

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 25 November 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

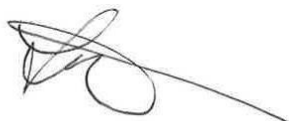
Membership of the Council:

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: 17 November 2020

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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1 Apologies for absence	
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To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 28 October 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.	

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

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

Name of Committee	Date
Planning Committee	17 September 2020
General Services Committee	8 October 2020
General Services Committee	14 October 2020
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education	3 June 2020
Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	13 September 2020
General Services Committee	26 October 2020
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 September 2020

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Future Dates of Council: 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.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

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 <i>the subject</i>.	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

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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.

November 1940

FARMAN Edgar
FARMAN Beryl
JEFFERY Arthur Edward
HYDE John Francis
HORN William George
HAYMAN Frederick
ATKINSON Herbert
GILBERT James
STICKLAND Percy
GALLICHAN Walter
RATHBONE James
STONER William
WHALE Charles Herbert
BAILEY Harry
GLADWIN Charlotte
SIMMONS Maud Victoria
MUNDY Dorothy
PENNEY Helena Iris
SHAW Alice
RYAN Ernest L

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Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 October 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors 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, 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 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: Councillor Robert Gledhill

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 to the Council's online webcast channel.

157. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 30 September 2020 were approved as a correct record.

158. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

159. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Mayor requested that those Members laying wreaths on his behalf to do all they could to remain socially distanced and if there were more than six people gathered around the memorial to hang back until it was safe to lay the wreath. The Mayor announced that he would be laying a wreath at Purfleet on

Thames this Sunday and on the 8 November would be attending the Remembrance Day Service at St Peters and St Pauls Church in Grays at 11am and then would be laying a wreath at Chafford Hundred in the afternoon. The Mayor thanked all those residents who would be observing the two minutes silence and laying wreaths outside their own homes.

The Mayor also announced that he was still looking for imaginative ways of raising money for GiFT, the Mayor's chosen charity, but this was proving difficult with the restriction on gatherings of more than six people.

The Mayor thanked the many shops and organisations that were supporting people during these arduous times.

The Deputy Leader of the Council made the following announcements on behalf of the Leader who had been taken unwell and was unable to join the meeting this evening.

In regards to COVID, the Council had taken the decision that Thurrock should remain in the lowest risk level, Medium Alert or Tier 1, based on the available data, information and balancing the risk posed by coronavirus with the harm we knew would be caused to our residents if stricter rules were imposed on their lives. The decision was not made based on just one metric, that being the number of positive COVID tests per 100,000 people in the population, but on a number of factors including the number of residents in hospital and the number of deaths where COVID was a factor. Councillor Hebb confirmed that between the 1 September 2020 and the 27 October 2020, 17 people from Thurrock had positive COVID results and had entered hospitalisation at Basildon Hospital and positive result tests was still being seen across the borough. It was important to note that the outbreaks in Thurrock were in two specific non-community environments, those in a single care home and in hospital where there was an increased positive infection rates attributed to those settings.

We know that Thurrock's strong communities, determination and common sense have helped but we have so much more to do. We must ensure we remain vigilant against the threat posed by COVID, now was not the time to allow complacency to creep in. We have already come together to achieve so much. By carrying on taking personal responsibility, playing our part and looking out for each other we can continue to make sure the borough stays as safe as possible. We now must play an active role in the fight against his virus and that none of us could have predicted that we would find ourselves in this position but would definitely have predicted that Thurrock and our communities would have risen so superbly to the challenge.

The pandemic was global but the solutions were local and the best defence will come from our actions. If we all continue to practise hands, face, space abide by the rule of six and most people use their common sense to help prevent the spread of this virus that way we are doing all we can to ensure that Thurrock stays at the lowest level wherever possible and stricter rules were not imposed on us.

We continue to closely monitor and review the situation on a weekly basis and would make sure that all decisions we make put our residents' health and wellbeing first and protect us all no matter what.

Councillor Hebb took the opportunity to thank the Government who so far had provided more than £14 million of emergency funding which had been fully spent on covering the extra costs of the coronavirus such as:

- Our excellent test and trace service which had around a 95% success rate in getting in touch with people who had been in contact with someone who had tested positive.
- Contracting our own testing service for the borough's care homes to help protect those most vulnerable.
- Providing help and extra care to the most vulnerable people in the borough including those who had to shield, the homeless and young people.

Remembrance Day - This year we would not be able to mark Remembrance Day as we usually would by coming together but I would encourage all residents to mark this, the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, privately and remotely as we honour the tremendous sacrifices and efforts made by that generation by making a small sacrifice ourselves and staying at home and marking the event in our own way.

There would still be a two minute silence which we can observe on our doorsteps but we would not be able to gather for large communal events as the Mayor had already mentioned. Instead we would have to come together virtually or show our appreciation privately. It was the most fitting way to commemorate our nation's heroes and thank all those who had served. The Leader would like to thank the local Royal British Legion for helping us shape how we remember those who made that ultimate sacrifice in a way which respected both them and the needs imposed by this pandemic and there were a number of communities across the borough who would rise to that challenge.

Halloween and Bonfire Night - I would ask everyone to be considerate and respectful of their neighbours. The Leader had been asked what the rules would be for the upcoming Halloween and Bonfire Night to which the Deputy Leader stated there were no specific rules for these events and would go back to what was said previously, residents should use their own common sense and think of the risk that would be imposed on groups of children knocking on residents doors, residents who may be susceptible or vulnerable or indeed infectious. Regarding bonfire night this year would see no organised events across the borough and I am sure many residents would be planning on holding private family displays in their garden. I would urge them all to make sure they know the fireworks code and have taken all precautions they need to prevent injury and accident. If they are buying fireworks they should do so from reputable dealers and not buy those intended for large displays and feel that using them in their back garden was a safe option. We should also remember the impact this has on our furry friends and should think about pets and wildlife and should think of that as well as their own safety. There was

plenty of advice on how this can be done and I would urge residents to seek that out.

The Deputy Leader stated that last week had marked the first anniversary of the tragic incident that had happened in Eastern Avenue with the Leader taking a strong view that he hoped his colleagues in France and Belgium regularly watched the approach taken by Thurrock and urged their authorities to work with their respective border control forces to help prevent further issues of people being put at risk by ruthless people and urged all Members to take a moment's thought for those that had died on that sad and tragic morning.

The Deputy Leader provided a Clean It, Cut It, Fill It update:

- Filled 1,776 potholes, every single one of them within agreed timescales
- Cleared 1,700 tonnes of litter from our streets
- Cleared 776 fly-tips
- Issued 1,935 fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour like spitting, littering and dropping cigarette ends.

161. Questions from Members of the Public

No questions from members of the public had been received.

162. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

No notices of petition had been received.

163. Petitions Update Report

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

164. 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.

Councillor Hebb on behalf of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, informed the Chamber he had no changes to make.

Councillor J Kent, Leader of the Labour Group, informed the Chamber he had the following change to make:

For Councillor Liddiard to replace Councillor Worrall on the Prevent Violent Extremism Members Working Group.

Councillor Byrne, Leader of the Thurrock Independent Group informed the Chamber he had no changes to make.

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

165. Assistant Director Appointments

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and sought the approval from Council to appoint to the Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help and Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection. That 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 Children's 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.

The Mayor called a vote on recommendations 1 and 2 to which the Members voted unanimously in favour.

RESOLVED

1. That Council approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of Joseph Tynan as the permanent Assistant Director Children's Social Care and Early Help.
2. That Council approved in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of Leigh Nicholson as the permanent Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection.

166. Report of the Cabinet Member for Education

Councillor Jefferies stated he was privileged to present his first portfolio holder report for education and some of the areas covered in this speech were:

- Having taken up his role in February 2020, two months later the country had gone into lockdown due to the pandemic and would like to thank all teaching staff, teaching assistants, dinner ladies, care takers and everyone else who worked in Thurrock schools who ensured that children in Thurrock received their education and ensured that free school meals were provided in the Easter and Summer holidays for some of Thurrock's most vulnerable children.
- Due to the pandemic, he had been unable to visit schools and had begun a weekly zoom call with head teachers and CEOs for them to tell us how things were going in their schools.
- That schools communicated regularly with their children and there had been some great examples of teachers engaging with their pupils.

- That at the start of the lockdown, schools remained open for key worker children with the average number of 300 to 400 pupils per day and had dropped off to about 200 pupils a day at Easter.
- That all schools should be commended as once the Government stated they could reopen, all the schools reacted positively and ensured that children returned as quickly and safely as possible.
- Thanked the Education Team who had worked hard to ensure that support was provided for all the educational settings and specifically thanked Sheila Murphy, Director of Children’s Services, and Michelle Lucas, Assistant Director of Education, who had always been there to offer help, advice and guidance.
- That 92% of primary schools were rated as good and 70% of secondary schools had been rated as good or better.
- Last year had achieved 100% of 16 year olds having a place of learning and hope to reach that target this year.
- As part of the Skills Summit had brought together South Essex Skills and Education portfolios and alongside officers to plan how they could work together to provide the skills and training to help rebuild the local economy.
- Agreed that the Head of the Adult College to work closely with Opportunity South Essex so that the best assistance can be provided to all Thurrock residents who were looking for additional skills and qualifications.
- In September 2020 a new independent travel training session was launched for post 16 year old SEND pupils to equip them to travel independently.
- Had attended a grand opening of the new Thameside Academy and wished staff and pupils all the best for the future and looked forward to visiting Orsett Heath Academy shortly that also opened in September.
- Concluded by recognising the outstanding work of the education providers from early years, schools, post 16 and adults and all that had been achieved in this unprecedented times.

Councillor Okunade thanked the portfolio holder for this report and asked for his response to the issue of Thurrock children going hungry as a result of the Government’s recent refusal to fund free school meals in holidays. Councillor Jefferies stated that the Government had provided free school meals in the Easter and Summer periods when the schools were in lockdown and only open for key worker pupils. Now that the schools were open and residents were back at work it was only right that free schools meals were provided in term time. That the Government had put policies in place for those in need such as the increase of Universal Credit, increased local housing allowances and with Thurrock receiving £193,000 from Government it would be the intention to use this money to help struggling families to get hold of food and essentials.

Councillor Okunade referred the portfolio holder to page 48 of the Agenda where the report had stated that “all children returned to school in September and the attendance had remained high” and questioned the number of elected home education of pupils due to parent’s concerns of the transmission of

COVID in schools and asked the portfolio holder what he was doing in regards to these figures. Councillor Jefferies stated that head teachers and CEOs were doing everything to reassure parents that schools were safe for pupils to return with Thurrock way ahead of the number of pupils returning and had seen an increase since the schools had reopened.

Councillor Okunade referred to the National Funding Formula and school budgets and asked the portfolio holder for more information on the challenges of this funding. Councillor Jefferies stated he had nothing further to add unless there was something specific Councillor Okunade was referring to. Councillor Okunade stated the report had referred to challenges around high needs funding and questioned what these challenges were. Councillor Jefferies stated budgets were tight and that work would continue with schools to ensure they had the funding they need and this was something for the future to have conversations with schools to understand any issues and concerns and to work with them to resolve them.

Councillor Anderson asked what the long term plan would be for providing skills and re-education in the borough specifically looking beyond COVID. Councillor Jefferies stated that the Government had recently announced that every adult would have access to four years of funding post 18 and it was Thurrock's intention to give to everyone to meet their own potential. Councillor Jefferies announced that it was the intention to move the Adult Education College from its inadequate building into classrooms and buildings fit for the 21st century.

Councillor J Kent echoed the comments made by Councillor Okunade and had seen the commitment and dedication of members of staff throughout Spring to ensure that schools could stay open for those children of key workers and then the hard work to ensure that schools could open more widely, safely and as normal as possible in September to ensure the best learning experience could be provided. Councillor J Kent stated he had been incredibly impressed with the work undertaken and all Members should take time to thank all those in schools. Councillor J Kent then referred to the issue of free school meals through the holidays and questioned the portfolio holder how he intended to spend the £193,000 to ensure that no child in Thurrock goes hungry during the school holidays. Councillor Jefferies stated it was not just about the £193,000 payment, the Government had increased the Universal Credit payment by £1000, local housing allowances increased to help residents pay their rent and aim to distribute the £193,000 to struggling families so that they can get hold of food and essentials.

Councillor Byrne questioned whether those Thurrock schools that were isolating whole years was the right thing to do when compared to what other local authority schools were doing. Councillor Jefferies stated he could not comment on other authorities but it would be down to each individual school and by following the right rules and regulations. Councillor Jefferies stated he had been impressed how the schools had handled this, sent home children when necessary and communicated well on social media and letters to parents and further stated that Thurrock schools were doing an amazing job.

Councillor Allen asked the portfolio holder to ensure that more mental health support was provided at Thurrock schools as it was imperative this was identified and early intervention was taking place. Councillor Jefferies agreed that the Council had to be more vigilant and stated the Council was taking this very seriously to have mental health facilities available and working with Councillor Halden to help, assist and offer advice to schools.

Councillor Muldowney referred to the news that the Government had used its COVID emergency powers to impose a new legal duty on schools to provide remote education and then some schools in Essex having the number of laptops that had been allocated to help deprived children being reduced by 80%. The portfolio holder was asked how this had affected schools in Thurrock and what steps the portfolio holder would undertake to ensure that no child fell behind in their education if they were unable to attend school. Councillor Jefferies stated he was unaware of any Thurrock school having any difficulties with laptops and was confident they had their allocations within that scheme and asked Councillor Muldowney if she had any specific examples of schools to let him know outside the meeting.

Councillor Redsell questioned whether the portfolio holder was satisfied that all was being done in the school environment to ensure that COVID rules were being followed. Councillor Jefferies stated that when schools were opened from June, they were asked to complete a risk assessment to see if pupils were the safest at school which then enabled the number of pupils able to return. As risk assessments were completed, the confidence of parents grew and by mid-July there were over 4000 pupils attending per day and from September all children had returned to school. Councillor Jefferies was confident that schools had followed all the rules and only when necessary and in the interests of safety, were children sent home and was confident that all Thurrock schools were following the guidelines.

Councillor Collins referred to the SEND and active travel paragraph in the portfolio report and asked for more details as to what the awards would be. Councillor Jefferies stated he was unsure what the awards were and would find out and report back to Councillor Collins.

Councillor Worrall questioned the portfolio holder about parking and speeding outside of schools and asked for his agreement that the safety of children outside of schools across the whole of the borough was very important. Councillor Worrall asked whether the portfolio holder would consider and support in implementing a working group to look at enforcing the 20mph outside schools and to ensure that parking restrictions are enforced. Councillor Jefferies wholly endorsed what Councillor Worrall stated that children's safety was paramount and that there were more enforcement officers outside schools and when Members reported any issues those officers would be redirected to that area. That parking restrictions, speed signs, ramps and neon signs could be implemented around schools but took on board Councillor Worrall comments and the seriousness and would look into her suggestion and would respond.

167. Report of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning

Councillor Coxshall stated the world had changed dramatically since his last portfolio report due to COVID and in some way this may have affected the Council's investment strategies and investments in the local economy but in some other ways this had not changed and the report demonstrated the good work that had been done over the last 18 months in the borough. With the Council working with the private sector, with Government funding, outside bodies and local authorities across the SELEP region.

Some of the areas covered in this speech were:

- Tilbury2 - The borough's first national significant infrastructure project was now complete with the process involving close joint working between the Council and Port of Tilbury. This was another port for Thurrock and had the honour of visiting there last week. That this port had been a Brexit dividend which would create 500 new jobs in the borough.
- Two further development controller orders (i) Lower Thames Crossing had been handed over to the Secretary of State and was quickly moving onto inspections and onto the next stage and (ii) London Resorts would be a great economic benefit to Thurrock and could completely change the river front and how this could be used in the future with the opportunity of great leisure facilities.
- That Tilbury and Grays received £25 million from the Towns Funds of which £1.2 million had to be spent before March 2021 on small changes but big improvements in both Tilbury and Grays. With a further £50 million for Tilbury and Grays to be spent by 2025 with the Council having until January 2021 to deliver plans on how this money would be spent.
- Particularly pleased with Tilbury's £25 million as for too many years Tilbury had been left behind.
- That New River still had commitment to Thurrock and continued to see the great opportunities in Grays.
- Local Plan – it was important to move forward at a rapid pace and Members would be contacted very shortly before this was moved onto the next stage with partners, Princes Foundation, officers and the portfolio holder. That community engagement would be vital to ensure they benefit from what they want.
- Concluded that Thurrock was the best place to live, work and play and the report had demonstrated that.

Councillor Kerin thanked the portfolio holder for his report and raised the matter on the legal situation in regards to Thurrock Regeneration Limited and asked for the full composition of directors and the situation regarding the resignation of the three directors this year. Councillor Coxshall stated that post COVID had changed everything and what was needed was to relook at the delivery of housing strategies and a review would be required to ensure that good quality housing would be delivered and a paper would be presented to the General Services Committee with the results of what would happen with Thurrock Regeneration Limited.

Councillor Kerin referred to the A13 Widening Project and questioned the mitigation plan that was in place and asked for confirmation from the portfolio holder that Thurrock tax payers would not be asked to pay the financial shortfall accrued by the mismanagement of the project so far. Councillor Coxshall stated he could not give that guarantee as this would stop all investments given to Thurrock by the Government and that every avenue would be pursued to ensure that Thurrock residents would not pay any more money.

Councillor Kerin referred to the Preston Model and the five year plan and asked what figure was the portfolio holder anticipating and what concrete examples could he give of Thurrock moving in the Preston Model direction. Councillor Coxshall stated the Thurrock model had been used but asked that if Councillor Kerin had any examples to bring them forward.

Councillor Allen asked the portfolio holder to ensure that the monies available for Tilbury would be well spent and not wasted and to ensure sustainability for years to come so that Tilbury be set for a brighter future. Councillor Coxshall stated that 10% of the £25 million had to be delivered on revenue spend with the rest to be capital spending. That engagement had commenced with the wider communities and ward members and as a board member would want this money to be spent on four or five big items of capital spending to ensure that an iconic legacy would be left in the borough.

Councillor J Kent referred to the disappointing decision made by New River to put Grays Town Centre up for sale and had been a blow to the plans that had already been carefully put together and asked the portfolio holder to categorically rule out that the Council would step up and buy the town centre. Councillor Coxshall stated absolutely, what the Council needed was partners and joint ventures and to look after those benefits of residents.

Councillor Muldowney referred to the Government's recently published White Paper which set out the proposals for the reform of the planning system and Council working as a pilot authority for the roll out of the new reforms and asked the portfolio holder how the Council would ensure that affordable housing and other accommodation would be delivered for local residents if the Council became a pilot on these reforms. Councillor Coxshall stated the Council had a forward looking and a low cost policy in delivering the local plan across party and to deliver low cost housing for the community and younger people at a reasonable cost and that these planning reforms could do that if carried out right.

Councillor Coxshall summed by stating the importance of the Local Plan, that engagement with communities and Members on how this plan could help decide what was being delivered and how those changes can help deliver low cost housing for Thurrock residents.

168. Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no questions to the Leader had been received and 8 questions to Cabinet Members.

As the item fell due to time limit of the meeting Councillor J Kent resubmitted question 8 for November Council.

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

At 8.40pm, Councillor Coxshall, called Point of Order, asking that the Constitutional Working Group consider looking at the running of Council post COVID.

169. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies

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

170. Minutes of Committees

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

171. 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.

Councillor J Kent questioned why the Motion submitted by Councillor Rigby at the 26 February 2020 Council in regards to the high use of fireworks in the borough which was causing distress and injury to pets and wildlife and had an impact on air quality was not on this report. Councillor J Kent stated this should now be a priority as Members were still receiving emails from concerned residents and it seemed that little or no progress had been made on this motion. Councillor J Kent questioned the process of how this report was prepared and asked for a timeframe as to when the motion would be put in place as the Council did not want to be in the same position this time next year.

The meeting finished at 8.44pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 28 October 2020

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

There was no question submitted from members of the public.

Item 13 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no questions had been received to the Leader of the Council and 8 questions had been received to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee had been received.

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

Thank you Mister Mayor. Can the Portfolio Holder please let this Chamber know how the Stanford-le-Hope Station Redevelopment is going?

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall.

Councillor Coxshall

This project has been through, as I said earlier really, a pause and review as lessons learnt off the A13, and coming out of that is now in a better place. It's more deliverable, more affordable, within its budget envelope, and more importantly, something the residents actually would like to see down there. The scheme is now progressing well, the scheme will be brought forward in two phases. Phase one will be the station site, and phase two will be the transport hub on the opposite side - the opposite side of the road, which we purchased earlier this year. Detailed designs will go into market, and one of the lessons learnt is to get a fixed price to satisfy the concerns of our Members which has been raised at the Committee a few times about how making sure that we don't get inflationary costs and mission creep on the scheme, so we are fixed price on both phases. The preparation and tender documents is now started and we will be drafting the contracts at the same time to move forward.

Mayor

Councillor Kerin, do you wish to pose a second question.

Councillor Kerin

Yes please Mister Mayor, and I'd like to thank the Portfolio Holder for his answer. Just generally, given the importance of this project I do find it somewhat lamentable that it warrants just a paragraph in this report, and just under two minutes worth of speech when it was brought up at Cabinet. So, therefore as a question to follow on, since July 2018 when it was declared in the press that the station plans are still on track, and up until the present day, how much has been spent on external consultants?

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall.

Councillor Coxshall

The external consultants is always expensive, coz like the problem is, I've got to do something and maybe disagree. Consultants are sometimes important in contracts to get the skillset and what we saw in the A13 expansion is we didn't have enough consultants – early time and skills actually in house, and what we've got to do is actually – and there is quite a lot of money and you're going to come out afterwards with how much it is, but I'm not going to say how much that is, but at this stage consultants are important. You can't just blame consultants, external consultants, when you need skills and we need the skillsets in here and instead of employing permanently. We're not a big like Development Corporation, this department, we're a very small department and has to rely on consultants. Development Corporation had, what, eighty staff I think, and we're delivering that with a fraction of that, what we were doing five years ago with the Development Corporation. So, I'm not going to be ashamed, we do employ consultants quite regularly in my department.

Mayor

Councillor Kerin, do you wish to pose a second supplementary?

Councillor Kerin

Thank you Mister Mayor. I know the Portfolio Holder has said before in previous answers about not giving guarantees, but when you look at the timeline of this project I think it's important tonight to give some reassurance to our residents about things definitely being on track, because the delivery timeline from 2016 when it was £12million, in 2018 it was declared to be on track, in February 2019 Cabinet approved another £4million, then there was pause and reflect, then at PTR in July 2020 the figure was £19million. So, can the Portfolio Holder please state for everybody what the final bill is going to be please?

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall.

Councillor Coxshall

It has to be delivered within the budget envelope of the agreed at Cabinet which was £19.7million from memory, just under £20million. It cannot go over that and that's why there will be a fixed price, coz of the concerns at PTR and I've mentioned it here, there's the Member's concern about the fixed price. We've got to get a fixed price, that's a fixed price and have to deliver that and that's why that's right in the contract. You'll be moaning at me there's another consultant to actually design this contract as well, but it's got to be, we can't do this in-house. We've got to make sure we do it properly and that's one of the lessons learnt from pause and reflect from the A13. Yes it's – in the next twenty years this will improve but I do take your point. I get it in the neck from my local colleagues of Stanford West weekly about making sure we get this back on track. I think we've got a great design here, the residents group are very happy about seeing it and we just need to now see some shovels in the ground – I agree with you completely.

Mayor

Thank you. Going on to question two from Councillor Byrne to Councillor Huelin. Councillor Byrne, please read out your question as set out on page 71 of the agenda.

2. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Huelin

Yes, where does performing Arts sits in with Thurrock's plans bearing in mind the very precarious position the industry finds itself in at the moment?

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

Thank you Mister Mayor, thank you Councillor for your question. The Council recognises cultural activity like performing arts play an important role within our community, which is why the Council works collaboratively with groups and other local partners such as CVS and Creative People and Places to develop shared ambition around community driven arts activity and we actively support these groups. We're seeking funding avenues and continue to provide community grants. Arts England recently recognised too that performing arts that need help and we ourselves have secured £191,000 of funding to help us reopen the Thameside Theatre, if and only if we can reopen it safely to current guidelines. We recognise that many organisations have found themselves in a difficult position this year. We've promoted government support schemes such as the £10,000 grant system to small businesses, we've deferred rents where possible, and earlier this year arranged around a community arts grant to support artists and community groups delivering in Thurrock. Both BSDF and CEDF funding rounds have

recognised the effects of COVID, helping with repairs and rents as well as funding projects. Council will continue to support organisations as best it can through these difficult times.

Mayor

Councillor Byrne do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Byrne

Yes please. I never – we seldom here any mention of the performing arts in this Chamber, but we constantly hear about mental health issues. There are proven medical benefits of the performing arts, sufferers keep off the meds and away from GPs. No finer example of that is the Opera House Choir and yet you've stopped they're funding and we've got members already going back to see their GP and are back on the meds. Can you give us any insurances that you will fight for Thurrock funding for these companies, like the Opera House and change everyone's mentality that it's 'only' performing arts.

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

Thank you Councillor. Firstly yes, totally recognise the mental health issues and health and wellbeing is really greatly helped by performing arts. As to the choir itself – as to the choir itself it's my understanding that the choir were funded by the Royal Opera House and not directly by Thurrock Council. Funding to the Royal Opera House came from the education budget for their works with schools and children, and not the arts budget so it doesn't fall under me. For a more detailed response I would suggest you redirect your question to Councillor Jefferies. As for the choir, like any other performing arts group they are able to take advantage of other funding avenues such as Arts England, the BSDF and the CEDF in the future, and officers here at the Council are here to support them with applications to find other avenues of funding and CVS as well will help them with their applications. We run workshops for people help them to fill out and find funding, so they're more than welcome to come to us.

Mayor

Councillor Byrne, do you wish to pose a final supplementary question?

Councillor Byrne

Yes please. We're going to see a wave of homelessness in Thurrock around Easter time when the eviction notices start taking place with the people in performing arts. Most are now on six months' notice to lose their house, so

can I ask you when you think of performing arts, it's not just about singers: it's about actors; it's about singers; it's about artistic directors; it's about assistant stage managers, backing singers; ballerinas; chaperones, circus performers, clowns; comedians, company stage managers, composers, conductors, concert pianists, contortionists, designers, dancers, it goes on and on and on.

Mayor

Is there a question coming?

Councillor Byrne

Yes – will we agree to treat performing arts as you will with every other industry in Thurrock please?

Councillor Huelin

I will treat all people that come forward from performing arts and arts groups to funding and for support from the Council. I will treat them all equally and fairly. You yourself, and I'm grateful for you coming to the panel, to help us cross-party help fund organisations that are in difficulty. We'll continue to do that. We can't show favouritism to one particular group, everybody's welcome to the same level of support from the Council.

Councillor Byrne

I'm sorry, the question was will we get the same deal as any other industry in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

I can't answer for every other industry – I'm the arts Portfolio Holder and I'm answering on behalf of the arts in the Council.

Mayor

Thank you Councillor. Moving onto question three from Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes. Councillor Muldowney will you please read out your question.

3. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes

Councillor Muldowney

Thank you Mister Mayor. 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?

Mayor

Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. Yes this amount of money, which I'm led to believe is £480,000 not £490,000, was agreed by NHS England to actually be a loan rather than just taking the money. I have actually contacted the Accountable Officer for mid and south Essex to ask for his support in actually getting this money back, which I know you have also done at an overview and scrutiny committee. So I believe we have to keep on pressurising and I've been told that the money will come back. I believe a paper on agreement is going to be approved over the coming – sort of weeks, so that we can actually get a timeframe for this as well, so yes. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Muldowney, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Muldowney

Yes please Mister Mayor. Thank you for your reply Councillor Mayes. I'm glad to hear that you've been speaking to the Accountable Officer for mid and south Essex, as indeed you're correct in saying, I have actually been chasing this issue for over a year through the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny. As you know, you're the only democratically elected local representative of the local health economy, so it is your responsibility to act on behalf of local residents to make sure they receive the health services they need. I was promised by the representative of NHS England at Health Scrutiny Committee over a year ago now that the payments would be started in the next year and would be repaid over the following three years. So that deadline came and went in September of this year and still no firm arrangements have been made for paying back this money. Can you give me any idea from your enquiries when this money will be paid back?

Mayor

Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor. In terms of the absolutes, unfortunately not because the paper is going to be written and that actually will be more detailed. I will be chasing that as you would expect and we are all on board with this. At the end of the day, this money has come out of Thurrock and we need to make sure it

comes back, so we'll keep going. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Muldowney do you wish to pose a final question?

Councillor Muldowney

Thank you Mister Mayor. Just to say I'm happy that it's being chased, but I am rather concerned that -

Mayor

Is that a question or a statement?

Councillor Muldowney

And I would, if the health Portfolio Holder would come back to me as soon as possible with a deadline for when payment would start, I would appreciate that.

Mayor

Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor. Obviously I will keep chasing, as I said and I'll update yourself as I know you've been chasing us as well. Thank you.

Mayor

Thank you. Moving onto question four, Councillor Okunade to Councillor Huelin. Councillor Okunade please read out your question as set out on page 71 of the agenda.

4. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Huelin

Councillor Okunade

Thank you Mister Mayor. 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?

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor for your question. All our job adverts display the Council's commitment to diversity and our recruiting managers undertake shortlisting via applications where all of the personal details, like diversity information, has been redacted, so that it's a blind selection if you like, to ensure that there's no unconscious bias. The executive recruitment agencies that support us in appointing the roles, they're briefed very strongly on our commitment to diversity, and our requirement to present an experienced and diverse pool of candidates to us. The Council remain committed to ensuring that we have in place a workforce that represents the diverse community we serve and work is always ongoing to strengthen our approach to workforce and succession planning to ensure opportunities to all existing staff members, to receive training and progress and develop their careers.

Mayor

Councillor Okunade, do you have a supplementary question.

Councillor Okunade

Thank you very much Councillor Huelin for your response. Yeah my second – my first supplementary question is your recently published annual workforce equality data concluded that the Council is representative of the borough in terms of the senior management team. Can you explain how you've reached that conclusion?

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

Well the gender of the borough, there's like 174,300 precise, we think, residents, 51% of which are female and 49% are male. The Council workers we've got 70% female, 30% male; senior management 54% male, 46% – sorry 54% female, 46% male, so that's pretty representative, we've got more women than men. According to the last census the split on ethnicity for the borough is 85% of white background; 15% of black and other minority ethnics. At the Council staff we have about 71% white background and 11% BME and 18% have chosen not to reveal their ethnicity, so it's difficult to exactly say if we're right on target, but we do our best. We appoint on merit, it's done by actions and words. We try and do unbiased looking at applications, so I think we're representative in the fact that the percentages, if you look, are up or down in the same way. It's not an exact science, as I'm sure you know as you do sit on the General Services Committee that does help appoint staff, so you probably have a better idea than I do if that's done with an unbiased mind.

Mayor

Councillor Okunade, do you have a final question?

Councillor Okunade

Yes I do, and in fact I think there's need for more talk around this thing because this is – this is visibility and I can see what's happening and you can see what's happening without any statistics. So in terms of senior and chief officers you can see that can't you, without statistics. I know you committed in your report last year, you did say – sorry not last year, just last month – you were committed to valuing diversity and the issue is that if you do not even accept that there is issue, then how can you be committed. Okay, my question will then be, because you really do need to look inward and see what you're doing, you've said that yes I'm on General Services Committee, we give jobs, you know, to those but there is gap there and you obviously did say to me that you instruct, and there needs to be balanced representation here. Sorry, this is some issue that -

Mayor

Have we got a question coming please?

Councillor Okunade

Yes I have a question and firstly I would like you to look inward - inward and see the gap and my question is this: can you set a target for the Council to have diversity reflected in the management team, as well as in the majority of areas where there has been under-representation?

Mayor

Councillor Huelin.

Councillor Huelin

I'm not quite sure what you're saying – you're saying we see a gap, and I'm not quite sure what gap, because I would hope that everybody is employed on merit, of qualifications, and experience. Anybody can apply for the job, those job applications are sorted on experience, not on diversity. If people of, I don't know what you're referring to, anybody within the diverse community are not applying then we don't understand the reasons why they're not applying, then we need to look at that. I'd value your help and the input of other people like CVS who do an awful lot of work around diversity, and we can look at that, but it has to be on merit. We can't appoint – we can't use diversity, we employ because they're the right person for the job, not because they're a man or a woman or race exactly. We're both women, I would hope that I got my position on Cabinet due to my experience and that's why you're here as well, and that's what we need. If we're missing something then we need to look at it, but people, I feel definitely, are employed because of their experience and their merit, and not anything to do with their gender or race or any other thing.

5. From Councillor Holloway to Councillor Johnson

Councillor Holloway

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?

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

Thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Holloway for your question. I am sure you are aware of the reason why we have undertaken a review of all the electronic gates not only in our sheltered housing complexes but right across the borough that is following a change in compliance regulations which in turn has amplified the fact that the gates are difficult to maintain and expensive to repair. We have involved all the ward councillors as well as the tenants in our consultation and I can advise that a number of suggestions have arisen as part of the exercise and I am pleased to inform you that a report will be presented to the Housing scrutiny meeting at the November meeting which will consider the said review with members and residents. Once I have a better detail from the feedback will of course decide one way or another what the outcome will be for the council gates but that will be in the best interest of all residents in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Holloway do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Holloway

Yes please Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor Johnson. I think I should have added into my question at no added cost to the older people in the borough. I am happy to say that since I tabled this question the gates in my ward are actually have been confirmed to be replaced. My question Mister Mayor is, Councillor Johnson, I am being told that my residents agreed to pay additional charges when the consultation choices sent to my residents only said either pay or have your security gate removed. I have spoken to my residents which I have 26 letters here addressed to you from people living in the complex who I do know do not think it is acceptable to have to pay for security they currently have. Why are you charging my older people in housing complexes for security they have been living with? Will you do the right thing and not charge older people to live safely in their own homes please.

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

Like I said Councillor there is a consultation ongoing and once I have that feedback I will make that decision. But there are 29 sheltered housing complexes in this borough, only 6 of them have gates. So if we are looking for the fairness of the whole of Thurrock that has to be taken into account. Too much cost over real security would only ever result in security winning. However I do think there is an issue exactly what security gate is offering remember we are just talking about car park gates here. So you know off the top of my head the only security I can see is that security of a car parking space which is not fair for everyone in Thurrock.

Mayor

Councillor Holloway do you have a second supplementary question?

Councillor Holloway

Yes thank you Mister Mayor. I can assure you that my residents definitely don't see this as saving car parking spaces. I would be very happy for you to come and visit the site it is near a very busy school, it's quite secluded and it needs to remain that way. I assure you it is definitely used for the comfort and safety of residents. My question is Councillor Johnson you are going to bill my older residents living there for the next 15 years for the cost of these gates. I have been told they will be replaced. I am not sure what the consultation in the coming months will be but my assurances that they will be replaced. My question is why you think it is acceptable for this Council to pay £10 million on new council offices, £5 million for arrangements fees for billions of debt for officers to tell me there is no money and then charge my older residents in sheltered accommodation for a replacement security gate. Will you do the right thing and not charge the older people living in sheltered housing for their safety in their own homes.

Mayor

Councillor Johnson

Councillor Johnson

I keep repeating this is a consultation and we will get the details of the feedback and then we will make a decision. I haven't said I am going to charge anybody anything. We are looking for the feedback, once I have it we can make that decision. So I repeat there are only six of these complexes which have gates out of the whole 29. We are not just looking at sheltered housing we are looking at electronic gates right across the borough. They are expensive to replace. They are very very difficult to repair as well. I am trying to be fair to the whole borough. We will wait we will see what that feedback is

and when the Housing committee scrutiny has seen the report then we will have more feedback we will make a decision. Thank you Councillor.

6. From Councillor Muldowney and Councillor Mayes

Councillor Muldowney

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

Mayor

Councillor Mayes

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Mister Mayor and thank you Councillor for your question. In 2018, the Council joined with Essex County Council, Southend-on-Sea and Kent County Council in writing a letter promoting the production by LTC/HE of a standalone Health Impact Assessment, which was agreed by LTC. The draft combined Health & Equalities Impact Assessment was shared in early August and officers have commented on the draft document. A Summary Paper was produced for the Task Force and then discussed at its meeting on 12 October. Regarding specific air quality matters, drafts of some of the Environmental Statement chapters were received by Highways England and detailed comments have been made, including air quality. These comments have been produced with input from the Council's public health and environmental health teams. Myself and officers will continue to pursue the points and issues raised once the DCO submission has been made. Any outstanding matters will be recorded in the Local Impact Report which is anticipated will be subject to a report to Council in the coming months. Officers and the consultant team are fully aware that this is a critically important issue for the Council and of its residents.

Mayor

Councillor Muldowney do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Muldowney

I do thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Mayes for your reply. I must admit I was very surprised not to see the Lower Thames Crossing included in your report to council last month. It seems like a significant omission particularly as you sat alongside me on the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and listened to evidence about the existing health issues suffered by those along the route. In fact at the September 2019 LTC task force you highlighted your concerns about the high levels of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in Tilbury and at that point you felt it would be difficult for the Lower Thames Crossing to mitigate, for Highways England to mitigate against the health impacts of the crossing and you are asked for your

concerns to be noted. Is this still your view and if so why was this not included in your report to council last month. If it isn't your view what's happened in the mean time for you to change your mind.

Mayor

Councillor Mayes

Councillor Mayes

Thank you Councillor for your question. Yes I have been sitting in the LTC meetings and it was very difficult to sit through last year and I am very glad the chair has changed on that one. The fact is there is going to be air quality issues it is not up for debate, I've said it, we've all said it, and we've all said the same thing time and time again. The DCO I believe has been submitted now following a conversation I had with the chair earlier so obviously we need to look at the health impact assessment and see what will happen now. The report was based on what we have been doing over the past year and that also included some of the work done by my colleague, the other councillor, so yes my feelings have not changed there is going to be a lot of pollution and the fact is we have said what you have raised the fact that I had said that so thank you very much. So therefore nothing has changed for me but we have to be pragmatic about this as the LTC has been submitted to the DCO and we need to think about how we proceed with this not necessarily go round in the same arguments again. Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Muldowney do you have a second supplementary question?

Councillor Muldowney

I do thank you Mister Mayor. Thank you Councillor Mayes for your reply and glad that you still agree with yourself now that you are a conservative councillor rather than when you were a Thurrock independent councillor. I note you have been removed from the Lower Thames Crossing task force at last month's council meeting after a quite patchy attendance it must be said as a conservative councillor but I hope you have ...

Mayor

Councillor, Councillor Muldowney we are running really short of time can you get to a question or we will move on.

Councillor Muldowney

I am just getting to it Mister Mayor if you just let me. Ok I am glad that you raised the health quality impact assessment which was brought to the October meeting. This assessment highlighted

Mayor

Where's the question. I want a question. Councillor, Councillor. There wasn't a question, you were taking too much and I have put you on mute.

7. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall

Councillor J Kent

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

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall

Councillor Coxshall

The plans for, as I have been saying quite a bit tonight actually, the plans for the Thameside complex are currently under review to assess the impacts of the virus on the services provided in the building. When we are in a position to discuss the potential futures and the outcomes of the review we will report back here.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor J Kent

The problem with that Mister Mayor is that we have never been told what the plans currently under review were. This has been going on now since January 2017 when Cabinet received a report that told us that the building would likely close in the following year. There was been no further report that has been made public. Will the portfolio holder now commit to publishing a report on plans for the future of the Thameside Complex?

Councillor Coxshall

Yes of course we have got to decide what we want to do with the Thameside Complex. It is a multiply building, we have had questions tonight about how we are going to deliver our culture entitlement, we do that as part of the live work and play, we need that bit, and live is an important element of that. Now the Thameside is how do we deliver that, it was been quite a while, when the administration took over we had ideas on moving the whole lot onto the Grays Beach area and then we were talking about putting it here in the council so there has been multiple conversations at every committees on going forward. But want we can do is actually come to an end of this. I think the Boards, that Grays Board with the money has got to make a decision, the High Street bids have got to come to a decision, the adult college has got to a make decision

whether this moves into the town centre, which was announced tonight by Andrew by moving it out of Richmond Road. There are multiple options all of them need to go through a good scrutiny and as soon as possible. I think that it has got to come to an end and I think we need to decide the way forward. And COVID has delayed this obviously.

Mayor

Councillor J Kent to you have a second supplementary question?

Councillor J Kent

Mister Mayor we have had four years of dither. We need to get to a conclusion. So I will ask the portfolio holder when does he expect to be in a position to give the general public in Thurrock some idea of future plans for that building.

Mayor

Councillor Coxshall

Councillor Coxshall

In due course.

As the item fell due to time limit of the meeting Councillor J Kent resubmitted question 8 for November Council.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was 1 question from members of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor Johnson

Over a number of years the Council has been carrying out a programme of installing double glazed windows in Council rented housing. Can you assure residents that these windows meet with current health and safety regulations, particularly with regard to escape/rescue in the event of fire?

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Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Officer	Status
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	<p>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.</p> <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>

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25 November 2020	ITEM: 10
Council	
Senior Management 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 Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health and Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships.

Following a robust search and selection process, General Services Committee (GSC) interviewed on the 16 November 2020. GSC recommend the appointment of Ian Wake as Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health and the appointment of Gerard McCleave as the Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 To approve in accordance with the Council’s Constitution the appointment of Ian Wake as the permanent Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health.**
- 1.2 To approve in accordance with the Council’s Constitution the appointment of Gerard McCleave as the permanent Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health role will become vacant in March 2021, following the resignation of the current post holder. Recruitment to this role is essential; as outlined in the Constitution this post holder shall act as the statutory officer for adult social services.
- 2.2 The Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships role is a vacant position and is being recruited to for the first time.

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

3. Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health

3.1 Recruitment to the Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health role commenced in September 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 26 October, from which seven applicants were selected to progress to the next stage.

3.3 Prior to the technical assessment, one candidate withdrew from the process. Technical Assessments for the remaining six candidates were conducted by an external independent expert on 3 November. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 9 November, from the six candidates three were selected to progress to the Selection Day.

3.4 Selection Day took place on 16 November with the three candidates. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel and General Services Committee. The stakeholder panel consisted of:

1	Mark Tebbs	Alliance Director, Thurrock CCG
2	Neil Woodbridge	CEO, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions
3	Kristina Jackson	CEO, Thurrock CVS
4	Sheila Murphy	Corporate Director Childrens Services, Thurrock Council
5	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, Thurrock Council
6	Paul Chopping	HR Business Partner (Panel Facilitator)

3.5 The recommendation of the General Services Committee is to appoint Ian Wake as the permanent Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health.

4. Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships

- 4.1 Recruitment to the Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships role commenced in September 2020. An executive recruitment agency was appointed and a full national campaign developed.
- 4.2 This campaign attracted a total of 13 applicants which were initially assessed and rated by the agency based on their applications with five candidates recommended to progress. Longlisting by General Services Committee took place on 8 October, from which six applicants were selected to progress to the next stage.
- 4.3 Prior to the technical assessment, one candidate withdrew from the process. Technical Assessments for the remaining five candidates were conducted by an external independent expert. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 9 November, from the five candidates two were selected to progress to the Selection Day.
- 4.4 Selection Day took place on 16 November with the remaining two candidates. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel and General Services Committee. The stakeholder panel consisted of:

1	Perry Glading	Chair, Thurrock Business Board
2	John Speakman	Senior Asset Manager, Port of Tilbury London
3	Bianca Forrester	Development Manager, NewRiver
4	Stephen Munday	CEO, South West Essex Community Education Trust
5	Neil Woodbridge	CEO, Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions
6	Adam Bryan	CEO, South East LEP
7	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, Thurrock Council
8	Sue Hawthorne	HR Business Partner (Panel Facilitator)

- 4.5 The recommendation of the General Services Committee is to appoint Gerard McCleave as the permanent Assistant Director Economic Growth and Partnerships.

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 these senior management positions has been conducted by General Services Committee with the full engagement of key stakeholders. GSC recommends the candidates be approved by Full Council.

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

- 7.1 The Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) is a politically restricted statutory chief officer post under Section 2 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and is accountable for the delivery of local authority social services functions listed in Schedule 1 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 in respect of Adults.

8. Implications

8.1 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.

8.2 Legal

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

The final decision on the appointment of statutory Chief Officers, as relates to the role of Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health, is by Full Council.

8.3 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

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25 November 2020	ITEM: 11
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing	
Report of: Councillor Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Housing	
This report is Public	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report presents an overview of the range of Housing services and provides details of the performance of the department in 2019/20.
- 1.2. The document also outlines the action taken by the Housing service in response to the challenges which have been faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.3. This document also identifies a range of key external factors which have affected and shaped service delivery throughout the 2019/20 financial year and sets out the financial position for the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund budgets within Housing.

2. Service Overview

- 2.1. The Housing service provides a range of statutory and landlord functions, utilising rental income through the Housing Revenue Account as well as smaller General Fund budgets. The Housing service interacts with around 10,000 households in the borough directly through the provision of tenancy and leasehold management services, and additional households through the housing advice and options, homelessness and private sector housing functions.
- 2.2. The key functions which the Housing service are responsible for delivering include:
 - Tenancy management activities, including tenancy audits, sign-ups and exit inspections, and other day-to-day interactions with the Council's tenants for both general needs and sheltered housing properties.
 - Caretaking and estate services for many of the blocks and communal spaces across the borough.
 - Rent collection, financial inclusion and welfare advice.
 - Ongoing repairs and maintenance of Housing stock and assets.
 - Monitoring and maintaining over 300 CCTV cameras across the borough.
 - Tackling domestic abuse, hate crime and other safeguarding issues.
 - The investigation, management and implementation of enforcement action for anti-social behaviour issues.
 - Capital investment programmes delivering improvements to Housing stock and assets, such as the Transforming Homes programme.

- Homeownership services, including the administration of Right to Buy applications and leasehold management.
 - Tenant and leaseholder engagement through forums, community activities and other events.
 - The administration of the Council's Housing Register and the allocation of properties in line with the Allocations Policy.
 - The prevention and relief of homelessness in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, as well as the provision of temporary accommodation for households, for example those which are homeless or have been displaced through emergency or disrepair
 - Management of three council run Travellers' sites, including rent collection.
 - Mediation, enforcement and licensing activity for private sector landlords and tenants.
- 2.3. The majority of Housing services use the Northgate Housing Management System as the central system for administering, managing and monitoring the range of functions.

3. Performance in 2019/20

- 3.1. The performance dashboard for Housing is designed to ensure that key objectives are identified for reporting across three distinct sections:
- Corporate Performance Indicators (CPI) – Captures the contribution of the Housing service to the corporate suite of performance indicators, including measures such as budget variance, complaints received and upheld, and sickness absence. The targets for these indicators mirror the corporate targets.
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPI) – A suite of service critical performance indicators designed to measure key outputs of the Housing service, including measures such as gas check compliance and tenant satisfaction with primary functions of the service.
 - Local Performance Indicators (LPI) – An extensive suite of service level indicators which measure the outputs of individual teams within the Housing service, as well as tenant satisfaction with specific services such as repairs, caretaking and grounds maintenance.
- 3.2. The Housing performance scorecard is updated on a monthly basis and performance is reviewed at management team and directorate performance management meetings. The suite of key performance indicators and corporate performance indicators are reported at Performance Board, forming part of the quarterly performance report which is taken to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3. Tenant satisfaction surveys are completed by an independent research contractor which specialises in satisfaction surveys for the Housing sector. Satisfaction levels in the 2019/20 financial year were measured using a 5 point scale (excellent, good, fair, poor and very poor), with only excellent and good ratings included in the satisfaction rate.

3.4. Performance Indicators

KPI	Performance Indicators	Target	2018/19	2019/20
KPI01	% General Satisfaction of Tenants With Neighbourhoods / Services Provided by Housing	75%	68%	74.9%
KPI02	% Satisfaction of Tenants With Transforming Homes (Contractor & Programme)	85%	87.5%	86.9%
KPI03	% of Repairs Completed Within Target	95%	97.7%	98.3%
KPI04	% Rent Collected	98%	98.8%	98.5%
KPI05	Average Time to Turnaround / Re-let Voids (in days)	28	26.64	25.6
KPI06	% of Gas Service Checks Carried out Within Statutory Timescale	100%	100%	100%
KPI07	Number of Applicants with Family Commitments in Bed & Breakfast for Six Weeks or More	0	1	3
KPI08	Number of Category 1 & 2 Hazards Removed as a Direct Result of Private Sector Housing Team Intervention	900	896	1000

- 3.4.1. The Housing Revenue Account continued to balance through the 2019/20 financial year. The final outturn position of the Housing General Fund at the end of 2019/20 was above budget by £18,154.

There was a reduction of 4.2% in the number of Housing related complaints received during 2019/20 in comparison with the 2018/19 financial year which equates to 2 fewer complaints per month, on average. Additionally there was a 1% reduction in the percentage of complaints upheld in 2019/20 compared with 2018/19.

- 3.4.2. The 2019/20 financial year saw significant improvement in overall tenant satisfaction with Housing services. Through the tenant satisfaction surveys which were carried out in 2018/19, out of a sample of 2,011 tenants 28% rated the Housing service as excellent or good, however in 2019/20, 74.9% of a sample of 2,002 tenants rated the Housing service as excellent or good. This represents a year on year improvement of 6.9% in tenant satisfaction.

The 2019/20 financial year was also the strongest performing year for overall tenant satisfaction with Housing since the Housing department began measuring tenant satisfaction in 2013/14. Satisfaction with a number of individual Housing services and service elements increased against final outturns for 2018/19.

Relating to specific service provision, satisfaction increased with Grounds Maintenance, tackling ASB, and Estate Caretaking by 8.9%, 3.1% and 1.9% respectively. Tenant satisfaction with their Tenancy Management Officer increased by 5.5%, new tenant satisfaction increased by 6.4%, and satisfaction with the quality of home increased by 1.5%.

Analysis of tenant feedback indicates that one of the key drivers for dissatisfaction is a perceived lack of communication and engagement between the Housing service and its tenants. Towards the end of the 2018/19 financial year the Housing service introduced a regular tenants and leaseholder e-newsletter, a formal communication plan, an annual tenants' conference, enhancements to the Tenants Excellence Panels involvement in service delivery and mailshots to tenants. Since these measures have been implemented, satisfaction has increased. Analysis of this improvement indicates that the improved communication and engagement is closely correlated with overall satisfaction.

- 3.4.3. Satisfaction with Transforming Homes remained high at 86.9%, above its target of 85% for 2018/19. From an overall sample of 453 tenants who provided feedback on the work in their homes, 90.1% were satisfied with the quality of the work which was carried out and 94.6% found the operatives completing the works to be polite and courteous.
- 3.4.4. The percentage of repairs completed on target has continued to show strong, consistent performance with year-on-year improvements. Against a contractual target of 95%, the outturn for 2019/20 was 98.3%, up 0.6% against 2018/19 and 0.8% against 2017/18. A particular performance highlight for this indicator was that 99.2% of repairs were completed on target in quarter four of 2019/20.

Satisfaction with the Repairs service also remained high at 90.5%, continuing the consistent strong performance of recent years.

- 3.4.5. Despite growing challenges faced by the Rents and Welfare team, namely through a 47% increase in the number of tenants claiming Universal Credit and a £3.5m reduction in the amount of rent paid by Housing Benefit against the 2018/19 financial year, rent collection remained strong and the final outturn position was above target. The Financial Inclusion Officers within the team continue to work alongside tenants to maximise their income, and their contribution to the positive outcomes which have been achieved with tenants was recognised by being named 'Team of the Year' for 2019/20.
- 3.4.6. The average time to re-let empty properties continued its trend of year-on-year improvement since the 2015/16 financial year when re-lets took an average of 36 days. During 2019/20, it took an average of 25.6 calendar days to re-let an empty property, an improvement of 1 day in comparison with 2018/19 and 10.4 days compared to the final outturn of 2015/16.
- 3.4.7. The Housing service continued to remain 100% compliant with gas service checks carried out within the statutory timescale throughout the 2019/20 financial year.
- 3.4.8. The performance of the Housing Solutions team relating to the number of homeless applicants with family commitments who were placed in bed and breakfast accommodation for six weeks or more was comparable to the final outturn of one in 2018/19. Although this indicator did not meet its target, in circumstances where securing alternative accommodation was becoming

increasingly challenging, only three households surpassed the six week timescale, compared to 41 households in 2017/18.

- 3.4.9. The Private Sector Housing Team removed 1000 category 1 and 2 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards from private sector properties in 2019/20. This represents an increase of 104 (12%) on the 2018/19 outturn and exceeds the target by 100 hazards in total.

4. Housing Development – New Build

4.1. HRA New Build Programme

- 4.1.1. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) new build programme will deliver in total 117 new Council homes for rent. The properties will be a mix of houses, low rise flats, maisonettes and bungalows. The budget for the programme is £32.53m as agreed within the HRA Capital Programme. HRA rents are being set at 70% of local market rents under the affordable rent regime, and all subject to a local housing allowance cap.

- 4.1.2. To reduce annual costs on the HRA for the new schemes it is proposed to utilise Right to Buy Receipts which would otherwise potentially need to be paid to the government along with interest at 4% above the base rate. Sufficient unallocated receipts of £9.8m have been identified to partially fund this programme.

- 4.1.3. Cabinet agreed on 13 March 2019 that a housing development pipeline be prepared to seek to deliver up to 500 new Council homes for Thurrock over the next 5 to 10 years to be funded within the Housing Revenue Account. A process to identify potential sites for Housing Development was agreed by Cabinet in January 2020 and in line with that process update reports are presented regularly to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 4.1.4. Individual Housing Revenue Account schemes that are funded and on-site are listed below and a brief commentary provided on Thurrock Regeneration Ltd.

4.1.5. Alma Court, Argent Street, Grays

Alma Court, formerly known as the Tops Club scheme, was handed over in July 2020 and provides 29 units of 1, 2, 3 bed flats and maisonettes all for rent within the HRA, together with an enhanced playground for residents. All properties were let successfully

4.1.6. Heathlyn Close/Claudian Way, Chadwell

This is a 53-unit scheme consisting of a mix of bungalows, houses and low rise flats, all for rent within the HRA. A number of properties were handed over into Housing stock in September 2020 and have now been let. The remaining houses and bungalows to be handed over by the end of November 2020 and at the time of writing the flats are scheduled to be handed over in December 2020.

4.1.7. **Calcutta Road, Tilbury**

This development of 35 flats is for people approaching retirement and beyond. The scheme accords with the 'HAPPI' principles ('Housing our Ageing Population – Panel for Innovation') which will ensure good design appropriate to the age group. Work on-site is underway and completion is currently planned for Summer 2021.

5. **COVID-19 Impact and Response**

- 5.1. Much like the wider organisation, the Housing Service implemented a number of measures to address the challenges brought by COVID-19, particularly in response to the announcement of the Government's 'Stay at Home' guidance on 23 March 2020.

The Housing service acted to protect the health and wellbeing of its staff and those who use its services from the risks posed by COVID-19. Close attention was paid to statutory responsibilities, new and existing legislation, and changing Government guidance.

All services considered their activities against a broad framework in order to determine whether they:

- needed to be suspended, either for the safety of staff and service users or in line with Government guidance
- could continue to be delivered, but with significant alterations
- could continue to be delivered, but at a greatly reduced rate.

- 5.2. A number of services and processes were suspended across Housing, not only as a result of service-led reviews, but also due to measures which have been implemented nationally by the Government. Many of these services have now restarted, in part or in full, where it has been safe to do so.

The choice based lettings process was initially suspended, however it restarted on 11 June 2020 alongside an upgraded Housing Online customer portal.

The delivery of aspects of the Transforming Homes programme was suspended but has also recommenced. The restarted programme features revised working practices to ensure that works are completed safely and in line with Government guidance and accelerated output to deliver works within existing timeframes.

Scheduled resident engagement activity which was due to take place physically had been cancelled in March 2020, including resident meetings, events in communal halls at sheltered housing complexes, and the planning for the 2020 Tenant Conference. Resident engagement activity has continued using virtual platforms, such as through the use of social media, whilst restrictions still remain in place for larger physical meetings.

There has been no court action taken on those in arrears or for anti-social behaviour, which was a position reflected nationally due to a moratorium on

eviction proceedings. The Rents and Welfare team have worked rigorously to contact tenants who have fallen into arrears, or were at risk of doing so, and have provided support accordingly.

- 5.3. As almost all members of Housing staff continue to work from home, teams across the department have had to alter the way in which they provide their services. Interactions which would ordinarily have taken place face to face are instead being undertaken by telephone, by video call or online.

In line with Government guidance, the service greatly expanded its support for those rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping by providing accommodation and food, giving opportunities for self-isolation and therefore reducing the risk of infection in this particularly vulnerable group. Further detail is provided later in this report regarding this.

Additional support was also provided to tenants from a tenancy management perspective. Tenancy Management Officers increased and their levels of Contact with vulnerable tenants to ensure that appropriate support was being provided, including holding in-person visits where contact with tenants could not be established.

Sheltered Housing Officers increased the frequency that health and wellbeing calls were being made to tenants in Sheltered Housing. Officers were asked to attempt to make these calls with all tenants at least twice a week and additional time has been spent on each call to ensure that tenants feel safe and to alleviate any feelings of isolation. Since 23 March 2020, in excess of 60,000 contacts have been made with tenants by the Sheltered Housing Officers.

Due to the risks identified in gas safety and water testing, statutory compliancy checks for properties in these areas continued, however a number required reprogramming for a future date where access to properties was been impacted by shielding and self-isolating residents. These appointments were rescheduled to take place after shielding was paused on 1 August 2020, and all were due to be completed by 7 August 2020.

- 5.4. It was possible, and in some cases vital, for some services to continue, albeit a reduced level. Tenancy sign-ups for risk-assessed homeless households and applicants whose safety was at risk where they were living continued. Tenancy sign-ups have now been fully restored, albeit with additional measures to ensure social distancing guidance can be followed.

Estate caretakers were vital in ensuring that communal areas remained safe and clean for those who live in and travel through estates, and priorities were adjusted to focus more heavily on sanitising. Since July 2020 full operating hours resumed and as such a normal caretaking service is being delivered again.

It was possible to continue to deliver emergency repairs to properties, with additional arrangements made to record requests which were received for routine repairs so that these could be addressed once it was safe to do so. The full repairs service resumed on 8 June 2020 with a backlog of 919

repairs which had been requested – the majority of which have now been completed or booked for completion.

5.5. Homelessness and ‘Everyone In’

- 5.5.1. Following the Government guidance on 26 March 2020 to ‘bring everyone in’, the Council worked to identify and provide accommodation to all known rough sleepers. By the end of October 2020, accommodation had been provided to 56 individuals (53 ‘households’ comprised of 50 single people and 3 couples) who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

Temporary accommodation for 26 households has been provided locally, with 27 households provided with temporary accommodation in nearby areas. Support services and voluntary organisations have worked alongside the Council to provide food and supplies to those who have been accommodated in bed and breakfast.

- 5.5.2. Individuals with mental health issues accommodated by the Council have received an assessment by the Senior Mental Health Practitioner in the Housing team. A robust care, housing and support assessment was also undertaken by the Council’s support provider Sanctuary Housing to ensure that a clear picture of needs for each individual.

Tailored offers of support have been provided and the team have had a high rate of success in the levels of engagement in this process, particularly in ensuring that the Council engages with both the landlords they are placed with through the Landlord and Tenant Liaison Officer, and the applicants and potential employment providers through the Community Engagement and Employment Officer.

- 5.5.3. The team are continuing to work to ensure that no-one accommodated returns to rough sleeping. A recovery plan, submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has been developed to steer the Council to meet its aim to provide long-term, settled accommodation for these individuals and to support them to make positive transitions into independent living.

To date, a total of fifteen households have moved on from the temporary accommodation which had been provided by the Council. Fourteen of these households have been assisted to find and secure accommodation in the private rental sector, of which five are located within Thurrock. Nine households have moved on from the temporary accommodation of their own accord. Five returned to prison. Regular contact continues to be made to all those who the Council continues to accommodate as part of this work.

- 5.5.4. The Council is taking a proactive approach through its Rough Sleeper Project to engage with those who are at risk of rough sleeping, understand their circumstances, build a positive relationship with them, and work alongside those individuals to guide them into suitable accommodation.

In order to successfully achieve this goal, it is crucial that the Council works alongside a range of partners to develop new initiatives and ways to best help

those in need of assistance and to engage those who can assist. There has been evidence of successful outcomes for those at risk of rough sleeping through this approach already through the improved referral pathway between the Council, Sanctuary Housing and Thurrock Mind, and with the Thurrock Homelessness Partnership Board and emerging Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan there is ample opportunity to continue to drive this forward.

- 5.5.5. The total number of households which approached the Housing Solutions service between 23 March 2020 and 31 October 2020 were 1051. During the same period in the 2019/20 financial year 1283 households approached the service. This means that approximately 18% fewer households approached the Housing Solutions service, which can in part be attributed to the moratorium on evictions.

This national ban on new evictions was lifted on 20 September 2020, and the service is already preparing for the possibility of a spike in evictions from early 2021. With the new lockdown, we await further guidance from central government on dealing with rough sleepers

- 5.5.6. New roles have been created in the service with specific regard to homelessness prevention. Where it is appropriate and safe to do so, it is essential that the service assists households to sustain their tenancies and remain in their existing properties. Work is underway to identify a continuous flow of suitable private rental sector properties in Thurrock for those who are unable to remain in their property, which will also mean that temporary accommodation can be retained for use in emergency cases where there is a need for immediate action.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The Council continues to provide many key Housing services for tenants and residents across the borough. Performance in a number of areas remains strong and good progress has been made in others.
- 6.2. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of Housing services since March 2020. Whilst there has been a level of disruption, officers from across Housing have worked to minimise and mitigate this wherever possible whilst ensuring that services could continue to be provided to those who need them.
- 6.3. Work will continue to identify areas for refinement and improvement, in order to deliver value for money for Thurrock residents as well as a greater customer experience and overall levels of satisfaction for those using Housing services.

7. Appendices to the report

None.

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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 1 question to the Leader and 6 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

1. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Gledhill

Would the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport update the chamber on plans for a new access to treetops school from the A1013?

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

1. Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

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

2. Councillor Byrne to Councillor Coxshall

Can you enlighten the Chamber on the timed out £600,000 of funding from LG / DP world that we forgot to claim for the Stanford station?

3. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Johnson

Can the Portfolio Holder tell us when this administration will finally sign off on building some new, genuinely affordable housing for Thurrock residents?

4. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes

Can the Portfolio Holder tell the Chamber how many GP surgeries he has visited since taking up his portfolio in January?

5. From Councillor Kerin to Councillor Coxshall

Can the Portfolio Holder please inform this Chamber as to when new directors will be appointed to Thurrock Regeneration Limited?

6. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Johnson

When does the Portfolio Holder anticipate the electricity supply issues affecting, some, residents of Airey Neave Court will finally be resolved?

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This report lists all motions from the previous twelve months which still have updates forthcoming. All Motions which have been resolved or the actions from officers have been completed are removed.

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 programme has started with the first meeting of the Partnership Group. An update report will be presented to Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December.</p>	Andy Millard

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

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

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Motions Submitted to Council

In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 15) of the Council's Constitution

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor J Kent

Thurrock Council believes that no child should go hungry and recognises the fantastic effort of many local businesses and organisations for helping prevent many local children being hungry during the October half term holiday. Council calls on cabinet to ensure that every Thurrock child, who qualifies for Free School Meals, has their FSM entitlement fulfilled during the school holidays as well as term time - beginning with the 2020 Christmas holiday.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

Should the motion be approved this would be a request to the Cabinet. The Cabinet will need to consider all material factors relating to the mechanisms for delivering the requested support and the financial implications of this. The provision of such support could be undertaken within the discretionary powers of the Council.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

On Sunday 8 November 2020, the Government announced a package of extra targeted financial support for those in need over the winter period. The Winter Grant Scheme, which will be made available in the next month, will see new funding issued to County Councils and Unitary Authorities (including Metropolitan Councils and London Boroughs) to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy and water bills and other associated costs. The Council allocation is £523,004.

The Council will use part of this funding to ensure free school meals are provided to those who are entitled in the Christmas and Spring half-term holiday period. This scheme is part of a wider winter support package for families and children, including:

- The significant expansion of the Department for Education's (DfE's) Holiday Activities and Food programme, which has provided healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children, across England next year. This will ensure provision is in place for Easter, Summer and Christmas in 2021.
- An increased value of the Department for Health and Social Care's Healthy Start vouchers from £3.10 to £4.25 from April 2021. Healthy Start supports lower-income pregnant women and families with children under four to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula, providing an important nutritional safety net.
- DEFRA will provide further funding for local charities through established networks to provide immediate support to front-line food aid charities, including food banks, who are supporting those most vulnerable due to the economic impacts of COVID-19.

While detail is awaited on the wider package of support the expectation is that this will ensure there is sufficient funding for the Council to deliver free school meals to those entitled to them in the holiday periods.

Is the above motion within the remit of Council to approve?

Yes