct record.

203. Items of Urgent Business

Councillor Jefferies confirmed he had agreed to one urgent item of business and that was the urgent report titled **Award of the Waste Treatment Contract (Decision: 110686)**. Councillor Jefferies reminded Members that appendix 2 and 3 to the report were exempt and therefore should not be discussed in open session. If members wished to discuss the appendices then the public and press would need to leave and the recording will go offline.

Councillor Jefferies introduced the report and explained that permission is being sought for delegated authority to be given to the Interim Director of Public Realm in Consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership to award the waste treatment contract.

Cabinet approved delegated authority for the re-procurement of this waste disposal contract in November 2020. The procurement was further ratified following the Section 114 notice when via email from the Finance Commissioner in March 2023 and the Strategic Approval Board (SAP) in April 2023.

The contract is for ten years, with a five-year extension option. As the estimated value of this contract is £70 million over ten years, updated legal advice was sought which confirmed that the matter should be brought back to Cabinet to seek approval to award the contract.

There were no questions from Members.

RESOLVED:

1.1 That Cabinet note the progress regarding this procurement process.

1.2 That Cabinet approve the delegated authority for the award of the waste treatment contract to the Interim Director of Public Realm and the Section 151 Officer in Consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

204. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

205. Statements by the Leader

Councillor Jefferies highlighted that for the first time in Thurrock Council's history a budget meeting took place involving all Councillors.

Councillor Jefferies explained that the Local Plan Regulation 18 has been agreed unanimously to go out for Consultation. The consultation starts on Monday 18 December 2023 and Councillor Jefferies encouraged all residents to participate.

The Youth Zone in Tilbury has been given planning permission. This will provide Thurrock with a world class youth facility for the youngsters of Thurrock.

Councillor Jefferies confirmed that he had met with the Borough Commander that afternoon who confirmed the following figures: -

- All crime has reduced over the last 12 months by 3.2%.
- Hate crime is down by 2.2%
- Anti-Social behaviour is down by 30%.
- A cannabis production place containing 100 plants has been closed down in Tilbury.
- Since 2018 Anti-social behaviour has reduced by 63%
- Operation Ceasar which concerns the off-road nuisance bikes has reduced reports to police by 55%
- Operation Stronghold to increase the visibility of police in the borough – in Corringham, South Ockendon, Grays and Lakeside an additional 100 hours of police time and probably contributed to the reduction in crime
- Additional Police patrols in and around the Lakeside area will take place over the Christmas period.

206. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

There were no briefings on Policy, Budget or other issues.

207. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no Petitions submitted by Members of the Public.

208. Questions from Non-Executive Members

There were no questions from Non-Executive Members.

209. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

210. Delegated Decisions taken since the last meeting

Councillor Jefferies confirmed there had been two delegated decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting which are listed on the second page of the agenda. One relating to Manor Close and the other relating to Angle Road.

211. Children's Transport Contract Procurement 2024 (Decision: 110681)

Councillor Carter introduced the report. Councillor Carter explained that the report seeks to collaborate with Essex County Council on a Dynamic Purchasing system for Home to School Transport. It is hoped this will drive down costs. Councillor Carter explained that the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had raised concerns about the licensing fee however it has been confirmed that we will continue to use our tendering system and therefore the concerns were unfounded.

Councillor Snell queried what is the main benefit of the new framework.

Councillor Carter responded that currently they are limited regarding the number of providers and if a provider leaves they cannot replace them under the fixed framework. Under the new system they will be able to access Essex providers and other Thurrock providers not currently under the fixed framework. There will be more options for a cheaper and better service.

Councillor Johnson added that he appreciates this coming forward and increasing the number of providers should give a better service and possibly cheaper. Choice is everything and is important for parents and children.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 Cabinet agree the recommendation for the Council to collaborate with Essex County Council (ECC) on a procurement exercise for a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and to undertake further competition via the DPS to award contracts for Children's home to school transport as set out in section 3.**
- 1.2 Cabinet agree that the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Education Portfolio Holder is given delegated authority to award contracts following further competitions under the DPS.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

212. Thurrock Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Assessment of Settings - April 2023 (Decision: 110682)

Councillor B Maney introduced the report and explained that Thurrock is host to 17 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, designated by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which are of national significance and it is only right that they are protected. The report is an important document and will aid planning officers with planning applications and ensure any developments are sympathetic to these ancient monuments. Councillor Maney welcomed the report and stated it is treating Thurrock's history and heritage with the regard it is due.

Councillor Carter also welcomed the report and stated that Thurrock hasn't always shown the great historical offering that it has. To an outsider Thurrock may just look like a logistics superhub but it is more than that and some of the monuments show the rich history Thurrock has had for thousands of years. Councillor Carter stated that he hoped the document would be widely circulated as it is worth teaching about Thurrock's local history and most would not know about every site on there.

The Leader commented that he didn't realise how many sites Thurrock has. It is a great step forward to ensure the sites are protected for future generations.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That Cabinet approve the publication of the Thurrock Scheduled Ancient Monuments: Assessment of Settings report (April 2023) (Appendix 1)**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

213. East Tilbury (Bata Village) & Corringham Conservation Areas Character Appraisal and Management Plans - April 2023 (Decision: 110683)

Councillor B Maney introduced the report and explained that the East Tilbury (Bata Village) conservation area and Corringham conservation area are two of seven conservation areas designated by Thurrock Council. Councillor B Maney stated that they are keen to preserve Thurrock's heritage and the things that make Thurrock unique. Both the previous East Tilbury Character Appraisal and Corringham Character Appraisal were adopted in March 2007 and are now out of date. The Council has a statutory duty to review and update Management plans. No changes are proposed to the East Tilbury conservation area boundary. Minor amendments are proposed to the Corringham conservation area. Councillor B Maney stated that he was happy to adopt the report and to take any questions.

No members asked questions.

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption and publication of the East Tilbury (Bata Village) Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (April 2023) (Appendix 1) and of the Corringham Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (April 2023) (Appendix 2)**
- 1.2 That Cabinet note the management proposals within the Conservation Area Management Plans with regard to potential use of Article 4 Directions, and asks that a report be brought to the Planning, Transport, and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and Cabinet for further consideration on this matter.**

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

214. School Appeals Hearings Service (Decision: 110684)

Councillor D Arnold introduced the report and explained that when parents change their child's school, if they do not get their preferred choice of school, they can appeal to the school about the placement. Democratic Services at Thurrock Council have been a supplier of this service for providing independent appeals and there are also other suppliers. Thurrock wish to cease to be a provider of this service. Schools can use a different provider and it is likely to be more cost effective for them. Thurrock Council currently charge £250 for the service and Essex County Council charge £170 for the same service and quality. This will free up Democratic services to concentrate on work to do with the recovery on governance. If agreed, Democratic Services will speak to the schools about the other suppliers. The change will not affect the process, schools will just need to find another supplier.

Councillor Coxshall requested assurance that there is a market out there and that it will be cost effective. He also commented that it was logical to free up Democratic services if the market is cheaper and the quality of service will not be affected.

Councillor D Arnold stated that she is confident that there is a supplier chain out there. There are independent providers who work for more than one Local Authority. Schools can choose their supplier from an open market and Thurrock will help signpost schools so there is a seamless service.

The Leader commented that as long as there is the assurance that parents will still be able to appeal as residents do come to local Councillors to ask for help about appealing a decision.

RESOLVED:

1.1 To cease Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with local schools on Thurrock Council's school appeal hearings service.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

215. 2023/24 Quarter 2 Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn (Decision: 110685)

Councillor Snell introduced the report and explained that it sets out the estimated forecast revenue outturn position for 2023/24 for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA), Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and Public Health Grant.

The quarter 2 general fund position is a forecast underspend of £1.512m including the current assumed capitalisation directive of £180.159m. This is an improvement of £0.476m on quarter 1.

The directorate position is forecast to overspend by £2.361m against a revised budget of £169.383m, equivalent to 1.4%. This is an improvement on the Q1 position and Directors continue to work hard to find mitigating measures to resolve the pressures on the 2023/24 budget.

An estimated underspend within the Treasury management function of £3.873m reduces the overall position to £1.512m less than the assumed general fund budgeted levels.

It is noted this projected underspend would reduce the planned capitalisation direction by £1.512m.

The financial accounts of the Council remain open from 2020/21 onwards and further issues could be identified which impact on the current position.

The current projected outturn for 2023/24 is a breakeven position for the Designated Schools Grant and Public Health.

The HRA is forecast to achieve an operating surplus of £0.817m for the year as set out in section 5 of the report.

The General Fund (GF) and HRA Capital Programme positions are set out in section 8. There is forecast slippage on the General Fund programme of £22.13m against a budgeted programme of £48m. Forecast slippage on the HRA capital programme is £12.59m against a budgeted programme of £44.04m

Since the last Outturn report in September a review has been undertaken of the capital programme to minimise borrowing for capital purposes and to implement a debt reduction strategy to comply with directions from DLUP and to ensure the capital programme is sustainable on future years budget and is focused on essential spending and delivery of statutory services. The proposed changes are included in appendix 7 and 8 and will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny in February.

The investment portfolio is undergoing valuation and assessment and a full report will be available in Quarter 3.

Expenditure controls remain in place and are reported to the Finance Recovery Board. Between January and August this year the number of spending requests steadily declined. The panels will continue to challenge spending across the Authority for the foreseeable future.

All forecast outturn positions are based on several assumptions such as interest rates and inflation holding at particular levels.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1.1. Note and comment on the overall forecast general fund outturn position for quarter 2 is an underspend of £1.512m.**
- 1.2. Note that directors with adverse variances will continue to review directorate budgets and identify mitigating actions to resolve the forecast pressure against the 2023/24 budget.**
- 1.3. Note the potential risks to the position listed noted in section 4 and the following specific risks noted within the report:**
 - a) Note there is an ongoing assessment of the investment portfolio values which remains under assessment pending reporting in quarter 3.**
 - b) Note there are ongoing wider financial accounting assessments related to prior periods which may also need to be considered.**
- 1.4. Note and comment on the positions set out in respect of the HRA, DSG and Public Health which project to deliver the budget within the existing funding envelopes.**
- 1.5 Note and comment on the capital programme, the current projected General Fund slippage of £22.13m, the HRA slippage of £12.59m and the outcomes of the external capital programme review**
- 1.6 Approve the proposed changes to the capital programme for 2023-24 as set out in section 8 and Appendices 7 and 8.**
- 1.7 Note that the position will remain provisional as further substantive work is undertaken, notably in preparation of historic accounts, which could have an impact on current or future years**
- 1.8 Approve Thurrock's 2024-25 Schools funding formula to be implemented as set out in section 6.**

1.9 Note the review of the Expenditure Control Panels included at Appendix 6.

*Reason for the decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

The Leader thanked all Members especially the newest members of Cabinet, Councillor Carter and Councillor Coxshall for their hard work and support. The Leader also thanked Officers in the Council who have also worked extremely hard. The Leader wished everyone including residents a Happy Christmas and New Year.

The meeting finished at 7.30 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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10 January 2024	ITEM: 11 Decision: 110687
Cabinet	
Progress on Thurrock Council’s Improvement and Recovery	
Wards and communities affected: N/A	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Cllr Andrew Jefferies, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Assistant Director: N/A	
Accountable Director: N/A	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report provides Members with a progress update on the work to date to deliver the Council’s Improvement and Recovery Plan. This is the second report following Members’ agreement to receive quarterly updates and allow for scrutiny and constructive challenge to the delivery of the Plan and Council’s recovery overall.

The content of this report reflects that the period since the last report to Members has been focussed on the approval of an enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan as required in the updated Directions in March 2023 and the transition from the projects under the previous Plan. Future reports on progress will also consider how improvement is being made in relation to the Outcomes Framework set out in the Improvement and Recovery Plan, in order to test whether delivering the plan is making meaningful improvements.

The Council continues to face significant challenges as it recovers and responds to the Directions from the Secretary of State. As failings are addressed and improvements made, the Council will have to work at considerable pace to make the required changes to re-shape the organisation and become financially sustainable. Difficult decisions will come forward in the coming months, including agreeing a new vision for how services are delivered and setting a budget for 2024/25.

The progress reporting considered by Improvement and Recovery Board in December can be found as an appendix to this report.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner comments will be provided when Full Council consider this progress update.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1.1 Note the progress made on the Council's improvement and recovery.

1.2 Refer this report to Full Council for all Members to consider and comment on the progress to date.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 On 2 September 2022, the then Secretary of State for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities made directions under section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 to implement an intervention package for Thurrock Council. This package was in two parts: the first is that the Council's functions over managing its financial resources, exercise of the statutory requirement to arrange for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, and all functions associated with the strategic financial management of the Authority would be overseen by Essex County Council (ECC), in the role of Commissioner.

2.2 Governance structures were put in place to allow the Commissioners to have oversight of these functions and carry out these functions. A Finance Recovery Board, chaired by Nicole Wood, Executive Director of Corporate Resources at ECC, was established and began meeting fortnightly from 10 October 2022 (latterly this meeting has been held monthly). The terms of reference and minutes from this and other Commissioner-led boards can be found on the intervention section of the Thurrock Council website.

2.3 From the outset of the intervention, Commissioners have worked constructively with Members and Officers to ensure proactive engagement, meaning that in practice decisions continue to be taken by the Council with Commissioners powers held in reserve and used where they deem necessary.

2.4 These directions also required the Council to produce an Improvement and Recovery Plan within three months. This plan was submitted to the Commissioners and the Department for Levelling-up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in December 2022, with reporting to Commissioners on urgent financial actions beforehand to the Finance Recovery Board.

2.5 To oversee the development and delivery of the Improvement and Recovery Plan, the Improvement and Recovery Board, chaired by Gavin Jones, Chief Executive of ECC, was established and has met monthly since 1 November 2022. Membership of the Board includes Commissioners, the Leader and

Deputy Leader of the Council, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Senior Leadership Team.

Expanded Directions

- 2.6 In December 2022, the Commissioners submitted their first update to the Secretary of State, reporting on the Council's progress against the specific Directions as well as their reflections on the culture, governance and capacity.
- 2.7 Shortly after the Commissioner's report was submitted, the Best Value Inspectors also provided an update on the progress of their inspection. The update proposed an extension to the time period set out in the appointment to allow the inspection to look into wider areas than the original scope, however the inspectors were able to make some recommendations to the Secretary of State at that point.
- 2.8 These reports were published by DLUHC on 24 January 2023 alongside the Ministerial response to them, which outlined that the Secretary of State was 'minded-to' expand the Directions in order to:
- transfer further powers to Commissioners in areas such as governance, the way the Council delivers services and the senior structure of the Council.
 - require the Council to produce an enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan to go further into particular areas.
 - appoint a Managing Director Commissioner in order to strengthen the intervention model, and to support the Authority's capacity to deliver against its improvement plan.
- 2.9 After considering all representations made, the Secretary of State confirmed the expanded recommendations and appointment of Dr Dave Smith as Managing Director Commissioner on 16 March 2023, effectively replacing the original directions from 2 September 2022.
- 2.10 Following the publication of the Commissioners' Second Report on 5 October 2023, the Minister announced that Essex County Council would exit its role as Commissioner, given that the first phase of the intervention has concluded with the publication of the Commissioners' second report.
- 2.11 For the next phase of the intervention, Gavin Jones and Nicole Wood are appointed as Lead Commissioner and Finance Commissioner respectively, continuing their existing roles in the intervention, but on an individual basis rather than on behalf of Essex Country Council.

Updating the Improvement and Recovery Plan

- 2.12 As set out in the March 2023 Directions, the Improvement and Recovery Plan needed to be enhanced to cover the additional areas highlighted by the

Secretary of State. Following a period of extensive Officer and Member engagement, the Plan was approved by Full Council on 25 October 2023.

2.13 This plan builds on the work already underway and recognised by the Minister in his letter on 5 October. By focussing on three priorities of improving leadership to accelerate change, improving governance and controls and improving financial sustainability, this plan sets out a path for the Council to meet its Best Value Duty.

2.14 Below is further detail on each aspect of the Plan.

Priorities	Workstreams	Aims	Objectives
Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change	Leading with purpose and direction	We will have a published Corporate Plan and a revised operating model for service delivery, that is developed in partnership by Members and officers. This workstream will refocus our efforts and actions on being exemplary and visible place leaders for the communities we serve.	A long-term purpose and direction for the Council
			Develop a medium-term Corporate Plan that continues the change and improvement programme of the Council.
			Strategy-led business planning
	Building our corporate capability	We will have a new operating model that positions the Council as enabling the most effective and efficient delivery of public services within the resources available. We will redesign our organisation and have a corporate structure agreed and mobilised that has the right people in the right jobs to make a significant personal and corporate contribution to change.	Develop, consult and approve a new operating model for the Council
Redesign and restructure the Council			
Improving Governance and Controls	Establishing the foundations for governance excellence	We will have in place the policies and practice required to demonstrate strong governance. We will ensure that our policies are compliant and provide a solid foundation for the efficient and effective delivery of corporate and service priorities.	Review and refresh all of our governing policies
			Build a capable and effective scrutiny function
			Undertake a governance review for all external companies or partnership bodies that the Council has an interest in
	Creating an exemplary control environment	We will have in place processes, protocols and a culture of accountability, that positions the Council as having a highly effective control environment. Members and Senior Leaders will collaborate to develop and implement an approach to the management of risk, including ensuring officers are empowered to deliver	Create a Council-wide strong risk managed operating environment
			The Council's assurance and audit functions are re-set

Priorities	Workstreams	Aims	Objectives
		corporate objectives within a clearly articulated scheme of delegation. Through our control environment we will be accountable and transparent internally and externally for our actions.	Proportionate processes that maximise transparency and accountability are developed
Improving Financial Sustainability	Divestment of the Council's investments	We will have significantly reduced the debt of the Council and reduced the budget financing debt charges to secure a more stable financial position in the longer term to mitigate future risks.	Dispose of investments
	Improving our stability through budgetary savings and maximisation of income	We will have implemented a range of actions to demonstrate significant savings, reductions in the capital programme, generation of capital receipts - all of which will lead to the significant reduction in general fund borrowing – as well as maximisation of income to pay down a proportion of our debt and ensure that service and programme spending delivers the highest level of service and outcomes within the constrained resources available. Spending controls as a result of the Section 114 notice have also supported in delivering this objective.	Through implementing a savings programme, alongside a programme to maximise income over each of the next five years and beyond, the Council's budget moves towards achieving a balanced position.
			Detailed plan to generate capital receipts
			Develop a Capital Programme which leads to General Fund borrowing which is significantly smaller and aligned to the Corporate Plan.
	Improving our financial management capability and practice	We will have a fit for purpose finance function that demonstrates exemplary leadership and management, implements robust financial controls, and champions effective scrutiny and reporting to enable clear accountability, risk management and compliance with statutory requirements and accounting standards. That there is strong and appropriate financial capability for leaders, budget holders and members enabling them to fulfil their own fiduciary duties and engage meaningfully in scrutiny and challenge.	Demonstrate exemplary corporate financial leadership
			Redesign and restructure the Council's financial service
Corporate Financial Capability			

3. Challenges and Recovery Progress to date

3.1 While progress is being made, the Council continues to face challenges and difficult decisions, including:

- Maintaining and where necessary enhancing the scale and pace of change – as well as securing the capacity, capability and appropriate external support to deliver.
 - Decisions on how services are provided, linked to a different vision for the role the Council has in the community.
 - Decisions related to setting a budget for 2024/25, including savings and the impact on service levels.
 - Embedding a new Senior Leadership Team.
 - Making significant progress to improve the Council's control environment of audit, risk management etc.
 - Continuing to take steps to improve relationships and engagement between Officers and Members as well as between Members and Members.
 - Meaningful and lasting culture change takes time to be delivered and embedded.
- 3.2 The Council is actively monitoring of these challenges and putting measures in place to minimise their impact on the Council's improvement. This includes taking a programme management approach to organisational change, as well as continually improving how we communicate and engage internally and externally.
- 3.3 Appended to this report is the progress update information considered by the Improvement and Recovery Board in December. This provides an overall position of each priority and project, with a specific focus on the milestones and risks associated to ensure Commissioners and Members have visibility of what could impact on the Council's improvement and what is being done to mitigate those risks. The minutes of the Commissioner-led boards can also be found on the Council's website.

Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change

- 3.4 Achievements and progress since last report:
- Working groups established to further develop the new operating model workstreams: Locality; Corporate Services; Communications and Engagement; Commissioning; Change Management.
 - Locality model kick-off workshop completed in December.
 - Engagement with Leadership Group and Managers Conference on Operating Model
 - Work started to develop a multi-year Corporate Plan.
 - Interim measures put in place to report on the performance of Council services.
 - Appointments made to Assistant Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Resources (Monitoring Officer) and Executive Director of Place roles.
 - Recruitment of Assistant Director posts commenced.

- Programme Director for overall Change programme onboard to add capacity and capability to delivery.
- Technical Change Management Training sessions held for Managers & Leaders to build internal change management capability.
- Change & resilience support training delivered to workforce.
- Change Community resource developed and accessible via Oracle.

3.5 Sector and External Support:

- **Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC)** – supporting the work of the Change Team to develop a new operating model, savings and development of the Programme and Project Management Office.

3.6 Issues and Risks:

- Deliverability of new operating model – primary focus of this workstream has been to work with the organisation and PwC to develop the new operating model. Capacity and capability will be required to deliver the model to the scale and pace required.
- Recruitment to Chief Finance Officer position and Assistant Director roles.
- Communications – ongoing openness and transparency in external and internal communications.

Improving Governance and Controls

3.7 Achievements and progress since last report:

- Mazars on board to provide capacity and support to the internal audit function.
- New arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny committees and Standards and Audit Committee considered by Governance Recovery Board ahead of engagement Members more widely.
- Member mentoring has commenced or has been offered to all political leaders.
- Report writing training delivered to senior officers.
- New report writing guidance and template developed.
- Draft Financial Regulations updates to the Council's constitution produced, including Contract Procedure Rules.
- The Consolidated Full Business Case for the Thames Freeport has been submitted to DLUHC.
- New Risk Management Strategy & Framework developed and taken to Standards & Audit Committee
- Bespoke risk management training for Standards & Audit Committee members and generic overview training for all members
- LGA commissioned to deliver awareness raising training on the role of Audit and to provide tailored development of Standards & Audit Committee members.
- Detailed reviews of Regeneration Projects (highlighted in BVI) undertaken and reported to O&S and Cabinet with next steps agreed.
- LGA Planning Advisory Service Peer Review of Planning Service undertaken.

- Local Plan Initial Options Proposals (Reg 18) Consultation approved by Council.

3.8 Sector and external support:

- **Local Government Association (LGA)** – in addition to the core offer to the Council as a member of the LGA, a package of support has been proposed including communications support, Member mentoring, Member training including the Leadership Academy, Member and Officer development, the review of the constitution, and audit reviews and refresh.
- **Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS)** – leading on the review of the overview and scrutiny function of the Council and supplementing the related aspect of the LGA support.
- **Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA)** – conducted the review of Council-owned companies, Constitution Review, Financial Regulations and Contract Procedure Rules.

3.9 Issues and Risks:

- Securing the appropriate resource to support the full review of the constitution.

Improving Financial Sustainability

3.10 Achievements and progress since last report:

- Very good progress on the divestments workstreams - the Council aiming to have divested or have underway over 90% of its Council's investment portfolio by 31 March 2024.
- Finance function review and restructure complete and recruitment commenced.
- Review of HRA recharges conducted by CIPFA found no significant issues relating to the HRA ring-fence and made recommendations where improvements could be made.
- Investment Advisory Panel has been established and met.
- 2023/24 savings business cases and CEIAs considered by Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet, and programme of communications and engagement commenced.
- Treasury Strategy, Capital Programme, HRA Business Plan and Revenue Budget proposals developed for Commissioners and Members to consider through the budget setting process.
- MRP has been reviewed and a series of improvements set up for action.
- Properties currently being marketed with estimated anticipated sale receipts of c.£56million.

3.11 Sector and External Support:

- **CIPFA** – conducted a review of HRA recharges, support to the Divestment Strategy
- **Avison Young** – providing independent valuations of the Council's assets.
- **PwC** – working with the Change Team, provided cross-cutting savings outline business cases to the value of £5.6million for 2024/25 as part of

the direction to reshape the Council in order to become financial sustainable.

3.12 Issues and Risks:

- The ability to meet the savings targets and agree a balanced budget for 2024/25.
- Market factors impacting on the ability to gain capital receipts from asset disposals.

4. Outcomes Framework

4.1 As part of producing the enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan, an Outcomes Framework was developed in order to test whether the delivery of the plan has changed things in a meaningful way.

4.2 The 12 key outcomes are listed below and will be used by the Council to consider whether the changes made have led to tangible improvements. This will also form the basis of how progress is reported to both Members and Commissioners.

Improvement in the quality of decision making	Improvement in value for money	Improvement in corporate capability	Improvement in policy and practice through the use of external expertise
Improvement in collaboration between officers and between Members and officers	Improvement in responsiveness to poor performance	Improvement in risk management	Improvement in assurance and audit
Improvement in the transparency of performance information	Improvement in Member and officer confidence	Improvement in public and partner confidence in the Council	Improvement in responsiveness to the public

4.3 As this is a new element of how we measure progress, over the coming months we will assess the starting point / baseline for where the Council is against each outcome so that we can measure what improvement has been made, including using the independent methods as set out in the Plan.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 This is the second report updating Cabinet on progress towards the Council’s improvement and recovery.

5.2 Cabinet are also asked to refer the report to Full Council to ensure all Members are sighted on the progress to-date.

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

6.1 Not applicable.

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

7.1 There are no direct impacts as a result of this report.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Karen Ind**
Management Account

Revenue budget has been set aside for two years as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to fund the additional resource required to support the delivery of the Enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan. This resource and capacity will enable the Council to move towards financial sustainability by the delivery of long-term savings, maximising income, demonstrating value for money, divestment of the Council's investments and review of the Capital Programme. It will also allow the Council to improve the governance and controls and implement the culture change required by the organisation. Grant funding and external support, where available, will be used to fund delivery.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye**
Interim Head of Legal Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation in this update report.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no direct diversity and equality implications from the recommendations in this progress update report.

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

There are no direct significant implications from the recommendations in this progress update report.

9. 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):

- Documents relating to the intervention in Thurrock Council, DLUHC - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/intervention-at-thurrock-council>
- Progress on Thurrock Council's Improvement and Recovery, Full Council 27 September 2023 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MID=6348#A117934>
- Improvement and Recovery Plan (approval of the enhanced plan), Full Council 25 October 2023 - <https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MID=6349#A119348>

10. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Progress Reporting to Improvement and Recovery Board for December

Report Author:

Luke Tyson

Chief Intervention Officer

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Improvement and Recovery Plan Report to Improvement and Recovery Board

Page 27
18 December 2023

Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change

Priority Theme

Page 28

Initiative	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
Building Corporate Capability	Nov-23 Apr-26	01. Concept			<p>The overall project is in concept phase following publishing of the Council's enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) at Council on 25 October 2023. The IRB report articulated the objectives of this project and how its expected outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the Council's strategic priority of Improving Leadership to Accelerate Change.</p> <p>This is the first status report for the Building Corporate Capability project which incorporates a new project to stand up a Programme and Project Management Office (PPMO) along with relevant previous Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) projects, namely Organisational Design, Leadership and Operating Model, which have been mapped to Implementing a New Operating Model and Redesign and Restructure of the Council.</p> <p>Standing up a Programme and Project Management Office is progressing the recruitment of project officers and resourcing. It is the more straightforward workstream of this project, which when established and embedded will support improved delivery of the Council's change programme and contribute to mitigation of change management issues and risks. Redesign and Restructure of the Council is in concept with senior leadership recruitment progressing and the wider organisational design will be informed and shaped by the new Operating Model design and as such will only be progressed once the Operating Model solution design has been progressed further. The New Operating Model is wide in scope and complex and will require scoping work to be undertaken and resourcing to support stakeholder analysis and project management.</p>
Leading vision and direction	Nov-23 Apr-25	03. Design			<p>This is the first status report for the Leading a new vision and direction project which incorporates relevant projects from the previous IRP. The project is in design phase. The IRP clearly articulated the objectives of this project and how its expected outcomes will contribute to the achievement of the Council's strategic priority of Improving leadership to accelerate change.</p> <p>A delivery plan has been drafted incorporating key milestones for the development of a long-term purpose and direction for the Council, the Council's Corporate Plan and its Performance Management and Assurance Framework (PMAF) and strategy led business planning approach. Milestones for the projects are aligned to Council and senior leadership meetings to ensure necessary approvals are obtained and effective engagement is undertaken throughout. The project will take a phased delivery approach due to the interdependency of work packages in each workstream and timescales involved in recruiting to the remaining vacancies within the new senior management structure.</p>

Aggregated Risk Matrix (open items only)

Impact

4 - Catastrophic
3 - Significant
2 - Minor
1 - Insignificant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (LFC 002) - IR-003 Availability of project resource (LFC 002) - IR-006 Corporate Plan signoff delay (LFC 002) - IR-011 Not achieving cross-party consensus impacting CP sign off (LFC 003) - IR-011 Budget constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (LFC 003) - IR-001 Resourcing 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (LFC 002) - IR-008 Tight timeline for Corporate Plan (LFC 003) - IR-003 Optimising productivity of the PPMO (LFC 003) - IR-005 Enough service based resource to support delivery of the change programme (LFC 003) - IR-012 HR Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (LFC 003) - IR-002 Noncompliance to Governance Handbook (LFC 003) - IR-007 Leadership capability gaps (LFC 003) - IR-008 Lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation (LFC 003) - IR-009 Change legacy - failure to recognise impact (LFC 003) - IR-013 Capacity and capability deficit due to staff attrition (LFC 003) - IR-014 Org. ill equipped to successfully deliver change 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (LFC 002) - IR-005 Personnel and process changes due to restructures (eg Finance restructure) 	

KEY:
 Projects
 LFC 002 – Leading a New Vision and Direction
 LFC 003 – Building Corporate Capability

1 - Unlikely 2 - Possible 3 - Probable 4 - Extremely Likely or Definite

Probability

Project	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-001	Standing Up a PPMO	Resourcing: Unable to attract suitable project officer/manager candidates, then there is a risk of shortfall in available skilled resource to meet the demands of the Change Programme. The potential result is the Council will fail to meet its priority improvement objectives as planned	Gary Staples	12	Treat: Revisit the job description, readvertise the role and expand advertising channels to include social media	29/11/23 Post to be readvertised by 01/12/23 Snr PO role JD being developed	Gary Staples	29-Feb-24	
Building Corporate Capability	IR-002	Standing Up a PPMO	Noncompliance to Governance Handbook: Lack of awareness & engagement of the Governance Handbook, then there is a risk of noncompliance with agreed governance protocols. The potential result is lack of improvement in corporate capability to apply programme and project management governance principles	CPT	9	Treat: Communication strategy	29/11/23 Meeting set up to plan PMO launch	Gary Staples	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-007	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p>Leadership capability gaps: A lack of leadership/management change skill and experience to a requisite standard to support and lead delivery of the IRP actions and their service/teams through the transformation</p> <p>Impact: uncoordinated and inconsistent standard in the delivery of change/IRP activities, Leaders /Managers fail to recognise the impacts of change on their teams, staff feel unsupported and disengaged leading to a lack of understanding and desire to support the change (increased resistance)</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p>Treat: Leadership and Management Development Modules delivered as a priority, specific focus on change management and critical skills. Development sessions also incorporated into Leadership Group and Mangers Conference</p>	<p>29/11 Additional Technical Change Mgt training sessions held Oct/Nov/Dec; twice monthly sessions scheduled for 2024 to support leaders technical change management capability.</p> <p>25/09 good attendance at change training sessions. Change Community resource developed and socialised</p> <p>22/08 Additional Change Mgt sessions scheduled Aug - Nov, awaiting outcomes of PwC skills gaps. Leadership Group development session 12th Sept</p> <p>28/07 SLT development programme work progressing ready for delivery Autumn 2023. Change Management sessions delivered July, excellent feedback and additional sessions scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct. Behaviours diagnostic carried out 3 x Managers Conference to inform L&M framework, further workshops scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct to progress the L&M Framework indicators.</p> <p>28/06/23 SLT development programme in development. Leading Change training scheduled early July for managers/leaders. Managers Conference x 3 scheduled for mid-July - development session. Leadership Group development sessions scheduled Sept 2023</p> <p>Change Team creation to support the consistent delivery of intervention projects and activities. Change Team will ensure change impacts are recognised and action taken to mitigate.</p> <p>05/05 "Change Management for Leaders" content under development (May), & date to be scheduled for Leadership Group development session.</p> <p>05/05 Schedule for development sessions for wider audience under development (May), dates to be released once content is fully developed.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

Page 34

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-008	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p>Lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation: Significant critical skills deficit within Culture and Leadership Workstream. A lack of available specialist technical skill/experience within the organisation (Org Development/Design and Change SMEs or practitioners, trained facilitators etc) required to inform and support delivery of the workstream activities. Impact: lack of critical specialist skills required to support successful design and development of Theme activities will constrain and delay progress of theme activities development and delivery, theme success outcomes and performance standards are not achieved</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p>Treat: Implementation of the resourcing and capacity plan. Proactive recruitment of additional skills/capacity. Identification of internal talent who can be developed swiftly to fulfil skills gaps</p>	<p>28/06/23 3 x OD/Change leads now recruited and progressing work within the L&C Theme. OD Manager working with OD/Change Leads to direct and deliver. Creation of The Change Team will allow for additional resources to be directed to specific L&C Theme activities The Programme Director for change is starting Monday 5 December Specialist OD resources aligned to the project in place.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A





Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-009	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p>Change legacy - failure to recognise impact: Historically Thurrock does not implement projects and adopt change successfully Impact: the legacy of this will engender attitudes of apathy and lack of trust and motivation to engage with and support the transformation. Uncoordinated and inconsistent standard in the delivery of change/IRP activities, Leaders /Managers fail to recognise the impacts of change on their teams, staff feel unsupported and disengaged leading to a lack of understanding and desire to support the change (increased resistance)</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p>Treat: Technical Change Management Training developed and delivered to the Change Team members and HR BPS, to build awareness and understanding using a structured process to deliver change activities. A Change Toolkit designed a Leaders and Managers support to guide through key change activities aligned with the PM methodology. Sessions to support staff going through change delivered through to March 2024 to build capability to deal with the change at Thurrock.</p>	<p>29/11 Technical Change Mgt sessions scheduled twice monthly. for 2024. Practical application of change management activities for live projects sessions scheduled for 2024. Continued managing change sessions delivered by L&D for 2024. Change Leads assigned to specific projects for IRP to support managers delivering change and to support identification & management of staff impacts of change. 25/09 As below training sessions, Change Community support resources now available through Oracle 22/08 Additional Change Mgt sessions running Aug - Nov to build leadership & management capability 28/07 Change Management sessions delivered July, excellent feedback and additional sessions scheduled Aug/Sept/Oct. 05/07 Technical Change Management Training developed and delivered to the Change Team members and HR BPS, to build awareness and understanding using a structured process to deliver change activities (July/Aug 2023). The Change Toolkit designed a Leaders and Managers support to guide through key change activities aligned with the PM methodology live July 2023. Sessions to support staff going through change delivered from July 2023 through to March 2024 to build capability to deal with the change at Thurrock.</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-013	Redesign and restructure the Council	<p>Capacity and capability deficit due to staff attrition: Due to the significant changes within the organisation, there is an increase in voluntary resignation and the additional voluntary and compulsory redundancy following the outcomes of the budget saving work over the next 3 years and the Thurrock improvement plan creating a reduction in capacity and capability. This in likelihood will lead to reduced core skills and experience for the delivery of BAU activity currently and the key skills required for the future new ways of working. Inherent in any significant change is the disengagement of a percentage of staff with the process and the outcomes of the required changes to their behaviours and ways of working and therefore a reduction in staff engagement, commitment and morale.</p>	Tina Dempsey	9	<p>Treat: Robust business case validation Recruitment and resourcing of appropriately skilled expertise Extensive staff engagement and communication</p>	<p>29/11/23 Actions to date include: Technical Change Management training for leaders & managers to build internal change capability delivered Change support training (3 hrs sessions) for all staff and managers delivered Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on required new behaviours to support change delivery Engagement with Leadership on required new behaviours to support change delivery Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on the high-level proposals for the operating model</p>	Tina Dempsey	01-Apr-24	A

Project Ref	Ref	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Building Corporate Capability	IR-014	Operating Model/ Standing up a PPMO	<p>Org. ill equipped to successfully deliver change: Organisation not equipped with capacity/capability to deliver change successfully</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of forward planning and structured approach for key change projects (e.g. Operating Model) -Change legacy -Lack of change management capability & capacity -Lack of structured approach to change management delivery 	Tina Dempsey	9	<p>Treat: Operating mode workstreams formed – planned work approach beginning Dec 23. Realistic resourcing and scheduling approach to improve sustainable implementation and embedding. Leaders and managers engagement sessions ongoing to facilitate understanding and co-design. As a key enabler of the IRP's delivery and success a Change Team has been stood up, aligned with the new PPMO and key deliverers to influence feasibility, change readiness and adoption. The objective to build internal change capability and capacity aims to ensure that change is planned and supported successfully. Change management support and training is made available to all staff with the aim to build capability for managing change. Leaders and managers are offered targeted technical change management training. A change community resource is available via Oracle to support and equip staff with relevant content and tools. Additional change operating capacity will be provided through the new Programme Director who starts imminently, and ultimately the new Assistant CEX</p>	<p>29/11/23 Actions to date include: Change SMEs recruited Change Team created Technical Change Management training for leaders & managers to build internal change capability delivered Change support training (3 hrs sessions) for all staff and managers delivered Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on required new behaviours to support change delivery Engagement with Leadership on required new behaviours to support change delivery Managers Conferences x 3 – engagement on the high-level proposals for the operating model Engagement with Leadership Group on the high-level proposals for the operating model SME resources allocated to Operating Model Programme Volunteer requests for Operating Model Workstream team members Change Community support resources for all staff to access OD SME resources allocated to the new IRP Programme</p>	Sue Church	04-Apr-24	A




Governance and Controls Priority Theme






Related Projects Status

Project	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
<p>An Exemplary Control Environment</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 39</p>	Jan-23 Dec-24	04. Delivery			<p>The focus has been on migrating the projects from the old IRP to the new IRP. The project workstreams are now: 'Improving RM Practice', 'Improving Audit Practice' and 'Improving Transparency & Accountability'.</p> <p>The former Information Governance project has been removed and replaced with a workstream focusing on transparency. (This requires additional work). All workstreams are in delivery. The former Chief Internal Auditor has left the Council with a part time interim CIA resource being provided by Mazars pending an appointment being made as part of the Finance Restructure. Key achievements since the last theme report include:</p> <p>Improving Risk Management Practice - 1) ROM Strategy & Framework review paper taken to Standards & Audit Committee on 30/10 and to SLT on 29/11. Report prepared for submission to Cabinet. 2) Work on the refresh of the Corporate Risk Register continues with a report to SLT scheduled in December (SAC in Feb 24) 3) RM training for SAC members on 30/10 and on 23/11 for all members. (Further sessions planned in December and January).</p> <p>Improving Audit Practice - 1) Mazars senior manager acting as Interim Chief Internal Auditor, 2) Mazars on site and undertaking audit work, 3) Discussions with the LGA to agree the scope of awareness raising training of the role of Audit and tailored development of Standards & Audit Committee members</p> <p>Improving Transparency & Accountability - 1) Mentor secured for the Deputy Conservative Leader, 2) New approach for delegated decisions embedded into Cabinet Report agenda items 3) Engagement approach agreed to develop quality assurance surveys of Members Enquiries</p>
Foundations for Governance Excellence	Jan-23 Dec-24	04. Delivery			<p>The focus has been on migrating the projects from the old IRP to the new IRP. The project workstreams are now: 'Improving Governance', 'Thames Freeport AB' and 'Company Governance'. As a result of the migration to the new IRP the project in respect of Thurrock Regeneration Ltd has been part moved to the Financial Sustainability Theme (asset disposal) with the governance aspects remaining to be included in a workstream to review all companies and partnerships. This needs to be scoped. Delivery is underway in respect of Improving Governance and Thames Freeport. Key achievements since the last theme report include:</p> <p>Improving Governance - 1) Discussions held with LGA to revisit the request for support to deliver the Constitution Review and potential suppliers investigated. Financial Procedure Rules aspects of Constitution significantly advanced with formal consultation with CWG underway 2) New arrangements for O&S agreed by GRB and work programming sessions scheduled for January to engage Members more widely 3) Agreement secured to split Standards & Audit Committee to 2 separate committees 4) New report writing guide designed and ready for consultation, 5) New approach to minute taking launched, 6) Proposed new report writing template designed ready for consultation</p> <p>Freeport Accountable Body – 1) Signed and submitted the Consolidated Full Business Case to the Freeport for onward submission to DLUHC 2) Raised concerns again about current governance arrangements 3) Begun process to develop retained Business Rates Strategy</p> <p>Company Governance - Workstream content being scoped.</p>

Impact	Probability			
	1 - Unlikely	2 - Possible	3 - Probable	4 - Extremely Likely or Definite
4 - Catastrophic		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 002) - IR-004 Failure to deliver cultural change (GC 002) - IR-005 External perceptions of the Council's governance do not change (GC 002) - IR-008 Council and Freeport OpCo unable to agree Freeport Business Plan and Contract (GC 002) - IR-009 Council unable to resource Accountable Body Function (GC 002) - IR-010 Proper governance arrangements to secure delivery of Freeport Accountable Body not in place (GC 003) - IR-004 Failure to deliver a cultural change in the practice of Risk Management (GC 003) - IR-005 External & Internal views of Council's ROM approach do not change (GC 003) - IR-012 Failure to deliver a cultural change in the practice of Audit (GC 003) - IR-013 Internal and External perceptions of Internal Audit do not change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 002) - IR-006 Council, Freeport and DLUHC unable to agree MOU and associated legal agreements (GC 002) - IR-011 Seed Capital Projects (GC 002) - IR-012 Retained Business Rates Strategy 	
3 - Significant		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 002) - IR-001 Failure to recruit to key posts in the Democratic Services Team (GC 002) - IR-002 Inadequate levels of engagement from stakeholders (GC 003) - IR-010 Lack of engagement from business in the Audit Improvement workstream (GC 003) - IR-015 Member Development (GC 003) - IR-016 Members Enquiries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 002) - IR-003 Low availability of resources to support the delivery of the project (GC 003) - IR-003 Availability of project resource (GC 003) - IR-006 Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data (GC 003) - IR-007 Lack of knowledge & skills for Risk Management across the council (GC 003) - IR-011 Availability of resource to support the Audit Improvement workstream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 003) - IR-001 ROM Review (GC 003) - IR-008 Restructure of Finance Department (GC 003) - IR-009 Recruitment to key posts in the Internal Audit Team (GC 003) - IR-014 Impact on the Internal Audit function as a result of the restructure of Finance Department
2 - Minor		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (GC 003) - IR-002 Low level of engagement from the business in the Risk Improvement Workstream 		
1 - Insignificant				

KEY:
 Projects
 GC 002 – An Exemplary Control Environment
 GC 003 – Foundations of Governance Excellence

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-011	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	Seed Capital Projects: Timeframe to approve and deliver Seed Capital schemes	Stephen Taylor	12	Treat: 1) Detailed partner engagement with Freeport OpCo and with final grant recipients	11 - Accountable Body preparing for subsidy control assessment and working with Freeport OpCo to address gaps in Outline Business Cases as they stand 10 - WSP appointed by Freeport OpCo to work with grant recipients to develop OBCs 10 - Raised reprofiling seed capital schemes with DLUHC 09 - Accountable Body feedback on initial OBCs - significant gaps in information	Stephen Taylor	30-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-012	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	Retained Business Rates Strategy: Accountable Body and TFGB unable to agree Retained Business Rates Strategy and Approach	Stephen Taylor	12	Treat: Partner engagement initially with OpCo and then with TFGB	11 - Initial meeting on principles held by Thurrock Council and OpCo. Thurrock stressed importance of Best Value, of supporting projects that benefit Thurrock	Stephen Taylor	30-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-006	Open	Freeport Accountable Body	Council, Freeport and DLUHC unable to agree MOU and associated legal agreements: Parties unable to agree legal framework for the Freeport	Stephen Taylor	12	Treat: 1) Partner engagement	10-11 - Issue raised in person and via email between Head of Freeport and Head of Programmes at Freeport OpCo 09 - Issue raised formally again by CEO at TFGB meeting 07 - Issue formally raised again by monitoring officer through email exchange 03 - Council concerns about existing governance arrangements issues raised with Freeport OpCo and collaboration agreement proposed	Stephen Taylor	31-Mar-24	




Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-001	Open	Improving Risk Management	ROM Review: Capacity/Resource - Limited capacity/resource and/or competing priorities lead to project delay	Andy Owen	12	Treat: Development of plans (project and service level) to manage position and ongoing monitoring of developments and progress against plans.	11 - Project schedule is mapped out and being managed to target. No project slippage experienced to date	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-003	Open	Improving Risk Management	Availability of project resource: Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Andy Owen	9	Treat: Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 - On track. Project schedule is being met.	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-006	Open	Improving Risk Management	Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data: Risk Registers - Lack of single point of storage or system for risk data, leads to inadequate & inefficient analysis, recording & reporting of risk information	Andy Owen	9	Treat: Management Strategy - Research and gather info on system, report findings and if agreed commission system.	11 - No action taken since last meeting. To be addressed when Risk Management function is fully established	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-007	Open	Improving Risk Management	Lack of knowledge & skills for Risk Management across the council: Lack of knowledge & skills for RM across the council leads to limited or inconsistent application for the management of risks and non compliance with the RM strategy & framework	Andy Owen	9	Treat: Management Strategy - Develop and implement training programme to meets stakeholders needs and to support the delivery of the ROM strategy and framework	11 - Strategy, Policy & Framework and supporting guidance has been refreshed. Bespoke training provided to Members, SLT and directorate based senior leads. When risk function is fully established further training and support will be made available	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-008	Open	Improving Risk Management	Restructure of Finance Department: Restructure of Finance Dept will temporarily impact on the delivery of the risk workstream	Andy Owen	12	Treat: Manage (see actions)	11 - First phase of recruitment of new service management is underway	Andy Owen	31-Mar-24	

Page 43







Open Aggregated Risks by exception – both projects

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-009	Open	Improving Audit Practice	Recruitment to key posts in the Internal Audit Team: Inability to recruit senior internal auditor posts results in capacity and capability gaps for the service	Mark Chalkley	12	Treat: Targeted recruitment in specialist press	11 - Mazars now embedded into team and undertaking scheduled Audit work. Mazars also providing interim CIA role 09 - High level scope shared with Mazars and contact made with the client. Fieldwork to start 6th October. Finance restructure out to consultation with increased capacity and training identified for the Internal Audit service. 08 - Mazars formally appointed. Programme of work for them to deliver has been agreed and they will commence on site work in September 07 -Most recent advert for recruitment of second post was not successful. Recruitment will continue. In the short-term, APEX Framework will now be utilised, and an interim resource to support the service has been secured from Mazars who will start in September 2023.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	A
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-011	Open	Improving Audit Practice	Availability of resource to support the Audit Improvement workstream: Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Mark Chalkley	9	Treat: Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 – LGA commissioned to provide leadership and member support in respect of the role of audit as part of governance 09 - Subject to finance restructure and available resources following recruitment to vacant posts. 08 - Appointment of Mazars to undertake audit work will further enable audit team members to support the project 07 - New SIA supporting project delivery 06 - The newly appointed Senior Internal Auditor has been brought into the project to support the delivery of key activities - conducting the self assessment against national standards.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	A

Page 44

Project	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
An Exemplary Control Environment	IR-014	Open	Improving Audit Practice	Impact on the Internal Audit function as a result of the restructure of Finance Department: Changes to the structure of the Internal Audit service result in a lack of personnel to deliver the workstream	Mark Chalkley	12	Treat: Recruitment process in line with new structure	11 - Recruitment underway for new Head of Service and Mazars providing interim senior support. 09 - Finance restructure date extended to 6th October. 08 - Finance restructure currently out to consultation which finishes 29th September 23.	Mark Chalkley	31-Mar-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence Page 45	IR-001	Open	Improving Governance	Failure to recruit to key posts in the Democratic Services Team Inability to recruit to scrutiny posts results in capacity and capability gaps for the service	Matt Boulter	9	Treat: Targeted recruitment in specialist press	11 - Successful appointment of 3 positions has taken place. Staff will start in January 2024. Challenges becoming evident with the level of support required for onboarding new members of staff 08 - Recruitment continues to be a significant challenge. Agency recruitment has not been successful. Options for secondments from the Legal Department are currently being explored. 07 - Recruitment campaign continues 06 - Failure to recruit temporary staff via agencies has led to business case to seek temporary staff through other means. Request made to LGA and CfGS for support 04-05 - Failure in permanent recruitment led to sourcing of temporary staff via agencies 09- All internal activities completed and new posts out to advert with a deadline of last quarter of October.	Matt Boulter	31-May-24	
Foundations of Governance Excellence	IR-003	Open	Improving Governance	Low availability of resources to support the delivery of the project: Limited project resource capacity and competing requests leads to a longer delivery period	Matt Boulter	9	Treat: Recruiting additional resource funded by the programme as appropriate	11 - Issue escalated to LGA and further meeting to discuss requirements arranged for 5/12 10- Recruitment underway. LGA chased for further support on Constitution review 08 - LGA have been approached to supply support for constitution review. Awaiting response 07 - Resource plan approved by SLT, recruitment exercise underway 07 - Specialist expertise has been brought in via CfGS to support O&S reviews and LGA scoping a proposal for Constitution review 06 - GRB requested a resource plan to be developed, to deliver a sustainable governance function, for consideration by SLT 05 - Project Manager has engaged with CIPFA & CfGS to secure additional external expertise to support delivery	Matt Boulter	31-May-24	

Financial Sustainability Priority Theme

Initiative	Start & End Dates	Current Phase	RAG Status		Overall Status Commentary
			Overall	Plan	
Budgetary Stability	Oct-23 Apr-24	04. Delivery			The Council is currently working through four major workstreams to seek to achieve financial stability: Divestment of investments – this is progressing well with over 90% of the investments planned to be in progress or complete by March 2024. Assets sales of over £100m currently estimated, £40m in 2023/24 and £40m in 2024/25 Reducing the borrowing financing the general fund capital programme to as low as possible over a 5 year period – currently standing at circa £5m Identifying and delivering £18.2m of revenue savings in 2024.25. All identified to date – some at OBC stage
Divestment	Apr-23 Mar-24	04. Delivery			The Council continues to progress all 14 divestments supported by advisors who provide regular updates on progress with a key focus on the Toucan administration process, that is currently progressing towards a sale in November/December 2023 and Just Loans Group (JLG). Both represent a significant proportion of the total and remain on track. Work is also progressing on divesting from the other financial investments, work has commenced on the windfarm sales, where we are now focusing on agreeing the sale and the approach. The project remains and is likely to remain at an amber rating, as an act of caution. This project is unlikely to progress towards a green rating until funds have been recouped successfully. The dates provided for the milestones and tasks within the project schedule are regularly discussed, reviewed and updated accordingly as the project progresses. Amber reflects that certain activities that are outside of the Council's direct control - for example the company administration process.
Financial Management	Nov-23 Mar-24	04. Delivery			A series of matters have been and are being addressed within the Council: The Council's financial model has been and will be further reviewed The budget process – pace and quality has been considerably improved for 2024/25 The Council's MRP has been reviewed and a series of improvements set up for action The half year and full year Treasury Management reports are in preparation The Restructure was completed on 26 October 2023 and staff assimilated to their roles. The Recruitment Phase began almost immediately with the drafting of adverts. Following feedback from managers the recruitment phase was split into two phases, pre and post Christmas 2023. This is to allow for higher priority posts to be filled urgently and for a smooth handover from agency staff to permanent staff in the new year depending on the success or otherwise of the recruitment campaign. Phase 1 interviews are due to begin in week commencing 5 December 2023.

Milestones

Priority / Programme	Workstream / Project	Objective / Service Business Case	Milestone	2023/24					2024/25												
				Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Improving Financial Sustainability	Divestment of the Council's investments	Dispose of investments	Toucan: Planned Financial Close																		
			Wind Farms: Approval to seek market options agreed																		
			CCLA: Financial Close																		
			Preliminary assessment of tail investments																		
			90+% of investment portfolio divested (subject to Toucan, Wind Farms and CCLA coming to fruition)																		
	Improving our stability through budgetary savings and maximisation of income	Through implementing a savings programme, alongside a programme to maximise income over each of the next five years and beyond, the Council's budget moves towards achieving a balanced position.	Fees and Charges Business Cases: Overview & Scrutiny 14/02/24																		
			Savings Business Cases: Overview & Scrutiny 28/11/23																		
			Draft budget proposals: 2nd Overview and Scrutiny 14/02/24																		
			Budget proposals Cabinet 26/02/24																		
			1 year savings plan: Council approval 06/03/24																		
			Budget: Council 06/03/24																		
			New fees and charges effective																		
			Delivery of savings business cases 11 January and 8 March																		
			Delivery Risk Assessment 24/25 starts																		
			Detailed plan to generate capital receipts	Cabinet Report on Asset Disposals 13/03/24																	
	Develop a Capital Programme which leads to General Fund borrowing which is significantly smaller and aligned to the Corporate Plan.	Cabinet Report on Asset Disposals 13/04/24																			
		General Fund draft Capital Programme changes at FRB																			
		General Fund Capital Programme: Overview and Scrutiny 14/02/24																			
		General Fund Capital Programme: Council approval 06/03/24																			
	Improving our financial management capability and practice	We will demonstrate exemplary corporate financial leadership	DSG: DBV SEND grant application submitted																		
Treasury Strategy (incl. MRP), Revenue Budget (incl. DSG Plan), HRA Business Plan: Cabinet 26/2/24																					
Treasury Strategy (incl. MRP), Revenue Budget (incl. DSG Plan), HRA Business Plan: Council 06/03/24																					
We will redesign and restructure the Council's financial service		Finance Restructure: Phase 1 recruitment starts																			
		Finance Restructure: End of Project Report 22/12/23																			
		Finance Restructure: Phase 2 recruitment starts																			
		Outcomes contained in Improvement Report and Departmental Business Plan 31/3/24																			
Corporate Financial Capability	Corporate capability and accountability: work commences																				

Page 48

Aggregated Risk Matrix (open items only)

Impact



4 - Catastrophic
3 - Significant
2 - Minor
1 - Insignificant

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 004) - IR-008 Insufficient resources to fund new structure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 002) - IR-001 Crystallised losses on Toucan, JLG / JCF, and PWE investments (FST 002) - IR-002 Borrowings (FST 002) - IR-003 Illiquid Investments (FST 004) - IR-005 Failure to recruit (FST 004) - IR-006 Inability to meet statutory responsibilities (FST 004) - IR-007 External review agencies do not have confidence that the revised structure will deliver required change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 002) - IR-004 Inflation and rates (FST 002) - IR-005 UK economic downturn
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 003) - IR-001 Significant economic downturn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 004) - IR-002 Reviews not included 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 004) - IR-003 Economic factors (FST 004) - IR-004 Asset Disposals/Disinvestments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (FST 004) - IR-001 Completion of Accounts




KEY:
 Projects
 FST 002 – Divestments
 FST 003 – Budgetary Sustainability
 FST 004 – Financial Management

1 - Unlikely 2 - Possible 3 - Probable 4 - Extremely Likely or Definite

Probability

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-001	Open	Divestments	Crystallised losses on Toucan, JLG / JCF, and PWE investments: These investments are currently or have recently undergone recovery plans to resolve identified issues. There is a risk impacting the Council's investment and leading to significant impairments, at least initially (with some additional recoveries over time depending on the strategy).	Steve Mair	12	Treat: The mitigation for this risk is to understand the timeframe of these impairments, the timeline of recoveries, the associated borrowing costs and the wider financial impact (e.g. MRP, revenues) are important to manage the risks to the Council's balance sheet.	28/11 - continues to be monitored. Work has been undertaken to further understand and mitigate the MRP implications on investments that will be shortly disposed of.	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	
Divestment	IR-002	Open	Divestments	Borrowings: The Council's refinancing strategy continues to replace maturing inter-LA loans with PWLB loans. There is a risk as new loans are taken out, the cost of borrowing will grow considerably given increases in PWLB rates in recent months.. This will diminish the net income for Thurrock and likely turn it negative.	Steve Mair	12	Treat: The mitigation for this risk is the maturity profile of the new borrowing will also need to be carefully managed to ensure it is aligned with the liquidity being targeted for investments, so as not to incur added borrowing (or repayment) costs over time.	28/11 looking at the Camdor portfolio report for October (most recent received) short term borrowing is being put in place to bridge between the divestment proceeds and the requirement to repay borrowing.	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-003	Open	Divestments	<p>Illiquid Investments: The majority of investments are illiquid by virtue, as they are in private markets. It is likely that Thurrock is locked into most of their bond investments until the maturity date, so it will be important to assess if and how liquidity may be obtained.</p>	Steve Mair	12	<p>Treat: The key mitigation for this risk is that the Council will need to carefully negotiate and manage these positions to ensure they are divested insofar as possible in line with the Council's needs and proceeds maximised. Financial structuring/restructuring as well as secondary sales processes may also need to be considered to help the Council achieve its goals.</p>	<p>23/08/23, 28/9 - Good progress has been made on Toucan, with the sales process well advanced and some distributions now flowing. The same is also true for JLG/JCF, where the servicer is now in place for the majority of the Council's exposure, and the CCLA funds, where redemption notices have been served and a timeline agreed for receipt of proceeds. Between these three, that represents c. 85% of the Council's portfolio. For the remaining positions, these are more illiquid, given the much smaller size in general, specific market dynamics in the underlying sectors and the contractual obligations or structure of the arrangements. Preliminary analysis is underway on these and the risk will be assessed in more detail following this. The Council should also consider its strategy for the equity-like positions, which do not have a contractual end date but could be sold theoretically to other investors should the company grow and/or perform well.</p> <p>28/11/23 - The position remains the same</p>	CIPFA	31-Mar-24	A

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Divestment	IR-004	Open	Divestments	<p>Inflation and rates: Inflation has risen significantly and remains elevated. The impact of this is extensive: the Council's investments will likely be dealing with increased operating costs, potentially weighing on profitability and weakening their ability to service interest payments, principal repayments or distributions to the Council. The portfolio has some protection through index-linked investments, notably solar and wind investments. The real estate exposure (CCLA) is also a partial mitigant, through the index-linkage is typically capped here and will not fully mitigate current inflation. Alongside, the Bank of England has raised rates aggressively in recent months, which has also raised borrowing costs for the Council.</p>	Steve Mair	16	<p>Tolerate: The Council will monitor and align borrowings with anticipated liquidity points to lock in borrowing costs where possible, minimise upcoming falls / gaps in net income and future asset-liability mismatches. Increased rates further weighs on asset valuations, driving down the value of underlying assets through increases in the discount rate.</p>	<p>28/11 the Council has put in place short term borrowing given any gap between divestment proceeds and repayment of borrowing. These same inflationary/macro economic factors are making it difficult for a number of the funds to refinance in order to repay the Council's investment when they fall due.</p>	Council	31-Mar-24	
Divestment	IR-005	Open	Divestments	<p>UK Economic Downturn: The Council has significant exposure to many aspects of the UK economy: property, small businesses, energy, etc. Therefore, a downturn and potential recession as growth slows would negatively impact their portfolio. We note the UK may enter a recession, which will increase the risk for several positions.</p>	Steve Mair	16	<p>Tolerate: Council to proactively monitor and engage with its positions to understand points of weakness, potential mitigants (e.g. contractual underpinnings, positive correlation to energy prices) and to ensure liquidity or exits are not impaired. Higher risk positions should be prioritised within the Council's ongoing review</p>	<p>28/11/23 – high level monitoring via boards and panels continues.</p>	Council	31-Mar-24	
Financial Management	IR-005	Open	Finance Restructure	<p>Failure to recruit: Failure to increase capacity undermines ability to improve financial sustainability</p>	Mike Thomas	12	<p>Treat: Build in a Phase 2 recruitment campaign in early 2024 to fill any remaining vacancies following Phase 1.</p>	<p>28/11 first stage recruitment active and due to end 22/12/23</p>	Mike Thomas/Sarah Hirt	31-Mar-24	

Project Ref	Ref	Status	Workstream	Title & Description	Owner (person)	Risk Rating	Control Strategy & Approach	Actions incl. Mitigations	Requires Action from	Target Date	RAG
Financial Management	IR-006	Open	Finance Restructure	Inability to meet statutory responsibilities: Failure to improve capacity and capability will potentially impact the Council's ability to meet its statutory financial responsibilities.	Steve Mair	12	Treat: Robust recruitment campaign in place, with phase 2 built in to fill any remaining vacancies following Phase 1	28/11 first stage recruitment active and due to end 22/12/23	Steve Mair	31-Mar-24	
Financial Management	IR-007	Open	Finance Restructure	External review agencies do not have confidence that the revised structure will deliver required change: External agencies (Commissioners) do not consider the changes sufficient to deliver the required cultural, strategic and operational improvements	Steve Mair	12	Treat: Regular reports to Commissioners, IRB, FRB, SLT. Commissioner and external audit views will continue to be received but increased capacity and restructure should impact views	28/11 regular reports to Commissioners, IRB, FRB and SLT continue	Steve Mair	31-Mar-24	

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10 January 2024	ITEM: 12 Decision: 110688
Cabinet	
2024/25 Revenue Budget Savings Proposals	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Cllr Graham Snell, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Human Resources and Payroll	
Accountable Assistant Director:	
Accountable Director: Chief Financial Officer/s151	
<p>This report is Public with exempt appendices</p> <p>This report contains exempt information which falls within schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.</p>	
Date of notice given of exempt or confidential report: 2 January 2024	

Executive Summary

This report outlines the revenue budget savings proposals put forward for Cabinet approval as part of the preparation for the 2024/25 Council budget.

The savings:

- total £18.2m across 53 proposals, which are considered to be deliverable in 2024/25 (some proposals may span two financial years before a full year effect is realised). Proposals have been profiled accordingly,
- have been prepared by Directorates supported by Finance, HR, Legal, the Community Development Team and further supported by PWC,
- proposals in some cases may require investment and further investigation before the full outcomes can be established. The costs will be financed from the transformation budget / capital programme as appropriate. The Scrutiny meeting on 14th February 2024 will be used for an update on any necessary proposals,

- are supported by Community Equality Impact Assessments (CEIAs) where applicable and background business cases.

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioners have been engaged in the development of budget savings proposals. The savings total £18.2m across 53 proposals and a reasonable process has been followed to assess them as deliverable in 2024/25. Securing savings is an essential part of the building a financially sustainable future for Thurrock and is in accordance with the directions as laid out by the Secretary of State. Subject to approval, it is imperative that (i) there is mobilisation of resource to ensure appropriate management and delivery of the change (ii) that delivery risk assurance is carried out on the deliverability of the savings reporting monthly to the Finance Recovery Board, such that there is full transparency of progress on mobilisation of the savings and remedial action as appropriate.

Should Members want to take proposals off the table for policy reasons it is critical they seek to identify alternative options to secure sustainability.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That Cabinet note the savings proposals at paragraphs 3.2.3 and 3.2.4 and 3.6.2, for which consultation started on the 29th November 2023 and ends on the 19th January 2024 and 7th January 2024, respectively.**
- 1.2 That Cabinet note that the remainder of the savings proposal at paragraph 3.9.7 will be reported as noted as a separate item to the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on the 14th February 2024 for final consideration.**
- 1.3 That Cabinet note that the Outline Business Case savings reported to Overview and Scrutiny on 28th November 2023, are to be re-presented when at the Full Business Case stage on the 14th February 2024 for final consideration, these are at listed at paragraphs 3.3.5 and 3.9.1, 2 and 3.**
- 1.4 That Cabinet approve the estimated expenditure as set out in paragraph 3.10, which will be met from the Transformation budget.**
- 1.5 That Cabinet note that those proposals presented at Overview and Scrutiny on the 28th November 2023 and noted as needing a CEIA (Appendix B) at the second stage will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny on the 14th February 2024 for final consideration.**
- 1.6 That Cabinet approve all proposals totalling £11.3m as listed in Appendix C that are able to progress to implementation and maximise achievable benefit in 2024/25.**

- 1.7 That Cabinet note that there are a number of proposals that are being consulted on, have outstanding CEIA's or require further development; these total £6.9m. Details are at Appendix C.
- 1.8 That Cabinet note the savings form part of the wider budget setting process and that the overall 2024/25 budget will be reported for Full Council Approval in February 2024.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 As is well known, the Council is facing virtually unprecedented financial challenges and its financial position is extremely challenging in terms of the scale of the financial impact, the time it will take the Council to recover from this and the range of issues to be dealt with. The position will undoubtedly regularly change and resolving all the known matters will take at least 5 years. A great deal of work has been undertaken and is planned to continue and develop further to improve the Council's financial position.
- 2.2 The Council has 4 major streams of budget challenges which are underway:
- selling £1.035bn of investments to the fullest extent possible (to be determined) to pay down debt,
 - generating over £100m of capital receipts to also pay down debt,
 - reducing reliance on borrowing to fund the general fund capital programme to avoid increasing debt,
 - saving £18.2m from the revenue budget for next 2 years and a further £13.65m for each of the following 3 years.
- 2.3 As part of this challenge the Council must consider and take forward revenue savings which will contribute to seeking to secure its long-term financial sustainability which are the subject of this report.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

The following sections summarise the proposed savings for each portfolio. A number of proposals have been identified as confidential in nature as they may potentially identify individuals or contain commercial sensitivities, these are set out in Appendix A, marked with ** in the below tables.

3.1 Children's Services & Housing

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0013 - Growing Portfolio of Temporary Accommodation	140
CTS0027 - Review of cases to secure appropriate Health Contribution	100
CTS0029 - Review of Social Care	233
Grand Total	473

3.1.1 CTS0013- Growing Portfolio of Temporary Accommodation

This proposal is twofold, the utilisation of existing housing stock, and to further increase the level of Council-owned properties to reduce reliance on more expensive temporary accommodation options.

3.1.2 CTS0027- Review of cases to secure appropriate Health contribution

Ongoing challenge is securing the appropriate level of funding from Health to contribute to placement costs. The reduction proposal is to seek appropriate Continuing Health Care contribution from Health for existing or emerging cases.

3.1.3 CTS0029– Review of Social Care

Changes implemented in September 2023 to the structure of Children's Social care (CSC) and Early Help (EH). This has been achieved with a requirement to focus on prioritising statutory duties, maintaining focus on child protection and preventative action. Continuing to provide the best possible outcomes for children and families and building on the 'good' Ofsted rating received in 2021. Total Saving: £310k (2023/24 £77k and 2024/25 £233k)

3.2 Education

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0028- Education and Skills Transformation	378
CTS0216- Inspire - Employability & Skills Saving	221
CTS0217- Home to School Transport - Review of Minibuses and Taxis	145
CTS0226- Home to School Transport - Policy update and post 16 charging policy	37
Grand Total	781

3.2.1 CTS0028- Education and Skills Transformation

Several changes to the operating model of the Education and Skills (E&S) Service. The changes were consulted on in the first quarter of 2023/24 and were in response to the Council's budget situation and formed part of the Children's Services Directorate contribution to the savings requirement. The revised operating model ensures resources are deployed in the most effective way and allows Children's Services to focus on the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to Education and Skills.

3.2.2 CTS0216 - Inspire - Employability & Skills Saving

A number of proposed changes to the operating model of the Inspire Youth Hub. The changes are in response to the savings outlined in the work undertaken by PWC, and the completion of our On Track grant funded programme. The revised operating model will ensure we are delivering to our minimum statutory duties.

3.2.3 **CTS0217- Home to School Transport - Review of Minibuses and Taxis**

Looking to reduce spend on minibuses and taxis to support home to school transport including exploring re-procurement options.

3.2.4 **CTS0226- Home to School Transport - Policy update and post 16 charging policy.**

There is not a statutory duty on the Council to financially support post 16 SEN transport. This business case will bring us in line with other LA's who charge for post 16 SEN transport. A consultation will take place regarding the policy to consider a range of options relating to post 16 transport, with a proposed implementation date of September 2024.

3.3 Environment, Economic Development and Directional Leadership

Savings Proposal	2024/25 £000's
CTS0098- Deletion of Land Charges Manager	69
CTS0109- Review Intelligence Officer Post in Counter Fraud & Investigation	47
CTS0136- Waste Collections	2,551
CTS0137- Trade Waste	200
CTS0209- Parks and Open Spaces*	273
CTS0124- Client Support Officer tasks moved to Support & Performance team**	45
CTS0125- Sports, Recreation & Leisure Management**	77
CTS0126- Contracts & Disposal Management**	99
CTS0304- Review of Technical Support Team**	80
CTS0307- Review of Directorate Support**	33
CTS0310- Highways and Transportation Service Management**	106
CTS0320- Review of Depot and Stores**	33
CTS0321- Emergency Planning and Public Protection Management**	103
Grand Total	3,716

3.3.1 **CTS0098- Land Charges Manager post**

The deletion of the vacant Land Charges Manager post within the Support and Performance Team.

3.3.2 **CTS0109- Review Intelligence Officer Post in Counter Fraud & Investigation**

Delete the currently vacant Intelligence Officer post.

3.3.3 **CTS0136- Waste Collections**

This project is required to deliver an operational cost saving from the waste collections services. It involves introducing alternative weekly collections for general waste & recycling waste, introducing a boroughwide separate weekly food waste collection service and a chargeable fortnightly 'green waste' service. The new garden waste service will be an opt in service, meaning only those households that pay the annual subscription fee will receive the service. The proposal is anticipated to achieve a saving of £2.915m over two years.

3.3.4 **CTS0137- Trade Waste**

Commercial waste collection is not covered by business rates and is a chargeable service. This project looks to identify opportunities to make the service more efficient and maximise income generated.

3.3.5 ***CTS0209 - Parks and Open Spaces Review – (Outline Business Case)***

Altering the maintenance levels for grass cutting within Thurrock's parks and open spaces, as well as delivering additional income through offering events spaces and hiring out concessions within these park/open space sites.

3.4 Finance, HR and Payroll - Central Financing

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0312- Business Rates Retention Pooling 2024/25	1,750
CTS0318- Council Tax Base Increase	1,030
Grand Total	2,780

3.4.1 **CTS0312- Business Rates Retention Pooling 2024/25**

The Council has identified an opportunity to enter business rates retention pooling arrangements with two other local authorities. This is projected to have a significant financial benefit to the three authorities while also aligning with existing relationships developed through the Thames Freeport.

3.4.2 **CTS0318 Contribution from improved Council Tax Base**

The 'Council Tax Base' (CTB) identifies the expected number of net billable properties for the forthcoming financial year, having taken account of current property numbers and reductions/increases related to discounts/exemptions and premiums.

3.5 Finance, HR and Payroll

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0214- People and OD Team	240
CTS0118- Finance restructure and related matters	503
Grand Total	743

3.5.1 **CTS0118- Finance restructure and related matters**

The staffing restructure plan has been worked on since May and was approved by General Services Committee on 24 August 2023. The outcome of the project will generate a saving against the original estimated budget for the restructure costs alongside a further review of remaining budget lines.

3.5.2 CTS0214- People & OD Team

The project will focus on a wider review of the HR OD Transformation Directorate and will focus on analysis of activity, duties carried out, what can be stopped, must continue, and required needs to support the organisation's transformation that will equip our workforce with the right, skills, knowledge, and expertise to deliver services to our residents.

3.6 Health, Adult Health, Community and Public Protection

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0001- S117 Reviews to Improve Efficiencies	367
CTS0004- Review Charging Policy for Assistive Technology	50
CTS0006- Review of Care Packages	832
CTS0011- Direct Debits	106
CTS0015- Commissioning Review - LD and MH Services	125
CTS0021- Expansion of Community Led Support Teams	72
CTS0133- Housing First	50
CTS0319- Caring for Thurrock	562
Grand Total	2,164

3.6.1 CTS0001- S117 Reviews to improve efficiencies.

Utilisation of transformation funding for two part-time posts for a fixed term period to pro-actively clear a backlog of reviews on the current cohort of clients under Section 117 arrangements following discharge from secondary mental healthcare. Until a S117 review is completed, all patients are entitled to free care, meaning that a delay in S117 reviews could result in avoidable costs accruing to the council from residents whose financial circumstances mean that they would not qualify for 100% funded community care.

3.6.2 CTS0004- Review Charging Policy for Assistive Technology

Thurrock's current charges for Assistive Technology do not allow for full cost recovery and benchmark low compared to many other local authorities. Adult Social Care proposes to consult on proposals to increase charges for Assistive Technology. Subject to the financial assessment as defined by the Care Act (2014), individuals not entitled to free care may be asked to pay more towards the cost of their Assistive Technology.

3.6.3 CTS0006- Reviews of Care Packages

There is currently a backlog of reviews of Adult Social Care packages, meaning that some residents may be in receipt of a package of care at a level they no longer require. Conversely, internal audit has identified that the council has been funding care that should be provided free by the NHS under Continuing Healthcare arrangements. This proposal is to recruit further short-term resource to undertake more timely reviews of ASC care packages.

Reviews will be focused on:

- High-Cost Care Packages
- Direct Payments
- Eligibility for free care under NHS Continuing Healthcare arrangements.

3.6.4 **CTS0011- Direct Debits**

Integrating direct debit functionality into our enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, customer finance can streamline their payment processes, improve cash flow management, reduce payment delays, and enhance customer satisfaction as well as minimising debt provisions in some cases where payment options are a factor of debt build up.

3.6.5 **CTS0015- Commissioning Review- LD & MH Services**

Utilisation of transformation funding to allow additional commissioning capacity to undertake a review of the existing market and to develop a market development plan which complements the development of a new Integrated Strategic Commissioning Strategy. This will include a review of Supported Accommodation arrangements. The Integrated Strategic Commissioning Strategy will outline the direction of travel for existing and future commissioning solutions and increase choice and diversity of providers within the local care market, providing more flexible and tailored solutions whilst delivering modest savings.

3.6.6 **CTS0021- Expansion of Community Led Support Teams**

The aim is to continue to develop integrated locality social work teams – reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, improving place-based working for all teams, and ultimately improving the experience for the person being supported. By embedding/integrating more ASC functions within strengths-based locality teams, it is possible to deliver better outcomes at a reduced management cost.

3.6.7 **CTS0133- Housing First**

The proposal is to extend the Housing First scheme by 5 houses. The extension of the scheme is aimed at people who struggle to maintain tenancies within general needs housing and sometimes within supported living. The saving is derived from the avoidance of otherwise significantly more expensive supported living placements.

3.6.8 **CTS0319- Caring for Thurrock**

In March 2022 Provider Services became Caring for Thurrock. The service was created to move to a Well Being model of self-managing teams. The proposal is to reduce the Community Teams from 6 to 5 by merging two teams and to release vacant posts.

3.7 Regeneration and Highways

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0077- Rent Reviews	650
CTS0079- Car parking at Civic Offices and Staff Parking Permit Scheme	86
CTS0080- Remove outsourced night-time security guards at Civic Office and Town Hall **	63
CTS0082- Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review	30

CTS0085- Remove subsidy on Christmas Lights	15
CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences	348
CTS0127- Street Scene Management **	100
CTS0211- Outsourced Daytime Security at Town Hall **	90
CTS0305- Business Improvement and Performance Management **	87
CTS0309- Public Rights of Way Structure **	24
Grand Total	1,493

3.7.1 **CTS0077- Rent Reviews**

Continued development with work regarding rent reviews, lease renewals and letting vacant property.

3.7.2 **CTS0079- Car Parking at Civic Offices and Staff Parking Permits**

Reintroduce Salary Sacrifice payment for staff to acquire Season Tickets to use all Thurrock Council Car Parks at a sliding scale dependant on salary.

3.7.3 **CTS0082 - Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review**

Centrally controlling and managing the building heating and air condition systems via the dedicated BMS (Building Management System) enables temperature regulation and the efficient use of energy consumption.

This will take place alongside a review of current energy contracts ahead of any contract renewal.

3.7.4 **CTS0085 - Remove Subsidy on Christmas Lights**

It will be the responsibility of a community group to secure private sector sponsorship for Grays Christmas Lights.

3.7.5 **CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences (MTO)**

To utilise available legislation to enforce penalties for 'Moving traffic offences' at Junction 31 M25 (roundabout) and specifically the 'encroachment' of vehicles into 'yellow boxes' at the approved site. This proposal spans two years, generating recurring income of £348k in year one and a further £396k in year two.

3.8 Transformational Change, Communications and Governance

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0314- Strategy Team Senior Management Restructure	58
CTS0316- Reduction in central communications budget	10
CTS0117- Customer Services Vacancy and Customer Contact Association (CCA) Accreditation	83
CTS0315- Removal of specialist agency budget within Performance, Quality & Intelligence (PQBI)	52
Grand Total	202

3.8.1 **CTS0314- Strategy Team Senior Management Restructure**

Removal of the vacant post of Strategy and Projects Officer.

3.8.2 CTS0316- Reduction in Central Communications Budget

A review of the service to identify efficiencies in delivery and costs for communications tools.

3.8.3 CTS0117- Customer Services Vacancy and Customer Contact Association (CCA) Accreditation

Vacant Posts reduction, and reduction in supplies and services budget.

3.8.4 CTS0315- Removal of specialist agency budget within Performance, Quality & Business Intelligence (PQBI)

Removal of specialist agency budget within Performance, Quality & Business Intelligence (PQBI) team.

3.9 Cross-Cutting

Outline business cases:

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0201- Contact Management*	977
CTS0203- Corporate Services*	1,788
CTS0202- Workforce Planning and Agency Spend *	2,530
Grand Total	5,295

3.9.1 *CTS0201 - Contact Management – (Outline Business Case stage)*

The proposed transformation of the Council’s Contact Management operating model, with indicative financial savings to be realised through staff-related efficiencies.

By automating, digitising, and streamlining processes, the Council can potentially realise significant savings and accelerate its journey to being ‘digital by default’ and offering resident-centred services.

3.9.2 *CTS0203 - Corporate Services Redesign and Ways of Working (Outline Business Case)*

Enhance and strengthen the corporate core: Adjust the current systems landscape, contact channels, organisational design, and ways of working to deliver services more efficiently.

3.9.3 *CTS0202 - Workforce Planning and Agency Spend Outline Business Case*

Reduce overall establishment expenditure through a reduction in agency costs and to explore wider opportunities for reductions in overall establishment costs.

Other cross-cutting proposals:

Savings Proposal	£000's
CTS0087- Mail and Print Service Review	39
CTS0130- Stationery Budget	53
CTS0212- Learning and Development Budget	139
CTS0055- Fees and Charges	325
Grand Total	556

3.9.4 CTS0087- Mail and print service review.

A proposal to streamline our use of Multi- Functional Devices (MFD's), post and mailroom services.

3.9.5 CTS0130– Stationery Budget

60% Reduction to the overall stationery budget

3.9.6 CTS0212– Learning & Development Budget

A new learning and development strategy will outline new criteria for learning and development activity where statutory and mandatory activities will take priority.

3.9.7 CTS0055 - Fees and Charges

An initial review of fees and charges was presented to Cabinet on 12th July 2023, where £0.114m was identified as part of the in-year review of charges. The £0.325m includes the £0.114m and the remainder will be presented to Scrutiny on 14th February 2024.

3.10 Anticipated Transformation Costs

The total anticipated cost of transformation for the Business Cases is £2.4m. This excludes the transformation costs of the Outline Business Cases and those which require public consultation. Further updates will be provided following the consultation period and when the Full Business Cases are available. Proposals to date are detailed below:

Saving Budget Business Cases (excluding OBC and Public Consultation)	Anticipated Transformation cost £000's
Redundancy	559
Transformation	1,794
CTS0001- S117 Reviews to Improve Efficiencies	150
CTS0006- Review of Care Packages	239
CTS0015- Commissioning Review - LD and MH Services	182
CTS0082- Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review	30
CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences	498
CTS0136- Waste Collections	670
CTS0137- Trade Waste	25
Grand Total	2,353

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The Council is legally required to set a balanced revenue budget as part of a suite of reports that the Council will consider in March 2024. A significant part of this is to identify and agree revenue budget savings of £18.2m which will contribute to the Council's balanced budget.

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

5.1 This report is based on consultation with the services, Senior Leadership Team, and portfolio holders. External and staff consultation will be undertaken for some proposals, as necessary.

5.2 The savings proposals were discussed at an Extraordinary Overview & Scrutiny meeting on 28th November 2023, a good debate and detailed discussion took place for each proposal.

5.3 The Key themes from the meeting are set out below:

- Deliverability and profiling of savings across financial years – concern that there may not be adequate lead in times to fully realise the saving, some supporting business cases are unclear as to the proposed start date.
- Contingency and potential alternatives – concern that there is no clear contingency in place to offset any proposals that may be rejected.
- Cllr Speight queried that year 1 proposals should potentially be more aggressive given the fact further significant savings are required in subsequent years.
- Acknowledgement that proposals aim to protect front line social care and vulnerable people.
- Potential for further savings to be identified within the Communications service and this will be added to the forward to plan to look at in more detail.

- Members noted that that it is still early in the budget setting process and further work is required on some of the proposals.
- Members noted the need to continue to engage scrutiny in the ongoing budget setting process, identification and delivery of savings.

Formal minutes of the meeting are available through the usual democratic route or at [Overview and Scrutiny Meeting 28th Nov 2023](#)

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

- 6.1 The proposals in this report will assist the Council’s move towards financial sustainability which will in turn support the Council’s priorities. It will also address some of the requirements of the BVI and the recovery plan.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Steven Mair,**
Interim CFO/S151

The financial implications of this report are set out throughout the report and accompanying documents.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Jayne Middleton-Albooye,**
Interim Head of Legal Services

Relevant legal implications for each savings proposal are set out in the business cases.

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires the Council to have regard to the need to: (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”); (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The Act states that ‘marriage and civil partnership’ is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

Members are asked to note that Community Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken, where required, on proposals. The outcome of the Community Equality Impact Assessment should be carefully considered when decisions are made in relation to the budget saving proposals. Members should have due regard to the outcome of the CEIAs and whether the proposals in this report will have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee,**
Community Development Team

Three proposals are subject to formal consultation and will be considered by Overview and Scrutiny in February 2024. Two relate to Home to School Transport CTS0226 Policy update and post 16 charging and CTS0217 Review of Minibuses and Taxis. A third proposal CTS0004 – Charging Policy for Assistive Technology is also subject to consultation. Initial Community Equality Impact Assessments (CEIAs) for these three proposals have been prepared and were considered by Overview and Scrutiny on 28 November 2023. Feedback from the current consultations will inform a review of the initial CEIAs that will be updated (where applicable) and considered by Overview and Scrutiny in February 2024. CEIAs for proposals set out in paragraphs 3.3.5, 3.9.1, 3.9.2 and 3.9.3 will also be considered by Overview and Scrutiny in February 2024.

CEIAs for all other proposals are included for consideration by Cabinet. Engagement feedback will inform a review of CEIAs and potential mitigation through implementation.

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

Some of the proposals will affect staffing within the Council which will be dealt in accordance with the Council appropriate policies and procedures.

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

- Individual business cases have been prepared to support each proposal; these are currently exempt from publishing due to containing information potentially relating to individuals or commercial sensitivities.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A - Confidential proposals - EXEMPT
- Appendix B – Community Equality Impact Assessments
- Appendix C - Proposals Requiring Approval or Further Work
- Appendix D – Link to Business Cases - EXEMPT

Report Author:

Steven Mair, Interim Chief Financial Officer/s 151

APPENDIX C

Savings Proposals Requiring Approval	SAVING TOTAL 2024/25 £000's
CTS0001- S117 Reviews to Improve Efficiencies	367
CTS0006- Review of Care Packages	832
CTS0011- Direct Debits	106
CTS0013 - Growing Portfolio of Temporary Accommodation	140
CTS0015- Commissioning Review - LD and MH Services	125
CTS0021- Expansion of Community Led Support Teams	72
CTS0027 - Review of cases to secure appropriate Health Contribution	100
CTS0028- Education and Skills Transformation	378
CTS0055- Fees and Charges	325
CTS0079- Car parking at Civic Offices and Staff Parking Permit Scheme	86
CTS0080- Remove outsourced night time security guards at Civic Office and Town	63
CTS0082- Civic Centre Energy Efficiency Review	30
CTS0085- Remove subsidy on Christmas Lights	15
CTS0087- Mail and Print Service Review	39
CTS0098- Deletion of Land Charges Manager	69
CTS0107- Moving Traffic Offences	348
CTS0109- Review Intelligence Officer Post in Counter Fraud & Investigation	47
CTS0117- Customer Services Vacancy and Customer Contact Association (CCA) Accreditation	83
CTS0118- Finance restructure and related matters	503
CTS0124- Client Support Officer tasks moved to Support & Performance team**	45
CTS0125- Sports, Recreation & Leisure Management**	77
CTS0126- Contracts & Disposal Management**	99
CTS0127- Street Scene Management**	100
CTS0130- Stationery Budget	53
CTS0133- Housing First	50
CTS0136- Waste Collections	2,551
CTS0137- Trade Waste	200
CTS0211- Outsourced Daytime Security at Town Hall**	90
CTS0212- Learning and Development Budget	139
CTS0216- Inspire - Employability & Skills Saving	221
CTS0304- Review of Technical Support Team**	80
CTS0305- Business Improvement and Performance Management**	87
CTS0307- Review of Directorate Support**	33
CTS0309- Public Rights of Way Structure**	24
CTS0310- Highways and Transportation Service Management**	106
CTS0312- Business Rates Retention Pooling 2024/25	1,750
CTS0314- Strategy Team Senior Management Restructure	58
CTS0315- Removal of specialist agency budget within Performance, Quality & Intelligence (PQBI)	52
CTS0316- Reduction in central communications budget	10
CTS0318- Council Tax Base Increase	1,030
CTS0319- Caring for Thurrock	562
CTS0320- Review of Depot and Stores**	33
CTS0321- Emergency Planning and Public Protection Management**	103
Grand Total	11,281

Savings Proposals requiring further development	SAVING TOTAL 2024/25 £000's
CTS0004- Review Charging Policy for Assistive Technology	50
CTS0029 - Review of Social Care	233
CTS0077- Rent Reviews	650
CTS0201- Contact Management*	977
CTS0202- Workforce Planning and Agency Spend *	2,530
CTS0203- Corporate Services*	1,788
CTS0209- Parks and Open Spaces*	273
CTS0214- People and OD Team	240
CTS0217- Home to School Transport - Review of Minibuses and Taxis	145
CTS0226- Home to School Transport - Policy update and post 16 charging policy	37
Grand Total	6,923

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Potential Increases in Adult Social Care Charges
Lead officer name	Ceri Armstrong
Lead officer job title	Head of Transformation and Commissioning
Lead officer email address	carmstrong@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Adult Social Care Fees and Charges Policy
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?
<p>To look at options to enable the continued provision of essential Adult Social Care services to eligible individuals within Thurrock.</p> <p>This CEIA is updated from 2021 when Cabinet agreed a change to the Adult Social Care charging policy (with many services being charged at full cost recovery subject to a means test to identify affordability).</p> <p>This update is required given the Fees and Charges report going to HOSC and Cabinet November 2023 relating to 2024/25 Fees and Charges.</p>

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

Consultation was carried out on the initial decision to move to a 'full cost recovery position', via the councils website and a letter to all ADS services users, the outcome of this consultation is available on request. Response rate 14.42 %,

Reassurance was and will be given that will not impact the level of service that users receive as the underlying duty to meet eligible needs under the Care Act 2014.

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

Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate – to provide narrative in regard to negative impacts being minimised.

Care Act 2014 – in both the 'summary of impacts' and 'mitigation' sections. The narrative explains the legal duty placed on the authority in regard to completing a financial assessment and that charges are made based on ability to pay.

Controcc – our data recording system has been used to provide numbers/percentages of individuals for some for the protected characteristics.

Office of National Statistic – 2021 census information. To add to the narrative in 'summary of impacts' sections.

[Social Care Access for adult BAME and LGBT+ populations: a rapid realist review - NIHR Funding and Awards](#) – to provide additional narrative in the 'summary of impacts' sections for Race and Sexual Orientation.

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?
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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>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and contributes to sustaining the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock.</p> <p>Individual impact can only be fully understood on completion of a financial assessment.</p> <p>Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>A greater proportion of people requiring social care support will come from deprived areas of the borough than less deprived areas of the borough. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>Individuals may refuse care where they have been assessed as requiring to pay partially or in full for their care.</p> <p>Individuals may request to have their care reduced where they have to contribute towards the costs.</p> <p>Health & well-being of individuals may be impacted on where assessed provision of</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p> <p>Refer to the Carers Support service – free to access.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>The majority of users of Adult Social Care (ASC) services are age 65+ and therefore increasing charges would have a greater impact on those aged 65+.</p> <p>However, out of those age 65+ just under 20% will be affected. Therefore, whilst this does not disproportionately affect this protected characteristic (as most users of ASC users in Thurrock do not make any contribution to their care) it is however worth noting.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>36% of ASC service users are recorded as those with physical, learning or mental disability. This is the second largest client category.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide details of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific impacts on grounds of gender reassignment has been identified, this data is not routinely collected from service users.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide details of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific impacts on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity have been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Any charges levied are unlikely to impact on grounds of race, it is recognised that some nationalities may have difficulty in understanding any communication received in relation to increased charges due to limited English language skills. Communication needs are noted by staff and information can be made available in other languages, font sizes or easy-read upon request.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>Whilst this assessment is focused on charges for services. It is worth noting that research carried out in 2019 suggested that some of the people most likely to miss out on social care services are black, Asian or from another ethnic group (BAME) - Social Care Access for adult BAME and LGBT+ populations: a rapid realist review - NIHR Funding and Awards.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

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"/>	<p>No specific impact on grounds of religion or belief has been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>Women form the largest part of the ageing population and therefore is likely to impact on women more than men, however charges will only be levied following an individual financial assessment .</p> <p>In addition 59% of unpaid carers are female – and provide more hours of unpaid care than men</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%,this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p> <p>Carers are entitled to request a carers assessment.</p> <p>Respite to take a break from Caring role/sitting service/day services.</p>

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific grounds on sexual orientation has been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>Whilst this assessment is focused on charges for services. It is worth noting that research carried out in 2019 suggested that some of the people most likely to miss out on social care services are from lesbian, gay or bisexual communities - Social Care Access for adult BAME and LGBT+ populations: a rapid realist review - NIHR Funding and Awards.</p> <p>It would therefore be reasonable to assume that these experiences of lesbian, gay and bisexual communities in Thurrock replicate national findings.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	N/A
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific impacts on the grounds workforce have been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
<p>Health and wellbeing of residents</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>It is likely that the increase in charges may have a negative impact on individuals health and well-being.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and contributes to sustaining the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock.</p> <p>Individual impact can only be fully understood on completion of a financial assessment.</p> <p>Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p> <p>Health & well-being of individuals may be impacted on where assessed provision of care is refused in part or full. This could lead to informal carer breakdown, hospital admissions, increased crisis, increased usage of Thurrock Urgent Community Response Team.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific impact on grounds of Socio-economic outcomes has been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>No specific impact on grounds of Socio-economic outcomes has been identified.</p> <p>Individuals may have to pay more towards the cost of their Adult Social Care service. This will be based on the person's ability to pay and help sustain the provision of all care services for the vulnerable adults within Thurrock. Charges are only levied against those who can afford it following individual financial assessment.</p>	<p>Via means testing to assess the person's ability to pay. Individuals can request a review of their financial assessment at any time.</p> <p>Benefit maximisation is offered to ensure each individual has access to any benefits they are entitled to.</p> <p>Thurrock's Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) is set at the Department of Health & Social Care MIG rate plus 25%, this allows people to keep more of their income.</p> <p>Disability related expenditure (DRE) – individuals are asked to provide detail of any DRE which will be deducted from any income to assess their ability to pay.</p> <p>The LA has the ability to exempt an individual for care costs on a case by case basis on complex matters such as, waiting for a Continuing Healthcare decision, Ordinary Residency decision.</p>

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
Service users can request a review of their financial circumstances, this is also carried out at review which occurs on an annual basis	On going	Financial Assessment Officers
Continue to monitor the application of increases to fees and charges in relation to protected characteristics	On-going, as and when changes are made to our policy	Head of Transformation and Commissioning
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Head of Transformation and Commissioning
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.

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

Sex: women form the largest part of the ageing population, and therefore this has the potential to impact more on women.

Race: some nationalities may have difficulties understanding the policy due to limited English Language skills.

Sexual Orientation: whilst not in relation to increases in charges, research suggests that accessing services is limited for this particular protected characteristic, no

Disability: more people with disabilities are in receipt of care and support services than those without disabilities. The policy has the potential to impact more on disabled people than non-disabled people.

Age: more older people are in receipt of care and support services than younger people. The policy has the potential to impact more on older people than younger people.

Deprivation: those in receipt of adult care and support services are likely to be amongst the most deprived.

Health and Well-Being: there is potential that increases to fees and charges, where applicable, may negatively impact some individuals.

5. Sign off

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

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

Name	Role	Date
Ceri Armstrong	Head of Transformation and Commissioning	5 th October 2023
Jayne Middleton-Albooye	Interim Head of Legal Services	9 th November 2023
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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Adult Social Care
CEIA Lead Officer	'Bosa Osunde
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Head of Social Work Support
CEIA Lead Officer email address	iosunde@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Expansion of Community Led Support Teams to include all Social Work Teams
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?
<p>This proposal is in line with Thurrock Transformation Programme and the aim is to develop an integrated social work team – reducing unnecessary bureaucracy, improving place-based working for all teams, and ultimately improving the experience for the person being supported. Having an integrated team will ensure that all team members have good awareness of each other's areas of work and are better able to identify, develop and deliver integrated solutions at first point of access. The Team will continue to form a network with other professionals working in the same area of the Borough to be able to provide integrated solutions beyond social work.</p> <p>The project is required as people's experiences with health and care are often fragmented. The health and care system has developed to respond to individual needs and conditions rather than the person. This is also the case in social care. People requiring support can often get caught between 'generic' and 'specialist' teams. The project will start with the person and the outcomes most important to them, and build an integrated response that prevents, unless necessary, the person from requiring different access points, pathways, and responses. This will also be the most effective use of available resource.</p>

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

There is significant evidence, reported nationally and locally, that the system is fragmented and not focused on achieving the best outcomes for people. There is also evidence that the way that the system has been operating is the least efficient – waiting until people get to crisis point or are ‘needy’ enough to meet eligibility criteria and various thresholds. Evidence supports the system being redesigned to a) act as early as possible, and b) provide integrated solutions that focus on the outcomes an individual wishes to achieve.

Through drop-in sessions known as ‘Talking Shops’, ongoing consultation and engagement takes place through which feedback is and can be used to further develop and improve what is offered and how it is offered.

- 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

We believe the best way to serve a community is to be a part of it. Social workers are encouraged to work remotely from various locations within their communities to get a true feel for the area. This makes them more familiar to the residents, which can remove some of the barriers that often exist. Ensuring bureaucracy is the absolute minimum it has to be, people get the right support and information, and advice at the right time and the main principle behind this is the Human Learning Systems model of change.

We have worked with the National Development Team for Inclusion for a number of years. The NDTI own the CLS concept. The NDTI has carried out significant research and provided data and intelligence from all members which has helped to support our initiative.

We have also recently carried out an evaluation of our integrated social work initiative which has been positive and shown the benefits of working in place and across social work teams that were previously separate.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrated Social Work Teams will reduce the possibility of 'hand offs' and failure demand and make social care more accessible. As teams are based within communities, they will be able to understand the communities they serve far better and be able to offer a greater range of innovative and strength-based solutions.	<p>Implementation group implemented, which would include key leads and support a collaborative approach to integrated working to remove silo working teams and any existing barriers.</p> <p>We are aware of demand of each one of our community-based teams and the resource required, and will continue to monitor potential impact.</p> <p>Approaches to monitoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and mapping exercise • Community engagement exercises • Staff engagement and feedback
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As 'local communities in general'.	There are no concerns identified - age should not impact ability to work within the integrated teams.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	As 'local communities in general'.	There are no concerns identified - any disability concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposal will be applied across the service with the potential to impact all groups considered by this CEIA.</p> <p>Diversity data relating to gender reassignment is not presently collected for individuals that are service users to determine impact specific to this characteristic.</p>	There are no concerns identified - any gender reassignment concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposal will be applied across the service with the potential to impact all groups considered by this CEIA.</p> <p>Diversity data relating to marriage and civil partnership is not presently collected for individuals that are service users to determine impact specific to this characteristic.</p>	There are no concerns identified - any marriage and civil partnership concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The proposal will be applied across the service with the potential to impact all groups considered by this CEIA.</p> <p>Diversity data relating to pregnancy and maternity is not presently collected for individuals that are service users to determine impact specific to this characteristic.</p>	Any staff on maternity leave will receive letters in writing and will be offered 1:1 session's to discuss via HR process- no concerns raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information about race will be recorded as part of any care and support assessment. No implications have been identified.	There are no concerns identified - any race concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information and data is collected in relation to the care and support assessment, but this proposal is about ability to reduce failure demand and to have greater accessibility within the community itself. Implications on religion or belief per se have not been identified.	There are no concerns identified - any religion or belief concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We collect information on sex in relation to care and support assessments, but changes being made have no implications on sex.	There are no concerns identified - any sex concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified	There are no concerns identified - any sexual orientation concerns have not been raised during scoping exercises, information gathering and implementation processes
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact that is location specific.	<p>No anticipated impact that is location specific. Monitored via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and mapping exercise • Community engagement exercises • Staff engagement and feedback
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposal will impact some members of the workforce in that they may have a change of line manager or be responsible for managing different staff or service users.	<p>To be supported by Change Management process.</p> <p>Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts across all groups.</p>

<p>Health and wellbeing of residents</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Community members and people who live and work within place, will have a better understanding of support available at an earlier point, they will have direct access to place-based teams and be able to seek advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity to reduce escalation of crisis.</p> <p>Place based teams offer consistency to people, there will be a reduced number of case transfers to different teams, this provides people with familiar staff, who they have already built relationships with, making it easier for people to gain trust, they will not need to repeat their story and establish new relationships with different case workers.</p> <p>All tasks are managed at place through integrated working partnerships, place based teams work collaboratively with partners, this reduces onward referrals as many solutions can be found by working collaboratively with a multi-agency team approach , this means there are opportunities for joint visits and coworking with partner organisations, this reduces the person having to repeat their</p>	<p>No anticipated impact that is location specific. Monitored via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and mapping exercise • Community engagement exercises • Staff engagement and feedback
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Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
				story or speak to multiple staff members from different teams, a true person centred approach and ensuring the right support at the right time	
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact on socio-economic outcomes.	<p>No anticipated impact that is Socio-economic specific outcomes. Monitored via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and mapping exercise • Community engagement exercises • Staff engagement and feedback
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact on veterans and serving members of the armed forces.	<p>No anticipated impact that is Veterans and serving members of the armed forces specific. Monitored via</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies and mapping exercise • Community engagement exercises • Staff engagement and feedback

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
Are there any routine monitoring cycles relating to feedback from staff and individuals that are service users.	Ongoing	Principal Social Worker
Review CEIA after consultation with staff	Ongoing	Principal Social Worker / Transformation team
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	'Bosa Osunde
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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.

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

People too often receive fragmented care from services that are not effectively co-ordinated around their needs. This can negatively impact their experiences, lead to poorer outcomes, and create duplication and inefficiency.

Implications for individuals that are service users will be considered through case studies and mapping, community and staff engagement, and service and day to day interaction with members of the workforce.

Workforce- Potential loss of income

As public servants working for local authority, we must ensure the best possible use of public funds whilst ensuring we provide the best possible service to individuals using the resources and funds available. We need to be transparent and ensure that any additional payments to workforce either via overtime or shift allowance are reasonable, justified and fair.

Standard rota (Fixed or Variable Hours) – A standard rota is defined as working hours which are irregular and on a rota basis including hours which fall outside of normal working hours (outside 8:00 to 20:00 Monday to Friday). A rota will apply for service cover which includes Saturday and Sunday working. The rota may be planned with fixed rota hours or variable in nature depending on the service needs. Variable rotas may fluctuate and vary from day to day. Staff working standard rotas will receive a premium of 7.5% of their basic pay.

We have agreed that no changes will be made to HSWT who currently have the opportunity to receive additional income immediately, this needs to be explored and reasoning found behind the need should be understood, overtime is not guaranteed and is payable to any staff who work additional hours over and above contractual hours.

Workforce- Wellbeing

Any changes will be mindful of team structure and where possible we will endeavour to ensure supervisors remain the same.

The HSWT will play a key role in planning the new operational model. The implementation and planning stage will take time and the HSWT will be key drivers.

The transformation team are here to support staff as well as senior leaders to adjust to change. TBC provides support with staff who may struggle with change and enable them to build resilience in the evolving workforce of Health and Social care.

- [Health and well-being events](#)
- [Health and well-being support](#)
- [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\)](#)
- [My Health and Well-being and Stress Management Policy \(EDRMS link\) \(312.00 B\)](#)
- [Here For You newsletter shared with team- a confidential mental health and wellbeing service available to all health, social care and voluntary sector workers across Essex and Hertfordshire](#)
- [Change management support.](#)

- Full CLS training available to support with upskilling and understanding community working.

Local communities in general

Having an ASC team based within the community who can access a wide range of skills within their team benefits the individuals we support.

Community Led Support Core Principles

- People can get support and advice easily, when they need it, so crises are avoided
- The culture is based on trust, empowerment and shared values within and across teams and organisations
- There is a focus on 'place' and on the 'whole' person
- Coproduction brings people and organisations together around a shared vision
- The system is responsive, proportionate and focussed on outcomes
- Bureaucracy is the absolute minimum- it has to be
- Support is strength based, building independence, control, and community connections

As we start to explore true integrated teams at place consisting of a range of service both statutory and voluntary, it is crucial that hospital discharge and pathways from acute are linked into the CLS teams to ensure the best possible outcome for the patient.

We are also exploring transfer of care hubs which will support us to bring in therapies, reablement and supporting services to minimise the risk of unsafe discharge and admission avoidance. By aligning discharge to place staff will have greater access to resources and be able to use a more collaborative approach toward discharge and explore longer term needs of our residents.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

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

Name	Role	Date
Ceri Armstrong	Head of Transformation & Commissioning, AHH	07/11/2023
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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Waste & Recycling Services
CEIA Lead Officer	Anthony Fletcher
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Performance & Support Manager
CEIA Lead Officer email address	afletcher@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC), chargeable garden waste and food collections
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?
This project is required to deliver an operational cost saving from the waste collections services. It involves changing the collection frequency for residual waste collections from weekly to fortnightly, introducing a boroughwide separate weekly food waste collection service and a chargeable fortnightly 'green waste' service. The new garden waste service will be an opt in service, meaning only those households that use the service will subscribe.

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

A full consultation with residents was undertaken at the beginning of 2020, to ascertain views around key aspects of the waste strategy.

Additionally the strategy has been developed with the input of a Cross Party Working group to ensure that all political viewpoints have been consulted. This has further ensured that the voice of residents has been heard.

- 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 results from the 2020 consultation exercise have been analysed and taken into consideration in the preparation of the refreshed approach along with feedback from the cross party working group. Please see table below. Numbers are actual property counts, trying to avoid rounding. However, as the Green waste and recycling services are not used by every resident, every week, I've had to make some assumptions to have a more realistic view. Food waste is based on the trial we are currently undergoing.

Properties	Flats/MDU	10000				
	Houses/SDU	59535				
Service	Service Type	Houses	Flats	Participation/%	Collections per 4 weeks	Collections
Refuse	weekly	59535	10000	100%	4	278140
Recycling	fortnightly	59535		80%	2	95256
Recycling	weekly		10000	80%	4	32000
Garden	fortnightly	59535		50%	2	59535
Food	weekly	7000		30%	4	8400
					Total Collections	473331

Assumptions

- 1 Refuse, Recycling Garden participation rates of 100%, 80%, 50% - these are assumptions
- 2 Collection for flats based on no. of house holds. In practice most will have large communal bins therefore we don't collect per house hold.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased focus on education and empowerment	Accessible documentation and messaging to accommodate all resident's needs, including those who do not speak English as a first language
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collection Service – presentation of bins	Current operations provide for additional assistance for those who are unable to present their own bins for collection on a weekly basis. This will be retained.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collection Service – presentation of bins	Current operations provide for additional assistance for those who are unable to present their own bins for collection on a weekly basis. This will be retained.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collection Service – presentation of bins	Current operations provide for additional assistance for those who are unable to present their own bins for collection on a weekly basis for a temporary period.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	Waste Collection Services and communication across all areas will be consistent.
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any impact on the workforce will be reviewed on an ongoing basis	Subject to ongoing review
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	To be informed through engagement	To be informed through engagement
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	To be informed through engagement	To be informed through engagement
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No Impact	No Impact

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
Continuation of the Assisted Bin Programme	Already in place with the consideration of adding Pregnancy and Maternity to be confirmed	Edward Brotherton, Waste Services
Accessible communication	A communications plan needs to be developed, agreed and rolled out 21/10	Corporate Communication Team
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update CEIA	January 2024	Paul Southall
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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.

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 refreshed Waste Strategy proposes changes to the waste collection regime as well as to levels of communication with a focus on Education and Empowerment. There are no proposed changes that will adversely impact any groups within the Borough and care will be taken to ensure that communications are accessible. Furthermore the existing assisted bin collection programme will be retained as a feature of the service supporting any residents who are unable to present their bins for collection.

A communications plan will be developed.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

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

Name	Role	Date
Ed Brotherton	Head of Service, Waste & Recycling	21/10/2023
Paul Southall	Assistant Director - Street Scene and Leisure	21/10/2023
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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Children's Services
CEIA Lead Officer	Michele Lucas
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Assistant Director – Education and Skills
CEIA Lead Officer email address	mlucas@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Home to School Transport Policy Update – Post 16 SEND Transport Statement and Review of taxi/minibus spend
Borough-wide or location-specific?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Borough-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Location-specific – please state locations below.
Why is this policy, strategy, function or service development or review needed?

SEND home to school transport is a statutory duty on the Local Authority, we have further duties where we place a primary child two miles from the school and secondary pupil three miles from the school. The LA does not have a statutory duty to transport post 16 SEND students however it must ensure that young people can access an educational offer. The SEND home to school transport has seen a significant increase due to the increase in demand for Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs). The current policy needs a complete review, in line with the changes to the home to school transport policy nationally and the proposed changes to the current offer for post 16 SEND students.

We have recently undertaken a benchmarking exercise across the eastern region to gain a better understanding of which authorities have introduced changes which may include a charging system to post 16 students.

The current Home to School transport budget was realigned as part the 2023/24 estimates. This baselined and reflected the year on year overspend due to the continual increase in demand and our statutory duty to provide transport. We have, over the past two years, introduced a range of options for parents which has led to some reductions in the overspends reported. An example is offering fuel reimbursement or bus/train tickets rather than contracted vehicles. In addition to this travel assistance already offered, we will also be considering an option to include a travel assistance budget provided to the parent where this is more cost effective.

Alongside the policy, there will be a supporting review of taxi/mini-bus spend to secure better value for money and greater consistency of spend per pupil (home to school transport).

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information.

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

An engagement exercise is required when any changes are made to a home to school transport policy. We will undertake an engagement exercise and ensure that factors in the policy changes. We have already started consultation with our parent carer forum and are working closely with them on the proposed changes.

Negotiations will take place with operators with a view to reducing spend on taxi/mini-bus services related to home to school transport.

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

Benchmarking has been undertaken with other Local Authorities around the policy and post 16 statements that they have and the options that have been included around the post 16 transport offer.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any change to a home to school transport policy is likely to be viewed negatively particularly as we engage around options that may include a contribution from parents around post 16 SEND transport.	Our commitment to work at an early stage with our parent carer forum and the consultation exercise we will undertake will enable the voice of the community to be heard.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There is likely to be a disproportionate direct impact on 16–18-year-old SEND learners.	We are working at key transitions points in schools yr. 9 and yr11 to discuss and consider how we can support independent travel training to support young people with SEND into adulthood.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The likely changes to post 16 learners will have a disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of disability.	We are working at key transitions points in schools yr. 9 and yr11 to discuss and consider how we can support independent travel training to support young people with SEND into adulthood.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of gender reassignment.	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of marriage and civil partnership.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.	N/A
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of race.	N/A
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of religion or belief.	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of sex.	N/A
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated on the basis of sexual orientation.	N/A
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This proposal has the potential to cause parents of post 16 learners' frustration and concern.	We will work closely with the parent/carer forum to ensure we are communicating well any changes to the offer around SEND post 16 students.
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated for the council's workforce.	N/A
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The potential changes to the policy are likely to led to concern for residents with post 16 SEND students.	Clear communication plans will be put in place to ensure parents can comment on as part of the consultation around the proposed policy changes.
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This proposal will potentially impact transport operators as we look at a range of options as to how to support post 16 SEND learners to access education.	Regular meetings are held with transport operators, and we will ensure any proposed changes that subsequently implemented will communicated at the earliest opportunity.
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No disproportionate direct impact anticipated for veterans and serving members of the armed forces.	N/A

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 whom
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Michele Lucas
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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.

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
An initial consideration of impacts for communities and protected groups is set out in section 2 of this CEIA. An engagement exercise will inform an updated Community Equality Impact Assessment related to the Home to School Transport Policy – Post 16 SEND Transport Statement and the outcomes from a review of taxi/minibus spend.

5. Sign off.

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

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

Name	Role	Date
Mark Bradbury	Director Place	16 October 2023
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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Communications – Chief Executive's Office
CEIA Lead Officer	Mary Patricia Flynn
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Interim Director of Communications
CEIA Lead Officer email address	mpflynn@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Reduction in Central Communications Budget
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?
<p>The Communications Team delivers traditional and digital communications for the whole organisation. This involves proactive campaigns, reputation enhancing, and support for council priorities. Most of the communications annual budget is allocated to salary for the communications specialists employed by the council. The remainder of the budget is mostly allocated to campaign promotion and necessary subscriptions for the essential communications tools. A move to digital will reduce costs associated with expensive print costs. A review of the service is also underway.</p> <p>The proposed savings have been identified by the Head of Communications as being achievable by reducing the campaigns budgets. There are alternative ways to promote messaging that are separate from the traditional campaigns budget. Services will be engaged with about the potential changes in the campaigns budget and will have an opportunity to input and review proposals arising.</p>

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

The communications service is about to enter a full review which will include looking at the use of all communications tools to improve the way we share information. The focus will be a proactive and modern communications function with increased engagement.

- 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

A new communications strategy approach has been agreed at Improvement and Recovery Board and will be developed in line with the main corporate strategy that is emerging. This will enable a different approach and way of promoting the council's core priorities.

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"/>	<p>Reducing the spend on communications reduces the potential impact of council communications at a time when communications has been identified by commissioners as key to the council's recovery. This has the potential to impact all groups.</p> <p>A reliance on digital communications has a risk of providing a lesser service to those without digital access.</p>	<p>There is less reliance on costly print materials than in previous budget years. Targeted social media advertising has advanced in effectiveness and is less expensive than universal print solutions. Print and location advertising is still relevant and used for non-digital members of the community in a more targeted and analysed way.</p>
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.</p>	N/A
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.</p>	N/A
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.</p>	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact.	N/A
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is minimal differing impact as the changes are designed to cater to different audiences in different ways.	N/A

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
As part of the production of the new Communications Strategy, an annual campaigns plan will need to be created and agreed by services. The annual campaigns plan has a cycle of checks and reviews, each quarter being assessed for whether it is meeting objectives	To follow quarterly calendar year cycle	Alix Macfarlane
Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Alix Macfarlane

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 new Communications Strategy will set out a different approach and way of promoting the council's core priorities. There are no fundamental impacts for the community or members of the workforce as resources will be used more effectively.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

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

Name	Role	Date
Alix Macfarlane	Interim Director of Communications	14/11/2023
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Thurrock Council

Community Equality Impact Assessment

Service area and lead officer

Name of service	Adult Social Care
CEIA Lead Officer	Dawn Wakeling
CEIA Lead Officer job title	Business Team Manager
CEIA Lead Officer email address	DaWakeling@thurrock.gov.uk

Subject of this assessment

What specific policy, strategy, function or service is the subject of this assessment?
Caring for Thurrock
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?
<p>Following the impact on the service post the pandemic there is now over capacity in staffing and under capacity in commissioned hours.</p> <p>This business case seeks to maximise the capacity within Well Being Teams to enable the completion of an evaluation with a view to externalising the service.</p> <p>The retirement and resignation of some staff provides further opportunity to make changes to the Community Services structure to support the needs of the service users within Thurrock to maximise financial efficiency.</p> <p>There will be changes to the way the service is delivered across the borough with existing staff expected to work across Thurrock rather than in small village patches to meet the needs of individuals accessing the service. Rotas within the Community Home Care Service are also subject to change.</p>

1. Engagement, consultation and supporting information

- 1.1. What steps you have taken, or do you plan to take, to engage or consult (where applicable) 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 engage or consult

Consultation proposed in line with Change Management Policy to change working practices and contracts.

Existing staff were consulted and asked to amend their roles to support taking on tasks of others. Due to the reduction in support being provided within Well Being and Community Teams the Service Planners and Coordinator have capacity to support with taking on tasks of those staff who have left. Some staff have been very engaged in taking on new tasks to broaden their work knowledge.

The consultations were conducted as group meetings and also 1:1's, all staff were given the opportunity to respond after the meetings once they had considered the proposals.

Regular meetings and supervisions will be undertaken with encouragement of staff to feedback issues that arise to be considered by Management in the future.

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

Data was gathered as part of the staff consultation process. The information gathered was a review of the care provision in hours provided across the service 12 months ago and compared with current service provision – which showed a reduction.

The removal of vacant posts will not be detrimental to service users. The sharing of staff across services to support with care calls has been a positive and helped to reduce overtime and stress on existing staff.

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"/>	No specific impact anticipated.	To be monitored through feedback and satisfaction monitoring from individuals that are service users.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuals that are service users are often older members of the community. The impact for this group is currently considered neutral and will be the subject of ongoing review.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of age.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Individuals that are service users are frequently affected by disability. The impact for this group is currently considered neutral and will be the subject of ongoing review.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of disability.
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to gender reassignment not presently collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of gender reassignment.
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to marriage and civil partnership not presently collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of marriage and civil partnership.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to pregnancy and maternity not presently collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of pregnancy and maternity.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to race is collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of race.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to religion is sometimes collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of religion or belief.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to sex is collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of sex.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diversity data relating to sexual orientation is not collected for individuals that are service users.	Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts on the basis of sexual orientation.
Location-specific impact, if any	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact that is location specific.	No anticipated impact that is location specific.

Communities and groups	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Summary of positive and negative impacts	How will positives be maximised, and negatives minimised or eliminated?
Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposal will impact some members of the workforce in that they may have a change of line manager or be responsible for managing different staff or service users.	To be supported by Change Management process. Workforce diversity data will be considered as part of the review process to determine if there are any disproportionate impacts across all groups.
Health and wellbeing of residents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposal may impact some residents in that they may have a change of keyworker	We will communicate with residents as changes occur
Socio-economic outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact on socio-economic outcomes.	N/A
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No anticipated impact on veterans and serving members of the armed forces.	N/A

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
We are currently undertaking regular meetings to review the processes and the services we provide to the community. We will be doing this on a monthly and quarterly basis.	31/3/2024	Business Team Manager
Ongoing review of future changes in capacity will be undertaken to ensure that there is enough support in the budget to provide the services with the care provision they need.	Monthly	Head of Service and Team Managers

Review any additional feedback from engagement and update this CEIA accordingly	January 2024	Dawn Wakeling
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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

Data will be gathered as part of the staff consultation process to inform an updated version of this CEIA that will be the subject of ongoing review. Implications for service users will be considered through regular feedback cycles e.g. satisfaction service and day to day interaction with members of the workforce.

5. Sign off

5.1. This Community Equality Impact Assessment must be authorised by the relevant project sponsor, strategic lead, or assistant director. This should not be the CEIA Lead Officer. Officers authorising this assessment are responsible for:

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

Name	Role	Date
Angela Clarke	Head of Service	02/11/2023
Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.

10 January 2024	ITEM: 13 Decision:110689
Cabinet	
Thames Freeport - Accountable Body Decisions	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Cllr D Arnold, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Transformational Change, Communications and Governance	
Accountable Assistant Director: n/a	
Accountable Director: Asmat Hussain, Interim Director Law and Governance	
This report is Public with exempt appendices	
This report contains exempt information which falls within schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.	
Date of notice given of exempt or confidential report: 2 January 2024	

Executive Summary

Thames Freeport will drive economic growth across the Thames Estuary, forecast to generate 21,000 jobs, £4.6billion of public and private investment and significant amounts of funding for levelling up priorities.

Thurrock Council is Accountable Body for the Thames Freeport. As Accountable Body the Council has a number of functions including responsibility to oversee the financial management of public money within the Freeport Programme.

The Thames Freeport Operating Company has prepared its business and financial plan for 2023/4. As Accountable Body the Council carried out due diligence on the Financial Plan to ensure best value and value for money. Validation and verification checks have also been carried out. The Freeport Governing Board approved the Business Plan and Financial Plan at its meeting on 26 September 2023.

The Freeport Operating Company is ultimately funded through retained business rates as set out in the Full Business Case for the Freeport. The arrangements mean that Thurrock Council is in receipt of s31 grant to the value of the retained business

rates forecast for this year, for 2023/24 the council have received £2.257m of s31 grant funding as reported to cabinet on 13 September 2023. This report asks Cabinet for approval to release funding of £1.651m to the Freeport Operating Company (subject to a signed funding agreement) in line with the Business and Financial Plan for 2023/4 and to delegate a decision on use of the remaining £0.606m to the Director of Legal and Governance to meet the costs incurred by the Accountable Body and to use on projects that support the Freeport.

In September 2023 Cabinet agreed to establish a Thames Freeport Sub-Committee to provide oversight and support Cabinet in its decision making. This report also seeks approval for the Terms of Reference for the sub-committee.

1. Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1 subject to establishing the subsidy control position approve funding of £1,651,275 to enable the Thames Freeport Operating Company to deliver the Thames Freeport Business Plan 2023/4. Funding to be taken from the £2.257m s31 grant relating to Thames Freeport held by the Council**
- 1.2 delegate authority to the S151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to**
 - (a) to take all necessary action to establish the subsidy control position in relation to recommendation 1.1**
 - (b) subject to subsidy control requirements release funding to the Freeport Operating Company and once the appropriate legally binding agreements are in place between all parties to allow the Council to discharge its obligations as Accountable Body including a signed funding agreement between the Council and the Freeport Operating Company.**
- 1.3 delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance or Executive Director Corporate Services as appointment, in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and S151 Officer to release the balance of funding from the remainder of the s31 grant of £0.606m to deliver the Accountable Body functions and to use on projects that support delivery of the Freeport.**
- 1.4 approve the Terms of Reference for the Thames Freeport Cabinet sub-committee established by Cabinet in September 2023.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thames Freeport will drive economic growth across the Thames Estuary. Forecast to deliver 21,000 jobs, £4.6b of public and private investment and to**

support regeneration and levelling up activity in line with Freeport objectives over the next 25 years.

- 2.2 The Freeport is led by the private sector (Forth Ports, Dubai Ports World and Ford UK) and Thurrock Council. The Council is Accountable Body for the Freeport, an active partner driving delivery of the Freeport, and a billing authority for business rates on two of the Freeport sites.
- 2.3 As Accountable Body for the Freeport the Council is responsible for overseeing the proper use of public funds, ensuring value for money and compliance with the Nolan principles, National Assurance Framework, legal requirements, the principles of probity or sound financial practice, applicable funding terms and agreement on scrutiny arrangements.
- 2.4 The Council carries out its functions through ongoing monitoring and governance arrangements, preparing and providing an annual assurance statement to Government, and through annual approval of the Annual Business and Financial Plan.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Freeport Operating Company Annual Business and Financial Plan

- 3.1 The Freeport Operating Company Business and Financial Plan for 2023/4 forms **exempt Appendix 1** to this report. The business plan is formed around:
 - The three strategic objectives of the Freeport: Trade and investment, Regeneration and Skills, Innovation and Net Zero
 - The investment levers available to the Freeport including the tax incentives, Seed Capital and Retained Business Rates
 - Corporate responsibilities including monitoring and evaluation, programme and risk management, governance, financial management
 - Staffing and resources including appointment of the core team of seven including a Chief Executive, Head of Trade and Investment, Head of Marketing and Promotion, Director of Innovation and Net Zero, Head of Skills and Employment, Head of Programmes and a Project Manager
- 3.2 The financial plan sets out the income and expenditure relating to the Operating Company in 2023/4 and asks for £1,651,275 from the Accountable Body to fund operations.
- 3.3 The financial plan also references the skills levy which is funded by Forth Ports and DP World to support skills related activity.
- 3.4 The Council carried out due diligence on the Financial Business Plan. The Accountable Body report presented to the Thames Freeport Governing Board forms **exempt Appendix 2** to this report. The Council tested the Business Plan and concluded that it was fit to be considered by the Freeport Governing Board for approval.

- 3.5 There were three recommendations and a number of actions arising from the assessment of the business plan which are now being actioned by the Freeport Operating Company and the Council. It should be noted that the benchmarking of the size of the team has been completed.
- 3.6 The Council has received £2.257m s31 grant relating to the retained business rates forecast for 2023/4. The s31 grant is to pay for the Thames Freeport Operating Company operating expenditure, the costs incurred by the Accountable Body and any remainder to be used on projects that support the Freeport. This report seeks approval to fund the £1,651,275 operating expenditure of the Thames Freeport Operating Company from the s31 grant and delegation of the remaining £0.606m s31 grant as set out in recommendation 1.3 and paragraph 3.11.
- 3.7 The Thames Freeport Governing Board includes representation from the three private sector partners, the three Local Authorities, representation from the Thames Estuary Growth Board, the Port of London Authority, an independent chair and strategic advisors. The Governing Board met on 26th September and approved the Business and Financial Plan.
- 3.8 To date the Freeport Operating Company has been supported by the private sector while waiting for the first formal meeting of the Governing Board and approval of the business plan. Payments are forecast on a quarterly basis however by December 2023 three payments of up to £1,238,454 are due. The fourth payment of up to £412,821 is scheduled for March 2024.
- 3.9 A funding agreement is being prepared by the Council to be agreed and signed by the Freeport Operating Company. Funding is also subject to subsidy control requirements and appropriate legally binding agreements between all parties being in place.
- 3.10 The Subsidy Control Act controls the provision of subsidies given by public authorities to prevent unfair competition or effects on trade and investments. The Council has identified expert legal and economic advice to take a view on the subsidy position in providing operational grant to the Freeport OpCo.
- 3.11 The Freeport Governing Board will meet again in January 2024 and will consider the Financial Business Plan for 2024/5. A further report will be presented to Cabinet seeking permission to spend the funding should the Board approve the plan and subject to receipt of sufficient funding through s31 grant and a signed funding agreement.

Remaining s31 Grant

- 3.12 The remaining s31 grant of £0.606m for 2023/4 is to pay for costs incurred by the Council in its role as Accountable Body and any remainder is for projects that support the Freeport. This report seeks approval to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the Leader,

Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and S151 Officer to release funding to deliver the Accountable Body functions and to use on projects that support the delivery of the Freeport.

Cabinet Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

- 3.13 In September 2023 Cabinet agreed to establish a Cabinet Sub-Committee to provide oversight and support to Cabinet in its decision making relating to the Freeport. The committee was to include a minimum of three Members with attendance by key senior members of the Accountable Body Officer Group including the Chief Financial Officer and the Director of Law and Governance.
- 3.14 A draft terms of reference for the group have been prepared and form Appendix 3 to this report. The Terms of Reference summarise the membership and the role of the group. The group will not have decision making powers but will refer all recommendations direct to Cabinet.
- 3.15 Cabinet are asked to approve the terms of reference for the Thames Freeport Cabinet Sub-Committee.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Thurrock Council are Accountable Body for Thames Freeport and have received s31 grant from DLUHC which is to be used to pay for the operation of the Freeport Operating Company and the costs incurred by the Accountable Body. Any remaining funding is to be used to fund projects that support the Freeport.
- 4.2 As the Financial Business Plan for 2023/4 has been subject to due diligence and approved by the Freeport Governing Board, Cabinet is asked to approve spend of £1.651m to fund the Operating Company subject to the necessary legal agreements being put in place.
- 4.3 Cabinet are also asked to delegate authority to the Director of Legal and Governance in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder for Governance, Chief Executive and S151 Officer to release funding to deliver the Accountable Body functions and to use on projects that support delivery of the Freeport in consultation.

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

- 5.1 The Thames Freeport Governing Board have reviewed and approved the Freeport Operating Company Financial Business Plan.

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

- 6.1 Deliver of Thames Freeport is referenced in the Improvement Recovery Plan and through the generation of jobs, investment and income to fund

regeneration priorities it will support delivery of a number of Council Place and Prosperity priorities.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director Finance

The funding of £1,651,275 will be funded from the s31 grant of £2.257m received by the Council as Accountable Body. The s31 Grant relates to the retained business rates forecast for 2023/4 and is used to pay the Freeport Operating Costs and the Council Accountable Body costs. Any remaining funding is to be spent on projects that support the Freeport

Financial Position	£m
S31 Grant	2.257
Operating Costs	1.651
Balance	0.606

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Governance Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Before any funds can be approved for release by the Council to the Thames Freeport Operating Company, the subsidy control position will need to be established.

The new domestic subsidy control regime brought in by the Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into full force and effect on 4 January 2023. The Act controls the provision of subsidies given by public authorities to prevent unfair competition or effects on trade and investments.

The Act requires public authorities to establish whether the support (known in the Act as 'financial assistance') they are proposing to provide amounts to a subsidy under the regime.

The subsidy control regime does not apply to all types of financial assistance given by public authorities. However, in the early stages of decision-making, it is key that the Council assesses whether the financial assistance that the Council is seeking to release to Thames Freeport Operating Company falls under the definition of a subsidy that is set out in the Act.

There are key questions which need to be explored to help determine the subsidy control position in respect of the proposed Operational Grant to Thames Freeport Operating Company:

- is the Operating Company an enterprise and is it receiving funding for economic activity?
- does the Operational Grant confer an economic advantage on the Operating Company?
- does the receipt of funding impact trade or investment?
- is there a subsidy to the private sector Freeport partners as owners of the Operating Company or other third parties?

The answers to these questions will be important in understanding whether the Operational Grant is or is not a subsidy. Further information needs to be secured from the Council's economic and/or financial advisers, and further advice, where required from external legal advisers. This will enable the Council to take a view on the subsidy position involved in providing the Operational Grant to Thames Freeport Operating Company.

The Government may decide to establish a national subsidy scheme for freeports and, if it is, this could afford an easier route for the Council to provide the Operational Grant in a subsidy compliant manner. However, currently no formal announcement has been made.

In addition, a funding agreement will need to be finalised and signed by the Council and the Freeport Operating Company before any funds are released. Work on the funding agreement can only commence once the subsidy control position has been established.

The September 2023 Cabinet meeting noted that various legally binding agreements will need to be established between the Council, Thames Freeport Governing Body, Thames Freeport Operating Company and recipients of grant funding. One of the legal agreements that will need to be established is a legally binding agreement relating to the governance arrangements for Thames Freeport to ensure that the Council's role as Accountable Body can be carried out effectively. A draft legally binding agreement has been prepared, but as yet has not been finalised. It is in the interest of the Council that such an agreement is put in place prior to entering into a funding agreement with Thames Freeport Operating Company to release the retained business rates funds.

The Council's responsibilities as Accountable Body to Thames Freeport is an executive function. The establishment of the Thames Freeport Cabinet Sub-Committee will provide oversight and advise Cabinet on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and the strategic risks faced by the Council. The terms of reference states that the Sub Committee will not have any executive decision-making powers.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities

A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) was completed as part of the Full Business Case for Thames Freeport considered by Government and aligned with Council's Community Equality Impact Assessment process. This provided a focus on the extent to which Thames Freeport will positively impact on reducing inequalities overall, not least those related to employment, income, health, and well-being. The EQIA/CEIA is a live document owned by the council working both in its role as accountable body and with partners to maximise benefits for residents overall.

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

None

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

Cabinet Report - 13 September 2023 [Freeport Cabinet Report](#)

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: Thames Freeport Business and Financial Plan – EXEMPT
- Appendix 2: Accountable Body Report on the Thames Freeport Business Plan– EXEMPT
- Appendix 3: Thames Freeport sub-committee Terms of Reference

Report Author:

Stephen Taylor

Head of Freeport Accountable Body

Economic Development

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Appendix 3: Thames Freeport Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Thames Freeport Cabinet Sub-Committee
Terms of Reference

Aim:

To establish a Thames Freeport Committee as a sub-committee of Cabinet.

Membership:

Appointments to the sub-committee will be made by the Leader in consultation with the Cabinet. Membership will include a minimum of three Members:

- The Leader of the Council
- The Cabinet Member for Transformational Change, Communications and Governance
- The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Highways

Officers from the Accountable Body Group including the Council's Chief Financial Officer and Director of Law and Governance will be in attendance.

Chair:

The Chair and Vice Chair will be elected by the membership of the Freeport Sub-Committee. The appointment will last for the duration of the municipal year.

Duration:

The sub-committee will remain in place indefinitely to provide continued oversight of the Freeport.

Meeting Schedule:

The sub-committee will agree its own schedule, but it is expected that the sub-committee will meet in response to the Freeport Programme.

Duties:

The sub-committee will oversee delivery of the Council's functions in relation to Thames Freeport. The Council has a number of functions:

- 1) to act as Accountable Body for the Freeport. Details of the role of the Council in its capacity as the Accountable body are summarised below
- 2) to be an active partner on the Freeport Board driving delivery and maximising benefits for local residents and businesses
- 3) to be the billing authority to the Freeport for those elements of the Freeport that fall into Thurrock Council's geography

The sub-committee will:

- Provide oversight to help the Council develop and implement processes to effectively discharge responsibilities
- Ensure that the role of Accountable Body is exercised to the satisfaction of the Commissioners as reflected in the Improvement and Recovery Plan
- Consider how the Council can best deliver its roles as Accountable Body, partner and billing authority
- Advise Cabinet on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and the strategic risks faced by the Council
- Review processes to ensure compliance with the Freeport Memorandum of Understanding and Assurance Framework
- Advise Cabinet on how best to maximise the benefits from the Freeport for residents and businesses in Thurrock
- Advise Cabinet on how best to meet obligations as a billing authority while supporting delivery of the Freeport

Decision-Making:

The sub-committee has no executive powers and will refer all recommendations direct to Cabinet.

10 January 2024	ITEM: 14 Decision:110690
Cabinet	
Re-commissioning of Public Health Contract – Healthy Families Service	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Olajumoke Kehinde, Senior Programme Manager, Public Health	
Accountable Assistant Director: Andrea Clement – Assistant Director, Consultant in Public Health	
Accountable Director: Dr Jo Broadbent – Director of Public Health	
<p>This report is Public with an exempt appendix</p> <p>This report contains exempt information which falls within schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.</p>	
Date of notice given of exempt or confidential report: 2 January 2024	

Executive Summary

Local Authorities have mandated responsibilities under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to ensure the delivery of universal and targeted Health Visiting and School Nursing Services to the whole child population cohort.

At present Thurrock Council Public health team commissions North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT) to provide the Healthy Families 0-19 service, incorporating both mandated and discretionary services for Children and Young People in Thurrock.

Following several extensions in recent years, the contract with NELFT is now due to expire on August 31st 2024. As such, it is now necessary to undertake a re-commissioning exercise to ensure a 0-19 service continues to be available to all residents from September 2024 onwards.

In January 2023, Cabinet gave approval to proceed to tender and gave delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to award the Healthy Families Service Contract up to a maximum amount of £4.3 million per annum for 5+1+1 years to commence from September 2024. However, this financial envelope did not include annual uplifts and therefore it has become necessary to revise this financial envelope to incorporate these. Additionally, since

then, the Strategic Approval Panel have only given approval to re-procure on contract term of 3+2 years.

This report details the revised financial envelope, contract term and projected year on year financial implications which Cabinet are requested to approve.

Commissioner Commentary

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1. Further to the recommendations agreed by Cabinet on 11th January 2023, that Cabinet agrees:

1.1.1. to commence the procurement of the Healthy Families Service Contract in line with the revised financial envelope detailed in this paper;

1.1.2. that the power to award the Healthy Families Service Contract be delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education, Portfolio Holder for Health, Adult Social Care, Community and Public Protection, and the s.151 Officer.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1. Activities undertaken by the Local Authority's Public Health Team are, on the whole, funded by the Public Health ring-fenced Grant (PHG). This centrally allocated money is provided to Local Authorities by the Department for Health & Social Care (DHSC) to fund local efforts to improve the health and wellbeing of local populations and to reduce health inequalities.

2.2. The PHG allocation comes with conditions around how the money may be spent by a local authority. It is used to provide vital preventative services that help to support health. This includes children's health services as well as broader public health support across local authorities and the NHS.

2.3. It is also a condition of the PHG that monies be spent on ensuring there are public health services aimed at protecting and improving the health of the people (including children) in the authority's area. Failure to do so may result in the Secretary of State reducing, suspending or withholding grant payments.

2.4. In 2016, an extensive re-design and service transformation of services associated with the Healthy Child Programme and the Brighter Futures suite of services was conducted. The purpose was to integrate the 0-5 and 5-19 service; reduce associated management structure costs and duplication; streamline pathways for families; develop a skill mix workforce to support the

integration; and provide an improved prevention offer of health and social care within the community for children, young people and families. This was achieved by creating a platform branded 'Brighter Futures' for associated services to work to a shared vision and set of principles, outcomes framework and location.

- 2.5. The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme (HCP) is a universal offer available to all children and young people. The programme aims to ensure that every child gets the good start they need to lay the foundations of a healthy life. The programme recognises the importance of building on the support in the early years and sustaining this across the life course for school-aged children and young people to improve outcomes and reduce inequalities through universal provision and targeted support.
- 2.6. Although the language has now changed and emphasis is now on "personalised" care, HCP was previously delivered through a system described as the "4-5-6 model" to ensure a minimum service reaches everyone through community support at **four** different levels across the 0-19 age range. There are **five** mandated health reviews at the Universal level for health visiting, with additional provision to target families with specific needs as they arise. Within the programme, there are **six** high impact areas each for health visiting and school nursing that are linked to policy and driven by evidence to support delivery of the Healthy Child Programme in an integrated way across the 0-19 age range. These areas are where a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people can be realised. The service provision is delivered simultaneously by generic health visitors, school nurses and their teams, managing caseloads and covering geographic areas.
- 2.7. In Thurrock, the Healthy Child Programme is currently delivered through the Healthy Families Service (HFS) and comprises of two teams; Health Visiting and School Nursing, and other targeted support and a range of health interventions for children and young people as part of Thurrock's Brighter Futures offer.
- 2.8. The Healthy Families Service comprises of both statutory functions and discretionary services for children and young people.
- 2.9. There are several mandated elements of the Healthy Families service, which are:
 - National Child Measurement Programme - Measurement of children's height and weight in reception year and Year 6, and provision of feedback of results and general advice/information to parents if requested.
 - Health and development reviews
 - Ante-natal health promoting visit
 - Newborn/14 day review
 - 6-8 weeks check
 - 9-12 month review
 - 2-2.5 year review

- All pupils receive a comprehensive age-appropriate programme of PSHE
 - Responsibility for vision screening
 - Safeguarding responsibilities
- 2.10. The health visiting part of the service is currently provided to children aged 0 to 5 years and their families. It supports parents to focus on the needs and priorities of their baby and family during pregnancy, the first years of life and beyond. There is a universal service offer for everyone who lives in Thurrock with further support offered to those in greatest need. As well as the five mandated visits, the service also provides several high impact programmes to improve infant and family outcomes. These include:
- supporting the transition to parenthood
 - supporting maternal and family mental health
 - supporting breastfeeding
 - supporting healthy weight, healthy nutrition
 - improving health literacy; reducing accidents and minor illnesses
 - supporting health, wellbeing and development: Ready to learn, narrowing the 'word gap'
- 2.11. The school nursing part of the service is available for children, young people and their families of school age – usually from age 5-19 years. This component has gone through significant changes over the past few years following a service transformation in 2016 to become more personalised in response to effect health behaviour change when young people are developing independence, self-determination and autonomy. As with the health visiting component of the service, the school nursing service is available to all, and enhanced support is also available based on need.
- 2.12. The high impact areas for school nursing are:
- supporting resilience and wellbeing
 - improving health behaviours and reducing risk taking
 - supporting healthy lifestyles
 - supporting vulnerable young people and improving health inequalities
 - supporting complex and additional health and wellbeing needs
 - promoting self-care and improving health literacy.
- 2.13. The school nursing component includes the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which is a mandated element. This has been further developed since the guidance was originally published in 2014. For more information on NCMP, please see: [National Child Measurement Programme: operational guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).
- 2.14. Initial and Review Health Assessments for Children Looked After (CLA) are holistic assessments that involve the review of health needs, the analysis and assessment of past medical history, missed health problems and missed screening opportunities. The initial assessments are commissioned by Mid and

South Essex ICB (this includes children placed in or out of the Thurrock area). The review assessments are commissioned as part of the Healthy Families service. The assessments of children and young people placed in Thurrock are completed by the service; out of area assessments are completed by the health provider in that local area with a reciprocal arrangement. The health assessments are especially important as they present an opportunity to influence outcomes and reduce inequalities for CLA.

- 2.15. Furthermore, two posts are commissioned through the Healthy Families Service to supply specialist support to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This is working well to support the safeguarding of children and young people.
- 2.16. A 6.5% cost reduction was negotiated for this contract for 23/24. Associated service reductions came largely from the school nursing and school health improvement aspects of the service. Whilst mitigations were put in place, it is planned that this reduction in service scope is largely reversed as part of the re-procurement exercise.
- 2.17. The HFS is currently provided by the North East London NHS Foundation Trust (NELFT). The contract commenced in 2017 and was initially agreed on a three-year contract with the option to extend for a further two years (3+1+1). This was subsequently extended beyond the initial term in 2022.
- 2.18. On 11th January 2023, Cabinet agreed to another 12-month extension of the Healthy Families Contract at a 6.5% reduction to the contract value (£4.306m) for September 2023-August 2024. Therefore, a service reduction was negotiated with the provider, which included the removal of some aspects of the school health improvement offer, but with mitigation in place with an emphasis on information and advice provision, partnership working, signposting and referral to other services such as, SET CAMHS, PROVIDE, Brook, Thurrock Healthy Lifestyle Service etc. This extension commenced on 1st September 2023.
- 2.19. The Healthy Families Service was funded at a total cost of over £30m during the initial 5-year contract and 2-year extension period. Alongside the contract value, there has been expectation under national guidance to pay NHS Agenda for Change uplift on the staffing establishment associated with this contract. This amounted to £0.375m uplift in the contract value in year three which then set the base contract for future years to incorporate the additional staffing costs. In year six, there was an additional AfC uplift of £0.230m, bringing the entire AfC uplift paid till March 2023 to a total of £1.355m.

Healthy Families Service - Cost	Year	Contract Value £m
One off start up monies	Sept 2017-Aug 2018	0.360
Year 1	Sept 2017-Aug 2018	4.000
Year 2	Sept 2018-Aug 2019	4.000
Year 3	Sept 2019-Aug 2020	4.375

Year 4	Sept 2020-Aug 2021	4.375
Year 5	Sept 2021-Aug 2022	4.375
Year 6 - Extension beyond contract period	Sept 2022-Aug 2023	4.605
Year 7 - Extension beyond contract period with 6.5% contract reduction	Sept 2023-Aug 2024	4.379
Total		30.469

2.20. At the time of writing this report, discussions are ongoing with The Provider (NELFT) on the AfC uplift for 2023/24 following the National Guidance on pay award that was published by NHS England in May 2023 (updated in August 2023¹). This equates to £0.072m for year seven of the final year of the contract. We are currently not aware if the expectation for local authorities to pay AfC uplifts will continue in future years. However, the tender documents and contract will state that the Local Authority will not be paying any uplifts, other than the proposed 1% uplift recommended in this paper, unless legally required to do so.

2.21. The following sets out how the proposed financial envelope has been determined:

- a. £4.379m is the current contract value and the maximum agreed for the contract from September 2024 onwards.
- b. a benchmarking exercise was completed by the Public Health Team in 2022, which showed that Thurrock are currently paying a higher cost per head than other similar local authorities, suggesting that Thurrock could achieve greater value for money. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the services are not directly comparable, and costs will have increased with inflation (see 3.2 below).
- c. we will also be looking to reintroduce the elements that were removed as part of the 6.5% service reduction and incorporate additional elements within the proposed financial envelope, such as a Tier 2 Child Weight Management service and Family Hubs elements (Specialist Perinatal Mental Health Support and Infant Feeding) which are currently funded through additional funding streams. However, this will be determined following the completion and outcome of the ongoing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

2.22. By applying a year-on-year uplift in the £4.3m contract value of either 0%, 1% or 2%, the maximum value of the contract for a 5-year duration with an annual 2% uplift is forecast to be £31.967m. The minimum cost of the contract for a 5-year contract with a 0% uplift is forecast to be £21.5m.

2.23. Breakdown of forecasted total costs based on three scenarios:

¹ https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/PRN00650_2023-24-pay-award-revenue-finance-and-contracting-guidance-updated-version_v2.0_150823.pdf

Contract Term	Annual contract price - 0% Uplift	Annual contract price - 1% Uplift	Annual contract price - 2% Uplift
3 years	£12.9m	£13.03m	£13.16m
5 Years	£21.5m	£21.934m	£22.377m

2.24. Full modelling for 0%, 1% and 2% etc uplift based on the agreed £4.3m baseline value:

HFS 0%, 1% and 2% budget increase modelling over 3+2 years. Base = £4,300,300.00

% Increase	Budget Year 1 (2024/25)	Future Budget year 2 (2025/26)	Future Budget Year 3 (2026/27)	Future Budget year 4 (2027/28)	Future Budget year 5 (2028/29)	Grand Total
0%	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 21,500,000.00
1%	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,343,000.00	£ 4,386,430.00	£ 4,430,294.30	£ 4,474,597.24	£ 21,934,321.54
2%	£ 4,300,000.00	£ 4,386,000.00	£ 4,473,720.00	£ 4,563,194.40	£ 4,654,458.29	£ 22,377,372.69

2.25. Since DHSC's indicative Public Health budget for 2024/25 is a 1.3% uplift on the 23/24 level, an annual uplift of more than this may become unaffordable. To have enough funding in the financial envelope, Public Health would recommend an uplift of 1% annually, to cover cost increases that the service will experience during the lifetime of the contract. The risk of offering 1% and not 2% may reduce provider interest and therefore reduction of quality in service provision, however it is recognised that the Council is in a financial situation that may require the costs to be capped at 1%.

2.26. In January 2023, Cabinet also delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise and in consultation with the Portfolio Holders, to proceed to tender and award for the Healthy Families Service up to a maximum amount of £4.3m per annum for 5+1+1 years to commence from September 2024. However, this financial envelope did not include any annual uplifts and failure to make provisions for at least a 1% uplift may warrant a future reduction to the HFS service offer.

2.27. Furthermore, as of November 2023, the Strategic Approval Panel does not agree with a contract term of 5+1+1 years. They are instead giving approval for the contract term to be 3+2 years commencing September 2024.

2.28. The agreed approach is to re-commission the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme following its current contract term coming to an end in August 2024. This presents an opportunity for a fresh look at the service ensuring coherent, effective; life course services for children and young people aged 0-19 across Thurrock which is value for money. The CYP JSNA is currently underway and is the first step in this process.

2.29. The previous commissioning in 2016 aimed to achieve some efficiencies and savings via transforming and re-designing the offer and working to a more integrated approach. This can be better achieved using the more recent updates to the Healthy Child Programme and changes to the delivery model for

health visiting and school nursing service, which has been specified as 'Universal in reach – Personalised in response' (Public Health England, 2021²).

- 2.30. This current commissioning will focus on transformation and improved outcomes through:
- i. Work towards the Human Learning Systems principles, which is informed by an embedded engagement mechanism and new approach to commissioning and market development.
 - ii. More collaboration and integrated working with Early Years settings especially Family Hubs.
- 2.31. The commissioning of this service will be guided by the Brighter Futures Strategy. This strategy is led by the Brighter Futures Children's Partnership Board which oversees and coordinates all work programmes relating to children, young people and their families in Thurrock. It works to a set of principles to drive better outcomes for children, young people and families and reduce health inequalities. These are as follows:
- i. A shared vision, with a view to driving strategic decision making and planning.
 - ii. Create a new future, which strives to achieve the best outcomes for our children and young people.
 - iii. Be driven by evidence.
 - iv. Embracing meaningful co productive methods that puts the voice of the child and young person at the centre of service design and delivery.

The Brighter Futures Strategy set out four key strategic priorities for children and young people living or affiliated. These include:

- i. **Strategic Priority 1** - All children are able to achieve their potential – focusing on education and skills.
- ii. **Strategic Priority 2** - Children are able to access the services they need to stay healthy, focusing on prevention and early intervention focusing on maternity, 0-5 and 5-19.
- iii. **Strategic Priority 3** - All children can live safely in their communities, focusing on preventing serious youth violence and gang membership.
- iv. **Strategic Priority 4** - Children and their families experience good emotional health and wellbeing focusing on strengthening protective factors and reducing risk factors that impact on children and young people's mental health and commissioning of services that support/treat children and young people and their families with mental ill health.

2.32. It is expected that the new service will work to these principles and priorities.

2.33. The go live date for the new service delivery and contract will be 1st September 2024. As such, the timeline for re-commissioning the HFS dictates that the contract should go out to tender in March 2024. The commissioner is therefore

² [Health visiting and school nursing service delivery model - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-visiting-and-school-nursing-service-delivery-model)

seeking agreement from Cabinet to increase the maximum value approved in January 2023 to re-procure the HFS.

2.34. Indicative timescales:

Publish tender documents	15th March 2024
Tender Application Closes	26th April 2024
Evaluate Tenders (incl. interviews if required)	29th April - 17th May 2024
Notify Bidders Outcome	21st May 2024
Standstill Period	22nd May – 31st May 2024
Final Award	3rd June 2024
Contract Handover	June - August 2024
Contract Start	1st September 2024

2.35. The contract itself will consist of an initial 3-year period, followed by the option to extend for a further 2 years (5+1). Thus, the contract length will be a minimum of 5 years and a maximum of 7 years.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1. Re-commissioning is likely to have additional cost implications. However, it will allow the service to adapt to the newly updated Healthy Child Programme which describes changes to the delivery model for health visiting and school nursing service to provide greater emphasis on the assessment of children, young people and family’s needs and the skill mix to respond to these needs (PHE Healthy Child Programme guidance update, 2021²). The following represent the changes:

- a. The language of the “4,5,6 model” has been removed and replaced with an increased emphasis on “personalised” care or tailored interventions as well as professional and clinical judgement, which underpins the professional autonomy of the health visitor and in response to individual or family need.
- b. The inclusion of two additional universal contacts at 3-4 months and 6 months. These will provide important opportunities to address key public health priorities including, perinatal mental health, child development, breastfeeding, childhood obesity prevention, immunisation uptake and accident prevention.
- c. Increased scope for “Emotional Health and Wellbeing Assessments” – alongside maternal mental health, these will now include fathers and babies. This includes a clear statement that, “Health visitors assess maternal mental health at all health visiting mandated reviews.
- d. Health reviews for 5-19 or 24 if appropriate remains.

- 3.2. Given the above, the Healthy Families Service (HFS) contract, which utilises a model developed nearly 7 years ago, now requires a refresh particularly considering the Family Hubs Transformation programme and understanding gained through implementation and contract management of the service. Additionally, a benchmarking exercise was also completed which showed that best value savings could be made. Therefore, we aim for a better value for money by using the current contract value as a base, with a view to re-introducing aspects of the school health improvement offer that had to be removed for this year (see 2.16 & 2.18).
- 3.3. The current contract extension for the provision of Healthy Families Service is due to end in August 2024. There is consequently a need for the local authority to ensure a contracted service is in place from September 2024 onwards.
- 3.4. The value of any contract(s) from September 2024 onwards will likely exceed the threshold for which Cabinet approved and delegated authority to the Director of Public Health in January 2023, meaning Cabinet agreement to proceed with a higher amount is required.
- 3.5. There are currently two options for Cabinet to consider in this matter:
- 3.6. **Option 1: Do Nothing – no change to the £4.3m originally approved in January 2023.**
- 3.7. The Council could make no change to the £4.3m per annum agreement for which authority to award was delegated to the Director of Public Health. By not providing agreement to increase the maximum contract value and subsequently refusing to agree funding for projected uplifts the Council could in effect still provide a service. This would generate a significant saving in terms of spend on contract. However, there would be a significant risk that the service would need to be reduced during the life-course of the contract in order to be affordable for any provider. There is also a risk of failing to attract interest from prospective providers during the tender process, which would make it less competitive. This would potentially mean a reduction of quality in service provision especially for the school nursing element, which has already gone through significant changes in the past years. Additionally, it may make it more challenging to fully integrate HFS within the Family Hubs Transformation Model and put in place a sustainable family hubs offer.
- 3.8. **Option 2: Agree to increase the maximum financial envelope to include potential uplifts by the recommended 1% year on year and continue with the re-procurement process for the service with a revised contract spend and service specification from September 2024 for a period of 3+2 years.**
- 3.9. The re-procurement process will continue as planned with the re-design of the service specification of the Healthy Families Service ready for September 2024. If the contract value was reduced there is the likelihood that the service specification would also be reduced from what is offered presently. However, with the incentive of a 1% uplift year on year, there is an improved potential for

a provider from the open market to demonstrate cost effective ways of delivering a service with an equivalent or increased specification from that seen now.

- 3.10. Of particular note is the 5-19 element that has gone through significant changes in the past years following a service transformation in 2016. Additionally, the need to meet the 6.5% service reduction in the current contract has left only a basic age 5-19 offer in place. Without the uplift, it will be challenging for a provider to deliver over and above what is in place currently. There is also the added risk that inequalities will not be adequately tackled for the benefit of the population of Thurrock that experience poorer than average health outcomes.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1. **Option 2** is recommended for the HFS Contract as this ensures continuity in the delivery of a service with good outcomes for children, young people and families whilst giving the Public Health, Children's Services and procurement teams the resources required to complete the necessary steps and planning for a renewed offer from 2024/25. The alternative options would lead to a breach of the Council's statutory requirements for children 0 – 19 and families.
- 4.2. The HFS is a Start for Life element and forms the foundation of the Family Hub Transformation programme. As such establishing an effective Family Hub programme will require some changes to the way in which some existing elements of the HFS interact with other services. Whilst some additional funding is available to undertake this transformation work and specifically to expand services which will form part of the family hub, it is time limited; therefore, consideration needs to be given to longevity of the Start for Life offer. Moreover, as the transformation work proceeds, the service provider will likely be required to make further changes within their contract envelope (such as the location of some service delivery) which will likely incur additional cost. The recommended increase in the maximum contract value will provide an opportunity to re-design the model in line with this transformation work and available budget moving forwards. Agreeing to the uplift will make this more likely and attract competitive interests from prospective providers.
- 4.3. It is also recommended that the power to award the contract be delegated to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders. This will allow a sufficient window of time between contract award and contract commencement, during which the necessary contract handover actions can take place to ensure a smooth and effective transition to the new service.

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

- 5.1 Consultation with the public and stakeholders was conducted in summer 2021 before the current agreement was reached by Cabinet in January 2023. A further consultation is being conducted as part of the children and young people Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which includes a survey questionnaire that is available on the Council's consultation portal. There is a second survey

aimed at professionals and interviews have been conducted participants of which include the portfolio holders for Health and Children's Services. Additionally, over the next few months, the relevant governance boards are being consulted on the proposed service design and service specification to ensure that the best service model is commissioned for Thurrock residents.

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

- 6.1. The Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-26 contains a goal to ensure all children and young people are able to achieve their potential through raising aspirations and reducing the disadvantage gap.
- 6.2. The Brighter Futures Strategy Strategic priority 2 states that children are able to access the services they need and be healthy, focussing on prevention and early intervention and the Healthy Families Contract is key to the delivery of this.
- 6.3. By ensuring the provision of the HFS from September 2024, is based on the comprehensive JSNA, the local authority is demonstrating its commitment to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- 6.4. The recommendations of this report align with Thurrock's Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) 2022 to be a more streamlined and financially sustainable organisation.
- 6.5. The recommendations within this report will align with the strategic aim of the IRP to be a focused, cost-effective, sustainable and co-designed approach to service provision which is delivered in partnership with residents and other key partners, with collaboration across multi-disciplinary teams.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Bradley Herbert**
Senior Management Accountant

All the financial implications as detailed in the report will be contained within the public health grant and no implications to the council's general fund.

Based on the information contained within the report, option two represents the most financially viable option.

This option will likely increase prospective providers' interest and encourage a competitive tender process. This will likely contribute to a better and proper service re-design, leading to greater value for money longer term.

As detailed in paragraph 2.23 the inflationary uplift are across a potential range and will be contained within the public health grant and will form part of the annual budget setting process.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Kevin Molloy**
Team Leader Contracts Team

Following issue by the Council of a s114 notice, the Council must ensure that its resources are not used for non-essential spending. The contract at issue here is essential and the provision of it a statutory duty under legislation. In procuring the services outlined, the Council must observe the obligations upon it outlined in national legislation and in its internal procurement rules. Officers should ensure Legal Services are kept informed as they progress through the procurement

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager - Community Development and Equalities

Both services are universal and as such their existence or otherwise could be argued to impact upon all socio-demographic groups equally. However, the nature of the services is that in many cases those individuals at greatest risk of harm and who could be considered society's most vulnerable would be impacted mostly through any potential withdrawal or reduction in scope of the services.

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

Delivery of this service will support the aims of Brighter Futures Children Partnership Strategy 2021-26.

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

- Thurrock Brighter Futures Strategy 2021 – 2026 – [Brighter Futures Children's Partnership Strategy 2021-26 | Children and young people's strategies | Thurrock Council](#)
- Cabinet - Wednesday, 11th January, 2023 7.00 pm – item 95 [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 11th January, 2023, 7.00 pm | Thurrock Council](#)
- NHS England 2023/24 pay award: revenue finance and contracting guidance (updated version) <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp->

content/uploads/2023/01/PRN00650_2023-24-pay-award-revenue-finance-and-contracting-guidance-updated-version_v2.0_150823.pdf

- Health visiting and school nursing service delivery model (2021) [Health visiting and school nursing service delivery model - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/98482/Health_visiting_and_school_nursing_service_delivery_model_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1

Stage 1 Form – Approval to Proceed to Tender, Exempt from Publication.

Report Author:

Olajumoke Kehinde

Senior Programme Manager – Children and Young People

Public Health

10 January 2024	ITEM: 15 Decision:110691
Cabinet	
Gas Services Contract Modification	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Cllr Barry Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Housing (Cabinet Member)	
Accountable Assistant Director: Ewelina Sorbjan, Assistant Director of Housing and Development	
Accountable Director: Ian Wake, Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The council has embarked upon the procurement of an all-inclusive Partnership Delivery Model for all housing repairs, planned, major works and compliance works to its housing stock. This new delivery model is planned to go live on 1 March 2025. Between now and 1 March 2025 the intention is for the council to only procure any new works contracts for a limited time period where these cannot be extended or be absorbed into other contracts within the necessary regulations.

The Domestic Gas Servicing Contract will expire on 29 March 2024. However, the council needs to maintain a gas servicing and heating works contract, in order to service and maintain its housing stock in repair and compliance.

This report is seeking approval for a contract modification to extend the contract for Domestic Gas Servicing to 1 March 2025 after when the service will be delivered as part of the new Partnership Delivery Model for Housing works. This extension falls within the parameters of Public Contract Regulations 2015 regulation 72.

This recommendation is consistent with the objectives of the Enhanced Thurrock Improvement and Recovery Plan for the council to offer value for money to its residents and for its services to be delivered in a financially sustainable manner.

Commissioner Commentary

The commissioner supports the recommendations as outlined in the report.

The council has a legal duty as a landlord to ensure its tenants are provided with safe homes that are compliant with housing regulations and deliver on its housing asset management objectives. As such it is imperative that the gas servicing works contained within this report are delivered in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner that offers the best value to the council and its residents.

Finances for the delivery of these works have been allocated within the HRA 30 business plan.

In September 2022, directions issued to the council by the Government required Thurrock to put in place an Improvement and Recovery Plan to the satisfaction of Commissioners. The plan has 5 main themes:

- financial sustainability
- governance and scrutiny
- strategic direction
- place leadership and growth
- leadership and culture

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Approve the recommendation set out in the report to modify and extend the existing domestic and commercial gas servicing, breakdown, repair and installation contract for a further year to 1st March 2025 with the potential extension for a further year.

1.2 Approve delegated authority to implement the contract modification for the domestic and commercial gas servicing, breakdown and repair to the Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holder, Commissioners and Section 151 Officer.

2. Introduction and Background

Gas Services Contract

2.1 The current domestic gas contract was procured and awarded in 2019 to Aaron Services following a restricted tender process in accordance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015). The contract was extended as permitted under the contract terms in 2022 for a period of two years. The contract is based on a price per property for the annual servicing and repair to all gas appliances in council housing stock.

2.2 The current contract is £1.2m per year comprising of servicing and repairs, installation of new boiler and central heating systems and out of scope repairs. The price per property contract covers general operating components of the boiler, however, more extensive repairs fall outside of the price per property scope and are classified as exclusions which are assessed and approved on a

case-by-case basis by the housing contract management team. Commercial gas servicing and repair services are currently split into two elements, and includes council buildings across the borough, including the Civic Offices and Thameside Complex. The commercial element of the contract is much smaller than the domestic servicing (at an annual value of £30k per annum) and is effectively delivered as part of a “one stop shop” for gas services.

- 2.3 The data below provides the number of repairs and new boiler installations that have been delivered by the contractor over the past two financial years, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Gas breakdown and repair repairs and costs

Between April 2021 to Mar 2022 – 8350 gas repairs were completed with 94% of these repairs completed at first visit.

Between April 2022 to Mar 2023, 11,333 gas repairs were completed with 93% of these repairs completed at first visit.

Between April 2023 to Sept 2023 4235 gas repairs were completed with 70.5% of these repairs completed at first visit.

(Data taken from Housing Gas Repairs Performance Dashboard)

Number of new gas boiler installation and costs

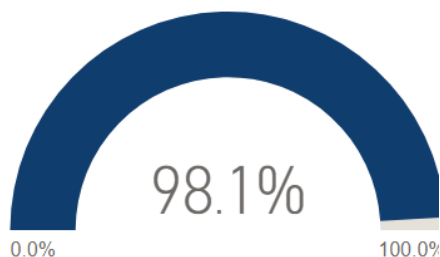
2021/22 – 498 boiler renewals were completed at a total cost of £1,057,255

2022/23 – 528 boiler renewals were completed at a total cost of £1,204,927

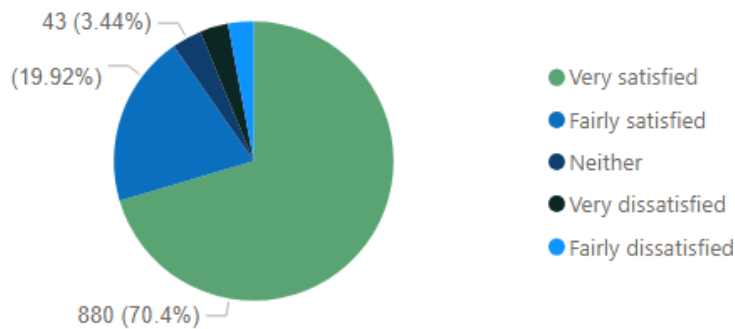
Total – 1026 boiler renewals at a total cost of £2,262,183.02

- 2.4 The customer satisfaction ratings for the contractor’s performance has been good as illustrated by the data below. Data below is from April 2022 to Sept 2023.

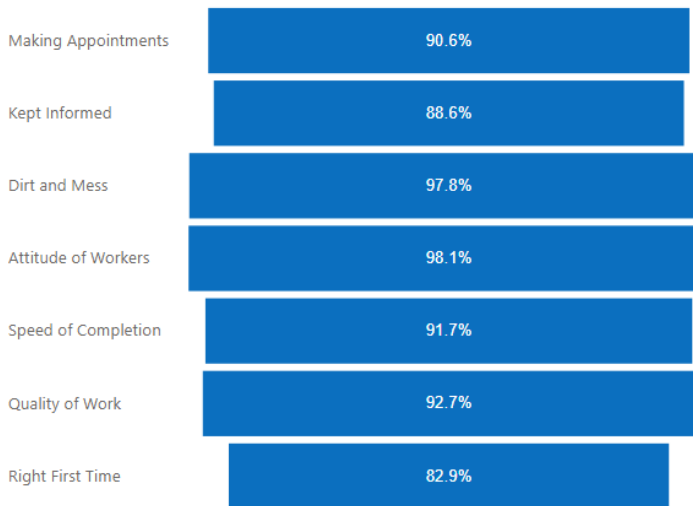
CSAT Rate - Overall Satisfaction



Responses by Rating



Other Satisfaction Metrics



3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Gas Servicing Contract

3.2 Several options were considered to ensure there was no disruption to residents for gas servicing when the contract expires in March 2024. These options included sourcing a new supplier via a new procurement exercise; incorporating the gas servicing within the existing repairs contract; to spot purchasing any repairs, servicing and heating installations as and when required. The risks and benefits of each of these options are listed in the table below.

3.3 These options pose considerable risks to the council as any new procurement exercise could mean considerable price increases to the council from the

market given the short contract term. There could also be the considerable risk of service disruption during the mobilisation period for any new supplier.

- 3.4 With all of these risk factors considered the recommended option is to modify the existing contract with the existing supplier, Aaron Services, for a period of one year to last up to when the new Partnership Delivery Model for housing works takes over from 1st March 2025. This recommendation poses the least risk of service disruption to tenants whilst at the same time ensuring cost certainty to the council as prices will remain as per current scheduled rates.
- 3.5 The modification to the existing contract is to be pursued under Regulation 72 of the Public Contracts Regulations (PCR) 2015, which a contract can be amended after award without the need to re-advertise in OJEU. Regulation 72 describes a number of changes that can be made to awarded public contracts without triggering a requirement to conduct a fresh tender process. Importantly, a change proposed by a contracting authority will only need to satisfy one of a number of tests in order to not be deemed material. Please see para 7.2 of this report for further detail on Regulation 7.2.

Options Appraisal

Gas Servicing Contract		
Option	Benefits	Disadvantage
Do nothing – this option is not recommended.	There are no benefits to this option	This option would not deliver the council's legal duties as a landlord. This option is discounted.
Outsourced procurement via recognised specialist Framework - this option is not recommended.	Competitive process.	Limited contract period will attract low response from the market. Limited value for money to the council due to short contract period. Procurement process and mobilisation period for any new supplier will pose a risk of service disruption. Limited or no opportunities for social value.
Spot purchasing / Procure works on a job by job basis – this option is not recommended.		Given the volume of works required this option will not deliver any cost efficiencies or consistent service standards. Spot purchasing will pose significant procurement challenges given the volume of works required. This is not

		deemed a viable option and discounted.
Direct delivery in-sourced service approach - this option is not recommended.	Direct control over delivery of service.	The time to set up a direct delivery service will pose a significant risk of service disruption and subsequent failure to meet landlord duties. The costs of setting up an in-house service along with all ancillary support logistics will be very significant and these costs are not currently budgeted for. This option does not align with the Enhanced Improvement & Recovery Plan for the council to become an enabling and commissioning organisation.
Modify/Extend Existing Contract - This option is recommended.	Ensures continuity of service. Requires no contractor mobilisation period. Ensure cost certainty to the council as prices will remain as per current scheduled rates.	There is a low risk of challenge to this option as the council has already utilised extension provisions in the contract. The risk of a challenge is low/moderate as the modification/extension period is for eleven months and interest from the market would be very limited for such a short period.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The council has a legal duty as a landlord to ensure its tenants are provided with safe homes that are compliant with housing regulations and deliver on its housing asset management objectives. As such it is imperative that the gas servicing works are delivered in a timely, reliable, and cost-effective manner that offers the best value to the council and its residents.
- 4.2 The existing contract expires on 29th March 2024. Options available to the council are to re-procure this contract, amalgamate this service with another contract or extend the existing contract. Due to current market conditions leading to significantly increased prices; the risk of service disruption and the performance of the existing contractor (Aaron Services) worsening, the recommendation is to modify and extend the existing contract to 1st March 2025 after when the gas servicing and heating works would become part of the new Partnership Delivery Model which the council intends to procure from the market from 14th Dec 2023.

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

- 5.1 Options within this report have been discussed with Portfolio Holder for Housing. Wider housing and corporate estate colleagues have been briefed on the impending contract procurements to ensure a one council approach.
- 5.2 As this report pertains to a contract modification of an existing service this report has not been presented to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

- 6.1 The recommendations of this report align with Thurrock's Enhanced Improvement and Recovery Plan 2022 to be a financially sustainable organisation offering best value to its residents.
- 6.2 The recommendations within this report will align with the strategic them of the Enhanced IRP to be a focussed, cost-effective, sustainable and co-designed approach to service provision which is delivered in partnership with residents and other key partners, with collaboration across multi-disciplinary teams.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Strategic Lead – Corporate Finance

The contract detailed within this report relates to the Housing Revenue Account. There is no impact on the council's General Fund

The budget provision within the HRA for costs pertaining to the gas contract for 2023/24 is £1.303m. This is sufficient to cover the estimated costs of the contract.

The total expenditure in relation to the works in the previous two financial years equated to £1.132m in 2021/22, and £1.235m in 2022/23.

The cost of the contract modification will form part for of the 2024/25 HRA budget setting process. This will include an inflationary element of 6.7% on the 2023/24 budget provision, giving a total budget provision of £1.390m.

Any major works in the replacement of heating system form part for the HRA capital programme and are outside of the revenue maintenance works detailed within this report.

7.2 Legal

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

7.1 The ground under regulation 72 above referred to at clause 3.5 requires that the proposed variation is not substantial in order for it to be an allowable exception to the rules. There have not been many cases on the application of regulation 72, and the courts will proceed from the basis that any allowable exceptions to the procurement rules will be interpreted narrowly. The test for what is substantial is detailed below, and members will need to consider whether a 20% increase in the contract value and term would be viewed by the court as substantial, were a challenge to come in.

(a) the modification renders the contract materially different in character from the one initially concluded;

(b) the modification introduces conditions which, had they been part of the initial procurement procedure, would have—

(i) allowed for the admission of other candidates than those initially selected,

(ii) allowed for the acceptance of a tender other than that originally accepted, or

(iii) attracted additional participants in the procurement procedure;

(c) the modification changes the economic balance of the contract or the framework agreement in favour of the contractor in a manner which was not provided for in the initial contract or framework agreement;

(d) the modification extends the scope of the contract or framework agreement considerably;

(e) a new contractor replaces the one to which the contracting authority had initially awarded the contract in cases other than those provided for in paragraph (1)(d).

7.2 It is difficult to say with confidence whether an increase to the contract of roughly 20% in value and length would be considered 'substantial' from a legal standpoint. There have been relatively few legal cases on application of regulation 72, but we do know the courts do interpret its meaning narrowly. There is some risk therefore that a challenge would succeed. However, members are also asked to note the view of the assessment of the likelihood of challenge outlined above at clause 3.5 under the Options Appraisal, which is put at low to moderate.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Community Development Team

While there are no specific equality and diversity implications arising from the recommendations of this report it imperative for the council to ensure residents continue to receive a repairs and maintenance service and there is a risk to residents if this service is not in place in time when the existing contract expires.

Should the gas servicing works not be in place in time there will be a deterioration of living standards for residents as well as the deterioration of properties. It will also mean the council will not meet its landlord obligations under the Fitness for Human Habitation Act with implications for all protected groups with some, potentially, more disadvantaged than others because of age and disability.

If the term of the contract is modified in line with the recommendations outlined in this report, council officers will work with the provider to explore opportunities to extend its existing social value offer to support a wider range of projects to benefit the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of local residents

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

None

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** : None

Report to Cabinet on Procurement of Partnership Delivery Model for Housing Works, 8th November 2023.

9. **Appendices to the report**

None

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