

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

Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council will be held at **7.00 pm on 28 October 2020**

Due to current government guidance on social-distancing and the COVID-19 virus, this meeting will not be open for members of the public to attend. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch the meeting live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

Venue – Hybrid meeting Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL (restricted numbers of Councillors) and virtual attendance.

Membership of the Council:

Terry Piccolo (Mayor)
Sue Shinnick (Deputy Mayor)

Qaisar Abbas
Abbie Akinbohun
John Allen
Alex Anderson
Chris Baker
Gary Byrne
Daniel Chukwu
Colin Churchman
Gary Collins
Mark Coxshall
Jack Duffin
Tony Fish
Mike Fletcher
Oliver Gerrish
Robert Gledhill
Garry Hague

James Halden
Shane Hebb
Victoria Holloway
Sue Hooper
Deborah Huelin
Andrew Jefferies
Barry Johnson
Tom Kelly
Cathy Kent
John Kent
Martin Kerin
Angela Lawrence
Steve Liddiard
Susan Little
Ben Maney
Fraser Massey

Allen Mayes
Sara Muldowney
Bukky Okunade
Jane Potheary
David Potter
Shane Ralph
Joycelyn Redsell
Gerard Rice
Elizabeth Rigby
Sue Sammons
Jennifer Smith
Luke Spillman
David Van Day
Aaron Watkins
Lynn Worrall



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

Agenda published on: 20 October 2020

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for absence	
2 Minutes	9 - 36
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 30 September 2020.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
4 Declaration of Interests	
To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
5 Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council	
6 Questions from Members of the Public	37 - 38
In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
7 Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors	
In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
8 Petitions Update Report	39 - 40
9 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels	
The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.	

10	Assistant Director Appointments	41 - 44
11	Report of the Cabinet Member for Education	45 - 56
12	Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning	57 - 70
13	Questions from Members	71 - 72

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

14	Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies	
15	Minutes of Committees	

Name of Committee	Date
General Services Committee	3 August 2020
Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	2 July 2020
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 July 2020
General Services Committee	24 September 2020
Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Group	21 September 2020
Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 September 2020

16	Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year	73 - 76
-----------	---	----------------

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

Future Dates of Council: 25 November 2020, 27 January 2021, 24 February 2021 (Budget)

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Due to current government guidance on social-distancing and the COVID-19 virus, council meetings will not be open for members of the public to physically attend. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch council meetings live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

Members of the public have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting will be live streamed and recorded with the video recording being published via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

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.

PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

No speech may exceed 3 minutes without the consent of the Mayor [Rule 19.8], except for the proposer of any motion who shall have 5 minutes to move that motion (except on a motion to amend where the 3 minute time shall apply) [Rule 19.8(a)]			
All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C			
A.	A1 Motion is moved A2 Mover speaks A3 Seconded A4 Secunder speaks or reserves right to speak		[Rule 19.2] [Rule 19.8(a) (5 minutes)] [Rule 19.2] [Rule 19.3] (3 minutes)
Then the procedure will move to either B or C below:			
B.		C.	
IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)		If NOT amended i.e. original motion	
B1	The mover of the amendment shall speak (3 mins).	C1	Debate.
B2	The seconder of the amendment shall speak unless he or she has reserved their speech (3 mins).	C2	If the seconder of the motion has reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.
B3	THEN debate on <u>the subject</u>.	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.	C4	Vote on motion.
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply.		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.		
B7	Vote on amendment.		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate.		

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

This page is intentionally left blank

WW2 in Memoriam

Remembering Thurrock's Fallen : Civilian Deaths due to enemy action and Roll of Honour

Today we share names on the Roll of Honour. These are people whose home address was shown as Thurrock who lost their lives during the Second World War whilst serving with the armed forces or merchant navy.

In recognition of the adversity and bravery experienced by ordinary people in Thurrock civilian deaths are also noted here in relevant months. 101 non-combatants were killed in Thurrock between 1939 and 1945 who will also be remembered.

A special thanks to Museum volunteer Pam Purkiss for compiling the Roll of Honour information. Civilians added by Valina Bowman-Burns from Thurrock Museum.

The names have been listed in date order.

October 1940

GRAY William Frederick

LAWSON Henry

BARKER Roger Bevan

BUSH Robert H

KEMPTON Doris

KEMPTON Albert

DAY Hubert Alexander

WICKING Geoffrey

BING Elaine Emily Sheila

This page is intentionally left blank

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 30 September 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Terry Piccolo (Mayor), Sue Shinnick (Deputy Mayor), Qaisar Abbas, Abbie Akinbohun, John Allen, Gary Byrne, Daniel Chukwu, Colin Churchman, Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Tony Fish, Mike Fletcher, Oliver Gerrish, Robert Gledhill, Garry Hague, James Halden, Shane Hebb, Victoria Holloway, Sue Hooper, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Tom Kelly, John Kent, Martin Kerin, Angela Lawrence, Steve Liddiard, Susan Little, Ben Maney, Fraser Massey, Allen Mayes, Sara Muldowney, Bukky Okunade, Jane Pothecary, David Potter, Shane Ralph, Joycelyn Redsell, Gerard Rice, Elizabeth Rigby, Sue Sammons, Jennifer Smith, Luke Spillman, David Van Day, Aaron Watkins and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillors Chris Baker and Cathy Kent

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded, with the video recording to be made available on the Council's Youtube channel.

141. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Extraordinary Council held on the 8 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 8 July 2020 were approved as a correct record.

142. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

143. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

144. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

The Mayor announced that Reverend Canon Darren Barlow had been appointed to the role of his chaplain.

The Mayor stated that it had been unprecedented times and hoped that everyone and their families were well and it was encouraging to see Thurrock had one of the lowest infection rates in the country and thanked all those that had complied with the advice that was being given in regards to limiting the spread of COVID-19.

The Mayor stated he had attended very few engagements since July and had continued to make donations to small local organisations that were helping ease some of the pressure on the national services that were feeling the pressure. The Mayor stated he was looking for ways to raise money for his chosen charity, G1FT, in these current restricted times and hoped to make some announcements shortly.

The Mayor paid tribute to Barry Palmer, a past mayor of Thurrock who had sadly passed away on the 16 July this year. The Mayor had attended his funeral where he paid his respects and acknowledged the fine work that he had carried out during his time as a Councillor. Members were asked to observe a minute silence in his memory.

The Leader also paid tribute to Barry Palmer and stated this was a great loss to Thurrock and particularly those East Tilbury residents who he had served for many years.

The Leader provided Members with a Coronavirus Update that over recent weeks nationally we had seen an increase in activity around coronavirus and it had been made clear we were not out of the woods yet. Unlike other areas of the country, Thurrock's infection rate remained low, which was why it was even more important for all to keep playing their part in Thurrock. The Leader stated that it was thanks to residents' sacrifice and dedication that the infection rate had been brought down before and stated that Thurrock had got what it takes to do it again. That the new restrictions announced by the Prime Minister were not as stringent as those introduced in March but stated that if we did not follow those guidelines we would expect more restrictions to get the virus under control. The Leader encouraged residents of Thurrock to continue to play their part by downloading the NHS COVID-19 App and continue to comply with the requirements of self-isolating should they test positive or show signs of the coronavirus. The Leader also asked residents to treat those mask exempt residents with kindness and respect.

The Leader stated over the last two months the Government had announced two reforms which would give local authorities greater autonomy and better opportunities to deliver significant growth which would benefit all residents. With the first planning reform outlined in a white paper published at the start of August which would streamline the planning process, cut red tape and harness new technology to ensure that vital homes and infrastructure could be delivered more quickly and in a way that benefitted local residents. With the current cumbersome planning laws it was high time for reform so Thurrock

welcomed this proposal and encouraged all to look at the consultation. Secondly the reform to local government which would see local authorities getting more devolved powers from Westminster. In many ways here in South Essex, Thurrock had been ahead of the game forming the Association of South Essex Local Authorities three years ago to work together more collaborative across the South Essex Councils with this work already resulting in millions of pounds of Government money being invested into digital infrastructure improvements and assisting with strategic planning.

South Essex was the economic powerhouse and it provided a home to more than half the people in Essex in an area that covered roughly a fifth of the county but for decades had suffered an infrastructure deficit and stated that it was the right thing to do to go unitary to break away from Essex and be masters of our own fate. The Leader stated that South Essex worked and it had worked for the whole nation with a natural economic corridor encompassing three international ports, an international airport and home to more than 1,700 manufacturing businesses. With Thurrock already writing to the Government outlining their plans for South Essex which would contribute an additional £15 billion to the national economy by 2050. Thurrock had asked the Government to give the funding and powers needed to unlock the regions enormous economic potential. That Thurrock were looking at the best way we could work together to ensure a significant positive impact on residents' lives in the future and that some powers were devolved from Westminster to the South Essex.

The Leader announced that over the past few weeks, Thurrock had successfully secured two High Court interim injunctions to protect greenbelt land north and south of the Buckles Lane site from further unauthorised development which had been an on-going issue but were now at the point to start and to move forward with further action. That a scaffolding company had been fined which had been blighting the lives of residents in Aveley by moving their lorries outside of permitted hours and stated that any businesses that were blighting the lives of Thurrock residents would be brought to an end if the Council had powers to do so under the planning regulations. The Leader thanked residents for reporting this kind of activity and encouraged everyone to let the Council know if they were being affected by out of hours HGV and lorry movements or other issues impacting their quality of life.

The Leader stated investments had been made to the Council's foster carers by taking the Thurrock based carers out of council tax to encourage those to foster in the borough rather than foster through private agencies and would have their council tax reduced and encouraged carers to come forward and take advantage of the fantastic move forward for Thurrock and to help those that need to be fostered to stay in Thurrock.

The Leader provided an update on Clean It, Cut It, Fill It and that since the start of April 2020, Thurrock Council had:

- Filled 1,592 potholes

- Cleared 1,379 tonnes of litter from our streets
- Cleared 704 fly-tips
- Issued 1,652 fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour like spitting, littering and dropping cigarette ends
- 77 x £400 fixed penalty notices issue for fly-tipping
- 30 court cases for littering have already been successfully prosecuted but there are 125 more in the pipeline to be sent to Legal at the end of this month. A considerable number of offenders have requested extensions due to the pandemic and lockdown.

Councillor J Kent paid tribute to Barry Palmer who had served Thurrock for many years, stating he was a kind, generous and funny man who would be solely missed and passed his sincere condolences to his wife and children.

145. Questions from Members of the Public

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be viewed under the relevant meeting date at <http://democracy.thurrock.co.uk/thurrock> and are attached at Appendix A at these minutes.

146. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

The Mayor informed Members in accordance with the Council's petition scheme, one requisition of notice had been given to present a petition at the meeting.

Councillor Allen presented a petition on behalf of residents who were being affected by an alleyway being used for unacceptable behaviour such as a toilet, drug use, use by motorbikes and calling for full closure of the alleyway at the bottom of Central Avenue, Tilbury, Essex, RM18 7RX.

147. Petitions Update Report

Members received a report on the status of those petitions handed in at Council meetings and Council offices.

148. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The Mayor enquired whether Group Leaders wished for any changes to be made to the appointments previously made by Committees and Outside Bodies, statutory and other panels.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Chamber he had the following changes to make:

For Councillor Spillman to be removed from the General Services Committee.

For Councillor Johnson to be removed from the Standards and Audit Committee.

For Councillor Mayes to be removed from the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force.

For Councillor Spillman to be removed from the Health and Wellbeing Board.

For Councillor Hague to be removed from the Impulse Leisure outside body and offered out to any Member who wished to sit on this panel.

The Leader offered the vacant seat on the Corporate Parenting Committee to the Thurrock Independent Group to fill.

Councillor Fish arrived into the chamber at 7.34pm.

Councillor J Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Chamber he had no changes to make.

Councillor Byrne, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group informed the Chamber he had the following change to make:

For Councillor Smith to be added to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

Councillor Massey and Councillor Allen informed the Chamber they had no changes to make.

149. Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2019/20 - Serious Youth Violence and Vulnerability

Councillor Mayes, Portfolio Holder for Health and Air Quality, presented the annual health report that considered the issue of Violence and Vulnerability in young people and how a public health approach could be used to improve outcomes for Thurrock residents. Councillor Mayes thanked the Director of Public Health, Ian Wake, and his team for this fantastic report. Members were referred to the four steps of the public health approach to violence which were (1) surveillance to identify the nature of the problem (2) identify the risk and preventative factors (3) develops and evaluates interventions to reduce the risk factors and improve protective factors and (4) implementation and scaling up of success.

Councillor Mayes stated the report aimed to deliver the first three steps and then to the point of implementation. Members were referred to the Public Health Approach in tackling serious violence and gang related activity and their characteristics, the methodology used as a framework in the understanding the issue of violence and vulnerability in Thurrock and proposed that multi-agency action was required to address this. The report also considered issues in detail on the context of the public health approach.

Councillor J Kent thanked the portfolio holder for the report and stated that the report was a fantastic piece of work that had been presented to the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. Councillor J Kent stated that when precious resources against violence and youth crime were required these should be at the head of the queue and made a plea that the recommendations be agreed with sufficient resources to see them succeed.

Councillor Kerin asked the portfolio holder to outline what he was doing to protect those children in care from gang related activities. Councillor Halden stated that a Gang Officer and the expansion of the Youth Offending Service was resourced and was already in place and secure. That investment to have additional adolescence mental health workers in schools and investments made into INSPIRE to ensure young people had a route into employment rather than into criminality. A task force was in place looking at employment and housing and how support structures could be put in place. That mental health and vulnerability health streams were being resourced and an update would be provided at the next Health and Wellbeing Board.

Councillor Ralph questioned with the changes in COVID with more children at home had the Council sought to employ more child psychologists in Thurrock. Councillor Halden stated that more work was being put into intervention with a psychologist team already in Thurrock but did not want an over clinical model that focused on medical intervention it was the preventative work that was required.

Councillor Redsell thanked the portfolio holder for the report and the brilliant work undertaken but stated it was vital to get to the children earlier say at primary school age.

Councillor Anderson stated the report had been successfully presented at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee with good debate and discussion.

Councillor Massey echoed the comments already made that this was a fantastic report and it was good that issues were being tackled earlier before they became bigger problems.

Councillor Holloway also echoed the comments that this was a fantastic report prepared by Ian Wake and his team, and had a clear pathway going forward and hoped that the Portfolio Holder would ensure the recommendations were taken forward.

Councillor Okunade thanked Ian Wake for the detailed report and with the report being presented at the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July where members had found the report very useful and felt that this was the right way forward in particular the setting up of the locality based disciplinary panel. Councillor Okunade asked for assurance that the recommendations would be implemented and asked when this would take place. Councillor Mayes stated this report would be taken very seriously for the benefit of the young people of Thurrock and that costings around the

recommendations would take place and would endeavour to do everything possible. Councillor Mayes assured members that these recommendations would not be shelved, things may not happen straight away but there were things that could be done now and built upon.

Councillor Little firstly thanked Ian Wake for the report which were always so inclusive. Councillor Little reminded Members that they were in a unique position within their communities and it was vital that every Member played their part if they were to recognise something happening particularly with children or gang related. Members were reminded about the gang related training was available and encouraged all to sign up for it.

Councillor Spillman stated it was pleasing to see a wide range and challenging approach being undertaken by the Council to deal with these issues and thanked the portfolio holders and Ian Wake for the report and hoped that the recommendations came to fruition.

Councillor Mayes thanked Members for their questions and stated although the report may have been a difficult read it was a very important report.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Council noted and commented on the content and recommendations contained within the report.**
- 2. That Council considered how the findings and recommendations contained within the report can best be implemented and used to influence broader council strategy in this area.**

At 8.36pm, Councillor Churchman left the meeting.

150. Report of the Cabinet Member for Central Services and Communities

Councillor Huelin was delighted to present her wide and very varied portfolio holder report from April 2019 to March 2020 for central services and communities. Some of the areas that Councillor Huelin covered in her speech were:

- The introduction of the Consultation Portal with over 3,000 users registered to 'have their say' online.
- The Community Environmental Development Fund had gone from strength to strength with almost 40 projects being supported over the last four years.
- Thurrock had a very diverse community and grateful to CVS for their support and facilitating conversations around racism and inequality.
- The Collaborative Community Paper would be presented to overview and scrutiny shortly.
- Opening of the new Aveley Hub – used and shared by the community with the the digital offer developed during lockdown, the service would continue to be modernised with membership to The Libraries

Consortium and the implementation of a new Library Management System.

- With 95% of household registered to “My Account” to report a variety of issues 24/7.
- Communications had improved resident engagement through social media channels.
- The Right First Time training had successfully been rolled out to all council employees to ensure residents had a right first time experience and where not, complaints were dealt with effectively.
- Information Technology Team undertake the work to ensure that 2700 staff, 160,000 residents and 49 members could communicate with each other, pay bills and report issues.
- That £4 million Government grants would be managed to improve internet speeds across the borough with Full Fibre Network.
- Updates being made to My Account to allow residents to report more on-line.
- Thurrock Council had carried on through COVID-19 and had shown that the Council was ahead of the curve. With IT working to ensure staff could work remotely and theatre and enforcement officers organising and distributing emergency food parcels to shielding residents. Library staff helped to coordinate the COVID centre with Stronger Together and CVS and Councillor Huelin thanked everyone who helped.
- Within days the Thurrock Community Coronavirus Action had been set up to help vulnerable residents with over 500 volunteers to help isolating residents.
- The Arts and Cultural Team worked with local artists and CVS on local COVID projects to promote health and wellbeing.

Councillor Abbas thanked Councillor Huelin for the report and thanked all staff and volunteers for their help and support. Councillor Abbas asked what progress had been made in regards to a memorial in memory of the 39 lives lost at the terrible incident in West Thurrock last October. Councillor Huelin stated this was under discussion, that a collaborative consultation would be undertaken with the community and residents and would provide an update to Members.

Councillor Abbas questioned whether any funding had been allocated to digitise the museum records and articles of value. Councillor Huelin confirmed there was funding and all items were being digitalised but stated that this would be a very long slow process as there were items that were over 50 years old and had to be handled very carefully and trying to understand the ownership of some of items would take time.

Councillor Abbas asked how confident the portfolio holder was in securing funding from the Arts Council in the next bidding round. Councillor Huelin stated the collaborative community had come together to support this and that the last six months had helped the Council to evidence their case and felt that the Council was in the best place to get the funding this time.

Councillor Redsell thanked the portfolio holder for getting the libraries open for residents as they meant so much to people.

Councillor Gerrish asked the portfolio holder what objectives had been set this year to ensure that communities were properly supported to recover from the affects that COVID had on them. Councillor Huelin stated the work was being undertaken very closely with voluntary services such as CVS who had already started to under consultations and surveys on voluntary groups to gauge how they had been affected. Councillor Huelin and Councillor Halden would work together with the community and faith groups and analyse the feedback together as they were aware that mental health illness issues may be different to what they were before COVID and would need to be taken into consideration, understand them and use cultural and arts and the voluntary sector to help support those individuals.

Councillor J Kent referred to the communications digital by default and stated some residents may suffer from digital exclusion or digital isolation especially some of Thurrock's elderly residents and asked what assessment had the portfolio holder undertaken of the number of people, including those elderly residents, who may be suffering from digital exclusion. Councillor Huelin stated the Council had always been accountable to include all residents with 95% of residents on-line and 10% of residents that needed to be looked after. Councillor Huelin stated that most residents had a telephone which they could use to phone the call centre, speak to a member of staff and seek the help they need. Libraries were also a good means of internet access for those residents what did not have this facility at home.

Councillor Byrne stated his support for this report.

Councillor Massey thanked the portfolio holder for the detailed report and stated that it was important and good to see that the Council's IT technology had been upgraded and questioned following the success of Phase 1 of the implementation of Microsoft 365 platform whether there were any further phases to come. Councillor Huelin stated the IT department were continually looking how to upgrade technology for better experiences for all users. Members were reminded that this was a new way of working with new means of technology and staff were doing their best.

Councillor Allen thanked the portfolio holder for the report and thanked all those involved in the distribution of the emergency food boxes to residents and to ensure that all residents, including the elderly, where included in Council's communications.

Councillor Worrall questioned where a copy of the statutory report of the Equality Act 2010 could be found as these reports had not been presented at Council meetings for any endorsement. Councillor Huelin stated that all equality, diversity and collaborative community papers had been delayed. That the consultation had been carried out with the papers ready to be presented to overview and scrutiny committee.

Councillor Holloway welcomed the on-line offer of thousands of books available to residents and asked for confirmation that no library would close and that if libraries were moved to hubs they would not be downsized with the quality and range of book taken into account. Councillor Huelin stated this Administration had stated that they would always strive to maintain library services but could not promise where they would be as times changed with possible changes to buildings and libraries being moved into hubs. Councillor Huelin stated this was a community led initiative and referred to the The Libraries Consortium where there would be over six million books available.

Councillor Huelin offered to answer any further questions outside of the meeting.

Councillor Huelin summed up by stating that during the year the corporate transformation programme had focused on digital transformation and agreed that this had stood the Council in good stead over the last six months. Taking all the work undertaken the services had ended the year with a record 74% of services achieving target.

151. Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Air Quality

Councillor Mayes stated that it had been a privilege to have become the portfolio holder report for health and air quality. That those two areas helped recognise the relationship between supporting people to make healthier lifestyles choices and how air quality had an impact on resident's health and wellbeing. Councillor Mayes stated that there were links between his portfolio and that of Councillor Halden, portfolio holder for adults and social care and would continue to work together. That the lockdown of COVID-19 could never have been predicted and that key workers continued to work to provide vital services and thanked every person who played there part either by staying at home or as key workers.

In Thurrock, the Council continued to deliver services to residents as much as possible with restrictions in place, with the Council and community services coming together to deliver 596 essential food packages during lockdown. Councillor Mayes praised the work undertaken by the Public Health Team during the pandemic and established outbreak control plans to protect Thurrock's residents. A lot of positive work on mental health had been undertaken but further work was required to ensure residents got the support that they needed and as part of that a Mental Health Steering Group would be established to discuss those needs. That work continued with health and third party sectors to adopt any new challenges that COVID-19 would bring.

Councillor Mayes was pleased to announce that construction work would commence in November 2020 on the Integrated Medical Centre in Corringham. That the Integrated Medical Centres would direct the appropriate health care that residents require as not everyone would need to see a general practitioner and would free up vital appointments for those that did. That a paper was presented to the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier in the year to refresh the Air Quality and Health

Strategy and although this was still Councillor Mayes aim this would not be the right time due to COVID to refresh the model. That work continued with schools on the anti-idling campaign and encouraged all to switch off engines when in an idle position to reduce pollution. Councillor Mayes reminded residents of Tilbury that the dust issue had not been forgotten with the Council taking this very seriously and actively engaging with the environmental agency and encouraged residents to continually report issues to the environmental agency.

Councillor Holloway paid tribute to the fantastic work of the Public Health Team, Council and NHS Staff and Care Providers who ensured that Thurrock was one of the lowest affected areas and for looking after Thurrock's residents. Councillor Holloway referred to the difficulties of accessing COVID-19 testing nationally and questioned what processes were in place locally for residents of Thurrock to get them back to work and back to learning. Councillor Mayes stated the testing capacity was dedicated by the national scheme and that two lighthouse labs were opened last week which had created 75000 more capacity for testing across the country but with Thurrock prevalence of COVID quite low and work would continue with officers and partners to ensure that those residents who need a test got tested.

Councillor Holloway questioned what Councillor Mayes was doing personally to make sure that Thurrock's test and trace was not left to nationally and that Thurrock were being heard. Councillor Mayes stated that private testing had been commissioned to alleviate testing for staffing in care sectors. That work was being undertaken with officers and partners on how provision could be increased and that more testing would become more available over the coming weeks.

Councillor Ralph thanked everyone in the Public Health Teams that and worked during the pandemic and welcomed the changes being made to mental health and the COVID test centres that had been put up in Corringham.

Councillor Allen raised his concern on the red dust problem in Tilbury.

Councillor J Kent paid tribute to all those people working for the Council and those working in the wider economy who had done so much good work during the pandemic. Councillor J Kent stated that most general practitioners were not undertaking routinely face to face consultations at this time and were being held over the telephone. Councillor J Kent stated that it was becoming increasingly difficult for residents to get appointments with general practitioners or even get through to the surgery on the telephone to make an appointment and asked Councillor Mayes if he was aware of this problem and what could be done, working with colleagues in health, to give residents better access and better chances of speaking to a general practitioner. Councillor Mayes stated that he had spoken with the five clinical commissioning group chairs and face to face appointments had been raised and that face to face appointments would be made available for the most vulnerable and mental health patients but felt that it was a fine balance to make sure that face to face

appointments were undertaken when needed and to use the telephone or teams for other appointments.

Councillor Byrne questioned whether the hubs would close just as the general practitioner surgeries had closed if there was another pandemic. Councillor Mayes stated they would provide a better integrated medical care and would help residents get the right service.

Councillor Massey referred to the idling enforcement and referred to the level crossing in his ward where a lot of idling took place and stated that commercial operations were guilty of that and suggested that the Council could in the future work with commercial partners to educate them to turn off their engines at level crossings which would help everyone in the area. Councillor Mayes agreed and would speak with partners.

Councillor Worrall raised her concern on the red filings and dark dust that continued to blight her jacuzzi and items in her garden in Tilbury and stated this was not acceptable nor healthy for residents to live like this and asked Councillor Mayes to now please sort out the air quality. Councillor Mayes agreed that this was not acceptable and the Council had a duty of care and that the environmental agency were the enforcement agency. That work continued with the environment agency with a steering group now being set up.

At 8.52pm, Councillor J Kent called Point of Order in relation to Council Procedure Rules, Paragraph 3.8 (b), the time allowed to introduce the report and receive questions on each report and questioned whether the Mayor would consider extra time to ensure that all had the opportunity to speak. The Mayor stated that extra time had been allowed for Members to speak and confirmed that the order of questions being asked.

At 8.54pm, Councillor Coxshall, called Point of Order, asking for confirmation on the order of questions to ensure that all had the opportunity to speak.

152. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that one question to the Leader had been received and 11 questions to Cabinet Members.

As the item fell due to time limit of the meeting Councillor J Kent withdrew question 7, Councillor Worrall withdrew question 8, Councillor Kerin resubmitted question 9 for October Council and Councillor Holloway withdrew questions 10 and 11.

A copy of the transcript of questions and answers can be found at Appendix A to these minutes.

153. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no reports had been received.

154. Minutes of Committees

The Minutes of Committee as set out in the Agenda were received.

155. Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year

Members received an information report updating the progress in respect of Motions received at Council.

156. Motion submitted by Councillor Redsell

Councillor Redsell deferred the following motion:

Members hereby remember those who have lost their lives due to COVID-19 during this pandemic. Furthermore this chamber agrees that the Council should consider the creation of a permanent memorial to local residents, with the intention that it could be a place for family and friends to reflect. Members would also request that Cabinet consider options for a Thurrock memorial and bring forward a future report on this.

The meeting finished at 9.33 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

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 30 September 2020

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

There was 1 question submitted from members of the public.

1. From Cathy Sisterson to Councillor Mayes

Last year, at the Council meeting on the 23rd October, the Council voted to declare a climate emergency and to set up a citizen's assembly to look at ways to reduce carbon emissions to zero by 2030. Since then there has apparently been no movement on this. Please could you say when this citizen's assembly is to be set up, particularly in view of the escalating climate and ecological crises facing the world?

Councillor Mayes

Thank you to the resident for the question.

As everybody knows and is acutely aware, things have changed this year and quite dramatically, hence we are doing what we are doing now with people at home. The way we travel to work, the things we do, the way we live our lives is dramatically different. So, with that in mind, we obviously have to take time, that's very much the position now that we should start to pause and reflect on what is happening and what a post COVID world would look like. Which is why, in terms of air quality and climate change, it's very difficult to look at what we will be doing in six months' time, a year's time, two years' time and so on and so forth.

So with that in mind, a great deal of work has already been done in terms of the sort of preparation for plans and targets, working towards the government's guidelines and targets on this one. So, there's been a partnership group that's been established, that is led by Members and also we elected residents. So therefore, we will do our best to represent them on that board or that group. So therefore, that is where we are at with it and thanks very much.

Item 15 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that one question had been received to the Leader of the Council and 11 questions had been received to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

1. Councillor J Kent to Councillor Gledhill

The government has chosen Thurrock as one of 29 areas covered by a Special Development Order to enable the building of a lorry park to help facilitate the extra paperwork that may be needed post Brexit. Will the Leader

of the Council tell us the location of the government's preferred site for this lorry park?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor and I'll try to shorten the response that I've drafted.

Thurrock Council has been named as one of 29 areas covered by the Special Development Order to enable temporary planning permission for development consisting of land to be used for border processing and the associated stationing of vehicles (particularly goods vehicles) entering or leaving Great Britain, and the provision of facilities and infrastructure associated with this use. Specific development proposed in relation to each site must be approved by the Secretary of State.

An initial discussion has taken place between relevant consultants on behalf of HMRC and relevant officers of the Council to seek initial local input on the implications of a potential location specified in this order. The location of the specific development being considered and the development area cannot be shared at this time but if approved would we understand be operational from April 2021.

We have been assured that engagement with stakeholders including Members as well as with residents and businesses will take place prior to the submission of any final application. Formal consultation will also take place as part of the planning process.

Mayor

Councillor John Kent, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Kent

Yes, can the Leader of the Council confirm that he does know the location? Can he tell us whether there's one Lorry Park or two lorry parks, how big the lorry park may be, how long it may have to operate for?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor. Yes I'm fully aware of the location that's been suggested. Officers have told me a brief outline of the engagement that's taking place. As in relation to the answers to the others, I think that will be down to how well the negotiations go with our former colleagues in the EU. Hopefully, we won't end up with the need for these lorry parks at all.

Mayor

Councillor John Kent, do you wish to propose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Kent

Mister Mayor, I believe the people of Thurrock have the right to know where this lorry park is planned and I'm really disappointed with the Leader of the Council who has admitted that he knows where it is. But once again, wants to keep it secret. You know, I have to say, a lot of people voted to want to leave the European Union, the majority of the people of Thurrock voted to leave the European Union. I believe that those people thought that one of the benefits of leaving would be to make democracy stronger, not weaker. To make things more transparent, not hidden. Can I ask the Leader of the Council again, if he would tell us where this lorry park is planned?

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mister Mayor.

What a surprise. I'm fully aware that Councillor Kent has asked this question of Officers and have been told very, very clearly that the instructions were from consultants of HMRC that the area in question, should not be shared at this moment in time. I made very clear at the end of my statement and just to make sure that it's fully appreciated again, "We have been assured that engagement with stakeholders including Members as well as with residents and businesses will take place prior to the submission of any final application. Formal consultation will also take place as part of the planning process."

I'm sorry Mister Mayor but the Leader of the Opposition is standing up and saying that he feels that I should be breaking the rules of central government, isn't going to persuade me to break those rules. I'm sorry, government is going to tell us what we will be doing and will say what we can and cannot disclose of these areas. And the very second we can, I can assure you, we will.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Fish to Councillor Mayes

Following my question to the Portfolio Holder around a year ago he undertook to review the Clean Air Strategy. What changes have been made as a result to improve air quality for residents in Grays Riverside?

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Fish for your question.

The Portfolio Holder at the time did undertake the review and procedures were put in place. In fact, it went to PTR O&S in February. That was pre-COVID, obviously, air quality wise, we did have an undertaking to do an air quality strategy. It would be, in my view, completely irresponsible to waste

taxpayers' money doing it when air quality is not at the right levels because otherwise the models that we create will not be accurate and this is a model that we want to build on and work with and actually improve air quality moving forward. We just cannot do this at this moment whilst people are working from home. I don't know how many Councillors are in this room compared to what it normally is. That sort of thing has an impact, that's just one example. So, unfortunately, it has to be put on hold. It still is one of my aims to get that through because obviously, we need to have a baseline, we need to know what we are working with to know how to make improvements. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Fish, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Fish

Yes thank you Mister Mayor.

Actually, my question was deferred, delayed for a few meetings. So, in fact, it's been much more than a year since I asked the original question. So ok, I accept your response about the COVID situation. Why did it take nine months, before the COVID situation, to get it to the point, where you sent it to scrutiny?

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Fish for your supplementary.

Obviously, I took over the Portfolio Holder in January, obviously, it did go to O&S in February and it was going to proceed from thereafter. Money was allocated for each of the surplus that we had at the time so obviously, things have changed. Things are not where they was. Obviously, commenting on what someone did nine months previous, when I wasn't even sure if I was in the Chamber at that point, so unfortunately, I can't give you a direct answer on why it went there. All I can say is that since I've been Portfolio Holder, we've been pushing it along. Obviously, COVID has unfortunately changed that.

Mayor

Councillor Fish, do you wish to propose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Fish

Yes thank you Mister Mayor.

Obviously, that shows the administration's interest in making improvements in my ward, in Grays Riverside. It takes nine months to come forward with a strategy and then it gets delayed by COVID. My question is, ok it's fair enough to bring forward a strategy, obviously as a Portfolio Holder, you have a vision

to drive in that strategy but is your vision for Grays Riverside, to make improvements?

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Fish.

I understand your frustration to be honest. However, in terms of Grays Riverside, we have got the £50 million town's fund that will be used to improve Grays that will also have an impact. There are little things, for example, the improvement of the one way system in Grays to ensure traffic flows, that's in the middle of your ward. Those sort of things would have an impact, the reality is that air quality doesn't just hit ward boundaries and say, 'That's Grays, I'm not going to go there'. It's for the whole of Thurrock so the actual air quality strategy wasn't Grays Riverside based, it was for the whole of Thurrock so unfortunately, at this time, and it is on hold. However, it will be picked up once the new norm is known. Thank you.

2. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Watkins

Can the Portfolio Holder for Environment update the chamber on the progress he has made on replacing the bins at cemeteries?

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Worrall for your question.

To date, we have had successful installations of the new bins style and layout at Stanford le Hope and Chadwell St Mary. This, as you may remember, was an extension to the various successful bin reviews and replacements which had taken place across Thurrock for a couple of years. They have been delayed this year, as you expect, due to the pandemic and we still very much want to roll out the rest of the bins across the remaining cemeteries, that is of course, subject to funding availability and we will be assessing it over the remains of this financial year. However, in the meantime, we are putting together a pilot of the existing heavy litres bins which we have across the Borough as part of that review. The intention is to pilot into these specific cemeteries, this one being West Thurrock based on the feedback from the Grounds Team as the initial trial. These will sit alongside the existing bins, not replacing them, to allow for a greater usage within the cemetery and will be signposted appropriately. This is based on the bins we currently have in storage and sits within the current budget lines.

Subject to the initial success of this, we would then look to roll out a similar bin style across the remainder of the cemeteries until a time in which we can obviously secure the funding for the remainder of the bins as per the original trial in Stanford Le Hope and Chadwell St Mary.

Mayor

Councillor Worrall, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Worrall

Yes I do thank you Mister Mayor.

Thank you Councillor Watkins, I went to Chadwell St Mary today and in all honesty, I expected that, with a month's notice, you would have sorted the problem out so that I wouldn't have to ask the question tonight. But tonight, there were still general street waste bins in two sections including where they got the dog waste at the top, just like what you would get in the high street is exactly what you got in the cemeteries. And then in another little area, I'm hoping this isn't your answer to our bins, there was two little bins in the section with a bit of wood around it, with two bins inside, one said general waste, one said garden waste. They're no bigger than what I've got in my kitchen at home. And then if the wind blows, there's nothing to stop all the mums and dads and all the other stuff that people are piling in there, they're just blowing onto people's graves which is why I've brought this back here.

I went up there and there was all old stuff all over other people's graves and it's not good enough. This is two years that we've been looking at bins strategy for cemeteries and we was promised that you had people going out, looking at best practice, please don't tell me this is what's come back as best practice. We need to get it right. This is our parents, our families, our loved ones, please can you tell us when you are going to make our cemeteries and our bins work? Because what's up there today, please don't tell me that's what you're replacing with.

Councillor Watkins

Thank you Mister Mayor and Councillor Worrall.

I'm glad you mentioned one thing actually so you are right. When you were the Chair of CGS a little while ago, you spoke very passionately about cemeteries back then and obviously following the KPI results which we had back a couple of years ago and seeing the most recent KPI results we got, have excelled any that we had previously. We did instigate the internal standards review for the cemeteries and we do stick by those and we have seen through the number of complaints that we have received and I'm also going to take last year's into account as well because I know that lockdown would have restricted the amount of people into cemeteries but also when you take into the consideration of last year, the number of complaints we've had about our cemeteries have gone significantly down and I do mean that – significantly down. Thanks to the work that our teams do.

If there are individual issues, such as the one you mentioned of today, the teams will address those as they are going through in cleaning cemeteries. We've had two successful pilots and as I've alluded to, in my answer, that

subject to funding, we would go out then to the remainder of the cemeteries to have the new style bins, which would be different to what we now have on our high streets. However, the pilot in which I have mentioned, would be the very heavy duty bins, the massive bins which are across our high street, which would then sit alongside the existing bins that's within our cemeteries so that they can accommodate more rubbish and obviously more general waste equally at the same time as well. Guard ways would also be included within that so that a greater storage is allowed and we wouldn't have the small bins which you've alluded to.

However, we do take the pride of our cemeteries to heart. We do ensure that our cemeteries are always at the highest standard and that the team do a fantastic job.

Mayor

Councillor Worrall, do you wish to propose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Worrall

It's just a quick one Mister Mayor. So if you're running a pilot, when can we expect that we will have these bins? Because two years is a long time to not have got it right. If not, can I just ask the question again in six months because I want to get it right for our residents.

Councillor Watkins

Sorry if I haven't made myself very clear as I've alluded to. The remainder of the cemeteries outside of Chadwell St Mary and Stanford le Hope will have the new bins stores in subject to funding. Now, obviously, we do welcome comments and that's what CGS sits there for so please do send on your suggestions to CGS if you feel that the existing bins aren't doing what they potentially should be doing. Obviously again, we would seek feedback from the wider community as well in relation to that and that can change in reflection to the new styles when they come out.

The pilot in which I mentioned, is in relation to West Thurrock cemetery which is what our teams have identified as a good trial for the use of these new heavy style bins which, again will be rolling out in the next few weeks, subject to the success of that pilot and feedback. We would then roll that out to the remainder of the cemeteries.

3. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Coxshall

Can we be given assurances that Thurrock residents will not be asked to contribute to the A13 widening projects overspend?

Councillor Coxshall

Well, the simple answer to that is no I can't give that even if I wanted to. Just like having a charge against your house for a bank loan, before the bank gives you money, the government will not give us the funding unless we underwrite the scheme in its entirety. We would never be able to, if we did that, win again anymore government money, anymore bids, or vast amount of infrastructure that we want for this Council, for our infrastructure for our policy.

But what I can do is give you the absolute assurance that the weight of this Council, the weight of this administration will be working to find alternatives for the cost of the A13 and all the work of this will continue to be reported to the Standards and Audit as we go forward with all the alternative options.

Mayor

Councillor Byrne, do you wish to propose a supplementary question?

Councillor Byrne

Yes please Mister Mayor.

I watched in amazement, the Chair of Regeneration (PTR) and the Vice-Chair praising the great work we done at Stanford le Hope station. As part of this great work, he failed to mention the deadline to apply for London Gateway funding was missed three times and that was the tune of £600,000, despite all their warnings. And that obligation has now timed out and that money was for a bus turnaround, not the station upgrade and so have we secured the funds without the DP World contribution?

Councillor Coxshall

Sorry do you want me to answer that or do you want me to...?

Mayor

I'm sorry, I can't accept that as a supplementary question because the main question was regarding the A13.

A discussion ensued about Councillor Byrne's supplementary question in which the Mayor did not accept as it was not related to the main question.

4. From Councillor Anderson to Councillor Halden

Can the Portfolio Holder outline what he is doing additionally to make the children's partnership more accountable?

Mayor

Councillor Halden

Councillor Halden

Thank you Councillor Anderson for your question. Nothing is more important than make sure that all members are clear sighted on what we are doing to keep our children safe and well and making sure they can reach their ambitions. We've made a lot of progress as a Council since 2011 when we set up the Corporate Parenting Committee to make that all members had a correct forum to champion looked after children. We've recently announced an independent review of the safeguarding partnership which is nearing its conclusion which will be published soon. What we have done since is offered cross party members more information than they have ever had before on committees so the Corporate Parenting Committee is seeing special reports on children missing. The overview and scrutiny committee will be seeing special reports on the so-called high risk notifications and a newly constituted prevent committee will see information regarding unaccompanied asylum seeking children and what I would say to committee members is that I really urge all members is please use these forums. Scrutiny is a powerful tool, corporate parenting is an important tool. If there is additional information that you feel that you need in order to champion children in your ward or children in care by all means ask for information probe further. We're very proud as a department of the things that we are going for children so we are always happy to attend scrutiny and indeed I think Councillor Coxshall bleats every now and then that the best disinfectant is sunlight. Ask us questions it helps us build a stronger department so we would urge members to please use these forums we are making sure more information is available the type of information that's normally only available to the portfolio holder and we are keen to continue in this vein.

Mayor

Councillor Anderson do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Anderson

No supplementary question Mister Mayor but just like to say that I certainly welcomed the contents of Councillor Halden response there.

5. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Mayes

Would the Portfolio Holder be prepared to write to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Council to ask him to account for the Government's despicable treatment of NHS workers over its pay increase decision?

Mayor

Councillor Mayes

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Byrne for your questions. The decision to award the pay increase does not actually rest with me however what I will say is a bit of background with this because actually there is an independent NHS pay review body which makes recommendations to the Government on the pay for NHS staff and I am under the understanding at the moment that has not come back yet that may not be the case as it currently stands but that is my understanding. The Government has also pledged that obviously they will listen to the independent board because it is also been in conjunction with trade unions to ensure that everybody is fully rewarded. I do understand that NHS staff are currently benefitting from the final of the three year pay deal agreed by trade unions previously which is delivered on a year on year increase such as increasingly starting salary for a newly qualified nurse by 12% by 2021. I do not think appropriate for me to write to the secretary of state on this matter. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Byrne do you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor Byrne

Yes I take that as a no then. The chair of the regeneration scrutiny was very vocal on his motion to build an A&E in Thurrock before the local plan starts concreting over Thurrock. Are you to join him and I would assume his portfolio holder is up for this so are you going to be another big gun that's going to join Councillor Allen's quest to go all guns blazing for an A&E in Thurrock.

Mayor

Can I suggest that Members look at how to put questions in it is quite clear that any supplementary question must relate directly to the main question asked. I will allow it on this one instance if you're happy to do so Councillor Mayes but be aware that in future if it is something that is not directly related to the main substantive question then I will now allow it. And I was going to mention this later on I am getting rather perturbed about the trap door questions that go in where the initial question in my mind in some instances is not the actual question you want to ask so if members want a full and truthful answer than make sure that their question that they actually want to ask is that question and Councillor Mayes would you like to reply.

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Byrne for your second question. The reality is with the new IMCs of which one will be Grays the urgent what we are pushing towards at the moment there is going to be an urgent care centre. What we are pushing for as a 24 hour urgent care centre will actually to be an upgrade to minor injuries which will obviously benefit the residents of Thurrock. Looking at the statistics obviously the decision to

implement a new hospital isn't within my gift however obviously improvements to things such as Grays IMC hopefully and things that I will push for his 24 hour urgent care centre that will actually improve people's health care in Thurrock.

Mayor

Thank you Councillor Mayes. Councillor Byrne do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor Byrne

Okay. With a no to that a no to supporting that great opening from his chair begs the question why did you clap every Thursday for the NHS.

Mayor

Councillor Mayes

Councillor Mayes

I can answer that one. I clapped every Thursday for the NHS because I support the NHS, I think they are doing a fantastic job and at the end of the day there are things outside of this council's control. We can influence, we can push however we are at the behest of Governments and unfortunately I know it's your third question I do think that is the reality, I generally think the clapping for the NHS should be annual thing, I am totally on board with that, I think that it was a fantastic community to come outside when were actually being locked down one time or if you go out for exercise you actually go out and you see people, you see your neighbours that was absolutely lovely for everyone to come out to clap for the NHS but I do not think hypocrites to come and do that based on my role as portfolio holder. Thank you.

6. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

When will all residents living in council sheltered complexes be able to use their community halls?

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor for your question. After changes were made to the guidelines on Monday 14 September 2020, permits only six people from different households to meet. All twenty nine risk assessments were required to be amended to reflect the said guidance. A letter was issued on 16 September to Councillors and tenants regarding the need to ensure strict infection controls in place so the actual phased opening

of the halls began yesterday. Tenants will be asked to continue the infection control by using the cleaning equipment provided by the housing service to wipe down surfaces used and disposing of the wipes safely in the bins provided. In addition each entry door now has a wall mounted battery operated hand sanitizer, which tenants are encouraged to use both when entering and leaving the building. A simple on the door booking system for tenants will be introduced, which will clearly identify that only six people are permitted in the communal hall at any one time. Sheltered housing officers will be monitoring the simple on the door booking system which will clearly identify the six only permitted at any one time. However there are still be some restrictions on activities due to numbers and possible cross contamination on equipment but consideration is being given to looking at how a flexible scenario can be adopted for all activities in the future.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent to you wish to pose a supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Thank you Mister Mayor and I am really grateful for both the response and the work that has been going on to get community halls open again. I think my supplementary revolves around that last bit which is looking to be as flexible as we can. Some of the community halls that we have are, you know, larger than this council chamber and it is more than possible to get different groupings of six with adequate distance between them to enable residents to be able to use the hall. My question is that although I understand we all understand the absolute need to rigorously control the virus many of our older people do suffer some loneliness. In our complexes many of the people living there are single, they are not married, and those community halls are literally a lifeline to them. During the summer, if I take the example of Dexter Close which is the closest one to me they had lots of tables outside where people could come and sit and be two metres from the next bubble that is clearly not possible this time of year so can I just ask that that flexibility and as much common sense as possible is used to enable as many of our older vulnerable residents to use the community halls as possible.

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

The immediate answer to that counts again is yes obviously but however it has to be some kind of generic opening just to make sure that everything is correct and then I will ensure the officers do look at each individual hall. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent do you wish to pose a second supplementary question.

Councillor J Kent

Yes again I am grateful for that. Could I ask that at a time of his convenience the portfolio holder comes with me to meet residents of Dexter Close to see the hall for himself and to see what more can be done to get it as open as possible as quickly as possible.

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

By all means.

As the item fell due to time limit of the meeting Councillor J Kent withdrew question 7, Councillor Worrall withdrew question 8, Councillor Kerin resubmitted question 9 for October Council and Councillor Holloway withdrew questions 10 and 11.

This page is intentionally left blank

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions received from members of the public.

This page is intentionally left blank

Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Officer	Status
539	We understand and note with concern Highways England's plans for the relocation of the Gammon Field traveller site as part of the Lower Thames Crossing project. We object strongly to the option of siting a new traveller site near existing residential properties in Long Lane, opposite the junction with Kerry Road. This further loss of green belt is deemed unacceptable and we regard this area as ill suited for use as a traveller site.	8 July 2020	Cllr Redsell Presented at Council	Andy Millard	Discussions are progressing with Highways England in relation to the relocation of the traveller's site. Feedback from the latest consultation will not be available until the Lower Thames Cross Development Consent Order application is submitted which is expected to be made on 23 October 2020. From officer discussions with the Lower Thames Crossing team, it is highly probable that the site identified in the last consultation will be progressed as opposed to the two sites subject to the petition.
540	This is a written application by residents affected by an alleyway being used in the stated reasons below (used as a toilet, drug use, use by motorbikes) and are calling for full closure of the alleyway at the bottom of Central Avenue, Tilbury, Essex, RM18 7RX	30 September 2020	Cllr Allen Presented at Council	Roger Harris	A Thurrock Anti-Social Behaviour Officer has been working in partnership with the members of the Community Safety Partnership, in this location. As part of a target hardening project, an A frame was installed in the alleyway which leads from Hobart Road to North View to prevent nuisance from motorbikes. In June 2020, the Council received complaints from two residents relating to the location and one of the residents supplied video footage of the behaviour. The footage showed groups of young people riding motor bikes dangerously and inappropriately. This issue was raised the case at our Local Area Group, to ensure a multi-Agency response to the problem.

Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Officer	Status
					<p>As a result Inspector Paul Ballard from Essex Police requested the footage is sent alongside all the intelligence from residents' complaints. As a result of information from the local community, the police carried out a raid on a council tenant and recovered a motor bike, which was confiscated. Our Anti-Social Behaviour Officer is following-up the police action with the most appropriate and proportionate action for breach of tenancy terms and conditions. The actions being taken will be ongoing as the members of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership will continue to monitor the situation.</p>

28 October 2020	ITEM: 10
Council	
Assistant Director Appointments	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key
Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council	
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

In accordance with the Constitutional requirements this report seeks approval from Council to appoint to the Assistant Director Childrens Social Care and Early Help and Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

Following a robust search and selection process, General Services Committee interviewed on 14 October 2020 and unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Joseph Tynan as Assistant Director Childrens Social Care and Early Help and Leigh Nicholson as Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection. These were both supported by the recommendations of the Stakeholder Panels.

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 To approve in accordance with the Council’s Constitution the appointment of Joseph Tynan as the permanent Assistant Director Childrens Social Care and Early Help.**
- 1.2 To approve in accordance with the Council’s Constitution the appointment of Leigh Nicholson as the permanent Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care and Early Help role became vacant in March 2020 following the successful appointment of the incumbent post holder to the position of Corporate Director Childrens Services. Since that time interim arrangements have been in place.
- 2.2 The Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection role became vacant in May 2019, following the successful appointment of the

incumbent post holder to the position of Director of Place. Since that time interim arrangements have been in place.

- 2.3 Both roles are permanent existing positions in the senior structure and are critical to the delivery of key priorities and statutory activity for the Council.

3. Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help

- 3.1 Recruitment to the Assistant Director Children’s Social Care and Early Help role commenced in August 2020. An executive recruitment agency was appointed and a full national campaign developed.

- 3.2 This campaign attracted a total of 15 applicants which were initially assessed and rated by the agency based on their applications with six candidates recommended to progress. Longlisting by General Services Committee took place on 24 September 2020, from which all six applicants were selected to progress to the next stage.

- 3.3 Prior to the technical assessment, two candidates withdrew from the process. Technical Assessments for the remaining four candidates were conducted by an external independent expert on 29 September. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 8 October, from the four candidates two were selected to progress to the Selection Day.

- 3.4 Selection Day took place on 14 October with the remaining two candidates. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel, young persons panel and General Services Committee. The young persons panel consisted of 5 young people who live in the borough and was facilitated by Sue Hawthorne, HR Business Partner. The stakeholder panel consisted of:

1	Kevin Sadler	CEO, The Gateway Academy
2	Petra Back	Head Teacher, Graham James Primary Academy
3	Neil Johnstone	Essex Police
4	Ashley Palipana	Youth Cabinet
5	Aaliyah Alie-Sesay	Youth Cabinet
6	Kristina Jackson	Thurrock CVS
7	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, Thurrock Council
8	Julie Harris	Panel Facilitator and HR Business Partner, Thurrock Council

3.5 The unanimous recommendation of both the Stakeholder Panel, Young Persons Panel and General Services Committee is to appoint Joseph Tynan as the permanent Assistant Director of Children’s Social Care and Early Help.

4. Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection

4.1 Recruitment to the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection role commenced in August 2020. An executive recruitment agency was appointed and a full national campaign developed.

4.2 This campaign attracted a total of 8 applicants which were initially assessed and rated by the agency based on their applications with four candidates recommended to progress. Longlisting by General Services Committee took place on 24 September 2020, from which all four applicants plus one additional applicant with a marginal assessment were selected to progress to the next stage.

4.3 Technical Assessments for the five candidates were conducted by an external independent expert on 1 October. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 8 October, from the five candidates three were selected to progress to the Selection Day. Prior to the selection day one candidate withdrew from the process.

4.4 Selection Day took place on 14 October with the remaining two candidates. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel and General Services Committee. The stakeholder panel consisted of:

1	Steve Munday	South West Essex Community Education Trust
2	Lucy Harris	Tilbury on the Thames
3	Bianca Forrester	NewRiver Retail
4	John Speakman	Port of Tilbury (London)
5	Neil Johnstone	Essex Police
6	Aaliyah Asie-Sesay	Youth Cabinet
7	Kristina Jackson	Thurrock CVS
8	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, Thurrock Council
9	Sue Hawthorne	Panel Facilitator and HR Business Partner, Thurrock Council

4.5 The majority recommendation of the Stakeholder Panel and unanimous recommendation of General Services Committee is to appoint Leigh

Nicholson as the permanent Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To appoint to these senior positions to ensure the council fulfils statutory functions and requirements and has appropriate senior leadership in place to deliver critical services and ambitions.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Appointments to this senior management position has been conducted by General Services Committee with the full engagement of key stakeholders. GSC recommends the candidate be approved by Full Council.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

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

These are substantive posts and are therefore included within the council's core budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
Assistant Director Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

These appointments are recommended based on the council's recruitment process which is underpinned by the council's equal opportunity policy.

Report Author:

Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation

28 October 2020	ITEM: 11
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Education	
Report of: Councillor Andrew Jefferies, Cabinet Member for Education	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock like the rest of the country has been dealing with a global pandemic – as I write my first report as Cabinet member for Education I wanted to start by thanking all early years, primary secondary and colleges for the hard work and commitment they have shown to our children & young people and adults.

I would also like to take the opportunity of thanking my education team who have worked hard to ensure that we are supporting all educational settings in these unprecedented times. It is also right to recognize both the CCG and public health who have worked closely with colleagues in education over the last 6 months.

This report sets out the work we have undertaken over the past year and identifies my key priorities for the coming 12 months.

My key strategic priorities are:

1. Undertake an education review to ensure we continue to support our educational providers to enable strong educational pathways.
2. To ensure we work to support our SEND children and young people and meet the outcomes within the Written Statement of Action.
3. To continue to support our skills development work – recognising some of the challenges that the pandemic has created.
4. Ensure we have high class facilities to deliver innovative learning environments for children, young people and adults.
5. To provide access to adult skills opportunities recognizing the economic challenges that COVID 19 presents.
6. To ensure we continue to support emotional wellbeing by providing support to schools in the further imbedding of our schools wellbeing service.

EDUCATION & SKILLS – supporting our children and young people and adults to achieve.

1. School Effectiveness

So much of what we would usually report in School Effectiveness is not available this year due to Covid-19 and its impact on early year's settings and schools locally and nationally. Due to the cancellation of most statutory data returns to the Department for Education (DfE), for Early Years Foundation Stage, SATs and GCSE/ A Levels, it will not be possible to report in the usual manner. There will be no DfE published data for any key stage. Instead Ofsted and the DfE will refer to the 2018/2019 academic years' data.

Our school effectiveness team have worked closely with schools over the past year to provide support and challenge – this has further imbedded our partnership approach with our schools. Thurrock has embraced the academisation programme and by the end of 2020 we will only have one maintained school in Thurrock – Grays Convent.

2. Early Years

There are 236 Early Years providers in Thurrock: 53 Day Nurseries or Pre-schools, 28 School based nursery classes and 155 childminders. Of these, only 3 are not yet rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, which is just 1.7%. Our Early Years Officers are working with those settings to ensure rapid improvement. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic all Ofsted inspections have been suspended until January 2021 at the earliest so there has been no change to these figures.

During the pandemic which struck in March 2020, many early years providers remained open for the children of critical workers, vulnerable children and children with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs). Our providers provided early education and childcare for approximately 450-500 children per week.

Some settings were forced to temporarily close, either because they had no demand for places or because they did not have the staff to open due to shielding/ quarantine etc. In line with DfE Guidance to ensure that we had sustainable childcare, all settings were still funded for Government early years funded places whether they were able to open or not, based on their previous terms numbers. This has meant that to date we have seen no early education and childcare providers close.

During the period March – July, Council Officers worked with 28 parents to identify alternative early education and childcare provision where their own setting was closed. The team received a high number of compliments from the providers across the borough for the support they provided during March – July and for day nurseries who remained open during the summer break.

3. Schools

There are 56 schools in Thurrock: 40 Primary schools, 13 secondary schools and 2 special schools. There is one pupil referral unit offering alternative provision.

92% of primary schools remain rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. This places Thurrock at 59/ 152 local authorities for primary schools. 70% of secondary schools that have been inspected (10 schools) are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. One secondary school is still waiting its first inspection since opening. Five schools had an Ofsted inspection during the autumn term of 2019, and there were none in the spring or summer terms due to Covid-19. All schools that were inspected retained their previous judgement- four remained good and one remained outstanding.

Of the 40 primary schools, 38 are academies with the remaining two maintained schools are due to join multi- academy trusts this term. Twelve out of thirteen secondary schools are academies. Grays Convent High School is a Catholic voluntary aided school. The alternative provision is run by Olive Academies Trust. There are 12 Multi-Academy Trusts operating within Thurrock as well as a number of standalone academies.

3.1 School during Covid-19 period March 20 – July 31 2020

All Thurrock schools remained incredibly resilient during the end of spring term and throughout the summer term. Schools stayed open to offer provision for critical worker's children, vulnerable children and those with EHCPs.

During the very early stages of lockdown, schools were expected to undertake a risk assessment for these groups of children to determine if they were considered safest at home. If this was the case, the children were asked to remain at home where possible. The average attendance during this period was 300-400 pupils per day, who mainly consisted of critical worker's children.

48 schools remained open and offered Easter Holiday provision for critical worker's children, vulnerable children and those with EHCPs. Average attendance dropped during the holiday period to approximately 200 children per day.

As lockdown began to ease and the Government announced a wider opening of schools on June 1, schools were again expected to undertake a risk assessment, but this time it was focused on whether the pupils were safest at school. This enabled many more children to access school places and attendance began to increase. In the week beginning 1 June the average attendance was 1200 pupils per day. The biggest proportion of these were children from eligible year groups (Nursery (N) Reception (YR), Year 1 (Y1) and Year 6 (Y6)): approximately 60%, Critical worker's children made up a further 30% with the rest being vulnerable children and children with EHCPs.

As risk assessments took place and parental confidence grew, many more children attended school and by the middle of July there was on average 4000 children attending

school per day. The biggest proportion of these was again the children from eligible year groups which had been extended to Years 10 and 13.

All children returned to school in September and the attendance has remained high. Ofsted have resumed visits to schools and we have had two schools who have had an Ofsted visit. This is not an inspection but they will be looking at the schools risk assessment and reviewing school attendance. A letter will be published following the Ofsted visit, this will not be a graded judgement.

4. Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities.

There were 1716 Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) maintained by Thurrock at the end of the summer term. This is an increase of nearly 5% since January 2020.

The national data for the percentage of EHCPs completed within twenty weeks is not available for 2020 as it was due to be updated in May 2020 via the national census which did not take place, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore the latest national data available is 2019, which shows that 60% of EHCPs nationally were issued within the twenty week statutory timeframe. Thurrock data for the first six months of 2020 shows that 82% of EHCPs were completed within the statutory timescales, despite the Covid-19 pandemic interruption to normal working, school closures and the ability to hold assessment and other types of meetings.

The Statutory SEND Service is committed to ensuring most EHCPs will be completed within the statutory timescales this academic year. In order to achieve this we have recruited a number of new caseworkers who have completed their induction and SEND training and the whole services has undertaken training throughout this year to upskill and improve performance.

4.1 SEND & COVID-19

The government issued temporary amendments to the law which meant that the rules around statutory timescales and delivery of provision in the EHCPs were slightly relaxed. School and Local Authorities were tasked with making reasonable endeavors to deliver the provision and plans. Where in a small amount of cases this was not possible, even after reasonable endeavors had taken place to complete an EHCP on time due to Covid, then they could be recorded as a valid exception

During the initial Lockdown phase and after the wider opening of schools, the SEND Service ensured that all pupils in Thurrock schools with an EHCP had been contacted regularly by their school.

School were asked to develop a reasonable endeavors plan for each pupil, which demonstrated how they were going to deliver the SEND provision identified in the EHCP. Schools were asked to discuss the provision with the parents and to work out

what was possible, what was possible with amendments, and what couldn't be delivered.

5. Virtual School (VS)

The Virtual School head is in charge of promoting the educational achievement of all the children looked after by Thurrock Council.

The school does not exist in real terms, or as a building. Children do not attend it - they remain the responsibility of the school at which they are enrolled. The Virtual School is a service which has been created for the effective co-ordination of educational services at a strategic and operational level.

In the summer term there was a total of 307 pupils aged 3-18 years supported by the Virtual School, which was an increase on the previous term. Twenty-nine of these were unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

5.1 Covid 19 Strategy and Virtual School Response

There were a number of actions that the Virtual School took as the result of schools closing and lockdown being imposed, to protect the education of looked after children.

For example:

- A letter of guidance was sent to social care and the carers to decide whether or not children and young people would be accessing an educational offer.
- Every family and social worker was contacted to check the status of children/young people.
- Every pupil was RAG rated to gauge the level of concern we would have and highlight where our initial support/challenge needed to be focus on.
- Carers were asked to provide daily or weekly updates to inform the VS as to the progress that was being made as pupils stayed at home,
- The team created a COVID 19 PEP which catered for pupils being educated at home.
- The team created a suggested list of activities and online learning sites to access for each phase.
- The team created a set of mental health activities and access to support to provide carers and pupils with information.
- The carers have been contacted to provide SDQ data to the Virtual School as part of the termly PEP so that we can then highlight those pupils needing the most emotional well-being support.

6. Education Welfare Service

The service received 628 referrals last academic year for a variety of reasons, including children missing, Elective Home Education (EHE), Admissions related issues, moving out of borough and no school place.

At the end of the summer term there was 222 pupils receiving EHE. At some point during the academic year 439 pupils had received EHE, of these 64 were returned to school, 40 were referred to school admissions, 52 moved away and 54 were closed at the end of the academic year as they were no longer statutory school age. (Post year 11).

Since September and the start of the new academic year, we have had 104 requests from parents requesting to EHE their children. This is a significant increase and is recognized as a regional and national issue. We have ensured that we are in contact with parents to provide guidance around the process.

7. School Wellbeing Service

The School Wellbeing service has been established this year to support the emotional wellbeing of children and young people across all our schools in Thurrock. A strong partnership group supports it with representatives across a wide range of areas. The service has successfully recruited to all its posts with a Team Lead, three senior practitioners' two wellbeing practitioners and administrative support. The service has established links with all schools in Thurrock, who now have a named member of school staff as emotional wellbeing lead in school who are linked to a key member of the service.

The Service has carried out initial assessments with all schools in Thurrock to establish the current support arrangements and needs within the schools. These have led to the establishment of action plans for schools to further develop these services with the help of the school wellbeing team. The service has developed a wide range of resources and training approaches to assist schools in their development of support for wellbeing.

The service has carried out the first phase of the Brighter Futures Survey with children and young people on mental health and wellbeing, which delivers essential data on the needs of young people. This information working with Public Health, supports the development of support in schools and will be followed up in the autumn term to incorporate information from children and young people post lockdown.

During the period of the Covid 19 lockdown and school disruption, the service has developed and distributed to schools additional resources to assist schools in meeting the needs of children and their families, an example of this was the creation of a telephone support line for schools which included staff from the Education Psychology service. The service has developed strong links across Health, Children's services and Third sector providers of services for children and young people to ensure a joined up approach is in place at this time.

The practitioners within the service have also worked closely during this time with the individual school leads for emotional wellbeing, and have successfully delivered telephone and reflective sessions for staff to enable them to be supported during this time. This service has been particularly well received by schools who have experienced a range of challenges in relation to pupil and staff wellbeing over the period of the lockdown. Moving into the new school year, the service will be working with schools to establish the appropriate level of direct and virtual contact to enable the delivery of a range of training and support to ensure all our children and young people have the right provision in place.

8. Inspire Youth Services

8.1 September Guarantee 2019 stands at 100% ensuring that every 16 year old had a place of learning reserved for them in September 2019. September Guarantee 2020 is on the same trajectory.

8.2 Grangewaters - This year we have created an exciting SEND offer at Grangewaters as a response to the SEND Ofsted Inspection – young people with SEND access Grangewaters for a range of training sessions getting them ready for the world of work and preparing them for adulthood.

SEND Post 16 service is reassessing its post 16 provision and its quality assurance – the service is actively working with the young people to enable provision to meet the young people's needs.

8.3 Adult Community College - Graded as Good by Ofsted and as such we are offering a range of courses to support getting into employment across the Authority. The adult skills agenda will remain a key focus during the current year as the country works on its recovery plan. Our ambitious plans include identifying new premises to deliver our new blended offer and looking to transform how we deliver our adult skills agenda.

8.4 OnTrack - OnTrack is a Youth Employment Initiative programme for young people aged 15-29 in Thurrock. It is part funded through the European Social Fund and managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. This 2.5 year programme is a £3.2m match funded project successfully awarded to Thurrock Council in 2015 with the following targets these were all achieved in July 2019.

- 1310 NEET young people engaged/supported
- 768 young people entering EET
- 261 young people in EET for 6 months

We have submitted a further application for a phase two programme this will build on the work already undertaken in phase one.

9. National Funding Formula and school budgets

In 2020/21 Thurrock implemented in full the National Funding Formula in the distribution of funding to schools. The challenge still remains around our high needs funding and we are working with schools and the ESFA at ways to address this.

10. Home to School Transport

10.1 Covid 19 – Seamless and consistent delivery

The Passenger Transport Unit was able to deliver transport to all vulnerable children and children of Key Workers who opted to return to school as of Monday, 30 March 2020.

- **30 March 2020** - Approximately 8% of the total Home to School Transport service was utilised during the first 8 weeks of the partial re-opening of schools. Officers in the Passenger Transport Unit and the Children's Transport Team worked closely with parents, schools and operators to deliver a service throughout that period including the Easter holiday. The service worked with operators during the Easter holiday and spent just under 10,000k to ensure the Council succeeded in its bid to support key workers, families of vulnerable children and most essentially the children.
- **1 June 2020** -Transport has been offered consistently and seamlessly to the initial cohort of children and the additional categories added over time including Year 10 pupils, children in temporary accommodation and any other pupils schools identified as being disadvantaged by the lack of school provision.
- **The Furlough scheme** – The Scheme was extended to operators in order to sustain our contracted services and support them to continue delivery in September 2020. All of our operators have been able to deliver in September.
- **Risk Assessment** All operators showed a good understanding of guidance; particularly around hygiene, transmission and contact protocols. Operators were made aware of their sole responsibility to carry out required risk assessments. Officers requested copies of risk assessments in order to review them and ensure they were adequately robust.
- **Parental Risk** The issue of parental confidence poses the greatest risk to the successful delivery of Home to School transport in September 2020. A set of Frequently Asked Questions have been prepared for parents and a separate set for schools; both to be published on the councils website and within other prominent platforms on 14 August 2020.

10.2 Home to School Travel and Transport policy update

A proposal to update specific areas of the Home to School Travel and Transport policy was presented to Children's Overview & Scrutiny in July – the committee felt one of the recommendations around the removal of transport related to children in temporary accommodation should be removed. In the Cabinet meeting held on 22 July 2020,

Cabinet fully support the feedback from Children's Overview & Scrutiny and as a result this recommendation was removed. The recommendations outlined below shows what was approved:

- the implementation of a charging regime in respect of Post 16 SEND transport
- the delivery of home-to-school transport in accordance with the legislation around the maximum walking distance set for primary and secondary students

The updated policy will enable the council to achieve the following:

- to deliver services in line with its statutory duty
- to ensure resources are geared towards eligible children and young people unless exceptional circumstances are involved
- to encourage greater resilience in children by reducing their reliance on transport to support the development of skills that enhance their ability to travel independently
- to improve health by increasing participation in active modes of travel
- to improve the environment as more sustainable means of travel are adopted

10.3 Independent Travel Training

The transport team have worked with our colleagues in Procurement for the launch of a pilot Independent Travel Training (ITT) programme that will provide young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) the skills and confidence required to make the home-to-school journey on public transport. Officers are working to introduce the training to the first cohort of post 16 SEND students for September 2020.

10.4 Travel Demand Management

The government have provided additional funding to ensure that we can manage the travel demand. The funds will be used to devise and implement creative measures that will resolve current and forecasted transport issues, but also give rise to sustainable travel plans and a marked increase in the offer/take up of active modes of travel.

10.5 Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOT)

The Children's Transport Team are working collaboratively with the Transport Management Team, the Road Safety Team and Public Health to revise the 2015 SMOT. The goal is to encourage more schools to share their Travel Plans with the council.

- **Accreditation** - Officers also seek to increase the number of schools attaining the Modeshift Stars Scheme award. Currently 37% (20 schools) are accredited. The scheme recognises schools, businesses and other organisations that have shown excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable and active travel. We intend to achieve the goals by working with the Public Health Team to change mindsets around healthy lifestyles and heighten awareness of the free

services currently offered by the Road Safety Team including Road Safety On-road training for parents and children in specific year groups and Bikeability Cycle Training.

- **SEND and Active Travel** – Officers have developed various forms of training and incentives to reduce reliance on Home to School travel support, increase resilience and improve health. Bespoke cycle training is available for pupils with SEND attending Treetops School. The inclusion of children and young people with SEND is a key priority thus personal risk assessments can be completed for each pupil being considered for the independent travel training programme being launched in the new academic year. Various SEND incentives will also be available via the Sustainable Travel Reward Scheme; a scheme that can be tailored to each child and school's needs. Children are rewarded on a daily basis for walking, cycling or scooting to school. In order to encourage participation, particularly for children from low-income homes, bicycles are made available free or on loan.

11. Free School Programme and School Expansion

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that every child in Thurrock has a school place. We continue to achieve this with strong working relationships with our schools.

Thurrock's forecasting for school places to date has been robust and accurate. The PPP document 2019 forecasted 17,552 pupils (whole school numbers and on census day 17,196 pupils were on roll across secondary schools on census day in October 2019. Primary numbers forecasted within the same PPP document were 10,474 pupils with 10,173 pupils on roll on census day across all primary schools in Thurrock. The difficulty with forecasting is that, although forecasts are accurate, we are not able to identify how old the children will be that move into Thurrock and to what year group they will move into. This takes close monitoring and we ensure we are in a position, when necessary, to take swift action in opening up classes within certain year groups. This year we received a high number of late primary applications after national offer day, which resulted in bulge classes being opened at both Dilkes Primary and Belmont Castle, each taking an additional 30 places each.

There have been no additional secondary bulges classes opened as the two new free schools have opened in their temporary locations this September. Both Free schools are located in Grays. Thames Park is located behind South Essex College and Orsett Heath is located by Thurrock Rugby Club.

We are seeing a high proportion of pupils, after national offer day take up school places outside of Thurrock. This year saw 10.2% children accepting a school place outside of Thurrock.

As part of the schools capital programme we are currently delivering the following:

- Benyon Primary is expanding from 1 form entry to 2 form entry. This expansion is progressing well and is due to complete by the end of December 2020

- Phase two of the St Clare's expansion programme is due to complete in November 2020. Phase two includes the delivery of the new classrooms, dining facilities and sports hall.
- Corringham primary is a two phase project, phase one being the delivery of the new nursery building, which is now complete and handed over to the school ready for opening this September 2020. Phase two will consist of the demolition of the former nursery building, new play surface and tarmac to the new access road / car park along with the installation of the cycle shelter.
- Internal works at Thames Park Free School temporary location for both internal and external works were completed for the opening of the school in September 2020.
- In advanced of Bonnygate Primary converting from a LA maintained school to academy status, conditions works have been undertaken and completed to ensure we meet the timeline of 1st December for conversion of the school into the Osborne Academy Trust.

The two new free schools, Orsett Heath and Thames Park have successfully opened in September. As the portfolio holder I was invited to the launch of Thames Park and was impressed with the accommodation. The Trust complimented the LA on its work around ensuring the accommodation was really for opening in the temporary accommodation. The new permanent sites have been approved and we look forward to seeing the two new secondary schools being open in September 2022.

For our SEND learners the new free school that will open on the current Treetops site is due to open in September 2021. This will provide more places for SEND children and will continue to support our ambition around keeping our children and young people local.

12. Conclusion

I would like to end my report where I started by recognizing the outstanding work that our education providers from early years, schools, post 16 and adults have achieved in what has truly been unprecedented times. We will continue to support our educational partners over the coming academic year. I and Officers have been meeting with parents who have children/young people with additional needs – at a recent meeting I was struck by the partnership work between ourselves, the CCG and Public Health the parent commented on the strong support systems available in Thurrock – which is testament to so many colleagues who ensure our children, young people and adults receive a good educational offer and transition pathways are built on our ethos of positive working relationships.

Appendix 1 - Dedicated Schools Grant

* Additional financial resources are allocated and available as part of the wider skills and schools budgets. For the purpose of this report dedicated schools grant financial information has been provided.

<u>Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21</u>	£
Schools Block	127,474,073
Central Services Block	1,850,237
High Needs Block	25,463,842
Early Years Block	12,481,456
Funding Settlement 2020/21	167,269,608
Less Academy Recoupment:	(124,068,017)
Funding Settlement 2020/21 (after recoupment)	43,201,591
The following budget allocations have been provided from the resources available:	
	£
Maintained Schools Budgets	6,719,627
School Licences	126,060
Growth Fund	1,259,000
Statutory and Regulatory duties	518,506
School Place planning	29,302
School Admissions	260,429
Schools Forum	10,000
SACRE	10,000
Contribution to Combined budgets	1,022,000
Place Funding	397,000
Top Up Funding - Thurrock Schools and Academies	11,039,671
Top Up Funding - Other Local Authorities (4-16)	1,043,000
Top Up Funding - Post 16	1,787,000
Pupils not in School	360,661
Non Maintained and Independent Providers	2,200,000
Commissioned Services	1,149,000
Travellers Team	53,157
Home to School Transport	1,787,000
High Needs Central Team	967,183
Early Years 3 & 4 Year old Offer - Payment to Providers	10,108,470
Early Years 2 Year old Offer - Payment to Providers	1,836,000
Early Years Central Team	518,525
Total Dedicated Schools Grant 2019/20	43,201,591

28 October 2020	ITEM: 12
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning	
Report of: Councillor Mark Coxshall, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning	
This report is public	

1. Introduction

Since my last report to Council there have been many changes within Thurrock and across the world. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, we saw huge amounts of announced investment in the borough and also made great strides in delivering our ambitious growth agenda.

We have seen the milestones of Purfleet Centre Regeneration obtaining outline planning consent for the whole masterplan area and reserved matters consent for the first phase of housing delivery – this is a major achievement and recognised nationally as the second largest commercial consent granted in the UK between November 2019 and May 2020. A £75.1million grant via the Housing Infrastructure Fund was also approved for the scheme, resulting in yet further central government investment in the borough.

The first phase (totalling £72million) of a wider £150 million expansion of intu Lakeside is now open with new leisure activities and restaurants for visitors to enjoy, with COVID-19 safeguards in place.

The Borough's first Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project is well underway at Tilbury2 with construction now complete and the development operational. The scheme will see the creation of around 500 new jobs. The process involved close joint working between the Council and Port of Tilbury and I am pleased to report that the scheme was recognised at the National Infrastructure Planning Association Award in 2019 for "Best Project". The judges praised the team behind the DCO planning process and recognised best practice in participating in the Development Consent Order Process (DCO) for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

Issues and Options Stage 2 report of consultation – an important part of the Local Plan – has been published. As we work on plans for how the future will look, it is key that we have an idea of what our towns and communities will look like in years to come and it is important that we continue to engage with residents.

Through the Council leading the way and working with the private sector, we are looking at planned investment of £200m in Grays from the Thameside to the Thames, as well as significant investment in Tilbury.

From both the private sector and central government, we continue to see investment in Thurrock to improve the area for residents and businesses alike. This is a real, strong and continued vote of confidence in our borough and something we should be excited by and take an immense amount of pride in.

The Council has also played its part in supporting businesses through this time of national crisis. I am proud that the Council has been able to work with government to provide more than £22million in direct support more than 1,800 businesses to support the local economy, protect jobs and protect livelihoods.

The coming months will see us step up our efforts to drive forward economic recovery and growth, through refocussing our Economic Development Strategy to shape the local economy and looking at ways to accelerate the delivery of the Local Plan in order to create a community-led, infrastructure first and high quality plan for future growth and prosperity.

I am confident that through this approach, we will be able to support our residents and businesses as they recover from the impacts COVID-19 has had on society, and deliver the long held growth ambitions for Thurrock.

2. Grays

- 2.1 I'm pleased to see that Grays is set to benefit from unprecedented levels of investment. The Council was successfully shortlisted for the Future High Streets Fund and was also announced as one of the areas to benefit from the Government's Town Fund. Combined, these funds could bring up to £50m into Grays Town Centre, allowing the Council to continue to engage in the transformative regeneration projects that are set out in the Town Centre Framework. COVID-19 extended the business case timeframes for both of these grants and saw the introduction of £750k Accelerated Funding to be used to improve capacity at Grays Bus Terminus, make further improvements to Grays Riverside Beach Park and to improve signage around the town. The Future High Street Fund business case was submitted in July and we are using the additional time on the Town Fund to ensure that the bid is of high quality and takes into account any different support that may be required to aid economic recovery as a result of the current pandemic.
- 2.2 The Council continues to work with Network Rail and our urban design consultants to bring forward designs for a pedestrian underpass which will be set in a high quality public realm. £10.8million has been secured for this project from the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. Initial design options were shared with the public during a consultation exercise held in March. Strong support was demonstrated for the removal of the level crossing and positive comments received about the design options, including 81% of the respondents in favour of "Option C; the Plaza"). This option C was also the

preferred design in an Option Selection Report produced by Network Rail. And at Cabinet in July 2020, we agreed that Option C was the design we would take forward to be worked up in detail.

- 2.3 Planning consent has been secured for the extension to the Civic Centre which will modernise the delivery of many of our services, in particular improving the immediate offer to residents who present as homeless and creating a more welcoming environment for the registrar service. Work has now commenced on the building, which will set a benchmark for quality as other developments come forward in the Town Centre and will create a real presence on the High Street, help to increase footfall south of the rail crossing and positively contribute to the economic vitality and vibrancy of the town.
- 2.4 This ambitious programme of investment in Grays is giving the private sector confidence to invest alongside us. This is clearly demonstrated by the proposals that New River, the owners of the Grays Shopping Centre, are working up - to invest c. £150million in redeveloping their site. We will continue to work closely with our private sector partners to ensure that all our proposals contribute towards making Grays a successful, diverse and sustainable modern Town Centre.

3. Purfleet

- 3.1 The Purfleet Centre programme has taken great strides forward following the granting of both outline planning consent by unanimous decision from the planning committee and detailed consent for the first reserved matters application. The development will capitalise on the town's location on the riverfront bringing new homes, amenities and jobs to the area as well as improving connectivity by replacing the level crossing with a pedestrian and vehicle bridge.
- 3.2 Central government's decision to support the scheme with £75.1million from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) is welcomed and is a reflection on the way the scheme has sought to address the historic infrastructure deficit and tackle significant infrastructure challenges such as the removal of the level crossing. We are committed to infrastructure first development across the borough and Purfleet continues to demonstrate how local communities embrace plans for well managed growth and we are now in the process of demonstrating how we will meet the HIF obligations.

- 3.3 It is expected that development of the first 61 new homes of this scheme will start on site this year. After many years of planning and deliberating, I am delighted that we will soon be on the ground and delivering.

4. Tilbury

- 4.1 Since my last report, the Port of Tilbury has received consent to build their new port at Tilbury2 – this will provide a boost to the local economy and further solidify Thurrock's position as the most important part of the Port of

London's estate and Thurrock becoming the ports capital of the UK. Construction on the country's newest and largest unaccompanied freight roll on/roll off (ro-ro) terminal begun in April 2019 and was completed and operational in May 2020.

- 4.2 The announcement that Tilbury is to benefit from up to £25m of central government funding from the Town Fund will be a great boost to our regeneration plans in the area and will allow us to show Tilbury the love that we have promised for so long. The recently established Town Fund Board is exploring opportunities to support connectivity, skills and development projects and we are already starting to work alongside local communities and businesses to develop exciting proposals that are rooted in addressing local needs. I am delighted that much of the first £500k of initial "Accelerated funding" from the Town Fund has been directed to providing opportunities for local residents in Tilbury to be more active outdoors and supporting our local youth provision. We have listened to our local residents and will continue to offer opportunities for them to help shape the Town Investment Plan ensuring that the funding responds to the locally defined need.
- 4.3 I am pleased to report that good progress is being made with delivery of our Tilbury CLLD programme which was awarded £2.2m European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund money to invest in skills and employment projects and in small businesses in Tilbury. Funding is distributed through bidding rounds and decisions are taken by a Local Action Group including local residents and businesses. Six projects have been approved to support unemployment or economically inactive residents, with more to follow and seven business have been awarded grant funding – a further 61 are expected to benefit over the next two years. This programme is a good example of the Council working with and alongside local people and businesses to invest and give people real opportunities in Tilbury.
- 4.4 Proposals for an Integrated Medical Centre (IMC) to be located on the central Civic Square site at the heart of Tilbury continue to be developed in partnership with our colleagues across the health sector. Our continued commitment to see four IMCs across the borough will ensure that our residents have access to high quality healthcare and community services in their immediate localities.

5. Local Plan

- 5.1 Work on preparing a new Local Plan for Thurrock has continued over the last year. We consulted on Issues and Options (Stage 2) between 12 December 2018 and 29 March 2019, and the report of the near 3,000 responses has been published on the website. Throughout our work and engagement on the plan, we are making clear at every juncture that growth in Borough needs to be community driven, infrastructure led and high quality.
- 5.2 As set out in the report we considered at our last meeting, during the Your Place, Your Voice events, residents clearly identified a number of issues and

concerns they have, which continue to be uppermost in our minds. Transport and traffic, community facilities and the need for housing are some of the key issues that will be at the core of how we move forward.

- 5.3 The proposed Lower Thames Crossing has frustrated our ability to bring forward our Local Plan, due to the uncertainty around future design changes and local impacts. That said, we have been working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to plot a path which allows us to develop a Local Plan under the conditions we currently face. We are also now working to find ways to bring the Local Plan forward as quickly as possible, to help aid economic recovery and set the conditions for growth and prosperity.
- 5.4 As we progress the next stage of the technical work to develop the plan, we are also working in communities to develop a number of 'Place Based' strategies which will also be used to inform the preparation of area based Inset Plans for incorporation in the Local Plan.
- 5.5 Our approach to bringing forward our Local Plan is truly unique and ground breaking. Building on the success of our Your Place, Your Voice community engagement sessions and a government pilot scheme in Aveley, we are now working with the Princes Foundation, MHCLG and Design Council to roll out Design Charrettes across the Borough. These will bring together key stakeholders (including local communities, businesses, built environment professionals and other stakeholders) to collaborate on a place-making vision for a new, or existing, neighbourhood that will guide the regeneration and future development of that area. This is not just about housing numbers, this is about the creation of places where people can prosper.
- 5.6 On the 6th August 2020 the Government published a White Paper which sets out its proposals for the reform of the planning system. I'm pleased to say that in many ways the approach that we have adopted is aligned to the approach now being promoted by Government.
- 5.7 Our approach to growth is that it should be community-driven, infrastructure-led and make a key contribution to high quality place making. These cornerstones are reflected in the White Paper. In particular, our work in rolling out Design Charrettes is strongly supported by the reforms; the concept of working with communities, landowners, and developers to create locally distinctive master plans for development on a town by town basis forms a core plank of the government's design coding ambitions. We are very much ahead of the curve in this respect.
- 5.8 In light of the similarities in approach, I am confident that opportunities exist for the Council to work collaboratively with MHCLG as a 'pilot' authority for the roll out of the new reforms. We are already in discussion with MHCLG to explore opportunities and to ensure that the effort we are putting into the current Local Plan will be recognised in any new system.

6. Economic Development

6.1 Thurrock is a great place to do business. We are well connected to the biggest economy in the UK, have three major ports, specialism in important sectors to the UK economy and a workforce with a strong work ethic. While our economy has been working well the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the economy in Thurrock as it has on the rest of the country. In response we have developed our new draft Economic Development Strategy (Backing Thurrock) which was approved for consultation in September. The strategy identifies some short term actions already underway and explains how we will work with our key businesses, public institutions and the voluntary sector to co-produce an implementation plan setting out actions we will take collectively to improve resilience and return to growth.

6.2 The strategy will focus on addressing the economic impact of COVID but will also reflect on some of the priorities we had before COVID – including challenges with infrastructure, business accommodation and employing a labour force with the right skills.

Attract investment in our infrastructure

6.3 By engaging with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and with Opportunity South Essex we have been able to make a very strong case for investment in our infrastructure. I have previously highlighted the significant funding the Council has obtained to support key projects including widening the A13, Grays Town Centre and Purfleet and I have been pleased to see the progress made on these and other infrastructure projects.

6.4 This summer the Government launched the Getting Building Fund and Thurrock has supported projects within the borough like the Transport and Logistics Academy proposed at South Essex College and taken a leading role on a south Essex wide initiative to improve broadband services I am keen to make the case for further investment in our infrastructure and to that end Thurrock has played a leading role in supporting development of growth policy and strategy at an ASELA, SELEP and Thames Estuary Growth Board level. We continue to make the case for delivery of joint priorities and to prepare strong proposals that support growth in Thurrock so we have projects ready for any future bidding rounds.

Help local people find work

6.5 In recent years our strong and growing economy has meant many local people have been able to find work. However we have continued to support those who need an extra helping hand to benefit from employment by supporting initiatives like our Tilbury Community Led Local Development Programme. Other initiatives have included launching the Thurrock Opportunities website – which aims to provide one place for residents to search for jobs, apprenticeships and training opportunities in Thurrock.

Helping our residents to develop their skills and find work is a key focus of our revised Economic Development Strategy and we will continue to work with our partners to support local recruitment and training schemes.

Support our Business Community

- 6.6 It is important that the Council has a strong relationship with the local business community, via the Thurrock Business Board and direct dialogue with our larger employers. Building a long lasting relationship with our larger businesses means we can work together to tackle issues that affect us all and to create opportunities for the people of Thurrock.
- 6.7 Many business support services are delivered through the Essex, Southend and Thurrock Growth Hub. The Council continues to work with the staff there to make sure we get a fair deal for Thurrock businesses. In addition the Council has worked with other Local Authorities and our businesses to provide networking opportunities, training events and tailored 1:1 business advice and support. We have also used European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) money to support businesses, including:
- Tilbury CLLD programme which is now starting to give grants to small businesses in Tilbury to help them grow;
 - LOCASE – which has offered grants to eligible businesses across the south-east to reduce their carbon footprint and improve their energy efficiency;
 - SECCADS – which is delivering business advice, mentoring, networking and small grants to businesses across the south-east in the cultural, creative and digital industries;

We also continue to benefit from European funded programmes led by other Local Authorities that are delivered across the South East including the South East Business Boost programme offering grants to small and medium sized businesses and grants to support business growth.

- 6.8 Once again the COVID-19 pandemic has had a big impact on our business community. We have sought to share information with our businesses through a business newsletter, through social media and our website. We have focussed on promoting the Government grants and funding available to support the business community, on sharing links to useful guidance and information and reminding businesses of their responsibilities around the restrictions currently in place. We have also worked with our businesses and partners to support the reopening of the High Street.
- 6.9 The Council needs to continue to play its part to help those businesses who have survived to find their feet, to trade and to grow once again. Through our revised EDS, focussed on recovery and growth, we will work with our business community to deliver initiatives that bring back growth and

prosperity.

Providing space for our business to grow

- 6.10 There has been a particular shortage of small business space in the borough. The Council has continued to try to fill this gap by providing three business centres catering for small and growing businesses and which offer serviced office and workshop space at the Tilbury Riverside Business Centre, The Old Courthouse and Centre for Business in Grays. The business centres continue to perform well and are nearly full despite the impact of COVID.

7. Lower Thames Crossing

- 7.1 My views on Lower Thames Crossing are clear – this is the wrong route. That said, I continue to reinforce the need to maximise any potential benefits of the Lower Thames Crossing scheme whilst minimising its negative impacts.

- 7.2 Statutory consultation closed at the end of 2018 and Highways England having analysed the 28,500 consultation responses, undertook a round of supplementary consultation this year which focussed on targeted design changes. The Council submitted a comprehensive consultation response to these latest changes.

- 7.3 The Council commissioned an economic impact study of the scheme which was published in February titled ‘Lower Thames Crossing a missed opportunity for Thurrock’. This report was well received by key stakeholders as baseline for the current scheme. It is intended that this work will be developed further over the coming months to identify potential benefits from the scheme to seek to influence Highways England on the ultimate design of the scheme should it progress.

- 7.4 The environmental impact assessment which Highways England is working to produce to support the application will be important in the understanding of the true impact of the scheme. I will be seeking to secure all appropriate mitigation for the residents of the borough.

- 7.5 Since the close of supplementary consultation, Highways England has announced they will submit their DCO application in October and we will continue to engage in order to maximise the benefits and mitigate this new road. The submission of the DCO represent a new phase in the project development by Highways England, and our means to influence the scheme need to adapt accordingly.

8. Strategic Planning and Joint Strategic Plan

- 8.1 The Council continues to play a leading role in responding to the emerging London Plan both on behalf of the South Essex authorities and the East of England. The Strategic Planning team is also responsible for making representations on the Local Plans being prepared by neighbouring local

authorities and in response to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects being proposed in adjoining boroughs.

- 8.2 In July 2018 the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASLEA) signed a Statement of Common Ground which includes the intention to prepare a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) to guide the future development of South Essex. We are currently working with Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Rochford and Southend to prepare an evidence base to support the production of a JSP to promote economic recovery and growth in South Essex.

9. Corporate Property and Facilities Management

- 9.1 The Corporate Property/FM team manage the council's asset portfolio which is made of up two parts, the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 9.2 The Corporate Property Team (CPT) ensures joined up working with the South East Creative, Cultural and Digital Support (SECCADS) team, enabling independent local businesses to thrive in a supportive and cohesive environment in line with the council's corporate objectives.
- 9.3 The CPT also covers valuations, acquisitions and disposals of land and property for a variety of purposes, energy and efficiency monitoring and surveying services for operational and non-operational properties.
- 9.4 Asset valuations are undertaken annually in line with prescribed codes and practices approved by the RICS and CIPFA, enables the information held on the state, condition and performance of the council's assets to be updated enabling maintenance and capital works to be programmed, insurance cover arranged as appropriate. Furthermore these valuations have engendered property review programmes, such as the 3Rs programme - Retain, Reuse, Release.
- 9.5 This programme challenges the rationale for holding the asset resulting in the classification of assets as either:
- Retained (business as usual, little need or opportunity for change identified);
 - Re-used (for example for different services or more intensive or changed use); and
 - Released (for example to dispose of immediately or develop for housing).

Any opportunities arising from the 3R's programme will continue to be promoted, analysed and considered for formal declaration of "surplus to requirements" through a designated consultation process which is managed through the council's Property Board with any disposals requiring the agreement of the Leader or Cabinet.

- 9.6 A high level of occupancy across the portfolio has resulted in a decrease in voids, presently below the national average. Combined with the good work on lease renewals, rent reviews and new lettings this has generated an increase in annual rental income.
- 9.7 The current pandemic has resulted in many changes to the use of our operational buildings and there is a wide reaching Asset Rationalisation project with a view to improved use and a more streamline estate. This review is already showing success with a proposed centralisation of the Meals on Wheels team potentially freeing up 3-4 additional sites and generating important savings.
- 9.8 The CPT has successfully lead on three Secretary of State Applications. These have enabled two successful disposals to the Department of Education for the development of two Free Schools at Orsett Heath and Treetop and has provided a significant development site for regeneration or disposal at the former Culver Centre.
- 9.9 The CPT has been integral in the successful delivery and stakeholder management for Purfleet, Stanford-Le-Hope Interchange, Lower Thames Crossing, assisting in the acquisition and management of assets and providing significant property advice.
- 9.10 After successfully managing the acquisition and securing the vacant possession of the New Road site, which forms an integral aspect of the new Civic Office Development, the CPT successfully managed the demolition of the site as well as that of Station House while supporting the Regeneration Team on the Grays High Street Re-development
- 9.11 Due to the impact of COVID 19 Facilities Management were asked to provide Thurrock and Corporate Landlord services with PPE/sanitiser, signage, screens and cleaning products, this has been a major task due to lack of suppliers, Facilities have carried out this additional role successfully and it is still on going. Working closely with Health and Safety, Facilities have been instrumental in the process of assisting Corporate Landlord properties with their risk assessments for properties that are now wishing to open.
- 9.12 Mailroom/reprographics, security, maintenance and facilities wardens have worked extremely well under adjusted working patterns and duties in line with building closures maintaining service and professionalism thorough out. All staff are now back to full capacity and working shift patterns. I am extremely proud of the teams and their commitment in these unsettling times.

10. Development Management

- 10.1 I am enormously proud of our Development Management (DM) service who continue to top the league table nationwide as well as operating commercially to deliver the best for Thurrock. How a Local Planning Authority performs is a key driver in developer deciding where to invest and our ability to maintain

high standards puts us in a good position to attract inward investment, something that is even more important in these difficult economic times.

- 10.2 Through a robust pre-application offer, applicants are able to work with the Team to 'dry run' their proposals ahead of a formal submission to ensure wherever possible, the scheme is of the highest quality and has the maximum benefit to existing communities. During the pre-application discussions, the Team will draw upon a range of specialists from across the organisation to help shape and influence the scheme, to ensure that the right development takes place in the right place at the right time.
- 10.3 The team has developed strong relationships with the development industry, championed forward thinking and commercial awareness, and created a culture which helps drive investment and growth in the Borough. This has significantly boosted investor confidence and stability in commercial decisions in an area where there are major challenges around the viability of development. It has resulted in an overall uplift in 'place value' through improvements to design and quality delivered through effective developer partnerships, maximising the contributions made from new development.
- 10.4 The DM team has continued its Managed Service arrangement with Brentwood Borough Council, whereby we provide management support to Brentwood's Development Management team. The relationship has continued to be successful, resulting in an improved service at Brentwood (both in terms of quality and performance) and by providing an income stream for Thurrock which protects jobs and services locally. I am proud that the Development Management Team were shortlisted and highly commended at the national Planning Awards for the partnership work between Thurrock and Brentwood.

11. A13 Widening Project

- 11.1 This is an important project to benefit the Borough which is now delivering on the ground. Widening the A13 will support growth both in the Borough and across the south Essex corridor, reduce congestion and will deliver a continuous three lane carriageway in either direction from the M25 to Stanford le Hope.
- 11.2 A recent Value for Money Exercise has determined that the project represents high value for money and will deliver much needed improvements to the road network to support economic recovery. Construction has continued on the scheme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 11.3 It is often the case with projects of this scale and complexity that a start on site reveals issues that impact on the anticipated delivery of the project and which cannot readily be anticipated and planned for. The project has encountered issues with regard to the design and installation of deep drainage, significant utilities diversion works and the final design of significant bridge structures and alterations. These issues have led to an increase in the cost of the scheme and a delay to completion. There is a mitigation plan in

place, however as the pandemic is still a live issue, the final impacts are still unknown.

- 11.4 Work is now forging ahead on the scheme and recent good seasonal weather has meant that the project has progressed at pace. The four main bridge structures are largely complete which was a key milestone in the construction to ensure this high value for money important infrastructure is delivered as efficiently as possible.

12. Stanford le Hope Interchange

- 12.1 Stanford Le Hope station is moving forward after the pause and reflect period with a much improved scheme in line with the current budget. Having acquired additional land across the road to the station, a review of the design has now meant that the station site can forge ahead to deliver a modern station building and improved public realm area. By moving the transport hub across the road, along with cycle parking, bus drop off and turnaround facility as well as an increase in parking for local people, the scheme will deliver on all of its key objectives and more by reducing congestion, improving pedestrian safety, encouraging the use of public transport and supporting economic growth.

13. Lakeside

- 13.1 The first phase (totalling £72 million) of a wider £150 million leisure scheme has been completed with new restaurants and leisure businesses operating from the new units. The scheme includes an exciting number of operators, including Hollywood Bowl, Putt shack, Nickelodeon and Flip Out. The development builds upon the success of intu's Boardwalk and is set to diversify the recreational offer in the Lakeside Basin as part of the wider vision for the creating of a 21st Century town centre. Discussions are already on-going between the Planning Service and intu in relation to the next phases of their leisure plans.
- 13.2 In addition to the leisure development, intu Lakeside have recently obtained outline permission for a retail extension to the mall to the north and east of the existing building resulting in relocation of the bus station nearer the existing footbridge to provide better connections to the railway station.
- 13.3 Construction of the new residential development at West Thurrock Way is well advanced and Bellway are now actively marketing homes in the Basin. This represents the beginning of the transformation of the Basin to a modern town centre, drawing upon the strengths of the existing leisure and commercial sectors to create a vibrant location for people to live, work and play.
- 13.4 An application for the development of the Arena Essex site has been submitted by London Strategic Land, which proposes an ambitious regeneration scheme providing 2,500 new homes, lido, school, bike trails, parkland, medical centre, and community centres, as well as approximately

£29 million worth of infrastructure investment. Consideration of the planning application is ongoing and will be considered by the Planning Committee as soon as possible.

- 13.5 In addition, meetings continue to be held between the Planning Service and land owners within the Lakeside Basin to ensure there is a consistent and comprehensive approach to development. In order to facilitate this the Council has commissioned an up-date to the Lakeside Development Framework which will help to inform the new Local Plan. To guide the process a Steering Group has been set up which comprises representatives from the two major landowners in the Lakeside Basin – intu and Land Securities, as well as London Strategic Land, c2c, and Highways England.
- 13.6 The ongoing work to bring forward plans to deliver the crucial infrastructure priority of the east-facing slip roads on the A13/A126 will also aid free flowing traffic and air quality in the area.

14. London Gateway

- 14.1 London Gateway Port continues to establish itself as a major operator in international shipping. The first three berths (of up to seven consented) are open meaning that the port has 1250 meters of quay wall, providing three deep-water berths.
- 14.2 The bulk of the jobs anticipated from London Gateway will be generated through the logistics park and, therefore, the Council remains keen to continue to work with the port owners to secure further development and create job opportunities at all levels for local residents.
- 14.3 Thirteen submissions under the Local Development Order have been progressed resulting planning consent for commercial floor space totalling approximately 200,000sq.m (155,000sq.m of which is completed on site) in addition to supporting infrastructure. Occupiers on site include UPS, Lidl and Dixons Carphone Warehouse – creating jobs and benefiting the local economy.

15. Thames Enterprise Park

- 15.1 Since acquiring the site the applicant (Marcol / ISEC) have positively engaged with the Planning Service and the Design Council/CABE to develop their plans for the site.
- 15.2 ISec's plans for the site include the comprehensive re-development and regeneration of the entire site including a range of employment generating uses including food processing, manufacture, storage and distribution, energy production [including energy from waste], along with a new sustainable energy park and central hub accommodating a new skills academy, research and development, training and conference spaces.

- 15.3 The application predicts that up to 4,450 employment opportunities would be created as a result of the proposals.
- 15.4 The planning application is under consideration and will be considered by the Planning Committee as soon as possible.

Questions from Members to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees or Members appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee in accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.

There were 0 questions to the Leader and 8 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Kerin to Councillor Coxshall

Can the Portfolio Holder please let this Chamber know how the Stanford-le-Hope Station Redevelopment is going?

2. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Huelin

Can I ask where performing Arts sits in with Thurrock's plans bearing in mind the very precarious position the industry finds itself in?

3. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes

Will the Portfolio Holder use what influence he has to support the efforts of the CCG in recovering the £490,000 taken from Thurrock Health Budgets to bail out Peterborough and Cambridgeshire last year?

4. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Huelin

Within her portfolio remit of Corporate Strategy and Performance, as well as HR, what plans does the Portfolio Holder propose in ensuring the Council has a diverse workforce at the senior/chief officer level?

5. From Councillor Holloway to Councillor Johnson

Will the Portfolio Holder for Housing repair or replace and maintain the electronic gates currently providing much needed security to older people in our sheltered housing complexes?

6. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes

What steps is the Portfolio Holder taking to address the health and air quality impacts on Thurrock residents posed by the Lower Thames Crossing?

7. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall

Will the Portfolio Holder outline the Administration's plans for the future of the Thameside complex?

8. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

In the last year, how many homeless Thurrock households have been rehoused outside of the borough?

Update on Motions agreed by the Council

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
23 October 2019	Cllr Gerrish	<p>Thurrock Council therefore resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency' that requires urgent action; 2. Request that the Council's activities become net-zero carbon by 2030; 3. Request that the Council embed this work in all areas and take responsibility for reducing, as rapidly as possible, the carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities; 4. Request that the relevant Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Climate Change convenes a Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change and a Climate Change partnership group, involving Councillors, residents, young citizens, climate science and solutions experts, businesses and other relevant parties. Over the following 6 months, the Group should consider strategies and actions being developed by the Council and other partner organisations and develop a strategy in line with a target of net zero emissions by 2030. It should also recommend ways to maximise local benefits of these actions in other sectors such as employment, health, agriculture, transport and the economy. The membership of this group should be agreed in consultation with Group Leaders; 5. Request that all reports in preparation for the 2020/21 budget cycle and investment strategy will take into account the actions the Council will take to address this emergency; 6. Request that the Leader write to the UK Government asking them to provide the powers, resources and help with funding To make this possible, and ask local MPs To do likewise. 	<p>As agreed by Group Leaders on the 13 January 2020, a Task Force will be established to consider the recommendations included within the motion, evidence from experts within the field and what actions are required to be taken.</p> <p>Terms of Reference have been drafted and a draft work programme put together. In addition, supporting arrangements to assist in the delivery of that work have been recently agreed. The delivery of the programme will commence shortly and an update report will be presented to Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December.</p>	Andy Millard

Update on Motions agreed by the Council

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
29 January 2020	Cllr J Kent	<p>This year's Holocaust Memorial Day marked the 75th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. Thurrock Council understands the importance of remembering the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust and the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The Council calls upon Cabinet to explore the opportunity to work with schools to facilitate visits to former Nazi death camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, to help learn first-hand the consequences of hate. A future programme should seek to work across schools in Thurrock.</p>	<p>Holocaust Memorial Day is an important occasion for Thurrock Council to commemorate and remember the millions murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides. The day also provides an important focus to educate about the consequences of hate and the need to tackle discrimination. Previous visits to former Nazi death camps have provided a valuable opportunity to learn these lessons first hand, and to share experiences within the wider school and community. Given the current pressures on schools and restrictions on travel, our initial focus will be on promoting digital opportunities for learning more about Holocaust Memorial Day and how the lessons of history are relevant today. This position will be reviewed once the Pandemic is under control, and when travel is easier to consider.</p>	Roger Harris

Update on Motions agreed by the Council

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
26 February 2020	Cllr Redsell	Council calls on Cabinet to consider a new wood and bluebells to be planted on a piece of land at the edge of Woodside.	The requirement from the s106 is for the open space to be kept mowed, with limited planting around the edges. Contact has now been established with the developer and a meeting is being scheduled to discuss the motion presented.	Julie Rogers

This page is intentionally left blank