

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

Standards and Audit Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **10 September 2020**

Due to current government guidance on social-distancing and the COVID-19 virus, Standard and Audit Committee on 10 September 2020 will not be open for members of the public to physically attend. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch the meeting live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.youtube.com/user/thurrockcouncil

Venue - Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL and virtual attendance.

Membership:

Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), David Potter (Vice-Chair), Gary Collins, Barry Johnson, Cathy Kent and Luke Spillman

Lisa Laybourn
Vani Thuvaragan

Substitutes:

Councillors Abbie Akinbohun, Garry Hague, Tom Kelly and Lynn Worrall

Agenda

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2 Minutes	5 - 18
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Standards and Audit Committee meeting held on 9 July 2020.	
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.

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **2 September 2020**

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DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- **relate to; or**
- **likely to affect**

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- **Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;**
- **Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and**
- **leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon**

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature

You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Standards and Audit Committee held on 9 July 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Gerard Rice (Chair), David Potter (Vice-Chair), Barry Johnson, Cathy Kent and Luke Spillman

Lisa Laybourn, Co-opted Member

In attendance: Sean Clark, Director of Finance, Governance and Property
Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor
Lisa Clampin, Binder Dijke Otte (BDO) Representative
Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects
Lee Henley, Strategic Lead, Information Management
David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud & Investigations
Andrew Millard, Director of Place
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being streamed on the Council's on-line webcast channel.

39. Minutes

The minutes of the Standard and Audit Committee held on the 12 March 2020 were approved as a correct record.

40. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

41. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Annual Information Governance Report

Lee Henley, Strategic Lead Information Management, updated Members on the Annual Information Governance Report that covered the three main areas of Data Protection, Record Management and Freedom of Information and referred Members to the appendices in the report.

Lisa Laybourn, Co-opted Member, questioned whether the 9764 physical archive boxes in storage that formed part of the physical record questioned whether the nature of the information would be non-compliant with GDPR and was there a plan to address those records that needed to be destroyed. Lee

Henley stated that this was a key reason to review those archive boxes and any records that exceeded the retention timeframes would be disposed of.

Councillor Johnson asked for some clarification on the three complaints received from the Information Commissioners Office regarding the management of Subject Access Requests. Lee Henley stated that one complaint was in relation to when the Council responded to a subject access request information had been withheld and the complaint was then made. The other two complaints were in relation to the Council not responding to the subject access review within the timeframe. Lee Henley stated the response time was good and was reflected in the 97% of those requests responded to in the timeframe.

Councillor Spillman gave praise to Lee Henley and his team and commended them on the figures and that the team had performed above expectations.

Councillor Rice referred to the Freedom of Information Status, Appendix 1 on page 19 of the report and asked for clarification on how a request would be refused. Lee Henley stated this would depend on what the request was in relation to. That there were a number of exemptions within the legislation where refusal could be made for example if the disclosure disclosed financial information in relation to a third party a commercial exemption would be applied or where the request would take the Council longer than the 18 hours to respond the request could be refused on cost grounds. Another example of this was where the information requested was already in the public domain.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted the information Governance activity and performance.**
- 2. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted the Data Protection Compliance activity detailed within Appendix 2.**

43. Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 - Activity Report 2019/20

Lee Henley, Strategic Lead Information Management, provided members with an update on the usage and activity of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) requests during 2019/20. Members were also provided with a refreshed RIPA Policy for approval. Members were referred to page 28 of the report that highlighted the RIPA activity and the Policy Changes.

Councillor Rice asked for clarification on the nature of the Fraud Activity. Lee Henley stated this could be a RIPA covert surveillance for any fraud activity or trading standards investigations such as counterfeit goods, under age sales. Lee Henley stated this would be used as a last result and the Council had a responsibility to use less intrusive means.

Councillor Rice questioned how the joint operation between the Police and the Council at a compound behind the Orsett Golf Club had been reported on. David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Investigation and Enforcement, confirmed that RIPA activity would be a last resort and where material cannot be sought from any other means. Joint operations with the Police and depending on who would be leading that operation would be the responsible agency to get the RIPA received.

RESOLVED

That the Standard and Audit Committee noted the statistical information relating to the use of RIPA for the period 2019/20.

44. Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report - Year ended 31 March 2020

Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor, introduced the report that provided an independent opinion on the Council's Governance, Risk Management and Internal Control frameworks and noted that assurance could never be absolute, with reasonable assurances being provided on the work undertaken. Members were informed that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the work being undertaken between March and July 2020, which would normally be the time when end of year reports would be finalised, but this had been taken into account in the Chief Auditor's opinion. Members were referred to the issues, options and analysis of options on page 58 of the report and were referred to the findings found in Appendix 1.

Councillor Rice referred to the Risk Management on page 67 of the report and asked what this meant and how would this be operated. Gary Clifford stated that meetings were arranged with senior managers to determine their levels of risk and the risk register was reviewed and discussed with the Corporate Risk & Insurance Manager, Andy Owen. The Risk & Opportunity Register was presented to the Standard and Audit committee on a regular basis to ensure that Members received assurance on how risk management was being operated.

Councillor Johnson asked for clarification between an assurance report and an advisory report. Gary Clifford stated that an assurance report would look at a system and provide management with assurance around the controls, risk management and governance around that system. An advisory report would usually be driven by the service who had identified an issue and would look for advice on how to tighten up their controls and risk management around the specific areas of concern.

Councillor Johnson questioned how the assurance reports were selected each year. Gary Clifford stated that the audit plan was developed with senior managers who prioritise their key risks which were then included within the annual plan. As a result, the majority of work in the plan would be made up of assurance reports.

Councillor Rice questioned how engagement was undertaken and the process for reviewing applications, commissioning and the inspection processes to manage footway crossings. Gary Clifford stated that inspections would take place alongside a review of all the documentation from the application right through to the agreement. In addition, comparisons would be undertaken against other local authorities in terms of charges to ensure Thurrock residents were getting value for money.

Councillor Spillman asked about the actual performance for management responses received within 10 days in the last audit report and questioned whether the chasing of management was normal or was this a one off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Gary Clifford stated that this was a problem in some areas. Councillor Spillman questioned who set the targets and what was the rationale of that 10 days. Gary Clifford stated the 10 days tended to be a service standard format and was laid down in the audit protocol which had been presented to, and agreed by the Standards & Audit Committee and Director's Board. Councillor Spillman questioned why management were not providing this information on time, and what as Members, they could be put in place so that this did not happen in the future. Gary Clifford stated that increased use of the escalation process, that formed part of the audit protocol, would be used going forward which should improve performance.

RESOLVED

That the Standard and Audit Committee considered and commented on the Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report – Year ended 31 March 2020.

45. Internal Audit Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Annual Internal Audit Plan 2020/21

Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor, stated that between December 2019 and March 2020 a comprehensive Audit Needs Assessment had been undertaken with officers and as a result a three year Strategy for Internal Audit 2020/21 to 2022/23 and an annual plan for 2020/21 had been developed. It was noted that although implications from the COVID-19 pandemic had started to emerge with changes to working practices, the timeframe of the planning process meant that changes had not been reflected in the plan. Therefore the plan would need to be constantly reviewed to ensure that Internal Audit Service was utilising its resources to best meet the needs of the Council. Members were also referred to the Appendix 1 that set out the approach taken to develop the Internal Audit Strategy.

Councillor Spillman noted that COVID-19 was not a separate external factor in Appendix A and questioned whether this only sat with Public Health. Gary Clifford stated that this was added before the COVID-19 pandemic had hit and was a general risk.

Councillor Rice asked for clarification on what "emerging" meant in terms of Major Projects that the Council will face. Gary Clifford stated this was work

that had been carried out towards the end of the year and this would be covered more in the following items on the agenda.

Councillor Rice also asked for clarification on how Brexit as an issue, would affect the Council. Gary Clifford stated that this factor was still emerging as the details were unknown at this stage. Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property, stated there was a need to put this factor into the report but until the issues were known, this factor would be flagged and the Council would react as necessary.

Lisa Laybourn, questioned whether those audit areas to be looked at in three years were inherently higher risk areas or were they areas which had issues in the past. Gary Clifford stated that some of the areas would have been carried forward and some would not have been audited for a number of years. However, they would mainly be those areas which had been discussed with service managers and looking forward, would need to be picked up in the future.

RESOLVED

That the Standard and Audit Committee received and agreed the Internal Audit Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 and the Annual Internal Audit Plan 2020/21.

46. Counter Fraud & Investigation Annual Report & Strategy

David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Investigation and Enforcement, presented the report to Members which outlined the performance of the Counter Fraud and Investigation Team over the last year. Members were referred to the proposed new Counter Fraud Strategy to tackle fraud for Thurrock Council in 2020/21 and to the Appendices of the report.

Councillor C Kent questioned whether Thurrock Council could be at risk by helping out other local authorities especially with new challenges and pressures that COVID-19 may have put on the services that Thurrock Council undertake. David Kleinberg stated that main role and the primary function was to protect Thurrock and the team had been resourced accordingly. With the expanded team funded by third parties enabled the resilience to do those roles and if it became known that resources were not available this work would stop.

Councillor Johnson questioned whether any fraud found on the COVID-19 business grants would be for Thurrock to action or would this be a Government action to get the money back. Councillor Johnson stated if it was the Government were Thurrock at any risk if they were asked for the money back. David Kleinberg stated that since COVID-19 had started himself and Sean Clark had attended Department of Business Enterprise Industrial Strategy and Ministry of Housing Community and Government meetings and had provided assurance that they would underwrite this money if it was due to

fraud but was confident that with the extra systems put in place these incidents should be at a low lower or not at all in Thurrock.

Councillor Rice asked for some clarification on the £3.5 million of fraud detected last year. David Kleinberg stated the main type of fraud was tenancy fraud which included unlawful sub-letting and claims for social housing. Members were referred to the Operational Activity, Social Housing Fraud on page 117 of the report that referenced that 36 social housing properties had been recovered.

Councillor Spillman asked whether there was an estimate or a projected figure for this year based on last year's figures. David Kleinberg suggested that the figure may be lower this year based on the COVID-19 lockdown where people were not sub-letting as they had remained in their properties. This was a positive but until the data could be analysed and meetings taken place with Police partners this figure would not be known at this time.

Councillor Rice congratulated the Counter Fraud and Investigation Team on the performance of the team by demonstrating that for every £1 spent on the service by the Council it had detected £3 in fraud.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted the performance of the Counter Fraud and investigation team over the last year.**
- 2. That the Standard and Audit Committee approved the Counter Fraud and Investigation Strategy and work programme for 2020/21.**

47. Investment Briefing

Following the request from the Chair, Councillor Rice, for a report to address his concerns on the Council's borrowing levels and investments and in particular how the £1.2 billion rising to £2 billion had been invested, how safe were Thurrock's investments and what the impact would be should there be a collapse brought about by the looming economic depression. Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property, presented a report that set out the actual levels of investments and related financial returns with a section on the security and viability of the solar portfolio especially in the current economic climate

Sean Clark stated that there had also been a lot of conversations around the democratic oversight with Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee putting forward in January 2020 for Cabinet to consider the improvement of that oversight. This was agreed by Cabinet in February 2020 and reinforced at July Council in debate on investments and in Councillor Hebb's portfolio holder report. Sean Clark stated that Councillor Hebb would be writing to Leaders of each group to arrange this first meeting where options would be put forward on future scrutiny of the investment portfolio and new

opportunities. Members would be included in the briefings and to establish what could be undertaken publically and to receive a full briefing on where the Council was now.

Sean Clark provided Members with an introduction to the report and provided information as to why the Council were undertaking investments and background information on the Council's investments in the past. Another key factor that had been raised was that the Council used inter-local borrowing for short term loans and the Council had continued with the shorter term approach as was seen as a financial benefit to the Council and also a financial benefit to the other local authorities that lend it.

Members were referred to the table on page 135 of the report which was a breakdown of the Council's borrowings at high level as of 31 March 2020 and the spread of the investments. The view was that the renewable energy sector was the stronger option available in terms of national and international drive and for the Government's support for it. Members were informed that no loss of income on investments had been lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic unlike other local authorities who had invested in property-related investments.

Sean Clark reminded Members that investments were at risk and referred Members to the mitigating list on page 136 of the report that were in place which had given the Council confidence and security against any such risk.

Councillor Spillman asked what the average term for an inter-local borrowing undertaken by Thurrock Council had been. Sean Clark stated these ranged between one week and one year but there were a couple that go into two years.

Councillor Spillman asked when the Bonds would mature. Sean Clark stated that when the Bonds were taken out there was mixture of between three and five years with the five year Bonds being renegotiated into 10 years but the Council was already two or three years within that cycle.

Councillor Spillman asked how much had been invested into those Bonds and what would the market value of those Bonds be now. Councillor Spillman also asked if those Bonds had to be sold today how easy would that be. Sean Clark stated the Bonds were valued the same as to what was lend out and would not fluctuate from that. The selling of the Bonds would vary but this was something that the Council would not be looking to do.

Councillor Spillman asked whether those loans taken from other local authorities, who may be in a stressed position, be called in immediately or whether there were any set times. Also whether there was any concern that the level of loans available with potentially some councils stressed which may leave Thurrock Council in difficulty. Sean Clark stated that loans could not be called back. If a stressed Council were to ask Thurrock to pay back the loan it would then be the decision of Thurrock. The approach that Thurrock Council would take if they were unable to secure loans through the inter-local authority

market would be, as a last resort, to go to PWLB. Sean Clark confirmed that Thurrock Council did not plan to do this but should there be a need the Council can do.

Councillor Spillman questioned whether the Council would still make these investments post COVID-19 and what would the risk be of those Bonds not being paid back. Sean Clark stated discussions were taking place with those that Thurrock Council had investments with. There was no evidence not to, with assets still performing as they should with regular reports being provided that demonstrated that and income was coming through on a regular basis.

Councillor Spillman asked what the main concern was now. Sean Clark stated that this would be the concern that other councils were not lending due to COVID-19 or stressed but as previously stated could go through PWLB if there was a need to. That no reductions in performance had been reported in solar farms and wind farms or reductions in price. There had been no reports stating that there was any more risks than there had been previously, which had been low from the outset.

Councillor C Kent questioned what the scenario would be if Government were to come down and say as an authority we are borrowing too much, taking too much in light of the size of the authority or who Thurrock had borrowed from. Sean Clark stated that he could not see this scenario happening with the Government deciding whether Councils should be making investments at this time. This could potentially come through legislation and controlling of the PWLB that no more investments or to make it more difficult going forward. Sean Clark confirmed that this would not affect any past investments.

Councillor Johnson stated he could not see any Government coming in to unravel debt that would put Thurrock in a worse position. Sean Clark agreed with this and made it clear that Thurrock had done nothing wrong and that Thurrock and other councils had been doing this for decades.

Lisa Laybourn questioned the property fund and whether there were any concerns or risks if the Council were unable to access the money when they needed to and what was the thought process behind selecting the property fund. Sean Clark stated the property fund was quite balanced, the CCLA property fund was very diverse in the types of properties it had in the UK and there had been no reduction in income flows in that process.

Councillor Rice asked for clarification on the gross and net interest position. Sean Clark stated that last year the net position, after expenses and fees, the Council had cleared £35 million.

Councillor Rice stated that Thurrock residents wanted reassurance that investments were sound and that the Council had been receiving this income. Sean Clark stated that a lot of the discussion this evening should have given that reassurance to residents.

Councillor Rice asked what procedure would be followed before taking out an investment. Sean Clark stated that this depended on the nature of the investment, specific experts/consultants in that field who would comment and do due-diligence, technical experts had been on site, accounts looked at and figures challenged. That this work would not only be with Sean Clark and his team but had the involvement from senior officers and the director of commercial services. This would then go through the chief executive for any challenge and then onto the portfolio holder and cabinet and then onto presenting at the council spending review.

Councillor Rice asked what the exposure would be for TRL and Impulse Leisure. Sean Clark stated they were both different. With TRL, St Chads was still being rented out with no issues and that any further development was on hold whilst cabinet and members undertook a review of the housing delivering models. In regards to Impulse Leisure, they rent a number of properties from the Council for leisure facilities with no agreement between the Council and Impulse Leisure on the level of reactional items that should be provided. Commercial discussions were coming forward from Impulse Leisure that would come into the Council for financial support.

Councillor Johnson commended Councillor Rice in requesting this report be presented at the Standard and Audit Committee as this was the correct forum for this item to be discussed.

Councillor Spillman stated the challenging questions raised this evening had been responded to but more effort should be made on how this information be communicated.

Councillor Rice requested that this report be presented at this committee on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted and commented on the report content.**
- 2. That the A13 Widening Project be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.**

48. A13 Widening Project

Following the request from the Chair, Councillor Rice, for a report to be provided on the A13 Widening Project, the completion date and whether there were any budget implications for Thurrock Council in the current and subsequent financial years. Andy Millard, Director of Place, introduced the report by referring Members to the report that provided the introduction and background to the project, the complicating factors to the delay and cost issues with the A13 and the three significant issues which had impacted on the delivery of the scheme. Members were also referred to the Issues and

Options which covered the programme review, current out turn forecast and budget implications.

Councillor Spillman questioned whether in hindsight if a proposal was now presented to Thurrock, would the Council still be in favour of going ahead or should the Council steer clear of such a project. Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director, Lower Thames Crossing, Place, agreed that the Council should not have steered clear of the project as Thurrock, the size of the authority, were capable of delivering projects on this scale and with the ambition of the borough we needed to make sure we were. That there was no single issue that had caused the issues, rather a number of circumstances including adapting existing infrastructure which carries greater risk. Having been involved in the project for the last 10 months, Officers were confident that the Council had understood fully the challenges and risks that were being dealt with and the Council were fully and appropriately mitigating them as much as possible. Discussions had taken place with directors on what needed to be addressed on the commitments to large scale projects in the future and that was being implemented. Further discussions were needed about the funding phasing on future schemes as the need to spend grants by particular deadlines was driving less than optimum decisions. Anna Eastgate stated during COVID-19 the delivery of the site remained open and that had mitigated some further cost and impacts of delivery and praised the contractors for working within such difficult circumstances, however any cost and delay to the scheme as a result of Covid-19 was still to be assessed.

Councillor C Kent asked what had been put in place and what lessons had been learnt to ensure that Thurrock did not end up in a similar scenario again. Councillor C Kent also questioned why had it taken so long for the amount of overspend to come out into the public domain and asked about the contracts. Andy Millard, reiterated that Thurrock Council needed to have the ambition to delivery projects of such a nature and in relation to this project there were significant benefits in terms of improving journey times and reliability and less pollution through the reduction in congestion and it was vital that the Council got those projects right. That lessons could be learnt from some of the issues that had come out of this particular project and some intensive work had been undertaken already but it was clear that the project must move forward and to take learnings from this project to avoid some of those issues happening again in the future. Anna Eastgate stated that in regards to lessons being learnt that some detailed interactive sessions had been carried out with officers across different departments of the Council that were responsible for delivering other projects, information and knowledge had been shared on particular issues and challenges working with particular contractors, addressing behaviours between parties, with a note being produced on how those concerns would be addressed going forward. That the work carried out had been positively received by everybody. In regards to having a plan in place for the cost and overspend, around the table sessions were taking place with team members across different departments to come up with options and ideas to explore the criteria that was set out in the report on page 144. That an action plan was being prepared to address these and would be overseen by directors. Anna Eastgate stated in regards to the time that it had taken for

this information to come out in the public domain, the Council had undertaken a commercial review of cost and programme but it was essential to have completed that exercise before information was shared in the public domain so that it was reliable. That prior to COVID-19 there was confidence the revised full out turn forecast that had been arrived at was robust but unfortunately COVID-19 would alter this and the impact of that is unknown at this time. Anna Eastgate agreed that getting the information out in the public domain had taken some time but it was more important that genuine answers were given on the true position. In relation to contracts for this project, due to timescales, there was insufficient time to go to market for bespoke contracts and a framework had been used which only provided for separate design and build contracts.

Councillor Spillman questioned why there was not a wider strategic body in place with all the councils from South Essex to deal with the problems of the A13 in its entirety rather than Thurrock just dealing with the stretch of road on their own. Also stated that there were a lot of people benefiting from this scheme outside of Thurrock and questioned whether the Council were satisfied with the level of support received from central funds. Andy Millard stating that infrastructure be provided more effectively on a sub-regional basis was something that needed to be looked at going forward.

Councillor Spillman asked whether the mapping received from Essex County Council in particular to some of the utilities and how the road was planned had been a major problem that had resulted in significant extra costs. Anna Eastgate stated that some of the drawings were not reflective of what was on the ground and it was known that some utility companies did not know exactly where their assets were in the ground. That there were some concerns on the preliminary work undertaken resulting in different ground investigation reports and a need to rationalise and agree the information. There had been a combination of factors that been contributed to the issues with a number of reworks being undertaken on the designs of the structures and drainage.

Councillor Rice questioned how the Council would cope with the reported £41 million overspend. Sean Clark stated that the Council would be legally obliged to pay the contract that was in place but further work would be undertaken with those contractors to try and reduce those costs and to avoid any further escalation. Members were referred to paragraph 3.9 of the report and stated there were only three high level options available and would actively seek any further opportunities of grants that come through and look at partners in the private sector which would include those organisations that had given advice. Sean Clark stated that ultimately if the gap could not be closed completely through grants or funding contributions the Council would had to meet this through capital resources.

Councillor Potter referred to paragraph 3.2 of the report and questioned what the productivity percentage rate was at this current time. Anna Eastgate stated that currently it was operating at about 85% on the project. There was a plan to bring more of the contractor team back on the site and measures

had been put in place to protect the workforce from COVID-19 and potentially back up to 90% / 95% of activity on site.

Anna Eastgate referred to Councillor Rice's comment on the £41 million overspend and corrected by saying that the forecast outturn was not £41 million at this current time the actual shortfall was £35 million.

Councillor Rice requested that this report be presented at this committee on a quarterly basis.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted and commented on the report content.**
- 2. That the A13 Widening Project be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.**

49. Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects

Following the request from the Chair, Councillor Rice, for a report to be provided on the Stanford Le Hope Transport Project, to include the £7 million spend on consultants and how that £7 million was financed and what was achieved and who had authorised this and to inform Members on the price for the Old Brewery to accommodate the parking and waiting areas for buses and coaches going to DP World. Andy Millard, Director of Place, introduced the report by referring Members to the report that provided the introduction and background to the project and the Issues and Options that included costs of the Old Brewery Site.

Councillor Rice questioned whether there was an overall figure that had been expended on consultants through the period of the project so far. Anna Eastgate stated there was not an overall figure on what was spent on the consultancy but £7 million had been spent on the project to date which included project management resource and was the original design and build contract that had been procured at the start of the project.

Councillor Rice asked for an estimate as to when the project would be completed. Anna Eastgate stated that the Council were in detailed design stage, there would now be two phases – phase 1 going out to market on a fixed price tender and anticipated that completion of the station site would be summer 2021 then in parallel once phase 1 was up and running, phase 2 would start on the design and commence with the old brewery site being used as the construction compound. Therefore once phase 1 was completed, subject to planning approval, work would commence on the construction for the phase 2 works. With no final completion date available for phase 2 as the designs had not been development sufficiently to understand what the programme for that would be, but as these would be general civil works should be completed in a relatively short period of time.

Councillor Spillman asked for reassurance on behalf the residents of Stanford Le Hope that this project would finally get sorted out. Anna Eastgate spoke with confidence that the project following the acquisition of the old brewery site had given this project a whole new opportunity to deliver something substantially better than what was originally proposed. The revision to the scheme had given the Council the opportunity to acquire an asset and improve facilities for local people including additional car parking. That a Project Steering Group had been set up with key stakeholders such as the ward members, key stakeholders and resident representatives who had local knowledge and had a valuable contribution to make in helping to shape those proposals. This had already been acknowledged by Councillors Hebb and Piccolo as a positive step and had every confidence that the project team would bring this project forward.

Councillor Rice stated that the project was needed and welcomed with the potential expansion of DP World.

Councillor Rice requested that this report be presented at this committee on a quarterly basis.

Anna Eastgate informed Members that the Council was in the process of setting up on-line registerable newsletter and information of this would be posted in the station and within that facility. This would enable residents and commuters to receive updates on the project, the project web site was being updated to improve the level of information being provided and making it more accessible to the community.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Standard and Audit Committee noted and commented on the report content.**
- 2. That the Stanford Le Hope Transport be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.**

50. Work Programme

Members agreed to add:

- Investment Briefing be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.
- A13 Widening Project be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.
- Stanford Le Hope Transport Project be scheduled onto the work programme to be presented at every quarterly meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.31 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**

10 September 2020	ITEM: 5
Standards and Audit Committee	
Annual Complaints & Enquiries Report – 2019/2020	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Lee Henley - Strategic Lead Information Management	
Accountable Strategic Lead: Lee Henley – Strategic Lead Information Management	
Accountable Directors: Jackie Hinchliffe – Director of HR, OD & Transformation	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

- The number of complaints received for the reporting period is 1393. For the same period last year the figure was 1483, therefore the reporting period represents a reduction in complaints received.
- Details of the top 10 complaint areas are detailed within Appendix 1.
- A summary for Adult Social Care complaints is attached as Appendix 2.
- A summary for Children Social Care complaints is attached as Appendix 3.
- During the reporting period, 40% of complaints have been upheld. This is an improvement compared with the same period last year which identified 43% of complaints as being upheld.
- For the reporting period, 86% of complaints were responded to within timeframe. This is below the 95% target and represents a dip in performance from last year, where 89% were responded to within timeframe.
- A total of 287 MP/MEP enquiries were received, of which 87% were responded to within the timeframe. This is below the 95% target, and represents a dip in performance compared to last year's figures of 89% on time (from 589 received). The significant reduction in case volumes can be attributed to the closure of the MEP's office with only 8 enquiries being submitted during the year.
- A total of 3580 member enquiries were received, with 96% responded to within timeframe. This is above the target of 95%. Last year 3825 were received with

96% also responded to within timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 3 days.

- The council received 989 external compliments within the reporting period compared to 983 during last year.

1. Recommendation(s)

For the Standards and Audit Committee to note the statistics and performance for the reporting period.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This report sets out the council's complaints statistics for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

2.2 Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Social Care (CSC) have separate statutory complaints procedures.

2.3 Top 10 complaint themes have been produced and are attached as Appendix 1. The Corporate Complaints Team work with services to establish the root cause for complaints received, to identify reasons for complaint escalation and to establish the reasons why complaints are upheld.

2.4 Ombudsman Enquiries

2.4.1 The table below provides a summary of formal enquiries where the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and/or the Housing Ombudsman (HO) have reached a formal decision on cases within the reporting period. Findings and recommendations from all enquiries are shared with respective Directors and Assistant Directors.

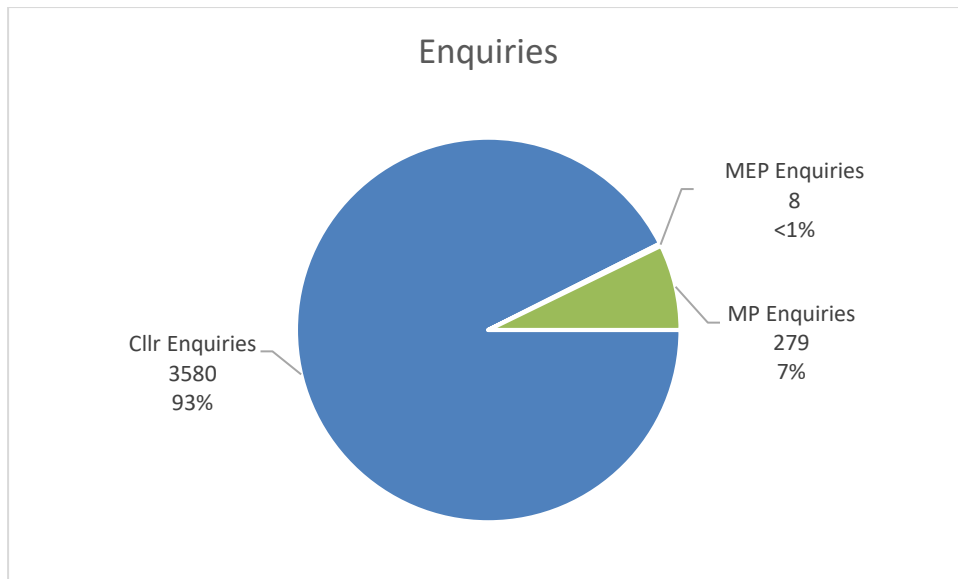
Area	Issue Nature	Ombudsman Findings	Financial Remedy
Place – Transport Development	Regarding the restructuring of the Towers Road/Rectory Road roundabout	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£150
Children's Services - SEN	Delays in Education Health and Care Plan	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£5675
Place – Development Control	Lack of consultation with neighbours over planning application	No Maladministration	N/A
Housing – Private Housing Team	Disclosing landlords name to tenants	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£100
Children's Services - Commissioning	Concerns raised that Council staff were targeting an individual's business	No Maladministration	N/A
Housing – Homeless Team	Complaint regarding change to local connection criteria	Discontinued Investigation	N/A

Children's Services - SEN	Delays in issuing Education Health Care Plan and communication	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£300
Env & Highways – Parking Enforcement	Complaint regarding enforcement of a parking ticket	Outside Jurisdiction	N/A
Place – Transport Development	Changes to a junction & traffic signals	Premature Complaint	N/A
Housing – Allocations Team	Not reviewing priority banding	No Maladministration	N/A
Adult Social Care - Finance	Disagreement over care costs	Discontinue Investigation	N/A
Adult Social Care – Finance	Not backdating money or carrying out new assessment	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A
Finance – Assets Team	Complaint regarding a land lease	Outside Jurisdiction	N/A
Adult Social Care – Day Care	Complaint regarding a reduction in direct payments	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A
Housing – Allocations Team	Leaving family in inappropriate property and not awarding a medical banding	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A
Env & Highways – Vehicle Crossings	Complaint in relation to rejections of an application for a dropped kerb	Maladministration, No Injustice	£75
HR and Organisation Development - Complaints Team	Not responding to a Stage 3 complaint	Maladministration Causing Injustice	£100
Finance – Council Tax	Complaint regarding council tax billing	Discontinue Investigation	N/A
Adult Social Care - Finance	Complaint regarding respite care costs	No Maladministration	N/A
Housing – Private Housing Team	Complaint by Landlord regarding enforcement actions	Outside Jurisdiction	N/A
Place – Planning Enforcement	Complaint regarding an enforcement case against a resident	Discontinued – No fault found	N/A

2.5 MP, MEP and Members Enquiries

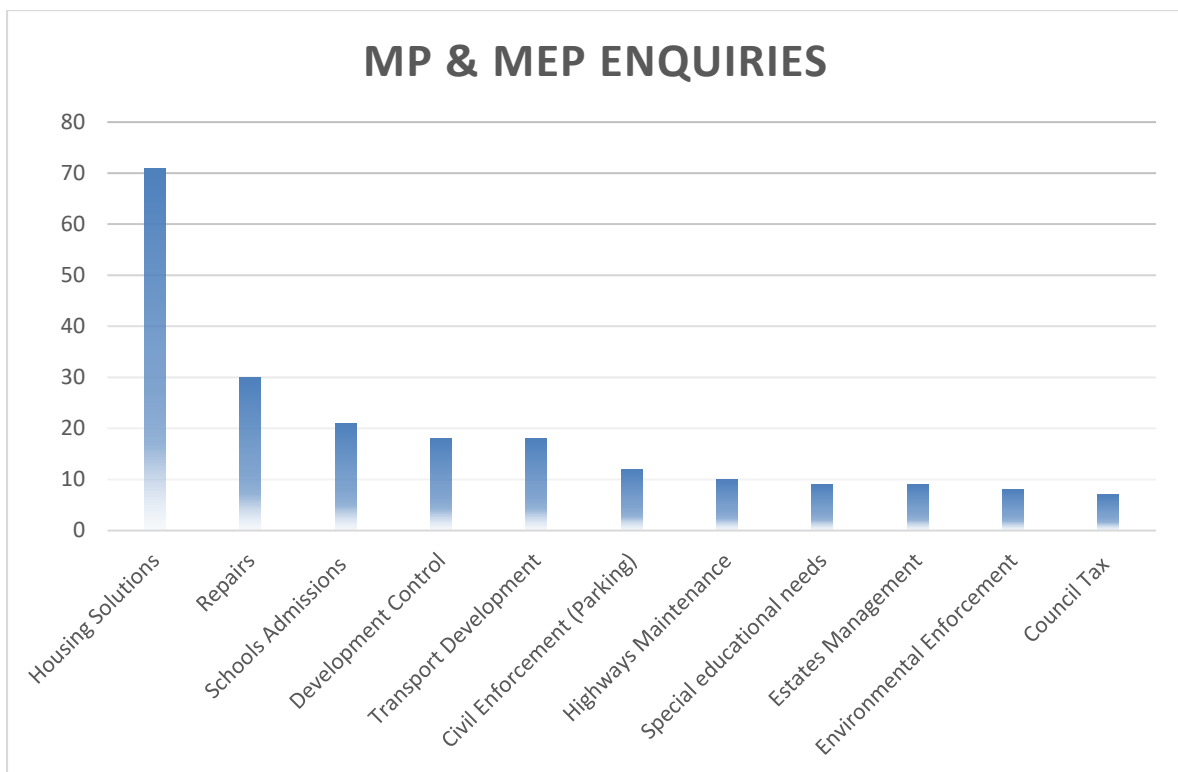
2.5.1 During the reporting period enquiries were received as follows:

- 3580 member enquiries were received, with 96% responded to within timeframe. The average time taken to respond to members enquiries across all Directorates was 3 days.

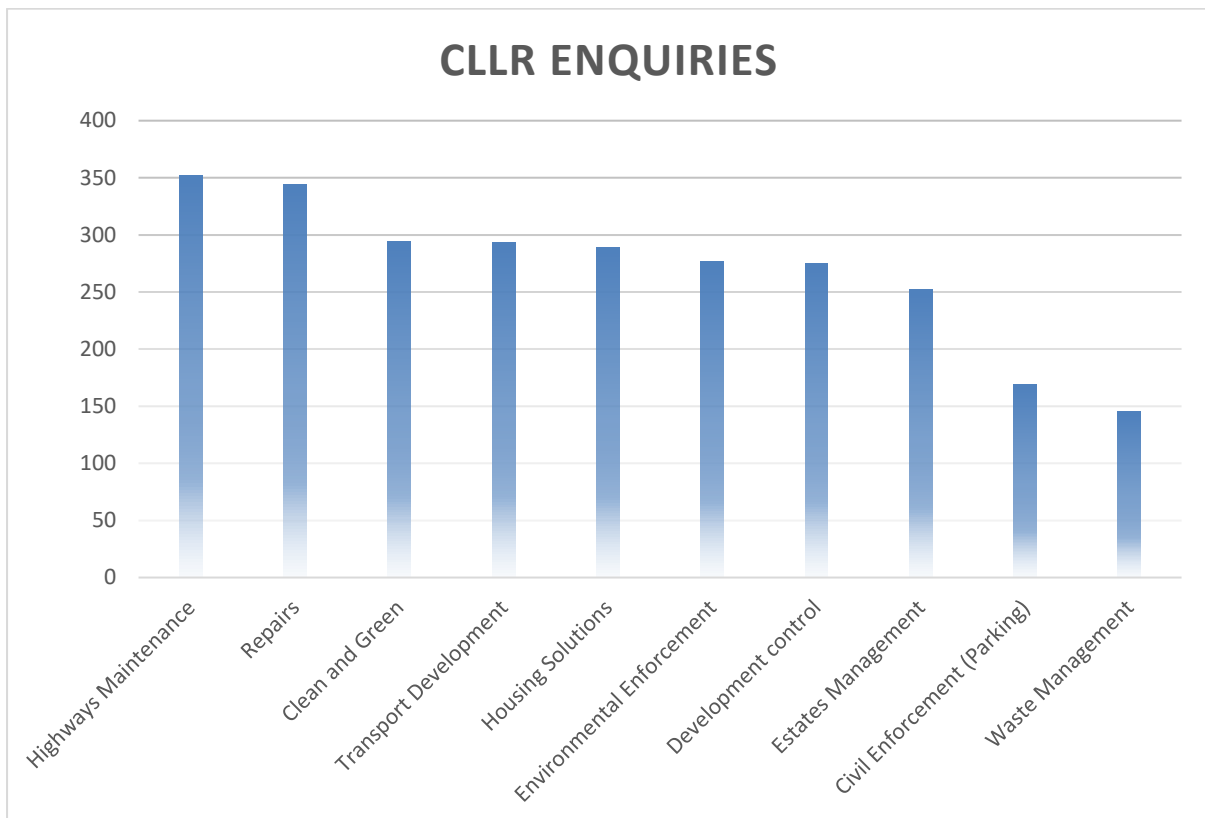


- A total of 287 MP/MEP enquiries were received, of which 87% were responded to within the timeframe.

2.5.2 MP/MEP enquiry trends and common themes are outlined below:



2.5.3 Councillor enquiry trends and common themes are outlined below:



2.6 Learning lessons from complaints

2.6.1 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 shows top 10 complaint themes and a summary of high level learning from upheld complaints which has been identified for each area.

2.7 Complaint investigation costs

Complaints which escalate through the complaints procedure can result in additional costs to the council in terms of officer time. Based on analysis it has been estimated that a stage 1 complaint costs £46, a stage 2 complaint costs £81 and a stage 3 complaint costs £130. As such complaint investigation costs for the reporting period are as follows:

Note – This is based on complaints closed (so will be different to the complaints received figure in the Executive Summary)

Complaint stage	No of complaints	Associated cost
Stage 1	932	£42,872
Stage 2	297	£24,057
Stage 3	26	£3380

2.8 Alternate Dispute Resolution

Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) has been embedded within the corporate complaints process for several years and is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team and appropriate recommendations being made. It can also include mediation with the complainant, the service or advising of onward referral to the appropriate Ombudsman.

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint.

Costs for independent investigations for both children and adult social care services differ depending upon complexity of the case, length of the investigation and in particular the need for independent persons in addition to an independent investigating officer for children's services. However, initial data analysis has shown that on average these costs are:

Adult Social Care	...	£3000 per complaint investigation
Children's Social Care	...	£1800 per stage 2
	...	£1000 per stage 3

Within the reporting period there were 2 ADR's undertaken. Saving £3600 by both preventing a Stage 2 children's escalation.

2.9 Compensation

2.9.1 Records confirm that within the reporting period financial compensation payments have been made by the council as outlined below:

Area	Complaint Stage	Financial Remedy
Children's Services - SEN	LGO	£5675
Housing – Estates Management	Stage 2	£3000
Place – Transport Development	LGO	£150
Housing – Private Housing Team	LGO	£100
Children's - SEN	LGO	£300
HR – Complaints Team	LGO	£100
Finance – Council Tax	Stage 3	£50
Env & Highways – Highways Maintenance	LGO	£75
Total		£9450

2.10 Social Care Annual Complaints & Representations

- Appendix 2 provides a summary dashboard for Adult Social Care.
- Appendix 3 provides a summary dashboard for Children’s Social Care.

2.11 Complaint channels

2.11.1 There are various means for complainants to register expressions of dissatisfaction. The top themes for the reporting period are shown below:

Digital channel (email, social media, website)	72%
Complaints Form	15%
Telephone	8%
Letter	4%
Website	1%

2.12 Compliments

2.12.1 The council received 989 external compliments within the reporting period compared to 983 from last year. A breakdown is shown below:

Area	Volume
Housing	106
Environment & Highways	70
Finance & IT	2
Strategy, Communications & Customer Service	629
HR, OD & Transformation	3
Legal	1
Place	27
Children’s	9
ASC	106
CSC	30
Libraries	5
Public Health	1
Total	989

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options associated with this paper.

4. Reasons for recommendations

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 Customer and Demand Board and Director's Board.

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

6.1 Complaints impact on the council's 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: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director Finance

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law and Governance & 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 Smith**
Strategic Lead Community Development and Equalities

The Information Management Team will ensure that the Community Development and Equalities Manager are aware of all complaints that have an equality related expression of dissatisfaction.

7.4 Other implications

None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report

Information has been obtained from the council's complaints system.

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Top 10 complaint themes
Appendix 2 – ASC complaint dashboard
Appendix 3 – CSC complaint dashboard

Report Author:

Lee Henley

Strategic Lead Information Management

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High level summary:

2019/20 – Annual Complaints Report

Top Ten Complaints Areas

The areas receiving the highest number of complaints are outlined below together with the individual learning for each area grouped by Directorate. Figures in brackets below represent 2018/19 data.

Directorate & Area	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
Housing –Repairs	206 (218)	38% (44%)	17 (23)	28 (36)	21% (33%)	11% (6%)	2 (4)	2 (4)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
E&H -Waste Management	177 (163)	58% (77%)	14 (20)	46 (21)	61% (57%)	2% (10%)	1 (2)	1 (2)	100% (50%)	0% (0%)
Housing – Housing Solutions	95 (61)	37% (36%)	13 (9)	31 (40)	42% (44%)	3% (1%)	3 (2)	3 (2)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Housing – Estates Management	54 (48)	20% (35%)	8 (12)	32 (43)	16% (19%)	0% (5%)	6 (1)	6 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Place – Development Control	51 (24)	14% (21%)	12 (10)	20 (16)	20% (19%)	0% (0%)	11 (3)	11 (3)	0% (66%)	0% (33%)

Finance – Council Tax	68 (54)	18% (17%)	9 (6)	10 (11)	10% (9%)	0% (0%)	2 (2)	2 (2)	0% 50%	0% 50%
Place – Transport Development	38 (9)	4% (22%)	1 (1)	3 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
E&H - Civil Enforcement (Parking)	28 (15)	29% (20%)	0 (2)	10 (6)	0% (33%)	0% (0%)	1 (1)	1 (1)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)
Environment – Clean & Green	32 (49)	47% (65%)	2 (4)	4 (15)	100% (33%)	50% (7%)	0 (4)	0 (4)	0% (25%)	0% (25%)
Housing – Transforming Homes	24 (22)	50% (45%)	4 (11)	11 (14)	55% (29%)	0% (7%)	1 (2)	1 (2)	0% (0%)	0% (0%)

- Complaints for this area cover both the internal Quality Assurance team & Contractors (Mears/Oakray/Aaron Services)

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/20	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Regular customer care and governance meetings are held with Mears, to review customer feedback and monitoring contractor performance.	This remains ongoing as part of contract performance and routine business. Meetings cover issues including, but not limited to, customer care issues, complaints and enquiries and customer satisfaction feedback, contract performance against key performance indicators.
2	Mears Follow on Works - A new status has been implemented within the Mears repair system (Awaiting Supervisor Action). This will allow for Mears to actively monitor where there are follow on works required, as these jobs would now sit within this status, as opposed to sitting within the complete status. This will be monitored by Mears as routine business and any repeat issues relating to follow on works not being raised will be addressed as part of staff performance, in-line with Mears internal HR processes. It is anticipated that this will result in a reduced level of complaints, relating to follow on works.	<p>Follow on works continue to be monitored as part of routine business.</p> <p>In addition, a review of staff resources across the contract has been undertaken which has resulted in additional administrative support being assigned to some areas of the contract where the service demand is high.</p> <p>2019/20 saw a slight increase in the number of complaints upheld.</p> <p>To provide some context around Mears repairs demand;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of 31,559 repairs were completed by Mears during 2019/20 Customer satisfaction for Mears for 2019/20 was 91%
3	Gas servicing and repairs – Aaron Services are the new contractor delivering gas repairs and gas servicing. As part of contract management, regular meetings will be held with the contractor, in order to monitor performance against set performance indicators. It is anticipated that	There has been a noticeable reduction in the number of complaints received relating to the gas repairs and servicing contract.

	<p>the implementation of this new contract will result in a reduced number of complaints relating to missed appointments, delays and communication issues.</p>	<p>There has also been a reduction in upheld complaints for this contract; 16 upheld during 2019/20, compared to 38 upheld for the previous year – 2018/19.</p> <p>In relation to gas repair satisfaction, the service have only been measuring this since December 2019, however the year end outturn for was 88%.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Oakray door entry - An improvement plan in relation to poor communication and delayed works has been implemented as part of contract management. It is anticipated this will assist in a reduced number of complaints being received relating to these issues.</p>	<p>There has been a reduced number of complaints received for this contract during the 2019/20 year.</p> <p>Oakray have worked hard to improve on their communications with Thurrock. Additional staffing including a dedicated Contract Manager has been assigned to work on the Thurrock contract to ensure that works are managed and issues responded to within an appropriate time.</p> <p>This contractor has met all KPI's and exceeded the target within a number of areas.</p>

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
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2019-20	206	38%	17	28	21%	11%	2	2	0%	0%
2018-19	218	44%	23	36	33%	6%	4	4	0%	0%
Difference	-12	-6%	-6	-8	-12%	+5%	-2	-2	0%	0%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suggested progress going forward or Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
38% of Stage 1 complaints upheld (of 206 received) This is a mixture of issues relating to contractor works, delays and missed appointments	Learning action plans are imbedded regularly with Mears & Aaron services as part of ongoing contract performance and this can be seen in the reduction overall volume of complaints received and the number upheld.	The direction of travel in terms of volume and percentage upheld is positive
21% of Stage 2 complaints upheld (of 28 received.) These include additional complaints regarding staff actions and attitudes	As with stage 1 complaints the learning actions can be seen to be being successfully embedded as the volume of escalations and overall numbers of direct staff complaints have fallen year on year.	

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	<p>Gas repairs and servicing</p> <p>Improved communications and service relating to keeping residents updated with the status of gas related repairs and completion of works in line with agreed policy timeframes.</p> <p>This was a new contract which commenced in April 2019 and following completion of the first year, a full review of service demand will be undertaken to ensure that volumes of operational staff are sufficient to support and deliver the requirements of the service. In addition, customer service training is being rolled out to all staff across the contract.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the above will result in fewer upheld complaints relating to these specific areas and an overall customer satisfaction rating meeting the agreed performance indicators.</p>
2	<p>Mears Repairs</p> <p>Continuous improvements to the service relating to follow on works being progressed including additional process implementations as required.</p> <p>General Housekeeping - Improvements to be made to system use, quality checks and the handheld devices for Mears operatives to log and update jobs. Maintaining clear monitoring of system failures.</p> <p>Communication to residents and the Council in relation to new or outstanding works orders.</p> <p>In addition to the above Mears will be reviewing and providing refresher training to staff covering customer services, the Mears internal repair reporting system and email management.</p>

- Complaints for this area cover the Allocations, Registrations, Homeless and Temporary Accommodation teams

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/20	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Increased joint working with the Corporate Complaints team, conducting monthly review of trends and lessons learnt to minimise future complaints. The service will hold regular meetings with Service team managers to capture lessons learned from complaints, and embed learning in the business process and practices	All processes have been updated to reflect the complaints above to improve our quality of service. Feedback is given to staff via the team meetings that are held, as well as the manager meetings.
2	Implement improvement of services from learning from complaints. Involve staff in service improvement review. Develop and undertaken a customer satisfaction survey and complete customer care standards for each area.	Staff have been trained to understand the importance of learning and taking on board the reasons for the complaints. No customer satisfaction surveys completed yet, however we have access to a free customer satisfaction tool (STAR), which we will look to implement in the future.
3	Continue bespoke customer care training for staff. Include customer care in all team processes.	All processes have been updated to reflect customer care, call handling guidance on all staff members' desks.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	95	37%	13	31	42%	3%	3	3	0%	0%
2018-19	61	36%	9	40	44%	1%	2	2	0%	0%
Difference	+34	+1%	+4	-9	-2%	+2%	+1	+1	0%	0%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain:	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
<p>37% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 95 received). These were a mixture of issues spread across all teams with the main issues being perceived lack of response to residents and issues with bidding and banding.</p>	<p>Provide suggested progress going forward or</p> <p>Provide a summary of positive impact</p> <p>During 2019/20, a review of the service was undertaken by two of the leading industry experts (National Practitioner Support Services and Shelter). They conducted a comprehensive examination of the entire service, focusing on the customer experience. The service has adopted a continuous improvement action plan which details increased activity to seek customer feedback and streamline processes to enhance the customer experience.</p> <p>The service have updated the processes following a review of the complaints and lessons learnt, and shared the learning with staff at quarterly meetings.</p>	<p>The volume of complaints has increased. Whilst it is positive that the upheld percentage has remained static the jump in volume overall needs to be monitored.</p>

<p>42% of Stage 2 complaints upheld of 31 received. The majority of these cases were direct staff complaints regarding lack of contact with caseworkers</p>	<p>Homeless team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated officers are now on a rota to manage incoming calls and emails each day. Individuals will be contacted within 48 hours. • The inbox is reviewed daily by a service manager to confirm that this has been cleared and all emails have been responded to. • Identified training requirements in the use of Objective's contact slips have now been resolved. This is now an ingrained part of the initial training plan for new staff. <p>The above measures will be monitored moving forward by the service manager to ensure compliance.</p> <p>The Allocations service has met and gained clarity on implementing some aspects of the Allocations Policy, agreeing the process moving forward.</p>	<p>The volume of complaints & upheld percentage has dropped slightly but is still above the overall target of 40%.</p>
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Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
<p>1</p>	<p>Communication will remain an agenda item for service manager team meetings, to ensure lessons from complaints and case reviews continue to be embedded into the day-to-day service processes and training provided where required for staff.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Encourage and increase customers usage of the online services</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Continue with our efforts to improve our response time to customers and resolving any issues raised at the first point of contact, whilst undertaking quality and monitoring checks periodically. Officers to have regular casework monitoring sessions to ensure the service are contacting customers regularly.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Increased joint working with the Corporate Complaints team, conducting monthly review of trends and lessons learnt to minimise future complaints. The service will hold regular meetings with Service team managers to capture lessons learned from complaints and embed learning in the business process and practices.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Develop and undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys and complete customer care standards for each area.</p>

- Complaints for this area cover the Tenancy Management, Caretaking & Anti-social Behaviour teams

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/20	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Resident Engagement to continue with current plans to intervene and resolve issues locally.	The Resident Engagement team has grown and the team have successfully recruited three Neighbourhood officers. These new roles will continue to work with local residents to address neighbourhood issues on Housing land and further emphasise the importance of local community involvement as well as inspecting the areas not covered by caretaking services. The Resident groups have continued to grow over the reporting year and they have addressed a number of key concerns such as parking, grounds maintenance and fly tipping. They have also held many community events, in-line with encouraging healthy lifestyles.
2	Tenants Excellence Panels to continue to meet and identify any further issues	The Tenants Excellence Panel has continued to be involved in a number of developments which has provided a good level of feedback to the service. There are a number of subgroups which are progressing such as Readers Panel, Estate Inspections, Void Inspections, Complaints and Fire Safety. These subgroups focus on these areas and work with officers to develop their knowledge and challenge the practices to improve the level of service delivered to residents.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	54	20%	8	32	16%	0%	6	6	0%	0%
2018-19	48	35%	12	43	19%	5%	1	1	0%	0%
Difference	+6	-15%	-4	-11	-3%	-5%	+5	+5	0%	0%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain:	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
20% Of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 54 received). There were no overarching themes but mostly related to customer service type issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suggested progress going forward or • Provide a summary of positive impact <p>Upheld complaints are decreasing which is a positive improvement. There have been no complaints for the Resident Engagement & Neighbourhood Team and the Traveller Liaison Teams for the whole year.</p>	Whilst the volume of complaints at stage 1 has slightly increased, the number upheld has dropped well under the benchmark which is a positive.
16% Of Stage 2 complaints were upheld (of 32 received). Most which are direct staff complaints relating to disagreements with officers or lack of contact.	There have been a number of changes in process during the reporting year which has impacted the level of customer satisfaction within the team. For example, a new process of household audits has been successfully implemented which enables a proactive and supportive service to be delivered to residents rather than a reactive one. Emphasis has been made to officers on the importance of maintaining contact with residents and	Both the volume and upheld % in this area have dropped year on year. Whilst more complaints progressed to stage 3 the strength of the investigations at stage 2 meant that none of these cases were upheld.

	following through on actions, especially vulnerable tenants to ensure they have the correct level of support.	
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Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
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1	To continue to audit properties on a regular basis and to ensure relevant support is provided to vulnerable residents.
2	To continue to develop a system for inspecting Housing land to ensure the areas are well maintained and managed.
3	To continue with developing the area of resident engagement and empowering communities to support themselves and each other where possible.
4	To continue to identify garages which are in disrepair and manage them effectively, providing a good level of customer care to customers renting garages from the council.
5	To continue to provide a good level of tailored service to those living on the traveller sites, supporting them and their households effectively.

- Complaints for this area include both Transforming Homes and Adaptation works to properties.

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/20	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Provide quality assurance (QA) of all QA TH programme documentation and written processes, to ensure these are robust, consistent, and support effective programme delivery. To review the quality and relevance of the documentation and seek standardization where applicable. Undertake periodic spot checks of processes and documentation to ensure files are complete.	This is an ongoing exercise. We have undertaken a number of policy and process reviews, for example that relate to the delivery of adaptations to residents and also how we consult with leaseholders regarding programmes of works to their homes. A review is currently taking place regarding the communication process for external programme of works
2	Lead on customer information and analysis from the customer feedback transforming homes programme. To provide quarterly review of trends with suggested improvements. Work collaboratively with housing colleagues to deliver agreed improvements.	The service has completed quarterly and yearly reports based on independently obtained data which asks residents to confirm how Transforming Homes works went for them. The service consider any emerging themes and work with colleagues to deliver improvements. The service also look at any works defects that are reported whilst necessary rectification works are carried out to the individual properties. The service will look at any repeating issues and how it might address these.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	24	50%	4	11	55%	0%	1	1	0%	0%
2018-19	22	45%	11	14	29%	7%	2	2	0%	0%
Difference	+2	+5%	-7	-3	+26%	-7%	-1	-1	0%	0%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain:	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
50% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 24 received). These largely relate to issues regarding quality of work by contractors and communication with residents over works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suggested progress going forward or • Provide a summary of positive impact <p>The main theme having reviewed the outcomes from the upheld complaints is one of communication. The service have carried out exercises to improve with regard to this matter. So whilst in the majority of cases our improved communication processes are robust, it is evident that further emphasis is required on this matter with regard to formal complaints. The service are already doing this, for example with on-going reviews of its procedure and processes generally particularly as works programmes move from internal refurbishment to external programmes.</p>	Both complaints volumes and upheld % have increased slightly, however comments by the service confirm they are aware of this so further monitoring will be required.

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21
1	Continuing work to improve communication processes.
2	On-going policy and process review to inform the above.
3	Consider and review the customer experience generally to reduce number of complaints received to include those regarding staff.

- Complaints for this area include all Waste collection issues.

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/2020	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Ongoing efforts to further improve on reducing 'missed bins' and 'non-returned bins' complaints, with the 'Bartec In Cab' system being rolled out to all collection vehicles.	The introduction of Bartec has already enabled the Service to raise the level of key performance indicator compliance
2	Ongoing training & monitoring for all collection crews to ensure collection service standards are being maintained across the service. Ensure Service standards are monitored by Supervisors during crew visits.	Scheduled training sessions during 'catch-up' periods throughout the year have ensured continuous training sessions are carried out and targeted towards improving service delivery.
3	Ongoing efforts to further improve on response & resolution of all levels of customer complaints. Closer monitoring of supervisor compliance to ensure timely and appropriate levels of response and measured via Performance Development Review process.	The Waste Management Team have improved on the response times for complaint resolution by closer monitoring and by regular meetings with the Performance & Support Team where focus is maintained on prompt resolution of issues across the team.
4	Aim to increase recycling levels across the borough by ensuring collection crews are carrying out contamination checks and recording issues via the Bartec In-Cab System, to ensure residents are then made aware of issues that result in bins not being emptied due to unacceptable materials being placed in their bins.	By using Bartec to enable crews to quickly and accurately report such issues and introducing an automated response directly to the resident. The Service is driving down contamination levels within recycling collections and reducing the risk of loads being rejected by the contractors which in-turn increases recycling tonnages.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	177	58%	14	46	61%	2%	1	1	100%	0%
2018-19	163	77%	20	21	57%	10%	2	2	50%	0%
Difference	+14	-19%	-6	+25	+4%	-8%	-1	-1	+50%	0%

***Notes**

- **2018/19 data relates only to missed collections.**
- **2019/20 data relates to waste management in general. This will include missed collections and other issue natures (e.g. non-return of bins). This change took place as part of a system upgrade and re-classification of issue natures**
- **Based on the above, the 2 years data is not a like- for-like comparison**

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suggested progress going forward or • Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
58% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 177 received). Complaints largely relate to missed bin collections and the return of bins to the property.	Waste Services are continually committed to improving the services provided to the residents of Thurrock and will continue to work towards reducing their need to complain about service provision. This will be achieved through a continued provision of excellent customer care, operational training and monitoring, and the use of In-Cab technologies to ensure our staff have access to accurate and up to date collection rounds information with which to carry out their work.	See notes section above
61% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld (of 46 received)	As above ongoing operational staff training is being continued with to help reduce the volume of staff complaints received.	See notes section above

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	Ongoing efforts to further improve on reducing 'missed bins' and 'non-returned bins' figures, with the 'Bartec In Cab' system being rolled out to all collection vehicles.
2	Ongoing training & monitoring for all collection crews to ensure collection service standards are being maintained across the service. Ensure Service standards are monitored by Supervisors during crew visits.
3	Ongoing efforts to further improve on response & resolution of all levels of customer complaints. Closer monitoring of supervisor compliance to ensure timely and appropriate levels of response and measured via PDR process.
4	Aim to increase recycling levels across the borough by ensuring collection crews are carrying out contamination checks and recording issues via the Bartec In-Cab System, to ensure residents are then made aware of issues that result in bins not being emptied due to unacceptable materials being placed in their bins.

- Complaints for this area include General parking enforcement and complaints against Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's)

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	28	29%	0	10	0%	0%	1	1	0%	0%
2018-19*	15	20%	2	6	33%	0%	1	1	0%	0%
Difference	+13	+9%	-2	+4	-33%	0%	0	0	0%	0%

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Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suggested progress going forward or Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
29% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 28 received) These related to parking notices issued and/or a perceived lack of enforcement	In order to reduce the overall number of complaints received and upheld, the team will ensure all officers that are providing front line and back office support to the enforcement teams, are provided with all relevant	Volumes of complaints & upheld % have increased. However the % upheld figure is below the benchmark and with no staff

	<p>training, support and guidance suited to their role. This will focus on providing excellent customer service.</p> <p>The team will ensure robust supervisory measures are in place and to undertake regular quality control checks. Officers will be accountable for delivering a professional customer focussed service.</p>	<p>complaints upheld which is a positive.</p>
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Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	Effective use of remote supervisory tools including: Regular reviews and quality checks of Officers recorded body cam footage to ensure high levels of customer service are being provided by front line officers in accordance with legislation, policy and procedure. Any areas of concern will be addressed with officers in their 1-2-1 and additional training will be provided where required.
2	In cases where lessons have or could be learnt – The team will introduce an agenda point at the scheduled monthly team meetings to discuss casework and lessons learnt. Where there are concerns that require immediate rectification, immediate debriefs will be conducted to scrutinise how the service can improve.
3	Continue to promote a proactive approach to enforcement where Officers immediately deal with issues that fall within their remit and work in effective partnership with other service areas on matters outside their authority. This will be done through co-ordinated Operations that will focus and target problematic hotspots.
4	Increase Officer attendance at Community Forums and residents meetings to receive information and feedback on issues and concerns first hand negating the need for residents to escalate concerns.
5	Ensure all service requests are dealt with efficiently and customers receive a timely response including cases which have been referred to other service areas. All service requests will be reviewed within 24 hrs

- Complaints for this area include works conducted by the Arboriculture, Street Cleaning & Cemeteries teams.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	32	47%	2	4	100%	50%	0	0	0%	0%
2018-19*	49	65%	4	15	33%	7%	4	4	25%	25%
Difference	-17	-18%	-2	-11	+77%	+43%	-4	-4	-25%	-25%

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Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suggested progress going forward or Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
47% Of Stage 1 Complaints were upheld (of 32 received). These relate to a perceived	To reduce overall complaints volumes or those upheld the team will continue to ensure that service requests are answered in a timely manner and this will be checked by Management. The service has	The direction of travel is positive due to fewer complaints and a reduction in upheld complaints

quality issue with work and/or delays in conducting work.	communicated with any staff member who closes down jobs on Uniform that they need to ensure that a clear comment is made that is appropriate for the resident / complainant to see.	
100% Of Stage 2 complaints were upheld (of 4 received.) The volume of complaints is too low to show themes	Whilst the overall percentage is high, volumes are low and less than the previous year.	

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	To ensure that all Team Managers and Team Leaders have had further guidance on closing down jobs on Uniform. This will include template paragraphs for the most common complaints that can be adapted for each response.
2	Further communications to all staff reminding them of the importance of answering service requests and complaints in a timely manner, and a “right first time” approach when dealing with these.
3	Continue with instilling a “don’t walk by” attitude in the service where staff either deal with issues that are their responsibility or report those that are outside of their remit or area. This will be backed up with effective supervision of staff and quality control of service delivery by Team Leaders and Team Managers.

- Complaints for this area include Council Tax billing complaints and issues relating to discounts on bills

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/2020	Progress summary provided by the service
1	Continue to respond to all requests and queries within time to prevent complaints being received	The team continue to monitor both timeliness and accuracy work areas, to ensure customer service levels are maintained throughout the year.
2	Continue recording and review of telephone calls from staff to assist in further reduction of complaint volumes	As above

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Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	68	18%	9	10	10%	0%	2	2	0%	0%
2018-19	54	17%	6	11	9%	0%	2	2	50%	50%
Difference	+14	+1%	+3	-1	+1%	0%	0	0	-50%	-50%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suggested progress going forward or • Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
18% of Stage 1 complaints upheld (of 68 received) these largely related to perceived incorrect billing or failure to apply discounts.	Volume of complaints are extremely low considering the volume of cases the team deal with throughout the year.	Whilst the volume of complaints has increased the upheld % is very low and this should be emphasised as a positive.

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	Continue to respond to all requests and queries within time to prevent complaints being received
2	Continue recording and review of telephone calls from staff to assist in further reduction of complaint volumes

- Complaints for this area cover all issues raised regarding planning applications & enforcement cases

	Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2019/2020	Progress summary provided by the service
1	In partnership with other services, improve customer access to Development Services	The service work closely with the Web Team to update information on the Council website to assist customers in submitting applications to the service. The service also work with the Geographical Information System (GIS) team to add updates to mapping tools on the website to allow customers to self-serve.

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Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	51	14%	12	20	20%	0%	11	11	0%	0%
2018-19	24	21%	10	16	19%	0%	3	3	66%	33%
Difference	+27	-7%	+2	+4	+1%	0%	+8	+8	-66%	-33%

Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide suggested progress going forward or • Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
14% of Stage 1 complaints were upheld (of 51 received). Complaints related to delays in application processing and issues regarding enforcement cases	The nature of the service and the matters it deals with mean that some decisions will not always be positively viewed by third parties. The outcomes through the complaints process do not identify any particular trends in regards to the nature of complaints or where they have been upheld.	There has been an increase in complaints volume at all stages, however several of these cases were submitted by 1 or 2 individuals
20% of Stage 2 complaints were upheld (of 20 received). These related to escalations of existing cases mixed with direct staff complaints	The service is aware that positive communication of its activities, methods of assessment and reasons for outcomes can lead to improved understanding for customers and that regular updates on cases under consideration can assist in supporting customers and providing certainty and clarity. The team are aware of this and as a service are looking to improve communication with customers as much as possible.	

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	To improve communication with Customers
2	Regular recorded updates to complainants and Members in regards to enforcement cases
3	Advising applicants and agents of any potential changes in timescales for determination of applications

- Complaints for this area include: Plans for new parking restrictions, traffic calming measures and road redesign activities.

Comparative Data: 2019-20 vs. 2018-19	S1 rec'd	% upheld	S1 escalated	S2 rec'd	% upheld	% of S2 upheld, that were not upheld at S1	S2 escalated	S3 rec'd	% upheld	% of S3 upheld, that were not upheld at S2
2019-20	38	4%	1	3	0%	0%	0	0	0%	0%
2018-19	9	22%	1	1	0%	0%	0	0	0%	0%
Difference	+29	-18%	0	+2	0%	0%	0	0	0%	0%

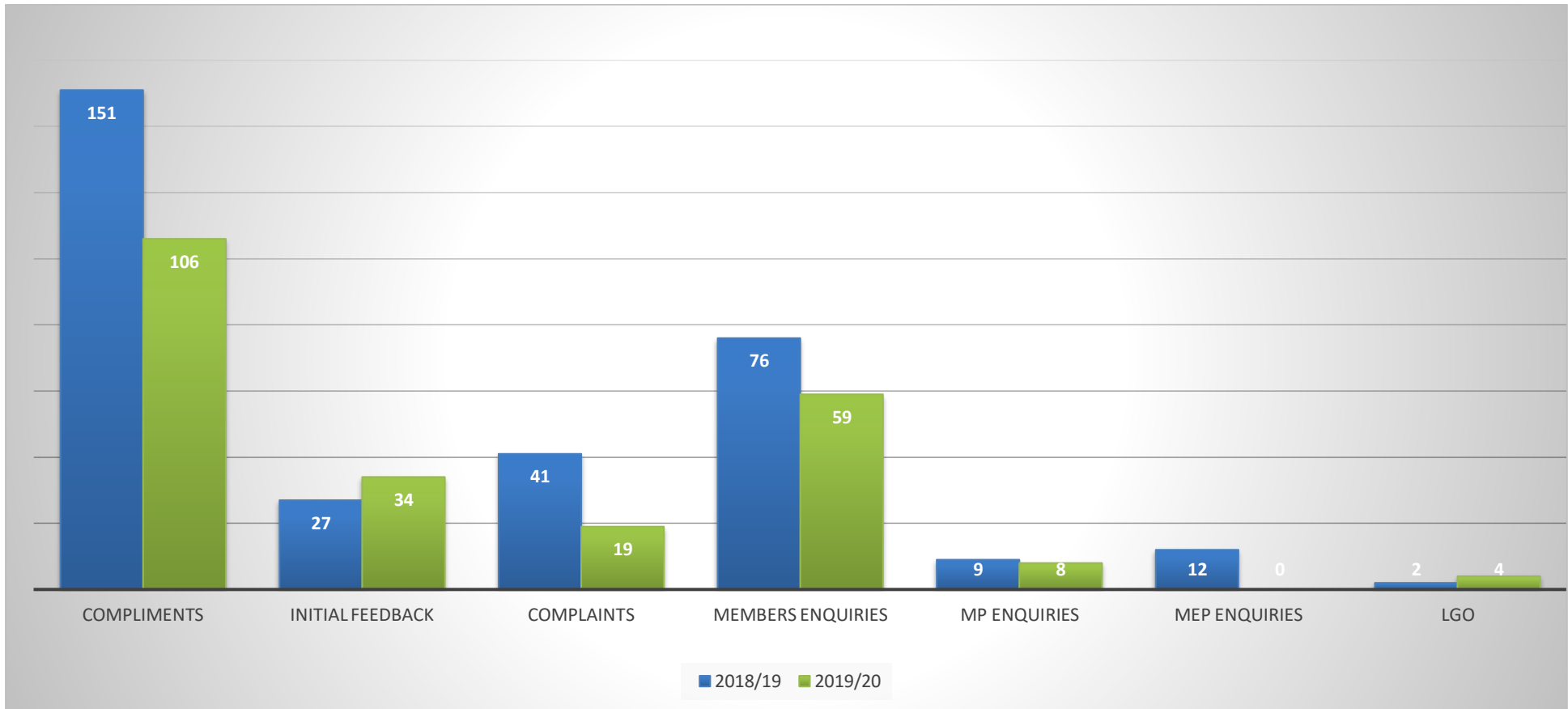
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Analysis – key themes / concerns	Comments to explain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide suggested progress going forward or Provide a summary of positive impact 	Additional commentary from the Complaints Team
Stage 1 complaints have increased.	Overall levels of complaints have increased, however this was due to a single issue which involved a complaints campaign by a local organisation (none of these complaints were upheld).	It is anticipated that complaint volumes will drop back to 2018/19 levels by the next reporting cycle.

Service commitments submitted by the service for the year 2020/21	
1	Complaints relating to the Transport Development team are relatively low and will continue to be dealt with by the team. Allocation of enquiries and complaints can cause delay and a bespoke resource will be explored to manage this more effectively.
2	Bi-weekly meetings established to ensure all outstanding enquiries, complaints etc. are identified and dealt with robustly.
3	Additional resource explored, through restructure opportunity, to provide increased commitment to managing enquiries and complaints.

Volume of Representations 2019/20 vs 2018/19

Below is a comparison of representations received for both years. During 2019/20, **230** representations were received, compared with **318** for 2018/19.



Complaints – 2019/20 vs 2018/19

Below is the comparison between the two years broken down into more specific detail including those complaints involving both internal and external providers.

Feedback:	Initial Feedback	Low Intervention	Medium Intervention	High Intervention	No. withdrawn / Cancelled	Total to be investigated	Cases closed in period*	% of complaints upheld in period	% timeliness of response for those due in period*
2019/20	34	17	2	0	2	17	18	61%	79%
2018/19	27	37	3	1	2	39	38	56%	93%
Difference	+7	-20	-1	-1	0	-22	-20	+5%	-14%

* For 2019/20, of the 18 closed complaints, 17 relate to the period 2019/20 and 1 relates to 2018/19 (but this was closed in 2019/20).

* 2019/20 % timeliness is based on 19 complaints being due in the period (15 from 19 within timeframe).

Root cause analysis and associated learning:

Complaints are analysed and the top themes are identified below. Learning from upheld complaints is recognised by the service as part of complaint resolution.

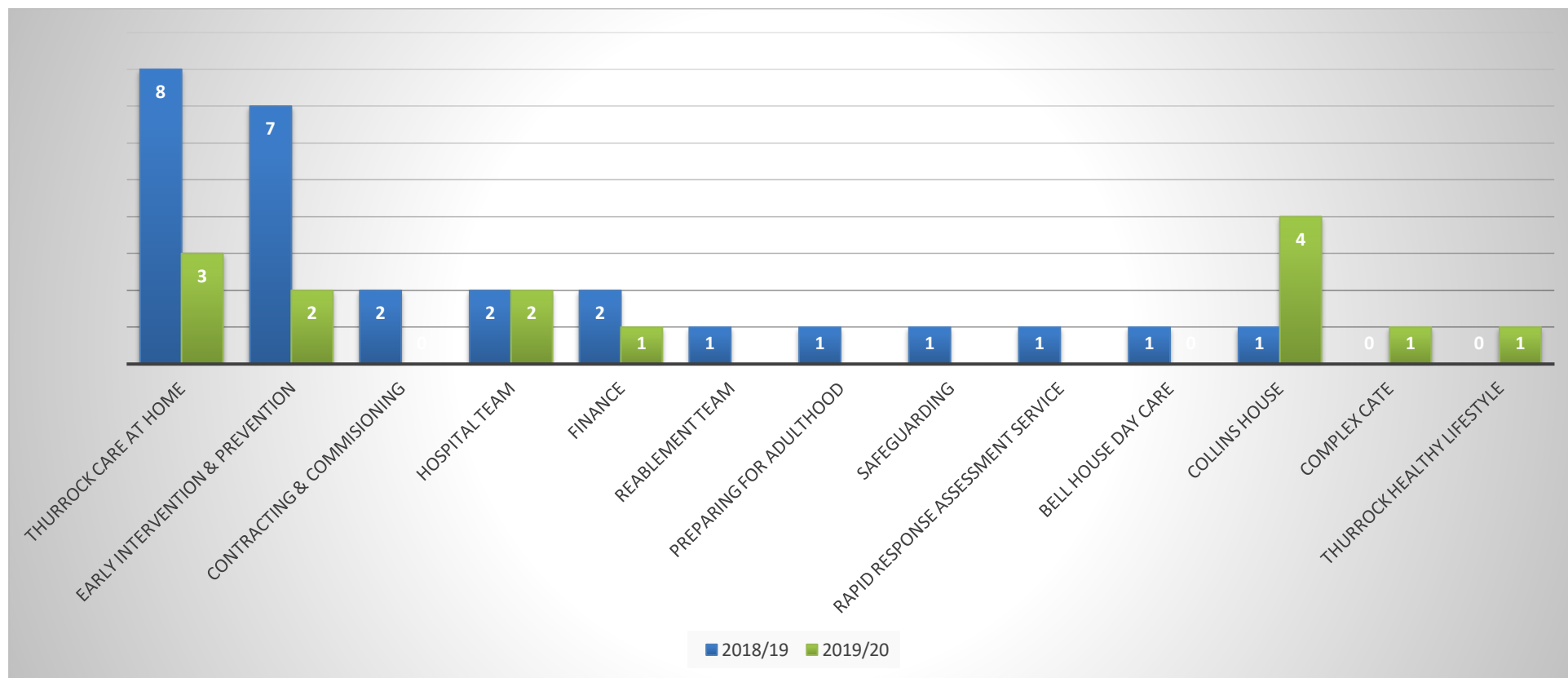
Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints:	Root Cause 1 and associated learning	Root Cause 2 and associated learning	Root Cause 3 and associated learning
2019/20	Quality of Care	Assessment	Communication
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medication Audits changed from weekly to daily and Senior Carers will be undertaking further medication administration training Staff member (carer) reminded of professional standards required during all visits Staff reminded to provide additional support during meal times and ensure rooms are regularly cleaned Staff reminded of the importance of the correct use of protected personal equipment Staff reminded to dress service users appropriately To ensure residents security by allowing them to lock doors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to the admission of a resident, ensure all information regarding potential safeguarding issues is gathered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure documentation is fully recorded and the family are notified regarding changes in a resident's condition. Ensure the family are always informed when an injury occurs to a resident. Staff reminded to ensure questions from the family are directed to the duty manager to formally respond to. Communication between staff for handovers to be improved and if delays occur these are communicated to all affected parties.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure recording of information is accurate and ensuring medication is always provided 		
2018/19	Missed Appointments	Quality of Care	Finance
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers to maintain consistency in carers call times • Staff reminded that all care calls must be provided and support plans followed at all times 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-house system to be monitored to ensure quality & length of calls. • Additional training for carers provided • Staff to ensure that all available contacts for Clients are documented within ISP and are regularly checked and updated. • Medication policy updated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct payments provider to review internal processes for payments • Funding decisions to make clear reasoning for outcomes (legal advice etc.)

Complaints regarding internal teams and staff:

14 of 18 complaints responded to within this period are for internal teams/services. This compares with **27** of **38** during 2018/19.

Note – From 1 April 2020, complaints data will also be captured and reported upon for the Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, for those areas where services are jointly managed with the council.



Commissioned Providers:

4 of 18 complaints responded to within this period are for commissioned providers. This compares with **11** of **38** during 2018/19.

Provider Name	Volume 2019/20	Volume 2018/19
Bennett Lodge	1	0
Hollywood Rest Home	1	0
Leatherland Lodge	1	0
Willow Lodge	1	0
Lodge Care Group	0	2
Guardian Homecare	0	1
Purple	0	6
Cedar House	0	1
Bluebell Court	0	1

Upheld Complaints:

- Percentages for upheld complaints for the services below appears high. This is due to the low volume of complaints that are in-scope of this report. Figures in brackets below represent the numbers of upheld complaints for those received and closed in period.

Complaint Area	Volume 2019/20	% Upheld	Volume 2018/19	% Upheld
Finance	1	100% (1)	2	50% (2)
Early Intervention & Prevention	2	0%	7	29% (2)
Thurrock Care at Home	3	100% (3)	8	100% (8)
Hospital Team	2	0%	2	0%
Collins House	4	100% (4)	1	100% (1)
Bennett Lodge	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
Hollywood Rest Home	1	0%	0	N/A
Leatherland Lodge	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
Willow Lodge Care Home	1	0%	0	N/A
Thurrock Healthy Lifestyle	1	0%	0	N/A
Complex Care	1	100% (1)		

Contracts & Commissioning	0	N/A	2	50% (1)
Safeguarding	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Preparing for Adulthood	0	N/A	1	0%
Reablement Team	0	N/A	1	0%
Guardian Homecare	0	N/A	1	0%
Lodge Care Group	0	N/A	2	50% (1)
Bell House Day Care	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Bluebell Court	0	N/A	1	0%
Cedar House	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Rapid Response Assessment Service	0	N/A	1	100% (1)
Purple	0	N/A	6	67% (4)

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints:

There were 4 LGO complaints/enquiries received during the reporting period. See below:

Area	Issue Nature	Ombudsman Findings	Financial Remedy
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Finance	Regarding the council charging for 15 weeks of respite care which should only have lasted 6 weeks and delays in returning home.	No Maladministration	N/A
Finance	The council has not backdated all Disability Related Expenditure and not refunded money owed from 2013.	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A
Finance	The complainant disagrees that she should have to pay money to the council for her late mother's care costs.	Discontinue investigation	N/A
Finance	Resident complains the council reduced her direct payments without good reason.	Maladministration Causing Injustice	N/A

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR):

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint. ADR is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team. It can also include mediation with the complainant and the service area.

There have been no ADR cases in the reporting period.

Enquiries:

In the reporting period the following was received:

- 8 MP Enquiries
- 59 Member Enquiries

MP Enquiries	Total
Blue badges	1
Commissioning	1
Complex Care	1

Contract Compliance	1
Finance	1
Leatherland Lodge	1
Customer Finance	1
Thurrock First	1

Members Enquiries	Total
Thurrock First	18
Public Health	8
Safeguarding	7
Extra Care	5
Blue badges	4
Finance	3
Local Area Coordination	3
Thurrock Care at Home	2
Preparing for Adulthood	2
Early Intervention & Prevention (East)	1
Catering	1
Merrie Loots Farm	1
Older People Mental Health	1
Grays Court Care Home	1
Commissioning	1
Early Intervention & Prevention (West)	1

External Compliments:

A total of 106 compliments have been received during this period.

Note – These relate to compliments that have been sent to the Complaints Team to record on the complaints system.

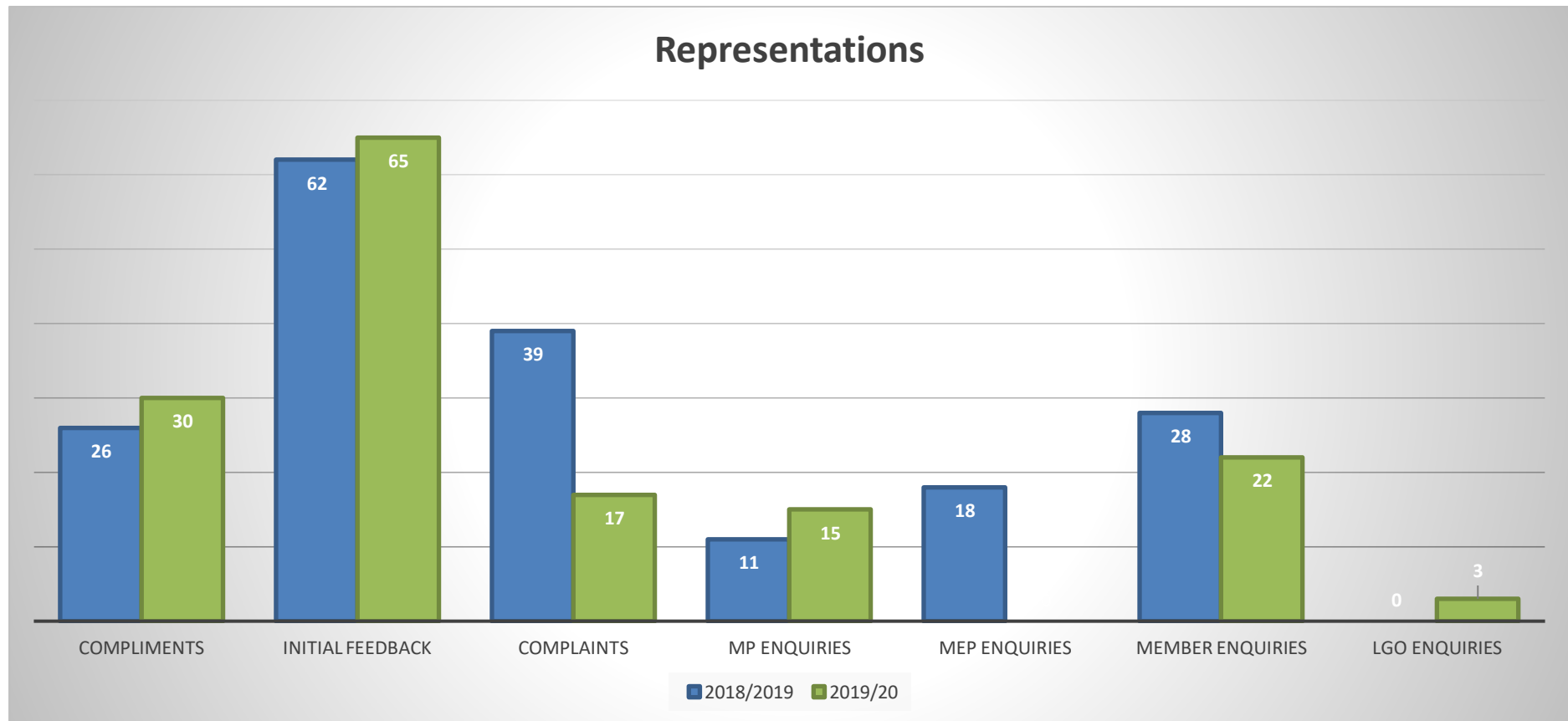
Service Area	Number of Compliments
Joint Reablement Team	34
Thurrock Care at Home	10
Hospital Team	10
Collins House	8
Disabled Facilities Grant	8
Older People Mental Health	6
Extra Care	6
Rapid Response Assessment Service	5
Local Area Coordination	5
Early Intervention & Prevention (East)	4
Safeguarding	3
Blue badges	2
Careline	2
Day Care	1
Complex Care	1
Preparing for Adulthood	1

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Appendix 3 - 2019/20 - Children's Social Care – Complaints & Representations

Volume of Representations – 2019/20 vs 2018/19:

Below is a comparison of all representations received during both years. A total of **152** representations were received in 2019/20 compared to **184** in the same period of 2018/19.



Complaints – 2018/19 vs 2019/20:

Below is the comparison between the two years with additional details provided. There were no escalations beyond stage 1 for both periods. The reduction in complaint volumes can be attributed to a more proactive process of meeting with residents to prevent issues becoming complaints and/or staffing related complaints now being captured as corporate complaints (and not statutory complaints):

Feedback:	Initial Feedback	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases	Cases closed in period*	Cases Cancelled	% of complaints upheld in period	% timeliness of response for those due in period*
2019/20	65	17	0	0	2	14	4	50%	47%
2018/19	62	39	0	0	1	35	3	51%	87%
Difference	+3	-22	0	0	+1	-21	+1	-1%	-40%

*For 2019/20, of the 14 closed complaints, 13 relate to the period 2019/20 and 1 relate to 2018/19 (but was closed during 2019/20)

* 2019/20 % timeliness is based on 15 complaints being due in the period (7 from 15 within timeframe). 1 was closed in March 2018 and so appeared on last year's report.

Root cause analysis and associated learning:

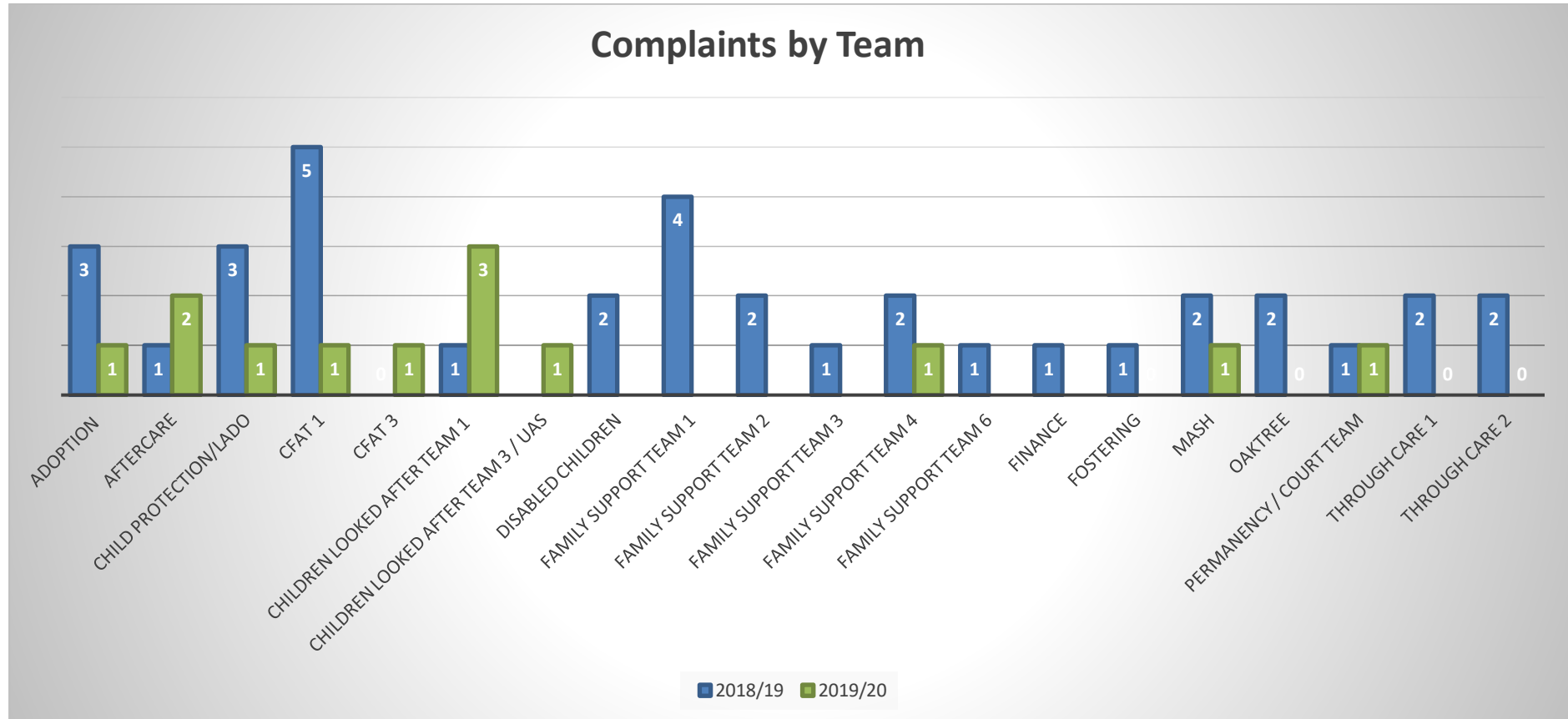
Key learning themes are identified below for the reporting period. Learning from upheld complaints is recognised by the service as part of complaint resolution.

Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints:	Root Cause 1 and associated learning	Root Cause 2 and associated learning	Root Cause 3 and associated learning
Learning for 2019/20	<p>Communication</p> <p>Discussions have taken place within the service in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of sharing plans across the service on a need to know basis (Children Looked After Team 1) • The need to ensure that information given to children about their care plans is accurate and up to date (Children Looked After Team 1) • Change over arrangements to be improved with joint visits to be conducted with both the new and outgoing 	<p>Savings</p> <p>The team have developed a new process to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address inconsistencies in savings for looked after children (Aftercare) • Ensure all young people receive regular savings going forward (Aftercare) • To review allowance payments annually and to ensure the system in place does not cause any disruption and/or inconvenience to the carer (Adoptions Team) 	<p>Assessment</p> <p>A formal review to be conducted to ensure standards are maintained in all cases involving unaccompanied asylum seekers (Children Looked After Team 1)</p>

	<p>social workers (Children Looked After Team 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share all reports and communicate with families to prevent any disruption in education during placement moves (Children Looked After Team 1) • Staff reminded of expected customer service standards during visits (Courts Team) 		
<p>Learning for 2018/19</p>	<p>Communication</p> <p>Internal changes to rota spreadsheets to reflect contact in the community.</p> <p>Staff given reflective practice sessions to attune themselves with how service changes affect users.</p> <p>Better handling of Letterbox administration to ensure birth relatives and adoptive parents maintain proper contact.</p> <p>Recruitment of staff to allow for resumption of life story book productions.</p>	<p>Decision Making</p> <p>Both sides of families to be contacted where children only live with one parent to ensure equal sharing of information.</p> <p>Staff retrained on LADO referrals and social workers to fully familiarise themselves with the case prior to initial meetings.</p>	<p>Policy and Training</p> <p>Policy to be drafted to address the issue of savings for children in care.</p> <p>Further training to be provided to staff to remember the impact that professional opinion and timekeeping has on cases.</p>

Breakdown of complaints received:

This may be different to figures within the upheld complaints section as this is based on closed complaints (not complaints received). The figures below will also exclude cancelled complaints.



Upheld Complaints:

Percentages for upheld complaints (based on complaints received and closed during the reporting period) across some areas are high as volumes of complaints are relatively low. Figures in brackets below represent the numbers of upheld complaints.

Complaint Area	Volume 2018/19	% Upheld	Volume 2019/20	% Upheld
Adoption	3	67% (2)	1	100% (1)
Aftercare	1	100% (1)	2	50% (1)
Child Protection/LADO	3	33% (1)	1	0%
CFAT 1	5	40% (2)	1	0%
CFAT 3	0	N/A	1	0%
Children Looked After Team 1	0	N/A	3	100% (3)
Children Looked After Team 3 / UAS	0	N/A	1	0%
Disabled Children	2	50% (1)	0	N/A

Family Support Team 1	4	25% (1)	0	N/A
Family Support Team 2	2	100% (2)	0	N/A
Family Support Team 3	1	0%	0	N/A
Family Support Team 4	2	0%	1	0%
Family Support Team 6	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
Fostering	1	100% (1)	0	N/A
MASH	2	0%	1	0%
Oaktree	2	100% (2)	0	N/A
Permanency / Court Team	1	100% (1)	1	100% (1)
Through Care 1	2	50% (1)	0	N/A
Through Care 2	2	50% (1)	0	N/A

LGO Complaints/Enquiries:

There were 3 LGO complaints/enquiries received during the reporting period. All 3 remained open with the LGO as at 31 March 2020. An update on these cases will be provided as part of the next complaints report.

Area	Issue Nature	Ombudsman Findings	Financial Remedy
Children & Families Assessment Team	Action taken to support a resident fleeing domestic violence	Case still open	N/A
Disabled Children	Assessment and communication with the child's parents	Case still open	N/A
Aftercare Team	Support with appropriate housing and quality of accommodation	Case still open	N/A

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Cases:

Complainants are seeking resolution and welcome the involvement of a neutral third person who will be able to assist both the complainant and the service in negotiating a settlement to their complaint. ADR is implemented as a mechanism to resolve complaints swiftly should the complainant request escalation. This involves assessment of the presenting issues by the Complaints Team. It can also include mediation with the complainant and the service area.

For the reporting period, there have been 2 cases of successful ADR, both of which prevented escalations to Stage 2. This has resulted in an estimated saving of £3600 for the service/Council.

Initial Feedback:

The Council receives feedback which following assessment does not constitute a formal complaint but still requires addressing. Those within scope of an 'Initial Feedback' are sent to the service with a request that swift action takes place to resolve the issue. This should negate the need for a formal complaint taking place. For the reporting period the following 'Initial Feedback' has been recorded:

Team	Feedback Total
CFAT 1	12
Disabled children	7
Family Support Team 4	6
Children Looked After Team 1	6
MASH	5
Aftercare	4
Permanency / Court Team	4
Fostering Team	4
CFAT 2	3
Children Looked After Team 2	3
Family Support Team 3	2
Children Looked After Team 3 / UAS	2
Adoption Team	2
Prevention/Support Service	1
Operation of homes	1
Oaktree	1
Child Protection/LADO	1
Family Support Team 2	1

Enquiries

During the reporting period the following enquiries were received:

- 22 Member/Cllr Enquiries
- 15 MP Enquiries

Cllr Enquiries	Number by Team
MASH	4
Youth Services	3
Children Looked After Team 1	3
Disabled Children	3
Fostering Team	2
CFAT 1	2
CFAT 2	2
Operation of Homes	1
Family Support Team 2	1
Family Support Team 4	1

MP Enquiries	Number by Team
CFAT 1	4
Aftercare	2
Family Support Team 4	2
MASH	2
Child Protection/LADO	1
Fostering Team	1
Support for childminders	1
Children Looked After Team 3 / UAS	1
Family Support Team 1	1

External Compliments:

30 Compliments have been received during this period, breakdown of teams is below.

Service Area	Total Received
Families Together	9
Prevention/Support Service	5
CFAT 4	2
Disabled children	2
Family Support Team 4	1
Family Support Team 2	1
Child Protection/LADO	1
Children Looked After Team 2	1
Family Support Team 3	1
Family Support Team 6	1
Children Looked After Team 1	1
Fostering Team	1
CFAT 1	1

Permanency / Court Team	1
Aftercare	1
Family Support Team 1	1

10 September 2020	ITEM: 6
Standards and Audit Committee	
Internal Audit Charter 2020	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Gary Clifford – Chief Internal Auditor	
Accountable Assistant Director: N/A	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark – Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

The Internal Audit Charter is a formal document that defines the internal audit services' purpose, authority and responsibility. The Internal Audit Charter establishes Internal Audit's position within the council, including the nature of the Head of Internal Audit's functional reporting relationship with the Standards & Audit Committee; authorises access to records, personnel and physical properties relevant to the performance of engagements; and defines the scope of internal audit activities. Final approval of the Internal Audit Charter lays with the Standards & Audit Committee.

Changes have been made to the Charter to reflect the new senior management roles and responsibilities, consequent change of job titles to reflect this and the move of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Team from Finance, Governance & Property to Environment & Highways to provide the council with a corporate combined fraud and enforcement service.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee approve the internal Audit Charter 2020 and the Chair of the Standards and Audit Committee signs the Charter on behalf of the Committee.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The foundation of an effective internal audit service is compliance with standards and proper practices.

2.2 A professional, independent and objective internal audit service is one of the key elements of good governance, as recognised throughout the UK public sector.

2.3 An effective internal audit service should:

- Understand the whole organisation, its needs and objectives;
- Understand its position with respect to the organisation's other sources of assurance and plan its work accordingly;
- Be seen as a catalyst for improvement at the heart of the organisation;
- Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives; and
- Be forward looking – knowing where the organisation wishes to be and aware of the national agenda and its impact.

2.4 This Charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Thurrock Council.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 The Charter has been prepared in order to help to support the provision of an effective internal audit service and to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To provide the Council with assurance that the internal audit service is working towards compliance with the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards.

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

5.1 The Internal Audit Charter has been presented to Directors Board and agreed with the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property as the responsible officer.

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

6.1 There is no direct impact on the policies, priorities, performance or on the Community although an effective internal audit service may impact indirectly on all areas of the Council's business.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Dammy Adewole**
Senior Management Accountant – Central Services

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

The contents of this report and appendixes form part of the council's responsibility to comply with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including to at least annually undertake an effective internal audit to, amongst other things, evaluate the effectiveness of its risk management, control and governance processes taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance. The council has delegated responsibility for ensuring this is taking place to the Standards & Audit Committee. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no direct diversity implications arising from this report.

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

There are no significant other implications arising from 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):

- Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).
- CIPFA – PSIAS Local Government Application Note (February 2019)
- Internal Audit Charter 2019

9. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Internal Audit Charter 2020.

Report Author:

Gary Clifford

Chief Internal Auditor

Thurrock Council Internal Audit Service, Corporate Finance, Governance & Property

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Thurrock Council

Internal Audit Charter 2020

September 2020

To be presented to Standards and Audit Committee on the
10 September 2020

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Consultation

This Audit Charter will be circulated to the members of Directors Board, the Standards & Audit Committee and Section 151 Officer as part of the consultation process.

Distribution

Copies of this Audit Charter will be provided to all members of the Standards & Audit Committee, Section 151 Officer and all staff by being made available on the council's internet site.

Who to contact to find out more:

Gary Clifford, Chief Internal Auditor

Email: gclifford@thurrock.gov.uk

Telephone: (01375) 652702

Version – 4 - Next review date September 2022 or as required by changes to working practices or legislation.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Internal Auditing is an independent and objective assurance and consulting activity that is guided by a philosophy of adding value to improve the operations of the Thurrock Council. It assists the council in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, internal control.
- 1.2 This Charter establishes the purpose, authority and responsibilities for the internal audit service for Thurrock Council.
- 1.3 The internal audit service is provided by Thurrock Council's Internal Audit team. Your key internal audit contact is:

Chief Internal Auditor	
Name	Gary Clifford
Telephone	01375 652702
Email address	gclifford@thurrock.gov.uk

- 1.4 This Charter has been prepared in order to support the council in ensuring it has in place an effective Internal Audit service that meets the requirements of the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS) which came into effect from 1st April 2013. This was updated in February 2019.
- 1.5 This Charter will be reviewed, updated as required and reported to the Standards & Audit Committee for consideration on a bi-annual basis or when changes are made.
- 1.6 For the purposes of this Charter, the Chief Internal Auditor fulfils the role of the council's Head of Internal Audit (HoIA) and is referred to as such throughout the document.
- 1.7 Within Thurrock Council, the HoIA does not have any responsibility for other operational areas within the council.

2 DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

- 2.1 Internal Audit is defined in the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards as:

“An independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation's operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by introducing a systematic, disciplined approach in order to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes.”

- 2.2 Internal Audit is a key part of the assurance cycle for the council and provides senior management with assurance on whether the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes are adequate and operating effectively.
- 2.3 To clarify and align this Charter with the PSIAS, senior management are defined as Directors' Board, Leadership Group and members of the Standards & Audit Committee.

3 PROFESSIONALISM

- 3.1 The internal audit activity will govern itself by adherence to The Institute of Internal Auditors' mandatory guidance including the Definition of Internal Auditing, the Code of Ethics, and the *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing (Standards)*. This mandatory guidance constitutes principles of the fundamental requirements for the professional practice of internal auditing and for evaluating the effectiveness of the internal audit activity's performance.
- 3.2 The Institute of Internal Auditors' Practice Advisories, Practice Guides, and Position Papers will also be adhered to as applicable to guide operations. In addition, the internal audit activity will adhere to the council's relevant policies and procedures and the internal audit activity's standard operating procedures manual.

4 AUTHORITY

- 4.1 In accordance with Chapter 9, Part 3, Section 1, Paragraph 1.9 of the Council Constitution covering the Finance Procedure Rules, to enable the HoIA and internal audit staff to fulfil their responsibilities, they have the right to automatic and full access to all records (however held) relating to any transaction carried out or on behalf of the council and to any of the council's premises or land. They may seek and obtain any explanations they need to conduct their work, or require any employee to produce council assets under their control, wherever located.
- 4.2 The HoIA and internal audit staff are not authorised to perform any operational duties associated with the organisation which may conflict with their independence.

5 ORGANISATION

- 5.1 The HoIA will report functionally to the Standards & Audit Committee and administratively (i.e. day to day operations) to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property.
- 5.2 The Standards & Audit Committee will:
- Approve the internal audit charter.
 - Approve the risk based internal audit plan.

- Receive communications from the HoIA on the internal audit activity's performance relative to its plan and other matters.
- Make appropriate inquiries of management and the HoIA to determine whether there is inappropriate scope or resource limitations.

6 INDEPENDENCE AND OBJECTIVITY

- 6.1 The internal audit activity will remain free from interference by any element in the organisation, including matters of audit selection, scope, procedures, frequency, timing, or report content to permit maintenance of a necessary independent and objective mental attitude.
- 6.2 Internal auditors will have no direct operational responsibility or authority over any of the activities audited. Accordingly, they will not implement internal controls, develop procedures, install systems, prepare records, or engage in any other activity that may impair their judgment.
- 6.3 Internal auditors will exhibit the highest level of professional objectivity in gathering, evaluating, and communicating information about the activity or process being examined. Internal auditors will make a balanced assessment of all the relevant circumstances and not be unduly influenced by their own interests or by others in forming judgments.
- 6.4 The HoIA will confirm to the Standards & Audit Committee, at least annually through the HoIA's Annual Report, the organisational independence of the internal audit activity.
- 6.5 To enhance the independence of Internal Audit, its personnel report direct to the HoIA. The HoIA has the right of independent access to the Chief Executive, as well as reporting lines and direct access to the Section 151 Officer and the Chair and members of the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 6.6 The HoIA holds one to one meetings with the Chair of the Standards & Audit Committee, to whom all significant concerns relating to the adequacy and effectiveness of risk management activities, internal control and governance are reported.
- 6.7 The HoIA and team of auditors are required to sign a declaration of interest form on an annual basis. Copies of the signed declarations will be retained by the HoIA.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 One of the main responsibilities of Internal Audit is to support the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property in the discharge of their duties as Section 151 Officer by providing an effective internal audit of the council's systems of internal control, risk management and corporate governance in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Internal Audit do this by providing a high quality, independent service to the council which evaluates and reports, through the

Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report, on the effectiveness of the risk management, internal control and governance processes. This is presented to the Standards & Audit Committee at their first meeting of the municipal year and is used to inform the Annual Governance Statement.

7.2 The scope of internal auditing encompasses, but is not limited to, the examination and evaluation of the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management, and internal controls as well as the quality of performance in carrying out assigned responsibilities to achieve the organisation's stated goals and objectives. This includes:

- Evaluating risk exposure relating to achievement of the organisation's strategic objectives.
- Evaluating the reliability and integrity of information and the means used to identify, measure, classify, and report such information.
- Evaluating the systems established to ensure compliance with those policies, plans, procedures, laws, and regulations which could have a significant impact on the organisation.
- Evaluating the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verifying the existence of such assets.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency with which resources are employed.
- Evaluating operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with established objectives and goals and whether the operations or programs are being carried out as planned.
- Monitoring and evaluating governance processes.
- Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the organisation's risk management processes.
- Performing consulting and advisory services related to governance, risk management and control as appropriate for the organisation. Where consulting or advisory activities are undertaken, the HoIA will not issue an assurance report. An advisory report will be issued.
- Reporting periodically on the internal audit activity's purpose, authority, responsibility, and performance relative to its plan.
- Reporting significant risk exposures and control issues, including fraud risks, governance issues, and other matters needed or requested by the Standards & Audit Committee.
- Evaluating specific operations at the request of the Standards & Audit Committee or management, as appropriate.

7.3 The HoIA also has a responsibility to:

- Develop a flexible, risk based 3 year internal audit strategy and detailed annual audit plan. The plan will be submitted to the Standards & Audit Committee for review and approval each year at its March meeting, prior to work commencing to deliver the plan.

- Include any additional tasks requested by management and the Standards & Audit Committee following consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property.
- Ensure the internal audit team consists of professional and suitably skilled audit staff with sufficient knowledge and experience.
- Establish a Quality Assurance and Improvement Program to ensure the quality and effective operation of internal audit activities and compliance with the PSIAS.
- As part of the audit planning cycle, evaluate and assess significant merging or consolidating functions and new or changing services, processes or operations within the organisation.
- Highlight risks and weaknesses in control and make recommendations for improvements to management based on an acceptable and practicable timeframe.
- Carry out follow up reviews to ensure management has implemented agreed internal control improvements within specified and agreed timeframes.
- Liaise with the external auditor to provide maximum audit coverage to the organisation whilst minimising duplication of work.

8 REPORTING

- 8.1 A written report will be prepared and issued by the HoIA or designee following the conclusion of each internal audit engagement and will be distributed as appropriate. Internal audit results will also be communicated to the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 8.2 The HoIA shall issue progress reports to the Standards & Audit Committee and management summarising outcomes of audit activities, including follow up reviews. These will be presented in line with the agreed work programme of the Standards & Audit Committee.
- 8.2 The HoIA is required to provide the Section 151 Officer with an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's governance, risk management and control arrangements. In giving this opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute. The most that the internal audit service can provide to the Council is a reasonable assurance that there are no major weaknesses in the risk management, governance and control processes. This assurance is provided through the HoIA's Annual Report which is presented to the Standards & Audit Committee following the financial year end.

9 DATA PROTECTION

- 9.1 Internal audit files need to include sufficient, reliable, relevant and useful evidence in order to support our findings and conclusions.
- 9.2 Personal data is not shared outside of Thurrock Council. The only exception would be where there is information on an internal audit file that external auditors

have access to as part of their review of internal audit work or where there is a legal or ethical obligation to do so (such as providing information to support a fraud investigation based on internal audit findings).

- 9.3 Thurrock Council has a Data Protection Policy in place that requires compliance by all of their employees. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

10 FRAUD

- 10.1 The Standards & Audit Committee recognises that management is responsible for controls to reasonably prevent and detect fraud. Furthermore, the Standards & Audit Committee recognises that internal audit is not responsible for identifying fraud. However, it will assess the risk of fraud and be aware of the risk of fraud when planning and undertaking any internal audit work. Any instances of potential fraud or corruption identified during the course of an internal audit review will be immediately communicated in the first instance to the HoIA who will determine the short-term action to be taken. It will then be discussed with the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property, Director of Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud and the Assistant Director of Fraud & Investigation to determine any further action required.

Signature _____
Councillor Gerard Rice
Chair of the Standards & Audit Committee

Date: 10th Sept 2020

Signature _____
Gary Clifford
Chief Internal Auditor

Date: 10th Sept 2020

Signature _____
Sean Clark
Corporate Director of Finance, Governance
& Property and Section 151 Officer

Date: 10th Sept 2020

10 September 2020	ITEM: 7
Standards and Audit Committee	
Counter Fraud & Investigation Quarterly Update (Q1)	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Michael Dineen. Senior Manager, Counter Fraud & Investigation	
Accountable Assistant Director: David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud, Investigation & Enforcement	
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Environment, Highways & Counter Fraud	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Counter Fraud & Investigation is responsible for the prevention, detection and deterrence of all instances of alleged economic crime affecting the authority including: allegations of fraud, theft, corruption, bribery and money laundering.

CFI has developed working arrangements with other agencies to share the Council's counter-fraud culture providing specialist support and capabilities to those public bodies where necessary.

The work of the service is predicated on the overall strategy of the council which is approved following consultation with council services and intelligence from partners in government and policing.

This report outlines the performance of CFI over the last quarter (Q1) for Thurrock Council as a whole as well as the work the team have delivered nationally for other public bodies.

1. Recommendation

1.1 The Standard and Audit Committee comments on the performance of the Counter Fraud & Investigation Department.

2. Introduction & Background

2.1 The Council's Counter Fraud team is responsible for delivering the corporate counter fraud programme which includes proactive activity to enhance the council's controls as well as respond to intelligence from that proactive work and information from other sources.

3. Performance

- 3.1 CFI receives reports about suspected fraud from the public, internal referral mechanisms and proactive operations. The figures show the performance of the department for Quarter 1 of 2020/21:
- 121 reports of suspected fraud have been received.
 - 20 Investigations have been closed as 'no fraud'.
 - 1 sanction has been delivered in a case of proven fraud.
 - 1 Social housing property has been recovered.
 - 28 active investigations are currently being conducted.
- 3.2 The work of the CFI has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as the legal processes that the team follow were stopped very early in the year. This included the cessation of any litigation processes with HM Courts and Tribunals being closed and the limitation on interaction with the public being limited only to 'crimes on action' incidents to prioritise public protection.
- 3.3 The national lockdown initiated by HM government to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and protect the NHS resulted in CFI initiating Operation Alexis. This operation deployed CFI officers across the borough at Council assets closed as part of the lockdown measures to ensure they were protected from loss or damage.
- 3.4 The team worked 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, on a rotating shift pattern conducting over 2,000 checks on locations within Thurrock. The team also identified 55 incidents at assets implementing measure to deter burglary and theft at those site. CFI officers on one night operation identified s suspected 'drink driver' driving dangerously, coordinating Essex and Kent Police stop the driver who appended them.
- 3.5 In addition to the proactive asset protection activity the CFI team continued in its counter fraud work focusing on the provision of HM government grants to businesses during the pandemic. That CFI activity saw successful detection of £85k in fraudulent grant applications. The team quickly identified the offender residing in Bedfordshire conducting a successful arrest and search operation, repatriating the monies lost.

4. Work Plan for 2020/21

- 4.1 CFI has a programme of proactive work to ensure the council's posture against fraud is robust and effective. That plan was presented and accepted by the Standards and Audit Committee in July 2020. **Appendix 1** sets out the progress made in delivering the Counter Fraud Strategy & Plan 2020/21.
- 4.2 The work programme is a working document and if during the year changes or additions to the plan are proposed between the CFI and the Section 151 Officer, these will be brought back to the Committee for approval.

5. National Counter Fraud

- 5.1 The £85,000 fraud that affected the COVID-19 grant schemes was quickly linked to a large national organised crime attack on the overall HM government schemes.
- 5.2 The speed and effectiveness of identifying the offenders, apprehending them and repatriating lost monies was recognised by HM government.
- 5.3 The council's NATIS (National Investigation Service) function was commissioned by the Secretary of State to use its capabilities to identify and apprehend the organised criminals behind the coordinated attacks, passing case files to the Crown Prosecution Service. That work is completely ring-fenced both financially and operationally from the council's core businesses, seeing investment in the service providing financial sustainability for the CFI and council's overall counter fraud stance.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

- 6.1 This report provides a detailed update to the Committee on the counter-fraud measures for the Council and how it is reducing fraud under the council's counter-fraud strategy.

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

- 7.1 All Directors and Heads of Service were consulted with the current strategy to be taken by the Council in its counter-fraud approach.

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

- 8.1 Work undertaken by CFI to reduce fraud and enhance the Council's anti-fraud and corruption culture contributes to the delivery of all its aims and priorities supporting good corporate governance.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial

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

This report shows the financial implications within **Appendix 1**.

9.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 section 4 (2) require that:
The relevant body shall be responsible for ensuring that the financial management of the body is adequate and effective and that the body has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes the arrangements for the management of risk.

9.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
**Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer, Adults, Housing & Health**

There are no diversity or equality issues within this report

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

None.

10. 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):

Counter Fraud & Investigation Policy & Strategy – thurrock.gov.uk/fraud
Counter Money Laundering Policy & Strategy – thurrock.gov.uk/fraud
CroweClarkWhitehill Annual Fraud Indicator – crowe.co.uk

11. Appendices to the report

Appendix 1 – Counter Fraud Strategy & Plan 2020/21.

Report Author:

Michael Dineen
Senior Manager
Counter Fraud & Investigation

Counter Fraud & Investigation



See it. Report it. Stop it.



[thurrock.gov.uk](https://www.thurrock.gov.uk)

Counter Fraud Proactive Work Plan

2020/21

Foreword

“The country has been affected by the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with significant loss of life and continuing damage to the economy, with many businesses closing and workers moved from their workplaces to their homes.

Sadly, criminals didn’t stop working, with many increasing their persistent attacks on the public sector support schemes and the most vulnerable in society, particularly those shielding from the virus.

This year, as we begin to recover from the emergency, our focus will be targeting those criminals in an unprecedented co-ordinated response by the council’s Counter Fraud function joining forces across government and policing.”

David Kleinberg,
Assistant Director for Counter Fraud,
Investigation & Enforcement



Proactive Work Plan

Risk Area	Activity	When	Current Status	Responsible Officer	Date Complete
Council-wide	<p>Application of Counter Fraud Risk Analytics across the council's 10 threat areas.</p> <p>This work will commence with sampling exercises, fraud loss measurement programmes and testing of analytic tools across those high-risk areas.</p>	June 2022 To May 2021	<p>The council has initiated its own data matching solution across the Housing and Revenues data sets to begin modelling 'what fraud looks like'.</p> <p>That work is on track and will continue throughout the next quarter with results being detailed here.</p>	Michael Dineen	
Council-wide	<p>Install improved Anti-Money Laundering (AML) controls at all of the council's Customer Contact Points.</p> <p>Fraud, Bribery, Corruption and Money Laundering are intrinsically linked by a common theme – persons and businesses being compromised by crime. That may be intentional or unintentional (e.g. stolen identities (unintentional) or fictitious businesses (intentional))</p>	June 2022 To May 2021	<p>The CFI team implemented an AML solution as a pilot around the COVID-19 Discretionary Grant scheme in partnership with the Revenues team.</p> <p>The performance of that pilot is now being reviewed against the other customer contact points.</p>	David Kleinberg	
Revenues & Treasury	<p>COVID-19 Business Grants Counter Fraud Programme</p> <p>The council has awarded £19m of government grants to businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The team will be using the Counter Fraud tools provided by</p>	June 2022 To May 2021	<p>The CFI team are processing the post-assurance counter fraud activity using tools provided by HM government and those already held within CFI.</p>	Dave Nash	



Risk Area	Activity	When	Current Status	Responsible Officer	Date Complete
	the Cabinet Office and commercial sector to assure the payment already made and prevent future frauds.				
Council-wide	Renewed Education & Marketing Campaign for Countering Fraud, Bribery, Corruption and Money Laundering	Nov 2020	This item was moved to September so that the campaign takes account of the 'new normal' working model the country is working to.	Nicholas Coker	

DRAFT

10 September 2020	ITEM: 8
Standards and Audit Committee	
Refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non key
Report of: Andy Owen, Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director of Finance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance & Property	
This report is a public report	

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 on the refresh of the register is presented on an annual basis and provides details of how the key risks and opportunities facing the authority are identified and managed.

The Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board during June to August to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

This report provides Standards and 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 1).
- 1.2 That Standards and Audit Committee note the 'In Focus' report (Appendix 2), which highlights the higher priority items identified by the review.

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 makes a significant contribution to the sound Corporate Governance arrangements to meet the requirements set out in the Account and Audit Regulations and is an important part of the council's overall Performance Management Framework.
- 2.3 In accordance with the ROM Policy Strategy and Framework regular reviews of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity register were undertaken during 2019/20 and reported to Directors Board and Standards & Audit Committee.
- 2.4 The annual review of the council's ROM arrangements was undertaken in the last quarter of 2019/20. As part of the review the ROM Policy, Strategy and Framework were updated and reported to Standards and Audit Committee 12 March 2020, via Directors Board 25 February 2020 and Performance Board 03 February 2020.
- 2.5 The refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register is the first exercise under the updated ROM Framework. The Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams and Performance Board during June to August to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.
- 2.6 The exercise was scheduled to be undertaken in the first quarter during April to June but with the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak and the Council focussed on responding to the situation it was decided to defer the review to the second quarter.
- 2.7 The review has resulted in some changes to the register (e.g. items refreshed, added or removed).

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The outcome of the review is shown in the Dashboard (Appendix 1), In Focus report (Appendix 2) and the following tables.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 – 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, shows the significance of the risks and opportunities, along with the developments to date and the management time frames.
- 3.3 Appendix 2 – Risks and Opportunities In Focus report
This document highlights the higher priority items identified by the review.

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 order.

Impact of Coronavirus - Risk 5

(Rating: 16 Critical/Very Likely)

Recognised that this is not a short term crisis and there is no easy or quick solution to the situation as the position/challenges faced change regularly. Regular monitoring of the position, issues, planned response and recovery undertaken through gold/silver command structure and currently in line with the measures and guidelines issued by government. Covid-19 response and implications reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committees June and July 2020.

A13 Widening Project - Risk 9

(Rating: 16 Critical/Very Likely)

The A13 corridor is a vital part of the transport network in Thurrock and the south Essex area, enabling the economy to grow through expanding businesses, new housing and more jobs.

Major economic growth: Thurrock and the south Essex area has seen major investment in recent years, including the opening of DP World London Gateway Port and Logistics facility, and the continued development of Intu Lakeside retail and entertainment complex. This is part of a planned £20 billion investment in jobs, homes and infrastructure in Thurrock, including developments led by the private companies at Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside Basin and the Port of Tilbury. A widened A13 will help support these developments, and also the significant investment planned for other parts of south Essex, including £272 million at Airport Business Park in Southend.

Excellent transport links: Thurrock and the south Essex area already has many excellent transport links with London, the rest of the UK and Europe, by road, river and air. The London Gateway Harbour Empowerment Order 2008 gave legal backing for further improvements to the surrounding road network, including widening the A13. This will be a benefit to traffic flow as currently around 77,000 vehicles each day use the A13 between the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) and the A1014 (The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope).

Funding and partners: DP World London Gateway have contributed to the costs and the rest from government funding, directed through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Ongoing review and monitoring of project and implementation of planned actions to manage identified issues, areas for improvement and potential risks.

Adult Social Care Stability and Market Failure - Risk 2

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Adult Social Care has received additional funding in recent years – through a precept as part of the Council Tax and also through the Improved Better Care Fund. A significant proportion of this money has been used to stabilise the market place and deliver sustainability for care providers. This has included increasing the capacity of the contract and brokerage team to ensure contract compliance visits and monitoring to take place in a timely manner – reducing or aiding early identification of risks. The introduction of a Brokerage function has also meant that more realistic costs and fees are negotiated. In addition uplifts have been provided (as described in the risk description) to improve stability and domiciliary care has been retendered. Through the Better Care Fund, we have also been able to enhance capacity through investment in a Bridging Service and through enhancing existing services to ensure that people can come out of hospital when medically fit to do so – even when they are unable to return home. This has helped to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care and Waiting Lists.

The current Covid-19 Pandemic has added increased strain on providers. For example residential care providers have significant vacancies which is impacting on their ability to generate sufficient income. The Council has provided additional funding recognising the financial impact placed on providers. This includes a 10% temporary financial resilience payment which is available to all providers for the first 16 weeks of the financial year. Since the end of March, the Council has enabled payments to providers to be monthly in advance for at least 16 weeks to help with cash flow. The Government has also made funding available to support care homes with infection control subject to the homes meeting certain conditions. Whether the vacancies will continue following Covid cannot be foretold. In addition, there is an increased risk to the stability of the care market from new UK immigration rules which currently excludes social care staff from the Health

and Care Visa.

Work is progressing to overcome current challenges. This includes developing a new model of care for domiciliary care. At the beginning of 2018, the new domiciliary care contract started with providers now well established within the Borough. Work has also taking place on alternative approaches to traditional domiciliary care, with two Wellbeing Teams launched. Wellbeing Teams will enable us to identify the model required and will focus on enhancing Wellbeing and not just on meeting needs. It will also look at how to encourage people in to the care industry and to professionalise a caring role. In addition, Thurrock is allocated additional funding for the Winter Period which is traditionally a very difficult time for the health and care system. This means that our local system is functioning as well as possible.

Despite the work taking place, the risk of market failure remains high.

CSC, Service Standards & Inspection Outcome - Risk 6 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

This risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children's social care quality of service and provision. The pressures outlined throughout previous years remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity and ongoing activity to review high cost placements. The implementation of the early help service model and the Thurrock multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been successful. The service continues to maximize the external investment and opportunities presented through the Troubled Families Programme and continuously measures impact of the MASH.

The service is demand led and cannot fail to respond to the needs of a child due to budget or resource constraints. Changes on a local, regional and national level can have a significant impact on the demand for services. War and international factors can result in an unplanned increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children or families with no recourse to public funds. Geographical movement of families across the Eastern Region and London can see a rise in families needing services, including large sibling groups. Areas for improvement have been identified in the Ofsted (ILAC) 2019 and a Development Plan has been created to address this. As a consequence of Covid19 since March 2020 there has been a significant impact on the way in which we deliver services within children's social care. There has been an impact on the budget which is subject to continuous scrutiny.

The level and complexity of some children and young people's needs and the lack of available national resources (specialist placements) to meet those needs is driving up cost pressures. As the Council continues to improve practice regarding the identification and tackling of Child Exploitation there is an increase in demand for service provision in terms of intervention; prevention and victim support. Current and new duties in terms of radicalization also place pressures on the service in terms of workforce capacity. Trends can be predicted based on previous levels of demand but these are subject to variance.

The pressures outlined above will not be alleviated in the short term and the risk rating will remain at the higher (red) level for the period covered.

CSC, Safeguarding & Protecting Children & YP - Risk 7 (Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The nature of the work in terms of safeguarding and supporting children at risk of harm means that this will always be a high risk area although through the application of the S.E.T (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Child Protection procedures the department actively works to mitigate this risk and reduce the likelihood.

The risk of children and young people coming to harm cannot be completely eliminated and the risk level needs to remain high and ensure clear vigilance across the council and partner agencies. New and emerging risk factors will arise and there is always a potential for agencies 'not knowing, what they don't know' that needs to be guarded against.

Embedding the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help has supported earlier identification of risk through a multi-agency approach enabling the department to work to intervene at an earlier stage and reduce the risk of harm in some cases. The development and implementation of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements will further improve the inter-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people living in Thurrock.

The impact for individual children and families, particularly in cases of child death is significant and whilst actions to reduce the likelihood are implemented the impact will remain as critical. There is

also a critical impact score in terms of reputational damage should a child death or serious injury occur.

The ongoing nature of risk in child protection and safeguarding is such that despite effective mitigation the acknowledgement of the risk needs to remain high and will not reduce. This is not to say that the risks are unmanageable but for effective management the gravity and complexity of the risk needs to be acknowledged.

Managing this risk places inherent pressures on the Children's Social Care budget as a demand led budget. Effective demand and resource management remain a priority for the service within an overriding context of keeping children safe.

Risk will remain constant throughout the period covered.

Property Ownership Liability - Risk 15

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Council properties (except for HRA and parks) moved to corporate function for repair, maintenance planning and budgets transferred. There has been a significant increase of number of properties moving to the Corporate Landlord Function which has resulted in a sharp increase in work streams. Condition and compliance surveys completed and loaded on Concerto database. The Estates Module remains outstanding on Concerto. This is a significant module which will assist with the management of leases and other property related matters and plans are in place to finalise this module by October 2020 as it is resource intensive and currently does not have adequate resources allocated to be able to progress. A draft Corporate Landlord Policy and a draft Corporate Landlord Procedure have been drafted, but can only be finalised once the resourcing requirements of the Corporate Property Team are agreed. The Facilities management function was brought back in house in April 2020 and Corporate Property Team restructure needs to be finalised to strengthen the capacity of the service. There is particular concern that vital roles are being undertaken by contract staff with no contingency or succession planning possible. In addition there is a lack of resource where posts remain vacant and where new resource is required to undertake a greater workload both within the Corporate Property and FM teams. Proposals to refresh governance arrangements for property matters was submitted in March 2020, this included a revised TOR for Property Board, a new reporting structure and an itemised forward plan to support property management, governance and enhance visibility of Corporate Landlord matters. The constitution has been changed limiting requiring consent for all disposal from the Leader or Cabinet. As there are currently no exclusions to this requirement the Assets Team should be obtaining consent for even day to day deminimis transactions, all disposal are on hold until the Director has agreed a way forward. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the rapid and unplanned closure of buildings for an unknown period of time and plans/protocols were established and arrangements put in place to ensure the safety of buildings and for critical staff that needed to work at the Civic Centre. The recommissioning of buildings is being carefully planned to ensure health and safety hazards are managed thereby ensuring buildings are safe for re-occupation. Additionally, the pandemic has necessitated social distancing measures and new working practices to protect staff, visitors and customers from the virus. Risk Assessments and re-occupation plans in accordance with PHE and government guidance are drafted for the Civic Centre and further guidance for other corporate buildings and satellite sites are to be developed and rolled out as appropriate.

Waste Strategy for Thurrock - Risk 20

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

Cross Party Working Group established to develop strategy. Consultation with public and members completed and outcome from exercise to be reviewed to inform the further work required to develop strategy. Work ongoing with CPWG to further develop the strategy and planned to present draft to Cleaner, Greener & Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee in October 2020.

Fraud - Risk 23

(Rating: 12 Critical/Likely)

The Counter Fraud & Investigation service has an organisational-wide strategy and proactive work plan to monitor and manage the identified risks. A persistent training and education regime is in place, where experts from the service work with staff, contractors, Members and in the council's supply chain to identify and mitigate the risks, and increase awareness.

The council has current and effective policies on Counter Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and Money Laundering which are kept under constant review. These policies acknowledge the threats and install an action plan in identified incidents including, civil & criminal litigation and redress to recover any identified losses. Any control weaknesses identified in investigations are rectified in collaboration with the affected services and Internal Audit through SMART Action Plans.

Major Projects (Place) - Risk 10

(Rating: 12 Substantial/Very Likely)

The Thurrock growth programme crosses many disciplines within the Council. It requires significant programme management capacity from the Regeneration team to lead the programme alongside a joined up approach with other areas of the authority to ensure that relevant specialisms are brought in as required and programmes and strategies are complementary. Investment needs to be committed to project development stages before outputs and benefits are realised, significant levels of funding are committed at risk to prove feasibility and investment then needs to continue to secure the benefits from the initial funding. External funding is committed to numerous projects, whilst this reduces the financial burden to the Council, compliance with funding agreements must be achieved to ensure the Council is not exposed financially via claw back mechanisms. Projects span numerous financial years and have to be able to respond to changing market, policy and financial conditions. Strong project and programme managers are essential to ensuring that delivery stays on track and investment secures value for money outputs. Increasing resource capacity in the team via Matrix has provided some additional support and approval has been received to secure 1 additional FTE. The project portfolio could benefit from significant external funding in 2020/21 which will put additional pressure on the existing staff resource as more projects are developed. Momentum needs to be maintained in the ongoing restructure to improve working approaches and secure additional resource.

Opportunity - In priority (rating) and then reference number order.**Investment in Growth - Opportunity 13**

(Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

The Council has successfully secured approximately £100m in Local Growth Funding to support development of infrastructure supporting growth in Thurrock

While there are unlikely to be further bidding rounds for Local Growth Fund (LGF) support Government have introduced new funding streams including the Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund. Both Grays and Tilbury have been identified as potential recipients of the Towns Fund which will bring a significant amount of investment into the local economy. Other opportunities to bid for funding are now being developed to help the economy recover from COVID. In the longer term the Shared Prosperity Fund should be introduced to replace LGF and ESIF funding (European Structural & Investment Funds).

Treasury Management/Investment Strategy - Opportunity 16a (Rating: 12 Exceptional/Likely)

Investments identified as having the greater ability to make significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy established. Review undertaken and position reported to Council Feb 2020. Ongoing development, review, monitoring and reporting of investment programme (e.g. Investment Briefing presented to July Council and Standards & Audit Committee).

- 3.4 For members information the Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood levels are included under Appendix 3 to show the guidelines used to rate and prioritise the items.
- 3.5 Two items have been removed as a result of the exercise and the details are summarised in the following table:

Items in alphabetical order

Alignment of Libraries and Community Hubs - Opportunity

With the Peer Review completed and the information used to further inform the Strategy/Plan, the acceleration of the collaborative communities' agenda as a result of mobilising communities to support the response to Covid19 and with the restructure on the horizon the Council are in a very good position to complete the alignment the libraries and community hubs. The Framework for developing Collaborative Communities will enable this agenda to be managed as business as usual going forward. Opportunity to be removed from the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register and ongoing monitoring of developments and position to be continued at department level.

Political Balance of the Council - Risk

The political party membership has changed & the Conservative party now has a majority control of the council. Item removed from register and replaced with new item for Political Environment.

3.6 The whole register has been filed on Objective under the shared file for Risk and Opportunity Management

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 on the refresh of the register is presented on an 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 and Insurance Manager has engaged with Services, Department Management Teams, Performance Board and Directors Board to refresh the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register.

5.2 The refreshed Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register was presented to Directors Board 17 August 2020, via Performance Board representatives 13 August 2020.

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: **Dammy Adewole**

Senior 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: **Tim Hallam**

Deputy Head of Law and 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: **Roxanne Scanlon**

**Community Engagement/Project Monitoring
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, July 2020. The document can be accessed via the following shared Risk and Opportunity Management file on Objective: <https://edrms.thurrock.gov.uk:443/id:fA1213633>

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 - Dashboard
- Appendix 2 - In Focus report
- Appendix 3 - Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood

Report Author:

Andy Owen
Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager

Risks									
Risk Ref / Priority	Risk Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Forecast	
			In Qtr 1 (2019/20)	Mid Year (2019/20)	In Qtr 4 (2019/20)	In Qtr 2 (2020/21)		Rating	Date
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay									
• High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time									
4	Fire Safety Housing Stock	Carol Hinvest	8	8	8	8	➔	8	*31/03/21
17	Cyber Security	Andy Best	6	6	6	6	➔	6	*31/03/21
20	Waste Strategy for Thurrock	Julie Rogers	-	12	12	12	➔	8	31/10/20
21	Emergency Planning	Cheryl Wells	6	6	6	6	➔	6	*31/03/21
22	Business Continuity Planning	Performance Board	12	12	12	9	⬇	6	*31/03/21
23	Fraud	David Kleinberg	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
• Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing									
2	ASC Stability and Market Failure	Les Billingham	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
3	Housing Needs and Homelessness	Carol Hinvest	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/21
6	CSC Service Standards & Inspection Outcome	Sheila Murphy	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
7	CSC Safeguarding & Protecting Children & Young People	Sheila Murphy	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
24	Failure to Comply With the Prevent Duty 2015 (New)	Michelle Cunningham	-	-	-	8	N/A	8	*31/03/21
28	Welfare Reforms	Carol Hinvest	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/21
Place - A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future									
• Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places									
8	Lower Thames Crossing	Anna Eastgate	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/21
9	A13 Widening Project	Anna Eastgate	-	-	16	16	➔	16	*31/03/21
19	Highway Funding and Standard	Julie Nelder	6	6	6	6	➔	6	*31/03/21
• Fewer public buildings with better services									
15	Property Ownership Liability	Michelle Thompson	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
Prosperity - A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations									
• Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy									
10	Major Projects (Place)	Andy Millard	12	12	12	12	➔	12	*31/03/21
12	Local Plan	Andy Millard	9	9	9	9	➔	9	*31/03/21
• Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services									
16b	Treasury Management & Investment Strategy	Sean Clark	8	8	8	8	➔	8	*31/03/21
All Priorities - People, Place & Prosperity									
5	Impact of Coronavirus (New)	Directors Board	-	-	-	16	N/A	12	*31/03/21
26	Political Environment (New)	Karen Wheeler	-	-	-	8	N/A	6	31/03/21
27	Impact of UK Withdrawal from EU	Karen Wheeler	9	9	4	9	⬆	4	31/12/20

Footnote: Forecast 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 (e.g. risk 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.
 * = The date applies to when the risk/management action plan documentation will be refreshed (e.g. used for medium/long term risks, where the risk circumstances are expected to change over a period of time).
 Priority: **Red** = High, **Amber** = Medium, **Green** = Low. Ratings: Lower is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (➔ Static, ⬆ Increased, ⬇ Decreased)

Opportunities									
Opp Ref / Priority	Opportunity Heading	Director / Head of Service	Previous Ratings			Latest Rating	DOT	Forecast	
			In Qtr 1 (2019/20)	Mid Year (2019/20)	In Qtr 4 (2019/20)	In Qtr 2 (2020/21)		Rating	Date
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay									
• High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time									
18	Digital Council Programme	Jackie Hinchliffe	9	9	9	9	→	12	*31/03/21
• Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing									
1	Health & Social Care Transformation	Les Billingham	6	6	6	6	→	12	31/03/22
Place - A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future									
• Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places									
11	Thurrock Regeneration Ltd	Helen McCabe	6	6	6	6	→	9	*31/03/21
Prosperity - A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations									
• Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy									
13	Investment in Growth	Stephen Taylor	8	8	12	12	→	12	*31/03/21
14	Thurrock Growth Programme	Stephen Taylor	6	6	6	8	↑	8	*31/03/21
25	Raising Thurrock's Profile & Image	Karen Wheeler	9	9	9	6	↓	12	31/03/21
• Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services									
6a	Treasury Management & Investment Strategy	Sean Clark	12	12	12	12	→	12	*31/03/21

Footnote: Forecast 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 (e.g. opportunity realised or managed to the required level). For items managed to the required level any ongoing monitoring to be undertaken by Dept., if needed.
 * = The date applies to when the opportunity/management action plan documentation will be refreshed (e.g. used for medium/long term opportunities, where the opportunity circumstances are expected to change over a period of time).
 Priority: **Gold** = High, **Silver** = Medium, **Bronze** = Low. Ratings: Higher is best DOT: Latest v Previous Rating (→ Static, ↑ Increased, ↓ Decreased)

Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register July 2020

In Focus Report

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

Risks In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner		
The Council working with other agencies and the community have a critical role to play in the response to the crisis, shaping the transition and recovery for the borough, local residents and businesses. Failure to maintain plans and resources to deal with the situation will lead to uncoordinated, delayed or an ineffective response and recovery to the crisis and the Council not complying with the requirements of the Coronavirus and Civil Contingencies Acts.							Directors Board		
Link to Corporate Priority									
All priorities - People, Place & Prosperity, including: People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time. • Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing 									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021

Comments
Recognised that this is not a short term crisis and there is no easy or quick solution to the situation as the position/challenges faced change regularly. Regular monitoring of the position, issues, planned response and recovery undertaken through gold/silver command structure and currently in line with the measures and guidelines issued by government. Covid-19 response and implications reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committees June and July 2020.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented							
1. Command structure established and regular meetings of gold and silver (Tactical Coordination Group) commands to monitor and review position, issues, plans, response and recovery.	From Mar 2020							
2. Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group established (includes Thurrock Council) and meeting regularly to coordinate the plans and response for Essex.	March 2020							
3. Working from home arrangements introduced and all staff advised that they will be required to work from home except for those who have been identified as delivering front line services or are required to be in Council buildings.	19 March 2020							
4. Work undertaken with educational establishments to provide provision for priority group of children and young people (e.g. children who have a parent who is a critical worker, vulnerable children and young people).	March 2020							
5. Internet Coronavirus information hub established covering latest Government and Health Information; Thurrock Council Services; Financial Support; Government advice for businesses & services; Fraud, Scams & staying safe online and Bereavement support.	April 2020							
6. Intranet Coronavirus information hub established covering latest Government Information and Advice; Working Arrangements; Self-Isolation & Absences; Looking After Your Health & Wellbeing; FAQs and How To Help Prevent The Spread Of The Virus.	April 2020							
7. COVID19 Working arrangements policy created as a direct response to the pandemic to support working arrangements and to ensure critical Council services continue during these unprecedented times.	23 Apr 2020							
8. Community support network established with partners to provide help for the shielded group and other residents in most need during the outbreak	April 2020							
9. Government initiatives and funding support provided to the Council, Businesses and the Community, including:- Funding to the CCG to enable the Council to support the hospital discharge process; Funding for care homes to cover the costs of implementing infection control measures to reduce transmission; Funds to develop tailored outbreak control plans; Hardship funds for those receiving Council Tax Support; Funds to support the re-opening of High Streets; Funding to address rough sleeping; Upfront payment of Business Rate Grant; Deferral of business rate payments to government; Payment of Social Care Grant and further direct support to Businesses (e.g. Business rate relief; Grant support to Rural and Small Businesses, Hospitality and Leisure sectors; Financial support to those businesses with ongoing premises costs but are not on the rating list).	From March							
10. Regular monitoring and reporting of financial and budget implications (e.g. expenditure, income, council tax, business rates, housing revenue account and capital programme) to Boards and Committees, including regular engagement with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).	From June							
11. Development and implementation of guidance/risk assessments for Display Screen Equipment and Making the Workplace Safe.	June 2020							
12. Commence transition recovery phase in line with government plans and guidance, including introduction of contract tracing scheme; opening of schools, town and shopping centres; improvements to cycling/walking corridors. Including establishment of Recovery Sub Groups of Tactical Coordination Group established to focus on recovery (e.g. People, Assets and H&S; Children & YP; Business, Finance & Economy and Transport)	From May 2020							
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date		Progress			
13. Ongoing implementation of actions 1 - 12 above			From 01/07/2020					
14. Establishment of ERF level Recovery Co-ordinating Group			From 03 Jul 2020					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner		
<p>Work is underway to widen the A13 from 2 to 3 lanes in both directions between the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) and the A1014 (The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope).</p> <p>When complete, the widened section will join with the existing 3-lane section of the A13, west of the A128, providing a continuous 3-lane road in both directions between the M25 and Stanford-le-Hope.</p> <p>As part of the work, 4 bridges will be replaced, the Orsett Cock roundabout will be widened and new traffic lights will be installed to help manage vehicle flows. Public bridges will be built and opened before the old bridges are demolished.</p> <p>The Council is undertaking a number of major projects which place significant demands on the Council and failure to increase capacity to meet the demand could impact the successful delivery of the project.</p>							Anna Eastgate		
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Place – A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future. Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places</p> <p>Prosperity – A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy</p>									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	29/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 29/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 29/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021																																																																																																																												
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Comments
<p>The A13 corridor is a vital part of the transport network in Thurrock and the south Essex area, enabling the economy to grow through expanding businesses, new housing and more jobs.</p> <p>Major economic growth Thurrock and the south Essex area has seen major investment in recent years, including the opening of DP World London Gateway Port and Logistics facility, and the continued development of intu Lakeside retail and entertainment complex. This is part of a planned £20 billion investment in jobs, homes and infrastructure in Thurrock, including</p>

developments led by the private companies at Thames Enterprise Park, Lakeside Basin and the Port of Tilbury. A widened A13 will help support these developments, and also the significant investment planned for other parts of south Essex, including £272 million at Airport Business Park in Southend.

Excellent transport links: Thurrock and the south Essex area already has many excellent transport links with London, the rest of the UK and Europe, by road, river and air. The London Gateway Harbour Empowerment Order 2008 gave legal backing for further improvements to the surrounding road network, including widening the A13. This will be a benefit to traffic flow as currently around 77,000 vehicles each day use the A13 between the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) and the A1014 (The Manorway, Stanford-le-Hope).

Funding and partners: DP World London Gateway have contributed to the costs and the rest from government funding, directed through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

Ongoing review and monitoring of project and implementation of planned actions to manage identified issues, areas for improvement and potential risks.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Usual project management tools are being used including risk registers, change logs, approvals, clear systems and processes and ways of working etc. 2. Appointment of external auditors – Thurrock Council appointed expert transport infrastructure auditors to undertake a detailed review of the scheme. As a consequence there is a clear action plan of project improvements that has been substantially implemented 3. Strengthened the project team – Thurrock Council has brought on board an additional project management resource to focus on commercial issues and retained the services of the external auditor. Together, they will work their way through the outstanding compensation events and quotations. Aecom has also brought on board a senior quantity surveyor, risk manager and programme manager. 4. Programme challenge workshop – a report identifying ways in which time and cost can be saved. This is already identifying efficiency savings in particular with regard to costs. 5. Collaborative planning – the parties are undertaking collaborative planning to understand the inter-dependencies on the project and how they can be effectively managed to avoid impacts on critical path 6. Ways of working – co-location of contractors on site to ensure efficient agreement on issues which can then be quickly resolved 7. A monthly dashboard reporting mechanism to track blockers and identify ways of relieving them 8. Elements of parallel working which can ensure the workforce and plant and equipment is being utilised to maximum effect 9. Early warnings and improvements to communication to ensure efficiency 10. Full review and monitoring of cost and programme for the project 								November 2019
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	29/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Ongoing application of actions 1-10 above as appropriate 12. Full review and monitoring of impact of COVID-19 on the costs and programme for the project 13. Delivery of action of project improvements following commercial audit 			From July 2020					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description		Risk Owner						
<p>The risk is that a combination of on-going pressures will result in lack of stability in the care market place resulting ultimately in market failure. Whilst the Council has given additional resource in the form of uplifts, they fall short of what is requested. The domiciliary care rate has been increased with the retender of the domiciliary care contract – this has resulted in greater stability, but difficulties remain. For example, issues concerning recruitment and retention. Hospital capacity is still an issue, but our ability to move people on more quickly has increased as a result of increased investment arising from additional adult social care monies – e.g. improved better care fund and social care precept. The additional funding is however limited which is likely to be an additional risk to stability. There is also a risk that additional capacity is used inappropriately as a backstop due to lack of capacity in domiciliary care. For providers, fees and rates are still an issue and as a result – compounded by the National Living Wage, and despite activity over the last 18 months, the risk of failure is still very real.</p>		Les Billingham						
Link to Corporate Priority								
<p>People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.</p>								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	13/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 13/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 13/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021

Comments
<p>Adult Social Care has received additional funding in recent years – through a precept as part of the Council Tax and also through the Improved Better Care Fund. A significant proportion of this money has been used to stabilise the market place and deliver sustainability for care providers. This has included increasing the capacity of the contract and brokerage team to ensure contract compliance visits and monitoring to take place in a timely manner – reducing or aiding early identification of risks. The introduction of a Brokerage function has also meant that more realistic costs and fees are negotiated. In addition uplifts have been provided (as described in the risk description) to improve stability and domiciliary care has been retendered. Through the Better Care Fund, we have also been able to enhance capacity through investment in a Bridging Service and through enhancing existing services to ensure that people can come out of hospital when medically fit to do so – even when they are unable to return home. This has helped to reduce Delayed Transfers of Care and Waiting Lists.</p>

The current Covid-19 Pandemic has added increased strain on providers. For example residential care providers have significant vacancies which is impacting on their ability to generate sufficient income. The Council has provided additional funding recognising the financial impact placed on providers. This includes a 10% temporary financial resilience payment which is available to all providers for the first 16 weeks of the financial year. Since the end of March, the Council has enabled payments to providers to be monthly in advance for at least 16 weeks to help with cash flow. The Government has also made funding available to support care homes with infection control subject to the homes meeting certain conditions. Whether the vacancies will continue following Covid cannot be foretold. In addition, there is an increased risk to the stability of the care market from new UK immigration rules which currently excludes social care staff from the Health and Care Visa.

Work is progressing to overcome current challenges. This includes developing a new model of care for domiciliary care. At the beginning of 2018, the new domiciliary care contract started with providers now well established within the Borough. Work has also taking place on alternative approaches to traditional domiciliary care, with two Wellbeing Teams launched. Wellbeing Teams will enable us to identify the model required and will focus on enhancing Wellbeing and not just on meeting needs. It will also look at how to encourage people in to the care industry and to professionalise a caring role. In addition, Thurrock is allocated additional funding for the Winter Period which is traditionally a very difficult time for the health and care system. This means that our local system is functioning as well as possible.

Despite the work taking place, the risk of market failure remains high.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. New Domiciliary Care Contract 2. Uplifts for providers 3. Development of New Model of Care – Wellbeing Teams 4. Prevention agenda – e.g. Stronger Together, identification and management of Long Term Conditions, Enhanced Primary Care 5. Market Development Strategy 6. Market Diversification – e.g. through Micro Enterprises, Shared Lives 7. Better Care Together Health and Social Care Transformation Programme 8. Implementation and evaluation of Wellbeing Teams pilot 9. Review use of Better Care Fund for 2019-23. Programme for 2020/21 refreshed, submitted and approved 10. Review of Winter Planning (Refreshed as part of BCF review) 11. Market place diversification 12. Workforce Development Strategy – establishment and implementation of regional strategy 13. Additional Funding – Temporary resilience payments, arrangements to assist with cash flow and additional infection control allocated to providers							In place or ongoing	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	13/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
14. Ongoing application and implementation of actions 1-13 above as appropriate		From July 2020						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:							

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner		
Failure to manage the increases in demand and budget/resource pressures for Children's Social Care could lead to a breakdown in the quality or performance of the service provided to vulnerable children and results in less favourable outcomes from inspection and damage to reputation of the service does meet the required standards							Sheila Murphy		
Link to Corporate Priority									
People - A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	17/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 17/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 17/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021
<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
<p>This risk evaluates the impact of increased demand and resource pressures on children's social care quality of service and provision. The pressures outlined throughout previous years remain acute. They include increased volumes, increased complexity and ongoing activity to review high cost placements. The implementation of the early help service model and the Thurrock multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) has been successful. The service continues to maximize the external investment and opportunities presented through the Troubled Families Programme and continuously measures impact of the MASH.</p> <p>The service is demand led and cannot fail to respond to the needs of a child due to budget or resource constraints. Changes on a local, regional and national level can have a significant impact on the demand for services. War and international factors can result in an unplanned increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children or families with no recourse to public funds. Geographical movement of families across the Eastern Region and London can see a rise in families needing services, including large sibling groups. Areas for improvement have been identified in the Ofsted (ILAC) 2019 and a Development Plan has been created to address this.</p> <p>As a consequence of Covid19 since March 2020 there has been a significant impact on the way in which we deliver services within childrens social care. There has been an impact on the budget which is subject to continuous scrutiny.</p> <p>The level and complexity of some children and young people's needs and the lack of available national resources (specialist placements) to meet those needs is driving up cost pressures. As the Council continues to improve practice regarding the identification and tackling of Child Exploitation there is an increase in demand for service provision in terms of intervention; prevention and victim support. Current and new duties in terms of radicalization also place pressures on the service in terms of workforce capacity. Trends can be predicted based on previous levels of demand but these are subject to variance.</p> <p>The pressures outlined above will not be alleviated in the short term and the risk rating will remain at the higher (red) level for the period covered.</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding functions are in place and robustly applied and a Development Board has been implemented and takes place on a monthly basis.							Ongoing	
2. Trix Policies and Procedures have been introduced across Children's Social care. All procedures are subject to review and updating.							Ongoing	
3. Joint delivery of the 'Early Offer of Help Strategy' and associated services are now embedded 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 and ensure that the 'step down and step up' processes are robustly managed.							Ongoing	
4. Internal quality assurance audits to evidence appropriate application of thresholds.							Ongoing	
5. Ongoing data analysis to enable us to benchmark and target areas for improvement; complete redesign of KPI and trends analysis.							Ongoing	
6. Ofsted inspections and action plans to address recommendations included in inspection reports. Updated April 2020							Ongoing	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	17/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
7. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 1 - 6 above.			From July 2020					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner/		
Failure to ensure that all children and young people in need of help or protection are safeguarded and supported could result in them not achieving their full potential and increasing the risk of a child death or serious injury.							Joe Tynan		
Link to Corporate Priority									
People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	17/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 17/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 17/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021
<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

The nature of the work in terms of safeguarding and supporting children at risk of harm means that this will always be a high risk area although through the application of the S.E.T (Southend, Essex & Thurrock) Child Protection procedures the department actively works to mitigate this risk and reduce the likelihood.

The risk of children and young people coming to harm cannot be completely eliminated and the risk level needs to remain high and ensure clear vigilance across the council and partner agencies. New and emerging risk factors will arise and there is always a potential for agencies 'not knowing, what they don't know' that needs to be guarded against. Embedding the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help has supported earlier identification of risk through a multi-agency approach enabling the department to work to intervene at an earlier stage and reduce the risk of harm in some cases. The development and implementation of the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements will further improve the inter-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people living in Thurrock.

The impact for individual children and families, particularly in cases of child death is significant and whilst actions to reduce the likelihood are implemented the impact will remain as critical. There is also a critical impact score in terms of reputational damage should a child death or serious injury occur.

The ongoing nature of risk in child protection and safeguarding is such that despite effective mitigation the acknowledgement of the risk needs to remain high and will not reduce. This is not to say that the risks are unmanageable but for effective management the gravity and complexity of the risk needs to be acknowledged.

Managing this risk places inherent pressures on the Children's Social Care budget as a demand led budget. Effective demand and resource management remain a priority for the service within an overriding context of keeping children safe.

Risk will remain constant throughout the period covered.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Development plan in line with Ofsted inspection								Nov 2019
2. Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements established. Peer Review is currently being undertaken								July 2020
3. Application of the Southend, Essex & Thurrock Child Protection procedures								Ongoing
4. Quality assurance and safeguarding function of Children's Social Care.								Ongoing
5. Legal framework and court action								Ongoing
6. Continue to strengthen the Thurrock Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and Early Offer of Help								Ongoing
7. Case Audits								Ongoing
8. Quality assurance framework								Ongoing
9. Development plan in line with Ofsted inspection 2019								Apr 2020
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	17/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
10. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 4-9 above			From July 2020					
11. Development of safeguarding arrangements to meet statutory requirements			From July 2020					
12. Review of Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements.			From July 2020					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner		
The Council is a significant owner and user of operational property and ensuring that buildings comply with appropriate statutory, regulatory and corporate standards is a significant challenge. In addition to the direct consequences of any incident arising from buildings non-compliance, the Council could be faced with damage to its reputation, financial loss, and individual officers facing legal proceedings and in the worst case, the loss of lives of building users. It is therefore imperative that systems are in place to ensure compliance and manage these risks.							Sean Clark		
Link to Corporate Priority									
Place – A heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future. Fewer public buildings with better services People – A borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay – High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.									
Inherent Risk Rating		Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021

Comments
<p>Council properties (except for HRA and parks) moved to corporate function for repair, maintenance planning and budgets transferred. There has been a significant increase of number of properties moving to the Corporate Landlord Function which has resulted in a sharp increase in work streams. Condition and compliance surveys completed and loaded on Concerto database. The Estates Module remains outstanding on Concerto. This is a significant module which will assist with the management of leases and other property related matters and plans are in place to finalise this module by October 2020 as it is resource intensive and currently does not have adequate resources allocated to be able to progress. A draft Corporate Landlord Policy and a draft Corporate Landlord Procedure have been drafted, but can only be finalised once the resourcing requirements of the Corporate Property Team are agreed. The Facilities management function was brought back in house in April 2020 and Corporate Property Team restructure needs to be finalised to strengthen the capacity of the service. There is particular concern that vital roles are being undertaken by contract staff with no contingency or succession planning possible. In addition there is a lack of resource where posts remain vacant and where new resource is required to undertake a greater workload both within the Corporate Property and FM teams. Proposals to refresh governance arrangements for property matters was submitted in March 2020, this included a revised TOR for Property Board, a new reporting structure and an itemised forward plan to support property management, governance and enhance visibility of Corporate Landlord matters. The constitution has been changed limiting requiring consent for all disposal from the Leader or Cabinet. As there are currently no exclusions to this requirement the Assets Team should be obtaining consent for even day to day deminimis transactions, all disposal are on hold until the Director has agreed a way forward. The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the rapid and unplanned closure of buildings for an unknown period of time and plans/protocols were established and arrangements put in place to ensure the safety of buildings and for critical</p>

staff that needed to work at the Civic Centre. The recommissioning of buildings is being carefully planned to ensure health and safety hazards are managed thereby ensuring buildings are safe for re-occupation. Additionally, the pandemic has necessitated social distancing measures and new working practices to protect staff, visitors and customers from the virus. Risk Assessments and re-occupation plans in accordance with PHE and government guidance are drafted for the Civic Centre and further guidance for other corporate buildings and satellite sites are to be developed and rolled out as appropriate.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented	
1. Corporate Health and Safety Committee established.								Ongoing	
2. Asset Management Strategy drafted, consultation with officers undertaken and final draft awaiting DB approval								2018 & ongoing	
3. Comprehensive Asbestos Register in place – review being undertaken to ensure accurate building information in place								2018 & ongoing	
4. Property Procedure Rules (PPRs) prepared, consulted with officers and key members, awaiting DB approval. Additional Disposals Procedure prepared and submitted for approval in March 2020.								Ongoing	
5. Scheme of Delegations reviewed, amended and implemented.								Ongoing	
6. Restructure of Regeneration and Assets Service completed in September 2019 and Corporate Property Team transferred to Finance. Apleona FM staff TUPE'd in April 2020.								Mar 2019 to Apr 2020	
7. Transfer of all phases and budgets completed								From Jun 2018	
8. Compliance and condition surveys for Corporate Landlord Buildings completed April 2020 and new stock condition baseline established and entered into Concerto (new asset management database system), in June 2020.								Jun 2018 to Jun 2020	
9. Regular updates on progress and compliance presented to Property Board								From July 2018	
10. Retain, Release, Reuse programme for assets implemented								From June 2018	
11. Corporate Landlord Working Group developed and work undertaken until Aug 2019								2018 to Aug 2019	
12. New Planned & Preventative Maintenance (PPM) programme and compliance module developed and proposal submitted in March 2020 to refresh Property Board with key reporting milestones set against a clearly defined annual forward plan.								Mar 2020	
13. Closure of Corporate Buildings due to Covid-19 - Risk assessment, closure protocols & inspection regimes implemented and measures introduced for partial use of Civic Centre and Oliver Road Depot.								March 2020	
Residual Risk Rating		Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action		Implementation Date	Progress					
14. Ongoing implementation and/or application of actions 1 - 13 above, as appropriate.		From July 2020						
15. Development of plans in accordance with government guidance for the recommissioning of corporate buildings due to Covid19		Dec 2020						
16. An urgent review and restructure of the FM team to cover capacity, skills, technical knowledge and capability constraints.		August to Sept 2020						
17. Corporate Landlord Policy and Procedure approved following finalisation of resourcing and governance issue associated with PPRs and restructure approved.		Oct 2020						
18. Finalisation of Concerto Estates Management Module and training for staff		Oct 2020						
19. Review and restructure of the Corporate Property Team		Dec 2020						
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description	Risk Owner								
<p>Thurrock Council's Waste Strategy for Thurrock (2008 - 2020) is due to expire in the coming year and requires reviewing and updating to ensure the Strategy continues to be both fit for purpose and will guide and drive forward the way the Council are to meet and exceed the National Targets for Recycling, as laid down in the Waste Strategy For England. Alongside this, a strategic review of the Council's numerous waste disposal contracts that are also due to expire in December 2020, with the exception of the Waste to Energy Recovery contract which runs until March 2024.</p> <p>Central Government have consulted on a number of issues around waste collections, producer responsibilities, a potential of designated waste streams and national consistencies of collection-container identification. Local aspirations are to build a further 32,000 houses within Thurrock over the coming 20 years.</p> <p>A Cross-Party Working Group (CPWG) has been formed, that is made up of elected members of all political parties, and is tasked to create a Vision Statement, which will guide the direction of the Waste Strategy document. Areas of consideration are to include existing and alternative waste collection regimes such as differing collection schedules, waste streams and containerisation options. In addition, alternative options for the treatment & disposal of waste and recyclable materials.</p> <p>Key Risks are as follows:</p> <p>Timeline: The draft Waste Strategy is due before CGS in October 2020. This revised timeline was necessary due to the restrictions on face-to-face meetings put in place during the Covid-19 situation. Virtual meetings have now been implemented to allow this issue to progress.</p> <p>Political Differences: While the Cross Party Working Group (CPWG) is made up of Members from all political parties and political buy-in is positive in terms of participation and allows for constructive input, there is a risk that decisions may become difficult to achieve, particularly as the local elections calendar has effectively removed the 'fallow-year' during which such decisions may be less challenging.</p> <p>Government Influences: Central Government strategy has determined a number of mandatory changes to waste collection regimes that will directly influence Thurrock's Waste Strategy and will steer local collections that will in turn influence waste-disposal contract needs, potential changes in collection-vehicle specifications and staffing resource needs.</p>	Julie Rogers								
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Place - a heritage-rich borough that is ambitious for its future. Fewer public buildings with better services</p> <p>People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services that are right first time.</p> <p>Prosperity – a borough that enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services.</p>									
Inherent Risk Rating	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Date:</td> <td>01/07/2020</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:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16
Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16		

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Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 01/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/10/2020																																																																																																
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Comments
Cross Party Working Group established to develop strategy. Consultation with public and members completed and outcome from exercise to be reviewed to inform the further work required to develop strategy. Work ongoing with CPWG to further develop the strategy and planned to present draft to Cleaner, Greener & Safer Overview & Scrutiny Committee in October 2020.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented									
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cross Party Waste Management Group set up to consider all elements necessary to allow Officers to present a draft of the Waste Strategy, following agreement by Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These elements include an overview of the outcome from the Public Consultation carried out during March 2020. Fact finding and collation of supporting information and development of outline strategy in readiness for consultation phase. Consultation with stakeholders (e.g. public, members, officers) Review outcomes of public consultation exercise Ongoing further development of strategy 	<p>From Jul 2019 and ongoing</p> <p>From Jul 2019 Feb to Jun 2020</p> <p>From Jun 2020 From Jun 2020</p>									
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Residual Risk Rating</td> <td>Date:</td> <td>01/07/2020</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Likely (3)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>	Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12	
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	01/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12		

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress									
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing application of actions 1-5 above as appropriate Draft Waste Strategy to be presented to C,G&S O&SC 	<p>From Jul 2020</p> <p>Oct 2020</p>										
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Forecast Risk Rating</td> <td>Forecast Date:</td> <td>31/10/2020</td> <td>Impact:</td> <td>Critical (4)</td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td>Unlikely (2)</td> <td>Rating:</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	31/10/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8		
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	31/10/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8			
<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Revised Residual Risk Rating</td> <td>Date:</td> <td></td> <td>Impact:</td> <td></td> <td>Likelihood:</td> <td></td> <td>Rating:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:			
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:				

UNMANAGED / INHERENT RISK

Risk Description							Risk Owner	
<p>The Council is responsible for and provides a wide range of functions and services.</p> <p>There is a risk that the Authority experiences significant incidents of fraud, bribery, corruption or other economic crime as well as cases of money laundering. This can subsequently result in losses from the delivery of Council functions and services.</p>							David Kleinberg	
Link to Corporate Priority								
People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.								
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	09/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 09/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 09/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021

Comments
<p>The Counter Fraud & Investigation service has an organisational-wide strategy and proactive work plan to monitor and manage the identified risks. A persistent training and education regime is in place, where experts from the service work with staff, contractors, members and in the council’s supply chain to identify and mitigate the risks, and increase awareness.</p> <p>The council has current and effective policies on Counter Fraud, Bribery & Corruption and Money Laundering which are kept under constant review. These policies acknowledge the threats and install an action plan in identified incidents including, civil & criminal litigation and redress to recover any identified losses. Any control weaknesses identified in investigations are rectified in collaboration with the affected services and Internal Audit through SMART Action Plans.</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place								Date Implemented
1. Establishment & proactive enhancement of CFID								Nov 2014
2. Fraud and Corruption Policy established and maintained from 2014								From 2014
3. Counter Fraud Work Plan established and maintained								2017
4. Regular review of policies and procedures from within the council to ensure that it can prevent, detect and deter and fraud and other economic crime.								From Nov 2014
5. Counter Fraud and Money Laundering Policies Established and maintained.								2017
6. Corporate-wide Bribery & Corruption Risk Review								From Oct 2018
7. Corporate-wide Cyber Crime Risk Review								From Dec 2018
8. Fraud risk matrix/loss assessment development and roll out								From Jul 2018
9. Review of supply chain against identified national crime risks								Oct 2018
10. Ad-hoc services to prevent/detect fraud (e.g. operations to prevent/detect housing tenancy fraud, counter money laundering & social care fraud)								From Oct 2018
11. Enhanced intelligence programme								Feb 2019
12. Application of Counter Fraud Risk Analytics across the council's high risk/threat areas.								From May 2020
13. Install improved Anti-Money Laundering (AML) controls at all of the council's Customer Contact Points.								From May 2020
14. COVID-19 Business Grants Counter Fraud Programme.								From May 2020
15. Fraud e-learning training programme								Jun 2020
16. Renewed Education & Marketing Campaign for Countering Fraud, Bribery, Corruption and Money Laundering								From Jul 2020
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	09/07/2020	Impact:	Critical (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
17. Ongoing application of actions 1-16 above as appropriate.	From July 2020							
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	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 growth programme in Thurrock continues to be one of the largest and most exciting opportunities in the country. Thurrock’s reputation as a place full of opportunity has helped attract a number of large scale projects including London Distribution Park at the Port of Tilbury, the continuing investment at DP World London Gateway, expansion of Lakeside, Purfleet Regeneration, etc. As a direct result of the scale of the growth agenda in Thurrock the Council will be involved in three National Infrastructure Projects over the coming years.</p> <p>Managing these projects alongside the other key regeneration projects will place significant demands on the Council and ensuring the authority have capacity in key areas is important in maintaining momentum and maximising opportunity for the borough.</p> <p>Failure to increase capacity to meet current, future or competing demands could impact the successful delivery of the major schemes and projects.</p>		Andy Millard	
Link to Corporate Priority			
<p>Prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy • Vocational and academic education skills and job opportunities for all. <p>Place – a heritage rich borough which is ambitious for its future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places • Fewer public buildings with better services 			
Inherent Risk Rating	Date:	13/07/2020	Impact: Critical (4)
			Likelihood: Very Likely (4)
			Rating: 16

DASHBOARD

Inherent Risk Rating & Date: 13/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at: 13/07/2020	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Residual Risk Rating as at:	Forecast Risk Rating & Date: 31/03/2021

Comments

The Thurrock growth programme crosses many disciplines within the Council. It requires significant programme management capacity from the Regeneration team to lead the programme alongside a joined up approach with other areas of the authority to ensure that relevant specialisms are brought in as required and programmes and strategies are complementary. Investment needs to be committed to project development stages before outputs and benefits are realised, significant levels of funding are committed at risk to prove feasibility and investment then needs to continue to secure the benefits from the initial funding. External funding is committed to numerous projects, whilst this reduces the

financial burden to the Council, compliance with funding agreements must be achieved to ensure the Council is not exposed financially via claw back mechanisms. Projects span numerous financial years and have to be able to respond to changing market, policy and financial conditions. Strong project and programme managers are essential to ensuring that delivery stays on track and investment secures value for money outputs. Increasing resource capacity in the team via Matrix has provided some additional support and approval has been received to secure 1 additional FTE. The project portfolio could benefit from significant external funding in 2020/21 which will put additional pressure on the existing staff resource as more projects are developed. Momentum needs to be maintained in the ongoing restructure to improve working approaches and secure additional resource.

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL RISK

Management Action or Mitigation Already in Place	Date Implemented
<p>1. Overall</p> <p>1.1 Managing the impact of various outcomes relating to the UK's exit from the EU</p> <p>1.2 Include Brexit contingency in all project budgets to cover the potential for increased construction costs due to potential increases in labour/material costs.</p> <p>1.3 Managing the impact of COVID-19 on projects and programmes, including assessment on the cost of the programme of all projects</p> <p>1.4 Appropriately qualified team in place.</p> <p>1.5 Specialist expertise brought in on a consultancy basis as required.</p> <p>1.6 Programme Management methods in place with all projects having a project programme, budget and risk register set up from the outset.</p> <p>1.7 Area based Programme Boards operational to ensure cross department buy in.</p> <p>1.8 Funding agreements managed to ensure compliance and reduce risk of claw back</p> <p>1.9 Increase of capacity required in team (additional FTEs)</p> <p>1.10 Standardised project management documentation implemented and consideration of standardised project management software solution.</p> <p>1.11 Continuously improve our ability to deliver projects and share the learnings from other</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Since Oct 2018</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Mar 2019</p> <p>Jun 2019</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2. Grays Underpass</p> <p>2.1 Managing costs within GRIP stages with Network Rail</p> <p>2.2 Information campaign to help prevent accident or incident at level crossing</p> <p>2.3 Performance of Network Rail team monitored and managed through Senior Steering Group</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>3. Navigator Park</p> <p>3.1 Work ongoing to scope a deliverable programme</p> <p>3.2 All possible uses for the site continue to be explored</p> <p>3.3 Sufficient resource allocated through the planning application phase</p> <p>3.4 Full assessment of infrastructure risks underway</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

4. Purfleet Primary School								
4.1 Facilitated discussions with all stakeholders on size of site, budget and programme								Ongoing
5. Tilbury Business Centre								
5.1 Need to ensure funding is available from SELEP for project prior to tender process completion.								Ongoing
6. A13 / A126 East Facing Access Scheme								
6.1 Work on design options continuing to understand impact on surrounding area								Ongoing
6.2 Ongoing dialogue with DfT to negotiate funding arrangements and programme of delivery								Ongoing
7. Stanford le Hope Transport Interchange								
7.1 Steering Group Meetings established including strong engagement from all stakeholders								Ongoing
7.2 Detailed design work being undertaken ahead of tendering for phase 1 contractor								Ongoing
Residual Risk Rating	Date:	13/07/2020	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST RISK / REVISED RESIDUAL RISK

Further Management or Mitigating Action			Implementation Date	Progress				
8. Ongoing application or implementation of actions 1-7 above			Ongoing					
Forecast Risk Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Substantial (3)	Likelihood:	Very Likely (4)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Risk Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

Opportunities In Focus

UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description							Opportunity Owner		
Opportunity to promote the borough and secure investment in growth through SELEP, Thames Estuary Growth Commission and other Government funding sources							Stephen Taylor		
Link to Corporate Priority									
Prosperity – A borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy.									
Inherent Opportunity Rating		Date:	22/07/2020	Impact:	Moderate (2)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	4

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date: 22/07/2020	Residual Opp. Rating as at: 22/07/2020	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Forecast Opp. Rating & Date: 31/03/2021																																																																																																
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Comments
<p>The Council has successfully secured approximately £100m in Local Growth Funding to support development of infrastructure supporting growth in Thurrock</p> <p>While there are unlikely to be further bidding rounds for Local Growth Fund support Government have introduced new funding streams including the Towns Fund and Future High Streets Fund. Both Grays and Tilbury have been identified as potential recipients of the Towns Fund which will bring a significant amount of investment into the local economy. Other opportunities to bid for funding are now being developed to help the economy recover from COVID. In the longer term the Shared Prosperity Fund should be introduced to replace LGF and ESIF funding</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place							Date Implemented	
The Council has already taken a number of actions to secure funding: 1. Developing a pipeline of strong proposals for future bidding opportunities as they arise 2. Scanning external funding opportunities to bid for investment in Thurrock 3. Delivery of projects that have already won funding and more robust project management procedures in place to secure spend 4. Dedicating resource to secure funds through bidding opportunities like the Towns Fund 5. Active participation in promoting Thurrock and decision making at an ASELA, LEP, Thames Estuary Growth Board and Government level. 6. Promoting priorities for investment in Thurrock. 7. Horizon scanning for new funding opportunities. 8. Dedicating resource to development of bids for funding when appropriate							From 2014 " " " From Apr 2020 " " "	
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	22/07/2020	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
9. Ongoing application of actions 1-8 above as appropriate 10. Refresh of the project pipeline and preparation of business cases wherever appropriate for Council or third party schemes	From July Sept 2020							
Forecast Opportunity Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

UNMANAGED / INHERENT OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity Description							Opportunity Owner		
<p>A mix of approaches (e.g. service reviews, expenditure efficiencies, general income increases, managing demand, transformation, investment, etc.) have been adopted to deliver future balanced budgets and enable services to continue to be provided to meet the needs of residents.</p> <p>All the approaches are important to maintain balanced budgets for the life of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and it is recognised that investments have the greater ability to make significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision (e.g. in recent years the treasury function and activities have contributed approx. £13.7M per annum towards savings/income.</p> <p>The development and implementation of the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Programme continues to provide the Council with further opportunities to generate significant additional income and contributions towards the delivery of Council services</p>							Sean Clark		
Link to Corporate Priority									
<p>Prosperity – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations. Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services. People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay. High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time.</p>									
Inherent Opportunity Rating		Date:	15/07/2020	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Unlikely (2)	Rating:	8

DASHBOARD

Inherent Opp. Rating & Date: 15/07/2020	Residual Opp. Rating as at: 15/07/2020	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Residual Opp. Rating as at:	Forecast Opp. Rating & Date: 31/03/2021																																																																																																
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Comments
<p>Investments identified as having the greater ability to make significant income with the minimum of impact on service provision. Treasury Management and Investment Strategy established. Review undertaken and position reported to Council Feb 2020. Ongoing development, review, monitoring and reporting of investment programme (e.g. Investment Briefing presented to July Council and Standards & Audit Committee).</p>

EXISTING ACTION / RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Management Action Already in Place							Date Implemented	
1. Update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and proposed investment approach (including principles) reported to and agreed by Cabinet 11 th Oct 2017.							Oct 2017	
2. Follow up on the investment approach and the revisions required to the Treasury Management Strategy reported to and agreed by Council 25 th Oct 2017, including increases to the parameters for how much the council can borrow/invest and changes required to bolster the investment programme (e.g. capital cash investments/expenditure, acquisition or development of revenue generating assets, bringing more sites forward for development through Thurrock Regeneration Ltd).							Oct 2017	
3. Capital Strategy (incl Treasury Management Strategy), Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, proposed Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management projections reported to and agreed by Council 27 February 2019, via Cabinet 12 February 2019 and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee 31 st January 2019							Feb 2019	
4. Continue to develop investment programme in line with codes of practice and guidance to Identify further investment opportunities and achieve a balanced portfolio.							From Feb 2019	
5. Review of Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement & Prudential Indicators undertaken and reported to Council Feb 2020.							Feb 2020	
6. Manage current and explore, develop and implement new opportunities.							Ongoing	
7. Regularly review/monitor and report on all investments, including new items.							Ongoing	
Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:	15/07/2020	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12

FURTHER ACTION / FORECAST OPPORTUNITY / REVISED RESIDUAL OPPORTUNITY

Further Management Action	Implementation Date	Progress						
8. Ongoing implementation or application of actions 5 and 6 above	From July							
9. Review and report Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement & Prudential Indicators to Council Feb 2021.	Feb 2021							
Forecast Opportunity Rating	Forecast Date:	Refresh 31/03/2021	Impact:	Exceptional (4)	Likelihood:	Likely (3)	Rating:	12
Revised Residual Opportunity Rating	Date:		Impact:		Likelihood:		Rating:	

Criteria Guide for Impact and Likelihood

Appendix 3

Criteria Guide for Impact Levels

Risk

Negative Impact	Description
4 Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver a number of strategic objectives or a priority. • Major loss of service, including several important service areas • Major reputation damage - adverse central government response, involving threat of / removal of delegated powers or adverse and persistent national media coverage • Loss of Life • Major personal privacy infringement - All personal details compromised / revealed • Huge financial loss/cost - >£1M in a year. Up to 75% of budget. • Major disruption to project / huge impact on ability to achieve project objectives.
3 Substantial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to deliver an organisational priority or strategic objective. • Major disruption to important service or a number of service areas. • Significant reputation damage - adverse publicity in professional/municipal press or adverse local publicity of a major and persistent nature. • Major injury. • Many individual personal details compromised / revealed • Major financial loss/cost - >£500K - <£1M in a year. Up to 50% of budget • Significant disruption to project / significant impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.
2 Marginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant disruption to important service or major disruption to non crucial service. • Moderate reputation damage - adverse local publicity / local public awareness • Serious injury • Some individual personal details compromised / revealed • High financial loss/cost – >£100K - <£500K in a year. Up to 25% of budget • Moderate disruption to project / moderate impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.
1 Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief disruption to important service or significant disruption to non crucial service. • Minimal reputation damage - no external publicity and contained within Council • Minor injury or discomfort. • Isolated individual personal detail compromised/ revealed • Low or medium financial loss/cost <£100K in a year. Up to 10% of budget • Minor disruption to project / minor impact on ability to achieve the project's objectives.

Opportunity

Positive Impact	Description
4 Exceptional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptional improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objectives/priorities • National award or recognition/elevated status by national government • Positive national press/media coverage • Major improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders • Income/savings of >£500K in a year or exceptional saving of resource (e.g. time and labour)
3 Major	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Regional recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Positive publicity in professional/municipal press or sustained positive local publicity. • Significant improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders • Income and/or savings of >£250K - <£500K in a year or major savings of resource (e.g. time and labour).
2 Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Borough or County wide recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Positive local publicity / local public awareness • Moderate improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders. • Income and/or savings of >£100K - <£250K in a year or moderate savings of resource (e.g. time and labour).
1 Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor improvement to service(s) (e.g. quality, level, speed, cost, etc) and/or delivery of strategic objective/priority. • Local level recognition for initiative, partnership or arrangement. • Minor positive local publicity • Minor improvement to the health, welfare & safety of stakeholders. • Income and/or savings of <£100K in a year or minor saving of resource (e.g. time and labour)

10 September 2020	ITEM: 9
Standards and Audit Committee	
Investment Briefing	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: No
Report of: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director Finance	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

The Standards and Audit Committee received an update on the council’s investments and borrowings as at 31 March 2020 at their meeting on 9 July 2020. At that meeting, the committee asked for updates to be presented to future meetings of the committee.

This report sets out the actual level of investments and borrowings as at 30 June 2020.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee note the report.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Members will recall that, previously in Thurrock, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasts only presented a one year balanced budget up until the Investment Strategy was agreed. Future years were shown with significant deficits projected for the remaining years. This short term approach meant the Council had to focus on efficiencies and service reductions to deliver the budget in the relevant financial year without the ability to think longer term to transform services more effectively.

2.2 While there has been a greater focus on commercial investment in the public sector in the last five years, it is important to note that councils have always carried out investments – traditionally through money markets but also including commercial property such as industrial units.

- 2.3 In 2014, the council changed its approach with its first investment in the Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) property fund with further investments in CCLA and the first investments in the renewable energy market taking place in the subsequent two years. Following the success of the initial investments, the council unanimously agreed a new, formal Investment Strategy at its meeting in October 2017.
- 2.4 Whilst there has also been significant focus on the council's level of debt, it is important to remember that the amounts relating to these investments will all be repaid at the end of the term or, at the wish of the bond issuer, earlier.
- 2.5 Set out below is key financial information on the council's investment performance and position as at 30 June 2020. The overall debt position is £100m higher than it would normally be as the Council, like a number of authorities, increased its cash balances as the COVID restrictions commenced. As the year progresses, this will naturally reduce with the first repayment of £25m due in September 2020.

Source	£m	£m
PWLB – GF (March 2020)	100	
PWLB – HRA (2012)	161	
LOBOS (Various Pre May 2005)	29	
Other Public Bodies – Short Term (rolling debt built since start of council)	1,113	
Other Public Bodies – Long Term (rolling debt built since start of council)	90	
Gross Debt		1,493
Less:		
COVID Related Borrowing	100	
Investments – Bonds, CCLA, etc	987	
Total Repayable		1,087
Net Debt		406

- 2.6 The net hard-debt shown above largely relates to the historic and current capital programme expenditure. This has increased since the 31 March by £75m that will, in the main, be due to capital programme expenditure and the timing of council tax and business rates collections. This will fluctuate as cash flow requires.

There has been an increase in investments of £2m that are linked to previously agreed drawdowns of existing investments. The overall surplus from investments in 2019/20 was a net position, after borrowing costs and fees where applicable, of £35.7m, annually (or circa £80m since October 2017), which is delivering services beyond statutory minimum. The estimate for 2020/21 is circa £35m.

2.7 The spread of the investments are as follows:

- Renewable Energy Sector 79.8% (spread over approx 60 interests)
- CCLA 10.5%
- Other, including TRL 9.7%

2.8 The impact of COVID restrictions highlighted the likely loss of income for those authorities who purchased, for example, shopping centres, airports or retail parks. Some councils are reporting up to 25% loss of income in property-related investments.

2.9 The administration have always maintained that owning a shopping centre or retail park leaves any council with long term borrowing costs – fixed costs – but variable income streams, as has been evidenced in recent months.

2.10 This potential risk is not the case for Thurrock where the investments have been in bonds and where the drive to increase investment in renewable energy schemes is well documented at a national level.

2.11 There has still been no adverse impact from the start of the COVID pandemic on the council's investments and income streams have remained stable.

3 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 There are no options related to this report as it is simply a briefing on the council's investment position.

4 Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 The recommendation is simply to note the report as it is a report for information only.

5 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Whilst there has been scrutiny through the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, Council Spending Review and Council annually, there has been no consultation on this information report.

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

- 6.1 The council made a unanimous decision in October 2017 to supplement the council's budget through an investment approach. This has allowed investment across all of the council's front line services and includes additional services such as increasing the police presence across the borough.
- 6.2 There are other obvious benefits such as supporting renewable energy, a key approach against the impact of climate change.

7 Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clark**
Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

The benefit of the investment approach has been set out in the report.

It is clear that the approach has significantly contributed to the provision of services to Thurrock's residents against a national norm of service reductions and closures.

It had always been intended that the level of investment would reduce over time and the nature of the bond periods facilitated this.

Members need to be aware that there are significant commercial considerations when discussing investments and Local Authority inter-lending.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director of Legal & Governance/
Monitoring Officer**

The Council has a requirement to finance its operation in order to deliver services to residents and to have a balanced budget.

The legislative framework underpinning local government financing permits Councils to undertake borrowing and lending activities as part of their routine treasury management.

In considering the approach to scrutinising the Councils activities Members should have regard to the commercial sensitivities which can arise from detailed discussions of the Councils investment and borrowing portfolio. Members are reminded that the Councils own commercial interests can be considered as a ground for excluding the press and public from a meeting

under schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, however in assessing the need for this Members should also consider the public interest and need for transparency in the Councils operations. The information contained in this report is provided in a public form balancing the competing interests.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

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

There are no specific diversity and equalities implications as part of this report.

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

The Council's financial position has allowed for additional investment across all services with additional funding, specifically, for services to the vulnerable, fighting Anti-Social Behaviour and Climate issues including allocations for tree planting and air quality measures.

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:

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

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10 September 2020	ITEM: 10
Standards and Audit Committee	
A13 Widening Project	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects	
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report is provided at the Committee's request to have a quarterly update on the A13 project. This report and future reports will focus on the latest progress in delivery of the scheme, any changes in the agreed programme and any changes in the out turn forecast.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee notes and comments on the report content.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This project involves widening the A13 Stanford le Hope by-pass from 2 to 3 lanes in both directions, from the junction with the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) in the west to the A1014 (The Manorway) in the east and replacing four bridges. Once the project is completed, there will be a continuous three-lane carriageway from the M25 to Stanford le Hope, reducing congestion and resultant pollution, improving journey times and supporting further economic growth.

2.2 There have been a number of issues with the project which has resulted in delays in the delivery and an increase in costs, the detail of which has been discussed and considered in previous reports to both this Committee and PTR O&S.

2.3 This report and future reports to this committee will focus on progress in delivery and provide an update on out turn forecast and programme.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Progress

3.1 The site continues to operate in accordance with the industry guidelines for working safely in Covid 19, with no positive cases recorded across the project. Plastic screens have been installed in the offices, to enable more office staff to return, alongside additional hygiene facilities and cleaning resources.

3.2 Significant visible progress made over the course of the summer so far, with the successful installation of Saffron Gardens Bridge and the two new bridges at the Orsett junction. Work is underway to construct the surfaces and walls of each structure. Earthworks, drainage and other works continue to progress at the same time.

3.3 Almost £7.5million has been invested locally, by using regional suppliers and businesses based within 10 miles of the project – supporting the local economy at a time when this is needed more than ever.

3.4 The project has employed summer placement civil engineering students – currently studying at Loughborough University – helping to foster the next generation of civil engineers.

3.5 Considerate Constructors Scheme assessment took place in July. We scored 43/50 and were rated ‘Excellent’ by the independent review body.

Programme

3.6 Under the terms of the NEC 3 contract in place, there are four limited provisions which would enable the Council to reject changes to the programme. In rejecting the contractors programme, the Council has to give the justification and reasons why.

3.7 The four provisions are:

- The Contractors plans are not practicable
- It does not show information required by the contract
- It does not represent the Contractors plans realistically
- It does not comply with the works information.

3.8 The current accepted programme No 34 has an anticipated planned completion date within the currently published period of Autumn/Winter 2021. Again it is likely that there will be further delays as a consequence of Covid 19 but as the pandemic is still a live issue, it is difficult to understand the impact at this stage.

Budget Forecast

- 3.9 Members will recall at the last meeting, the anticipated out turn forecast including contingency was £114,675,000.
- 3.10 There is no update to this figure which was arrived at prior to the Covid 19 crisis. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, there will be a cost impact from the Covid 19 crisis which is difficult to assess when the crisis is still very much ongoing.
- 3.11 Information relating to the impacts on cost and programme as a consequence of Covid 19 are being closely monitored and separately identified. This is to ensure that the Council can apply for any additional support from Government should it be made available for infrastructure schemes impacted by the pandemic.
- 3.12 Members will recall that there were three options being looked at to bridge the forecast funding gap of £26.9m as follows:
- An increase in grant funding towards the delivery of the Project;
 - Funding contributions from the private sector; and
 - Funding contributions from Thurrock Council.
- 3.13 Officers from Highways, Finance, Economic Growth and Transport Projects held a workshop to look at the options. The workshop has identified a list of ideas which need to be looked into in further detail before taking any forward on which to base a decision. Those ideas will be reported back when they are further worked up into potential opportunities.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To respond to the Committee's request for quarterly updates on the A13 project.

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

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared and agreed.
- 5.2 Member briefing sessions are held periodically at the A13 Site Offices and provide an opportunity for Members to receive a presentation from the contractor and raise issues on behalf of local residents.
- 5.3 Meet the team sessions are held monthly at the A13 Site Office and are a popular way for residents and road users to find out more about the works and ask any questions, although as a result of Covid-19 these (and the Member briefing sessions) are currently postponed.

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

- 6.1 The A13 Widening scheme supports the corporate priorities by encouraging and promoting economic prosperity.
- 6.2 The A13 Widening scheme also supports the Thurrock Transport Strategy (2013 – 2026) and in particular policy TTS18: Strategic road network improvements by creating additional capacity to reduce congestion, improve journey times, facilitate growth and improve access to key strategic economic hubs.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This is an update report and there are no specific direct legal implications arising.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no implications arising from this update report.

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

The contractor is required to risk assess all aspects of this project and put in place appropriate procedures and measures to safeguard lives as well as the environment.

The contractor is also required to prepare a sustainability plan that reduces carbon emissions and reduces the project's carbon footprint.

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:

Anna Eastgate

Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects

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10 September 2020	ITEM: 11
Standards and Audit Committee	
Stanford Le Hope Transport Project	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects	
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects	
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This report is provided at the Committee's request to have a quarterly update on the SLH project. This report and future reports will focus on the latest progress in delivery of the scheme, any changes in the agreed programme and any changes in the out turn forecast

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee notes and comments on the report content.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 This scheme involves the construction of new station buildings with footbridge and lifts, passenger information system, bus turnaround facility, passenger drop-off points and cycle parking.

2.2 There are a number of stakeholders involved in the scheme including UK Power Networks, C2C, Network Rail and the Port of London Authority and it will be delivered under a Development Agreement with C2C, who are the principal land owner.

2.3 There have been a number of issues with the project which culminated in a pause and review of the scheme. The reasons for that have been discussed and considered in previous reports to both this committee and PTR O&S.

- 2.4 Since that review, many positive changes have been made to the scheme which have created a greater level of certainty on its deliverability and a much improved, high quality scheme.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Progress

- 3.1 A single Option concept design has been developed and reviewed by all key stakeholders. A consolidated list of comments has been compiled and the designers will now progress the design adding Architectural details.
- 3.2 Changes to the design have meant that there is a need to resubmit a planning application for the station site as soon as possible. Each phase of the design development is shared with Thurrock Council Planners and a Full Planning Application will be submitted as soon as Architectural Details are agreed. Working in parallel, a team of designers is working on the development of the scheme for the Transport Hub Phase 2 which is well advanced.
- 3.3 A report is due to be considered at Cabinet on 16 September 2020 to obtain authority to procure a main works contractor as soon as possible. Specialist legal procurement and contract advice has been sought to build in to a strategy going forward to address members concerns raised about cost control on major projects.
- 3.4 The project steering group is continuing to meet on a monthly basis, to share information and ideas and obtain feedback on progress to ensure this infrastructure is coming forward with the agreement of stakeholders and local residents. So far, all the feedback has been very positive.

Programme

- 3.5 An updated programme is currently being worked up to reflect the time required to prepare a full OJEU compliant tender process. This will include the preparation of tender documentation, prequalification of bidders, the tender process, through to tender evaluation and award.
- 3.6 Subject to the procurement process, it is anticipated that Phase 1 of the works will be delivered within the current programmed completion date of Summer 2021 with the Phase 2 works following in quick succession.
- 3.7 At the moment, there are no impacts from Covid 19 affecting the progress of this project but Covid remains a live issue and impacts may arise once works begin again on site. This will be monitored and kept under review.

Budget

3.8 The table below shows the funding sources for the project:

Source	£
SELEP	7,500,000
London Gateway (DPW)	550,000
NSIP (Network Rail)	3,050,000
C2C	737,000
Other S106 contributions	1,533,000
Council	5,720,000
TOTAL	19,090,000

3.9 It has been agreed with the designers that a high level “estimated project” cost evaluation exercise be carried out at two “checkpoints” through the design process, once when the full concept is agreed and a further check at final design approval, to give further certainty and to give some indicative numbers in support of the tender evaluation process.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To respond to the Committee’s request for a quarterly update on the Stanford-le-Hope Interchange project.

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

5.1 Consultation was undertaken as part of planning process and further stakeholder engagement is continuing. This includes meetings with the residents of Chantry Crescent and local Councillors.

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

6.1 The Stanford-le-Hope scheme supports the Place corporate priority, in particular:
Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

The revisions to the design and the revised programme for the delivery of the works remain under consideration alongside the associated costs. As set out in the report there are checkpoints to review the costs of the scheme during the detailed design process. The final projected costs will then be reviewed against the overall project funding set out in paragraph 3.8.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Since this is an update report, there are no specific direct legal implications. Legal Services will provide any legal advice in relation to this project as and when required.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no direct implications arising specifically from this update report. If the scheme progresses it will offer a greater level of accessibility at the station.

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

Not applicable.

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:

Anna Eastgate
Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing and Transport Infrastructure Projects Place

**Standards & Audit Committee
Work Programme
2020/21**

Dates of Meetings: 9 July 2020, 10 September 2020, 24 November 2020 and 11 March 2021

Topic	Lead Officer
9 July 2020	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 - 2019/20 Activity Report	Lee Henley
Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report – Year ended 31 March 2020	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Annual Report & Strategy	David Kleinberg
Annual Information Governance Report	Lee Henley
Internal Audit Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Annual Internal Audit Plan 2020/21	Gary Clifford
Investment Briefing	Sean Clark
A13 Widening Project	Sean Clark
Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects	Sean Clark
Red Reports (as required)	

10 September 2020

Annual Complaints & Enquiries Report 2019/20	Lee Henley
Counter Fraud & Investigation - Q1 Update	David Kleinberg
Internal Audit Charter 2020	Gary Clifford
In Quarter 2 Refresh of the Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register	Andy Owen
Investment Briefing	Sean Clark
A13 Widening Project	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Red Reports (as required)	

24 November 2020

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) – Activity Report April 2020 – September 2020	Lee Henley
Mid-Year Review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk and Opportunity Register	Andy Owen
Internal Audit Protocol 2020	Gary Clifford
Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Quarterly Update (Q2)	David Kleinberg

Investment Briefing	Sean Clark
A13 Widening Project	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Audit Results Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2020	BDO / Sean Clark / Jonathan Wilson
Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement 2019/20	BDO / Sean Clark / Jonathan Wilson
Red Reports (as required)	
11 March 2021	
External Audit Plan 2020/21	Lisa Clampin (BDO)/Jonathan Wilson
Certification of Claims and Returns Report 2019/20	BDO/Jonathan Wilson
Complaints and Enquiries Report – April 2020 to September 2020	Lee Henley
Annual Review of Risk and Opportunity Management and the Policy, Strategy and Framework	Andy Owen
In Quarter 4 Review of the Strategic/Corporate Risk & Opportunity Register	Andy Owen
Internal Audit Progress Report 2020/21	Gary Clifford
Counter Fraud & Investigation Quarterly Update	David Kleinberg
Thurrock Annual Audit Letter 2019/20	BDO / Sean Clark

3 Year Strategy 2020/21 to 2022/23 and Annual Plan 2021/22	Gary Clifford
Investment Briefing	Sean Clark
A13 Widening Project	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Stanford Le Hope Transport Projects	Andy Millard / Anna Eastgate
Red Reports (as required)	

Clerk: Jenny Shade
Last Updated: July 2020