

A fresh start for Thurrock

Our corporate plan 2024–2029





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Foreword – Leader and Chief Executive's Introduction

Realising Thurrock's full potential requires all of us to come together and play our full part; residents, businesses, voluntary, faith and community groups, public sector partners and the council. Collectively, we will make a difference.

The loss of confidence in the council will have a long legacy. Building trust and confidence that the council will play its full role and collaborate effectively with all our partners and stakeholders is dependent on the council demonstrating it is different and better. Work continues with a clear focus to deliver our recovery, to move towards establishing ourselves on a financially sustainable footing and to be a credible organisation.

We are focusing on how we can best serve the people of Thurrock and work with our partners. This Corporate Plan sets out what we are doing, how we are doing it and what we aim to achieve as a result of our efforts over the coming years.

As a council we must reconcile how we balance our desire to create the conditions where the life chances of Thurrock's diverse communities are enhanced by sustainable and inclusive economic growth, where residents who need it are supported to reach their potential and to live in a clean and welcoming environment against a long and sustained period of financial constraints. Our position necessitates that the ambitions of the Corporate Plan are realistic; and that we draw on a strong evidence base of needs in making our future decisions.

This does not mean we stop innovating. As an organisation we must prove our ability to adapt, respond and lead whilst keeping a focus on our long-term ambitions for change. It will mean we all must be agents of change, innovating and taking different

approaches, and being more collaborative with our partners, all our elected members and across our organisation. As an organisation, we must be collectively committed to doing this. We must ensure that our future direction and purpose is clear and can be sustained.

The Plan does not cover everything we do, and nor will it reflect the new challenges that we will no doubt face. But whilst circumstances change and new challenges and opportunities present themselves this plan provides the direction for our work. It will set out how we will deliver our priorities, how we will organise ourselves differently, and how we will work more locally and be more responsive to residents and service users.

We have already started this. Our Improvement and Recovery Plan, our new operating model, and our behaviours and values have all been developed in collaboration with our internal and external stakeholders. This is an approach we will continue to adopt and adapt, in order that we continue to remain connected with our residents and partners and all of our staff and members.

Through this plan we will be ambitious for Thurrock – transforming what we do and how we do it to ensure our people and communities can thrive. We will be a different and better borough.



Dave Smith
Managing Director
Commissioner and
Chief Executive



Councillor John Kent
Leader of the Council

Purpose of the document

This Corporate Plan 2024-2029 is a key strategic document. It sets out the purpose of our council and how we intend to adapt our approach. It is a document that focuses on the changes we need to make and our priorities. It is a crucial document and will guide the work of our leadership, our teams and our officers and through this work to rebuild external and internal confidence and trust in our council.

The Corporate Plan is not intended to cover everything the council does but sets out our aspirations for change that will be delivered alongside our day-to-day activities. The plan has three core elements: our purpose, our approach and our strategic priorities. Whilst set out as a 5 year plan, it will be reviewed every year, so we are clear about our planned programme and are open and honest about how we are performing.

The challenges of the past number of years have been great. In developing this corporate plan, we are cognisant that we will continue to face challenges of a serious and significant magnitude. Whilst it can be difficult to view the immediate future with optimism, we are confident that through implementing and embodying the new ways of working set out in this Corporate Plan that we can deliver the changes we need to make to rebuild the confidence of our stakeholders and residents.

To deliver the change and improvement needed it has been incumbent on us to look inward and challenge how we work both internally within the council and also externally with our service users, partners and stakeholders. We know we need a new approach as an organisation to how

we operate. Our changed approach is built on a new operating model that signifies a fundamental change in:

- how we will pivot from a delivery organisation to a predominantly commissioning and enabling council
- how we will mobilise new approaches to working in and with communities
- how we will diversify and innovate in the delivery of services
- how we will make clear and open decisions on priorities based on evidence and the needs of our priority cohorts
- how we will be persistent and authentic in realising the value of good communication and engagement with our residents, communities and partners

This first Corporate Plan following intervention focuses on how we deliver this new approach. It details the type of council we wish to be, the changes we will make in how we organise, how we will work more collaboratively and how we will become more outward facing and responsive, building a more meaningful relationship with residents and our partners.

Our new operating model combined with new values and behaviours provide strong foundations for us to be a sustainable organisation, providing good value in services to our residents.

Building on our improvement and recovery plans

The constraint on resources in the borough is a long-term reality. Consequently, the need to achieve greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness, and to continually improve, is an ever-present requirement. Our ambition is to ensure that we progress our improvement and recovery to ensure that Thurrock Council is self-governing and fulfils its best value duty in the shortest time possible.

Through this Corporate Plan, we build on our Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP) and our change programme and articulate in detail our plan to transform and improve – in leadership, in culture, in service delivery and in the governance and financial management environment. We are committed to working differently not simply out of necessity but because working differently will enable us to develop and implement new delivery models and partnerships that can more effectively deliver the services our residents and communities need.

Our suite of improvement outcomes, detailed in our IRP, speak to the behaviours and approach we need to adopt, not least to improve the confidence of our employees and partners. We build on these outcomes in this plan through the articulation of our values and behaviours. We will apply these values to all we seek to do through this plan to be open about what we need to do well and consequently how others experience our improvement.

Our Purpose

Our purpose is a statement of our vision for the council we wish to be and the relationship we wish to implement with our residents and partners.

Our purpose is to:

- lead our communities, bringing residents, businesses, community groups and partners together to better understand the opportunities and needs of the borough and individual neighbourhoods
- bring together and engage all who can make a contribution to supporting local people with their needs and to realise opportunity
- provide high quality analysis to support open decision-making on strategic and operational priorities
- be consistent and comprehensive in analysing and evaluating the impact of our collective strategies at addressing need and opportunity to enable us to learn how to improve

To do this well we will:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ support democratically elected members, as accountable leaders of place, to represent residents and to provide leadership ■ be responsive and flexible to changing circumstances, needs and strengths within the local areas, recognising that what makes a place 'good' can change ■ be accountable to residents as individuals and groups to ensure they are enabled and supported to shape their local area and direct their own lives ■ collaborate, convene, support and commission services to address needs in the most efficient and effective way 	<p>What you will see because of this change in purpose is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ excellence in understanding our place, through deep and insightful analysis and communication of evidence of need and opportunity ■ open communication and meaningful engagement with local residents, communities and partners and with our elected members and staff ■ a locality-based approach that leverages existing assets and partnerships to drive outcomes and join up services and build community capacity ■ co-creation of relevant services with local residents, communities and partners, so that funding flows are aligned to residents, communities and partners, and in some cases delegated directly to them and can be flexibly deployed to meet need ■ a focus on access to preventative and early intervention services with a focus on supporting residents to help themselves through effective and accessible information
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Our Approach

In taking forward our purpose we will adopt a different approach to how we will work and the values we will bring to our work.

Our approach will be to:

- focus on ensuring our residents and communities have access to affordable and responsive services
- use digital tools to ensure our processes are simple and effective
- harness the strengths of our partners to deliver outcomes
- enable and empower others to provide more services, ensuring there is a diverse and innovative community of support available for residents
- always deliver good value for the public purse

To do this well we will:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ fully implement our new operating model, changing how we work externally and internally and changing our internal structure and specialisms ■ standardise, digitise and automate processes, wherever appropriate, adopting existing technologies and supporting interoperability between systems ■ collect and share data and provide insights to evolve towards one version of the truth. Improve our use of evidence to inform strategy, regularly reviewing outcomes to support adjustments in our services ■ secure value for money and social value from commissioned services ensuring that our activity is sourced from a diverse network of sustainable providers, cost is understood and proactively managed and supports local business and workforce where appropriate 	<p>What you will see because of this change in approach is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the size and capabilities within the council will change as we implement our new operating model, our commissioning approach and embrace technological change ■ a diverse market of providers and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE) to enable choice, with the council focused on brokering, quality and contract management to assure delivery ■ a willingness to innovate to seek solutions to solve problems through data and evidence ■ a plan that delivers the best outcomes at the lowest possible cost, the council will be the provider of the last resort, fulfilling need only where others cannot
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Our Values

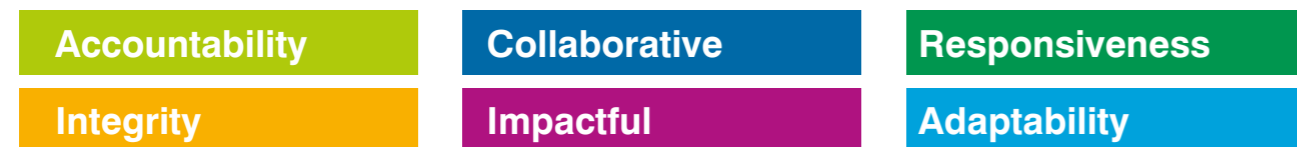
Working as agents of change with a corporate purpose to rebuild trust and confidence in the council as a leader of place requires not simply a change in purpose and approach but also in behaviour.

The Best Value Inspection (BVI) pointed to collective weaknesses in integrity and accountability.

To be successful, our new operating model, purpose and approach requires us to demonstrate greater collaboration, responsiveness and adaptability.

Collectively, with less resource, we need to make greater impact. Demonstrating exemplary and consistent behaviours will underpin our changed approach.

Our behavioural drivers are:



These behavioural drivers have led to the development of a corporate statement of our values.

- Together, we hold ourselves to account to get things done – accountability/integrity
- Together, we make possible what cannot be achieved alone – collaborative/impactful
- Together we will listen and act to continually improve – responsiveness/adaptability

We have set out what these values mean for the way we work; setting the parameters for how we will work as an organisation, as directorates, as teams and as individuals.

These ways of working will become the bedrock for our assessment of performance corporately and personally as part of the annual personal performance review process.

Value statement – Together, we hold ourselves to account to get things done

Behavioural drivers	Way of working
Accountability	We set ourselves high standards and are each accountable for our actions
	We will move at pace, being decisive and making clear choices
	We will be unwavering in actively demonstrating accountability to elected members and residents
Integrity	We will keep our word and will do what we promise
	We will be open in explaining and applying our processes and in our decision making

Value statement – Together, we make possible what cannot be achieved alone

Behavioural drivers	Way of working
Collaborative	We will be a credible, versatile and engaging partner and collaboration will be the bedrock of all our work
	We will find better solutions by pooling our skills, resources and know-how, collaborating across services and directorates
	We will trust and support each other and work together to the benefit of our residents
Impactful	We will be evidence led in our policies, practices and programmes to use our resources wisely and efficiently to get things done
	We will track our performance and be open to greater change to increase the impact we are making

Value statement – Together, we listen and act to continually improve

Behavioural drivers	Way of working
Responsiveness	We will listen with intent and purpose
	We will take the time to review, reflect and respond
	We will deliver a high standard of service to our residents, businesses and partners and will provide information that is timely and targeted
Adaptability	We will be agile in our approach
	We will lead and embrace the change required to deliver the right outcomes
	We will seek out opportunities to make things better, consistently improving outcomes and processes, to be as effective and efficient as we can be

Our 2024–2029 Plan and Priorities

Our Corporate Plan 2024-2029 is designed to achieve two policy outcomes for People and Place and one corporate outcome as we mobilise our change programme to become an Enabling Council.

Each policy outcome is distilled into a number of strategic objectives which collectively set out the priority actions for the council in the short term.

These strategic objectives draw on currently agreed strategies where these are already in place – for example, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Brighter Futures Strategy and the Better Care Together Thurrock Strategy – and will be strengthened following the development of the Thurrock Place Strategy when all strategic outcomes and objectives will be aligned to our priorities for Thurrock.

To support our ambition to be a place leader, leading insight into need and opportunity and building and understanding the evidence of our place we will develop a clear set of objectives and metrics. These will be nuanced to differentiate

between the strategic place based measures that are the collective responsibility of the breadth of Thurrock’s partners and stakeholders and those that are specifically the responsibility of the council to deliver.

We will develop a suite of measures and milestones for the Corporate Plan and a baseline position, that will be monitored and reported on so that we are open and honest about our progress.

As articulated in the Collaborative Communities Framework, we are committed to creating a fair, accessible and inclusive borough where everyone has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive, and where community-led ambitions are supported and actively encouraged.

In support of this commitment, our equality objectives are set around the themes of engagement, empowerment and equality. These themes are threaded throughout this plan, through the new priorities, the new purpose, the new approach and the new strategic objectives.

An Enabling Council

Our policy outcome

We will build strong and impactful partnerships to maximise the benefits for residents and our borough.

Our strategic objectives

We will lead the organisation through change by:

1. working differently to create a consistent point of access to the council making the most of digital technology, empowering residents to find and access what they need more efficiently and effectively
2. implementing new approaches to engagement, to listen and access support at the right level to assist us to co-create services
3. implementing our new operating model and change programme to realise the financial, service and efficiency savings and improvements set out in the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP)

What this will do for local people and communities is:

- simplify access, availability and responsiveness of information for residents, providing support in a more accessible format
- place leadership from an organisation with a clear purpose, an improved corporate culture, transformed ways of working and a renewed commitment to work more closely with residents and communities
- improve access to data, information, intelligence, insight and analysis regarding Thurrock, our communities and services
- increase opportunities for public engagement and involvement
- improve effectiveness built on stronger collaborative relationships between elected members and officers

Our priorities for 2024-2029 are as follows.

A. Improve clarity of information on services and support enabling residents to access what they need in an appropriate and timely format

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Corporate Services

What we will need to do well is:

- produce clear messages and information
- mobilise an effective first point of contact and resolution system
- utilise insights to continually improve information

What we will deliver	
1	Deliver the IT and digital change project to consolidate systems, support alignment between systems and deliver the technology on which to build the customer contact system. Implement a robust Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
2	Implement a new corporate customer service system enabling residents and other partners to self-serve for simple enquiries, freeing resource for more complex issues. Develop robust intelligence and analytics to build insight into resident needs to continue to evolve and improve.

B. Articulate clearly the ambition for Thurrock, focusing on the place and people priorities and the services provided and commissioned by the council

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive

What we will need to do well is:

- work collaboratively with partners to build an effective Thurrock communication narrative
- target and monitor the effectiveness of our communications

What we will deliver	
3	Improve communications internally within the council, and externally with residents, partners, with government and other professional bodies to continue to rebuild trust and to cultivate an openness to input leading to stronger more resilient partnerships, rebuilding reputation and influence.
4	Improve promotion of Thurrock as an investment location, to inspire business leaders to engage as an active stakeholder, to build private sector confidence and lever their investment potential and to continue to inspire residents of the opportunities they can access to support their career aspirations.

C. Implement a council-wide approach to engagement and partnership working, ensure co-creation of services

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive

What we will need to do well is:

- communicate a clear and compelling purpose and plan
- be responsive to ideas, input and feedback
- be proactive and curious to elicit information and insight that informs improvements in our performance

What we will deliver	
5	Aligned to the locality priority in Place, mobilise the internal structures and ways of working that enable a consistent and effective approach, and implement supporting information and governance arrangements.
6	Implement approaches and mechanisms, linked to Your Place Your Voice, for increasing the participation and engagement of the public, businesses and stakeholders in service design and local priorities.
7	Develop strengthened partnerships between officers, elected members and ward councillors to build momentum and confidence in the changed approach of the council.

D. Implement our change programme ensuring that our operating model and structure delivers our functional responsibilities efficiently and we evaluate this to continue to improve

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Corporate Services

What we will need to do well is:

- build pride in working for Thurrock Council
- support employees to perform well
- create and embed a culture of self-reflection and improvement
- be rigorous in our approach to performance review and appraisal

What we will deliver	
8	Implement the council’s change programme based on the new operating model and structure, centralising core services and pivoting the organisation from a delivery focused organisation to a commissioning organisation, empowering partners and communities to deliver services.
9	Develop and embed new ways of working across the council. Develop a flexible and capable workforce demonstrating corporate values, expected behaviours and clarity of purpose, investment, performance and cross-team collaboration and communication.
10	Monitor HR and workforce performance indicators and identify and implement changes and policies that improve the recruitment, personal and professional development review (PDR), and retention of the staff whilst improving the diversity of the workforce.

E. Implement our governance improvement programme, ensuring we renew and refocus our processes and procedures to be open and accountable

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Corporate Services

What we will need to do well is:

- ensure evidence and intelligence is the foundation of programme and project design, service development and decision-making
- create and embed a culture of self-reflection, scrutiny and improvement

What we will deliver	
11	Implement a rigorous approach to governance improvement with a renewed focus on clarity of strategy, outcomes and organisational capability, using insight and intelligence from data, evaluation and other evidence, to ensure policies and strategies prioritise actions and the rationale for action is shared and agreed.
12	Implement a comprehensive approach to performance management and assurance, where information and insight is collated, shared and understood and early intervention in areas of underperformance or high risk is mobilised.
13	Agree new protocols for Officer / Member collaboration, ensuring responsiveness to enable elected members and the decision-making Boards to make informed decisions that deliver priorities and change utilising best in class assurance and corporate governance.
14	Build performance monitoring and independent evaluation into our processes to subject our services and programmes to scrutiny to ensure we adopt a continual cycle of review and improve.
15	Embed a new approach to risk management to improve accountability and ensure any likely risks are escalated and a management strategy implemented to mitigate these.

F. Manage Thurrock Council’s resources to ensure maximum value to the public and delivery efficiency and accountability

Responsible Directors:

- Chief Finance Officer / Section 151 officer

What we will need to do well is:

- maximise the impact we make from, our resources and deliver value for money
- increase spend in our local area (where possible)
- ensure exemplary management of investment and project activity and capital and revenue projects

What we will deliver	
16	Deliver our financial savings programme, mobilising savings identified and other efficiencies through working differently.
17	Demonstrate good fiduciary and asset management by improving the quality of and access to financial information across the council and relevant partners, including budget setting, monitoring, spending decisions, financial pressures and greater efficiency. Strengthen the embeddedness of financial business partnering in the organisation.
18	Widen access to procurement and spending across Thurrock especially from local businesses, partners and the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE). Implement social value indicators as an integral part of our business and investment activity and the way we procure and commission our services.

People

Our policy outcome

Ensure Thurrock is a place where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential and access the support they need.

Our strategic objectives

We will lead a wellbeing and inclusion transformation by:

1. working differently and integrating services to support communities, families and residents to achieve their version of a good life
2. focusing on prevention to reduce the potential for long term damaging impacts for children, adults and / or families
3. ensuring that inclusive, people-focused outcomes are integral to all our work to reduce inequality and widen opportunity for all
4. supporting people to improve their skills, find good employment, progress in work or realise entrepreneurial ambitions and thereby accelerate social mobility, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from economic prosperity

What this will do for local people, businesses and places is:

- simplify access to support for residents and families by enabling a breadth of services, responding to needs in a locality to be delivered
- enable change in the skills system to allow community capacity building and support more residents to be better qualified, access a good job with training and improve their economic potential
- increase the numbers of employers actively promoting good health and wellbeing in order to reduce the days lost due to health

Our priorities for 2024-2029 are as follows.

A. Accelerate and improve engagement with our adult priority cohorts to ensure we listen and understand health and wellbeing needs and priorities

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Adults and Health

What we will need to do well is:

- collate and interpret data about our people and place – understand the characteristics, needs and risks ensuring we better understand our place and people
- commission responsive services that are adaptable to meet priority cohort needs
- innovate and pilot new solutions

What we will deliver	
1	Build a strong evidence base for each of our priority cohorts and those with complex needs; the elderly people with learning disabilities, mental health and physical and sensory disabilities. Utilising this evidence and insight to commence meaningful engagement with residents, service users and service deliverers to listen and understand opportunities, limitations and risks.
2	Identify the desired outcomes to be achieved for each priority cohort and collaborate with service users to co-design desired service improvements and support.
3	Mobilise the new way of working outlined in Better Care: A further case for change, delivering the pilot in Tilbury, engaging residents in decision making on priorities for the Innovation Fund and agreeing the plan for the remaining three localities.
4	Develop the business case to recommission domiciliary care based upon services working to the principles of the 'wellbeing team', to lever whole system savings.
5	Agree the approach to independently evaluating impact of service delivery with the users and deliverers of services, ensuring that all opportunities for further improvement are explored. Over time, build the baseline of data and agree any improvement metrics.

B. Provide the leadership to ensure the priority of developing a more integrated adult health and care services is mobilised and delivers tangible improvements

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Adults and Health

What we will need to do well is:

- collaborate and engage
- commercial acumen in commissioning
- evaluate, understand and manage risk

What we will deliver	
6	Create multi-disciplinary teams and integrated networks, overseen by Community Investment Boards (CIBs), empowered to work flexibly to brigade services across a locality and to focus on delivering people focused solutions.
7	Develop a new place-based model of commissioning to make the best use of available resources to deliver outcomes that are unique to the individual.
8	Review partner capacity and development needs to enable the council to successfully pivot to the new operating model as effectively as possible and maintain and improve service quality.
9	Clarify the priorities that the council will lead and deliver and influence partners across health, education and the VCFSE to commit to meeting their actions set out in the HWB Strategy.
10	Review locality-based assets to identify and mobilise co-location centres transforming these into integrated locality working bases.
11	Expand Micro Enterprise development, working with community catalysts to transition towards a broader Community Economic Unit.
12	Across the council, evaluate the cost of service delivery across localities and consider different approach to finance and resourcing.

C. Work to ensure the children and young people who access or are at risk of accessing council services are appropriately supported to achieve positive outcomes

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Children’s Services

What we will need to do well is:

- collate and interpret data about our people and place – understand the characteristics, needs and risks ensuring we better understand our place and people
- commission responsive services that are adaptable to meet priority cohort needs

	What we will deliver
13	Work to increase regulated placements, in order to improve access to local high quality placements, that effectively support the complex needs of Thurrock’s children and young people, with a provider and in a locality that positively improves the quality of life and outcomes for the young person.
14	Ensure the offer, capacity and blend of skills within the service is responsive to the needs of all our children including looked after, care leavers, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) children and young people and our cohort of unaccompanied asylum seekers.
15	Collaborate with education, training providers and businesses to increase meaningful and accessible programmes, apprenticeships, placement and employment opportunities for young people including SEND, care leavers and other vulnerable groups.
16	Continue to develop and innovate in our approaches to prevention and early intervention, ensuring all children are supported and able to live safely in their communities and reduce the numbers of children and families requiring a statutory service and children needing to be accommodated.

D. Continue to deliver the Brighter Futures: Developing Well in Thurrock Strategy to ensure capacity and capability within the council and its delivery partners increasingly supports our priority cohorts to achieve positive health and well-being outcomes

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Children’s Services

What we will need to do well is:

- collate and interpret data about our people and place so that we better understand and have greater insight into our challenges and opportunities
- evaluate, understand and manage risk
- partnership building

	What we will deliver
17	Lead and support strong partnership approaches across the borough, utilising Family Hubs and other assets to improve information and access to services and to develop improved insight of the needs of our families and young people.
18	Enhance engagement approaches with service users, families and service providers to build new approaches to the co-design of essential services.
19	Continue to use information and timely data to evaluate the complexity of cases for looked after children and unaccompanied asylum seekers and other priority cohorts to build our insight into desired outcomes and priorities to inform our commissioning approach.
20	Continue to develop and innovate approaches to prevention and early intervention, ensuring children have access to services to be healthy, minimising longer term complex problems and reducing service costs.

E. Support activity that raises aspirations and develops skill that enable all residents to achieve their potential in securing good jobs or self-employment

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Place

What we will need to do well is:

- understand the economic impact of different activity
- develop new partnerships with businesses, educational and anchor institutions
- influence local accountability for the impact of Adult Education Budget (AEB)

What we will deliver	
21	Work intensively with deliverers of large-scale regeneration and development investments, including the Freeport and other large-scale strategic partners to ensure opportunities for young people and adults to access jobs with training and apprenticeship programmes are maximised. Maximise impact by targeting enhanced support for those who are less represented – for example, women returners, young people with SEND needs, care leavers and those in the criminal justice system.
22	Work with education and training providers to communicate ambitiously and share the potential impact of education and training to prospects, earnings and health and wellbeing. Ensure information and advice and guidance is available to all residents, ensuring a more enhanced offer for vulnerable groups.
23	Play a leadership role in devolution of or impact of Adult Education Budget (AEB). Influence the development of plans demonstrating responsiveness to local outcomes, ensuring providers deliver effective and well understood options for Thurrock residents to access and sustain work with training, seeking other public, private or voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector (VCFSE) delivery partners.

Place

Our policy outcome

Achieve a strong and well-connected place that enables our borough, its diverse communities and businesses to thrive and grow.

Our strategic objectives

We will lead the development of the borough by:

1. collaborating with stakeholders, residents, communities and businesses to develop a plan for Thurrock that sets a compelling vision and intent for the borough that mobilises the collective endeavours of the private, public and voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to deliver
2. stimulating local economies by investing in or influencing investment in the infrastructure, housing, transport and educational capabilities to create jobs and transform places
3. ensuring that economic growth provides opportunities to Thurrock residents and communities and reduces inequalities
4. protecting and improving our environment, to ensure Thurrock improves as a quality place to live, with clean streets, well maintained public realm and well-maintained roads

What this will do for local people, businesses and places is:

- improve local infrastructure and transport connections, diversifying the role of town centres, improving the environment, sustainable housing and local services
- more and better opportunities for businesses to start-up, scale-up or locate in Thurrock and be nationally and globally competitive
- more and better opportunities for people to find good work or start a business here
- increase the value of international activity through export or international investment

Our priorities for 2024-2029 are as follows:

A. Build the policy framework and priorities, through collaboratively developing a 2024-2029 Thurrock Place Strategy and annual Place Plan for Thurrock, including the supporting statutory and technical documents

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Place

What we will need to do well is:

- improve insight into infrastructure and environmental opportunities and challenges
- create action-orientated plans in collaboration with our partners, residents and stakeholders
- prioritise what actions the council needs to lead and what are for other agencies and partners to lead and deliver

	What we will deliver
1	Develop a concise yet compelling 2025-29 Thurrock Place Strategy and from this refine and refresh other supporting strategies, ensuring they are clearly evidenced and that benefits, outcomes and performance measures are established. Ensure an open monitoring and reporting agreement is developed and implemented.
2	Adopt and begin to implement the Local Plan and associated suite of documents to the statutory timeline, ensuring the consultation responses are acted upon and all obligations are met.
3	In support of the Thurrock Place Strategy, refresh the housing strategy and delivery plan to include a clear evidence base on locations, type, tenure and affordable homes. Agree this with a wide range of private, public and VCFSE sector providers.
4	In support of the Thurrock Place Strategy, support the leadership role of the newly formed, business leaders' group ensuring that growth is led and driven by the private sector.
5	Develop the Local Transport Plan 4 once Department for Transport guidance is issued (anticipated later in 2024).

B. Develop the locality approach

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Adults and Health
- Assistant Chief Executive

What we will need to do well is:

- ensure stakeholders and communities are engaged in our planning
- ensure that inclusive, people-focused outcomes are integral to our plans

	What we will deliver
6	Agree with political leaders and stakeholders a consistent approach to Thurrock's locality arrangements, including agreeing consistency on locations, developing a clear and agreed locality-level evidence base and clear and agreed statement of priorities, outcomes and plan for measuring progress.
7	Mobilise the arrangements required by the new operating model to organise an increasing amount of services, teams, communications and engagement at a locality level, including with and through ward members.

C. If agreed, develop the proposition for a pan-Essex devolution deal, and/or enhanced South Essex Councils joint arrangements ensuring the council works to maximise the impact of devolution for Thurrock

Responsible Directors:

- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Place

What we will need to do well is:

- develop an evidence rich proposition for key priorities
- broaden our collaborative activity across Essex
- collaborate with Members and stakeholders to secure a mutually beneficial deal

	What we will deliver
8	Work collaboratively with partners to innovate and lead change. Develop business cases for new approaches to deliver priority actions – for example, approaches to use devolved Adult Education Budget (AEB) to tackle the level 2 deficit, and to deliver beneficial outcomes that will accelerate impact across Thurrock and Essex.
9	Work collaboratively with elected members locally and internally with officers to establish a clear and evidenced policy position regarding subsidiarity to ensure policy, strategies and plans are clear about the most appropriate level to deliver programmes and services.
10	Work with the South Essex Councils Joint Committee to develop collaborative arrangements for economic development.

D. Maximise the impact of the Freeport for businesses, residents and the community

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Place
- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Corporate Services
- Chief Finance Officer

What we will need to do well is:

- ensure that inclusive, people-focused outcomes are integral to the development of the Freeport
- influence leveraging the economic impact of the Freeport
- leadership, financial management and governance

What we will deliver	
11	Innovate and influence priorities and work to capitalise on opportunities from the Freeport. Ensure the economic impact of the Freeport is realised and the wider benefits for local employment, apprenticeships, supply chain development and infrastructure are realised.
12	Fulfil the leadership and governance role of Freeport Accountable Body, providing informed leadership challenge, strong governance arrangements and influence over the redeployment of any financial benefits to the wider borough.

E. Maximise the impact of the Thames Estuary for the benefit of Thurrock

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Place
- Assistant Chief Executive
- Executive Director of Corporate Services
- Chief Finance Officer

What we will need to do well is:

- ensure that inclusive, people-focused outcomes are integral to the development of the Thames Estuary
- influence leveraging the economic impact of the Thames Estuary
- leadership, financial management and governance

What we will deliver	
13	Innovate and influence priorities and work to capitalise on opportunities from the Thames Estuary. Ensure the economic impact of the Thames Estuary is realised and the wider benefits for local employment, apprenticeships, supply chain development and infrastructure are realised.
14	Fulfil the leadership and governance role of Thames Estuary Growth Board, providing informed leadership challenge, strong governance arrangements and influence over the redeployment of any financial benefits to the wider borough.

F. Maximise the potential and impact of the business leaders group to develop and mobilise Thurrock’s Economic Development Strategy

Responsible Directors:

- Executive Director of Place

What we will need to do well is:

- broker positive and impactful relationships between politicians and business leaders
- harness private sector influence and resources to deliver the plan

What we will deliver	
15	Develop a strong evidence base for Thurrock and its regional and national connections, that highlights untapped economic potential, opportunities and challenges to support the development of an insight rich Economic Development Strategy, as an integral element of the broader Thurrock Place Strategy.
16	Engage businesses to be active partners in business to business support, curriculum development and the delivery of other infrastructure, aligned to the Thurrock Place Strategy. Work to influence the private sector to deliver a voluntary programme of non-executive support and mentoring to support endeavours to increase the survival rate for self-employed or business start-ups including micro-enterprises.

Delivering our Plan

Governance

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) of the council will oversee the delivery of this Corporate Plan. The SLT will work with the council's Commissioners given the interdependencies between the Corporate Plan and the Improvement and Recovery Plan (IRP).

The Chief Executive, Statutory Officers and Executive Directors will be accountable to Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny and Standards and Audit Committees for delivery, performance and risks associated with delivering the priorities agreed.

Our commitment is to deliver this plan and report on this plan in an open and honest manner, in support of our IRP improvement outcomes.

Finance and funding

The resource pressures the council faces, the requirements to deliver in full our extensive and varied savings programme, along with our renewed commitment to securing value for money requires challenging decisions and difficult choices to be made. We continue to work under a Direction from government to reconfigure the council's services commensurate with the available financial resource.

This new Corporate Plan, in setting out how we will implement a new operating model, needs to do this in a context of savings, and a strict debt reduction plan. Inevitably this means ceasing some activity, divesting from many investments, selling capital assets, commissioning more effectively and working differently.

Our financial pressures may mean that the pace of delivering some of our priorities needs to flex and change. In recognition of this and the mobilisation of the new operating model, work continues to develop detailed business cases over future financial years. These business cases will be laser-like in their focus on the outcomes to be achieved,

the options to deliver these and the financial and whole council resource requirement.

Through the business planning process and the rigour we bring to this, we will discharge our leadership responsibilities, improve the quality of our decision making and deliver a plan that is evidenced and informed.

In future iterations of our Corporate Plan, we will consider resources set against each of our strategic priorities and use a wide range of business intelligence developed throughout 2024-25 as part of the next phase of the Performance Management and Assurance Framework (PMAF) development, so that our policies and strategies inform resourcing and other decisions.

Implementing the new operating model, continuing the internal change programme, embedding and coordinating the PMAF disciplines and restructuring will enable us to have robust data, information and analysis to do this well.

Measuring impact and reporting

To openly demonstrate progress towards delivering our outcomes, as part of our new Performance Management and Assurance Framework (PMAF) we will evaluate success in a number of different ways, crucially by the impact for our residents, communities and businesses.

To measure impact we will track a suite of objectives and metrics. These will set out what we want to achieve (outcome) and where we want to get to (objective) and how we will know that we have delivered this (milestones and key metrics).

As a performance management tool milestones and metrics support the transparency we will bring to our processes and our decision making, support alignment across the council, and enable us to build improvement into all we do. This informed understanding of the impact we are making will

empower our leaders, managers and teams to innovate whilst owning and being accountable for their personal performance and results.

We already have much to build on. In addition to the outcomes we set as part of our IRP, extensive partnership work went into developing the approved Health and Wellbeing and the Brighter Futures: Developing Well in Thurrock strategies. We have a considerable body of evidence supporting our emerging Local Plan and a priority for 2024/25 is to build a strong evidence base to support our Place Strategy.

A crucial objective of the PMAF for the first year of this Corporate Plan is to consolidate the evidence we have into a single source of information on the benefits and outcomes we are seeking for Thurrock. When this is complete, we will evaluate gaps in our knowledge and information and take steps to address these gaps. The specificity we bring to defining our economic and social benefits and outcomes will enable us to strengthen our partnerships, improve our engagement and communication and provide a solid foundation for improving our corporate capability, decision making and direction.

Following defining our outcomes we will have clarity of the council's role and contribution, communicating our core indicators and the data sources that we will use to track our progress and improvement. We will set planned service and delivery outputs, targets, milestones and be clear about our current baseline and the gap to target.

We will evolve this approach, drawing upon other indicators of success including regional, sectoral and national benchmarks to provide the insight we need to sharpen our focus and prioritise our resource and effort. This approach will enable us to better identify risks and be more enquiring and curious to explore the factors that could be affecting achievement.

Reporting

Defining and reporting on our milestones and metrics, through our PMAF will support our value of operating with integrity, namely that we will do what we say we will do.

Alongside our metrics we will detail how, when and who is accountable and responsible for reporting progress. In committing to deliver improvements in the transparency of performance information, progress and performance against the outcome measures will be shared internally, with our governance boards, elected members and publicly with residents and partners.

Our progress and performance information will be essential for developing future business cases and commissioning approaches.

