

Appendix 2
CORPORATE PLAN PRIORITY PROJECTS 2016/17

MID YEAR PROGRESS

Create a great place for learning and opportunity

Work with partners to provide training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities linked to key local industries

The Employability and Skills team continues to build/maintain employer contacts in Thurrock and beyond, in order to extend provision that directly links to key priority sectors and enables local employers to recruit to vacancies. Earlier this month Opportunity Thurrock, the borough wide annual careers fair, hosted more than 130 exhibitors ranging from local/national employers, further education (FE) and higher education (HE) to speak to more than 2,500 students about their aspirations/pathways for the future. Close liaison with the regeneration team has enabled the development of a job vacancies website as another route for local employers to promote opportunities. This has been branded as **Opportunities Thurrock** so it is immediately recognisable and linked to the careers fair and key priority sectors. Regular liaison with the regeneration team enables the inclusion of apprenticeship and employment with training, training for existing staff and the recruitment of local people as part of their statutory obligations via Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act.

Other programmes, such as:

- OnTrack Thurrock provides bespoke services for NEET (Not in Education, Employment of Training) young people to develop skills to enable employment
- Thurrock's Next Top Boss provide students with high profile business mentors to resolve real time business challenges
- the Careers and Enterprise Company programme that is recruiting business leaders as volunteers to provide strategic direction to Head Teachers/Principals to create whole school/college Enterprise Strategy as well as simplify the range of offers and services available to schools and our traded work experience service are all designed to provide students with high quality 'employer encounters'
- In addition, joint work is underway, with an external partner and HR & OD, for the council to consider the creation of fixed term contract employment opportunities for vulnerable young people

Work with schools and other partners to increase percentage of good/outstanding schools, academies and early education facilities in the borough in line with new legislation

The School Improvement Team works closely with the three teaching schools to identify the continued professional development (CPD) and school improvement needs of the schools and academies in the borough using the latest end of key stage data. School to school support bids have been made for two schools in the borough to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). A comprehensive CPD brochure has been developed which includes masters degrees, short courses and bespoke packages.

Of the 39 primary schools, 36 schools have a current inspection grade - two schools are

awaiting their first inspection. Of the 36 schools, 33 schools are rated by Ofsted as good or better (92%). There are currently three schools that are rated by Ofsted as requiring improvement and the council would expect all three to be judged as good on their next inspection. Both special schools are rated as outstanding and eight out of the nine secondary schools with inspections are rated as good or better with one school awaiting inspection after re-opening as a new academy in September. Overall the percentage of good or better schools in Thurrock is 91%.

The early years team within the school improvement team work closely with all settings to ensure they provide high quality early education and childcare. The team ensures settings are meeting the statutory welfare and education requirements of the early years and foundation stage (EYFS), thereby ensuring the number of good or better settings has continued to rise. (89% good or better).

Review school improvement and other children and young people services and develop proposals for future delivery to make best use of available resources

The Children's Centre review as part of the 0-19 Wellbeing Model is currently out for consultation. It is intended to improve the service by reducing duplication and delivering a more integrated approach to users of Children's Centres, Early Offer of Help, Troubled Families and Health.

The review of the Virtual School is also underway. The commissioning team are working with the virtual school to find efficiencies in the commissioning of services.

Due to departmental restructure the review of school improvement is not yet complete.

Using outcomes of the iMPower review and Ofsted Inspection, develop and deliver strategic plan for demand management of children's social care services

A clear Ofsted improvement plan has been developed and is being monitored and progressed by the Director of Children's Services. The overall direction of travel (progress) within the plan is positive.

iMPower are completing their final piece of work with Children's Social Care to restructure the current services to offer more effective early help and prevention.

The current service delivery of early offer services is considered to be too fragmented to be effective at early enough a stage to prevent escalation into statutory services and deterioration for the families.

The new model being scoped with iMPower will bring together the current offers (teams) into a unified and/ or co-ordinated whole.

Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

Promote Thurrock and what it has to offer to residents, visitors and inward investors

The council has been focusing on a number of different ways to raise the profile of Thurrock and of the council.

A new monthly e-newsletter was launched in October - an additional, customer-centric communication channel to complement the more strategic use of other channels i.e. social media, website, local media, outdoor advertising. It will be coordinated by the Communications team and be campaign-led enabling the communication of key priority messages. It will also feature event dates for the diary. This will be a regular communique which residents can sign-up for, and will be encouraged to do so.

Directors Board have agreed to a focussed programme of awards and nominations to increase the profile of the borough nationally, and have recently contributed to the leading growth industry guide, MIPIM, for developers highlighting the investment opportunities that Thurrock has to offer.

Develop and progress the refreshed Local Plan and associated documents

Thurrock Council is preparing a new Local Plan. This plan will be used to guide decisions on planning applications for development as well as set out the strategic direction of the area on social, economic and environmental matters. All Local Planning Authorities must prepare a Local Plan setting out planning policies for their area.

In February-April 2016 the council undertook its first formal consultation on the emerging Local Plan, an Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation. The purpose of the consultation was to obtain the views of stakeholders, local businesses and the community on the key issues that the Local Plan will need to address. In total of 70 bodies/persons provided formal responses to the consultation document. They raised 548 separate comments.

In order for the Local Plan to be prepared in an open and inclusive way the council recognises that there needs to be elements of ongoing stakeholder engagement throughout the plan making process. Since the end of the Issues and Options (Stage 1) consultation the council has continued to engage key stakeholders through the creation of four discussion forums and through the use of summer roadshows. It is anticipated that the next formal round of public consultation will take place in April 2017 although this date is dependent upon an announcement on the preferred Lower Thames Crossing Route and how this affects emerging Local Plan evidence (Green Belt Assessment; Economic Development Needs, Strategic Transportation Needs Assessment).

Implement the Economic Growth Strategy and progress the six Growth Hubs including Purfleet Centre Scheme

The growth programme in Thurrock continues to be one of the largest and most exciting opportunities in the country. Thurrock's reputation as a place full of opportunity has helped attract a number of large scale regeneration projects including DP World London Gateway, Port of Tilbury expansion and Purfleet Regeneration. These projects in turn have created significant numbers of jobs and the opening of Amazon and UPS facilities in 2017 presents further opportunities. In addition to these large scale projects we have also focussed on smaller but nevertheless significant projects for local people such as expanding our small business accommodation offer in the borough, helping local people to find work and improving our town centres. Good progress has been made in a number of areas as the programme continues to move from plans to deliverables. Highlights include: -

- Agreement of the masterplan for Grays and development appraisals for a number of sites which would generate a positive return to contribute towards delivery of the underpass and new theatre.
- Agreement of the masterplan for the Civic Square in Tilbury and progress defining and designing the flagship Integrated Healthy Living Centre proposed as the centre-piece of the new scheme

A full and detailed update on the progress of the six growth hubs will be presented to Council as part of the Portfolio Holder report for Regeneration in November 2016.

Work with partners to identify and provide for infrastructure needs including tackling issues of congestion and proposals for a new Lower Thames Crossing

Waiting for the announcement on the preferred Lower Thames Crossing Route affects Local Plan and other infrastructure strategies moving forward, however in the meantime infrastructure and highways improvements are progressing, including the A13 with local communication and awareness raising having started. The improvements will widen the A13 Stanford-le-Hope Bypass from two to three lanes in both directions, from the junction with the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) in the west and the A1014 (The Manorway) to the east.

This widened section of road would tie-in with the existing three lane section of the A13 to the west of the junction with A128. DP World London Gateway will provide £10 million funding towards these improvements. Works will begin once a further £80 million of government funding is confirmed.

Build new homes that are affordable and a mixture of tenures (private and social)

During the first half of the financial year housing development activity has continued to progress at pace. A project of twelve houses for affordable rent to Council tenants has completed at Bracelet Close in Corringham. The remaining three Housing Revenue Account funded schemes in Grays, Chadwell St Mary and Tilbury are well advanced in planning and feasibility terms with all schemes benefitting from external design review to ensure they will be of high quality.

These projects are part of the Housing Zone will deliver a mix of 118 houses, flats and bungalows for rent which meets evidenced housing need and supports other programmes such as the review of sheltered housing and the need to help manage the demand for Social Care by reducing or delaying the need for care services.

The national rent reduction policy will make further HRA schemes very unlikely at present. Two completed HRA schemes also won national design awards and are considered exemplar.

Gloriana's first phase of new homes will be ready for occupation in January 2017 with the balance of the 128 unit scheme at St Chads completing later in the 2017. The next Gloriana scheme has been submitted for planning and will deliver, subject to planning, 80 homes for sale and rent at Belmont Road in Grays. A pipeline of development sites for Gloriana is being evaluated, with feasibility studies ongoing on sites in Grays and South Ockendon.

The development of a business case to achieve the regeneration of estates with high repair costs and poor environmental conditions has progressed substantially in the last six months.

The main drivers in this work are to radically improve the lives of residents whilst managing the repairing liability to the council. Key risks to this project in the long term are ensuring effective and timely resident engagement, changes to build cost and sales values of enabling residential development.

Build pride, responsibility and respect

Develop a communication and engagement strategy informed by the Residents Survey

The resident survey has been commissioned and this will be undertaken during the autumn with final analysis expected in January. This will feed into the wider communication and engagement approach as well as other pieces of work such as the review of the vision and priorities and associated corporate performance framework.

The council has increased its use of social media and this is now a daily, two-way, instant channel of communication with residents and other stakeholders. The council now has around 9,500 followers on Twitter and nearly 2,000 Facebook “likes”. Social media accounts are now being manned at evenings and weekends. This is part of an increasingly customer-centric approach to residents. The council now “tweets” press releases and posts them on Facebook to get maximum coverage as well as utilising LinkedIn.

Work with partners to empower communities

The council has progressed a number of programmes to help empower communities. Most significantly in the year to date is the adoption of the Community Assets Transfer (CAT) Policy. Often, communities aspire to provide local resources but lack the facilities to do so. This policy provides a consistent opportunity for community organisations to seek the use of land or property owned by the council at a subsidised rate when the public value of the activity is considered within an agreed framework.

Friends of Hardie Park (based in Stanford Le Hope) were instrumental to the development of the CAT policy and provide a current example of the policy in practice. With a pool of dedicated volunteers, the group are campaigning for park improvements and championing local management and maintenance of the park. They have made improvements to prevent vandalism of equipment and anti-social behaviour and secured funding to install a brand new skate park. A prefabricated building has also been erected and will contain a café and space to deliver training sessions.

A new Community Hub has opened in Purfleet taking the number across the borough to six. Hubs empower communities by bringing people together around common issues and exploring community based solutions to improvement. Often, the simple act of providing a space and support to talk something through can change someone’s perception from being dependent and stuck, to having choice and options about the future. People appreciate being supported by trained volunteers, and hubs are increasingly seen as the first point of call of information and support. Hubs are co-produced with the voluntary sector and local communities, and are underpinned by a commitment to equality.

As well as increasing confidence, improving skills and knowledge is an important aspect of empowerment. Subsidised training is available to Thurrock residents active in their communities with Voluntary Sector Training Essex with courses now delivered in Thurrock too. Courses to date have included Finding Funding Faster and Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees.

The key partnership approach helping to empower communities is through the Stronger Together Partnership. A dedicated website has been created to promote the many different programmes in Thurrock supporting people to support themselves and others including Timebanking, the work of Local Area Co-ordinators and support for micro enterprise to

name a few. The site is particularly good for promoting good news about Thurrock and examples of community spirit in action – you can view the site at <http://www.strongertogether.org.uk>

Develop new models for adult social care and support provider development through implementation of the Market Position Statement

Excellent progress is being made with the implementation of the key objectives of the Market Position Statement. The micro enterprise project has developed well with a project lead that has supported a number of micro enterprises to be established in Thurrock. The shared lives tender has now been successfully awarded (we are still however in the alcatel period prior to announcement of the result).

Domiciliary support has provided significant challenges – the council has developed a comprehensive project plan which is being implemented, the pilot of a new model is just about to start, a new specification is being developed which will offer a new way of working to support people to be connected to their communities and to receive the level of care and support they need. The approach to domiciliary support is key to the next part of the Building Positive Futures agenda, Living Well in Thurrock. Specialist autism services are being developed for the first time in Thurrock in partnership with Family Mosaic who will be building accommodation with specialist support at Medina Road.

Develop a new and transformational Customer Services Strategy including delivery through digital channels where appropriate

A new Customer Strategy has been drafted and will be presented to Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee in November, which ties in all forms of direct contact with our residents, and supports channel shift, but goes further to embed the “getting it right first time” principle. This is a wide ranging piece of work, as there are so many aspects to it, from analysis of customer requests and queries through the contact centre, monitoring of trends in complaints, usage of website to a whole scale look at the quality of the correspondence we send out. This strategy will also recognise the valuable role Community Hubs play in supporting residents who need to help to access online services.

Improve health and wellbeing

Implement the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and deliver the action plans

All action plans are in place – one per Health and Wellbeing Strategy objective (25 action plans). Action Plans have been signed off and with their progress monitored via the Health and Wellbeing Board's Executive Committee and the Board itself. The Board focuses on one of the Health and Wellbeing Board's goals at each of its meetings, with action plan owners presenting action plans and progress.

Action plans will be refreshed on an annual basis and an end of year report will be produced to capture the year's progress. The development of the strategy is being co-produced through regular sessions with both Thurrock Disability Partnership Board and the Older People's Parliament.

Transform and integrate health and social care with a focus on prevention and early intervention, including the delivery of four integrated healthy living centres

The Adult Social Care Transformation Programme 'Living Well in Thurrock' (LWiT) is designed to reduce, delay and prevent the need for care (and health) services. The programme focuses on three elements – stronger communities, built environment, adult social care (and health) offer.

The programme includes the further development of existing initiatives and the introduction of a number of new projects and initiatives. This includes a bid for additional supported housing in Aveley, and the consideration of options for the expansion of Collins House.

The programme is reviewed on a monthly basis via highlight and exception reporting to the Integrated Commissioning Executive. The majority of the projects contained within the LWiT programme are also linked to the delivery of objectives contained within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Some examples of the work accomplished to date include:

- The council has engaged with an external provider to complete a feasibility study concerning the spinning out of provider and fieldwork services in Adult social care
- A Social Prescribing Project has been started seeking alternative solutions being identified by GPs for people who require community solutions rather than medical interventions
- Work is nearing completion to introduce a single point of access called 'Thurrock First', to enable people to access all community based health, mental health and Adult Social Care services through one point of contact, thereby reducing duplication and the need for people to provide information many times to access the variety of services available

Deliver Transforming Homes programme for 2016/17

The Transforming Homes programme is now in its fourth year. The first half of the year has seen 763 properties benefitting from internal improvement works these have been located predominantly in Grays Riverside and West Thurrock and South Stifford areas.

The next phase of year four will continue with the completion of properties in West Thurrock

and South Stifford and will move to start works in properties in both Chadwell St Mary and Aveley.

However the programme remains on target to achieve improvements to 65% of the council's housing stock by year end. This will mean that month on month completion numbers will gradually reduce in the second half of the year in line with the council's spend profile. This will ensure that the programme continues to be affordable and achievable.

A key focus across the programme is to drive improvement by continuing to monitor the resident satisfaction and ensure robust challenge of contractor performance. Average resident satisfaction with the programme across the year to date is 81.76%.

Resident feedback allows for the identification of areas of poor performance and ensures that the services that are delivered reflect our residents' needs.

It is a priority for all partners to ensure emerging issues are addressed as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to residents. Recent improvements have been made through enhanced inspections of works in progress addressing any concerns as they arise and close monitoring of the percentage of properties handed over by the contractors snag free.

Improve efficiency and effectiveness of homelessness prevention

The main cause of homelessness has changed over the past two years from being parental eviction to being the ending of an assured short hold (private) tenancy.

This has proved very challenging since it removes options for prevention through offers of private rented properties. Thurrock is becoming less affordable with an increasing gap between the Local Housing allowance and market rents. The service was only able to prevent 71 households from homelessness.

One of the ways in which the service has been able to prevent homelessness is through the offer of early financial advice and support through the financial inclusion service. Economically vulnerable households are identified early, and supported adequately through better budgeting, sign posting to other services, and ensuring they can sustain their current tenancies. So far this service has provided support to about 300 social tenants and many other residents in the borough.

A new housing management system was designed and built and will be replacing the current outdated one in November 2016; the introduction of the new system will improve record keeping, performance monitoring and drive effective data analysis through business intelligence. This will aid the service in understanding better its effectiveness in delivering services and ensure consistency and accountability.

The introduction of a new homeless prevention scheme called Housing First which is directed to support the most vulnerable service users in the borough went live in November 2016 where the service will be offered to the first two service users.

The Homeless Reduction Bill which is currently being debated in Parliament is likely to present further challenges but should ultimately ensure that homeless households are assisted at a much earlier stage.

The overall review of housing services will include the housing solutions and homeless prevention work streams.

Promote and protect our clean and green environment

Review waste services including collection options, re-tendering of contracts and opportunities for income generation

The project to review waste services is well established with a considerable amount of research having been carried out to identify possible changes to the service, with the intention of ensuring that an efficient and effective waste collection service is provided to all residents. The review includes options relating to collection methods, the separation of materials and the disposal routes for waste collected in Thurrock.

As part of the review options relating to the structure, management and location of the Civic Amenity Site are being considered. As is the possibility of implementing a subscription garden waste collection service for residents.

With regard to income generation there has been renewed vigour in the pursuit of trade waste business by the Department which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of customers contracted to receive the service.

Improve consistency and sustainability of street cleanliness services through stronger enforcement action on fly-tipping and littering and exploring possibilities for trading greening services

The council is engaging a private enforcement company for a 12 month pilot from December with a primary focus on enforcement action relation to littering and dog fouling, both of which have been ongoing issues for the borough. The approach was agreed by Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This is supported by the "Love Thurrock" campaign.

Over the past three months the department has been running a pilot of returning street services staff to service-based rather than areas team. This, with the additional resources that have been made available, has had a marked impact on the standard of the parks and open spaces, verges and street cleanliness across Thurrock.

Enhance the built environment, public spaces and access to the river through development of a Design Guide and progressing the town centre Growth Hub programmes

The importance of achieving good design, and the benefits this can bring in delivering sustainable development and communities, is clearly articulated through nation planning policy and guidance. Achieving good design outcomes must therefore be an important component of delivering development proposals across Thurrock.

The Design Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the council's core design principles ensuring that future development in the borough is of the highest design standards. Once finalised, the Design Strategy SPD will be used as a tool to inform and assess proposals within existing locations, at all scales, from small infill sites through to larger regeneration and redevelopment schemes. The Design Strategy was subject to public consultation in February 2016 and scheduled for adoption in January 2017.

The Design Strategy will be supported by five more detailed design guides looking at Residential Areas (New Build and Extensions/Alterations); Industrial Areas; Town Centres and Transport Hubs; Rural Locations. Consultation on some of these guides is anticipated to commence in April 2017.

It is also worth noting that the council has produced development frameworks for both Lakeside and Grays. These will form the basis of area based policies/inset plans in the emerging Local Plan.