

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

Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **8 March 2022**

Training Room, The Beehive Community Resource Centre, West Street, Grays, RM17 6XP

Membership:

Councillors Susan Little (Chair), Colin Churchman (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter, James Halden, John Kent and Bukky Okunade

Substitutes:

Councillors Abbie Akinbohun, Gary Collins, Sara Muldowney and Graham Snell

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

	Page
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Minutes	5 - 14
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 January 2022.	
3 Items of Urgent Business	
To receive additional items that the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972. To agree any relevant briefing notes submitted to the Committee.	
4 Declaration of Interests	
5 Quarter 3 (April-December 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22	15 - 32

6	Report on Asset Related Savings	33 - 38
7	Thames Freeport: Business Rates Policy and Governance Structure	39 - 62
8	Work Programme	63 - 66

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Agenda published on: **28 February 2022**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Advice Regarding Public Attendance at Meetings:

Following changes to government advice there is no longer a requirement for public attendees to book seats in advance of a committee meeting. All public attendees are expected to comply with the following points when physically attending a committee meeting:

1. If you are feeling ill or have tested positive for Covid and are isolating you should remain at home, the meeting will be webcast and you can attend in that way.
2. You are recommended to wear a face covering (where able) when attending the meeting and moving around the council offices to reduce any chance of infection. Removal of any face covering would be advisable when speaking publically at the meeting.
3. Hand sanitiser will also be available at the entrance for your use.

Whilst the Council encourages all who are eligible to have vaccination and this is important in reducing risks around COVID-19, around 1 in 3 people with COVID-19 do not have any symptoms. This means they could be spreading the virus without knowing it. In line with government guidance testing twice a week increases the chances of detecting COVID-19 when you are infectious but aren't displaying symptoms, helping to make sure you do not spread COVID-19. Rapid lateral flow testing is available for free to anybody. To find out more about testing please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/testing/regular-rapid-coronavirus-tests-if-you-do-not-have-symptoms/>

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

Recording of meetings

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

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

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

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

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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

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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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



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

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Susan Little (Chair), Colin Churchman (Vice-Chair), Adam Carter, James Halden, John Kent and Bukky Okunade

In attendance: Sean Clark, Corporate Director Resources and Place Delivery
Jonathon Wilson, Assistant Director, Finance
Grace Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

23. Minutes

Councillor Halden mentioned that he had not received a response in relation his question on KPIs as minuted on page 15 of the agenda. Officers said that this would be followed up.

(At the request of the Chair, this response was added to these minutes:

In relation to the KPI defined as "of the children who reached their 28th day in care within the reporting period, % that had an Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days" Cllr Halden asked for clarity around the divide between those where consent is the issue and those which are procedural delays. Cllr Little also asked whether COVID had been a contributory factor to the underperformance.

The original report is at Agenda for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 16th November, 2021, 7.00 pm | Thurrock Council

This response provides information regarding the Initial Health Assessment (IHA) performance between April to October 2021 (NB this includes an extra month's performance from the report that went to O&S). Two performance measures inform the data and success in children having an initial health assessment in time;

- Whether the referral for an initial health assessment is made by the local authority within 5 days*
- An initial health assessment takes place within 20 working days of a child entering into care.*

Impact of Covid

1 Initial Health Assessment was delayed because of self-isolation due to Covid.

3 Initial assessments were delayed due to sickness or capacity in health but it is not clear if this was Covid related.

IHA request made to health by social care within 5 days of child becoming looked after.

The average percentage completed in time from April to October 2021 was 82%

Between April and October 2021 there were 12 children with a delayed referral. Of these;

7 (58%) were due to parents either refusing or delaying in providing consent.

3 (25%) were due to procedural issues.

2 (17%) were due to other reasons

Reasons for delays included; parents refusing or delaying in providing written consent; procedural issues such as a child moving placement and the paperwork needing to be resubmitted and; request for consent being late or a child who is able to give consent refusing or going missing.

Initial Health Assessment taking place within 20 working days of a child entering care

The timeliness of referrals from social care to health can, but does not always, impact on assessments taking place in time. 3 assessments were late due to paperwork not being provided on time or incorrectly completed by social care and 5 because a Court Order was required due to parent refusing to provide consent.

The average percentage of initial assessments completed in time between April and October 2021 was 61%.

24 IHAs were completed out of timescale for the following reasons;

14 (58%) were due to procedural issues or capacity within health.

5 (24%) were due to Court Orders needing to be sought as parental consent not given.

1(4%) was due to a child isolating due to Covid.

5 (24%) were due to other issues.

Reasons for delays in children having an initial health assessment in time includes; parents refusing or delaying in providing written consent; procedural issues such as a child moving placement and the paperwork needing to be resubmitted; capacity within health due to sickness or otherwise, and other reasons such as clashes in appointments for the young person or a child being ill.)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

24. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

25. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Portfolio Holder Verbal Update

Councillor Coxshall stated that he had been looking into the capacity levels within Thurrock Council to see whether the Council could survive alone as a Unitary Authority or if a Combined Authority was needed. Thurrock needed to ensure that they could survive as an entity and also be sustainable.

There were currently opportunities for Thurrock Council that would support the survival of Thurrock Council but the capacity issues needed to be considered. Thurrock currently had a large capital programme which was large in comparison to other Local Authorities. The current priorities for Thurrock were:

- A13 Widening Project;
- Stanford Le Hope Hub;
- Grays Town Regeneration;
- HRA Homes to transform places where people lived; and
- Purfleet-on-Thames Regeneration.

He went on to say that the New Towns Board had put a lot of pressure on Thurrock's projects. He mentioned that the SELEP plans to grow the Thames Estuary were also linked to Thurrock's programmes as it was part of Thurrock's future. The goal was 2050 to grow the Thames Estuary by but he felt that with the Freeport plans in Thurrock, this could be achieved by 2030. Referring to the Local Plan, Councillor Coxshall said that Thurrock was moving in the right direction and was looking at how the Local Plan could be delivered.

The Chair queried the timeframe for the delivery of the Local Plan. Councillor Coxshall explained that the Local Plan had been delayed due to the Lower Thames Crossing as it removed homes. The service hoped to bring forward Local Plan Consultations in the summer and hoped that the delivery of the Local Plan would be ready by 2024.

Councillor Halden raised concerns on the demographics of Thurrock and said that the service needed to ensure that Thurrock was ready for the Local Plan. He asked if the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) solution was one to follow. He said that Thurrock would require complicated financial modelling and asked if the service had the capacity to lead on this. Councillor Coxshall agreed that there were demographic issues but stated that it was hard to say which was the right solution for Thurrock and whether Thurrock needed to find partners. He said that the service needed to see

where there were capacity issues and where it was needed. The service needed to find the best solution for Thurrock.

Councillor Okunade asked for an update on the Thameside Theatre and the Civic Offices. Councillor Coxshall said that the service had met with community groups since the last Corporate O&S meeting. They had been working together on a business case to find a company to manage the Thameside Theatre. The service needed to ensure that the theatre was a viable asset before handing it over and was helping the community groups to find funding.

In regards to the Civic Offices, Sean Clark said that this had been near ready to open in the first week of January. However, in the second week, the Council was informed of delays to the supply chain for the furniture. There were also cases of self-isolation which added to the delay. In regards to the Thameside Theatre, he added that there was a meeting with community groups next week which would be the third one since the last Corporate O&S meeting.

Councillor Okunade felt that Members should have been regularly updated on the progress of the Civic Offices as there had been no information about its delay. Councillor Kent also voiced his concerns over this and felt communications could be better. Sean Clark explained that the Council had been informed of the delay very recently but would look into the communication issue and feed back to Director's Board.

Referring to the regional and capacity issues in delivering regeneration projects, Councillor Kent mentioned that he had experienced a 'blockage' with Essex County Council in partnership working. He queried whether this was still the case. Referring to the government paper of Levelling Up, he commented that combining authorities would allow the government to recognise the extra capacity that was being brought in. This would help with funding as it would give the government confidence and trust in an entity of that size to deliver to its residents. He questioned what the service's thoughts were on the Levelling Up paper. He mentioned that Thurrock's Leader of the Council had signed a Memorandum on Understanding with Basildon's Leader last year to work on the position of both authorities. He asked for an update on this work.

In response, Councillor Coxshall said that Thurrock had reached out to new Leader of Essex County Council who was more open to working together. Regarding the Levelling Up paper, he said that it was Thurrock's decision to choose devolution unless the Secretary of State decided this instead. He stated that local authorities needed to be able to survive but it was hard to say how this could be done. He commented that ideas included looking into the centre of London or across the river as the Thames Estuary Board had suggested to be a centre just outside the city. He said that the administration had pushed to work on a combined Local Plan with South Essex which didn't work out. Then the administration looked to Basildon Council to work on a

combined Local Plan which led to the Memorandum of Understanding but now, the administration in Basildon had changed.

Councillor Kent pointed out that the administration change delayed progress and highlighted the need for a combined authority. Councillor Coxshall explained that the government did not agree with this as it was the 'vehicles of political changes'. Referring to the Local Plan, he said that Thurrock needed to work as 49 Councillors together which would give the government more certainty that everyone was committed and that the Council was moving in the right direction. He agreed that a combined authority with South Essex would work but had to be on the right terms and ensure that Thurrock would be sustainable.

The Chair asked when the A13 Widening Project would be completed. Councillor Coxshall replied that the project was nearing the end and it was hoped that all lanes would be open by the end of quarter 1 or the beginning of quarter 2. There would still be works going on in the background.

The Committee thanked Councillor Coxshall for his update.

27. Discussion Paper - Investments Committee

The report was presented by Sean Clark.

Referring to options 3 and 4, Councillor Halden said that he was fairly relaxed on these two options due to its processes. He stated that it was important that due diligence was done and that investment was consistent. He highlighted the importance of not buying assets or taking on management liabilities that would put the Council in breach of anything. Sean Clark explained that the service would be going back to a more traditional approach to investment that included lending surplus cash to other LAs if needed. Other opportunities for investment could be TRL as it linked to the Council's borrowing or into Thurrock's regeneration programmes.

Councillor Kent felt it was not the right time to establish a new committee and preferred option 3. He stated that Standards and Audit Committee were not the appropriate Committee for investment reports to be discussed. Neither was Corporate O&S due to the sensitive information in reports. Referring to General Services Committee, he pointed out that they were a shareholder to TRL so could not be neutral in the reports relating to investments in TRL. Sean Clark explained that General Services would work well to discuss investment reports but would not bring TRL discussions into that committee.

Agreeing with option 3, Councillor Okunade said that the current process for discussing investments were inconsistent. She highlighted the importance of the need to ensure that officers were competent with the right skills when considering investments. She pointed out that this also linked to Members in the relevant Committee who needed to be properly trained to scrutinise and consider the investments. She went on to say that option 4 was not viable as it would only monitor the investment portfolio. Sean Clark answered that

training would be provided by the consultants that the Council used if there were to be new investments made. He explained that the reports would be coming from Council officers and external consultants as well as specialists.

Councillor Kent agreed on the points about training and capabilities. He said that if investments were taken on by the General Services Committee, Group Leaders would be aware and insist on Members to take on the training that the S151 Officer felt was relevant.

Members agreed that option 3 was their preferred option.

RESOLVED:

That Members noted the report and considered the options set out.

28. Draft General Fund Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update

The report was presented by Jonathan Wilson.

Councillor Halden mentioned that Essex County Council often lobbied for investments and funding which they were usually successful in. He pointed out that other forms of income such as business rates would help the Council's budget and that there were some areas that required funding. He said that the Council funded SEND and the NHS did not put any funding towards this. He felt that Thurrock needed to take the same approach as Essex County Council and build the capacity to lobby as well. Jonathan Wilson answered that the government's Fair Funding Reform would be released soon as it had been on hold prior to the pandemic. In regards to business rates retention, he said that this was less certain as Michael Gove did not seem to suggest this would be considered. Business rates was also dependent on what the Council would get. In regards to the lobbying power of Essex County Council, he said that Thurrock was part of their conversations in lobbying and also shared some of their lobbying efforts. He said that Thurrock had the capacity to take part in lobbying.

Adding to this, Sean Clark said that the report linked back to the Committee's earlier discussions on Levelling Up paper. He explained that the Chancellor had announced a 3 year department level budget for local government back in October and Thurrock had received a one year settlement back in December. This was because the government was looking to change the methodology of how funding would be distributed in the coming years. However, Thurrock had received a grant to cover the National Insurance expense. He went on to explain that once the Levelling Up agenda was ready, it would determine how funding would be distributed though it was uncertain what funding Thurrock would receive. In regards to business rates, he said that Thurrock were using these but did not keep the full percentage of the business rate. He stated that his section 25 statement highlighted that it would difficult to get through the 2022/23 financial year but the real concern lay ahead in 2023/24.

Referring to appendix 2, Councillor Kent asked how confident was the service in delivering the savings in the next financial year. Sean Clark answered that the next financial year would be challenging and the concern was the increase in the demand in social care. He stated that the council tax increase was not enough to cover cost in Children's Social Care. There was less concern on delivering the budget and savings as there was more concern on the cuts to be made. He said that the savings had to be implemented to secure the budget for 2023/24 as there was a concern on the demographic growth of Thurrock too.

Councillor Kent said that the Council had an ambitious agenda and were not well equipped to deliver this. He asked if the service was confident in keeping Members to the budget set out. Sean Clark replied that the Council were increasing the staff numbers in the regeneration and social care teams only and if there were other overspends, it would impact the budget. He said that the Council's capital programme had the smallest level of new projects due to its capacity and the common message through reviews would be about prioritisation and capacity. The Chair invited Councillor Coxshall to speak. Councillor Coxshall said that Cabinet had looked over the budget to ensure the survivability of the Council and that projects could be delivered within budget.

Councillor Halden highlighted the need again to lobby for funding as without this, it caused difficulties within the budget particularly for healthcare. Councillor Kent agreed that lobbying was needed and the Council was underfunded in the health services. He said that he understood the need for frontline services but extra capacity in lobbying for other areas were needed so that research and intelligence gathering could be undertaken. Councillor Coxshall agreed and said that there was opportunity in capacity but as to how it could be done would cost money.

Councillor Kent stated that he was disappointed with the increase in council tax and asked that Cabinet reflected on the current climate particularly as there were a number of cost increases in the country. He did not agree with the recommendations. Councillor Okunade stated that she was also not in agreement with the recommendations.

Councillor Carter and Halden pointed out that the increase in the council tax was below inflation and that Thurrock was one of the lowest LAs with low council tax. The increase was also ring fenced back to Children's Social Care services which was needed due to the issues there caused by the pandemic.

UNRESOLVED:

1.1 That the Committee comments on the proposed council tax level with mind to the comments in the report; and

1.2 That the committee comments on the draft budget as set out within this report to inform final budget proposals to Cabinet on 9 February 2022.

29. Capital Strategy 2022-23

The report was presented by Sean Clark.

There were no comments or questions from the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the 2022/23 Capital Strategy for consideration by Cabinet at their meeting on 9 February 2022.

30. Draft Capital Project Programme

The report was presented by Jonathan Wilson.

Referring to the digital projects, Councillor Okunade asked how these would benefit residents. Jonathan Wilson explained that the Digital Board was responsible for the digital projects and looked at developing digital efficiencies. This helped to improve services that the Council used and enabled them to continue to deliver to residents.

Councillor Kent felt that the capital programme was disappointing for a number of reasons. However, he was pleased to see that the Orchard Footbridge Renewal was in the programme as it was long overdue for renewal. He said that he was disappointed with the comment under the Fleet Vehicle Replacement programme that the service could not find renewable energy as a way to power the fleets. He pointed out that other local authorities were able to do this. He said that he would have liked to see the service look into other fleets and pilot these.

Adding onto this, the Chair asked whether the fleets were owned or leased. She said that the use of fuel for these fleets were disappointing as it used diesel. She pointed out that the Council was trying to go 'green' and that the service needed to think 'outside the box'. Jonathan Wilson said that the fleets were owned and that he would feed Members' comments back to the service to see if they could explore other options. Sean Clark added that Director's Board had challenged the fleet vehicles as well and would feed Members comments back to Director's Board as well.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the specific proposals set out within this report.

31. Work Programme

The following reports were added to the next meeting:

- Thameside Theatre Update
- Capacity under Local Government Reforms

The meeting finished at 8.40 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

This page is intentionally left blank

8 March 2022	ITEM: 5
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Quarter 3 (April to December 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-key
Report of: Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth	
Accountable Assistant Director: n/a	
Accountable Director: Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Engagement and Growth	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

This is the third corporate performance monitoring report for 2021/22 covering April to December 2021.

This report provides a progress update in relation to the performance of key indicators, including a focus on some specific highlights and challenges. It details statistical evidence the council will use to monitor the progress and performance against the council's priorities.

During the first three months of the financial year, the country was preparing to open up slowly in line with the government's roadmap, but there were still a number of restrictions in place. In quarter 2, some indicators were still being directly or indirectly impacted by the coronavirus pandemic during this period although national restrictions had significantly reduced. During quarter 3, rates of infection and restrictions increased again. The report highlights how COVID-19 has disrupted or changed performance and/or priorities and demand levels across a number of services during the year and in some cases continues to have a lasting effect.

Despite the impact of COVID, the report shows that 66% of indicators are currently achieving target and 66% are better than or the same as the previous year.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **To note and comment upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are off target and the impact of COVID-19.**
- 1.2 **To identify any areas which require additional consideration.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The performance of the priority activities of the council is monitored through the Corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) framework. This provides a mixture of strategic and operational indicators. The indicators have been chosen to be as clear and simple to understand as possible, whilst balancing the need to ensure the council is monitoring those things which are of most importance, both operationally and strategically.
- 2.2 This reflects the demand for council services increasing and being ever more complex, not least due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, and the need for a holistic approach to monitoring data and intelligence. Analysis of performance and internal processes at service level by Directors continued monthly throughout 2020/21 and will continue throughout 2021/22.
- 2.3 These corporate indicators will continue to be reported to both Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a quarterly basis, throughout 2021/22.
- 2.4 In line with the recommendation from Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2019, throughout 2021/22, where performance is below target, commentary will be included to show the intended improvement plan. This is included in Section 3.5 as the “Route to Green”.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

This report is a monitoring and update report, therefore there is no options analysis.

3.1 Summary of Corporate KPI Performance

Quarter 3 2021/22 Performance against target		Direction of Travel compared to 2020/21	
Achieved	65.7% (23)	↑ BETTER	43.8% (14)
Failed	34.3% (12)	→ STATIC	21.9% (7)
		↓ WORSE	34.3% (11)

3.2 Impact of Covid-19

- 3.2.1 The Quarter 3 (April to December 2021) overall outturn is 66% of indicators achieving their target which is higher than the outturn for 2020/21 of 63%. However, given the significant impact and disruption this time last year at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is difficult to make a meaningful comparison. This report covers April to December 2021, the first three months and final month of which saw the country still in various phases of lockdown. Whilst most

restrictions have now eased, we continue to monitor how the latest phase of restrictions have impacted service provision.

3.2.2 In most cases the targets for 2021/22 have been set based on “normal” circumstances to more clearly analyse the impact of the disruption caused by the pandemic. This is likely to mean that more indicators will not “perform” as well as they did before COVID, and/or the rate of improvement will not be as great. Where an indicator has failed to reach its target during the year, the commentary provided will identify clearly whether this is related to COVID-19 impacts or other factors impacting on performance.

3.2.3 It is difficult to predict accurately how long and to what extent service delivery in some areas will continue to be impacted. Some will continue to be affected during the remainder of the year, particularly given the return to restrictions before Christmas. This is being further affected by the need to mitigate against the wider capacity and financial pressures which COVID has brought about, including the need to hold vacant posts and the ongoing recruitment restrictions as well as transformational changes to the way services are delivered. This is likely to continue to have an increasingly significant impact on service delivery going forward to the end of 2021/22 and into the next municipal year.

3.3 On target performance

66% of available corporate KPIs achieved their targets. (Brackets show actuals where appropriate).

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
% of potholes repaired within policy and agreed timeframe	Cllr Maney	98%	99% (1,472)	100% (2,391)	100%	100%	100%	100% (2,912)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	98%	98%
% of Major planning applications processed in 13 weeks	Cllr Maney	97%	100% (9)	100% (16)	100%	100%	100%	100% (24)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	90%	90%
% of refuse bins emptied on correct day	Cllr Jefferies	97.31%	99.87%	99.96%	99.96%	99.95%	99.95%	99.95%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	98.5%	98.5%
Tenant satisfaction with Transforming Homes	Cllr Spillman	86.5%	90.3% (56)	90.3% (112)	100%	100%	80%	91.4% (187)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	85%	85%
% occupancy of council-owned business centres	Cllr Coxshall	71%	75%	75%				86.67%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	80%	80%
No of events and activities (provided from hubs/libraries) that support engagement in a range of cultural, social and learning opportunities to support well-being / strengthen community connections	Cllr Huelin	437	99	290				602	ACHIEVED	BETTER	270	360
Successful completion of treatment in Young People's Drug & Alcohol service (YTD)	Cllr Mayes	90%	100%	95%				96%	ACHIEVED	BETTER	70%	70%
Number of new Micro Enterprises started since 1 April 2021	Cllr Huelin	20	4	16				21	ACHIEVED	BETTER	15	20
Older people (65+) still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/ rehabilitation (quarterly snapshot)	Cllr Huelin	86.40%	91.9% (68)	84.0% (68)				94.4% (67)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	86.3%	86.3%
% of places accessed for two year olds for early years education in the borough	Cllr Johnson	70%		71.6% (summer term)				82.3% (autumn term)	ACHIEVED	BETTER	73%	73%
Value (£) of council owned property disposals	Cllr Hebb	£460k	£537k	£2,797k				£2,797k	ACHIEVED	BETTER	£2m	£3m

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
No of applicants with family commitments in Bed & Breakfast for six weeks or more (ie homeless with dependent child(ren) / pregnant)	Cllr Spillman	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	ACHIEVED	STATIC	0	0
Overall spend to budget on HRA (£K variance)	Cllr Spillman	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	ACHIEVED	STATIC	£0	£0
% of Minor planning applications processed in 8 weeks	Cllr Maney	100%	100% (43)	100% (91)	100%	100%	100%	100% (148)	ACHIEVED	STATIC	90%	90%
Forecast Council Tax collected	Cllr Hebb	97.96%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	98.0%	ACHIEVED	STATIC	98.0%	98.0%
Forecast National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) collected	Cllr Hebb	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	96.8%	ACHIEVED	STATIC	96.8%	96.8%
Overall spend to budget on General Fund (% variance against forecast)	Cllr Hebb	0%	0%	0%				0%	ACHIEVED	STATIC	0%	0%
% of repairs completed within target	Cllr Spillman	98.3%	97.2% (7,960)	95.4% (15,993)	96.0%	96.7%	97.1%	95.9% (24,463)	ACHIEVED	WORSE	95%	95%
Permanent admissions of older people (aged 65 and over) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population (population figure 24,098 published June 2021)	Cllr Huelin	618.3 per 100,000	178.4 (43)	336.1 (81)	361.0 (87)	448.2 (108)	493.8 (119)	493.8 (119)	ACHIEVED	WORSE	560.2 (135)	738.7 (178)
% of volunteer placements filled within council	Cllr Huelin	96%	90% (135)	93% (181)				94% (166)	ACHIEVED	WORSE	94%	96%
No of placements available within council for volunteers	Cllr Huelin	224	150	194				177	ACHIEVED	WORSE	175	190
Street Cleanliness - a) Litter	Cllr Jefferies	4.61%		Tranche 1 6.17				Tranche 2 7.83	ACHIEVED	WORSE	9%	9%
Average time between child entering care & moving in with adoptive family adjusted for foster carer adoptions, for children who have been adopted (days) (rolling 12 mths)	Cllr Johnson	new KPI	378 days	375 days				341 days	ACHIEVED	n/a	426 days	426 days

3.4 Off target indicators

At the end of quarter 3, eleven (11) of the available indicators failed to meet their target.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
Proportion of people using social care who receive direct payments	Cllr Huelin	34.4%	33.1%	31.5%	30.8%	31.2%	31.1%	31.1%	FAILED	WORSE	33%	33%
<p>Although under-target, Thurrock is still performing 4.5% above the latest national average (26.6% 20/21) and 6.0% above the latest regional average (25.1% 20/21). Out of 1,401 long term community services in place at month end, 436 were direct payments. In order to support hospitals during COVID, new national measures were put in place to provide up to 6 weeks free care (4 weeks from July) to anyone being discharged from hospital, funded under the national Covid Hospital Discharge Policy. As such, individuals leaving hospital have been placed in free commissioned services (such as home care). As a consequence, for those individuals who require ongoing care beyond the free period, most are staying with the home care provider they are already receiving support from, rather than moving to a direct payment where they would be required to make their own care arrangements, resulting in a slow uptake of new direct payments.</p> <p>In addition, the pandemic has resulted in fewer personal assistants and other independent services being available, causing difficulties for individuals sourcing their own care, resulting in more individuals moving from direct payments to Council commissioned services. Due to the continuing pandemic, these individuals are reluctant to move back to a direct payment at this time.</p> <p>Following the ending of the Section 75 agreement with Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT), all of the cases transferred back into the Local Authority were reviewed and some cases were identified where the direct payments were no longer current. This also has resulted in a reduction in the overall number of people receiving direct payments.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>Communications have been circulated to practitioners and managers to promote direct payments and ensure that everyone eligible for a direct payment is offered this choice during the assessment and support planning process. Direct Payments will continue to be promoted with practitioners, however uptake remains slow owing to the issues described above. Manager's authorising the commissioning of new services have also been reminded to ensure that the option of direct payments has been explored with individuals before a commissioned service is authorised.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
No of new apprenticeships started (includes council staff undertaking apprenticeships) (excludes LA maintained schools)	Cllr Duffin	56	10	23 (33)	5	1	0	6 (39)	FAILED	WORSE	15 (45)	62

The target was met in October but with only one new apprentice over November and December the overall target for the quarter and year to date was missed. The lead up to Christmas is usually a quieter period. There are a further 15 apprenticeship in plan and if all commence within the accounting period there will be a total of 54 against the target of 62 which is 87% of the annual target.

ROUTE TO GREEN

The current trajectory suggests that the end of year outturn would equate to 2% of the workforce compared to the nationally-set public sector target of 2.3%. This is a slight improvement on the 2020/21 achievement of 1.95%. Public Realm and Resources and Place Delivery directorates have already met their annual directorate target. All directorates have been asked to continue to seek out opportunities for apprenticeships, especially upskilling existing staff, and contact the apprenticeships officer for support if needed.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Tranche 1	Tranche 2	Latest Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	2021/22 Target
Street Cleanliness - c) Graffiti % of areas surveyed with unacceptable levels of graffiti	Cllr Jefferies	3.67%	3.33%	3.83%	FAILED	WORSE	3%

Graffiti levels continue to be just above target, despite the ongoing efforts of the Clean and Green teams. There continues to be a lot of work conducted on graffiti clearance and several teams proactively clear small tags from street furniture as soon as they are noted.

ROUTE TO GREEN

The collaboration between Clean and Green and Environmental Enforcement Teams continues with targeted action in high incidence areas, additionally aided by the intelligence received through this survey. In addition to ongoing vigilance and cleaning of graffiti by the street cleansing teams, Environmental Enforcement Officers are continuing with an ongoing operation [Abercrombie] and recording graffiti offences. This has seen a reduction in offending and the arrest and prosecution of one offender.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target																														
Payment rate of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) - initial figure	Cllr Gledhill	49%	45.49%	49.31%	49.1%	42.1%	24.9%	38.72%	FAILED	WORSE	70%	70%																														
<p>The FPN payment rate is reported at the beginning of each month and provides an initial indication of performance. However, many of the FPNs issued in the month are not expected to be paid within that month. Indeed the full payment cycle of an FPN can be as long as three months. This means that the initial performance is often reported as being significantly lower than the final payment rate figure. The chart below provides a comparison of the initial in month figures that have been reported each month to December 2021, alongside the final payment rate calculated three months later.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>April</th> <th>May</th> <th>June</th> <th>July</th> <th>August</th> <th>September</th> <th>October</th> <th>November*</th> <th>December*</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Initial figure</td> <td>48%</td> <td>45%</td> <td>43%</td> <td>49%</td> <td>53%</td> <td>46%</td> <td>49%</td> <td>42%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised figure</td> <td>66%</td> <td>60%</td> <td>56%</td> <td>55%</td> <td>62%</td> <td>60%</td> <td>57%</td> <td>42%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>*subject to revision</i></p> <p>This shows performance with regard to FPN payments whilst still under target, is significantly better than might appear to be the case should only the initial figures be reviewed. This additional line of data will be included in future reporting. It will also provide an updated payment rate figure in subsequent reports to ensure that the final performance is accurately represented. It is anticipated that over the course of January and February, the figures for October, November and December will increase further.</p>														April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November*	December*	Initial figure	48%	45%	43%	49%	53%	46%	49%	42%	25%	Revised figure	66%	60%	56%	55%	62%	60%	57%	42%	25%
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November*	December*																																	
Initial figure	48%	45%	43%	49%	53%	46%	49%	42%	25%																																	
Revised figure	66%	60%	56%	55%	62%	60%	57%	42%	25%																																	
ROUTE TO GREEN																																										
<p>It is important to note that the payment rate of FPNs can be influenced by a number of factors outside of the control of the council team, as previously reported to members. A recent example is the low rate initially reported for December 2021 which is likely to be linked to individuals prioritising Christmas related spending over FPN payment.</p> <p>The Environment Enforcement team continue to closely monitor payments and take all appropriate action to ensure that the final payment rate is as high as possible. For the period from April to December, 451 prosecutive cases have been initiated relating to the non-payment of FPNs.</p>																																										

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
% of young people who reoffend after a previously recorded offence	Cllr Johnson	17.0%	17% (Q4)	3% (Q1)				26%	FAILED	WORSE	20%	20%
<p>The latest aggregated Quarter 3 data for this locally identified re-offending cohort is 26%. This has significantly increased since the last quarter due to a small cohort containing some prolific offenders. It is also likely that the back log of court cases due to COVID 19 has impacted this figure. However, Thurrock's nationally published Ministry of Justice re-offending performance is 32.3%, which benchmarks better than the 35.2% for England & Wales and 34.7% for our nationally identified benchmark family.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>The primary aim of all youth offending teams is to reduce the offending of children in line with the expectations of the Youth Justice Board. Thurrock's current Youth Justice Plan sets the strategic direction and highlights six priorities designed to address the offending of local young people. Within the plan a strong commitment has been made to diverting young people away from the criminal justice system by introducing an Out of Court Disposal Panel. The panel is designed to reduce first time entrants and will consequently reduce reoffending.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
Of the children who reached their 28th day in care within reporting period, % who had an Initial Health Assessment (IHA) within 20 working days (28 calendar days) NB definition amended 2021/22	Cllr Johnson	57%	85.2% (23)	61.2% (30)				58.0% (40)	FAILED	n/a - new definition	80%	80%
<p>This is currently not on target due to a combination of reasons including delays in appointments from health, placement changes, capacity issues, or the family cancelled appointment or did not attend. With regards to capacity within health this is requiring a meeting with health colleagues to discuss further. The small cohort here means that individual cases impact significantly on the percentage.</p>												

ROUTE TO GREEN

A detailed explanation of this indicator has been provided to members as part of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee minutes for the January 2022 meeting. The service is working hard to ensure paperwork (where there is consent) is sent within 5 days to health colleagues. The initial appointments for children within Thurrock are usually within the 20 days. There are capacity issues for all health authorities in England for IHAs. Delays are addressed through the weekly IHA meeting and escalated where necessary. There is regular consultation with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and reviews of the data. This is ongoing. There is also a renewed focus on the IHA and seeking consent from parents, and agreeing with foster carers to keep appointments and for social workers to attend with the carers.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
Number of health hazards removed as a direct result of private sector housing team intervention	Cllr Spillman	746	212	455	83	110	76	724	FAILED	BETTER	756	1,000

Over the course of 2021-22 to date private landlords have been reporting challenges in carrying out property improvement works following the lifting of COVID restrictions nationally. Some landlords have requested more time to remove hazards and carry out remedial works due to financial or operational difficulties caused by the pandemic in completing works. This includes building material shortages impacting on timescales, material prices causing financial difficulties for some landlords and a shortage of contractors to carry out works. This is assessed and considered on a case by case basis and the latest government advice for local authorities to enforce standards in rented properties. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities continue to recommend a pragmatic approach to support landlords and tenants.

Routine property inspections were not carried out during the national lockdowns for Category 1 and 2 hazards. Essential inspections were only carried out where an imminent risk to a tenant's health due to a serious hazard. Following government advice, routine inspections recommenced in May 2021, subject to tenants not self-isolating or refusing to allow access.

ROUTE TO GREEN

Outputs in this area have increased in Quarter 3 which has brought the year to date outturn within 26 of the in quarter target. Compared to 45 difference at the end of Quarter 2. This represents positive progress towards the year end target of 1,000 hazards removed.

The private sector housing team are working closely with landlords and tenants to ensure standards in rented properties are maintained and are taking formal action if/when the most serious 'category 1' hazards are found and are made aware that a tenant is vulnerable. This includes works in default when a landlord refuses or fails to carry out repairs.

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
% Rent collected	Cllr Spillman	98.3%	89.5%	93.1%	93.2%	94.3%	95.3%	95.3%	FAILED	STATIC	95.5%	98%
<p>This is expected to recover in the final quarter of the year. Rent collection performance in December was impacted by £100K of Universal Credit payments for the 24th - 29th of December not being posted to the rent accounts in time.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>Had the £100K of Universal Credit payments been posted on time, rent collection performance at the end of December would have been 95.5% and on target.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
Average time to turnaround/re-let voids (in days)	Cllr Spillman	47.5 days	30.2 days	31.4 days	42.0 days	34.3 days	30.0 days	32.5 days	FAILED	BETTER	28 days	28 days
<p>Performance against this indicator is made up of both general needs and sheltered voids. General needs voids average re-let time at the end of quarter 3 is just over the target of 28 days at 28.3 days. Sheltered voids average re-let time at the end of quarter 3 was 43.7 days and over the target of 28 days. However there is a clear disparity in performance between sheltered voids with an entrance door on the ground floor and those with an entrance door on the first floor or higher. The latter are generally harder to let, with latest average relet times being 25.7 days (on target) and 62.3 days respectively. Sheltered voids with an entrance door on the first floor or higher, which make up a very small proportion of voids overall (36 of 272), is the clear driver of void re-let time underperformance and this is substantially affecting the overall average re-let time.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>A number of actions have been taken in order to address underperformance, specifically with sheltered voids above the ground floor. A dedicated officer has been assigned to this area to improve performance and is currently pro-actively contacting tenants to support them to move from larger properties; part of the decommissioning working group - supporting tenants to move and targeting hard to let properties. They are also working with the Allocations Team to identify suitable tenants and support the fast tracking of paperwork. The service is also in constant contact with a number of other council teams in order to identify suitable tenants and are being flexible in relation to the lower age limit for sheltered housing. As a result of actions being taken, the average void re-let time for sheltered voids above the ground floor improved significantly in December with 4 voids let in an average of 21 days.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
% General tenant satisfaction with neighbourhoods/services provided by Housing	Cllr Spillman	75.5%	72.8%	73.6%	66.9%	73.2%	76.8%	73.2%	FAILED	WORSE	75%	75%
<p>During 2021/22 at the end of quarter 3, 1,478 tenants have completed a telephone satisfaction survey and have given a rating for satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing. Of these, 1,082 (73.2%) tenants gave a "very satisfied" or "fairly satisfied" rating. Of the remaining 396 tenants, 173 gave a neutral rating of "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" which means that 223 (15%) tenants gave a dissatisfied rating of "fairly dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied".</p> <p>Some of the reasons for underperformance, based on accompanying qualitative feedback, relates to refuse collection, street sweeping, Council Tax and Housing Benefit. Whilst these are not services delivered by housing, this has impacted the overall satisfaction rate by 1.4%. Another main reason for underperformance is issues with repairs. 56 out of 223 negative ratings were accompanied by qualitative feedback relating to repairs. This accounts for 25.1% of all negative feedback and has impacted the satisfaction rate by 3.8%.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>Tenant satisfaction with the overall service provided by Housing in December was 76.8% and on target and has improved from lower scores in both October and November.</p> <p>New business intelligence dashboards were developed during Quarter 3 which enables management to drill down into much greater detail to understand the reasons for dissatisfaction with the overall Housing service as well as a range of other measures including repairs, quality of home and keeping tenants informed. These dashboards are now operational and will enable management to identify and rectify the aspects of the service which are driving dissatisfaction.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
Total gross external income (fees & charges) (based on sales forecast)	Cllr Hebb	£6.4m	£6.6m	£7.1m				£7.4m	FAILED	BETTER	£8m	£8m
<p>The position reflects the current projection of fees and charges in the context of the ongoing pandemic. It is expected a proportion of the expected reduction will be met from Central Government funding and there will be some cost reductions associated with specific income losses that further mitigate the overall position.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>This continues to be closely monitored as part of the wider budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) monitoring with regular reports to Cabinet.</p>												

Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Quarter 1 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Quarter 3 Year to Date (YTD)	Quarter 3 Target Status	Direction of Travel since 2020/21	Quarter 3 Target	2021/22 Target
% of GP practices who have received 1 visit to discuss COVID recovery in relation to Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF)	Cllr Mayes	<i>new KPI</i>	26%	59%				59%	FAILED	n/a	75%	100%
% of GP practices who have received a second visit to review outcomes of first and discuss the cancer quality improvement work	Cllr Mayes	<i>new KPI</i>	Annual indicator – follow up activity to above indicator									100%
<p>Due to the urgent prioritisation of Primary Care resources to focus on the booster vaccine campaign, particularly in response to the level 4 national incident due to the pressure caused by the Omicron variant, there have been no further visits to practices for the purpose of discussion of Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) indicators. QOF will recommence in full from April 2022 with planned local enhancement through the Stretched QOF programme that is currently being planned with Primary Care Network (PCN) engagement. Visits will recommence once this is established.</p>												
ROUTE TO GREEN												
<p>Activity for these indicators has been refocused to develop profile cards and a refocussed stretch QOF programme for PCNs in 2022/23. It will not be possible to recover this indicator during Q3 & Q4 and so will remain at the Q2 outturn for the remainder of 2021/22.</p>												

3.5 Other key indicators

3.5.1 Throughout the year the council also monitors some other indicators as part of the corporate scorecard which, whilst not performance related, are important to keep under review

Demand Indicator Definition	Portfolio Holder	2020/21 Outturn	Q1 Year to Date (YTD)	Q2 Year to Date (YTD)	In month Oct	In month Nov	In month Dec	Q3 Year to Date (YTD)	Direction of Travel since 2020/21
No of households at risk of homelessness approaching the Council for assistance	Cllr Spillman	1,826	440	909	151	152	102	1,314	HIGHER
No of homeless cases accepted	Cllr Spillman	211	35	101	13	24	15	153	LOWER

The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) 2017 places a duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness, or relieve homelessness where this is not possible. The number of approaches include all who have approached the council for housing assistance. A number of these cases were prevented and homelessness has been relieved.

The acceptances are low in comparison to approaches because the service deal with a greater number of cases by preventing and relieving homelessness before they reach the "main duty" stage, which is the stage at which acceptances are recorded.

The council primarily uses the private rented sector to source accommodation for applicants which is secured through regular contact with landlords and estate agents. Tenancy Sustainment Officers and Financial Inclusion Officers then work with the tenant to ensure that the relevant benefits are applied for to enable them to sustain their tenancy. In addition to this, the council also utilises the services of the Community and Employment Support Officer to support applicants into training and employment.

The service also prevents homelessness by negotiating and working with landlords and excluders (someone the applicant currently lives with who has asked the applicant to leave their property) to keep the applicants in the property they are approaching us from or negotiating a planned move into suitable accommodation.

3.5.2 KPIs for which data is not currently available due to COVID-19 impact

Number of delayed transfers of care (DToC) - days from hospital (attrib. to NHS, ASC & Joint)	The collection and publication of official DToC figures continue to be suspended by NHS England due to COVID-19 and new Hospital Discharge Policy.
% of primary schools judged "good" or better	No inspections have taken place since the start of COVID-19 pandemic
% of secondary schools judged "good" or better	

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The corporate priorities and associated performance framework are fundamental to articulating what the council is aiming to achieve. It is best practice to report on the performance of the council. It shows effective levels of governance and transparency and showcases strong performance as well as an acknowledgement of where we need to improve.
- 4.2 This report highlights what the council is focussing on during 2021/22 and confirms the governance and monitoring mechanisms which were in place to ensure that priorities are delivered.

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

- 5.1 Performance against the corporate priorities was monitored through Performance Board, a cross-council officer group of performance experts representing each service. Performance Board will continue to consider the corporate KPIs on a monthly basis, highlighting areas of particular focus to Directors Board.
- 5.2 Each quarter a report will continue to be presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and finally reported to Cabinet.

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

- 6.1 The vision and priorities cascade into every bit of the council and further to our partners, through key strategies, service plans, team plans and individual objectives.
- 6.2 This report will help decision makers and other interested parties, form a view of the success of the council's actions in working towards achieving the vision and priority ambitions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**

Senior Management Accountant

The report provides an update on performance against corporate priorities. There are financial KPIs within the corporate scorecard, the performance of which are included in the report.

Where there are issues of underperformance, any recovery planning commissioned by the council may entail future financial implications, and will need to be considered as appropriate.

The council is still assessing the full financial impact of Covid-19 and this is being regularly reported to members.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Corporate Governance Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation of this report. However under s3(1) of the Local Government Act 1999, local authorities have general duty to obtain Best Value by making arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In relation to this general duty, the focus is not simply to achieve best value, but also to strive for continuous improvement. The best value duty also extends to obtaining best value to all aspects of local authorities operation.

Effective KPIs are useful in ensuring and monitoring the level of service delivery of the Council's services and activities. Where there are issues of underperformance, any recovery planning commissioned by the Council or associated individual priority projects may have legal implications, and as such will need to be addressed separately as decisions relating to those specific activities are considered.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Corporate Performance Framework for 2021/22 contains measures that help determine the level of progress with meeting wider diversity and equality ambitions, including youth employment and attainment, independent living, vulnerable adults, volunteering etc. Individual commentary is given throughout the year within the regular monitoring reports regarding progress and actions.

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

The Corporate Performance Framework includes areas which affect a wide variety of issues, including those noted above in the body of the report. Where applicable these are covered in the appendix.

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): N/A

9. Appendices to the report

- n/a

Report Author

Sarah Welton

Strategy Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

8 March 2022	ITEM: 6
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Report on Asset Related Savings	
Wards and communities affected: All Wards	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: David Johnson – Asset Manager	
Accountable Assistant Director: David Johnson – Asset Manager	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark – Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery	
This report is public	

Executive Summary

Members have received a number of reports on the budget pressures that Thurrock Council face with agreement of the budget for 2022/23 at full Council on 23 February 2022. A forecast deficit of £14.3m remains for the following two years.

The Cabinet report on 7 July 2021 targeted reductions of £1m through Assets was identified though this has been subsequently reduced to £850k. The closure of the Thameside building was identified as a possible contributor towards this target. A final decision on the future of the building has not yet been made due to ongoing discussions with the community as reported to Cabinet in January 2022 - therefore full year savings from the Thameside Complex will not be made for 2022/23.

This report updates on those discussions regarding a potential asset transfer to the community. The report to Cabinet will recommend that these discussions continue with a further Cabinet report in July 2022 at the latest to make a final decision on the building.

1. Recommendations:

1.1 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the report and the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 9 March 2022:

- That Cabinet note the main points from the discussions with the community and through the ongoing wider Roundtable meetings; and

- **That Cabinet support the relevant Portfolio Holders and Officers to continue with further discussions with the community over the future of the Thameside building and related services and that a recommendation is made to Cabinet for final decision no later than July 2022.**

2. Background

- 2.1 The Cabinet has received reports regularly since 7 July 2021 on the council's financial forecasts and projected two-year budget pressure of £34m. The budget for 2022/23 was agreed at full Council on 23 February 2022. A forecast deficit of £14.3m remains for the following two years.
- 2.2 Thurrock Council, like all councils nationally, face pressures every year but, since 2018, has managed to meet these pressures through commercial income generation.
- 2.3 As this is no longer possible, the main focus of meeting these challenges going forward is through expenditure reduction and, as one of the larger cross-council budgets, a targeted reduction in the cost of the council's assets was identified.
- 2.4 The Thameside building was identified as a potential saving with a net cost in excess of £0.5m per annum. In addition, the building requires significant investment, currently estimated at £16m, after only minor capital works over the last decade.

3. Community Asset Transfer

- 3.1 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) is a process that allows a community organisation to take over publicly-owned land or buildings in a way that recognises the public benefits that the transfer will bring. It involves the transfer of the responsibility for an asset from the Council to a community group or voluntary organisation. This can be done through either a transfer of management responsibility or short or long term lease and is an option for the Thameside Complex.
- 3.2 As reported to Cabinet in January 2022, to date, conversations with the community group leading the development of asset transfer proposals have been positive. There is however still significant work required by the community on a business plan which is not now expected to be received by the council until the end of March 2022. Receipt of a detailed business plan will enable full consideration of the proposals by the council in order to make recommendations to Cabinet for a final decision.
- 3.3 The council will also promote the community asset transfer opportunity more widely in line with the Asset Disposal Policy and Collaborative Communities Framework to ensure that any other interested community organisations are aware of the Thameside Complex, as well as other opportunities, and that the council is considering its future. Other groups would then be able to submit

alternative proposals or seek to engage with the group already developing their business plan.

- 3.4 A final decision on the future of the Thameside building should be made no later than July 2022 to enable at least part-year savings for 2022/23 and/or clarity on the financial and service implications for 2023/24 and beyond.
- 3.5 The Thameside building will therefore not close before the end of July 2022. All services operating within the building will continue including bookings for the Thameside theatre and engagement activities at Thurrock Museum. Grays Library will also continue to operate from the building as usual. The Registry Office and Registrars service will move to the new Civic Offices building in the coming months as previously planned.

4. Roundtable Meetings

- 4.1 Meetings with interested representatives of the community took place on 22 September, 30 November, 13 December 2021 and 25 January 2022. Cabinet should note that the second meeting had been planned for an earlier date in October but was deferred due to the tragic death of Sir David Amess MP, along with all Council meetings in Thurrock and across Essex at that time.
- 4.2 The Portfolio Holders for Regeneration, Strategic Planning & External Relationships and Adults & Communities and various officers represented the council.
- 4.3 Whilst the first meeting was mainly about ensuring the strength of feeling in the community was known, along with challenges to the rationale for closure and concerns over the impact on cultural services, the following meetings have concentrated on a proposal from the community to manage the building and related services. This has provided an opportunity for engagement with a wide range of representatives from different organisations interested in the future provision of culture, arts and heritage services and activities from the Thameside Complex including library services and will inform the emerging business plan.
- 4.4 In addition, meetings have also taken place with individuals and groups as part of ongoing engagement to develop a shared Cultural Strategy for Thurrock with partners.

5. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 5.1 There are three clear options relating to the Thameside building:
 - Do nothing. This is not recommended as the ongoing revenue cost is prohibitive, significant capital investment would be required and the necessary improvements to the Cultural offer will not be made;
 - Close the building. While Cabinet recognised in July 2021 that the building is not considered fit for purpose in the medium to long-term,

this is not recommended at this time whilst meaningful discussions are taking place with the community representatives; or

- Continue with discussions and the development of a business case that could see a community organisation taking over the Thameside building including the transformation of the building and related cultural services. Recommended in principle but with a final decision to be made no later than July 2022 to ensure savings can be made and the future is clear to all interested parties.
- Whilst there has also been discussion about the future of the library situated in the building, any decision on possible relocation is linked to the future of the building.

6. Reasons for Recommendation

6.1 The recommendations allow for ongoing discussions with community representatives to determine the future of the Thameside building.

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

7.1 The future of the Thameside building was subject to debate at the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 16 November 2021, with community representatives at four separate Roundtable meetings and with affected staff.

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

8.1 Whilst the decision is about the future of a building, it is difficult to separate that decision from the impact on the services currently provided within it. Running parallel to these discussions is the development of a new cultural strategy that will be presented in due course.

9. Implications

9.1 Financial

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

Savings of circa £500k are currently targeted from the closure of the Thameside building. Delays in decision making to explore alternative options with the community have impacted on achieving a full year saving in 2022/23.

The outline business case currently being proposed by the community also requires ongoing financial support, on a reducing basis. A full and detailed business plan is expected to be received by the council by the end of March 2022. This will need to be considered and recommendations made for a decision by Cabinet no later than July 2022.

9.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Mark Bowen**
Interim Head of Legal Services

The Council is generally empowered to dispose of assets which are underperforming or surplus to requirements. Each asset will need to be checked to ensure its formal ownerships and appropriation enable general disposal with terms to be confirmed. Any proposal would also need to be considered against the provisions of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the public subsidy regime.

9.3 Diversity and Equality

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

The Asset Disposal Policy sets out considerations for bringing agility to land and property assets so that the delivery of the Council's goals and objectives are realised in a sustainable manner, at the right time and on budget. The policy itself will be the subject of a Community Equality Impact Assessment to mitigate the risk of negative impact on citizens, communities and workforce currently located at Thameside. Where community assets are identified for disposal, the process set out for the implementation of the CAT Policy and principles of the Collaborative Communities Framework will be applied, this includes the completion of CEIA's on a case by case basis, engagement with the voluntary and community sector, and an assessment of social value that includes support for Thurrock's recovery from COVID-19 and building resilience within communities and voluntary sector networks.

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

The Thameside is used for a range of purposes including direct service delivery, use by community groups and residents. The council recognises the value and positive impact culture, arts and heritage can have on the health and wellbeing of residents and this will be reflected in the new strategy.

Staff and volunteers based at the Thameside building have been kept informed of the ongoing considerations about the future of the building since July 2021 including the possible implications for the services where appropriate. They have also been actively engaged in the development of the Cultural Strategy.

Due to the lack of capital investment in the building and its age, it does not currently have a positive impact on the council's carbon emissions.

10. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location)

on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

11. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Sean Clark

Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery

8 March 2022	ITEM: 7
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee	
Thames Freeport: Business Rates Policy and Governance Structure	
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A
Report of: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director of Finance and Gerard McCleave, Assistant Director of Economic Growth & Partnerships	
Accountable Assistant Director: Jonathan Wilson, Assistant Director of Finance and Gerard McCleave, Assistant Director of Economic Growth & Partnerships	
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery and Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Engagement & Growth	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

Thames Freeport is a key feature of Britain’s Trading Future and will drive economic growth across the Thames Estuary. As a national and international hub for global trade and investment across the UK, it will deliver regeneration and job creation in areas in urgent need of levelling-up and will be a transformational game-changer for Thurrock communities.

Thames Freeport is private sector led (Forth Ports, DP World and Ford). Thurrock Council is the Lead Authority and the Accountable Body for Thames Freeport. Lead Authority main responsibilities include managing and being accountable for public money, participation in the Freeport governance arrangements, liaison with Government and public sector leadership. As Lead Authority for Thames Freeport, the Council had a principal role in ensuring the collaborative completion of the business case and submission to Government for approval.

One of the tax incentives available to businesses is 100% relief on business rates for five years providing they invest in the Freeport tax site areas by September 2026, which is then fully reimbursed back to the Council from Government. As this is a locally-administered tax, the Council is required to create and adopt a business rates relief policy to provide that benefit, subject to the criteria required to meet Freeport objectives. This report seeks to agree this policy.

As part of the business case, the guidance required development of a management case which sets out the long-term governance structure and arrangements (Board membership, powers, delegations, accountabilities and responsibilities etc.), delivery

team structure, stakeholder management and engagement, shared learning and building expertise, risk management, arrangements for dealing with security and illicit activity, key milestones, the role of the accountable body, and monitoring and evaluation arrangements.

Expanding on the interim arrangements in place for developing the business case, Thames Freeport will be governed by a Board, the Thames Freeport Governance Board (TFGB), established for the purpose and duration of delivering the Freeport. The TFGB will have overall responsibility for all Thames Freeport activity and will be accountable to Government for the achievement of the Freeport strategic objectives. This report also seeks to appoint the Thurrock Council representative to the TFGB, as well as endorsing the Council's role in future sub-committees.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee comment on the report and the recommendations to be considered by Cabinet on 9 March 2022:

- **That Cabinet:**
 - **Approves the Thames Freeport Business Rates Policy at Appendix 1.**
 - **Delegates authority to the Section 151 Officer to make necessary amendments to the policy as required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships.**
 - **Approve the Chief Executive's appointment as the Council's representative on the Thames Freeport Governance Board, who will be responsible for briefing and updating the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships on key and significant activity.**
 - **Endorses that relevant Officers participate in and represent the Council on the various Thames Freeport Sub-committees as necessary and delegates authority to the Chief Executive to appoint Officers to appropriate sub-committees e.g. Skills, Levelling Up and Regeneration.**
 - **Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery and the Monitoring Officer, to enter into any Memoranda of Understanding with government and Freeport bodies in order to deliver the activities of Thames Freeport in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Thames Freeport is a catalyst for change in Thurrock. It will deliver further employment which will increase local productivity, initiatives to support

inclusive and sustained economic growth, reduce inequalities and enable growth to meet local need and attract further talented people, more investment, innovative employers, and businesses. The TFGB will formalise the strong public-private relationships, with a relentless focus on local impact and putting local stakeholders and communities at the heart of delivery.

- 2.2 The core economic strengths of the Thames Freeport geography are logistics, low carbon energy, transport and storage, construction and advanced light manufacturing. The Freeport is the correct regeneration and policy response because it is directly aligned to and builds on Thurrock's strengths and can deliver greater economic growth than could be achieved with traditional (locally isolated) regeneration policy. In particular, time bound tax incentives will increase the rate of return to new investment which occurs over the short-medium term. This will de-risk, accelerate and increase the volume of investment occurring as the economy recovers from Covid-19. Businesses investing in the tax sites will continue to benefit over the longer-term because of the strong clustering / agglomeration impacts the Freeport is aiming to create through its selection criteria of supportive businesses, the delivery and focus of the Thames Freeport Innovation Strategy, bespoke skills and labour market pipeline, alignment with initiatives of local, regional and national significance, increased trading opportunities and the quality infrastructure on offer on the port sites.
- 2.3 Greater public and private investment in the region will allow it to close gaps in employment opportunities and incomes with the rest of the nation, whilst the retention of additional business rates will allow investment in social and economic infrastructure which boosts the productivity and well-being of Thurrock residents, aligning to wider regional and national policy, for example regeneration, levelling up and net zero.
- 2.4 The Outline Business Case (OBC) for Thames Freeport was submitted in July 2021 and, following an extensive review period with relevant government departments, was approved by Government at the Autumn Statement and Spending Review in October 2021. Following the approval of the three tax sites and the primary customs site by HM Treasury and HMRC, Thames Freeport was fully approved by government to operate on 15 December 2021.
- 2.5 The Full Business Case (FBC) was submitted to government on 28 January 2022, where it will be assessed by the relevant government departments, led by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Approval of the FBC allows for the release of funding from government, including seed capital funding to accelerate investment within the tax sites, and accrued retained business rates to the ratings authorities, which includes Thurrock Council.

Thames Freeport Headline Economic Benefits

- 2.6 The Thames Freeport identified a number of economic and other benefits from Freeport policy and investment. The headline points are:

- Deliver an increase in gross value added (GVA) of £2.6 billion per annum into the economy
- Over £4.5 billion in new public and private investment
- 21,000 net additional jobs with many more across supply chains
- 1,700 acres of development land – much with planning consent
- £400 million port investment into some of the most deprived areas
- Approximately £300 million of retained business rates investment in Thurrock in projects to accelerate levelling-up outcomes, including:
 - **Sustainable Multi-Modal Transport Initiatives** – such as enhanced public transport, improvements to rail and river infrastructure, as well as walking and cycling lanes between existing communities, new communities and across South Essex to provide sustainable access to Thames Freeport employment locations.
 - **Social Development Investment** – for example new health, well-being and cultural facilities, aimed at health and wellbeing improvements, as well as education investment – the new South Essex Technical University a centrepiece of the Thames Freeport Skills Plan to ensure local residents have access to new high-quality jobs, and supporting young people through investment in community-based youth programmes and better targeted youth facilities.
 - **Infrastructure to Unlock Growth** – new roads and upgrades to existing network including feasibility study on major infrastructure in Stanford-Le-Hope.
 - **Digital and Green** – expansion of Gigabit speed internet to tackle digital exclusion, enabling the hydrogen opportunity and supporting the South Essex Estuary Park and further investment in digital infrastructure.

2.7 Overall, it is anticipated that the Thames Freeport will contribute £65 billion to the UK economy over the next 25 years.

3. Thames Freeport Business Rates Policy

3.1 The Government has confirmed that full business rates relief will be available to eligible businesses within the designated Freeport tax sites.

3.2 Relief will be available to all new businesses, and certain existing businesses where they expand, until 30 September 2026. Relief will apply for five years from the point at which each beneficiary first receives relief.

3.3 The Government has not changed legislation relating to the Freeport relief and instead has issued guidance for authorities to use their discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), to grant relief to those who are eligible.

3.4 In the existing framework, granting of discretionary relief would involve a cost to the Council. However in the case of Freeports the Government will fully

reimburse the Council for the cost of relief granted in accordance with the guidelines, through section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act.

4. The FBC Management Case – Governance Structures

4.1 The FBC Management Case sets out the main governance structures and arrangements for delivering Thames Freeport including areas of responsibility, accountabilities, the role of the accountable body and the executive team, led by the Executive Director.

4.2 Thames Freeport will be governed by a Board, the Thames Freeport Governance Board (TFGB), an unincorporated body established for the purpose and duration of delivering the Freeport. The TFGB will have overall responsibility for all Thames Freeport activity and will be accountable to Government for the achievement of the Freeport’s strategic objectives:

- Establish the Thames Freeport as a hub for global trade and investment;
- Enable regional regeneration, improving access to quality jobs and infrastructure;
- Create a centre of regional innovation; and
- Be a leader on transition to net zero within the Freeport Tax and Custom sites.

4.3 The TFGB main areas of responsibility will include Freeport strategy; setting strategic goals, overseeing tax site delivery, approving annual business and delivery plans; overseeing the use of public funds¹, reviewing the strategy and projects funded by retained business rates in line with Freeport policy objectives, stakeholder engagement and monitoring and evaluation of Thames Freeport activities in line with key performance indicators (KPIs) to be agreed with Government.

4.4 The TFGB will be supported by four sub-committees in the areas of:

- Trade and Inward Investment
- Skills, Levelling Up and Regeneration
- Investment, Innovation and Risk Management
- Tax and Custom Site delivery (including net zero and security)

4.5 During the process of developing the original Freeport bid, OBC and FBC, Thames Freeport had in place an Interim Board comprising executive officers from each of the private sector partners, Thurrock Council and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (LBBD). Expanding from these interim arrangements, Thurrock Council as the lead local authority and accountable body will be a core member of the TFGB alongside the private sector tax site operators. The TFGB will also include LBBD and the London Borough of Havering (the local authorities making up the Thames Freeport geographic boundary) with representation from the Port of London Authority as well as a

¹ Subject to final approval by the Accountable Body – Thurrock Council

'skills champion' and non-executive members. In total, the Board will comprise 12 members including an independent Chair, Rt. Hon Ruth Kelly (appointed in November 2021).

- 4.6 The TFGB Chair and Executive Director will attend, at the invitation of the Council, a full council meeting of the three Local Authorities in the Freeport outer boundary and the Joint Committee of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities, each calendar year.

Accountable Body

- 4.7 Thurrock Council also holds the role of Accountable Body for the Thames Freeport in relation to the use of public funds.

- 4.8 As set out in the FBC, it is expected that the role of the Accountable Body will include, but not limited to the following functions:

- Establish and maintain a financial system to account for all funding received and disbursed on behalf of the Freeport;
- Review and approval of business cases for seed capital projects
- Receive funding on behalf of the Freeport and be responsible for its proper administration;
- Ensure, that funding is used appropriately in accordance with the law, good financial management any applicable grant conditions and Freeport objectives;
- Ensure the decisions and activities of the Freeport are taken transparently, are evidence based and represent value for money, and compliance with the Nolan principles, the National Assurance Framework; legal requirement; the principles of probity or sound financial practice; applicable funding terms and agreement on scrutiny arrangements;
- Ensure that the checks and reporting requirements of Thurrock Council's Section 151 Officer are met; this includes retaining appropriate documentation on decisions around funding;
- Ensure appropriate control and reporting mechanisms are in place and that all required information on expenditure, activities, outputs and outcomes are properly recorded and reported to the Freeport;
- Retaining necessary information and ensuring all required information on expenditure, activities and outcomes are properly recorded and reported;
- Escalating in the first instance concerns around non-delivery and/or mismanagement to TFGB;
- A support function: providing technical advice on the relevant law, identifying risks associated with pursuing a particular course of action for the TFGB to consider; and
- Responsibility for assessing the overall delivery risk and associated financial risk (up to an agreed level) on behalf of the Freeport.

4.9 These functions are subject to ongoing negotiations with government, approval of the FBC by DLUHC and will form the basis of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with government and relevant bodies.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 The draft business rates policy is designed to support business while protecting wider local interests from factors such as displacement within the Freeport outer boundary. The correct application of the policy will ensure that relief is granted in accordance with the Government's guidance.

5.2 Cabinet previously (January 2021) endorsed submission of the private sector led Thames Freeport bid and subsequently endorsed (July 2021) the continued engagement of officers with partners to development the Outline Business Case (OBC) and Full Business Case (FBC) and delegated authority to the Chief Executive (in consultation) to sign-off and submit the final OBC and FBC to Government for approval. Cabinet also delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Members, to sign-off and to agree to the formal arrangements for the Council's role in the Freeport's governance structure and enter into appropriate agreements.

5.3 During the development of the Thames Freeport bid, OBC and FBC processes an interim board was in place to oversee and drive forward these different processes. Specifically the role of the interim board was to provide leadership, strategy and oversight / coordination of activities to ensure the successful set-up, formal designation and transition to full operation of the Thames Freeport. This included leading the development of the OBC and FBC processes; developing relationships with the DLUHC Freeport team and leading discussions on wider Freeport economic strategy; coordinate the development of the investment proposition; appoint an independent Chair as well as to evolve the governance arrangements for Freeport operations and delivery. The interim arrangements comprised executive officers from each of the private sector partners, Thurrock Council and LBBD. The TFGB is an expansion on the interim arrangements.

5.4 As outlined above, Thames Freeport is a catalyst for change in Thurrock and can deliver significant economic benefits for the Council area and wider geography through the creation of more and better jobs, substantial increases in investment and GVA into the local economy, initiatives to support inclusive and sustained economic growth, reduce inequalities and enable growth to meet local need and attract more talented people, more investment and more businesses. The potential of the Thames Freeport impacts across a wide range of Council services and longer-term ambitions for example in economic development, skills, health and well-being, engagement and communications, regeneration, planning, community development, finance and legal services. Given this breadth and depth of potential impact and benefit across Thurrock and the Council, it is recommended that the Chief Executive be appointed as Thurrock Council's representative on the TFGB and relevant officers

participate in and represent the Council on the various Thames Freeport sub-committees as appropriate.

- 5.5 As the Lead Authority and Accountable Body Thurrock Council will agree a Memorandum of Understanding with Government in relation to Seed Fund Capital and Business Rates Retention. As the Accountable Body the Council will provide local assurance for all seed capital projects. The Accountable Body will also act on behalf of the Freeport to manage the financial arrangements in relation to the capacity funding provided by Government. It is expected that the role of the Accountable Body will include review and approval of business cases, financial management, accountability and monitoring for all funding received e.g. seed capital, as well as ensuring decisions and activities represent value for money.

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

- 6.1 Thames Freeport partners, Forth Ports, DP World, Ford, Thurrock Council, LB Barking and Dagenham and LB Havering have engaged with a wide range of stakeholder groups throughout the Freeport process including businesses and regional bodies such as South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), Opportunity South Essex (OSE), the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) and the Thames Estuary Growth Board. This engagement is continuing and will intensify as Thames Freeport moves into its operational phase, for example through the DLUHC Freeports Forum, membership of the Thames Freeport Sub-committees, development and delivery of projects, and implementation of the Thames Freeport strategies to support economic growth e.g. skills and innovation. In particular, the connected work by ASELA on the growth agenda has been a key element of the Freeport processes which has demonstrated that the Thames Freeport has understood the wider geographical impact expected of the policy and investment beyond the boundaries of the actual designated area.

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

- 7.1 The vision for Thurrock is: **An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.**
- 7.2 The opportunity created by the Thames Freeport to further support the delivery of this vision and corporate priorities is significant. The government's policy objective to promote regeneration and job creation through the Freeport model is directly aligned to the Council's ambitions and place shaping agenda.
- 7.3 Under the corporate priority banner People, Place, Prosperity, the council is creating a place where people want to live and are proud of, and where businesses want to stay and thrive, and where investors and talent want to locate.

7.4 The successful delivery of the Thames Freeport has the ability to support a number of the Council's Place and Prosperity priorities:

- 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
- A borough ambitious for its future – clean environments, roads, housing and public spaces that connect people and places

7.5 The successful delivery of the Thames Freeport in Thurrock will also significantly contribute to achieving wider place agenda ambitions by bringing together physical, economic, social and environmental renewal to improve the well-being of communities, provide opportunities and help ensure places are fit for the future. This will be reflected in the Council's overall corporate strategy including communicating and promoting the economic strengths, successes and opportunities in Thurrock, a key part of delivering successful economic growth. It also relates to the development of the Local Plan and the implementation of the Economic Development Strategy, Backing Thurrock and the emerging health and well-being strategy.

8. Implications

8.1 Financial

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

The development of a Freeport in the borough enables access to additional funding sources including grants and the retention of business rates relating to new business that locate within the Freeport Tax Sites. This funding can then be utilised to support the wider development of the Freeport area.

The Council has submitted projections of the potential funding streams to identify the level of investment available to deliver the outcomes of the Freeport. The FBC under the 'Financial Case' strand assesses all monetary costs and benefits associated with Thames Freeport including capital and revenue requirements. This includes an assessment of the financial risks associated with the capital programme and a sensitivity analysis of the projections of the additional retained business rates income. This income requires the implementation of the Freeport business rates policy as proposed in the body of the report. It is reiterated that, while the policy enables the Council to retain 100% of new business rates within the designated tax sites, this funding is specifically required to support the delivery of the objectives of the Freeport. Government requires that this funding be largely used for additional activity such as infrastructure and environmental enhancements

and other “levelling up” activity including investment in skills, as it relates to the Freeport objectives.

Subsequent investment decisions for which the Council will be responsible will be subject to a business case process and will follow the Council reporting and decision-making processes.

The role of the Accountable Body also means the Council will have wider responsibility for the Seed Capital Funding (totalling £25m) which supports the delivery of agreed projects by DP World, Forth Ports and Ford. As noted in the report, arrangements will be setup to support the approval of projects, the release of funding and the ongoing monitoring of the project delivery.

8.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Gina Clarke**
Governance Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer

The Government has not laid out the rules for Freeports in a single Freeports Act. The relevant legislation is spread across a range of different Acts and secondary legislation which enables the Council to participate in the Government’s Freeport programme.

Under S113 Finance Act 2021, HM Treasury has the discretion to designate a location as Freeport tax sites purposes of SDLT, plant, machinery, buildings and structures allowances. The Designation of Freeport Tax Sites (Thames Freeport) Regulations 2021 has designated the location of the Thames Freeport with effect from 19th November 2021. Following designation, businesses in the Freeport tax sites will be able to benefit from tax reliefs including business rates relief.

Under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (LGFA) the Council has the power to grant discretionary business rates relief in respect of newly developed sites of Thames Freeport within its area. The LGFA also requires the Council to have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State when deciding whether to grant relief under section 47 of the 1988 Act. Government Guidance dated 21 July 2021 to support local authorities in administering the business rates freeports relief scheme sets out eligibility criteria for which properties will benefit for relief.

The Guidance states that it is up to individual local authorities administering the business rates relief to adopt a local scheme and determine in each individual case to grant discretionary relief under the LGFA. The Government will then fully reimburse local authorities for the local share of the discretionary relief grant funding under s.31 Local Government Act 2003.

The Guidance makes it clear that:

- Local authorities have discretion to apply additional tests for Freeport rates relief in order to avoid or not incentivise displacement of business activity from within the Freeport of the surrounding area.
- Relief should be applied after mandatory and other discretionary reliefs have been applied. Where a site is located within an enterprise zone and freeport, the business itself should choose which scheme applies.
- Freeport business rates relief is subject to the UK's domestic and international subsidy control obligations. Businesses located in Thames Freeport tax sites will need to fulfil any requirements in place to ensure compliance with those obligations in advance of, during, and after claiming relief.

The proposed Business Rates Relief Policy at Appendix 1 of the report is consistent with Government Guidance.

In this context, when considering creating and implementing a proposed policy, the Council is required to demonstrate compliance with its public sector equality duty, pursuant s.149 Equality Act 2010. Cabinet is required to consider the equality impact or likely impact of the proposed policy on those with protected characteristics who are potentially affected by the decision and that any potential adverse equality impacts have been minimised.

Powers set out in section 1 Localism Act 2011, the general power of competence, enables the Council to do anything a private individual may do provided it is not otherwise prohibited by law. Under section 111 Local Government Act 1972, the Council can do anything calculated to facilitate, or is conducive to, or incidental to the discharge of any of the Council's functions. The proposed activities of Thames Freeport are calculated to facilitate the Council's regeneration and economic development functions, bringing jobs, investment, enabling regeneration and facilitating construction and upgrading infrastructure.

The recommendation to appoint the Chief Executive to be the Council's representative on the Thames Freeport Board (TFGB) is consistent with the powers set out in the 2011 and 1972 Acts. The Council's Constitution enables Cabinet to make the appointment. The legal nature of the TFGB is an unincorporated association, to be set up through an agreement between the members of the Freeport to further the Freeport objectives. This governance structure does not have limited liability, therefore arrangements for insurance or indemnity cover will need to be in place for the Chief Executive acting as the Council's representative on the TFGB.

The proposed appointment of Council Officers to sub committees of the TFGB, is also a function, which Cabinet is able to exercise. Section 9E(5)(b) of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that where any executive

functions may be discharged by Cabinet, then unless the Leader directs otherwise, Cabinet may arrange for the discharge of any of those functions by an officer to the authority. The delegation to the Chief Executive to undertake this function is consistent with the provisions of the 2000 Act. Insurance cover/ an indemnity for Council officers appointed the TFGB sub committees will need to be in place.

Subject to the terms of a memorandum of understanding the Council will act as the accountable body to the Government, to oversee and support the use of public funds to ensure good financial management, grant condition compliance and appropriate spend. The section 151 Officer will be responsible, for overseeing the proper administration of financial affairs in respect of the Thames Freeport. Recommendation 1.5 of the report is consistent with the powers available to the Council to deliver the Thames Freeport objectives.

8.3 Diversity and Equality

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

A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been completed as part of the FBC process for consideration by Government.

The EQIA was developed in line with Council's Community Equality Impact Assessment process with a focus on both the construction (initial) and fully operational phases and considered the extent to which Thames Freeport can positively impact on reducing inequalities overall, not least employment, income and health and well-being.

The EQIA predominately identifies positive equalities benefits for the borough's residents, including those with protected characteristics. The EQIA will continue to evolve as the Freeport develops and new opportunities for investment are brought forward and will be the subject of an ongoing cycle of monitoring and review by the TF Programme Manager in conjunction with the TF Partnership Board who will identify any new considerations. Where applicable, new programme elements will be incorporated into future versions of this EQIA including identifying mitigations to minimise the potential of any negative impacts.

Aligning the equality impact of Thames Freeport to the Council's Community Equality Impact Assessment process also supports the Council in meeting our duties under the:

- Equality Act 2010
- Public Sector Equality Duty

- The Best Value Guidance
- The Public Service (Social Value) 2012 Act

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

Freeport policy is also a significant part of the government's goal of net zero carbon emissions and will be used to develop new technologies and advanced manufacturing to bring forward decarbonisation.

9. **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):

Cabinet Report – 13 January 2021

<https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s29328/Thames%20Freeport%20Bid%20to%20Government.pdf>

Cabinet Report – 7 July 2021

<https://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s30973/Thames%20Freeport%20Outline%20Business%20Case%20OBC%20and%20Full%20Business%20Case%20FBC%20to%20government.pdf>

10. **Appendices to the report**

Appendix 1: Thames Freeport Business Rates Policy

Report Author

Luke Tyson

Delivery and Strategy Manager

Resources and Place Delivery

This page is intentionally left blank

Thurrock Council Policy for the granting of Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief

Freeports

Contents

1.0	Purpose of the Policy	3
2.0	Discretionary Relief – Legislative Background	3
3.0	Discretionary Relief – Freeport.....	4
	New businesses within the Freeport area – awarding relief	4
	Existing businesses within the Freeport area – awarding relief	5
	Establishing the value of the discretionary relief	6
	Order of reliefs	6
4.0	Effect on the Council’s Finances	6
5.0	Discretionary Relief – Subsidy Control	6
6.0	Administration of Discretionary Relief	7
	Applications and Evidence	7
	Granting of relief	7
	Variation of a decision	8
7.0	Scheme of Delegation.....	8
	Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief	8
	Reviews.....	9
	Appeals	9
8.0	Reporting changes in circumstances	9
9.0	Fraud.....	9

1.0 Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to determine the level of discretionary relief to be granted to certain defined ratepayers within the tax sites located within the Council's part of the Thames Freeport area. The policy includes the criteria for granting the relief from the establishment of the Freeport area until 30th September 2026. A map of the Freeport area is available at the following link; [Maps of UK Freeports - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/maps/freeports)
- 1.2 Central Government is not changing the legislation relating to the reliefs available to businesses and has produced guidance for all local authorities that use their discretionary relief powers under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), to grant relief to those ratepayers who are eligible. This policy follows the principles within government guidance.
- 1.3 Where relief is granted correctly, the Council will be reimbursed for any grants made under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.4 This document outlines the following areas:
- Details of the criteria for receiving Discretionary Reliefs for under the Freeport scheme;
 - The Council's policy for granting the relief;
 - Guidance on granting and administering the relief;
 - Subsidy requirements including provisions for Subsidy Controls; and
 - The Council's Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.6 This document covers all aspects of the relief (subject to changes in legislation). Where organisations apply for the relief, they will be granted (or not granted) relief in line with the following policy. It should be noted that all applications for relief shall be considered taking into account the objectives of the Freeport as set out in the Thames Freeport Investment Policy.

2.0 Discretionary Relief – Legislative Background

- 2.1 The original purpose of discretionary relief was to provide assistance where the property does not qualify for mandatory relief, or to 'top' up cases where ratepayers already receive mandatory relief.
- 2.2 Over recent years and particularly since 2011, the discretionary relief provisions, as defined by section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, have been used by government to provide assistance to certain specified categories of business ratepayers without the need to change the legislation. However, whilst government provides general guidance, it is for the Council to ensure that all relief is granted strictly in line with the primary legislation and the Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989.

- 2.3 Unlike mandatory relief, ratepayers are obliged to make a written application to the Council. The Council is obliged to carefully consider every application on its merits, taking into account the guidance provided by government.
- 2.4 There is no statutory appeal process against any decision made by the Council although as with any decision of a public authority, decisions can be reviewed by Judicial Review.
- 2.5 The decision to grant or not to grant relief is a matter purely for the Council.

3.0 Discretionary Relief – Freeport

- 3.1 Up to 100% discretionary business rate relief will be available to eligible businesses locating on tax sites within the Freeport area. Awards will be considered for new businesses moving into tax sites and certain existing businesses where they expand, on or before 30th September 2026.
- 3.2 Discretionary Relief under this policy will apply for a maximum of 5 years from the date which each beneficiary first receives relief. This means that if a business first received relief on 30 September 2026, the relief may be applied up to 29 September 2031

New Businesses locating to tax sites within the Freeport – awarding relief

- 3.3 Existing businesses within the Freeport area that seek to relocate onto a tax site in the Freeport area are unlikely to be eligible for the relief subject to consideration of paras 3.7 and 3.14 below.
- 3.4 The business must occupy the hereditament and both existing and any new hereditaments must be shown on the local rating list or included as part of the Port cumulo where applicable.
- 3.5 New businesses which expand after moving into tax sites within the Freeport (whether into new or existing buildings) will, in addition to any existing relief, be eligible for relief on any additional hereditaments they occupy within the tax site.
- 3.6 In considering what is a new business, the Council will lift the corporate veil and consider groups of companies to be single businesses.
- 3.7 The Council has discretion to apply additional tests as required on a case-by-case basis. The Council will look to avoid granting relief where businesses deliberately

displace from the within the Thames Freeport (inc. Port cumulo) area in order to take advantage of the relief.

Existing businesses within the tax site of the Freeport area – awarding relief

- 3.8 Subject to 3.10 and 3.11 below, 100% relief is available on a hereditament where a business has occupied the property comprising that hereditament for the first time on or after the date on which the Council's tax site within the Freeport is designated (and on or before 30 September 2026). This, for example, would include existing businesses expanding into a further property.
- 3.9 Subject to 3.10 and 3.11 below, partial relief is available on a hereditament where a person has occupied a room or similar within a hereditament for the first time on or after the date the Council's tax site within the Freeport is designated (and on or before 30 September 2026). For example, where an existing business builds an extension or takes on new rooms or floors in their building leading to an expansion of the hereditament.
- 3.10. Ratepayers **cannot** generally claim relief merely by expanding their use of an existing room or similar within a hereditament. However, partial relief is available to a person in respect of part of a hereditament on which they were already the occupier or owner prior to the date on which the Council's tax site within the Freeport is designated, **provided** that the space is within an existing room of a building and has become useable for the first-time following development commenced on or after the date on which the tax site is designated (and on or before 30 September 2026). A typical example would be the installation of a mezzanine or access/fire control improvements to bring an existing space into use.
- 3.11. Improvements to space already or previously in use by the ratepayer prior to the date on which the tax site is designated, are not eligible for discretionary relief.
- 3.12. The Council will need to determine the value of any part of the hereditament where partial relief is to be granted.
- 3.13 Where the Council is unable to reasonably ascertain the increase in rates liability attributable to these factors, no relief shall be awarded.
- 3.14 As previously mentioned, the Council has discretion to apply additional tests for discretionary relief in order to avoid or not incentivise displacement of business activity from within the Thames Freeport (inc. Port cumulo). This may include reducing the award of relief in cases where a ratepayer's occupation of a space arises in whole or in part from them vacating another space in the Freeport or surrounding area.

Establishing the value of the discretionary relief

- 3.15 Where full relief is granted, it shall be 100% of the rates liability less any mandatory reliefs. Where partial relief is granted, the Council will award an amount which represents 100% of the rates liability (less any mandatory reliefs) attributable to the part of the hereditament where that increase is reasonably ascertainable.
- 3.16 In establishing the part of the rates liability attributable to any increase the Council's decision shall be final.
- 3.17 The Council shall determine the best method to determine that value.

Order of reliefs

- 3.18 This relief will be applied after mandatory reliefs and other discretionary reliefs have been applied.

4.0 Effect on the Council's Finances

- 4.1 The granting of discretionary relief will, normally, involve a cost to the Council. However, where Government leads an initiative such as this, grants are often available through section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. This is not automatic and Central Government will look to the Council to adopt the recommended approach when granting in these areas.
- 4.2 Central Government has indicated that any relief granted for businesses in the Freeport area may be funded in full. The Council, whilst being keen to support as many businesses as possible, will ensure that relief is **only** granted strictly in line with guidance in order to maximise grants from government

5.0 Discretionary Relief – Subsidy Control

- 5.1 This discretionary relief is subject to the United Kingdom's domestic and international subsidy control obligations. Businesses located in designated Freeport sites will need to fulfil any requirements in place to ensure compliance with those obligations in advance of, during, and after claiming relief from the Council.
- 5.2 The United Kingdom remains bound by its international commitments, including subsidy obligations set out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the EU.
- 5.3 The Council can award relief; however, businesses should make themselves aware of their obligations under Government's subsidies arrangements available on via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complying-with-the-uks-international-obligations-on-subsidy-control-guidance-for-public-authorities>

- 5.4 This policy will be amended to take into account the UK Subsidy Control Bill when it receives Royal Assent in 2022.

6.0 Administration of Discretionary Relief

- 6.1 The following section outlines the procedures followed by officers in granting, amending, or cancelling discretionary relief. This is essentially laid down by legislation¹

Applications and Evidence

- 6.2 Relief must be applied for in writing by the ratepayer. Application forms are produced within the Council and issued to all ratepayers requesting the relief. The relevant application form for the relief is available on the Council's website www.thurrock.gov.uk
- 6.3 Organisations are required to provide a completed application form plus any such evidence, documents, accounts, financial statements etc. necessary to allow the Council to make a determination. Where insufficient information is provided, then no relief will be granted.
- 6.4 Applications should initially be made to the Business Rates Section and will be determined in accordance with this policy.
- 6.5 **The Council will provide this service and any guidance free of charge. Ratepayers are encouraged to approach the Council direct and NOT pay for such services through third parties.**

Granting of relief

- 6.6 In all cases, the Council will notify the ratepayer of decisions made.
- 6.7 Where an application is successful, then the following will be notified to them in writing:
- The amount of relief granted and the date from which it has been granted;
 - If relief has been granted for a specified period, the date on which it will end;
 - The new chargeable amount;
 - The details of any planned review dates and the notice that will be given in advance of a change to the level of relief granted; and

¹ The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989

- A requirement that the applicant should notify the Council of any change in circumstances that may affect entitlement to relief.

6.8 Where relief is not granted then the following information will be provided, again in writing:

- An explanation of the decision within the context of the Council's statutory duty; and
- An explanation of the appeal rights (see section 7 below).

6.9 Discretionary relief is to be granted from the date of the qualifying event.

Variation of a decision

6.10 Variations in any decision will be notified to ratepayers as soon as practicable and will take effect as follows:

- Where the amount is to be increased by the Council, from the date to be decided by the Council;
- Where the amount is to be reduced due to a reduction in the rate charge from the date of the decrease in rate charge; and
- Where the amount is to be reduced for any other reason takes effect at the expiry of a financial year, and so that at least one year's notice is given.

6.11 A decision may be revoked at any time and the change will take effect at the expiry of a financial year.

7.0 Scheme of Delegation

Granting, Varying, Reviewing and Revocation of Relief

7.1 All powers in relation to reliefs are given under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011. However section 223 of the Local Government Act 1992 allows for delegation of decisions by the Council to Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees or Officers.

7.2 The Council's scheme of delegation allows for the Revenues Manager to award, revise or revoke any discretionary relief applications. However, any application which is considered to be of a significant nature, will be subject to consultation with the S151 Officer of the Council prior to final determination.

7.3 Applications that are refused will, on request, be reconsidered if additional supporting information is provided or the refusal is subsequently considered to be based on a misinterpretation of the application.

Reviews

- 7.4 The policy for granting relief will be reviewed annually or where there is a substantial change to the legislation or funding rules. The Council's S151 Officer has been delegated powers which enable changes to this scheme to either meet the Council's requirements of changes in legislation.

Appeals

- 7.5 Where the Council receives an appeal from the ratepayer regarding the granting, non-granting or the amount of any discretionary relief, the case will be reviewed by the Revenues Manager. Where a decision is revised then the ratepayer shall be informed, likewise if the original decision is upheld.

8.0 Reporting changes in circumstances

- 8.1 Where any award is granted to a ratepayer, the Council will require any changes in circumstances which may affect the relief to be reported as soon as possible and, in any event, not more than 21 days from the happening of the event.
- 8.2 This will be important where the change would result in the amount of the award being reduced or cancelled e.g., where the premises comes unoccupied or is used for a purpose other than that determined by the Council as eligible for relief.
- 8.3 Where a change of circumstances is reported, the relief will, if appropriate be revised or cancelled. Where any award is to be reduced, the Council will look to recover the amount from the date the change of circumstances occurred.

9.0 Fraud

- 9.1 Where a ratepayer falsely applies for any relief, or where the ratepayer provides false information, makes false representation, or deliberately withholds information in order to gain relief, prosecutions will be considered under the Fraud Act 2006.

This page is intentionally left blank

Work Programme

Committee: Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Year: 2021/22

Dates of Meetings: 8 June 2021, 7 September 2021, 16 November 2021, 18 January 2022, 8 March 2022

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
8 June 2021		
End of Year Corporate Performance Summary 2020/21	Sarah Welton/ Karen Wheeler	Officer
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
7 September 2021		
Quarter 1 (April to June 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22 and Corporate Performance Framework	Sarah Welton/Karen Wheeler	Officer
Communications Strategy 2021-24	Karen Wheeler	Officer
Fair Debt Summit – Supporting Vulnerable Residents	Michele Lucas	Member
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
16 November 2021		
Thurrock's Scrutiny Review: An Update	Lucy Tricker/Matthew Boulter	Member
Mid-Year/Quarter 2 (June-September 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22	Sarah Welton/Karen Wheeler	Officer
Fair Debt Update	Andy Brittain/Sean Clark	Members

Work Programme

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
Report on Asset Related Savings	Sean Clark	Officer
Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals	Jonathan Wilson/ Sean Clark	Officers
Local Council Tax Scheme	Andy Brittain/ Sean Clark	Members
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
18 January 2022		
Councillor Coxshall – PFH Invitation	N/A	Member
Discussion Paper - Investments Committee	Sean Clark	Member
Draft General Fund Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy Update	Jonathan Wilson/Sean Clark	Officer
Capital Strategy 2022/23	Jonathan Wilson/Sean Clark	Officer
Draft Capital Project Programme	Jonathan Wilson/ Sean Clark	Officer
Work Programme	Democratic Services Officer	Standard Item
8 March 2022		
Quarter 3 (April-December 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22	Sarah Welton/Karen Wheeler	Officer
Report on Asset Related Savings	Sean Clark	Members

Work Programme

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
Thames Freeport: Business Rates Policy and Governance Structure	Karen Wheeler	Officer
Work Programme	Work Programme	Work Programme

Items for the first meeting of 2022/2023

- Fair Debt Update - Andy Brittain/Sean Clark
- Capacity under Local Government Reforms – Karen Wheeler

Updated: 25 February 2021

This page is intentionally left blank