

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

Standards and Audit Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **10 July 2014**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL.

Membership:

Councillors Simon Wootton (Chair), Yash Gupta, Terence Hipsey, Cathy Kent and Brian Little

Rhona Long, (Co-Opted Member)
Stephen Rosser, (Co-Opted Member)
Jason Oliver, (Co-Opted Member)

Substitutes:

Councillors Robert Gledhill and Tunde Ojetola

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards and Audit Committee Meeting held on 5 March 2014.	
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	
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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **2 July 2014**

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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.

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

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

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

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

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity
- Support local businesses and develop the skilled workforce they will require
- Work with communities to regenerate Thurrock’s physical environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities

- Create safer welcoming communities who value diversity and respect cultural heritage
- Involve communities in shaping where they live and their quality of life
- Reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and safeguard the vulnerable

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being
- Empower communities to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

5. Protect and promote our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock’s river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock’s natural environment and biodiversity
- Ensure Thurrock’s streets and parks and open spaces are clean and well maintained

MINUTES of the meeting of Standards and Audit Committee held on 05 March 2014 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Yash Gupta, Cathy Kent and Phil Anderson (substitute Simon Wootton)

Co-opted Members: Jason Oliver and Rhona Long

Apologies: Councillor Healy and Wootton

In attendance: Sean Clark–Head of Corporate Finance
Gary Clifford–Client Manager for Audit Services
Chris Harris – Head of Internal Audit
Lucy Magill – Head of Public Protection
David Kleinberg – Fraud Investigation Manager
Debbie Hanson – Ernst and Young
Christine Connolly - Ernst and Young
Kenna-Victoria Martin – Democratic Services

49 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Standards and Audit Committee, held on 06 February 2014, were approved as a correct record, subject to recommendation 2 of item 45 page 6 in the agenda being corrected to 'Noted that Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny have Animal Welfare Policy on the forward plan and this will encompass the responsibilities of the Council in relation to stay horses'

50 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

52 THURROCK COUNCIL BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Head of Public Protection introduced the report to the Committee informing Members that the Council had a Corporate Continuity Plan in place, which enabled each department

Members were notified that the plan had been taken to Cabinet in May 2013, following which it was decided to carry out further tests and bring

the plan to Committee. It was explained that officers would be looking at completing further testing within the next 12months.

Following questions from the Committee it was explained that the reason there was little information regarding ICT within the report was due to the fact that ICT came under Disaster Recovery. Members were informed that Serco were working on a piece of work within IT including work to support Thurrock online, Officers agreed to bring a item back to the Committee with regards to Disaster Recovery.

Members queried as to what Business Continuity entitled. The Head of Public Protection explained the Business Continuity plan enabled departments and different services to continue working should for example the Civic Offices flood.

It was enquired by the Committee if under 8.1 of the Business Continuity Plan (page 43 of the agenda) could include increasing works with community parties and public sector organisations may be able to provide useful opportunities for Business Continuity. Members also queried if under 8.2 of the Business Continuity Plan (page 43 of the agenda) could include community or public building that could be used within Business Continuity.

Officers informed Members that the points raised were within each team/department Business Continuity Plan, however could be applied stronger with the Corporate Plan.

The Chair of the Committee asked whether any reality tests had been undertaken. Officers confirmed reality tests had been carried out and by not allowing access to a floor of the Civic Offices allows officers to test 16plans all in one.

RESOLVED that Standards and Audit Committee agree:

- 1.1 To note the Thurrock Council Business Continuity Policy and plan.**
- 1.2 To note that the testing carried out this financial year has not resulted in any changes to the Thurrock Council Business Continuity Plan since agreed by Cabinet in May.**
- 1.3 To note the plan for testing of team business continuity plans.**
- 1.4 Points identified by the Committee be noted and reviewed by Officers**

53 Internal Audit Progress Report 2013-2014

The Client Manager for Audit Services presented the report to Members explaining there had been 8 reports which had received a green

assurance and 2 reports received an amber/green assurance. It was further explained that during the period being reported 7 reviews were at a draft stage and with the client and a further 7 reviews were in progress. Members were informed that this reviews would taken to the Committee as part of the final progress report.

The Committee commented that 2 schools had been given an amber/green assurance then queried what was being done to help improve the assurance to green. Officers explained that the recommendation will be followed up with the school and included within the process report.

Members queried as to when the internal audit for Housing Repairs was going to take place. Officers informed the Committee that the audit was scheduled for 2015/2016; however this could be brought forward to 2014/2015.

The Chair enquired as to the Social Care Income and Debtors, as he was aware of a case where a resident tried to pay their bills on time and wasn't allowed. The Head of Corporate Finance explained that the system used to allow payments had an upgrade and for an unknown reason wouldn't allow payments in excess of £1,000 in just this instance and the software issue had been reported to the supplier. He continued to explain that he was aware of the case and the resident had been advised to make 2 payments to keep individual transactions to under £1,000 until the issue was resolved.

RESOLVED That the Standards & Audit Committee:

- 1.1 Consider reports issued by Internal Audit in relation to the 2013/14 audit plan.**
- 1.2 Note progress against the Internal Audit Plan for 2013/14.**

54 DRAFT STRATEGY FOR INTERNAL AUDIT 2014-2015 TO 2016-2017 AND DRAFT ANNUAL PLAN 2014-2015

The Client Manager for Audit Services introduced the report to the Committee explaining that in November 2010 a comprehensive Audit Needs Assessment process involving all Corporate Directors and Heads of Service was carried out and resulted in a three year strategic plan being developed from 2011/12 to 2013/14. Officers were now meeting to discuss the next three year plan, including discussion with external audit.

Members were informed that further meetings needed to be held with Directors and Heads of Service before a final strategy and plan for 2014/2015 could be provided. This would include the plan going to Directors Board before the final plan came back to the Committee.

The Committee queried that with regards to governance control and effectiveness the following was absent;

- Asset disposal and acquisitions;
- Housing Repairs ;
- Care packages for Children and Adults social care.

Officers explained to Members that Housing Repairs were within the plan under 2015/2016, however they could move it forward and everything else would be taken on board.

It was enquired as to whether work to be included within the plan could be suggested. Officers stated that works could be suggested; however they would also be subject to discussions with the relevant director.

During discussions Officers explained that should a school convert to an Academy, they no longer visited the academy to check on their progress, instead all reports are passed to Children Services and they then monitor the Academy.

RESOLVED that the Standards & Audit Committee

1.1 that the Standards & Audit Committee receive the Draft Strategy for Internal Audit 2014/15 to 2016/17 and the Draft Annual Audit Plan 2014/15 and officers report back to the next meeting with a final agreed version.

1.2 That items identified during Member discussions be taken to Directors Board for consideration and that Standard and Audit Committee Members receive a briefing note on the outcomes.

55 COUNTER FRAUD SERVICES – PROGRESS REPORT

The Fraud Investigation Manager introduced the report to Members informing them of the Council's joint working with Southend Borough Council and the Ministry of Justice. He also explained that attached at appendix 2 of the report was the Audit Commission's Fraud Briefing 2013 for Thurrock Council, which highlighted the need to improve responses to the threat from all types of fraud.

Members queried as to how their roles could help the Council combat fraud within the borough. The Fraud Manager explained that Councillors' roles were key as they would receive first hand information from residents which could then be passed to the Fraud Team to investigate.

The Chair informed the Committee that he felt that the report should be taken to the next available Full Council Meeting. Members agreed and the Chair proposed that it be added as an additional recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Committee

1.1 notes the Audit Commission's briefing and the update on the Council's approach to Anti-Fraud activity, including the draft Corporate Fraud Work Plan.

1.2 referred this report and its appendices to the next meeting of Full Council

56 EXTERNAL AUDIT: AUDIT PLAN

The External Auditor introduced the report to the Committee informing Members that the report outlined the audit strategy and the risks identified. Members were notified that that only 1 of the 3 opinion risks was specific to Thurrock.

The Committee were taken through the report and during discussions the following was queried by Members, having recently set the budget anything that cost £50thousand or more would be sent to relevant overview and scrutiny Committee and Full Council. How could the Council have materiality of between £4million and £8million, for ticking the wrong box. The External Auditor explained that the materiality level was set at the level at which the auditor assessed an error or omission would influence the users of the accounts. This was determined by reference to the gross expenditure but also took into account factors such as the level of balances and reserves. The audit procedures performed are designed to detect errors and omissions at a lower level than this and all errors above a very low level are reported to members.

RESOLVED That the Committee noted the report.

57 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – PROGRESS REPORT

The Head of Corporate Finance presented the report to Members during which he explained that officers were no longer required to bring the financial statement to Committee at a draft stage, however it was decided to keep Members up to date with the progress of the financial statement.

Members were then taken through the report with the following being highlighted:

- that issues raised by external audit with regard to the 2012/2013 accounts had been discussed and the classification of income and expenditure items would be reviewed in detail at the year-end;
- Officers of the final accounts team have received training from CIPFA and the Councils External Auditors, Ernst and Young;
- The working papers supporting the financial statement have been drafted and allocated to relevant team members for completion including sections of the Whole of Government Accounts return.

RESOLVED that the Standards & Audit Committee notes the content of this report.

58 WORK PROGRAMME

Members discussed the work programme for the next municipal year and the Chair asked that for future Committees, at the last meeting of municipal year Members should receive an annual report of Member complaints.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Kenna-Victoria Martin, telephone (01375) 652403,
or alternatively e-mail kmartin@thurrock.gov.uk**

10 July 2014	ITEM: 5
Standards and Audit Committee	
Appointment of Membership to Members Advisory Panel 2014/2015	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key
Report of: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Head of Service: Fiona Taylor Head of Legal & Democratic Services, Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Localism Act 2011 (the Act) places a duty on Local Authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst their members and co-opted members. The Act further provides that the authority must adopt a code of conduct and that it must have in place arrangements under which allegations of breaches of the code can be investigated and arrangements under which a decision on allegations can be made. The Thurrock Constitution provides that where the Monitoring Officer receives a complaint and after an assessment determines that the matter merits investigation; they are to report their findings on the matter to a Working Group of this Committee (the Member Advisory Panel).

The Standards and Audit Committee previously appointed Councillors Yash Gupta and Simon Wootton along with co-opted members Jason Oliver and Rhona Long to the Members Advisory Panel on the 19 September 2013. This Report requests that the Standards and Audit Committee appoints a new membership to the Members Advisory Panel to serve until the next local elections in May 2015.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee make an appointment to membership to the Members Advisory Panel to serve until the next local elections.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 On 1st July 2012 the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) provisions for standards came into effect. The Act places a duty on Local Authorities that they must

promote and maintain high standards of conduct amongst their members and co-opted members. The Act further provides that the authority must adopt a code of conduct and that it must have in place arrangements under which allegations can be investigated and arrangements under which a decision on allegations can be made. The overall responsibility for this function was duly delegated by the Council under the Constitution to the Standards and Audit Committee (this Committee).

- 2.2 The authority duly adopted a code of conduct and a procedure for dealing with complaints that provides the Monitoring Officer shall carry an assessment of complaints and consult with an Independent person appointed under the Act as to whether a matter requires investigation. If the opinion is reached there are grounds for an investigation the procedure requires that the Monitoring Officer report the findings to a working Group of this Committee that is the Member Advisory Panel.
- 2.3 The Composition of the Panel is set out in the Constitution at Chapter 5 Part 5 (page 157) and shall consist of 4 members two elected and two independent members from this Committee. The Chair shall be an independent member and shall have a casting vote.
- 2.4 The legislative requirement is that an authority must have in place arrangements for decision to be made on allegations and so it is right that a panel is established ready to hear any allegation that may need to be brought before it.
- 2.5 On Thursday 19 September 2013, the Standards and Audit Committee appointed Councillors Yash Gupta and Simon Wootton along with co-opted members Jason Oliver and Rhona Long to the Members Advisory Panel to serve until the local elections in May 2014.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Thurrock Borough Council as an authority subject to the Localism Act 2011 is obliged to have arrangements in place to make decisions on allegations of breach of the Code of Conduct.
- 3.2 To be effective it is best practice to establish a Standing Members Advisory Panel rather than wait until a Complaint about a breach of the Members Code of Conduct reaches the point where it needs to be considered.
- 3.3 Unnecessary or avoidable delay in adjudicatory functions is considered poor practice as it is unfair on all parties that is the complainant and the Member concerned, not to have the matter considered as quickly as is reasonably possible.
- 3.4 Not to have a panel in existence until the occasion demands it creates a situation where complaints cannot be handled promptly as it will necessitate either calling a special meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee or

waiting to the next available meeting. Neither option is a sound administrative practice or wise use of resources.

- 3.5 For the above reasons an appointed standing Members Advisory Panel is considered the best option

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 As set out in the body of this report for reasons of legal compliance, fairness and good public administration, this Committee is advised that an appointment for membership of the advisory panel should be made forthwith.

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

- 5.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with the statutory officers for governance that is the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer.

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

- 6.1 The promotion of high standards in the conduct of elected and co-opted members is of the highest importance in maintaining public confidence in local democratic accountability and determines how successful the Council is in its achievement of the Council's priorities and objectives

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

There are no direct financial implications for the Council.

7.2 Legal

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

As established in the main body of this Report the Localism Act 2011 requires that an authority has arrangements in place to consider and make decisions regarding allegations of breaches of the Members Code of Conduct. This authority has determined that such decision making shall take the form of a hearing by a working group of this committee for the purpose of making recommendation for action to the Monitoring Officer. As set out in this report it is both sound legally and administratively to establish a standing members

advisory panel so as any complaints can be dealt with promptly and not subject to avoidable delay which is in itself a form of unfairness to due process of law.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

There are no direct Diversity implications noted in this report.

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

There are no other significant implications.

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):

- Localism Act 2011 – Current Law Annotated Volume

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

Kenna-Victoria Martin
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Legal and Democratic Services

10 July 2014	ITEM: 6
Standards and Audit Committee	
Refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register, In Quarter 1 Report	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Andy Owen, Corporate Risk Officer	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

One of the functions of the Standards and Audit Committee under the Terms of Reference of the Constitution is to provide independent assurance that the Authority's risk management arrangements are adequate and effective.

To enable the Standards and Audit Committee to consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk and opportunity management arrangements the report is presented on a bi annual basis and provides details of how the key risks and opportunities facing the Authority are identified and managed.

The Corporate Risk Officer has worked with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board between March and May to refresh the Strategic Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

This report provides Standards & Audit Committee with the key risks and opportunities identified by the review and the revised Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

- 1. Recommendation(s)**
- 1.1 That Standards and Audit Committee note the items and details contained in the Dashboard (Appendix A).**
- 1.2 That Directors Board note the 'In Focus' report (Appendix B), which includes the items identified by Corporate Risk Management, Performance Board and Directors Board that Standards and Audit Committee should focus on this quarter.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Risk and Opportunity Management (ROM) describes the planned and systematic approach used to identify, evaluate and manage the risks to and the opportunities for the achievement of the Council's objectives.
- 2.2 ROM is an important part of the Council's overall Performance Management Framework and makes a significant contribution to the sound Corporate Governance arrangements to meet the requirements set out in the Account and Audit Regulations.
- 2.3 During the autumn of 2013 the Corporate Risk Management function was restructured and incorporated with the Insurance Team under Corporate Finance. As part of the arrangements a shared service for risk management was established with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
- 2.4 To enable risk management to be effective in and for both organisations a full review of the ROM frameworks was undertaken and the quarterly reporting of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register suspended until the revised arrangements were developed.
- 2.5 The revised ROM Policy, Strategy and Framework were developed and reported to Cabinet March 2014, via Standards & Audit Committee February 2014 and Directors Board January 2014.
- 2.6 This review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is the first exercise under the new framework and the Corporate Risk Officer has worked with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board between March and May to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.
- 2.7 The review has resulted in some changes to the risk and opportunity register. Twenty one items have been refreshed, ten new items added and fourteen items removed.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The outcome of the review is shown in the Dashboard (Appendix A), In Focus report (Appendix B) and the following tables.
- 3.2 Appendix A – Dashboard
The refreshed and new items are included in the dashboard table. The dashboard provides a summary of the items in the register mapped against the Council's priorities and when the results of future reviews are captured, the table will also outline the progress to manage the items to planned targets and timeframes.
- 3.3 Appendix 2 – Risks and Opportunities In Focus report
This document includes the items identified by Corporate Risk Management, Performance Board and Directors Board that Standards and Audit Committee should focus on this quarter.

The rationale for items being in focus is based on the numeric value of the rating. Any risks/opportunities which are currently rated 16 or 12 automatically become in focus, and any which are currently rated 9 or 8 would be considered on a case by case basis for the in focus report.

A summary of the position for each in focus item is included below:

Risk - In priority (rating) and then reference number (numeric) order.

<p>Adult Social Care, Cost and Quality Standards - Risk 1 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>The risk evaluates the impact of a combination of issues on the maintenance of care quality standards. The risk is rated at the higher level due to the financial pressures on local authorities & the impact this will have (e.g. reduced teams for critical processes such as contract management, inability to uplift prices to counter competition for workers and inflationary pressures, etc).</p>
<p>Failure to Implement the Care Bill - Risk 2 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>Programme management of this major legislative change would, in any normal year, become the major focus for the directorate. However we are currently having to programme manage and deliver four complex and wide ranging programmes of work; the care bill, better care fund integration, short term service efficiency and improvement projects and long term cultural change and transformation. Thurrock is a very low spending authority per capita on adult social care and also faces significant reductions to funding via the national austerity programme. Risks of non-delivery of any, or all, of these important programmes are exacerbated by these factors. Mitigation in the form of securing resources in the short term to provide adequate programme management, delivery and specialist expertise where required is necessary.</p>
<p>Children Social Care - Risk 3 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>The risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children's social care, quality of service and provision. This risk remains from the previous year. The pressures outlined throughout the 2013/14 year remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity, ongoing activity to review high cost placements, implementation of early help and multi-agency safeguarding hub. It is not possible therefore to downgrade the risk rating whilst this remains the case and the risk remains at a high level. A range of mitigating action has been implemented throughout 2013/14 and this is summarized in the risk management action plan.</p>
<p>Health & Social Care Transformation - Risk 4 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>Programme management of this major legislative change would, in any normal year, become the major focus for the directorate. However we are currently having to programme manage and deliver four complex and wide ranging programmes of work; the care bill, better care fund integration, short term service efficiency and improvement projects and long term cultural change and transformation. Thurrock is a very low spending authority per capita on adult social care and also faces significant reductions to funding via the national austerity programme. Risks of non-delivery of any, or all, of these important programmes are exacerbated by these factors. Mitigation in the form of securing resources in the short term to provide adequate programme management, delivery and specialist expertise where required is necessary.</p>
<p>ICT Infrastructure - Risk 5 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>Initiatives are currently underway to manage & overcome the risk (e.g. implementation of flexible/mobile working and IS/IT improvements through the refurbishment of Civic Offices). Progress against the strategy and project are monitored regularly by the CISD and Transformation Boards.</p>
<p>Delivery of MTFS 2014/15 - Risk 6 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>The 2014/15 budget has been set with a planned contribution from reserves of £2.4M. Challenges such as savings targets for shared services, transformation and procurement and limited growth for demand led services such as children's social care have been identified and are being monitored.</p>
<p>Delivery of MTFS 2015/16 to 2017/18 - Risk 7 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)</p> <p>The Core Shaping and Intelligence Group (CSIG) have been formed and chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. The group coordinates the process and findings for reshaping service delivery from 2015. The budget process is a standing item on each Directors Board and Leadership Group and the Directors Board Sub Groups are looking at cross Council service integration to feed into the process.</p>

Purfleet Regeneration - Risk 8

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The Council appointed the 'Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited' consortium as its development partner at the March 2014 Cabinet following conclusion of the OJEU competitive dialogue process. This has reduced the impact of the risks associated with the procurement process but all other risks (in respect of land assembly, reputation etc) remain the same.

Welfare Reforms - Risk 9

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The impact of the changes is being monitored by the Welfare Reform Group. In terms of the specific areas :

- The ELF has had a lower take-up than expected (largely because it is cashless) and the arrangements with Southend are working well. The main risk is over its continuance post 2014/15;
- The social sector size criteria has affected nearly 1,000 people. DHP has been used to minimise the impact; HB arrears have been lower than expected; around 40 households have moved. The risk is over maintaining this position;
- The benefit cap only affected a very small number of people and has had minimal impact;
- The move from DLA to PIP is being monitored and numbers will grow as people switch at their review point. Delays remain the biggest problem.
- LCTS – again arrears are lower than expected but it is causing financial hardship for significant numbers of people, the long-term impact of which is hard to assess at this stage;
- Universal credit – the roll-out at a national level has been delayed because of IT and other implementation problems. There are opportunities to see if we can get a joined up assessment process between the Council and the DWP.
- Movement of families and individuals from other local authorities especially London. There is anecdotal evidence that this is starting to happen although still at a small scale. There is a risk of local services expected to pick up more as numbers increase.

Political Balance/No Overall Control - Risk 31

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The Council has implemented governance arrangements within its Constitution and particularly its Scheme of Delegation to manage the position. Statutory officers of the council are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the political balance of the council does not hinder or delay dealing with difficult issues and the importance of early consultation with all political groups.

Business Continuity - Risk 10

(Rating: 12 Substantial/Very Likely)

The work of business continuity is permanently ongoing due to the unpredictable nature of occurrence of disruptive events. The new aspect of working with the education department on development of critical incident plans for schools which is not only ensuring that Thurrock schools are resilient in their operation, but also creating an income stream for the department. The project is in its infancy as commenced in March 2014. This project has also led with schools linking in with Thurrock Councils Communications team to explore service level agreements.

Road/Transport Infrastructure - Risk 11

(Rating: 12 Substantial/Very Likely)

On 17 March 2014 the risk description was revised to reflect the current situation and the anticipated management and further mitigation required in 2014-15 (e.g. lobbying government with regard to changes to the existing Dartford Crossing, Lower Thames Crossing Options Review, improvements to J30/31, widening of A13 between Manorway and Orsett Cock, etc.)

Opportunity - In priority (rating) and then reference number (numeric) order.

Gloriana Thurrock Ltd - Opportunity 29

(Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

The opportunities flow directly from the Company's objectives which are to build high quality housing in support of Thurrock's Vision and growth targets. If Gloriana can deliver high quality housing within the financial parameters set in the Business Case approved by Cabinet then much needed affordable housing will be provided for the Borough and a financial return will flow to the Council. The Business Case presented to Cabinet in March included a governance and scheme gateway process to enable the effective management of the opportunities and risks flowing from the project. A general risk register and a specific risk register for the first site, St Chad's in Tilbury, showed that some risks had already been mitigated or mitigation/management actions were already in place. Scheme development risks would remain as key risks to be managed and mitigated in future together with demand risk in relation to letting/selling the properties.

Business Rate (NNDR) Pooling

(Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

Pooling arrangements established with Basildon Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering. Work in progress to develop a clear delivery programme of activity across the pool to support economic growth.

- 3.4 A number of items have been removed from the register as a result of the review. These items along with the rationale for their removal are summarised in the following table:

Risk - In alphabetical order**Delivery of MTFS 2013/14**

Risk managed. Budget for 2013/14 balanced and within budget envelope

ERP / Oracle

Risk managed. The majority of the Phase 2 HR/Payroll project was implemented in 2013.

Health Transition

Situation changed. Health transition risk removed and replaced by new risk for Health and Social Care Transformation (see Risk 4).

Housing Responsive Repairs

Risk managed. The progress made on repairs along with setting up the better reporting interface diminishes the risk. The key action undertaken to manage the risk includes - Mobilization of new contractor Mears completed; Basic interface between the Council and Mears system functional and fully functional system to be developed by August; Operational and Core Groups established and regular monitoring of exclusion repairs and budgets undertaken; Completion repairs continue to be marginally hindered by the back log of repairs not completed in the last months but this status is likely to recuperate as a result of better performance and the implementation of the Capital Works Programme, which will improve the general condition of the Housing stock/units beyond the decent homes standard.

Public Health Funding

Risk Managed. The shortfall in the public health funding allocation for 2013/14 has been resolved. The PHE have allocated £1.124M to the baseline budget effective from 2013/14 onwards and the shortfall has been paid to the Council. A report outlining the spend allocation was submitted to Health and Well Being Board in March 2014.

SSP Savings

Risk removed. 2013/14 budget envelope/balanced budget achieved. Delivery of savings going forward incorporated in the overall financial risk items for the delivery of the MTFS (Risks 6&7).

Transformation Savings

Risk removed. 2013/14 budget envelope/balanced budget achieved. Delivery of transformation savings going forward incorporated into the overall financial risk items for the delivery of the MTFS (Risks 6&7).

Waste Route Optimisation

Risk removed. The waste route optimisation project is complete and embedded in scheduled service delivery. Implementation was carried out between June and September 2013 with minor scheme changes being finalised and complete between October and December 2013. There is now no residual risk to the Authority from this project.

Opportunity - In alphabetical order**Academy of Transport & Logistics**

Opportunity removed. The Academy of Transport and Logistics opportunity has been subject to a great deal of work in the year which has concluded that the original proposal is no longer workable. We are therefore moving on in a different direction (much smaller in scale) which would not justify an entry on the register.

Asset Management

Opportunity managed and removed. Asset management plan, subsidiary asset management delivery plan and disposal process established.

Lakeside Basin

Opportunity removed. The transformation of the Lakeside Area is now incorporated in the long term strategic planning of the Borough. On the 12th February 2014 Cabinet authorised the review of the Adopted Thurrock Core Strategy and the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the development of the Borough over the period to 2031. As a result of this decision work on the Site Allocations Local Plan, which included an Inset Plan for Lakeside, will now be rolled forward and merged with the preparation of the new Borough-wide Local Plan. This will have significant implications in terms of the programme and milestones set out in the register for the delivery of the Lakeside project. In short these will need to be re-aligned with the timescales for preparing the new Local Plan and it therefore makes sense to manage the Lakeside and Local Plan processes as one, with strategic oversight and risk management being provided by both Growth Board and a new Lakeside Programme Board.

London Gateway

Opportunity realised with the opening of the first berth of the port in November 2013. On the 12th February 2014 Cabinet authorised the review of the Adopted Thurrock Core Strategy and the preparation of a new Local Plan to guide the development of the Borough over the period to 2031. As a result the ongoing management and strategic oversight of the London Gateway and Local Plan is to be provided by Growth Board.

Purfleet Regeneration

The opportunity on Purfleet can be removed as appointing the development partner is the realisation of the opportunity at a strategic level.

Thurrock Learning Campus

Opportunity managed. The Thurrock Learning Campus is now largely complete and the Council can reasonably consider that it has realised this opportunity.

- 3.5 The whole register has been filed on the J:\THURROCK\EXCHANGE file under ROM\ROM Q1 Refresh_SC R&O Register.
- 3.6 A copy of the register was also made available via the Members Library and additional copies made available on request from the report author.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 One of the functions of the Standards and Audit Committee under the Terms of Reference of the Constitution is to provide independent assurance that the Authority's risk management arrangements are adequate and effective
- 4.2 To enable the Standards and Audit Committee to consider the effectiveness of the Council's risk and opportunity management arrangements the report is presented on a bi annual basis and provides details of how the key risks and opportunities facing the Authority are identified and managed.

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

- 5.1 The Corporate Risk Officer has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board to refresh the Strategic Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.
- 5.2 The revised Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register (In Quarter 1 Report) was reported to Directors Board 27th May 2014 and Performance Board representatives 2nd May 2014.

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

6.1 ROM is recognised as a good management practice and how successful the Council is in managing the risks and opportunities it faces will have a major impact on the achievement of the Council's priorities and objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
Management Accountant

Effective risk and opportunity management and the processes underpinning it will provide a more robust means to identify, manage and reduce the likelihood of financial claims and/or loss faced by the Council.

7.2 Legal

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

Effective risk and opportunity management and the processes underpinning it will provide a more robust means to identify, manage and reduce the likelihood of legal claims or regulatory challenges against the Council

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
Equalities and Cohesion Officer

The management of risk and opportunities provides an effective mechanism for monitoring key equality and human right risks associated with a range of service and business activities undertaken by the Council. It also provides a method for reducing the likelihood of breaching our statutory equality duties.

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

Risk and opportunity management contributes towards the Council meeting the requirements of Corporate Governance and the Account & Audit Regulations.

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):

- Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register, April 2014 (In Quarter 1 report). The document can be accessed via the J:\THURROCK\ EXCHANGE file under ROM\ROM Q1 Refresh_SC R&O Register

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A - Dashboard
- Appendix B - In Focus report

Report Author:

Andy Owen
Corporate Risk Officer
Corporate Finance

Strategic Risks										
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Target		
			-	-	-	Qtr 1 (2014/15)		Rating	Date	
Priority - Create a great place for learning and opportunity										
3	Children Social Care (refreshed)	Nicky Pace	-	-	-	12	N/A	12	01/04/15	
23	School Place Planning (refreshed)	Carmel Littleton	-	-	-	6	N/A	3	30/09/14	
Priority - Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity										
8	Purfleet Regeneration (refreshed)	Matthew Essex	-	-	-	12	N/A	8	31/12/14	
11	Road / Transport Infrastructure (refreshed)	Basil Jackson	-	-	-	12	N/A	6	31/03/15	
Priority - Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities										
16	Emergency Planning & Response (refreshed)	Lucy Magill	-	-	-	9	N/A	9	31/12/14	
17	Equalities (refreshed)	Natalie Warren	-	-	-	9	N/A	6	31/03/15	
24	Community Engagement (refreshed)	Natalie Warren	-	-	-	4	N/A	4	31/03/15	
Priority - Improve health and well-being										
1	Adult Social Care, Cost & Quality Standards (refreshed)	Les Billingham	-	-	-	12	N/A	12	01/04/15	
2	Failure to Implement the Care Bill (new)	Les Billingham	-	-	-	12	N/A	9	30/09/14	
4	Health & Social Care Transformation (new)	Roger Harris	-	-	-	12	N/A	8	31/03/16	
9	Welfare Reforms (refreshed)	Roger Harris	-	-	-	12	N/A	12	31/03/15	
Priority - Protect and promote our clean and green environment										
13	Carbon Management (refreshed)	Clare Lambert	-	-	-	9	N/A	6	31/03/15	
18	ERDF Low Carbon Business Programme (refreshed)	Clare Lambert	-	-	-	9	N/A	4	31/03/15	
21	Coalhouse Fort Project (new)	Clare Lambert	-	-	-	6	N/A	6	31/03/15	
Organisational Risks										
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Target		
			-	-	-	Qtr 1 (2014/15)		Rating	Date	
Theme - A well-run organisation										
5	ICT Infrastructure (refreshed)	Kathryn Adedeji	-	-	-	12	N/A	4	30/09/15	
6	Delivery of MTFs 2014/15 (refreshed)	Sean Clark	-	-	-	12	N/A	6	28/02/15	
7	Delivery of MTFs 2015/16 to 2017/18 (refreshed)	Sean Clark	-	-	-	12	N/A	8	28/02/15	
10	Business Continuity (refreshed)	Lucy Magill	-	-	-	12	N/A	9	31/12/14	
12	Asset Management (refreshed)	Ian Rydings	-	-	-	9	N/A	3	31/03/15	
14	Communications / Poor Reputation (new)	Karen Wheeler	-	-	-	9	N/A	6	30/04/15	
15	Contract Management Consistency (refreshed)	Kathryn Adedeji	-	-	-	9	N/A	3	30/09/15	
19	Managing Change / Capacity for Change (refreshed)	Jackie Hinchliffe	-	-	-	9	N/A	4	30/09/14	
20	Sickness Absence (refreshed)	Jackie Hinchliffe	-	-	-	9	N/A	4	31/03/15	
22	Data Security and Encryption (refreshed)	Lee Henley	-	-	-	6	N/A	6	30/06/14	
25	Data Quality (refreshed)	Karen Wheeler	-	-	-	4	N/A	4	30/09/14	
31	Political Balance/No Overall Control (new)	Fiona Taylor	-	-	-	12	N/A	6	31/03/15	

Footnote: Target Date: Retained = The risk is managed to the required level (risk appetite) but ongoing monitoring/review required via the S/C R&O Register.
 Removed = The risk is removed from the S/C R&O Register as it is either realised or managed to the required level (risk appetite). For items managed to the required level any ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Dept., if needed.
 Priority: Red = High, Amber = Medium, Green = Low. Ratings: Lower is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (→ Static, ↑ Increased, ↓ Decreased)

Strategic Opportunities									
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Target	
			-	-	-	Qtr 1 (2014/15)		Rating	Date
Priority - Create a great place for learning and opportunity									
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priority - Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity									
26	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (new)	Matthew Essex	-	-	-	8	N/A	16	31/03/15
29	Gloriana Thurrock Ltd (new)	Barbara Brownlee	-	-	-	12	N/A	16	31/03/15
30	Business Rates Retention (NNDR) Pooling (new)	Matthew Essex	-	-	-	12	N/A	16	31/03/15
Priority - Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities									
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priority - Improve health and well-being									
27	Community Hubs (new)	Steve Cox	-	-	-	6	-	6	01/03/15
Priority - Protect and promote our clean and green environment									
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Organisational Opportunities									
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Target	
			-	-	-	Qtr 1 (2014/15)		Rating	Date
Theme - A well-run organisation									
28	Digital Programme (new)	Jackie Hinchliffe	-	-	-	4	-	16	31/03/15

Footnote: Target Date: Retained = The opportunity is managed to the required level but ongoing monitoring/review required via the S/C R&O Register.
 Removed = The opportunity is removed from the S/C R&O Register as it is either realised or managed to the required level. For items managed to the required level any ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Dept., if needed.
Priority: **Gold** = High, **Silver** = Medium, **Bronze** = Low. Ratings: Higher is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (➡ Static, ⬆ Increased, ⬇ Decreased)

Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register April 2014 (In Quarter 1 Report)

In Focus Report

The Items are Split Between Risk & Opportunity and Listed in Priority (Rating) Order and Then Reference Number (Numeric) Order.

Risks In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description:							Risk Owner	
Balancing the cost of care and maintaining minimum quality standards - Risk that a combination of the following ongoing pressures:- financial pressures on local authorities (e.g. reduced teams for critical processes such as contract management, inability to uplift prices to counter competition for workers and inflationary increases, etc), a significant failing of a current provider, transitional homecare provision arrangements in lieu of contract award, significant and continued pressures on hospital A&E and periods of 'black alert', market wide decrease in number of carers due to ongoing poor employment conditions, ongoing issues in providing temporary care staff through local framework agreement and continued economic pressure on care providers leads to a drop in care quality/standards and failure of providers to maintain basic or minimum standards for service users. Ultimately results in risk to service user's health, reputational damage to the council and increased costs in managing escalated care and health needs and council intervention as a result. Neighboring boroughs where contract monitoring was reduced have experienced care home failures, in one home alone it was estimated that over 4,500 hours have been spent addressing this. Estimates indicate that the cost of this professional involvement were approximately £140k							Les Billingham	
Link to Corporate Priority								
Priority - Improve health and wellbeing								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	03/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 03/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 03/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 01/04/2015

Comments
The risk evaluates the impact of a combination of issues on the maintenance of care quality standards. The risk is rated at the higher level due to the financial pressures on local authorities and the impact this will have (e.g. reduced teams for critical processes such as contract management, inability to uplift prices to counter competition for workers and inflationary pressures, etc).

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented								
1. Contract compliance monitoring and audit function in operation across externally provided services	2013/14								
2. Unannounced (including out of hours) monitoring visits (as required on risk-proportionate basis)	"								
3. Contract specifications for externally provided services in place include performance and outcomes requirements and minimum quality standards to be met	"								
4. Quarterly information sharing meetings with Care Quality commission (CQC) to identify and share concerns/risks. Bi annual Quality Surveillance Group (QSG) meetings with health colleagues and CQC to identify and manage risks across the whole system.	"								
5. Focus on development and use of alternative care provision to residential (ongoing strategy e.g. intermediate care and re-ablement provision)	"								
6. Review out of borough placements where Thurrock does not have the same level of control over contract compliance scrutiny as in borough. (Yet to take place but should be carried out as a matter of urgency due to the reduction of some monitoring by other boroughs leading to significant failings of many care providers)	"								
7. Identify a 'fair price for care' – council to establish/decide on a fair price for care by carrying out meaningful fee consultations with providers to ensure the price we pay is reasonable.	"								
8. Establish minimum quality standards across services to be achieved regardless of cost. New QA framework established through the work undertaken by Herts CC and implemented across the region from Apr 2013 to enhance contract compliance assurance. Implemented in Thurrock through contract specs and provider quality framework (from Apr 2013).	From Apr 2012								
9. Ongoing price negotiation work to achieve a fair price on high-cost placements. From April 2011	From Apr 2011								
10. Market shaping and development of alternative provision for those with complex needs e.g. extra-care	2013/14								
11. Budget / growth strategy (strategy for future funding of care provision. To be incorporated into Market Position Statement. From May 2013	From May 2013								
12. Provision of a 2% inflationary increase for providers. From Dec 2012	From Dec 2012								
13. All providers reviewed service users and priority-ranked to assist support prioritization in event of lack of carers. From Dec 2012	"								
14. Business continuity plan for adult social care regularly reviewed to ensure up to date and sufficient in light of the risk. From Dec 2012	"								
15. Prepare for the potential for Thurrock to take emergency action, if required and notify CQC accordingly. From Dec 2012	"								
16. 'Step-up to care' training programme developed and implemented for non-care staff to act in emergency. Dec 2012 to May 2013	May 2013								
17. Prioritisation of the rapid response assessment service to manage emergency calls and ease pressure on hospital admissions and residential care admission. From Jan 2013. Service expansion agreed for 2013/14.	From Jan 2013								
Residual Risk Rating	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>03/03/2014</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Likely (3)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>	Date:	03/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Date:	03/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12		

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FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
18. Implement spot purchase contract with to take on work which is being retained by our in house team from April 2014. 19. Ongoing contract compliance monitoring and audit of externally provided services 20. Continue unannounced (including out of hours) monitoring visits (as required on risk-proportionate basis) 21. Maintain quarterly information sharing meetings with CQC and bi annual Quality Surveillance Group meetings with Health and CQC. 22. Provision of increase (1% plus 1%) for providers from April 2014		From April 2014						
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	Refresh 01/04/2015	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner						
<p>The Care Bill 2014 (due to receive Royal Assent in May 2014) is the biggest change in legislation within Adult Social Care in over fifty years. The bill fundamentally changes the basis upon which social care is assessed and the parameters around what is and isn't eligible through moving to a broader "well being" definition of need. There is also a new statutory duty for adult safeguarding in partnership with health and the police. In the longer term the introduction of a new financial regime implementing the recommendations of the Dilnot report will change the way that social care is funded. Failure to successfully implement this Bill will leave the Council exposed to significant reputational and legislative risk resulting in the potential for legal challenge and an inability to control expenditure in an already difficult financial position.</p> <p>There is a very significant change programme required with a new national eligibility criteria, new assessment requirements for carers and a new duty upon local authorities around the Advice and Information offer it provides citizens. Not only will systems and business process need to be fundamentally reviewed within Adult Social Care but there will be a significant training and development programme required for staff as well as a need for a comprehensive community engagement programme.</p>		Les Billingham						
Link to Corporate Priority								
The introduction of the new bill links to the corporate priority to improve health and well being. The need to implement the bill alongside contributing to the Councils need to identify significant efficiencies will place a further pressure on resource levels.								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	21/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 21/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 21/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 30/09/2014

Comments
Programme management of this major legislative change would, in any normal year, become the major focus for the directorate. However we are currently having to programme manage and deliver four complex and wide ranging programmes of work; the care bill, better care fund integration, short term service efficiency and improvement projects and long term cultural change and transformation. Thurrock is a very low spending authority per capita on adult social care and also faces significant reductions to funding via the national austerity programme. Risks of non-delivery of any, or all, of these important programmes are exacerbated by these factors. Mitigation in the form of securing resources in the short term to provide adequate programme management, delivery and specialist expertise where required is necessary.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. The financial risks through the implementation of Dilnot have been highlighted through the Medium Term Financial Strategy	Feb - Apr 2014
2. Presentation to leadership group and Directors Board to get wider corporate strategic buy-in.	Mar - Apr 2014
Residual Risk Rating	Date: 21/03/2014 Impact: Critical (4) Likelihood: Likely (3) Rating: 12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress
3. Establish a Health and Social Care Transformation Programme Board which will oversee the implementation on the Care Bill requirements with specific workstreams on: a. Eligibility Criteria. b. Carers Assessments. c. Advice and Information	By May 2014	
4. A Care Bill Implementation team will be established.	By May 2014	
5. Monthly readiness assessments will be produced for the Programme Board	From June 2014	
6. Development of training programme for staff	By July 2014	
7. A communication plan for the wider community will be produced	By Sept 2014	
Target Risk Rating	Target Date: 30/09/2014 Impact: Substantial (3) Likelihood: Likely (3) Rating: 9	
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date: Impact: Likelihood: Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
Risk: Failure to manage the increases in demand and budget/resource pressures for Children Social Care services could lead to a breakdown in the quality or performance of the social care service provided to vulnerable children and results in less favourable outcomes from inspection and damage to reputation if the service does not meet the required standards.							Nicky Pace	
Link to Corporate Priority								
Priority - Improve health and wellbeing Priority - Create a great place for learning and opportunity								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	22/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 22/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 22/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 01/04/2015

Comments

This risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children’s social care quality of service and provision. This risk remains from the previous year. The pressures outlined throughout the 2013/14 year remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity, ongoing activity to review high cost placements, implementation of early help and multi-agency safeguarding hub. It is not possible therefore to downgrade the risk rating whilst this remains the case and the risk remains at a high level. A range of mitigating actions have been implemented throughout 2013/14 and management action plans are summarized below.

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EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Planned reductions to the establishment implemented from August 2010 onwards to achieve reductions in expenditure.	Aug 2010 onwards.
2. Reduction in Service Managers undertaken in July 2011 to achieve in year savings.	July 2011
3. Reduction in social work staffing levels for looked after children undertaken in Dec 2011 to achieve in year savings.	Dec 2011
4. Work with Education from July 2011 onwards to develop 'Early Offer of Help Strategy' to meet the new the duty placed on Council's to coordinate an early offer of help to families who do not meet the criteria for social care services.	Jul 2011 onwards.
<p>5. Ongoing management review, reporting of services (e.g. resource and demand pressures) from February 2012, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report on service including resource and demand pressures presented to Children's Overview & Scrutiny Panel February 2012. - OfSTED Inspection of Children's safeguarding and children looked after provision – June 2012. OfSTED rated both services as good. The inspection also identified areas for improvement and recommendations based on these. Action plan to address areas for improvement developed/implemented by service and progress regularly monitored by senior management. - Internal quality assurance audits from Sept 2012 to evidence appropriate application of thresholds. - Analysis of national data in respect of child protection and looked after children to compare Thurrock with other councils and report of findings to Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. - In partnership with other Eastern Region authorities monitoring a Safeguarding Performance Dashboard which focuses on key service pressure areas. - Caseload allocation analysis - All teams monitor caseload allocation in terms of volume and complexity regularly (caseload allocation is a key indicator in the Eastern region safeguarding dashboard). 	Feb 2012 ongoing
6. Phased implementation of 'Early Offer of Help Strategy' – from April 2012. Early Offer of Help Services agreement to proceed was given at Cabinet (Q3 2012) and contracts are at the point of being awarded - as at Jan 2013	Apr 2012 ongoing.
7. Business case/growth bid for resource submitted to Star Chamber and service pressures report including resource, demand, staffing and legislative considered by People Services DMT highlighting critical pressures and associated risks - August 2012.	Aug 2012 ongoing
8. Further analysis undertaken Q3 2012 into increased safeguarding and related activity and the associated service pressures and resource demands arising from this. The following actions were identified as steps to support proactive demand management and explore the scope for additional activity to clarify whether there is any unexplored potential to return children to care of their own families:	2012/13
(i) Greater insistence on fuller implementation of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process – all cases should have had CAF involvement prior to acceptance by Social Care. Intention is for receiving teams to start requesting CAF with referrals – this is in the process of being implemented by the service as at Jan 2013.	Ongoing
(ii) Widen use of Family Group Conferences (FGCs) – wherever possible FGCs should be held prior to care as a standard procedure – the need for this will be further highlighted by CP Chairs to support Social Work teams – ongoing as at Jan 2013.	Ongoing
(iii) Hold a summit with voluntary sector to explore what more can we do together to maintain or return children to their own families. This follows informal communication in which some local organisations had expressed a commitment to be more active in this area of work. A date of 22 February 2013 has been planned for an initial meeting.	Ongoing
(iv) Review of all cases for children aged 14+ - The head of service has chaired a panel to review the cases of a sample of looked after children aged 14+, to explore whether there are young people who could safely be returned to the care of their families. This reviewing exercise has been completed and to date (Jan 2013) has confirmed that, with the exception of 1 or 2 cases, where a return to home was already planned, the existing arrangements in terms of placement and care needs are appropriate. Positively, this additional scrutiny has validated existing processes rather than identified any failing.	

<p>(v) Late entrants to care – explore what more could be done for Looked After Children (LAC) and CP to anticipate and prevent late care entry. The focus will be all cases of YP who are vulnerable to losing places in homeless accommodation, or who are known to be a serious risk of exclusion from home by their parents – this work is in progress as at Jan 2013 with the first phase focusing on the most recent 20 children aged 14+ being scrutinised by senior management team</p> <p>9. All admissions of teenagers into the care system to be agreed in advance at the placement panel – April 13. Any admissions out of panel to be agreed by Head of Service</p> <p>10. Placement Review – an external review of high cost placements to be commissioned / undertaken in the year</p> <p>11. Social Work Advisor (Use of Resources) – in post</p> <p>12. Review of open cases to establish proportion of recent migration into Thurrock of families / children and subsequent entry in care system and demands on service. In addition to monitoring of transfer-in cases.</p>							Ongoing	
							Apr 2013	
							Apr/Jun 2013 ongoing	
							"	
							"	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	22/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
13. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to be implemented from July 2014		July 2014						
14. Delivery of Ofsted mock inspection action plan – from November 2013		From Apr 2014						
15. Strategic action should be taken to better manage demand on social care services including engagement with schools, Health and other partner services to ensure that they are using their resources effectively thereby diminishing the compensatory actions being taken by the council.								
16. Munro Senior Social Worker – in post								
17. Enhanced quality auditing of existing caseloads – external resource brought in to lead and supported by new audit tool								
18. Quarterly regional safeguarding performance benchmarking – monitoring of key indicators of risk and performance								
19. Business case for CONTROCC finance and charging system to support control of financial management								
20. Further targeted analysis of cases and performance information to minimise any potential case drift and QA that all alternatives have been explored.								
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	01/04/2015	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner			
<p>Adult Social Care and the NHS are finding it increasingly difficult to meet demand for services, particularly when resource continues to decrease. With the expected ageing and growth of the population, we can expect age-related disease to continue to rise. Dementia for example is predicted to risk steeply in Thurrock, and by 2033 the population aged 85+ is projected to double. Two thirds of the resource spent on social care nationally is already spent on individuals with at least one long-term condition. For the NHS, the percentage spent is even higher. Lifestyle factors too will continue to compound the problem with Thurrock levels for smoking and obesity being significantly higher than the national average. Alongside a system that was designed in the 1940s and is no longer fit for purpose, a programme of major transformation is required.</p> <p>Further adding to the risk are the number of change programmes (all significant) being run concurrently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care Act Implementation (see Corporate Risk); • Short-term Efficiency (ASC contribution towards Council's savings target); • Demand Management; and • Health and Social Care Integration (Better Care Fund Plan). <p>Thurrock Council in partnership with NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) has developed a joint transformation programme. The Programme will align all change programmes as mentioned above. Failure of the programme to achieve its objectives will lead to the inability of social care and health to be able to meet demand within existing resources. For adult social care, this would mean either not providing services to those people who were eligible to receive them which would leave the council open to challenge and also result in a failure to meet statutory duties; or continue to provide services to those who qualify but exceeding budget.</p>		Roger Harris			
Link to Corporate Priority					
Improve Health and Wellbeing					
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	15/04/2014	Impact: Critical (4)	Likelihood: Very Likely (4)	Rating: 16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 15/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 15/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2016

Comments
Programme management of this major legislative change would, in any normal year, become the major focus for the directorate. However we are currently having to programme manage and deliver four complex and wide ranging programmes of work; the care bill, better care fund integration, short term service efficiency and improvement projects and long term cultural change and transformation. Thurrock is a very low spending authority per capita on adult social care and also faces significant reductions to funding via the national austerity programme. Risks of non-delivery of any, or all, of these important programmes are exacerbated by these factors. Mitigation in the form of securing resources in the short term to provide adequate programme management, delivery and specialist expertise where required is necessary.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Programme Management arrangements in the process of being established alongside programme initiation document	April 2014
2. Some work already in progress – e.g. managing demand via Building Positive Futures Programme; process and service redesign already underway for in-house provision; review of external placements	"
3. Close partnership working with Thurrock CCG already established	"
4. Separate risk register developed as part of the Programme Management arrangements	"
Residual Risk Rating	Date: 15/04/2014 Impact: Critical (4) Likelihood: Likely (3) Rating: 12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress
5. Embed Programme Management Arrangements – Programme Board and Work Streams (x4)	May 2014	
6. Fully develop work stream project plans	May 2014	
7. Identify resource requirements needed to enable change to take place	July 2014	
Target Risk Rating	Target Date: 31/03/2016 Impact: Critical (4) Likelihood: Unlikely (2) Rating: 8	
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date: Impact: Likelihood: Rating:	

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UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
ICT systems and processes are not optimal, based upon outdated, inefficient legacy devices and processes leading to a stifling of service delivery improvements, lack of flexibility for transforming our business processes and poor business continuity timelines. The Council will not be able to deliver business and customer needs and reap the benefits in efficiencies which better more flexible ICT provides.							Kathryn Adedeji / Andrew Austin.	
Link to Corporate Priority								
A well run organisation								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	Refreshed 15/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 15/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 15/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 30/09/2015
<p>Page 37</p>					

Comments
Initiatives are currently underway to manage and overcome the risk (e.g. implementation of flexible/ mobile working and IS/IT improvements through the refurbishment of Civic Offices). Progress against the strategy and project monitored regularly by the CISD and Transformation Boards.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Implementation of Oracle Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution for Financial Management, HR, Payroll and Procurement services together with Business Intelligence reporting.								2013/14
2. Development and implementation of ICT initiatives as part of the corporate transformation programme to provide systems capable of supporting business requirements and initiating solutions that provide savings and service improvements (e.g. flexible/mobile working).								2013/14
3. Information System and Information Technology (IS/IT) strategy refreshed and reported to Cabinet March 2013								Mar 2013
4. Individual service transformation projects to support and drive ICT change in line with business requirements from/during 2013/14 (e.g. Housing).								2013/14
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	15/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
5. Ongoing monitoring of IS/IT Strategy by the Corporate Information Systems & Development Board (CISD)		From April 2014						
6. Ongoing monitoring of implementation IS/IT and refurbishment of Civic Offices by the Civic Offices Programme Board and Transformation Board.		From April 2014						
7. Recruitment of ICT Strategy Role in the Commercial Team.		May - Sept 2014						
8. Review and update the IS/IT strategy to take account of changes due to flexible working and ERP.		From Sept 2014						
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	30/09/2015	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Unlikely (1)	Rating:	4
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner			
The Council fails to fully deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy – The budget envelope is not maintained and/or savings are not delivered to meet forecasted budget deficits. Both or either of these scenarios could lead to service overspends and Council wide financial pressures which would require additional unplanned efficiencies to be made with potential service delivery impacts or the Council having to rely on further contributions from reserves in 2014/15.		Sean Clark / Directors Board			
Link to Corporate Priority					
Theme - A well run organisation					
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	Refreshed 08/04/2014	Impact: Critical (4)	Likelihood: Very Likely (4)	Rating: 16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 08/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 08/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 28/02/2015

Comments

The 2014/15 budget has been set with a planned contribution from reserves of £2.4M. Challenges such as savings targets for shared services, transformation and procurement and limited growth for demand led services such as children’s social care have been identified and are being monitored.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. MTFS established February 2013. The Council agreed a two year balanced budget covering the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15							Feb 2013	
2. Monthly reports to Directors Board and quarterly reports to Cabinet on the MTFS / budget position. .							From Apr 2013	
3. Pressures for 2013/14 identified and appropriate action undertaken taken to ensure that the budget remained balanced and recognised that these actions will have an adverse effect on the 2014/15 budget position.							2013/14	
4. 2014/15 General Fund Budget and MTFS established and agreed by Council February 2014.							Feb 2014	
5. Core Shaping and Intelligence Group (CSIG) meeting weekly to guide the savings requirements for 2015/16 and the savings impact on 2014/15							From Mar 2014	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	08/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
6. Ongoing monthly reporting to Directors Board and quarterly reports to Cabinet on the MTFS and 2014/15 budget position.	From Apr 2014							
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	28/02/2015	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	6
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
<p>The Council faces significant budget pressures due to increasing demand in services (e.g. children’s social care) whilst facing significant funding reductions from central government. The government reductions will continue and the Council is now concentrating on the period 2015/16 through to 2017/18</p> <p>Failure to develop plans to set and maintain a balanced budget and to deliver the associated savings for the period 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 could lead to ill informed decisions on service reductions, unplanned efficiencies and in year overspends and result in service delivery impacts, negative feedback or publicity and unexpected contributions from reserves to balance the budget or, in the worse case, an ultra vires deficit budget position.</p>							Sean Clark / Directors Board	
Link to Corporate Priority								
Theme - A well run organisation								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	Refreshed 08/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 08/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 08/04/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 28/02/2015

Comments
<p>The Core Shaping and Intelligence Group (CSIG) have been formed and chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. The group coordinates the process and findings for reshaping service delivery from 2015. The budget process is a standing item on each Directors Board and Leadership Group and the Directors Board Sub Groups are looking at cross Council service integration to feed into the process.</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. MTFS established February 2013. The Council agreed a two year balanced budget covering the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15 to provide a solid foundation to identify the future shape and service delivery mechanisms of the Council							Feb 2013	
2. Reviews commenced to determine the future shape and service delivery mechanisms of the Council (e.g. Strategy Week, Star Chamber, Transformation, etc)							2013/14 Dec 2013	
3. Managers Conference Dec 2012 – Concentrated on how the major cuts faced by the Council could be achieved and the effects on the organisation/services.							From Jan 2014	
4. Budget Challenge – Service teams considered and put forward ideas to achieve savings. From Jan 2014							From Jan 2014	
5. Leadership Group – Work undertaken to review services and to identify potential savings without taking service levels below the statutory minimum.							February 2014	
6. MTFS for 2014/15 to 2017/18 established and agreed by Council February 2014.							From Mar 2014	
7. Core Shaping and Intelligence Group (CSIG) meeting weekly to guide the savings requirements for 2015/16 and the savings impact on 2014/15							From Mar 2014	
8. Directors Board Sub Groups established and working on themes covering; people, place, growth, regeneration, planning, streets and public health.							From Mar 2014	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	08/04/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
9. Proposals to close funding gap to be finalised	By July 2014							
10. Cabinet report on proposals to close funding gap.	July 2014							
11. Implementation of plans for the agreed proposals	From Jul/Aug 2014							
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	28/02/2015	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
Complex and costly land acquisition including potential use of CPO powers, managing a long term relationship with the Council's development partner and securing the delivery of elements of the scheme that the Council is responsible for (school etc) are all fundamental to the success of the project.							Matthew Essex	
Link to Corporate Priority								
Priority 2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity Objective: Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	Refreshed 21/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date 21/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 21/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/12/2014

Comments
The Council appointed the 'Purfleet Centre Regeneration Limited' consortium as its development partner at the March 2014 Cabinet following conclusion of the OJEU competitive dialogue process. This has reduced the impact of the risks associated with the procurement process but all other risks (in respect of land assembly, reputation etc) remain the same.

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EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Land Assembly – Approx 55% of the required land acquired and is managed by the assets team. Cabinet Nov 2011 agreed a first resolution to commence compulsory purchase order (CPO) process for the remaining site. Negotiations with remaining owners continues and managed by CBRE (property & real estate adviser). CBRE available to advise on CPO strategy, negotiations and valuations as required.							Ongoing from 2011	
2. Procurement of development partner – Selected and approved March 2014							Apr 2013 to March 2014	
3. S106 completed and outline planning permission have been secured							"	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	21/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
With the development partner now appointed the project moves into the delivery phase with a great deal of work required between the Council and developer to map out the programme for delivering the project and identify/apportion the various risks that remain.		From April						
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	31/12/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description	Risk Owner								
<p>The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Local Government Finance Act 2012 have resulted in major changes to the welfare scheme, aiming to reduce the UK's welfare benefit costs by £18 billion over the next five years and promote work as more beneficial than claiming benefit. Embedded in the Acts are a range of measures designed to simplify, streamline and reform the payment of out of work, income, housing and disability related benefits; re-assess the fitness or otherwise of claimants to work; and provide employment related support.</p> <p>Both Acts have introduced significant reforms to the current system that have a direct impact on Council services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The replacement of Council Tax Benefit with Localised Council Tax Support wef April 2013 - The introduction of a "size criteria" and limitation of Housing Benefit within the social rented sector wef April 2013 - The limitation of total benefits through an overall household "Benefit Cap" (From July 2013) - The reform of the Disability Living Allowance and its replacement with Personal Independence Plans wef October 2013 - The replacement of the abolished elements of the Social Fund which was administered by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), by a local scheme. The Council was allocated funding for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 to create a local scheme to replace Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants which had been part of the social fund. From April 2013 the council set up a grant based scheme known as Essential Living Fund to replace these parts of the Social Fund*. - The replacement of all working age benefits (Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credits and Working Tax Credit) with a single unified benefit known as Universal Credit (to be completely in place by 2020) <p>The reforms could lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fewer people in receipt of benefits who may then look to the Council to provide them with a service – e.g. housing, homelessness, adult social care. - Additional demand for Council services as a consequence of demographic and migration changes brought about by the Welfare Reforms (e.g. people moving to Thurrock from London). - The Council having to fund the Essential Living Fund scheme from 2015/16, if the Government decides not to extend the current two year funding arrangements for 2013/14 and 2014/15. 	<p>Roger Harris</p>								
<p>Link to Corporate Priority</p>									
<p>Improve Health and Wellbeing / Encourage and Promote Job Creation and Economic Prosperity / Build Pride, Responsibility and Respect to Create Safer Communities.</p>									
<p>Inherent Risk Rating</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>19/03/2014</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Very Likely (4)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>16</td> </tr> </table>	Date:	19/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
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DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 19/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 19/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2015																																																																																																
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Comments
<p>The impact of the changes is being monitored by the Welfare Reform Group. In terms of the specific areas :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ELF has had a lower take-up than expected (largely because it is cashless) and the arrangements with Southend are working well. The main risk is over its continuance post 2014/15; The social sector size criteria has affected nearly 1,000 people. DHP has been used to minimise the impact; HB arrears have been lower than expected; around 40 households have moved. The risk is over maintaining this position; The benefit cap only affected a very small number of people and has had minimal impact; The move from DLA to PIP is being monitored and numbers will grow as people switch at their review point. Delays remain the biggest problem. LCTS – again arrears are lower than expected but it is causing financial hardship for significant numbers of people, the long-term impact of which is hard to assess at this stage; Universal credit – the roll-out at a national level has been delayed because of IT and other implementation problems. There are opportunities to see if we can get a joined up assessment process between the Council and the DWP. Movement of families and individuals from other local authorities especially London. There is anecdotal evidence that this is starting to happen although still at a small scale. There is a risk of local services expected to pick up more as numbers increase.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. The Welfare Benefits Reforms task and Finish Group (Lead by Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning) meets monthly to monitor and evaluate the impact of the different changes. The group provides advice and guidance where relevant to the service departments responsible for the operation and implementation of reforms.	From April 2013
2. The Benefits and Housing service also meet monthly to discuss the discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) policy and budget to ensure that the fund provides those who have been impacted by benefit cap and under occupancy. DHP is the main financial resource available to the council to help provide the relevant top up for rent for people on Housing Benefit (HB).	"
3. The Council has also set up a Universal Credit Solutions group and a programme board to create the councils project plan for responding to the impact of Universal Credit and to start preparation activities. The start date of Universal Credit in Thurrock and most of the Country (except for Pilot areas) is still unknown. But DWP are using target of April 2016 as a target start date for planning activities.	"
4. The council is also working together with Job Centre Plus (part of Department for Work and pensions) to help develop understanding of each other's services and priorities for Thurrock residents and to help provide an informed holistic services. The Welfare Reforms project team are also working with	"

Page 47	<p>other council services e.g. children's services, regeneration, Housing, children's centres and Troubled families to develop a partnership agreement and data protection protocols to enable effective joint working and targeting of benefit claimants seeking Employment and skills advice and support. Employment can help take individuals out of benefit dependency</p> <p>5. The Council Tax debt management team are in the process of reviewing the fair debt and bailiff policy to ensure individuals impacted receive as much support as possible during the bailiff and court summons process to recover unpaid council tax. In 2013/2014, about 600 LCTS affected customers had not paid Council tax and many others had been able to do so.</p> <p>6. The council has renewed its Service Level Agreement with Southend Council to continue processing the Essential Living Fund for 2014/2015.</p> <p>7. Housing Service:</p> <p>(i) The Council's Housing services have visited and provided benefits, debt and money advice to council tenants affected by the Benefit cap and under occupancy. They have visited residents at home and at outreach centres e.g. Community Hubs, Children's centres, libraries to provide advice. Although some people have been supported to downsize, there are still more people on the waiting list that need help to do so.</p> <p>(ii) Monitoring and management of potential increased rent arrears/evictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rents and Welfare team continuously monitors level of rent arrears and endeavour to make contacts with those affected and provide advice and assistance in order to assist in sustaining their tenancies. A Finance inclusion officer works with tenants affected by the changes, maximizing income and reducing expenditure, this is supplemented by a new SLA with Family Mosaic (partner) providing tenancies and financial advice, and other supporting services to residents. - An Eviction & Prevention Panel tracks all evictions and potential ones in the social sector resulting from the welfare reform, whereby a full consideration is made by the Head of Service prior to a final decision being taken of whether to precede with the evicting process or not. <p>(iii) Cap on Housing Benefit – Size Criteria (Including exclusion from entitlement to larger property than household requirement):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Along with advice and assistance to access services and benefits (provided by the Rents and Welfare team), Housing Solutions teams assist tenants affected by the abovementioned changes in moving to alternative suitable and affordable properties (assistance includes financial incentive to downsize). - A 0.5% decrease in rent collection is currently anticipated as a result of the changes brought by the welfare reforms. <p>(iv) Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of affordability of housing in inner London is resulting in an increased number of homelessness whereby Thurrock area is becoming a logical affordable place for an ad-interim housing for homeless households; Thurrock Private Housing Sector team works with private landlords to promote to maintain standards, and to make more affordable properties available for letting. 	<p>"</p> <p>"</p> <p>"</p>
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Residual Risk Rating	Date:	19/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
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FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress
8. The Welfare Benefits Reforms Task and Finish group to continue to meet monthly to monitor the impact and ensure that the council and its partners are working together to respond to known and identified needs where possible to do so.	From April 2014	
9. The Universal Credit Programme Board to continue working together with across council services and with partners e.g. DWP/JCP and CVS to plan and prepare for the impact of Universal credit.	"	
10. Review the funding and arrangement for Essential Living Fund grant and service delivery after this ends in March 2015	"	
11. Housing Service:	"	
(i) Continue to provide benefits, debt and money advice to council tenants affected by the Benefit cap and Social Sector Size Criteria		

<p>/ Under Occupancy.</p> <p>(ii) Monitoring and management of potential increased rent arrears/evictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rents and Welfare team to continue monitoring the level of rent arrears and endeavour to make contacts with those affected and provide advice and assistance in order to assist in sustaining their tenancies. - Finance inclusion officer to continue to work with tenants affected by the changes, maximizing income and reducing expenditure and Family Mosaic (partner) to continue to provide tenancy and financial advice and other supporting services to resident. - Eviction & Prevention Panel to continue to track all evictions in the social sector resulting from the welfare reform and Head of Service to maintain evaluations to inform judgements on whether to proceed with the eviction process. <p>(iii) Cap on Housing Benefit – Size Criteria (Including exclusion from entitlement to larger property than household requirement). Housing Solutions teams to continue to assist tenants affected by the cap on housing benefit</p> <p>(iv) Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation – Thurrock Private Housing Sector team to continue to work with private landlords to promote to maintain standards, and to make affordable properties available for letting.</p>								
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	Refresh: 31/03/2015	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (4)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
Failure to maintain the co-ordination of Business Continuity Planning across the Council would lead to the business continuity management arrangements across the Council becoming outdated and ineffective in times of a disruption affecting Thurrock							Lucy Magill / Gavin Dennett	
Link to Corporate Priority								
Build pride, responsibility and respect to create safer communities Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity A well-run organisation.								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	31/03/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 31/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/12/2014

Comments
The work of business continuity is permanently ongoing due to the unpredictable nature of occurrence of disruptive events. The new aspect of working with the education department on development of critical incident plans for schools which is not only ensuring that Thurrock schools are resilient in their operation, but also creating an income stream for the department. The project is in its infancy as commenced in March 2014. This project has also led with schools linking in with Thurrock Councils Communications team to explore service level agreements.

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EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. 95% of business continuity plans have been reviewed and returned, those outstanding are being followed up on. Report to Standards and Audit Committee February 2014 complete with new Corporate Business Continuity Plan, Policy and Statement. Four service business continuity plans have been exercised with service reviews and considerations given to external Council suppliers and their business continuity arrangements.							Sept 2013 - March 2014	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	31/03/2014	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
2. Programme for advice and implementation of critical incident plans for schools commenced.	March 2014							
3. Further exercises to take place on critical functions of Council initially (5 exercises planned).	Apr - Oct 2014							
4. Re-establishment of Business Continuity Management Group	July 2014							
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	Refresh 31/12/2014	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	9
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner			
<p>In Thurrock, the M25 & A13 are routes of national & regional importance. Adverse traffic conditions on these routes often have a knock on effect to local roads, leading to localised gridlock and impacting negatively on economic productivity. The Dartford Crossing adds an additional element of traffic risk, as the bridge & the tunnels are more sensitive to accidents & congestion, in part due to the current method of tolling.</p> <p>Currently the need for major network improvements on strategic routes to facilitate growth has been identified as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * M25 – improvements at Junction 30/31 * The introduction of free flow tolling on the Thurrock/Dartford Crossing. The Government is planning to introduce free-flow charging at the Dartford Crossing in October 2014 and raise charges at the same time, although major disruptive road works will continue at the crossing and its approaches until April 2014. * The consideration of an additional long-term river crossing capacity. The DfT is currently giving further consideration to their Options A and C for a new Lower Thames Crossing and their final decision will have long-term and significant implications to the Borough. * A13 – widening of the section between Manorway and Orsett Cock. <p>Planned developments (such as London Gateway, Port of Tilbury expansion and Lakeside) are likely to continue to increase congestion without adequate improvements to infrastructure. However, as these and other developments are delivered, some new public transport routes may open up as demand increases but will not fully mitigate the impact upon the network. In this regard, the A13 is of particular concern. DP World provides only part funding for the necessary widening from Manorway to Orsett Cock and there is a shortfall in the region of £70M.</p>		<p>David Freestone / Basil Jackson</p>			
Link to Corporate Priority					
<p>Priority 2 - Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity. Objective - Provide the infrastructure to promote and sustain growth and prosperity.</p>					
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	Refreshed 17/03/2013	Impact: Substantial (3)	Likelihood: Very Likely (4)	Rating: 12

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 17/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 17/03/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2015
<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>	<p>Likelihood</p> <p>Impact</p>

Comments
On 17 March 2014 the Risk Description was revised to reflect the current situation and the anticipated Management and Further Mitigation required in 2014-15 (e.g. lobbying government with regard to changes to the existing Dartford Crossing, Lower Thames Crossing Options Review, improvements to J30/31, widening of A13 between Manorway and Orsett Cock, etc.)

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Lobbying Government to fast-track free flow charging at the Dartford Crossing throughout 2013/14. Government to introduce free flow charging Oct 2014.	2013/14
2. Engagement in the Government's Lower Thames Crossing Options Review through Stakeholders Panel and DfT consultations. Council's response to Government consultation on options for Lower Thames Crossing agreed by Cabinet July 2013.	2013/14
3. Lobbying Government for improvements to J30/31 throughout 2013/14. £150M scheme announced by the Government.	2013/14
4. Lobbying Government, EU, SELEP on widening of the A13 between Manorway and Orsett Cock especially in identifying funding opportunities. Work to include the promotion of this infrastructure requirement directly by the Council and via TGSE and SELEP.	2013/14
Residual Risk Rating	Date: 17/03/2014 Impact: Substantial (3) Likelihood: Very Likely (4) Rating: 12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress
5. Lobbying Government not to raise charges at the Dartford Crossing until all the planned works are completed, possibly, in April 2015.	On-going to October 2014	
6. Continue to engage in the Government's Lower Thames Crossing Options Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Undertake public engagement events in Thurrock in 2014 relating to the remaining Options of A and C. ii. Review the Council's position on the longer-term and far reaching implications of any decision made by the Government following the DfT's consultation on their Lower Thames Crossing Options. 	2nd April and a date tbc in June 2014 On-going and throughout 2014-2015	
7. Lobbying Government for additional improvements to J30/31 over and above the £150m scheme announced by the Government.	On-going and throughout 2014-2015	
8. Continue lobbying Government, EU, SELEP on widening of the A13 between Manorway and Orsett Cock especially in identifying funding opportunities. Work to include the promotion of this infrastructure requirement directly by the Council and via TGSE and SELEP	On-going and throughout 2014-2015	

9. Progress transport schemes to be delivered through funding from the Local Growth Fund via the SELEP			On-going and throughout 2014-2015					
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	31/03/2015	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	6
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description						Risk Owner			
The political balance of the council has been altered following the election and there is no overall control of the Council. Lack of cooperation between party groups/members could hinder or unduly delay the decision making arrangements and impair the achievement of the Council's priorities/objectives and the delivery of the transformation and savings agenda.						Fiona Taylor			
Link to Corporate Priority									
Theme: A well-run organisation									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	09/06/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 09/06/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at: 09/06/2014	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Target Risk Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2015

Comments

The Council has implemented governance arrangements within its Constitution and particularly its Scheme of delegation to ensure the risk of the above is minimised. Statutory officers of the council are aware of their responsibilities to ensure the political balance of the council does not hinder or delay dealing with difficult issues and the importance of early consultation with all political groups.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Constitution and Members Code of Conduct reviewed November 2013.							Nov 2013	
2. Members Induction, including role as a Councillor and legal and governance obligations.							May 2014	
3. Regular group leaders meetings to discuss issues of contention and significant issues affecting the council.							Ongoing	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	09/06/2014	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
4. Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to facilitate a high level of cooperation between group leaders to ensure decision making is not unduly delayed.	Ongoing							
5. Consideration and development of a political protocol that sets out how senior officers will work with all members to ensure that officers: (i) Make arrangements and understand the significance of communication with all political parties with integrity, impartiality and objectivity and (ii) Work with all members to build consensus where possible and ensure cross party briefings take place in a regular and timely way.	June 2014							
6. Regular meetings of the council's statutory officers to ensure the above is on target.	June 2014							
Target Risk Rating	Target Date:	31/03/2015	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	6
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

Opportunities In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description		Opportunity Owner						
<p>Gloriana Thurrock Ltd is a company set up and wholly owned by Thurrock Council with the objective of developing high quality homes on Council owned land in order to stimulate the weak private sector market and assist in delivering the Council’s vision for Thurrock and ambitious housing targets. The Council will transfer land to Gloriana in exchange for shares and the Council will prudentially borrow and on- lend money (at a margin) to Gloriana to develop housing on that land. The Housing department will act as agent for Gloriana, in developing and managing the homes, on full commercial terms. The arrangements that have been put in place comply with state aid and other regulatory requirements and have been discussed with the Council’s external auditors. The financial projections, prepared by PricewaterhouseCoopers show that, on a fairly prudent set of assumptions, Gloriana should be able to repay its borrowings from the Council (giving rise to a small annual surplus to the General Fund) and, in addition, generate a longer term equity return to the Council.</p>		Barbara Brownlee						
Link to Corporate Priority								
<p>Priority: Encourage and Promote Job Creation and Economic Prosperity. Gloriana supports the delivery of the Thurrock Vision – “Thurrock: A Place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish” and the five strategic priorities. It will help to meet directly the target to build 18,500 homes by 2021.</p>								
Inherent Opportunity Rating	Date:	01/04/2014	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Very Unlikely (1)	Rating:	4

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date:01/06/2014	Residual Opp. Rating as at:01/06/2014	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Target Opp. Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2015																																																																																																
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Comments
The opportunities flow directly from the Company's objectives which are to build high quality housing in support of Thurrock's Vision and growth targets. If Gloriana can deliver high quality housing within the financial parameters set in the Business Case approved by Cabinet then much needed affordable housing will be provided for the Borough and a financial return will flow to the Council. The Business Case presented to Cabinet in March included a governance and scheme gateway process to enable the effective management of the opportunities and risks flowing from the project. A general risk register and a specific risk register for the first site, St Chad's in Tilbury, showed that some risks had already been mitigated or mitigation/management actions were already in place. Scheme development risks would remain as key risks to be managed and mitigated in future together with demand risk in relation to letting/selling the properties.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place	Date Implemented
1. Gloriana Thurrock Ltd a company wholly owned by Thurrock Council set up.	Mar 2014
2. Opportunities for development on Council land being actively pursued – First site identified (St Chads in Tilbury) and second site (Belmont Road in Grays) under consideration. Profile of Gloriana being raised (MJ Awards, discussions with other authorities, developers) to increase awareness and exploit the potential.	Jun 2014
3. Risks registers reviewed and risk mitigation measures in hand. Discussions progressing with Wilmott Dixon to establish a fixed price contract within the financial parameters set for the scheme and which will provide for effective transfer of construction related risks to the contractor. Soft market testing of potential marketing agents complete and tender process in hand.	Jun 2014
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date: 01/06/2014
	Impact: Exceptional (4)
	Likelihood: Likely (3)
	Rating: 12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress
4 Further actions required to identify additional sites in locations related to Thurrock's strategic growth areas which can best pump prime private sector development.	Sept 2014	
5. Additional financial analysis needed to consider relative merits of transfer of Council General Fund land to Gloriana.	Sept 2014	
6. Further consideration of use of HRA land by Gloriana as HRA reaches borrowing cap.	Sept 2014	
7. Consider opportunities for working with developers in relation to S.106 requirements.	Dec 2014	
Target Opportunity Rating	Target Date: 31/03/2015	Impact: Exceptional (4)
		Likelihood: Very Likely (4)
		Rating: 16
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	Impact:
		Likelihood:
		Rating:

UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description		Opportunity Owner						
The Council has entered into a Business Rate pooling arrangements with Basildon Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering for the financial year 2014/15. The pooling arrangement offers the opportunity for Thurrock to work collaboratively with members of the pool to address strategic issues (e.g. skills, economic development and transport), support economic growth and increase the proportion of any business rates income retained.		Matthew Essex						
Link to Corporate Priority								
Priority – Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity. Objective – Support local business and develop the skilled workforce they will require. Deliverable – Facilitate the implementation of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) pooling arrangements and establish a clear delivery programme of activity across the pool to support economic growth.								
Inherent Opportunity Rating	Date:	09/06/2014	Impact:	Exceptional	Likelihood:	Very Unlikely (1)	Rating:	4

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date: 09/06/2014	Residual Opp. Rating as at: 09/06/2014	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Target Opp. Rating & Target Date: 31/03/2015																																																																															
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Comments

Pooling arrangements established with Basildon Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering. Work in progress to develop a clear delivery programme of activity across the pool to support economic growth.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Review and modelling of options associated with the Business Rates Retention Scheme.							Mar/ Jun 2013	
2. Identification and agreement of preferred option. Pooling arrangements to be developed with Basildon Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering							Jun/Sept 2013	
3. Model to share the Retained Levy negotiated and agreed with pool members and Memorandum of Understanding setting out the broad principles, aims, objectives and exit arrangements of the pooling arrangement established.							Sept/Oct 2013	
4. Application to CLG to form a business retention pool with Basildon Borough Council and the London Boroughs of Barking & Dagenham and Havering - October 2013.							Oct 2013	
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	09/06/2014	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / TARGET OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
5. Establish a clear delivery programme of activity across the pool to support economic growth	Sept 2014							
6. Ongoing monitoring and reporting of performance of the pool.	From Apr 2014							
Target Opportunity Rating	Target Date:	Refresh 31/03/2015	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

10 July 2014	ITEM: 7
Standards and Audit Committee	
2013/14 Complaints, Compliments and Enquiries Report	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Lee Henley – Information Manager	
Accountable Head of Service: Jackie Hinchliffe – Head of HR, OD & Customer Strategy	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant – Chief Executive	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

Corporate Complaints:

- During 2013/14, 2549 complaints were received. The previous year (2012/13) 3505 complaints were logged. However this decrease (27%) is primarily due to a change in our complaints process with the introduction of a concerns stage which has resulted in 1026 being recorded.
- 2013/14 also saw a reduction in housing repair complaints. During 2013/14, the combined total of complaints and concerns volumes recorded for housing repairs was 1109. The previous year 1370 housing repair complaints were received.
- Of the 1026 concerns received, 773 were responded to, although 253 are showing as not responded to on our complaints system. This does not necessarily mean that the concern was not responded to by the service area, and could be that the issue was dealt with and the Complaints Team were not updated of the action taken by the service area. Going forward, additional monitoring will be undertaken by the Complaints Team to enable greater transparency.
- The service areas that received the highest volume of complaints are shown below. However these services will always receive the highest volume of complaints due to the nature of the services and the number of residents that these services are provided to.

Missed Bin collections

Housing Repairs

Council Tax

- During 2013/14, 97% of complaints were responded to within timeframe. This is an improvement on the previous year's figure of 91%
- The average response time for LGO enquiries has increased to 21 days compared to 15 days during 2012/13. Going forward the LGO timeline will be shortened to ensure performance improves.
- Members enquiries performance has improved during 2013/14 despite an increase in volumes. During the reporting year, 2023 enquiries were received with 98% responded to within timeframe. During 2012/13, 1044 were received with 90% responded to within timeframe.

Children's Social Care (CSC):

- 62 complaints were received for children's social care in the year. This compares to 84 complaints in 2012/13 and 93 in 2011/12.
- In addition, three new stage two investigations were started during the year, and one complaint has progressed to Stage 3 review.
- The service aims to successfully resolve issues and concerns at the point they are raised and through staff members closest to the situation. This means that more matters are appropriately dealt with before they are escalated into the statutory complaints process.
- Learning from complaints is a key element of the CSC quality assurance and performance framework and feedback is considered at quarterly CSC service quality assurance forums.

Adult Social Care (ASC):

- 56 complaints were received for adult social care in the year. This compares to 74 complaints in 2012/13 and 91 in 2011/12.
- The service aims to successfully resolve issues and concerns at the point they are raised and promotes the same approach from commissioned providers. This approach means that more matters are being appropriately dealt with before they are escalated into the statutory complaints process.
- Feedback and learning from adult social care complaints has also been reported to local people and people who use services through the 2012 Adult Social Care Local Account. The service continues to engage with service users for feedback and service improvement through local forums and network groups.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note the statistics for 2013/14.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report sets out details relating to the council's complaints statistics and performance for 2013/14.

2.2 Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care have separate statutory complaints procedures, which are managed together under the same service.

2.3 For corporate complaints the council has a centralised team with dedicated responsibility for Directorates. The centralised team has generated savings for the council as part of the transformational programme due to the reduced staffing model in operation.

2.4 Volumes and performance for complaints and concerns:

2.4.1 During 2013/14, the council received 2549 corporate complaints. The table below shows complaint numbers received over the last 4 years along with the % of complaints that were due a response and processed within timeframe.

Year	Complaints received	% Responded on time
2013/14	2549	97%
2012/13	3505	91%
2011/12	2618	97%
2010/11	3187	89%

2.4.2 During 2013/14, the council received 956 fewer complaints than the previous year. However this year's report reflects a change in the complaints process with the introduction of a concerns stage for Housing for the entire reporting period. The concerns stage for other service areas was only implemented in January 2014 (quarter 4). The introduction of the concerns stage has seen 1026 concerns being received and recorded.

2.4.3 The tables below shows the most common complaints received for 2013/14 across the Directorates. Figures in brackets represent 2012/13 complaints volumes.

Directorate	Complaint Type	Number of complaints received
Children's Services	Special Education Needs	3 (6)
	Admissions	2 (6)
	Early Years	14 (3)
	Home to School Transport	8
	Pupil Referral Unit	3
Adults Health and Commissioning	Adult Social Care	56 (74)

Housing	Repairs	557 (1370)
	Estate Management	182 (223)
	Housing Solutions	80 (73)
	Private Housing & Adaptation	16 (45)
	Rents	12 (9)
	Transforming Homes	72 (53)
Serco	Council Tax	268 (286)
	Housing Benefit	101 (97)
	Contact Centre	65 (69)
	Face to face	11 (27)
Central Services	FOI and DP	10 (11)
	Finance	6
	Complaints	6
Environment	Missed Bin Collections	514 (387)
	Waste and Recycling staff	45 (31)
	Non return of bins	50 (94)
	Street Services	67 (91)
	Horticulture	16 (23)
	Community Protection	15
	Environmental Health	28
Planning & Transportation	Development Control	29 (29)
	Parking Enforcement	21 (45)
	Passenger Transport Unit	12 (21)
	Parking (schemes/restrictions)	12 (12)
	Traffic Management	17 (14)
	Potholes, footpaths and carriageway defects	30 (42)

2.4.4 **Concerns** – With effect from the 1/4/13, the council implemented an informal stage when processing all Housing Directorate complaints. This informal stage resulted in some issues being recorded as a concern as opposed to a complaint and represents an enhanced level of customer service, as the service area is tasked with contacting the individual via telephone in order to resolve the issue informally.

Leadership Group agreed that the council would adopt this process change across all service areas, as a mechanism to drive forward improvements in the way we interact with our residents, service users and customers. This change then took place from the 1/1/14

2.4.5 The process for managing concerns is captured below;

- All concerns reported are logged as a concern on the council’s complaints database within 1 working day of receipt and then sent to the relevant service area
- Upon receipt of the concern from the complaints team, the service area will determine if the concern is one for them to resolve, and if so telephone the individual who has raised the issue to confirm their understanding of the concern. If a phone number is not available then contact can be made in writing
- The service area then undertake necessary work to resolve the individuals concern and then send an update back to the complaints team within 5 calendar days
- The complaints team will undertake a single chase up on day 5. If the concern cannot be resolved at the informal stage, or if the complaints team are of the view that it is not within scope of a concern, then the concern will be recorded as a complaint. Some examples of concerns and complaints that will be recorded are shown below:
 - *I have a job booked for damp and mould treatment at my property, but have not been informed when this will be done – **Concern***
 - *I contacted the council to find out what was happening with the damp and mould treatment at my property and was informed that someone was going to call me back. It’s now over 2 weeks and I still haven’t heard anything - **Complaint***
 - *My bin has not been collected and this is not the first time its happened – **Concern***
 - *I reported my bin not being collected and I was promised that it would be collected by 2pm tomorrow. It’s now been 3 days and no collection has taken place - **Complaint***
 - *When will I get a new front door at my property, as I have been informed it’s on the council’s capital programme works – **Concern***
 - *No one has got back to me regarding when my front door will be replaced, despite me making 3 phone calls to request this information - **Complaint***

2.4.6 The table below shows service areas who have received the most concerns during 2013/14. As stated above with the exception of Housing, the concerns process did not commence until 1/1/14 for all other service areas.

Serco	Council Tax	32
	Housing Benefit	25
	Contact Centre	12
Planning & Transportation	Potholes, footpaths and carriageway defects	13
Housing	Repairs	552
	Housing Solutions	51

	Estate Management	101
Environment	Missed Collections	41

2.4.7 Based on the 1026 concerns received during 2013/14:

- 773 were responded to, although 253 remain active on the complaints system. This does not necessarily mean that the concern was not responded to by the service area, it could be that the issue was dealt with and the complaints team were not updated. Going forward more work on this will be undertaken by the Complaints Team to enable greater transparency.
- Of the 773 concerns responded to, 482 (62%) were completed within timeframe (5 calendar days).
- Of the 773 concerns responded to, the average response timeframe was 8 calendar days.

Note – During 2013/14 148 complaints had escalated from a concern.

2.4.8 Based on the above tables in 2.4.3 and 2.4.6, those service areas who have received a significant increase/decrease in complaints volumes (to that of the previous year) have been summarised below (along with taking into consideration any concerns received in year):

- Housing repair complaints – 813 fewer complaints received, although 552 concerns were recorded
- Estate Management – 41 fewer complaints recorded, although 101 concerns were recorded
- Private Housing and Adaption – 29 fewer complaints received, although 7 concerns were recorded
- Parking Enforcement – 24 fewer complaints recorded, although 6 concerns were recorded
- Street services – 24 fewer complaints recorded, although 9 concerns were recorded
- Non return of bins – 44 fewer complaints recorded, although 9 concerns were recorded
- Missed Bins - An increase of 127 complaints along with 41 concerns logged. This increase was due to the change in rounds that took place during 2013/14.
- Housing Solutions - 7 additional complaints received, along with 51 concerns received. The Housing Allocations policy was amended during 2013/14, therefore the increase in volumes would have been as a result of this new policy (due to a change in criteria applied when determining housing applications)
- Environmental Health – 28 additional complaints recorded, along with 3 concerns recorded.
- Housing Benefit – 4 additional complaints received along with 25 concerns received

2.5 Outcomes - The table below provides the % of upheld complaints across all stages. Figures in brackets represent 2012/13 statistics.

Stage	Total complaints due	Complaints upheld	% upheld
Stage 1	1731 (2485)	887 (1162)	51% (47%)
Stage 2	599 (807)	253 (338)	42% (42%)
Stage 3	170 (150)	56 (50)	33% (33%)

2.5.1 All stage 3 complaints are subject to pre-assessment by senior officers within the Complaints Team. It should be noted that of the 170 complaints received a total of 48 were cancelled on our system. A stage 3 complaint can be cancelled for two reasons:

- Following a meeting with the complainant together with the service area the matter has been concluded satisfactorily or
- Where a senior officer within the Complaints Team is of the view that the Directorate could do further work to negate a formal stage 3, the complaint is returned for further management.

2.6 Quality Checking - The Corporate Complaints Team as part of their quality checking programme checked 2267 complaints during 2013/14, and 1051 (46%) required amendments and/or were rejected due to the response not being fit for purpose.

2.7 Social Care complaints

- All social care complaints are managed under separate statutory guidance from their respective regulatory bodies and as such, are required to provide dedicated annual reports regarding the effectiveness of the process. Both children's and adults social care complaints follow separate processes from that set out for corporate services.
- Responsibility for managing adult and children's social care complaints was brought together within the same service in October 2012. This has enabled the service to strengthen the consistency of approach and quality assurance of the complaints process, whilst at the same time, streamlining resource and realising efficiencies.
- The service recognises the need to further promote best practice and sound customer care and quality assurance across the range of adults and children's social care services. This is a particular focus for both services given that care and support is undergoing unprecedented change and transformation e.g. implementing the Care Act and funding reforms. A new Complaints and Engagement Manager has been appointed for this purpose. This post will continue to develop and improve the statutory complaint processes across both services.

2.8 Children's Social Care (CSC):

- 2013/14 saw a 26% decrease in the number of complaints received for CSC with 62 complaints compared to 84 received in 2012/13.
- 8% of complaints were upheld in 2013/14 compared to 2% in 2012/13. 10% were partially upheld compared to 46% in 2012/13.
- 53% of complaints were not upheld in 2013/14 compared to 46% in 2012/13.
- 16% of complaints were withdrawn in 2013/14 compared to 14% in 2012/13.
- 34 concerns and issues were recorded and dealt with outside of the formal complaints process during this reporting period.
- 19 MP enquiries were received in 2013/14 compared to 8 in the previous year. All enquiries were responded to on time.
- Three new stage two investigations were started during the year, two of which are currently open. The third has progressed to stage three review panel.
- 62 compliments were formally recorded in 2013/14. This compares to 60 in 2012/13 and 90 in 2011/12.
- The introduction in 2011/12 of an Information Pack which is distributed to service users new to working with Children's Social Care has contributed to a further decrease in complaints received this year. The Information Packs give service users an insight into what they can expect from the teams they are working with, and what the teams expect from the service users. The packs also contain information of additional support services available to the service users.
- Overall, CSC continues to produce good quality responses to complaints. Most complaints are resolved locally within teams without the need for a formal stage 2 investigation. The very few complaints that have progressed to stage 2 have all involved a multiple of complex issues where the complainant has remained unhappy with the outcome at stage 1.
- Learning from complaints is a key element of the CSC quality assurance and performance framework and feedback is considered at quarterly CSC service quality assurance forums. Action plans are developed to address and learn from the recommendations arising from all stage two and three investigations and are monitored by the Head of Service

2.9 Adult Social Care (ASC):

- 2013/14 saw a 24% decrease in adult social care complaints received. 56 complaints were received, compared to 74 complaints in 2012/13 and 91 in 2011/12.
- 27% of complaints were upheld in 2013/14 compared to 28% in 2012/13. 32% were partially upheld compared to 16% in 2012/13.
- 18% of complaints were not upheld in 2013/14 compared to 19% in 2012/13.

- 21% of complaints were withdrawn in 2013/14 compared to 23% in 2012/13.
- 37 concerns and issues were recorded and dealt with outside of the formal complaints process in 2013/14. This compares to 33 recorded in 2012/13.
- 12 MP enquiries were received for adult social care in the year. This compares to 16 enquiries in 2012/13 and 10 in 2011/12. All enquiries were responded to on time.
- The number of compliments has increased by 20% with 201 compliments recorded in 2013/14. This compares to 160 in 2012/13 and 219 in 2011/12.
- The number of complaints recorded has again decreased for this reporting year. There could be number of contributory factors for the decrease e.g. concerns being resolved at an early stage or lack of service user awareness on making complaints. This will be reviewed together with the complaints policies and related work practice in 2014/15.
- The service remains focused on engaging service users and local network groups for feedback and participation on the effectiveness and improvement of service delivery.
- The service also has a robust process in place for monitoring quality within externally commissioned services, which account for the majority of spend in adult social care. This includes regular monitoring of complaints and complaints procedures in contract compliance visits.
- Learning and recommendations from complaints is reported to senior management on a regular basis so that learning can be disseminated and services improved.

2.10 Compliments - During 2013/14 a total of 629 compliments were received (541 external and 88 internal). This is a slight reduction to the previous year where 498 external and 133 internal compliments were received. The table below shows compliments received since 2010/11 (includes Adult Social Care and Children Social Care compliments).

Year	Compliments received
2013/14	629
2012/13	631
2011/12	765
2010/11	963

2.10.1 The table below shows external compliments per Directorate for 2013/14:

Directorate	External Compliment
Central Services	92
Serco	21
Environment	99
Planning and Transportation	27

Children's Services	29
Housing	51
Social Care (Childrens and Adults)	222

2.11 MP and Councillor Enquiries

2.11.1 **Member Enquiries** - Performance has improved during 2013/14, despite an increase in volumes. During the reporting year, there were 2023 enquiries received with 98% processed within timeframe. During 2012/13 performance was 90% with 1044 received. The table below shows member enquiries received, per Directorate for 2013/14:

Directorate	Cllr enquiries
Central Services	46
Serco	65
Environment	459
Planning and Transportation	366
Children's Services	72
Housing	1015

2.11.2 **MP Enquiries** - Performance for responding to MP enquiries has improved during 2013/14. There were 364 MP enquiries received with 98% responded to within timeframe. During 2012/13, 452 enquiries were received of which 94% were responded to within timeframe.

2.12 Learning lessons from complaints

2.12.1 The most important aspect of any complaints management framework is the ability to demonstrate that the council can show evidence that it is learning from complaints received. Appendix 1 details a sample of case studies that have been published on the Councils 'You Said We Did' website. During 2013/14 a new process has been set up by the Complaints Team in order to drive forward learning from complaints. This includes:

- The production of monthly Directorate based complaints reports which are sent to Directorate Performance Officers
- The Complaints Team (following the submission of the Directorate based monthly reports) meeting with Performance Officers/ Team Managers to analyse complaints data
- The Complaints Team will then work alongside the Performance Officers with a view to identifying root causes from complaints, and to then produce learning from complaints case studies
- The Complaints Team will log and track any agreed learning activity required from the relevant service area, as a mechanism to evidence learning from complaints

2.13 Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

2.13.1 The LGO set the Council a deadline of 28 days to respond to their first enquiries, however Thurrock have implemented a 21 day deadline in order to maintain an effective level of performance.

2.13.2 Below is Thurrock's average response time over the past 4 years, and the figures in brackets represent number of enquires that were received from the LGO investigation team.

- 2010/11 - 20.5 days (20)
- 2011/12 – 15.4 days (33)
- 2012/13 – 15 days (27)
- 2013/14 – 21 days (19)

Due to the increase in our average response time for 2013/14, the Complaints Team will bring forward its timeline to ensure our average response for 2014/15 shows an improvement.

2.13.3 All LGO complaints are managed by the Corporate Complaints Team. For those cases which were formally concluded by the LGO, the findings are as follows:

- Maladministration causing an injustice: The LGO determined 3 cases under this category; 1 for Housing Services, 1 for Childrens Services and 1 for Adult Social Care. The case for Adult Social Care resulting in a public report being issued.
- Local settlement: The LGO determined 11 cases under this category; 6 for Housing Services, 2 for Childrens Services, 2 for Serco and 1 for Adult Social Care.

As a direct result of these cases, the council issued financial compensation totalling £6,556.

2.14 Housing Ombudsman (HO)

2.14.1 On 1st April 2013 the new Housing Ombudsman Service was launched with an extended jurisdiction covering all housing associations and local housing authorities. During the reporting year there was 1 complaint received from the Housing Ombudsman. This was responded to within 15 days.

2.15 Compensation

The Corporate Complaints Team has developed a compensation model in line with Local Government Ombudsman guidelines to ensure that any monetary compensation is aligned council-wide. Whilst this is clearly identified for all Ombudsman cases, more work is required across Directorates to enable transparency and detailed analysis of all compensatory payments. The Corporate Complaints Team will lead on this work.

2.16 Benchmarking

During June, Thurrock initiated a benchmarking request from our Unitary Authority benchmarking group. These have been summarized in Appendix 2. Barking and Dagenham has been shown as a comparison.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options associated with this paper.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This report is for noting purposes. There are no recommendations requiring approval.

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

5.1 This report was sent to Performance Board and was discussed/agreed at Directors Board.

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

6.1 Complaints impact on the Councils' priority of delivering excellence and achieving value for money.

6.2 The complaints process seeks to create a culture of corporate learning from best practice from listening to our customers and by acting on complaints. All complaints received must have learning applied if the complaint outcome is upheld.

6.3 The complaints process aims to improve customers and users experience of accessing council services. This will support our customer services strategy.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance

There are no direct financial implications with this report

7.2 Legal

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

- Both the Courts and the Local Government Ombudsman expect complainants to show that they have exhausted local complaints / appeal procedures before commencing external action.
- The implementation of our learning from complaints and listening to our residents should lead to a reduction of complaints received and a reduction in those going to the Ombudsman or the Courts.
- Social Care for Adult and Children are required to follow a separate procedure stipulated by the Department of Health (DOH) and Department for Education & Skills (DFES).

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

- The Information Management Team will continue to work with the Diversity Team to provide data that can be broken down into race, gender and disability themes in order to address any inequalities in relation to service delivery. This initiative will also support our aim to reach of using complaints data as a service improvement tool.

7.4 Other implications

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

- None – Information has been obtained from the complaints system

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Sample case studies
- Appendix 2 - Benchmarking

Report Author:

Lee Henley
 Information Manager
 Complaints and Information Governance

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LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS 2013/14

Planning Services – case study**What you said (complainant)**

Ms X submitted a planning application the content of which was subject to objection by a neighbour. When the neighbour provided a letter of objection this was uploaded on the council webpage and caused distress to the complainant because the letter contained information which was deemed to be inflammatory.

What we did

The complaint was subject to an independent investigation at the final stage of the council's complaints procedure, this was the third time that an incident such as this had happened to the same complainant.

The investigation found that despite revised processes and procedures having been introduced by the administrative support services assisting the Planning Team, there was a lack of a consistent approach in determining when and what to redact in letters of objections. The investigation concluded that there would be no guarantee that the error would not happen again. This matter was discussed with the Head of Planning and the Team Manager where it was agreed that a redefined process would be introduced which would ensure that **any** letters which contained inflammatory content would not be uploaded onto the council webpage. Statements that discriminate on grounds of religion, sexuality or disability will also not be published. The web page will also be updated to include that this approach will be taken will all future planning objections.

How we expect our service to get better

This approach will ensure that the council applies consistency when dealing with all planning objection related matters. This will also reassure residents that they can submit planning applications without concern that any objections do not cause them any further undue distress.

Environment – case study

What you said (complainant)

Mr D complained about continued non collection of refuse from his property. He states that the service provided by the council is sub-standard and that despite continued calls to Thurrock Council he does not receive a return telephone call advising him how the matter will be addressed.

What we did

An investigation into the concerns was undertaken. The service reported that they did experience difficulties when accessing this particular property due to a long standing problem with the dirt track which leads into the location. The service requested that checks be made with Land Registry to determine ownership of the land/track which is currently an unmade track.

There is no access for collection to the front of the properties and the only access is via the rear which is where the residents leave their bins. Additionally, this locality is where all of the garages are and is the only place where cars can be left. The poor weather conditions at the time only served to make the bin collections worse and they were subsequently missed. The condition of the track continued to deteriorate so the service had to make alternative collection arrangements which they subsequently did and informed all residents.

How we expect our service to get better

As a result of the complaint interim arrangements have been put into place to ensure that normal service resumes for bin collections. There have been no further complaints from this resident or other residents in the locality.

Housing Options – case study

What you said (complainant)

Ms H visited Thurrock Council with her elderly vulnerable relative who had been sleeping rough in another borough and was seeking the services of Homelessness in order to consider whether she could be rehoused in Thurrock so that she could be nearer to her relatives.

Ms H stated that not only was her case discussed in an open environment initially, but that she was not treated in the correct way and her experience made her feel that her concerns were of no relevance and that her case was dismissed by the council and that Ms H's relative was told to go back to the borough in which she had a property.

What we did

The initial complaint response did apologise for the fact that the initial meeting was not managed as well as it could have been and an apology was extended to Ms H in this regard.

An investigation undertaken by the Corporate Complaints Team resulted in more detailed information being provided regarding the case, this information should have been sought by the Homeless Team at the point of assessing the case. Whilst at the time of the assessment, Ms H's relative was not homeless and therefore the team were following process, it was nevertheless evident that she was a vulnerable adult and there were justifiable reasons why she could not return to the property in another borough. The case was then transferred for a joint assessment with social care and another housing officer, this resulted in Ms H's relative being offered accommodation within Thurrock.

Thurrock Council Housing Policy gives consideration to 'local connection' for grandparents, but does not give consideration to 'grandchildren.' It was the grandchildren who were concerned regarding their grandmother.

As a result of the investigation, it is recommended that triage guidelines are designed to assist in determining the acuity of a client's needs and the proper action to take when considering cases. The goal of a triage service is to ensure that reasonable and responsible level of care regarding a client's presenting problem is accessible to all clients. The guidelines should include priority levels and this will enable a consistent approach and determination of all cases.

Additionally the policy needs to be changed to ensure that grandchildren are included in the 'local connection' section.

How we expect our service to get better

A clear consistent approach in determining cases will ensure that equality and consistency is applied at all times and that users' experience of this service is much more improved.

Council Tax – case study

What you said (complainant)

Mr D complained regarding his revised council tax bill. He stated that he visited Thurrock Council and spoke with an officer regarding the revised bill and the associated payments and that these would be spread over 5 months which would make the bill more manageable. He later discovered that this did not happen and that in fact Thurrock Council took the full amount due in one payment. Mr D was very unhappy about this as he had been financially inconvenienced as a result.

What we did

The department looked into the sequence of events which took place and informed Mr D that due to the fact that the direct debit mandate had not been processed within the timeframe of 14 days, this resulted in the full amount being taken from Mr D's bank account. An apology was extended for this oversight but the complainant remained dissatisfied and a review undertaken by the Corporate Complaints Team concluded that for this particular case, Mr D should receive a goodwill gesture payment for the inconvenience he had been caused.

How we expect our service to get better

The Corporate Complaints Team have issued an instruction to the department to ensure that mandates are processed in sufficient time thereby ensuring that residents are not further inconvenienced as a result. This will ensure that there are no repeated complaints of this nature.

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Benchmarking Analysis

Appendix 2

Council	Complaints Volumes	Performance across all stages	Timeframes w/d= working days c/d = calendar days	Top 3 complaint areas	Member Enquiries volumes	Performance of members enquiries within timeframe	Timeframes for members enquiries w/d= working days c/d = calendar days
Thurrock	2549	97%	Stage 1 – 14 c/d Stage 2 – 28 c/d Stage 3 – 28 c/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing repairs • Missed bins • Council tax 	2023	98%	14 c/d
North Kesteven	65	82%	15 w/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Decisions • Council Tax • Recovery Action • Housing 	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
High Peak Borough Council	402	88%	S1 – 10 w/d S2 – 20 w/d S3 – 10 w/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste and Recycling • Council Tax • Housing 	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
North East Derbyshire	113	74%	10 w/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscene • Revs & Bens • Planning 	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
East Riding	2075	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 - 98% • Stage 2 – Not provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1 – 10w/d • Stage 2 – Not provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse & Street Cleansing • Grounds Maintenance • Waste Disposal & Recycling 	Not recorded	Not recorded	Not recorded
Cornwall Council	2331	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step 1 – 86.8% • Step 2 – 76.9% 	Step 1 – 10 working days Step 2 – 20 working days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Tax • Call answering • Planning applications 	Not held centrally	Information not held centrally	No corporate standard for responding to members

Benchmarking Analysis

Appendix 2

			LGO – 28 working days				enquiries (although these tend to be given priority)
South Gloucestershire Council No housing stock and only 2 stages.	117	79%	Stage 1 = 10 working days or 20 working days with an agreed extension Stage 2 = 28 working days or 60 working days with an agreed extension	1 – Inadequate / unsatisfactory services 2 – Failure to follow policies and procedure 3 – Discourteous / unhelpful staff	N/A	N/A	N/A
City of Lincoln Council	418	No longer set a target (it used to be 15 days)	Average of 7.1 days to respond		Just starting to collect formally - no data available yet		5 working days
Barking and Dagenham	3208	86%	Stage 1 – 10 w/d Stage 2 – 20 w/d Stage 3 – 20 w/d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed Bins • Parking • Housing Repairs 	4016	93%	10 w/d

10 July 2014		ITEM: 8
Standards and Audit Committee		
2013/14 Access to Records Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non key	
Report of: Lee Henley – Information Manager		
Accountable Head of Service: Jackie Hinchliffe – Head of HR, OD & Customer Strategy		
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant – Chief Executive		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

- During 2013/14, the council processed 98% of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the legal timeframe.
- Despite an increase in requests received this year, the council have implemented processes in order to reduce the volume of requests that are logged and processed as FOI requests. 266 requests were diverted away and processed as routine enquiries by services areas.
- Based on data captured within the FOI database, it has been estimated that the average FOI request takes 3.5 hours to process.
- The council challenge and/or refuse requests when it is believed that the requestor has used a false name, where we have reasonable grounds to believe the applicant is acting as part of a campaign or in consort with others, or where their questions do not meet the other validity requirements for FOI.
- The council refuse requests where it is estimated that the time taken to process the request exceeds 18 hours. This was a policy change during 2012. During 2013/14, 39 requests were refused due to the 18 hour threshold.
- During 2013/14 the council received 29 Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection legislation. 90% of these requests were processed within timeframe.
- The Information Governance Team is continuing to ensure an increased amount of data is identified for routine publication online. This work forms part of the Transparency Agenda and aims to increase openness and accountability; whilst reducing unnecessary processing of FOI requests.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note the performance and statistics for 2013/14 for both FOI and Data Protection.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Freedom of Information

2.1.1 FOI affects up to 100,000 public sector bodies and organisations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including central and local government, the police, NHS, schools, dentists, opticians and pharmacists. Anyone, from anywhere in the world, may make a request for information that is held by the council (they can be a person, business, or organisation). FOI requestors do not have to give reasons for seeking the information, and the council cannot make enquiries as to why information is being sought.

2.1.2 From 1 January 2005 the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000 was fully implemented. This resulted in access to recorded information held by the council being made available, allowing anyone to submit a written request to see information about almost anything that is recorded.

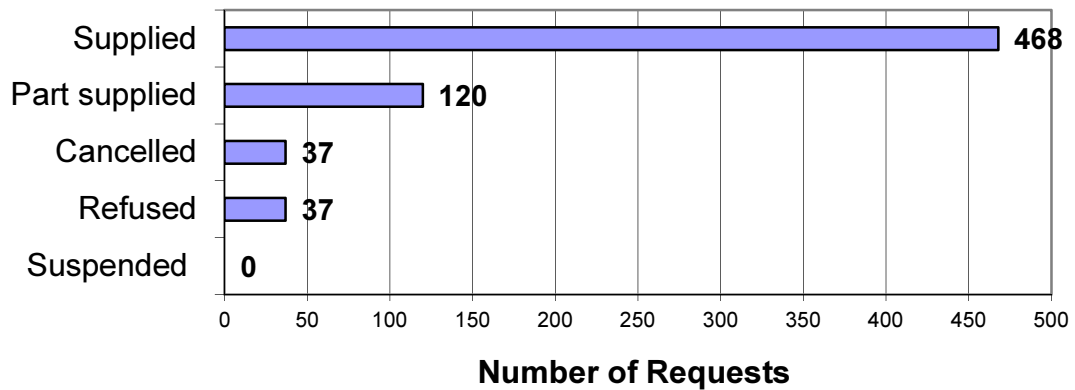
2.1.3 On receipt of an FOI Request the council have 20 working days to process the request.

2.1.4 During 2013/14, 662 FOI requests were recorded on the council's FOI tracking system. The table below details year-on-year volume and performance data since the introduction of the FOI legislation:

Year	Number of Requests	% responded to in time
2004/2005	53	98%
2005/2006	275	99%
2006/2007	252	98%
2007/2008	225	97%
2008/2009	366	96%
2009/2010	512	99%
2010/2011	547	99%
2011/2012	599	97%
2012/2013	495	93% (would have been 98% if we exclude mailbox error)
2013/2014	662	98%

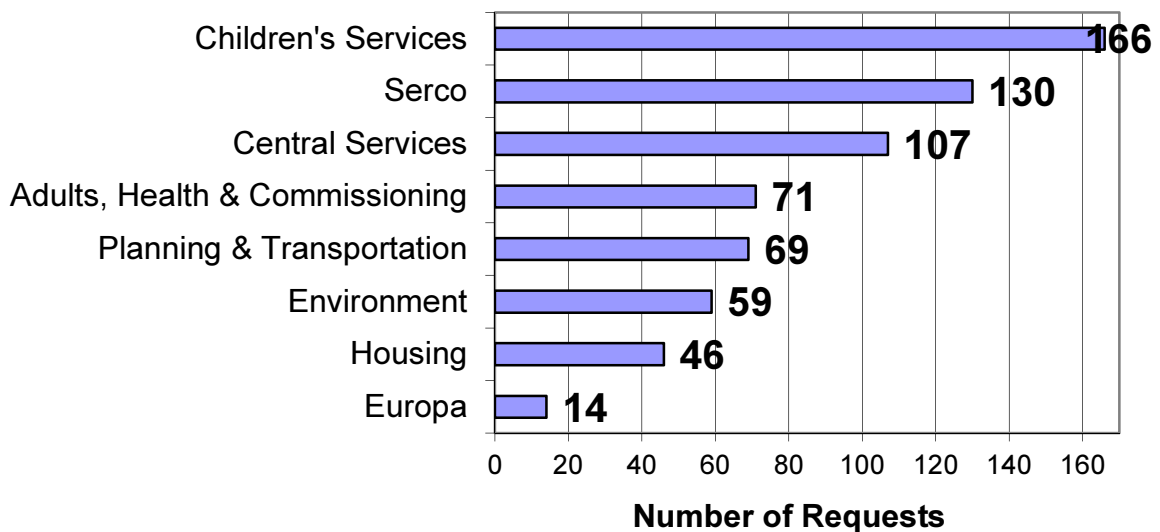
2.1.5 Of the 662 received, 14 were not answered within 20 working days. The chart below shows that of the 662 FOI requests received in 2013/14, 468 (71%) were supplied with all information requested, 37 (5%) were refused, 120 (18%) were part supplied, 37 (5%) were cancelled.

FOI Status



- 2.1.6 The average number of days taken to answer a Freedom of Information request for 2013/2014 was 14 working days. During 2012/13 the average time taken was 17 working days.
- 2.1.7 Based on 662 requests processed within 2013/14, it has been estimated that the average FOI request takes 3.5 hours to process.
- 2.1.8 The chart below shows requests received per Directorate.

Breakdown of requests per Directorate

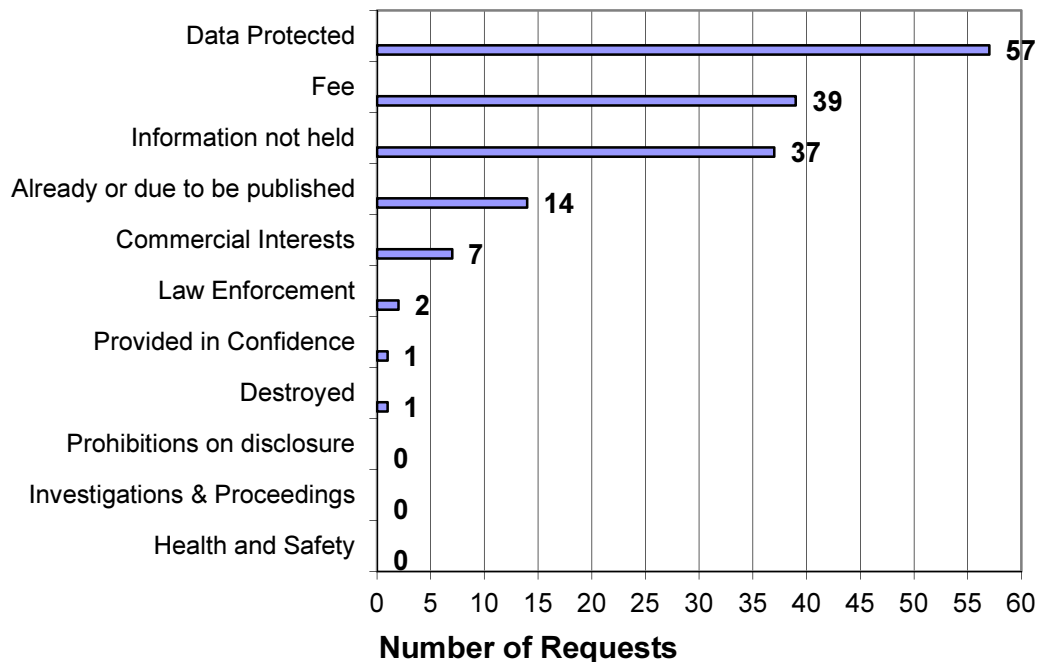


- 2.1.9 The top 5 FOI themes received during 2013/14 were:
 - Spare Room Subsidy (Bedroom Tax) / Under Occupancy
 - Procurement / Contract Information
 - Agency Cost / Zero Hour contracts
 - Looked After Children / leaving care placements
 - Free School Meals

2.1.10 The chart below shows the type of exemptions and refusals that were relied upon (based on a total of 157 requests that were part supplied or refused).

Some of the exemptions allow the council to withhold information where disclosure would cause significant prejudice to the council's business at a particular time, and which is therefore not in the public interest to release. Please note the chart below does not add up to 157, as more than one exemption can be relied upon per request.

Types of Exemption/Refusal



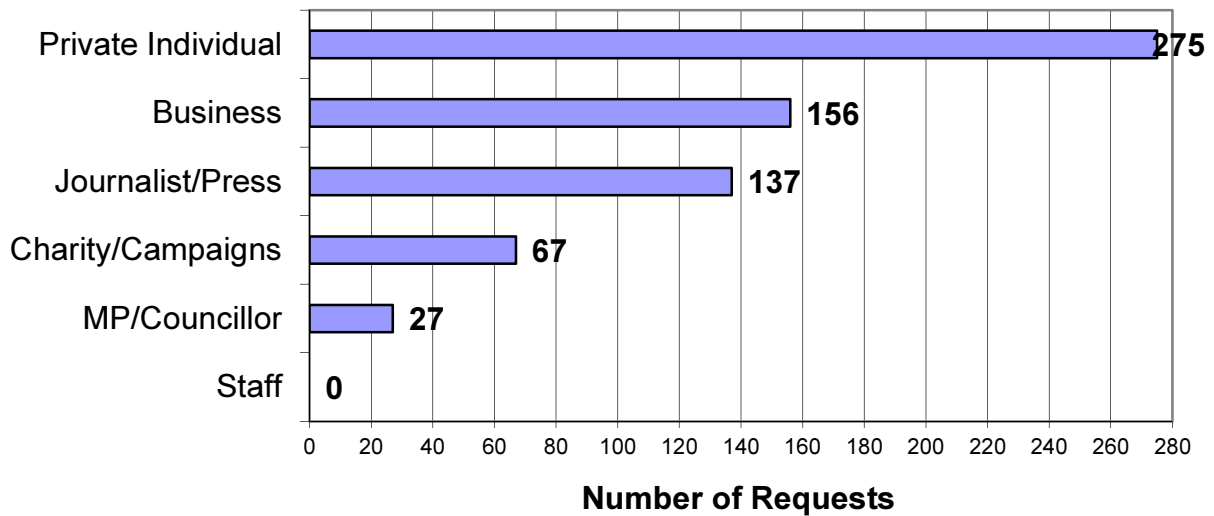
2.1.11 The Information Management Team maintains responsibility for making decisions on the application of Exemptions (to withhold information) under the Act. These are recorded and evidenced to support the approach taken, and to demonstrate how the Public Interest Test has been applied for Qualified Exemptions. This part of the process is vital to prevent and respond to complaints about FOI responses where data has been withheld, either partially or in full.

2.1.12 The Information Management Team monitor and respond to complaints received regarding FOI responses. During 2013/2014 there were 2 FOI complaints that were escalated to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). A summary of these complaints is detailed below:

- The council originally withheld information in relation to a FOI request, however following a complaint to the ICO this information was released due to the passage of time. This request also contained police data.
- The council had refused to provide information in response to a FOI follow up enquiry. This information was then released to the requestor.

2.1.13 The chart below identifies where FOI requests to the council originated from.

Who FOI requests were made by



- 2.1.14 The council refuse requests where it is estimated that the time taken to process the request exceeds 18 hours. The first task our FOI co-ordinators undertake when requests are formally logged is to work with service areas to assess how long a request is likely to take. Any requests estimated to take in excess of 18 hours will be refused. Estimates must be justified and records kept supporting our decisions. During 2013/14, 39 requests were refused due to the 18 hour threshold.
- 2.1.15 If the council receives two or more related requests within a period of 60 consecutive working days (on the same/similar topic), from a person or different persons who appear to be acting in concert or in pursuance of a campaign, the costs of complying with the individual requests will be aggregated (for the purpose of refusing).
- 2.1.16 The Information Management Team aim to routinely populate completed FOI requests onto the council's website, so that requestors asking for the same information can be directed to the website to obtain the information (as opposed to being logged as another FOI request). There has been a backlog on this as a result of competing priorities and due to a new system being launched as part of the corporate website launch. This work is being picked up during 2014/15 and requests are now being published on our website.
- 2.1.17 The Information Governance Team continues to implement processes to reduce the volume of FOI requests that are recorded and processed. This includes processing (where possible) requests as routine enquiries and/or diverting requestors to our website where information may be generally available or available as part of a previous FOI response. During 2013/14, 266 requests were diverted away from FOI.
- 2.1.18 A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken to compare performance and data on FOI with other Councils. The results of this are shown in Appendix 1 and a summary is provided below:

- Replies were received from 12 councils' (the request was sent to approximately 90 Councils/organisations in scope for FOI).
- Performance is strong for the majority of Councils who responded.
- That all councils' have received an increase in requests received compared to 2012/13

2.2 Data Protection

2.2.1 Principle 6 of the Data Protection Act states that personal information must be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects. This can result in anybody making a request to the council about any information we hold on them and these are referred as Subject Access Requests (SAR). Requests range from very specific records (such as Council Tax, Benefits claim history or complex social care records) to a wide range of records (such as all information held by the Council).

2.2.2 When the SAR process is utilised, the council have 40 calendar days in which to complete the request. The timeframe is met at the point at which we have prepared all files for disclosure and have invited the applicant in to collect their records from the council.

2.2.3 During 2013/14, the council received 29 requests where the fee was paid and the full SAR process implemented. Of the 29 requests, 90% of requests were processed within the statutory timeframe.

2.2.4 During 2013/14 the council received 4 Data Protection complaints from the ICO, however only one related to a SAR. A summary of the 4 data protection complaints is shown below:

- In three cases, the council had disclosed personal information to a third party in error. In all three cases, sensitive information was not disclosed in error.
- One case, related to delays in processing an individual's subject access request

Due to the council's good record regarding data protection, no further action was taken by the ICO in all cases reported.

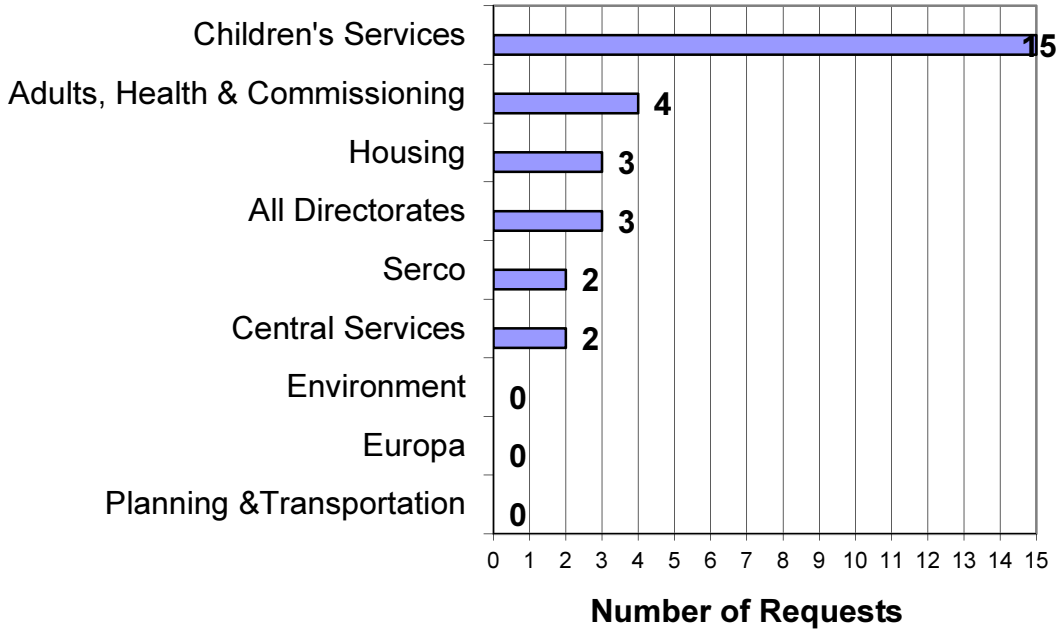
2.2.5 The table below shows volumes of requests and performance over a 4 year period. The ICO have also confirmed that in the future they are going to be implementing formal monitoring of council's response rates on data protection in terms of timeframes (at the moment this is only checked if complaints are made).

Year	Number of Requests	% responded to in time
2010/2011	32	97%
2011/2012	51	55%

2012/2013	25	80%
2013/2014	29	90%

2.2.6 The chart below shows where the data was owned (i.e. those departments holding data on the applicant) for the 29 requests. This shows that Children’s Services received the most requests for 2013/14.

Subject Access Requests – Data Owners



3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options associated with this paper.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 This report is for noting purposes. There are no recommendations requiring approval

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

5.1 This report was sent to Performance Board and was discussed and agreed at Directors Board.

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

6.1.1 The council has an effective system and process in place for managing both FOI and Data Protection requests. Procedures are regularly reviewed in order to improve performance.

6.1.2 The council’s ability to comply and process FOI and Data Protection requests within the requirements of the respective legislation demonstrates our

commitment to openness and accountability. This will allow residents and customers to have a confidence in what we do and will help build trusting relationships.

6.1.3 Access to information can also be closely linked to our Customer Services and ICT Strategies.

6.1.4 Processing of FOI and Data Protection requests can identify where service improvements can be made, such as improving records management processes.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: Sean Clark
Head of Corporate Finance

- The council can charge £10 to process a SAR under the Data Protection Act.
- Financial penalties for Data Protection breaches have increased to up to £500K and the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) have been given more powers to check for compliance.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: David Lawson
Deputy Head of Legal Services

- FOI failure could result in regulatory intervention as the ICO are now starting to target poor performing councils for FOI which will lead to reputational damage.
- There are various avenues available to the Information Commissioner's Office to address an organisation's shortcomings in relation to the collection, use and storage of personal information. These avenues can include criminal prosecution, non-criminal enforcement and audit. The Information Commissioner also has the power to serve a monetary penalty notice on a data controller.
- The council must also comply with the Code of Practice issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The Information Commissioner may issue practice recommendations to an authority considered to be non-compliant with the Code specifying the steps that should be taken to ensure conformity. Failure to comply with such a recommendation could lead to an adverse report to Parliament in relation to the authority, by the Information Commissioner.

- The council must also be mindful of its duties under the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and any other record-keeping or archives legislation.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

- There are significant diversity issues for the whole community regarding FOI and Data Protection. The successful implementation of FOI and Data Protection allows our customers, stakeholders, partners and the public to access and receive information.

7.4 Other implications

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

- None – Information has been obtained from the FOI and Data Protection system

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 - Benchmarking

Report Author:

Lee Henley
Information Manager
Information Management Department

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Appendix 1 -Freedom of Information Benchmarking results 2014

Council	Number of FOI requests 2013/14	Number of FOI requests 2012/13	% that were replied to within 20 working days for 2013/14	Average number of days taken to answer requests	The majority of the request come from	Most popular subjects asked for				
						1	2	3	4	5
Cambridge City Council	689	511	92%	13.4	Businesses	Business Rates	Discretionary Housing Payments	Bedroom Tax	Public Health Funerals / intestate	Licensing
Merton Council	1712	1384	88%	Not Known	General Public	Business Rates	Parking	Agency Workers	School suspensions/ exclusions	Free school meals
Redford	1475	1159	99%	13	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known
Chenwood Borough Council	609	408	98%	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known
Portsmouth County Council	1059	763	79%	23	General Public	Finance	Tendering / Contracts	Adults & Childrens Social Care	Local Issues / Interests	Education - violent incidents
Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council	515		99%	Not Known	General Public	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known	Not Known
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council	759	593	96%	Not Known	Businesses	CON 29	NNDR	Public Health Funerals / intestate	Tendering / Contracts	Bedroom Tax
Havant Borough Council	581	500	98%	Not Known		NNDR	Parking	Planning	Public Health Funerals / intestate	Benefits

East Hants District Council	450	390	96%	Not Known		NNDR	Parking	Planning	Public Health Funerals / intestate	Benefits
Barrow Borough Council	556	519	100%	6.2	Businesses	NNDR	Public Health Funerals / intestate deaths	Spending	Planning	Tendering / Contracts
Eastbourne Borough Council	606	440	96%	5.5	General Public	Business Rates	Financial Issues	Housing	Benefits	HR
Southampton City Council	1325	931	98%	11.5	General Public	Business Rates	Schools	Tendering / Contracts	Public Health Funerals / intestate	Empty Homes register
Thurrock Council	662	495	98%	14 days	General Public	Bedroom Tax	looked after children	Agency Costs	Procurement / Contract Information	Free school meals

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10 July 2014	ITEM: 9
Standards and Audit Committee	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 – Quarterly Activity Report	
Wards and communities affected: n/a	Key Decision: n/a
Report of: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Head of Service: Fiona Taylor, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the usage and activity of RIPA requests during January 2014 to March 2014.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 To note the statistical information relating to the use of RIPA from January 2014 to March 2014.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, legislates for the use of local authorities of covert methods of surveillance and information gathering to assist in the detection and prevention of crime in relation to an authority's core functions.

2.2 The council's use of these powers is subject to regular inspection and audit by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) in respect of covert surveillance authorisations under RIPA, and the Interception of Communications Commissioner (IOCCO) in respect of communications data. During these inspections, authorisations and procedures are closely examined and Authorising Officers are interviewed by the inspectors.

2.3 The RIPA Co-ordinating Officer maintains a RIPA register of all RIPA requests and approvals across the council.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The total number of RIPA authorisations since the last report is 2. Below is a breakdown showing the areas the authorisations relate to:

Trading Standards	0
Fraud	2
Regulatory	0
Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS authorisations)	0

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the usage and activity of RIPA requests for directed surveillance and/or CHIS during the respective quarter being January 2014 – March 2014.

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

- 5.1 The RIPA Co-ordinating Officer has been in contact with the relevant departments to obtain the data set out in this report.

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

- 6.1 Monitoring compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, and the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, supports the council's approach to corporate governance. Ensuring the appropriate use of RIPA in taking action to tackle crime and disorder supports the corporate priority of ensuring a safe, clean and green environment.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Mike Jones**
Management Accountant

There are no financial implications directly related to this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Daniel Toohey**
Principal Solicitor

Legal implications comments are contained within this report above.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

There are no such implications directly related to this report.

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

Compliance with the requirements of RIPA legislation will ensure the proper balance of maintaining order against protecting the rights of constituents within the borough. There are no implications other than contained in this report.

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

- None.

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None.

Report Author:

Lee Henley
Information Manager
Chief Executive's Office

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10 July 2014	ITEM: 10
Standards & Audit Committee	
Internal Audit Annual Report – Year Ended 31 March 2014	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Chris Harris – Head of Internal Audit	
Accountable Head of Service: Sean Clark – Head of Corporate Finance	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant – Chief Executive	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

As the provider of the internal audit service to Thurrock Council, Baker Tilly are required to provide the Section 151 Officer and the Standards & Audit Committee with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving our opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes.

As your internal audit provider, the audit opinions that Baker Tilly provides the organisation during the year are part of the framework of assurances that assist the Council prepare an informed annual governance statement.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 **That the Standards & Audit Committee receives and notes the Internal Audit Annual Report – Year ended 31st March 2014.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The role of internal audit is to provide management with an objective assessment of the adequacy and effectiveness of internal control, risk management and governance arrangements. Internal audit is therefore a key part of Thurrock Council's internal control system and integral to the framework of assurance that the Standards & Audit Committee can place reliance on to assess its internal control system.

- 2.2 Under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 the Council is responsible for undertaking an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control. This responsibility has been delegated to the Head of Corporate Finance (Section 151 Officer) under the Council's Executive Scheme of Delegation and is delivered through the Head of Audit in consultation with the Head of Corporate Finance.
- 2.3 In April 2013, a revised standard for Public Sector internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) came into effect, compliance against which is seen as fundamental to demonstrating the adequacy and effectiveness of internal audit, in order to meet statutory requirements as set out in the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2011. The procedures and practices that Internal Audit operates at Thurrock are designed to reflect adherence to these standards.
- 2.4 The provision of assurance services is the primary role for internal audit in the UK public sector. This role requires the Head of Audit to provide an annual internal audit opinion based on an objective assessment of the framework of governance, risk management and control. Consulting services are advisory in nature and are generally performed at the specific request of the organisation, with the aim of improving governance, risk management and control and contributing to the overall opinion.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 During the year, internal audit have finalised and issued a total of 42 assurance reports. A further 2 reports (Housing Benefits and Payroll) are at draft stage as the work started late at the request of the client, to allow new processes to become more embedded. We have also issued 1 advisory report on Key performance Indicators and carried out advisory work around the National Fraud Initiative.
- 3.2 There was an increase in the percentage of reports issued with a positive (Green, Amber/Green or Amber/Red) assurance opinion. There was also a reduction in the percentage of reports issued with a negative (Red) assurance opinion. Only 1 final report was issued with a Red opinion which was the Housing Capital Programme (Kitchens & Bathrooms) review.
- 3.3 It should be noted that following the decision that risk management become a shared service with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, and the consequent service review and revision of the Risk & Opportunity Management policy, strategy and framework, we were unable to review the processes so have been unable to provide an overall opinion for risk management. It has been agreed with the Head of Insurance & Risk Management that a full review will be undertaken in 2014/15. We have assessed that there has been no significant change from last year for Governance which remains Green. However, the upward direction of travel in the percentage of positive reports has changed our opinion for Control from Amber to Green.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The Internal Audit Annual Report – Year ended 31st March 2014 is presented for the Standards & Audit Committee to note and supports the Annual Governance Statement.

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

- 5.1 The Internal Audit Annual Report – Year ended 31st March 2014 provides an independent opinion on the Council's governance, risk management and internal control processes. There is no consultation as it is based on work completed during the year which is widely reported to officers and members.

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

- 6.1 The achievement of corporate priorities is a key consideration of the Corporate Directors, senior management and internal audit when they are planning the years' work. A positive opinion in the Internal Audit Annual Report provides an independent assurance that the Authority has adequate control and risk management processes in place.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Michael Jones**
01375 652772
mxjones@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
01375 652087
David.lawson@bdtlegal.org.uk

The Council has a legal obligation under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 to undertake an adequate and effective internal audit of its accounting records and of its system of internal control in accordance with the proper practices in relation to internal control. The Council has delegated responsibility for ensuring this is taking place to the Standards & Audit Committee. In receiving and considering this report, the Council is complying with its obligations under the Regulations. There are no adverse legal implications relating to the reporting progress.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Teresa Evans**
01375 652186
tevens@thurrock.gov.uk

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report.

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

In terms of risk and opportunity management, the Internal Audit Annual Report and its outcomes are a key part of the Council's risk management and assurance framework.

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):

- Internal Audit Reports issued in 2013/14.

9. Appendices to the report

- Internal Audit Annual Report – Year ended 31st March 2014.

Report Author:

Gary Clifford

Internal Audit Manager

Baker Tilly – provider of Internal Audit Services to Thurrock Council

Thurrock Council

Internal Audit Annual Report – Year ended 31 March
2014

Presented at the Standards & Audit Committee
meeting of: 10th July 2014

Chris Harris

Baker Tilly Risk Advisory Services LLP



1 Internal Audit Opinion



1.1 Context

As the provider of the internal audit service to Thurrock Council we are required to provide the Section 151 Officer and the Standards & Audit Committee with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving our opinion it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in risk management, governance and control processes.

As your internal audit provider, the audit opinions that Baker Tilly Risk Advisory Services LLP (Baker Tilly) provides the organisation during the year are part of the framework of assurances that assist the Council prepare an informed annual governance statement.

1.2 Internal Audit Opinion 2013/2014

<p>We are satisfied that sufficient internal audit work has been undertaken to allow us to draw a reasonable conclusion on the adequacy and effectiveness of Thurrock Council's arrangements. However, it should be noted that following the decision that risk management become a shared service with the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, and the consequent service review and revision of the Risk & Opportunity Management policy, strategy and framework, we have been unable to provide an overall opinion for risk management.</p> <p>For the 12 months ended 31 March 2014, based on the work we have undertaken, our opinion regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of Thurrock Council's arrangements for governance and control is as follows:</p>		
	Red Amber Green	Direction of travel
<p>Governance</p> <p>During 2013/14 we conducted a review of the Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality for senior officers and members and provided a substantial assurance (Green) opinion. We have also looked at the governance arrangements in specific areas of the Council's operations and where we have identified issues, the Council has reacted swiftly to address them. These decisions were made with the full involvement of both officers and members. This shows that governance continues to be robust. Therefore, our overall opinion on Governance remains as Green.</p>		
<p>Risk Management</p> <p>We did not undertake a review of risk management during 2013/14 as the Risk and Opportunity Management (ROM) Framework and Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register were reviewed due to the decision to have a shared services arrangement for risk management with the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham from August 2013. The Council carried out an annual self-assessment against the CIPFA/SOLACE Risk Management Benchmarking Model where they identified that there had been improvements from the previous year. This was reported to the Standards & Audit Committee on 28th November 2013. A new revised ROM policy, strategy and framework were presented to the Standards & Audit Committee in February 2014. Whilst we appreciate a fundamental review was required following the move to shared service arrangements, and nothing has been brought to our attention to suggest the Council needs to be concerned around the risk management environment, the circumstances mean we are unable to provide an overall opinion. It has been agreed with the Head of Insurance & Risk Management that a full review will be undertaken in 2014/15.</p>	<p>No opinion provided</p>	

<p>Control</p> <p>Positive assurance opinions were provided in 41 of the 42 assurance reports issued in 2013/14 (excluding the advisory review). This represents an improvement on 2012/13 where 38 of the 42 reports issued were given a positive opinion. Therefore, the direction of travel is upward and as a result, our overall opinion on Control moves from Amber to Green.</p>		
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Note: The direction of travel arrow indicates whether the change in our opinion related to the previous year is upward (improving), downward (adverse) or static.

1.3 The Basis of the Opinion

1.3.1 Governance

During 2013/14 we conducted a review of the Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality for senior officers and members and provided a substantial assurance (Green) opinion. We have also looked at the governance arrangements in specific areas of the Council's operations and where we have identified issues, the Council has reacted swiftly to address them e.g. the report issued on Capital Programme (Kitchens and Bathrooms) which received a no assurance (Red) opinion assisted in a decision being made to remove the contractor, bring the team back in house and strengthen the governance arrangements. The Council has continued to face challenges to meet the savings it is required to make. It has looked at options to improve services and reduce costs through partnership working with other local authorities and through contractual arrangements with its strategic partner (Serco) and other partners. These decisions were made with the full involvement of both officers and members and showed that governance continues to be robust.

1.3.2 Control

During the year, we issued a total of 42 assurance reports as final. We have also issued 2 reports in draft on Housing Benefits and Payroll which commenced late in the year at the clients request. We have provided positive opinions for these 2 reports which will not impact on our overall opinion. These will be reported as part of our Internal Audit Annual Report for the year ended 31st March 2015. In addition, we issued an advisory report on key performance indicators.

The chart at 1.3.4 shows that there was an increase in the percentage of final reports issued with a positive assurance opinion. It also highlights that there was an increase in the percentage of reports issued with a green or amber/green assurance opinion. One final report was issued with a red assurance opinion, compared to four in 2012/13. This was the Housing Capital Programme (Kitchens and Bathrooms) which was presented to the Standards & Audit Committee on 28th November 2013 by the Head of Housing, Investment and Development.

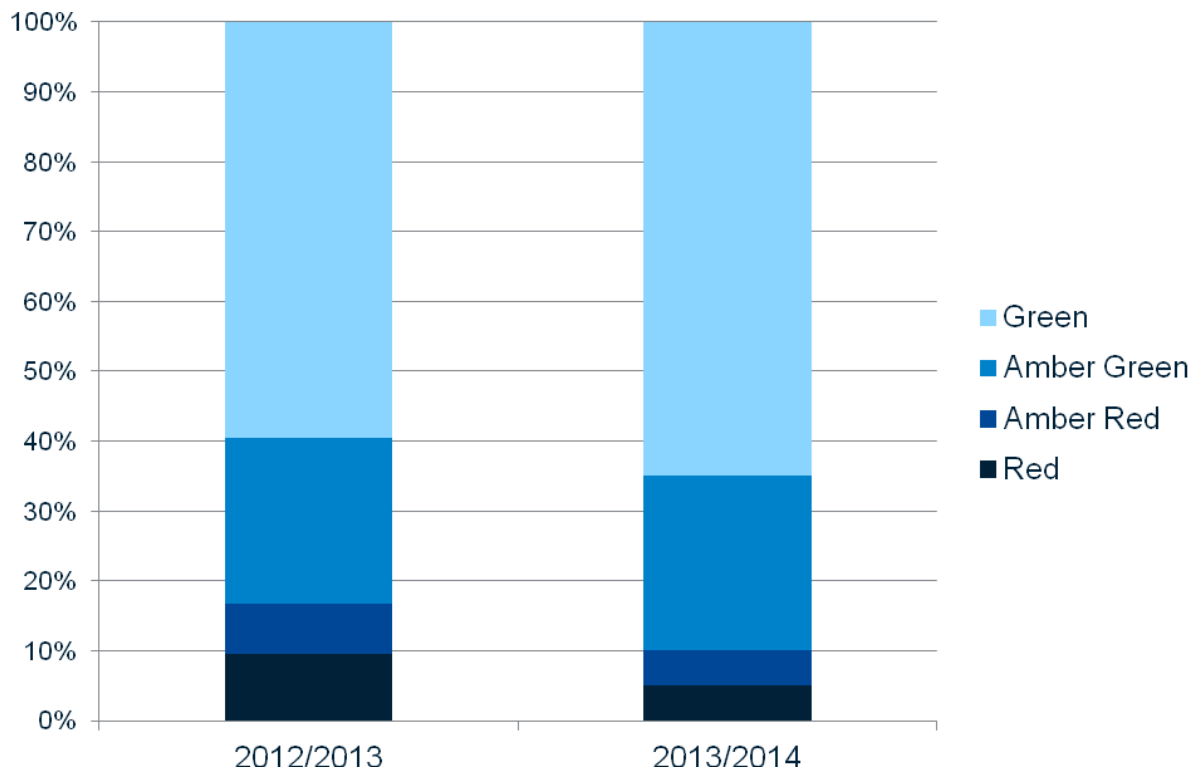
The chart at 1.3.5 shows that the percentage of high recommendations has reduced, with a slight increase in the percentage of medium level recommendations issued. The percentage of low recommendations was virtually unchanged.

The chart at 1.3.6 shows that the implementation of high and medium recommendations was 83%. It was noted that the majority of the low recommendations that had not been implemented related to schools (11 of the 13) and these will be picked up as part of the next cyclical visit to the school.

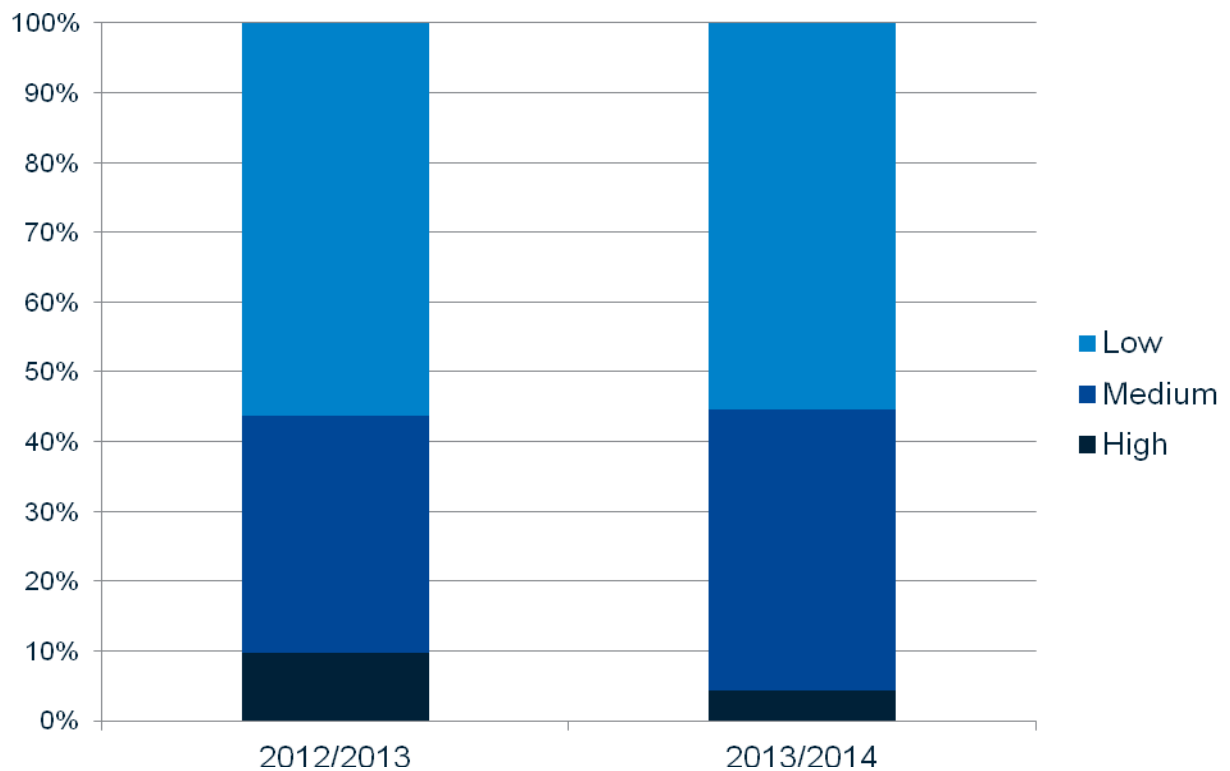
1.3.3 Acceptance of Recommendations

All of the recommendations made during the year were accepted by management.

1.3.4 Comparison of Internal Audit Opinions (Assurance assignments) in 2013/2014 compared with 2012/2013



1.3.5 Comparison of Internal Audit recommendations made 2013/2014 compared with 2012/2013



1.3.6 Progress made with previous internal audit recommendations

Our follow up of the recommendations, including those that were outstanding from previous years, showed that the organisation has made adequate progress in implementing the agreed recommendations, as summarised below:

Recommendation Priority	Number checked in the period	Of which:	
		Addressed	Not implemented or still in progress
High	11	11	0
Medium	31	24	7
Low	69	56	13
Totals	111	91	20

1.3.7 Reliance Placed Upon Work of Other Assurance Providers

In forming our opinion we have not placed any direct reliance on other assurance providers.

2 Our Performance

2.1 Wider value-adding delivery

As part of our client service commitment, during 2013 we issued 12 local government client updates and 3 general briefings. In addition, Baker Tilly provided Thurrock Council with assistance in reviewing its case management around a specific fraud investigation, carried out advisory work around the National Fraud Initiative and provided advice and guidance to the Procurement Systems Design Group.

2.2 Conformance with Internal Audit Standards

Baker Tilly affirms that our internal audit services to Thurrock Council are designed to conform with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) which came in to effect from 1 April 2013.

Under the standards, internal audit services are required to have an external quality assessment at least once every five years. During 2011 our Risk Advisory service line commissioned an external independent review of our internal audit services to provide assurance whether our approach meets the requirements set out in the International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF) published by the Global Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA). The PSIAS are based upon the IPPF, and therefore we are confident that the results of this review apply to our continuing services in the sector.

The external review concluded that *“the design and implementation of systems for the delivery of internal audit provides **substantial assurance** that the standards established by the IIA in the IPPF will be delivered in an adequate and effective manner”*.

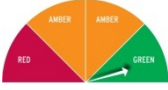

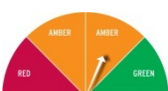
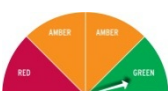
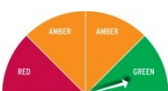



2.3 Performance Indicators



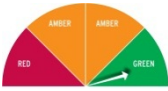

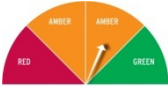
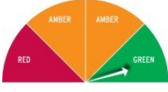
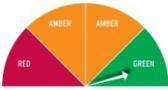


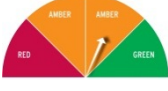

Our performance during 2013/2014 was monitored through the issuing of a Client Satisfaction Questionnaire issued by the Audit Manager with the final report. A total of 42 questionnaires were issued and 23 were completed and returned. None of the schools that had become Academies responded. The questionnaire covers five key areas of the audit process around the audit objectives; report format; report accuracy; usefulness of recommendations; and consultation with the client on the findings during the audit debrief meeting. There was a 100% positive response.

2.4 Conflicts of Interest

We (Baker Tilly) have not undertaken any work or activity during 2013/2014 that would lead us to declare any conflict of interests.



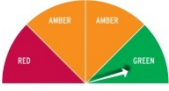
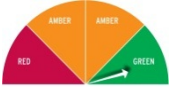
Appendix A: Internal Audit Opinions and Recommendations 2013/2014

Audit	Link to risk or rationale for coverage	Opinion	Actions Agreed (by priority)		
			High	Medium	Low
Audits to address specific risks					
Benyon Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	0	3
Public Health	Failure to manage, monitor and report on new health projects could lead to poor prioritising and use of limited resources.		0	0	1
Treetops School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	3	1
Giffards Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	0	0
St Mary's Catholic Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	0	1
Environmental Health (Food)	Poor environmental health processes could result in contaminated food being sold to the public which may increase the risk of illness and damage to the Council's reputation.		0	0	1
Use of Agency Staff for In-house Provider Services	Failure to properly utilise existing and bank staff could result in reduced service quality, additional costs for agency staff, budget overspends and a lack of value for money.		0	6	0
Arthur Bugler Infant School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	0	1

Housing Capital Programme (Kitchens & Bathrooms)	Procurement of contracts is in compliance with legislation and the Council's Constitution. The awarding of contracts is backed up by appropriate documentation and evidence.		5	3	0
Chadwell St Mary Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	1	3
Business Continuity (non IT)	The Council may not be able to provide key/critical front line services in the event of an emergency or serious disruption.		0	1	3
Social Care Income and Debt Recovery	Increasing levels of debt could result in reduced income and have an impact on budgets and service provision.		0	1	0
Aveley Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	2	5
Econogas	Council properties may not be inspected in accordance with legislation and/or policy.		0	0	4
Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality	Non-compliance with the Constitution and Code of Conduct may open the Council up to accusations of impropriety.		0	0	1
Arthur Bugler Junior School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	1	7
Trading Standards	Non-compliance with statutory requirements in respect of Trading Standards might result in dissatisfaction amongst local residents.		0	2	2
Education Transport – Contract Review	Procurement of contracts is in compliance with legislation and the Council's Constitution. The awarding of contracts is backed up by appropriate documentation and evidence.		0	2	3
Thurrock Community Adult College Crèche	The Crèche may not have an appropriate business plan in place to identify opportunities		0	2	1

	to increase revenue which could result in decisions needing to be made about its long term viability.				
Key Performance Indicators	The rate of improvement may be below the national average.	Advisory			
Neptune Nursery School	Failure to manage the budget and control debt could result in overspends and impact on service provision.		0	3	0
Waste Management (Charges)	Failure to manage the waste management contract could result in the Council paying at the incorrect rate or for waste it should not be paying for.		0	0	0
Little Pirates Nursery School	Failure to manage the budget and control debt could result in overspends and impact on service provision.		0	2	0
Health and Safety	Inadequate health and safety policies and procedures could result in an increase in incidents and accidents.		0	1	0
Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	2	4
Tudor Court Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	1	2
Orsett C of E Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	2	3
Stanford-le-Hope Primary School	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	3	3
LiquidLogic System Adult	Lack of control in business area could result in data being accessed by unauthorised persons.		0	3	3
Deneholm School Primary	The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary		0	1	3

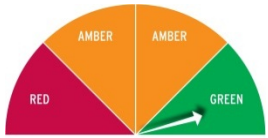
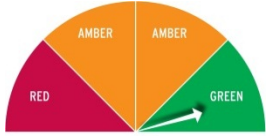
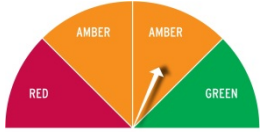
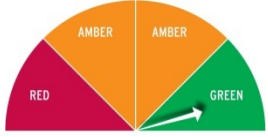
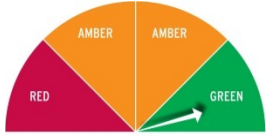
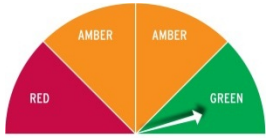
	Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	2	4
Corringham School	Primary The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	2	4
Bonnygate School	Primary The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		0	0	3
Quarry Hill School	Primary The operational and financial management arrangements in Secondary and Primary Schools may be inadequate increasing the risk of impropriety.		1	3	4
Core Assurance					
Cash Receipting	Cash collection procedures, banking, access arrangements and security of cash received may not be adequately controlled.		0	3	1
General Ledger	The Council's financial system may not be appropriately managed to so financial transactions may not be accurately recorded.		0	0	1
Accounts Payable	Purchase Orders may not be raised. Invoices may not be paid correctly and promptly. Insufficient checks and reconciliations may be carried out. Access to the Accounts Payable system may not be restricted.		0	1	3
Accounts Receivable	Poor controls around the administration and management of debt could result in lost income to the Council.		0	0	1
Housing Rents	There may not be adequate systems and procedures in place relating to the administration and management of the rents process.		0	1	1
NNDR	The Council's NNDR systems and processes in respect of property valuations may not comply with all statutory requirements resulting in		0	2	0

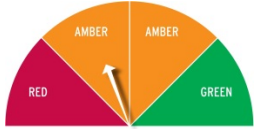
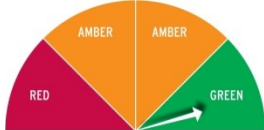
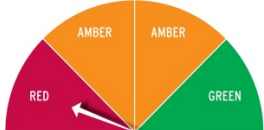
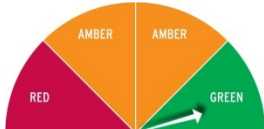
	inaccurate billing, failure to recover overdue debts and insufficient documentary evidence to support all payment transactions.				
Treasury Management	If controls around the payment and reconciliation processes are not robust, the Council may not achieve the best return on its investments.		0	0	2
Bank Reconciliation	If regular reconciliations are not carried out, errors may not be picked up in a timely manner.		0	1	1
General Ledger Upgrade	General ledger balances may not be brought forward correctly, resulting in unreliable financial reporting. The old chart of accounts may not be adequately linked to the new balance sheet codes, leading to inaccurate reporting.		0	0	1
Payroll Post Implementation Review	The payroll migration from the Delphi System to Oracle may not be successful resulting in staff being incorrectly paid or not paid at all.		0	1	0
		Total	6	56	77

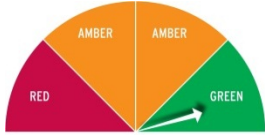
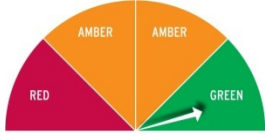
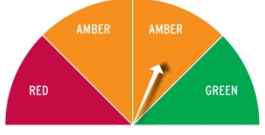
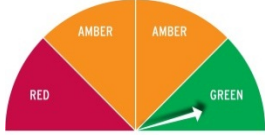
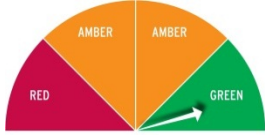
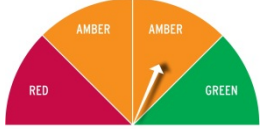
We use the following levels of opinion classification within our internal audit reports:

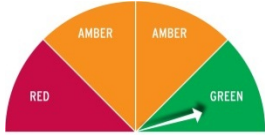
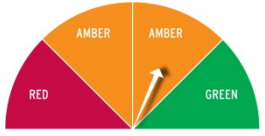
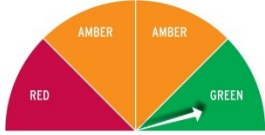
Red	Amber / Red	Amber / Green	Green
<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the Board cannot take assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied or effective.</p> <p>Action needs to be taken to ensure this risk is managed.</p>	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, whilst the Board can take some assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective, action needs to be taken to ensure this risk is managed.</p>	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the Board can take reasonable assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.</p> <p>However we have identified issues that, if not addressed, increase the likelihood of the risk materialising.</p>	<p>Taking account of the issues identified, the Board can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage this risk are suitably designed, consistently applied and effective.</p>

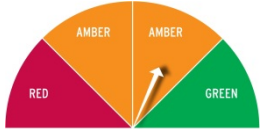
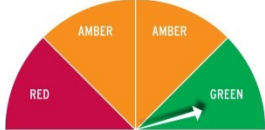
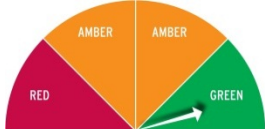
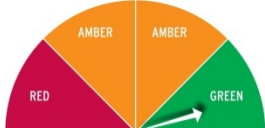
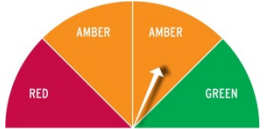
Appendix B: Key Findings from Internal Audit Reviews 2013/2014

<p>Assignment: Benyon Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Benyon Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Public Health (Community Budgets)</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Public Health (Community Budgets) we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Treetops School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Treetops School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 3 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase orders were not always raised before the date of the invoice; • Dinner monies were not being banked frequently enough; and • Entitlement to free school meals was not regularly monitored. 	
<p>Assignment: Giffards Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Giffards Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: St Mary's Catholic Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of St Mary's Catholic Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Environmental Health (Food)</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Environmental Health (Food) we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	

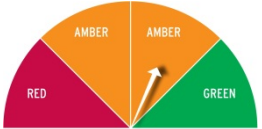
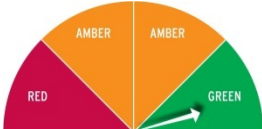
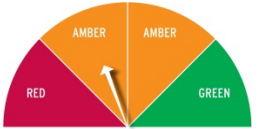
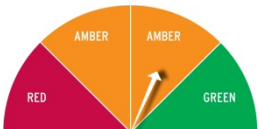
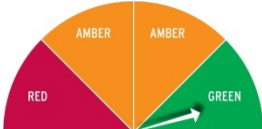
<p>Assignment: Use of Agency Staff for In-house Provider Services</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Use of Agency Staff for In-house Provider Services we have provided an Amber/Red opinion (some assurance). There were 6 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency workers were not always used appropriately i.e. to cover in the short term; • No risk assessment had been carried out to ascertain whether escorts were always required when picking up clients; • Staffing levels at Day Centres were not being monitored; • Some staffing budgets were overspent; • There was no Officer Register of Interests; and • Agency timesheets were being automatically approved in some instances. 	
<p>Assignment: Arthur Bugler Infant School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Arthur Bugler Infant School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Housing Capital Programme (Kitchens & Bathrooms)</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Capital Programme (Kitchens & Bathrooms) we have provided a Red opinion (no assurance). There were 5 high and 3 medium recommendations. The high recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance reporting framework for financial and project progress was not fully in place; • Key Performance Indicators were not supported by up to date project information; • Contract management was not sufficiently developed to report costs, emerging issues, risks, design requirements or additional works that may impact on budgets; • Overall lack of management information around the entire contract; and • Works being commenced without a properly approved works order. <p>The medium recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of provision of costing information by Surveyors to programme managers and finance; • No formal minutes were taken of the meetings between the Council and the contractor; and • Not all of the documentation to support the evaluation of tenders was available for inspection. 	
<p>Assignment: Chadwell St Mary Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Chadwell St Mary Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the need to update the school's financial regulations to reflect the delegated decision that the Assistant Headteacher signs and approves the orders.</p>	

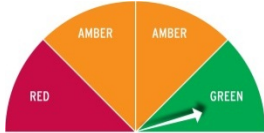
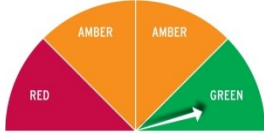
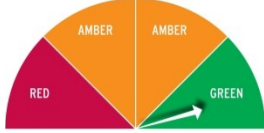
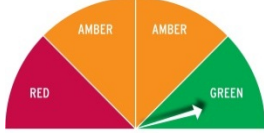
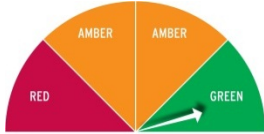
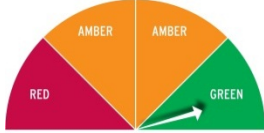
<p>Assignment: Business Continuity (non IT)</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Business Continuity (non IT) we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the need to bring the Business Impact Assessment and risk analysis up to date.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Social Care Income and Debt Recovery</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Social Care Income and Debt Recovery we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the incorrect assessment of a client who had been allocated a couple's personal allowance rather than that of a single person.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Aveley Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Aveley Primary School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bank mandate was out of date and did not reflect the current signatories; and • The Council were not informed when siblings started at the school so did not know that the school were providing them with free school meals for which they were not receiving funding. 	
<p>Assignment: Econogas</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Econogas we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Register of Gifts, Interests and Hospitality we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Arthur Bugler Junior School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Arthur Bugler Junior School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the need to regularly reconcile the free school meals list sent out by the Council to the pupils receiving them. Whilst there was only 1 medium recommendation, the level was assessed as amber/green as there were a further 7 low recommendations made.</p>	

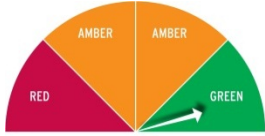
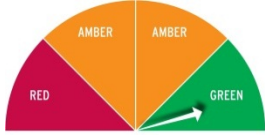
<p>Assignment: Trading Standards</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Trading Standards we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessed routine inspections were not always being carried out; and • Sharing of information was not developed enough to help capture and identify new businesses. 	
<p>Assignment: Education Transport – Contract Review</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Education Transport – Contract Review we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities were not clearly defined in respect of the accountable person for contract management; and • A small number of variations to route contract prices were not supported. 	
<p>Assignment: Thurrock Adult Community College Crèche</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Thurrock Adult Community College Crèche we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to develop a business plan to improve take up of the remaining places; and • Purchase orders were not always raised before the date of the invoice. 	
<p>Assignment: Key Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Advisory</p>
<p>Headline Findings: The review of Key Performance Indicators was an advisory review so an assurance opinion was not provided. Recommendations were made and related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes for monitoring visitors to the Boroughs Managed Natural Areas needed to be reviewed; • The definition of apprentice needed to be clarified and relevant departments submit details of apprentice starters and leavers during the period; • Support plans for clients receiving direct payments, or who have a personal budget, needed to be reviewed on an annual basis; • Sample testing of weighbridge tickets be carried out as part of the contract review process; and • Changes to waste data needed to be identified on a monthly basis and a clear audit trail be maintained. 	

<p>Assignment: Neptune Nursery School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Neptune Nursery School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 3 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some invoices were not approved and signed by the Manager before payment; • Overtime sheets were not approved and signed by the Manager before formal on-line approval was given; and • Staff were not always recording the correct time spent in each class, just recording it all against the first class they attended. 	
<p>Assignment: Waste Management (Charges)</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Waste Management (Charges) we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Little Pirates Nursery School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Little Pirates Nursery School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some invoices were not approved and signed by the Manager before payment; and • Staff were not always recording the correct time spent in each class, just recording it all against the first class they attended. 	
<p>Assignment: Health and Safety</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Health and Safety we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to providing a comparison with the previous quarter when submitting the monitoring report to Directors Board on areas where risk assessments have not been carried out.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Horndon-on-the-Hill Primary School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School Financial and Management Practices document did not specify the limits in respect of ordering, going out to quote and undertaking a full tender process; and • Regular letters to parents for unpaid dinner money were not always sent out in a timely manner. 	

<p>Assignment: Tudor Court Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Tudor Court Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to purchase orders not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Orsett C of E Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Orsett C of E Primary School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase orders were not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice; and • VAT returns were not submitted to the Council on a monthly basis. 	
<p>Assignment: Stanford-le-Hope Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Stanford-le-Hope Primary School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 3 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase orders were not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice; • No copy on file of the CRB clearance form for one member of staff; and • Processes around the chasing of school meal debt were not robust. 	
<p>Assignment: LiquidLogic Adult System</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of LiquidLogic Adult System we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There was 3 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a policy document that governed the use and processes within the system but it was in draft form and had not been distributed to users; • Old or inactive users were not removed from the system promptly; and • Some users had access levels at a higher level than they required. 	
<p>Assignment: Deneholm Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Deneholm Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to purchase orders not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice.</p>	

<p>Assignment: Corringham Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Corringham Primary School we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular letters to parents for unpaid dinner money were not always sent out in a timely manner; and • Entitlement to free school meals was not regularly monitored. 	
<p>Assignment: Bonnygate Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Bonnygate Primary School we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Quarry Hill Primary School</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Quarry Hill Primary School we have provided an Amber/Red opinion (some assurance). There was 1 high and 3 medium recommendations. The high recommendation related to quotes and tenders not being sought for purchase orders over £5K and £30K respectively. The 3 medium recommendations related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase orders were not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice; • Dinner monies were not always pursued promptly; and • Budget virements were not signed in accordance with the school's Financial Regulations. 	
<p>Assignment: Cash Receipting</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Cash Receipting we have provided an Amber/Green opinion (reasonable assurance). There were 3 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no procedure notes for new staff to refer to; • Suspense items were not always cleared in a timely manner; and • There was a generic user account "Paris2.User" which enabled a single amount to be cleared against multiple codes but did not identify the user clearing the suspense. 	
<p>Assignment: General Ledger</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of General Ledger we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	

<p>Assignment: Accounts Payable</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Accounts Payable we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to purchase orders not always being raised before receipt of the goods or invoice.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Accounts Receivable</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Accounts Receivable we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Housing Rents</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Housing Rents we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the need to control the number of users with administrator access to the Saffron system.</p>	
<p>Assignment: NNDR</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of NNDR we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were 2 medium recommendations which related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliefs and exemptions were not always reviewed regularly; and • Written off debts over £25K were not always subjected to Cabinet approval. 	
<p>Assignment: Treasury Management</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Treasury Management we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Bank Reconciliation</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Bank Reconciliation we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the monthly reconciliations not being completed in a timely manner at the start of the financial year. However, it was acknowledged that this usually happens due to prioritisation of staff to assist with the closure of the previous year's accounts.</p>	

<p>Assignment: General Ledger Upgrade</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of General Ledger Upgrade we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There were no significant issues raised around the design, application or compliance with the control framework.</p>	
<p>Assignment: Payroll Post Implementation Review</p>	
<p>Headline Findings: For our review of Payroll Post Implementation Review we have provided a Green opinion (substantial assurance). There was 1 medium recommendation which related to the lack of hardcopy evidence to support the status reports which indicated that each module implemented was subjected to three or four cycles of user acceptance testing.</p>	

As a practising member firm of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), we are subject to its ethical and other professional requirements which are detailed at <http://www.icaew.com/en/members/regulations-standards-and-guidance>.

The matters raised in this report are only those which came to our attention during the course of our review and are not necessarily a comprehensive statement of all the weaknesses that exist or all improvements that might be made. Recommendations for improvements should be assessed by you for their full impact before they are implemented. This report, or our work, should not be taken as a substitute for management's responsibilities for the application of sound commercial practices. We emphasise that the responsibility for a sound system of internal controls rests with management and our work should not be relied upon to identify all strengths and weaknesses that may exist. Neither should our work be relied upon to identify all circumstances of fraud and irregularity should there be any.

This report is supplied on the understanding that it is solely for the use of the persons to whom it is addressed and for the purposes set out herein. Our work has been undertaken solely to prepare this report and state those matters that we have agreed to state to them. This report should not therefore be regarded as suitable to be used or relied on by any other party wishing to acquire any rights from Baker Tilly Risk Advisory Services LLP for any purpose or in any context. Any party other than the Board which obtains access to this report or a copy and chooses to rely on this report (or any part of it) will do so at its own risk. To the fullest extent permitted by law, Baker Tilly Risk Advisory Services LLP will accept no responsibility or liability in respect of this report to any other party and shall not be liable for any loss, damage or expense of whatsoever nature which is caused by any person's reliance on representations in this report.

This report is released to our Client on the basis that it shall not be copied, referred to or disclosed, in whole or in part (save as otherwise permitted by agreed written terms), without our prior written consent.

We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

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10 July 2014	ITEM: 11
Standards & Audit Committee	
Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement Update	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance	
Accountable Head of Service: Report of: Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance	
Accountable Director: Graham Farrant, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report is for noting: the 2013/14 Financial Statement and Annual Governance Statement have been submitted to Ernst and Young for audit, the results of which will be reported back to this committee in September.

Members should note that there is no longer a requirement to bring these documents to the committee at this stage. Officers will circulate the documents to Members for information to enable them to review the information prior to the committee meeting in September enabling them to approve the final Statements at this point.

1. Recommendation

1.1 That Members note that the Draft Annual Governance Statement and Financial Statement have been completed and passed to Ernst and Young for auditing.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The process supporting the completion of the Financial Statements has been improved in 2013/14. The statements have been completed in accordance with statutory deadlines and reflect the requirements of the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting (The Code).

2.2 The Council underspent against the general fund balance by £0.58m in 2013/14 and the level of general fund balances at 31 March 2014 was maintained at £8.01m.

- 2.3 There were no significant audit issues in the prior year and there were no changes to the overall level of reserves following the 2012/13 audit. However, some balances required reclassification in the statements and this has been addressed in 2013/14.
- 2.4 The Council is prepared for the upcoming audit and has liaised with the auditors to discuss any issues arising in advance of the audit. Their interim audit work is substantially complete with no significant issues highlighted to date. Similarly the audit of the IT systems is largely complete and discussions to date do not suggest there are any significant issues arising which will impact on the audit of the financial statements.
- 2.5 The Annual Governance Statement requires approval by the committee under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. It is noted as good practice by CIPFA to complete this before the approval of the Financial Statements. Consequently the final statement will be approved at the same meeting in September.
- 2.6 The Annual Governance Statement reflects the continuous improvement made by the Council in resolving governance issues. The actions identified in the 2012/13 statement have been reviewed and addressed within the year where possible. The governance framework remains sound and continues to support the delivery of priorities in the borough.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There are no issues arising from this report. The Financial Statement and Annual Governance Statement have been submitted for audit and the committee will receive a report back in September, accompanied by a report by Ernst and Young.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 For the committee to note the completion of both statements.

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

- 5.1 All services and senior management have been consulted in the compilation of both of this document.

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

- 6.1 The level of resources and how they are allocated will affect the amounts available towards the Council's overall aims and objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Head of Corporate Finance

The statements are largely governed by the Code. Apart from reporting the Council's financial position as at 31 March 2014, there are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

7.2 Legal

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

There are no specific implications from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no specific implications from this report.

7.4 Other implications

There are no specific implications from this report.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

- There are various working papers within Corporate Finance.
- The Annual Governance Statement draws on a range of documents from around the Council.

9. Appendices to the report

- None – both statements will be circulated to members following the meeting.

Report Author:

Sean Clark
Head of Corporate Finance
Corporate Finance

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Work Programme

Item 12

Committee: Standards and Audit

Year: 2014/2015

Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Progress / Update required
10 July 2014				
1 st Quarter Review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	February 2014	Officers	Andy Owen	
Update: Financial Statement	May 2014	Officers	Sean Clark	
Draft AGS	May 2014	Officers	Sean Clark	
Annual Complaints Report	May 2014	Officers	Lee Henley	
Annual Access to Records Report	May 2014	Officers	Lee Henley	
Head of Internal Audit Report	May 20014	Officers	Chris Harris/ Gary Clifford	
Internal Audit: Red Reports (as required)	May 2014	Members/Officers	Relevant Director	
Update: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 RIPA	May 2014	Members/Officers	Lee Henley	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
16 September 2014				
Financial Statement	May 2014	Officers	Sean Clark	
Audit Results Report	May 2014	Officers	Ernst & Young	
AGS	May 2014	Officers	Sean Clark	
Progress Report: Internal Audit	May 2014	Officers	Gary Clifford	
Internal Audit: Red Reports (as required)	May 2014	Members/Officers	Relevant Director	
Update: Regulation of	May 2014	Members/Officers	Lee Henley	

Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Progress / Update required
Investigatory Powers Act 2000 RIPA				
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
9 December 2014				
Annual Audit Letter	May 2014	Officers	Ernst & Young	
3 rd Quarter Review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	February 2014	Officers	Andy Owen	
Update: Complaints Report	May 2014	Officers	Lee Henley	
Fraud Report	May 2014	Officers	Sean Clark	
Progress Report: Internal Audit	May 2014	Officers	Gary Clifford	
Internal Audit: Red Reports (as required)	May 2014	Members/Officers	Relevant Director	
Update: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 RIPA	May 2014	Members/Officers	Lee Henley	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
4 February 2014				
Review of ROM Policy, Strategy & Framework	February 2014	Officers	Andy Owen	
Progress Report: Internal Audit	May 2014	Officers	Gary Clifford	
Report on the Audit of Grant Claims	May 2014	Officers	Ernst & Young	
Internal Audit: Red Reports (as required)	May 2014	Members/Officers	Relevant Director	
Update: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act	May 2014	Members/Officers	Lee Henley	

Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Progress / Update required
2000 RIPA				
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	
3 March 2014				
Draft Internal Audit Plan	May 2014	Officers	Gary Clifford	
Ernst and Young – Audit Plan 2014/2015	May 2014	Officers	Ernst & Young	
Internal Audit: Red Reports (as required)	May 2014	Members/Officers	Relevant Director	
Update: Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 RIPA	May 2014	Members/Officers	Lee Henley	
Work Programme	Continuous	Members/Officers	Democratic Services Officer	

To Be Allocated				
Item	Date Added	Request By (Members/Officers)	Lead Officer	Committee Date

Full details of Member’s decisions can be viewed in the Minutes on the Council’s Committee Management Information System - <http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/thurrock/>

FOR CONSIDERATION

There are currently no items for consideration.

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