

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 24 February 2021**

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](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast)

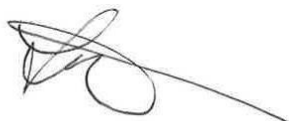
### Membership of the Council:

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: 16 February 2021



## **Agenda**

Open to Public and Press

		<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	<b>9 - 32</b>
	To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on 27 January 2021.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Items of Urgent Business</b>	
	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.	
<b>4</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>	
	To receive any declaration of interests from Members.	
<b>5</b>	<b>Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council</b>	
<b>6</b>	<b>Questions from Members of the Public</b>	<b>33 - 34</b>
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2 (Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>7</b>	<b>Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors</b>	
	In accordance with Chapter 2, Part 2(Rule 14) of the Council's Constitution.	
<b>8</b>	<b>Petitions Update Report</b>	<b>35 - 36</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels</b>	
	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.	

<b>10</b>	<b>Assistant Director Housing Management Recruitment</b>	<b>37 - 40</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Annual Pay Policy Statement 2021/22</b>	<b>41 - 60</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Capital Strategy 2021/22</b>	<b>61 - 90</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>General Fund Budget Proposals</b>	<b>91 - 130</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	<b>131 - 152</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Questions from Members</b>	<b>153 - 154</b>

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

<b>16</b>	<b>Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies</b>	
<b>17</b>	<b>Minutes of Committees</b>	

Name of Committee	Date
General Services Committee	17 December 2020
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	17 November 2020
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	10 November 2020
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 December 2020
Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee	3 December 2020
General Services Committee	19 January 2021
Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	8 December 2020
Planning Committee	7 January 2021

<b>18</b>	<b>Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year</b>	<b>155 - 156</b>
-----------	---	------------------

**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](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank

## **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](http://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](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast)

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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)]			
<b>All Motions will follow Section A and then either Section B or C</b>			
<b>A.</b>	A1 Motion is moved A2 Mover speaks A3 Seconded A4 Seconder 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>B.</b>		<b>C.</b>	
<b>IF there is an AMENDMENT (please see Rule 19.23)</b>		<b>If NOT amended i.e. original motion</b>	
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	<b>THEN debate on <u>the subject</u>.</b>	C3	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.
B4	If the seconder of the substantive motion and the amendment reserved their speeches, they shall then speak.	C4	Vote on motion.
B5	The mover of the amendment shall have a right of reply.		
B6	The mover of the substantive motion shall have the final right of reply.		
B7	Vote on amendment.		
B8	A vote shall be taken on the substantive motion, as amended if appropriate, without further debate.		

## Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
  - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
  - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
  - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
  
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
  - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
  - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
  - Fewer public buildings with better services
  
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
  - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
  - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
  - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

This page is intentionally left blank

## **WW2 in Memoriam**

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

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

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

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

The names have been listed in date order.

#### **February 1941**

*FRENCH Horace F*

*STAMMERS Ernest G*

*HAWKINS Norman H*

*HATHAWAY Edwin George*

This page is intentionally left blank

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 January 2021 at 7.00 pm

---

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

**Apologies:** Councillors Colin Churchman, Mike Fletcher, Robert Gledhill, Angela Lawrence and Bukky Okunade

**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 the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's online webcast channel.

### 187. Tribute

The Mayor made the following tribute:

#### Mr Albert England

Albert England was a friend to many here this evening. I am sure, like me, the news of his passing stopped all who knew him in their tracks. I am sure, like me, your thoughts turned immediately to Mrs Wyn England and their family.

Albert England's military career was well known. Albert was part of what was known as a combined operation, with the Navy and Army working together. In June 1944, Albert helped pilot a landing craft to the Normandy beaches. As with so many ships, Albert's boat was bombed, and he was rescued from the sea. In 2015, Albert was appointed to the rank of Chevalier by the French Government in recognition of his service – Councillor Cathy Kent received his insignia on Albert's behalf and handed it to Albert in this Chamber where he received a standing ovation. Albert was later flown to Burma where he served with honour. Back in Thurrock, both Wyn and Albert were the backbone of

Thurrock's Burma Star Association for many years, ensuring members had someone to turn to and support them. They were the inspiration behind the rose garden installed in Orsett where annual services were still being held. Thurrock Burma Star Association received the Freedom of the Borough in 2008. As well as being remembered as a distinguished veteran, Albert was also a lifelong Thurrock resident. He attended Orsett Primary School as a young boy from 1930 till the age of 11. Albert would often visit school children to share the memory of his experiences in the Second World War. In 2019 Albert and Wyn presented Thurrock Burma Star Association's Union Jack Standard and Shield to Orsett Primary School for longevity and safekeeping. Albert worked for Shell in Coryton and lived in Corringham. Albert was a much loved member of the local community, the service community and a friend to Thurrock. Rest in peace Albert, you will be missed.

### Mr Baldev Singh Gill

Many members would have known Mr Gill as a leading member of the Sikh community in Thurrock. Indeed, Mr Gill was President of the Gurdwara Sikh temple in Grays which had done so much to engage with communities over the years, helping to teach about the Sikh religion and culture. Others would remember Mr Gill as a familiar resident of Grays, often seen around the town, always with a welcoming smile. As well as the important leadership role he played within the Sikh community, Mr Gill sought to build stronger community networks between different faiths, and between different communities, active over the years with many different organisations to consider local issues. I have had many dealings with Baldev over the years, firstly through the Thurrock Faith Matters organisation and later during my time with Thurrock CVS. He would be remembered as a gentle and kind man who always made time for others. Our thoughts are with Mr Gill's family at this difficult time.

### Mr Eddie Coull

Mr Coull was a RAF veteran known widely across Thurrock for his organisation of The Wings Appeal which supported RAF serving members as well as veterans and their families who had sadly passed away on the 23 January. Mr Coull was heavily involved in their fund raising activities and was a member of the Thurrock Branch of RAFA and heavily involved with the ATC Squadrons in Grays and Stanford Le Hope. Whilst I only met Eddie on a couple of occasions, his amazing dedication to fund raising and supporting veterans was outstanding. My condolences go out to his family, he would be sadly missed.

The Mayor announced today people around the world had commemorated Holocaust Memorial Day on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. As with so many events, we had not been able to mark this occasion as we normally would, but many tributes had been made virtually to remember the victims of the Holocaust and further genocides, including the Jewish people and millions of others targeted due to their faith, gender, culture, ability and sexual orientation.



This year, the Holocaust Memorial Day theme was 'be the light in the dark'. This call to action encouraged us all to reflect on the depths humanity could sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities had resisted darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide.

The first fully digital UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021 ceremony started at 7.00pm today and was now being live streamed. The Mayor informed members the meeting would be paused at 8.00pm which was when the ceremony concluded so they could join the nation, light a candle and put it in their window.

Prayers were led by Reverend Canon Darren Barlow.

This was followed by a minute silence.

#### **188. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on the 25 November 2020 were approved as a correct record.

#### **189. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

#### **190. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

The Mayor announced he would change the order of the agenda and to take Item 10 next.

#### **191. Police Fire & Crime Commissioner (Presentation and Q&A)**

The Mayor welcomed Roger Hirst, the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, and Chief Inspector Richard Melton to the meeting and asked they delivered their presentation which would then be followed by questions by members. Roger Hirst updated members on the following:

- Recorded crime and anti-social behaviour had been significantly impacted by COVID. The effects on policing demand, the types of incidents and crimes reported to Essex Police as a result of COVID had been complex and had not been uniform across all fields.
- During the 12 month reporting period up to November 2020 crime had decreased in Thurrock by 13%.
- Operation policing command in Thurrock in 2019/20 were in excess of 300 hours of patrols, arrested 150 individuals, conducted 150 stop and search and had attended 4000 reported incidents.
- Operation SHIELD, a trial tackling repeat risk/violent domestic abuse offenders.

- Operation ENVISON, being run to understand why victims of domestic abuse who were not supportive of Police action.
- The “Ports as a Community” project to look to increase intelligence sharing between law enforcement agencies to strengthen borders and support victims of organised immigration crime.
- Emergency (999) and non-emergency (101) remained a priority focus with significant improvements being seen year on year.
- Next steps were: tackling gangs and drug-driven violence, domestic abuse and prevention activities.

The full PowerPoint can be found on-line from the following link:

<https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=5801&Ver=4>

Members raised the following questions:

Councillor Spillman: Referred to domestic abuse and questioned what had been the main challenges faced during the pandemic and what operational changes had been made to tackle them. Roger Hirst stated the Police had been very alert and had tried very hard to make themselves accessible with work being undertaken with charities. That a recent National Initiative called ANI would assist people with reporting by less obvious means. The J9 project had been launched to help other people to understand how to spot signs of domestic abuse and how to report it. That advertising had been undertaken alongside social media. Chief Inspector Richard Melton stated there needed to be a way to predict those at risk or provide other platforms for victims to come forward. Operation SHIELD had been rolled out across the whole county to work around prevention before it became a problem and the provision to provide better platforms would be an ongoing piece of work. Members were assured there was the commitment to deal with not only perpetrators but to give victims every opportunity to come forward and would be mindful and keep a close eye on the situation when lockdown started to finish.

Councillor Redsell: Referred to the Motorcycle problem in Thurrock with some perpetrators drawing knives on residents and questioned what more could be done to help prevent this. Roger Hirst stated this was a priority and asked Chief Inspector Richard Melton to provide a response from a local level. Chief Inspector Richard Melton agreed this was a blight on Thurrock and was a high priority with some good joint working with the Council being undertaken on Operation CAESAR. That a lot of work was being undertaken but recognised there was still a lot to do and information would be shared through the Community Safety Engagement Officers and pleaded that residents continued to report incidents.

Councillor Muldowney: Referred to the increase of incidents of anti-social behaviour in Chadwell St Mary being reported and asked what additional Police presence or other Police services would residents expect to see over the coming year. Chief Inspector Richard Melton agreed there had been an

increase in reports of anti-social behaviour and these had been contributed due to a nature increase in some anti-social behaviours, a lot of COVID reporting would go down as anti-social behaviour and motorbikes. To tackle this the community policing team were fully up to strength and pro-active patrols would be undertaken. It was hoped the figures for anti-social behaviour in Chadwell St Mary would come back under control and would continue be a main focus.

Councillor Ralph: Referred to town centre policing and questioned when the town centre policing would be seen in Corringham. Chief Inspector Richard Melton reassured Councillor Ralph that conversations were taking place looking at the viability of extending the Stanford Le Hope policing teams to Corringham with an update to be provided shortly. That the town centre policing were fully resourced and fully staffed with four additional funded town centre officers covering Purfleet and Tilbury. That going forward through the Community Safety Engagement Officer, data could be identified on how many hours were spent in each town centre, what they were undertaking and what affect that was having. The town centre policing were doing everything they wanted them to do and would be more visible in 2021 and going forward.

Councillor Jefferies: Referred to the two push bikes that had been delivered to the South Ockendon Police Station in 2019 from the Council. These push bikes had required servicing and for the need for the Police Officers to pass their cycling proficiency tests and asked for assurance those Police bikes would be used, evidenced and visible policing would come back to South Ockendon. Chief Inspector Richard Melton acknowledged there had been some challenges and had seen an increase in anti-social behaviour in South Ockendon and policing would continue to be visible in the communities through the town policing team and agreed he would look into the bike matter.

Councillor Byrne: Referred to why the crime report figures were watered down and questioned were these crime figures down because the full story was not being reported. Roger Hirst assured Councillor Byrne the full story was being reported with Essex Police being regularly inspected on the accuracy of crime data recording and was pleased to announce Essex Police received an outstanding rating. Chief Inspector Richard Melton agreed national recording standards would not allow crime figures to be watered down and again reassured Councillor Byrne this was not happening.

Councillor Allen: Referred to the anti-social unlicensed motorcycle use in Tilbury and asked for assurance that patrols would be tighten to tackle this behaviour and what plans would be put in place to tackle these unlicensed motorcycles. Roger Hirst reassurance Councillor Allen that road crime was being taken seriously and would commit resources to it. Chief Inspector Richard Melton again recognised these motorcycles were a real blight on Thurrock, had the focus of Operation CAESAR and work would continue with the Council on joint funded operations. That some good results had been seen with 58 motorcycles seized in the last year, seven people had been arrested and a number of anti-social driving notices had been issued.

Councillor Holloway: Referred to the tragedy of the lorry where the Vietnamese people were found in West Thurrock and questioned what Essex Police were doing in partnership with other agencies to make sure this never happen again and nobody could be trafficked through the ports in Thurrock. Roger Hirst stated work was being undertaken more closely with Border Force and Immigration Services. Chief Inspector Richard Melton recognised that a tragedy this like could not be allowed to happen again, prosecutions had been made with a fantastic result all be it in tragic circumstances. That Ports Watch was where professionals get together to share information and with Ports Watch set up in non-Government organisations and voluntary sector level so discussions on issues within the Thurrock area and to share information and intelligence. There was also the Ports Watch at the industrial and commercial level where port operatives would be able to report issues within the confines of the ports. The Ports Community Project between Essex Police, Immigration Services and Border Force was a multi-agency task force brought together to share all information across all platforms. To also uplift and focus activity on the Police resources to tackle organisation crime groups and going forward into 2021/22 a significant and a focused multi-agency response would be seen to prevent tragedies like this happening again.

The Mayor thanked, on behalf of members, Roger Hirst and Chief Inspector Richard Melton for their time this evening and asked Roger Hirst to sum up. Roger Hirst thanked members for the opportunity to present this evening and would be happy to answer any further questions that could be submitted through democratic services. That investments would continue to be made in policing across the county and in Thurrock. The key topics to be addressed over the next couple of years would be to see more problem solving policing, working on hot-spots, working around known offenders and working around vulnerable people with Thurrock's community safety partnership.

*At 7.58pm, the meeting was paused to allow members to light candles in recognition of the UK Holocaust Memorial Day 2021.*

*At 8.02pm, the meeting resumed.*

*At 8.02pm, the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Roger Hirst and Chief Inspector Richard Melton left the meeting.*

## **192. Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council**

The Mayor made thanks to those who had continued to work through the pandemic to ensure vital services were maintained where possible and thanked the voluntary sector who had played an important role in keeping in contact and supporting the vulnerable in Thurrock.

The Mayor stated as he was not able to attend functions due to the pandemic he had continued to make small donations to local voluntary groups to enable them to carry on the support for local residents.

The Mayor hoped by the end of his time as mayor he would be able to visit some of the voluntary groups to express his gratitude on all the work they had carried out over the last year.

Councillor Hebb, Deputy Leader of the Council, echoed the tributes made this evening and sent best wishes to Councillor Fletcher and his family.

Councillor Hebb then made the following announcements:

In regards to COVID-19 the rate of infection in Thurrock was moving in the right direction in all age groups but were by no means out of the woods yet. We were in fact still very much in the grip of the more infectious variant which had led to the huge spike in local infections that we were still experiencing despite the drop in positive tests we have seen in the past weeks. That it was now more important than ever we keep on doing all we can to stop the spread of the virus, protect the NHS and save lives. The simple truth was we all needed to act like we had COVID and anyone we meet had it as well. By following hands, face, space advice, practising social distancing and taking extra care to look out for one another we would be playing an active role in defeating the virus. Those who seek to bend or break the rules not only pose a risk to themselves, their loved ones and our communities, they hindered our chances of leaving national lockdown and being able to get back to more relaxed restrictions.

In regards to vaccinations, these were being given to the groups identified by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as being most at risk. This included those living and working in the borough's care homes, those aged 80 and over and then the over 70s and those who were clinically extremely vulnerable. That residents and staff in our care homes were being given vaccines right now while vaccines were also being delivered to the other priority groups across the borough's two vaccine centres at Chadwell Medical Centre and Stifford Clays Health Centre. That plans were also being put in place to ensure all housebound residents would be visited and given their vaccine at home. The key message here was there was no need for anyone to call their doctor, you would be notified directly by the NHS. There was no charge for a vaccine and the NHS would never ask you to share bank details to confirm your identity or pay for a vaccine. It was important for those who had received the vaccination to remember it could take up to three weeks after the first injection for the body to develop some protection from the first dose and during this three week period and indeed after it as well, you must to continue to take the same precautions to avoid either infecting yourself or passing on the virus to others.

In regards to the Tilbury and Grays Town Fund Bids, Councillor Hebb was pleased to inform members that bids for the Towns Fund programme, which could potentially bring over £50 million in Government funding to improve Grays and Tilbury, had now been submitted by their Towns Boards. These Towns Boards, led by local business community partners and community leaders, had developed the bids to address issues which had the potential to significantly enhance these two towns and we await their outcome with

interest. That Grays had already been awarded £750,000 to kick start works including a new outdoor play and sports area at Grays beach while in Tilbury being awarded £500,000 had been unlocked from the Towns Fund.

**193. Questions from Members of the Public**

There were no public questions received.

**194. Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors**

The Mayor informed Members that in accordance with the Council's petition scheme, no requisition of notice had been given to present a petition at the meeting.

**195. Petitions Update Report**

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

**196. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels**

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

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Hebb, informed the Chamber he had no changes to make.

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

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

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

**197. Director of Public Health Recruitment**

Councillor Halden introduced the report and sought the approval from Council to appoint to the interim Director of Public Health. Following a search and selection process, the General Services Committee had interviewed on the 19 January 2021 and recommended the appointment of Jo Broadbent as interim Director of Public Health. The Council would be obliged to establish a specialist panel to conduct the recruitment of a permanent Director of Public Health with the final approval of appointment being granted by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

The Mayor called a vote on the recommendations to which these were carried.

**RESOLVED. That**

- 1. To approve in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of Jo Broadbent as the interim Director of Public Health.**
- 2. To agree in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Chapter 2; Part 1; Article 4; 4:1) the appointment of the sub-committee set out at 4.5 below to conduct recruitment to the permanent Director of Public Health.**
- 3. To agree in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Chapter 2; Part 1; Article 4; 4:1) to discharge approval of the appointment to a permanent Director of Public Health to the sub-committee set out at 4.5 and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.**

**198. Local Council Tax Scheme**

Councillor Hebb presented the report that provided details of Thurrock's scheme and in line with the above there were no proposals to amend the scheme for 2021/22.

The Council were required to agree the scheme annually, even if there had been no changes. The current Local Council Tax Scheme had been implemented on the 1 April 2017 following consultation and had subsequently been agreed for each financial year with no changes.

Councillor Gerrish supported this item but asked for reassurance that a review of the scheme would be forthcoming next year as it was important the views of those who used the scheme were heard to ensure it reflected the needs of the community. Councillor Hebb stated the focus this year had been to stabilise the offer with the offer being increased by £0.85 million and it was important to engage in line with university credit reviews but at this time it was to stabilise the offer and offer support where the Council could. Councillor Hebb gave Councillor Gerrish the commitment this would be done at the right time.

**RESOLVED**

**That Council agreed to maintain the existing scheme for 2021/22.**

**199. Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour**

The item was withdrawn.

## **200. Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Sports & Leisure**

Councillor Watkins presented his fourth annual report which was being delivered under very different and difficult circumstances. Firstly, Councillor Watkins acknowledged the amazing work being undertaken by staff either on the front line or in offices for the work undertaken this year and thanked every member of staff for their contribution. Councillor Watkins passed on his thoughts and well wishes to those who had lost family and friends in the current pandemic.

Some of the key points made were:

- Residents were thanked for their patience over this difficult time where more waste was being collected where more people were at home.
- The service has had to deal with an increased number of parked vehicles that had caused blocked access issues.
- This and the absence of staff due to a number of reasons had put a great strain on the service.
- The team had worked flat out to deliver the best service over this time.
- During the pandemic and lockdown it would continue to prioritise the waste, refuse and recycling over this period and aimed to bring the garden service collections back up as quickly as was possible.
- The first phase of the communal recycling programme had been rolled out with all council areas now complete.
- Over the year this would be rolled out over private estates and work would begin with estate operators and residents.
- Over this period the cleaner and greener teams had continued to do a fantastic job to keep the borough tidy.
- Investments made had seen a magnificent difference and within the last two periods of the tranche scoring of the Keep Britain Tidy, the Council had seen the best scores they had ever seen.
- The Active Place Strategy had been passed and would now enable sports which would make a difference within the borough.

Councillor Watkins stated that in 2021 when safe to do so, services would be resumed to where they once were and recognised this would not be easy. That garden waste would return when it was safe to do so without putting a strain on refuse and recycling collections. The HWRC site would be back to normal as soon as was possible. The Trailer Thursday would enable trailers to access the site all day on Thursdays on an initial trial basis but members were reminded this would be done to ensure the safety of staff on site and residents. Other projects would include the improvements of recycling, aim to launch a new recycling campaign "Getting Thurrock Recycling", a new missed bin collection scheme, a separate food waste system to which a date had yet to be confirmed. Councillor Watkins encouraged members to come forward with any ideas, comments or feedback. Work would also continue to improve on street cleaning, cemeteries and tree strategies.



Councillor Redsell referred to the Sports Strategy and asked for assurance this would be taken forward as the youth of the borough need sport now and even more so post COVID. Councillor Watkins gave his reassurance and stated an update would be provided to the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee within the autumn period of 2021 outlining where the strategy was but it was imperative this was done right first time.

Councillor J Kent stated his disappointment members were unable to comment and ask questions on Councillor Gledhill's portfolio report and commented although he understood members had issues or ill health that prevented them from attending meetings he stated Councillor Gledhill's attendance at both Council and General Services Committees had been woeful.

Councillor J Kent stated his surprise the portfolio holder report had not mentioned the Cabinet's decision to move to fortnightly collections of residual waste and questioned when this was expected to take place. Councillor Watkins stated the only change that would be taking place would be the new recycling campaign, the separate food waste collections would need to be administered by 2023 with all other aspects of the waste strategy being currently under review.

Councillor Byrne questioned whether Corringham Athletic would still be able to continue to play on the pitches on the Manorway and would the Council stand up to Shell to fight to save those pitches. Councillor Watkins stated yes as previously committed but we had to see sporting changes which did not mean destroying the sporting facilities the borough already had.

Councillor Allen touched on the Sports Strategy and the improved sport opportunities and wondered if this was the time for the Council to offer Grays Athletic the opportunity to continue their great work with youngsters. Councillor Watkins stated work and conversations were being undertaken with Grays Athletic about them getting back to their rightful home. That there were plans in the Active Place Strategy and there were aspirations to move forward into 2021 and into future years where this strategy would be a key part of that.

Councillor Muldowney referred to the commitment made by Councillor Watkins in June 2019 an investment would be made for play and sports equipment in parks in Chadwell St Mary. Councillor Muldowney questioned when would residents of Chadwell St Mary see the investment promised in play and sports facilities into their parks. Councillor Watkins stated investments had been made in other parks in the borough which had been part of the initial plan but due to the pandemic changes had to be made. The Council were still tackling the pandemic and services had to be changed in line with this and once services were back to normal and safe to do so this work would continue.

Councillor Rice questioned whether Impulse Leisure had approached the Council for any financial grants. Councillor Watkins stated conversations and

work were being undertaken with Impulse Leisure in relation to the national leisure recovery fund grant which had come forward from Government.

Councillor Worrall asked for assurance the brown bin collections would be back ready for spring time and there would be no attached costs to this service. Councillor Watkins categorically stated there would no charges for these collections and in relation to when they would return they were currently on a rolling two week notice. That the portfolio holder and his team were doing everything physically possible but the safety of staff would continue to be the main priority. Councillor Watkins was unable to give Councillor Worrall any guarantees as to when the service would resume but guaranteed the team were doing everything they could.

Councillor Watkins summed up by stating members could ask him questions at any time. That it had been a pleasure to be in this position with the team undertaking an exceptional job over the previous year and continued to do an outstanding job. They were the front line staff of the Council and thanked them all for the work they undertook.

## **201. Questions from Members**

The Mayor informed the Chamber that no questions to the Leader had been received and five questions to Cabinet Members. Those questions not heard would either receive a written response or have the option to withdraw and resubmit.

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

## **202. Reports from Members representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

Councillor Hebb provided an update on the future management of funds by the Mucking Charitable Trust which was a charity that managed an endowment set up in 2011 to fund the costs of running the Thameside Nature Park in Mucking for a planned period of 99 years. That in September 2018, the trustees of the Mucking Charitable Trust proposed to pass the responsibility for safeguarding the restricted funds of the Mucking Charitable Trust to the directors of Thameside Nature Park Limited the charitable company responsible for managing the Thameside Nature Park but not the Visitors Centre housed within the Park. It was further proposed by the trustees of Mucking Charitable Trust that once the responsibility for safeguarding the funds and the transfer of the balance of funds, all in compliance with the rules of the Charity Commission, had been made to Thameside Nature Park Limited the Mucking Charitable Trust would be wound up and some of the present trustees of Mucking Charitable Trust would join the board of Thameside Nature Park Limited. The view that amalgamating the effort would be beneficial for both parties. However, after months of endeavour on the part of the trustees for Mucking Charitable Trust the negotiations had not been successful, and consequently, the trustees of Mucking Charitable Trust decided in November 2020 to not pursue this at the current time, although

remained open to future possibilities if they arose. After the closure of negotiations and in recognition of common practice within charities, the trustees of the Mucking Charitable Trust took the opportunity to review the make-up of their trustee board. As a result of that review, which was carried out at the end of November 2020, the trustees of the Mucking Charitable Trust decided to move the responsibilities and duties for the Chair of the Mucking Charitable Trust by appointing a paid-for trust company, Brachers Trust Corporation Limited, with this new arrangement beginning on 1 January 2021, and four out of the five current trustees of Mucking Charitable Trust would remain.

The key change was the Mucking Charitable Trust would now be chaired by a professional body, which would ensure best practice in line with the ever-changing requirements of the Charities Act and would work alongside the lay trustees who would continue to pursue the wishes of local people in all matters. Following completion of the changes the Mucking Charitable Trust was in good shape and in line with the original endowment and was ready to continue to provide financial support to the Thameside Nature Park Limited for many years to come.

Councillor Redsell provided members with an update as a member on the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Panel that a lot of good work had been achieved such as £20 million Class A drugs and £1.8 million in cash had been seized in Essex under the serious crime directorate which was part of an international operation and trained Police Officers would be coming through into the community.

Councillor Coxshall provided members with an update on projects that would be coming through the Grays Town Board and Tilbury Board. Two new jetties with electric clippers into central London and into Kent; Youth Centre would be built into Tilbury; in Grays a riverside activity centre; bringing back two new beaches in Tilbury and Grays; revamp of Grays Beach Park into a new play centre and updated cafe; a new outside entertainment centre; development work on Tilbury Fort; £25 million for each town with the bids being submitted in February and hopefully finding out by the summer if the Council can forward on business cases.

### **203. Minutes of Committees**

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

### **204. 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.

### **205. Motion received from Councillor Anderson**

The Motion, as printed in the Agenda was proposed by Councillor Anderson and seconded by Councillor Halden. The Motion read as follows:

*Given the great importance the Conservative government has placed on the “prevent” agenda in terms of countering extremism, and the need to consider all of the human trafficking and modern day slavery implications of illegal entry and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, especially in areas with a large waterfront or port industry, the chamber wishes to have an appropriate member’s forum for “prevent”.*

*Therefore, following the procedure used to constitute the Corporate Parenting Committee as a formal Council Committee, we instruct the monitoring officer to present relevant terms of reference for the next meeting of the Full Council to help better protect our communities and those who come into our care.*

Therefore, following the procedure used to constitute the Corporate Parenting Committee as a formal Council Committee, we instruct the monitoring officer to present relevant terms of reference for the next meeting of the Full Council to help better protect our communities and those who come into our care.

Councillor Anderson stated the motion recognised the seriousness and the challenges being faced with the Prevent agenda and would give members the opportunity to scrutinise and discuss issues in an appropriate forum. That the current Prevent Members Working Group did not reflect the need to scrutinise these issues to the required extent required. With Thurrock being a port locality it was already known the seriousness of legal entry. That the scrutiny of these issues would not only serve the community but for those vulnerable people who would come into care in Thurrock. The Motion sought to create one committee that would focus on those issues and provide members with a joined up picture and approach. That a report would need to be presented to the General Services Committee in the event the motion being passed and encouraged members to support these important issues.

Councillor Coxshall was pleased to support the motion which would enable the Council to do something themselves to get that to move forward and work together to make sure human trafficking and modern day slavery would be addressed as Thurrock would become more of a target with the increasing traffic coming into Thurrock ports. That the motion would enable members to be fully aware across the full aspects of the concerns that would affect planning and port issues. Councillor Coxshall concluded the change to the constitution would highlight this properly.

Councillor Allen stated his full support of the motion which would provide an opportunity for members to discuss and scrutinise.

Councillor Halden, as seconder of the motion, stated it was good to see there was no opposition to the motion. That the issues affected all 49 members and all 49 members should be able to engage with and see how issues were being actioned. Councillor Halden stated were the motion passed this evening he would encourage all members to engage in the work of the committee to formulate a works plan and provide the appropriate scrutiny which was so important to safeguarding.

Councillor Anderson thanked members for their comments and requested the motion moved to the vote.

The Mayor called a vote on the Motion.

Members voted in favour of this Motion to which the Mayor announced the Motion carried.

**The meeting finished at 9.20 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**

This page is intentionally left blank

## **Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 27 January 2021**

**There were no questions from Members of the Public.**

### **Item 14 – Questions from Members**

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

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

#### **1. From Councillor Pothecary to Councillor Johnson**

What is Thurrock Council doing to stop the practice of landlords and letting agencies placing blanket bans on renting to prospective tenants in receipt of housing benefit (known as “No DSS”), after two county court judges ruled this practice amounted to indirect discrimination on the basis of gender and disability under the Equality Act 2010 in July 2020 and September 2020?

#### **Councillor Johnson**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your question.

I'd be very annoyed, indeed, upset if it were brought to my attention that residents bringing forward their concerns that this may be happening, were ignored by the Council. However, that this Act being a civil law provision means residents should refer their complaints directly to the County Court without need for reference to the council as Thurrock Council has no responsibility for the enforcement of this Act. Whilst it's clear that Thurrock Council has no power to take action on this matter, I would still expect any such report to be taken seriously and any Thurrock resident pointed in the right direction as to how to get the complaint into court but I do know there are strict time limits in bringing such claims to the County Court and therefore it's important that the individual seek legal advice and are given that advice by the Council.

#### **Mayor**

Councillor Pothecary, do you have a supplementary question?

#### **Councillor Pothecary**

Yes please Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Johnson for your reply. I've been supporting a family with young children trying to find a home in Grays who have been teetering on the brink of homelessness for well over a year now. They're finding, as a matter of course, that letting agents are still gatekeeping properties upon enquiry with blanket no DSS policies. So they will enquire about a property, as soon as Housing benefit or Universal credit is

raised, they're told these properties are not suitable for people on the DSS and we have no properties that can be let to those in aid of public assistance. I think that your suggestion that these families, who are in the midst of a crisis, should be trotting along to the County Court every time a letting agent says no to them, is quite frankly not good enough. The Council needs to take the lead on this. Would you emit, Councillor Johnson, that the Housing Department implement an action plan to eradicate this unfair practice in Thurrock within the next six months?

### **Councillor Johnson**

Thank you Councillor. It is not my opinion, it's the law. The law on this is a civil law provision, therefore the Council has no jurisdiction over it whatsoever. But as I've said in my first answer, I'll be very annoyed if we are not giving legal advice to those particular tenants which in all honesty Councillor that is what you should be doing. I'm afraid the Council cannot take it to court as it's an individual who needs to take it to court and what you have to remember is that these particular cases are only in the County Court so they don't have to be taken into the proper law. But because originally it was considered that no DSS policies, which I disagree with completely shouldn't happen, but they were not and that's your protected characteristic. But it could still be that it still depends on the individual getting those benefits, how the court would see it. But it's not something that Thurrock Council could advocate on. It has to be an individual taking it to the court.

### **Mayor**

Councillor Potheary, do you have a second supplementary question?

### **Councillor Potheary**

Yes please Mr Mayor. I think, Councillor Johnson, you're suffering from an incredible lack of imagination. I'm not suggesting that the Council take individual letting agents to court. What I'm suggesting is that the Council has various levers, various ways, it can influence and educate and inform. And there are many, many ways that the Council could actually use its influence. It's to talk to letting agents locally and make them absolutely crystal clear aware that these policies are not, in fact legal. The suggestion that individual families should be trying to go to court every single time they try to rent a property when there enquiring after, maybe 20 properties a week in some cases, is absolutely ludicrous. Will you please resolve to talk to your officers and see what can be done proactively to say to letting agencies this really isn't on. Especially as more and more of our residents go onto Universal Credit and Housing Benefit as the Coronavirus redundancies bite.

### **Councillor Johnson**

Councillor, I'm sorry I'm not suffering from anything at all other than trying to repeat myself to you. This is the law. It's not something that we can do. I've said quite clearly that I would be very upset if residents of Thurrock who are



bringing this to Officers' attention but is not advised properly. And that proper advice is to seek legal advice because that is how they take it to court and that's how it can be done. It needs to be done in the County Court for the civil law provision. They go and speak to the Citizens' advice Bureau or to solicitors if they really need to but that's the advice that the Council can give. If Council Officers on their way happened to see that these letting agencies have the 'No DSS' sign on their door, then the Council will tell them that they've got to take it off. But other than that the Council has no jurisdiction over taking action in this matter.

## **2. From Councillor Potheary to Councillor Mayes**

In December 2020, a coroner ruled that air pollution was a cause of death of a nine year old girl from Lewisham, Ella Kissi Debra, who tragically died in 2013 during an asthma attack. What is Thurrock Council doing in response to this landmark ruling to protect Thurrock residents from toxic air?

### **Councillor Mayes**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your question.

Of course that case itself is an extremely sad thing any parent who's either lost or has children can never imagine the suffering that would bring them. Our hearts go out to them, albeit a number years ago but the pain will never go away. In terms of air pollution, it is important that we get on top of it that's why my Cabinet colleagues agreed earlier this month to look at things such as electric vehicle charging to try and get the vehicles cleaner and greener. We've got an anti-idling campaign that has been going on for some time; working in collaboration with schools trying to encourage people to walk to schools if they can because obviously we want to try and keep as clean air as possible. And obviously with Highways England trying to build Lower Thames Crossing, in the fight against that, it's obviously important that we try and do all we can to make sure that the air quality in Thurrock is the best it can be.

### **Mayor**

Councillor Potheary, do you have a supplementary question?

### **Councillor Potheary**

Yes please Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Mayes for your response.

You've outlined a couple of measures there, have any of these measures had any demonstrable impact because at the moment as a resident it doesn't feel like things are getting any better.

### **Councillor Mayes**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your supplementary.

Of course during the pandemic is very difficult to quantify that. Obviously we're putting measures in place that will undoubtedly make a big difference. Trying to reduce emissions is obviously important and they will have an impact. Obviously how to measure that is important but during this time that wouldn't be responsible because we're not in normal times. So, we did at the beginning of last year look at redoing our air quality modelling strategy and of course that would be irresponsible to spend taxpayers' money on this at this moment due to the fact that we are not in normal. So, the way that we will check that the things that we're doing are working is obviously there is continued air quality monitoring for our AQMA centres. However, we need to review the model because it is very old and we need to look into that as agreed by the CGS. So, at this moment, we can't say absolutely our air quality monitors are obviously showing that air quality is better. However, that isn't a true reflective of what the new norm will look like once Covid is over.

### **Mayor**

Councillor Potheary, do you have a second supplementary question?

### **Councillor Potheary**

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Mayes for your answer which was incredibly candid.

My final question is slightly long but forgive me it's really crucial. Yesterday the Conservative government and a majority of Conservative MPs including both of our local MPs voted against an amendment to the Environment bill which would have seen the UK adopt the World Health Organisation's recommended air quality target of PM .25 or less. This would potentially stop the Lower Thames Crossing in its tracks. Given the commitment you've made tonight, will you lobby your government to ensure the World Health Organisation's air pollution targets are enshrined into UK law and avoid preventable deaths and serious illness from air pollution in Thurrock?

### **Councillor Mayes**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your second supplementary.

Obviously how things and votes go in Parliament can often be headline grabbing so we got to look at details of what was exactly said and done. And I appreciate obviously you've picked out bits there but sometimes bits aren't the whole picture. But I do think it is important as I've said, for air quality to be improved. That's why I do think we should all get behind our Thames free port bid to make sure that we can look at getting really, really good improvements for our Borough on top of what we can do with things like electric river transport, hydro power, battery-powered cars that's fantastic, if we could get the use of the river and take people off the roads. These are the sort of things that we can all do to push and try and make things better for Thurrock rather than trying to get something through in Parliament that may just be symbolic

rather than actually detailed in how we actually improve things for our Borough.

**3. From Councillor Shinnick to Councillor Mayes**

Can you please inform me if there are any plans for Thurrock to have Covid 19 Marshals going around the borough?

**Councillor Mayes**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your question.

There are Covid marshals going around the Borough. In fact, we received £93,000 funding from the government a few weeks ago and we are in the first week of working with our partners to deliver this. There are 64 businesses that were visited in the first week alone and 674 members of the public that was offered advice on how to promote Covid safety measures so the answer is that they're archiving marshals.

**Mayor**

Councillor Shinnick, do you have a supplementary question?

**Councillor Shinnick**

I'd just like to ask Councillor Mayes, are any of these marshals being deployed in South Ockendon because I am receiving quite a few complaints about things that are going on over there regarding masks and things in the shops.

**Councillor Mayes**

Thank you Mr Mayor, thank you Councillor for your supplementary.

In terms of where, I can check that and come back to you. However, I do think it's important to take this opportunity to remind residents that we can all play our part in shops, in and around, when we're at work, follow hand, face, space. Just make sure we wear our masks, do the right things and we can all get through this as quick as possible.

**Mayor**

Councillor Shinnick, do you have a second supplementary question?

**Councillor Shinnick**

I'd just like Councillor Mayes to get back to me on that you know and let me know if this is happening in Ockendon, marshals going around.

**4. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Huelin**

When will the report of the Communications LGA Peer Review, carried out last October, be published?

**Councillor Huelin**

Thank you Mr Mister. Thank you Councillor for your question. The report will be published as part of the corporate overview and scrutiny committee agenda papers in March.

**Mayor**

Thank you. Councillor John Kent do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

**Councillor J Kent**

Can I ask what the holdup has been in bringing that forward. The review that took place as I've said in October. Having to wait as long as March seems an extraordinary long time. What's been the hold-up then?

**Councillor Huelin**

Thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you Councillor again for your question. It does but there's been no deliberate delay at all the review as you say was carried out in October but the final report was only received from the LGA mid-December. The LGA recommended we formulate an action plan on how and when recommendations can be implemented including the development of the new communication strategy and at the same time as you know guidelines and regulations changed rapidly and those changes when on into January and it was necessary for the comms team to get focus on the incredibly hard job of ensuring residents and local businesses received that latest information and advice so the work on the plan and the strategy will take place throughout February and then it will be ready to bring to overview and scrutiny to make comments for input and recommendations in March.

**Mayor**

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

**Councillor J Kent**

No that's fine thank you Mr Mister.

**5. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Coxshall**

When does the Portfolio Holder expect planning application 18/01671/FUL, in respect of the land at Arena Essex, to be determined?

### **Councillor Coxshall**

The application was submitted in November 2019 and during the course of 2019 the statutory consultees confirmed they had no objections with the exception of Highways England who required a transport modelling to be undertaken once this is complete. We are still waiting for it to be completed as I understand from the applicant we will consult Highways England again and hopefully they will lift their objection. As this process now does draw so close to an end Highways England lift their objection. I understand the planning committee will determine the application by the summer of this year.

### **Mayor**

Councillor John Kent do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

### **Councillor J Kent**

Thank you and that's helpful. The portfolio holder will be more than aware that as a result of the change of ownership of the land where the Lakeside Hammers speedway club have lost their home. Will the portfolio holder undertaken to push for Lakeside Hammers to be rehomed within the borough as part of this application.

### **Councillor Coxshall**

Thank you. As you know I was a regular visitor maybe you didn't, that I liked that, in fact I was honoured to be there on the last night we had without doubt we were there, it's really important it was the premier team here regularly on sky news, sky sports. I'm disappointed we can't get there, the local planning team and I have met directly with Lakeside Hammers on numerous occasions over the past few years to encourage them to get involved in the preparation for the new local plan and look at opportunities for a new venue in Thurrock and if the application of Arena Essex is successful and I really do I hope they do find a venue. It is very difficult obviously we had quite a few people upset that's very noisy to the people around and now I think Lakeside Hammers realise that but I would want them to stay in Thurrock and I am hoping that we can make sure they do stay here. The sooner the Lakeside Hammers can get back the better.

### **Mayor**

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

### **Councillor J Kent**

Yes again that's helpful and the portfolio holder will be more than aware that our current planning policies, particularly policies at PMD5 and CSTP9 mitigate in favour of not losing sports clubs when developments happen in particular CSTP9 said to only allow the loss of a particular facility where appropriate alternative provision can be made elsewhere. Does the portfolio

holder believe that would give members of the planning committee enough cover to refuse a planning application for Arena Essex that did not take into consideration the future of Lakeside Hammers.

**Councillor Coxshall**

You're getting into a planning committee conversation, I wouldn't want to get there, that's a point of law, that's a quasi-judicial, I am not going to venture that far - you're not going to push me there but I can say is the applicant needs to be in negotiations with the Lakeside Hammers or Thurrock Hammers now to make sure that is part of their application.

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

No questions were received from members of the public.

This page is intentionally left blank



## Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Officer	Status
543	Revoke Walsh Licence - Stop the Walsh tipper trucks. Revoke their licence. Clean and keep safe our roads.	4 January 2021	Resident (on-line)	Andy Millard	The operators are working under planning permission 08/00958/TTGMIN which is subject to a number of planning conditions, notably planning conditions 15 & 16 which relate to lorry movements out of the site. At present, the operators are working in accordance with the terms of their planning permission and there are no known breaches of planning control. Whilst the site is required to comply with the terms of the planning permission, the operator also works under license issued by the Environment Agency. Permits issued by the Environment Agency for these activities are subject to conditions to reduce pollution and nuisance to residents. These permit conditions are enforced by inspectors from the Environment Agency.
544	Manorway 100 cycle and footbridge over Vange creek to Wat Tyler Park and beyond.	4 January 2021	Resident (on-line)	Andy Millard	A petition was submitted for an active travel (walking, cycling and equestrian) route and crossing at Vange Creek, linking Thurrock to Castle Point. The Council does not oppose such a proposal, but a number of significant issues would need to be overcome. This includes identifying an appropriate route, and seeking landowner permissions to upgrade existing Definitive Footpaths into shared use paths. Funding to provide the necessary bridge structure is also of consideration, as it will need to be appropriate for use, while also continuing to allow boat traffic in the creek to move without being impeded.

## Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Officer	Status
					Lastly, significant engagement will be required with Essex County Council and Castle Point District Council to help progress this proposal, and the creation of an appropriate route east of the creek. The Council is unable to prioritise this proposal at this moment in time, however may be able to support and advise other organisations who have an interest in moving this idea forward, and will explore further if funding sources can be identified.
545	Bring Grays Athletic Football Club Home to a purpose built community stadium in Grays.	4 January 2021	Resident (on-line)	Julie Rogers	The Playing Pitches Strategy has recently been reviewed and included work with Essex County FA on the Local Football Facilities Plan, Grays Athletic FC were fully consulted. The council does not have a statutory role or legal obligation to provide sports facilities or community stadiums for any independent club or group, however the council has informed all non-league football clubs who meet a need of the local community, that they will be supported in applying for external funding to develop their facilities. This is a process that will be supported by the Recreation & Leisure Services Team.
546	We as a community have started this petition and would like to make an official complaint of anti-social behaviour against 18 Branksome Avenue, Stanford Le Hope, SS17 8AZ.	14 December 2020	Resident (email)	Andy Millard	Environmental Protection Officers have provided guidance and an Officer has visited the main petitioner's property. The petitioner has been advised that the High Hedge legislation does not apply to deciduous trees and the other concerns raised were considered private civil matters.

<b>24 February 2021</b>	<b>ITEM: 10</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Assistant Director Housing Management Recruitment</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Key
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Housing	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Roger Harris, Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

In accordance with the Constitutional requirements this report seeks approval from Council to appoint to the permanent Assistant Director Housing Management.

Following a robust search and selection process, General Services Committee (GSC) interviewed on the 23 February 2021. GSC recommend the appointment of [*name to follow*] as the permanent Assistant Director Housing Management.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

**1.1 To approve in accordance with the Council's Constitution the appointment of [*name to follow*] as the permanent Assistant Director Housing Management.**

### 2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Assistant Director Housing Management role will become vacant in March 2021 following the resignation of the postholder. Interim cover has been in place since 22 February 2021.

2.2 The role is a permanent position in the senior structure and is critical to the delivery of key priorities and housing activity for the Council.

### 3. Assistant Director Housing Management

3.1 Recruitment to the Assistant Director Housing Management role commenced in January 2021. An executive recruitment agency was appointed and a full national campaign developed.

- 3.2 This campaign attracted a total of 11 applicants which were initially assessed and rated by the agency based on their applications with 4 candidates recommended to progress. Longlisting by General Services Committee took place on 9 February, from which 4 applicants were selected to progress to the next stage.
- 3.3 Technical Assessments for the remaining 4 candidates were conducted by an external independent expert. Shortlisting by General Services Committee took place on 18 February, with recommended candidates selected to progress to the Selection Day.
- 3.4 Selection Day took place on 23 February with the candidates. Selection involved interviews with a stakeholder panel and General Services Committee. The stakeholder panel consisted of:

1	Aaliyah Alie-Sesay	Youth Cabinet Representative
2	Sue Hodgson	Tenants Excellence Panel Representative
3	Lynn Mansfield	Tenants Excellence Panel Representative
4	Jacqui Payne	Thurrock CVS
5	Les Billingham	Assistant Director Adult Social Care and Community Development
6	Andy Millard	Director of Place
7	Sean Clark	Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property
8	Paul Chopping	HR Business Partner (Panel Facilitator)

- 3.5 The recommendation of the General Services Committee is to appoint [name to follow] as the permanent Assistant Director Housing Management.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 To appoint to this senior position to ensure the council fulfils critical housing functions and requirements and has appropriate senior leadership in place to deliver the housing service and its ambitions.

#### **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 Appointment to the Assistant Director Housing Management role has been conducted by General Services Committee and with the full engagement of key stakeholders. GSC recommends the candidate be approved by Full Council.

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

- 6.1 The Assistant Director Housing Management is a politically restricted Deputy Chief Officer post as set out in Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

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

This is a substantive post and is therefore included within the council's core budgets.

### **7.2 Legal**

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

The final decision on the appointment of Deputy Chief Officers, as relates to the role of Assistant Director Housing Management, is by Full Council.

### **7.3 Diversity and Equality**

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

This appointment is recommended based on the council's recruitment process which is underpinned by the council's equal opportunity policy.

#### **Report Author:**

Mykela Pratt

Strategic Lead HR, Resourcing and Improvement

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>24 February 2021</b>	<b>ITEM: 11</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Annual Pay Policy Statement 2021/22</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> N/A
<b>Report of:</b> Cllr Deborah Huelin – Portfolio Holder for Central Services and Communities	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Jackie Hinchliffe – Director of HR, OD & Transformation	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to publish an annual Pay Policy Statement for chief officers. This must be approved by Council by 31 March each year. Like many other local authorities, Thurrock’s statement includes a pay policy for all categories of employees which reflects existing employment terms and conditions.

The Council’s Collective Agreement enables the Council to come to a locally agreed decision with the recognised Trade Unions, taking into account the National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC) pay settlement; the annual independent market assessment; budget availability and the UK Living Wage.

Pay for Senior Managers is governed by the Pay Strategy and Pay Policy for Assistant Director and Director Posts agreed in 2009 and determined by the annual independent market assessment. This is an employment contractual requirement which the Council is required to adhere to. The assessment this year recommends a pay freeze in the pay clusters for senior management pay. This is reflective of the senior salaries in the sector.

Recommendations contained in this report reflect those from the independent market assessments conducted by Total Reward Projects Ltd in December 2020 and, for apprentices, the Government’s Pay Review Statement published in 25 November 2020.

### 1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 The Annual Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 is agreed in line with the Council’s obligations under the Localism Act 2011, the Collective Agreement, the recommendations by the independent market**

**assessment and the output of the pay review project (as agreed by General Services Committee on 8 October 2018).**

- 1.2 In line with the Chancellor's statement apply an increase of £250 to each pay point up to and including pay point 17 (top of band C), subject to reaching agreement with the Trade Unions on phase 2 of the pay review.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 This report seeks approval of the Council's Annual Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22; in particular, the elements of this statement which vary from, or are in addition to, those contained in last year's pay policy.
- 2.2 The proposed policy attached at Appendix 1 was supported by Directors Board on 13 January 2021.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 3.1 The 2019 pay policy statement implemented the recommendations of the pay review project commissioned by Council in 2018. The 2006 single status agreement (and associated pay structure) was replaced with a new Collective Bargaining Agreement signed by the Director of HR, OD & Transformation (under powers delegated by General Services Committee on 8 October 2018) and the three recognised trade unions.
- 3.2 As part of the new agreement the Council introduced a new pay structure for staff that removes overlapping grades and is being phased in over a period of 4 years. Once fully implemented the new scales limit the number of incremental points in each grade in line with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission guidance on having no more than 5 increments (6 points within each grade). The new pay structure benefits staff in many ways, increasing salaries through the removal of legroom, increasing maximum salaries and seeing considerable investment across the workforce.
- 3.3 The pay scales included at Appendix 3 of the proposed Pay Policy Statement reflect year three of this agreement, with a bottom rate of £9.24 per hour.
- 3.4 The Chancellor's pay review on the 25 November 2020 recommended an increase to all salaries under £24,000 of £250. Although Local Government is not bound by the Chancellors announcement it is proposed the Council apply the increase to reward our lowest paid staff. To avoid differentiation within a grade this would apply to pay points 1 to 17 as well as the Thurrock Living Wage. There are around 1080 employees currently below scale point 17, the cost to implement is £300,000. This is proposed to Council subject to reaching agreement with the Trade Unions on Phase 2 of the Pay Review and rationalising and modernising the Council's allowances to repay the £800k investment that was brought forward as part of Phase 1. This option is shown as a revised table at the end of the report.



#### **4. Independent Pay Reviews**

- 4.1 The Council's Collective Agreement and Pay Strategy and Pay Policy for Senior Managers incorporate an independent market assessment to determine appropriate pay increases. This approach ensures pay levels continue to be fair, transparent and represent good value.

#### **5. Pay Award for Employees 2021/22**

- 5.1 Under Thurrock's 2019 Human Resources Framework Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Council agreed to remove the historical link to National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC) pay rates and for the pay rates to be determined via "a locally agreed decision with reference to the National Negotiating Committee (NJC) recommendations, an independent pay review (commissioned annually by the Council), budget availability and the UK Living Wage".
- 5.2 Pay negotiations between the NJC and trade unions for 2021-2022 have not commenced, the current expectation is that an agreement will not be reached before the implementation date of 1 April 2021 and negotiations could result in an agreement not being reached until late 2021.
- 5.3 The independent pay review commissioned by the council recommends that, with effect from 1 April 2021, the council implements a pay freeze for its current pay scales for employees in pay bands A to I.
- 5.4 The Government in its Pay Review on the 25 November recommended a pay freeze for all public sector employees except NHS Staff. Local Government pay is negotiated separately from the public agencies covered by the Government's statement and the local Collective Agreement provides for no detriment across the lifetime of the agreement.

#### **6. Pay Award for Senior Management 2021/22**

- 6.1 In accordance with the Pay Strategy and Pay Policy for Senior Managers the Council has undertaken an annual independent market assessment of senior management pay.
- 6.2 This recommends a pay freeze in all the pay clusters for senior management pay.

#### **7. The National Living Wage (formally the National Minimum Wage)**

- 7.1 The National Living Wage – the legal, minimum wage for workers aged over 22 will be £8.91 per hour from the 1 April 2021.
- 7.2 The National Living Wage above will have no effect on pay as it is below the lowest pay point.

## 8. Apprentices

- 8.1 The pay for Council apprentices is the National Living Wage appropriate to their age from the start of employment. This was agreed in the 2018/19 pay policy statement, as an increase from paying apprentices the lower apprentice rate for the first six months of their employment.
- 8.2 It is proposed to continue this approach to apprentices, increasing the rates in line with the rates as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Apprenticeship rates for 2021/22

	Aged 23 and over	Aged 21-22	Aged 18 to 20	Aged under 18	Apprentice Rate
Rates from April 2020	£8.91	£8.36	£6.56	£4.62	£4.30

## 9. Senior Manager Pay and Responsibilities

- 9.1 Following the introduction of the Government's code of practice for transparency in 2014<sup>1</sup>, the Council will continue to publish specific details of senior managers' pay and responsibilities.

## 10. Consultation with Local Trade Unions

- 10.1 Negotiations with the Council's recognised trade unions began in May 2018 for each part of the pay review project. In October 2018, General Services Committee agreed to delegate authority to negotiate a new collective agreement with Trade Unions to the Director of HR, OD & Transformation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Central Services. This was signed by all parties in May 2019.
- 10.2 The recommendation in the report have been shared with our recognised Trade Unions.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Local Government Transparency Code 2014' published by DCLG: 1  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/360711/Local\\_Government\\_Transparency\\_Code\\_2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/360711/Local_Government_Transparency_Code_2014.pdf)

## **11. Implications**

### **11.1 Financial**

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

The budget papers considered by Cabinet on 13 January 2021 and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on 21 January 2021 includes a provision for incremental progression for those staff that are not at the top of their grade and have performed to the required level and growth that will meet the increases set out within this report.

### **11.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Paul Field**  
**Solicitor, Senior Employment Lawyer. Law & Governance**

In setting out the proposal in this paper, due consideration has been given to:

- Equality Act requirements and compliance.
- The requirement under the Localism Act for transparency over the Council's approach to pay.
- Recent high profile equal pay cases successfully brought against councils. ((e.g. Birmingham City Council v Abdulla & others, Armstrong v Glasgow City Council amongst others).

Sections 38 to 43 of the Localism Act 2011 require Councils to prepare a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year and the Secretary of State, pursuant to section 40, has issued both the original Pay Accountability Guidance in February 2012 and a supplementary guidance in February 2013. The content of this report and the recommendations comply with the Councils responsibilities in this regard.

### **11.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**  
**Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities**

This pay statement implements the recommendations approved by General Services Committee and standard protocols set by law and policy and therefore there are no diversity and equality implications arising. The increase to pay above apprentice pay rates will have a positive impact.

#### **11.4 Other implications**

No other significant implications have been identified.

#### **12. Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Pay Policy Statement 2021/22

#### **Report Author:**

Andrew Brown

Strategic Lead Pay and Operations

HR, OD & Transformation

**Option to increase all salaries below £24,000 by £250 as recommended in the Chancellor's pay review**

Grade	Pay Point	2020/21 rate per hour		2020/21 salary	
I	54		£39.91		£76,992
	53		£38.74		£74,748
	52		£34.40		£72,564
	51		£36.39		£70,437
	50		£35.44		£68,370
	49		£34.40		£66,363
H	48	£33.39		£64,416	
	47	£32.41		£62,526	
	46	£31.46		£60,696	
	45	£30.54		£58,923	
	44	£29.65		£57,213	
	43	£28.80		£55,557	
G	42		£27.97		£53,964
	41		£27.15		£52,371
	40		£26.35		£50,835
	39		£25.58		£49,359
	38		£24.85		£47,943
	37		£24.11		£46,524
F/G	36	£23.41	£23.41	£45,168	£45,168
F	35	£22.74		£43,869	
	34	£22.07		£42,570	
	33	£21.42		£41,328	
	32	£20.81		£40,149	
	31	£20.20		£38,967	
	30	£19.62		£37,845	
E/F	29	£19.03	£19.03	£36,723	£36,723
E	28		£18.48		£35,661
	27		£17.93		£34,599
	26		£17.41		£33,594
	25		£16.89		£32,592
	24		£16.40		£31,647
D/E	23	£15.91	£15.91	£30,702	£30,702
D	22	£15.45		£29,817	
	21	£14.99		£28,929	
	20	£14.57		£28,104	
	19	£14.14		£27,279	
	18	£13.74		£26,511	
C/D	17	£13.47	£13.47	£25,993	£25,993
C	16		£13.07		£25,225
	15		£12.71		£24,517
	14		£12.34		£23,809
	13		£12.10		£23,335
B	12	£11.85		£22,864	
	11	£11.61		£22,390	
	10	£11.39		£21,976	
	9	£11.18		£21,565	
	8	£10.96		£21,151	
	7	£10.75		£20,737	
A/B	6	£10.54	£10.54	£20,326	£20,326
A	5		£10.32		£19,912
	4		£10.11		£19,498
	3		£9.92		£19,144
	2		£9.74		£18,790
	1		£9.56		£18,436
TLW	TLW	£9.37		£18,082	

This page is intentionally left blank

**APPENDIX 1**

**THURROCK COUNCIL**

**PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/22**

## VERSION CONTROL SHEET

<i>Title:</i>	<b>Pay Policy Statement 2021/22</b>
<i>Purpose:</i>	<b>To advise on the Council's pay policy including requirements under Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.</b>
<i>Owner:</i>	<b>Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</b>
<i>Approved by</i>	<b>Council</b>
<i>Date:</i>	<b>7th January 2021</b>
<i>Version:</i>	<b>0.2</b>
<i>Review frequency:</i>	<b>Annually – in accordance with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011</b>
<i>Next review date:</i>	<b>October 2021</b>



# **Thurrock Council Pay Policy Statement 2020/21**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Scope**
- 3. Determination of pay grades and salary levels**
- 4. Pay progression**
- 5. Cost of living pay increases**
- 6. Lowest paid employees / UK living wage**
- 7. Apprentices**
- 8. Pay multiple**
- 9. Acting up payments**
- 10. Other payments**
- 11. Contractors or consultants**
- 12. Appointment of senior officers**
- 13. Payment on termination, and re-engagement of officers**
- 14. Mandatory Gender Pay Reporting**
- 15. Transparency Code**
- 16. Publication of information**

**Appendix 1 Senior Manager Pay Scales 2021/22**

**Appendix 2 National Minimum and Living Wage Rates 2021/22**

**Appendix 3 Collective Bargaining Pay Scales 2021/2022**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Statement complies with Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011, which requires local authorities to produce a pay policy statement for each financial year in order to improve transparency and accountability within Local Government.
- 1.2 It may be adapted and/or updated by agreement at a full Council meeting.
- 1.3 Thurrock Council has, in addition, been conducting a pay review with the intention of modernising and simplifying current pay arrangements. The outcomes of phase 1 of that project are contained in this pay policy.
- 1.4 Thurrock Council reserves the right to review, revise, amend or replace the content of this Statement from time to time to reflect service delivery needs and to comply with new legislation.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This Statement is applicable to both Council and school-based employees covered by the Council's Collective Agreement, and to senior officers. Youth workers, those on Soulbury contracts of employment and employees covered by TUPE are also included but their pay is determined by separate processes. This Statement does not apply to teachers, who are employed under separate terms and conditions.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this Statement, Thurrock's senior officers are the chief executive, corporate directors, directors and assistant directors.

## **3. Determination of pay grades and salary levels**

### **Senior officers**

- 3.1 The chief executive's and other senior officers' remuneration was determined in 2009. It was based on the median pay point of a market salary and reflected remuneration levels for comparable jobs in unitary authorities and London boroughs.
- 3.2 The 11 senior pay bands are shown in Appendix 1. Assistant directors are paid on the AD bands, ranging from points 1 to 15; directors and corporate directors are placed on a DIR pay band points 16 to 30 while the chief executive is on the CEX pay band: points 31 to 33.
- 3.3 Since 2010 annual, independent pay reviews have been conducted to reassess the salary levels that these pay bands should attract. These assessments take account of:

- (a) **The type and size of Thurrock Council:** Thurrock is a medium sized, unitary council with a significant degree of complexity due to its location, its changing demographics, its regeneration agenda and its complex external relations.
- (b) **The geographical location of Thurrock Council:** Located on the eastern boundaries of London and within easy commuting distance of London, the Council is competing in the same labour market as many London boroughs as well as Essex County Council and other unitary local authorities.
- (c) **The market for senior posts in Local Government:** In recent years many posts have become more demanding as a result of changes in legislation and public demand. This has led to a position whereby significant differences now exist regarding the remuneration attached to certain posts.
- (d) **Affordability:** Producing an affordable pay structure for senior managers is a principal aim of this policy.
- (e) **Transparency and clarity:** Thurrock Council is committed to establishing a pay structure which is clear, rational and able to withstand challenge.

#### **Employees who are not senior officers**

- 3.4 Employees other than senior officers are subject to the pay levels set out in the Council's Human Resources Framework Collective Bargaining Agreement which contains a single 'Thurrock Living Wage' grade for the lowest paid employees (excluding apprentices), plus 9 pay grades containing between 5 and 8 incremental pay points. Posts have been allocated to a pay band through a process of job evaluation, using the GLPC job evaluation scheme.
- 3.5 All new or revised posts must be evaluated. This is done by trained evaluators in-house, as is common in other local authorities, using the GLPC job evaluation scheme. The results of any such evaluation are subject to moderation by the Council's Trade Union Board, which comprises of officers and trade union representatives and open to a fair and transparent appeals process.
- 3.6 Changes to this structure are being phased in over the next three years, as agreed with General Services Committee in October 2018, which will lead to bands of 6 points, meaning staff can progress through in 5 years, in line with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission guidance on having no more than 5 increments (6 points within each Band). The pay structure in Appendix 3 reflect the third year of this transition.

## **4. Pay Progression**

### **Senior officers**

#### **4.1 Senior officer pay bands contain three pay levels:**

- i. A lower point – for a post-holder with sufficient competence or experience but with some development needs. This is expected to apply to some appointments at the time of recruitment.
- ii. A median point – for a fully competent and appropriately experienced/qualified post-holder. This is expected to apply to most appointments.
- iii. An upper point – for an exceptional post-holder. The difference between the median point and upper point will only be paid as an additional non-consolidated payment for ‘exceptional’ performance. Few post-holders will be rewarded at this level, which is based on the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of the market data.

#### **4.2 The award of an annual increase to points (ii) or (iii) above is subject to satisfactory job performance.**

### **Employees who are not senior officers**

#### **4.3 New starters are paid in accordance with Section 16.6 of the council’s recruitment policy which states; ‘normally the pay point will be the minimum point of the band. Exceptions to this rule may be considered where the minimum point is below the candidate’s current salary.’**

#### **4.4 Employees will receive an increase of one incremental point each year, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April, providing they (i) have performed their role entirely satisfactorily; (ii) have 6 months’ service before 1<sup>st</sup> April; (iii) are not already at the top point of their pay band. Performance objectives will be linked to service delivery plans and priorities.**

#### **4.5 Employees who are protected under TUPE arrangements will be paid according to their contract of employment.**

## **5. Cost of living pay increases**

### **Senior officers**

#### **5.1 The annual, independent market assessment conducted in December 2020 recommended there should be a pay freeze for senior officers in 2021/22.**

## **Employees who are not senior officers**

- 5.2 Under the Human Resources Framework Collective Bargaining Agreement 2019, the Council agreed to remove the historical link to National Joint Council for Local Government (NJC) pay increases and for the pay increases to be determined via “a locally agreed decision with reference to the National Negotiating committee (NJC) recommendations, an independent pay review (commissioned annually by the Council), budget availability and the UK Living Wage”. This applies to all employees other than senior officers.
- 5.3 The annual independent assessment conducted in December 2020 recommended a pay freeze for 2021/22.

## **6. Lowest paid employees**

- 6.1 For the purposes of this Statement, employees on the lowest grade of the Council’s pay structure are classed as the lowest paid employees. The only employees paid at a lower rate than the Thurrock Living Wage are apprentices (see paragraph 7).
- 6.2 The Thurrock Living Wage pay point and grade are the Council’s minimum pay point with hourly pay set to £9.24 from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

## **7. Apprentices**

- 7.1 The starting pay for Council apprentices is the national minimum wage or national living wage according to their age at the point of recruitment. The lowest pay rate for apprentices aged 16 -17 years old will be £4.62 from 1 April 2021. The full range of NLW rates for 2021/22 are set out at Appendix 2.

## **8. Pay Multiple**

- 8.1 Calculations were made using 2021/22 pay scales which show the pay ratios between the chief executive’s salary and the average salary of the workforce are as follows:

Chief Executive: mean salary of the workforce = 1:6

Chief Executive: median salary of the workforce = 1:7.5

- 8.2 These ratios were calculated from the median chief executive salary level of £182,000; the mean salary of all staff other than the chief executive of £29,155 and the median salary of all staff other than the chief executive of £23,788.

## **9. Acting up payments**

- 9.1 For acting up or additional duties arrangements, an individual will be paid at the lowest point of the band being acted into, or one pay point higher than their substantive pay point if pay bands overlap.
- 9.2 Management do however have the discretion to award an acting up or additional duties allowance up to a maximum of 3 additional points from the employee's substantive pay point. The rationale for payment is subject to approval by the Councils Trade Union Board and evidence should be clearly documented on the employee's personal file.
- 9.3 Secondments are subject to the same pay allowances as stated above, however managers can make secondment arrangements according to the needs of their service are these are not subject to approval. Further details can be found in the Secondment policy.

## **10. Other payments**

- 10.1 The Council pays business user car allowances to single status staff who meet specific criteria relating to the frequency and type of business journeys they are expected to undertake. There are three levels of business user allowance: £1,149, £600 and £300 per annum. Any employee using their own vehicle for work purposes is eligible to claim 40p per mile. Business User Allowance is due to be reviewed and any future changes will be consulted on and included within future pay policy statements.
- 10.2 A car allowance is consolidated into the senior officer pay rates given in Appendix 1. In addition, senior officers receive a mileage payment of 10p per mile.
- 10.3 The Council has an employee relocation package, available to all new employees, subject to eligibility criteria.
- 10.4 The Council does not operate a bonus scheme for any employees, nor does it offer any other informal benefits to its senior officers
- 10.5 On occasions, for posts below senior officer level, temporary market supplements may be paid where difficult market conditions lead to recruitment and retention problems. Such supplements must be agreed by the Council's Trade Union Board.

## **11. Contractors and consultants**

- 11.1 Should the Council engage the services of an individual at senior officer level under a contract for services (i.e. not on the Council's payroll), the level of remuneration paid to the contractor, consultant or agency employing them will not exceed the equivalent salary points outlined in Appendix 1.

11.2 In exceptional circumstances, and with the express approval of the Chief Executive, a contractor or consultant at senior officer level may be engaged at a pay rate outside of the equivalent salary point in Appendix 1.

## **12. Appointment of senior officers**

12.1 Full Council will agree the appointment of all permanent Directors and Assistant Directors.

## **13. Payment on termination, and re-engagement of officers**

13.1 In the event of redundancy or the early retirement of any employee, the Council will pay its standard severance payments within the discretions of the Local Government Pension Regulations.

13.2 In exceptional circumstances and where it represents best value for the Council, additional payments may be made to comply with the terms of a settlement agreement. These will be subject to the delegated powers and processes outlined in the Council's Constitution.

13.3 The Council will not normally re-engage, either in a contract of employment or a contract for services, any officer who has previously been paid a discretionary payment (via a settlement agreement or retirement package) on leaving the Council's employment. Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the Chief Executive and the General Services Committee, will such an arrangement be sanctioned.

13.4 The Government has introduced, through the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015, a £95k cap on "exit payments". Regulations will be inserted by the Enterprise Bill 2015-2016. This will limit the amount a public sector worker could be paid for losing their job to £95k. The regulation had been delayed but came into legislation on the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The regulations will apply to all staff but predominately high earners and will cover:

- Redundancy payments
- Payments on voluntary exits
- Pension strain costs
- Severance or ex-gratia payments
- Payment for outstanding entitlement
- Compensation under the terms of a contract
- Pay in lieu of notice
- Any other payments made as a result of loss of employment

13.5 A different set of regulations, the Repayment of Public Sector Exit Payment Regulations should have come into force on the 1st April 2016, however implementation has been substantially delayed, however is still awaited. It sets out the liability to repay any exit payment if the exit payee returns to the same 'sub-sector' within 12 months of receiving the payment. If they return to the same sub-sector within 28 days the whole amount is due, thereafter tapering arrangements become operational. Full Council may exercise a waiver to exclude such a repayment. If a waiver is issued it must be published along with the reasons for doing so in the preceding twelve months at the beginning of a financial year or published in the annual accounts. Guidance is awaited on the exercise of a waiver. If reclaimed an exit repayment is made to the 'old' employer and the sum passed through to the Treasury.

#### **14. Mandatory Gender Pay Reporting**

14.1 As of April 2017, all organisations with more than 250 employees must produce data on the gender pay gaps of their employees. The deadline for the Council to report this date is 30 March each year.

#### **15. Transparency code**

15.1 In accordance with Government guidelines<sup>1</sup>, the council publishes details of senior managers' pay on its website.<sup>2</sup>

#### **16. Publication of information**

16.1 This Statement will be published on the Council's website. Any in-year changes to this Statement will be published in the same way following full Council approval.

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Local Government Transparency Code 2014' published by DCLG: [Transparency Code](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/what-we-publish/local-government-transparency-code>



## Appendix 1 - Senior Manager Pay Scales 2021/22

	50/50% Lower Base Pay		50/50% Median Base Pay		50/50% Higher Base Pay	
	SCP	Annual Pay £	SCP	Annual Pay £	SCP	Annual Pay £
<b>CEX</b>	<b>31</b>	166,500	<b>32</b>	182,000	<b>33</b>	194,500
<b>DIR5</b>	<b>28</b>	129,000	<b>29</b>	141,000	<b>30</b>	150,500
<b>DIR4</b>	<b>25</b>	121,000	<b>26</b>	134,000	<b>27</b>	141,000
<b>DIR3</b>	<b>22</b>	112,500	<b>23</b>	125,000	<b>24</b>	128,000
<b>DIR2</b>	<b>19</b>	100,500	<b>20</b>	110,000	<b>21</b>	115,500
<b>DIR1</b>	<b>16</b>	93,500	<b>17</b>	104,500	<b>18</b>	107,000
<b>AD5</b>	<b>13</b>	90,500	<b>14</b>	100,000	<b>15</b>	104,000
<b>AD4</b>	<b>10</b>	88,500	<b>11</b>	97,000	<b>12</b>	99,500
<b>AD3</b>	<b>7</b>	83,000	<b>8</b>	93,000	<b>9</b>	96,000
<b>AD2</b>	<b>4</b>	78,000	<b>5</b>	86,000	<b>6</b>	90,500
<b>AD1</b>	<b>1</b>	73,500	<b>2</b>	78,000	<b>3</b>	86,000

## Appendix 2: National Living Wage Rates 2021/22

	Age 23 and over	Age 21 to 22	Age 18 to 20	Age under 18	Apprentice Rate
Rates from April 2021	£8.91	£8.36	£6.56	£4.62	£4.30

### Appendix 3: Collective Agreement Pay Chart 2021/2022

Grade	Pay Point	2021/22 rate per hour		2021/22 salary	
I	54		£39.91		£76,992
	53		£38.74		£74,748
	52		£34.40		£72,564
	51		£36.39		£70,437
	50		£35.44		£68,370
	49		£34.40		£66,363
H	48	£33.39		£64,416	
	47	£32.41		£62,526	
	46	£31.46		£60,696	
	45	£30.54		£58,923	
	44	£29.65		£57,213	
	43	£28.80		£55,557	
G	42		£27.97		£53,964
	41		£27.15		£52,371
	40		£26.35		£50,835
	39		£25.58		£49,359
	38		£24.85		£47,943
	37		£24.11		£46,524
F/G	36	£23.41	£23.41	£45,168	£45,168
F	35	£22.74		£43,869	
	34	£22.07		£42,570	
	33	£21.42		£41,328	
	32	£20.81		£40,149	
	31	£20.20		£38,967	
	30	£19.62		£37,845	
E/F	29	£19.03	£19.03	£36,723	£36,723
E	28		£18.48		£35,661
	27		£17.93		£34,599
	26		£17.41		£33,594
	25		£16.89		£32,592
	24		£16.40		£31,647
D/E	23	£15.91	£15.91	£30,702	£30,702
D	22	£15.45		£29,817	
	21	£14.99		£28,929	
	20	£14.57		£28,104	
	19	£14.14		£27,279	
	18	£13.74		£26,511	
C/D	17	£13.34	£13.34	£25,743	£25,743
C	16		£12.95		£24,975
	15		£12.58		£24,267
	14		£12.21		£23,559
	13		£11.97		£23,085
B	12	£11.72		£22,614	
	11	£11.48		£22,140	
	10	£11.26		£21,726	
	9	£11.05		£21,315	
	8	£10.83		£20,901	
	7	£10.62		£20,487	
A/B	6	£10.41	£10.41	£20,076	£20,076
A	5		£10.19		£19,662
	4		£9.98		£19,248
	3		£9.79		£18,894
	2		£9.61		£18,540
	1		£9.43		£18,186
TLW	TLW	£9.24		£17,832	

<b>24 February 2021</b>	<b>ITEM: 12</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Capital Strategy 2021/22</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Shane Hebb, Portfolio Holder for Finance	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director - Finance	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

The Capital Strategy sets out the strategic framework underpinning capital expenditure and the associated financing at the Council. It also includes the Treasury Management Strategy. These are set in accordance with revised guidance contained in The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public Services and the Prudential Code (The Code). The strategy continues to support the Council's ambitions through the ongoing investments which create revenue returns which can then be allocated to spending on the services for Thurrock residents.

The Code requires local authorities to determine the Capital Strategy and the associated Prudential Indicators on an annual basis for the forthcoming three years. The annual strategy also includes the Treasury Management Strategy that is a requirement of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government Investment Guidance.

In accordance with the above Codes, this report:

- a) sets out the Capital strategy for 2021/22;
- b) confirms the proposed Prudential Indicators; and
- c) sets the Capital and Treasury Management projections for 2021/22.

## **1 Recommendation(s)**

**That Full Council:**

- 1.1 **Approve the Capital Strategy for 2021/22 including approval of the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement for 2021/22;**
- 1.2 **Approve the adoption of the prudential indicators as set out in Appendix 1; and**
- 1.3 **Note the revised 2020/21 and 2021/22 Treasury Management projections as set out in Annex 1 paragraph 2.32.**

## **2 Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The Capital Strategy and the Annual MRP Statement are prepared under the terms of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code) and approval is sought for the adoption of the Prudential Indicators that have been developed in accordance with the Code.
- 2.2 The report also includes a forecast for Interest Receivable from Investments and the indicative Interest Payable on Borrowing.
- 2.3 The report covers a range of areas as set out below with the detailed document attached at Appendix 1.

### **Borrowing Activity**

## **3 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

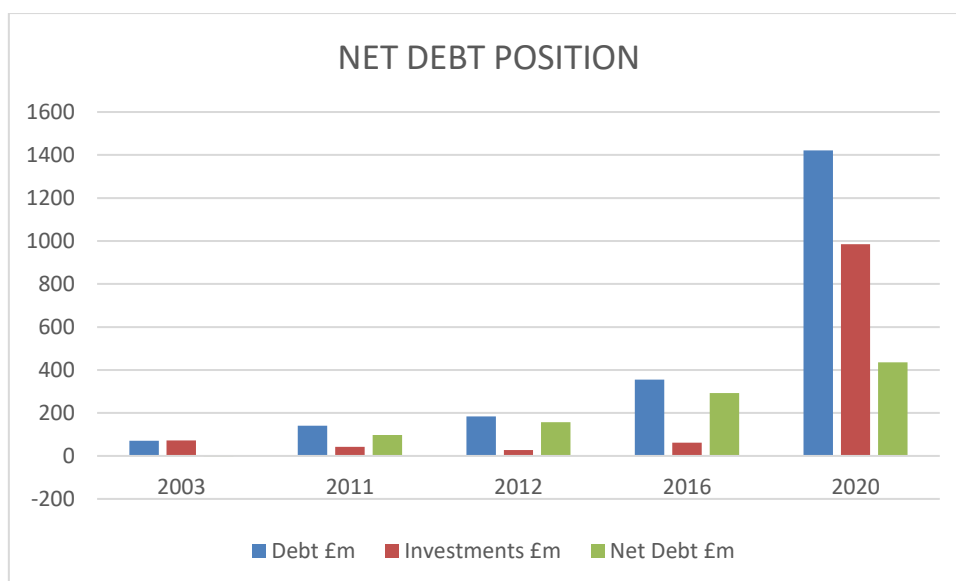
- 3.1 The Capital strategy of the Council is attached as an appendix to this report and has been set with consideration of relevant legislation and appropriate guidance. This includes Annex 1 which incorporates the Treasury Management Strategy. The Prudential Indicators are governed by decisions made on the revenue and capital budgets.
- 3.2 The Capital Strategy sets out a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It includes the following:
  - Details of capital expenditure and financing;
  - The governance arrangements around the identification and approval of capital bids;
  - Details on the sources of funding and projections on capital receipts;

- The strategic approach of the Council to borrowing and the governance arrangements in place;
- The proposed prudential indicators;
- Details of the Council's strategic approach to investments and commercial activities: including the approach pausing (i.e. not undertaking new investment activity, and not budgeting for replacing current investment activity when existing bonds mature), and a reduction of over £350m from projected approved borrowing levels;
- Details of other liabilities and revenue implications arising from this strategy; and
- A further annex containing the detailed treasury management strategy that supports the capital strategy. This includes the annual statement on the Minimum Revenue Provision.

3.3 There are two key areas in this report for Members to be particularly mindful of:

- a) The Council has held significant levels of temporary borrowing since 2010 and hence there is potential exposure to interest rate changes and availability of funding. Officers continue to monitor this and react as necessary to any changes in the economy; and
- b) The approach taken to the Minimum Revenue Provision (as set out in Annex 1).

3.4 It is also worth noting how borrowing activity has changed over the years. The graph below sets out the gross borrowing and investments at certain points over the last 20 years and then the net borrowing position. The net position is the council's core debt, as it has always been, and represents the amount that will not be repaid through maturing investments but through revenue amounts raised through council tax on an annual basis – the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) - and through setting aside capital receipts where available. The core debt is the accumulation of borrowing to fund capital projects.



**Notes:**

- Pre 2004, borrowing for capital purposes was restricted by government to credit approvals that were awarded on an annual basis. Capital expenditure was funded through these credit approvals (with the revenue impact funded by government through the Revenue Support Grant), capital receipts, and a higher proportion of grants;
- 2004 saw the introduction of the prudential Code that allowed councils to borrow for capital activity without the need for a credit approval. This approach ultimately led to lower proportions of grant and supported borrowing;
- In 2011/12 the government changed the Housing (HRA) Subsidy System that led to a national reallocation of HRA debt, with some authorities receiving significant sums to redeem debt whilst other, like Thurrock, received significant increased debt (£161m) as a result. This was, however, offset in Thurrock through no longer having to make annual payments to the government from the rents collected;
- Between 2012 and 31 March 2016, Thurrock Council had taken out its first investments in CCLA;
- The period 2016 to 2020 sees the significant increase in both debt and investments in line with the unanimously agreed Investment Strategy. A key point to recognise in this period is that net debt had increased by £143m but this includes the £100m taken out at the end of March 2020 to support Covid-19 cash flow challenges; and
- The Strategy has realised interest receivable in the calculations of the council's spending power. This manifests as income into the revenue account to provide stability of funding, whilst council services were in the process of being reviewed, and enhancing services above those required

of a local authority – i.e. funding additional police resource across the borough, investment into mental health initiatives in schools, investing in one-off technology to improve the street and park scenes of the borough etc., along with the trebling of general reserves since 2016. The graph shows the interest receivable against that payable.



3.5 Members will recall that the council voted to support the formation of a constituted committee arrangement, to improve the level of oversight and monitoring around the council’s investment activity. A “Shadow” board has operated since Autumn 2020, whilst Terms of Reference are developed and readied for a Members’ decision in May 2021 at the Annual General Meeting. An Investment Strategy Statement is also being developed, for publication in the early municipal year, which will be published on the council website, and will condense all information around the council’s commercial activities into one document, which will enable easy reference and reading for interested parties and residents.

3.6 As announced in December 2020, the Capital Strategy approach is now scheduled to account for no new investment activity, and is not currently budgeting for replacing investment activity when existing bonds mature.

#### 4 Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 There is a statutory requirement for the Capital Strategy and the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement to be ratified by Full Council. This report and appendices have been written in line with best practice and the Council’s spending plans.

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

5.1 As set out in section 4, the report is based on best practice and the Council’s spending plans that have been scrutinised throughout recent months.

5.2 The Shadow Investment Committee will also be provided an opportunity to review the proposals, and Cabinet will be briefed of any commentary the committee raise on the night this report is heard.

5.3 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report at their meeting on 21 January 2021.

5.4 The discussion included consideration of:

- capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity;
- a summary of the overall treasury position of the Council and wider consideration of the investment strategy that has provided additional financial resources of circa £90m to support the delivery of core services over the last three years; and
- An overview of the impact of the guidance the Council is required to meet on the treasury activity undertaken. This included discussion of the agreed pause to the investment strategy in light of the updated guidance on the conditions that must now be met to secure borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board. This applied from November 2020.

5.5 At their meeting on 10 February 2021, Cabinet considered the report and recommended approval by full Council.

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

6.1 Treasury Management plays a significant role in funding the delivery of services to the community. The debt restructuring carried out in August 2010 will have contributed savings in the region of £32.3m by the end of 2020/21 and Investment activity has contributed some £90m over the last four years.

## **7 Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Chris Buckley**  
**Treasury Management Officer**

The financial implications are included in the main body of the report and appendix. Investment income generated from the Investment Strategy contributes significantly to the council's financial position.

### **7.2 Legal**

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

The report is in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003, related secondary legislation and other requirements including the Prudential Code.

Publication of the strategies is a statutory requirement and conforms to best practice as required by the CIPFA Code of Practice.



### 7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Natalie Smith**  
**Community Development Officer**

There are no direct diversity implications noted in this report.

### 7.4 **Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

- Not applicable

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

- Revised CIPFA Prudential Code
- Revised draft ODPM's Guidance on Local Government Investments
- Revised CIPFA's Treasury Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes
- Treasury Management Policy Statement
- Investment Strategy
- Treasury Sector Briefings

### 9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy Report 2021/22
- Annex 1 – Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22

### **Report Author:**

Chris Buckley  
Senior Financial Accountant  
Corporate Finance

This page is intentionally left blank

## Appendix 1 - Thurrock Council

### Capital Strategy Report 2021/22

#### Introduction

This capital strategy is a refreshed report for 2021/22, giving a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

#### Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy or build assets. The Council has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10k are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

In 2021/22, the Council is planning capital expenditure of £174.335m as summarised below:

*Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £m*

	<b>2019/20 actual</b>	<b>2020/21 forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 forecast</b>	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>
General Fund services	77.742	116.704	142.821	58.134	15.896
Council housing (HRA)	28.657	29.692	31.514	18.435	16.390
Capital investments	101.244	25.567	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>207.643</b>	<b>171.963</b>	<b>174.335</b>	<b>76.569</b>	<b>32.286</b>

The main General Fund capital projects include the widening of the A13, Stanford Le Hope Interchange, Purfleet and Grays redevelopment, Highways Infrastructure Improvements, Provision of Care Home, Integrated Medical Centres, school expansions and ICT improvements.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised, by other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately, and includes expenditure over the following 3 years of £64m including £30.9m for transforming homes and £17m for tower block refurbishments.

There are no planned new capital investments from 2021/22 onwards following an agreed pause to the investment strategy.

**Governance:** Service managers bid annually in September to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by Corporate Finance who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The bids are then collated and prioritised by either Property Board, Digital Board or the Service Review Board. The proposed programme is then considered by Directors' Board. This includes a final appraisal of all bids including final consideration of service priorities and financing costs. The final proposed capital programme is then collated and reported with recommendations to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee. The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet and to Council in February each year as part of the overall budget setting process.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and, historically, through Private Finance Initiatives). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

*Table 2: Capital financing in £m*

	<b>2019/20 actual</b>	<b>2020/21 forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 forecast</b>	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>
External sources	51.808	67.238	20.516	47.740	11.200
Own resources	23.554	20.949	10.540	10.540	10.540
Debt	127.281	83.776	143.279	18.289	10.546
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>202.643</b>	<b>171.963</b>	<b>174.335</b>	<b>76.569</b>	<b>32.286</b>

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance and repayments of investments on maturity will repay the associated debt. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

*Table 3: Minimum Revenue Provision in £m*

	<b>2019/20 actual</b>	<b>2020/21 forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 forecast</b>	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>
Own resources	5.980	7.206	7.514	10.837	11.654

The Council's full MRP statement is included in the treasury management statement appended as an annex to this document.

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £134.759m during 2021/22. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

*Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £m*

	<b>31.3.2020 actual</b>	<b>31.3.2021 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2022 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 forecast</b>
General Fund services	195.496	237.905	351.690	351.248	344.289
Council housing (HRA)	191.291	200.157	221.131	229.025	234.876
Capital investments	940.099	965.666	945.666	945.666	902.090
<b>TOTAL CFR</b>	<b>1,326.886</b>	<b>1,403.728</b>	<b>1,518.487</b>	<b>1,525.939</b>	<b>1,481.255</b>

**Asset management:** To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has undertaken a detailed asset review in 2020/21 and the use of assets is being considered alongside the delivery of corporate priorities.

**Asset disposals:** When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Council is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation projects until 2021/22. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Council plans to receive capital receipts (total includes both GF and HRA receipts) in the coming financial year as follows:

*Table 5: Capital receipts in £m*

	<b>2019/20 actual</b>	<b>2020/21 forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 forecast</b>	<b>2022/23 forecast</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>
Asset sales	8.034	0.930	5.000	3.000	3.000
Loans repaid	0.039	0.041	0.043	0.045	0.047
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8.073</b>	<b>0.971</b>	<b>5.043</b>	<b>3.045</b>	<b>3.047</b>

## **Treasury Management**

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account.

The Council currently has £1.448bn borrowing at an average interest rate of 2.51% and £21m treasury investments at an average rate of 0.07%.

**Borrowing strategy:** The Council's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Council therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans (currently available at around 0.35%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 0.95% to 1.61%).

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

*Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £m*

	<b>31.3.2021 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2022 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2023 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2024 forecast</b>
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	1,418.89	1,500.55	1,520.60	1,437.57
Capital Financing Requirement	1,403.73	1,518.49	1,525.94	1,481.26

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement over the medium to long term but can be over for the short term recognising borrowing requirements ahead of need for future capital expenditure. As can be seen from table 6, the Council complies with this requirement.

**Affordable borrowing limit:** The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 7: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £m

	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 limit	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit
Authorised limit – borrowing	1,683.963	1,600.548	1,620.597	1,537.573
Authorised limit – PFI and leases	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Authorised limit – total external debt	1,683.963	1,600.548	1,620.597	1,537.573
Operational boundary – borrowing	1,583.963	1,500.548	1,520.597	1,437.573
Operational boundary – PFI and leases	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Operational boundary – total external debt	1,583.963	1,500.548	1,520.597	1,437.573

Further details on borrowing are contained in the treasury management strategy as annex 1 on this report.

#### **Investment strategy:**

The Council's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield - that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both short-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

Further details on treasury investments are contained in the treasury management strategy as annex 1 to this report.

**Governance:** Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Full Council.

**Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

<b>Refinancing rate risk indicator</b>	<b>Upper limit</b>	<b>Lower limit</b>
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	60%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	60%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	60%	0%
10 years and within 40 years	60%	0%
Over 40 years	100%	0%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

### **Investments for Service Purposes**

The Council can make investments to assist local public services, including making loans to and buying shares in local service providers, local small businesses to promote economic growth, the Council's subsidiaries that provide services. In light of the public service objective, the Council is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to break even after all costs.

**Governance:** Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property and must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Further details on service investments are contained in the treasury management strategy in annex 1 to this report.

### **Commercial Activities**

With central government financial support to local public services declining, the Council decided to investigate various options to increase income and has subsequently made investments in line with the principles set out in the Council's Investment Strategy.

To this end on 20 November 2018 a Long Term Investment Strategy was taken to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee outlining the Council's approach to Service/Non-Treasury/Commercial Investments rather than the standard treasury investments. The report outlined the key principles involved, governance arrangements and the considerations required to ensure investments are thoroughly scrutinised before completion.



In 2020/21 the investment strategy has been paused and consequently there is no forecast activity included in the capital strategy.

### **Liabilities**

In addition to debt detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £158.9m at 31 March 2020). It has also set aside £6.466m to cover risks including business rates appeals and insurance claims.

**Governance:** Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by service managers in consultation with Corporate Finance and, where appropriate, the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by Corporate Finance.

### **Revenue Budget Implications**

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

*Table 9: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of net financing income to net revenue stream*

	<b>2020/21 forecast</b>	<b>2021/22 budget</b>	<b>2022/23 budget</b>	<b>2023/24 budget</b>
Financing costs (£m)	16.947	19.517	23.018	26.083
Proportion of net revenue stream	14.5%	15.2%	16.9%	18.3%

**Sustainability:** Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend into the future. The Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable as set out annually in the s25 statement accompanying the setting of the annual budget.

### **Knowledge and Skills**

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and

investment decisions. For example, the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property is a qualified accountant with 34 years' experience. The Council pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA, ACT (treasury), AAT & ACCA.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

## Annex 1 - Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22

The Treasury Management Strategy is a critical component of the way Thurrock Council manages cash-flow. It also supports the management of investments and borrowing to enable the net revenue returns to be allocated to spending on the services for Thurrock residents.

Treasury risk management at the Council is conducted within the framework of CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

In accordance with the above Codes, this report:

- a) sets out the Treasury Management strategy for 2021/22; and
- b) sets out the Treasury Management projections for 2021/22.

## 2 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The Treasury Management Strategy and Annual MRP Statement are prepared under the terms of the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Code).
- 2.2 The report also includes a forecast for Interest Receivable from Investments and the indicative Interest Payable on Borrowing.

### Borrowing Activity 2020/21 to 2022/23

- 2.3 The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes, as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), together with the level of balances and reserves, are the core drivers of Treasury Management activity. The estimates, based on the current revenue budget and capital programmes are:

	<b>31/3/2021 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31/3/2022 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31/3/2023 Estimate £m</b>
General Fund Borrowing CFR	237.905	351.690	351.248
Housing Revenue Account Borrowing CFR	200.157	221.131	229.025
Capital Investments	965.666	945.666	945.666
<b>Total Borrowing CFR</b>	<b>1,403.728</b>	<b>1,518.487</b>	<b>1,525.939</b>
Less: External Borrowing	1,418.889	1,500.540	1,520.600
<b>Under/(Over) CFR</b>	<b>(15.161)</b>	<b>17.947</b>	<b>5.340</b>

- 2.4 The increases above reflect the increases to the council's capital programme. Repayments of prudential debt are made through the annual Minimum

Revenue Provision (MRP) and where surplus cash balances are accumulated. However, where the amounts needed to finance the capital programme, even just essential operational requirements, are in excess of these repayments this leads to an annual increase in net debt.

- 2.5 The Council's levels of borrowing and investments are calculated by reference to the balance sheet. The Council's key objectives when borrowing money are to secure low interest costs and achieve cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, all underpinned with sound Return on Investment principles. A further objective is to provide the flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long term plans change.
- 2.6 In light of the ongoing reductions to Local Government funding, the Council's focus of the treasury management strategy remains on the balance between affordability and the longer term stability of the debt portfolio. Subject to the availability of low short term interest rates it remains cost effective to borrow over short term periods or utilise internal balances.
- 2.7 Where available this further enables the Council to reduce borrowing costs and hence the overall treasury management risk. While this strategy is beneficial over the next year or two as official interest rates remain low, this depends on the availability of this funding means this will be supplemented by PWLB borrowing which will provide the balance of the funding. The benefits of internal borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long term borrowing rates are forecast to rise. This will help inform whether the Council borrows additional sums at long term fixed rates in 2021/22.
- 2.8 In addition, the Council expects this will be supplemented by wider borrowing to enable the management of the Council's cash flow.
- 2.9 The Council will keep under review the following sources for long term and short term borrowing:
  - Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loans and its successor body;
  - UK Local Authorities;
  - Any institution approved for investments;
  - Any other bank or building society authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority to operate in the UK;
  - Public and private sector pension funds;
  - Capital market bond investors;
  - UK Municipal Bonds Agency;
  - Special purpose companies created to enable joint local authority bond issues;
  - Local Authority bills; and
  - Structured finance, such as operating/finance leases, hire purchase, Private Finance Initiative or sale and leaseback.
- 2.10 With regards to debt rescheduling, the PWLB allows Councils to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Some lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature repayment terms. The Council has in 2020/21 reviewed the debt portfolio to identify opportunities expected to lead

to an overall saving or reduction in risk. At this time, it is not financially prudent to take any options of early repayment, owing to early redemption fees.

- 2.11 Borrowing and rescheduling activity will be reported to the Cabinet on a regular basis during 2021/22.
- 2.12 In August 2010 the Council repaid its entire PWLB portfolio of loans (£84 million) to obtain significant interest savings. The re-financing was undertaken by utilising short term funds from the money markets, mainly other Local Authorities, at substantially lower rates than taking longer term fixed debt. To the end of 2019/20 the rescheduling had saved £29.3m of interest costs and is estimated to have saved £32.3m by the end of 2020/21. Currently financing from short term money market debt is expected to continue, where available, into 2021/22 and beyond. The inherent risk of this strategy is noted with potentially higher rates and increased debt costs in the future.
- 2.13 The Council retains the ability to fix interest rates. This can be achieved within a matter of days of the decision being made or profiled against the maturity schedule of the short term debt. The current base rate stands at 0.10% with short term rates standing at between 0.10%-0.40% and it is estimated that it will remain there or even move lower during 2021/2022. The future course of interest rates largely depends on macroeconomic factors such as, for example, the ongoing impact of Brexit and the Government's handling of the Pandemic so future interest rate estimates are difficult at this point in time. The PWLB recently cut the rate of interest on new loans by 1%, so current PWLB rates range from 0.80% to 1.61%. However, even if the base rate increases to 0.75% this will still be below the level of current long term rates that the Council could borrow at. In addition, as the Council borrows from other public bodies, rates are not fixed to the bank base rate and are generally lower. The normalised level of the bank base rate post this period is expected to be between 2.50% to 3.50%.
- 2.14 Based on this outlook, the council may borrow on a short term basis when deemed beneficial to the taxpayer while monitoring interest rates to ensure borrowing is fixed if required. Prudently, the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) does assume rate increases over the three year period.
- 2.15 The Council has £29 million of loans which are LOBO loans (Lenders Option Borrowers Option) which were taken out in the 2000-10 decade, where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these loans, excluding one with Barclays, could now be amended at the request of the lender only and, although the Council understands that lenders are unlikely to exercise their options in the current low interest rate environment, there remains an element of refinancing risk. In the event the lender exercises the option to change the rate or terms of the loan, the Council will consider the terms being provided and also repayment of the loan without penalty. The Council may utilise cash resources for repayment or may consider replacing the loan by borrowing from the PWLB or capital markets. Barclays have taken out the option to increase the rate of their loan thereby effectively turning the loan into a fixed rate deal. LOBO loans have become less attractive to Banks and there may be

opportunities in the future to redeem these loans. Officers will continue to monitor any developments in this area.

- 2.16 On 1 April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) pools. New long-term loans will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs and income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged or credited to the respective revenue account. The Council will credit interest to the HRA based on the average balances of its reserves and revenue account balance at the average 7 day LIBID rate for the year.
- 2.17 The Council continues to undertake a series of new housing related schemes utilising borrowing and the abolition of the Housing Debt Cap has increased the funding flexibility available to the Council to deliver its housing investment progress.
- 2.18 Finally, there may be significant regeneration programmes to consider investment vehicles for. The need to borrow for investment will be on a case by case basis after considering investment returns, risk and the result of due diligence.

### **Investments**

- 2.19 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing loans received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. It is envisaged that investment balances held internally will be approximately £20 million at the financial year end. The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparties detailed in Appendix 1 to this Annex.
- 2.20 The Council holds a £103m investment in the CCLA Property Fund that is estimated to provide a gross return in 2020/21 of 4.25% with income in the region of £4.3m. The Council has also invested in a number of bonds of various durations since 2016/17 that provides finance to the private sector for, as an example, the purchase of solar farms, whilst providing significant net returns to the council to support front line services in a move towards financial sustainability.
- 2.21 Local Authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk. The general power of competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 removes much of the uncertainty over Authorities use of standalone financial derivatives. The CIPFA code requires authorities to clearly detail their policy on the use of derivatives in the annual strategy.
- 2.22 The Council will only use standalone derivatives (such as swaps, forward, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the Council's overall exposure to financial risks. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds, will not be subject to this policy, although the

risks they present will be managed in line with the overall Treasury Management strategy.

- 2.23 Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit. The Local Authority will only use derivatives after seeking expertise, a legal opinion and ensuring officers have the appropriate training for their use.
- 2.24 The Authority has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services, but, without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Council's treasury management activities the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property believes this to be the most appropriate status.
- 2.25 The Council complies with the provisions of s32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget.
- 2.26 The needs of the Council's Treasury Management staff for relevant training are assessed as part of the annual staff appraisal process and additionally where the responsibilities of individual members of staff change. Staff attend courses, seminars and conferences provided by the Council's advisors and CIPFA. Corporate Finance staff are encouraged to study for professional accountancy qualifications from appropriate bodies.
- 2.27 Under the new IFRS standard the accounting for certain investments depends on the business model for managing them. The Council aims to achieve value from its internally managed treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

### **Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement**

- 2.28 Local Authorities are required to prepare an Annual Statement of their policy on making MRP for each financial year. Appendix 2 to Annex 1 outlines the assessment of the Council's Annual MRP Statement for 2021/22, which is included in the Annual Strategy in paragraph 2.30.
- 2.29 Officers have reviewed the current strategy and recommend no changes for the 2021/22 strategy.
- 2.30 Consequently the following paragraphs on Borrowing Activity and Investments form part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy with effect from 1 April 2021:
  - 2.30.1 To obtain any long term borrowing requirement from the sources of finance set out in paragraph 2.9;
  - 2.30.2 To continue to fund the ex-PWLB debt via short term funds from the money markets unless circumstances dictate moving back into longer

term fixed rate debt. The borrowing sources mentioned in paragraph 2.9 will then be assessed as to their suitability for use;

- 2.30.3 To repay market loans, borrowing sources in paragraph 2.9 will be assessed as to their suitability for use, to where investment arrangements run longer than the life of the loans;
- 2.30.4 To undertake short term temporary borrowing when necessary in order to manage cash flow to the Council's advantage;
- 2.30.5 To reschedule market and PWLB loans, where practicable, to achieve interest rate reductions, balance the volatility profile or amend the debt profile, dependent on the level of premiums payable or discounts receivable;
- 2.30.6 To ensure security and liquidity of the Council's investments and to then optimise investment returns commensurate to those ideals;
- 2.30.7 To contain the type, size and duration of investments with individual institutions within the limits specified in Appendix 1 to this Annex.;
- 2.30.8 To move further funds into the CCLA Property Fund or other externally managed funds if it is felt prudent to do so following appropriate due diligence; and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance;
- 2.30.9 To meet the requirements of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Council's policy for the calculation of MRP in 2021/22 shall be that the Council will set aside an amount each year which it deems to be prudent and appropriate, having regard to statutory requirements and relevant guidance issued by MHCLG. The Council will also consider the use of capital receipts to pay down any MRP incurred; and
- 2.30.10 To ensure all borrowing and investment activities are made with due reference to any relevant Prudential Indicators.

#### **Interest Projections 2020/21 Revised and 2021/22 Original**

- 2.31 The CIPFA document Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice places a requirement on the Council to publish estimates relating to the operation of the borrowing and investment function.
- 2.32 The 2020/21 budget and the projected position for 2020/21 as at November 2020 and also an initial projection for 2021/22 are shown in summary format in the table below:



	Budget 2020/21	Projected 2020/21	Projection 2021/22
	£'000's	£'000's	£'000's
Interest payable on External Debt			
Debt Interest	16,851	17,439	19,421
Total internal interest	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>	<u>96</u>
Interest payable	<u>16,947</u>	<u>17,535</u>	<u>19,517</u>
Investment Income			
Interest on Investments	<u>(49,041)</u>	<u>(45,716)</u>	<u>(45,161)</u>
Net interest credited to the General Fund	<u>(32,094)</u>	<u>(28,181)</u>	<u>(25,644)</u>
MRP- Supported/Unsupported Borrowing	<u>7,906</u>	<u>7,206</u>	<u>7,514</u>

- 2.33 It is noted that the figures shown above for 2021/22 include assumptions made about the level of balances available for investment, any anticipated new long term borrowing and the level of interest rates achievable. They may be liable to a significant degree of change during the year arising from variations in interest rates, other market and economic developments, and Council's response to those events.
- 2.34 In accordance with the requirements of the revised CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Council will report on treasury management activity and the outturn against the treasury related Prudential Indicators at least bi-annually.

## Approved Investment Counterparties:

Credit Rating	Banks/Building Societies Unsecured		Bank/Building Societies Secured		Government		Corporates		Registered Providers	
	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period	Amount	Period
<b>UK Govt</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£unlimited	50 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>AAA</b>	£10m	5 years	£20m	20 years	£20m	50 years	£10m	20 years	£10m	20 years
<b>AA+</b>	£10m	5 years	£20m	10 years	£20m	25 years	£10m	10 years	£10m	10 years
<b>AA</b>	£10m	4 years	£20m	5 years	£20m	15 years	£10m	5 years	£10m	10 years
<b>AA-</b>	£10m	3 years	£20m	4 years	£20m	10 years	£10m	4 years	£10m	10 years
<b>A+</b>	£10m	2 years	£20m	3 years	£10m	5 years	£10m	3 years	£10m	5 years
<b>A</b>	£10m	1 year	£20m	2 years	£10m	5 years	£10m	2 years	£10m	5 years
<b>A-</b>	£7.5m	13 months	£15m	13 months	£10m	5 years	£10m	13 months	£10m	5 years
<b>BBB+</b>	£5m	6 months	£10m	6 months	£5m	2 years	£5m	6 months	£5m	2 years
<b>BBB</b>	£5m	100 days	£10m	100 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>BBB-</b>	£5m	100 days	£10m	100 days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>None</b>	£5m	6 months	N/A	N/A	£5m	25 years	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Pooled Funds ,External Fund Managers and any other investment vehicle approved by the Section 151 Officer – Decisions are based on each individual case following appropriate due diligence work being undertaken.

The above limits are the maximum that the Council would expect to have in place at any time. However, in practice the actual duration limits in place are continually assessed and are often much shorter than the limits in the above table.

**Credit ratings:** Investment decisions are made by reference to the lowest published long-term credit rating from Fitch, Moody's or Standard & Poor's. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used.

**Banks and Building Societies Unsecured:** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail.

**Banks and Building Societies Secured:** Covered bonds, reverse repurchase agreements and other collateralised arrangements. These investments are secured on the bank's assets, which limits the potential loss in the unlikely event of insolvency and means that they are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but, the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the highest of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used to determine cash and time limits. The combined secured and unsecured investments in any one bank will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

**Government:** Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multi development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in and there is an insignificant risk of insolvency. Investments with the UK Central government may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Corporates:** Loans, bonds and commercial paper issued by companies other than banks and registered providers. These investments are not subject to bail-in, but, are exposed to the risk of the company going insolvent.

**Other Organisations –** The Council may also invest cash with other organisations, for example making loans to small businesses as part of a diversified pool in order to spread the risk widely. Because of the higher perceived risk of unrated businesses such investments may provide considerably higher rates of return. The Council will also undertake appropriate due diligence to assist in all investment decisions.

**Registered providers:** Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by or secured on the assets of Registered Providers of Social Housing, formerly known as Housing Associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Homes and Community Agency and as providers of public services they retain a high likelihood of receiving Government support if needed.

**Pooled Funds:** Shares in diversified investment vehicles consisting of any of the above investment types plus equity shares and property. These funds have the advantage of providing wide diversification of investment risks coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a fee. Money market funds that offer same-day liquidity and aim for a constant net asset value will be used as an alternative to instant access bank accounts while pooled funds whose value changes

with market prices and/or have a notice period will be used for longer investment periods.

Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but, are more volatile in the short term. These allow authorities to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. These funds have no defined maturity date but are available for withdrawal after a notice period. As a result their performance and continued suitability in meeting the authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly and decisions made on entering such funds will be made on an individual basis.

Risk assessment and credit ratings: Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- No new investments will be made;
- Any existing investment that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- Full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments: The Council understands that credit ratings are good but not perfect predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may meet the credit rating criteria. Due diligence is also required from external bodies, advisors and experts.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2011, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but, can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the authorities cash balances then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government via the Debt Management Office or invested in treasury bills for example or with other local authorities. This will cause a reduction in the level of investment income earned, but, will protect the principal sum.

Specified Investments

Specified investments will be those that meet the criteria in the CLG Guidance, i.e. the investment:

- is sterling denominated;
- has a maximum maturity of one year;
- meets the “high credit quality” as determined by the Council or is made with the UK government or is made with a local authority in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland or a parish or community council; and
- The making of which is not defined as capital expenditure under section 25(1)(d) in SI 2003 No 3146 (i.e. the investment is not loan capital or share capital in a body corporate).

The Council defines ‘high credit quality’ organisations and securities as those having a credit rating of BBB- or higher that are domiciled in the UK or a foreign country with a sovereign rating of AA+ or higher. For money market funds and other pooled funds ‘high credit quality is defined as those having a credit rating of A- or higher

Non-specified Investments

Any investment not meeting the definition of a specified investment is classed as non-specified. The Council does not intend to make any investments denominated in foreign currencies, nor any that are defined as capital expenditure by legislation, such as company shares

Non-Specified Investment Limits

	Cash Limit
Total Long Term Treasury Investments	£450m
Total Investments without credit ratings or rated below A- with appropriate due diligence having been performed	£70m
Total Investments in foreign countries rated below AA+	£30m
Maximum total non-specified investments	£550m

Investment Limits

The maximum that will be lent to any one organisation in the Approved Investment Counter Party list (except the UK Government) is £20m. For other investments approved by the Section 151 Officer the amount to be invested will be determined by the Section 151 Officer, taking into account the relevant merits of the transaction such as, for example, duration and risk following due diligence work undertaken. A group of banks under the same ownership, a group of funds under the same management, brokers nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors will all have limits placed on them as in the table below:

	Cash Limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£20m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£40m
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£50m
Any external Fund Manager	£750m
Negotiable instruments held in a brokers nominee account	£20m
Foreign countries (total per country)	£30m
Registered Providers in total	£30m
Building Societies in total (excluding overnight investments)	£40m
Loans to small businesses	£20m
Money Market Funds	£40m
Investments approved by the Section 151 Officer	Reviewed for each case

### Liquidity Management

The Council maintains a cash flow spreadsheet that forecasts the Council's cash flows into the future. This is used to determine the maximum period for which funds may be prudently committed. The forecast is compiled on a pessimistic basis, with receipts under estimated and payments over estimated to minimise the risk of the Council having to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments.

## THE MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT

### **Introduction:**

The rules for Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) were set out in the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These rules have now been revised by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

Authorities are required to submit to a meeting of their Council an annual statement of their policy on making MRP.

### **Background:**

Each year the Council borrows money in order to finance some of its capital expenditure. The loans taken out for this purpose, unlike a mortgage which is repaid in part each month, are fully repayable at a future point in time. The repayment date is chosen to secure the best financial result for the Council.

The concept of Minimum Revenue Provision was introduced in 1989 to prescribe a minimum amount which must be charged to the revenue account each year in order to make provision to meet the cost of repaying that borrowing.

The detailed rules and formulae to be used in the more recent method of calculation were laid down in the Regulations mentioned in the introduction section.

This system has now been radically revised and requires an annual statement to full Council setting out the method the Council intends to adopt for the calculation of MRP.

### **Considerations:**

Under the old regulations Local Authorities were required to set aside each year, from their revenue account an amount that, in simple terms equalled approximately 4% of the amount of capital expenditure financed by borrowing. Local Authorities had no freedom to exercise any discretion over this requirement.

The amendment regulations introduce a simple duty for an authority each year to set aside an amount of MRP which it considers to be 'prudent'. The regulation does not define a 'prudent provision' but the MRP guidance makes recommendations to authorities on the interpretation of that term.

The MRP guidance document is a statutory document and authorities are obliged by section 21 of the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to such guidance. The guidance aims to provide more flexibility and in particular for development schemes it is possible to have an MRP "holiday" for assets or infrastructure under construction.

In addition, it is accepted that where there is capital expenditure that will give rise to a capital receipts, either through the disposal of the asset or loan repayments, then

there is no need to set aside MRP on an annual basis but the capital receipt or loan repayments should be set aside on receipt for that purpose.

The operative date of the change was 31 March 2008, which means the new rules have applied since the financial year 2007/08.

### **The Annual MRP Statement**

As stated above, Local Authorities are required to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP for submission to their full Council. This mirrors the existing requirements to report to the Council on the Prudential borrowing limits and Treasury Management strategy. The aim is to give elected Members the opportunity to scrutinise the proposed use of the additional freedoms conferred under the new arrangements. The statement must be made before the start of each financial year.

The statement should indicate how it is proposed to discharge the duty to make prudent MRP in the financial year in question for the borrowing that is to take place in that financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original statement during any year, a revised statement should be put to Council at that time.

The guidance includes specific examples of options for making a prudent provision. The aim of this is to ensure that the provision to repay the borrowing is made over a period that bears some relation to the useful life of the assets in question or where a capital receipt will be received to repay the debt in part or in full.

### **Proposals**

The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2021/22:

- In accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 the Council's policy for the calculation of MRP in 2021/22 shall be that the Council will set aside an amount each year which it deems to be prudent and appropriate, having regard to statutory requirements and relevant guidance issued by MHCLG; and
- The Council will also consider the use of capital receipts to pay down any MRP incurred.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.



<b>24 February 2021</b>	<b>ITEM: 13</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>General Fund Budget Proposals</b>	
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Yes
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Rob Gledhill, Leader of the Council	
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director - Finance	
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Executive Summary

This report sets out the draft budget proposals for a balanced budget for the financial year 2021/22. The budget addresses both the ongoing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, the wider cost pressures arising from demand pressures and the decision to pause the investment strategy.

Following HM Government’s Spending Review 2020, the underlying budget pressure has been mitigated through a combination of identified savings, the anticipated but partial use of reserves (built up from the investment approach) and capital flexibilities as well as additional Covid-19 funding from the government. This also assumes that the full level of council tax increase, including the Adult Social Care precept, is agreed by the Council.

Members should note the use of one-off interventions results in underlying base pressures being carried forward into 2022/23 and 2023/24. The budget also reflects the agreed pause to the Investment Strategy approach adopted by the Council in October 2017. Hence while significant savings have been identified for the latter two years, the remaining gaps stand at £14.838m and £10.511m in 2022/23 and 2023/24 respectively. This will require significant further action by Members to move the Council back to a financially sustainable position.

The impact of Covid-19 has been identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and separated from core budget pressures. Short term funding in the form of an in-year grant from Central Government has been reflected to the value £4.853m.

The council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget and the use of some of the council's reserves is required to achieve this for 2021/22, as has been expected since the outset of the COVID pandemic.

The key consideration is the proposed council tax increase, which reflects the guidance issued by Central Government as part of the Spending Review announcements made on 23 November 2020 that comprises the general element of 1.99% with a further 3% Adult Social Care precept to fund increasing cost pressures within the service.

The proposals were considered by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2021 with the comments considered as part of the final budget proposals agreed by Cabinet at their meeting on 10 February 2021.

**1. Recommendation(s)**

**That the Council:**

- 1.1 Considers and acknowledges the Section 151 Officer's (Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property's) S25 report on the robustness of the proposed budget, the adequacy of the Council's reserves as set out in Appendix 1, including the conditions upon which the following recommendations are made;**
- 1.2 Agree a 3% council tax increase towards the cost of Adult Social Care;**
- 1.3 Agree a 1.99% council tax increase to meet the increasing costs and demands of all other services and to move the council towards greater financial sustainability for the medium to longer term;**
- 1.4 Approve the new General Fund capital proposals, including the allocation for feasibility work on future and aspirational proposals, as set out in section 10 and Appendix 5; and**
- 1.5 Delegate to Cabinet the ability to agree schemes (a) where it can be evidenced that there is a spend to save opportunity or (b) that use any unbudgeted contributions from third parties, including those by way of grants or developers' contributions, and these be deemed as part of the capital programme.**

## **Statutory Council Tax Resolution**

*(Members should note that these recommendations are a result of the previous recommendations above and can be agreed as written or as amended by any changes agreed to those above).*

- 1.6 Calculate that the council tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/22 is £71,110,644 as set out in the table at paragraph 5.1 of this report.**
- 1.7 That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:**
- (a) £502,865,204 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act.**
  - (b) £431,754,560 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.**
  - (c) £71,110,644 being the amount by which the aggregate at 1.7(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1.7(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).**
  - (d) £1,399.32 being the amount at 1.7(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (Council Tax Base of 50,818), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (including Parish precepts).**
  - (e) £0 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.**
  - (f) £1,399.32 being the amount at (d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) above by Item T, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.**
- 1.8 To note that the Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner has issued precepts to the Council in respect of Essex Police and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the tables below.**
- 1.9 That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts**

shown in the tables below as the amounts of council tax for 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

**2021/22 COUNCIL TAX FOR THURROCK PURPOSES EXCLUDING ESSEX FIRE AUTHORITY AND ESSEX POLICE AUTHORITY**

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2021/22							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
932.88	1,088.36	1,243.84	1,399.32	1,710.28	2,021.24	2,332.20	2,798.64

- 1.10 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council in respect of Essex Police for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2021/22							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
139.02	162.19	185.36	208.53	254.87	301.21	347.55	417.06

- 1.11 That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority has stated the following amounts in precept issued to the Council in respect of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for each of the categories of dwellings as follows:

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2021/22							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
49.26	57.47	65.68	73.89	90.31	106.73	123.15	147.78

**2021/22 COUNCIL TAX (INCLUDING FIRE AND POLICE AUTHORITY PRECEPTS)**

Amounts for the Valuation Bands for 2021/22							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
1,121.16	1,308.02	1,494.88	1,681.74	2,055.46	2,429.18	2,802.90	3,363.48

**2 Introduction and Background**

**The Process for Agreeing the Council's Budgets**

- 2.1 The Council must, by law, set its annual revenue budget and associated council tax level by 11 March of the preceding financial year. If, for whatever

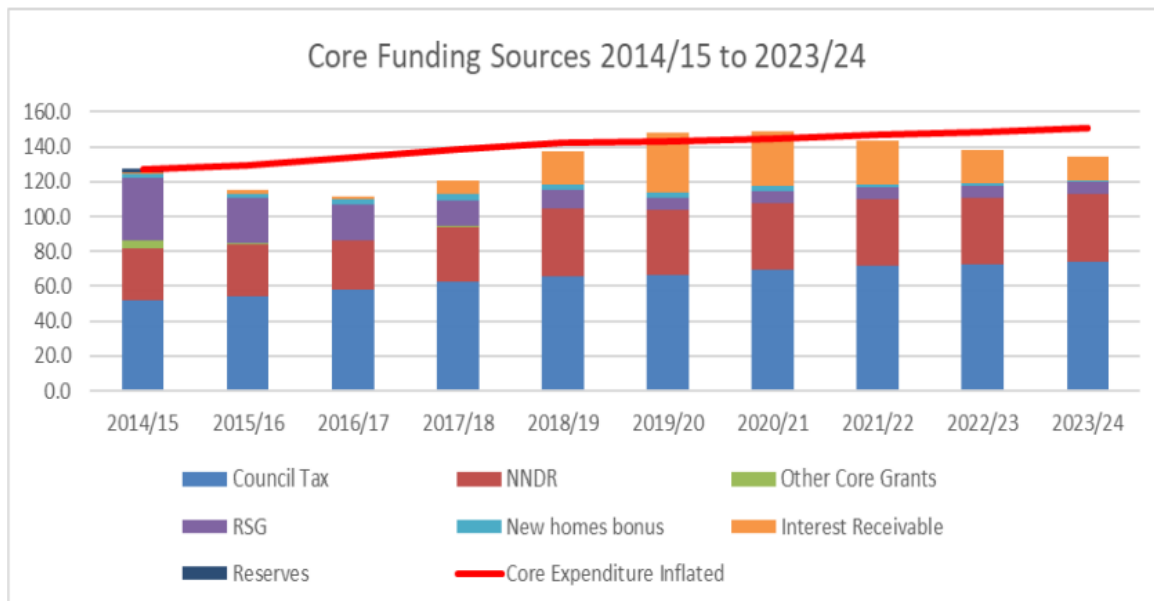
reason, the Council cannot agree a budget and Council Tax level at its meeting on 24 February 2021, Members should be aware that the Council will not have a legal budget and this will impact on service delivery and cash flow with immediate effect whilst damaging the council's reputation and can, as a last resort, lead to intervention from the Secretary of State under powers given by section 15 of Local Government Act 1999.

- 2.2 The role of Council is to agree the level of Council Tax and inherently, the budget envelope for the Council. The precise allocation of that envelope and expenditure falls to the Cabinet.
- 2.3 It is also good practice to approve the capital programme at the same time because there is an interdependency between the budget streams.
- 2.4 This report presents the proposed 2021/22 General Fund revenue and capital budgets, as per the recommendations of Cabinet that have been formed through budget reports presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet over recent months.
- 2.5 The Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property's statutory statement on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of reserves under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003 is included at Appendix 1. This must be considered by the Council before approving the council tax level.

## **Revenue**

### **The 2020/21 Budget Position**

- 2.6 Members have received reports throughout the year, with the most recent report forecasting a £2.672m pressure. Further support from central government is now expected to support the mitigation of this pressure. Member priorities which were originally earmarked for spend against the budgeted surplus of £4.074m have now either been deferred, or cancelled altogether and this surplus has been included in the overall position to fund in-year pressures, mainly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the pause to the investment strategy; specifically new investment activity, including replacement investment activity when existing arrangements conclude.
- 2.7 For context, the graph below illustrates the position over several years, in regards to a reducing Revenue Support Grant position, and how the investment approach has been used to provide time to reform services at a pace far more considered than otherwise would have been the case. The approach undertaken in 2017, supported unanimously by council, sought to provide that headroom. Members should note that whilst council tax and NNDR income has increased over the period set out in the table, spending requirements have also increased over the same time-period, notably owing to growth and inflationary pressures.



2.8 Thurrock has received funding from central government to help mitigate the impact of the pandemic and returns continue to be submitted to MHCLG highlighting the ongoing financial risks.

2.9 The significant financial pressure within core services continues to be high cost placements in Children’s Social Care.

**Financial Self Sustainability and Government Grants**

2.10 Council Tax and Business Rates remain the main sources of funding for the Council’s total General Fund budget (excluding schools). Government funding of its main grant is the third ranked provider of funding. As such it remains a reducing factor in determining the Council’s revenue budget. The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2021/22 was confirmed by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 10 February 2021 and confirms the reductions built into the MTFs.

2.11 The latest Finance Settlement maintains the key changes in the way that Local Government is now financed, which were introduced in April 2013, with the main changes being from the launch of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) scheme as the principle form of local government funding. All forecasts continue with the principle of phasing out reliance on central government support and to replace this with income raised locally through Council Tax, Business Rates and income generation.

2.12 Regarding Adult Social Care (ASC), the ability for the council to raise an ASC precept at 3% is available for 2021/22 to the Council. It is noted the Local Government Finance Settlement made additional funding available for both Adults’ and Children’s Social Care through increased grant funding of £0.800m for 2021/22. Further support to help mitigate costs incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have been provided in the form of a grant valuing £4.853m.

- 2.13 Recognising the pressures facing Local Government's ability to achieve financial sustainability, the MHCLG have allowed councils to increase Council Tax by up to 2% in 2021/22 financial year. Council Tax proposals for 2021/22 are set out below and recommend a Council Tax increase of 1.99%.
- 2.14 The Council also receives a number of grants for specific purposes. These include Housing Benefits Administration and Public Health.
- 2.15 As part of the reforms contained within the Health and Social Care Act 2012, responsibility for commissioning certain public health functions moved from the NHS to Local Authorities. In 2013 a ring fenced Public Health Grant was provided to all top tier local authorities in order to commission mandated and discretionary Public Health services.
- 2.16 The Public Health Grant is expected to increase by £0.057m in 2021/22. In the longer term this grant is likely to be absorbed into core funding as part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.
- 2.17 Currently the Council retains circa £37m from a total collection of £121m (31%) against a headline of 49% retention. Gains for Thurrock Council through a greater headline retention cannot be guaranteed and so are not assumed. What is known at this time is that other grants, such as Public Health Grant, will be met from greater retention but then at the loss of the specific grant.

### **3 Collection Fund Balances and Council Tax Base**

- 3.1 The Constitution delegates the factual calculation and agreement of Collection Fund balances and the Council Tax base to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property.

#### Collection Fund

- 3.2 The Collection Fund is where the transactions for Council Tax and Business Rates billing, collection and distribution is accounted for. Councils are required to separately estimate the balance as at 31 March each year and for this to be allocated to the major precepting bodies to be accounted for in the budget setting for the following year.
- 3.3 These balances can be either surpluses or deficits and so will impact the budgets accordingly. The impact for Thurrock Council has been included within these budget proposals and precepting bodies have been notified.
- 3.4 Based on the latest forecasts of collections and write offs the Council Tax Collection Fund is estimated to be a surplus of £0.384m as at 31 March 2021. This is apportioned to the major preceptors as follows:

<b>Major Precepting Authority</b>	<b>£m</b>
Thurrock Council	0.319
Essex Police Authority	0.048
Essex Fire Authority	0.017
<b>Total Allocated</b>	<b>0.384</b>

- 3.5 Based on the latest forecasts of collections and write offs the Business Rates Collection Fund is estimated to have a surplus of £1.150m as at 31 March 2021. This is apportioned under regulations as follows:

<b>Major Precepting Authority</b>	<b>£m</b>
Thurrock Council	0.564
Central Government	0.575
Essex Fire Authority	0.011
<b>Total Allocated</b>	<b>1.150</b>

### Council Tax Base

- 3.6 The Council Tax Base is the calculation formed by considering the number of properties within the borough at the various bands of A to H, the discounts currently being afforded to a number of those properties and the likely reduction in liability through the Local Council Tax Scheme (LCTS).
- 3.7 All properties are then averaged to create an equivalent of a number of Band D properties that is then used to calculate the Council Tax income within the budget. Whilst there are over 67,000 properties in the borough, these equate to a Council Tax Base of 50,818 Band D properties that, when multiplied by the proposed Council Tax level, calculate a total that will be raised through Council Tax.

## **4 Council Tax Proposals**

- 4.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the concept of a referendum where a proposed Council Tax increase exceeds its excessiveness principles either by the billing authority (Thurrock Council) or one of its major preceptors. Simply, a referendum would be required if the Council resolved to increase council tax by a higher percentage than the government guidelines. This report does not propose increases that would call for a referendum.
- 4.2 As reported in previous years, Thurrock Council has one of the lowest Council Tax levels and Council Tax income of all of the Unitary Councils in the country and the lowest Council Tax in Essex. For example, residents in Thurrock Band D properties pay circa £100 per annum less than residents in Band D properties in Southend-on-Sea and circa £265 less than residents in Band D properties in neighbouring Basildon. This low base means that, financially, Thurrock Council has less income than comparable councils to deliver the same suite of services, irrespective of demographic need, and limits any increase through the Council Tax precept as any percentage increase is on a lower amount than other authorities. A low base also means reduced



flexibility in terms of having surplus funds to spend on capital projects and other initiatives, without having to rely on prudential borrowing where the need is identified.

4.3 The most significant and stable income stream that the Council has is through Council Tax and building this base is critical to sustaining the services offered by the Council and after accounting for factors such as inflation and wage increases in the social care sector.

4.4 There are two elements to the Council Tax that need to be considered:

- The general increase – this is capped at 2% and so the maximum increase that can be agreed is 1.99% for 2021/22. A 1.99% increase has been recommended by Cabinet and the MTFs assumptions have been updated to reflect this approach; and
- The Adult Social Care (ASC) Precept – this precept was announced as part of the 2021/22 Local Government Finance Settlement. A maximum of 3% can be raised to support the provision of social care in the borough and the full amount is recommended by Cabinet.

4.5 There is a continuing need for sustained increases to the ASC budget to meet the increased costs of the national minimum wage and demand pressures as the population continues to live longer with more complex health and care needs. The Council continues to face considerable challenges with the domiciliary care market which remains a national trend. Coupled with the ongoing impact of Covid-19 pandemic it is likely this will remain a challenging area for a considerable period of time.

4.6 The table below sets out the average impact on a household in each band when considering the various discounts and support already in place:

Band	Band Charge	Properties		Average Net Charge	Average 1% Increase p.a.
		No.	%		
A	£1,070.22	7,482	10.9	£630.68	£6.31
B	£1,248.59	13,703	19.9	£937.75	£9.38
C	£1,426.96	27,240	39.6	£1,191.52	£11.92
D	£1,605.33	12,538	18.2	£1,428.09	£14.28
E	£1,962.07	4,760	6.9	£1,802.39	£18.02
F	£2,318.81	2,246	3.3	£2,182.16	£21.82
G	£2,675.55	830	1.2	£2,535.36	£25.35
H	£3,210.66	49	0.1	£2,178.66	£21.79
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>68,848</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>£1,186.96</b>	<b>£11.87</b>

- 4.7 For over 70% of residents, each additional 1% increase in council tax equates to an average of 20 pence per week or £10.33 per annum. The additional funding raised will be applied to a wide range of services, including Children’s and Adults’ social care that work with the most vulnerable members of the community.

## 5 Proposed General Fund Revenue Budget 2021/22

- 5.1 Draft budgets are included at appendix 2 but a summary of the overall budget envelope and financing is set out below:

	£m
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>119.064</b>
<b><i>Financed by:</i></b>	
Revenue Support Grant	(6.886)
NNDR Precept	(38.367)
Other Grants	(2.011)
Collection Fund balances	(0.689)
<b>To be funded through Council Tax</b>	<b>(71.111)</b>

## 6 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021 – 2024/25

- 6.1 The MTFS covering the period 2021/22 through to 2024/25 is attached at Appendix 3 which includes the assumption that there will be a 1.99% council tax increase and a 3% increase in the ASC precept in 2021/22, and 1.99% council tax for subsequent years. This is in line with the current year recommendation and the flexibility provided to local government from the MHCLG.
- 6.2 The pause to Thurrock’s investment approach has been reflected, specifically around new investment activity, creating a projected pressure of £22.295m over the life of the 4 year MTFS. This includes both cash and capital investments and hence the associated targets have been removed pending further consideration. No provision has been made to replace maturing investments. Also reflected is the increased cost of PWLB borrowing which has been used to replace short term funding in 2020/21 and includes an expectation that this will continue, albeit that is a lesser figure when comparing the impact of pausing the approach.
- 6.3 There are no longer any surplus balances forecast across the life of the MTFS.
- 6.4 In summary, an extract from the MTFS shows a balanced position for one year only:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£m	£m	£m
MTFS Budget Pressures (excluding Investments)	12,530	5,405	5,598
Investment pressures	6,758	7,221	4,948
Core budget savings	(5,656)	(4,941)	(4,035)
Social Care precept	(2,480)		
One-off funding	(11,153)	7,153	4,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>10,511</b>

6.5 As can be seen from the table, a series of savings and one-off interventions supports a balanced position for 2021/22 but results in underlying base pressures being carried forward to subsequent years. Whilst significant savings have been identified for these latter years the deferment of pressures from 2021/22 means the remaining gaps total £25.349m. This will require significant further action by Members to move the Council back to a financially sustainable position.

## 7 Reserves

7.1 There is no set formula to determine the General Fund balance but it is for the Council's S151 Officer to consider the Council's past financial performance and risk to the budget over the future medium term and to then recommend a balance to the Council. It is, however, for the Council to set this balance considering that recommendation.

7.2 Based on the above, the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property recommends the retention of the optimum balance of £11m as at 31 March 2021 and this is reflected within the s25 statement at appendix 1.

7.3 Members will be aware from previous reports that the council's reserves position has become far more resilient since 2016, as a direct result of the investment approach. In 2016, the council's General Fund Balance sat at £8m. Comparing that to now, the General Fund Balance sits at £11m, a Social Care Reserve of £1.5m has been created to help manage market volatility during the pandemic, a Financial Resilience Reserve of £6m has been built up and a General Reserve of £5.5m exists to support the council against pressures. Both of these latter reserves have been built to provide additional security from any financial fluctuations the council may experience and were built from investment income and deferred Member priorities, which were paused when the pandemic took hold, and allocated for use to manage the pressures which were forecast to come as a result of the pandemic.

7.4 Members should note that the use of reserves enables a one-off stimulus. They cannot be used for sustainable spending needs and, as such, Members are reminded of the need to reform services for a sustainable medium/long term cost base.

## 8 Government Funding – Dedicated Schools Grant

- 8.1 On 17 December, the Secretary of State for Education announced details of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2021/22. The table below shows the funding to be received by Thurrock:

Dedicated Schools Grant	2020/21	2021/22	Increase
	£m	£m	£m
Schools	127.474	140.936	13.462
Central Services	1.850	1.783	(0.067)
High Needs	25.410	28.266	2.856
Early Years	12.699	12.877	0.179
<b>Total</b>	<b>167.433</b>	<b>183.862</b>	<b>16.430</b>

- 8.2 Thurrock's funding formula in 2021/22 has implemented the following principles consistent with the decision made by Cabinet in December 2020:
- National Funding Formula values have been applied;
  - Unallocated funding of 1.033m has allowed an inflationary increase of 1% to be applied to the Basic Entitlement values;
  - Retained growth fund has been set at £1.213m; and
  - Schools Forum have agreed a £0.673m transfer from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support increase demand for Specialist placements and Education, Health and Care Plans.
- 8.3 As part of November's Spending Review, the Chancellor announced a £44m investment in 2021/22 for local authorities to increase hourly funding rates paid in the next financial year to childcare providers for the government's free childcare entitlements.
- 8.4 As a result of this, ESFA have confirmed that in 2021/22 the hourly funding rates for all local authorities will increase by 8p an hour for the two-year-old entitlement and, for the vast majority of areas, by 6p an hour for the three- and four-year-old entitlements.
- 8.5 In order to support settings Thurrock is to increase the rates paid by 8p an hour, from April 2021. The hourly rates will increase to £5.23 for the two-year-old entitlement and to £4.36 for the three- and four-year-old entitlement.
- 8.6 Further information for the Dedicated Schools Grant is shown at Appendix 6.

## 9 Capital Programme

- 9.1 The Capital Programme plays an understated role in not just supporting and maintaining the borough's and the council's infrastructure but also includes strategic and place making schemes supporting both the place making and commercial agendas.

9.2 The following sources of funding are available to the General Fund:

- Capital Receipts – these are the receipts realised from the disposal of capital assets such as land and buildings. The Property Board, at the request of Cabinet, continues to strategically challenge the use of assets and which results in an outcome based on the simple ethos of Release – Reuse - Retain;
- Grants and Contributions - these could be ad hoc grants awarded from government or other funding agencies or contributions from developers and others;
- Prudential Borrowing – the Council is able to increase its borrowing to finance schemes as long as they are considered affordable and are deemed to meet the public good; and
- Revenue – the Council can charge capital costs directly to the General Fund but the pressure on resources means that this is not recommended.

### **Current Programme**

9.3 Before considering the new proposals, it is worth reflecting on the allocations that have been agreed over recent years. These are summarised in Appendix 4 but, covering the period 2020/21 through to 2023/24, total over £299m with £237m still to be spent as at 1 January 2021.

9.4 Set out below are the major schemes that are included within the current programme over that period that are already committed and many underway:

The widening of the A13	Stanford-le-Hope Interchange
Purfleet Regeneration	New Educational facilities
A13 Eastbound Slip Road	The HRA Transforming Homes programme
Civic Offices Development	HRA New Build Schemes
Thameside Theatre	Highways infrastructure
Grays Town Centre and Underpass	

9.5 As noted, and in light of Covid-19 and the funding gaps identified in the MTFs, no further funding for feasibility projects is sought for 2021/22. However as the detailed review of assets develops this will enable longer term decisions that support an asset management strategy that aligns with the Council priorities.

## **10 Draft Capital Proposals**

10.1 There have been a number of schemes that can be seen as projects in their own right. These have been included at Appendix 5 and will, in the main, be

known to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in one form or another.

- 10.2 Having reviewed all of the other capital requests, they fall within one of three categories and are summarised in the table below. The amounts have been calculated using the respective bid totals and would be under the responsibility of a relevant Transformation Board or Directors' Board for allocation and monitoring:

<b>Responsible Board</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>2021/22 £m</b>	<b>2022/23 £m</b>	<b>2023/24 £m</b>
Service Review	These could include new systems that create efficiencies, upgrades to facilities to increase income potential and enhancements to open spaces to reduce ongoing maintenance.	0.500	0.500	0.500
Digital	The council has been progressing steadily towards digital delivery, both with residents and amongst officers. This budget will allow for further progression as well as ensuring all current systems are maintained to current versions and provide for end of life replacement.	2.260	0.372	0.170
Property	This budget will provide for all operational buildings including the Civic Offices, libraries, depot and Collins House. It will allow for essential capital maintenance and minor enhancements.	1.290	0.00	0.00

- 10.3 In addition, the capital programme also includes the HRA, Highways and Education. These are largely funded by government grants and rents and will be considered by their respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Cabinet under separate reports.

- 10.4 Highways are expected to receive in the region of £4m per annum from the Department of Transport whilst Education are expected to receive a further £4m in 2021/22 from the Department for Education with further allocations for free schools.

## **11 Other Capital Recommendations**

11.1 In previous years, the recommendations to Council have also included delegations to Cabinet to agree additions to the capital programme under the following criteria:

- If additional third party resources are secured, such as government grants and s106 agreements, for specific schemes; and
- Where a scheme is identified that can be classed as 'spend to save' – where it will lead to cost reductions or income generation that will, as a minimum, cover the cost of borrowing.

11.2 The delegation requested is that any approval is deemed to be part of the capital programme and that the necessary prudential indicators set out in the Capital Strategy are amended accordingly.

11.3 This approach means that estimated amounts for schemes that may or may not take place are not included in the programme, removing the need for agreed provisions that may not be required.

## **12 Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

12.1 The issues and options are set out in the body of this report in the context of the latest MTFS and informed by discussions with relevant Portfolio Holders and Directors' Board.

12.2 The key option arising from this report is on the level of Council Tax that sets the overall budget envelope for the coming and subsequent years.

## **13 Reasons for Recommendation**

13.1 The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget annually. This report sets out the budget pressures in 2020/21 and recommends a balanced budget for 2021/22 to the Council.

## **14 Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

14.1 This report has been developed in consultation with the Leader, Portfolio Holders and Directors' Board.

14.2 Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered factors of this report at their meeting on 21 January 2021. Main areas of discussion included:

- The need to seek further funding support from Central Government;
- The concern that Council Tax will be rising by circa 10% over a 3 year period;
- The need to look at wider opportunities to expand commercial income generation within the current regulations;
- The need to accelerate new ways of working to support further cost savings; and

- The need to consider wider opportunities for working with other Local Authorities to also support further cost savings.

## **15 Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

- 15.1 The implementation of previous savings proposals has already reduced service delivery levels and our ability to meet statutory requirements, impacting on the community and staff. This budget continues the rebuild of key service budgets with real growth allocated to Children's and Adults' Social Care and Homelessness.
- 15.2 Whilst the direct impact on frontline services is low from the new proposals, the efficiencies could have an effect if not properly managed, as could be expected.

## **16 Implications**

### **16.1 Financial**

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

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report and the appendices. The report sets out a balanced budget for 2021/22 on the basis that proposed funding decisions and actions to deliver savings are supported by members.

Council officers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the Council can contain spend within its available resources. Regular budget monitoring reports will continue to come to Cabinet and be considered by the Directors' Board and management teams in order to maintain effective controls on expenditure. Austerity measures in place are continually reinforced across the Council in order to reduce ancillary spend and to ensure that everyone is aware of the importance and value of every pound of the taxpayers money that is spent by the Council.

Members should note that the actions set out do not address the underlying budgets issues in subsequent years. Further savings will be required in addition to those identified to date. Given the significant funding gaps that remain it is essential the Council supports the further measures required to create a sustainable MTFs and in a timely fashion that recognises the lead in time that significant savings require.



## 16.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance and  
Monitoring Office**

There are statutory requirements of the Council's Section 151 Officer in relation to setting a balanced budget. The Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Section 114) prescribes that the responsible financial officer "must make a report if he considers that a decision has been made or is about to be made involving expenditure which is unlawful or which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency to the authority". This includes an unbalanced budget.

## 16.3 Diversity and Equality

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

There are no specific diversity and equalities implications as part of this report. A comprehensive Community and Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) will be completed for any specific savings proposals developed to address future savings requirements and informed by consultation outcomes to feed into final decision making. The cumulative impact will also be closely monitored and reported to Members.

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

The council's current investments continue to contribute towards the green agenda through supporting renewable energy schemes across the UK. Part of the budget surplus had previously been allocated to supporting climate change but, with the budget pressures the council now faces, this, along with other such allocations, has been centralised back into a general reserve to support the budget in this year and next.

## 17 Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Budget working papers held in Corporate Finance.

## 18 Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Report of the Council's Section 151 Officer under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003: Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

- Appendix 2 – Allocation of Growth and Savings to Services
- Appendix 3 – Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Appendix 4 – Current Capital Programme Summary
- Appendix 5– New Capital proposals
- Appendix 6 – Dedicated Schools Grant 2020/21

**Report Author:**

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property

## **SECTION 151 OFFICER'S STATEMENT ON THE ADEQUACY OF BALANCES AND THE ROBUSTNESS OF THE BUDGET – BUDGET YEAR 2021/22**

### **Introduction**

The Chief Financial Officer is required to make a statement on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of the budget. This is a statutory duty under section 25 of the 2003 Local Government Act which states the following:

- (1) *Where an authority to which section 32 or 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (billing or major precepting authority) or section 85 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 (c.29) (Greater London Authority) applies is making calculations in accordance with that section, the Chief Finance Officer of the authority must report to it on the following matters:*
- (a) *The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations;  
and*
- (b) *The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.*
- (2) *An authority to which a report under this section is made shall have regard to the report when making decisions about the calculations in connection with which it is made.*

This includes reporting and taking into account:

- The key assumptions in the proposed budget and to give a view on the robustness of those assumptions; and
- The key risk areas in the budget and to assess the adequacy of the Council's reserves when reviewing the potential financial impact of these risk areas on the finances of the Council.

This report has to be considered by Council as part of the budget approval and Council Tax setting process.

This document concentrates on all of the Council's budgets but, in addition, it also considers key medium term issues faced by the Council.

### **Impact of Covid-19 and Ongoing Risks**

Whilst it is clear that Covid-19 has had a devastating effect on individuals, communities, businesses and the economy, this section concentrates on the impact on Thurrock Council's financial position.

The estimated impact currently stands at £17m for the 2020/21 financial year and has been met from government support in both direct grants and compensation towards the reduction in fees and charges achievable, with the balance being met from the council's budgeted surplus of £4m. Current forecasts for 2020/21 are a breakeven position and no surplus.

Key pressures have come from:

- Adults' Social Care £4.8m – the ASC market has required resilience support due to both increased costs and the fact that Thurrock Council is, nationally, low cost in this service area. The service has also seen an increase in demand and a temporary suspension to the charging and review process;
- Children's Services £3.7m – increase in referrals and loss of income;
- Environment and Highways £2.8m – public transport subsidies, enforcement staffing costs and temporary mortuary facilities. Loss of income for parking & enforcement and commercial waste;
- Homelessness £1.5m – cost of increased homelessness activity; and
- Other – cost of Operation Shield, ICT and losses of income such as the Theatre and Planning.

Whilst the above has a direct impact on the current financial year, a number of assumptions on the ongoing impact have been built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2021/22-24.

In addition, there are ongoing impacts – the full extent not yet known – on local taxation:

- Council Tax – there has been an increase in Local Council Tax Scheme claimants and an associated increase of £700k in the budget for this. The final impact of this is unknown though and is unlikely to be clear until the furlough scheme has ceased; and
- Business Rates – a mix of the furlough scheme, business rate discounts and financial grants may well be masking the true impact of the pandemic on local businesses.

The MTFS assumes some reductions and less growth in both of these areas with associated core income reductions.

### **Borrowing and Investments**

The council currently has a net debt position circa £400m although this includes Covid-19 related borrowing. £161m of this relates to the Housing Revenue Account. Gross borrowing is circa £1.4bn but is offset by circa £1bn owed to the council from repayable investments.

These investments currently return a surplus in excess of £30m per annum that has been used in recent years to:

- Increase reserves;
- Maintain or enhance services levels; and
- Provide additional services outside of the council's core offer.

This has undoubtedly strengthened the council's financial resilience that has subsequently supported the council's response to the pandemic and reduced the impact on services in both the current and next financial years.

The council has now ceased any new investment activity and this includes not replacing any maturing investments in the future.

There are risks associated with investments, the most significant being:

- Any investment can also result in a capital loss through, for instance, business failure. With the majority of the council's investments in renewable energy a material impact is considered unlikely;
- A reduction in annual returns. This is more likely in the current economic environment but is likely to only impact for the short to medium term;
- Early redemption of investments. A Bond issuer is entitled to redeem their debt earlier than the maturity date and will lead to a net reduction in the council's annual finances; and
- Interest Rates. The interest rates secured by the council are dependent on the availability of finance and the source. Reports in previous months have recognised that the council has accessed funding from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and this does incur higher rates.

Availability of finance has become more difficult for the council in recent months as lending by other public bodies has reduced. The PWLB has implemented new rules since November 2020 that does not allow the PWLB to be used by a council that plans to take out investments in the future purely for yield, even if that is only a fraction of the borrowing requirement. This should not be an issue for Thurrock Council as refinancing historic debt, even if that relates to investments take out in the past, is not affected.

### **MTFS and Local Government Finance**

Since 2010, the council has consistently set budgets that did not require the use of reserves for core expenditure and, each year, has stayed within the agreed budget envelope.

It should be noted though that whilst there has been strong financial management within services, the main contributor to the above achievements has been through the Treasury and Accounting functions, neither of which will be able to support future activity to such an extent. These include:

- Debt refinancing from August 2010 – a move away from financing long term debt through the PWLB to accessing short term debt from the inter-local authority treasury market;
- Changes to the council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) approach that has resulted in significant annual savings and large one off gains that has allowed the council to increase reserves and to provide the finance to exit the Strategic Service Provision contract realising £3m per annum savings; and
- Investments that contribute in excess of £30m per annum to the council's financial position.

Throughout recent months, the council has consistently reported a budget gap for the coming three years of £34m of which £19m related to 2021/22. The approach to the 2021/22 budget has been through a mix of measures that either provide an

ongoing benefit to the council or serve as a one off solution that simply defers the inherent budget pressures into future years. Key measures and their robustness are as follows:

- Council Tax Increases – permanent – a 4.99% increase, the maximum allowed – subject to council approval;
- Government grant of £4m – one off – government support for Covid-19 and confirmed;
- Use of Capital receipts for Transformation Activity – one off - subject to disposals but achievable and robust;
- Use of Reserves – one off – confirmed;
- Reduction of Allowances – permanent – subject to consultation so not yet confirmed; and
- Vacant Post savings – one off - £4m equates to approximately 100 staff. Whilst the impact on service delivery could be significant, the likelihood of achieving this saving is high.

As such, I consider that the budget plans for the 2021/22 financial year are robust subject to the council approving council tax increases totalling 4.99%.

There is far less certainty over the following years. The deferment of pressures in the 2021/22 budget result in a forecast deficit for the following two years of £25m.

Whilst this report only considers the next three years, these pressures also need to be seen in the context of years 2024/25 to 2028/29 when considering:

- History shows that the required growth in council's budgets always exceed the ability to raise finance through council tax thus leading to pressures every year; and
- The council's investments will mature over the period 2024-2028 creating the need to meet the lost income currently in excess of £30m per annum.

Thurrock Council also has one of the lowest council taxes of all Unitary Authorities in the country and one of the lowest budgets per head of population. National benchmarking on Adults' Social Care, the council's largest budget, also demonstrates one of the lowest in the country. Considering this context, it is more difficult to see how the council can balance the budget over the next six to seven years without significant reductions to services and staffing levels.

There are a number of considerations regarding the national picture on local government finance, the impact of most is still unknown:

- In November 2020, the Chancellor announced the outcome of a one-year spending review and a commitment to a multi-year spending review later in 2021. The relevance of this is that there is no indication of government support or council tax levels beyond this coming year meaning that the council needs to plan within the MTFS parameters and assumptions published as part of this report. As such, all savings plans need to be agreed, consulted upon and largely implemented before any announcements are due to be made;

- The spending review should be supported by the Fair Funding Review that has been deferred from the last two financial years;
- The future of Adult Social Care funding remains a national problem but has been further highlighted over the last year from the additional pressures created by the pandemic; and
- There is a clear direction to transfer financial responsibilities and risk from central government to local authorities. Whilst tax raising has been, and continues to be, a key component of this, other examples include capital projects such as the A13 and the East Facing Slips, both of which require contributions from the local authority and for the local authority to take all delivery risk.

Considering all of the above, the council's record of delivering balanced budgets and achieving savings targets provide confidence that the financial pressures can be met. However, this is going to require significant changes to service levels and delivery and the support of Members to achieve this.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

Cabinet agreed a rent increase of 1.5% at its meeting on 10 February 2021. Whilst this is welcome, it also needs to be seen in the context of several years of rent reductions that have impacted on the HRA's ability to meet the levels of improvements and repairs identified within the Stock Condition Survey.

Covid-19 has not yet had a significant impact on rent collection but this will need to be monitored as the furlough scheme is phased out.

Work continues on identifying new build and estate regeneration opportunities with affordability remaining an issue in many cases.

The use of right to buy receipts is being carefully managed to ensure that they are maximised with any repayment to government minimised.

Forecast levels of reserves within the HRA are adequate.

### **Capital Programme**

The capital programme was reviewed during 2020 with a number of schemes paused. The reasons for this were two-fold – the need to minimise future borrowing and the related cost impacts on the MTFs and the need to recognise reductions in staffing levels and, therefore, the ability to deliver the number of projects previously agreed.

As set out above, there is currently a shift to transfer delivery and financial risk – previously borne by organisations such as Highways England – to local authorities. This has been seen on the A13 widening project and will need to be a key consideration when deciding to accept the grant offer to deliver the East Facing Slips.

Key risks within the Capital programme therefore include cost over runs and the relevant delivery resources required.

### **General Fund Reserves**

All councils hold two types of reserves:

- An unallocated balance which, at Thurrock Council, stands at £11m; and
- Ear Marked Reserves that are set aside for specific purposes. The majority of these are restricted to an imposed use and so not available for general support to the council's general Fund budget.

This level of reserves has been considered adequate in recent years and remains so under normal conditions. The pandemic has challenged these norms though but cannot be considered in determining the adequacy due to the high level of uncertainty.

### **Assurance**

Given all these factors, especially given the history of delivering similar savings and the budget within the agreed envelope, I consider the estimates for 2021/22 to be sufficiently robust for approval by the Council. There are challenges and it is dependent on continued strong financial management from officers and Members.

Looking more medium to longer term is far more challenging especially considering the low level of council tax and overall budget envelope.

The Council will need to make strong representations to government regarding the Fair Funding Review and Comprehensive Spending Review consultations in 2021 to demonstrate the low financial base that underpins the council's net budget.

I consider the level of reserves within the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account to be adequate at this time.



## Allocation of Growth and Savings to Services

Directorate	2020/21 Revised budget	Removal of one-off funding	Council Tax charge 1.99%	Council Tax Social Care precept 3%	Business Rates Precept	Social Care Grant	Inflation	Treasury & Central Financng	Social Care Growth	Corporate Growth	Savings	Income loss contingency	Other Grants	Capital receipts	Use of reserves	Indicative Base Budget 2021/22
Adults, Housing and Health	43,513	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2,500	0	(10)	0	0	0	0	46,005
Central Financing	(118,030)	0	(1,653)	(2,480)	(500)	0	0	3,800	0	0	0	0	(200)	0	0	(119,064)
Children's Services	40,648	(441)	0	0	0	(800)	2	0	1,814	0	(7)	0	0	0	0	41,215
Commercial Services	988	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(0)	0	0	0	0	988
Corporate Costs	(1,863)	1,103	0	0	0	0	4,866	100	0	667	(4,800)	1,320	(5,084)	(3,000)	(3,300)	(9,991)
Environment & Highways and Counter	30,714	0	0	0	0	0	759	0	0	0	(765)	0	0	0	0	30,708
Finance, Governance and Property	18,334	(611)	0	0	0	0	65	0	0	0	(70)	0	0	0	0	17,717
Housing General Fund	1,817	(51)	0	0	0	0	19	0	0	0	(0)	0	0	0	0	1,785
HR, OD and Transformation	5,145	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5,145
Place	5,356	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	(3)	0	0	0	0	5,354
Strategy, Communications & Customer Services	3,175	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,175
Treasury	(29,794)	0	0	0	0	0	0	6,758	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(23,037)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,653)</b>	<b>(2,480)</b>	<b>(500)</b>	<b>(800)</b>	<b>5,714</b>	<b>10,657</b>	<b>4,314</b>	<b>667</b>	<b>(5,656)</b>	<b>1,320</b>	<b>(5,284)</b>	<b>(3,000)</b>	<b>(3,300)</b>	<b>0</b>

## Medium Term Financial Strategy

Narrative	2021/22			2022/23	2023/24
	£000's			£000's	£000's
	Non Covid	Covid	Total		
Council Tax Position	(1,301)	2,191	890	(1,081)	(1,500)
Business Rates Position	(395)	51	(345)	(51)	(665)
Government Resources Position	202	0	202	797	784
<b>Net Additional (Reduction) in resources</b>	<b>(1,495)</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>(335)</b>	<b>(1,381)</b>
Inflation and other increases	5,714	0	5,714	4,515	4,665
Treasury	6,758	0	6,758	7,221	4,948
Corporate Growth	1,959	3,022	4,981	2,314	2,314
Commercial Income	0	1,089	1,089	(1,089)	0
<b>Internal Position</b>	<b>14,431</b>	<b>4,111</b>	<b>18,542</b>	<b>12,961</b>	<b>11,927</b>
<b>Core Budget Deficit before intervention</b>	<b>12,936</b>	<b>6,353</b>	<b>19,288</b>	<b>12,626</b>	<b>10,546</b>
Savings Departmental	(756)	0	(756)	(3,341)	(1,635)
General Staffing	(4,800)	0	(4,800)	(100)	(2,000)
Cross Cutting	(100)	0	(100)	(1,250)	(200)
Wider Funding	0	0	0	(250)	(200)
<b>Internal Core Budget Savings</b>	<b>(5,656)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(5,656)</b>	<b>(4,941)</b>	<b>(4,035)</b>
<b>Core Budget Deficit Position</b>	<b>7,280</b>	<b>6,353</b>	<b>13,632</b>	<b>7,685</b>	<b>6,511</b>
<b>Additional Core Budget Savings</b>					
Adult Social Care Precept 3%	(980)	(1,500)	(2,480)	0	0
<b>11. Other funding (not affecting baseline)</b>					
Utilisation of Capital Receipts	(3,000)	0	(3,000)	3,000	0
Use of reserves 2021/22	(3,300)	0	(3,300)	3,300	0
Capital receipts 2022/23	0	0	0	(2,000)	2,000
Use of reserves 2022/23	0	0	0	(2,000)	2,000
Covid Grant	0	(4,853)	(4,853)	4,853	0
	<b>(6,300)</b>	<b>(4,853)</b>	<b>(11,153)</b>	<b>7,153</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>Overall Budget Working Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14,838</b>	<b>10,511</b>

## Current Capital Programme Summary

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend	% Spend against
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	(Dec-20)	CY Forecast
<b>Childrens Service</b>	£'000 11,266	£'000 400	£'000 0	£'000 10,436	£'000 1,231	£'000 0	£'000 7,304	<b>69.99</b>
<b>Adults; Housing and Health</b>								
Provider Services	500	20	0	500	20	0	573	<b>114.60</b>
Better Care	2,151	805	0	744	1,563	648	240	<b>32.00</b>
Community Development	1,632	1,309	0	1,150	1,591	200	685	<b>60.00</b>
Housing General Fund	391	100	35	306	100	120	18	<b>6.00</b>
	<b>4,674</b>	<b>2,234</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>3,274</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>56.15</b>
<b>Environment, Highways &amp; Counter Fraud</b>								
Highways Infrastructure	1,051	0	0	1,051	0	0	-281	<b>-26.74</b>
Highways Maintenance	10,015	3,630	2,450	8,810	4,441	2,845	4,471	<b>51.00</b>
Resident Services	320	1,827	0	320	1,827	0	239	<b>75.00</b>
Environment	7,371	1,030	0	4,366	4,030	0	826	<b>19.00</b>
Counter Fraud & Investigation	250	0	0	250	0	0	12	<b>5.00</b>
	<b>19,007</b>	<b>6,487</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>14,797</b>	<b>10,298</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>5,267</b>	<b>35.60</b>
<b>Place</b>								
Place Delivery - Highways Major Projects	38,405	31,214	0	38,373	31,243	0	27,600	<b>71.93</b>
Place Delivery - Regeneration	8,104	18,311	5,846	7,354	19,061	5,846	2,792	<b>37.97</b>
Planning and Transportation	5,904	5,096	790	2,276	7,935	1,580	844	<b>37.08</b>
	<b>52,413</b>	<b>54,621</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>48,003</b>	<b>58,239</b>	<b>7,426</b>	<b>31,236</b>	<b>65.07</b>
<b>Finance, Governance and Property</b>								
Information Technology	8,330	585	80	4,871	3,680	445	2,024	<b>41.55</b>
Corporate Assets	3,715	7,114	240	2,580	5,720	2,768	679	<b>26.32</b>
	<b>12,045</b>	<b>7,699</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>7,451</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>36.28</b>
<b>HR, OD and Transformation</b>	9,386	4,128	0	9,386	4,128	0	3,127	<b>33.32</b>
<b>Customer Services</b>	283	19	0	218	84	0	104	<b>47.71</b>
<b>Commercial Services</b>	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditure - General</b>	<b>109,092</b>	<b>75,588</b>	<b>9,441</b>	<b>93,009</b>	<b>86,654</b>	<b>14,452</b>	<b>51,257</b>	<b>55.11</b>

## Current Capital Programme Summary

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	<i>Not yet started</i>	18	0	0	0	18	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	8,899	0	0	8,899	0	0	6,490	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	15	0	0	15	0	0	14	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	566	0	0	566	0	0	495	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,768	400	0	956	1,213	0	305	
<b>Total: Childrens Service</b>		<b>11,266</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,436</b>	<b>1,231</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,304</b>	<b>69.99</b>
Page 118	<i>Not yet started</i>	874	648	0	74	800	648	5	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	559	0	0	297	263	0	14	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	215	0	0	215	0	0	215	
	<i>On hold</i>	873	1,050	0	750	1,170	0	639	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,599	536	35	810	1,041	320	185	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	554	0	0	554	0	0	458	
	<b>Total: Adults; Housing and Health</b>		<b>4,674</b>	<b>2,234</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2,700</b>	<b>3,274</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>1,516</b>
Page 118	<i>Not yet started</i>	60	0	0	60	0	0	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	250	0	0	250	0	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	3,930	0	0	930	3,000	0	7	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	11,605	2,757	2,050	11,020	3,343	2,050	4,263	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	232	0	0	7	0	0	7	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	64	0	0	64	0	0	0	
	<i>On hold</i>	1,450	3,434	400	830	3,659	795	621	
	<i>Demand led</i>	1,416	296	0	1,636	296	0	369	
<b>Total: Environment, Highways &amp; Counter Fraud</b>		<b>19,007</b>	<b>6,487</b>	<b>2,450</b>	<b>14,797</b>	<b>10,298</b>	<b>2,845</b>	<b>5,267</b>	<b>35.60</b>
Page 118	<i>Not yet started</i>	3,940	5,385	4,974	1,991	6,527	5,764	34	
	<i>Design stage</i>	2,106	4,035	0	1,697	4,466	0	976	
	<i>Contract formation</i>	131	0	0	0	131	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	40,121	31,802	900	40,059	31,862	900	28,505	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	393	0	0	359	29	0	283	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	161	0	0	161	0	0	12	
	<i>On hold</i>	1,600	11,315	762	1,350	11,565	762	1,101	
	<i>Demand led</i>	3,146	2,084	0	2,136	3,094	0	233	
	<i>Feasibility Stage</i>	815	0	0	250	565	0	92	
<b>Total: Place</b>		<b>52,413</b>	<b>54,621</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>48,003</b>	<b>58,239</b>	<b>7,426</b>	<b>31,236</b>	<b>65.07</b>

## Current Capital Programme Summary

Summary of the 2020/21 General Fund Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	<i>Not yet started</i>	1,590	488	50	100	1,613	415	0	
	<i>Design stage</i>	30	200	0	30	200	0	0	
	<i>Out to tender</i>	37	0	0	37	0	0	0	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	8,690	120	30	6,470	2,340	30	2,390	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	145	1,000	0	145	1,000	0	127	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	125	0	0	125	0	0	17	
	<i>On hold</i>	534	5,838	240	5	3,883	2,724	0	
	<i>Demand led</i>	894	53	0	539	364	44	169	
<b>Total: Finance, Governance and Property</b>		<b>12,045</b>	<b>7,699</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>7,451</b>	<b>9,400</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>2,703</b>	<b>36.28</b>
Page 119	<i>Not yet started</i>	70	0	0	70	0	0	18	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	9,080	3,698	0	9,080	3,698	0	3,152	
	<i>Scheme completed</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	-77	
	<i>Demand led</i>	236	430	0	236	430	0	34	
<b>Total: HR, OD and Transformation</b>		<b>9,386</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,386</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,127</b>	<b>33.32</b>
	<i>Work commenced</i>	278	0	0	213	65	0	99	
	<i>On hold</i>	5	19	0	5	19	0	5	
<b>Total: Customer Services</b>		<b>283</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>47.71</b>
	<i>Work commenced</i>	18	0	0	18	0	0	0	
<b>Total: Commercial Services</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Total Expenditure - General Fund</b>		<b>109,092</b>	<b>75,588</b>	<b>9,441</b>	<b>93,009</b>	<b>86,654</b>	<b>14,452</b>	<b>51,257</b>	<b>55.11</b>

## Current Capital Programme Summary

Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>Adults, Health and Housing</b>								
Provider Services	6,651	2,014	155	5,850	2,131	155	3,013	
Better Care	23,041	0	0	16,688	6,353	0	7,547	
<b>Total Expenditure - HRA</b>	<b>29,692</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>22,538</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>10,560</b>	<b>46.85</b>

Summary of the 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, by scheme status	Project Status	Approved Budget			Projected Outturn			CY Spend (Dec-20)	% Spend against CY Forecast
		2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23		
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
	<i>Design stage</i>	12	0	0	12	0	0	13	
	<i>Work commenced</i>	29,303	1,890	155	22,155	8,360	155	10,235	
	<i>Completed retention o/s</i>	377	124	0	371	124	0	312	
<b>Total Adults, Health and Housing - HRA</b>		<b>29,692</b>	<b>2,014</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>22,538</b>	<b>8,484</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>10,560</b>	<b>46.85</b>

## New Capital Projects

Project	Board	Project Ambition	Total Value	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Oracle Cloud - functional enhancements	Digital Board	Oracle Cloud is by nature a platform that will evolve through the continual introduction of new modules and functionality. The bid is to support the implementation of digital assistants initially in the Human Resources module. This is a pilot scheme with the potential to generate internal savings and enhance the ability of the Council to sell payroll services to other entities. The pilot can then form the basis for assessment of the potential benefits in other Oracle modules.	410,000	410,000	-	-
Wharf Road, SLH - Drainage scheme	Service Review Board	<p>The bid is for the renewal of existing Highway pump equipment and the associated highway drainage assets. Works required include mechanical, electrical and civils engineering to support the implementation. This will be implemented whilst facilitating traffic and pedestrian flows to the south of Wharf Road and 24/7 pumping to ensure the Highway is not flooded whilst works in operation.</p> <p>These works build on the £85,000 funding provision for a detailed survey of topography, hydrology, infrastructure (including coring, excavation and re-</p>	575,000	575,000	-	-

**New Capital Projects**

		instatement) and review of the pump station and catchment area.				
--	--	---	--	--	--	--



## New Capital Projects

Project	Board	Project Ambition	Total Value	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Highway Street Lighting Central Management System	Service Review Board	<p>The bid is to install a Highways Street Lighting Central Management System (CMS) a web based system which allows for approx. 21000 assets to be dynamically controlled in real time. It also requires the installation of seven base stations which will interact with the existing street lighting infrastructure enabling the Council to monitor and adapt lighting levels in response to and as a consequence of increasing financial, safety, legal and environmental requirements. The bid will generate future energy and carbon dioxide savings by enabling the majority of the lighting assets to be dimmed as required. A reduction of 25% energy between 20:00 hrs and 06:00 hrs would give a yearly saving of approx. £173,000. If we increased the dimming further to 40% that would result in annual energy savings of £206,660 It would also reduce our CO2 emissions annually by approx. 1,524,000 kg.</p> <p>With a CMS system faults are also automatically registered real time, pre-empting concerns being raised by residents. (In 2019/20 street lighting received over 650 customer enquiries online and attended over 900 maintenance faults)</p>	1,038,000	519,000	519,000	-

## New Capital Projects

Project	Board	Project Ambition	Total Value	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Highways Lit signage replacement programme	Service Review Board	<p>A programme of work to replace damaged and structurally corroded lit signage assets throughout the borough over a minimum of 3 years. Lit signage is a statutory requirement used to display regulatory and warning signs for road users and pedestrians. There are approx. 2,500 lit signposts within the borough and at least 20% are estimated to require replacing (500 assets). This is a cumulative problem linked to the installation of approximately 1,850 plastic coated posts between many years ago. These posts have corroded from the inside out essentially, as moisture has gathered between the steel posts and the plastic coating causing in many cases severe rusting and corrosion, this compromises the structural integrity of the asset and presents a real danger to road users and pedestrians.</p> <p>New posts would have a life expectancy of 30+ years. Costs for emergency attendance to cut assets down to make safe would be avoided and there would also be also some energy &amp; C02 emissions savings, using more efficient LED luminaires where renewals have not been previously completed under the LED programme.</p>	1,039,000	353,000	343,000	343,000

## New Capital Projects

Project	Board	Project Ambition	Total Value	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
A1014 The Manorway - Footway Protection	Service Review Board	<p>The bid is for the implementation of raised kerbs and bollards to protect against damage caused by HGV parking, plus renewal of gullies with hinged lockable covers.</p> <p>The section of The Manorway with the concerns associated with it has an ever expanding HGV movement and associated vehicle movements to DP World and associated Industries.</p> <p>The existing 2-lane (each direction) dual carriageway was built in the early 1970's and has received no strengthening works to the carriageway or footway which has a low level kerb making it attractive as an alternative parking location for HGV drivers. Extensive damage has already been caused to the footway/cycleway which place the Authority at risk to our inability to be able to rectify the footway from existing budgets as the costs in doing so outstrip the budget available.</p> <p>The specific of concern is beyond the Corringham area heading towards Coryton, which is unlit and also prone to gully theft. It is proposed to renew the gullies in this section with hinged lockable gullies which are less prone to theft.</p>	915,000	305,000	305,000	305,000

## New Capital Projects

Project	Board	Project Ambition	Total Value	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
A1014 The Manorway - Carriageway repairs	Service Review Board	The bid is for the reconstruction and deep inlay resurfacing of The Manorway between Stanford Interchange and The Sorrells junction. The depth of reconstruction will be up to 600mm in isolated areas and deep inlay on areas of rutting. Works would be undertaken via road closure and/or contra-flow. The bid also supports the longer term effectiveness of additional resurfacing works planned to be delivered by DP World. The Manorway has an ever expanding HGV movement and associated vehicle movements to DP World and associated industries. It forms the only authorised access route to DP World and failure of the carriageway would result in all traffic being diverted through the surrounding the residential area, which is formed of Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope and Fobbing.	820,000	820,000	-	-

### Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22

1. In December, the Secretary of State for Education announced details of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) allocations for 2021/22. The table below shows the funding to be received in Thurrock:

<b>Dedicated Schools Grant</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>Increase</b>
	£m	£m	£m
Schools Block	140.936	127.474	13.462
Central Services Block	1.783	1.850	(0.067)
High Needs Block	28.266	25.410	2.856
Early Years Block	12.877	12.699	0.179
<b>Total Funding Allocation</b>	<b>183.862</b>	<b>167.433</b>	<b>16.430</b>

#### Schools Block

2. The increase in funding of £13.462m is as a result of grants transferring into the Dedicated Schools Grant of £6.269m; increase to funding rates of £4.192m; increase of 468 pupils, realising additional funding of £2.629m and an increase in the growth fund by £0.372m, as shown in the table below:

<b>Schools Block</b>			<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
2020/21				127.474
Protected funding for the pay and pensions grants transferred into the Dedicated Schools Grant			6.269	
Increase in Funding		4.163		
Increase in Premises value		0.029	4.192	
Increase in Pupil Numbers	2021/22	27,835		
	2020/21	27,367		
		468	2.629	
Increase in Growth Fund	2021/22	1.758		
	2020/21	1.386	0.372	13.462
<b>Schools Block 2021/22</b>				<b>140.936</b>

3. In 2021/22, this funding will continue to be distributed using the Schools National Funding Formulae (NFF). The key aspects of the formula are:
- The incorporation of the 2019 update to the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), ensuring that the deprivation funding through the NFF continues to target schools most likely to need additional funding
  - Funding previously received through the Teachers' Pay Grant (TPG) and Teachers' Pension Employer Contribution Grants (TPECG), has been added to schools' baselines; by increasing the basic per pupil funding.
  - The minimum per pupil funding levels will increase from £3,750 to £4,180 for primary schools and £5,000 to £5,415 for secondary schools. This increase reflects the transfer of grant into the DSG and increase to funding rates.

It remains the government's intention to move to a 'hard' NFF, where budgets will be set on the basis of a single, national formula.

## Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22

4. In 2021/22 local authorities continue to have discretion over their local schools funding formulae. Cabinet agreed on 9th December 2020 that Thurrock's funding formula in 2021/22 would implement the following principles:

- National Funding Formula values to be applied;
- Any unallocated funding will be applied to the Basic Entitlement values;
- Growth fund to be retained to support sufficiency of places.

In addition the Schools Forum have agreed to transfer up to 0.5% (£0.673m) from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block to support increase demand for Specialist placements and Education, Health and Care Plans.

### **Central Services Block**

5. In 2021/22, historic commitments funding to be received will be reduced again by 20%. For Thurrock this is an annual reduction of £0.256m.

### **High Needs Block**

6. The High Needs NFF for 2021/22 remains unchanged. However, with over £730 million of additional funding, the formula will ensure that every local authority will receive an increase of at least 8%.
7. Thurrock is to receive an increase of £2.794m or 11%. Whilst the increase is welcome, Thurrock continues to experience high level of demand for Specialist places and Education, Health and Care Plans. The 2020/21 projected outturn is an overspend of £2.6m.
8. A very challenging and stretching balanced budget is proposed but within this key risks of £1.9m have been identified, if demand continues are the same rate as in 2020/21.
9. The annual meeting with the ESFA, expected to be held in March 2021, will discuss the DSG Management Plan, current EHCP trends and options to address the historic DSG deficit.

### **Early Years Block**

10. The Early Years funding allocation has increased by £44 million in 2021/22. The rate paid to Thurrock will increase by 8p per hour for the two-year-old entitlement and by 6p per hour for the three-and-four-year-old entitlements.
11. The Early Years Block will return to being funded based on the January census. The January 2021 census will be used to fund the spring and summer terms. The January 2022 census will be used to fund the autumn 2021 and spring 2022.
12. The impact of Covid on the spring 2021 census will need to be closely monitored, especially if demand in the summer term returns to pre-Covid levels.

### Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22

13. In order to support settings Thurrock is to increase the rates paid by 8p an hour, from April 2021. The hourly rates will increase to £5.23 for the two-year-old entitlement and to £4.36 for the three-and four-year-old entitlement.

#### Dedicated Schools Grant – Deficit

14. The table below shows the projected outturn position for 2020/21:

<b>DSG Deficit - Summary</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Deficit</b>
		<b>% of DSG</b>
Historic Deficit 2018/19	(2.656)	
DSG 2019/20	0.678	
Deficit @ 31/03/20	(1.978)	1.26%
DSG 2020/21	(1.617)	
Projected Deficit @ 31/03/21	(3.595)	2.15%

#### Conditions of Grant

15. The Dedicated Schools Grant conditions of grant changed in 2020/21 to clarify that councils are not expected to use their general reserves to fund deficits in the DSG but must carry forward overspends. The aim is to stop Local Authorities from reducing funding for other services to cover deficits, which are mostly due to high needs pressures. The Department for Education wants DSG deficits to be covered from DSG income over time. No timescale has been set for the length of this process.
16. The DSG conditions of grant requires that any LA with an overall deficit on its DSG account at the end of the 2019/20 financial year, or whose DSG surplus has substantially reduced during the year, must be able to present a plan to the Department for Education (DfE) for managing their future DSG spend.
17. The DSG management plan is currently being populated and will be presented to the Schools Forum in March and to the ESFA at the annual conversation meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank



<b>24 February 2021</b>	<b>ITEM: 14</b>
<b>Council</b>	
<b>Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Councillor Rob Gledhill, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour	
<b>This report is public</b>	

## Introduction

As the portfolio holder for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) this report is presented to update on the work of the teams within Thurrock Council whose role it is to keep residents safe. This report covers the period from April 2019 to date.

We recognise and fully understand that anti-social behaviour has always been a key priority for residents, therefore this is a key priority for Cabinet, and it is for this reason I have continued to be the Cabinet Member responsible. The areas that fall under the remit are:

- Community Safety Partnership
- Environmental Enforcement
- Counter Fraud and Investigation
- Housing Anti-Social Behaviour
- Emergency Planning and Resilience
- CCTV Service
- Public Protection

Whilst Essex Police maintain law and order in Thurrock by protecting members of the public and their property, Thurrock Council as a responsible authority have a legal duty to work with our partners to tackle crime and disorder locally and work in partnership to prevent crime, reduce the fear of crime and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

The Council's Public Protection team have continued to provide a crucial service to the Borough in keeping residents safe; in particular, the Trading Standards team, which handles over a third of all seized goods at the UK's ports and continues to lead in an exemplary way.

In January 2020, the Counter Fraud & Investigation function moved into this Portfolio aligning the capabilities in that service with the wider-public protection services, improving the response to serious issues that could affect residents and businesses.

Across the teams, we are taking every possible action, including the issuing of Community Protection Warnings/Notices, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements, Closure Orders and injunctions to protect the community from those that would cause residents harm.

## **1. COVID-19 Response**

- 1.1 In direct response to the pandemic and in the efforts to encourage compliance and support front line emergency services, the Environmental Enforcement team provided proactive foot patrols in high footfall areas such as high streets, parks, and open spaces that were identified as hot spot locations for groups gathering in breach of the government rules and guidance. Since March 2019, Officers have engaged with over 5,000 groups, promoting compliance with the social distancing rules and actively reducing, and deterring non-compliance. The officers gathered information and Intel, which was shared with police partners.
- 1.2 The Emergency Planning and Resilience team have been supporting the Council's response to COVID-19 since March 2020, with senior officers from across the Council attending a Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) twice per week to ensure a shared situational awareness and response to the pandemic.
- 1.3 The Counter Fraud and Investigation work undertaken in Thurrock during the pandemic has drawn national attention and the team have now been commissioned by the government to lead nationally on the response to serious organised crime for COVID-19 support schemes. The newly funded team have been working across the country pursuing over 82 individuals and recovering over £3.2m of public finance.
- 1.4 The Licensing Team have contributed towards the Councils response to reduce the spread of COVID-19 through their work with hospitality venues. During the period of the pandemic when premises were allowed to open, the team worked with businesses to ensure precautions were in place. The team ensured that hospitality businesses were complying with their obligations under the regulations to provide signage, guiding visitors around the one-way systems and giving indications of separation distances, as well as ensuring they collected the relevant customer data to facilitate the follow up by test and trace should an outbreak unfortunately arise at the premises.
- 1.5 Environmental Health Officers from the Food Team have dealt with hundreds of complaints from residents regarding failure to observe COVID-19 restrictions. The enforcement approach has escalated to meet the threat in line with the Councils Enforcement Policy. In many cases, premises have complied voluntarily when approached by officers but on occasion, it has been necessary to take action that is more formal. An example of this includes a hairdresser's salon where it was necessary to serve a prohibition notice to achieve compliance.

- 1.6 Considerable work has been undertaken at Winter Wonderland, Lakeside in conjunction with Thurrock's Public Health team to help safeguard residents using the ice rink and wider Winter Wonderland attractions from the virus. Environmental Health officers provided advice and guidance to the business to allow it to operate as safely as possible. However, the Environmental Health Officers had to serve three Direction Orders on behalf of Public Health to restrict the capacity of people across the site, together with the numbers on the ice rink. Once the Order was served, EHOs undertook COVID-19 monitoring visits during evenings and at weekends to ensure compliance with the Order. This event involved considerable work by Public Health and the EHO team to allow the event to continue to operate in a COVID safe way.
- 1.7 Environmental Health Officers from the Food Team have assisted with the Public Health operation to test and trace those infected with COVID-19, this has involved working evenings and weekends and sourcing additional specialist staff to reinforce the existing team to upscale this area of work. This has greatly assisted the national effort to trace and isolate those infected with virus and thereby reducing the spread in the community.
- 1.8 Trading Standards have undertaken work on the closure of businesses where COVID-19 regulations have mandated it. Officers have been monitoring businesses and intervening where needed to ensure compliance with the rules. In many instances, businesses have complied but Trading Standards have had to serve nine prohibition notices to date on businesses that declined to accept advice and close to comply with the regulations. Whilst many of these have applied to small retail establishments, some work has involved more determined resistance to the regulations by national chains including Carpet Right and Wren Kitchens who initially adopted a different interpretation to the regulations than the Council. Following legal advice and the service of prohibition notices these matters have now been resolved. In the case of Carpet Right that has a head office in Thurrock, our Trading Standards service were called upon to advice to numerous other authorities on the prohibition notice to help facilitate its imposition across much of the UK.
- 1.9 When phase one of lockdown started, Environmental Protection continued to run the weekend out of hours noise service and dealt with a number of ongoing noise, light and bonfire nuisance matters by way of abatement notices, collecting evidence and retrospective enforcement action. The easing of lockdown in the summer this year saw a rise in noise nuisance complaints where groups of young people were congregating on land using amplification equipment. The team continued to deal with these while working the weekend out of hour's noise team to bring abatement where possible, within COVID-19 constraints and taking enforcement action against organisers where they could be identified and traced to a premise
- 1.10 Lastly, the Health and Safety team have been working with premises that have remained open during various phases of the lockdown to ensure robust risk assessments and precautions are in place to reduce the spread of the virus among staff and visitors. Premises specific advice has assisted business owners to mitigate the risks and reduce infection. The team have also

provided similar advice and support to council departments to assist the Council in reducing sickness among staff.

## **2. Community Safety Partnership**

2.1 Community Safety Partnerships were established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to ensure joint working between partners to reduce crime and promote public safety in a locality. In 2011, they were extended to include the duty to reduce re-offending.

2.2 The Council is a statutory member of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership, as are Essex Police; the Community Rehabilitation Company; the National Probation Service; the Clinical Commissioning Group; and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service. The responsible authorities who form the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) have a legal duty to work together to tackle local crime and disorder in the area and to have in place a partnership plan for that area, setting out the CSP's priorities.

### **2.3 ASB Data**

2.3.1 ASB incidents reported to Essex Police in 2019 compared to 2018 declined by 9.9% (467) compared to the Essex decrease of 10.9%. ASB incidents reported to Thurrock Council declined by 20.5% (42).

2.3.2 Grays Riverside remained the Ward with the highest number of reported incidents. There were significant reductions in ASB reported in Tilbury Riverside and Ockendon wards following action plans having been put in place – including work with the local schools.

2.3.3 The top 3 Wards, of Grays Riverside, West Thurrock & Chadwell St Mary, all went against the District and County trend of decreased ASB recorded by Essex Police. Chadwell St Mary increased by the greatest percentage (24.8%) resulting in a number of actions to address this, including 3 resident meetings and target hardening. Nuisance Vehicle incidents decreased by 27.9% (95)

2.3.4 Essex Police recorded ASB data for 2020 shows a significant increase, however, this reflects the four new ASB categories in relation to Covid-19 and a meaningful comparison is not available. All partners acknowledge that the perception of residents concerning ASB is not always aligned to reporting.

2.3.5 Following the restrictions placed to limit the spread of the worldwide pandemic, ASB levels reported to both Thurrock Council and Essex Police have seen a significant increase, in part due to the reporting of breaches in relation to COVID-19 guidance.

2.3.6 With many people confined to their homes there have been an increased number of reporting in relation to domestic living noise. Appreciating the impact this can have on people's health and wellbeing, the officers use all enforcement options available to stop the disruptions.

2.3.7 In response to the recorded increase in violent crime and the concerns raised by residents in relation to gangs and anti-social behaviour, Cabinet allocated £1m of surplus funding in 2018/19 to tackle anti-social behaviour in the borough. This enabled the recruitment of an ASB officer for 3 years within the Councils Community Safety team. The funding also enabled four additional police officers to complement the Town Centre Teams. The team have increased visible policing and their priority is to tackle ASB in the busiest areas, protect the vulnerable and tackle crimes against businesses.

2.3.8 Funding in 2019/20 enabled the Community Safety Partnership to resource Operation Caesar, run by Essex Police to tackle the nuisance caused by off road vehicles behaving in an anti-social manner. Funding enabled operations to run until September 2020.

2.3.9 In 2019, reports of Nuisance Vehicle incidents to Essex Police decreased by 27.9% (95 incidents). It is disappointing to note increased reporting in 2020; however, some increased reporting is a direct result of confidence in reporting following previous action taken.

2.3.10 For the 12 months – July 2019 to June 2020 operation results were:

<b>ACTION TAKEN</b>	<b>Jul 19 - Jun 20</b>
Incidents attended	124
Fail to stop	86
S 59 warnings	43
Intel reports	33
Stop search	29
Other traffic process/offence	19
Careless driving	18
Words of advice (engaged whilst setting up to ride)	13
Arrests	7
S165	6
Stolen vehicles recovered	5
Vehicle search	4
Prohibition notice	4
Excess Speed	3
CPWs	3
Vehicle seized	3
Driving otherwise than in accordance with a license	3
No seatbelt	1

2.3.11 The local authority provided funding to Operation Raptor, which is the response to tackling gang related violence. In 19/20, the operation was paramount to the success of obtaining and enforcing gang injunctions against members of the C17 gang and the on-going operations to target urban street gangs and county drug lines operating in the Thurrock area.

2.3.12 Following the obtaining of the injunctions a reduction in reported ASB incidents in all of the targeted areas: Grays; High Street, train station, park, Seabrooke Rise and Beach; Lakeside Shopping Centre and Chafford Hundred train station; and Dilkes Wood, Danbury Crescent and Cawdor Avenue in Ockendon was seen. There was also a 25% reduction of drug offences in Ockendon, however all areas saw an increase in violent crime. The increase in violence may be as a result of a gap in the drugs market that has been created following the successful enforcement against C17 and county drug lines operating in the Thurrock area. Rival urban street gangs from neighbouring areas and county drug lines could potentially be looking to exploit market opportunities.

2.3.13 Since April 2020, Op Raptor have continued to enforce the Gang Injunctions obtained on 11 members of the C17 gang and a further interim injunction has been served on one member from September 2020.

2.3.14 The Council takes all reports of potential cuckooing – whereby gangs or a County Line target vulnerable members of the community and is synonymous with persons from out of the area taking over a premises for free to give them a base within a community with which to supply drugs. One recent report has resulted in joined up activity and patrols by Essex Police, and Environment Enforcement Officers, with welfare checks resulting in an arrest of an individual in the area for drug offences.

2.3.15 Operation Adaminaby was set up in August 2019 as a partnership operation Between Thurrock Council Environmental Enforcement Officers and the Community Policing Teams. A total of 14 operations have been completed to date. The aim of the operation is to proactively conduct out of hour's patrols to ASB hot spot areas, as directed by intelligence from the community and the Cleaner Greener Team, to target the anti-social use and littering of nitrous oxide canisters.

2.3.16 The results from Operation Adaminaby to date are as follows:

- 32 Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to fly tipping, littering, urinating, fly Posting and Duty of Care
- 6 Notice in relation to Duty of Care (commercial waste s34)
- 12 Police community resolutions for possession of cannabis
- 2 x male arrested for unfit through drugs in charge of a motor vehicle (possession Cannabis and Cocaine), and;
- 36 Community Protection Warning Notice (30 for ASB, 3 for HGV parking)

#### 2.4 Council funded Community Policing Team Operations to address ASB in 2019/20

2.4.1 In response to an increase in reporting of ASB and robberies around the station in Stanford Le Hope, with support from Council funding, there were over 40 additional hours of visible policing in the area. This resulted in 1 vehicle search, 3 person searches, which in turn resulted in 1 cannabis

warning and multiple groups of youths dispersed, as well as positive engagement with local residents and businesses.

2.4.2 Operation Starfish was put in place in Chadwell St Mary to respond to an increase in ASB and vehicle crime. This part funded operation led to 82 additional hours of visible policing with 1 x vehicle search, 12 persons stopped and searched, 1 x cannabis warning issued and 6 intelligence reports generated. It also led to 1 arrest for possession of a knife, which resulted in a charge, remanded and sentenced to 6 months custody the day after

2.4.3 Following reports of ASB and young people using drugs in Little Thurrock, specifically Delafield Park, Council funding provided 32 hours of additional high visibility policing. Engagement with young people and local residents took place and there were no persons causing issues when police were present. There has been no further reporting of issues at the location, post the operation taking place.

2.4.4 Op Natal was the policing operation put in place in Tilbury in response to increased reporting of ASB. This was part funded by the Council and ran from August 19 to Jan 20. The operation was multi-faceted and there were 7 deployments with a total of 48+ additional visible police hours. Some of the deployments have also been jointly conducted with council officers, resulting in; 3 x persons arrested, 1 x cannabis warning issued, 3 x vehicle searches, 7 x persons stopped & searched, 1 x Section 59 warning issued in relation to nuisance motorbike, 9 x intelligence reports submitted and 2 engagement events completed at local schools.

2.5 An increase in reports due to COVID 19, have required investigation where the complainants are privately renting or owner/occupiers. The cases relate predominantly to noise nuisance, neighbour disputes, drug taking and youth congregation and have resulted in:

- 2 Community Protection Warnings being issued
- 2 referrals to Restorative Justice service
- 23 Noise Warning letters issued
- 9 referrals to multi-agency Locality Action Group
- 6 Safeguarding referrals

2.6 £143k of funding was secured for Thurrock in 2019 and a further £57k in 2020 through the PFCC and the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit to tackle violence in relation to gangs. In 19/20, this funding was used to:

- Increase awareness of risky behavior and impact on parents, pupils and staff at the Olive Academy, where some of our most vulnerable pupils attend
- Expand the work of the new school wellbeing service to work with pupils at risk of permanent exclusion
- To provide a mentoring programme for young people through youth services. This programme continues

- To increase our targeted youth provision through detached youth work and diversionary schemes
- To work with the community and Thurrock Youth Council
- Commission analytical resource to improve our intelligence with regard to links between exploitation and gangs

2.7 The Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) obtained by Thurrock Council to address car cruising in West Thurrock had been tested over the summer and was robustly enforced by the Community Policing Team, in partnership with the Environmental Enforcement Team. Operation Falcon, aimed at tackling the blight that this behaviour places on the community resulted in 30 Fixed Penalty Notices and cessation of the activity to date.

2.8 In April 2020, the Council reviewed and extended the Public Spaces Protection Order in Grays High Street, which continues to be effective in addressing the persistent street drinkers in the area. A total of 52 Fixed Penalty Notices have been served to members of the public linked to breaches of the order and 119 warnings were issued, after the disposal of their alcohol offenders were moved on from the PSPO zone.

### **3. Environmental Enforcement**

3.1 Thurrock Council's Environmental Enforcement Team have issued various enforcement notices and issued a large variety of Fixed Penalty Notices in response to environmental and ASB related offences between the 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019 and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. A breakdown of which is:

- Community Protection Notices issued by Officers: 63 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 58 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Abandoned vehicles removed: 33 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 75 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Fly tipping incidents investigated by the Environmental Enforcement Team: 4653 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 3722 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020

The investigations of these and proactive patrols have resulted in:

- Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping: 248 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 323 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Fixed Penalty Notices for littering: 268 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 322 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Unauthorised encampments reported: 60 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 12 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Fixed Penalty Notices progressed to prosecution files for littering offences in the Magistrates Court: 136 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 204 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
- Community Protection Warnings issued to HGV drivers (and their companies) for parking on the footpath/grass verge, also asked to



- move on immediately by the Environmental Enforcement Officers: 55 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 36 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
  - Community Protection Notices issued after they breached the Community Protection Warnings, refusing to move their vehicle: 17 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 55 from Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
  - Fixed Penalty notices issued by the Council's contractors (Kingdom Environmental Services). In the main, fixed penalty notices were issued for littering offences, however they also include the following offences, urination, fly tipping, fly posting and failure to produce waste transfer notes on request: 5631 from Feb 2018 to Sep 2019 and 5618 Feb 2019 to Sep 2020
  
- 3.2 The Senior Environmental Enforcement Officer and Operations Manager have enhanced partnership working and fostered excellent relationships with both internal and external partners. As a result, the team have been instrumental in delivering long-term sustainable solutions. They have seized 4 vehicles linked to fly tipping offences and provided valuable evidence in support of a planning breach, preventing over one hundred acres of land being illegally built on.
  
- 3.3 An additional dedicated twilight / night team have recently commenced with officers tasked to specific patrols focusing on enviro crime and ASB. This team are also responsible for providing front line partnership support to the Police and partners where required.
  
- 3.4 The team are part of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) and also for mobile CCTV in relation to fly tipping. CCTV has some potential to improve officer's opportunity to capture and identify offenders in the act of fly tipping. The CSAS devolved powers, authorised by Essex Police, enable the team to wear a high visibility and professional uniform with the CSAS logo and provide them with the following: -
  - Power to issue penalty notices for disorder
  - Power to issue fixed penalty notices for cycling on a footpath
  - Power to require giving of name and address
  - Power to deal with begging
  - Power to require name and address for anti-social behaviour
  - Power to require persons aged under 18 to surrender alcohol
  - Power to seize tobacco from a person aged under 16
  - Power to issue FPN for persons believed to be causing harassment, alarm or distress
  - Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 or allowing such consumption
  
- 3.5 The service have recently received the agreed uniform with the correct CSAS Logos. This will make the officers clearly identifiable when enforcing the CSAS Powers that they have been accredited with.
  
- 3.6 The Environmental Enforcement Team this year adopted the powers to issue FPNs for breaches of household waste duty of care. These powers

will be used to ensure that householders dispose of their waste legally at all times and includes waste from domestic properties, caravans and residential homes.

Householders must ensure that:

- The person who takes control of their waste is licensed to do so
- Take steps to prevent it from escaping from their control
- Store it safely and securely
- Prevent it from causing environmental pollution or harming anyone

- 3.7 In support of growing concerns about pollution and the environment by reducing unnecessary exhaust emissions from vehicles, the Enforcement Team have adopted the power to request vehicle drivers to switch off their vehicle engines while parked and they can issue a £40 fixed penalty notice to drivers if they refuse to comply with the warning.
- 3.8 The service have implemented the new Single Justice Process system to streamline the prosecution process with legal services. This means that the legal process in relation to summary offences will speed up prosecution against offenders.
- 3.9 Of the 351 prosecutions for littering, three trials have been requested by defendants. In all three cases, each defendant changed their pleas to guilty having seen the weight of the evidence supplied. The defendants all received a fine and costs awarded to the Council.
- 3.10 From April 2018, there has been an increase in the fine payable for littering offences, from £80 to £150, resulting in a payment rate dip. Income levels started to increase, but have also been impacted by the unprecedented circumstances due to Covid-19 impact and individual's inability to pay. Steps have been taken to offer extended periods of payment to reduce any further financial impact on offenders and measures are in place to improve the 56% payment rate for fixed penalty notices by conducting more detailed searches on offenders at the time of issuing.
- 3.11 The Council is taking a positive approach to tackling graffiti, the Enforcement Team are working closely with the Cleansing Team, who remove all tags on Council street furniture and buildings immediately as they appear. Through Operation Abercrombie, a joint partnership with Essex Police, which commenced 9<sup>th</sup> August 2019, all tags and offenders are recorded. Consequently, two prolific offenders were arrested and received community resolution for criminal damage. 1 prolific offender has been identified and an Agreed Behavioural Agreement put in place, attached to their Tenancy Contract.
- 3.12 A partnership focused approach, with Essex Police aimed at tackling Anti-Social issues in high footfall areas such as Grays Town Centre and Tilbury has resulted in:

- 112 Public Space Protection Order Warning Notices for Anti-social drinking alcohol
  - 80 Fixed Penalty Notices for further breaches of those Notices
  - 2 suspects being arrested and restrictions placed on their movements and behaviour by the Magistrates' Court
- 3.13 In the Tilbury area, Enforcement Officers in partnership with Essex Police have undertaken a series of regular high visibility patrols in the High Street, schools and colleges' to offer reassurance to the community. These patrols named Operation Anglesea have resulted in 7 FPNs for littering and raised public reassurance.
- 3.14 The Councils proactive and robust approach to tackling fly tipping has resulted in 4 vehicles being seized and the vehicle owners subsequently fined. A number of waste carrier operations have been effectively conducted in partnership with Essex Police. A total of 87 vehicles transporting waste have been stopped and FPNs have been issued for various offences including littering, duty of care offences, failure to possess waste carriers licences, and no vehicle insurance.
- 3.15 The Environmental Enforcement team led on a media campaign using high visible posters affixed to council vehicles and in hot spot areas to raise awareness linked to fly tipping and the penalties and consequences for offenders. There has been a noticeable decrease in the areas targeted by this media communication campaign. There has also been an increase in residents willing to support and report anyone they see fly tipping across the borough. Overall, this campaign was well received and effective.
- 3.16 Unauthorised Traveller Encampments
- 3.16.1 Thurrock Council employs the services of Essex County Traveller Unit (ECTU) who investigate unauthorised encampments on the Council's behalf. The turnaround time for eviction, depends on courts availability to approve applications for summons and to evict, however the end-to-end process and turnaround time is normally between 7 to 9 days to evict.
- 3.16.2 2019/20 has seen a significant reduction in unauthorised encampments, due to the success of the target hardening undertaken, along with the Gypsy and Traveller media outlets reporting that Thurrock Council have been successful in obtaining an injunction. This illustrates the significant impact that an injunction can have on the travelling community. However, it should be noted that there would be occasions when Travellers will come into the area in certain circumstances, for example attendance of a funeral. The total number of encampments is showing a steady decrease:
- 111 - February 2017 to September 2018
  - 60 - February 2018 to September 2019
  - 12 - February 2019 to September 2020

- 3.16.3 ECTU only investigate unauthorised encampments on public land, which is not covered by the injunction. The injunction covers some private land, but if the injunction does not apply, Private land owners will be responsible for dealing with encampments on their land, by employing private bailiff companies or by liaising with the police to enforce evictions where appropriate. However, the Council always takes an interest in all unauthorised encampments on private land in our borough and provide guidance to private landowners on the options to address unauthorised encampments on their land.
- 3.16.4 Due to the significant number of unauthorised encampments across the borough, it was agreed that Thurrock Council would apply to the High Court for an injunction preventing further encampments. On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019 the Council applied to the High Court requesting permission to serve the defendants the evidence via an alternative method such as a USB stick.
- 3.16.5 On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2019, the Council successfully applied for an Interim injunction prohibiting unauthorised encampments across the borough. The interim order covers 163 locations across the borough and identifies 107 defendants. The Council were due to return to the High Court and apply for a full order, but due to Covid 19 and the additional evidence required in light of the London Borough of Bromley appeal, this was delayed but it is anticipated that the council will return to the High Court very soon. However, please note that the interim injunction does not have an expiry date and can still be used.
- 3.16.6 The Environment Enforcement Team proactively identified unlawful development of a traveller's site at Buckles Lane South Ockendon. Working in partnership with Planning Enforcement, the team have secured a temporary injunction on 137 acres of land; a full hearing is due to take place in December 2020 for a permanent injunction.

#### **4. Emergency Planning & Resilience**

- 4.1 Thurrock has more industrial processes and commercial storage facilities than other councils in Essex due to its strategic location. This poses challenges for the Emergency Planning & Resilience Team who are responsible for the drafting and exercising of plans for managing incidents at hazardous industrial sites, commonly known as COMAH sites. These sites are regulated by HSE and as a local authority; we have a legal obligation to adhere to the requirements under The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015. The team have undertaken five full multi-agency exercises with sites in the area since April 2019 and have developed our response at Silver/Tactical level during COVID to include a virtual tactical cell; meaning that incidents can be managed at Silver/Tactical level with partners all using MS Teams.
- 4.2 The team continues to administer the Council's 24/7 emergency response service and in addition to the less serious incidents, have managed the Council's response to two 'major incidents', one significant business continuity incident, as well as other significant incidents, including;

- Operation Melrose (Vietnamese lorry deaths in October 2019)
- Evacuation of Collins House Care Home due to a major power failure on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019
- ICL major incident (COMAH site) in January 2020
- Burst water main in South Ockendon in June 2020
- Child death at Alexander Lake, Lakeside Shopping Centre in August 2020

4.3 We thank the emergency response partners, particularly Essex Police and Essex County Fire & Rescue for their support and collaborative approach to emergency planning and for their support in managing these incidents. I would also like to thank the voluntary agencies, particularly the Red Cross who provided an outstanding level of support to our partners and ourselves during our response to the tragic incident that led to the deaths of 39 Vietnamese individuals.

4.4 The Emergency Planning & Resilience Team are actively involved in the Essex Police led multi-agency 'Port Watch' project, which looks to address the learning points from Operation Melrose. Partners meet on a regular basis to share intelligence in relation to immigration criminality. The objectives of Port Watch are:

- To prevent incidents of organised immigration crime, crime, anti-social behaviour, modern slavery & human trafficking
- To identify perpetrators of such incidents
- To bring such perpetrators to justice
- To protect victims from such perpetrator
- To make communities in Ports safer

Activity by this group is also shared with other partners via the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) meetings.

4.5 The team have additionally taken over responsibility for business continuity planning for the Council, working with teams council wide to ensure Business Impact Analysis (BIA) is carried out and robust Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) are in place, enhancing our resilience and ability to continue delivering critical services in the event of a disruptive event.

## **5. Counter Fraud & Investigation**

5.1 The Counter Fraud & Investigation Team supports the Chief Finance Officer in discharging his statutory duty to prevent and detect fraud committed against the council's finances.

5.2 Since the service was formed it has been successful in protecting from fraud across our services, including housing fraud, and fraud in our grants and council tax schemes, recovering £5.5m from criminals and reinvested in to frontline services.

- 5.3 Government sponsorship was received to launch an enhanced service for Thurrock designed to bring advanced crime-fighting capabilities to protect us from developing fraud risks. Part of those enhancements was to also launch a new outward-facing function, known as the National Investigation Service, which supports the wider public sector in serious fraud issues.
- 5.4 The National Investigation Service has been extremely successful in detecting over £35m of fraud against the public sector across the country, bringing criminals to justice and disrupting organised crime.
- 5.5 We entered a national emergency this year, with financial support being awarded to our businesses, through the council, who were affected by the lockdown measures. Our Counter Fraud team worked closely with our Revenues team, who were administering the scheme, to prevent and detect fraud losses. That collaborative approach identified an organised criminal attack on the COVID grant scheme where £85k was lost due to sophisticated fraud. Within a short space of time, having the benefit of the national function hosted here in Thurrock, the criminals were arrested and the monies fully recovered.
- 5.6 Following the obvious success in combating serious organised fraud by our national function, the team have now been commissioned by the government to lead nationally on the response to serious organised crime for COVID-19 support schemes.
- 5.7 The Counter Fraud team is extremely productive in managing the risk from fraud in the council. This year for every pound spent on the service, it detected £3 in fraud.

#### Return on Investment Performance

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Detected Fraud</b>	£1,622,604	£4,562,032	£1,179,987	£3,426,474	£3,578,285
<b>Service Budget</b>	£880,637	£909,556	£939,313	£945,876	£1,144,949
<b>Money Recovered</b>	(£701,418)	(£3,729,705)	(£889,097)	(£941,155)	(£205,334 <sup>1</sup> )

## 6. Housing Anti-Social Behaviour

- 6.1 Thurrock Councils Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team deal with ASB where the person causing the problem is a council tenant or it affects a council tenant and where the ASB is any act that causes, or is likely to cause, alarm, harassment or distress to anyone living in a different household to the person responsible. Examples of ASB include:

<sup>1</sup> This figure represents the available assets which a court can order to be paid back by criminals to the council under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 or civil remedy, which is different to the amount of fraud that was proven at court. The period was affected by the courts closing due to COVID-19

- Noise nuisance
- Drug taking and dealing
- Threatening or rowdy behaviour
- Violence and disorder
- Vandalism

6.2 As a result of carrying out high visibility out of hour patrols targeting estates and hotspots, which are the subject of intelligence received from residents, local businesses and community partners the team have achieved the following outcomes from the 1st January 2019 to date:

• Community Protection Warnings	20
• Final warning letters issued	44
• Acceptable Behaviour Agreement	11
• Reassurance visits to vulnerable residents	104
• Notices of Possession Proceedings	4
• ASB Injunctions	4
• Demotion Order	3
• Closure Orders	6
• Evictions due to ASB	8

6.3 Private Housing promotes awareness of its regulatory and licensing function to estate agents, landlords, property owners and tenants.

6.4 Landlords must have a license if renting out a large House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and small HMO of 3 or 4 people who are not from 1 household under Additional Licensing. A licence is valid for 5 years. The council has licenced 84 HMOs in 2019/20 and 40 HMOs April to September 2020. Licensing in the private rented sector helps improve property conditions and management standards benefiting residents and neighbourhoods.

6.5 Private housing enforcement action prevents risks to public health and statutory nuisance. The Private Housing Team has increased enforcement measures within the Private Rented Sector to improve housing conditions and provide greater protection to HMO and single dwelling lets in 2019/20 in comparison to 2018/19.

<b>Enforcement Measure</b>	<b>2018/19 No.</b>	<b>2019/20 No.</b>	<b>2020/21 Apr-Sept</b>
Improvement Notice	17	36	13
Prohibition Order	8	3	3
Emergency Prohibition Order	0	0	0
Emergency Remedial Action	1	3	2
Environmental Protection Act S80	21	10	2
Hazard Awareness Notice	2	15	1

Suspended Prohibition Order	3	2	1
Suspended Improvement Notice	2	6	1
Building Act 1984/Public Health Act 1936 Drainage	4	8	2
Public Health Act 1936 Notice	4	3	3
Works In Default	6	10	1
Prosecutions	4	5	0
Civil Penalty Notice	0	15	3
Rent Repayment Order	1	0	0

6.6 Targeted visits and unannounced property inspections are carried out under the Private Housing Enforcement Policy for proactive investigations, such as:

- Suspected unlicensed properties
- Poorly managed private rented properties
- HMO properties subject to incidences of anti-social behaviour
- Properties with a low energy efficiency rating on their Energy Performance Certificate below an E rating
- Unregulated Care Homes
- Untidy gardens

6.7 The Private Sector Housing Team is exploring the business case for a Selective Licensing Scheme, covering certain parts of the borough. This would require all landlords of privately let properties to apply for a licence. Secretary of State Approval will be required for a scheme that covered more than 20% of the geographic area of the local authority area or would affect more than 20% of private rented sector in the area.

## 7. CCTV Service

7.1 The borough wide CCTV service has 600 cameras, spread over 40 locations on housing estates and open spaces including town centres. This provides residents with a sense of security and reassurance of feeling safer within their neighbourhood.

7.2 The council's Housing Enforcement CCTV service works in collaboration with Essex Police and internal departments sharing information and intelligence to prevent crime and deter anti-social behaviour.

7.3 Table 1 and 2 highlight the number of incidents captured on camera for Police and Council investigation. Evidence packs are the recordings and statements, which the CCTV operators produce for police and council enforcement officers.



April to March 2019/20

Team	CCTV Incidents	Evidential Packages Produced
<b>Police</b>	1415	375
<b>Council</b>	663	214

April to August 2020

Team	CCTV Incidents	Evidential Packages Produced
<b>Police</b>	369	146
<b>Council</b>	202	71

- 7.4 Cabinet approved a Public Identification CCTV policy on the 15 January 2020 for enforcement purposes and using images of criminal incidents in local publications and on the internet.
- 7.5 Council appeals for public help to identify persons of interest in local publications and on the internet was not needed over the last 6 months.
- 7.6 Enforcement Officers are identifying offenders by other investigative actions such as gathering information, establishing facts, analysing photographs, and evaluating evidence to track and apprehend those caught on camera committing criminal offences.
- 7.7 Some examples of how CCTV evidence has been used in the past year:
- CCTV evidence was provided to the Police regarding a prolific burglary offender caught on camera, which enabled a successful prosecution in Court, the outcome on sentencing is awaiting reports.
  - CCTV evidence was provided to the Police for an assault, threatening behaviour and Public Order offences in Grays Town Centre. The offender was sentenced to 4 weeks imprisonment and a banning order for three years from the Town Centre.
  - CCTV evidence was provided for a case of Criminal Damage against Council property in the High Rise flats at Tilbury. The offender was found guilty and ordered to pay £500 costs to the Council.
  - CCTV was used to identify, arrest and convict a tenant for criminal damage in the communal area George Tilbury House. The offender was seen kicking the glass door panels. Due to this conviction and other Anti – Social Behaviour (ASB) matters the ASB Team served the tenant with a mandatory possession under the Anti - Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
  - A visitor to Gooderham House was seen damaging the CCTV in the lift. The offender was subsequently identified and charged with criminal damage. This case will go before the courts soon. The ASB Team will

consider a proportionate response following the outcome of the court hearing.

- A female was assaulting another female as a result of argument over parking at Poole House. CCTV evidence captured the incident. The police are currently looking at the CCTV images and videos and will update the ASB Team for their input into this case.

## **8. Public Protection**

### **8.1 Licensing**

8.1.1 The Licensing Team continue to administer the Council's licensing functions and have worked throughout the year to ensure that licenced activities are as safe for residents as possible. This work has involved regular work with the Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance service and other external agencies with an interest in preventing crime and promoting public safety to provide safe solutions for events and regular licenced activity in the area. The team remains at the forefront of our shared services initiative with Brentwood Council reducing the cost of this service and increasing its resilience. Having assumed responsibility for the administration of the street trading scheme in Thurrock, the team have made a positive start in clamping down on unlicensed traders with the successful prosecution of a trader that failed to apply or cease trading. A number of traders are now licensed who would have otherwise undermine legitimate traders and fixed businesses in the area.

8.1.2 The licensing regime for animals covering pet shops, boarding kennels and breeding activities has been overhauled by central government. This is giving rise to an increased demand for work from the team in this area and they have upskilled to meet these new requirements. This has seen an increased number of licensed premises, particularly around home boarding and puppy breeders, with a prosecution progressing through the courts for a home boarder that failed to licence. The team welcomes information about unlicensed breeders and boarders to be emailed to [licensing@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@thurrock.gov.uk).

### **8.2 Food Safety**

8.2.1 The Food Team have had a very busy year dealing with over 150 notifiable diseases including cases of Legionella and E-Coli 157. Work has included the approval of a new bacon factory within Thurrock, intervention at a cheese manufacturer in Thurrock where poor hygiene standards were giving rise to a risk of E-Coli infection, successful prosecution of a butcher for activity giving rise to a serious risk of fatal infections from their products. The team have served 29 Hygiene Improvement notices to protect residents and visitors from poor hygiene and disease during the year.

8.2.2 The team have issued 150 export certificates to allow for companies in Thurrock to export food to non-EU countries. This work is expected to increase following the UK's departure from the European Union and we are in the process of recruitment to provide staff for this activity. Certification and

inspection work on imported and exported food is also undertaken in Thurrock's ports. The Corporation of London's Port Health Teams undertake this dockside work in collaboration with the Food Team. This is particularly necessary when consignments move between port sites and surrounding facilities in Thurrock. The team works with the Corporation of London's officers to streamline as far as practical this process reducing friction at the ports and surrounding business parks. We are currently working on an arrangement to provide jurisdiction for port health officers in the new business park surrounding DP World in Coryton. This arrangement will simultaneously reduce costs for Thurrock and reduce bureaucracy for importer and exporters of food using Thurrock ports.

### 8.3 Trading Standards

8.3.1 Trading Standards team have continued during this year to combat crimes against consumers in Thurrock prioritising activity based on local and national intelligence focusing on doorstep crime, fair trading, intellectual property and mass marketing schemes. Over the last few years, the team have expanded to include the operation of the ports safety project, a nationally funded project that monitors and regulates the safety of products imported into the UK via the Ports at Coryton, Tilbury and Purfleet. Examples of recent seizures include fake hand sanitiser and electronic foot massagers that present the user with a risk of electrocution. This is an increasing area of work and the Government grant to fund this has increased over recent years. The UK departure from the EU will give rise to an increased demand for this work and the team are monitoring the situation nationally to identify any opportunities that exist for additional funding to continue and expand this work stream. The team were finalists in this year's APSE team of the year awards.

8.3.2 Trading Standards have been working with Essex Police to conduct underage sales test purchases of knives. Two operations were undertaken working in partnership. These test purchases have shown limited sales of knives to young people. Where sales have been made, follow up visits have taken place to premises to provide advice to the traders to prevent further sales. Further operations on underage sales are planned for the future.

8.3.3 Responsible Retailer packs have gone out to all the off licences in the area and will continue to go out to all businesses selling age restricted item. These provide advice for traders to prevent sales of alcohol to underage consumers.

### 8.4 Health and Safety

8.4.1 The Health and Safety team are responsible for the regulation of health and safety standards for workers in the majority of businesses in Thurrock. This year they have investigated over 10 accidents, 20 new requests for health & safety in licensable premises, 30 complaints and investigated potential legal failings against two companies for health and safety failures that lead to injuries to staff. In addition to formal enforcement, the team maintain expertise in health and safety matters and advise both external employers and the Council on health and safety issues that impact employees. The team have

used their knowledge to exploit opportunities to offer their expertise to others on a paid consultancy basis. This has so far yielded income from schools and is an area of work that the team hope to develop further.

## 8.5 Environmental Protection

8.5.1 The team continues to deal with a high demand for work on nuisance and pollution issues. From 01.04.20 – 16.11.20 the team received 2005 requests for service. 1083 of which were for Noise including amplified sound, barking dogs and unreasonable DIY. 72 complaints were made for bonfire nuisance, 109 for odours and 46 for rubbish accumulation at premises requiring intervention and public health legislation.

8.5.2 The teams drone service has expanded now working in contract with Basildon District Council to assist their Planning Enforcement evidence gathering and this is creating some income. Thurrock qualified remote pilots continue to train and develop their expertise in this heavily regulated industry and work closely with the CAA to ensure competencies are up to date in full compliance with the law. This service enables the council to continue to enhance its ability to undertake monitoring and evidence gathering in hard to reach locations, which assists officer investigations in taking appropriate legal action where necessary. There are a number of high profile sites in Thurrock due to be overflowed and aerial imagery collected in the near future. Formal consultations and requests for scientific / technical expertise in acoustics, air quality, contaminated land and pollution prevention control continue in high demand and even throughout the pandemic EP have routinely continued to supply this expertise to Thurrock Planning / Highways, external consultants and other government agencies.

## 9. Financial Information

Service area	Revised budget	Year to date actual	Forecast outturn	Budget variance
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
Public Protection	1987	429	2030	43
Environmental Enforcement	(279)	232	(274)	nil
Community Safety Partnership	154	82	154	nil
Housing Anti-Social Behaviour	464	95	440	(24)
Counter Fraud & Investigation	341	402	328	(13)
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>1,240</b>	<b>2,678</b>	<b>11</b>

Note: These figures are as at period 3 and exclude loss of income due to COVID-19. The forecast overspend in Public Protection is due to agency staff cost.

## Community Safety Partnership Funding

2019/20:

<b>Funding stream</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Grant	£24,976	All allocated to CSP priorities
Thurrock Council	£18,347 £17,000	All allocated to CSP priorities For the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)
Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Funding through PFCC	£123,000	
Cabinet funding	£1,000,000	3 years to fund additional Police and ASB

2020/21:

<b>Funding stream</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Grant	£24,976	All allocated to CSP priorities
Thurrock Council	£18,347 £17,000	All allocated to CSP priorities For the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA)
Home Office Violence and Vulnerability Funding through PFCC	£57,000	

This page is intentionally left blank

**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 was 2 questions to the Leader and 11 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

**1. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Gledhill**

Can you explain the reasoning to continue with outsourcing our enforcement/warden contract?

**2. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Gledhill**

Will the Leader of the Council give an update on plans to create a new South West Essex Council consisting of Thurrock and Basildon?

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

**1. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Huelin**

Information on why we have a number of senior staff leaving at the same time please?

**2. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Johnson**

Following your recent announcement that you have asked officers to produce a damp and mould report could you please advise the chamber what the content of the report is likely to include and what the process and time line is for this report to be actioned?

**3. From Councillor Worrall to Councillor Watkins**

Following the announcement of parks having new equipment fitted could you please advise when the park in Hathaway Road is to be upgraded in line with other parks?

**4. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Halden**

The COVID-19 lockdown has seen a national increase in reported incidents of serious harm involving children. Can the Portfolio Holder assure us that measures are being taken to ensure vulnerable children in Thurrock are not "hidden from view" of the social care and have access to available support networks?

**5. From Councillor Okunade to Councillor Jefferies**

Independent of a lot of work that schools are doing to provide education during the lockdown, can the Portfolio Holder inform us of what he is doing to support children and young people to not fall any further behind in their education?

**6. From Councillor Holloway to Councillor Johnson**

What alternative financial options has the Portfolio Holder been presented with, in order to ensure older residents do not need to shoulder the financial burden of electronic security gates?

**7. From Councillor Kerin to Councillor Johnson**

Can the Portfolio Holder please say when he thinks it is likely a decision will be made about potential housing being built on the Grays Beach car park?

**8. From Councillor Gerrish to Councillor Maney**

Can the Portfolio Holder give an update on any HGV mitigation measures planned in West Thurrock & South Stifford?

**9. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Watkins**

Why were refuse collections not completed on any day during the recent snowy weather?

**10. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Watkins**

When will the brown bin service resume?

**11. From Councillor Holloway to Councillor Mayes**

Will the Portfolio Holder for Health join me in formally congratulating our NHS staff for their incredible work to date and continue to support them as this pandemic persists?



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
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 been established with the developer however a meeting has not yet taken place to discuss the motion presented.	Julie Rogers
27 January 2021	Cllr Anderson	Given the great importance the Conservative government has placed on the “prevent” agenda in terms of countering extremism, and the need to consider all of the human trafficking and modern day slavery implications of illegal entry and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, especially in areas with a large waterfront or port industry, the chamber wishes to have an appropriate member’s forum for “prevent”. Therefore, following the procedure used to constitute the Corporate Parenting Committee as a formal Council Committee, we instruct the monitoring officer to present relevant terms of reference for the next meeting of the Full Council to help better protect our communities and those who come into our care.	Draft terms have been prepared but in the time available it has not been practical to undertake all the necessary consultations with officers and Members to ensure that the proposed committee can be managed without undue conflict within the terms of reference of other committees. A report will be submitted to the General Services Committee with proposals and then reported to the next Council meeting.	Ian Hunt

This page is intentionally left blank