

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

Council

To the Members of Thurrock Council

The next meeting of the Council on **21 July 2021** will commence following the end of business of the reconvened 30 June 2021 Council meeting.

Council Chamber, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex RM17 6SL

Members of the Public can attend all meetings of the Council and its committees however they will be expected to follow the Council's Covid safe procedures for the building. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch council meetings live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

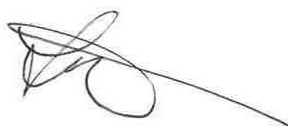
Membership of the Council:

Sue Shinnick (Mayor)
James Halden (Deputy Mayor)

Qaisar Abbas
Abbie Akinbohun
Alex Anderson
Chris Baker
Gary Byrne
Adam Carter
Daniel Chukwu
Colin Churchman
Gary Collins
Mark Coxshall
Jack Duffin
Tony Fish
Mike Fletcher
Robert Gledhill
Shane Hebb
Victoria Holloway

Deborah Huelin
Andrew Jefferies
Barry Johnson
Tom Kelly
Cathy Kent
John Kent
Martin Kerin
Steve Liddiard
Susan Little
Ben Maney
Fraser Massey
Allen Mayes
Sara Muldowney
Bukky Okunade
Augustine Ononaji
Maureen Pearce

Terry Piccolo
Georgette Polley
Jane Potheary
Shane Ralph
Kairen Raper
Joycelyn Redsell
Elizabeth Rigby
Sue Sammons
Jennifer Smith
Graham Snell
Luke Spillman
James Thandi
David Van Day
Lee Watson
Lynn Worrall



Lyn Carpenter
Chief Executive

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

Page

1 Apologies for absence

2 Minutes

Due to the timings of publication the Minutes of the 30 June 2021 will be included in the 22 September 2021 agenda.

3 Items of Urgent Business

To receive additional items that the Mayor is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency, in accordance with Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 Declaration of Interests

To receive any declaration of interests from Members.

5 Announcements on behalf of the Mayor or the Leader of the Council

6 Questions from Members of the Public

9 - 10

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

7 Petitions from Members of the Public and Councillors

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

8 Petitions Update Report

11 - 12

9 Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The Council are asked to agree any changes to the appointments made to committees and outside bodies, statutory and other panels, as requested by Group Leaders.

- 10 Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care 13 - 38**
- 11 Report of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities 39 - 60**
- 12 Questions from Members 61 - 62**

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

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

Name of Committee	Date
Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 March 2021
General Services Committee	15 June 2021
Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee	9 February 2021
Standards and Audit Committee	11 March 2021

- 15 Update on motions resolved at Council during the previous year 63 - 64**
- 16 Motion submitted by Councillor J Kent 65 - 66**
- 17 Motion submitted by Councillor Rigby 67 - 68**
- 18 Motion submitted by Councillor Watson 69 - 70**

Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

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

Future Dates of Council:

22 September 2021, 30 September 2021, 27 October 2021, 24 November 2021, 26 January 2022, 23 February 2022 (Budget)

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the Public can attend all meetings of the Council and its committees however they will be expected to follow the Council's Covid safe procedures for the building. Arrangements have been made for the press and public to watch Council meetings live via the Council's online webcast channel: www.thurrock.gov.uk/webcast

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

Recording of meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

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

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

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

Evacuation Procedures

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

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



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

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

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

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

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

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

Helpful Reminders for Members

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

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

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



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

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

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

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

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

Pecuniary

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

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

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

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

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

Non- pecuniary

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

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

PROCEDURE FOR MOTIONS

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

Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

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

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

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

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

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WW2 in Memoriam

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

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

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

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

The names have been listed in date order.

July 1941

JOSLING Leonard A
LOWE Richard
BARRETT Henry Thomas
CHEESEMAN William J
MELLFORD Alfred R

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions were received from members of the public.

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Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Director	Status
547	We the residents of Tilbury Town and the wider community of Thurrock call on Thurrock Council/ Enforcement to take urgent action against the owner/owners of the van repair business located in Lansdowne Road, Tilbury. For using the Queens Highway as an extension of their business. Hence obtaining all parking spaces in the current Controlled Parking Zone in both Lansdowne Road and Calcutta Road which is not allowing parents to pick up or drop off their children from the two school's being Lansdowne and St Mary's in a safe and controlled manner. This is a long ongoing matter that requires some urgent action to stop this particular business from flouting the parking rules and regulations that are in place.	30/4/2021	Resident	Andy Millard	Limited waiting bays have been removed and replaced by a resident Parking Permit Area (PPA) restriction. The Council's Parking Enforcement team can now take action against any vehicle not showing a valid permit.
548	Traffic/Parking issues relating to Quarry Hill/Grays Convent/St Thomas Schools. Congestion/poor driving and parking causing dangerous scenarios. HGV usage (predominately skip lorries/cement lorries/tankers). Address and Remedy Parking Issues (Bradleigh Avenue, College Avenue, Langthorne Crescent, Cresthill Avenue, St George's Avenue and Ward Avenue).	4/5/2021	Resident	Andy Millard / Julie Rogers	The issues raised within the petition fall under the Safer Routes to School (SRTS) and Area Intervention Programme (AIP) sections of the Council's annual Integrated Transport Block programme. The schools are ranked as 6th, 8th and 10th within the current SRTS programme of 52 schools, and the HGV issue is currently ranked 6th on the AIP programme. Although these locations are not included in the 2021/22 programme, based upon the

Petitions Update Report

Petition No.	Description	Presented (date)	Presented (by)	Responsible Director	Status
					<p>petition received, the Transport Development Team have begun to investigate solutions that could address the issues that have been raised. In relation to Parking Enforcement, the Council patrol and monitor schools in the borough on a rotational basis to a predetermined programme. Enforcement patrols are already in place to enforce the current restrictions in the areas surrounding Quarry Hill Academy, Grays Convent and St Thomas School. An increase in restrictions could be a possible solution, and periodic enforcement patrols will be provided in line with resourcing levels. Residents can report obstruction of their dropped kerbs by calling 01375 413871 and where resource permits an officer will be deployed. At present Thurrock Council do not have any plans to install cameras or introduce enforcement cars.</p>
549	<p>Rainbow Road Park Gate, Chafford Hundred - To make this park safer for small children I feel that the addition of a gate would be greatly appreciated by parents. The park entrance is situated on a very busy road through Chafford Hundred with nothing stopping children leaving quickly if their carers have multiple children with them.</p>	10/6/2021	Resident	Julie Rogers	<p>The site has been reviewed and appropriate gates are being considered to help prevent children from leaving the site quickly, but also ensure accessibility for all. In line with other parks and open spaces across the borough gates will not be locked of an evening.</p>

21 July 2021	ITEM: 10
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care	
Report of: Councillor Barry Johnson, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care	
This report is: Public	

Executive Summary

Thurrock, like the rest of the country, has been dealing with a global pandemic – as I write my first report as Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, I want to start by thanking all our staff working with children and families both staff employed by the Council and all our partners, including schools, for the hard work and commitment they have shown to our children & young people and adults over the past year.

This report sets out the work we have undertaken over the past year however, my presentation will concentrate on my key priorities for the coming 12 months.

Appendix A to this report provides a summary of the resources available to Children's Services and the ESFA Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2021/22.

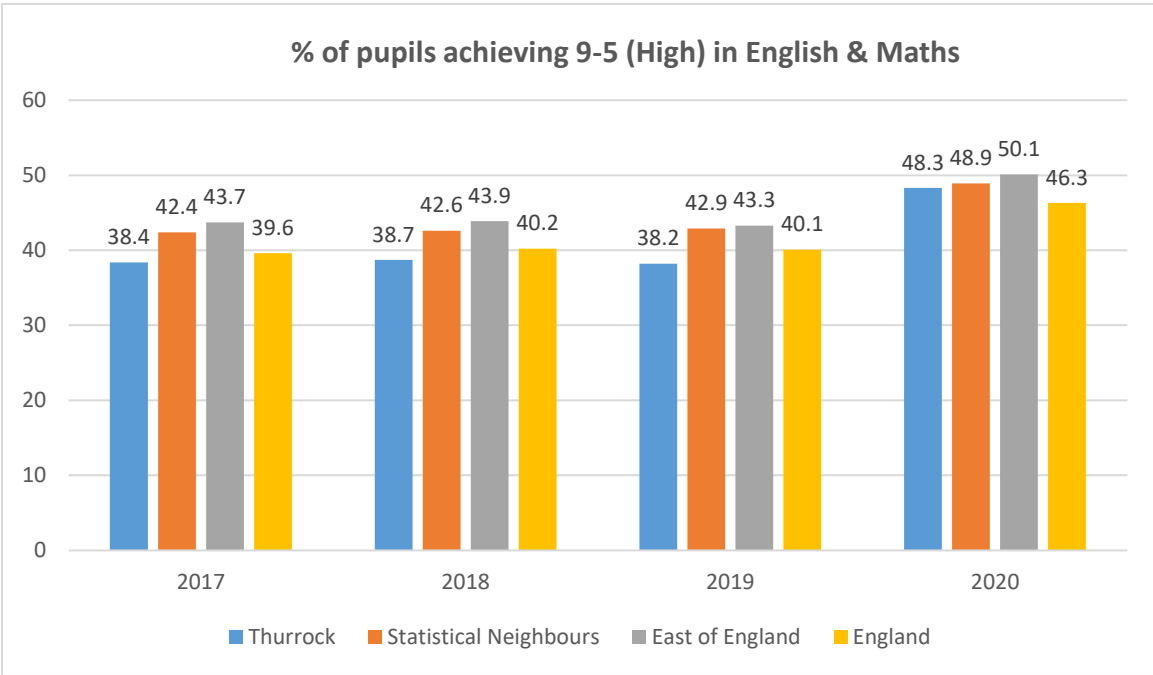
EDUCATION & SKILLS – supporting our children and young people and adults to achieve.

1. School Effectiveness

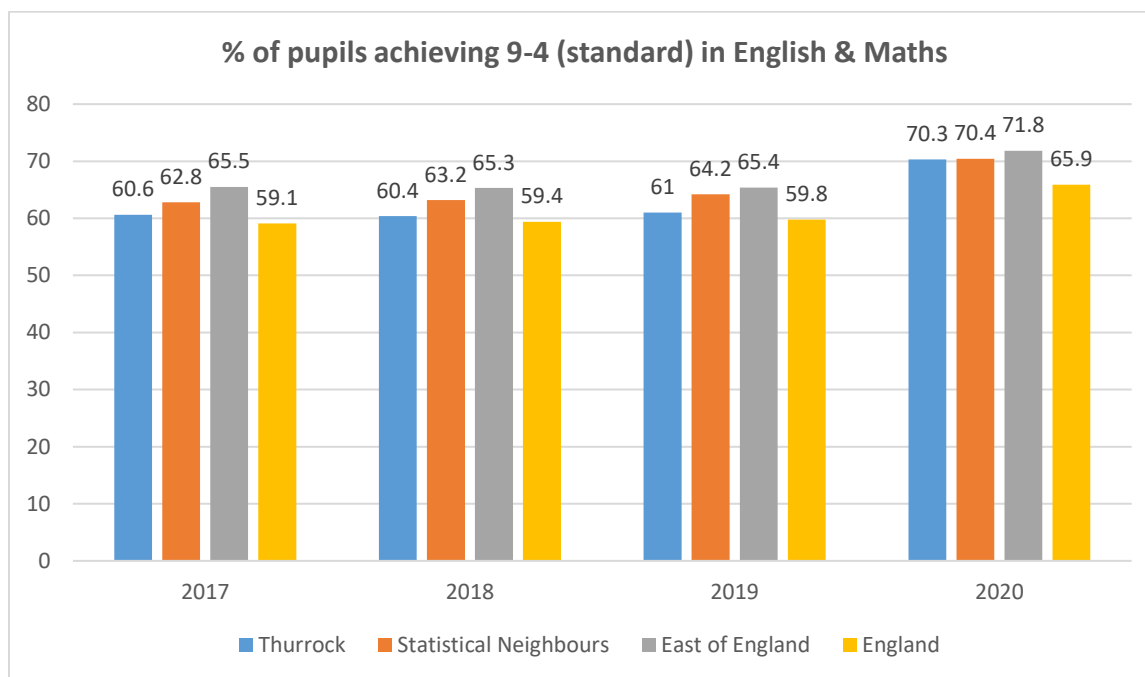
1.1 Whilst there is no attainment and progress data for primary aged pupils from 2019-20 and 2020-21 academic years, we have been able to monitor school attendance throughout this period. There have been periods of lockdown due to Covid where children were not required to attend school and remote learning was in place.

1.2 In secondary schools the government have published local authority data for GCSE results for 2020 but not individual schools’ data. The data shows an improving picture.

% of Pupils achieving 9-5 pass in English and Maths



% of pupils achieving 9-4 (standard) in English & Maths



- 1.3 It must be remembered that GCSE results for 2019 were centre assessment grades as no pupils sat GCSE exams.
- 1.4 Due to the pandemic Ofsted suspended full inspections, however they did make monitoring visits to 11 schools in the borough, after which schools were expected to be open fully in September 2020 – December 2020. They made virtual visits to 3 secondary schools and 8 primary schools. These were not inspections but conversations about attendance and the offer of education being made to pupils since their return to school in September. No grades were given but the information from these visits fed into Ofsted's national reporting.
- 1.5 When schools were forced to close again in January 2021, most schools were able to move to remote learning fairly rapidly and the offers were varied across the borough. Most schools offered a blended approach of 'live' online lessons, some pre-recorded lessons and some set tasks.

During this period we monitored the attendance in school of children who were vulnerable (those with Education, Health & Care Plans; those open to social care and those whose parents were critical workers) and therefore able to attend school. Whilst attendance of these groups was low, schools were ensuring they were contacting pupils and their families to check on safeguarding and wellbeing, and also to monitor the engagement with online learning. This information was collected by the School Effectiveness Team and monitored to ensure all vulnerable children had been either attending schools or regularly contacted by the school and the school was satisfied they were safe, well and engaging with

remote learning. Data about children open to social care was also shared with Children's Social Care Managers so that the social workers could follow up. Where concerns were identified schools and parents were contacted.

Throughout the period of lockdown when schools were open to vulnerable pupils, the vast majority of Thurrock schools remained open. Some schools who are part of a Multi Academy Trust kept one site open for all vulnerable pupils allowing their other buildings to be closed.

- 1.6 When schools opened fully in March, well-rehearsed protocols for working in bubbles were in place. However, most schools were affected by Covid with cases of bubbles (classes or year groups) having to self-isolate due to a positive Covid cases. However, since the introduction of regular LFD testing for secondary pupils, staff and families in the borough, cases in schools have been very rare. It should be recognized that pupils across the country have had their education disrupted and in some cases children had lost learning and fallen behind. All of our school staff and pupils have shown great resilience throughout this period. All schools have developed a strong recovery curriculum, ensuring pupil's wellbeing was highest on the agenda as well as a high quality broad curriculum.
- 1.7 Over the Easter period the first sessions of the #HAF2021 Holiday Activities Food programme funded by DfE were rolled out in Thurrock. This provided 440 spaces for eligible children to attend holiday provision with activities, food, advice and signposting to other services. The summer holiday provision is already being organised which will see even more providers across Thurrock delivering this provision.

2. Early Years

There are 236 Early Years providers in Thurrock: 53 Day Nurseries or Pre-schools, 28 School based nursery classes and 155 childminders. Of these, only 3 are not yet rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, which is just 1.7%. Our Early Years Officers are working with those settings to ensure rapid improvement.

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

Since January most providers have opened, and numbers of children attending has risen gradually. The numbers of 3-4 years olds attending is in line with pre-pandemic spring terms. However the number of two year olds attending early education and childcare has not yet fully recovered.

Throughout the pandemic Officers have worked closely with settings to ensure their Covid protocols and risk assessments were in-line with the Public Health and Government guidelines.

3. Schools

There are 55 schools in Thurrock: 39 Primary schools, 13 secondary schools and 2 special schools. There is one pupil referral unit offering alternative provision.

As there have been no Ofsted Inspections of schools due to Covid-19, 92% of primary schools remain rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. This places Thurrock at 49/152 local authorities for primary schools. Of the 13 secondary schools, ten have a current inspection grade whilst the other three are yet to have their first inspection. Of the ten schools, 70% are judged to be good or better by Ofsted. It is unlikely that the two newest schools without an inspection will be inspected in the near future

All of the primary schools are now academies. Twelve out of thirteen secondary schools are academies. Grays Convent High School is a Catholic voluntary aided school. The alternative provision is run by Olive Academies Trust. There are 12 Multi-Academy Trusts operating within Thurrock as well as a number of standalone academies.

4. Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. Andrea can you check data?

There was 1810 Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) maintained by Thurrock in June 2021.

The national data for the percentage of EHCPs completed within twenty weeks is now available for 2020, it shows that 58% of EHCPs in England were issued within the twenty week statutory timeframe. Thurrock data for 2020 shows that 86% of EHCPs were completed within the statutory timescales, despite the Covid-19 pandemic interruption to normal working, school closures and the ability to hold assessments and other types of meetings. For the first half of this year 84% of EHCPs were finalised within 20 weeks.

This is a good news story as it places us in the top quartile in the Eastern Region and in the country. The data for East of England is that 59% of EHCPs were completed within the statutory 20 weeks' timescale and the average our statistical neighbours achieved was 65%.

64% of pupils with an EHCP have had their annual review completed so far and we are making a commitment to ensure that all pupils will have had their EHCP amended following the annual review by the end of this academic year.

The Statutory SEND Service is continuing to strengthen practices and works closely with health, social care, parents, carers, schools, colleges and children and young people to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care plans and therefore outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

5. Education Welfare Service

COVID forced the service to reconsider policies, processes and working practice as the service is now delivered remotely. As a result, service delivery became even more streamlined and efficient. The changes have been so positive that many will be retained into the new academic year.

At the outset of COVID all cases were risk assessed and all families received at least one welfare call. The more vulnerable families receiving more regular welfare calls. Officers were proactive and stepped outside of their usual remit to support families to obtain their free school meals & vouchers, addressed laptop and internet need for remote learning and resolved transport issues for those most vulnerable or key workers children needing to accessing face to face provision.

There was a significant impact on the number of referrals for attendance matters as schools shut and, upon reopening, took a more sympathetic approach to absence matters.

Since the start of this academic year the service has received 186 new referrals. There were 27 Admission issues, 18 Attendance, 60 CME (Children Missing Education) & 81 'Missing' (whereabouts of child unknown). 132 of these cases were resolved and closed. There are currently 70 active cases.

There was an unprecedented increase in the numbers of families choosing Elective Home Education and this was reflected across the country.

Since the start of the Academic year there have been 285 new EHE cases of which 84 have been closed. 3 referred as CME out of borough, 3 referred as EHE out of borough, 3 left the UK, 41 were returned to a Thurrock School and 18 were returned to a school out of borough & 16 are CME in Thurrock either in the process of a School Attendance Order or waiting for a school start date.

A further 62 EHE cases, opened prior to the start of this academic year have also been closed.

There are currently 370 EHE open cases. 17 of these have an EHCP and the EHE Officer is proactive in the EHCP review process.

As restrictions are lifting the Officers have resumed 'doorstep visits' and continue to share good practice with neighboring authorities to ensure the best quality service for Thurrock families.

6. Virtual School (VS)

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

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

In January 2021 there were 250 children and young people that were monitored during the period of national lockdown. This covered our pupils from Nursery 2 through to year 13 who were placed both in and out of borough across over 130 educational settings.

In April 2021 there are currently 296 pupils who are being monitored and supported to promote good educational outcomes. Of the total number of pupils 38.8% have an identified Special Educational Need or Disability. This is higher than non-looked after children but is lower than the national figure of CLA with SEND which is 55.5%.

6.1 Covid 19 Strategy and Virtual School Response – January to April 2021

There were a number of actions that the VS took as the result of schools closing and lockdown being imposed in January 2021. In order to obtain a clear picture of provision and to be able to respond to the changing situation, the VS put a number of actions and measures in place:

- The Virtual School Head Teacher (VSHT) wrote to all carers and social workers to provide guidance on the local authorities' position regarding education for our children in care. This guidance advised that the ideal situation would be for all of our Children Looked After (CLA) to access a face to face education offer if provided. However, it took into consideration that decisions to attend school were based on a case by case basis which met the needs of pupils and the current home situations. For example, if their foster carer was shielding.
- An expectation was set that all CLA would have an education offer, whether face to face, or online. The decision to keep our pupils at home was a joint one made between the care placement, the social worker, their manager and the Virtual School. If schools/colleges were requesting that pupils attend school, we were supportive of this decision.
- In order to monitor the quality of the education offer and the engagement from our children, we requested that schools/colleges completed a 1 page summary sheet every week which informed the VS team of the situation and enabled the VS to assess the levels of attendance and engagement in learning. Feedback from educational professionals was excellent and they

were very supportive of this process. It enabled the VS to provide challenge, support and resources where necessary.

- For those attending school, the VS continued daily monitoring of attendance through the use of Welfare Call.
- The VS team met weekly to assess risk and barriers to learning in order to ensure that our pupils were receiving the most appropriate educational offer that suited their needs.
- The VS monitored the weekly data to see who was accessing face to face provision. This data showed a steady increase in school attendance during the lockdown as, in the majority of cases, being in the school building was the preferable approach.
- The post 16 pupils, in the main, received an online offer from their colleges or 6th form providers. For any post 16 pupil who was Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET), we held monthly strategy meetings about these young people and organised additional resources such as online courses for them to access. This continued throughout lockdown.
- The VS regularly had contact with carers in order to triangulate a range of perspectives and information around provision and engagement.
- In terms of monitoring mental health and well-being, the VS continued to request that the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was completed as part of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process to ensure that conversations and actions were taking place to support emotional well-being. There is a monthly SDQ meeting which takes places with social care, the virtual school and EWMHS to discuss distribution of support for mental health. This continued throughout the period being reported.
- Personal Education Plan meetings continued to take place as normal (i.e. every term) to ensure that this statutory part of the care plan was maintained and that education was formally monitored and recorded through this process.
- As soon as it was possible the VS continued to distribute the Letterbox Booktrust books so that the pupils in Nursery through to Year 9 received their books and learning materials.
- In terms of Pupil Premium Plus funding for Years R to 11 schools were encouraged to apply for this fund in order that they could use it to purchase additional resources and learning opportunities. If this was not applied for, the VS used it to support individual pupils as necessary. This was in the form of IT provision, tuition or additional resources.
- Designated teachers were regularly kept informed and updated throughout the period to ensure that they were aware of the work that the VS was completing and to know that the team were available for support and advice.
- If lack of IT resources was a barrier to learning, the VS team distributed laptops to a range of our pupils.
- The VS continued to commission the use of tuition providers as identified in the school improvement plan in order that key year groups received additional intervention to support with end of year assessments.

Post lockdown the Virtual School has continued to complete the core statutory functions relating to all of the varied work that the team do. Tuition has continued for those pupils who need it, even when returning to school. Additionally year groups 5 and 10 have started their tuition programmes to support their tests in 2022 and a range of resources to support exam revision has been provided to year 10s. To support early reading and phonic development, all of our Nursery age children through to year 2 have received reading and phonics based resources. The VS have recently purchased kindles and will be distributing these in the forthcoming weeks to promote a love of reading and key skills.

For the summer term, we are trialing mentoring for certain pupils who may be finding school difficult to manage. The aim of this is to promote confidence, self-esteem and resilience. Referrals have been made and mentors should be assigned within the next few weeks.

For those transitioning to university this year the VS will be providing laptops to support our young people as they continue their educational journey. One amazing piece of news the VS received during the lockdown period was that one of our Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, who came to us aged 15, has been accepted to study at Oxford University. A fantastic achievement.

7. Inspire Youth Services

- 7.1 **September Guarantee 2020** stands at 100% ensuring that every 16 year old had a place of learning reserved for them in September 2020. September Guarantee 2021 is on the same trajectory.
- 7.2 **Grangewaters** - This year we have enhanced our exciting SEND offer at Grangewaters – young people with SEND access Grangewaters for a range of training sessions getting them ready for the world of work and preparing them for adulthood. The coming year will see us undertake a comprehensive review of a number of assets including Grangewaters to ensure we are offering the best services in the correct environment.
- 7.3 **SEND Post 16** service is reassessing its post 16 provision and its quality assurance – the service is actively working with the young people to enable provision to meet the young people’s needs.
- 7.4 **Inspire** - in partnership with TCHC, have secured **OnTrack2**, a Youth Employment Initiative programme for young people aged 15-25 in Thurrock. It is part funded through the European Social Fund and managed by the Department for Work and Pensions. This 2.5 year programme is a £3.7m match funded project which plans to formally engage and sign up 1088 young people who will be able to benefit from the range of support on offer.

7.5 **Head Start Housing** - provides suitable accommodation to Thurrock's care leavers. It has a portfolio of 26 properties ranging from 1 bed to 5 beds, with varying levels of floating support to 24/7 provision. Each care leavers' skills and behaviours are considered, alongside their needs to enable selection of the right type of accommodation. Care leavers receive support from their PA and from the Head Start officer who ensures the property is, and remains, compliant with health and safety, is furnished with a bed, wardrobe, chest of drawers, wifi is available, utility bills are paid and blinds as well as lamp shades fitted. Care leavers are supported to access housing benefit and, when they are ready, education, employment or training. Since December 2018, working closely with Housing, 20 beds have been identified for exclusive use by care leavers. Working cross directorate, a panel meets to consider suitability of move on into social housing.

7.6 **Kickstart** - Thurrock Council has committed to provide 30 paid work placements for unemployed local young people, aged from 18-24 years. DWP promote the posts and provides advance notification of a young person's interest; who forwards their CV and is invited to attend a pre selection employability skills course. The course is delivered by Thurrock Adult Community College over 25 hours (the same weekly commitment as the placement provides). 15 (of 30) successful applicants were selected on this basis. A different approach has been applied to fill the remaining posts. If all employment checks complete without a hitch, there are 7 opportunities remaining. In the event of more teams creating opportunities, DWP is open to extending the contract to meet the demand. So far, posts have been created by Thurrock Adult Community College, Commissioning, HR, Waste, School Improvement, Housing, Catering and Inspire. Early feedback is extremely positive from both recruiting managers and the post holder. The recruit takes part in the corporate induction, regular peer group meetings, is supported by their team to learn the role and, later on, a Careers Advisor to ensure they secure sustainable employment.

8. **Thurrock Adult Community College**

Graded as Good by Ofsted and as such we offer a range of courses to support getting into employment across the Authority. The college also offers a wellbeing programme for individuals and families and bespoke programmes for young people with high needs to support their transition into adulthood. The adult skills agenda will remain a key focus during the current year as the country works on its recovery plan. The college has started to realise its long term ambition to level up access to learning by opening new localised learning hubs enabling residents to develop essential skills closer to where they live. They will have a choice of online, in person or blended delivery models based on their individual preferences.

9. **Home to School Transport**

9.1 **Covid 19 – Seamless and consistent delivery**

The Passenger Transport Unit is continuing to deliver transport via the DfE funding to all vulnerable children until the end of the academic year, this will include Post 16 SEND, children at the Beacon Hill Academy who travel in hybrid bubbles with support from the public transport operator Ensign, to ensure all children regardless of whether they are entitled or not can continue travel to school.

- **The Furlough scheme** – this ended in March 2021 when transport returned to full capacity.
- **Risk Assessment** – the only aspect of managing risk is that the DfE have suggested that all secondary age students continue to wear masks until the end of the academic year. We are awaiting confirmation of this. There have been no issues and operators have managed risk extremely well.
- **Parental Risk** – there are some parents who continue to feel anxious although the majority are confident in the service being delivered. When schools returned in March the take up of transport was high.

9.2 **Home to School Travel and Transport policy update**

The policy has been updated and reviewed by our legal team. The recommendations from cabinet have been agreed and incorporated into the revised policy. The policy is now available on Thurrock Council's website.

9.3 **Independent Travel Training**

Travel training is not yet in place due to COVID restrictions, however it is planned that this will commence from June 2021, first cohort of post 16 SEND students for September 2020.

9.4 **Travel Demand Management**

A communication plan has been developed and approved in collaboration with an external provider to harness positive behaviours around sustainable travel such as cycling, walking and the use of scooters during the pandemic. The plan will be disseminated to all schools and parents by the end of May 2021 to encourage continuation of the positive modes of travel from home to school.

9.5 **Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOT)**

The Children's Transport Team are continuing to work collaboratively with the Transport Management Team, the Road Safety Team and Public Health to revise the 2015 SMOT. It is envisaged that this will be in place for September 2021.

This year we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of schools providing returns to the 'hands up' survey. This survey collected data about how the children and young people travelled to school on the data collection day. In

previous years this data has been collected in a number of ways by requesting travel plans. The last time data was collected only 12 schools responded. This year 37 schools responded via the 'hands up' survey, which is a significant improvement.

- **Accreditation** – There has been no change to the 37% (20 schools) accredited due to COVID, however we are looking to improve this percentage. We have utilised bespoke letters developed by the external provider to support schools in identifying areas they are doing well in relation to sustainable travel as well as areas for improvement.
- **SEND and Active Travel** – there has been no further development in this area due to COVID restrictions. We are looking at Beacon Hill, Treetops as well as Olive AP Academy to run bespoke courses around sustainable travel. This will be re-considered from September 2021.

9.6 Free School Programme and School Expansion

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

In relation to pupil place planning we are in the process of compiling the next plan which will include forecasts from 2020-2025. Draft forecasts suggests there are no major concerns at this stage, however pupil data continually changes and this is reviewed on a monthly basis.

In respect of school places for primary and secondary for September 2021, we do not, at this stage, have any requirement to increase school places and therefore no bulge classes are planned this year, again this will be monitored on a monthly basis as we receive late applications for processing.

Following National Offer Day for secondary places 9.5% were offered a school outside of the Thurrock. The percentage for primary out of borough offers this year was 2.26%.

School Capital Programme Update:

- Benyon Primary expansion from 1 form of entry to 2 form of entry completed at Easter this year, taking the schools Published Admission Number to 60. Phase two of the St Clere's expansion programme has now completed.
- Abbots Hall Primary is expanding from 1FE to 2FE as approved by Cabinet. Feasibility works have been completed. Following a procurement exercise an architect to work on the detailed design is about

to be appointed with a view to completing works ready for September 2022.

- Thames Park Free School planning has now been approved and the new school is programmed to open September 2022.
- Orsett Heath Free School is due to go to planning committee in August 2021. The public consultation on this scheme will commence on the 4th June 2021 and complete on 20th June 2021. The delivery programme is in delay and the school is currently scheduled to open January/February 2023.
- The Harrier Free School that will be located in Aveley, which is part of the REAch2 Academy Trust and is currently scheduled to open in September 2022. The planning application for this scheme will be submitted May/June 2021.

10. Specialist Resource Provision

10.1 Beacon Hill

Beacon Hill Special School has a total of 75 places commissioned by Thurrock for pupils with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties many of which have complex medical needs. Due to the extreme vulnerability of these pupils the school provided a wide ranging and complex offer of support for the pupils and their families during the lockdown which they accessed from home.

There was a range of equipment and resources sent home to the families and the support for learning and therapies was provided through on-line activities and regular liaison with the children and their families. This included new and highly innovative activities to ensure they were able to continue to access, speech and language, physio and occupational therapy through video guidance and interactive sessions. The school had very close contact with all their children and this program of support was welcomed and much praised by the families of these children.

10.2 Treetops

Treetops special school has a total of 309 places commissioned by Thurrock Local Authority for pupils with complex needs including autism and for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The school has worked over the year to continue to provide an outstanding service to these pupils who are taught in varying class groupings and on individual programs of highly specialised support. During the pandemic lockdown, the school continued to provide a service for all of its pupils with some attending classes particularly those with the most complex needs and others accessing on-line learning with a range of additional support being provided by the school staff to the pupils and their families. The school managed a highly complex system of separating class groupings whilst enabling those children with autism and complex needs to access school in order to ensure both

the children and their families were supported appropriately during this time. The support provided by the school during this time has been highly praised by parents at the school.

10.3 Treetops Free School

The new Treetops Free School building will now open in Easter 2022 offering places for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and for pupils with autism. During the course of this year we have developed additional places at Treetops School through the provision of temporary accommodation which has allowed two additional classes of pupils to access special school places.

From September 2021 the Free School will officially open with the pupils in the temporary classrooms being joined by 4 other classes of pupils who will initially access accommodation within Treetops school site. This has been enabled by an innovative approach developing a new sports hall to be temporarily converted and used as classroom accommodation until the new building is completed in Easter 2022.

10.4 Mainstream Resource Bases

Thurrock has 6 Primary Resource Bases for pupils with SEND; 2 Primary Inclusion Bases for pupils at risk of, or who have been excluded, and 2 Nursery Resource Bases for pupils with SEND. The Primary Resource Bases cover Speech and Language Communication needs, Hearing Impairment, Visual Impairment; Learning Difficulties and Complex Needs; and Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

Thurrock has 4 Secondary Resource Bases for pupils with SEND covering Speech and Language Needs and Autism; Hearing Impairment; Visual Impairment and Social Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

In total we have 168 places in our Special Resource Bases in Thurrock. All of these bases continued to support their pupils and their families through a range of interventions including ongoing attendance at the schools, virtual delivery and work activities all supported through regular contact with parents and the families.

10.5 Independent Specialist Out borough Placements

There are currently 22 children and young people in Residential Non-Maintained and Independent Schools outside Thurrock Local Authority.

There are 14 children under the age of 16 in 52 week residential specialist placements. These children have complex special educational needs that cannot

be met in other settings. There are a further 5 children under the age of 16 in 39 week residential school placement.

We have continued to work closely with all of these providers to ensure these children's needs have been appropriately met including, Quality Assurance visits to all of these schools in addition to the regular series of reviews for all pupils with Education Health and Care plans, and the Reviews, monitoring visits and Personal Education Plan visits for those children who are looked after.

11. Access and Inclusion

We have continued the process of holding 3 weekly Primary and Secondary Inclusion Panels for all schools within the Local Authority. These panels ensure that the Fair Access Protocols are appropriately implemented ensuring that pupils who come under this, who are often particularly vulnerable, get access to a school placement in a timely manner with a fair distribution of these pupils across all schools in Thurrock. All schools in Thurrock have continued to engage positively in this process including during the lockdown period when we continued to offer places to pupils moving into the Borough. The Inclusion Panels also facilitate the process of managed moves for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion to avoid where possible the need for this, and enable a fresh start at a new school. The Panels also oversee the reintegration of pupils who have been previously excluded back into mainstream provision from our Alternative Provision.

Over the course of the lockdown there was an expected significant fall in the number of permanent exclusions from school. However despite the increased emphasis from schools in supporting pupils returning from lockdown, taking into account the difficulties this has presented to them, there has been a pattern of increased exclusions in recent weeks although still below the average for the year. During the course of the year there have been 9 pupils reintegrated back into mainstream education from Alternative Provision and 22 managed moves to new schools for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion.

12. Wellbeing and Mental Health Services

The School Wellbeing Service (SWS) has been fully established this year providing a range of activities and support for schools across Thurrock. There has been close co-ordination and work with the Health services, and Third Sector service supported by input and supervision from the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) to ensure there has been a joined up approach to wellbeing and mental health services in schools. All schools have worked on an action plan for wellbeing and have had access to a range of training and support for school staff and pupil activities with reflective sessions for staff groups being provided which have been very well received.

The DfE sponsored programme of support for wellbeing and mental health developed with the Anna Freud Centre has been supported through a new package of online materials, recorded training sessions and direct support for staff in schools. This has been developed and delivered by the Educational Psychology Service and the School Wellbeing Service as the Well Being for Education Resilience Programme and has proved to be a successful programme building on a range of approaches to support schools. During lockdown the EPS and SWS developed and delivered a telephone support line for schools and parents to provide a point of direct access to these services. In addition to this packages of support and advice, materials have been developed and delivered. The regular network meeting for all wellbeing leads in schools have been well attended throughout the year and have fed back positively on the work being carried out in this area.

13. Dedicated Schools Grant

Nationally, all local authorities and the education system have struggled to meet the additional demand for payments in support of children with Education Health and Care plans (EHCP); for out of borough placements, independent special school residential placements and for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) top up payments.

The high needs block remained a significant issue for Thurrock, with the number of EHCP's increasing by 9%, in 2020/21. This has required both additional top up funding to be paid to Schools and Academies and an increase in demand for specialist placements.

The DSG has a carried forward deficit into 2021/22 of £1.883m. This is a decrease of £0.095m from 2019/20. Discussions continue with the ESFA and the Schools Forum on options available to reduce demand for EHCP's and to increase Thurrock's Local Offer. A meeting is scheduled with ESFA in July to discuss Thurrock's DSG Management Plan.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP

14. Keeping children safe

The most significant challenge for the service, and for the children, young people and families we work with, has been the global pandemic during the past year). This has required us to be creative and adaptive in our working practices, in order to ensure children and families have been supported and safeguarded in these difficult circumstances. The service responded quickly and in a child focused way that ensured our most vulnerable children, young people and their families continued to receive a strong service during this past year. The service has worked closely with partners and families of children to both protect and maintain a constant vigilance for those on the edge of care. Practice has been

adapted to ensure the safety and protection of both staff members, and the children and their families and carers with whom we work.

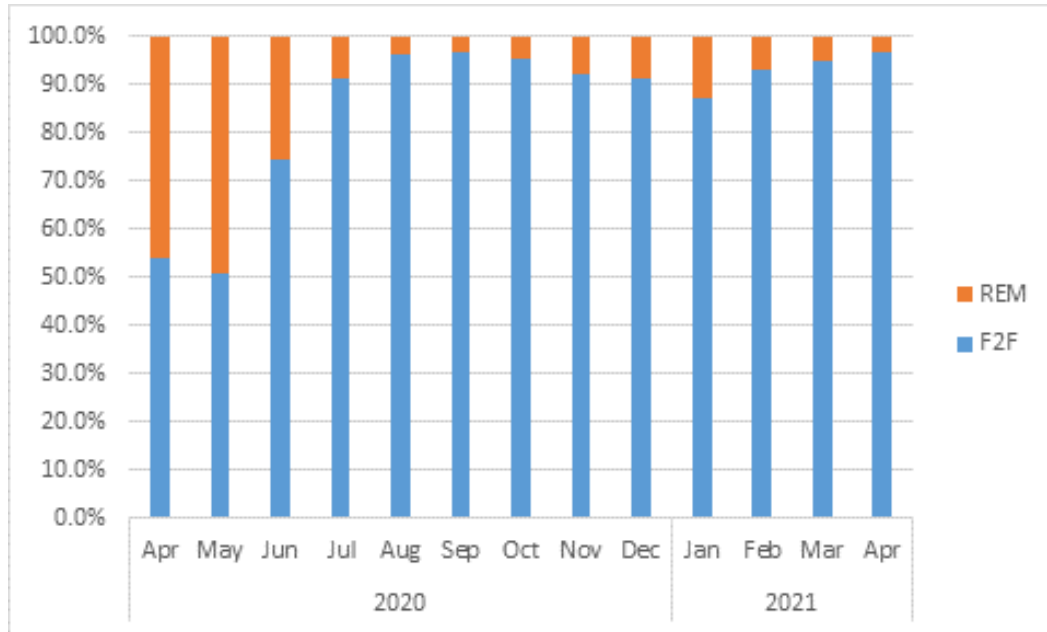
15. Quality of Practice

Thurrock has invested in the development of Signs of Safety (SoS) as a practice approach to provide a focus on recognition of risk, engaging family strengths to deliver safety and wellbeing. The embedding of SoS has led to improvements in practice across the service and improvements in communication and information sharing with partners. The Framework has been applied across services supporting consistency for families and a shared way of working among practitioners.

Feedback indicates the SoS approach is welcomed by practitioners, partners and families providing clarity of goals of the work. The recently published (10.5.2021) "SW Health Check" undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA), for Thurrock shows a very good score from staff regarding a strong and clear social work framework. The LSCP is taking the lead on the framework being applied by partner agencies.

Quality Assurance and case audit is impacting on social care practice with more cases achieving a good grade or better in 70% of the last audits. Quality of practice is monitored by audit, including multi-agency audits, performance data, service reports and feedback from complaints and compliments from partners and service users. A mixture of themed and routine audits have been used to sustain learning from audit and to strengthen management oversight and feedback to practitioners. A new audit programme has been devised for 2021/22 based upon feedback from the service and discussion with managers. Generic and thematic audits have been replaced with audits focusing on specific service areas, with the aim to maximise the impact of the learning on practice.

Meetings and panels have continue to take place remotely and children physically visited and seen where it is safe and appropriate to do so, and a high proportion of contact with children has remained face to face. The chart below shows visits to children during the pandemic year, starting with almost 50% of visits in April and May 2020 being remote visits, moving to face to face physical visiting almost exclusively through to April 2021. Social workers and managers are clear that children and young people need to be physically seen, in order to effectively safeguard them and at the end of May 2021 98% of children were seen face to face.



REM is remote visits and F2F is face to face visits

16. MASH:

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has successfully maintained a consistent application of thresholds with a positive culture of providing support and challenge to partner agencies.

We have seen considerable fluctuations in demand this year because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, contacts and referrals have reduced by approximately 10% in 2020/21 compared to 2019/20 impacted by Covid restrictions. However, we are starting to see an increase in demand as restrictions ease.

We have identified greater complexity in the contacts received by our Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and this has resulted in a greater conversion rate to referrals into Children’s Social Care.

17. Early Help and Intervention:

Our Prevention and Support Service (PASS) undertakes time-limited bespoke work with families who do not require statutory intervention. The focus is on providing the right level of support at the right time for families to prevent escalation. There is strong partnership working between the PASS Service, statutory teams and partner agencies. We are currently completing an evaluation of the outcomes achieved for families using the service.

The allocations to early help has noticeably increased during 2020/21, this is reflected in the total number of step downs in year at 327 in comparison to

2019/20 when there were 139 cases stepped down to early help. We have also seen a fluctuation in the number of Early Help Episodes started in 2020/21 from 29 episodes started in April 2020 when there were national restrictions to 160 episodes started in March 2021 as restrictions have eased. This is a pattern seen throughout the year as Covid restrictions have changed. There were a total of 1044 episodes started in 2020/21 in comparison to 1099 in 2019/20. This performance would appear to mirror the reduction in contacts and referrals in 2020/21.

18. Children in Need (CIN) and Children subject to a Child Protection (CP) Plan:

Thurrock's CIN cohort was 389 per 10,000 in 2019/20 and has been maintained at 388 in 2020/21. Thurrock is above statistical neighbours at 322 and National performance at 324. We have seen an increased complexity of cases referred during the Covid pandemic which may have impacted on numbers of children open on a CIN plan. This is despite the reduction in contacts and referrals. We are, however, reviewing and working closely with partners and Early Help to ensure that children are not receiving a statutory service where it is not required and universal or early help services are better placed to support children and their families.

The number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan has reduced from 173 in 2019/20 (39.5 per 10,000) to 110 in 2020/21 (24.6 per 10,000), which is below the statistical neighbour average. This represents a 36% reduction over the past two years. This can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the appropriate application of threshold, clear and robust processes, introduction of Child Protection and Child in Need surgeries to provide case challenge and oversee progression, and the impact of Covid-19. There are no children who have been subject to a Child Protection Plan of over two years duration.

19. Strong and Effective Partnership:

The Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP) is well embedded following an update of its structure in 2019. It is well-supported by its multi-agency partners. A new independent Chair/Scrutineer was appointed in April 2021.

Our Brighter Futures Early Help strategy is established and led by a multi-agency Board chaired by the DCS. The Strategy is currently being updated.

There is a multi-agency commitment to MASH. A quarterly MASH Strategic Board provides scrutiny and challenge to all partners. The governance of this has recently transferred to the LSCP.

There are effective partnership responses to CE and Gang-related issues. There is a dedicated Gang and CE Senior Practitioner across YOS and Childrens Social Care who works closely and links in with partner agencies.

Throughout the pandemic there has been good and effective communication and collaboration between Children's Social Care and the schools in Thurrock in respect of vulnerable children. Children in Need have been provided with laptops, school meals and food parcels where necessary. Free school meals were provided for those eligible throughout the school holiday periods up to and including Easter. In addition, the Corporate Director and Assistant Directors for Children's Social Care and Education have attended weekly meetings with CEOs of the Academy Trusts and the Leader of the Primary and Secondary forums to discuss any emerging trends and ensure effective communication between schools and Children's Social Care.

20. Care Applications and Children Looked After:

In Thurrock, the rate of care applications per 10,000 children was 14.3 in 2019-20 (62 applications). This was a decrease on the previous year. The rate in Thurrock is higher than the national rate of 10.8 for 2019-20. As of April 2021 there are currently 49 active care proceedings relating to 90 children and Thurrock made 77 care (s31) applications in 2020/21. This represents a 15% (-14 applications) decrease from the previous year.

The number of Children Looked After has remained stable over the past two years from 298 (68.1 per 10,000) in 2019-20 to 301 (67.4 per 10,000) in 2020-21. This represents an increase of 1% which remains in line with the statistical neighbour average [70.0 per 10,000]. Most other local authorities have seen increases in the number of children looked after over the last two years, with the national increase of 2% in this time.

All cases are reviewed to ensure the correct children come in to care; application of thresholds for Children Looked After (CLA) are consistently applied; and court proceedings are only issued where necessary. This oversight of care entry has been effective in supporting timely removal in the best interests of a child, and ensuring all options within the family network are fully explored.

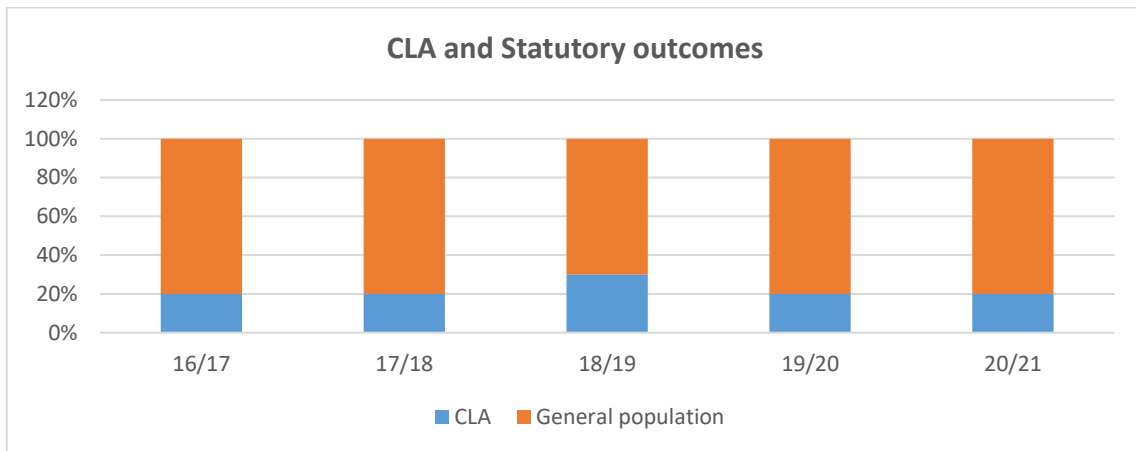
With the ongoing support of the Eastern Region protocol, the overall number of UASC has reduced from previous years and stabilised, as young people are dispersed across the region. In 2018/19 the number of UASC remaining allocated to Thurrock had increased to 35, however in 2019/20 there were 21 UASC and in 2020/21 there were 24.

21. Contact:

During the Covid-19 restrictions we have continued to prioritise contact between children in care and their birth parents and family. We have adopted a blended approach to contact with children under the age of three being prioritised for face-to-face contact. Our contact centre, Oaktree, increased the level of face-to-face contact over the course of the pandemic while adhering to all the government advice regarding safety measures. Contact for older children has been facilitated virtually and in the community, as the weather has allowed.

22. YOS:

In 2020-21 there were 46 children open to the Youth Offending Service with statutory outcomes, out of which 9 were Children Looked After, representing 20%. 2 of these children were looked after by other authorities and placed in Thurrock. Of the 9 Children Looked After, 56% were from the BAME community.



The throughput of the Youth Offending Service in 2020-21 has been significantly affected by COVID-19 and the closure of the Courts. This has resulted in delays in children being sentenced and lower numbers of young people being referred to YOS for statutory intervention.

There has been an increase in youth violence, involving bladed articles, in the last 3 months. The LSCP are undertaking a thematic review on youth violence, with a focus on learning from best practice around youth violence. A multi-agency response is in place and actions are overseen by the Youth Crime Governance Board and the Community Safety Partnership. This will be a focus for 2021/22.

23. Youth Detention Accommodation

Thurrock has had 6 children subject to Youth Detention Accommodation Orders in 2020-21. Under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012, any child that is made subject to a Youth Detention Accommodation Order

(remand in custody) by the Courts automatically becomes looked after by the local authority. Of the 6 children made subject to Youth Detention Accommodation Orders in 2020/21 there was an overrepresentation of young people from Black and Minority Ethnic Groups as 5 (83%) were from the BAME community.

24. Out of court disposal panel

During 2020-21 the out of court disposal panel dealt with 43 offences relating to 33 children, of which 5 children had looked after status. This equates to 15% and is in line with the percentage of children looked after from Thurrock in the criminal justice system. All 5 children were diverted away from the criminal justice system with identified support from the YOS partnership. Thurrock YOS and Essex Police are committed to the national protocol¹ aimed to reduce the criminalisation of Children Looked After. This approach will be supported with a local pan-Essex protocol to ensure there is a focus on diverting any child (where possible) who is Looked After from the Criminal Justice System.

25. Participation:

There have been several very successful Participation and Inclusion events with cohorts of children over the past 12 months, such as the 'Thurrock's Got Talent' event. The Children in Care Council (CICC) have met bi-monthly as a group and the Portfolio Holder, Corporate Director, and Assistant Director have attended meetings to gauge young people's views and feedback. Members of the Children in Care Council have attended Corporate Parenting committee meetings, and have also facilitated children's panels for staff recruitment interviews. In January 2021 the CICC were consulted about the Children in Care Pledge, providing detailed feedback and recommendations.

The 'Mind of my Own' app is promoted at each participation event, as a forum for young people to share their views. The Young Voices bi-monthly newsletter was launched in June 2020 to share learning, good news and promote upcoming participation events and opportunities. This publication includes a young person's blog which highlights topical matters, such as the journey of an unaccompanied asylum seeker. The most recent Blog in March 2021 featured a young person who delivered a training session to social workers about the power of participation.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) achieve very effective participation in CLA Reviews with the majority (85.5%) of over-4-year-olds taking part, or if not, sharing their views prior to the meetings

26. Aftercare:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-protocol-on-reducing-criminalisation-of-looked-after-children>

The Aftercare Service has maintained good communication with care leavers to limit their isolation and provide practical and emotional support. The service has provided financial support to the young people, based upon their personal circumstances, with additional financial support made available in early 2021 from the Covid Winter Grant. This has supported 275 young people with food and utility costs.

All Care Leavers are assigned a Personal Advisor at 16 years of age to assist and support young people with transition planning. There has been good partnership working between Social Care and Housing, resulting in a Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers, an improved offer to young people supporting them to prepare for Adulthood, early transition planning and improving tenancy sustainability.

Online training and virtual support for Care Leavers has been key through Covid-19. The Aftercare Service has worked hard to 'Keep in Touch' regularly with all Care Leavers to reduce isolation during the pandemic, using the young person's preferred communication method.

The Transition Panel addresses early transition planning for Care Leavers and Young Adults who have a disability and require ongoing support from Adult Social Care.

27. Fostering:

Thurrock Foster carers have shown an amazing resilience, commitment and fortitude during the pandemic, providing safe and caring homes to Thurrock children going above and beyond, promoting contact and making sure that children feel safe.

There is a new brand and marketing campaign, which has moved online. During Fostering Fortnight in May 2021 our campaign, which was driven by social media, was effective in creating enquiries. There were a significant number of "hits" on the council website where Fostering with Thurrock is promoted, including the benefits and support available to Thurrock Foster Carers. We have also had a reach of over 23,000 through Spotify and Facebook and an increase in applications from prospective households.

28. Adoption:

Adoption numbers have been significantly impacted over the past 14 months by the Covid-19 pandemic, as care proceedings have been delayed, hampering conclusion within the court and achievement of permanency and adoption for children.

Adoption is always considered for children, as a way of achieving permanence, and not just confined to children under the age of five. The number of children adopted in 2020/21, is 8. For children moving in with an adoptive family our timescales remain good; Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, adjusted for foster carer adoptions, (From 2018-2021 this averaged 341 days, however for the past 12 months this has been 370 days).

Average days from Court decision to matching has improved further this year from 181 to 138 days [national average of 226 days].

Thurrock is part of a Regional Adoption Alliance (RAA), Adopt East, which brings together eight local authorities, two voluntary agency partners (Adoption plus and Barnardo's), and the charity Adoption UK. This RAA offers Thurrock's children a greater pool of prospective adopters and early permanence carers.

Conclusion:

This report outlines the work of children's services over the past year, the recent changes to portfolio holders means that we have a new portfolio holder for Children's Services. This is an exciting opportunity to provide clear political leadership across the whole of Children's Services. The following year will see the country begin the recovery phase after Covid-19. Children's Services will ensure we continue to support our most vulnerable children and young people whilst working closely with our stakeholders to provide a strong educational offer which will provide opportunity for all.

Appendix A

Children's Services Budget 2021/22		£m
Children and Family Services	Brighter Futures - Prevention Service	3.846
Children and Family Services	Children and Family Services	7.095
Children and Family Services	Children Looked After Service	3.236
Children and Family Services	Safeguarding and Child Protection & LADO	1.022
Children and Family Services	Social Care Grant	(3.327)
Children and Family Services	Placement Support	17.701
Children and Family Services	YOS and Adolescent Services	0.809
Children and Family Services	Children's Centres	0.355
Children and Family Services	Business Support	1.497
Children and Family Services Total		32.235
Head Start Housing Service	Accommodation	0.847
Head Start Housing Service Total		0.847
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Admissions and Welfare	0.236
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Early Years; Families & Communities	0.598
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Learner Support	1.242
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Learning & Skills	2.265
Learning & Universal Outcomes	School Improvement	0.229
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Day Nurseries	0.124
Learning & Universal Outcomes	Education Support Service	1.094
Learning & Universal Outcomes Total		5.788
School Transport	School Transport - Core Funded	2.743
School Transport Total		2.743
TOTAL ALL		41.614

Dedicated Schools Grant 2021/22		£m
Schools Block	Maintained Schools Funding	3.787
Schools Block	Growth Fund & Licences	1.213
Schools Block		5.000
Central Services Block	Statutory and Regulatory Duties	0.558
Central Services Block	School Admissions	0.280
Central Services Block	Contribution to Combined Budgets	0.745
Central Services Block		1.583
High Needs Block	Top Up Funding	16.374
High Needs Block	Non Maintained and Independent Providers	3.328
High Needs Block	Commissioned Services	1.484
High Needs Block	Home to School Transport	1.600
High Needs Block	High Needs Central Team	0.675
High Needs Block		23.461
Early Years Block	Payment to Providers	12.329
Early Years Block	Early Years Central Team	0.548
Early Years Block		12.877
DSG Funding Settlement 2021/22 (after academy recoupment)		42.921
ESFA	Academy Recoupment	140.941
DSG 2021/22		183.862

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21 July 2021	ITEM: 11
Council	
Report of the Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities	
Report of: Councillor Deborah Huelin, Cabinet Member for Adults and Communities	
This report is: Public	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the first report of the Portfolio Holder for Adults and Communities.
- 1.2. It has been a year of unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The services within this Portfolio have responded and adapted, to the Pandemic, ensuring they have continued to deliver our priorities and support Thurrock's residents, including the most vulnerable, throughout the Pandemic.
- 1.3. This report describes the key areas of the Portfolio which comprise:
 - Adults Social Care
 - Community Development and Equalities
 - Libraries
 - Arts, Culture and Heritage

2. Impact of Covid-19

- 2.1. COVID-19 has dominated the work of the services within the portfolio over the last year. Maintaining a fully functioning adult social care operation throughout the pandemic has provided one of the greatest challenges of recent times. The Council and partners have been able to adapt and make sure Thurrock people have been kept safe, while being able to access continued mental and physical health support services.
- 2.2. Thurrock was a leading authority in taking proactive action to develop and implement a dedicated protocol with health partners on how to manage COVID outbreaks in care home settings. The protocol was developed and agreed in mid May 2020, and included enhanced arrangements to care homes, many of which were not available from central government until much later in the epidemic. These included:
 - An enhanced testing protocol for care home staff from May 2020 including weekly asymptomatic PCR testing of all care home workers

four months before government offered similar arrangements nationally, and strengthened local arrangements to protect against the risk of false negative PCR test results.

- A requirement for all patients discharged from hospital back to care homes to have been tested and received a negative COVID-19 test result
- Proactive engagement of care homes to put control measures in place as soon as we were informed of a COVID-19 exposure amongst a resident or staff member including closure of the home to visitors and non-essential personnel.
- Advice on prevention of outbreaks including enhanced IPC training and audits to deliver the highest standard of infection prevention and control.
- A GP Locally Enhanced Service with a named GP and dedicated primary care support to every care home resident
- Enhanced clinical in-reach to care homes from the North East London Foundation NHS Trust including a community gerontologist; a Consultant physician specialising in medicine for the elderly. (Research demonstrates that regular review by a community gerontologist significantly reduces risk of a hospital admission).
- 24/7 access to specialist Public Health advice
- Enhanced arrangements for managing and controlling outbreaks in care homes when they did occur including whole home testing and local contact tracing
- Establishing a multi-agency Health and Social Care Hub to oversee implementation of the protocol and management of outbreaks when they did occur

2.3. The council formed and led a multi-agency Care Home Hub that met at least twice a week to oversee implementation of our Care Home COVID-19 protocol and manage COVID-19 exposures and outbreaks when they did occur.

2.4. At the start of the pandemic the shortage of PPE was a source of national concern. The Council took swift and proactive action, assuming responsibility for providing supplies of PPE to other services, community groups and informal carers ensuring those most in need could access PPE that they required.

2.5. At the end of the first wave, the council had one of the lowest rates of death amongst care home residents in the country.

2.6. Regrettably, following the emergency of the new B.1.1.1.7 (Kent) variant that was significantly more transmissible than the original wild (alpha) variant, Collins House experienced a significant outbreak of Covid in mid-December. Over 70% of staff were also affected which presented some serious staffing challenges. These were mitigated by staff from other services volunteering to provide the much needed support until the outbreak was brought under control and staff who were self-isolating were able to return to work.

- 2.7. In March 2020 the Council took a pre-emptive step and set up a nine-bedded residential home to accommodate COVID-19 positive residents. This facility provided support to people discharged from hospital who could not return to their homes or a care home because they needed to self-isolate.
- 2.8. At the start of the second wave the Government directed all local Authorities to establish such a facility. Thurrock was able to support Essex partners as well as the residents of Thurrock and the facility accommodated more than 110 people during the two waves.
- 2.9. Since the start of the pandemic the council has worked closely with external care homes, domiciliary home care and supported accommodation providers to make sure they felt supported throughout and have remained up to date on outbreak management protocols and relevant government guidance.
- 2.10. The council have been in regular telephone and virtual contact with providers in relation to adequate PPE stocks, offering advice and guidance to staff on self-isolating protocols and identifying vacancies and capacity within the care homes as part of supporting timely hospital discharges. Home care providers have been encouraged to work in set geographical areas in order to utilise hours efficiently therefore minimising service users waiting for a home care service to start.
- 2.11. Regular virtual meetings have continued with providers to maintain relationships and to continue to in partnership for the benefit of service users. A number of compliments and thanks from providers have been received during this period.

The Thurrock Coronavirus Community Action

- 2.12. Thurrock Coronavirus Community Action (TCCA) established by the Council in partnership with the voluntary sector and led by CVS provided ongoing to support communities through the Coronavirus pandemic:
 - The TCCA supported communities by helping with access to food, prescriptions and avenues of support and the TCCA continues to support people self-isolating.
 - Over 5200 residents have been supported with 600 food boxes provided by the council due to shielding or emergency situations with staff teams and community volunteers making this happen during very challenging times.

3. Health and Social Care Transformation – Better Care Together Thurrock

- 3.1. The drive to deliver a *place-based* approach and new models for providing integrated, bespoke and person centred health and care continues at pace. Our approach recognises and leverages the unique strengths of our residents and the assets within our communities, seeking to design new preventative approaches in partnership with residents to promote and maintain their wellbeing and independence. Our approach seeks to '*do with*' rather than '*do*

to'. These is a key principles that underpins our plans to transform health and social care – known as *Better Care Together Thurrock (BCTT)*. Our ambition is for everyone to live in the place they call home, with the people and things that they love, doing things that matter to them.

- 3.2. This model aims to ensure that when people do require our support, they receive a response that focuses on what they tell us is important to them in improving their health and wellbeing and does not just look to 'fix' what we define as their immediate needs. Achieving this requires us to work across organisational boundaries and see the world through the eyes of our residents and their neighbourhood and community, rather than through health and care services. It is a principles and values based approach that requires us to transform whole systems rather than simply commission or provide distinct programmes or services.
- 3.3. The value of the Voluntary and Community Sector and the part they play is recognised and acknowledged in Thurrock with the Council continuing to work in close partnership working with the sector as an equal partner. This partnership is key to being able to identify and maximise the strengths that exist in our communities and it is also key to understanding what individuals and communities actually want and need from services.
- 3.4. The strength-based approach being adopted continues to help transform health and social care, ensuring that we create a responsive and flexible system that wraps itself around people and communities.
- 3.5. Along with the significant challenges it has brought, the Pandemic has also opened up opportunities and new approaches that we are keen to both embed and learn from as part of our transformation journey. This includes the increased use of virtual means to build relationships with partners – for example our community-based social work teams have regular 'virtual' meetings with representatives of health and care organisations in their area. This has enabled cross-organisational solutions to be achieved for people who would ordinarily have to be referred in to different parts of the system. We will also seek to retain the use of virtual opportunities as a means of engaging with people requiring support. This will not become a default, but an option – for example occupational therapists and social workers have been able to conduct assessments for some people this way. This will provide greater choice and flexibility – but will only be used if appropriate. Other opportunities that we are keen to retain are the use of volunteers for befriending and welfare checks. Our CLS 1 team has recruited volunteers for this purpose with great success and evidence of preventing crisis for certain individuals throughout the Pandemic. The greater our flexibility, the greater chance we have at delivering a system that works around people, and not around the organisation.

4. Front line social work teams

- 4.1. Social work teams are our professional leads in adult social care. They support and protect some of the most complex and vulnerable adults in Thurrock. Thurrock has one of the lowest turnover rates of social workers in England allowing long term care relationships between our staff and residents to be maintained. This is achieved through recruiting through social work apprenticeships and then offering staff career progression opportunities and the opportunity to work in a strengths-based, holistic way embedded within our communities.
- 4.2. There is now Thurrock-wide coverage for our place-based social work teams (known as Community-Led Support Teams). Each of the teams is aligned to one of four NHS Primary Care Network geographical footprints, supporting the provision of integrated health and care services.
- 4.3. The teams are easily accessible – offering regular drop-in sessions known as ‘Talking Shops’ at key locations within the community. During the Covid period, the Teams have offered ‘virtual’ talking shops but are now exploring re-establishing face-to-face sessions. We will also continue with a virtual offer of support if people prefer this way of making contact.
- 4.4. Despite approaching social care, people still continue to want to connect and do the things that have made their lives enjoyable. For example, we have often been able to link people with some gardening help so that they can continue to enjoy their garden or help to ensure they can get to clubs and organisations that reflect their interests.

5. Wellbeing Teams

- 5.1. Wellbeing Teams represent our new radically improved model of delivering strengths-based, holistic, flexible and integrated care based to residents in their own homes, based on long term care relationships. Following a successful pilot and evaluation, we have confirmed the permanent establishment of two Wellbeing Teams – one located within Tilbury and one within Chadwell. Wellbeing Teams represent our approach to addressing the ongoing fragility of the domiciliary care market and the desire to shift away from the existing ‘time and task’ model where resident needs are assessed once and then exactly the same number of minutes of care are provided each day, often by different individuals.
- 5.2. The Teams, based on the Buurtzorg model of self-management successfully developed in the Netherlands, operate at sub locality level and deliver care requirements to people who would ordinarily have received a service from a domiciliary care provider, but use the hours allocated to the individual flexibly and also look to build long term relationships with the person receiving support based on shared interests and passions.

- 5.3. The teams also look to reduce the reliance on a service but using resources creatively – seeing what can be provided from the community itself, family and friends, and also the application of technology and connecting individuals they care for with assets in the community that improve their wider wellbeing, for example a trip out to a garden centre or community group.
- 5.4. An evaluation of the approach has shown that it is already making a significant positive impact on the lives of individuals and in doing so, protecting and releasing capacity within the health and care system. An evaluation by the council’s public health team using an entire year’s worth of data concluded that residents receiving support from Wellbeing Teams needed seven times fewer GP appointments and had three times fewer hospital admissions compared to similar cohorts of residents receiving standard domiciliary care.
- 5.5. There are plans for Wellbeing Teams which will see the approach extended to incorporate elements of health care. For example, the Teams may be able to be trained to administer certain tasks normally carried out by a health professional. This will enable individuals to have greater continuity of care and reduce the number of visits by different professionals to one individual receiving support from both health and care sectors. This approach has been successful in other areas of the country and allows us to embrace a much more ‘blended’ definition of support in the home.

6. Care Home Development

- 6.1. In January 2019 Cabinet gave approval for a new residential care facility to be built on the Whiteacre / Dilkes Wood site in South Ockendon.
- 6.2. The new facility will provide social care and nursing care in a specialised setting. It will include 45 self-contained dwellings for single people and couples as well as the provision of 30 en-suite bedrooms for intermediate care. The facility will also include shared lounges, a restaurant, laundry room, and treatment rooms as well as accessible dementia friendly gardens.
- 6.3. Good progress was made in 2019, and the early part of 2020, with the design reaching RIBA Stage 2 (Concept design). Plans for consultation on the design with a range of stakeholders was put on hold in March 2020 due to the pandemic, although further design details was developed using remote working. In September 2020 it was decided to pause further work in order to a) review the requirements for the scheme in the light of the pandemic, and b) to focus on the proposed re-provision of the South Ockendon Health Centre.
- 6.4. In October 2020 an application was made by the NHS with the support of the council to One Public Estate for funding for a feasibility study. A grant of £133,000 for this work was announced in March 2021. The study is expected to commence in the next few weeks.

- 6.5. A report presenting the findings of the review of the requirements for the new care home, the prospects for a new integrated medical facility incorporating a community hub, and proposals for restarting the development is being finalised.

7. Mental Health Service Transformation

- 7.1. The challenges faced within our support offer to residents with poor mental health were well-documented in a report presented to Cabinet in March 2019. The findings of this report have underpinned an ambitious programme of adult mental health system transformation in partnership with Thurrock CCG, EPUT and our third sector partners which is seeing a greater number of our residents receiving support to improve their mental health and emotional wellbeing in the right place, and at the right time.
- 7.2. Appointment to a new Strategic Lead position and Commissioning Manager with a focus on mental health, to work with colleagues across the council and system partners has enabled a greater level of focus on this agenda, which has included several specific work programmes which will improve access to mental health services irrespective of level of need.
- 7.3. Appointment to a new Strategic Lead position and Commissioning Manager with a focus on mental health, to work with colleagues across the council and system partners has enabled a greater level of focus on this agenda, which has contributed to the development and ongoing implementation of the Mental Health Transformation Plan. There are five workstreams within the Plan which are:
- Urgent and Emergency Care
 - Integrated Primary and Community Care
 - Inequalities
 - Accommodation and Support
 - Workless-ness and Health JSNA
- 7.4. The MH Commissioning Manager sits within the ASC Commissioning and Procurement Team. The role is instrumental in developing provision under the Care Act that specifically meets the needs of people with mental illness to improve their health and wellbeing. Additionally, the role works with other agencies to ensure that service development in this area, across health and social care services is seamless, holistic and provides value for money. This process includes identifying need, capacity and demand, Monitoring/evaluating services and procuring new provision.

- 7.5. Our new Integrated Primary and Community Care (IPCC) model brings together a range of health, social care and voluntary sector resources to offer care and solutions in the community with specialist mental health social workers, working alongside Community Psychiatric Nurses and a range of assets in each Primary Care Network area. For Adult Social Care this model allows us to build on the success of Community Led Support (CLS) and Local Area Coordinators whilst maintaining established multi-disciplinary working practices to manage risk safely and to ensure that each individual is supported by the most appropriate professionals to find solutions to meet their desired outcomes and health needs.
- 7.6. The new model will improve capacity within Consultant led care, as the IPCC has created a viable alternative to manage individuals who require support but do not require that support/treatment to be consultant led, freeing up Consultant time to manage the most complex patients. During this transformation programme the benefits of a flexible and responsive social work offer in the mental health system are becoming evident. The approach is preventing escalation of need, improving independence and creating a smooth transition to more specialist services without unnecessary hand-offs and duplicate assessments.
- 7.7. During 2020, the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health took the decision to dissolve the section 75 agreement with Essex Partnership University Foundation Trust, allowing our specialist mental health social workers move from Grays Hall and work in a more integrated and strengths based way within the community.
- 7.8. Whilst the changes will take a little time to embed, we aim to align our social work Mental Health arrangements within the four PCN localities, in which we already provide a generic strengths based social work response. The benefits of the new approach will be:
- Improved access; more people, with a greater range of mental health needs and their carers, will receive support from the Adult Mental Health Social Work Team
 - Easier access to the team by all residents, with direct referrals accepted from within the community.
 - A broader range of approaches employed to help residents find solutions to address their needs thereby increasing their choice and independence.
 - Improved grip on demand, capacity and emerging issues and trends, which can then be resolved in a timelier manner.
 - Social work practice that is steeped in strengths based approach and closely aligned with the direction of travel for social work in Thurrock.
 - Ability to flex to meet changes in need and demand and offer a truly bespoke service to each individual resident.

8. Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC)

- 8.1. The targets within the Better Care Fund agreement continue to provide a significant focus to Delayed Transfers of Care (DToCs). DToCs are where someone is medically fit to leave hospital but there is no-where for them to move to and are a national issue monitored by NHS England.
- 8.2. In 2019-20, Thurrock was the best performing Council in the region, and performed well above the England average.
- 8.3. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, DToC recording has been suspended for 20-21. When recording will be reinstated is currently not clear. Despite official recording being suspended, locally we know that Thurrock continues to keep delayed discharges at a minimum as we are monitoring discharges through our hospital social work team and contract team. Any delays for Thurrock residents are often as a result of people waiting for discharged not agreeing to the choices of care and support that are available. Throughout the pandemic we have worked hard and succeeded in ensuring discharges are not delayed utilising our designated setting to ensure those who were Covid positive were discharged and supported in a timely way.
- 8.4. Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals Foundation Trust continues to be extremely complimentary about the work of the council – in particular the excellent work carried out by the Social Care Hospital Team, who work tirelessly to ensure people are discharged quickly when they are fit to do so.

9. Safeguarding (LPS)

- 9.1. Safeguarding adults who may be at risk of abuse or harm has long been an absolute priority for adult social care. The statutory Board led by Thurrock Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex Police is now well established and the Safeguarding Team provide skilled and person-centred interventions.
- 9.2. In 2020-21 a total of 1070 safeguarding alerts were received, a slight increase of 7% on alerts received in the previous year. The increase is in line with national data during the Covid period, and we are expecting this may increase further as restrictions ease. This will be closely monitored by the safeguarding teams and also our statutory Safeguarding Adults Board. The Council and partners continue to work closely with individuals, local communities and other agencies to ensure that those at risk have the support they need to live lives free from harm or abuse.
- 9.3. The Safeguarding Team is also responsible for managing the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard Service. The team will be implementing the new Liberty Protection Safeguards scheme, which is due to replace the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard Service in April 2022. The two schemes will run alongside each other for the first year post implementation. A process is currently in

place to develop the necessary systems and processes and ensure effective implementation of the new scheme.

- 9.4. Thurrock Council have always been proactive in ensuring that the necessary procedural safeguards are in place for those at risk of being deprived of their liberty; and remain confident that this strong Human Rights based practice will continue under Liberty Protection Safeguards.

10. Preparing for Adulthood Strategy

- 10.1. Effective preparation for adulthood for disabled young people has a very positive effect on prevention, helps young people and families manage change and promotes independence.
- 10.2. The Thurrock Preparing for Adulthood Strategy is a three year plan that is relevant for all agencies and staff who work with disabled young people between the ages of 14-25 years in Thurrock. Throughout its three-year life cycle, all accountable parties will update the action plan to include progress every year.
- 10.3. The Strategy is guided by the principles of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated SEN Code of Practice 2015, Care Act 2014 and the guidelines recommended by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence 2016, which provides national guidance and advice to improve health and social care. It is also supported by an action plan to ensure positive outcomes for our disabled young people, their families and carers.
- 10.4. The Strategy is now live and accessible via the Thurrock website at <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/young-people-with-special-needs-preparing-for-adulthood/transition-strategy>

11. Care Provider Market Development and Management

- 11.1. Thurrock's response to the Pandemic highlights the importance of the social care market, which remains fragile but manageable in Thurrock. A great deal of work has been done to stabilise the market and increase capacity. However, we are now grappling with a significant increase in both the numbers of people requiring care and the complexity of their need and the wider impact of COVID.
- 11.2. Older People entering residential care have more complex needs than they were a decade ago. For example, 80% of service users have both a physical and cognitive impairment compared with only 47% ten years ago.

11.3. A multi-faceted approach is adopted in Thurrock to address the increase in demand and complexity and support the provider market in addition to action previously described in this report includes:

- The contracts for home care continue to be well embedded and our in-house service, Thurrock Care at Home, is also now well established. Our approach to providing support to people in their homes through Wellbeing Teams is proving very successful.
- It is acknowledged that the location of specialist schools in-borough for young people with disabilities would result in additional demand for services when they transitioned to adulthood. This is why a purpose built supported housing scheme for people with autism in response to that identified need is currently in the process of opening.
- A greater variety of provision and type of providers (including successfully growing the number of micro providers) to meet the needs of an increasing number of young adults with complex learning disabilities who will be coming into adult social care every year is continually encouraged.

11.4. It has been an exceptionally challenging year, with significant pressure on the whole system resulting from the pandemic but we have continued wherever possible to move forward with our transformation agenda to develop and grow the market particularly with the implementation of the new model of Wellbeing Teams.

12. Carers

12.1. In Thurrock it is estimated that some 20,000 people are unpaid/informal carers. However, of these under 5% are actually known to public services and formally recognised and receiving carer support. The 2011 census shows that 26% of those identifying as caring in Thurrock provide more than 50 hours per week. This is higher than region and national averages.

12.2. To address this, over the next year the Council's work with carers is being revitalised to ensure that everything is in place to identify carers and give them the right information and support to improve their lives. As part of this, carers are involved in the refresh of our assessment process; We are developing training for social care staff on identifying and supporting carers; HR and Social Care are working together to identify and support Carers within our own workplace and we are working with carers to develop and publish an action plan so that future support meets their changing needs.

- 12.3. This last year has proven to be challenging for carers. The pandemic has meant more people than ever become a carer for the first time and for existing carers it often meant they took on more caring responsibilities as often the needs of the person being cared for increased. Many carers were unable to take a break from their caring role as day care and respite services had to pause. As a result of this, there has been a negative impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of carers. As part of our Covid recovery, the Council has increased the capacity in Thurrock Carers Service to help boost the identification of new carers and provide much needed support.
- 12.4. During Carers Awareness Week the service was able to hold its first meeting of our young adult carer peer support group (outdoor and socially distanced 'Pizza in the Park') for those transitioning to an adult carer role and an afternoon tea at Thurrock's Yacht Club to appreciate and thank Carers for all they have done during the last year.
- 12.5. Thurrock Carers Service has adapted and managed to respond throughout this difficult period by moving many of its services to a digital platform. They have supported and encouraged carers to utilise technology during this pandemic resulting in a larger number of Carers engaging digitally than ever before. It has been very successful and has helped reduce social isolation by moving peer support groups and social activities online – including a virtual garden party in the summer, a Christmas party, regular quizzes, mindfulness sessions and first aid training. The Council is looking to build on this and improve technology enabled care solutions to carers and has further enhance our digital offer/solutions.
- 12.6. Two new web based platforms have been introduced. The first provides practical information around health and wellbeing for both the cared for individual and their carer, with an online peer to peer support network. The second provides information for employers and carers who are in, or thinking about returning to work by giving advice on carers' rights, legalisation and employment.
- 12.7. It is also important to support carers who have no experience or who are fearful of new technology. In partnership with the Thurrock Carers Service the Council is trialling a videoconferencing device called Alcove to provide virtual support and social events. This specially adapted tablet makes video calling as straightforward, simple and as safe as possible.

13. Micro Enterprises

- 13.1. Micro Enterprises are small services delivering local services to local people, providing personal and flexible support to give people more choice and control over the support they receive.

- 13.2. Thurrock's award winning Micro Enterprise scheme, now in its sixth year has recently been featured as a case study in the Association for Public Service Excellence news. Micro enterprises are key to how we are changing the adult social care provider market and providing more choice so that people can still achieve what matters to them regardless of their health and care situation.
- 13.3. More than 140 services are now available for local residents. There is a very diverse range on offer from personal care to lunch clubs, gardeners and handymen to leisure and fitness activities. All are community focussed and provide a wide choice of services. Many services are run by volunteers and not dependent on an individual's ability to pay providing wider inclusivity for Thurrock residents.
- 13.4. There is ongoing interest in the scheme especially as Thurrock moves out of lockdown and people are reassessing their lives. The scheme has already provided opportunities for people who have been made redundant and there are plans to work alongside the DWP and as other local business re-start initiatives to offer the scheme as a potential for employment. Many other local authorities have sought Thurrock's expertise and are also now implementing similar schemes to the Micro-Enterprises that have been created in Thurrock.
- 13.5. Thurrock's Micro-Enterprises are part of a tangible and successful, innovative and collaborative approach to health and care transformation that delivers on all aspects, whether they be a vehicle for people realising a passion or a way of obtaining care and support that is personalised to the individual.
- 13.6. The Micro Enterprise scheme supports local residents to set up services that help others in their local communities. The focus is on developing care and support businesses that enable people to have a wide choice of services that people can utilise to enrich their lives by supporting their independence and promoting wellbeing. There are a wide range of services on offer; everything from personal care to support at home, lunch clubs to leisure activities and the list is growing. There are currently around 130 services available and there is ongoing interest from local residents in setting up services to help others.
- 13.7. The scheme offers a real opportunity for local residents to realise an ambition to utilise previous work/life experiences, an interest or a hobby and turn this into a service that not only benefits the community but also offers employment opportunities. A regularly updated list of available services is hosted on the Stronger Together website at www.strongertogetherthurrock.org.uk

14. Community Development and Equalities

- 14.1. The Community Development Team supports people to come together to take positive action on what is important to them. Support is provided to all services and staff networks around equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring our decisions and processes are both informed by our duties as a public body under the Equality Act 2010 and also representative of local issues. Building strong, resilient communities that enable integration and cohesion in a growing borough underpins the wide and varied work of the service.
- 14.2. Increasingly, so much of the council's ability to achieve the best outcomes for residents relies on an independent and thriving voluntary, community and faith sector. Supporting this sector to be as strong as it can be underpins much of our community development focus. Thurrock Community Service plays an essential role in developing the breadth and strength of Thurrock's voluntary sector.
- 14.3. The Stronger Together Partnership is developing as a key resource to help develop community resilience, connecting communities and issues to support improvements where possible. In January 2021, Cabinet approved our *Collaborative Communities Framework* which sought to encapsulate our Strengths and Assets Based Approach. Co-produced via our *Stronger Together* partnership over three years, the framework sets out how we will work and enable our communities to co-design and influence decisions, address their own challenges and realise their own ambitions. It recognises the importance of the council reducing red-tape that hinders community-led action, devolving power and enabling different ways of working so that communities are better enabled to achieve locally determined outcomes. Developing the action plan for the Collaborative Communities Framework is a key priority for the coming months including a review of community engagement to ensure we capture and use the views expressed through different programmes in a single view of engagement.
- 14.4. Thurrock Council continues to support its own volunteer programme with over 200 active volunteers. While volunteering activity slowed during the period of restrictions, the number of volunteers have remained high throughout with many of our volunteers going on to support the TCCA effort or getting involved with other roles including the Library Homelink service. The team provide training and support to services on involving and supporting volunteers leading with the creation of new roles in Adult Social Care, Library Service, Street Cleaning, Recreation and Leisure Services.

14.5. The Community Environmental Development Fund (CEDF), now in its sixth year of delivery, is a capital fund designed to support projects that: renew, improve, transform or create a community asset; sustain local organisations and initiatives; show a direct benefit to local communities. The fund supported 52 projects in its first five years, providing services for the benefit of local communities. The CEDF for 2021/22 was relaunched in May 2021 and will close in August 2021. The team have already engaged with approximately 35 interested groups through a series of on-line workshops.

14.6. In addition, a review of the council's Social Value Framework will conclude with the aim of adjusting local requirements to ensure that council contracts maximise social, economic and environmental benefits for Thurrock.

15. Community Led Local Development (CLLD)

15.1. The Tilbury Community Led Local Development (CLLD) programme covers Tilbury St Chads and Tilbury Riverside & Thurrock Park wards. The focus of the programme is to support local businesses as well as new start-ups and investment in projects that help unemployed or economically inactive residents to become economically active again. A Local Action Group (LAG) comprised of voluntary and community sector, resident, Member and business representatives agreed the priorities for the area and make key funding decisions.

15.2. The delivery element of the programme will run until December 2022. To maximise the opportunities for local businesses and residents a request to extend this to March 2023 has just been submitted to the funders – MHCLG and DWP – for their consideration.

15.3. The CLLD Programme offers grants of £1,000-£4,000 to small and medium-sized businesses to improve their business frontage or to support new businesses with start-up costs. Businesses need to match the grant pound for pound. Despite the impact of the pandemic, by the beginning of June, 12 had been approved, 2 more applications are being considered and 7 further businesses have had their eligibility confirmed and been invited to submit a full application. The aim is to support at least 68 businesses by the time the project concludes.

15.4. The investment to support unemployed or economically inactive residents has to be matched pound for pound, meaning that they only attract interest from providers with project activity already funded in the area. To date eight projects have been approved with total project costs of over £2.4m, offering a range of help to prepare for, find and secure work or move into learning. Providers include voluntary and community sector providers, Port of Tilbury, South Essex College and Council teams. These services have been badly affected by the lockdown but all of them are now mobilising to expand their delivery. Around 100 residents have been registered and we expect that to grow rapidly over coming months.

- 15.5. The first priority looking forward is to secure confirmation from the funders – MHCLG and DWP - that delivery can continue to March 2023. We are also looking to increase the financial support available to businesses to improve shopfronts in Tilbury.
- 15.6. As COVID-19 restrictions ease project leads will be able to work more closely with residents to help them develop their skills and find work. Over the next 12 months our focus is on delivery. We plan to offer grants to 40 businesses in Tilbury and help our projects engage around 800 residents in the skills and employment programme.

16. Libraries

- 16.1. Thurrock Libraries develop activities and service provision opportunities under the framework of both local strategic priorities and national DCMS-certified Universal Officers incorporating Information and Digital, Health, Reading, Culture, and Children's Promise as defined by Libraries Connected.
- 16.2. Thurrock Library Services continue to underwrite public access to books (for education and leisure purposes), authoritative information and PC facilities, including internet and printing. Pre-COVID-19 loans of physical items were at nearly 15000, and annual footfall across the borough for in-library services was at nearly 700,000.
- 16.3. Physical stock is supplemented by a popular and expanding digital library, consisting of thousands of e-books, e-audiobooks and magazines with nearly 14000 loans during the first 2020 lockdown period, with a 109% increase in new joiners. Print and digital collections are due to be expanded from July 2021 with the entry of Thurrock into the London-based Libraries Consortium, adding additional items to stock for Thurrock residents.
- 16.4. Grays Library maintains a comprehensive Local Studies archive, containing items of unique historical interest, while East Tilbury hosts the Bata Heritage Collection. The libraries serve the widest demographics, with growing support given to Further Education and Higher Education students studying locally and on distance learning courses and provision of health and well-being information resources under the national Reading Well scheme.
- 16.5. Thurrock has joined the Libraries Consortium, a business partnership of over 18 London and Essex library authorities that provides value for money, shared resources and joint contract-negotiating. To unify with the Consortium, Thurrock has installed a new Library Management System, migrating all catalogue, stock, customer and processing data – a large undertaking in which Thurrock's input and expertise benefitted best practice across the entire Consortium.

- 16.6. Over the last year Library staff adapted to a number of changes to the way they work. They were incredibly flexible and most staff were redeployed to different roles whilst the Libraries were closed, handling calls for TCCA, and providing and collecting Covid Tests from Libraries that were set up at Distribution Centres. They telephoned vulnerable library users to complete welfare checks and also delivered online sessions i.e. Baby Rhyme Time and Story Times.
- 16.7. Since lockdown, Thurrock Libraries staff have facilitating befriending and social outreach services online, such as Reading Friends, a Reading Agency scheme designed to bring people together under their love of books and reading. There have been at least two sessions a week, with approx. 6 to 12 participants per session.
- 16.8. Having benefitted from a small restructure, library and hub staff are now in a position to optimize both the service's potential and their own skills – maximising outreach and activities, local and national initiatives and schemes, and provide a robust and comprehensive response to the needs of the local community. Libraries and hubs should be as accessible and used as much as possible, while also taking skill sets and resources out into the community. We are reviewing our longer term strategy for libraries and the potential to direct more service contact through libraries to ensure better outcomes for residents.

17. Arts, Culture and Heritage

- 17.1. Arts, Culture and Heritage have an important part to play in supporting economic growth and regeneration across Thurrock. Our vision for cultural regeneration in Thurrock is one where culture brings people together, strengthens communities, and contributes to the creation of a more vibrant place through developments including health, social care, education, physical environment and economic development where culture and creativity improves the well-being of individuals and tackles inequalities.
- 17.2. The pandemic continues to have a significant impact on the arts and heritage scene and this report thanks again the many volunteers and groups who have found new ways to continue their work in a difficult year.
- 17.3. Thurrock Council manages the Thameside Theatre, Thurrock Museum and supports development of the arts across the borough. The Cultural Services team continues to take a safety first approach to the pandemic and work within the Covid guidelines - risk assessments have been prepared and measures taken to protect our community. Attention has focussed on those activities that can be delivered virtually or outdoors with some pilot activity also taking place including the full council meetings.

- 17.4. The Museum has refocussed operation to online while the lockdown has been in place. Since the online learning programme was launched, many digital learning resources have been produced, downloaded more than 3,348 times and achieved a five star rating from teachers. In addition 132 children have had online learning sessions with museum staff and 26 adults have participated in virtual tours and talks.
- 17.5. Despite long periods away from the Museum itself, Thurrock Museum 'volunteering-from-home' has been embraced with enthusiasm. The volunteers have helped with the creation of education resources, sent resource packs to care homes, submitted research that updates our webpages and even completed two temporary exhibitions displayed outside using the Thameside Theatre poster boards, reinvented as "The Museum Outdoors" – one for Remembrance Day and one for Christmas.
- 17.6. The Thameside Theatre has traditionally hosted a mixture of professional shows alongside amateur and community activities. Unfortunately its position on the third floor of the Thameside Complex means it is particularly difficult to open in a COVID safe manner and the theatre has remained closed to the public since the first lockdown in March 2020. Shows have been cancelled or postponed and where possible staff have been redeployed or furloughed.
- 17.7. Last October the Theatre won funding from the Cultural Recovery Fund to put Covid compliant measures in place and to prepare for eventual reopening. The funds were supplement with a second successful bid in March.
- 17.8. The money has been used to help pay the costs of those staff who have not been furloughed to offset the loss of income, to pay for COVID safety measures such as screens, to develop a new business and marketing plan to help the theatre develop and diversify its cultural services offer, and to invest in different ways to share cultural activity with audiences such as equipment to enable filming and live streaming.
- 17.9. The Council is particularly supportive of community led arts and cultural activity in Thurrock and the council has again supported development of a bid for Creative People and Places funding from Arts Council England. Creative People and Places is about more people choosing, creating and taking part in brilliant creative activities. If successful the bid, led by the Tilbury on Thames Trust, will draw in more than £1 million investment for cultural and creative activity in Thurrock. Groups and individuals across the borough have come together to help shape a shared vision for community led cultural activity in the borough which is reflected in the bid.

- 17.10. Furthermore, we have a world-class centre for creative production at High House Production Park which the council has taken over day to day management responsibilities for the site on behalf of the charity. The costs of our work are being met by the charity so there is no additional cost to Thurrock residents. The site has raised our profile as a centre for the creative industries – a growing sector in the UK economy. It will be important to use the same collaborative approach we have adopted for our community driven cultural activity to help the sector to grow and create jobs, inward investment and wealth in Thurrock. The potential for the sector has been recognised in the Backing Thurrock roadmap for recovery, resilience and a return to growth agreed by Cabinet in March 2021 and work is underway to develop a sector specific action plan.
- 17.11. Work on some projects to be included in the action plan is already underway. The council, working on behalf of High House Production Park has been able to secure funding from the Creative Estuary programme to help refresh the business plan for High House and to conduct a feasibility study on options for further development of workspace on site. Creative Estuary is also supporting a pilot programme in Purfleet aimed at embedding cultural facilities and activities into the major regeneration scheme. The council is also actively involved in the creative industries work being carried out by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities (ASELA) across south Essex which included a recent survey of individuals and groups working in the sector to better understand what would help them thrive.
- 17.12. The council is working with the Royal Opera House to deliver the Trailblazer programme – enabling young people in Thurrock to benefit from high quality cultural activities. The Trailblazer programme is refreshing the menu of cultural opportunities available to schools and all activity will be delivered in line with Government guidelines and Covid restrictions.

Going forward

- 17.13. Officers will continue to work with volunteers and the community to bring back arts, cultural and heritage services as restrictions ease further and we are all able to return to 'normal life'.
- 17.14. Over the course of the next few months we will working with our partners plan and reposition cultural services and in particular our approach to cultural regeneration to better support the Council's place ambitions. This will include reviewing current cultural services provision and assessing their overall social and economic contribution to regeneration in Thurrock.
- 17.15. Working with partners we will develop and bring forward a report on a new shared vision and priorities to support cultural regeneration in Thurrock that is social, economic and physical over the long-term including exploring ways to maximise the power of culture and creativity to support the well-being of individuals and communities as part of an overall programme for economic growth that impacts positively on social change, tackles inequalities and promotes place shaping through creativity.

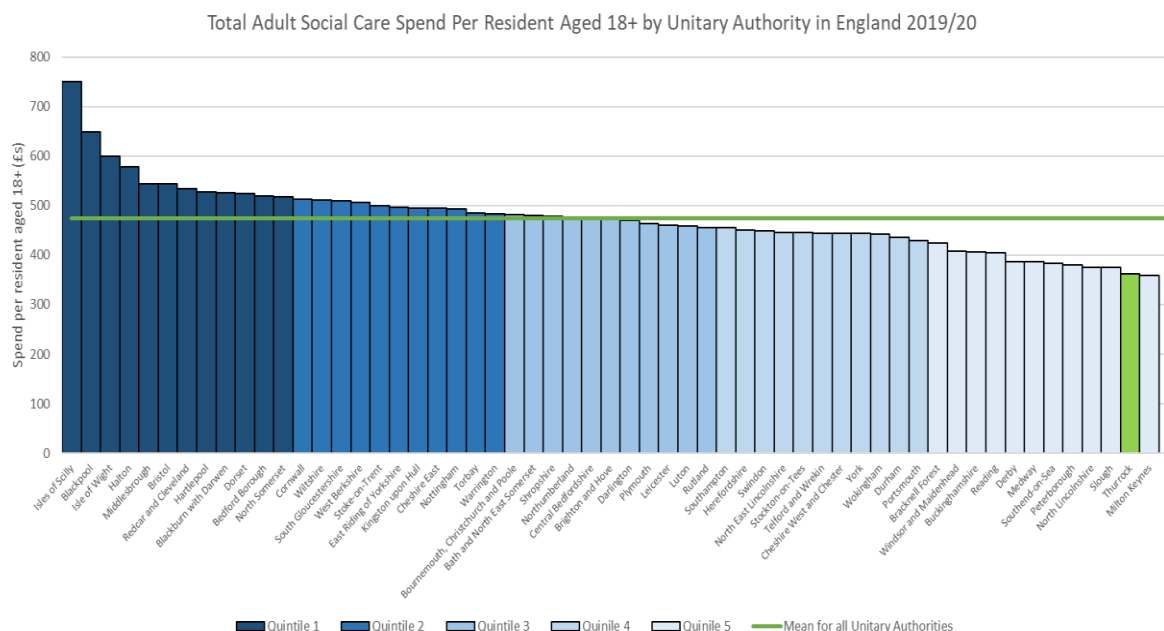
17.16. We will continue to deliver and enhance cultural services working with production companies, local groups, and borough wide facilities to promote arts and culture in venues across Thurrock and work with communities to support the development of new cultural productions and events, including the use of the theatre’s new streaming equipment and green screen to reach new audiences and support groups to maximise the benefit and impact of their work.

17.17. We will work with our partners to deliver community driven arts and heritage activity across the borough in ways that help improve the quality of life for our residents, reimagine our high streets and open spaces, support a new dimension to our economy, one that creates new jobs and opportunities for people to develop new skills as well as contributes to our key messages, conveying Thurrock’s success and opportunities and helping build external relationships for future prosperity.

18. Finance

Adult Social Care

18.1. The total net budget for Adult Social Care in 2020/21 was £ £43.431m. Thurrock has the second lowest spend per head of population on Adult Social Care of any unitary authority in the country. This reflects our success at transforming our services and wider health and care system to focus on prevention that keeps our residents independent for longer and delays and reduces demand on statutory care services. (Figure 1).



18.2. For 2020-21, adult social care received an additional £0.737m in Social Care Support grant, and £1.336m through the Adult Social Care Council Tax precept. This funding was predominantly used, in the base budget, to support

the increase in demand and costs within adult social care residential, homecare and supported living placements.

- 18.3. Additional funding was allocated, in the forms of infection control, rapid testing and workforce capacity grants throughout the year to support care providers. Furthermore, a central Covid funding allocation was received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to provide additional resources to deal with the escalated costs of delivery Adult Social Care services throughout the financial year.
- 18.4. Funding levels included within the base budget for 2021-22 include the additional 3% adult social care precept of circa £2.5m which has been used to finance growth requirement centred on increases in the rates paid to care providers for Residential, Nursing and homecare. This has been used to support the on-going market fragility and address some of the economic pressures faced within the sector. The funding has also been used to meet the rising costs associated with increased complexities within Learning disabilities and mental health clients.

Community Development

- 18.5. In 2020/21 £336,000 was allocated against supporting the delivery of community projects and over £400,000 was awarded locally in the form of voluntary grants. £800,000 has been allocated to this area for spend in 2021/22.

Libraries

- 18.6. £1.2m was spent on the library service in 2020/21. Loss of income whilst the libraries remained closed during the national restrictions was offset by reduced expenditure elsewhere within the service. The service have an allocation of £1.3m in 2021/22.

Arts, Heritage and Culture

- 18.7. The Theatre budget is based on a cost recovery basis and lost income during 2021/22 was offset by the income compensation scheme, reductions in corresponding expenditure and the furlough scheme.

19. Conclusions

- 19.1. This report highlights the comprehensive and high quality work undertaken across the diverse portfolio of services that are responsibility of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Adults and Communities. It documents continued performance despite the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and sets out an ambitious agenda of further transformation moving forward.

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

There were 1 question to the Leader and 5 questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

1. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Gledhill

Cabinet has agreed that 500 FTE posts will be cut over the next two years to save money. Given a number of these will be vacant posts, how many people currently employed by Thurrock Council does the Leader estimate will lose their jobs as a result of this?

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

1. From Councillor Byrne to Councillor Coxshall

Plan 3 for Stanford Station has no provision for Buses as previous plans explain why please?

2. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Mayes

Residents contact me daily with their concerns about primary health care in Chadwell. They report waiting for hours to get through to their GP surgery and lack of appointments once they do get through. Can the Portfolio Holder tell the Chamber what conversations or meetings he has been having with health partners to help drive improvements in primary health care?

3. From Councillor Muldowney to Councillor Jefferies

Given the recent vandalism of graves and other antisocial behaviour in Chadwell cemetery, will the Portfolio Holder now agree to resume locking the cemetery gates after dark?

4. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Maney

Cabinet agreed on 7th of July to introduce Pay and Display parking charges in car parks that are currently free. Will the Portfolio Holder set out the list of car parks where he plans to impose these charges?

5. From Councillor J Kent to Councillor Jefferies

For the past two years Thurrock Council has, one Saturday a month, provided a caged truck to support the Orchards Forum as they work to keep alleyways in the area as free as possible from fly tipping and other litter. Unfortunately, that support has now been withdrawn and the rubbish pulled from alleyways is left to be collected in the week. Will the Portfolio Holder reinstate the Saturday support?

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

Date	From	Motion	Status	Director
No current motions				

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 1

Submitted by Councillor J Kent

Council notes the Thameside Complex was, formally, opened on 22nd of January 1972 with the first performance in the theatre taking place in October 1971. Council agrees: (1) that a celebratory event should be held, at the Thameside, in January 2022 to mark the Golden Anniversary of the complex and (2) to call on Cabinet to identify the resources necessary to refurbish the theatre and ensure the future of the complex.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The motion relates to a matter affecting the authority and over which the Council has relevant functions.

The Council has a duty to consider best value in its use of resources and this would include the consideration of refurbishment for the Thameside complex.

It should be noted the management and decision making relating to the services and building are matters for the Cabinet, whilst Council can make comment and request action, they cannot impose a direct instruction that the services or building remain.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

The Council is aware of the significant financial challenges over the coming years and the legal requirement to set a balanced budget. This requires Members to consider all areas of the council's expenditure – both immediate and in the medium term.

The Thameside building itself requires significant capital investment, as does the theatre. In addition, the running expenses of the building alone are in excess of £0.5m.

Further reports on the Thameside and the services currently provided within the Thameside will be considered by Members later in this calendar year.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 2

Submitted by Councillor Rigby

Her Majesty the Queen will be celebrating her Platinum Jubilee next June. To commemorate such a momentous occasion, the Council calls on the Cabinet to plant an established tree in each ward, between October and March, with a plaque. This will be in line with The Queen's Green Canopy project and will provide a lasting legacy of Her Majesty's devotion to the Commonwealth.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The motion affects the functions and powers of the Council and is within the powers of the Council to implement.

Whilst full Council can make a request to Cabinet, the Cabinet will have to consider the request in line with their duty of best value and appropriate use of resources.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

Whilst there is a cost to this motion, it is likely that the expenditure could be found from within existing budgets.

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

Yes

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Motions Submitted to Council

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

Motion 3

Submitted by Councillor Watson

This Council notes with concern the Government proposals to change planning law.

This Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and, therefore, the Council resolves to write to our local members of parliament asking them to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications legislation.

Monitoring Officer Comments:

The motion relates to the government's proposals for forthcoming legislation which if implemented would affect the authorities area and the authorities actions. The Council is empowered to communicate with local members of parliament.

Section 151 Officer Comments:

There are no direct financial implications from this motion.

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

Yes

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